

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS



MIGRATION FLOWS
and
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

SPRING EDITION 2019

Letter from the Editors in Chief

As the academic year nears its end, we want to reflect on the collective journey we have all gone through this year. As the Editors in Chief of Global Conversations, we are incredibly proud of the content this publication has produced over the past eight months. It is the result of over 40 passionate student journalists, who have worked tirelessly to create over 100 articles and podcasts this year alone. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our team of directors, editors, writers, and podcasters for all their time and effort. We would also like to thank Sole Fernandez and the entire administration of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy for their continued support for this student-led initiative.

We are very proud to release our third and final Global Conversations issue for the 2018-2019 year on the theme of "Migration Flows and Changing Demographics." This topic is one that students in the the Master of global Affairs program have engaged with extensively, as it requires the type of interdisciplinary approach that MGA students excel at.

In this final issue, we think it is pertinent to acknowledge the positions of immense privilege we come from, especially when engaging with the topic of migration and demographic shifts. These types of events are often motivated by extreme violence, famine, and environmental changes that individuals and families around the world experience daily. It is our duty as masters students studying global affairs to remain both engaged with these sorts of events, and cognizant of our positions in relation to the events we study.

We hope that as readers of Global Conversations, you have enjoyed the engaging and critically minded pieces produced by our peers. We believe Global Conversations is an essential part of learning how to analyze trends and think in a multidisciplinary way about global challenges.

We thank everyone for their extremely hard work over the past eight months, and look forward to seeing how Global Conversations develops and changes in the future.

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Gilda Monreal

The cover design for this issue is inspired by the natural migratory routes of some of the largest animals on earth. Every year, Humpback whales embark on a marathon journey from equatorial waters to their feeding grounds near the poles. These odysseys are often fraught with dangers, but these animals are motivated by the necessity to feed and reproduce.

The world is currently experiencing an unpredicted age of human migration, which like these whales, is motivated by the necessity to find safety and opportunity in new waters. The choices made by peoples to cross foreign lands and dangerous waters are ones which are motivated by changing global political, economic and environmental landscapes and the conflict that comes with these changes. Migrants traveling on the back of the whale are seen as leaving conflict and moving towards new borders. The whale lifts her head in an attempt to help them cross over fenced walls, symbolizing hope of getting across into new lands. The reality is, however, that migrants often face barriers in their journeys to safety, such as barbed wire fences, border controls, and refugee camps. Arriving at the 'safe' end can mean the beginning of new challenges for migrants. With surveillance increasingly used at border crossings in the forms of traditional patrol and more recently, advancing technologies, migrants will face new hurdles to finding safety.

By contrasting the natural process of movement and migration against the stratifying nature of walls and political boundaries, this issue strives to humanize the individuals caught up in the current wave of irregular migration, highlighting their common experiences, challenges, and their natural drive to seek opportunity in new environments.

Introduction

There are presently few global issues that are subject to so much hysteria and misinformation as migration and demographics. It is true that changing migratory and demographic patterns are fundamentally altering the makeup of this planet. However, these phenomena are neither surprising nor unnatural. Like so many flora and fauna on Earth, humans are migratory creatures. Since the dawn of humanity, peoples have moved across the globe in search of food, shelter, and security. Similarly, demographic concerns have always played a key role in the arc of history. As the saying goes, “demography is destiny”, since one group’s ability to grow and manage its population has often been key to political and economic power.

The historical antecedents aside, today’s migratory and demographic changes are remarkable in their own right. Demographic changes are pressuring societies from two fronts. On the one hand, traditional Malthusian fears of overpopulation straining scarce resources are still prevalent; however, many eyes now turn to the growing concern that underpopulation render the current level of economic prosperity unsustainable. Meanwhile, international migration has grown considerably in recent decades to encompass more than three per cent of the entire global population, while internal migration numbers are roughly three times larger. As before, many people move for benign reasons—work, school, lifestyle—however, what is particularly concerning is the rapid growth in displacement migration. Driven by conflict, humanitarian abuse, ecological collapse, natural disasters, and a myriad of other causes, ever-greater numbers of humans are being forced from their homes to seek refuge abroad.

The twin issues of migration and demographics are intimately intertwined. Changing demographics act as significant push factors for migration, since the resultant competition for food, water, and jobs during a population boom often forces many people to seek a better life elsewhere. In the case of South-to-North migration, these new immigrants are a valuable asset for reversing the demographic decline that hinders much of the developed world. However, long-standing nationalistic and racist sentiment, fueled by an era of rapid propagation and dissemination of misinformation, has too often created hostile political atmospheres in the host countries. Instead of integration and celebration, many immigrants face ostracization and demonization in their new homes.

The Spring 2019 edition of Global Conversations seeks to shine a light on many of the all-too-human elements of migration and demographics that get lost in the debate. Some articles bring fresh perspectives to many global hotspots of demographic pressure and migratory flows, ranging from Brazil and El Salvador to Bangladesh and Honk Kong. Others explore key thematic global challenges related to these issues, including inadequate health services for migrants, illiberal backlash in the West, and shifting suicide trends. Still others seek to advocate a new way of approaching the demographic and migratory issues, one that imbibes a mindset that is conscious of environment, indigenous, and development affairs. Taking together, the Global Conversations writers have brought forth a multifaceted, holistic understanding of the critical issues of migration flows and changing demographics.

*Geordie Jeakins,
Director of Written Content*

Migration Flows and Changing Demographics

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Climate Change, Migration, and Nationalism: Why we need to talk about all three

BY ALI CANNON



CLIMATE change is increasing environmental migration both domestically and internationally, prompting the need for greater legal and political action in support of climate refugees.

Global temperatures are rising. An increasing number of extreme weather events are associated with this rise, including prolonged droughts, coastal flooding, intensified heatwaves, hurricanes, and wildfires. Between 2008 and 2014 alone, these changing climate patterns forced a yearly average of 22.5 million people to be displaced. Without intervention, this number is expected to rise above 200 million by 2050.

DOMESTIC PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

Forced displacement caused by environmental circumstances occurs primarily within nations. A 2018 World Bank report focusing on the nexus between slow-onset climate change impacts and internal migration, estimates that climate change could drive more than 140 million to be internally displaced in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America alone by mid-century.

These are three of the world's most densely populated, developing regions, making migration an especially pressing concern.

Internal migrants tend to move from rural agricultural areas to denser urban populations. These cities often lack the infrastructural and institutional capacity to support this rapid urbanization and, as a result, develop pockets of extreme poverty and other public health hazards.

Bangladesh exemplifies the consequences of being underprepared for internal migration. As a riverine South Asian nation, Bangladesh is no stranger to tropical storms, flooding, and other natural disasters. Recently, however, climate change has accelerated these historically destructive forces. Over the past decade nearly 700,000 Bangladeshis have been displaced annually due to climate and natural disasters.

Shifting precipitation patterns have led to deluges of silt-filled runoff from Himalayan Glaciers, which have eroded river banks and flooded homes. With the majority of its landmass lying below sea level, the wet season

can lead to more than one-fifth of the country being submerged. Rising sea levels are also to blame, as they bathe large expanses of agricultural land with saltwater. This combination of erosion, salinity intrusion, and repeated inundation is increasing the rate of crop failure and making life along the coast unfeasible. Consequently, the number quoted above for internally displaced Bangladeshis each year is increasing as coastal inhabitants flee to more central, urban areas - principally the capital Dhaka.

Increased displacement, as exemplified in Bangladesh, is especially troubling considering how climate change acts as a threat multiplier. Severe climatic shifts that decrease the viability of an area and trigger large-scale displacement contribute to political unrest and increase the probability of igniting or prolonging conflict. This was seen in the Arab Spring. There, climate change increased the frequency of droughts, leading to water scarcity, multi-year crop failures and economic deterioration. This, in turn, caused a mass migration to urban areas where overpopulation contributed to the outbreak of civil war. The Arab Spring and other similar stories emphatically demonstrate the need for an explicit international recognition of the link between climate change, migration, and conflict.

NATIONALISM VS. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Climate-driven migration isn't always domestic. In late 2018, thousands of individuals participated in a migrant caravan that made its way to the southern U.S. border. An assessment conducted by U.S. border officials found that the migrants were primarily driven by "drought-stricken farms and hunger". The migrant caravan news story triggered U.S. President Donald Trump to double down on his attempt to secure funding for a border wall, leading to a shutdown of the American government for thirty-five days.

Recent surges of nationalism world-wide may pose a threat to improved protection for climate migrants. Political trends have demonstrated an appetite for anti-immigration domestic policies, an aversion to international agreements, and a polarization surrounding the topic of climate change.

A WAY FORWARD

Despite nationalistic trends, it seems that not all political will is missing from the issue of climate migration. In December 2018, delegates from 160 countries met in Morocco to adopt the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), which recognized climate change as a driver of migration for the first time. This compact called on signatories to better understand and predict movements that may be caused by natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation.

While a step in the right direction, the agreement is voluntary and not legally binding. It also hasn't led to any changes in domestic policies nor has it led to any bilateral or regional agreements being developed, at least not yet. From a legal perspective, there is still no such thing as a climate refugee or migrant. As per the 1951 UNHCR refugee convention, only those who have "a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" may qualify as a refugee. While this definition is clearly outdated, in a time of retreating liberalism, re-opening the refugee convention may harm those who are most in need of protection.

