

# Final migration essay



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Interest in the topic is growing and there have been dramatic increases in empirical evidence and research on this subject. Over the past decade, Faction (a business information and research tool owned by DOD Jones & Company) shows an average of 5, 000 news articles in English per year about the impact Of brain drain, a testament to just how relevant this subject is (Gibson and McKenzie 201 1).

Len this essay I will define and discuss the three concepts brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation using specific examples from all over the world, in an effort to determine which of the three is most reverent.

It is important to define the term 'highly skilled migrant' to understand the impact they have on the economies of a country. There is no agreed international definition of 'highly-skilled workers', thus the concept varies, and is highly dependent on the eligibility requirements for the nation in question. However, highly-skilled migrants are commonly defined as having a 'university degree or extensive/equivalent experience in a given field. (already 2001 : Salt, 1 997) These migrants can typically be found in economic sectors including high-technology, information technology (IT), technology, engineering and health care (CERN, 2010).

Considering that immigration policies in receiving countries are increasingly tilted in favor of skilled migrants, (Being et all.

2003) identifying what constitutes a highly skilled migrant is vital. With 'quality selective' immigration policies (Decrier and Bedlams 2006) operated by many developed countries (Canada, New Zealand, and Australia)

endeavoring to attract the most highly skilled individuals, poorer countries are struggling to retain their workforce.

McKenzie, (2011 ) conducted a study of the top academic students from five countries, and documented increases in income of per year when the highly skilled emigrate from developing countries. Higher salaries, safer environment and endless opportunities are just some of the multiple ‘ pros’ that attract migrants to more developed countries. The huge outflow of highly skilled workers from a country gives rise to brain drain, a term coined by the British Royal Society to refer to the exodus of scientists and technologists from the United Kingdom to the United States and Canada in the 1950s and 1960s (Cervantes and Gaelic, 20021).

At present it is not limited to solely scientists and technologists the Oxford Dictionary defines brain drain as ‘ the emigration of highly trained or qualified people from a particular country’.

Structural and economic problems arise from this phenomenon such as the depletion of the tax base and a shift in the demographics of the country, meaning larger number of members of the older generation to support. It puts a huge strain on resources and employment as professionals take their skills elsewhere, along with their innovative new ideas.

Early literature published claimed that skilled migrants leaving a country produced dramatic negative effects for those left behind (Grubber and Scott 1966, Johnson 1967, Baggies and Yamaha 1995) Before the emergence of the theory of brain drain’s counterpart ‘ brain gain’, the emigration of highly skilled workers was generally accepted as a problem for the country with

minor, if any, positive results. There are many who still consider it a serious threat to the well-being of their country.

For example, in 2010 Parliament speaker Nabob Beers of Lebanon labeled ‘ brain drain’ as the ‘ biggest problem that the country faced’. He described the emigration of graduates as a “ transmitted disease among the youth”.

Gibson, J, & McKenzie 201 1) On the question of the impact of brain drain on host and origin countries, we must recognize that different regions of the world have varied experiences. ‘ Brain drain’ appears to be rampant in certain countries and has a less severe effect on others.

Sub-Sahara Africa, South America and the Caribbean are commonly listed as regions who suffer the greatest losses. A recent study (Marching, Sheen and Decrier, 201 0) found these countries to be the biggest losers of the brain drain as they have experienced mass outflows of the highly skilled and little return migration.

It s claimed that they have been left behind in the technology race that is speeding up day by day. As information technology is now at the heart of the globalizes economy, to be lagging behind now will result in great difficulty to climb back up the ladder.

The mass emigration of medical staff is considered an epidemic. Stalker (2004) reports that Jamaica has to train 5 doctors to retain 1 . LCP to 25% Of foreign trained health professionals working in Western countries are from Sub-Sahara Africa . ( Pulitzer, 2012).

In a recent study, Hooper (2008) claims 81 % of Wait's university-educated professionals had left the country to work abroad. The figure for Somalia was 58%, for Liberia 37%, and for Laos 13%. ' He also claims that 29% of Shania's doctors and 34% of Zombie's doctors have emigrated.

With such significant numbers of those who are likely to drive the economy departing from the poorest countries, it is difficult to imagine how these losses could be converted to a ' brain gain'. The term ' host country' even suggests the parasitic nature of the transition. Highly skilled immigrants bury inside the new country and latch on to their resources when their origin has become barren.

Despite this, many entries are using this mass emigration to their advantage, primarily through tapping into their Diaspora networks. Decrier and Bedlams (2006) identify three key feedback effects Of the brain drain. . Remittances 2.

Creation of business and trade networks 3. Return migration after additional knowledge and skills have been acquired Many forget to factor in the full extent that remittances contribute to the economy of the origin country, which can be truly enormous. In Lebanon, Lesotho, Nepal, Atkinson remittances provide more than of their respective GAP (The Economist, 201 1). One key question in policy formation for many poorer countries is whether or not they should invest highly in education as so many graduates emigrate as soon as they obtain their degree.

