Research Report

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Issue: Addressing the drivers of migration and urbanisation in LEDCs
Forum: Economic and Social Council and European Council

Position: Deputy Chair and Main Chair

Introduction

Since the beginning of mankind, peoples have always been on the move, a movement that one can deem a human instinct of survival. It's rather certain that it will always remain a part of human nature to leave a place behind, in the hope of finding a better future elsewhere. Migration, in fact, is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), article 13 stating that *"everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state"* and that *"everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own..."* Alarmed by the fact that, since the start of the 21st century, the number of migrants has grown exponentially, from 173 million in 2000 to 244 million in 2015 worldwide, both the ECOSOC and the EC will debate this important issue.

The ECOSOC will be focusing on migration as from its roots, especially dealing with the drivers in LEDCs. This concerns people moving to cities or other - often more prosperous - countries with their hopes up for better life standards. This is where the European Council will be involved in the issue. As migration often has positive effects, such as boosting a nation's economy as well as the possibility of creating a multicultural community, the downsides are more and more illuminated in MEDCs. These nations, like EU member states, have got to deal with an overwhelming increase in racial/ethnic tensions as citizens often lose their job to a foreigner, whose culture is generally more than unknown to them.

Sometimes overseen in international debates, LEDCs suffer from a huge internal flow of migrants, resulting into vastly overpopulated LEDC-cities. These cities deal with high unemployment rates, in addition to having too little resources to supply all the residents and thus offering very poor living standards. By looking into the causes of this migration, we ought to try to better regulate it, and make it more beneficial for all parties involved.

Definition of Key Terms

Urbanisation: Urbanisation refers to the population shift from rural to urban areas, "the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in cities", and the ways in which this questioned society deals with the changes and consequences of this urbanization. It sketches the process in which cities and central areas form and grow, as more people live and work there.

Migrant: The United Nations define the term 'migrant' as "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some

significant social ties to this country." Another criterion is the fact that a migrant is someone who has moved voluntarily. A refugee is thus not considered a migrant.

Migration: Migration is the crossing of the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period of time. It includes the movement of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people as well as economic migrants. Internal migration refers to a move from one area (a province, district or municipality) to another within one country.

Push factors: Factors that make people living in the area in question want to leave

Pull factors: Factors that cause a certain area to be attractive for people to move to

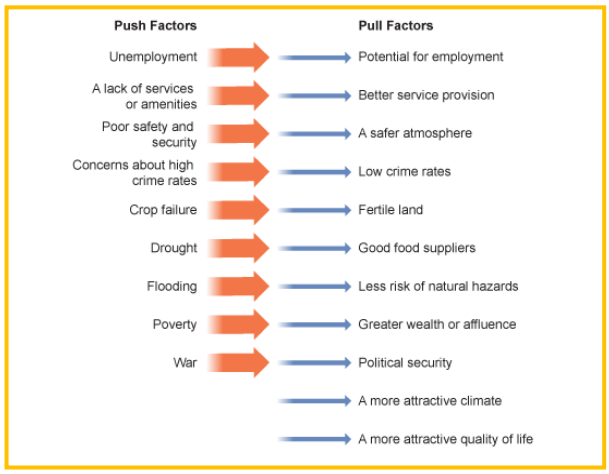
LEDCs: LEDC stands for 'Less economically developed country'. These countries are determined by 3 specific criteria, by the Committee for Development of the United Nations: (1) the gross national income (GNI) per capita, (2) the human asset index (HAI), and the economic vulnerability index (EVI). For a country to be considered an LEDC, the GNI must be of under 750 $ per capita. LEDC criteria are reviewed every three years by the UN ECOSOC.

General Overview

Causes: push and pull factors

To tackle this issue, we will look closer to the causes of migration in LEDCs, first of all focussing on migration from LEDC to LEDC. In LEDCs, we often speak of *rural to urban migration*, which means migration from rural areas into urban areas, also called *urbanisation*. The United Nations projected that half of the world's population would live in urban areas at the end of 2008. It is predicted that by 2050 about 64% of the developing world will live in cities. We may conclude from this that cities are attractive to people. The causes of this migration can be classified in *push factors* and *pull factors*.

Push factors are the reason for people to move away from a certain area. A large push factor for example is the lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas. People work on the land, under very tough circumstances and this does not pay a lot of money. In rural areas there are more job opportunities that pay better. Other push factors are famine and drought. Lack of these basic needs might be the most important reason for urbanisation. Natural disasters or warfare can be the reason for people to migrate as well. Their homes are destroyed or simply not safe. A large city can then of course be attractive, as it often is safer.



A list of push/pull factors, graphic courtesy of BBC

Pull factors are for example better employment opportunities. But also access to services such as education, medical help, food and water. People hope to earn more money and to live a better life. But a city is also safer, as the level of crime is lower. Moreover, the risk of natural hazards is lower.

