

How Do Global Migration Patterns Present New Challenges for Nation States?

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Abstract

In today's world, countries are increasingly interconnected and their interdependence is obviously growing. Migration has taken on a distinctly contemporary character as people move more frequently. The current global migration patterns not only have some beneficial effects on nation states, but also poses new challenges to them. For example, developing countries are losing their talent. The structure of international illegal immigration is more complex and its identity is increasingly ambiguous. International migration, especially irregular migration, poses security challenges (territorial, public and cultural) to nation states. However, the study has found that the impact of international migration on security is both objective and subjective.

Keywords: international migration, nation states, challenge, security

1. Introduction

International migration is no longer a strange word for us. International migrants are people who leave their country of origin or permanent residence and move across national borders to another country. It also includes the world's outstanding talents, skilled personnel and labor who are actively recruited, and refugees and other irregular migrants who are passively accepted. In today's world, countries are increasingly interconnected and their interdependence is obviously growing. Migration has taken on a distinctly contemporary character as people move more frequently. The current global migration patterns not only have some beneficial effects on nation states, but also poses new challenges to them. Surprisingly, some of our assumptions about international migration have been overturned. For example, most immigrants are poor; International migrants would compete with citizens of receiving countries for job opportunities and lower wage level in this process. From a lot of research and my own experience, I have found that the challenges posed by the global migration patterns are actually in the development interests of the receiving countries; the composition and identification of illegal immigrants as well as the homeland and public security, cultural security.

2. Modern International Migration

International migration has increased rapidly in the past few decades. Many migrants migrate to other countries in search of new opportunities, while others flee to another country to escape religious, economic and political conditions, or social problems. Modern international migration can be roughly divided into four historical periods (Massey 1998). The mercantile period from the 16th to the 19th century; The industrial expansion from the early 19th century to the 1920s; The massive decline in international migration following world war I and the great depression and the post-industrial migration from the 1960s to the present. And we may be in a new stage of migration (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011). The current economic situation is changing the way labor and capital are organized. The situation and regulation of global migration changed dramatically after 9/11 and the 2008 recession (Ratha & Mohapatra 2009). International migration is often linked to security issues and xenophobia. Tighter immigration policies have made illegal immigration more common and strained national resources. It also creates new problems. Many people think there are terrorists hiding in the immigration. This distrust of foreigners intensifies xenophobia.

When it comes to immigration, many people used to think that most immigrants are in poor economic condition, and the reason why they immigrate is to escape poverty and create wealth in a new country. Moreover, international migrants compete with citizens of host countries because they take up many job opportunities. I met a lot of immigrants when I studied in Australia, and I found that they were not poor, even rich. Immigration

actually requires a lot of money, which most poor people can't afford. The poor do not have the funds to pay for transit costs and lack the social capital, human capital and experience needed to support migration. Another fact is that modern migrants lack skills. Most of them can only seek jobs in fast-growing service industries (Stark & Wang 2002). Indeed, many of the Chinese immigrants around me are engaged in purchasing agency, running restaurants and working as real estate consultants. I know many people who associate immigration with terrorism and blame immigrants for the negative aspects like high crime. However, studies show that most immigrants are law-abiding, hard-working people. And most of them are healthy and of working age. They use the money they earn to support their parents in their countries of origin and pay for their children's education. That is to say, most immigrants are trying to support their families (Gamburd 2008).

3. Benefits

Another important point is that migration brings economic benefits to the country of destination. They have to buy food, pay for transportation, rent and utilities. On average, immigrants spend 60-80% of their income on their new country of residence. Moreover, immigrants pay taxes (Koc & Onan 2004). It creates income for the immigrant countries. Not only that, but the immigrants who put to work in the new country also participated in the construction and development of the country (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011). Immigration has brought benefits to nation states.

4. Challenges

4.1 Unbalanced Labor Resources

At the same time, the global migration patterns also bring new challenges to nation states. According to the "WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022" released by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), In terms of immigration countries of destination, today's immigrants are still concentrated in Europe and the United States. The United States (51 million immigrants) remained the leading destination, followed by Germany, the United Kingdom in fourth place and Canada in eighth. In terms of emigration countries, India is the most important emigration country (nearly 18 million), followed by Mexico, Russia the third, and China the fourth (about 10 million). It can be concluded that high-income countries absorb more recent international migrants.

