Open Migration Policy and Security

Madiyem Layapan[1], Romzi Ationg[1], Mohd. Sohaimi Esa[1], Mohd. Azri Ibrahim[1]
[1]Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

Correspondence: Romzi Ationg (mrationg@ums.edu.my)

Abstract

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The advent of post-colonial era shows Asia-Pacific regions such as Malaysia, China, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan have restricted migration policy. Despite the restriction, intellectual debates about the prospect of having open migration grew. The debates generally concentrate on what exactly are the benefits and risks of introducing open migration. This paper seeks to discuss what exactly are the benefits and risk of having open migration policies. To do so, it is argued that explanation on what exactly are the benefits and risk of having open migration policy must be tracked down by analyzing the security, economic and cultural issues in receiving country. Accordingly, based on literature as well as documents review, this paper suggest that open migration policy can be a source of security threats in receiving country which including the way that open migration may bring about uncontrolled population growth. In contrast, open migration policy may bring about economic and cultural enrichment in receiving country. Therefore, given the fact that open migration may bring about risks and benefits to receiving countries, this paper also explores the prospect of migration policy improvement as means of application for not only preventing the country form any risks, but also consolidating the economic and cultural enrichment though migration policy.

Keywords: migration, Asia-pacific, open migration, security
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Introduction

It is perhaps difficult to imagine how open migration policy may benefit and risk countries in this contemporary world, but given the fact that most of the Asia-Pacific regions such as Malaysia, China, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan have restrictive migration policy, it is prevailed why appropriate migration policy is needed. Conceptually, the term open migration refers to the position that people should be able to migrate to whatever country their personally choose which includes the way that it is free of mandatory charges. In this case, scholars such as Pecoud and de Guchteneire (2006), of the opinion that the concept of open migration is referring to a case where everyone has their every right to leave and return into any country. In explaining such argument, they suggest that the open migration policy motivated immigrants to leave their own country for several reasons, including a desire for economic prosperity, political issues, education, natural disaster or simply the wish to change their surroundings. The definition somehow portrayed that there will be a direct or indirect consequence of free migration. This definition therefore driven us to respond and give an opinion based on some literatures and information derived from variety of sources such as books, newspaper and any other readings. As such, this paper seeks to discuss further the benefits and risk from having more open migration policies. This paper further advance that the benefits and risk of having open migration policy can be tracked down by analyzing the security, economic and cultural issues in receiving

country. Simply put, open migration policy can be a source of security threats in receiving country which including the way that open migration may bring about uncontrolled population growth. In contrast, open migration policy may bring about economic and cultural enrichment in receiving country.

Open Migration: Unveiling the Benefits and Risks

In a broadest sense, security issues are potentially subjected to migration policy in both receiving and sending countries. However, it is unfortunate that migration theories generally view migrants as utility maximizing individuals and tends to neglect its impacts on security issues. For example, the economics perspective insists that there are two main factors of cross-borders migrations namely pushing factors and pull factors (Djafar, 2012; Parkins, 2010; Evert, 1966). Specifically, the economic theories such as neoclassical economic theory, dual labour market theory, relative deprivation theory, and world system theory explains that the migration occurred due to the insistence in increasing economic or financial status for family needs. Neo classical economic theory, a theory claimed by Massey, Juaquin, Hugo, Kanouchi, Pelegrino and Taylor (1993, p. 433) as "probably the oldest and best-known theory of international migration" explains that the main reason for migration is because of a wage difference between two geographic locations (Castles, 2000; DuMond, Hirch & Macperson, 1999). Dual labor market theory states that labor migration is mainly caused by pull factors in more developed countries and based on the assumption that the labor markets in the developed country is much more attractive (Azzopardi, 2012; Jennissen, 2007). While relative deprivation theory explains that the awareness of the income difference between neighbors in the migrant-sending community is the main migration factor (Jennissen, 2007). The world system theory states that interaction between different societies led to labor force movement due to the assumption that trade with one country may cause economic decline in another. This phenomenon may create an incentive to migrate to a country that has a vibrant economy. Furthermore, this theory considers migration as the outcome of globalization, a natural expression of movement across borders (Azzopardi, 2012; Jennissen, 2007; Ationg, 2020; Ationg, 2018).

