



Transcript

Free Movement of Workers: A Path to Global Economic Recovery?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie

Director, Up!-Africa Limited; Senior Adviser to the Governments of Mauritius (2012) and Mexico (2010), Global Forum on Migration and Development

Tim Finch

Director of Communications and Associate Director for Migration, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

Susie Symes

Economist; Chair of the Museum of Immigration and Diversity; Senior Official, European Commission (1990-92); Economic Adviser, HM Treasury (1985-90)

Co-Chairs: Justin Rowlatt and Manuela Saragosa

Presenters, BBC World Service

3 April 2014

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FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS: A PATH TO GLOBAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY?

Justin Rowlatt:

Hello, and welcome to In the Balance's 'Big Migration Debate'. We're in the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, also known as Chatham House. I am Justin Rowlatt.

Manuela Saragosa:

And I am Manuela Saragosa. This week we're joined by panellists and an audience to discuss one of the most controversial issues of our time: migration.

Justin Rowlatt:

Over the next half-hour, we'll be asking whether letting us all move freely around the world would boost the global economy. Should the nations of the world open up their borders and let people live and work wherever they please? We'll be hearing robust opinions on the subject from my three guests here on the stage.

Manuela Saragosa:

And I'll be among the audience, roaming about to find out what you think here in the audience. Plus, we'll be hearing from some experts here in the front row, and I'll be including comments from you, the World Service audience – comments you'll be making via the BBC World Service's Facebook page.

Justin Rowlatt:

So the structure of our debate is very straightforward. Our three main speakers have very different views about the benefits and the problems associated with migration. We're setting them a challenge. They've each got just a minute-and-a-half to outline their views on whether allowing workers to move freely across borders would stimulate the global economy. I'm going to be strict about this: I will cut you off if you over-run. Once we've heard from the panel, then we'll throw things wide open. Everybody can contribute to the debate.

So first up, we've got Susie Symes. Susie has been a senior economist for the UK Treasury and the European Union in Brussels. She's a supporter of increased migration. Susie, you've got 90 seconds to tell us why.

Susie Symes:

Migration is innate in human beings. It's inextricably our human story. So it makes no more sense to put up barriers against human beings moving around our globe than it would to stop cells moving around our body. It certainly makes no economic sense. Barriers to the movement of workers are a massive barrier to improving humankind's economic wellbeing. Surely we should be maximizing human potential and not wasting human resources. Life is short and for many people it's fragile and it's poor. So if human beings have the opportunity to do the best for themselves, everyone benefits. We start a cycle that leads to better outcomes for poor places as well as rich ones. We've made so much progress in past decades with free trade in goods and services that's moved many people out of poverty. Free movement of workers would do the same. The Center for Global Development in Washington, DC – the economist Michael Clemens there – has estimated the impact of free movement of workers at trillions of dollars, even as much as doubling GDP.

I don't know how many trillions of dollars it's worth. I don't know the exact economic impact. But it's clear that labour mobility would do vastly more for world growth than removing barriers to trade. We know that markets do a pretty good job. If you want to let the state meddle in free markets, then you need very strong evidence indeed – strong evidence and good reasons to stop workers moving freely and wasting so much economic and human potential.

Justin Rowlatt:

Very good, Susie. A tiny bit over time. Let me just very briefly clarify. You're saying completely open borders?

Susie Symes:

Yes, I think that's where we have to move.

Justin Rowlatt:

Okay. Next up is Tim Finch, who is not persuaded about the economic benefits of open borders. Tim is the associate director for migration at the UK-based think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research. We've heard what Susie says – huge benefits for the world. You've got 90 seconds to tell us why that's not right. Your 90 seconds start now.