In recent years, the globalization of the world economy has suffered setbacks and immigration policies in some countries have been tightened. At the same time, the economic growth between countries and the global population growth and distribution are still unbalanced, resulting in the imbalance of supply and demand of labor and resources. The cross-border movement of population is an important means to allocate resources and solve problems. It is quite paradoxical that the uneven distribution of labor resources, especially the "immigration deficit" of developing countries, and the massive "brain drain" may further lead to the imbalance of global development and the long-term asymmetric flow of international migrants (Chen 2018, p.33). It reminds me of an incident: between 1994 and 2000, South Africa spent about \$1 billion on training medical professionals who then tended to migrate to developed countries such as the United States and Britain. I am deeply aware that in a global competition, highly skilled people are crucial to the national economy. However, some countries are backward in economic development and cannot absorb these professionals. Wouldn't that make the developed countries more developed and the backward countries even more backward?

4.2 The Composition and Identification of Illegal Immigrants

The overall situation of international illegal migration is stable. However, it faces new challenges in the composition and identification of illegal immigrants. Take the United States as an example. According to one of my classmates from Central America, illegal immigrants in her hometown have increased a lot in recent years, and many of them are minors without parents. I think it puts pressure on immigration enforcement in the United States, and there is significant moral hazard. In an effort to combat and deter illegal border crossings, the trump administration introduced a "zero tolerance" policy in April 2018 that would lock up adults who cross the border illegally, resulting in a large number of children being separated from their parents. The immigration policy, which was chided as "family separation", ended in June under pressure from all sides (Zhang & Zhang 2018). On the other hand, the ambiguity of immigration status poses a law enforcement problem. This reminds me of one of the key issues in the 2018 midterm elections. Caravan migrants from Central America have been travelling across Mexico, close to the border with the US. The migrants claim they were forced to move to escape violent crime and economic collapse at home, hoping for asylum in the United States. This makes the status of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants more ambiguous, which makes it difficult for immigration enforcement. The same is true of the wave of immigration that Europe began to experience in 2015, that is the influx of a large number of minors and the definition of immigration status.

During my study in Australia, I have seen many parades on the streets about refugee issues. There are those who welcome refugees and those who refuse to accept them. The international refugee issue has become more prominent, and refugee protection and governance have become the focus of the international community. The refugee problem is a worldwide problem arising from the conflicts of military, political, national, religious affairs in human society (Chen 2018, p.34). According to an annual report by the United Nations, the number of refugees worldwide exceeds 70 million. If legal and illegal immigration are active migration, then refugees are passive migration, more affected by external environmental factors. In addition, I also found that minors account for about half of the current refugee population, reflecting the urgency, intractable and sensitive nature of the refugee issue. Perhaps because of this, the international community has gradually established an international refugee protection mechanism based on humanitarian and human rights protection, and clarified several principles of refugee protection, such as the principle of non-refoulement.

However, the current international refugee protection system is very fragile and shows great external dependence. The system lacks safeguard mechanism and executive force. On the other hand, the main countries of international refugee resettlement are developing countries. Nine of the world's top ten resettlement countries are developing countries, and four of them are the least developed countries. Their limited resettlement capacity and experience have limited the effectiveness of international refugee protection. Developing countries resettled 85% of the total number of refugees in 2017, with Turkey, Pakistan and Uganda all resettling more than one million refugees, according to UNHCR. I am shocked that developed countries in Europe and America have taken such a passive attitude towards refugee resettlement. On 19 September 2016, "the New York declaration of refugees and immigrants" was approved at the United Nations, calling on the international community to reach two agreement in 2018, that is "the global refugee agreement" and "the global agreement on safe, normal and orderly migration". Filippo Grandi is the United Nations high commissioner for refugees. He believed that the New York declaration realized the sharing of responsibility for refugees in a real sense, which would well fill a long gap in the international protection system. But on December 3, 2017, the United States withdrew from the "global migration agreement", saying it is an agreement that threatens its sovereignty. What's more, faced with the largest wave of migrants and refugees after world war II, some European countries have seriously violated human rights (Nie & Shi 2017). Migrants and refugees are also used by political parties in some countries to fight for political power. Against the background of economic depression, high unemployment and anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe, these parties hyped up the crisis caused by immigration in order to stir up public dissatisfaction with immigration policies of the current government, thus gaining huge public support in the election. For example, the right-wing Alternative for Germany party became the third largest party in Germany in its first election in September 2017. Italy's populist party Five Star Movement has emerged as the biggest single party in the 2018 parliamentary elections. In my opinion, some developed countries only focus on their own interests and do not want to shoulder the responsibility for the refugee problem. This directly affects the process of problem solving. It can be seen that the protection of the rights of international migrants, especially irregular migrants, is still a long way to go for various nation states.