As such, Alden (2012), Chow (2012), and Castles (2000) portrayed that migration as well as the migration policy have become increasingly associated with other issues such as the national security issue. Thus, open migration policy must be viewed as posing threats to the national security as well as to international stability. According to social constructivist approach the security threats, an issue that is strongly related to international migration flows or the open migration policy, is an indication of imminent danger, harm, hurt, destroy, attack, and punish which will cause someone pain, unhappiness, or trouble (Brauch, 2011). The social constructivist approach argues that the state's territory can be threatened by military threats and non-military threats (economic threats, physical threats, political threats and social threats) which can whether come from within or outside the state due to the existence of such active migration flows.

Accordingly, in 'Migration and security', Huysman and Squire (2009) suggests that there are two ways in which strategic analysis draw attention to the relevance of migration policy for security studies. First, the migration bears upon national security questions that are range from refugees turning to violent political actors, and the effect of migration on social cohesion and the availability of enough work force. Second, the security concern has an impact on a state's migration policies, primarily because migration is often defined national security threat. For these reasons, it is portrayed that active international labor migration flows due to such open migration policy is strongly related to national security or state sovereignty in receiving country.

In the case of migration flows in Asia, especially in Sabah, Malaysia, the local people feel threatened by the growing number of immigrants due to the inconsistent migration policy used by the Malaysian government in Sabah which includes the importation of immigrant from neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Philippine from 1060s to 1990s. Specifically, the growing number of immigrants in the state has triggered the security concern among the local people (Sadiq, 2009; Kassim, 2007; Mutalib, 1999). The local are increasingly concern about their security as they believe that fast population

growth caused by the wave of migration in the Sabah, Malaysia will lead to a situation where the rich will have to fight and the poor will have to die if mass migration overwhelms the local population (Kassim, 2007).

The debauched population growth with regards to the increase in the number of immigrants also can increase the competition for career and employment opportunities. As such, security is generally related to the struggle over the allocation of resources and it's supposed to be about alleviating the most serious and immediate threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values (Williams, 2008). As a result of this, the competition for career and employment opportunities motivates skilled locals to migrate. This migration can result in 'brain drain' that will cripple the delivery of key services such as in education and health care. In terms of domestic politics, excessive immigration can threaten social and national integrity by the growing salience of ethnic, religious and national cleavages.

The open migration policy also has the capacity to create interstate conflict, a conflict between sending and receiving country when the immigrants launch terrorist attack and supporting the armed rebellions in their homeland (Nesadurai, 2013). In a longer term, presence of large number of immigrants will bring about damage to social values of a society due to the emergence or interference of such negative social values brought together by immigrants (Brauch, 2011; Drodge, 2008). This means that security threats caused by the influx of immigrants due to the open migration policy in receiving country should not only refer to military attack but it also applies to a possibility of conflict between sending and receiving country and damage to social values of a society. Thus, it is convincing that open migration policy will lead the receiving country to experience both military and non-military threats.

In contrast, however, open migration policy may be able to bring benefits to the receiving country. The arrival of skilled immigrants will be an important element in developing several economic sectors of the country. As the number of skilled immigrants increase, competitions will also be mounting. Ebeling (1999) suggested that this kind of competition will lead the country to gain economic prosperous. He suggests that competition is the essence of a healthy economic system, and that any sort of negative impact on individual economic factor is more than justified by the prospects of long-term growth for economy.

In addition, open migration policy also helps enriching the country culturally. For instant, de Tocqueville in his study on the America's national development found that the destiny of America including its political development process was shaped by its Puritan culture (Kang, 2009). In this case, the core value of the United States of America, that is its culture, affected its economic growth and its ability to sustain capitalism. However, in longer terms, the influx of immigrants will lead to a weakening of the destination country's norms as well as its culture (Brimelow, 1995). Thus, it suggests that such open migration policy will bring more risks than benefits.

