

THE GOVERNANCE OF IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION A COMMENTARY

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I appreciate the paper of Prof. Danièle Joly that presents the issues on the question of immigration and integration through the study of the French and British cases. The paper also shows a concern for the welfare both of immigrants and refugees and calls on countries both of the industrialized ones and some “less developed ones” for policies that insure migrants’ legality and social rights and for more openness to *entrée* and integration.

As an observer from a developing country of social processes affecting the life-chances and total well-being of people, I think that it is pretty obvious that the main reason for movements of people is the imbalance in social and economic wealth between and among countries. Wars and low monetary incentives as well as a high degree of unemployment coupled with an undeveloped social security system become precipitating factors for incidence of refugees and economic migrants.

Governance of immigration and integration in terms of international policies on the part of international bodies should be a global concern considering the fact that labor migration from the monetarily poor countries to monetarily rich countries seems to be inevitable. The factor that causes this labor mobility is that in more highly economically developed countries, children and young are rapidly decreasing simultaneously with the increase of population among the elderly while in the economically underdeveloped and developing countries, children and youth as well as the elderly are fast increasing. Moreover, in this globalization context, the flow of migrants towards the developed countries searching for improved life-chances and the corresponding demand for services needed in these countries will be further accelerated. However, it is also understandable, that the movements

of people with their respective cultural differences breed tensions and conflicts between those of the receiving countries and the people from the sending countries unless a system of fair exchanges between them based on human and social rights principles would be set.

The Philippines is a case in point for understanding the issue of migration from the side of a developing world. Philippines was a receiving country for Vietnamese refugees in the 60s and presently continues to be a sending country for economic migrants.

Refugees

With reference to refugees, the experience of the Philippines as a receiving country is related to the upsurge of Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines during the war in Vietnam which ended in 1975. We still have former Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines but they are already well integrated in Philippine society. As host country, it designed a program for the Vietnamese refugees with the support of *United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)*, to prepare them for their final destination country of migration. And those who have not been accepted by other countries have been given all opportunities to stay in a village assigned to them. In this village the Vietnamese can foster and promote their culture while their children enroll in various Filipino schools. So far there have not been cases of hostilities between the Vietnamese and the Filipino children and youth. However, the Vietnamese in the Vietnamese village may also opt to leave the village to settle in other parts of the country. The whole process of governance and integration in this regard has been facilitated largely by the Catholic Church.

Economic Migrants (Permanent and Temporary)

The phenomenon of the Filipino out-migration is striking. As one of the biggest senders in Asia of workers abroad, the Philippine government statistics record departures of overseas land-based and sea-based Filipino workers at an estimated average of 700,000 annually (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1999) An average of 2,511 *Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)* left the Philippines daily during the first 8 months of the year 2000, representing an 8% increase over the previous year at 2,293 OFWs leaving daily (Facts on Filipino Labor Migration 2000, Kanlungan Center). To date there are more than 7.2 million OFWs spread in 187 countries and desti-

nations worldwide. Overseas Filipinos include permanent residents abroad (2.33 million), OFWS (2.96 million) and undocumented (1.91 million). They comprise 13.4 percent of the total household population age 15 years above and 19% of its labor force.

Permanent migrants understandably are mostly in the United States (U.S.) due to Philippines' former colonial relationship with U.S., in fact, Filipinos were second to Chinese (20.62 vs. 21.61% respectively) in terms of estimates of Asian population in the U.S. in 1990. Emigration to U.S. started already in 1903 with "pensionados" migrating. The second wave of migrants from 1907 consisted of farm-workers recruited by plantation owners in Hawaii and California. A third wave of migrants in U.S. followed, dominated by professionals and then by housewives, clerical students and students. With the oil crisis in mid-70s came the Filipino contract land-based (recruited for Middle-East countries) and sea-based workers. (Ma. Alcestis Abrera-Mangahas. *Filipino Overseas Migration: 1975-1986*. Social Weather Stations, Inc., pp. 6-10).

The out-migration policy of the Philippines is reflected in the *Philippine Overseas Employment Authority* (POEA), a government bureau established for the purpose of regulating the recruitment and protection of overseas workers. In 1974, a brochure of POEA quoted the former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos who stated that "the best weapon for economic growth is the export of manpower". Today, Filipinos are in 187 countries of the world. The words of the former Philippine President Marcos have been proven true. In-flows of income to the country is estimated at an average of 8 billion US dollars (400 billion pesos). In the Year 2003 the Budget approved by the Philippine Government is 16 billion US dollars or 804 billion pesos (Manila Bulletin, April 24, 2003) Thus, the earnings of the Philippines from overseas work are equivalent to 50% of the annual budget of the Philippines and 10.5% of the country's GDP, based on the GDP of the Year 1999 of the Human Development Report 2001, which was 76 bn US dollars or 3800 bn pesos. The GNP then in 1999 would have been an estimated 84 bn US dollars or 4200 bn pesos. The earnings of Overseas Work are 9.5% of GNP. Indeed it has been said that "the Philippine economy will remain heavily dependent on Filipino overseas workers". Income from Filipino Overseas Workers (OFWs), according to President Gloria Arroyo speaking to Overseas Filipinos in Singapore and calling them, "modern day heroes", has propped up the Philippine economy especially during the financial crisis of 1997 and 1998 (Agence France, Aug. 26, 2001, Singapore).