4.3 Security Challenges

International migration has an extensive and far-reaching impact on the sovereignty, security and development interests of relevant countries as well as world security. Although most international migrants are legal migrants, they contribute to improving the lives of people in the countries of origin and destination. But the public opinion around me still has a lot of doubts about international migration, which is mainly due to the concern about irregular migration dominated by illegal immigrants. Of course, the impact of international migration is multi-dimensional, but the security issue is the primary concern of the country. Security challenges arising from international migration have also become highly valued areas to the international community.

4.3.1 Homeland and Public Security

From empirical data, international terrorist organizations have repeatedly used loopholes in the immigration system of various countries to launch terrorist attacks. In 2004, the Nixon Center published a study saying that "Immigration has been involved in every major terrorist attack in North America and Western Europe in the last 10 years except Oklahoma City." Arguably, migration networks and immigration policies do make it easier for terrorist groups and other non-state actors to pursue their own interests (Adamson 2006, p.195).

However, exaggerating the link between immigration and terrorism does not fit the facts. As I mentioned above, the vast majority of our immigrants are law-abiding people. In practice, terrorists can be immigrants but also could be citizens of their own country. From empirical evidence, the crime rate of immigrants is not higher even lower than that of their own citizens. Indeed, in the more than two years I have lived in Australia, almost all the

crimes I have heard of have not been committed by immigrants.

Why do people always associate terrorism with immigration? I asked some friends around me, and they said that immigrants were always involved in some major terrorist attacks like 9/11. Another reason is their distrust of immigrants. When I ask them why they are so distrustful? They can't seem to come up with more specific reasons. I think it is a cultural factor, people always have a certain degree of psychological rejection of "the other". Wohlfeld said that "throughout human history, outsiders and 'others' have been the objects of suspicion and even hatred." On the other hand, there is a preconceived idea. In many people's minds, illegal immigrants are lawbreakers in the first place, and they often seek the assistance of human smugglers during the entry process, which is easy to cause related public security problems. In addition, the role of the mass media and public figures in over-rendering and over-interpretation cannot be ignored. On March 20, 2017, President Trump declared at a rally in Kentucky, "... I have met many American families whose loved ones—children and daughters, husbands and wives—have been brutally murdered by illegal immigrants." When I heard this, I also had a very negative attitude towards illegal immigrants. The apparently value-oriented language of these public figures makes the term "illegal immigrants" synonymous with fear and violence, thus making people create a strong negative view towards them (Rubio 2011).

If perpetuating or exaggerating the idea that immigration leads to terrorism, it will have at least three negative effects. First, it is likely to cause racial discrimination and lead to strong dissatisfaction among citizens of the countries concerned, thus facilitating recruitment for terrorist organizations. The isolation and exclusion of foreigners and immigrants in receiving countries may increase their possibility of participating in terrorist activities (Cinoglu & Altun 2013, p.101). Second, it is easy to lead to the anxiety and anger of immigrant communities towards the receiving country, and lead to the opposition and division of different social groups (Cinoglu & Altun 2013, p.103). Third, it may distract attention from the fight against terrorism and provide opportunities for real terrorists. Treating a group with suspicion means the government may ignore real terrorists who do not meet the criteria (Spencer 2018, p.10). Therefore, the view that international migration is strongly linked to terrorism and poses a threat to national security is highly misleading and dangerous.

