

Mehmet NIYAZI TANILIR*

LOCAL CAUSES, GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES — GLOBAL CAUSES, LOCAL CONSEQUENCES: THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CRISIS ON GLOBALISM AND NATIONALISM

The migrant and refugee crisis has become one of the most important global problems of our time. The existing immigration and border policies of the governments are not sufficient to solve the problem. The problem, with its economic, social, cultural and security dimensions, has led to serious concerns and debates among political elites, decision makers, academic and business circles of target countries. Governments and international organizations have become helpless in solving this hot issue.

This problem, which has both local and global causes, also has local and global consequences. In my paper, I will discuss the global and local causes of the migrant and refugee problem and its impacts on the globalism and nationalism.

Before discussing the consequences of the migration and refugee crisis in the context of globalism, standing a bit on the phenomenon of globalization will be useful for a clearer description of the matter.

Globalization, as one of the most important phenomenon of the contemporary World, keeps the agenda of all of us busy, somehow. Issues, such as what globalization is, its causes, consequences, benefits, damages and future, are being discussed worldwide by the academic and political elites.

According to a widely accepted simple definition, globalization is the free movement of goods, people, capital and ideas.

Or according to a more inclusive definition; *“Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.”* (<http://www.globalization101.org/what-is-globalization/>)

* Ambassador, Turkey

The globalization phenomenon, which we are discussing today, has become a process that has affected the whole World, especially after the cold war.

But, globalization is not a new phenomenon. People have been buying and selling goods to each other over long distances for thousands years. The well-known historical symbol of this fact is the silk road which was connecting China and India to Europe and Africa. Over centuries, people and corporations traded and invested in foreign countries. Nevertheless, after the cold war period, the policies of powerful states and large corporations and technological developments have caused such an increase in international trade, investment and migration that many observers started to believe that our World has entered a qualitatively new stage.

Thomas Friedman defines the difference of this contemporary globalization as follows: “[T]he inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before—in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before... the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world” (T. L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 1999, p. 7–8).

The wave of globalization has been driven by policies that opened economies to competition both locally and internationally. Especially during the last three decades, many governments have adopted free market economic system which has greatly increased their production potential and created huge trade and investment opportunities. Governments also made negotiations to lift barriers obstructing free trade to a large extent and signed international agreements to improve investments and trade of goods and services. Corporations constructed factories in order to take advantages of new opportunities in foreign markets and made production and marketing deals with foreign partners. Therefore, the international industrial and financial business structure has become the hallmark of globalization.

Technology is another main driver of globalization. Especially, progress in information and communication technologies has dramatically transformed economic life. Information and communication technologies have provided new valuable instruments to the all sort of individual economic actors, such consumers, investors, entrepreneurs, financiers, traders to identify and monitor world-wide economic opportunities and trends in a faster and more detailed way, to facilitate asset transfer and to collaborate with business partners in remote locations.

However, globalization is a very controversial issue. Globalists are arguing that globalization has provided opportunity to poor countries and their citizens to have economic progress and improved life standards. But opponents of globalization are advocating that the creation of an unfettered international free market has provided benefit to multinational corporations at the expense of local enterprises, cultures and ordinary people. As a result, resistance to globalization is manifesting itself at the level of both the people and governments, and the peoples and governments are trying to manage the flow of capital, labour, goods and ideas which constitute the current wave of globalization.

By the nature of globalization, it is expected that as one of the important production factors, labour should have been a necessary component of the free movement. In fact, it is not.

Nevertheless, it was achieved at a regional supranational level, namely in the EU, it has never been mentioned at the global level. However, there has been ideas aiming free movement of labour, it has not overcome the resistance of nation states. Of course, justifications of nation states for protecting national labour market, local productions, internal security and national culture are still valid in today's circumstances.

However, today, migration and refugee crisis has become an acute major issue on the agenda of nation states, supranational structure such as the EU, and many related international organizations, especially the UN. The immigrant flow arises from economic causes continues uninterrupted from the South to the North. The main cause of mass immigrant flow, from the poor nations of Asia and Africa to the rich countries of Europe and from Mexico to the United States, is the difference of wealth and life standards. In a more general sense, the poor South is moving towards the rich North.

The opponents of globalization refer to this contradiction as the unfairness of globalization of capitalism. On the other hand, globalists argue that thanks to globalization investments have been flowing into poor countries, trade is becoming widespread and employment opportunities are increasing, therefore poverty level in the World is relatively reducing and general trend will continue in this direction.

However, if we consider the issue in its historical context, we can bring the foundation of today's global injustice back to the beginning of European colonialism, that is, to the 16th Century. Throughout the history of colonialism wealth and economic and cultural resources of today's poor regions and countries transferred to the imperialist countries, namely today's rich western countries.

After 2. World War a hope awakened for development and prosperity by the independence of former colonies. But it was a pseudo-spring and ended shortly due to internal conflicts based on tribal, ethnic or religious differences usually highlighted by former colonialists, lack of educated and professional human resources, the corruption of greedy political and administrative elite, the interference of old colonial powers. At the end of the day, most of these newly independent poor countries fallen in consecutive political and economic crisis.

