

RESEARCH BRIEF

On Migration Solutions and Interventions: An Afterthought

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Migration is a phenomenon or event in which there is movement of people from one place to another place, from one region to another region, from one country to another country, or from one continent to another continent for varied reasons which can be economic, political, social, cultural, and moral in nature or a combination and amalgamation of all reasons aforementioned. International migration is the movement of people to another country, leading to temporary or permanent settlement. In the aggregate, it commonly raises questions about national identities and social membership. In a perspective that is content with common sense, migration is the relocation of individuals to some distant place, that is, at least beyond one's own city or town (Bartram & Poros 2014, p. 4).

Migration also entails multi-disciplinary approaches as various disciplines see it in different perspectives and lenses, which requires diverse contexts and dimensions and several approaches, paradigms, and solutions since migration occurs with different magnitude, dimension, and proportion as well. According to the estimate of the United Nations, almost 214 million people are living in a country other than that of their birth. Slightly more

than 20% of this population, or forty-three million people, have migrated to the United States. Women make up of nearly one-half of all migrants. War and political persecution forcibly displaced forty three point three million people. Of this number, 27 million have been internally displaced because of armed conflict or climate change (Collier & Strain 2014, p. 3).

Mass migration places and shifts the burden of responsibility from the point of origin to the point of destination, which the latter has nothing to do with but for compelling reasons opt to respond and rescue innocent lives, especially that of women and children who are more vulnerable victims and casualties every time war and disaster strikes. As a country with conscience, the receiving country cannot afford to turn its back to its humane obligation and moral duty to the pleas of suffering and plight of tragedy, which befalls migrants traversing the torrential and dangerous waves of the sea or trekking sweltering heat of the sun in the desert without enough food and water to replenish their tired bodies and weary souls.

On the other hand, while the responsibility to protect, care, and save the lives of innocent migrants with women and children alike falls on the shoulders of the

receiving state, relief and extrication of responsibilities from the sending state seems to be the case, as national governments and international agencies and bodies tend to grapple with a more efficient response and accurate answers in the prevention of migrants risking lives in search for a better lives in a foreign land. While the European Union and the Association of South East Asian Nations lay down the guidelines and framework for the management and governance of migrant refugees within its territorial jurisdiction to the extent of increasing the migrant rescue budget, still, the nation-states and international communities needs to bridge the gaps of responsibility between countries belonging to point of origin and point of destination by trace and identification of causes as to why these group of migrants flees their homeland and what can national governments and international communities do to at least the narrow the gap of responsibilities.

The new thinking on international migration and development, however, suggests that it is possible to develop immigration policies in migration destinations which have win-win outcomes not only for the destination but also for the migrants themselves and the origin communities. Injecting an element of development sensitivity into destination country policies need not mean the sacrifice of any gains or autonomy of that country (Hugo, 2008 p. 288).

It is the duty and responsibility of every state to serve and protects its citizens from any impending harm or injury to their lives, liberty, and property. Shrinking and deviating from such mandate translates to lack of accountability and legitimacy, and eventually the lack of the capacity to govern. Ogata (1995, p. 33) seems to capture in retrospect this observation of responsibility two decades ago when she stated that:

Beyond any doubt, the issue of mixed **migration** is of major concern to the international community. As **refugees** become part of a larger movement of people, responses must be fashioned to include measures to address both **refugees** and economic migrants. In such situations, traditional responses which focus primarily on the conditions in the receiving country fall short. Instead, the situation in the country of origin should be the focus of efforts to implement the most appropriate solution to the

crisis and to adopt measures that may prevent or minimize disorderly or coerced movements. As the causes of and solutions to population movements are often primarily of a political and socio-economic nature, closer cooperation is required between **refugee** and **migration** agencies, political actors and development and financial institutions.

Given these narratives, the paper seeks to propose and analyze some prospective policy paradigms, opportunities, and directions which nation-states can adopt on migration as a matter of governance. I also hope to conclude with implications, repercussions, and outcomes that seek to promote causal argument and conceptual improvement about migration on local, regional, and international levels.

Migration Interventions and Solutions

Migration is a complex issue which requires and demands steadfast commitments for all stakeholders and actors in the migration processes and solutions. Nation-states, regional and international organizations, and the global communities play a critical role in searching and finding a successful rational, legal, political, economic, and ethical outcomes in migration approaches. These approaches and solutions are not conclusive nor claim absolute recourse as to what migration entails and demands but just a theoretical supposition in achieving a win-win outcome in dealing with the migration issue.