Tim Finch:

If we replace the word 'global' with the word 'European', I'd be arguing on the other side of this proposition. Or if we remove the word 'free' or perhaps particularly if we added the phrase: 'gradually as the economies of the world converge', I'd be happy to sign up to it. But as the motion stands, and as I read it, it's saying we should do it now. I've no hesitation in saying I think it's really deeply reckless. I think it must be obvious why: there's such stark disparities between the economies of the world, particularly between the Global South and the Global North, that if we were to throw open the borders now we would have massive destabilizing movements of people, which the economies into which people were moving wouldn't be able to cope with. I think we'd definitely have, quite quickly, economic and social unrest and chaos – and not least for those migrants. They'd all be acting rationally themselves, because IPPR [Institute for Public Policy Research] research, and others, has shown that you benefit massively if you're moving from a developing country to a developed country, in terms of your ability to earn added income. But the sum of all of those individually rational decisions would spell, I think, economic disaster.

I think what we'd find in actual fact is if you tried it as an experiment, you'd very quickly – you'd throw open the borders and then after a few days probably, or weeks, you'd shut them again, and actually progress – steady progress – towards a freer world would be put back quite a long way. So I would say turn the proposition on its head. I think we need more global recovery and more convergence of economies – then we can have free movement of workers.

Justin Rowlatt:

Okay, I have to stop you there - and you stopped yourself. Thank you very much indeed, Tim. Now with a different perspective on the migration debate, here's Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, who's advised the governments of Mauritius and Mexico on migration and has worked with the Global Forum on Migration

and Development. Chukwu-Emeka, you've got a minute-and-a-half to give us your take on whether open borders mean greater prosperity or disaster.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

The eminent economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, is the one who said that migration is humankind's oldest action against poverty. It benefits the countries they arrive at; it benefits the countries that send [them]; and it benefits them. The debate that we're having actually in Britain and in Europe about migration is – I would call that rounding errors in that broad equation. So that fundamentally has been true.

Africa is where humankind actually found its birth and then migrated out of Africa. So it's been with us for a very long time and it will stay with us for a very long time. Talking of Africa, let's remember that the vast majority of African migrants stay in Africa. Their problem is that their governments place too many restrictions on their ability to maximize their gains from moving. The worst thing is actually that African governments make it harder for Africans to move than non-Africans. So if you're British or Australian or Canadian, you can move around Africa much more easily than the average African. So that is really the obstacle to the realization of the global recovery. That's what we need to address – it's the implementation of free movement that's needed.

Justin Rowlatt:

So your 90 seconds is up, Chukwu-Emeka, but I'm not clear where you stand on the proposition. Should we open borders or not?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

African governments – if I just give the example of African governments – have actually declared themselves in support of this. What they haven't done is implemented it. That's what they need to do.

Justin Rowlatt:

So in fact you do support the proposition – migration is a good thing.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

Yes, absolutely.

Justin Rowlatt:

And what about this disaster scenario that Tim draws, Susie? There's two quite extreme positions we've got there.

Susie Symes:

Tim's deliberately drawn a somewhat ridiculous assumption that we're going to open the borders tomorrow. Clearly –

Justin Rowlatt:

Well hold on, I asked you to clarify – to be fair, Susie, I said, 'Do you mean open the borders?', and you said, 'Yes, I do'.

Susie Symes:

Do I want totally open borders? Yes, I do. Do I think realistically you can get there tomorrow morning? Of course I don't. Of course that takes some preparation and some time. But is that the position we ought to end up much sooner rather than much later? Yes, definitely.

Tim Finch:

I'd agree with that as the endgame. I'd love to see that. I'm just saying that the proposition as framed suggests we should do that very quickly.

Susie Symes:

Well, I think very, very quickly.

Tim Finch:

We see what happens in Europe. We've got free movement in Europe and politically that's been quite difficult. We have had some issues. But we've transitioned to that, we've had converging economies, and people can move freely around that situation.

Justin Rowlatt:

But that's nothing like the kind of scale of movement that you'd see if you opened borders around the world. There are limits to the degree to which, Susie, surely, that societies can accommodate migrants.

