

International Migration Between Political Propaganda and the Economy

Dr. Ayman Zohry

Egyptian Society for Migration Studies

EGYPT

Migration in less developed countries is strongly influenced by poverty, economic difficulties, improper socio-economic policies, and political instability. Despite the fact that new technologies made it possible for people to communicate easily, strict visa requirements limit the freedom of movement. While national borders were invaded by international companies; only the highly skilled workers can find a pathway to be engaged in this globalized economy. In this essay I argue that the economy is the main determinant of migration rather than politics and political leaders.

Politics versus the Economy

In a globalized world, political leaders play with the card of migration in their electoral campaigns. However, one can confidently say that migration policies are determined by market mechanisms and economist rather than politicians. International economies stimulate most of contemporary migration streams; the legal migration as well as the undocumented migration streams. While International economies depend on undocumented migration to recruit cheap and unskilled labor needed for casual works, head hunting and the highly skilled migration programs are utilized to recruit the highly skilled migrants. This process takes away the highly skilled persons from developing countries to the developed. A salient example of this drain is the migration of medical personnel from Western Africa to Europe.

In a market-oriented international economy, head hunting and brain drain can be justified, but if we think beyond the market mechanism, developing countries does not have the incentives or the basic organizational infrastructure to keep their brains. Remittances of migrants are the most viable development-related aspect of

migration, but can they replace the drained brains? Migration includes hazards and potentials; undocumented migration is hazardous but at the same time it sustains the lives of millions of migrants and their left-behind families in origin. However, regular migration is not a sort of a hazard-free movement; it has its own consequences such as the problems of the left behind families in case of non-family movements. Also it implies the challenge of integration and the fear of assimilation in the countries of destination.

“*Encouraging the diaspora to invest in origin is an important way to boost trade between origin and destination countries*”

Towards a Fair International Migration Policy

It is important to establish a fair international migration policy that takes in consideration the potentials and hazards of people movement and protect developing countries from sacrificing their brains to the West. The current global scene reveals a sort of miss matching between labor supply and demand which is responsible about contemporary migration.

Economic imbalances in the international economy, globalization, and free trade agreements stimulate migration streams – regular and irregular (undocumented). Given the economic imbalance between the South and the North, migration streams will continue in the foreseeable future. The volume of irregular migration is a reaction of restricting regular migration. Economic aid as a means for reducing the volume of regular and irregular migration is not sufficient. It should be associated with “mobility Partnership agreements” between countries of origin and destination to ease regular migration and to reduce irregular migration.

The Way Ahead

Technical assistance and efforts to rehabilitate labor force in the South in order to be able to engage into the labor market is important. Technical assistance could take

the form of formal training, exchange programs, and qualifications and certificates recognition. Encouraging the diaspora to invest in origin is an important way to boost trade between origin and destination countries and to help creating more jobs in the South. Transfer of knowledge through national expatriates programs are highly appreciated and should be supported by both origin and destination countries. Despite some pitfalls, the UNDP experience in this field is highly appreciated and should be supported and strengthened. The appealing slogans such as “no aid but trade” should be transformed to programs to help developing countries cope with their economic difficulties caused by the transformation from the state-managed economy to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s led market liberalization in order to reinforce the so called globalized economy which works – so far – pro the Western international companies and leads to monopoly and more economic difficulties in the South. Globalization should be more humanized!

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