That said, and even though the effects of the GCM seem limited to date, the GCM still offers itself as a tool to civil society advocates to leverage domestic and foreign policy reform that is more open and supportive to those who are displaced. Effective policy can mitigate the risks created by migration, especially as related to overpopulation and conflict. These policies will be imperative for environmental migrants, however, they still remain a band-aid solution to a much larger underlying problem, climate change.



Ali Cannon graduated in 2018 from Western University with a Bachelor of Science Honours in Environmental Science, with an area of emphasis in genetics and the environmental determinants of population health.

PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, HITESH CHOUDHARY

Mo' (Development) Money, Mo' Problems? Analyzing the Migration Hump

BY EMMA AMARAL



ALTHOUGH rich countries attempt to use foreign aid to stabilize less developed countries and stave off 'irregular migration', researchers have found that an increase in socio-economic development is likely to lead to more, not less, migration. Developed countries often frame aid funding and development projects in lower-income countries as addressing the 'root causes' of migration. Despite this common rhetoric and the money that flows between 'receiving' and 'sending' states, migration patterns are far more complicated. The "migration hump" refers to the correlation between development and migration that follows an inverted 'U' shape. Emigration from low-income countries increases amid economic growth and rising income levels until the status of upper-middle-income has been achieved; even then, a decrease in emigration can be anticipated but not guaranteed.

THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

Many countries use aid funding to address migration. The European Union has pledged three billion euros in development funding across the African continent to address the 'root causes' of "destabilization, forced displacement, and irregular migration." Italian Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini, has announced the country

will spend at least one billion euros in Northern Africa to stem migration flows to Italy. While he was the United Kingdom Defense Secretary, current MP Michael Fallon advocated for the use of the foreign aid budget to deter the mass migration of refugees into Europe.

The United States has also pledged billions of dollars in development funding to try to stem migration flows from Central America and southern Mexico. However, the Trump administration has also threatened to withhold this money to pressure sending states to do more to prevent 'caravans' from forming. The U.S.'s aid specifically aims to "promote better security conditions and job opportunities" in sending states, so that locals are not driven to the United States. Mexican President Andrés Manuel Obrador echoed this, stating "I have a dream that I want to see become a reality... that nobody will want to go work in the United States anymore."

A MIGRATION PARADOX

Researchers Hannah Postel and Michael Clemens point out that there are two outcomes that must occur before the aforementioned strategies become effective. First, foreign aid must succeed in substantially changing the economic and social conditions in sending states.

Second, these changes must actually translate into fewer people leaving these countries. In regard to the former, the evidence reveals that it would actually take almost two centuries (at the average historical growth rate) for a currently poor country to reach the threshold (GDP per capita around USD \$8,000-10,000 at purchasing power parity) where emigration begins to decrease. Even this calculation, however, is based on the premise that aid funding in poor countries actually results in significant economic growth; an assumption that is inconclusive, to say the least.

It is far from certain that aid dollars alone can improve complex problems, such as youth unemployment, conflict, and human rights abuses, in a broad and sustainable way. Furthermore, even if aid is effective, the current levels of assistance to sending states are far too low to spark significant and sustainable development, reduce emigration (or incentivize return migration), or address the more fundamental 'root causes' of migration. Aid funding would need to be implemented in an unprecedented manner - at much higher levels of funding and over the span of multiple generations - in order to meaningfully impact migration flows.

Assuming that 'development' in sending states is achieved, such as higher incomes and better health and education systems, this won't necessarily lead to decreased emigration—in fact, it may encourage it. Research shows that emigration from middle-income countries is normally far higher than emigration from poor countries: 67 of the 71 countries that achieved middle-income status over the past several decades saw an increase in emigration. In addition, migration scholar Hein de Haas notes that "the very process of development is even conditional on the transfer of rural labour to urban sectors within and across national boundaries."

Poor countries with the lowest Gross National Products and the highest population growth usually do not exhibit the highest rates of emigration to Western countries. They normally have limited south to north migration flows, with the exception of refugee movements in times of crises. According to de Haas' research, migration is generally more concentrated from the world's 'labour exporting' countries, which fall more towards the higher end of the lower-income category or the lower end of the middle-income scale, such as Mexico, North African countries, and the Philippines. These countries generally

fit the profile of falling birth rates but a growing demographic of working age populations, moderate economic growth, and urbanization and deagrarianization.

As poor countries become more developed and the income of labourers increases, people are able to cover the expensive cost of the migration journey itself. Furthermore, de Haas argues that 'relative deprivation' due to global disparities in life opportunities, rather than absolute or chronic poverty, is a key cause of migration. As de Haas explains, "the propensity to migrate crucially depends on aspirations, which tend to increase with 'developmental' improvements in education and access to information." This suggests that as long as stark global inequality exists, migration will continue. Since migration is such a complex phenomenon, several factors could prevent the decrease of migration on the right half of the migration hump, even if sending states do become more economically developed, such as political instability in sending states or trade protectionism by receiving states.

A HUMAN-CENTRIC MIGRATION POLICY

States may need to fundamentally rethink their framing of human migration as a problem, let alone one that can be 'solved'. History has shown that human mobility is a part of our nature and will likely always exist. States do have the ability, however, to influence how migration occurs: for example, by expanding opportunities for safe, legal, and regular migration as well as cyclical and intraregional migration. While traditional development aid and attempts to prohibit migration completely are likely to fail, cooperation between sending and receiving states that can better shape how migration occurs, will help maximize the benefits of migration for all parties.



Emma Amaral is a second year Master of Global Affairs student who previously studied psychology at the University of Toronto. During a gap year, Emma worked in social services and mental health research. Emma is interested in political psychology and diplomacy, as well as the human impact of emerging technology especially as it relates to social inequality.

PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, JBDODANE

Demystifying the Risks to Migrants' Health in Countries of Refuge

BY NATASHA COMEAU



IN an unprecedented moment in history, over 258 million people are currently living outside their country of birth. Humans are migrating at an exceptional pace, fuelled by violent conflicts, extreme poverty, and climate change. The European Union has experienced its largest influx of migrants since WWII, with over two million people arriving from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern and African countries. The health of migrants has been a controversial topic in this recent crisis, with many myths spreading that these groups come with dangerous, exotic, communicable diseases that put host populations' health at risk. The World Health Organization (WHO) has responded to these misperceptions with a recent report outlining an accurate synopsis of migrants' health status.

AN OVERVIEW OF MIGRANTS' HEALTH

The WHO's report reveals many insights into migrants' health, both in transit and when resettling into host countries. Generally, migrants appear to have good

physical health standards; they arrive with lower risks of stroke, heart disease, and all forms of cancer (apart from cervical cancer). Migrants' incidence of tuberculosis is no higher than host populations and those that are HIV positive are more likely to acquire the disease once arriving in Europe. The most important findings of the report disprove xenophobic sentiments, as there is a very low risk of migrant populations transmitting communicable diseases, and new populations do not place a disproportionate burden on the healthcare systems of host nations. In fact, the livelihoods and living conditions of host countries appear to have negative impacts on migrants' health rather than the reverse relationship. Due to unhealthy living conditions, poor diets, and obesity epidemics in the developed world, new migrants' risk of developing cancer, stroke, and heart disease increase upon settling in developed countries. Diabetes is a significant risk for new populations, with a high incidence, prevalence, and mortality rate for migrant populations in host countries, particularly women.

A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AMONG MIGRANTS

Migrants suffer from a multitude of mental health problems during transit and upon resettlement, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and acute stress. Such disorders are linked to violent experiences, lengthy migration processes, poor socioeconomic conditions, unemployment, and isolation.

Migrants fleeing violence and extreme poverty in Central America—who are now stranded in Mexico awaiting asylum in the United States—have been reported suffering from chronic mental illness. In Tijuana, Doctors Without Borders has begun treating populations for their mental health needs; 90 per cent of those being treated have suffered some form of psychological harm or physical violence in their home country, during migration, or while stranded in Mexico. Criminal

gangs in the region have begun exploiting the migrants' vulnerable status through human trafficking and sexual violence.

ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE HEALTHCARE

The health of migrants often deteriorates through a lack of access to proper health services. Refugee camps and detention centres routinely struggle to meet the needs of the overcrowded populations, and therefore, medical attention is inadequate. Upon reaching destination countries, migrants may struggle to access healthcare due to complications with legal status, language barriers, or discrimination. Only a handful of countries provide migrants with the same access to healthcare as their general public, despite the WHO calling for all countries to make medical services free to all migrants. Charging migrants for healthcare is proven to cost the governments more in the long-term due to the high cost of chronic diseases, including diabetes and mental illnesses.

The Council of Europe recently criticized Greece for their treatment of mental health patients in migrant camps, which are greatly exceeding occupancy rates. Facilities are reported to be understaffed, with an over-reliance on pharmacotherapy, few activities for patients, incidents of verbal and physical patient abuse, and inappropriate use of mechanical restraints. Greece has responded with a promise for new legislation that will increase safeguards for patients' human rights.

VULNERABLE GROUPS' HEALTH

Two migrant groups that are particularly vulnerable to health complications are children travelling without a guardian, and pregnant women. Children are especially vulnerable as they are at higher risk for abduction, trafficking, and exploitation; in turn, they face much higher rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. On America's Southern border, over 1,600 children are currently being held in detention centres awaiting processing. Due to the rapidly growing number of children, the federal government has waived a crucial requirement for mental health services, reducing the ratio of children to clinicians. This change, along with much longer stays in detention centres averaging 67 days, has had detrimental

impacts on children's mental health. Another vulnerable group in migration is pregnant women. Migrant women are more likely to experience complications in pregnancy and to die in childbirth. Their babies are more likely to be born underweight or prematurely. Causes are primarily avoidable, including delays in seeking care, miscommunications, lack of support, and poverty. Migrant women also have a much higher risk of experiencing depression before and after pregnancy, due to isolation, language barriers, and cultural conflicts.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE'S (AI) POTENTIAL TO TREAT MIGRANTS' MENTAL ILLNESSES

With the number of migrants rapidly expanding, new innovative solutions have been developed to treat the growing healthcare needs of these populations. The most immediate and widespread interventions are needed in mental health, a difficult area of treatment due to the stigma related to such illnesses in many migrant populations. In response, developers have begun using AI to treat mental illness by collecting and analyzing reams of data in order to treat patients at a lower cost and faster pace.

