

EXCURSUS 3

André van Dam on MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economists usually measure the ups and downs of an economy by interpreting the output of goods and services, commerce, exchange and inflation rates, and other crucial factors. Far too seldom do we gauge migratory currents (whether across borders or within national territories), yet this is becoming an important, although often invisible, factor in economic growth.

Before the end of the century the world economy must create about 800 million jobs to take care of the demographic explosion. This task is exceedingly difficult, the more so since there are already an estimated 200 million people who are either unemployed or underemployed. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (which binds together the world's twenty-four richest countries) pleads for a coordinated planning of the humane and rational use of manpower. In the context of such planning, migratory currents are equally important for both recipient and "donor" countries.

Migration can be likened to a magnet, with a negative pole (countries exporting labor) and a positive pole (countries importing labor). Voluntary migration (to which this piece will limit itself) stems mostly from countries that are relatively underdeveloped; where the population pressure becomes intolerable; where there exist severe pockets of poverty; where the public and private sectors fail to remunerate professionals and skilled laborers in accordance with national potential; or where the rural sector is stagnant compared to the urban industrial sector. For example, when one reads that West Germany imports some three thousand qualified nurses from South Korea, or that illegal immigrants from nearby Colombia make up a fifth of the Venezuelan labor force, one does not have to be a futurist to conclude that there is something basically distorted in the national economy of the affected countries—undoubtedly for lack of national and/or international planning in the area of training and employment.

WREAKING HAVOC

Such lack of planning is quite evident in Western Europe. On the eve of the petroleum crisis Western Europe was host to some 15 million guest workers from the Mediterranean countries (not to mention their dependents). This migratory current explains to a large extent the economic success of Western Europe in the 1960s. In addition, it enabled the Europeans to abandon dirty or routine work in favor of higher skills and wages. In the same vein, immigration allowed the European manufacturing industry to compete more effectively in the world markets, and may be such migration indirectly kept inflation rates low.

As soon as the economic recession recreated unemployment, however, voices clamored for the return of immigrant workers to their countries of origin. In the mid-1970s, Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist party and for some years France's prime minister, could publicly state that "a country with 900,000 unemployed but with 2,000,000 immigrant workers is not a country with an insoluble labor problem"—a statement that requires no comment.

One of the most dramatic illustrations of poor employment and migration planning is now provided by the petroleum-exporting nations of the Middle East. For

example, Oman has exported a fourth of its native labor force, yet it had to import half its petroleum workers from neighboring and sometimes distant countries. Saudi Arabia likewise imports about half its labor force, some coming from as far as the Philippines. Nor is it only petroleum workers who migrate to the Mideast, but skilled workers of all sorts. Their departure can wreak havoc with the economy of the exporting nations, which may in turn be obligated to attract labor from beyond their borders, as in the case of Jordan.

This lack of planning can entail severe financial consequences. Witness Turkey. As a result of the European recession many Turkish guest workers were compelled to return to their homeland. Not only did this create massive unemployment in Turkey but also substantially reduced the remittances from Turkish emigrants to their dependents at home. (In fact, the Turkish Government had financed a third of its petroleum imports with the foreign currency generated by such remittances.) This directly contributed to the serious financial crisis that now rocks the Turkish economy. It is altogether possible that if someday the Middle East "boom" should deflate, millions of guest workers will have to return home, an event that can hardly fail to hurt a number of fragile economies.

Latin America provides some typical examples of international migration. For instance, the petroleum boom in Venezuela has attracted millions of skilled and unskilled workers, while there is rampant underemployment in the countryside. Likewise, since Paraguay's civil war in 1947, hundreds of thousands of Paraguayans have emigrated, mostly to Argentina. The impact of this previous flow of migrants is presently hurting Paraguay, now undergoing an exceptional economic "boom" caused by two huge hydroelectric projects. Still another dramatic example is the tension in Central America caused by the so-called "football" war between Honduras and El Salvador that broke out over clandestine migration.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

Well-planned migration can constitute an engine of growth for both importing and exporting nations, and the same holds true for importing and exporting regions within a given country—of which most countries have a store of examples. Migration lends flexibility to the labor market, in favor of manpower itself and of employers. In addition, migrant labor is a powerful tool to avoid bottlenecks in the manufacturing process. The mobility of immigrant labor is above all a stimulus to the interior development of certain countries, where their own urban workers hesitate or refuse to relocate.

But whatever the impact, it is time to re-allocate the costs and benefits of migration—not only to the countries involved, but to the migrants themselves. They are too often left out of the equation (despite the economic stimulus that caused them to become migrants in the first place), for the costs and benefits are not only economic but social and political as well. Such a coordination is all the more important if and when the gap widens between nations rich and poor in resources. The forthcoming scarcity or abundance of resources—energy, metals, minerals, proteins, water, forests, and so forth—will greatly affect the world economy and may create more migratory currents than in the past.

Many labor-exporting nations are in a position to stem the brain drain. Take Sudan, a country with an insignificant overall emigration but one that loses half its physicians and also a good part of its stenographers, statisticians, and bookkeepers, mostly due to an erroneous evaluation of their importance relative to the national econo-

my. It is quite common for Third World nations to offer a higher material reward to salesmen of neckties than to teachers, to waitresses than to nurses. It is high time that the value of the different professions and vocations is reflected not only in training but also in salaries.

