Social Justice and the Migration of Highly Skilled Elites

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While globalization has been an essential component of the human experience for several millennia, the very recent phenomenon of remarkable economic, social and political trade, interaction and dependence that has characterized the globalization of the recent few decades has brought with it some new, unique challenges. This current wave of globalization has, in particular, provoked distinct migratory patterns of diverse groups of individuals from many developing and lesser developed countries to the developed world. Indeed, while traveling to distant lands for one’s education was a common occurrence even in medieval times, it is the statistically remarkable, fluid movement of highly-skilled elites for both their education and livelihoods from their home countries to their host countries that is of particular interest to those concerned with the effects of migration and diversity on justice in particular. This, among other movement patterns, continues to distinguish our current era of globalization from previous ones, and demands our attention for its importance and relevance to the future of global society and economy. As such, this paper, which in its broadest strokes, seeks to better delineate the impact of migration on the pursuit of social justice in modern liberal societies, aims to address this question through a specific lens: this subset of highly-skilled migrants.

The migration of these highly-skilled elites to developed countries has been a key factor in the continued increase in the scientific and industrial output of developed Western countries as their ‘native’ PhD graduation rates in these fields fall. Our basic intuition ostensibly seems to indicate to us that such migration is relatively positive in nature as many of the traditional concerns vis-à-vis working-and lower-class immigrants do not apply to this group of elites. Indeed, studies\(^1\) have revealed that broadly speaking, when these individuals do migrate, they do so with the requisite language skills and background necessary for their new country. Due, in part to their education, these same studies show that concerns of cultural and social segregation

\(^1\) *International Mobility of the Highly Skilled, OECD: 2001, p.59-61*
and ghettoization that exist with many low-income migrant groups are less applicable for this group of individuals. This simple-minded analysis would seem to dissuade us from even considering using this group to consider the broader question of culturally and ethnically heterogeneous societies and social justice. Why, then, consider this group of migrants?

There exist two main motivations for our interest in relatively mobile, highly-skilled elite migrants a) These migrants contribute significantly (and many would argue, are essential) to the economic progress of their host countries, and b) Significant numbers of these migrants return to their countries of origin permanently after many years, or commute and live in both their ‘home’ and ‘host’ countries. This latter observation serves as the catalyst for the analysis presented herein. My primary goal is to attempt to understand how the unique characteristic of such a group affects the goals and principle of redistributive justice, and particularly, economic solidarity within both their home and host countries.

Such an analysis first entails understanding how both host and home countries view these migrants and vice versa. How, indeed, do these individuals deal with questions of identity? I will argue that by some very basic metric, this migrant group, by its increasingly transient nature, must parcel its identities out to more groups, making conventional notions of allegiance and solidarity more diffuse. These questions of identity drive to the very heart of our inquiry, as one is forced to consider if, and how, such migrants fit within conventional, Rawlsian conceptions of justice. As members of a transnational group, with the ability and desire to move across borders at will, highly-skilled migrants pose fundamental challenges to the principles that guide redistributive policies in modern, liberal nations. I will first consider whether this group poses a basic, ‘structural’ challenge to the notion of the original position that underlies the Rawlsian conception of justice. It is here that one finds an application of the impartial observer approach to the original position that has been previously suggested\(^2\). Questions of application, however, occupy a significant amount of a society’s, and therefore this paper’s, attention. Here, I will argue, with some empirical backing, that, while this migration is certainly not a zero-sum game,

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\(^2\) Sen, Amartya, "Justice across Borders,” p. 44
there exists a pronounced asymmetry on the nature of this groups’ impact on the pursuit of social justice within the home country and host country. This asymmetry generally reveals that home countries, in the short term, are assisted in their pursuit of social justice, while similar positive correlations are less likely in host countries where the diverse nature of these migrants\(^3\) still poses challenges. In sum, it can be seen that this particular group of migrants generally positively or neutrally affect the pursuit of social justice in home and host countries, an argument contingent on some basic empirical data and assumptions about the migrant group itself. This understanding may help in more generally dealing with the challenges faced by both developing and developed countries in our ‘brave new globalized world’.

