

Global Migration: A Transnational Problem*

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In the present paper I search for a tentative compromise which would be practical and ethical or simply decent in order to contain the problem of global migration. The compromise I suggest is, as much as possible, to take into account the principle or criteria of mutual interest between migrants and native citizens at the municipal level and, to a lesser extent, at the national level and beyond. The regulation of immigration is a national prerogative by national consent, but it is controlled also by regional and global agencies. Here I examine to what extent the formulation of the problem of global migration is conditioned on the model of globalization? In other words, I examine in what way the issues of global migration change with our dynamic concept of globalization. The traditional model of globalization is national, and national government controlled, effectively or not, migration. This means that government regulated the limits of their citizenry. The global problem of immigration and their solutions were formed with regard to national government and the power of global policies (such as those by the UN) was measured with respect to national policies. National policies were the target of evaluation – normatively or effectively. The new model of globalization admits that decisions are effectively made also beyond the national level, that is also both at the municipal and global levels. This model limits the power of government to regulate citizenry. In fact, as this model gets more acknowledgment, cooperation among different levels are enhanced. As a result, the problem of migration may eventually gain more effective recognition as well as enhance the resiliency of one of the new challenges of philosophy, namely the examination of the social, political and economic conflicts global migration creates.

Keywords: migration, liberalism, citizenry, decent society, global problems, mutuality of interest, urban techno citadels, global cities.

Introduction

Our times are enchanting and distorted: we have lost the audacity of the Renaissance, the naivety of the Enlightenment, but, I hope, we have overcome the despair of Post-Modernism as well. We are bravely experimenting with new models in different fields and fearlessly adopting hybrids, multidisciplinary processes and new forms that transcend the existing ones in art, architecture, literature and not least in everyday social life. However, I have not only reservations, but downright dissatisfaction as well, regarding the workings of national and global political economy (on which global migration spreads its loose net).

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As a result of my dissatisfaction regarding the workings of national and global political economy, I looked for a tentative solution to the problem of global migration. To my surprise, I discovered that global cities, in general, offered workable social and economic solutions to the problem of migration in their cities.

My aim here is to design a conceptual framework for society in conjunction with the problem of global migration. Migrants are the weakest group of the population of any region. The author of the much debated book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, Thomas Picketty (2013), examines the relation between growing wealth and income inequality and finds that immigration boosts growth and, to some extent, reduces the economic gap between the rich and the poor because, he says, there is more income to share and distribute in a growing economy than in a shrinking one. As such, Picketty dissolves the consensus that the problem of global migration is degenerative. In other words, Picketty interprets global migration as a force that expands the economy and acts against plutocracy that creates and widens income inequality.

I look for a robust yet flexible *modus Vivendi* for a decent society of migrants and citizens. My proposition for a *modus Vivendi* is on two levels: political and municipal. On the political level, I propose the implementation of a new form of citizenry within the new limited cosmopolitan space. On the municipal level, I find that the municipalities of global cities to some extent accommodate the problem of the degrading quality of services they offer to their residents that arise as a result of global migration to their cities. I propose that governments of nation-states, as much as possible, adopt the working procedures of the municipalities of global cities where migration is dense. Such procedures may pave the way to decently accommodate social and economic networks for the survival and even flourishing of the legal and illegal residents of global cities in spite of the current reduced and rigid concept of citizenry. I, then, conclude that, just like in the case with home computers, when children taught their parents how to master this new ghost that intruded into their private space, municipalities of global cities have to teach their governments how to deal with the problem of migration that intrudes into the public space. Then, governments would issue more flexible laws of citizenry in the newly transformed public spaces with respect to global migration.

Global migration is a global problem to which global politics should provide solutions.¹ By the term ‘global politics’ I mean global cooperation and coordination backed up and supported by global legislation and, as much as possible, jurisdiction and enforcement. We observe, however, that solutions offered both at global and national levels do not work well. Saskia Sassen (2005: 35), a Dutch-American sociologist from Columbia University, in her article ‘Regulating Immigration in a Global Age: A New Policy Landscape’ writes, ‘yet immigration policy in most of the highly developed countries has not been marked by major innovation as we have seen in other policy realm’.