Susie Symes:

I don't think there's any evidence whatsoever that vast numbers of people [would] move instantly. Migrations have actually been relatively stable over the past - what I think Tim completely misses, in fact gets it back to front, is that you need convergence before you can let people move. It's actually the fact that people move out when they're beginning to improve, in income terms, that causes further development in the future. People don't actually start moving until they start to develop, and then often the movement back of talent and experience, the sending back of remittances, the moving back to set up new businesses, is what creates further development.

Tim Finch:

I agree with all of that and I think there are lots of benefits that stem from it. But that is happening in a situation in which the Global North is largely managing and controlling migration. So the benefits are accruing back – and I'd like to see that relaxed over time. I'd like to see us have freer movement than we have now. I just think you need to do it step by step. If you just throw open the borders today, it's not true – loads of people would just get on a plane and fly to the UK or other places, and we wouldn't be able to accommodate them in our economy.

Susie Symes:

But you did actually say: 'I'd support this if it were about Europe but not the world'. So there's some kind of rather different sort of people that you don't seem to want to come in.

Tim Finch:

No, because there we have a converged economic area in which I think it can work. I think the point he was making about Africa is an important one. I think what you want to see – where I think you could build up towards a completely free world would be to have regional systems where you had the equivalent of

free movement in Europe, and then gradually get agreements between those regional systems.

Justin Rowlatt:

How does that sound to you, Chukwu-Emeka?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

The reality is that migration is regional. People move to where there are the opportunities. It's the restrictions on the ability to move that is the real problem. I don't think that everybody would get up and move tomorrow.

Justin Rowlatt:

Tim's shaking his head.

Tim Finch:

We had a field research. We once asked a Nigerian irregular migrant – it's an off-the-cuff remark, I know – remove visas from Nigeria for one day, how many people would come? They said: 2 million. We know that people are desperate to get to the West and it's entirely rational that they try to do so. I think if you announced that border controls were going on one day, in all the countries of the Global North, you would have absolute chaos.

Justin Rowlatt:

Chukwu-Emeka, if you look at the income differentials that is quite a persuasive argument, isn't it? If you could earn twenty times the amount –

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

The income differentials – somebody in Guinea or somebody in Ghana or Benin who moves to Nigeria, those income differentials are modest but they are enough to enable that person to improve their income and their wellbeing. So that's what we're talking about. We shouldn't trap this debate in a sort of North-South context. That's a bit of a problem with this thing. Like I said, the issues that we're dealing with here in Britain – they are rounding errors in the

grand scheme of things. This is local politics. Fine that people feel strongly about that, but –

Justin Rowlatt:

In fact you're saying the North-South debate – there's a much bigger South-South debate.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

Much bigger. I've just come back from Lusaka. The government of Zambia is incorporating, integrating, 4,200 former Angolan refugees, with no fanfare, no noise. This is being done. This is happening. We shouldn't overplay this sort of fear scenario of all these great unwashed masses coming up on the shores tomorrow. I don't think that's realistic.

Justin Rowlatt:

We've heard some fascinating views from the panel – now let's hear some other views. Manuela?

Manuela Saragosa:

Yes, I want to go to our front-row panellists here, our front-row experts. I know that they're very keen to get a word in. Owen Barder of the Center for Global Development, you wanted to have a say?

Owen Barder:

Thank you very much. The argument that Tim Finch is using about the disparity between rich people and poor people is exactly the argument that apartheid South Africa used to justify the past laws. The white South African government said that if you were to get rid of the restrictions on movement, that that would result in impoverishment for the white population. The evidence is now in: they got rid of those restrictions on the movement of people and the result has been no reduction at all in the income and wellbeing of white people in South Africa. So it is an argument that has been used down the years to protect minorities and it's false.

Manuela Saragosa:

Let me just also get the experience of Dr Titilola Banjoko. You've come here from Nigeria originally. Do you agree with Tim Finch's premise that it's deeply reckless to open up borders?