One AI intervention developed out of Silicon Valley is Karim, an intelligent chatbot using personalized messaging to provide emotional support to Syrian refugees. This population is widely underserved, as one-fifth of the million Syrian refugees living in camps suffer from mental illness. Karim is able to communicate with patients by providing comments, questions, and recommendations. This intervention avoids stigma around psychotherapy and can be expanded to migrant populations globally, from children in American detention centres to pregnant women resettling in Europe. While advancements in AI may continue to offer some much needed respite for a significant portion of migrants, the political misrepresentation and stigmatization of migrant health needs to be debunked.



Natasha is a second year Master of Global Affairs student and holds a BA Joint Honours degree in International Development and Political Science with a minor in Gender Studies from McGill.

PHOTO SOURCE: DOMINIC CHAVEZ/WORLD BANK

The EU's East-West Divide and its Effect on European Cohesion

BY ISAAC CRAWFORD-RITCHIE



NATIONALISM has played a role in Polish politics for centuries, as a long history of foreign occupation has created an inherent distrust of foreign influences. Today, a new form of Polish nationalism is the cornerstone of the ruling Law and Order Party (PiS), whose insistence on state sovereignty has allowed it to gain widespread support throughout the country. With the rise of nationalism in Poland, its previously strong relationship with Western European countries, such as Germany, has deteriorated and its place in the European Union (E.U.) has increasingly been called into question. Notably, the question of migration has perpetuated the growing divide between Warsaw and Brussels, as Poland has aligned with fellow Visegrád countries, such as Hungary, in its opposition to the E.U.'s migration policies. However, the divide between Poland and the West is not merely about migration. It is the symptom of deep-rooted national anxieties about foreign influence on domestic affairs. The split between former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Hungary, and Western member states could threaten the future of the E.U.

POLISH NATIONALISM AND THE PIS

The Polish PiS Party, led by its founder Jaroslaw Kaczynski and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, has been a vocal opponent of E.U.'s migrant quota system. The asylum reform plan aimed to ease the pressures put on Italy and Greece by the influx of migrants coming from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Africa. But many Eastern European countries, including Poland, rejected the E.U. policy, using appeals to state sovereignty and traditional Christian values. The PiS has accused Brussels of dictating rules to Eastern European nations and attempting to impose an elitist and secular path for Eastern Europe. These calls are consistent with the rhetoric employed by the PiS that accuse western powers of attempting to control Poland's domestic affairs as they did during World War II, or as the Soviets did until 1989. The collective paranoia of foreign influences stems from a long history of victimization, which makes the Polish population particularly responsive to the nationalist message of the PiS. According to Remi Adekoya,

the former political editor of the Warsaw Business Journal, "such rhetoric was aimed at tapping into Poles' deepest fears and resentments."

The 2015 migrant crisis provided a target for these sentiments. Kaczynski justified his anti-migration stance by claiming that Poland had to defend its sovereignty against European powers and foreign refugees. This message resonated with many Poles, particularly in rural areas, resulting in continued support for the PiS. This support has translated into political success, despite controversial nationalistic policies, such as a law which criminalized blaming Poland for crimes committed in the Holocaust or the consolidation of executive power through court-packing masked as judicial reform. Overall, the PiS has used historic national anxieties to reject migration, and has therefore denied deeper integration with Europe, secularisation, and multiculturalism, which the party claims are incompatible with Polish autonomy.

POLAND, HUNGARY, AND THE EAST-WEST DIVIDE

Hungary has stood by Poland in its rejection of the migration quota plan. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has continuously expressed that mass migration from the Middle East and North Africa threatens Europe's Christian culture. Orbán's Fidesz Party has claimed that the E.U. wishes to support illegal immigration and the weakening of members' right to border defence and sovereignty. Orbán has done so through large-scale advertising campaigns featuring the slogan, "You too have the right to know what Brussels is preparing!", referring to a commonly cited conspiracy that the E.U. is purposefully weakening its borders to allow more migrants into Europe. Similar to the PiS, Orbán has appealed to nationalist sentiments by claiming that Poland and Hungary have a common goal; "we believe Poles and Hungarians have a common path, common fight and common goal: to build and defend our homeland in the form that we want."

Orbán's recent re-election has solidified the alliance of the former communist countries against further European integration and the E.U.'s migration policies. Poland and Hungary have been joined by the Czech Republic

and Slovakia as vocal opponents of migration quotas. Although most of the global conversation has focused on the United Kingdom's exit from the E.U., many observers including Steven Erlanger and Marc Santora—the chief European diplomatic correspondent and the Warsaw Bureau Chief for the New York Times—claim that the stakes of the growing east-west divide within the E.U. outweigh that of Brexit. According to Erlanger and Santora, the conflict between Western European states and E.U. members from Central and Eastern Europe is the main threat to the cohesion and survival of the E.U. In April 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron also expressed his concern over the divide as he warned about the risks of an E.U. torn apart by disagreements between liberal and authoritarian democracies. Migration is just one issue that reflects this growing divide, as judicial reform, the rule of law, and the freedom of the press are additional issues in Eastern Europe with which the E.U. continues to grapple.

The growing chasm between Western Europe's liberal democracies and former communist states in Central and Eastern Europe goes beyond just the issue of migration. It is rooted in long established paranoia about foreign control. In some cases, such as with Orbán in Hungary, criticisms of the E.U. have come simultaneously with increasingly friendly relations with Putin. Although Poland's historical animosity towards Russia makes it unlikely that it will pursue friendlier relations with its former occupier, the clear divide between east and west in Europe is certainly playing into Putin's key foreign policy objective of undermining Europe's democratic institutions. Overall, the rise of nationalism in countries such as Poland and Hungary have hurt the prospects of Brussels' pursuit of further European integration. The willingness of these Visegrád countries to support the vision of a stronger European community may determine the future of the E.U.



Isaac is a first year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. Prior to the MGA program, Isaac received his Honours BA degree in Political Science from Western University. His primary interest is collective security within international institutions.

PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, HERMAN VAN ROMPUY

Hong Kong's Foreign Domestic 'Helpers' Refuse to Stay in the Shadows

BY FIONA CASHELL



OVER the past eight years, the percentage of women in the Hong Kong labour force has increased from just over 51 per cent in 2010 to 53 per cent in 2018. This increase has been made possible by the work of the 370,000 foreign domestic workers in the country, who mainly originate from the Philippines and Indonesia. In the next thirty years, it is projected that the country will need 600,000 workers to meet the needs of the ageing population. Despite the necessity of assistance these workers give, foreign domestic workers often face exploitation.

THE RISE OF FOREIGN 'HELPERS'

Foreign domestic workers, commonly referred to as 'domestic helpers', have been coming to Hong Kong since

the 1970s. During this time period, the Philippines became increasingly dependent on work that its citizens were finding abroad, and this need was met by the growing Hong Kong economy. The entrance of women into the Hong Kong labour force created a demand for helpers who could provide cooking, cleaning, and childcare.

Today, foreign domestic workers are required to sign a standard contract that stipulates that they will work for their employer for two years. Further, the employer is responsible for all medical bills for the duration of their employment. Should the worker be terminated, they have two weeks to leave the country if they cannot find new work—a standard that is not set for other foreign workers in Hong Kong.

PHOTO SOURCE: JIMMY CHAN

LIVE-IN REQUIREMENT

As of 2003, foreign domestic workers are required to live with their employer. This law was designed to stop the workers from seeking part-time work outside of their contract. The consequences of this law have resulted in the rampant over-working of foreign domestic workers, poor living conditions, and poor diets. Despite the law outlining that workers are entitled to a day off, this is often disregarded and workers report that they have been asked to be on-call 24 hours a day.

This work environment leaves women vulnerable to abuse. One notable case from 2014 was that of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, an Indonesian woman who was beaten by her employers after working 21 hours a day and being forced to sleep on the floor. Despite Sulistyarningsih being named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People in 2014 and the guilty verdict that was delivered to her employer, the issue of abuse has not changed for many domestic workers. In the South China Morning Post, foreign domestic worker Grace Shiella A Estrada compared her living conditions to that of a friend who is in a Hong Kong prison, saying: "It's really harder than if you were in prison."

In addition to the excessive workload, the live-in requirement also leads to social isolation for foreign domestic workers. Often, in order to socialize on their day off, they must meet in public spaces. These public Sunday gatherings have, however, been subject to discrimination including remarks from legislator Eunice Yung Hoi-yan, who, in May 2018, complained that they deteriorate the "environmental hygiene" of the city. The comments were met by protests from helpers, as well as a call for a formal apology.

PUSH FOR CHANGE

In light of the challenges that foreign domestic workers face, labour and human rights advocacy groups have focused on reforming the standard of living for these workers. The Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body is especially vocal in its concerns for the rights of these workers, often coordinating efforts between other

smaller worker's rights bodies, such as a protest against legislator Yung's remarks. Further, Justice Without Borders supports cases brought forward by workers who have experienced abuse and have since returned to their country of origin.