However, a study of the remittances sent home by Ghanaian migrants suggest that the amount they send back to their relatives over their working

lifetime covers the amount that was spent on their education several times over.

In fact, the cost of education would have to 5.6 times the official figure to make it a losing proposition for Ghana. (Anorak, 2011). The Philippines is another interesting case to explore as the World Bank has projected that remittances to the Philippines in 2012 will hit \$24 billion (Remote 2011), making the country the third-largest recipient of money sent by migrants in the world.

Despite predictions that remittances would decelerate alongside the global economy, this amount is actually 19% higher than the amount sent in 2011 (Remote, 2011). These 10 million migrants are essentially supporting their economy from all over the world, a brilliant example of ‘reverse brain drain’ in action. Naturally, there are counter arguments to the advantages of remittances. For example, Fain (2006) suggests that as skilled workers often come from lately families they have less of an incentive to remit.

Furthermore, as many skilled workers spend long periods of time abroad the flow of remittance seems to decline, and there is also the possibility that families will reunify in the host country. This means that not only does the origin country lose a skilled migrant; they also lose other family members and the stream of remittances. (Fain, 2006) However with total remittance sent back to origin countries in 2012 estimated to be \$534 billion (Remote, 2011) there is no denying the huge contribution they make to their economy.

One of the most liable feedbacks of emigration is the establishment of business and trade networks. However, as it is difficult to quantify the exact influence networks have, their importance can be disregarded somewhat.

Kaput (2010) argues that ‘ Indians in Silicon Valley have shaped the regulatory industry for Indian’s home-grown venture-capital I. Kaput claims that they have not only helped stimulate the Indian market but have actually paved the way for Indian software companies to break into the American market, optimizing their American connections and vouching for their quality. Prime Minister

Ammonia Sings advocated this in 2010, claiming that India were ‘ experiencing the benefits of the reverse flow of income investment and expertise from the global Indian Diaspora”. (One India News 2010).

As an immigrant you are a representative of your birth country, essentially a walking advertisement, which can improve the perception of your home by demonstrating skill and expertise. With the explosion of media networking sites such as Linked, Backbone and twitter these essential links established in the host country can be maintained using the internet, even when the migrant is long gone.

Hilary Clinton, Secretary of State of the CICS, is very optimistic about the benefits to be reaped from utilizing the Diaspora. At the second annual Global Diaspora Forum held in 2012 Clinton endorsed her views, stating that brain drain could be reversed by tapping into the experiences, thee energy, the expertise of Diaspora communities’. The US is one nation that benefits

from the inflow of highly-skilled migrants from all over the world to the ‘ land of opportunity.

For example, European expatriates living in the United States are several times more likely to have a Ph.

D. Than the average US labor market participants. They also have a high employment rate and consist of a high proportion of entrepreneurs. (Saint-Paul 2004).

On the other side of the scale, the exodus of PhD holders and innovative engineers from Europe can be truly destructive. With access to the host country’s educational set-vices and innovative practices, migrants expand their knowledge considerably Another prominent advantage is that of the return to human capital by individuals investing more in education before they emigrate.

Marching, Sheen and Decrier (2010) discuss the likelihood of individuals to invest in higher education if there are significant expected turns. Many will pursue studies in attempt to guarantee that they can emigrate. This results in post-migration human capital stocks increasing as well.

On top of networking and technical skills many return migrants are equipped with contemporary ideas about processes. For example Maryland (2012) notes that many return migrants in Poland have improved ideas about ‘ customer care, use of credit cards and chips and internet banking.

These novel ideas from the host countries can improve competitiveness within the country Of origin. Unfortunately, many of those who experienced



fairness and quality in the workplace abroad become disillusioned when the same standard is not provided in their home country, one of the main push factors resulting in circular migration. From personal experience, spending a year in France on Erasmus dramatically altered my work ethic.

Attending college daily from 8.30 until 17.00 meant that upon return to my 11 hour timetable in Dublin was willing to invest many more hours studying and researching as observed the time and effort that French students exerted. Use this example to illustrate that while remittances, technical skills and networks are all visible arduous of the brain drain, revolutionary ideas influenced by experiencing a different culture can yield the greatest advantages for the origin country.

From my study of the concepts of brain drain and gain it is clear that over the past few years they have certainly developed in meaning and complexity.

Despite arguments put forward by theorist such as Shift (2006), who States that net brain gain IS equal too in the steady state but a loss is likely to hold in a transition, I predict that brain drain may eventually be eradicated as governments employ intelligent policies to harness knowledge. At present we re seeing more fluidity in relation to migration, as budget airlines and open borders have expanded horizons and financial opportunities (Williams 2009). Long gone are the days of one track migration, such as the emigration of the Irish to America, resulting in clear cut brain drain and gain.

