



## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, GLOBAL INEQUALITIES AND ITS IMPLICATION ON ANTI-POVERTY POLICY

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this article is gaining an understanding on whether international migration contribute positively or negatively to global inequalities. Furthermore, it aims to analyze the implication of migration to anti-poverty policy within a country. Researchers use a literature review method to draw a conclusion on the relationship between international migration and global inequalities. Accordingly, international migration could affect both positive and negative on global inequality. It could reduce poverty through remittances, increasing wage level in the sender country, and brain exchange. On the other hand, it also has result on asymmetric development and an increase of dependence on destination countries. Furthermore, immigration affected anti-poverty practices and programs as well. According to a number of studies, policy must take into account the effects of migration on poverty and development. Social exclusion is a problem for anti-poverty initiatives. However, a dilemma arose during the policy-making process: who will be accountable for the difficulties of migrants, particularly illegal migrants? The host country or the local government?*

**Keywords:** migrants, international migration, inequalities, poverty, policy

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mencoba memahami apakah migrasi internasional berkontribusi positif atau negatif terhadap ketimpangan global. Selain itu, juga bertujuan untuk menganalisis implikasi migrasi terhadap kebijakan anti-kemiskinan di suatu negara. Peneliti melakukan penelitian literatur yang relevan untuk menarik kesimpulan bagaimana hubungan antara migrasi internasional dan ketidakesetaraan global. Dengan demikian, migrasi internasional dapat mempengaruhi secara positif maupun negatif pada ketidakesetaraan global. Migrasi dapat mengurangi kemiskinan melalui remitansi, peningkatan tingkat upah di negara pengirim, dan pertukaran otak. Di sisi lain, hal itu juga dapat mengakibatkan pembangunan asimetris atau peningkatan ketergantungan pada negara-negara tujuan. Imigrasi juga dapat mempengaruhi implementasi dan program anti-kemiskinan. Menurut sejumlah penelitian, kebijakan harus memperhitungkan dampak migrasi terhadap kemiskinan dan pembangunan. Eksklusi sosial merupakan salah satu permasalahan bagi program anti-kemiskinan. Namun, dilema muncul selama proses pembuatan kebijakan: siapa yang akan bertanggung jawab atas kesulitan para migran, khususnya migran ilegal? Negara yang menjadi tuan rumah atau pemerintah daerah?

**Kata kunci:** migran, migrasi internasional, kesenjangan, kemiskinan, kebijakan

## I. INTRODUCTION

Castles, Miller, & Ammendola (2005) claimed that international migration had become significant feature of the Post-Cold War era. Therefore, it was not surprising that the number of international migrants had been increasing over the last decade. In 2020, there was 281 million international migrants in total (United Nations Population Division, 2021). This number raised from 173 million in 2000 and 221 million in 2010. Most of migrants lived in high-

income countries: two third of all international migrants (United Nations Population Division, 2021).

The increase of international migration trend was influenced by several common reasons. Globalization was one of factor that believed had impact on migration between countries. According to Castles et al. (2005) and United Nations Population Division (2016), the development and advancement of technology both in transportation and communication had influenced on people perspectives and option which resulted in migration. These developments enabled people to obtain information regarding to quality of life's improvement. Additionally, a number

of socioeconomic variables, such as shifting work patterns, wars, social unrest, and the need for labor in urban areas, had an impact on migrant flows. Migration has also been significantly impacted by aggressive and favored immigration policies for qualified workers in post-industrial countries (Shan & Fejes, 2015, p.228).

Another factor, which is personal motivating reasons, might also inspire someone to undertake international migration. Low wages, limited employment opportunities, migratory culture, and the presence of institutions that steer migrant workers into certain industries were all local factors. High wages, friend influence, and environmental circumstances in line with informants' preferences were factors from the destination area. The satisfaction of fundamental necessities, being indebted, needing experience, and looking for venture financing are all personal motivators.

It does not matter the story behind migration, pursuing a better life was commonly understood as primary reason for people movement. According to the United Nation Population Division (2016), besides its contribution in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development, it could not be denied that migrants often was included to vulnerable member within society. It showed that migration could had impact both positively and negatively. In term of development and economic growth and development, migration, according to Wright and Black (2011); was often connected with alleviation of poverty. Even, there was strong claim stated that there was a link between migration, poverty and perceived disparities (Kaneff and Pine, 2012).