However, the solutions devised in global cities where migration is dense, work relatively well, and somewhat better than existing solutions provided at national and global levels (Khanna and Maniam 2011). This is not surprising: global politics is not institutionalized and global coordination of migration is not high on the agenda of global institutions, strong governments and globally influential decision makers. Yet, it is generally argued that global migration puts pressure both on economically advanced democratic states and

¹ Regarding estimates on internal migration, cf. UNDP 2009: 21, and also World Bank 2013: 2–13.

on global cities where migration is dense. Sassen suggests that the solutions devised by individual states to control existing borders may not be workable any more:

What is now experienced as a crisis in the control of the state over its borders may well be the sign that we need to redraw the map within which we confront the difficult question of how to regulate and govern immigration flows in an increasingly interdependent world (Sassen 2005: 37).

At the national scale, national political institutions such as political parties, agonize over the pressure from immigration on their electorate and suggest tailor made rules to protect the existing legal status of citizenry, without too much concern for the legal status of migrants. In global cities, the situation is somewhat different: for example, the right of residency and the freedom of settlement are elaborated according to the urgent needs of the residents, both citizens and migrants (see *e.g.*, Acuto and Khanna 2013; Ong 2003).

While exploring the existing solutions to alleviate the problem of global migration in particular within urban spaces hosting migration, I discovered the almost unnoticed and unspectacular contributions of municipalities to accommodate the way migrants are incorporated in urban techno citadels or global cities.

The plan of the paper is as follows: first, I briefly describe the phenomenon of migration. Second, I dwell on the characteristics of a decent society prior to the contemporary era of globalization. Third, I examine a few policies to accommodate global migration. Fourth, I discuss the future of global cities as a hope for transforming the problem of global migration into a sustainable problem waiting to be attended to, at a global level. I, then, wrap up my discussion in three main points and present my modest and tentative solution to the problem of global migration. For example, smart cities, one of the latest developments of the advancement in the communication technology, namely the Internet, accommodate for the adoption of such solutions.²

1. What is Migration?

In the modern period of development of nationalism, migration was simply the movement of people over national borders (Benhabib 2006; Gellner 1983; Beck 2007). It can also be further divided into legal and recorded or illegal and unrecorded migration or according to purpose (family reunion, tourism, work *etc.*) or according to migration being voluntary or involuntary (refugees, asylum seekers and modern slave trades). The rights and the recognition of each group differ. But this does not mean that the problem of global migration may be solved by tailor-made rules since we have to remember that migration is an integral part of global transformations (see *e.g.*, Stiglitz 2010; Krugman 2007).

Today migration is a trend that reshapes society in general and has already triggered contentious debate over policies affecting liberal institutions such as those protecting human rights, group rights, women's rights, freedom of expression, freedom in university education, the relation between state and religion in the sense of extending freedom of worship and reducing the role of the government in social and economic life (Beck 2009; Bauman 1998, 2000). Indeed the spectrum of influence of global migration on all facets of life is wide and ambiguous.

² I develop this point in a forthcoming article called 'Smart Cities and Global Migration'.

2. A Decent Society

Originally, that is in the modern period of nationalism, prior to the era of contemporary globalization, the accepted building blocks of a decent society were based on the traditional political model based on the hard-line approach characterized by a clear cut and rigid perspective. This perspective included, among others, the following principles:

- (1) the motto which calls to find the migrants, arrest them and throw them out;
- (2) rigid and reduced citizenry laws which delineate citizens from migrants;
- (3) a traditional model which reflects a commitment to law and to equality of rights of citizens only.

Global transformations today are thinning this ethos, baring the concept of citizenry to the extent of making it skin deep only, to declining the unique sovereignty of the states over their citizens and to denuding borders of their original *raison d'être* (to prevent infiltration). In other words, the trend is that borders are less of a barrier to the free movement of people and that there are many more cosmopolitans scattered globally with fewer and weaker attachment to nation-states (Habermas 1998, 2001; Benhabib 2006). The cosmopolitans and the progressive liberals within nation-states create a global community with relatively new traits such as global consciousness and global or regional political solidarity (Habermas 2013). Already a century ago, Dewey was the harbinger of this community.

As a matter of fact, a modern society is many societies more or less loosely connected. Each household with its immediate extension of friends makes a society; the village or street group of playmates is a community; each business group, each club, is another. Passing beyond these more intimate groups, there is in a country like our own a variety of races, religious affiliations, economic divisions. Inside the modern city, *in spite of its nominal unity*, are probably more communities, more differing customs, traditions, aspirations and forms of control, than existed in an entire continent at an earlier epoch (Dewey 2016 [1916]: 12, – italics mine, *MFR*).