Titilola Banjoko:

The first thing is that migration is a symptom of a root cause. People leave at scale because of a reason. Failing to address that actually is not going to make it any different. So if I look at my country, Nigeria: health care is a critical issue. That's because the West is benefiting from mass number[s] of healthcare workers who are in OECD countries and nobody is asking the question: what's happening back in the countries that trained these people? So you've become self-reliant on workers from other countries. That's evident. So migration is benefiting the North's healthcare system but is disadvantaging the South, and [there is a] loss of lives as a result.

Manuela Saragosa:

Owen Barder from the Center for Global Development is shaking his head.

Owen Barder:

There is evidence – people have looked at the impact on countries that export professional health workers. As we know, places like Nigeria and Ghana [are] exporting doctors, places like the Philippines exporting nurses. What the evidence tells us is that, as people move abroad and earn higher incomes, what happens is those become attractive professions for other people in those countries. They become higher-status, higher-earning professions, and you have more health workers, if anything, in those countries from which most people go abroad. There is no correlation statistically at all between the gaps in medical professionals and large numbers of people going abroad and there's, if anything, a slightly positive relationship between people going abroad and health outcomes in the countries from which they leave. There's no evidence at all that health workers going abroad makes health outcomes worse in developing countries.

Titilola Banjoko:

That is completely and utterly wrong. I am a Nigerian health care professional. Three of us trained as doctors; two in this country, one in the States. The healthcare system in Nigeria, public healthcare system, is not fit for purpose.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

But that's not a question of migration. That's a question of bad management.

Titilola Banjoko:

It is a question for migration because the North is selectively picking people that suit them. It's easier to get a visa as a nurse to work abroad. So when you say 'free', what do you mean by 'free'?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

The flaw in the system – it's a question of the management. People who work in the health sector in Nigeria and other countries – I remember a Ghanaian nurse complaining that she had trained and she could not actually help the people who came to her centre because [there are] no drugs; they had to charge the people. This is nothing to do with migration. As a professional, as a vocational profession –

Titilola Banjoko:

Those skills have left.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

But the incentives should be to improve the management.

Titilola Banjoko:

The West is benefiting from this thing. Let's just be blunt here. Even America will tell you – everybody sees the evidence. I don't understand what you are saying, whether the mortality figures and the morbidity figures are telling us a different story for you to be saying they are benefiting from it.

Justin Rowlatt:

What he's saying is that maybe there are other reasons why the Nigerian healthcare system has issues, aside from migration. Susie, you want to come in here?

Susie Symes:

Of course you're right – the West is benefiting. It is. That's absolutely right for you to say. The key point to realize is that you need to see this in a dynamic context. This movement of people out, earning more money, doing well, is what encourages more people into those professions at home. Second of all, I'm afraid I don't know much about Nigeria, but Ghana – you certainly have a lot of health professionals outside of Ghana who are using money and experience and contacts here to travel backwards and forwards, improving health services almost instantly while they are living abroad. So there's a dynamic impact that's very important.

Manuela Saragosa:

Professor Geraint Johnes, director of The Work Foundation.

Geraint Johnes:

Yes, of course it's the case that the West benefits – but everyone benefits from this. There is opportunity for other countries to benefit as well, not least from remittances that go back from people that have come to the West, earned larger salaries in the West, send money back to their families to help support them and to support them through education, so that they can become better qualified and serve their own countries better in the future.

Justin Rowlatt:

That is quite a claim. Everyone benefits – that's quite a claim. You're listening to *In the Balance's* 'Big Migration Debate' on the BBC World Service with me, Justin Rowlatt.

Manuela Saragosa:

And with me, Manuela Saragosa. We're at the Royal Institute of International Affairs headquarters at Chatham House in London. We're discussing

migration. Just in case you missed it, we're asking whether allowing free movement of workers across borders would boost the global economy.

Justin Rowlatt:

On the panel we have Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, who's advised African governments on migration matters; we've got Tim Finch of the UK-based think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research; and Susie Symes, former UK Treasury and EU economist. So we heard there: benefits for everyone. Chukwu-Emeka, can you really support that?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

That is absolutely the case. The healthcare system here is better. You find yourself in hospital, you're going to find a lot of foreigners and migrant workers. Back home, not just the money they send – we heard the incentives. A lot of people leave to actually come and study because there are not enough opportunities, for example, beyond getting a first degree. To do your postgraduate specialism, you have to leave.