**Definitions**

Before proceeding further, let us clarify some of the terminology used thus far. In particular, it behooves us to define with some clarity the migrant group this paper will use as its lens into the challenges migratory patterns pose to the pursuit of social justice and economic solidarity. To some extent, the precision of this definition is unimportant, beyond a general desire for empirical data and justification. As such, I will use the definition used by the OECD in its report, *International Mobility of the Highly Skilled* (which serves as a key empirical source for data and arguments) of Human Resources in Science and Technology (HRST)**4**:  

- individuals who have successfully completed education at the tertiary level (university) in a science and technology field of study  
- individuals not formally qualified as above, but are employed in an occupation where the above qualifications are normally required

Here science and technology is broadly interpreted to include the humanities and social sciences, and thus encompasses the general range of educated, highly-skilled individuals present in most

\(^3\) Miller, David, "Social Justice in Multicultural Societies," p. 32  
\(^4\) *IMHS*, p. 14-15
countries and societies. It is also worth noting that an arbitrary, perhaps unjustified, extension to the term highly-skilled is made, by defining this group as ‘elite’ in nature. This definition is not, however, mere semantics; it represents an intuitive way of defining the nature of this group of workers as migrants relative to the general population of migrants and workers. It is not meant as a value judgment, rather it serves to clarify the status of this group, and emphasize that they are a group prized by both their host and home countries (consider the terms ‘brain gain’ and ‘brain drain’ and the implied knowledge loss and gain by both societies when such individuals migrate).

Questions of Identity

Now that this group of migrants has been clearly defined, let us begin our analysis by considering the question of how these migrants view themselves and their identity. Identity, or rather, social identity, is, as any communitarian will tell you, an important, if not key, element in human decision-making and choices. The question of identity briefly occupies our attention as we consider the larger problems of social justice. Any notion of within-group solidarity is ultimately derived from some bond based on shared identity between individuals. While the communitarian approach to identity would have us ‘discovering’ it with little choice in the matter, a more choice-based approach to identity as outlined by Amartya Sen⁵ seems to offer more flexibility here.

When considering how our particular group of migrants comes to form its identities we must take into account two key factors: a) their ability to move from country to country with ease due to their highly-demanded skills, and b) their exposure through education to more cultures, ideas and patterns of thought. b) is relevant in the context of Sen’s argument that “there is a significant role of reasoning in the choice of identity”⁶ and that while the opportunity to explore and learn about new identities may not be available to everyone, people are generally capable of reasoning and making choices about their identities. In particular b) is important to consider as a

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⁵ Sen, Amartya, *Reason Before Identity*, p.18-22
⁶ *ibid*, p. 31
simple notion of opportunity. Highly-skilled migrants have, even in their home countries, had access to opportunities and knowledge enabling them greater choice in the matter of their identity. In other words, their identity space\(^7\) is larger than that of most members of both societies (and migrants in general) by virtue of the opportunities afforded them by their education and experiences.

In a similar vein, a) suggests a more malleable notion of identity for highly-skilled migrants due to their ability (and often employment-dictated need) to travel between their home and host countr(y/ies). In addition to their exposure to new patterns of life, religions, cultures, forms of entertainment, food and ideas, the transient, transnational nature of their identities add a new layer of complexity not found that often among less mobile migrants and the population of both societies in general. As Sen puts it:

“A feminist activist could well consider what her commitments should be to address the special deprivation of women in general – not necessarily only those in her own country. When an Italian feminist is involved in a movement for more gender justice in Sudan, she is acting not primarily as an Italian, but as a feminist”\(^8\)

Indeed, different identities become more relevant depending on the context of the situation. An Indian computer scientist in America may, would assign a weight (a component of the identity vector) \(\alpha_i\) to his Indian identity and a weight \(\alpha_j\), where \(\alpha_i > \alpha_j\), to his status as a non-resident Indian, but may invert these weights when he immigrates back to India. The plasticity of these weights, which by circumstance and not any intrinsic difference between highly-skilled migrants and regular migrants, renders the identities of the highly-skilled difficult to place, and their shifting affiliations hard to frame, especially within the context of justice. This plasticity results as a matter of the availability of a larger identity space to highly-skilled migrants, and the

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\(^7\) Mathematically, then, the identity of a person can be represented as a normalized \(n\)-dimensional vector where \(n\) is the size (dimension) of the identity space of the individual. The elements of this vector are then identity weights that reflect the valuation placed by an individual on a particular identity.

\(^8\) *ibid*, p. 29
geographical and societal mobility their skills afford them. The implications of this plasticity on
the pursuit of social justice will now be considered.

