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The New Logic of Migration in the Twenty-First Century

GÉRARD-FRANÇOIS DUMONT

Migrations have been a constant issue throughout the history of humanity. To mention but a few examples from the past centuries, when France revoked the Edict of Nantes, some cities in other western European countries grew richer thanks to the migrations that followed. Migrations were also the basis for population settlements in today's Americas and Australia; conversely, they account for the fact that Ireland still has fewer inhabitants today than in 1840.

These world-wide migrations are constantly redrawing cultural maps. The factors behind them are similar to those in previous centuries. However, profoundly new factors have also appeared. I have called these the 'new logic' of migration.¹ Today as in the past, there are four classic factors influencing population movements: politico-religious factors, economic factors, demographic factors and mixed factors, which will be analysed in succession.

Politico-Religious Factors

Political and religious factors have a dual nature, depending on whether they repel or attract. If one examines factors of repulsion, several types appear: international wars, domestic civil wars or conflicts, political decisions and liberticidal regimes. First of all, wars very often lead to exodus, like the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Domestic wars or civil conflicts represent the second type of factor for repulsion. One cannot understand Catalonia's desire to gain autonomy in a newly democratic country if one does not take into account memories from the exodus (*la Retirada*) of hundreds of thousands of Catalans fleeing civil war in early 1939 after Franco's forces had seized Barcelona. In the Kurdish zones in Turkey, internal military operations have driven populations out or obliged them to leave for Europe, particularly for Germany.

Political decisions, through which populations are driven out of their national territory, are a third type of cause. For instance, the Convention

signed on 23 June 1946 between the Belgian and Italian governments stipulated that the Italian government would try to send two thousand workers a week to Belgium.

At the national level, the attitude of Soviet authorities in 1974 can illustrate a factor for repulsion. Eager to remove the political opponents who had gained too much of a reputation to be sent back into penal servitude, they decided to deprive Alexander Solzhenitsyn of his Soviet nationality and send him to the West.

As the fourth type of repulsion, dictatorships typically cause the emigration of their nationals, either when the regime is installed, or later, once the poor democratic credentials of the new regimes have become apparent. During the forty years of its existence, the GDR (German Democratic Republic, East Germany) was a regime which pushed its own citizens out. The same applies to Castro's long-standing regime in Cuba.

Four types of political repulsion thus force people to leave their territories, which modifies the cultural geography of the planet.

In opposition to the territories where these forces of repulsion are at work, other countries are attractive because of the political decisions or conditions they offer. For example, Turkish emigration to Germany, particularly in the 1960s, was stimulated by the political will of successive German governments which were keen to sign migration treaties with Turkey. Since the 1990s, immigration from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, or Central Asia to Germany can be explained by the fact that the fundamental 1949 law allows anyone of German extraction to settle² and acquire nationality after six months. In other territories, economic, tax or financial laws can attract populations.

Other political decisions, like the policy of allowing family regrouping, can attract populations, all the more so when texts allow for a wide interpretation. Thus in France, following a judgment passed by the Council of State, it was legal for the families of polygamous workers to join them between 1980 and 1993; this became one of the reasons for the increase in immigration from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Russia is another interesting case. Since 1991, Russia first tried to contain the waves of Russians coming from the former USSR republics that had become independent. It thus attempted to appear reluctant to welcome them, with very moderate success. The idea was to preserve a Russian presence in the countries of the Community of Independent States (CIS) and in the Baltic states. Since 2002, Russia has realized how quickly it was losing its population (around 700,000 inhabitants a year) and it has radically changed its policies: it has now decided on an attractive policy towards twenty million potential migrants, improving its capacities as a host country and even devising 'credits for emigration'.

When one takes a closer look at politico-religious factors, one sees that

international migrations often combine repulsion and attraction. For example, Jewish immigration to Israel is both due to repulsive political factors in the country of origin (like Nasser's decisions in Egypt in 1956) and attractive factors, given Israel's desire to increase its Jewish population.

