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**Abstract**

This article improves our understanding of the reasons underlying the intellectual migration of scientists from existing cognitive domains to nascent scientific fields. To that purpose we present, first, a number of findings from the sociology of science that give different insights about scientific migration. We then attempt to bring some of these insights together under the conceptual roof of an actor-based approach linking expected utility and diffusion theory. Intellectual migration is seen as the choice of scientists who decide under uncertainty and on the base of estimations about probabilities, costs, and benefits of the migration. The resulting choice model can be used as a heuristic base for further exploration of the subject.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)