Justin Rowlatt:

But is there a danger here that we're generalizing? In big economies where there are lots of workers, maybe it's true that there are net benefits. But for small economies and troubled nations – I saw a statistic for Haiti where 85 per cent of educated Haitians have left the country. How can that possibly be a benefit for Haiti?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

Are you saying that those people, because they're in Haiti, they should stay in Haiti? A country that's –

Justin Rowlatt:

I'm not saying staying in Haiti – all I'm asking is whether or not there's a question about whether that is a net gain for a country like Haiti?

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

It is true that smaller countries do suffer and do struggle to manage that. But that in itself is not a problem of migration. That is a problem of management.

Susie Symes:

The situation with Haiti is symptomatic of the deep, troubled nature of Haiti. People leaving, being welcomed and having the opportunity to learn to take things back and change things in Haiti is what's best for Haiti.

Tim Finch:

I'm on the same side. I'm a great believer that, properly managed and done in the right way and not done in a sort of reckless, let's do it all tomorrow morning way, the win-wins are very obvious. I'm on this side of it.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

But that's a straw-man debate.

Tim Finch:

I'm just saying I think that it's a question of transitioning towards it. I think that's a perfectly reasonable position to be in.

Manuela Saragosa:

Let's hear from Steven Woolfe. He's the economic affairs spokesman for UKIP, one of the many parties around the world – here in the UK obviously – campaigning for a policy of restricted migration.

Steven Woolfe:

Yes, and I think what we've got here today are three people who absolutely believe in open-door migration across the globe, which in many ways is a corporatist charter. It will certainly support the larger businesses –

Manuela Saragosa:

I thought that Tim Finch was a bit more qualified.

Steven Woolfe:

Tim is still accepting it but it's at the level and scale. But what I want to challenge though is really this numerical assumption that it actually benefits all the time for everybody, both in the positive and the negative, for North and South. The studies that I've seen – starting from *The New American* by James Barry for the US government in 1997, to the Harvard Kennedy School in the *Heaven's Door* report in 2013, or even in the November report of the OECD – have recognized that there is very limited improvement to GDP for nations where you have open door immigration. What you also have, quite significantly, is a very clear distinction between those at the low-skilled and those at the high-skilled. It is absolutely clear: where you have high-skilled employees, then there is a benefit to the nation-state, but where you have low-skilled, you displace wealth from poor indigenous people to employers.

Manuela Saragosa:

Susie, what do you say to this?

Susie Symes:

It's right to say that, to the extent, there may be some people who are disadvantaged by migration. They are more likely to be less qualified, less skilled, young, working class. What's the answer to that? Make sure we educate, skill and equip our young people. But for heaven's sake, don't stop inward migration, which is what gives us the extra economic growth that allows us to spend the money on educating and skilling [sic] our young people.

Steven Woolfe:

But what you're doing then is not allowing – you're actually ignoring the fact that there are structural problems in countries. You're saying: fine, ignore those structural problems in countries, ignore helping those jurisdictions that need help. Particularly, for example, while we're talking about Nigeria, allow their doctors and nurses to leave, come here – we benefit – but not help those countries actually improve their lifestyles for the people living there.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

It's not an either/or proposition. The issues of labour markets, for example – opening up labour markets so that people can migrate in at the same time as building skills in the country is not an either-or proposition. We should be doing both. Because there are certain things that allowing migrant workers in can address and there are things that we need to do to improve the skills generally. The problem with the debate is when we sort of pretend as if these two things are completely, mutually exclusive. They're not.