Therefore, this article tried to find out the answers of these following questions: Does migration lessen or widen the world's disparities? What were the impacts of migration to anti-poverty policy? Researchers looked into pertinent material to reach their goal. There will be two main bodies to it. The first section covered the relationship between migration and global inequality. Global inequality could be impacted by migration in both positive and bad ways. The influence of migration on anti-poverty policy and practice was the main topic of the second major section.

## **II. MIGRATION AND GLOBAL INEQUALITIES**

Scholars had debated the relationship between inequality and global migration. There were various unique viewpoints about the partnership. A viewpoint recognized that international migration reduced global inequality in a favourable way. On the other hand, many believed that global migration had exacerbated global inequalities. De Haas (2010) believed that the former was based on optimism point of view while the latter was based on pessimism. Meanwhile, Bastia & Skeldon (2020) argued that both positive and negative impact of global migration could be seen at the same

time. This perspective saw the global inequalities as a result of global migration.

Migration was believed could lower the global inequalities due to remittances sending by migrants to their home nation (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). Compared to development programs or development aid, remittances made more significant contribution to income redistribution, poverty reduction, and economic growth (Ratha, 2005; De Haas, 2010; Kapur, 2004). Globally, remittances were seen as an essential source of reliable income. On a meso and micro level, migration was expected to help the migrant sending country's economy (De Haas, 2010, p. 232).

The case of the Philippines might serve as the ideal illustration of how remittances promote economic expansion. In the Philippines, remittances had developed into a crucial source for the nation's development (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). Beyond what other development techniques could accomplish, it was able to improve income distribution and quality of life (Keely & Tran, 2014). De Haas made a similar argument, claiming that remittances had a significant impact on the improvement of living conditions in recipients' home nations (De Haas, 2005). Furthermore, there was also capital flows transformation which had impact on national development. The flows completely changed from capital - to labour-scarce migrant sending nations (De Haas, 2010, p. 230).

How migration and remittances from migrants effect income disparities in rural minority communities of China was the subject of another research (Howell, 2017). The results showed that migration greatly increased income for all ethnic groups; however, when ethnic minority households take into account remittances as a potential alternative for income, the returns are often smaller than for Clan Han households. Decomposition analysis further demonstrates that, despite a decrease in spatial disparity, migration actually increased ethnic inequality.

Moreover, migration could reduce global inequalities as it was able to increase level of earning level in the sender. Outgoing labour migrants had resulted labour scarcity within sender country, however at the same time, there was increase marginal labour productivity then in the end resulting the rise of wage level (De Haas, 2010). When the earning level between home and sender countries were level, migration could possibly stop (Massey et al., 1998). Having mentioned that, in fact, migration could administer improving of the wage level in order to preserve home nation labour productivity. Therefore, Gamlen (2014, p.583) stated migration as a restoration of equilibrium between labour-rich but capital-poor origin locations and oppositely equipped destination regions is the technique for achieving "balance growth".

"Brain Exchange" was another aspect of migration that resulting global inequalities reduction. Discussing migration, it could not be separated with

the quality of migrants. There was assumption that majority of international migrants were well educated and with above average competency. It resulted short of human capital in sender countries. However, this situation could be handled when immigrants with equal or even higher competency replaced emigrants. It led to what was called "brain exchange" (Glass and Choy, 2001). Furthermore, the demand of high skilled labour could also stimulate educational quality improvement at home countries (Stark, 2004). Post-migration period could give benefit as well. As they brought ideas, expertise, and an entrepreneurial spirit, the returned migrants might be advantageous for the sending countries (De Haas, 2010). It might speed up the spatial distribution of modernity in underdeveloped nations (De Haas, 2010).

There was, however, a counterargument that wealthy nations would gain more from "brain exchange" than poor nations. The ability to efficiently use and maximize global resources, including labour, raw materials, and unfair commerce, was available to developed countries (Cheng and Yang, 1998). This unfair situation could lead to asymmetries in development, increasing inequality between the sending and receiving countries (Martin and Papademetriou, 1991 cited in Gamlen, 2014).