The live-in law was contested in court in July 2018, when the Filipino foreign domestic worker Nancy Almorin Lubiano claimed that it violated the rights of workers. Despite raising concerns that incidents, such as the abuse of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, were a direct result of the live-in rules, Justice Anderson Chow Ka-ming upheld the law. Justice Chow Ka-ming claims that there was no link between the abuse and the law. In his judgement, he stated: "If, after coming to work in Hong Kong, the foreign domestic helper finds it unacceptable, for any reason, to reside in his/her employer's residence, it is well within his/her right or power to terminate the employment." This claim, however, is not compatible with the aforementioned two-week rule and the pressure for workers to have steady employment or risk expulsion from the country.

Despite these challenges, some progress has been made for domestic workers. On February 21 2019, the Hong Kong Labour Tribunal permitted Joenalyn Mallorca to testify against her former employers via video from the Philippines. This decision has the possibility of setting precedent for similar cases that can take years to process, allowing women to return to their home countries while still seeking justice. Reforms in Hong Kong's policies show the potential for foreign domestic workers to have access to safe and dignified working conditions, an effort that will help support equality for all.



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A Case for Open Borders

BY RACHEL BRYCE



MUCH of the focus of global migration governance discourse revolves around the conceptions of nation-state borders and sovereignty. The status quo in many developed nations is one of increasing protectionism, indicated by restrictive national migration policies. Although it is expedient and makes practical sense to work within this state-centric framework, increasingly, academics are raising arguments that favour open border policies. In fact, advocates have provided detailed analyses of each of these arguments, as well as prominent objections to them. The New York Times and the Economist have also highlighted alternative migration policies, emphasizing practical arguments for welcoming more migrants into developed nations. Many experts stress that the economic benefits of migrants outweigh the costs; there is a compelling polemic for open borders.

THEY'RE NOT TAKING YOUR JOBS

From a global perspective, key economic models predict a 67 to 147 per cent increase in world GDP if borders were to open. More conservative models estimate a 20 to 60 per cent increase. With either model, the global economic benefit is clear. Carl Shulman indicates that this “doubling of the world GDP,” or gross world product (GWP) per capita, would only bring the average GWP to that of the average Greek citizen circa 2012. At current rates, the GWP will only double after approximately 20 years, so this immediate one-time doubling as a result of the opening of borders would be significant. The common fear of migrants crowding out the labour market and depressing wages have been widely disproven through multiple economic studies. David Card first

demonstrated this by looking at the way that the Miami labour market in the 1980s responded to the Mariel boatlift of Cuban asylum seekers. During this time, Miami’s labour force increased by seven per cent but this had no effect on either wages or the unemployment rates of native workers. Importantly, Card attributes this to Miami’s history of migrant absorption; less open regions may face short-term labour market tensions, but they too can ultimately absorb the new labour force and take advantage of the economic benefits of migration. Interestingly, and perhaps intuitively, all data show that countries that adopt more open migration policies benefit the most from a sudden influx of migrants, and can reduce cultural tensions and security risks.

CULTURAL TENSIONS RECONSIDERED

Regarding cultural tensions, the Economist contended in March of 2017 that “the discomfort some feel at the strange dress or speech of a passer-by does not remotely justify trillions in economic losses foisted on the world’s poorest people.” In so positing, the Economist introduces the egalitarian case for opening borders. By deconstructing the lines that divide global citizens arbitrarily, the world would address a major cause of inequality of opportunity. By permitting safe, orderly and regular migration across and within borders, international stakeholders would be allowing individuals to access resources and fully express their freedom.

For a potential test case, we can look to arrangements that have partially opened borders in the past. Specifically, Moroccan migrants often engaged in circular migration, i.e. temporary labour migration, with Spain prior to the creation of the European Union (E.U.). Moroccan labourers would come to Spain for higher wages that they would then bring back to Morocco in a mutually beneficial agreement between the two countries. This system of free labour mobility tapped into the economic benefits of migration for both the migrants and the host economy. Significantly, with the creation of the E.U. and the hardening of the southern Spanish border, Moroccans were no longer able to circularly migrate, and Spain witnessed an increase in irregular, one-direction migration. From this test case, we might

extrapolate that allowing migration to flow naturally and regularly, countries see more predictable and positive consequences.

OPEN BORDERS, OPEN OPPORTUNITIES

Farhad Manjoo writes, in his New York Times piece, “There’s Nothing Wrong With Open Borders,” arguing that the United States should not only oppose the Trump administration’s suggested border wall or call for the abolition of I.C.E. (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), but it should also enact policies that actively welcome migrants. He posits that American protectionism is defensive and “when you’re on defense, you’re losing.”

Undeniably, there are challenges associated with opening borders. Stephen Stromberg critiques Manjoo’s arguments, holding that these policies would inherently create a new underclass of residents in the country. Stromberg claims that Manjoo and other proponents of open border policies miss the significant challenge of cultural integration. That said, economist Branko Milonovic highlights the fact that “tiers of belonging already exist in many nations...”. Although serious criticisms may be raised against the Gulf States for their use of foreign workers, this labour migration is used for poverty reduction. He reiterates the egalitarian argument, stating that barring labour mobility while permitting capital mobility leads to global inequality. “Equality of opportunity cannot be a goal restricted to the level of the nation-state,” he writes. “We must pursue it globally.” And, open migration can be a first step in achieving this.



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PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, JOE RAEDLE

Two World Views: Indigenous Migration and the Relationship to Land

BY GILDA MONREAL



HOW would Indigenous migration trends be affected if global policies were based on a world view that presented earth as mother; animals, plants and minerals as brothers and sisters; and humans as equals to nature? “Impossible! That will simply never happen,” many state officials might argue. Nevertheless, this inconceivable notion has been threaded throughout international reports regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples. Frequently, these concepts are used as political language to highlight Indigenous peoples’ right to cultural identity, which fundamentally lies in their relationship to land. The recognition of Indigenous rights to land and cultural identity in international agreements,

however, is little more than a symbolic gesture, as these rights are rarely supported by state practice. This inconsistency is clearly reflected in global migration policies, which have yet to address the fundamental contrast between the dominant, Western ideology of land ownership and Indigenous perspectives on human relationships with land. In doing so, these frameworks assume cultural assimilation for Indigenous peoples by applying standardized provisions to all global migrants.

INDIGENOUS MIGRATION

The complexities of systemic disenfranchisement have created a distinct migration experience for Indigenous peoples across the world, which requires particular attention if holistic global migration policies are to be implemented. Not only do Indigenous populations experience migration caused by conflict, climate change, globalization, and persistent poverty, but their experience is compounded by centuries-long systemic dispossession of land. Many Indigenous peoples migrate to urban areas, with some countries seeing as many as 80 per cent of their Indigenous peoples living in cities and urban spaces. Furthermore, established social and political norms continue to disenfranchise Indigenous peoples, compounding migration risks such as human trafficking (particularly of Indigenous women and girls), layered discrimination, and providing inadequate access to public services. Challenges in developing effective Indigenous migration policies also include a lack of data on Indigenous migration, which leaves them vulnerable to detentions, prosecutions, deportation, and inadequate access to due process.

TWO WORLD VIEWS

When addressing Indigenous rights, current policies highlight the importance of the relationship that Indig-

enous peoples have with land. However, many international policies seem to presume that the simple mention of this relationship is sufficient to understand and appropriately address Indigenous rights without extensive contextual analysis. Moreover, these policies ignore any mention of the contrasting dominant global framework and its own relationship to land, and how this might influence or impede effective implementation of Indigenous rights. For the effective implementation of any policy that is valuable beyond rhetoric, it is necessary to examine the context within which it sits. Examining the larger international policy context on Indigenous rights reveals a global cultural, economic, and legal framework that is strikingly and systematically opposed to Indigenous rights and their relationship to land.

While the Indigenous world view is holistic, envisioning humankind and nature as interconnected and equal, the dominant industrialized global framework reflects a very different perspective. It reflects a relationship to land rooted in hierarchies and concepts of power, where it is assumed that humankind holds dominance over land and where to assume that humans and nature could be equals would be incomprehensible. In this dominant and unquestioned global structure, the anthropocentric supremacy over land lends itself to the subordination and commodification of nature. This power dynamic promotes ownership of resources at all costs, often justifying the ‘inevitable’ expulsion, extinction, or contamination of those who inhabit resource-rich territories, including Indigenous peoples, animals, plants, water and soil. There is a rigid dichotomy between these two world views, one which celebrates partnership with nature, while the other supports the subordination of nature.

Although Indigenous rights have begun to appear in high level institutional instruments like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, global, legally binding accountability frameworks have not yet been negotiated, and violations of land rights continue to impact Indigenous peoples across the world. When it comes to migration policies, the United Nations’ Global Compact mentions the right of Indigenous peoples to give or withhold free, prior, and informed consent for use of their lands, resources or traditional knowledge, which again exemplifies a global trend of highlighting Indigenous rights without con-

textual analysis. The Global Compact does not directly address Indigenous migration, other than to propose displacement mitigation strategies for economic development. If the Global Compact were to acknowledge the Western-centric context within which Indigenous world views and rights are situated, then appropriate and effective global policies could be developed. For now, a lack of international attention to this paradox implies that Indigenous peoples’ relationship to land must go through Western cultural assimilation.

