



The Challenge of Population and Migration

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International Labor Organization

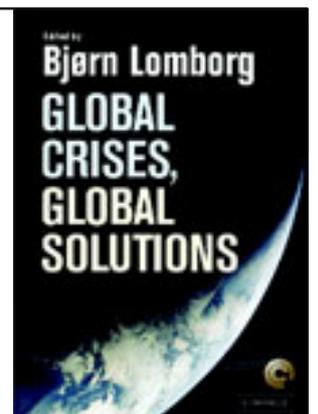
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Introduction

Stripped to its bare essentials, Phil Martin's three-pronged and interlocking proposals suggest that migrant-receiving countries should (i) pursue an active selection policy of the “best and brightest” but compensate migrant-sending countries for brain-drain losses; (ii) temporarily admit other foreign workers with employers paying extra payroll taxes for extensions of their contracts and the refunding of social security contributions to workers when they return to their home country; and (iii) operate a public recruitment, return and remittance system that contributes to the development of migrants' countries of origin.

Phil Martin's paper is the best-informed and most comprehensive exposition of facts, figures, analyses, models and proposals in the field of OECD countries' international migration problems that I am aware of. His depiction of demographic trends, rural-urban migration, widening income disparities and growing migration pressures can be taken as valid as long as one can see ahead. I would agree with his characterization of most OECD countries' policies in this field as “cumbersome, ... often adversarial” (p. 17) and perpetuating employers' “need” for fresh supplies of migrant workers. That his broad cost-benefit analysis is perhaps not what the organizers of the Copenhagen Consensus had in mind does not trouble me. The outcomes of international migration are not shaped by economic factors alone; private and social costs and gains often diverge; and pinpointed cost-benefit analyses suffer from having to assume away crucial determinants.

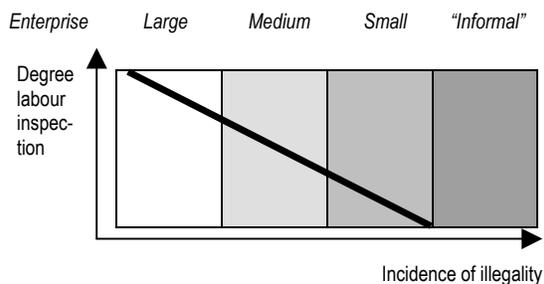
My problem with the challenge paper lies in a key assumption that is glossed over, namely the general capacity of today's State to control migration, and its interplay with different types of enterprises. Economists traditionally view the State as a neutral, benign or facilitative background factor (or a distorter of markets). However, the shift induced by contemporary globalisation “from equity to efficiency and from development to growth” (Nayyar, 2003, p. 17) has caused countries to diminish regulatory labour market interventions and public functions that are crucial to the success of Phil Martin's policy recommendations. Besides, the State happens to be made up of politicians and administrators who are human beings with all their strengths and failings. Given that “the most difficult challenge” identified by Phil Martin (p. 40) is to make the “transition from the current widespread employment of irregular workers to a world of legal migrants”, I shall examine the three opportunities elaborated by Phil Martin in the light of what they would require the State to do, effectively and efficiently,

in relation to the kind of employers who are prone to using (im)migrant workers unlawfully. In addition, I shall pick up the idea of establishing a World Migration Organization (WMO). The challenge paper dismisses this idea too lightly. I believe that it constitutes an opportunity in the sense that a WMO could contribute significantly to alleviating the challenges so well identified by Phil Martin.

What State and which enterprises are we concerned with?

One public function central to the repression of unlawful employment is labour inspection. Under conditions of contemporary globalisation, however, labour inspection is in danger of being hollowed out because employers dislike it, because it is an easy target of public expenditure cuts, and because today's State prefers to see inspectors more in a counselling than a policing role. While this might not cause many economists to shed more than crocodile tears, Phil Martin (p. 32) points to stepped up enforcement of labour and immigration law as an indispensable tool in fighting the unlawful employment of (im)migrant workers. What makes matters worse is the uneven distribution of unlawful employment in the economy (see scheme 1). The x-axis visualises the incidence of illegality, which is negligible in large enterprises, small in medium-size enterprises, quite extensive in small enterprises and high in the informal economy, especially in ethnic niches. The y-axis represents the degree to which

Scheme 1: Type of enterprises, incidence of illegality (shading) and degree of labour inspection (line)



labour inspectors visit different types of enterprises: They visit large enterprises regularly, medium-size enterprises almost as frequently, small enterprises occasionally and the informal economy practically never. Their presence is inverse to the requirements of a policy of flushing out the unlawful employment of (im)migrants – or of nationals for that matter.

