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**Book reviews
on global economy
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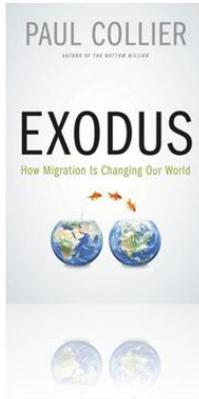
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Exodus: How Migration Is Changing Our World



Collier, Paul, (2013), Oxford University Press, New York.

“It may prove unsustainable to combine rapid migration with multicultural policies that keep absorption rates low and welfare systems that are generous.”

“Based on the self-interest of host societies, policy should select potential migrants based on a threshold level of education.”

“Nations have not become obsolete. Reducing nationality to a mere legalism would be the collective equivalent of autism: life lived with rules but without empathy.”

Summary

Paul Collier surveys today’s migration as it affects the three main stakeholders: host country, migrants, and country of origin. Collier asks questions such as: (1) What should guide migration policies? (2) Who should be allowed to enter a country? (3) Is multiculturalism a boon or a curse? The author analyses the effects of both liberal and restrictive migration policies on all three stakeholders. For example, skilled immigrants from poor nations confer financial benefits on their host countries but represent a ‘brain drain’ for their native land. For these and other reasons, Collier argues that a free-for-all and the mass migrations that would result would have devastating effects.

He also writes of nationalism and the need to purge it of all racist connotations given that the notion of a common identity is one immigrants should be able to share in order to connect with their new homeland. Immigrants’ absorption of the host culture is needed to control mass migration and to improve immigrants’ standing among the country’s original inhabitants — many of whom fear the newcomers will either steal their jobs or depress their salaries. Governments are responsible for drawing up effective immigration policies that take all three stakeholders in the migration issue into account. The author winds up his book by proposing a set of measures, which include limits, selection of the best-trained immigrants, integration and legalisation of **guest workers**.

The author

Paul Collier is Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University and member of St Antony's College. He has written various books, including *The Plundered Planet; Wars, Guns and Votes* and *The Bottom Billion*, for which he won the Arthur Ross Book Award and the Lionel Gelber Prize.

Key ideas and opinion

In *Exodus*, Collier builds a **controversial analysis of migration**, its causes and effects, and what he considers to be the best way of managing it so that everyone – host nations, countries of origin, migrants – wins. However, despite his clear views on future measures, **it is easy to object to some of his arguments**. First of all, Collier **advocates preventative migratory policies, not reactive ones**. These hold danger, seen as they are based on speculation and predictions than as a remedy for specific circumstances. Furthermore, although he warns readers in the foreword that his aim is to come up with ideas for others to study and pursue, the **lack of research and data** to underpin some of his statements makes them less credible. Moreover, Collier insists on criticising untrammelled immigration and stresses the problems it would create – yet the fact is no country follows such a policy and none is likely to do so in the future.

His argument that the main causes of poverty and hence of migration are shortcomings in the culture and social models of the nations of origin is an unsettling one. **Collier calls limits on immigration “acts of compassion” and criticises diversity as a hurdle to long-term economic development**. Nevertheless, although the book fields questionable arguments at some junctures, one of its merits is that it will spark a much-needed debate on one of the biggest problem society faces in the age of globalisation.

Migration — a growing trend and a taboo

Paul Collier begins his book by **analysing the concept of migration and criticises the politicisation of the subject in the past, which was hardly based on analysis**. The author also complains that immigration policies are often based on emotions and ignorance. It is a subject on which everyone has views but which countries manage in extremely varied ways, often creating confusion because of the intersection with ideas such as nationalism, poverty and racism. On several occasions, the author repeats the idea that **a host nation is not obliged to allow migrants in merely because they are poor and defends that country's right to deny them entry**. Nationalism is another key point for the author. A common identity, argues Collier, boosts the scope for cooperation. For Collier **the question as to whether migration is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is**

misconceived. The problem lies in mass migration and hence controls on migration will be very important in the future. He argues that the problem is the functional design of immigration controls rather than the controls as such.

With regard to the reasons for **the gathering pace of migration**, the author argues that **many people leave for wealthier nations given the organisational weaknesses and flawed social models in their nations of origin.** Collier highlights three factors affecting migratory flows: (1) the economic gap between the nation of origin and the recipient country; (2) income levels in the nation of origin; (3) the size of the *diaspora*. **In this respect, the greater the diaspora, the more immigration there is and the less the newcomers absorb the culture of the host country.** Be that as it may, the fact is that the number of migrants has risen from 94 million in 1960 to 185 million in 2010 and the trend will continue.

Host societies — welcoming or resentful?