The political factors behind migrations, which have been at work throughout the history of humanity, will continue into tomorrow, because the political decisions and situations are likely to generate repulsive or attractive factors. A second set of factors lies in the economic field.

Economic Factors

Notorious economic imbalances exist between countries. Some know how to maximize the value of their potential and human capital, or have energy resources or precious minerals that allow them a *rentier* economy. Conversely, others do not know how to create the conditions for economic expansion or they cannot maximize their assets. Some people, when they notice these gaps and have very little hope of improvement in their country, emigrate in search of better standards of living. Geographically, these international migrations are of two main kinds: South–North or South–South.

One of the most interesting examples of South–North migrations from the 1960s to the 1980s is the Ivory Coast. During the entire period when its economic development was both remarkable and comparatively exceptional in the region, the Ivory Coast was a major destination for immigrants. Millions of other African nationals (and particularly Burkinabes) were welcomed in the Ivory Coast. When conditions later worsened, immigration slowly stopped.³

Economic migrations thus depend on the capacity of countries to create riches, on the variations of the incomes they derive from hydrocarbons (for example, Saudi Arabia or Libya) or on the workforce they need for building works or engineering works. This was the case when Berlin was transformed into the political capital of a reunified Germany.

Beside this first type of economic migration, which results from imbalances between territories, there is a second type, linked to 'technical migrations'. These migrations are the consequence of profound changes in economic structures: they modify the various labour markets of a given territory and can entail population movements. Rural emigration, which arose from the transfer from an essentially agricultural economy to an industrial one, concerned not only internal but also international migrations. Since the mid-1970s, a new type of economic migration has emerged, which I call industrial emigration:⁴ It is the result of insufficient anticipation and of the rapid change from an industrial economy to an information society. Like the previous type, this emigration is mainly internal but can also be international – for instance,

former workers in obsolete Polish industries went to Germany to find means of subsistence.

In addition to political and economic factors, demographic factors need to be taken into account.

Demographic Factors

The third type of classic factor arises from the demographic differentials that generate migrations. Thus, the low level of previous settlements facilitated immigration to North America, which became particularly intense in the nineteenth century.

Beside density differentials, mortality differentials can also have an influence. The best, though particularly tragic, example is Ireland in 1842, when terrifying mortality figures led to a considerable number of Irish people emigrating to America. This is why, as the introduction mentioned, Ireland still has fewer inhabitants than in 1840.

Age differentials can also be an attractive factor for younger workers who would expect their income to improve more quickly if they provided services to older and richer customers.

Mixed Factors

The borderlines between these three types of migration (political, economic and demographic) are not always clear. It is thus important to stress a fourth type: mixed factor migrations, which is to say migrations which are both political and economic, or economic and demographic, or political and demographic, or even political, demographic and economic all at once.

The American phrase which refers to migrations resulting from political and economic factors is 'migration for bread and freedom'. The case of Algeria is a perfect illustration of this: Algerian emigration, particularly since the oil backlash of the mid-1980s, is based on both.⁵

The second type of mixed migration is economic-demographic migration. Fairly old examples – the Germanic populations who emigrated to Eastern Europe, or the Polish workers who supported France, when that country was recovering from the First World War – and more recent ones – millions of immigrants working in the small Gulf States – can illustrate this.

A complete type of mixed migration results from three interconnecting causes: economic, demographic and political. One particularly telling example, because it occurred over a short period is that of the Moroccans who emigrated to the ex-Spanish Sahara after the Green March of 1975. These

Moroccans emigrated towards a land where their government offered them more profitable economic conditions. They settled on a vast⁶ but sparsely populated territory where their arrival was not terribly disturbing, despite geopolitical opposition with Algeria. Politically, this migration gave Morocco a means of reinforcing its sovereignty over the ex-Spanish Sahara.