Does the rise in post-September 11 security concerns make up for the absence of labour inspector? Not yet because all the attention is on border controls.

The second State function that impinges on Phil Martin's proposals is a factor exogenous to migration, effective control of corruption. I carried out a "quick and dirty" correlation between two sets of dummy variables in 85 countries: my estimate¹ of the incidence of unlawful migration for employment (high/medium/low) and the degree of corruption according to the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International (2003).² As one might fear, there is a high correlation: the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is +0.93, significant at the 1% level. Low corruption countries such as Denmark, Canada or Singapore have few unlawful (im)migrants – in contrast to medium corruption countries such as Germany, the US or Malaysia. Migrant-sending countries tend to be afflicted by high degrees of corruption (Haiti, Indonesia, Bangladesh...). The story this tells is that, in order to make the "transition from the current widespread employment of irregular workers to a world of legal migrants" that Phil Martin sees as indispensable (p. 40), the world had better consist

¹ Based on Böhning 1996 estimates of legal and illegal (im)migrant workers in major migrant-receiving and sending countries.

² Countries' corruption scores were graded as *high* if they were in the 0-6 range of the Index, *medium* in the 6.1-8 range and *low* in the 8.1-10 range.

of nothing but virtuous Danes (or, even better, Fins) – or do something more effective in terms of repressing unlawful migration and employment.

A third element concerns the recruitment of (im)migrants – a role the State rarely assumes today. The US abolished its *bracero* programme with Mexico in 1964; European countries ended public recruitment at the time of the first oil crisis. The vacuum was taken up by *coyotes* in Mexico and by a variety of private intermediaries in Europe who supplied employers with few legal and many unlawful migrants. The presence of illegals undermined the general acceptability of (im)migrant workers. Canada, by contrast, remains actively involved in the recruitment process of Mexican and West Indian workers for its agriculture, suffers little from unlawful migration and employment, and enjoys high domestic approval of its (im)migration system (see Martin, 2003).

Opportunity 1. Attracting the “best and brightest” with brain drain compensation

The challenge paper’s first proposal is seductive, persuasively argued and can be applied flexibly. Unfortunately, it is of limited acceptability to migrant-receiving countries today, and it is unrealistic as far as the compensation of migrant-sending countries is concerned.

Like his other proposals, Phil Martin’s idea of an active, points-based admission system that selects those who are potentially of greatest value and who fit in easily seems to be aimed primarily at European countries. Its underlying philosophy corresponds to Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and US permanent immigration regimes that have no constraining post-entry restrictions or controls and where overall admissions are held in check by limits on the number of refugees. This philosophy has few followers in Europe and practically none elsewhere (though Singapore seeks to attract professionals). Europe’s most important migrant-receiving country, Germany, had a commission of politicians and experts recommend such a policy, more particularly a Canadian-type points system (Deutschland, Bundesministerium des Innern, 2001). But little more than a tiny “green-card” system for IT workers was acceptable in practice. I fear that permanent immigration policies in Europe will not pass national parliaments for many years to come. They would also require, as Phil Martin himself surmises (p. 19), a shift in the open-ended refugee policies of European countries towards the low-level caps on the number of refugees practiced by current immigration countries.

Chiefly due to the continued restriction on admissions and the development of networks, legal systems of immigration inevitably entail some degree of illegal immigration. The incidence of illegality will vary roughly in line with corruption levels. If one goes by Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (2003), this augurs well for Scandinavian countries, not so well for central European countries and not at all well for, e.g., Greece and Italy or eastern European countries, thus posing a problem of harmonizing policies in the European Union.