Justin Rowlatt:

You are kind of ignoring the political challenges that Steven raises. You say, oh look, it's not either-or, it's a dynamic situation, and if we educate people - In the short term at least, there are going to be challenges, as Tim pointed out right at the beginning. There are going to be challenges and particular groups of people in society are going to be particularly challenged.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

And that's why they have a wonderful party like UKIP to represent them.

Justin Rowlatt:

But the party is articulating a genuine issue.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

But that doesn't make an argument for saying – by the way, these sort of parties exist everywhere, in Africa we are dealing with the same issues. But that in itself does not mean that it's not a good thing.

Tim Finch:

But we do need some political consent for this. The reason why UKIP is garnering some support and why all the mainstream parties in all the major countries in the West are in favour of maintaining some sort of migration controls – that's not the totally winning argument, but democratically you need to be in control of migration systems in order to have any chance of getting elected.

Manuela Saragosa:

Can we just have a bit more about businesses which actually benefit from migration? Pimlico Plumbers – we've got Dominic Ceraldi here, you're a manager at Pimlico Plumbers. Tell us a bit about what you do and how migration has affected your business.

Dominic Ceraldi:

We want the best workers for our company. We're not a big corporate, we've got 220 people working for us. That's not just plumbers but right across the board, so we've got a support staff as well. We'll try and pick the best people for each role that we advertise for. We'll pick them from whatever country they come from. If we get a guy from South Africa who's a good plumber, then he's going to get a job with us. If he comes from Mexico and works in a call centre, then great, we'll have it.

Manuela Saragosa:

Could you run your business without migration?

Dominic Ceraldi:

I don't think so. Certainly not in London, and I think in England in general now. I've come down from Lancashire, so I've not come too far, but even in Lancashire I think it's exactly the same. There's been mass migration into the country over the last 40 or 50 years. My father was from southern Italy. In the 1960s, they were sponsored to come over by the British government and there's thousands of Italians in my town, second or third generation now. It's not benefited southern Italy. You go back there and the only benefit it's had is there's a few people that have gone back and maybe built summer houses there. But the Italians have stayed in Lancashire. The majority of them have come over and they've not necessarily – they did not become millionaires, they've just become regular workers in Britain and they've stayed in Britain. I think that's the same for Italians, Irish, Germans, whatever, they've gone all over the world. So I think it's a benefit to do it.

Justin Rowlatt:

So Dominic Ceraldi, you think it's a benefit. But I think we need to open this up to the floor, because I know there are questions from some of the audience members.

Question 1:

I'm a documentary filmmaker. I've visited Africa a number of times and I must say, I'm wholly in favour of migration, I think everyone benefits from more migration, but I am absolutely gasping here in almost shock – and I now know why the phrase 'common sense' is not very common. Of course developing countries are raped and plundered of their talent from that process, but I wouldn't believe for a moment we benefit hugely from them coming. But I think we're very disingenuous. We fail in our aid policies in making life attractive for these countries. But it's utterly dishonest and very disingenuous to say that these services are not – let's use our common sense. I've seen this myself. Who in his right mind would not come and make a hundred times more here than there? We should be ensuring by our aid policies and making it very attractive for people, and we're not doing it.

A final point, Mr Chairman, I've got to say as well here in Europe, we've mass youth unemployment in the European Union. That's why UKIP is doing well. Today, for example, the utter insanity of our economic policies – we cannot divorce this debate from what's happening in the real economy at the moment. The European Central Bank has failed to respond to real threat of deflation. Mass youth unemployment here. If we want migration we have to have intelligent economic policies here. Thanks very much.

Owen Barder:

I just want to say that although that does sound like common sense, and lots of people think that as skilled professionals leave a developing country that that must denude that country of talent, the evidence is very clear that that isn't true. My colleague did a careful study collecting data about the number of health professionals leaving each country and then looking at the number of health professionals working in those countries, and statistically there is no correlation between countries that have skill shortages and countries that are exporting medical professionals. It's just not true.

