



**ECHOES BY**  
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# MIGRATION

*All that glitters may not be gold*

**I**  
 In 1970, John Harris and Michael Todaro asked a simple question: why do people migrate from villages to cities? Their answer pioneered migration models in economics. They argued, the decision to migrate is influenced by differences in *expected* income between the village and the city.

Excluding visa lotteries, young highly educated people leave Bangladesh on their own choice mainly for two reasons: either for higher studies or to join their spouses. Today, young people are going abroad more than any time in our history. What's interesting is: what happens after they go abroad? The italicized *expected* will pop-up when needed.

**II**

A and B are two friends who are going to Australia. A's going for higher studies at the University of Sydney. B's going to join her spouse, a Bangladeshi-Australian.

After finishing studies, A asks himself: What life can I *expect* in Oz compared to back home in Bangladesh? After careful inspection, A decides to apply for PR. Oz needs IT people, and A did very well in IT from their oldest university.

B has come to Oz to stay with her spouse. She has three options: become a home-maker; search for a job that has vacations so she has time for family; or join the fast lane.

A convinces B to join the IT sector. B's

graduation from Bangladesh isn't in IT. Seeing the signals from the IT market, B decides to take training and become an IT specialist. A and B both *expected* they'd be better off.

**III**

Remember John Lennon's *Beautiful Boy*? Remember "*Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans*"? Well, fifteen years have passed in the twinkle of an eye for A and B. Both of them established themselves in IT in Oz. There's a twist coming, if you didn't sense.

A and B are both in their mid-forties now. The IT market in Oz is oversaturated. One of the beasts of flexible labour

markets is: what can hire quick, can fire quicker. The economy is hit by a financial crash like the one in 2008. Like a house of cards, A and B see their life crumble. Both become unemployed.

These events have happened in the past. Why can't they happen again?

**IV**

*Expected* income wasn't a good analysis of migration. What we *expect* may not turn out to be what lasts. Models in economics notoriously overlook time and/or space. The decision to migrate was isolated to a one time-period, when the decision was made. It wasn't spread over time. No science is complete. Let's move away from

economics.

A fairy told me, one of the two friends joined the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. While climbing the ladders of the IT world, that friend was making podcasts on music, art and even the Ashes for fun. One morning, the editor of ABC Jazz called: "We loved your podcast series on Miles Davis. Would you like to work with us?"

The other friend, the fairy told me, invested all their time and effort in their career, and nothing else. When that friend got the golden handshake, life crumbled as if in the quicksand of western Tasmania.

That friend would have been better off not migrating.

**V**

The pandemic has been a wakeup call, everywhere. Fortunes can vanish very quickly. Falling down in life isn't a problem. Standing up again is the challenge. If you're thinking of migrating, saying goodbye to your homestead -- think twice. Having and nurturing a second skill after your profession could be the difference between survival and being blown into oblivion.

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## THE STORIES OF PRINTS

*What would the world look like if everything were in solid colours?*

**FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN**

Can you imagine a world without prints? Chevron, brocade, plaid, paisley-- while patterns like these embellish the plain world around us, they also have rich stories to tell. You'll be glad that you weren't born a few decades ago because wearing some of your favourite prints would get you in trouble.

**STRIPES**

Stripes are a fan favourite. This striking combination, now a closet staple, had once been a symbol of delinquency. In the medieval times, stripes were a legal obligation to be worn mostly by social outcasts such as servants, jesters and criminals, and carried a negative connotation implying they were miscreants. Prisoners are forced to wear stripes because it signals that they are social deviants. The "badge of shame" soon turned into a symbol of rebellion during the American Revolution, when it was used in flags as battle cry, a motion of emancipation. Over time, this symbol became tamer and made its way into art, textile, fashion and movies. The core meaning of stripes is still the same -- subversion, dangerously different and not confined to the status quo.

**ANIMAL PRINTS**

Hunting animals was historically believed to be a sign of power. Before the animal print became a fashion



statement, it had been a symbol of status, wealth and royalty of the elite. During the 1920s, this print snowballed into popularity because of big names like Dior and became accessible to the mass public because of the emergence of the printing press. Now animal prints are a fun, chic, upscale and sometimes cheap (when mass produced) addition to clothing and textile.

**FLORAL PRINTS**

This pattern is said to have originated from the east and gained traction during the 16th century. Floral

arrangements, wreaths and other decorative items were only for the aristocracy during the Victorian era. Towards the late 1900s, this floral motif spread everywhere, from bed sheets and drapery to flowy dresses. Floral prints are great accents and can make anything look pretty.

**POLKA DOTS**

This fun, and peppy print was considered taboo centuries ago because it was reminiscent of impurity and diseases like smallpox. Back then, they did not have the technology to create equally spaced dots but dots had many positive connotations with culture, religion as well as magic. As cheerful as the term sounds, it is said to have originated from a lively Czech dance called *polka*. Polka dots have now left an imprint in famous pop art, vintage dresses and even on Minnie Mouse.

**CAMO PRINT**

The idea behind camouflage is to hide, conceal and blend in with the enemies during wartime. Ironically, camo print in fashion is used to stand out. This pattern is most popular in street fashion and hip hop culture. The masculine symbolism and toughness behind camo print mellowed down, gaining mass popularity in civilian culture than a military outlook.

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