Other solutions are urgently needed, including family planning; the wholesale removal of labor-intensive manufacturing industries from rich to poor countries; and a more equitable distribution of arable land within Third World nations, especially those that are densely populated. But above all, Third World nations should be able to export their labor, incorporated in goods and services, through a more ready access to the lush markets of North America, Western Europe, and Japan.

I believe that greater social and economic mobility within the labor-exporting countries would allow a more rational solution to problems of international migration. It is not only a matter of stemming the exodus of rural workers to the cities; it is above all a matter of creating better jobs and living conditions where most people make their home: in the rural areas. And if not enough work can be created there, then national migration should be stimulated not only by creating jobs elsewhere, but by providing the education, health facilities, housing, and environment conducive to such a national relocation of labor. If thereafter migration between countries is necessary, it should not reflect a world economy which, askew, moves people hither and thither in uncontrolled waves but, rather, one that can permanently absorb workers—and their dependents—in a smooth, humane fashion.

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EXCURSUS 4

Benjamin R. Barber on RIGHTS WITHOUT DUTIES?

Despite all the attention given the debate over draft registration and the possible return of military conscription, both proponents and adversaries of the draft (as well as their media counterparts) have conceived the issues in the narrowest of terms.

Hawks and reborn cold warriors seem to regard a renewed draft as part of an overall effort to crank up the American war machine—to “signal” the Soviet Union that we mean business and to demonstrate to our faltering allies that we will back up the mouths of our old diplomats with the bodies of our young men (and women). Doves, civil libertarians, and internationalists counter by portraying conscription as a device of irresponsible militarism that serves only the interests of corporate capitalism while violating the rights and liberties of Americans. The debate is thus joined in the unreflective, antihistorical idiom of ideological politics.

All of this must sadden those Americans concerned with the intrinsic vitality of our democracy and hoping for a thoughtful debate about the place of national service and the military in the life of a free republic. The relationship between citizenship and military service has a long history that can be traced back through the Founders to Rousseau, Montesquieu, Machiavelli, and the ancients. Whether peacetime standing armies are compatible with democracy, whether a people can be self-governing who

entrust their collective self-defense to professionals and mercenaries (“volunteers” in today’s euphemistic parlance), whether rights can be defended when duties are abdicated—these are the real questions raised by that tradition of historical discourse. Yet we hear from the administration and from its young critics only echoes of old ideological quarrels: “We won’t go!” and “Better dead than Red!”

The choice Americans face today is not, as one might think from the debate being conducted by critics, between a draft standing army and no army at all, but between a draft army and a professional army. History suggests that a professional army is far more susceptible to abuse both at home and abroad than is a conscript army. Would the Vietnam resistance movement ever have gotten under way had the army been volunteer? A professional army can be deployed overseas in engagements that a conscript army drawn from every section of the nation might resist; and it can be used at home for purposes of control and repression that a draft army would not brook. The best way to control the American military establishment is to guarantee that its fighting arm is fully democratic and representative of the entire country.

The second point that is lost on critics of conscription—all the more strange, given their progressive leftist orientation—is that the volunteer army is volunteer in name only, and then solely to those who believe in eighteenth-century free market politics. In reality it is the poor, the undereducated, the ill-trained, and the disadvantaged who are most likely to “volunteer”—not freely, but because society has left them with so few competing choices. Aside from the disastrous effect this may have on military efficiency, it suggests a particularly perverse distribution of the burdens of citizenship: namely, that those with the fewest rights should defend those with the most; that those who are powerless should be the military vanguard of the powerful. “We won’t fight for Exxon” read a sign in the recent antidraft demonstration in Washington; but presumably a “volunteer” army of the poor, the non-white, and the unemployable would be permitted to fight—for Exxon and for Exxon’s indignant critics.

Given the long, successful tradition of civilian control over the military, it is difficult to imagine any American army resisting a legitimate American government or suppressing the populace on behalf of an illegitimate one. But were such junta politics ever to enter our system, they would be far better served by a resentful, unrepresentative “volunteer” army than by two-year national service conscripts. Citizen armies not only fight better abroad (presuming they believe in what they are fighting for), they also serve democracy at home in various crucial ways.

National service is a vital constituent in the relationship between rights and duties in a democracy. It is a symbol of the “amateurism” that defines democratic self-government: Citizens of a republic judge, govern, and defend themselves—relying on professionals only as advisors and administrators, never as surrogate rulers or substitute soldiers. In Switzerland and Denmark and other Western democracies, national service has been a constitutional obligation for centuries. It is a matter of distributing the burden of citizenship equally, but it is also a matter of institutionalizing the necessary dependence of rights on duties. The moral force of rights may suggest something God-given and natural, but in practice they are the creation of constitutional systems and depend for their survival on a parallel set of constitutional obligations. But the ACLU and other critics have portrayed registration and conscription as “intrusions” on the rights and liberties of individuals as if there were not the slightest con-