

Globalization and immigration

[Economics](#), [Globalization](#)



Introduction Nowadays migration is getting to be one of the dominant characteristics of the modern world since at the present moment that movement of people and migration of citizens from one country to another become a norm. Not surprisingly that such unparalleled and extremely high level of migration results in substantial demographic, ethnical and socio-cultural changes in many countries of the world. In this respect, it is worthy of mention that such a situation with the migration is the result of the recent trend in the world economy which is characterized by processes which are generally called globalization.

The process of globalization is overwhelming and involves practically all countries of the world with rare exceptions which are traditionally rogue-states like Northern Korea, or other countries that stand on positions of isolation from the rest of the world. Consequently, a great majority of countries are involved in this process and tend to develop international relations on all levels, including cultural, political and especially economic, since globalization is primarily economic phenomenon that resulted in globalization of international relations on all other levels.

In such a situation, it is quite natural that the process of migration is also affected dramatically by globalization. On the other hand, it is necessary to underline that, being a relatively new phenomenon, globalization is an extremely controversial process. Since its beginning, which is traditionally dated back to 1980s, there have been arguments concerning the effect the globalization may have on different countries. Such continues now and they have probably become even more serious and more controversial.

However, there is a viewpoint, according to which globalization is rather positive phenomenon. On the other hand, there is a contrary belief that it is an extremely negative process. Naturally, such a controversial interpretation of globalization makes migration also quite contradictory. In fact, it is really important to find out what is the real effect of migration on all countries involved in the process which of them benefit from it and which lose, if any, or else what is the future of migration in the context of globalization.

Globalization as the defining factor of migration In order to understand all current trends in the process of migration, it is necessary to briefly discuss the role of globalization in this process and its general effect. In actuality, globalization is considered to get started in 1980s. It was the result of a rapid progress of science and technologies accompanied with a rapid development of some countries that have never been among the world economic leaders before.

Later, in 1990 this process became more obvious and globalization has become really global. The development of informational technologies, Internet and telecommunications made a particularly significant contribution to this process. As a result nowadays there are many international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, as well as there are a lot of regional organizations, all of them aiming at pedaling the process of globalization and faster development of international economic cooperation between countries.

In such a situation geographical boundaries between countries tend to disappear and, consequently, it is supposed that there will be fewer

obstacles on the way of migrants. In this respect, it is worthy of mention that traditionally population movements “ have taken place side by side with the development of contacts and flows between different societies and cultures” (Khor 2001: 274). This is why the essence of globalization seems to contribute to elimination of barriers between countries and increase of the level of contacts and flows between different countries worldwide.

Speaking about the essence of globalization in details, it should be said that globalization is characterized by economic specialization of different countries. It means that in the global market each country tends to occupy its own niche and sell the products or services it is the most competitive in. Naturally, it resulted in an extreme specialization of countries that makes their economies one-sided, and consequently more exposed to economic and social crisis. However, globalization developed international contacts and made it possible to cooperate on the global scale.

As a result, nowadays, basically due to the high level of development of IT and Internet, specialists physically living in different countries of the world may work on one and the same product. So, it may be said that globalization “ eliminated geographical boundaries between countries” (Gomory 2002: 187). As for its effects, they are quite contradictive. The contrast is particularly obvious between well-developed countries and developing ones. In short, its effect may be expressed in one phrase, richer countries become richer, and poor countries become poorer.

Though it sounds a bit radical and more precisely, it should be said that globalization makes developing countries more dependant on well-developed

and it also makes practically all the countries of the world more submitted to global crisis since their economies are closely interlinked than a crisis in one country would lead to the same effect on economies of other countries that are its economic partners. In this respect, migration seems to be probably the most effective by such a striking contrast that leads to high level of emigration from developing countries and respectively high level of immigration in developed countries.

This means that people from developing and poor countries prefer to move to developed and rich countries. Moreover, this process keeps growing despite the fact that globalization produced a positive influence on international trade flows that have increased significantly since the beginning of the process of globalization. Presumably, it should really improve the situation in developing countries and decrease the level of emigration.

Nonetheless, in actuality the trend, which will be discussed in details a bit later, remains practically unchangeable even though many developed countries attempt to create certain artificial barriers to both legal and illegal immigration. In such a way it is necessary to remember that globalization is a dubious process that has both positive and negative sides and migration is highly dependent on this process to the extent that the basic migration flows are defined by the current situation in the global economy and possibilities of population movement between different countries.

The current situation and problems of migration In fact, the current situation, when the world economy becomes more and more unified and practically all

countries of the world are involved in the international trade and economic relations, it seems as if there remains little room for obstacles on the way of free population movement.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to remember about a stark contrast between developed and developing countries which seem to get aggravated by the progress of globalization and the gap between rich and poor states keeps growing. Naturally, this gap, to a significant extent defines the current flows of population movement, i. e. migration. Basically, the current trends reveal the fact that people living in developing countries prefer to emigrate to well-developed and rich states where they suppose to have more opportunities to improve their life.