Social Justice and its Relevance

To ground our assessment of the impact of highly-skilled migrants on the pursuit of
social justice, it is necessary to define our notions of social justice. These notions derive from a
Kantian/contractarian tradition and find their fullest expression in John Rawls’ *A Theory of
Justice*. The well-known approach Rawls took, was the structure of the ‘original position’ from
where individuals unaware of their lot in life, decided on the basic principles of justice. These
principles, somewhat accurately summarized as “justice as fairness” are as follows: 1) The
primacy of freedom and liberty, as long as everyone is permitted a similar scheme of liberties,
and 2) the arrangement of social and economic equalities such that they are of the greatest
expected benefit to the least advantaged, and that fair equality of opportunity is present.9 The
pursuit of social justice then, for our purposes, entails ensuring that “justice as fairness” is
applied and followed as a guiding principle.

Rawls’ work can be viewed as a means of grounding with, and guiding the, principles of
the modern, liberal state that emerged in the wake of the Second World War. To Rawls, the
larger society which functioned as a “social union” was the most important of social unions that
existed. To borrow a Rawls quote chosen by David Miller in “Social Justice in Multicultural
Societies”:

“… the collective activity of justice is the preeminent form of human flourishing.
For given favourable conditions, it is by maintaining these public arrangements
that persons best express their nature and achieve the widest regulative
excellences of which each is capable”10

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9 Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 72
10 Miller, p. 16
This summarizes the practical concerns of justice within the scope of this paper, in that the pursuit of social justice entails allowing all individuals to ‘flourish’ and achieve the highest level of ‘excellence’ possible.

Permitting ourselves a little hand-waving and intuitionism, social justice is relevant and important, removed of the concerns of this paper, because it allows for the fairest means of maximizing human potential. And, as the ever-perspicacious Charles Taylor points out, “this [universal human] potential, rather than anything a person may have made of it, is what ensures that each person deserves respect”\textsuperscript{11}. The pursuit of social justice is not only essential to the modern liberal society, it drives to the very essence of what, from a Kantian experience, it means to be a rational being, and permits the expression of this essential, rational self. It is easy, when considering the minutiae and details of the central arguments of this paper, to lose sight of why it is even relevant to examine the effects of contemporary trends on the pursuit of social justice. Restating the answer to this \textit{why}, the need for this pursuit of social justice, as has just been done is an appropriate corrective measure to better frame the analysis that now follows.

\textbf{Structural Challenges}

When considering the challenges posed by this migrant group and the plasticity of the identities of its members, to the pursuit of social justice, it is first relevant to consider the structural challenges to the edifice of justice posed by such a group. Restating this, it is useful to consider how Rawls’ original position holds up when considering groups of individuals with shifting societal identifications and memberships. In essence, our concern here lies on the impact of a transnational group of highly-skilled migrants on the nature of the original position and attendant social contract and its impact on the \textit{scope} of justice.

These very concerns were addressed in their most general sense by Amartya Sen in “Justice across Borders”; the arguments made therein will now briefly be summarized: Sen persuasively argues that the original Rawlsian contractarian approach and its modifications are

\textsuperscript{11} Taylor, Charles, \textit{Philosophical Arguments}, p.235
still predicated on a somewhat unreasonable assumption that individuals interact primarily through their respective institutions and countries rather than independently across borders. This argument is, in some measure, derived from recognition of the weighted nature of multiple identities discussed earlier, as in many contexts cross-border affiliations far outweigh simple national allegiances. Indeed, Sen argues that the contractarian approach is, in general weak in dealing with the variable nature of group allegiances and proposes instead an impartial spectator approach to deal with varying-participant situations.

First, when considering the subject of this paper, why does this even matter? To many, concerns with the impact of highly-skilled, fluid migrants on the nature of the original position may seem far too abstract and unimportant given that this essay is motivated by practical concerns. However, as Sen points out in his essay:

“...The formulation of the demands of global justice as well as the identification of the agencies charged with meeting these demands are influenced by the choice of the appropriate conception of the original position and the corresponding characterization of the domain of justice as fairness”

To clarify the nature of the original position fundamentally affects the nature of the application of justice in the real world. With this motivation, we ask, how do the subjects of this paper, highly-skilled migrants, affect the original position’s validity? Furthermore, is Sen’s suggestion of an impartial spectator approach to arriving at principles of justice a reasonable one with respect to the case of highly-skilled migrants? The first question is, to a large extent, addressed by Sen himself as the case of a transnational group of highly-skilled migrants falls largely under the purview of ‘global justice’, the general subject he tackles in the article. Remembering that this paper is concerned primarily with the impact of these elite migrants on the pursuit of justice in each individual society (the host and home country), the plural nature of the affiliations and identities of this group of individuals (their larger identity space, as described earlier) makes any contractarian approach to defining justice difficult. Rawls’ presumption that the social union of, in our case the host or home country, is the most important social union to individual citizens

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12 Sen, “Justice Across Borders”, p. 39
does not necessarily apply to these transnational migrants; these are individuals who, while limited by their needs for livelihoods, can and often do migrate from and to societies easily and thus are hard to incorporate into an original position development of justice.