That being said, the proposal to set up a selective system for permanent immigration purposes designed to attract the “best and brightest” warrants to be put on policy agendas throughout Europe alongside a discussion of the contingent changes in refugee admission policies. (The latter will be highly contentious in Scandinavian countries.) What I find especially attractive in Phil Martin’s proposal is his focus on educational qualifications rather than the – in Europe – widespread longing for an immigration-driven demographic fix to the problems of ageing in general and of social security in particular. The demographics of making good the ageing of

the population very quickly sum to such numbers that they portend electoral suicide. Education is a more promising basis for recasting Europe's admission policies without incurring frightening numbers. Education greases the wheels of the economy. Mere bodies may be deadweights.

As regards compensating countries of origin for any losses they might suffer as a result of rich countries' immigration policies, I appreciate the well-meaning nature of the idea but fear that it reflects standard economics which contents itself with the *potential* of compensation for a proposal to pass muster. I believe that one should be honest rather than dangle the mirage of a carrot in front of migrant-sending countries' eyes. As migrant-receiving countries can pick and chose from a growing supply of brains around the world, they feel no compunction – nor are they subject to notable political pressures – to pay for something that is available free. Proposals of this kind (including Böhning, 1977) briefly floated around during the heydays of the “New International Economic Order”, but nothing came of them. Some of today's developing countries will increasingly tap into the international market for highly qualified workers, which will not endear them to the idea of compensating the workers' countries of origin. To be frank and honest, migrant-sending governments have no option other than to over-supply their countries with publicly or privately educated workers – in the hope of seeing some of them find suitable employment abroad, remit some of their savings to family members staying behind and return to some extent with new skills and motivations.

In the context of the fourth opportunity that I envisage in terms of creating a World Migration Organization, a rather different scheme is proposed to transfer a share of guest workers' income taxes to their countries of origin, which – although of different inspiration – could be likened to the idea of compensation.

Opportunity 2. Levying taxes and refunding their social security contributions

The challenge paper's adds a temporary employment component, presumably mainly for brawny rather than brainy work, to the range of desirable policies. In light of the failure of most previous guest worker programmes to rotate all migrants in and out of the country – notably in Europe and the US (though Singapore fared better in that respect) – Phil Martin envisages dissuading employers from reliance on cheap foreign labour by having them pay a fee if and when they renew guest workers' contracts, and he suggests to entice migrants back to their countries of origin by paying out accumulated social security contributions to them on their return.

Taxes on employers, which one may expect in the first instance to dampen their enthusiasm for employing workers,³ can take the form of fees upon initial engagement or of a bond that is redeemed upon departure from the country or forfeited if the migrant worker goes underground. Greece, Israel, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan are the main migrant-receiving countries that practice such schemes, which shifts the enforcement of the migrants' departure from the government to the employers – all of which lack administrative enforcement authority and most of which lack the practical means to carry out such a responsibility. Theoretically, it is rather doubtful that employers would be prepared to shoulder an additional

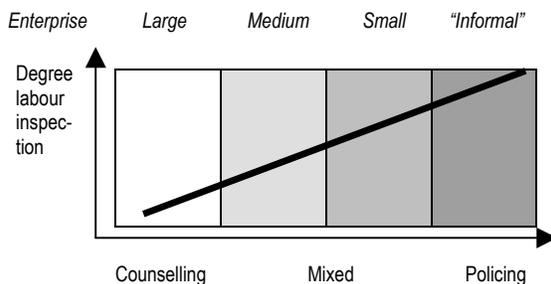
³ However, industry-level simulations for Germany 1977-94 concluded that, “contrary to the public discussion, ... the impact of payroll taxes, such as social security contribution rates, on employment is minimal” (Riphan and Bauer, 1998, 2). This research is admittedly not differentiated by the size of enterprises in the way migration-related studies should be and, therefore, does not reflect well the cost-benefit context of small enterprises – and the informal economy – where labour costs assume a comparatively higher importance.

burden when they have other opportunities. One is to pass the costs on to the worker, which is apparently what happens in Asia. The other is to hire less costly illegal entrants or to hire unlawfully migrants who are already in the country (see Epstein, Hillman and Weiss, 1999). What does reality show? Israel's measures since the early 1990s come closest to Phil Martin's ideas and are the only ones known to have been investigated. Estimates show that the proportion of illegal to legal foreign workers, which was 84% in 1995, jumped to 118% or so within a couple of years (see Brücker et al., 2002, table 6.2). Greece and Malaysia are other examples of countries with high proportions of illegally employed foreigners. The cases of Singapore and Taiwan are not well studied.⁴ At any rate, inflation of illegal employment is what one should anticipate occurring, which defeats the very purpose of setting up a truly rotating guest worker system.