Motives: voluntary, forced and reluctant migration

The motives for migration can be classified in voluntary, forced and reluctant migration terms. Voluntary migration is migration based on one's free will and initiative. People move for a variety of reasons, and it involves weighing options and choices. Individuals who are interested in moving will often analyse the push and pull factors of two locations before making their decision. The strongest factors influencing people to voluntarily move are the desire to live in a better home and employment opportunities. Other factors contributing to voluntary migration includes change in life's course (getting married, empty-nest, retirement, etc), politics (from a liberal state to a conservative state, states that recognize gay-marriage, etc.), and individual personality (suburban life to city life). These are more 'luxurious' reasons to move away.

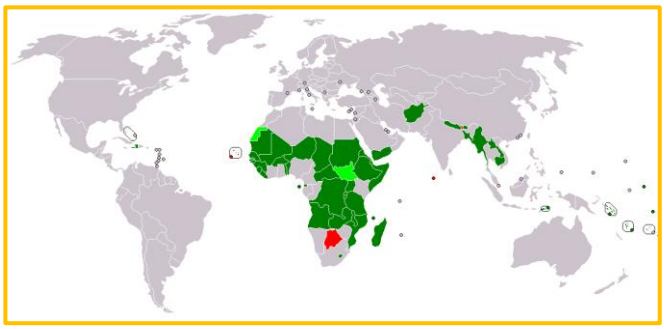
Forced migration is a more negative form of migration. The migrants have not left their homes out of free will. The cause of this sort of migration is warfare or a natural hazard for example. But forced migration is not always violent. One of the largest involuntary migrations in history was caused by development. The construction of China's Three Gorges Dam displaced nearly 1.5 million people and put 13 cities, 140 towns and 1,350 villages underwater.

Reluctant migration is a frequent form of migration in LEDCs. It is not necessary for people to move, but their situation of living is rather unfavourable. For example, people moving from northern Africa to southern Europe, hoping they will earn more money and

live a more convenient life. This can be the motive for urbanisation as well. However, urbanization can be forced as well (>> causes: push and pull factors).

Consequences in LEDCs

The people migrating to the cities are particularly young males, able to work, planning on sending the money home to their families, or sometimes even bringing the entire family along. But these males are poorly educated, only capable of fulfilling low paid jobs. And because the cities with a lot of pull factors are economically fast-growing cities, the cost of residence is high and these people are not able to afford this.



Map of LEDCs, map courtesy of Wikipedia

Take for example Mumbai, India. With 20 million residents, Mumbai is considered a mega city. With all those people not able to find a home, simultaneously the holder of the second largest slum in Asia. In these slums, quality of living standards is more than low, considering the lack of clean water, sanitary and the large amount of waste that is produced. Moreover, a lack of infrastructure.

Consequences in MEDCs

As stated before, MEDCs are almost always the destination of international migration flows. Not all of these countries are prepared that well for taking on migrants, leading to difficult situations concerning, for example, failing naturalisation systems. Therefore, MEDCs have got to deal with an overwhelming increase in racial/ethnic tensions as citizens often lose their job to a foreigner and are scared for the nation losing parts of its culture. Groups of citizens are frightened by the feeling that they are to lose everything what they always have known, often leading to political utterances as “Own people first!”

Major Parties Involved

European Union

Since the beginning of the so called *European Migrant Crisis,* the EU has been dealing with an enormous flow of migrants, leading to despair between the member states. Germany and France, currently taking upon the leading role in the EU, have received the most of migrants, as compared to the other member states. Moreover, the EMC was often said to be the end of the European Union, since all member states have acknowledged an increase in the popularity of euro sceptic parties. However, with the year of 2017 coming closer to an end, we can say that the elections of important member states such as the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and France, have not turned out to be as successful for the right-extremist parties as was predicted.

Syria

With more than over 4 million people leaving the country in the period of 2012-2017, Syria is to be called the most abandoned nation of the 21st century. The Syrian Civil War has cost more than 500.000 lives, while simultaneously have brought millions of people in danger by leaving them no other choice but to leave the country.

USA

Further away from the European Migrant Crisis, the USA has been dealing with its own disputes concerning immigration from Central American nations. Donald Trump winning the 2016 presidential election shows the world the fears of an immense part of the American people. "America first" and "building the wall" can be traced back to the migration flow of mostly Mexicans, trying to reach the USA in the hope for a better future.

Possible Solutions

Resolving this issue roughly covers two different aspects, requiring international deliberation as well as cooperation. First and foremost: tackling the roots of the migration flows. As for LEDCs, this will mean improving quality of life outside the cities, in order to take away some push factors for the internal migration flow. MEDCs as EU member states will have to take responsibility for tackling the roots of the Middle-Eastern flow, the ongoing Syrian Civil War, this also for their own best interest.

Secondly, whereas dealing with the causes of these problems, it is essential nations deal with the current state of misery many find themselves in. For LEDCs meaning working hard to keep the mega cities from exploding, while doing their upmost best to help their citizens in these difficult situations. For MEDCs it is essential to remain united in these hard times, as cooperation can be deemed as the one and only possibility of dealing with this crisis.

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