Is Sen’s suggestion of an impartial spectator approach to global justice an appropriate one in rectifying the impact of having a group of transnational migrants moving between countries? To some extent, the answer is yes. It does allow for an arbitration of the claims of individuals who may only partially reside in (and identify with) a particular society, and ‘full-time’ members of this society. This is since the arbitrator is a disinterested party who can take into account the identity vectors (as defined earlier) of different individuals, assess these affiliations and arrive at a just policy. A disinterested arbitration approach alleviates the structural challenges posed by the complexity of the identity space of highly-skilled elites. Furthermore, such an approach can take into account the role and position of these individuals in alternate societies in formulating just policies, rendering it a feasible approach to this particular group of individuals, and an application of the method suggested by Amartya Sen.

**Challenges to the Application of Justice**

In some sense this paper attempts can consider the impact of diverse societies on the pursuit of social justice, except with respect to the case of highly-skilled migrant workers. It is, however, entirely reasonable to ask, what *about* cultural and linguistic diversity? The argument that cultural and linguistic diversity are less pronounced factors for highly-skilled migrants was made early on, and remains a reasonable contention. This is not to say, however, that this form of diversity does not exist. A Chinese engineer migrating to the United States will certainly bring with him a different set of cultural modes than those practiced by his new American neighbors. Indeed, the same concerns of segregation and lack of identification with the new host country of the migrant still exist. Rather than deal with the direct impact of such migrants on local and regional diversity, empirical evidence has suggested a new trend that subsumes the more ‘traditional’ methodology of considering questions of diversity: the trend towards re-emigration
to the home country or maintaining a fluid notion of residency and status between ‘home’ and ‘host’ countries – distinctions that themselves become more a matter of definition than reality for these highly mobile individuals.

Indeed, this ties back firmly to the notion of the larger, more diverse identity space of highly-skilled migrant elites. Specifically, while they do migrate for economic reasons, there has been an increasing trend for re-migration back to their home countries, an empirical trend which has been implicitly assumed throughout this paper. The argument here is that these migrants are becoming a transnational elite with extremely fluid, plastic notions of state identity. Since, however, this transformation has not entirely occurred yet, this paper has remained focused on highly-skilled migrants that, in particular, have the ability and desire to return to their home countries while maintaining (maintaining) business contacts in their host countries. Why? Simply as a means of empirically grounding with contemporary data a situation that marks the beginnings of the emergence of, what is expected to become, a large transnational elite.

This section of the paper then concerns itself first, with some empirical evidence for this trend of re-emigration to home countries, and how these statistics, in combination with the plasticity of the identities of these highly-skilled migrants translates into their attitudes towards justice in both their home and host countries:

First, we consider the cases of Ireland and China as empirical examples of return-migrations and highly fluid migrant populations to identify some key economic and social trends. Ireland, until relatively recently, had a very low influx of migrants and returned-émigrés. But, starting in the mid-1990s, studies have noted that returned-émigrés tended to be better educated, and more well off. Alan Barrett’s landmark studies have revealed a positive correlation between this inflow of returning émigrés and the GNP of Ireland. More remarkably, since the migrants that have been returning are skilled (HRST) they have “reduced the wages of skilled workers relative to what they would have been in the absence of immigration”\textsuperscript{13}. This, in turn reduced

\textsuperscript{13} Barrett, Alan, “Return Migration of Highly Skilled Irish into Ireland and Their Impact on GNP and Earnings Inequality,” in IMHS, p. 156
earnings inequality in Ireland, an outcome desired of social justice at its most basic level. Empirical evidence then exists for relatively quick (given the short time-spans within which these individuals returned and energized the economy) and successful re-integration of highly-skilled migrants into their home countries, resulting in a reduction in earnings inequality.\textsuperscript{14} Ireland, while a well-performing European economy, is still a relatively small source of HRST compared to large developing economies like India and China, and thus it may be argued by some, a poor example on which to motivate or justify any analytical steps.