Question 2:

I want to challenge the idea that migration is easy. I actually support much more open doors for migration but if I take the Commonwealth, which is what I'm familiar with, it's actually very difficult even for skilled workers to enter Britain or other countries. I have problems recruiting people for my office in London, my office in South Africa, my office in Fiji. Really I think it's become too much of a Eurocentric debate. I think one should look at a structured opening of doors. The Commonwealth of 53 countries – it perhaps doesn't surprise you if I make the point – is a framework of an organization that can do this. At the last meeting of the Commonwealth leaders, the heads of government, a report has been commissioned to look into the issue of greater Commonwealth inter-migration.

My final point is there are many key emerging economies, like Malaysia, like India, like South Africa, like Nigeria, where greater movement among other countries of the Commonwealth would really make great benefit for those countries, including the UK. So let's move away from the Eurocentric debate and let's get a greater global perspective on the whole issue.

Justin Rowlatt:

Chukwu, that obviously was the point you were making right at the beginning.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

Absolutely. It's about making productive use of talent. That's how you get development, basically.

Tim Finch:

And there was a key word in there: structured. There's a way in which you can do this but you do it in a planned way, in an orderly way.

Question 3:

I manage a global equity fund and I've actually worked in Africa, in governments, especially in Nigeria, of all places. Two things. One is about the demographic transition. This country went through it in the 19th century, we ended up with 100 million – I'm sorry, 60 [million]. We would have had 100 if we hadn't exported about 40 to all of the former colonies like North America

and Australia, and so forth. If you look at Japan, as a comparison to where Britain would be today if we had not exported those people, that now would be roughly the sort of population density. The thing is that most developing countries are still going through their demographic transition. Some of them are getting to the end of it, like Bangladesh, which is a very interesting and particular case which I think the panel should look at more closely.

The second point I wanted to make is about economic failure in those countries of origin. In Nigeria it's fairly clear that this is a country which had very strong endowments but which frittered them away and which is basically [run by] a kleptocratic government, to refer to one of the points that the Nigerian lady said over there. So the West really ought to, if it's going to have more labour migration around the world, put much more pressure on regimes that basically repress their own populations and prevent organic development from happening in those countries.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

Again, let's not think that the West really can go lecturing these regimes about what they should be doing. The citizens of these countries are doing that quite well for themselves. The real point is that what each of these countries is grappling with right now is actually attracting the skills that they need. But then there are lots of practical things that we need to do. We need to start to recognize skills so that people can move and they can come with their certificate and they can be recognized. I'm talking about moving from Zambia to Malawi, for example. These are the sort of issues that we need to grapple with right here and now. But the issue is that migration is very much a part of the development story for these countries.

Susie Symes:

I think that's absolutely key. People have rightly emphasized the need for development, particularly in some very poor countries. But actually, migration is a large part of the answer to that. It's not the problem that causes poverty. Migration is part of the answer for development for poor countries, and that's exactly why we need research and evidence and not things that appear to be common sense and intuitively plausible but that turn out, when you test them out, to be wrong.

Question 4:

You may know that there was a recent vote in Switzerland and definitely the opinion in Switzerland is of the mindset that probably there is an upper limit to this open-door policy, in a country where one person out of four inhabitants is a foreigner. I come from a city, Geneva, where 56 per cent of the workforce is foreign. So I certainly see the advantages for the corporate world and definitely for certain industries. But I'd also like you to think about the fact that foreigners are in fact a source of dumping for the home market.

Manuela Saragosa:

How do you mean, dumping?

Question 4:

Dumping in the sense that these foreigners are essentially paid much less. So it raises quite a lot of questions about fairness and also equal opportunities for the home-grown economy and labourers.

Justin Rowlatt:

We've got a representative of the Trades Union Congress [TUC].

Manuela Saragosa:

Absolutely. Mohammad Taj from the TUC's International Migration Forum.