The four classic types of migration causes will inevitably still be at work in the future. Other factors, which I consider together under the new logic of migration and which result from our new era, also have an influence.⁷

Following from the last decades of the twentieth century, the twenty-first century is characterized by three processes: political globalization, internationalization and economic globalization. The definition that I suggest for each term highlights the usual mishmash use of the term 'globalization' and draws clear distinctions between them. It is thus a useful tool to understand their impact on migration.⁸

Political Globalization and Politically Encouraged Migrations

While the use of the term 'globalization' is generally wide and imprecise, there is a normative dimension to the term *political* globalization. I define political globalization as follows: *all the political processes that aim at setting up regional market organizations and/or a single world-wide market organization. Political decisions mean that markets are less segmented or heterogeneous because of national or regional borders.* Globalization is thus all the political decisions that aim to abolish political borders. It does not simply involve international processes – through decisions taken at the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), or today, at the WTO (World Trade Organization) – but also regional ones – the European Union, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), or the South American trade bloc Mercosur. Political decisions that aim to reduce the influence of borders – whether on goods, capitals, or individuals – inevitably result in new possibilities for the movement of populations.

First, the free movement of goods accelerates migrations because it puts populations at the heart of exchange networks that turn human mobility into an economic necessity. Similarly, countries that are members of the WTO must be involved in an open economy and abandon autarchic systems. When China joined the WTO, it opened its doors to the exchange of goods but it also opened up to international migrations, with westerners going to China to set up commercial activities.

Secondly, globalization is also financial and thus encourages migrations. Indeed, the prime concern of many migrants from the South is to send money to their families who have remained in their country. Financial globalization,

which means for instance the end of exchange controls, makes it easier for immigrants to transfer money.⁹

Third, some decisions on globalization have a direct positive impact on the freedom of movement for populations, as in the European Union (for all residents, whether they are European nationals or not) where it has become a right. When the former Communist countries like Poland joined the European Union after the implosion of the Soviet Union, they linked their future to the logic of European globalization.

Practical modalities for the freedom of movement are likely to increase flows of population. For instance, the end of border controls following the Schengen Agreement makes migration easier.

Other political decisions that reduce the importance of borders result from national migration policies, in keeping with the logic of globalization. For instance, the reforms that several European countries undertook from the 1970s (1976 for France) gave legal immigrants (and immigrants whose papers had just been put in order) the right to bring their families over, which is another way of lowering borders and encouraging migrations.

As a consequence, globalization makes some migrations easier because the barriers that existed previously have been lowered or abolished. Its effects are linked to the impact of transports, made more versatile by internationalization.

Internationalization and Reticular Migrations

Another new logic of migration is linked to internationalization, which has become unexpectedly rapid since the 1980s. According to my definition, internationalization – the technical side of the too general term of globalization – is *the use of techniques and processes that reduce the space/time effect in the material, information and human exchanges between the territories on the planet.*

We can date the acceleration of internationalization fairly precisely, along two phases: the turn of the 1980s and the end of the 1990s. During the first phase, flights become shorter: the record for the fastest flight around the world on a commercial airline was broken in 1980 (37,124 km in 44 hours and 6 minutes), while in 1981, the Caravelle flew for the last time, the Airbus flew for the first time, and the French high-speed train (TGV) link between Paris and Lyon was opened. Contrast this with the technical difficulties of trading with, say, Vietnam in 1933: the flight between Paris and Saigon, with the new airline Air France which took over from the Far-East airline (inaugurated by Maurice Noguès in 1931), would leave on a Thursday to arrive on the Friday of the following week, after no fewer than sixteen stopovers. In 2003, the flight between Paris and Ho Chi Minh City lasts 12

hours and 35 minutes: it is fifteen times shorter. Such shorter trips obviously make trade, investments and thus entrepreneurial migrations easier.¹⁰