To answer this challenge, we consider Guochu and Wenjun’s analysis of the impact of Chinese HRST mobility from the OECD’s report on highly-skilled workers. The net outflow of HRST from China is certainly identified as being negative in impact due to the ‘brain drain’ of talented individuals from China to developed countries like the United States and Canada. However, the authors’ also identify some important positive effects from this outflow: for one, many of these emigrating individuals do choose China as a region of investment when establishing their own businesses years in the future in their host countries. Second, this outflow allows individuals that may have otherwise not had the opportunity to truly discover their potential due to limited resources, to demonstrate the extent of their capabilities. The authors’ analysis of the impact of this outflow on receiving host countries is somewhat lacking, but the essence of the argument is that in addition to their knowledge and skills these migrants bring with them the contacts and desire to further international trade and investment.\textsuperscript{15} Indeed, overseas Chinese have been a crucial source of investment and support in China’s remarkable economic rise in the post-Deng-Xiaoping period. Unlike Ireland however, no studies have considered the effect of returning émigrés on Chinese society and economy. The authors’ of the paper acknowledge the need for further study of this group, and statistics regarding the number of returning Chinese graduate students are indicative of a general increasing trend in the mobility

\textsuperscript{14} Barrett, p. 155
and fluidity of an overseas Chinese population that, at one time, was significantly isolated from their home country. How, then do the cases of Ireland and China guide an analysis of the effect of highly-skilled migrants on the pursuit of social justice?

These studies, first, support the argument that re-migration of highly-skilled workers to their home countries, while currently not statistically significant, is a growing trend and feature of globalization in our age. Second, these studies suggest both positive and negative correlations between certain indicators of equity and equality and the movement of HRST in host and home countries. As such, this paper now reaches its key arguments on how one might interpret this empirical data with respect to the application of justice in both home and host countries.

In home countries, the migration of highly skilled workers would seem to ostensibly have a rather large negative impact on the pursuit of social justice. After all, to lose talented individuals who would contribute to the development of institutions and industries in what, for the most part, are developing countries, ultimately hurts everyone in the society. But there are some new arguments the empirical data suggest. First, the resource constraints of developing countries make it difficult for every individual to truly explore and achieve their potential. By removing those that by the imperfect processes of educational selection in these developing countries are deemed among the most talented members of a society, individuals that are less exceptional yet quite capable are afforded access to resources and opportunities unbeknownst to them in other circumstances. One can imagine this effect propagating its way down the economic ladder to ultimately advance the second principle of justice (especially the difference principle) and decreasing the impact of practical limitations on opportunities.

Second, and related to the much-bandied about notion of the plasticity of the identity of these migrants, is the impact of their return to (or as the case may be, re-investment in) their home countries. Some component of these individuals’ identities is tied to their ‘original’ societies and/or pan-national ethnic, religious or cultural identification. Those highly-skilled migrants that do return, return empowered with new knowledge and skills, and perhaps even the desire to contribute meaningfully to their home societies. Furthermore, unlike migrants to a new
society, their re-integration into their original societies, while in certain cases challenging, is certainly a simpler task. Indeed, those migrants that do return do so for reasons of culture and identification that make re-integration easy. Empirical evidence, as discussed earlier, also suggests that returning migrants can decrease inequality in their home societies, though this can not necessarily be generalized, and certainly depends on special contexts (in this case, that of Ireland). Thus, it would seem, emigration of highly-skilled workers and the freely-chosen return of these migrants would not significantly alter the application of the principles of justice, since generally those that do return to their home society identify with it fairly strongly. If anything, a positive relationship can be seen in terms of a general increase in opportunity and availability and opportunity creation by investment or re-migration in their home countries.

