

Trends in International Migration

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International migration in the globalized world is a highly complex phenomenon. The involvement of national and international organizations and a web of policies on international migration has delivered to us the highly regulated practical side of international migration. Modern-day migration has a diverse classification system, encompassing both micro and macro levels. Every factor is further divided into various sub-factors. All the factors together form the modern theoretical takes on international migration.

The globalized world brought its dangers with itself, wherein the softening of borders not just allowed the movement of migrants but also aided the expansion of international criminal syndicates, also known as transnational criminal networks. Now in a highly globalized world these organized crime syndicates pose a grave threat to citizens of each country as well as people, who intend to migrate to other countries. Criminal syndicates use them as a shields and also as workforce to drive their businesses and networks.¹

To regulate migration across borders and continents, countries have formulated set of rules and laws, whereby, every international migrant is bound to be treated with dignity and respect. Even those detained are not allowed to be treated harshly, and their rights under national and international laws must be respected.² This highlights cognizance of the change in methodologies to respond to international migration in a highly connected world. Yet, challenges are emerging within Europe and the United States. Resurgence of populism is reshaping the decades-old institutional-based approaches to international migration. In Germany, long-considered as a welcoming destination for international migrants, far-right groups have gained popular traction, putting pressure on the present government to review its policies on facilitating international migration.³ Gradually, the evolving anti-migration policies of several European countries and US government reflect the treatment meted out to migrants as per the pre-WWII methods.⁴

¹ Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1998).

² Khalid Koser, *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

³ Tabea Linhard and Timothy H. Parsons, *Mapping Migration, Identity, and Space* (Springer International Publishing, 2018).

⁴ Kristof Tamas, *Globalizing Migration Regimes: New Challenges to Transnational Cooperation* (Routledge, 2016).

Globalization and International Migration:

Globalization has been the major driver behind waves of human migration in recent decades. Following the Second World War, Europe opened itself to migrants as it sought low-paid labour and workers for post-war reconstruction. Later, conflicts in developing countries forced people to migrate. In 1990s, and first decade of 21st century, people migrated as they secured jobs and business opportunities in the interconnected world known as the global village. The digital revolution, moreover, helped people of all races, colour, and creed to be heard and counted in the digital space.⁵ The skills, education systems, and diverse backgrounds allowed the major powers to outsource jobs, not only from their territory but also attract and invite international talent from across the globe. The emergence of Apple Inc. and Google made the world a different place – one where commodities were not the only moveable assets, but talent became a new commodity. The current CEO of Google is an example of this phenomenon: Sundar Pichai an Indian born and raised techie is leading the world's largest and greatest tech conglomerate.⁶

Apart from the talent hunt by leading economic powers, the labour from the third world also saw an opportunity in moving to other countries. In the process of this migration, the migrants not just formed a new pattern, but enabled those countries to economically prosper. The Gulf region is best known for this sort of migrant movement. India being less developed, two decades ago, and the Arab region being relatively more developed, made many Indian citizens migrate to the Gulf countries. Indian diaspora in the Gulf region now serves as the bedrock of a new era in Gulf-India relations, in which Gulf countries are now at par with the new India in terms of economic potential. Economic interdependence also helped to shape a new labour environment as international migration became a dominant force in the 21st century.⁷

⁵ Kelly M. Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶ Tobias G. Eule et al., *Migrants Before the Law: Contested Migration Control in Europe* (Springer, 2018).

⁷ Karen Sudmeier-Rieux et al., *Identifying Emerging Issues in Disaster Risk Reduction, Migration, Climate Change and Sustainable Development: Shaping Debates and Policies* (Springer, 2016).

Institutional Theory:

After the end of World War II, the Wilsonian vision of international society was formally realized when the Bretton Woods Conference established the world's first economic system, which was truly global. The establishment of Bretton Woods system was thus not just limited to the economic sphere but also spilled into other domains of human life. A web of conventions were then formulated, which are now in thousands, and form the basis of international society today, including the international migration.⁸ The institutional theory is one sound explanation of international migration encompassing its many contemporary problems. The theory has two main assumptions – non-profit angle is always optimistic while the profit angle of any organization involved in human migration always brings havoc and problems for the non-profit angle. Institutional theory, furthermore, talks about all the frameworks and organizations of international migration.⁹

The United States has strict migration laws, but when it comes to the migrants facilitated by profit-seeking organization, which provides them with the counterfeit documents and paperwork, it has almost become impossible to penetrate the borders with those documents because but the modern border control system is mature enough to check cross-border movement and derives its power from the biometric identification through radio-frequency identification (RFID) technologies.

The profit and non-profit models are directly at odds in this scenario, as non-profit organizations blame profit-making organizations for tightening the borders because now even the skilled workforce possessing valid documents is suspected and has to go through harsh checking procedures.¹⁰ The recent Libyan Civil War, triggered a huge wave of human migration from the Middle East to Europe via the Mediterranean route. The crisis was exacerbated by the profit-seeking elements as well as nonprofit organizations seeking to accommodate thousands of families from war-torn countries. However, the harsh treatment from the Greek coast guards and other European countries made it clear that developed countries now see international migration differently and they also express this intent through speeches at the multilateral fora as well as national organizations.¹¹

⁸ Jane McAdam, *Forced Migration, Human Rights and Security* (Hart, 2008).

⁹ McAdam.

¹⁰ Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹¹ Huysmans.

Labor Aspect

The post-world war II economic system, in which the dollar emerged as the global currency, is the main reason why people from the underdeveloped and developing countries prefer to get work in developed countries. The graduated difference between the value of various national currencies forces people to seek employment and business opportunities in countries where they can earn good wages and also remit savings back to their home countries. This aspect of international labor is the most attractive feature for people considering to migrate to another country. After migrants get jobs in developed countries, start earning and settle down there, they often bring over their immediate and extended families there to multiply their incomes.¹² The labor aspect is the primary and macro reason for human migration. In underdeveloped societies, the governments are mired by corruption and thus they fail to establish a welfare-based system for people. This compels people to leave their countries.¹³

Push and Pull Aspects:

The societies undergoing conflict, like Libyan and Syrian civil wars, are instances of ‘push aspect’ of contemporary human migration. An attractive salary abroad, good living standard, and peaceful environment are, meanwhile, the ‘pull’ factors. The territorial borders are well guarded and leave little room for migrants to make it to mainland, but the maritime borders are comparatively porous and poorly guarded. In the case of the European Union and the US, however, the maritime spaces are extremely well guarded making it difficult for migrants to cross through them. Recent human tragedies in the Mediterranean prove that migration through sea is extremely dangerous. Even fulfilling the legal requirements for migration in today's world does not ensure a secure place in those societies as they are growing wary of new entrants especially after the 2008 global recession.

¹² M. Panizzon et al., *The Palgrave Handbook of International Labour Migration: Law and Policy Perspectives* (Springer, 2016).

¹³ Steven James Gold and Stephanie J. Nawyn, *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies* (Routledge, 2013).

Conclusion:

The contemporary migration trends suggest that violence, civil wars, weak prosecution system, weak witness protection system, and governmental corruption exacerbate the situations that prompt people to undertake migration. However, the West is increasingly unwelcoming towards migrants. All these aspects are diverse and require detailed analysis.

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