

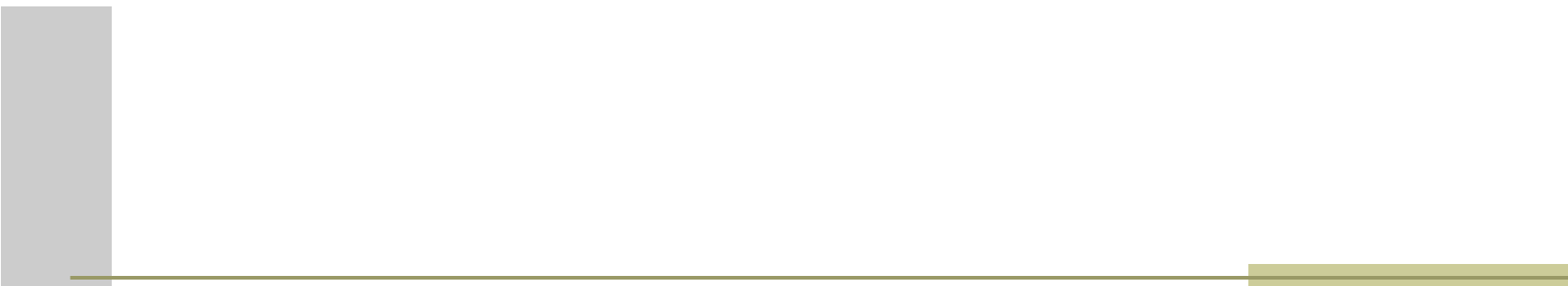


MIGRATION AND LABOUR

Managing Labour Migration and Public Health

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Labour Migration

- Focus of the presentation: relationship between migration policy and labour market policies
- Labour migration refers to cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country.
- Labour migration is distinct from migration for family reunification and refugee migration.
 - Labour migration is governed by economic criteria, specifically labour market needs.

Labour Migration

■ Major countries of origin

- Indonesia
- Philippines
- Viet Nam
 - Myanmar
 - Cambodia
 - Lao PDR
- Bangladesh
- India
- Nepal
- Pakistan

- PRC

■ Major countries/areas of destination

- Brunei Darussalam
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Thailand

- Hong Kong, China
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Taipei, China

- Gulf countries

Labour Migration

■ *Countries of origin*

- High population; young population
- Domestic unemployment
- Unemployment of highly skilled
- Migration, a means to address domestic unemployment

■ *Countries of destination*

- Declining population; aging population
- Labor shortage in 3D sectors
- Recently, shortage of highly skilled
- Migration, a means to address labor and skills shortage

Explaining Labour Migration

- Neo-classical perspective
 - Individuals decide whether or not to migrate from less endowed to more endowed areas (rational, maximizing human beings)
 - New economics of labour migration
 - Families/households decide who will migrate; migration is part of household strategy to maximize resources
- Dual labor market perspective
 - There is a demand for migrant workers in the 3D sectors of developing economies. Migration is structural.
- World systems perspective
 - The introduction of capitalism has displacing impacts on livelihood; people are compelled to migrate to find alternative employment.

Explaining Labour Migration

- Globalization involves displacement
 - Can lead to unemployment
 - Gap between aspirations and realizing them
 - Flows of people are not borderless
 - Networks emerge that render migration risky
- Globalization as a facilitating process
 - Cheaper communication and transportation
 - Aspirations are fed by access to global ideas
 - Flows of ideas, goods & capital are borderless
 - Networks develop that facilitate migration

Labour Migration: A Transnational Process

- All perspectives recognize that labour migration is a transnational process involving at least two states: where migrants come from (origin) and where they go (destination).
- The classification of states as origin, transit or destination is neither fixed nor mutually exclusive.
- **IMPORTANT:** Migration involves not just states but human beings.

“... it appears evidently from experience that a man is of all sorts of baggage, the most difficult to be transported.”