At this stage, it is worth noting a potential counter-argument that is motivated by recent trends in India. Significant numbers of technology workers and other highly-skilled workers who, for the most part, resided in the United States previously have returned to India. Strikingly, news features have reported that these individuals have congregated in their own ‘NRI colonies’ (NRI being an abbreviation for Non-Resident Indian) within urban centers. This immediately disputes the earlier argument that, generally, returning émigrés re-integrate into their home country easily, in that, evidently in India; large numbers of these individuals are segregating themselves from the population at large. Indeed, the lack of any detailed studies on this phenomenon precludes a thorough analysis on the subject. But, at first glance, this particular form of segregation would seem to have greater implications for questions of economic solidarity than social justice. Indeed, empirical accounts of the reasons for many of these ‘elite’ migrants returning to their home country indicate that many wish to impart Indian cultural norms and values on their children, and also volunteer to assist the poor and engage in charitable work. Such individuals, one could surmise, would not object to the goals of social justice and may indeed champion such tasks. This is hardly a complete response to this peculiar situation, but may serve as the beginnings of a more formal argument on how to deal with retuning NRIs.
In so-called host countries, the impact of these highly-skilled migrants on the pursuit of social justice is more ambiguous. While education and economic motivations drive these individuals to migrate, their increasing trends towards mobility and the possibility of returning to their home countries, places many of these individuals in a ‘temporary worker/student’ mindset. This mindset in turn, poses unique challenges to host countries. These are, without a doubt, productive, perhaps even necessary, individuals who contribute significantly to the progress of the host society. But, would such individuals be interested in if, and how, the principles of justice are applied on the general populace? In many instances, the answer is quite simply no. While they will come to identify with their host country to some extent, trends indicate that this identification has and will become weaker with the knowledge that their jobs and/or their choices may, in turn, force and/or result in their moving to either their home or another host country. They are, at once, both members and aliens in their host society. Rather than any fundamental disagreement with permanent residents of their host society, these highly skilled migrants may simply remain benign and apathetic to the pursuit of social justice in the host society. But, as Miller argues, individuals from more collectivist societies and cultures may be more inclined to redistributive policies, while also being more exclusive in their application of such policies.\textsuperscript{16} Even while highly-skilled migrants may, in ever larger numbers, consider themselves transient members of their host country, they may still not remain indifferent to how social justice is pursued in the host country.

Consider an example: One could argue that highly-skilled, high-wage earning migrants may oppose a progressive tax system, since they were not necessarily present for the deliberations over the principles of justice in the original position. Here, an impartial spectator approach to deliberating over justice comes in handy. In particular, an impartial spectator approach may be fundamentally necessary to account for the litany of weighted identities possessed by shifting groups of highly-skilled migrants across the world. But, quantifying the extent of differences in the application of justice in the host society that may arise from these

\textsuperscript{16} Miller, p.22-32
highly-skilled migrants (that will no doubt have diverse cultural backgrounds) becomes a rather
difficult task. The final claim this paper will then make on this matter is that the tendency
towards, and extent of, disagreements is lessened by the transient mindset that is increasingly
prevalent among highly-skilled migrants with diverse identity spaces.

Conclusions

In examining the question of how highly skilled migrants affect the pursuit of social
justice in both their home and host countries, this paper has argued that these migrants possess a
larger, more diverse and more malleable identity space than other migrants and individuals in a
society. This in turn posed challenges to the underlying structures from which the principles of
justice are derived. These challenges can be addressed by applying a modification suggested by
Amartya Sen to the original position. Finally, this paper argued that, while there are significant
positive and negative impacts on the pursuit of social justice in both host and home countries,
empirical trends suggest that home countries stand to gain more than host countries. The pursuit
of social justice in different countries is not a zero-sum game. Indeed, in previous generations,
migrants generally never or only rarely returned to their home countries, and as such had almost
no impact whatsoever (perhaps even a negative impact) on their home countries. With an
increasingly fluid transfer of HRST between home and host countries however, it would seem
that developing countries (that are the predominant source of HRST to developed countries)
stand to become key beneficiaries of these new trends.

As policy considerations go, it is not easy to recommend any measures for host countries
in dealing with these migrant workers. For the moment those highly-skilled workers that migrate
to developed countries contribute significantly to basic progress in science and industry that
impact the entire population. It may benefit developed countries to better retain these individuals
with incentives or more generous immigration policies, so as to not lose their expertise and
increase their identification with their ‘host’ country. This latter result may alleviate any negative
impact on social justice from a group of migrant workers who view their position in a society as transient.

It is reasonable, at the end of this paper, to ask: how useful is a focus on this particular group of migrants? As harbingers of future trends in globalization, understanding the effect of their migrations and complex identities on the application of the fundamental principles underlying modern liberal societies serves as a means of understanding future challenges to the application and theory of social justice. This paper’s weaknesses lie in an inevitable reliance on empirical data, and specific contexts to draw larger conclusions on general patterns of the impact of such migrations on social justice. There are other possible interpretations and arguments that may forcefully argue that the migration of elites has a significant negative impact on host societies in increasing competition for jobs, for instance. This paper has however attempted to steer a reasonable middle course that nonetheless comments on observed phenomena and basic theoretical principles. In doing so, one can only hope to provoke further data gathering, and detailed study into this subject matter to guide future generations of global citizens.
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