The global community today, however new, virtual and with almost no judiciary status, is not marginal though not fully mainstream. This community is in the process of developing the global consciousness and solidarity that are needed to support human rights and ecological sustainability. They request a revision in the building blocks of a decent society in the traditional model, in particular regarding its rigid and reduced citizenry laws. This request is met differently by governments of nation-states and municipalities of urban citadels. We even see a divergence in the goals and incentives of national and urban legislation and jurisdictions. In particular, there is pressure from the citizen residents to the national authorities to issue the laws from which clear and stable policies may be devised in order to alleviate the problem of global migration or, more specifically, non-citizen residents, in what concerns their resilience and quality of life (Benhabib 2006; Baubock 2005).

Within this divergence in goals, we find that the criteria of mutuality of interest are more salient and remarkable in urban policy making within the limits of municipal legislation than in national legislation. An example of the way the criteria of mutual interest may be applied is found in the allocation of greater urban spaces to informal economies and to unfamiliar lifestyles in urban citadels with extensive immigration participation (with the aim of extracting the much needed revenues). Nevertheless, the allocation, to some extent,

reduces the marginalization of immigrants and helps monitor a feasible *modus Vivendi* of residents, both migrants and citizens. As such, policy makers in urban citadels maneuver between respecting national legislation and agreements concerning migrants in these urban citadels and protecting the criteria for the mutuality of interest within their area of jurisdiction (Benhabib 2006; Baubock 2005). This maneuvering, on the one hand, touches sensitivities regarding sovereignty and, on the other, only partially alleviates the problem of global migration both for citizens and migrants.

Mutuality of interest dwells on the grounds of mutuality of benefits. This goes hand in hand with the principles of liberalism and the enhancement of existing institutions which I mentioned earlier and that protect liberalism. In fact, to ignore the principle of mutuality of interest as criteria for policy construction may rebuke migrants. The rebuke would immediately harm human rights and thus harm liberal institutions and the current understanding of democracy and liberalism, the pillars of economically advanced modern states. The economically advanced modern states inherited these pillars from the era of Modernity (sometimes also named First Modernity) at the turn of the previous century (see, e.g., Gellner 1983; Farhi-Rodrig 2011). Nevertheless, in spite of these pillars, global migration remains to be an ambiguous and multi-level problem (economic, political, social and communitarian).

In short, the framework for society and space in conjunction with global migration into urban techno citadels is characterized by open, complex and self-organizing systems such as observed in urban spaces: in urban spaces, the self-organizing systems are heavily dependent on economic and socio-cultural global and local processes or briefly, the geo-political transformations. These transformations put pressure on the framework in which global cities develop in a way that it becomes more open, more dynamic and more extensively self-organizing. In addition to that, the lack of clear legislation and jurisdiction leaves to both migrants and citizens the leeway for maneuvering and promoting their respective interests. In other words, the resilience of migrants and citizens is enhanced as the current geo-political transformations challenge the stability and status quo of global cities. As a result, the lifestyle entitlements of the growing population of migrants are, to some extent, accommodated. Migrants, even though they are non-citizen residents, become active participants in establishing policies in urban architecture (such as in parks, in cheap housing, in settlements and in space allowed for informal economies). Migrants, also, act as a trigger in developing policies regarding functional eco-systems such as kindergartens, grocery stores, social clubs and non-profit organizations informed by their lifestyle entitlements and leisure opportunities and preferences. It is these changing policies in urban spaces rather than national jurisdiction that provide freedom of circulation and rights of residency and settlement for migrants while their aspirations for more flexible citizenship rights gradually fade away.

3. Policies to Accommodate Global Migration

Within this framework and viewing the problem of global migration broadly, I find that the new challenge is to design stable policies that are more sensitive to the needs and requirements of migrant minorities and to find a workable *modus Vivendi* which, on the one hand, as much as possible, contains migration and, on the other, harbors migrants with the aim of supporting and sustaining a decent society of migrants and citizens.

Upfront, I acknowledge that if an economically advanced nation-state, such as the USA, would, unconditionally, open the gates to migration (allowing free passage into her territory), its economy would collapse immediately. In other words, though I am a liberal, I do not advocate the unconditional free movement of people. Instead, this acknowledgement, in my view, is rational thinking in interaction with changing socio-economic and cultural processes that are part of the self-organizing systems in the framework of urban spaces. Or put it simply, it is rational thinking given the current framework or situational logic or context. Popper (1979, 1999) coined the term *piecemeal engineering* to denote *this attempt to reach reasonable outcomes*.