Not surprisingly that some specialists underline that “ the basic determinants of the international migration lie in the inequalities that exist in levels of development, and the enormous magnitude, persistence and flagrancy of those inequalities in the globalized world of today heighten the so-called pressures for migration” (Theissen 2006: 8). Consequently, it would be logical to wonder what these ‘ pressures’ exactly are. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to just briefly return to the basic socio-economic differences between developing and developed countries.

On doing this, it will be obvious that it is the desperate socio-economic position of people in developing countries that force them to leave their motherland and move to developed countries. In such a situation the negative effect of globalization on migration in global terms is quite evident since “ economic policies pursued in the name of globalization, such as

deregulation, free trade, and emphasis on exports may better some lives, but the poorest end up even more poor” (Weisman 2006: 75).

Consequently, the socio-economic situation in developing countries is getting to deteriorate and simply forces people to emigrate in search of better life and specialists emphasize that “ most people migrate because they are poor - because they can’t feed their families, because they lost their jobs, because there is no hope of better life in their country” (Weiler 2002: 104). One of the evidences of this negative impact of globalization on migration is the high rates of immigrants working in developed countries.

In this respect it is worthy to look at Figure 1 which reveals that immigrants constitute a substantial part of the national labor force market in the US and basically they arrive from poor and developing countries of Latin America. Furthermore, the similar trends may be observed in other developing countries. However, poverty is not the only reason for population movement from developing countries to developed one.

For instance, the UAE, being a developing country, is characterized by a relatively stable socio-economic life and often the reasons local people take a decision to live the country may vary, among which education is probably one of the most important since basically this state currently exploits its natural resources and in a long-term perspective the prosperity of the state would decrease along with decrease of natural resources’ potential.

As a result, people do not simply find any real perspectives and they leave the country in search of new opportunities to find their own way in life.

Moreover, links with foreign companies also contributes to the process of emigration which firstly provides opportunities to get education, secondly, get acquainted with a different lifestyle, and, finally, find alternative way of life than the one that is traditionally followed in the UAE.

In this respect, globalization contributes to higher opportunities for local people to communicate with different cultures and move relatively freely in any country in the world. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the US is not the only country which is a kind of Promised Land from migrants from developing countries. For instance, Figure 2 show that the number of immigrants from Latin America and Caribbean in European countries is also quite significant, especially if one takes into consideration the distance between this region and other developed countries.

Naturally, it is important to analyze the effects of such a trend in migration in the modern globalized world. In fact, the current policy of many developed countries, such as the US, or some countries of the EU such as France, indicate at the fact that new immigrants is a very serious problem for these states and this is why they attempt to thoroughly control the process of immigration and limit the access of new immigrants to their territories.

In fact, this policy is a natural reaction on the effects of migration in globalized world. First of all, new immigrants provoke high level of competition in the national labor force markets in developed countries, to the extent, that the level of unemployment, especially among native population, may increase dramatically. The reason is quite simple immigrants are traditionally characterized as cheaper labor force, which

though, as a rule, is not well qualified, or even semi-qualified or non-qualified at all.

At the same time, immigrants, on receiving official status, demand the national government meets their needs and it is not a secret that national government has to fund immigrants whose socio-economic status is extremely low and naturally it is done with the money of tax-payers which are mainly native born. On the other hand, the migration from developing countries into developed is crucial for the former as well because it undermines the local labor force markets since the best specialists prefer to flow in a developed country than stay in a developing one and this process is known as brain drain (Khor 2001).

In such a way, it is possible to say that the effects of the current migration dramatically influenced by the process of globalization is quite negative, though developed states are in a better position since they can improve the demographic situation while in developing ones it is deteriorated.

Conclusion: perspectives of migration in the context of globalization Thus, taking into account all above mentioned, it is possible to conclude that the current trends in migration are rather negative than positive. In long term-perspective, the situation may get even worse if the current trends remain unchanged.

To put it more precisely, it is obvious that the high level of immigrants in developed countries would be only partially beneficial for developed countries which can increase the number of working people due to immigrants and, consequently their economies will have opportunities for

the further growth. On the other hand, this creates tension between native born labor force and immigrants whose labor is cheaper and, consequently, more attractive for employers. At the same time, immigrants also need healthcare protection, education, social guarantees, etc. thus, they need additional funding because of their poor socio-economic position and it is an additional burden for a state of any developed country. At the same time, developing countries also lose most qualified specialists and what is more younger generations are emigrating while the remaining population will risk to gradually grow older in national terms, i. e. gradually population of developing countries will grow older as it is now in developed states but there will be little immigrants who could close the demographic gap caused by high level of emigration.

Consequently, it is possible to presuppose that in the future developed countries would make their immigration legislation stricter and limit the access of immigrants while developing countries would stimulate local population to refuse from the idea of emigration. bibliography: 1. Danaher, C. Seven Arguments for Reforming World Economy. London: Routledge, 1999. 2. Gomory, R. E. Globalization: Causes and Effects. New York: Touchstone, 2002. 3. http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2002_e/its02_toc_e.htm 4. <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html> 5. Khor, M.

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