Adam Smith

Labour Migration in Asia

- Characteristics of labour migration in Asia:
 - Labour migration is strictly temporary:
 - Limited work contract (usually two years)
 - Limited to a specific sector/employer (difficult to change sectors/employers)
 - No family reunification for less skilled migrants (also, restrictions in marrying locals)
 - Labour migration is gendered: male migration responds to labour shortage in the 3D public sectors; female migration responds to the shortage in the private sector, i.e., shortage of care workers.
 - Unauthorized migration is substantial.
 - The migration industry is an important stakeholder.

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Destination

- Labour immigration is not readily acceptable to countries of destination for various reasons (economic, cultural, political, security, etc.).
- Alternatives to labour migration:
 - Increase the retirement age
 - Encourage the labour force participation of women; young people (students as part-time workers)
 - Invest in technology
 - Transfer production offshore
- There are some limitations to these options.
 - Changed notions of “work” among more educated population
 - Limited resources of small- and medium-sized companies
 - Some services or production cannot be transferred offshore

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Destination

- Approaches to labour migration:
 - Laissez faire – market-driven

 - Regulation of the migration process by the state – the typical approach in Asia
 - Singapore – quotas, ceilings, levies
 - Hong Kong, China, Taipei, China, Republic of Korea – quotas, ceilings, limited number of countries of origin
 - Malaysia, Thailand – policies attempt to adjust to the presence of migrants from neighboring countries
 - Deportations are not uncommon
 - Japan – accepts only highly skilled and professional migrants
 - Entertainers are professionals
 - Trainees

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Destination

- In general, migration policies regulate the migrant worker's entry, economic activity to be engaged in, and duration of stay in the country.
- Major gaps:
 - Regulation of working and living conditions , esp. women migrants in domestic work
 - Regulation of the migration industry
 - Support and assistance to migrants in distress
- Limitations of an economically defined migration policy:
 - It is based on the withholding of certain rights.
 - It is based on a view of migrants as workers only, not as human beings.
 - It assumes that migration is temporary.

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Origin

- Countries of origin also started out with the idea of labour migration as a temporary measure.
- Many started out with an emphasis on promoting labour migration.
- Later, policies, mechanisms and institutions were established to regulate the recruitment, exit, conditions in the destination, and the return and reintegration of migrant workers.
- In practice, not all these aspects or phases are adequately addressed by states of origin.
- Types of interventions (according to ILO):
 - Regulated system
 - State-managed system
 - State monopoly system

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Origin

- Examples of good initiatives:
 - Migrant recruitment
 - Philippines: regulation of recruitment agencies; a cap on placement fees; joint and solidary principle
 - Preparation of workers for deployment overseas
 - Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia: training; pre-departure orientation seminars; standard employment contract
 - Protection issues while nationals are abroad
 - Philippines: labour and welfare officers; overseas Filipinos resource centers; post-arrival seminars; legal assistance to nationals; repatriation funds; skills training

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Origin

- Philippines (1995) and Indonesia (2004) have laws to promote the protection of migrant workers,

BUT

- Good policies, weak enforcement = continuing abuses vs. migrant workers
- Dilemmas:
 - Domestic work is problematic, but the demand for domestic workers is stable or increasing
 - Countries of origin are eyeing to send more skilled workers, but this may be detrimental to their own development prospects.

Issues and Policy Questions: Countries of Origin

- Countries of origin also need to attend to the left-behind families.
 - Economic benefits, yes; but also, emotional displacement
 - Differential impact when fathers leave vs. when mothers leave
- Examples of good initiatives:
 - Philippines: working with children, encouraging children to save (Atikha, an NGO); organizing left behind families; seafarer's wives organizations; National Migrants Sunday as a means of awareness raising

Future Prospects

- Labour migration is likely to remain or increase further due to persistent disparities between countries of origin and destination.
- Governance of migration is heavily undertaken by states, but largely as a “national” concern.
- A transnational process such as migration requires going beyond “national” considerations.
 - Bilateral, regional, international frameworks
- Governance of migration will also have to involve other stakeholders, such as NGOs and migrants’ associations.
- The challenge ahead of us is how to make migration truly a win-win-win prospect for countries of origin, countries of destination, and not to forget, migrants and their families.