It supported argument by De Haas (2010) that migration had contributed on increasing global disparities instead of reducing it. As migrants are frequently educated, and employed individuals, the advantages of migration, such as remittances are unfairly reaped by the wealthy (Lipton, 1980; Zachariah, Mathew, & Irudaya Rajan, 2001). For those who are at a lesser level of ability and quality, it implies they stay at that level and profit disproportionately from migration. Instead of lowering inequality within communities in recipient countries, this condition actually makes it worse.

The availability of human capital in the countries of origin was also impacted by migration. It accelerated the deterioration into an unchecked loss of their population's healthiest, most energetic, and most productive individuals as well as their already scant supplies of trained labour (Papademetriou, 1985, p. 211-12 cited in De Haas, 2010). By the end, it resulted what was called as "brain drain" circumstances (Baldwin, 1970). This condition disabled the home countries to leverage their quality and compete with other countries. Although there was an argument that immigrants would replace emigrants but, in fact, most of migrants were moving to rich countries from middle-income countries on in reverse (United Nations Population Division, 2016).

Migration eroded regional and local economies as it increased countries dependency and there was a labour force deprivation within communities which resulted more out-migration (De Haas, 2010). Moreover, it also weakened productive structure within sender countries which stimulate "asymmetric growth". It was recognized that population was a crucial component of development processes because it both influences and is influenced by changes in an

area's economic, social, and political structures (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020).

As a result, for a variety of reasons, migration had an impact on global inequality that was both favourable and detrimental. These correlations, according to the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty (2009), depending on the geographical scope as well as the location and kind of inequality. They made the following claims after studying case studies from Central America, West Africa, and South Asia:

1. Migration did not affect national or local levels of inequality, but it appeared to lessen it on a global scale;
2. Migrants may not have the same rights in destination nations as local workers. As a result, inequality on a local or national level increased.
3. Where poor people have more options for migration destinations, the net effect on inequality is more likely to be positive.
4. Inequality was previously primarily associated with the economic sphere. However, migration may affect power relations between developing and developed countries, distinctive ethnic, group, and gender identities (Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty, 2009, p. 21).

Regardless of the position taken while examining the association between migration and inequality, it could not be rejected that the expressions "optimism" and "pessimism", which work on a perplexing reality, had been a valuable logical instrument (Gamlen, 2014). Be that as it might, there was yet a significant perspective while investigating this relationship. It did not put inequality as end product of migration but reason of it. Uneven distribution everywhere, whether it be global, national, or local, has encouraged people to leave their homes for other locations that offered better chances (Martin, 1992; De Haas, 2005; Development Research Center on Migration, Globalization and Poverty, 2006; Sládková & Bond, 2011).

According to Kaneff and Pine (2012), the expansion and development of the capitalist world market led to more instances and a more pronounced degree of regional and global inequality. Likewise, globalization process additionally proceeded to support and expand national development's differences (Cheng and Yang, 1998). As the outcome, there is another change in population as individuals had struggled responding evolving conditions (Kaneff and Pine, 2012, p. 4). Accordingly, individuals will be invigorated to move to different places. Mobility, according to Leisering and Walker (1998), was another effective tool for advancing one's aspirations in life.

The study conducted by Nieswand on the emergence of "Burgers" or foreign immigrants who successfully achieved middle-class status in their home country by working in blue-collar jobs in

Western Europe or North America, had demonstrated how disparity played a part in the migration process (Nieswand, 2014). Nieswand acknowledged that the paradox's roots in an uneven global political economy made it likely to occur in other situations when people move between different nations and regions of the world with wide disparities in living standards and wealth.

Research toward migration policy within The United Kingdom (UK) by Hayakawa (2020) examined problems and presumptions related to migrants' policy implementation and problematized the concept of skill level. It analysed the experiences of professional and low-skilled Filipino migrants in the UK after reviewing the UK's temporary migration programs. The results showed that the immigration and social policies of the host country can impose inequality between the two groups in addition to their employment role or pre-migration conditions.

### III. MIGRATION AND ANTI-POVERTY POLICY

As had been reported, there had been an increase in migration. It influenced how contemporary society was developed. Compared to earlier stages of industrialization, the post-industrial era was marked by substantially higher levels of social mobility and fluidity (Alcock, 2004, p.398). The impact of welfare programs and global economic factors, in particular, could be expected to cause individuals to move up or down the social ladder to a considerably higher extent than could have been the case in the early part of the last century. Class and employment statuses were less fixed as a result.