One should not blind oneself to the fact that little protest and much collusion occurs in the kind of enterprises that, in the contemporary world, look to employ guest workers. Trade unions are practically inoperative in small enterprises; labour inspectors are rare visitors; and in the informal economy, anything goes and nothing holds. Not only are there pools of willing non-national workers present in many European countries who would rather work illegally than not at all. But there are also national and international networks, ranging from single-person gangs to organized crime syndicates, which readily provide fresh supplies of work-hungry labourers from abroad, some 500,000 apparently each year in Europe (Brücker et al., 2002). A key characteristic of shady intermediaries is their willingness and capacity to corrupt anybody from border guards to local officials.

I believe a more effective policy of weaning small-scale and informal employers off unauthorized workers would be a *blanket prohibition to hire foreigners not admitted as full immigrants*, of which the whole population would be regularly informed. The only future guest worker scheme that I can see having a reasonable chance of sailing close to its intentions would be limited to truly seasonal work. In practically all countries today that means seasonal agriculture, because construction and tourism are year-round activities with highs and lows like any other non-seasonal employment. As a complementary measure, labour inspection would have to be retooled on the lines foreseen in scheme 2, with traditional policing functions being retained and applied intensively in respect of the kind of the small

Scheme 2: Type of enterprises, desirable degree of labour inspection (line) and form of inspection (shading)



and informal employers who are inclined to use workers unlawfully. Ethnic niches would probably require repeated raids combining labour inspectors and special police forces. At any rate, the marginal value added generated by small employers, ethnic niches and the informal economy does not warrant being handed a public subsidy in the form of access to fresh migrants from abroad.

The effective repression of the illegal employment of migrant workers – and of nationals for that matter – is a touchstone of any future guest worker policy, indeed of any successful of

⁴ The ILO has unsuccessfully approached Singaporean economists for an evaluation of the variable taxes paid there by employers for foreign workers.

admitting non-nationals.⁵ It would warrant a share of the research funds that the Copenhagen Consensus might be able to mobilize.

I can go along with Phil Martin's proposal to withhold and then refund social security contributions as an incentive for workers to return to their countries of origin. Although there are legitimate concerns that employers' and workers' payroll deductions for contingencies such as employment injury, illness and old age should be used for no other purpose – because such contingencies are unlikely to be catered for in any other way – even the International Labour Organization's Recommendation on Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 (No. 151), paragraph 34(c)(ii), and the United Nation's International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, article 27(2), allow such refunding up to a point. Forfeiture of such forced savings in the event of the migrant staying on unlawfully makes his or her switch into the underground economy a little less attractive. But long-term cost-benefit calculations discount this loss and anticipate adjustment to legal status after some time.

The understandable but counterproductive adjustment policies of migrant-receiving countries that enable workers who were not supposed to stay forever to gain residence entitlement hollow out legal (im)migration. As the challenge paper recalls (p. 15), this accounts for some two-thirds of all legal immigrant admissions in the US and a large portion in Europe, too. This kind of policy would have to be dropped or its scope of application would have to be limited drastically so that no more than marginal numbers of adjustments would occur on strictly humanitarian grounds. Such a change would, however, be difficult politically given the power of ethnic and humanistic lobbies in Europe and North America.

Opportunity 3. Recruitment, return and remittance to induce development

The relationships between migration and development are multifaceted (see Böhning, 1982) and include, in the first instance, the relief of unemployment and of the need to house, feed, etc., the people who leave. Still, if one looks at the three R's, as Phil Marin calls them, two of them, recruitment and return, form part of the opportunities he set out previously. There is nothing I need to add to my preceding comments except to highlight Phil Martin's starting point for "government services to substitute for the current migration infrastructure, which includes smugglers and traffickers" (p. 42). I would entirely agree with him but, for the reasons indicated in the Introduction, find this unrealistic under the conditions of contemporary globalization.

