

A Geo-Economic Approach to Brain Drain in Morocco

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Abstract

The brain drain is a symptom of a more serious disease that plagues the Moroccan policy of training and scientific research. The “brain drain” phenomenon is not novel and dates back to 1950. At that time, the term meant the massive departures of British scientists and engineers to the United States. Then, it referred to the South-North scientists’ migration and since recently scientists’ emigration from the East. Now this term is used in a broader sense to refer to the flight of human capital (that is to say, highly educated individuals with a university degree or equivalent) from the developing countries to the industrialized countries. Over the past two decades, the magnitude of the brain drain has reached staggering proportions. It is however clear that the extent of the brain drain has increased dramatically since the seventies. This is due in part to the introduction of selective immigration policies favoring skilled workers in most countries. Yet, the skilled labor migration contributes essentially to the increasing globalization of the economy, a globalization that reinforces the natural tendency of human capital to agglomerate where it is already abundant. In this article, we aim to explore some positive aspects of the “Brain Drain”. In fact, we will show that, in principle, a brain drain gain can at least rhyme with positive feedback for the country of origin. We will show through empirical analysis that the migration of skilled labor from a country can play a potential role in the pace of development of the latter and can be a source of positive externalities, and that through two channels. The first is related to the acquisition of additional skills and the increase in the ex-ante level of education. The second is related to the “brain gain” thanks to a compensation in terms of migrants’ return and the technology transfer that ensues. This article will aim to answer three major questions: (1) What are the determinants of skilled labor departure in Morocco? (2) Is there a link between the perspective of emigrating to a more developed country and the accumulation of human capital in Morocco? (3) Why these skilled migrants return and what is their role in the development of the country of origin? This article will present the determinants of departure and causes of return of the skilled migration in Morocco, analyze the issues raised by this migration and define the channels that mitigate its negative impact.

Keywords: International migrations, Brain drain, Human capital, Development, Brain gain