Internationalization makes migrations easier because it reduces the space/time effect. First, no one could have imagined a century ago that Sri Lankans who felt oppressed would be asking for political asylum in Switzerland twenty-four hours later. Today, thanks to the aeronautic revolution, all of this sounds commonplace, all the more so as the reduction of the space/time effect combines with a considerable reduction in transport fares. Internationalization, along with the globalization decisions that abolished some of the air monopolies, also generates migrations closer to home. For example, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, more and more British people have moved to France because low-cost airlines operate between London and Bergerac in the Perigord, Rodez in the Aveyron, or Limoges.¹¹

The second phase of internationalization became possible with the extension of computers, which the forecasters of the early 1970s had not taken into account. In the 1990s with the Internet, emails and mobile phones, migration has become easier because of the growth of information, which is readily available. Everyone, whether they are thinking of emigrating or not, can instantly or very quickly benefit from information that enables them to make choices.

Cyberspace means instantaneous contacts: immigrants are not necessarily cut off from their original family whom they can contact at all times via email or mobiles, which are much faster means of communication than rather unreliable posts or telephonic communications via the rather outdated exchanges in the countries of the South.

More generally, the changes that internationalization brings about allow for the development of what I call 'reticulate migrations' – migrations based on the development of networks that partially abolish the notion of frontier and provide the context for a more flexible mobility.

Economic Globalization and Entrepreneurial Migrations

The third cause of the new logic of migration derives from economic globalization, a term which one should use only for the *praxis* of economic agents: I thus define economic globalization, in the strict sense, *as the actions undertaken by companies in order to respond to specific demands everywhere and without any discrimination based on time or price; in order to perform these actions, companies must implement world strategies which are adapted to the evolving context of globalization and internationalization.* Economic globalization comes from the fact that companies have been forced to implement world-wide strategies to

satisfy their imperatives and their needs for results. Because of globalization and internationalization, it has become essential for companies to implement world-wide strategies, which give way to migrations on two levels. On the one hand, some migrations are linked to training – both initial and life-long – as distance learning does not entirely exclude real meetings during part of the course.

On the other hand, what I call ‘entrepreneurial migrations’ come from the fact that companies necessarily must think ‘world-wide’, even if they simultaneously need to respond to the local specific demands of their customers. Thus, companies organize the international migrations of some of their employees in order to create commercial subsidiaries, production companies, or joint ventures.

Besides the new logic of migration due to the processes of political globalization, internationalization and economic globalization, one should survey the intensity of the migrations that the twenty-first century might well have to face, given the factor of climate change.

Climate Change and Migrations

Though climatic migrations would not be a new event in the history of humanity, they could become a significant phenomenon in the twenty-first century, with an intensity that has not been witnessed for several thousands of years. If the average rise in temperature and sea level, predicted and already being witnessed in some parts of the globe,¹² were to modify the living conditions in many territories, several types of migration could appear.

The first one that comes to mind concerns forced migrations, which would be linked to the rising sea level or its consequences. True, these consequences could be controlled – as is already the case in many countries such as Argentina, Bangladesh, the United States,¹³ France, Japan and the Netherlands – but the costs involved in investments and in the maintenance of protective equipment would go on increasing. Existing dykes could be reinforced, new protective dykes could be built wherever necessary, or habitations could be designed which would be adapted to the new sea level. But not everything could be set up in all the areas involved. People who would want to live on dry land would have to migrate and these migrations could become international in many territories around the world.

A second type of climatic migration would happen in some territories where climate change would lead to temperature levels that would cease to correspond to the idea that some inhabitants would have of a good quality of life: it would thus be more of a voluntary migration. During seasonal hot periods, some people would migrate to other territories with less sun. This

process would thus be a sort of negative heliotropism,¹⁴ the reverse of the positive heliotropism that has been observed in various countries over the last decades.

Finally, climate change could lead to economic migrations towards territories that would become exploitable and habitable thanks to a major thaw and to the land or sea routes that would have been created by this thaw. Indeed, many territories in the northern regions of the Northern Hemisphere today are little exploited and inhabited, given the current climate. Their situation could change and generate climatic migrations.