Today, the refugee crisis, based on political reasons, has been added to the migrant movement based on economic reasons. It will not be wrong to pursue the root of this current crisis back to the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet Union in 1979 and the effects of that invasion on Muslim World generally and on Pakistan particularly, then the emergence of El Kaide as an outcome of the war against Soviet Union, after the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war El Kaide's terrorist attack against the US worldwide, after 9/11 the US invasion of Afghanistan on the name of war against terrorism in 2001, and then the invasion of Iraq in 2003, turmoil in both countries, and internal conflicts and war triggered by Arab spring in Syria, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and so on.

European Parliament Member Nirj Deva is attributing the current refugee crisis to the destruction caused by the US intervention in the Middle East in 2001 and beyond: *"The so-called War on Ter or that began in 2001 has evolved into multiple brutal conflicts that are destabilizing the entire Middle East, eroding people's freedoms, undermining*

their safety, and transforming the very nature of their societies. This is driving people from their homes, and often from their countries. The ongoing conflict in Syria, in particular, has already displaced some five million people." (<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/private-sector-economic-development-aid-by-nirj-deva-2017-06>)

Although the ultimate goal of people fleeing from war and conflict zones is the rich European countries, especially Germany, in reality the predominant burden of refugees is on the countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan which are adjacent to war and conflict zones.

In Europe, the masses of refugees coming over Mediterranean are mostly gathered in Greece and Italy. Of course, since 2015, being pushed the boundaries of other EU countries by this massive accumulation of refugees in the two countries, have created a serious panic in Europe.

Rather than seeking a common humanitarian solution to migrant and refugee flows, both the EU and individual European countries have opened debate on Schengen Accord, the largest regional free movement agreement ever made by humankind and some EU countries have restarted border control after 30 years of Schengen Accord.

Daniel Gros is convicted that this attitude will have the opposite effect in terms of European security: *"In light of Europe's refugee crisis... the core principle of a "Europe without borders" has come under attack. But, contrary to popular belief, reinstating border controls would actually undermine European security... It is not only possible to have both openness and security; the former can actually bolster the latter."* (<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/schengen-open-borders-help-security-by-daniel-gros-2015-12>)

Populist and nationalist parties, advocating closed borders, have strengthened and increased their votes in European countries. After the collapse of communism, first time some strange things happened in the middle of Europe; at the eastern edge of EU, Bulgaria closed its border with Turkey and at the southern edge, Hungary closed its border with Serbia by barbed wire. It is a tragic symbol of closed borders policy.

The wave created by this wind led the United Kingdom to quit the EU, the largest pacifist and globalist project that Europe has achieved in the 20th century.

This development has created a disappointment for ordinary people and for the supporters of globalization who believe in an integrated Europe with free movement of people, goods, capital and ideas.

On the other hand, the same picture has produced similar results in the United States and the rising wave of populism has brought Donald Trump to power, who banned the entry of citizens of seven Muslim countries to the United States and wanted to construct a wall at Mexican border with the US.

Joseph E. Stiglitz says that this policy is a threat to the global economy, however, in any case humanity will continue to be dependent on each other and confront the common problems: *"The protectionism advocated by Trump, Le Pen, and others poses a similar threat to the world economy. For three-quarters of a century, there has been an attempt to create a rules-based global economic order, in which goods, services, people, and ideas could move more freely across borders. To the applause from his fellow populists,*

Trump has thrown a hand grenade into that structure... This will be troublesome for the entire world. Like it or not, humanity will remain globally connected, facing common problems like climate change and the threat of terrorism." (<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/macron-fight-against-populism-by-joseph-e--stiglitz-2017-05>)

Stiglitz believes that solution is possible through cooperation, openness and sharing: *"The ability and incentive to work cooperatively to solve these problems must be strengthened, not weakened... to remain open and democratic... the only sustainable prosperity is shared prosperity. It is a lesson that the US and the rest of Europe must now learn."* (<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/macron-fight-against-populism-by-joseph-e--stiglitz-2017-05>)

As a conclusion; it can be said that migration and refugee crisis has triggered populism and nationalism in most developed World, namely in Europe and in the USA and has also raised doubts about globalist ideas.

Although it manifests itself as a political and economic problem, it is essentially a humanitarian crisis, and the rich North has not given a good test by preferring to turn its back to its southern poor brothers, rather than seeking a just solution to this common problem.

An open-minded and empathy based approach is needed.

EPILOGUE:

*We came here to get away from false promises,
from dictators in our neighborhoods,
who wore blue suits and broke our doors down
when they wanted, arrested us when they felt like,
swinging clubs and shooting guns as they pleased.
But it's no different here. It's all concentrated.
The doctors don't care, our bodies decay,
our minds deteriorate, we learn nothing of value.
Our lives don't get better, we go down quick.*

By Jimmy Santiago Baca,
Immigrants in Our Own Land
(New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1990)