Remittances are the new component. I agree with what has been stated. The most urgent practical question here is how to reduce the hefty margins that go into the pockets of formal and informal intermediaries.⁶

As regards the migration hump, its height and duration do not reflect some natural law but the concrete conditions of particular countries. The hump can be anticipated to be low and short

⁵ Including in the US. As G. Bertola commented: "Enforcement of immigration constraints by inland inspection...is clearly the most effective means of enforcing any regulation. ...such enforcement is almost comically non-existent in the US" (in Hanson et al., 2003, p. 289). By contrast, Bhagwati has consistently called for less internal enforcement and more policing of the borders, though he mischievously adds that it is futile to keep illegals out of advanced countries (see e.g. Bhagwati, 1998, pp. 331, 335, 341, 346 and 373-5).

⁶ Western Union made a profit last year of one third of its turnover based on usurious charges. In France, for instance, it lops off 21% from migrants' small remittances compared with 3.5% for large transfers.

in duration in, for instance, countries scheduled to join the EU (see Brücker et al. 2002, figure 4.4). But the picture would be drastically different for, say, Russia and Ukraine relative to the EU, China relative to Viet Nam or Egypt relative to Saudi Arabia.

Opportunity 4. A World Migration Organization to tackle the key challenges

There have been rising calls for the establishment of a World Migration Organization (WMO), as recounted by Bimal Ghosh in the introduction to his book.⁷ Last year, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan decided to launch a Global Commission on Migration to deliberate on improvements in the field of international migration and, when he lectured at Jagdish Bhagwati's university in November 2003, lent his weight to the idea of setting up a migration agency under UN auspices. The Global Commission commenced work in early 2004 in Geneva. At the same time, the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization published its findings and recommendations that strongly support a multilateral framework in this field (ILO, 2004a, p. 96).⁸

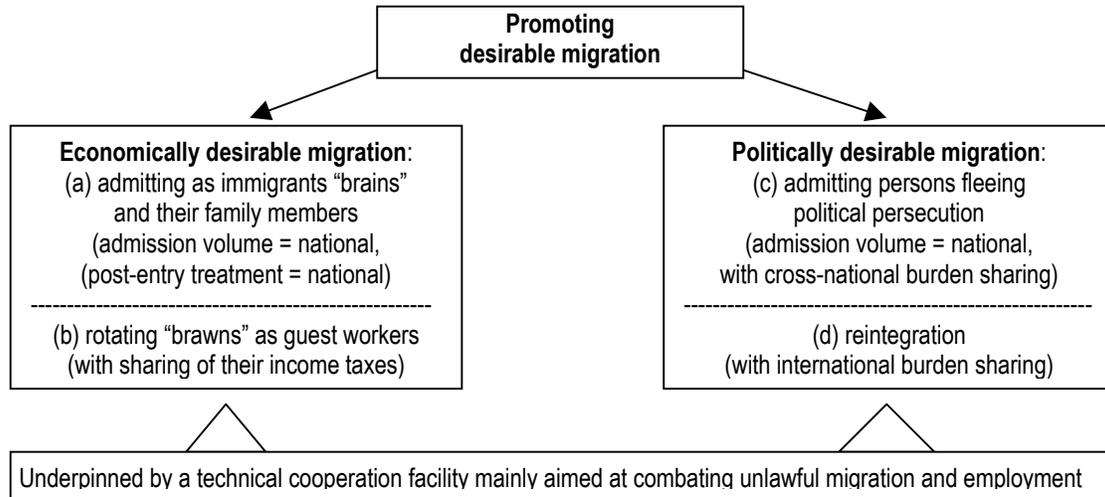
Two major hurdles must be overcome before one can usefully bring together sovereign States to negotiate a WMO. The first refers to what Phil Martin sees as the lack of a "clear theoretical basis for more migration, or even a consensus on a theoretical framework to estimate an optimal level of migration" (p. 42). I believe there is no need for an analogy with theoretical bases such as those of trade liberalization that inspired GATT, GATS and WTO. In actual fact, migrant-receiving countries would object to any explicit or hidden objective that a global migration organization would promote *more* or *free* cross-border flows of people.⁹ Politically, it suffices to give WMO one or two self-evidently consensual overarching aims that permit the derivation of more detailed migration principles concerning economically productive movements and the protection of refugees. Refugees must be an integral part of a comprehensive regime, otherwise political migration threatens to undercut economic migration as in Europe's recent past. For example, one could charge a future WMO with the "promotion of desirable migration" and envisage an "economically desirable migration" pillar and a "politically desirable migration" pillar (see scheme 3). I would eschew formulations such as "orderly", "better managed", "sustainable" or "regulated openness". "Orderly" and "better managed" migration lack substantive reference points or ethical values – even slaves can be moved in an orderly fashion, and desperate job-seekers can easily be managed to perform efficiently and cost-effectively under exploitative conditions. "Sustainable" opens the field wide to an open-ended array of subjects, competing claims and trade-offs, which adds uncertainty rather than reassurance. Ghosh's "regulated openness" may appear attractive to migrant-sending countries in that it appears to promise inflows abroad and some form of outflow control; but it lacks a counterpoint ("unregulated closure"?) and is an empty notion.