The following are the characteristics of Filipino Outmigration: 1) manpower export as a definite development strategy; 2) a broad spectrum of workers (sea-farers, managers, engineers, accountants, nurses, doctors, teachers, entertainers and domestic helpers etc.) desperately on the move to seek greener pastures; 3) under-qualification in order to take on menial jobs (public school teachers and other bachelor degree holders willing to work as domestic helpers abroad); 4) and high incidence of illegal entrants (Ramirez, M., *When Labor Does not Pay, the Case of Filipino Outmigration*, 1997, p. 6).

The situation of high unemployment and of low salaries and wages in the Philippines which due to mass media raises its people's expectations towards the "good life" is the primary cause of Philippine outmigration. A great number of Filipino high school and college graduates from 6,590 high schools and 2,402 schools offering tertiary (college, graduate and post-graduate) education join the ranks of the unemployed in the country and thus are pushed to seek life-chances for themselves and their families outside of the country (Philippine Statistical Yearbook, 1998, cited by Philippine Education for the 21st century. The 1998 Philippine Sector Study. Asian Development Bank's Technical Background Paper No. 2 on Education Costs and Financing in the Philippines with Leo Maglen and Rosario G. Manasan as Consultants, p. 77). The push for working outside of the country is aggravated by the fact that while there are at least a million additional Filipinos yearly with a population growth rate of 2.4% (Human Development Report, 2001) only a small middle class will have to support children, youth and the increasing number of the elderly. Social security is available only to 40% of the population. Small farmers, fisherfolk, urban population in the informal economy, indigenous groups, the self-employed, the small service-workers are not covered by the Social Security System.

A former Secretary of the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development laments the situation especially of the "poor working and living conditions of Filipino migrants, particularly the undocumented and the women, and worse, the negative effects on the children of OFWs" (Corazón Alma de León, "Children's Welfare and Governance", Sophia Lecture Series no. 6, Asian Social Institute, 2003). Severe social costs are the consequences of Filipino out-migration. A number of children are deprived of one parent, especially of their mothers, who work abroad temporarily to gather sufficient income to be able to make their children complete a college education. In the meantime, the children suffer anxiety, confusion, and become low performers in school.

Policies Towards Migrants as a Development Resource

The phenomenon of globalization advocates liberalization, privatization and de-regulation applied to financial capital, goods and services accompanied by radical changes due to the rapid advance of information technology. Will globalization liberalize the acceptance by richer countries of workers from poorer countries? Demand for services in the economically developed countries due to an aging population will have to call on the work-force of the under-developed and developing countries. At present the U.S. needs teachers, Canada needs care-givers, and Ireland, international social workers. A recent study on “The Migration-Development Nexus: Evidence and Policy Options”, gives this observation:

International liberalization has gone far with respect to movement of capital, goods and services, but not to labor mobility. Current international institutions provide little space or initiatives for negotiations on labor mobility and the flow of remittances. There is a pressing need to reinforce the view of migrants as a development resource. Remittances are double the size of aid at least as well targeted at the poor. Migrant diasporas are engaged in transnational practices with direct effects on aid and development; developed countries recognize their dependence on immigrant labor; and policies on development aid, humanitarian relief, migration, and refugee protection are often internally inconsistent and occasionally mutually contradictory. (By Ninna Nyberg-Sorensen, et al., *IOM International Organization for Migration*. July 2002, p. 5).

The foregoing observation of *IOM* is something to be considered towards improving the life-chances of economic migrants while sending countries strive to address, through their policies, the multi-faceted and interconnected problems of lack of socially-relevant education, unemployment, poverty alleviation, lack of discipline in the practice of a monetized economy, illegal recruitment agencies, and ineffective governance. With economic globalization, bilateral arrangements among countries which ensure the human and social rights of migrants should be sought. Equally important is the campaign for the ratification of the 1999 UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their families and the adoption of the UN resolution for the protection especially of the female migrant workers.

A Long-range Perspective for Integration

Viewing the phenomenon of refugees and migrants from a long-range perspective, it is necessary to promote international programs for the prevention of undue hostilities between migrants and the people of the host countries. It is important for the UNESCO as well as schools, universities and churches to promote multi-cultural exchanges, cultural feasts aimed at multi-culturality and peace in this globalization context. Through various educational approaches, appreciation of the finest life-values of each culture can be enhanced, an education that critically examines the assumptions of culture to identify and appreciate values which promote the wholeness of life and all life-forms, a heightening of awareness of varied cultural expressions of human dignity and well-being, building of international solidarity groups who live a sense of the common good. Respect for diversity, or multi-culturalism, openness to appreciating various arts and crafts, equal opportunities to contribute to the economy will reshape globalization towards the total well-being of persons, families, communities without exclusion and marginalization.