Mohammad Taj:

Let me say this. The point has just been made about dumping in the workforce, the migrant workers. I'm the son of a migrant worker living in the north of England. The problem we have in fact is that, you know, it's okay for the rich and the middle classes to hire a nanny or chauffeur or gardener and live with it. But the working-class people are there, whether they're black or white or Asian – they've got to live together, they've got to work together, they've got to breathe together. I believe, and the TUC believes, that a managed migration, rather than opening the huge borders – I can tell you now, I come from a part of Kashmir. If you open that border tomorrow, you will have about 1.5 million – that's the whole of the population of the country – wanting to come in. It's not feasible.

Manuela Saragosa:

Coming to where?

Mohammad Taj:

Coming to Europe, or England. But I don't blame them, because at the end of the day, a capitalist organization will make a decision based on rationale. They want to make profit. A worker, wherever they are – somebody is coming from East Timor to Portugal, from there to Ireland, to work in a chicken factory earning a basic minimum wage. Do you think actually he's come over here for the love of the weather or anything else? He's come here because he actually wants to be better off. There's nothing wrong with that. I believe in –

Justin Rowlatt:

But your point is, as a member of the TUC, the Trades Union Congress, you're saying that there is a big challenge there for other people in society, for other working people.

Mohammad Taj:

Absolutely. We've got to have structures in place. If I can give you an example: we get half a million migrant workers coming every year to work seasonally for three or four months. They are exploited. The only thing that was there to protect them was the wages board, which has been abolished quite recently. When we get these half a million people coming in, they only work for three months. If you paid decent wages to people, the big business did, then you will have British workers, people in Britain, wanting to take those posts up. They're not going to go break their backs in the fields for the minimum wage.

Justin Rowlatt:

Mohammad Taj, thank you very much. Susie, you've got to address that. These are the kind of pinch-points that you kind of ignored in your opening statement, aren't they?

Susie Symes:

In one-and-a-half minutes. Now I'll deal with it. Of course I think people should be treated fairly and of course I think there should be legislation so that people are not exploited and ripped off and treated as almost slave labour. Absolutely, spot on. That should be true everywhere. The more we provide safe and fair jobs for people, the less at risk they are.

Justin Rowlatt:

But Susie, that is an argument against your initial proposition, which was completely open borders. That's an argument for what Tim was saying, which is transition, isn't it?

Susie Symes:

And proper legislation to protect workers wherever they are from.

Justin Rowlatt:

Tim Finch, these are your final comments.

Tim Finch:

There's lots of things I agree with here. We agree about an awful lot. There's only one point of dispute, it's the pace of change.

Susie Symes:

I don't think you should select people on the basis of making a clear contribution to society.

Tim Finch:

What's wrong with that?

Susie Symes:

I think it's a sort of foolish 'picking winners' and I think it's unethical.

Tim Finch:

I think it's very sensible surely for countries – countries have to look after themselves first. That is a reasonable position to take surely.

Susie Symes:

It is an ethical position that you hold, it's not necessarily one that we all hold.

Tim Finch:

Well, we'll disagree about that.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie:

The bigger question of whether freer migration contributes to the global recovery is irrefutable. I think what we are talking about is that we need to ensure that this happens in a way that actually – governments must take responsibility. Protection for workers is part of that obviously, but a little bit of competition isn't a bad thing either. So this is also part of the reality. The workers who come from Kashmir and do the work, they provide a very good service, they provide very good value – there's an opportunity for other people to move into other sectors. So I don't think we should look at this thing from a protectionist point of view. There are a lot of opportunities and that's what we should do.

Justin Rowlatt:

And on that magisterial overview, we have to draw this discussion to a close. It's all we've got time here at Chatham House in London. Thanks to all our contributors: Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Tim Finch, Susie Symes and everybody else here, including our panel.

Manuela Saragosa:

Thanks also to our front-row panel of experts and also to our audience for taking part. You can get in touch; we want to hear what you have to say about the programme. If you have any comments, do get in touch. Our email address is world.business@bbc.co.uk. We're on Facebook at BBC Business.

Justin Rowlatt:

But for now, thanks for everyone who's been part of *In the Balance's* 'Big Migration Debate'. Thank you very much. Goodbye.