According to Popper, given a problem, say global migration, policies devised are challenged by the interaction between the dynamic social environment (global transformations) and the problem itself (global migration). As a result of the implementation of the devised policies, errors are discovered and better appropriated new policies are devised. Eventually, new problems arise and the process starts again. This is piecemeal engineering that may serve as a construct for small interventions and not for ultimate solutions. Small interventions make, to some extent, practical ethics possible and accommodate practical social life as much as possible.

Habermas (1998, 2013), on a similar note proposes the enhancement of communicative rationality between citizens and migrants expecting to achieve intervention on a wider scale. According to him, solidarity (political) among those with similar ideals (faith in democracy, in siblinghood of humanity) is required in order to reach reasonable outcomes. Habermas differentiates between political solidarity and human solidarity (pity, religious principles, paternalism, *etc.*). He emphasizes that communicative rationality is achieved by the development of the new kind of solidarity (political solidarity) as he described.

Still, I find that a massive investment in the economies of the most desolate regions of the world may, in the first place, trigger hope for a better future and then act as a booster to accelerate the desolate economies. This development may immediately contain or delay migration and, to some extent, even invert the direction of migration (Rosenstein-Rodan 1943; Sassower 1995). I mean migrants may go back to their native states and even some citizens of the hosting states may become migrants in the developing states. (When the Mexican economy somewhat improved in the aftermath of the 2008 global mortgage and financial crisis, many would-be migrants in Mexico delayed their immigration to the USA. As the 2008 crisis deepened in the European Union, the flow of immigration from Brazil to Spain slowed down and in some cases the flow of immigration reversed). In other words, by moderating migration and allocating massive investment to desolate regions, also may to some extent, serve as a policy that takes into account the criteria of the mutuality of interest. Next, I wrap up my discussion in three points and, then, make my concluding remarks.

4. A Quick Wrap up

First, on an economic level, it is not clear to what extent global migration is an economic problem for the hosting states. On the one hand, the part of the world, which attracts migration, is economically advanced and democratic and, incidentally, this part of the world saves much less than is required to meet the demands of its aging population. In other words, the hosting states spend more than they can afford to, given their social agreements, say with pension funds. Migrants, on the other hand, produce more income

than they consume in the hosting states making a positive contribution to the GNP of the hosting states. Thus, migrants contribute to increasing savings which may assist natives to honor, at least, parts of their social commitments. This is not all. In the hosting states, the private sector in general and industrialists in particular are for migrants as well, since it is no secret that they like cheap and abundant labor. So global migration is not only a burden to the hosting states, but it is also a blessing for their economy. Picketty (2013) also shows that migrants contribute to the reduction of the income gap in the hosting country, by expanding its gross national product and thus increasing the volume of wealth to be distributed.

Actually, despite episodic efforts to control migration, national governments are generally unable to withstand private sector influences favoring migration and unable to systematically track and regulate individual migration. For example, in Israel, African refugees and asylum seekers make up almost half per cent of the population in the territory and many are currently employed in formal and informal economies, many of them, without any legal status.³

Second, on a political level, on the one hand, migrants put pressure for obtaining more flexible citizenship and residency rights that may lead to greater liberalization with enhanced global, national and civil rights. On the other hand, greater liberalization may threaten political stability in the hosting country and signal to many would-be migrants to leave their countries of origin which would further contribute to the political instability.

Third, on a social and communitarian level, social practices and lifestyle entitlements of migrants are often rejected by citizens, on account that these practices are harmful to their society to the extent of abusing rights and powers that the hosting states extend to their citizens, for example, minimum wages and real estate prices in regions where migrants dwell, generally, in clusters. This is a problem that requires new legislation and policies that reallocate funds to areas and groups most affected by the pressure of migration. Governments of democratic nation states are expected to attend to these problems (Balibar 2006; Mouffe 1991, 2005).

Yet, no matter to what extent these problems will be attended, the urge for survival in desolate areas will motivate many to move, despite marginalization of refugees in the hosting destination states. For example, according to Cowell and Bilefsky (2014)

Frontex, the [European] union's border agency, also said the number of migrants from outside Europe known to have entered Europe illicitly this year was already close to the total for all of 2013 and was likely to rise as summer weather brings calmer seas, benefiting migrants crossing the Mediterranean from northern Africa.