How, then, are appropriate migration policies to be applied, if they are framed within a dominant legal framework which fundamentally opposes an Indigenous world view? The first step is to recognize the unique implications of migration for Indigenous populations. In addition to common migration challenges, when Indigenous peoples migrate, they also face the loss of identity linked to their land. For many non-Indigenous people, this loss may be oversimplified, and understood only as a geographical detail, however it is much more profound. From an Indigenous world view, migration may mean the loss of traditional practices, beliefs, and relationships. In some cases, it may mean the loss of local nature seen as an integral part of their community, and not merely property. Preventative and holistic Indigenous migration policies should address land grabbing, climate change, and conflict, but most importantly they should address Indigenous rights to self-determination, traditional lands, and resources. In order to properly address accurate policies for Indigenous migration beyond a symbolic gesture, global agreements will require a paradigm shift that addresses unique global Indigenous circumstances and rights.



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PHOTO SOURCE: FIYA BRUXA

Brazil's Withdrawal from the UN Migration Compact: What's next?

BY YUSHU MA



IN 2018 saw the international community make substantial efforts to build stronger cooperative mechanisms to manage the world's nearly 260 million migrants. Several prominent countries, however, appear to be moving in the opposite direction, including Brazil. On January 8th, 2019, newly-elected President Jair Bolsonaro officially stated that Brazil would withdraw from the United Nations Global Compact for Migration. Before examining the effects of Brazil's withdrawal, it is important to first understand what the UN migration compact is.

UN MIGRATION COMPACT

The official name of the UN accord is the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). It emerged from the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was developed over the course of two years into the GCM in December 2018. The GCM is the first step towards a common and comprehensive framework to manage global migration. It includes several ambitious objectives, including addressing the root causes behind mass migrations, reducing the dangers faced by migrants during transit, and building multi-

lateral frameworks amongst host countries to manage migrant inflows in a responsible and equitable way. When the text was finalized, all 193 UN member states, except the United States, agreed to sign onto the GCM. However, with increasing domestic criticism, only 152 countries formally ratified and adopted it in December 2018. Several European countries including Hungary, Austria, Italy, and Poland, refused to adopt the GCM. These countries feared that by adopting the GCM, it would encourage more illegal migration and exacerbate the European refugee crisis.

IMPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS

Bolsonaro's move to withdraw Brazil from the compact may not have immediate effects on the accord itself, since the GCM is not legally binding on its member-states. The effect of Brazil's withdrawal may have other indirect effects and deeper implications. As major states like Brazil refuse to adopt the GCM, it may influence other countries to withdraw, especially neighbouring South American states. Bolsonaro's decision to opt out of the GCM may also be an indication of his desire to lead Brazil away from multilateralism more general-

ly, especially on issues pertaining to global governance, such as climate change.

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT ONE TO WITHDRAW

When the UN finalized the text of the compact, more than 190 countries were on board; the U.S. was the only major economy opposing the deal. At the UN's inter-governmental conference in Morocco in early December 2018, a total of 164 UN members agreed to adopt the compact. One week later, only 152 of those countries voted in favour. This clearly shows how when powerful states refuse to buy-in to these types of accords, it can cause a chain reaction leading to weakened global governance. European nations accounted for most of the countries which did not vote in favour of the compact. Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland directly voted against it, while Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, and Romania abstained. This reflects the growing ride of populist politics in Europe, many of whom, just like Bolsonaro, have recently entered government and are attempting to change their countries' relationships and responsibilities in multilateral organizations like the UN. The GCM is not a binding treaty and mostly strives to strengthen international cooperation on migration issues. Still, many of these populist leaders have stressed their fear that the GCM will reduce their sovereign ability to set their own individual immigration policies. President Bolsonaro is clearly a critic. He explicitly stated that Brazil has the sovereign right to determine its immigration policies, and Brazilian people have the power to determine whether or not to accept migrants. Now that Brazil has pulled away from its commitments, other countries which adopted the compact may have newfound doubts, and some may be considering withdrawal as well. With fewer countries participating, the GCM itself will become weaker, and the effectiveness of international cooperation on migration may come into question.

Common market and immigration policy reforms Brazil has long been a hub for foreign migrants. According to an estimate, there were nearly four million foreign-born nationals living in Brazil in 2009. In recent years, Brazil has accepted a large number of refugees from Venezuela, Haiti, and Cuba. According to UN estimates, roughly 96,000 Venezuelan refugees have

migrated to Brazil due to recent political turmoil in their country. However, Bolsonaro's withdrawal from the GCM may be a signal of upcoming immigration policy reforms. Bolsonaro has publicly criticized refugees in Brazil and has stated that Brazil should not have open borders.

In addition to possible reforms to Brazil's immigration policies, Brazil's withdrawal may also threaten the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), which has been in place for more than twenty years. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Venezuela (suspended since 2017) and Uruguay are its full members. Associate members include Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. Since its inception, MERCOSUR has promoted free trade and the free movement of goods, services and people within the region. Brazil's withdrawal from GCM casts doubt on the preservation of the free movement of people within Latin America, a key pillar of MERCOSUR and free trade more broadly.

THE RETREAT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Bolsonaro's withdrawal from GCM signals a profound rejection of international cooperation and global governance. For instance, environmentalist groups have criticized Bolsonaro's pro-market economic policies for harming the environment. After he was elected in December 2018, Bolsonaro publicly stated that Brazil needs to re-examine the Paris Agreement and that he was open to following the United States' lead and pulling out of the accord. Thus, the deeper implication of his withdrawal from GCM is that it represents Bolsonaro's disdain for international cooperation. Walking away from GCM is momentous in and of itself, but it could be only the first step down a road to a far less cooperative Brazil on the world stage.



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PHOTO SOURCE: MARCOS BRANDÃO/SENADO FEDERAL

Can Colombia's Open Migration Policy Continue?

BY AMAL ATTAR-GUZMAN



At the Simón Bolívar bridge, that spans from San Antonio del Tachira, Venezuela, to Norte de Santander, Colombia, thousands of men, women, and children wait in front of border agents, carrying all their belongings. Many others wait to pass through the border to start a new life in a country that is similar to the one they left behind. Other border points, such as Cúcuta, receive thousands of Venezuelan migrants daily.

VENEZUELA'S COLLAPSE

Prior to the migration crisis, Venezuelans were among the wealthiest people in Latin America. Additionally, the country had the most equal income distribution in Latin American. Colombians began migrating to Venezuela starting in the second half of the 20th century, and with the petroleum boom of the 1970s, millions more joined the migratory trends.

That all changed in 2010, when former President Chávez declared an “economic war on all business sectors” due to the great shortages of basic necessities, from food to medical supplies. This economic instability was further exacerbated with the death of Chávez in 2013. Chávez’s deputy, Nicolás Maduro, came into power when Venezuela’s economy was already in decline. The fall in the price of crude oil in 2014, the country’s main export, contributed to hyperinflation. As the situation worsened, aggravated by Maduro’s cronies and the violent 2014 protests, millions of Venezuelans began leaving their country for Colombia.

COLOMBIA AS MIGRATION DESTINATION

In response, Colombia has opened its borders to over a million Venezuelans and establishing a receptive migration policy. But the process has not been easy. The Colombian national migration authority has issued thousands of identity cards to Venezuelans. These documents

provide immigration status, allowing the recipients to enter into the labour force and move freely, following the government’s integrating initiative. However, with the program’s expiration in December 2018, new migrants lack that protection.

In response, the Colombian government stated that the program is in the process of being adapted, with a plan to allow for more Venezuelan migrants. Felipe Muñoz, the Colombian official in charge of the border zone, stated how he wants to shift the Venezuelan migration crisis from a humanitarian issue to “a process of development” that will not only serve the country’s economic development but also Venezuelan migrants.

STRAINING THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Trisha Bury, Deputy Director for the International Rescue Committee stated: “I’ve never seen a government trying this hard to register people and leave the borders open.” But while there has been a progressive initiative to receive more Venezuelan migrants, “unfortunately, [with] the scale of this crisis, and the speed at which it changes, [it could be] more than [what] Colombia can handle.”

The crisis may also negatively affect the country’s economic standing. Colombia’s foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo explained that if the situation continues at this rate, up to four million Venezuelan migrants will be residing in Colombia by 2021. At the moment, approximately 1.5 million Venezuelans are currently living in Colombia. They account for approximately 0.5 per cent of Colombia’s healthcare, education and infrastructure spending.

In a scenario with four million Venezuelan migrants, the resources needing to be allocated would be equivalent to USD \$8.87 billion. Increasing unemployment and dropping wages for the local population due to the influx may have broader socio-political outcomes. There are also security concerns on the Venezuela-Colombia border. Violence and organized crime have flourished, whole narcotics, weapons, gasoline, and people are being smuggled across the border at an alarming rate, which threatens not only Colombia’s domestic security, but also Venezuela’s migrants and local border populations.

THE HUMAN FACE OF THE CRISIS

According to the United Nations migration agency, more than two million Venezuelans have left their home country, and the majority are arriving in neighbouring South American countries.

On the other side of the border, the Venezuelan government does not recognize figures put out by the Colombian government or the international community. President Nicolás Maduro and other government officials dismissed present migration figures, claiming it to be “fake news”; politically-motivated by opposing forces and aimed to justify foreign intervention in domestic affairs. Furthermore, the internal political crisis is not deescalating. There is now a presidential and constitutional crisis between President Nicolás Maduro and Interim President Juan Guaidó. The Venezuelan citizenry are divided on the matter, along with many actors in the international community, supporting one side or the other.