⁷ Ghosh, though, left out Thomas Straubhaar's contribution in a 1991 ILO working paper and Jagdish Bhagwati's repeated suggestion to set up a World Migration Organization, which he first put forward in a 1992 newspaper article in the *Christian Science Monitor* (reprinted in Bhagwati, 1998, pp. 315-317) and barely changed ever since (see e.g. Bhagwati 2003).

⁸ A report by the ILO on migrant workers due to be discussed at its annual conference in June 2004 endorses, somewhat lamely, a new comprehensive international migration framework (ILO, 2004b).

⁹ Phil Martin does not hide his view to see *more* migration come about as a result of *better* migration on the lines of his proposals. This will hardly endear his ideas to migrant-receiving countries.

Scheme 3: Principal components of a WMO adding value to international system



Of course, my own formulation begs the question of *what* is desirable and *for whom* specific forms of migration may be desirable. This brings me to the second major hurdle, i.e. the divergent or even opposed interests of migrant-receiving and migrant-sending countries (see scheme 4).¹⁰ These questions actually go still deeper. Any international regime entails some loss of countries' sovereignty (and budgets) in exchange for some expected value added. It must be able to share the costs and benefits of its existence relatively equally among States – unless it is imposed by a hegemon, which is undesirable in principle and unrealistic at present.¹¹

Scheme 4. Basic interests of migrant-receiving and migrant-sending countries in the contemporary world

	Migrant-receiving countries				Migrant-sending countries			
	Economic migrants		Refugees*		Economic migrants		Refugees*	
	Lawful inflows and length of stay*	Unlawful	Volume	Volume	Lawful outflows and length of absence	Unlawful	Volume	Volume
Brains	Many	Permanent	Nil	} as possible	Few	Temporary	Few	} as possible
Browns	Few	Temporary	Nil		Many	Permanent	Many	

* Including family members.

Enlightened self-interest on the part of migrant-sending countries could theoretically lead them to agree to tackle seriously, and jointly with migrant-receiving countries, the unlawful movements that span the globe. Deepak Nayyar, for example, expresses enlightened self-interest when he stamps smuggling and trafficking of people as *public bads*, wants a “regime of discipline to be imposed on intermediaries” (Nayyar, 2000a, p. 170), and observes that “in

¹⁰ For simplicity's sake, I leave aside the fact that most countries today are both migrant-receiving and migrant-sending countries and that quite a number are important transit countries. I also leave aside the GATS Mode 4 service providers, which are considered to remain part of the economic sphere of the country where the service enterprise comes from. The same reasoning applies to project-tied migrants.

¹¹ In effect, today's hegemon, the US, may be a rather reluctant participant in the gestation of a WMO, not least because of the influence of humanitarian and ethnic lobbies on Congress.

a world where the pursuit of self-interest by nations means uncoordinated action or non-cooperative behaviour, suboptimal solutions, which leave everybody worse off, are a likely outcome... Such outcomes can be prevented only by evolving institutional mechanisms for cooperation...which facilitate coordinated action and cooperative behaviour” (Nayyar, 2000b, p. 374).