Forge an International Treaties for the Protection of Sea Migrants

The migration crisis is a crisis every nation and state currently grapple with or potentially would struggle with in the future. Migration does not exempt or spare any country of it happening in reality. Eventually, migration catches up with them unknowingly and unconsciously, but before they know it, it is already too late as migration already reaches its crises proportions. Migration demands an honest and unwavering commitment to countries involved in the migration crisis, from the countries as the point of origin to the countries as the point of destination. Entering and coming into terms with

bilateral agreements or if more than two countries are involved, engaging in a multilateral agreement and if there are several countries affected, forging and inking an international agreement which regulates the movement of people, rescue procedures, safety embankments, and human rights protection and all other matters link with migration.

There are a growing clamor and response for bilateral, multilateral, and international agreements on migration to avert the immense sea tragedies, which migrant refugees are the victims and some countries carrying the brunt of the blame while exonerating other countries which have a greater moral obligation to fulfill in saving the lives of innocent people. Migration is a collective responsibility and an international responsibility not only of few countries which migrant refugees happen to choose as the safe haven by accidental circumstances. Interstate agreements are needed to guarantee rescue at sea and safe disembarkation, as well as arrangements for reception and screening. States that practice interception at sea need to be held accountable for the protection of migrant's rights and organizations should be wary of participating in or lending their imprimatur to ad hoc measures which undermine state responsibility (Kumin, 2014, 51)

It is necessary that the line of coordination, communication, and cooperative functions of sending states and receiving states remains open, transparent, and accountable without occurrences of negligence, ignorance, and predilection to their duty and obligation to save and rescue the lives of people in peril at the sea. Every passenger needs to be screened and accounted for without prejudice and discrimination. This places a great and enormous responsibility to resettlement countries to strengthen its commitment and resolve to help refugees who are reaching their soil with a yearning for a better life. The successful outcomes of the migration agreements rests on the extent and degree of engagement and commitment the receiving state or host state are willing to participate and how willing they are to take tangible response and swift actions in addressing the migration crisis. Ambroso (2012, p. 7) emphasized the cogent role that resettlement countries perform in combating the migration crisis when he pointed out that:

Resettlement to a third country is dependent on commitments made by resettlement countries to offer refugees this solution. Unfortunately, most European resettlement countries, which have relatively speedy resettlement procedures, did not substantially increase their resettlement quotas to cater for this emergency beyond what was previously planned, in spite of a UNHCR-led Global Resettlement Solidarity Initiative and a crisis that was unfolding on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Increasing the refugees' quota therefore can help resettlement countries greater flexibility and greater mobility for migrant refugees. However, putting tighter and increase restrictions on refugee quota, and even worst closing its sea borders, restrict and limit refugee access and mobility and leads to more death among migrant refugees while at sea. A scenario which Long & Crisp (2010, p. 57) saw in advance:

Meanwhile, however, states continue to impede the movement of both refugees and migrants across international borders. Increasing concern with border securitisation, the impact of global economic recession and rising domestic xenophobia have created a political cauldron of intolerance in both the North and the South. Asylum and migration space is shrinking; states perceive no immediate political advantages in allowing refugees' greater freedom of movement.

It is important then that the sending state and the receiving state agree and concur as to what extent and size of refugees the sending state is actually sending and as to what extent and size of refugees the receiving state can actually house and accommodate. More importantly, the point of origin or the sending state needs to closely track and monitor the occurrences and movements of migration within its territory. It should check and regulate the illegal and clandestine operations and activities that syndicates and human traffickers perpetrate on innocent people who are hoping and dreaming to start a new lease of life in another place and time.

Diminish Emigration Opportunities and Pressures Through Developmental Models and Paradigms Applied to Point of Origin or Sending State

Migration happens primarily because of multifarious factors related to political, economic, social, and cultural handicaps and impediments. Through a myriad of developmental models and frameworks to decrease migration opportunities such as political reforms, bilateral and regional treaties and agreements, promotion of foreign direct investments, and official development assistance granted by one country are regarded to reduce emigration pressures (Martin, Martin & Weil, 2006).

Political reforms and political restructuring are integral parts in the elimination of migration opportunities. A nation or a state—which embodies the ideals and aspiration of the people, protects their life, liberty, and property and promote the common good of the people such as employment, health, education, security, and safety—will solicit popular confidence and popular legitimacy. This makes the people stay and forego the chance of migration. A government that is willing to radically change and transform to better the lives and opportunities of its populace (in terms of job creation, adequate food and water supply, access to medicines and hospitals, guarantee of basic rights and liberties, and ensure a safe and secure life) makes their people stay put in their home soil and take out migration as part of their options.

If the nation or state's political system perpetuates its power for its own self-aggrandizement and self-emasculatation, rots in graft and corruption, oppresses and represses the people's rights and liberties, and deprives or robs the people of its health, education, jobs, food, shelter, and other basic necessities and services it rightfully deserve, then migration enhances rather than diminishes. Politicides, genocides, ethnic cleansing, and racial targeting are just some of the common cause of migration which is linked to political sphere of migration.