It was also acknowledged that, as was covered in the preceding section, different regions of the world experienced the effects of human mobility in terms of inequality. While in this section, it would be discussed how it affected anti-poverty actions and policies. The authors would first talk about the effects of migration to poverty itself before beginning to analyse it. Understanding the effects would make it easier to analyse how they might affect programs aimed at preventing or reducing poverty.

In general, poverty was thought of as either absolute or relative and was connected to a lack of resources or a failure to develop one's potential. It could be either chronic or transient, was frequently linked to vulnerability and social exclusion, and was occasionally intimately associated with inequality (Lok-Dessallien, 2000 cited in Sabates-Wheeler, Sabates, & Castaldo, 2008, p. 312). It demonstrated how closely inequality and poverty were related. According to Marshal (1972 cited in Leisering and Walker, 1998) 'illegitimate the lower end of the system of inequality was poverty'. They also contended that poverty was a mirror or seismograph that reflected a variety of ongoing societal processes.

However, there might or might not be a connection between migration and the reduction of

poverty. According to Margolis, Miotti, Mouhoud, & Oudinet (2015) the district with the longer history of migration was where poverty alleviation was known to be considerably more significant. Bastia & Skeldon (2020) claimed that it can occur due to migration enabled of commodities, money, and ideas, as well as people' transit between urban and rural areas. Additionally, it was believed that increased mobility of people will significantly improve migrant women's chances, freedom, and rights (Lasink, 2009).

Migration had helped poor Egyptians escape poverty and was a practical livelihood plan for the underprivileged (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2008). The transfer of migrants was the most important way to reduce poverty. Remittances were more important than local income in eliminating extreme poverty (Margolis et al., 2015). The majority of migrants were usually integrated into the city's economic and social structure; they were not always compelled to live in poverty despite the misconception that well-educated migrants from rural areas would become less educated than urban residents (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). However, the effects on the economy of the migrants' home country depend on the family's characteristics (Margolis et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Skeldon was worried about the poverty in the rural areas that migratory populations had fled to the cities. All the evidence pointed to the fact that mover was not the poorest, and by depriving the rural sector of its most enthusiastic and prepared individuals, it increased the level of poverty in the rural sector (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). Furthermore, Lasink contended that the possible cost of women migrating to other locations was human rights abuse and exploitation (Lasink, 2009). It implied that relocation would cost the people financially as well as otherwise.

The analysis of migration in Cape Town, South Africa after apartheid showed additional effects of migration. This study demonstrated how most migrants resided in slum areas, living in subpar conditions and some of them had been in this situation for as long as ten years (Ndegwa, Horner, & Esau, 2007). In Nairobi, Kenya, a comparable circumstance also existed. According to Zulu et al (2011) migrants had to deal with poverty in terms of both economic and health difficulties. The cause was due to the undesirable qualities of slum communities, including their inadequate infrastructure, poor living conditions, lack of access to services, and low level of service quality (Zulu et al., 2011).

Additionally, Ndegwa et al., (2007) discussed the problems with illegal immigrants who wind up residing in slum settlements. These migrants were typically young males who were prepared to take a chance. Study of 25 young people from the Umuzo community in Nigeria's Isiala-Mbano Imo State showed that although most young people were willing to take the risk of illegal migration, they were aware of the risks involved. This is as a result of how powerful the push-pull factors are. As a result of the rising rate of poverty, youth are inclined to offer

themselves for voluntary slavery (Nwosu et al., 2022). Another impact of the enormous migration flows was the rise of illegal immigration. According to Borjas & Crisp (2005), the large-scale migratory flows' fundamental characteristic is how frequently there are considerable flows of illegal immigrants.

Another aspect raised by illegal immigrant was illegal human trafficking or smuggling which was often called trafficking in humanity. Trafficking or human trafficking was an illegal and undocumented international migration that is categorized as people smuggling by means of fraud, coercion and violence. Trafficking is a part of the dynamics of population movement. In this case labour migration at one point can take place voluntarily for short-term interests and can be forced. Migration of labour, both voluntary and forced, is a new phenomenon. For example, during the colonial era, local residents were displaced either through repairs, trade carried out due to displacement, displacement carried out by criminals or political exile.