With all the domestic, regional, and international challenges, President Iván Duque Márquez declared in front of the United Nations: “despite any social and fiscal difficulties...we are united by fraternity.” Overall, the Colombian public has been supportive of Venezuelan migrants since they themselves have suffered from similar domestic turmoil, displacement, and violence in the recent past. Since Venezuela has historically opened its doors to former Colombian migrants, it appears it is time for Colombians to pay it forward as the migratory trend reverses. The question remains whether the Colombian government’s adapted migration policy initiative will be flexible enough to implement a sustainable, long-term agenda.



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PHOTO SOURCE: NOT A PROPERTY OF GLOBAL CONVERSATION

The Role of Remittances in African Development

BY VANESSA HAYFORD



IN thinking of migration in the African context, images of massive flows of African migrants arriving on the shores of European countries have been burned into our collective consciousness by mass media. In the frenzy of sensationalism over today's migration issues, however, the agency of migrants from African countries and the opportunities that can come from migration have been ignored in today's common narrative of African migrants.

Whether it involves sending money for an elderly parent's medication or transferring funds so that a loved one can buy food, remittances are a fundamental and routine part of daily life for many diaspora communities. These collective flows of money are crucial when it comes to economic development, and they possess untapped potential for sustainable growth. When it comes to Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no greater opportunity in migration than the incredible potential of remittances. With eight out of ten of the fastest growing migrant populations coming from this region, it is estimated that remittances sent to Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 9.8 per cent between 2017 and 2018. At present, flows

of remittances are far outstripping official development assistance and are proving to be more stable than flows of private capital.

MAKING MONEY MOVE

Remittances are considered a financial lifeline for many individuals across the continent and are known to help alleviate poverty, allow for increased access to education, and contribute to an overall decrease in inequality. The positive ripple effects of remittances on levels of development extend beyond the household. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa specifically, a number of countries have a high dependence on remittances, with such flows comprising over 20 per cent of GDP in Gambia and Liberia.

The ability to transfer money home is crucial due to the fact that it allows migrants and their families to be active participants in the development of their own country. Roughly 75 per cent of remittances coming into Sub-Saharan Africa are spent on basic consumption, allowing individuals who would otherwise be unable, to mean-

fully participate in their economies. The remaining 25 per cent of remittances, however, have the potential to be even more impactful. Through efforts in financial inclusion and the promotion of investments in infrastructure, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, Africa's diaspora communities could further contribute to development by providing the catalyst for broader economic activities.

SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

While financial flows are usually the primary focus in discussions pertaining to remittances, contributions to development can also be made through social remittances; that is, the social capital that is developed by migrants and brought back to their home countries when they return. Sub-Saharan Africa can greatly benefit from social remittances. In a continent that reports higher unemployment rates than the global average, the mobility of skilled individuals to other countries reduces pressures on the working population and can fill labour gaps in other regions.

Individuals who choose to migrate for economic reasons are also able to develop skills and create a brain gain upon return. According to a study by the International Organization for Migration, the impacts of social remittances in Africa are most positively felt in the areas of governance, education, health, and business. In addition to brain gain, growing African diaspora communities can foster the creation of new trade channels and partnerships. Research has shown that countries tend to engage in trade with the home countries of their prominent diaspora communities, particularly as demand for goods and services from home increases. Returning migrants can therefore be effective leaders and contributors to improvements in key institutions, while also opening African economies to broader global financial markets.

CHANGES NEEDED

Contrary to policy trends today, various studies have stated that restrictive global financial regulations and migration policies ultimately creates a lose-lose-lose situation, wherein migrants, countries of origin, and host countries are negatively affected.

Despite being the region of the world that attracts the most remittances by its diaspora communities, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most expensive region of the world to send money. Nearly 9.4 per cent of funds sent as remittances are absorbed by transfer costs. According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), these high costs are a result of anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing regulations, as well as reduced competition in the money transfer industry. Reducing the cost of transfers would ultimately serve to ensure that more money is directed toward development, thereby slowly reducing the need for official development assistance and reducing the need for individuals to use informal means of transferring money.

In the context of social remittances, restrictive migration policies in popular host states in North America and Europe stand as impediments to sustainable development in Africa. Despite staggering unemployment rates and labour gaps in trade sectors, many African countries place low emphasis on vocational training, opting to focus on academics and professional sectors instead. This has created a surplus of talent in various professional sectors while other sectors that could help to stimulate economic growth lag behind. If host states can make it easier for individuals from African countries to access vocational education and other relevant opportunities through flexible migration regimes and labour migration partnerships, migrants could contribute to a 'brain-gain' that would fill gaps in African economies.

If a key to sustainable and progressive development lies in remittances by way of economic flows, skills and knowledge transfer, the challenge becomes ensuring a steady flow of remittances that can be facilitated through migration. With some small changes, development in this continent can be stimulated from the inside out.



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PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, AMISOM PUBLIC INFORMATION

How the internet is shifting the demographics of youth suicide in North America?

BY EMMA SCHWARTZ



ALTHOUGH often a solitary act, suicide is an inherently collective phenomenon. Since sociologist Émile Durkheim's seminal research pointed to the importance of social integration in understanding suicide in the late nineteenth century, changing trends in suicide rates among certain demographics have been seen as both a public health concern and a reflection of changing societal pressures. This understanding of suicide as a social pathology, rather than individual illness, drives the search for culturally-based explanations. The recent increase in suicide among girls in North America has coincided with the rise of social media, cyberbullying, and pro-suicide websites, leading many to speculate about the role played by the internet in fueling this demographic shift.

A TROUBLING TREND

In recent decades, the U.S. and Canada have witnessed a significant increase in the rate of girls aged ten to 19

completing suicide—a trend not matched by boys of the same age. In the U.S., the rate of teenage girls completing suicide has doubled since 2007, and the suicide rate among American girls aged ten to 14 increased by almost 300 per cent between 2000 and 2016. Since 2003, the suicide rate for Canadian girls has increased by 38 per cent, while it has declined by 34 per cent among boys.

WHEN THE INTERNET TURNS DEADLY

This gendered divergence has led healthcare professionals and researchers to point increasingly to the internet as a driver of suicide among girls. While the internet can provide validation and companionship for young people struggling with mental illness, life online can lead to a feeling of being trapped, particularly during childhood and teenage years, when emotions run high and interpersonal skills, including boundary-setting abilities, are still forming.

American pediatrician, Dr. Gregory Plemmons, believes that an increasing reliance on electronics causes kids to not “feel as connected” as they used to. For girls in particular, a lack of in-person social interaction can combine with pressure to post only positive experiences and physically-attractive pictures. Dr. Suzanne Petroni, a researcher at the U.S.-based International Center for Research on Women, found that social media perpetuates sexist stereotypes and pressure to be perfect, and reinforces “visions of what they should be, but aren't.” Psychiatrist, Dr. Stephen Scott has argued that, “excessive use of social media does lead to poorer confidence and mental health,” and research has found a strong link between social media use, poor body image, and depression among girls.

Beyond the implicit pressure from social media, the past decade has also seen a sharp increase in the incidence of

cyberbullying. Most people who complete suicide after being cyberbullied are girls between the ages of 13 and 18, and the majority are bullied in-person as well as online. A large-scale study of 14 year olds found that girls are significantly more likely to be the targets of online bullying than are their male peers, and that cyberbullying coexists with symptoms of depression in girls twice as often as it does in boys.

A final factor in internet-related suicides is the presence of websites that encourage suicidal ideation and behaviour, which predominantly often target girls. The authors of a 2012 report on the rise of suicide among Canadian girls used the term “cybersuicide” or “net suicide” to describe “the numerous websites, chat rooms and blogs promoting suicide and suicidal ideation.” Pro-suicide websites outnumber suicide-prevention sites by 3 to 2, and are significantly more popular. Pro-suicide chat rooms often masquerade as sites meant to help those struggling with depression, and, in some cases, teens reaching out for help online are instead encouraged to kill themselves. The perpetrators are often anonymous, making these deadly conversations difficult to track and to prevent.

ADDRESSING THE CRISIS

Due to the sharp increases in suicide rates among girls, both Canada and the U.S. must address the role of the internet. In 2018, the Canadian government commissioned a project that will use artificial intelligence to predict regional suicide rates by identifying suicide-related social media posts. Facebook and Instagram now use AI to automatically flag posts that indicate an individual is at high risk of suicide and alert first-responders. These efforts often intervene at too late a stage, however, and attention must turn to minimizing the deadly influence of social media, cyberbullying, and net suicide among girls.

In an attempt to combat net suicides, bills have been introduced in the U.S. Congress to criminalize the establishment and maintenance of pro-suicide websites. They have consistently failed to become law, however, with opponents pointing to the impracticality of locating those behind the sites (who often reside abroad and

go to great lengths to remain anonymous), the difficulty in proving a causal link between the websites and individual suicides, and concerns around stifling freedom of speech. Here, the U.S. and Canada could learn from the government of Japan which, rather than enacting legislation, asks internet providers to remove pro-suicide content and shut down websites. Additionally, programs and campaigns teaching girls about the dangers of online chat rooms—particularly those masquerading as depression helplines—could raise awareness and steer potential victims toward genuine mental health resources.

Across North America, cyberbullying is legally indistinguishable from other forms of bullying. More nuanced laws may deter these crimes, but will likely have little impact since the perpetrators are often minors. Educating parents and children about the signs and consequences of cyberbullying is key, especially because encounters often take place privately. Further, since many girls bullied in school are also harassed online, investigations into in-person bullying must include a review of internet interactions.