Promotion of foreign direct investment or export driven economy, for example, provides the impetus for greater job creation and employment generation. A robust economy that thrives on foreign direct investments creates more jobs, and more jobs mean

more food on the table, more houses and shelter, access to quality education, more efficient basic social services, and a more people satisfaction. The concept of foreign direct investment makes goods and services migrate to the people instead of people migrating to offer their goods and services to a foreign land. Heavy foreign direct investment promotion and attraction, therefore, lessens and eases migration pressures through the shift of goods and services, which a migrant usually sell or render abroad right at their door step—their homeland—so that they will never have to migrate anymore.

Finally, Official Development Assistance (ODA) eases the pressures of migration as it is able to make timely help and intervention in building the capacities and capabilities of the people which are prone and susceptible to migration. The grant of ODA therefore opens up new opportunities and floodgates for the marginalize and downtrodden sectors of society to start up and build their lives in the process by putting up their own businesses through microfinance credit arrangements, livelihood programs for women, and more significantly, the creation of infrastructures to facilitate and stimulate emerging markets and economies. Through the ODA, empowerment of people and communities, and building self-reliant, self-resilient, and self-progressive communities are made possible. As what Martin, Martin & Weil (2006, p. 3) put it succinctly:

More generally, official development assistance granted by one country to assist the development of another can speed development and reduce emigration pressures. However, aid needs to be targeted effectively to reduce emigration pressures, providing micro-credit for would-be-migrants, so they can invest in their home communities, income-generation opportunities for women left behind by migrating spouses, infrastructure development to create new markets and economic opportunities, and education and health care services for families in emigration areas.

Institutionalize a Center for Migration on National, Regional, and Global Level

Migration requires policy interventions and policy choices, which can serve as a basis for rational decision making and proper implementation among institutions, actors, and stakeholders in the migration issues. In this case, institutions do matter in searching for a solution to the migration problems. Institutions are comprised of nations and states, regional and international organizations, civil society and international civil society organizations, and other international bodies and agencies task to oversee, monitor, and manage migration all over the world. Betts (2013, p. 197) proposed institutional adaptation as a global governance solution to the migration issues:

Understanding the institutional adaptation and change can take place across at least three different levels, international bargaining, institutionalization and implementation, -potentially allows international public policy makers to make existing institutions work better, even when wholesale reform at the global level may not be immediately possible. In a world that is changing more rapidly than its international institutions, understanding these causal mechanisms may allow global governance to adapt better to emerging challenges.

International bargaining involves diplomatic and negotiation skills on bilateral, multilateral, or international arrangements of countries involved in the migration crisis. A diplomatic channeling and bargaining between the countries as the point of origin and countries as the point of destinations on the proper handling and management of migration in their respective territories and jurisdictions facilitate a mutual cooperation and understanding on the causes, effects, and outcomes of migration in their respective countries. With cooperative mechanisms and agreements in place, a successful win-win solution and outcome can be achieved due to the existence of exigency measure and framework of cooperation, which both states are bound to observe and respect.

International bargaining also presupposes that regional and international organizations also must act

and intervene in seeking to reconcile and harmonize differences and conflicts, which migration can create among countries, for amicable and peaceable settlement of conflicts and disputes arising from the migration crisis. International or regional organizations can consolidate their talents, skills, and resources and put their acts together under the principle of partnerships, networks, and stakeholderships with a common goal, which is to manage and govern effectively the migration flows and trends within and without their country or region.

The creation of migrant center—which specifically focuses on migration trends, flows, and challenges—can serve as a blueprint and template for what Betts (2013) termed as “institutional adaptation” and “institutionalization.” Institutional adaptation implies that countries and regions need to cope, adjust, and adapt to the changing patterns and trends of migration through the creation of institutional frameworks and structure which would regulate, manage, and govern migration in cooperative and complementary arrangements with other states wherein migration is a common concern.

Institutionalization on the other hand suggests that the creation and establishment of an agency, body, or council to administer, manage, and address migration concerns can be embedded, incorporated, and integrated into a permanent structure as governing and regulatory body or agency with legal and statutory character and not merely assuming the nature and status of an ad hoc committee, which is basically recommendatory both in character and functions.

For institutional adaptation and institutionalization to successfully achieve its goals, the center or agency for migration and other governing bodies for migration must carry with it the power to enforce, implement, and execute as its chief mandate and not just relegate into a policy-making and policy-formulation agencies. Under this policy intervention, implementation rather than planning and formulations become the precondition for institutional adaptation and institutionalization to be successful and make institutional adaptation and institutionalization as the precondition for the implementation in solving the migrant crisis. Policy interventions also have to be designed to improve quality of life and personal and family safety by making

available local amenities, a good school and facilities for children, and fostering an attractive cultural milieu. In other words, to attract and retain talent, a region needs institutions that simply “do their job,” taking care of making the area an enjoyable place for working and living (Nifo & Vecchione, 2014, p. 1644).