These issues brought on by migration, such as rising levels of poverty in the countries of origin, slum settlements, and an increase of illegal immigration, had made the government more concerned with developing anti-poverty programs. According to Margolis et al. (2015), a thorough understanding of how migration affected poverty was crucial from a policy perspective. Additionally, it had been a dispute whether migration offered benefits or drawbacks for the reduction of poverty. Thus, there was a fundamental conflict between efforts to reduce poverty on the one hand, and attempts to regulate migration on the other (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). The dynamic understanding of social interactions and policy practice became crucial in the context of social policy, particularly when it came to measure aim at eradicating or preventing poverty (Alcock, 2004, p.396). According to the study on rural-urban migration, strategies should take reality into account and be able to effectively address the repercussions of migration (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020).

The implementation of anti-poverty initiatives could perhaps be successful by understanding the effects of the migration. As a result, policies to reduce poverty should place a greater emphasis on rural areas (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). The crucial policy topics concentrated around giving villagers access to a wider variety of options; many of these might be nearby, but others might be in urban regions or even abroad. In order to foster the most advantageous systems of rural-urban interaction, real policy solutions might exist (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). Contrarily, in an urban setting, growth control was less critical and more concerned with effective city management (Bastia & Skeldon, 2020). The Small and Micro Community Enterprises (SMCE) in Thailand was one example of a policy that focuses on villagers or rural residents (Valeepitakdej & Wongsurawat, 2015). This policy aimed to encourage villages to participate in the development of small and microbusinesses to increase

their income and reduce out-migration (Valeepitakdej & Wongsurawat, 2015).

In the perspective of policy, slum settlements are another effect of migration. There is an exclusion, as evidenced by the instance of migrants who spend a decade living in facilities-free slum settlements. It is known that one factor contributing to social exclusion is the quality of life, including physical and mental health, living conditions, crime, harm, and criminalization (Levitas et al., 2007). Its relationship to policy is that poverty has introduced a new concept of policy, which is active inclusion strategy. Poverty stresses not only a shortage of resources and deprivation as well as the loss of status and power driven on by poverty and social exclusion (Heidenreich et al., 2014, p.194). An active inclusion plan that included several anti-poverty measures was one of the innovative strategy to minimize poverty (Heidenreich et al., 2014).

By providing a minimal income, activation, and social services, this policy was enhancing the agency of those who were excluded (Heidenreich et al., 2014, p.180). This pattern had developed since the welfare state had changed to emphasize the activation of investment in human capital as a means of promoting labour market participation (Bonoli and Natali, 2011 cited in Heidenreich et al., 2014).

Even if there was theoretical and empirical support for the relationship between migration and its impact on anti-poverty policy, the question of who was ultimately responsible for the issues caused by migrants remains. In addition, as was already indicated, the number of illegal immigrants was rising. Did the difficulties of migrants fall under the purview of the governments of origin or of destination? It presented a challenge for decision-makers to develop an anti-poverty strategy for their region. However, it had to be understood that states had authority to define the situation of the people who live in their country (Entzinger, 1999). It follows that the perception and definition of immigrant and minority issues within Europe varied significantly, and these variations were reflected in the consultation structures and methods (Council of Europe, 1999, p. 183). For instance, certain Western European nations had considered how to fairly include immigrants in political discussion and decision-making (Entzinger, 1999).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Elements of globalization, such as its use of cutting-edge technology, had changed society. The movement of people was one effect of globalization. There were many causes for migration, including the desire for a better life in a location with superior resources, the necessity for labour, wars, and natural disasters. However, the link between migration and inequalities had garnered increased attention. Global inequalities might rise or fall as a result of migration. Depending on the degree and kind of inequality. The primary factors that could lessen inequality were considered to be remittances.

Additionally, migration could promote brain exchange, which benefited the regions from which it originated. While the problem that would exacerbate the disparities was the brain drain. In addition, it was anticipated that asymmetric growth will occur as migration-related dependency on origin areas increases. In this situation, migration was seen as a contributing factor to global inequality. On the other hand, migration could also be viewed in the context of global inequality. The disparities had inspired individuals to migrate.

Migration, however, also affected anti-poverty practices and programs. According to several studies, governments should take into account the actual effects of migration on poverty and development. Additionally, social exclusion was a problem in the creation of anti-poverty strategies. However, there was a conundrum when formulating policies because of the question of who would be accountable for migrant problems, particularly those of illegal migrants. The home or host government?

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