4.3.2 Cultural Security

From the perspective of cultural security, immigrant integration brings great challenges to the destination country. As for the influence of international migration on the culture of the destination country, there are different understandings in different countries and different historical periods. Historically, the United States has been welcoming to immigrants and tolerant of immigrant culture. However, with the change of the structure of immigrants, the United States has encountered many difficulties in the process of cultural integration of new immigrants, and even triggered concerns about "national identity". I've been to countries with a lot of immigrants, like the United States, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia... People in these countries come from all over the world. They also bring their language, food and culture with them. In such a multicultural society, we inevitably forget the original history and culture of this country. There is no denying that immigration has a great impact on the culture of these countries.

The challenge of immigrant culture integration for destination countries is not only that the mainstream culture of destination countries is impacted by immigrant culture, but also that people in destination countries how to react to immigrants and immigrant culture, such as whether there will be xenophobia or racism. This may in turn lead to social fragmentation in the destination country. On the other hand, intensifying the antagonism and conflict between the immigrant culture and the mainstream culture of the destination country will bring greater challenges to the immigrant integration, which may eventually form a vicious circle. This reminds me of a terrible example that happened a few years ago. On July 22, 2011, an attack took place in front of a government building in Oslo. It was carried out by the Norwegian far-right activist Anders Breivik. The incident left eight people dead. He then shot and killed 69 people and injured hundreds more at the labor party's youth camp on the island of Utoya, motivated by his anti-Islamic stance. Another example also struck me. On December 31, 2015, a large number of incidents of sexual harassment took place in Cologne, Germany. The offenders are believed to be refugees from the Middle East and north Africa. Germans launched a protest march, being angry that the government had failed to protect them and demanding a review of its refugee policy. However, in addition to criminal behavior, I think there is a more important reason, which is cultural conflict and immigrant integration. What I learned from Cologne is that one of the great challenges the European society is facing is that how to integrate these immigrants into European society well and adapt to the local culture.

In addition to technical factors such as language barrier and policy factors such as lack of government investment, foreign immigrants' difficulties in cultural integration also lie in the fact that the national cultural

identity has a certain stability and will not be easily changed in a short time. In addition, some immigrants, especially illegal ones, are treated unfairly in the receiving country, which makes them reject the local culture (Chen 2018, p.38).

In October 2017, the United Nations economic commission for Africa hosted a consultation on the global consultation on security, orderly and regular migration in Africa, which set up six topics. The human rights of migrants, social cohesion, social integration and all forms of discrimination, including xenophobia, racism and intolerance, were included in the first topic. This reflects that immigration issues such as immigrants' rights and social integration have become important issues for both the receiving countries and the countries of origin.

5. Direction of Effort

International migration is an objective existence, and there is still the possibility of further growth in the future, so a series of security risks and disputes will continue to exist. Facing the challenge positively is the key to solve the problem. I have some thoughts on dealing with the challenges of global migration patterns to nation states that I mentioned above. Countries should strive to build a correct understanding of international migration and avoid "demonizing" it. Secondly, it is necessary to establish a scientific understanding of the causes of international migration, especially irregular migration (Chen 2018, p.40). What's more, a rational understanding of the impact of international migration needs to be established. In my view, a more scientific system of immigration policies is essential for nation states. Of course, governance is important. The scientific immigration policy system must be reasonable and operable, that is, maintain a dynamic balance in the qualification and number of legal immigrants, legal migration channels and other aspects. I believe that immigration policy also needs to focus on strengthening immigrant integration. Above are some of my suggestions on immigration. Of course, this is not a simple matter, which requires the active coping and governance of each nation state.

6. Conclusion

At present, the issue of international migration is increasingly emerging. Global migration patterns present some opportunities for nation states but also many challenges. The number of international migrants continues to increase and flows are diversified but still concentrated in some developed countries. What's more, most immigrants are in their working age. This has led to a brain drain in some developing countries. The situation of international illegal migration is stable on the whole, but its structure is more complex and its identity is becoming ambiguous. The international refugee problem is serious, and the refugee protection and governance mechanism has become the focus of the international community. International migration, especially irregular migration, has posed major security challenges, mainly involving homeland security, public security and cultural security. From my experience and research, we can see that the influence of international migration on security is objective, but also subjective. This is the most interesting point in my thinking process. I have seen many immigrants during my study in Australia, and the cultural problems are indeed the most intuitive. Cultural influence and integration are inevitable problems. To sum up, the issue of immigration is a common concern of all nation states in the world today. It requires the joint efforts to accept these challenges.

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