Engagement of a Participatory, Multi-disciplinary and Militant Researches and Studies in Migration

Migration needs to be carefully studied, explored, and analyzed from the various perspectives and lenses of different disciplinary paradigms such as sociology, psychology, political science, anthropology, law, economics, and ethics. Multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research on migration provide the opportunity to narrow the gap between theory and practice, myths and reality, and more importantly, crisis and solutions on the thematic considerations and topical affairs of migration.

Migration research and studies need to veer away from one single hegemony or domination of paradigms in the presentation of blueprint and template for the resolution of migrant crisis and concerns. Migration studies require that each nation’s unique experiences of migration are told and narrated from the various vantage points of writers, authors, and historians from diverse backgrounds and specializations to avoid the false judgments and subjective characterizations of migration occurrences which involve nations and states. Yet research needs to remain close to those whose migration is categorized as illegal in order to build the trust and understanding that can allow frank, nonprejudicial exchange. That implies building up the research capacity of marginalized groups themselves as much as studying their experience from an academic ivory tower. There is also a need to connect together the narratives of different groups and individuals that find themselves in similar positions (Black, 2003, p. 50).

Multi-disciplinary research allow the accumulation and crystallization of perspectives and paradigms, approaches, and strategies in dealing with migration for they cull and synthesize the formation and intersection of a point of consensus which all disciplines may have common conclusions and observations. Hence, making multi-disciplinary research as a bridge of

global knowledge production on the intricacies and complexities of migration. The broader implications of multidisciplinary and comparative approaches are exciting to contemplate, particularly if bridges can be built between deductive and interpretive approaches, between statistical regularities and unique occurrences, and between the economic and structural forces that shape migrant behavior, and the individual agency the operates both harmoniously and disharmoniously in relation to other forces (Brettell & Hollifield, 2014, p. 24).

Finally, Garelli and Tazzioli (2013) conceptualized the term “militant research” alluding to the perceived dominant European influence in migration literature and the opportunity to challenge such Europeanism hegemonic effects on field of migration researches and studies by questioning its methodological tool and epistemological narratives. Just like Brettell and Hollifield (2014), Garelli and Tazzioli envisioned a culture of migration research governed by various epistemological positions and methodological instruments, distant and far-fetch from the one and single coherent narratives on what is migration and how it must be viewed. Militant research questions the current discourses and juxtapositions on migration and continuously search to arrive on a common nexus of language and vision on migration as culled from various plethora of voices across countries, continents, and disciplines in an honest attempt to create a world-view of migration.

Conclusion

Migration presents a myriad of challenges to contemporary societies. Political uncertainties, economic recessions, ethnic and cultural strife, natural calamities and disasters, and social upheavals are just some of the root and intervening causes on migration occurrences. Migration also poses serious risks to the lives of innocent men, women, and children seeking a better life which ranges from physical and sexual abuse, political persecution, infringement of human rights, racial selection and discrimination, and much even worst, the loss of lives either in the sea, at the desert, inside the refugee settlements or for being a mere passenger of a boat.

This makes migration issues important because at stake are human lives and not just mere objects or things. The point of origin and point of destination countries share equal responsibilities (to protect, save and rescue lives) and possess reciprocal obligation and duty to ensure the safe passage and entry of the migrants irrespective on whether the latter are forced by circumstance or voluntarily choose to become migrants.

Migration issues concerning boat refugees, migrant rights and liberties, refugee settlement conditions, climate change migration displacement, and illegal migration will continue to abound. It is an inevitable and inescapable reality which the nation, society, and the world cannot afford to close their eyes and fall deaf and mute to the pleas and sufferings of seas of humanity crying for help. There are proposed measures and strategies to ease and lessen migration crisis through bilateral, multilateral, and international agreements, adoption of developmental models and paradigms for capacity-building between and among states involve in migration, institutionalization and policy interventions, engagement in participatory, and multidisciplinary and militant research on migration. However, all of these will become inconsequential and irrelevant if there is an absence of honest and sincere commitment and proactive response to adhere and implement the provisions and stipulations of agreements, developmental models and paradigms, institutionalization, and capacity-research building on migration that narrow the gap between theory and praxis of migration realities.

Finally, migration is about human courage; it is about the triumph of human spirit against the oddities and trivialities which life itself presents—pain, sufferings, agony, and defeat. Migration is about conquering death itself and never allowing it to weaken and demoralize the much-needed push to pursue life at its finest. It is about overcoming the worst enemy within us, our greed, selfishness, indifference, and insecurity whether as in the capacity of a migrant, a country, or an international community. It is the story of our lives, of our hope, and of our dreams of finding a better place and in making that place a better world for all.

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