Beyond enlightened self-interest, I perceive the need for strong incentives to entice migrant-sending countries to join the WMO and the fight against undesirable migration. A revenue-sharing arrangement would seem to constitute an appropriate incentive, which I would pitch at migrant workers not admitted on a permanent basis, i.e. guest workers, as practiced by several Swiss cantons towards neighbouring communes sending frontier workers. There are two possible justifications for splitting income taxes (on, say, a 50/50 basis). One is that, prior to departure, the migrant workers themselves will generally have paid income taxes, which go missing when they are abroad. The second justification is that guest workers’ families almost invariably stay behind and consume costly infrastructure, such as schools, roads, etc., with the burden of providing it falling exclusively on the shoulders of the migrant-sending countries.

The advantages of my proposal over Phil Martin’s are threefold: (i) mine would not inflict taxes on employers that they will seek to avoid by unlawful hiring; (ii) there is no risk that the migrants will have to bear any burden; and (iii) the revenue loss in migrant-receiving countries, which may be quite marginal, provides an incentive for governments to try and wean employers off guest workers.

I should like to make clear that I do not see a WMO assuming collective enforcement and dispute settlement functions, let alone sanctions. I would not even go along with Jagdish Bhagwati’s suggestion that a WMO should study countries’ migration practices so as to put pressure on those with bad practices through WMO publications and NGOs using the research results. Research will certainly be needed but not for the single purpose of handing out good or bad marks. The WMO should be a facilitator and coordinator, not a police or incriminator – otherwise there won’t be a WMO.

A WMO would stand little chance of being established at present unless it focused its activities, at least initially, on the flip side of the desirable migration coin, i.e. unlawful movements. Its constitution should, *inter alia*, oblige all member States to enable the prosecution of identified smugglers, traffickers and other perpetrators of both illegal movements and unlawful employment to take place irrespective of where they may find themselves at any point of time. And it would have to give migrant-sending countries an incentive to play by the rules. Thus, the WMO that I see as useful would:

- organize the fight against unlawful cross-border flows as well as against the unlawful employment of (im)migrant workers in receiving countries. This would entail beneficial spin-off effects with respect to a related undesirable phenomenon, the unlawful employment of national workers;
- operate a strong technical cooperation facility to help countries lacking capacity to build up their migration administration so that out-flows from migrant-sending countries and in-flows into migrant-receiving countries conform to the ideals of

“desirable migration”.¹² A special technical cooperation fund should be established within the WMO that would not merely be a small fraction of the Organization’s regular budget. The WMO’s constitution could, for instance, oblige its 25 or 50 per cent richest member States to double their assessed contributions, with half of the money feeding the special technical cooperation fund; or the rich countries’ extra contributions could be assessed according to other criteria or a mix of factors. Technical cooperation contributions should be pooled and thereby de-linked from funders’ preferences. Actual assistance programmes should blend objectively determined needs with beneficiary countries’ willingness to take decisive steps in the realization of the WMO’s principal aims. Additional voluntary contributions by member States’ governments, other authorities, NGOs, Foundations, etc., could be added to the pool but need not be de-linked from preferences donors might have. Steps of this kind would enable the WMO to oversee a sizeable technical assistance operation with predictable funding aimed at helping countries battling with undesirable forms of international migration;

- agree on the principle of sharing the income taxes paid by guest workers in migrant-receiving countries with their countries of origin.

Why should migrant-receiving countries be interested in and willing to fund a new UN agency covering all forms of international migration?¹³ Because it promises value added in relation to unlawful migration and the three opportunities identified by Phil Martin, and by bringing economic and political movements into a common policy-making framework. This field of population questions being quintessentially international in nature, solutions to most problems cannot stop at the border but require international cooperation. Bilateral solutions are decreasingly effective because of the fact that increasing numbers of migrant-sending and transition countries are involved. A global intergovernmental organization can do things that individual countries cannot achieve. The time has come to move from endorsing the desirability of setting up a WMO to the elaboration of possible models on what its functions should be and how it should operate in practice.

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¹² The promotion of remittance flows could equally be facilitated through technical cooperation as also their productive use in migrants’ countries of origin.

¹³ WMO would, no doubt, absorb the existing International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR as well. Quite a number of countries would not have to shoulder additional costs.

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