Classic factors and the new logic of migrations combine and multiply the types of migration. Reticulate trends appear, on top of the radial migration trends.¹⁵ This also engenders more and more complex trajectories, for example, migrations from Central Africa to Europe, which take people through several African countries and spaces of transit like Morocco,¹⁶ or Libya.

In the future, all migrations would ideally follow from a deliberate decision. But, tomorrow as yesterday, it is very unlikely that it will be the case: many power-mad and prevaricating leaders very often disregard the principle that priority should be given to peace and development. It is likely that wars, civil conflicts and the existence of 'incapacitating states'¹⁷ that compromise development will generate forced migrations in the twenty-first century, as was the case during the previous centuries.

However, migrations in the twenty-first century, whether voluntary or forced, will stand out because of their specific context, due to the processes of political globalization, internationalization and economic globalization, to which the effects of climate change might be added. Countries, regional organizations like the European Union, and international organizations must take these facts into account to prevent forced migrations and to allow voluntary migrations to take place within the logic of exchange and partnership that would serve development.

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NOTES

- 1 Gérard-François Dumont, *Les migrations internationales* (Paris: Editions Sedes, 1995); Gérard-François Dumont, 'Les nouvelles logiques migratoires', Université de tous les savoirs', in Yves Michaud (ed.), *Qu'est-ce que la Globalisation?* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 2004).
- 2 And not to return, because it was their ancestors who had left Germany.
- 3 Gérard-François Dumont, 'Les migrations internationales en Afrique', in Gabriel Wackermann, *L'Afrique* (Paris: Ellipses, 2003).
- 4 In France, for example, the only major urban centres that have lost population through emigration in the 1980s and 1990s are located in the former industrial basins like Lens, Béthune or Saint-

- Étienne. Cf. Gérard-François Dumont, *La population de la France, des régions et des DOM-TOM* (Paris: Editions Ellipses, 2000).
- 5 When the President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac, went to Algiers in the first half of 2003, young Algerians welcomed him with cries of joy: 'Visas! Visas!'
 - 6 252,000 square km.
 - 7 Dumont, Gérard-François, *Les populations du monde* (Paris, Editions Armand Colin, 2004).
 - 8 Cf. also Gabriel Wackermann (ed.), *La mondialisation* (Paris, Ellipses, 2006).
 - 9 Estimates for 2002 give the following proportions of sums that immigrants transferred to their families: 39 per cent of transfers from the US, 21 per cent from Saudi Arabia, 5 per cent from France.
 - 10 Some, particularly from Europe to eastern Asia, follow from the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the Russian Federation decided to open (and charge for) more air corridors above its territory.
 - 11 'La campagne française prend de plus en plus l'accent british', *Le Monde*, 11 July 2003, p. 10.
 - 12 Cf. the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change created in 1986 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose headquarters is in Geneva: <www.ipcc.ch>.
 - 13 For example, the events in New Orleans in 2005; cf. Jean-Marc Zaninetti, 'Catastrophes naturelle et pauvreté: le cas de La Nouvelle-Orléans', *Population et Avenir*, 679 (September–October 2006).
 - 14 Gabriel Wackermann (ed.), *Dictionnaire de Géographie* (Paris: Ellipses, 2005).
 - 15 Gérard-François Dumont, 'Les grands courants migratoires dans le monde au début du XXIe siècle', in Jacques Dupâquier and Yves-Marie Laulan (eds), *Ces migrants qui changent la face de l'Europe* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).
 - 16 Mehdi Lahlou, 'Le Maroc et les migrations subsahariennes', *Population & Avenir*, 659 (September–October 2002).
 - 17 To borrow the expression of the United Nations Development Programme; cf. PNUD, *Rapport mondial sur le développement humain 1995* (Paris: Economica, 1995), p. 128.