So, the framework in global cities which is open, dynamic and self-organizing will continue to be more open, dynamic and self-organizing, no matter how much antagonism global migration creates within the native population.

5. Conclusion. The Future of Global Cities: A Possible Solution?

Harnessed by the criteria of the mutuality of interest, the open, changing and self-ordering frameworks of the political, social and economic spheres in global cities meet, to some

³ The current number, according to PIBA's (immigration authority) most recent report is 46,437 (33,999 Eritreans, 8,772 Sudanese and 3,049 other Africans). There has never been any formal clarification whether this includes births in Israel, but the assumption is that it does not, since births are not formally registered. More information may be found on PIBA's website: <http://www.piba.gov.il/publicationandtender/foreignworkersstat/pages/default.aspx>.

extent, the new needs of the legal and illegal residents: Khanna (2010), a geo-strategist at the New America Foundation, maintains that 'cities rather than states are becoming the islands of governance on which the future world order will be built'.

This perspective is rather new. In urban techno citadels, this perspective of cities as centers of governance originates, to a great extent, from both the impact of global transformations and of global migration. Following this line of thought, it may be that, eventually, global cities will offer services and solutions to other cities in fields such as global migration, on line identity of their residents and regulatory oversight of national decrees in most aspects of life, social, economic and even political. In other words, cities may become platform managers and curators of ecosystems giving democracy a new turn, transparent, decentralized and organic. The bottom line is that global cities become the locomotive of future changes not only for other cities and for accommodating global migration, but also for corporations, countries and even unions.

As a matter of fact, already today, in urban techno citadels the reduced and limited concept of citizenry is not anymore the unequivocal guard of sovereignty and of the so-called, social glue of society. In such spaces, the reduced concept of citizenry serves a new and weakened purpose: it, simply, serves as a standard of assessment, a tool for inquiring and understanding the changing processes in the framework of urban citadels and beyond (Ong 2003).

Such transformations sharpen sensitivities of certain members of national governments: for example, citizens may discover that their governments contain a ministry of interior more attentive to the economic value of migrants, a ministry of housing more attentive to the loss of value of the real estate in areas where migration is dense, a ministry of education more attentive to the changing needs of the migrant and non-migrant young children and students, a ministry of welfare more attentive to the needs and requirements of the migrant minority. In other words, citizens of these global cities may discover that their governments have become more optimal.

Against all odds and in view of my exploration of the almost organic transformations in global cities, I find that a new world order is evolving in which new political partners will, gradually, pair up to increase resiliency worldwide. The Russian scholar, Leonid E. Grinin expands this point beyond global cities. According to him, global cities would be an intermediary form towards shaping a new political order that is more optimal as well.

During the struggle for a role in organizing and operation of the new world order, *an epoch of new coalitions* will come, which will outline the contours of a new political landscape for a considerably long period... In searching for the most stable and adequate supranational systems various intermediary forms may develop, where the players of the world and regional political arenas will search for the most favorable and convenient blocks and agreements (Grinin 2012: 226–227).

To repeat, in line with the predictions made by Leonid Grinin, I propose that national and municipal policy makers consider the principle of mutuality of interest between themselves, as well as, the mutuality of interest between migrants and non-migrants and thus, loosen both the hierarchy set by the political system and the already scarred sensitivities

regarding national sovereignty. In other words, cities must be empowered rather than restrained by national governments to become more active agents in solving the problem of migration within their municipal territory. Then, national and local legislation and jurisdiction may cooperate instead of act hierarchically. The hierarchy will gradually dissolve within the dynamic public space, eroding sovereignty and gradual transcendence of nationhood. The hierarchy will, then, dissolve into an ideal of global citizenry and of global coordination in which cities are weaved together into a new form of cosmopolitanism and the most desolate regions of the planet are invited to join the bandwagon of the global economy. Migration will, then, gradually become a solution to problems rather than a problem or a burden. The resulting society would be more democratic as well as more human and its economy would be more inclusive.

The question is what can go wrong? Old and new problems may arise in different intensities and dimensions that require the implementation of old and new solutions which will be replaced or reformed as mistakes and new problems are discovered. As long as decision makers stick to democratic procedures and learn from their mistakes, the worst scenarios may be avoided and philosophy may, then, take a short break.

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