Collier begins his study on how migration affects those involved by looking at host societies. He first notes the social impact of unceasing immigration on a country. **For the author, the benefits of moderate migration are as clear-cut as the drawbacks of mass migration, whose social consequences depend on how immigrants relate to the host society.** Collier notes that diversity is culturally enriching but that it spawns many problems and that cooperation and trust arise more naturally in prosperous societies than in poor ones. **Indeed, he goes so far as to argue that the greater the level of immigration in a community, the less trust there is** both within and among groups and that individuals tend to be less sociable and involved in community activities.

Second, the author reflects on the need for mutual regard so that immigrants and indigenous populations forge a productive relationship. Here, absorbing the *diaspora* is key. This leads Collier to what he considers a surprising conclusion: **the wider the cultural gap between the nation of origin and the host country, the greater is the level of immigration.** The reason is that *diasporas* in this case are broader and more inward-looking, leading to the creation of ‘parallel’ societies. **The author rejects multiculturalism as the solution and advocates assimilation as allowing both communities to recognise each other as equals.**

Third, Collier examines the economic consequences of migration on the recipient country. He notes that **while most recipient country workers gain from immigration, the poorest do lose out** as they face increased competition and wages for unskilled labour fall or stay low. According to Collier, the reason economists are so keen on immigration is because they apply the ‘guest worker model’ — that is to say, people who come to work but have no chance of becoming citizens and enjoying the same rights and benefits as the indigenous population. The author gives Dubai as an example and says that the jobs offered by the city help reduce poverty.

Immigrants: Gratitude or Complaint?

After examining host societies, Collier analyses the **migrants themselves**. He defines them as **both winners and losers from migration**. They gain because they earn salaries much higher than they could at home – even though this salary may be lower than what an indigenous worker with the same education earns – and move from malfunctioning societies to rationally-run ones. This brings them many economic and social benefits.

However, immigrants also lose out because the first ones to arrive are affected negatively by fresh waves of migrants with whom they have to compete. **The paradox is that immigrants as a group have a vested interest in raising barriers to entry once they have got in themselves.**

Those 'left behind'

The third strand in the study covers the countries of origin. Paul Collier makes it clear in the foreword that his main interest is in the consequences of emigration on those left behind, watching their fellow-countrymen leave in droves. These effects are both economic and political (albeit indirect ones in the latter case). He also notes that **minorities are more likely to emigrate to improve their lot and that governments often facilitate their emigration to rid themselves of a social problem**. In many cases, those leaving the country are opponents of the regime. Collier identifies an important relationship here: **the better-governed and more democratic the host country, the greater the pressure exerted by immigrants to change the political system in their countries of origin**. Furthermore, when the emigrant flow changes direction, people with greater knowledge and management skills improve the system of governance.

Proposals for migration policy

For Collier, **the gathering pace of migration together with 'multicultural' policies may threaten the viability of nations and the achievements of modern society**. Basing his argument on this premise, Collier advocates the right of recipient societies to restrict entry while taking into account those whom such a policy affects: the indigenous population in the recipient country, would-be immigrants and those in the countries of origin. **Paul Collier concludes his book with the recommendation that immigration policies should be based on four principles: setting limits; selection; integration; legalising illegal immigrants.**

The first principle concerns **limits**. These would be applied as part of the preventive policies advocated by Collier and be based on the diversity of migration, not on numbers. **The number of immigrants accepted would be determined by the degree of assimilation in recipient society**. A high level of migration is only possible with a

steady diaspora and a high degree of assimilation. An example of limits would be **the lottery system** some countries run for issuing visas.

By **selection**, the author means **a process for choosing only the best-qualified or best-educated immigrants**. This would make immigrants more productive in the recipient society. Greater cultural affinity as well as the level of vulnerability will be further favouring elements in the selection process. The third plank — **integration** — means the degree to which immigrants are assimilated by the host society. Collier stresses that such **assimilation is impossible if 'multicultural' policies are pursued**.

Last but not least, Collier calls for the **legalisation of illegal immigrants** — a subject currently determined more by political whim than by practical and ethical considerations. However, legalisation would not imply social benefits but would entail payment of taxes. In addition, **legalisation would not lead to a flood of illegal immigrants if it went hand-in-hand with effective controls. These controls, if applied legitimately, would be more humane than leaving the immigrants without papers or legal status**.

With this combination of measures, the author believes that migration might speed up slightly in the beginning but will then stabilise. Furthermore, it would benefit: (1) the country of origin (by reducing the exodus); (2) the recipient country (by cutting the costs of an immigration glut which cannot be assimilated); and (3) immigrants (who would not have to compete with a mass of later 'newcomers'). **The only losers, argues Collier, would be future immigrants who would have to meet much stricter entry requirements**.