Social media's negative influence on girls' self-esteem may be the most difficult aspect of the triad to address, as no one is directly responsible for inflicting harm. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of campaigns celebrating healthy body images, and governmental support of these efforts could go a long way in countering the harm done by unrealistic standards. Ultimately, however, the burden falls on all of society to reconfigure expectations of girls, and to explore the complex drivers of this demographic shift in youth suicide.



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PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, MARCO VERGCH

Can El Salvador's New President Break the Cycle of Violence?

BY RACHEL WEBB



NEARLY two million people from El Salvador—a country whose population stands at just under 6.4 million in total—now live in the United States after fleeing violence that has only intensified since the end of the Salvadoran civil war. Rival gangs make daily life impossible in cities and rural areas alike. Meanwhile, poorly developed health and education infrastructure, combined with limited opportunities for legitimate employment lead many youth to join gangs; perpetuating a cycle of violence that many Salvadorans cannot escape. This is the situation in which the new and widely admired president-elect, Nayib Bukele, finds himself. The direction he chooses to lead the country could have multi-generational consequences for El Salvador.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND EMIGRATION

Having gained independence from Spain in 1821, El Salvador emerged as a major coffee producer. Though the industry was beneficial for the Salvadoran economy, it came at the cost of unequal land ownership between the remaining European population and Indigenous workers. State reliance on a single agricultural product led to significant economic damage when coffee prices crashed during the Great Depression. This led to protests throughout El Salvador calling for political and economic reform as well as land redistribution away from the small number of elite who now owned the majority of coffee plantations. In response, government forces killed thousands of protestors and student activists in the first wave of what was to become a bloody century.

This combination of political violence and the lack of economic opportunity in the country led many Salvadorans to seek work in neighbouring regions. After several decades of mass migration, growing tensions with Honduras led to the forced return of 300,000 workers to El Salvador. Salvadoran institutions, already weakened by inflexible economic and social policies, were unable to handle the additional strain and civil war broke out in 1980. Over the course of the war's twelve year span, thousands of people were killed, tortured, or made to disappear, and massive internal and external displacement led to increased political instability. In 1992, peace accords were finally signed and the two main opponents of the war turned to politics.

During the civil war, thousands of Salvadoran migrants sought refuge in the United States. While some were given asylum, the majority remained in the country on temporary permits or with illegal status. Gangs, comprised mainly of Salvadoran migrants, began to appear on American streets and prisons. The United States, a longtime aid contributor to the government of El

Salvador, reacted to the rising levels of violence among Salvadoran migrants by deporting hundreds of gang members from U.S. prisons through the 1990s and 2000s. Returnees quickly adapted to their new situation by extorting and recruiting locals, and starting turf wars with existing gangs. As a result, violence in El Salvador began to explode.

While successive governments attempted to tackle increase size and power of gangs, economic incentives and fear for personal and familial safety continued to attract young new recruits and keep those involved in gangs from leaving. Furthermore, different governments in El Salvador have taken remarkably similar approaches to dealing with the violence, implementing policies such as harsher prison sentences and militarizing the police force. While these policies have had great short-term success, they have not had the desired long-term effect on reducing homicide rates or gang-membership in the country. Jails in El Salvador are overfull and lack sufficient control over prisoners, leading to situations where many gang members can continue directing gang operations for the duration of their sentences. To the public's anger and dismay, one report showed that gang members in prisons were allowed access to strippers, buckets of KFC, and flat screen T.V.s. Corruption amongst police, politicians, and prison guards has meant that the threat of harsh sentencing is not proving effective at combating El Salvador's gang-problems.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

Enter Nayib Bukele. As mayor of San Salvador from 2015 to 2018, one of Bukele's key initiatives was to revitalize the city centre, which was crumbling under the weight of violence and extortion. By moving vendors away from the most violent areas into more secure locations and cleaning up the run-down but majestic buildings of the city centre, Bukele aimed to bridge the gap between rich and poor residents, while proving to the pessimistic residents of San Salvador that there was still hope to have a gang-free neighbourhood. Similarly, his initiative to illuminate the city with streetlights, completed around the same time as his revitalization program, was widely celebrated as an innovative way to strengthen security while making San Salvador more beautiful.

Now, as the president-elect of El Salvador, Bukele hopes to transfer the successes he won in San Salvador to the national level, although this has come with mixed reactions. Contrary to the tactics of his political opponents and predecessors, Bukele does not believe that the hard-on-crime approach is enough to solve El Salvador's violence problems. Instead, he hopes to address the root causes of crime, in particular the problems that youth in the country face, including lack of education and employment opportunities. Bukele recognizes that youth make up the largest group of those who leave the country. In response, he has proposed targeting their problems to lower the outflow of Salvadorans from the country, which would in turn increase in the size and vitality of the country's workforce.

While many Salvadorans support Bukele enthusiastically, critics worry about the transferability of policies that have worked on a municipal level to the national stage. Others question how the former mayor plans to finance his dreams for reviving a country that consistently ranks amongst the most dangerous in the world. Another potential obstacle would be a mass deportation of Salvadoran migrants in the United States, which U.S. President Donald Trump has alluded to, which could incite a conflict-ridden reaction on a scale similar to that of the early 2000s. Compounded with the economic devastation that would follow the elimination of the USD \$4.3 Billion in remittances sent to El Salvador each year from family members in the United States and abroad, stakes are as high as they have ever been for policy-makers. Bukele must be able to apply more than optimism to ensure the growth and success of El Salvador and its population. Nonetheless, the arrival of an optimistic newcomer on the political scene can, at the very least, lend Salvadorans some hope for a brighter future.



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PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, JAN SOCHOR

From Dhakar to Doha: The Perilous Journey of Bangladeshi Migrant Labourers

BY ROBBIE FRANK



BILAL Hossain was a 23 year old Bangladeshi expatriate who, like many others, ventured to the Persian Gulf in order to provide remittances to his family living back home in Bangladesh. In 2017, his relatives received the tragic news that he had suffered a fatal stroke, only to later learn from fellow Bangladeshis who worked with him that he had in fact been killed by an electric shock on the job. Bilal was one of 3,793 Bangladeshis who died while working abroad last year. The details surrounding Bilal's passing are shared by many others. According to the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, stroke was listed as the official cause of death of the majority of Bangladeshi workers overseas in November and December 2018. If Bilal's case is any proof, however, it is likely that the family members of others who died due to dangerous working conditions were lied to as well.

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF LIVING AS A MIGRANT

Bangladesh is one of the world's major source countries of foreign labour to the Persian Gulf and elsewhere around the globe. It currently ranks seventh in the list of the world's top remittance-receiving nations and is strongly dependant on these cash transfers. According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), there were over 21.5 million Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad at the start of 2017, with plans of sending another one million abroad throughout that year. Destinations for migrant Bangladeshi workers often include member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), such as Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, as well as Singapore, Jordan,

Lebanon, and Iraq. The majority of these individuals qualify as less-skilled or semi-skilled workers, making it difficult to obtain professional employment. The cause for large scale migration from Bangladesh is largely based in the significantly higher-wages workers are told they can earn working abroad. As a result, many male Bangladeshis wind up working in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, agriculture, retail, or in the service industry. Comparatively, Bangladeshi women often are employed as maids or cleaners.

Many migrant labourers from across South-Asia, including Bangladesh, India, and Nepal are being exploited by their host countries. Most take on temporary labor contracts of a year or two, wherein their employer's are their sole guarantor of their status in the country. This has led to exploitative working practices, as well as, in some cases, employers holding their labourer's passports hostage. Migrant labourers have no formal route towards securing permanent residency or citizenship status in the countries they travel in and have few rights or means of holding their employers accountable for mistreatment or abuse.

These migrant labourers also face exploitation through the networks that oversee their travel, visa applications, and work contracts. The businesses who oversee their travel often charge inordinate prices, forcing migrant labourers to go into significant debt that they must work off during their time abroad. Migrant workers are often told that they will earn a certain hourly wage, only to find out once arriving that between servicing their debts for their travels and the hidden costs their employers charge for living arrangements, they earn far less than they expected. The heart of this deception rests with the fact that only ten per cent of Bangladeshi workers migrate through formal channels and the remainder, risk falling victim to exploitation through fraud.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

In order to address the lack of transparency and clear violation of human rights, organizations such as the Asia Pacific Forum have worked to bolster the status of these individuals and publicize the atrocities and unfair working conditions that many encounter. Massive financial

disparities often exists between migrants and the domestic population. This inequity, coupled with insufficient legal protections or status for migrant labourers, results in significant power imbalances between both groups.

Resolving these issue to make migrant labour flows safer and more equitable will require including migrant labourers in policy-making process, improving their bargaining power in relation to prospective employers, and creating multilateral frameworks between source and host states to oversee migrant labour flows. This could prove challenging, however, due to the source countries' heavy reliance on remittances from host states. This creates an uneven negotiating table, one to which migrant labourers are not invited. Additionally, any issues pertaining to national sovereignty or functioning enforcement mechanisms for regulating migrant flows are both financially and politically costly. Ultimately, a step in the right direction would be to stop using migrants as political bargaining chips, and instead, humanize them by involving them in the policymaking process.

With the advancement of technology and the push for transparency, it is becoming increasingly difficult to conceal abuse and faulty records such as that of Bilal Hossain. Nonetheless, the issue persists and there is still much to be done in order to address these ongoing cases of human rights abuses and false avenues for migration. Empowering migrant labourers in their relationships with employers, as well as states, is crucial for reducing the kinds of human-rights abuses that are currently prevalent. Individuals, civil society groups, and states all have a role to play in ensuring migrant labourers receive the respect they are entitled to.