I feel that we may evolve further from Assai Sense's concept of the ' global city' to eventually producing ' global humans', where knowledge and skills

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will be the passport to success all over the globe. We are heading towards a system based solely on ‘ brain exchange’ and ‘ brain circulation’ where human capital is transferred between different geographic locations. Bearing this in mind, I will now discuss countries that may be already producing these ‘ global humans’ and where think Ireland will fit into the framework. Polish migration exemplifies the benefits of brain circulation.

The Polish economy has flourished in comparison to its European neighbors, growing a staggering 13% while almost every other economy contracted (Maryland, 2012).

Many millions of Poles (this number is unconfirmed as of yet) abandoned the country during the explosion of migration facilitated by the opening of the European Union borders. Although the Polish emigrants have not returned to their home country in a dramatic U-Turn, there has certainly been a steady trickle of return migration. Many Poles are now returning home and migrating out again to different countries.

Maryland (2012) offers us examples such as Pale Moderateness, an investment banker who returned to Poland after his training in London to establish a clothing line for babies. Or consider Corollas Bachelors who studied in Poland and Berkeley California and spent time working in the consulting firm McKinney and Company before returning. Neither intend on remaining in Poland forever.

These examples of circulatory migration give an insight into the fluidity of the migratory process and the accessibility of transport networks.

Minority (2012) discusses Polish migrants who do not return home for major economic purposes, but for seemingly trivial tasks such as visiting the local hair dresser or doctor. This study shows how traditional Neo-classical theories have been disrupted by the ever increasing mobility of migrants, assisted by budget travel. China's history of migration and policy is a further step in the evolution of brain drain/ gain.

A seemingly disastrous policy was implemented in 1978 by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping which encouraged Chinese scholars to go abroad to study and return when they had graduated.

When only 32% of the 300,000 scholars returned by 1997 (Aweigh and Rosen, 2003) China embarked on an aggressive policy of trying to woo their talent back. However, the concept of 'storing brain power overseas' was coined by Zhao Zhiqing, China's head of state in 1987 (Aweigh and Rosen 2003) and prompted lateral thinking and a long sighted vision surrounding mass emigration of the highly skilled. Instead of regarding those who abandon the country as 'traitors' the Chinese began encouraging them to act as ambassadors for China.

Chinese migrants are urged to invest in China's support pro-Chinese business organizations, act as consultants, deliver lectures, establish companies and engage in other forms of technology and financial transfers.

(Aweigh and Rosen, 2003) In this way, the Chinese are boosting their economy by accessing 'Chinese brainpower' all over the world. This unusual example of sending professionals abroad to support your country, similar to the above discussion of the Philippines, is an antistatic hybrid of brain gain,

drain and circulation which could pave the way forward for government's seeking the best policy to halt brain drain.

Much of the debate on the brain drain focuses on highly skilled migrants leaving developing countries to create a better future for themselves and their families. However a new phenomenon has exploded in the last decade; the desire of students and graduates to volunteer abroad (albeit usually to specific locations and on a short term basis).

An example of an organization trying to combat brain drain, is SOCIO International, who recruit volunteers using Diaspora networks by enticing highly skilled migrants to give back to their country of heritage.

CUSS International just one of thousands of volunteering organizations set up throughout the world that provide much needed aid to the countries ravaged by brain drain. The Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project estimates that, between 1995 and 2000, the number of volunteers contributing through voluntary organizations to be 140 million (United Nations Volunteers, 2011). Their economic contribution spread over 36 countries is approximately billion US dollars annually. This represented, on average, 1.1 per cent of GDP in the countries that were receiving this aid.

Highly skilled migrants are essentially engaging in reverse talent flow and attempting to plug the brain drain. The aid is not just limited to volunteer organizations as many developed countries are also actively trying to contribute. For example, the United States has implemented a "cultural exchange visa". The visa limits the stay of foreign health care workers such as doctors, nurses and medical professors. Workers are required to go home

for two years when their visa expires, until they are able to apply for re-admittance (Fortier, Gifford, and Simon, 2004).

The increase in highly skilled migrants traveling to underdeveloped countries is an under-researched area that may prove vital in the fight against brain drain.

So where does Ireland fit into this complex framework? As I have already highlighted, migration is extremely cyclical by nature, and this is by no means Ireland's first exposure to mass emigration. In 1980, as the country entered a recession, approximately 8% of graduates emigrated upon finishing college. By 1990, this figure had multiplied to 30%. (Irish Independent, 2009).

These figures are eerily similar to those looming over us currently. Fortunately, as soon as the economy began to flourish Irish nationals poured in from all over the world. The number of Irish return migrants rose almost continuously from 1987 to 2002, when it peaked at 27000 (Rush, 2009). I have no doubt that Ireland will be able to convert mass emigration into positive results for the country.

With the drastic improvements in travel and technology and the opening of borders, individuals are no longer limited to one city or country and can effectively become 'citizens of the world'.