Considering this fact, it is by now important to note that although the so-called open migration policy may happen to bring about positive impacts on the country economic and cultural, but inevitably, uncontrolled migration in-flows may also bring about the rise of significance security concern among the local people. Once a country goes down the high-migration pathway, there may be no going back as to solve some issues aroused, especially the security issues. Thus, perhaps it is the time for new reform era of migration policy that is much likely systematic migration policy. In this case, migration policy must be standardized around the world. The standardization may include entry procedures, compulsory registration of immigrants with the department of immigration and population, and the restriction for working in some sector to maintain appropriate quality of life among the residents. Most importantly, the standardized policy will ensure one's right to migrate and improve quality of life because one can appropriately understand what their do can and what not from their own country. Hence, the security issues that may arise due to migration flows in both receiving and sending countries may possibly be able to be systematically controlled. At the same time, the aims to enrich the national culture and economic prosperous will be able to accomplish successfully.

What Need to be Done?

As mentioned above, migration policy reform is generally needed to reach the goal of ensuring that there will be no or at least minimizes of security risks as well as to increase economic gains from the implementation of such policy. The point here is not only to prevent the receiving country from any security risks related to migration but also to brings general improvement. Also, such move is required to overcome the issues protracted and recurrent legislative fiddling. The constant changes in the implementation of migration policy in Sabah, Malaysia due to variance of politically driven interest seems have rightfully warranted some to not only resides but also gain citizenship (Sadiq, 2005; 2009). In fact, making the politically driven culture of welcoming immigrants is not a migration policy reform that needed today. Any country may welcome the immigrants whenever they follow the rules of existing migration policy, but certainly required rejection when they arrived illegally. For such reason, migration policy reform required examination on the issues of demographic change and receiving country's growing need for skilled workers and the aim of curbing security issue from gaining influence. This is possible through systematic exploitation of advance technology to select immigrants based on accurate and detailed examination of their potential contribution towards security and development issues. Such approach required transparency and that regularization or deportation of immigrants in an irregular situation must lead to improved public confidence in the policy implementation.

In a time where rapid change and great uncertainty, it is also important to ensure that the policy reform is largely driven by non-economic arguments such as social cohesion, social equality and other indicators. At the same time, ensuring the policy less of a political priority also need to be highly considered to such aspiration. To do so, the policy can be based largely on the following:

i.   Ensure that all relevant parts of government and the masses are involved in identifying, sharing and addressing emerging migration issues,
ii. Includes all parties in the implementation of migration policy,
iii. Develop new and solid partnership with countries of origin and emerging economics to favor co-development,
iv. Rethink existing process and programs to improve compliances and enforcement considering available new technologies,
v.   Build migration system that are transparent,
vi. Carefully considered the protection of personal data and privacy issues, and
vii. Build contingency plan for migration management in case of any disruption from politically driven situations as to ensure that the policy is a future ready.

It is expected that considering all the mentioned issues above for migration policy reform will lead to the minimization of security risks and increase in the economic gains. Thus, it is hoped that these suggestions be counted by the policy makers globally and specifically the policy makers in Sabah, Malaysia.

Conclusion

This paper presents a discussion on the debates pertaining to benefits and risks of introducing open migration policies. The debates show that open migration policy can be a source of security threats in receiving country which including the way that open migration may bring about uncontrolled population growth. Despite that, however, it is also found that open migration policy can bring about economic and cultural enrichment in receiving country. For this reason, this paper also explores the prospect of migration policy improvement as means of application for not only preventing the country form any risks, but also consolidating the economic and cultural enrichment though migration policy. It is hoped that such move provides valuable information to policy makers that could minimize risks and consolidate gains from the decision to improve migration policy.

Acknowledgment

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