Good Refugees and Bad Economic Migrants?

A look at what’s driving mass migration

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New Horizon Refugee Support Group
Gerry’s previous convictions

• Migrant worker in Yemen, Indonesia, Sweden, Finland and Germany
• New Horizon volunteer since 1999
• Worked on ‘jungle’ sites in Calais and Dunkirk
Immigration then and now

Harper’s Weekly  New York 1850

Daily Mail 17 November 2015
Ireland – Life Expectancy

Income per person, $/year (GDP/capita)
Ireland – Child Mortality

Child mortality rate, deaths under age 5 per 1000 births

Income per person, $/year (GDP/capita)
Ireland – Babies per Woman
Botswana – A country without a war
Ukraine – A never-ending disaster
Syria – A country at war
These economic differences drive migration

Migration by official channels is very difficult

- If you are rich you can buy a passport from a citizenship by investment scheme
- If you are highly skilled in a critical area you can come to the EU on a skilled workers visa
- It’s very difficult to get a visa for any other category of person
- Some people use asylum seeking procedure as an alternative route
Modern economies insist on:

- Free movement of capital
- Free movement of goods

It’s very difficult to achieve these while maintaining severe restriction on the movement of labour.
Restrictions on labour movement are counter productive

• It’s good for the receiving country
  • More workers
  • Improved productivity
  • Better age mix in workforce and society
  • Little or no effect on wage levels

• It’s good for the sending country
  • Emigrant’s remittances. Total global remittances in 2014 were €543 billion, more than twice official international aid
  • Transfer of skills
  • Improves wage levels for everyone

• Restrictions actively militate against people needing protection
“Trillion dollar bills on the sidewalk”

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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Efficiency Gain from Elimination of International Barriers (percent of world GDP)</th>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>Goldin, Knudsen, and van der Mensbrugghe (1993)</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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<td><strong>All barriers to capital flows</strong></td>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td><strong>All barriers to labor mobility</strong></td>
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<td>147.3</td>
<td>Hamilton and Whalley (1984, table 4, row 2)</td>
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Governments insist on drawing distinctions

65.3 million people have been forced from home. Nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

A refugee is:

– Outside country of origin
– Unable to return due to well founded fear of persecution

Where the world’s displaced people are being hosted

54% of refugees worldwide came from three countries

Top hosting countries

33,972 people a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution
9,700 staff UNHCR employs 9,700 staff (figures from December 2015)
126 countries We work in 126 countries

Source: UNHCR / 20 June 2016
“Well Founded Fear”

“of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, ...” (UNHCR definition)

Highly political definition makes it difficult to protect people who are fleeing:

– Environmental calamities such as famine, earthquake or tsunami
– Gay people who are in danger of their lives in some societies
– Women fleeing female genital mutilation, forced marriage or forced divorce

One day, hear knock on door. Man ask “Who is?” “Is potato man, I come around to give free potato” Man is very excite and opens door. Is not potato man, is secret police.
United Nations conventions

Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  – *Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind ...*

Convention on Protection of Refugees

Other relevant conventions exist on racism, human rights, status of women and rights of the child.

Most UN member states have signed up to these conventions and incorporated them into national law.

Unfortunately very few states abide by them.
Irish interpretation of UN conventions

The UNHCR Convention on the protection of refugees in Ireland is implemented by:

– International Protection Act (2015)

We will discuss how these work in the next session.
References

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