Robbie Frank is a Montreal native who graduated from the University of Ottawa in 2014 with an Honours Bachelors of Commerce in Finance. During his time in undergrad, he participated in a variety of case competitions and was an active member of numerous student clubs within the business faculty. During the final year of undergrad, he had the opportunity to study abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark at the graduate level. Since obtaining his degree, he has worked as an analyst for RBC Capital Markets in Montreal during which time he passed CFA Level 1.

PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, UN WOMEN

Daesh's Metamorphosis: Fake Passports and European Security

BY DEAN LAVI



IN the wake of the 2015 Paris attacks, it came to light that at least two of the Daesh attackers traveled to Europe through established migrant routes in Greece, using Syrian passports. Posing as refugees, they blended in with the over one million migrants who arrived in Europe that year.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve told reporters that Daesh has acquired thousands of blank Syrian passports and at least one passport printing machine after taking over government offices in Syria. Officials at

U.S. Homeland Security reported that the terror group had likely been able to print legitimate-looking Syrian passports since at least the summer of 2015, and indicated that operatives have been using the forged documents to sneak into western countries.

In Syria, buying illegitimate passports has become commonplace. Fake passports regularly go for \$200 to \$400 on the black market, where European Union (E.U.) country passport stamps can be backdated for a cost. With Daesh working diligently to diversify its revenue

sources after losing 98 per cent of territory it controlled at its peak in 2014, it stands to reason the group has put the illicit passport machines to use churning out fake passports. These passports have ended up on black markets and in the hands of Daesh operatives. In the process, the business of producing and selling illicit passports has become part of “an entire ‘industry’ for [Daesh].”

Greek deputy interior minister Nikos Toskas admitted that identifying fake passports is a big challenge for Greek authorities, particularly when thousands of people arrive every day on a small island. These fake passports give Daesh unfettered access to Europe and America, creating a significant security challenge for these states; one that’s been pushing the E.U. to test its moral framework.

If real Syrian passports can no longer be distinguished from fake ones, then the E.U. struggles with an international migration policy choice. On the one hand, the E.U. could lean in to an idealistic human rights orientation of the Syrian migrant case, and potentially allow Daesh operatives to enter the continent. On the other hand, noting the real world dangers of these fake passports, Europe could close its gates, and bear the guilt of turning its back on the millions still fleeing for safety.

Daesh fighters are ‘virtually impossible’ to detect among civilians fleeing the refugee crisis, and this has only helped stoke anti-immigration sentiment in the E.U., leading populist leaders across Europe to use the migration crisis for political gain. Ultra-nationalist parties have successfully turned fear of refugees into votes, and the threat of Daesh selling fake passports to criminals only gives weight to their claims.

Much to the chagrin of global affairs experts, this is precisely Daesh’s goal. It is clear that Daesh’s strategy is not direct conflict with the West, as its conventional military might pales in comparison. Instead, Daesh seeks to sow division within Europe, knowing full well that the chaos will lead to the othering and alienation that radicalizes insurgents in the first place. To echo former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and current Secretary General, António Guterres, “spreading fear and distrust of refugees play[s] into Daesh’s propaganda...[Daesh’s goal is to] set citizen against citizen within communities,

community against community within countries, and country against country in the Union.”

“spreading fear and distrust of refugees play[s] into Daesh’s propaganda...[Daesh’s goal is to] set citizen against citizen within communities, community against community within countries, and country against country in the Union.”

The migrant crisis has pushed more Europeans towards anti-immigrant sentiment leading to more inflammatory rhetoric against migrants, and growing racist sentiment towards those from the Middle East and North Africa. In a strictly military sense, the West has thoroughly beaten Daesh, reclaiming Raqqa and pushing Islamic State operatives into retreat. However, while the military might of Daesh is largely defeated, its toxic ideology lives on.



Dean Lavi is a Feature Contributor on the topic of Human Rights at Global Conversations. He’s passionate about Canada’s development as a leading international actor. Graduating in 2018 with a Double Major in Political Science and Criminology at Western, he specialized in international security, transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction.

PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, JÜRGEN WEYERHÄUSER

The Artificial Intelligence Arms Race in Cyber Security

BY ABE RAVI



THE 21st century has witnessed an unparalleled digitization of societal infrastructures, especially in areas such as banking, e-commerce, and telecommunications. For example, with everyday objects being increasingly connected to the online networks—a trend referred to as the Internet of Things (IoT)—it is estimated that a staggering 50 billion devices will be connected to the internet by 2020. As private corporations and sovereign states continue to embrace digitization, it is important that these entities have the tools to effectively secure their computational systems and infrastructure. This is important given that the cybersecurity problems have grown in parallel with the ubiquity of computational systems.

LEVERAGING AI TO MODERNIZE CYBERSECURITY STRATEGIES

There is overwhelming demand in the cybersecurity industry for sophisticated algorithms that can protect businesses against the tsunami of cyber-attacks—especially given the shortage of skilled cyber workers. To rectify this shortfall, industries have begun leveraging the

power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by developing sophisticated cybersecurity tools and integrating machine learning into existing network systems. AI and machine learning can revolutionize the cybersecurity industry by automating and identifying efficient approaches to threat detection, increasing the capability to monitor large amounts of data, and making up for shortfalls in human capital in the cyber-security sector.

A recent study by the Ponemon Institute and IBM Security indicated that the global average cost of a data breach would decrease by USD \$1.6 million if security automation using AI is deployed. Moreover, the same study indicated that implementing an AI-based cybersecurity platform saves more money than the use of security analytics, the use of data-loss prevention tools, and the appointment of a chief information security officer. Additionally, 41 per cent of previously untraceable zero-day exploits—vulnerabilities that are unbeknownst to the affected companies—can be detected through AI. Likewise, 45 per cent of existing security alerts can be handled by AI without human supervision—a trend that is expected to increase in the future. A survey conducted by BCG and MIT found that 20 per cent of companies have already incorporated AI into their systems while 70 per cent of executives expect AI to play a substantial role in their organizations in the next five years.

AI IN THE CYBER REALM

Private corporations and government entities can improve existing cybersecurity systems and techniques by applying AI at three different levels; prevention and protection, detection, and response. In the context of prevention and protection, companies can strengthen their cybersecurity defenses by developing security systems that leverage machine learning. Specifically, machine learning can enable organizations to adopt flexible threat detection methods which identify abnormalities

by comparing signals to a baseline indicator. Existing detection methods are outdated, as they rely on a static set of rules which are used to recognize a specific signal. In contrast, AI-based cybersecurity tools can intercept malicious signals with or without a comparative baseline signal. Additionally, AI can automate mundane manual tasks, such as searching through log files, which will enable organizations to mobilize human capital towards higher-value cyber defense activities. Therefore, by implementing AI-based cybersecurity strategies, companies can mount effective responses to cyberattacks by protecting valuable assets and redirecting hackers away from vulnerabilities.

CHALLENGES WITH AI-BASED CYBERSECURITY

Despite the immense potential for AI in the cybersecurity space, industry professionals are warning businesses to not view AI as a silver bullet. Security professionals warn that companies are introducing machine learning products into the market in order to attract customers who have been enamoured with the AI hype cycle. Moreover, since companies are rushing products to market in order to keep up with the hype, they might be incentivized to release unfinished or faulty products. Faulty AI-based cybersecurity tools could potentially miss important attacks if engineers do not exclude anomalous data points when training the technology to identify patterns in digital threats. Furthermore, experts warn that machine learning algorithms may provide organizations with a false sense of security, as any cybersecurity tool will become limited, outdated, and vulnerable over time. Therefore, integrating AI into existing cybersecurity systems poses an array of challenges.

Although AI can be used to protect the cybersecurity systems of organizations and sovereign states, cyber criminals can also use machine learning to develop dangerous cyber weapons. This is concerning, as malware and identity theft kits are already readily available on the dark web. This trend is further exacerbated as the delineation between state actors and criminal gangs fade in the context of rogue actors in the cybersecurity space. Cybercriminals can exploit machine learning to launch three different types of malicious attacks; high-

scale context-sensitive attacks, cloud ransom attacks, and deep penetration and long dwell times. Malicious actors exploit context-dependent scenarios where there are vulnerabilities in the decision-making processes. For example, cybercriminals are targeting strategic individuals such as senior management officials, by using context specific phishing campaigns. In cloud ransom attacks, cybercriminals target cloud consoles in order to demand a ransom while holding sensitive data hostage. Hence, criminals can threaten to delete vital data which could bankrupt a company or destroy a government organization if they do not receive a ransom payment. Cybercriminals also engage in deep penetration attacks, during which they plan an attack on organizations when they are the most vulnerable. In this scenario, malicious actors often want to maximize the destruction of assets and often prepare for months before executing such operations.

THE ARMS RACE FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CYBER REALM

The emergence of AI-based cyber weapons and cyberdefense tools has created an arms race which increasingly places machines at the forefront of cybersecurity. For example, in 2016, former President Obama issued a warning regarding the ability of hackers to access US nuclear codes using AI algorithms. Even though AI can help protect businesses and social processes, malicious hackers can misuse AI to exploit vulnerabilities in computerized systems. Hence, artificial intelligence—especially in the realm of cybersecurity—should be viewed as a double-edged tool which has immense potential once deployed, however should also be monitored constantly and used with extreme caution. A new framework in addition to an educated public will play a significant role in protecting the integrity of smart-devices and political institutions.



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PHOTO SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMON, THEDIGITALARTIST



MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS