IMPACT OF LABOR MIGRATION ON GLOBAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[**Issue Number 116 - April 2021**](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/116-d)

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**INTRODUCTION**

History is marked with waves of migration. From the Greek resettlements and Roman expansion through military conquests to the Byzantine and ottoman empires’ impact on societies merged under their control. Notwithstanding, the European colonializations to the great migrations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, migration has been attendant and sequential to civilizations as much as other large social phenomena.

Very few societies were untouched by migration and that is valid only before the rise of mapping the whole world with nation states. Migration of people as collective groups not as individuals to other geographical territories has occurred all through history and it is by no means a new trend. Though it is nowadays a new phenomenon, largely because individual labors with or without their nuclear families have become the underlying concern of labor migration. What is new is the changing nature and forms of migration in this era of globalization.

Globalization has carried with it many social and economic dynamics that are now explicated in terms of normalization tendencies. International migration is no exception to this. What globalization has done to migration is converting people into commodities like all products priced by the formula of supply and demand. International migration has become global, in so far as globalization means greater circulation of goods, people and capital, while also magnifying exploitative advantages in world politics. Globalization has transformed the nature of international migration both quantitatively and qualitatively. It has triggered greater mobility, and there are qualitative changes in migration dynamics brought forward by the diversity of regions and people who are involved in the affairs and undertaking of migration.

The commencement of the slave trade during the 17th century marked and involved not only the involuntary migration of labor as those slaved labors were transported from Africa to various colonies owned by England, Spain, France, and other key world powers of the existing Global Order, but also the beginning of the globalization trend. Until the abolition of slavery in these areas, slaves were usually treated as property that could be bought or sold at will and forced to change position to meet the economic needs of the new master.

Aside from the history of slaved labor and its impact on the World System economy in the previous three centuries[[1]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn1" \o "), the contemporary situation of Migrant labors (workers) is drastically different. Data collected by agencies of the United Nations indicate that modern migrant labors contribute to the development and growth of their countries of destination. Meanwhile countries of origin greatly benefit from both their remittances and the skills acquired during their migration experience. Yet, the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of migration and development linkages, governance, migrant workers’ protection, and international cooperation. The ILO works to establish policies to maximize the benefits of labor migration for all those involved.[[2]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn2" \o ")

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the critical role migrants play as essential workers, including in areas such as healthcare, food supply and other key sectors. It has also exposed their vulnerability to the devastating health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic. Migrants whether they are blue collar labors or professionals make significant and essential contributions to the economic, social, and cultural development of their host countries and their communities back home. Notwithstanding, these contributions are not well assessed and often go unnoticeable.

According to the United Nations ILO, on January 10, 2020 there were more than Two Hundred Seventy-Two (272) Millions of international migrants. The rapid increase of International migration among all World population is an out-product of economic and cultural globalization and has played an increasingly significant role in the development of societies, the phenomenon of the Global Village, and has become a global process that covered almost all the continents and countries, as well as various social strata. The total number of international migrants is rapidly on the increase.

More than half of migrants come from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. From these countries over the past 5 years, industrialized nations have taken the highest percentage, in other words, the annual inflow of migrants is averaged as highest into North America and secondly into Europe.

One of the objective bases of International labor migration is to alleviate an integrated international system. At the same time, the problem of free migration is the most dangerous for governments, both politically and in the social aspect. Ethnic and religious superstition and direct economic threat to the interests of particular groups, who are afraid of competition from immigrants, make this problem legally and socially too intricate. For politicians and the industrial sector, the issue of migration is a predicament that one cannot prosper without. Thus, when assessing the migration policy and its implementation it is very important to know the nature and general economic and social implications.

International migration consists of the two basic interdependent processes: emigration and immigration. Emigration is a departure of labor from one country to another, while immigration is the entrance of labor to the receiving country. Additionally, as part of international flows of people, remigration is another process and term distinguish. It refers to the return of the labor to the country of emigration.

**Causes of International Labor Migration**

International labor migration is the mobility of labor from one country to another for a period of over one year. International labor migration covers the whole world: both the developmed part and the underdeveloped periphery. Currently there are more than 300 million international migrants, and they compose close to 4% of the world’s population. This total number of international migrants continuously increases. International migration of the population has played an increasingly significant role in the development of societies and has become a global process that covered almost all the continents and countries, as well as various social strata. This is because more than half of migrants come from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

**The main forms of migration:**

1- Permanent migration: Before World War I This form of migration prevailed over others and is characterized by the fact that a great number of people left their countries for the permanent residence in the USA, Canada, Australia and west Europe for ever.

2- Time migration: providing the migrant’s homecoming on the expiration of certain terms. In this connection it is necessary to notice that modern labor migration has got rotational character.

3- The illegal migration: which is more favorable to business elite of the country of immigration and makes an original reserve of cheap labor necessary for them.

The international labor migration is caused by two features: Internal economic progress of each respective country and the constrains of extraneous foreign factors, i.e., the condition of the global market economy as a whole and economic relations between the highly involved countries. During unpreventable periods, motives of forces of the international labor mobility rise high as a response to the political, military, religious, national, cultural, family, and other social compels and constrains.

Traditionally scholars in the neoclassical theory emphasize and allocate the economic reason of the international labor migration to the rates and structure of capital accumulation by the Northern countries and the lack of fair development in most of the Global South states. The four most important factors are the following:

1- Differences in rates of accumulation of the capital and its concentration among few multinational corporations bring about the differences between the attractive and the repulsive forces of labor in various regions of the Global Economy. These contradictory forces define the directions of labor migration between countries and societies.

2- The high levels and scales of capital accumulation brings about new technologies (high tech computers) that eliminate the need for middle class white color workers. This has direct influence on an occupation level of able-bodied population and, thus, on the sizes of a relative overpopulation for the jobs available leading to unemployment, which is the basic cause of labor migration, immigration, and diaspora.

3- Capital accumulation rates and sizes to a certain degree depend on migration level. This dependence is explained by the low salaries of immigrants and the reduction in payments to domestic workers that ultimately allows to reduce the production costs and increase marketing products thereby increase the accumulation of capital. The same purpose is reached by the organization of production in the countries with low-paid labor. Transnational corporations for the purpose of accelerating capital accumulation exploit the labor movement to urban area or invest in urbanizing the regions with excessive size of labor.

4- The pattern of life and living standards are changing in most societies of the world, thus requiring more income to meet the pattern. This has forced families in non-western societies to excessively rely on women by propelling them to migrate and generate income needed by their families at home especially in places where male labor is not needed.

5- It is worth indicating that, in the international labor migration not only the unemployed, but also a part of the working population is involved. In this case, the driving motive of migration is the search of more favorable working conditions. The labor moves from the countries with a low standard of living, harsh conditions and unsafe environment at the workplace and low salaries to the countries with better accommodations. So, one of the objective basis of labor migration is discrepancies in living standards and in the level of wages.

**Impact of Globalization**

Globalization with its correlate liberalization policies derived a massive increase in mobility of labor across borders similar to the unlimited freedom of capital transfer and the relocation of technology across the continents. Globalization tends to erode the sovereignty and autonomy of the nation-state in terms of control over capital flow and to that effect international migration became an integral part of globalization. Globalization has made migration much easier through better communications, dissemination of information through mass media and improved transport, not to mention the financial inducement. It is the increasing trade and investment flows in many regions, which facilitated interest and awareness in migration.

Global communications network, satellite dishes and internet have had a perspicacious role on the minds of the world’s less prosperous societies. Almost all regions are open to global networks, peoples’ expectations have risen, and cultural differences have been reduced. The images conveyed by such media may be largely false. Nevertheless, they convey a potent message about the advantages experienced by people living in the developed states.

Globalization forces have reinforced the movement of skilled workers who move with the capital flows and multinational investments. Globalization has also increased economic disparities between countries. The flow of goods and capital between rich and poor countries will not be large enough to offset the needs for employment in poorer countries. The social disruption caused by economic restructuring in a given developing society most likely will lead to encourage more people to abandon themselves from their communities and encourage them to look for work in more prosperous societies.

Globalization is defined and measured by the variety of transnational flows of economic activities[[3]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn3" \o "). The impact of globalization on human population have had the most profound effect in terms of education, awareness, participation, political ideologies, opportunities, and liberties. On the negative side, globalization processes set in motion unprecedented intrastate and transnational displacement of men and women resulting in breakdown of the nucleus family. It has brought about a shift in gender relations. The globalization experience and particularly the feminization of labor migration inevitably affected patriarchal gender arrangements in developing societies.

The end of the Cold War and the beginning of the third phase of Globalization dismantled remnants that separated the West from most of the developing countries[[4]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn4" \o "). As cultural, ideological, and regulatory barriers progressively crumbled down, formerly Socialist country started to integrate their economies into the global market. The apparent ascendancy of Western liberal democracy produced hopes for an eventual worldwide economic and political prosperity. These expectations inspired writings of Fukuyama’s “The end of History and Last Man” while an assembly of liberal economists employed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund exaggerated the globalization’s benefits which as they implied is awaiting to be reaped by people of the developing countries and those of the former Soviet bloc and its allies around the world.

To the disappointment of Liberal Economists, as globalization fostered emerging flows of commodities, services, and people across borders, developing societies started to experience series of problematic post-integration effects. Adapting to an unfamiliar environment of global competition turned out to be not mere challenging but devastating in terms of sustainable livelihood. Economies of socialist states struggled to provide employment even remotely close to the level maintained during the socialist regimes. Consequently, the growing brain drain and outflow of labor force from countries failing to adapt to new rules of competition driven global market turned them into so called labor donor states. Both women and men were driven to seek jobs overseas not by a promise of a better carrier but by the push factor of spreading unemployment[[5]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn5" \o "). In terms of general observation, the market reforms that have been adopted in most of the developing states that were composed and prescribed by the international financial institutions and endorsed by neoliberal thinkers and policy makers in Western countries have been deeply defective and faulty. The grave social costs of the transition from socialist systems to liberal economy have been far higher than expected, and the burden borne by women has been especially onerous[[6]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn6" \o ").” According to the 2006 Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and 2020 surveys of the International Labor Organization (ILO), approximately 70% of the migrant domestic workers across the world are women. The most vulnerable group of female domestic workers are transnational migrants or women that leave their country of origin and travel across the globe to find employment to support families and relatives left behind[[7]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn7" \o ").

**Migration and the Global South**

At the end of the 20th century developing and underdeveloped countries labeled as the Global South Georgia explicitly became donor countries of migrants. According to data provided by the Office of The ILO of the United Nations, by the year 2015, approximately 18% of the population of developing countries were permanently living abroad. To understand the significant impact on the countries demography, one could look in comparison to Philippines.[[8]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn8" \o ")  Today Philippine nationals are one of the major sources of female labor feeding global supply chains to fulfil demands of domestic, and care sector, contributes almost approximately 10.2 million, according to 201 report of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas  (CFO). However, this number constitutes only 11% of the total [population of the Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_the_Philippines).

Overall, these statistical numbers may not appear critical from the viewpoint of economists. However, from a sociological perspective feminization of population outflows inevitably disturb gender equilibrium in patriarchal societies. One must look beyond statistical reports of the international organizations and into the local social changes taking plays in donor countries feeding its female population to the transnational supply chains of labor. The new opportunities and necessities brought in by the crush of soviet economic system and the opening of the markets and removal of borders affect structures of patriarchal societies. The full potential of the gender role shift is already taking place in the post-Soviet patriarchal societies and previous progressive regimes. Men and women are no longer provided with opportunities for traditionally allocated occupations, education, and employment. Remittances sent by female workers alter expectation about male vs. female roles in maintaining families’ economic security.

**Wars and Political Instabilities as Determinants of Labor Migration**

The demand for female labor force in specific industrial domains and service sectors of the World Economy became one of the main defacto reasons for feminization of international and transnational migration of labor. Prior to the 1980s early women migrated as financial dependent members of separated families in order to join their husbands oversees in the process of reunification[[9]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn9" \o "). In contrast, today’s women migrate independently in response to the demand of female-labor preference in certain industries[[10]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn10" \o "). According to Lauren B. Engle, transnational companies deliberately promote growth in job occupations typically associated with a female labor. These occupations predominantly include, domestic service, legal and illicit entertainment industries, health care, childcare, and care management for the aged population of the receiving countries. The growing textile and electronic sector of the Global South also target female labor for a factory-related work such as an assembly of microelectronics, or the manufacturing of clothing and textiles[[11]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn11" \o ").

The International Organization for Migration reports summarizes the determinants of migration as follows: desire for positive change, entrepreneurship, skills transfer, family reunification, cultural expectations, filling labor demands abroad, escape from chronic hardships, such as those associated with underdevelopment, poverty, food insecurity, poor governance, disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, cultural factors, inequalities, persecution, human rights violations, armed conflicts, violence or serious disturbances of public order, among others[[12]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn12" \o ").

After the disintegration of the USSR and the failure of formerly centralized economy to adjust to a free market and remunerate for dissipated economic arrangements, in addition to a massive loss of jobs, most of the previously centralized economies witnessed a consequent civil and military strife[[13]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn13" \o "). Consequently, economic deficiencies were further exacerbated by an influx of refugees fleeing their regions. As such, the population of once centralized economies underwent deeper shock of the political upheavals and economic adjustments since during the previous regimes women in particular were supported with maternal and childcare benefits formerly provided at no cost by the system[[14]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn14" \o ").

Culture and mentality within traditional societies would not accept the notion of a female member of a family leaving relatives to take a job and to live on her own. However, reality today reflects different societal disposition shifted gradually as a result of deep socio-economic crisis. Women come to participate in labor migration gradually as hopes for recovery of local economy dwindled away. Only in the early 1990’s the developing yet poor societies started to experience shifts within old norms and ideologies, normative, detrimental economic conditions proved to be a factor that is[[15]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn15" \o ").

During the rule of the progressive ideological systems, traditional values set forth resilience despite ideological pressure from above. Traditional codes of conduct with its emphasis on kinship, family networks, sexual modesty, and prescribed gender roles never disappeared during official promotion of political progressive ideologies. According to Curro progressive ideologies bestowed upon patriarchal societies in the 1920’s prompted a partial political emancipation of women from the constrains of domesticity and initiated their participation in public spheres of life but did not emancipate them from social and cultural old traditions. Thus, the progressive states failed to overshadow the old values and beliefs[[16]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn16" \o "). A different approach to the above opinion maintains that the level of emancipation, which resulted in high level of education and public participation of women during the political progressive era achieved irreversible effect[[17]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn17" \o ").

However, the resurgence of old values and particularly of socially appropriate gender roles was challenged by the deteriorating economic conditions which kept men unemployed and thus, unable to fulfill their traditionally perceived obligations as main breadwinners. Ultimately, revitalization of traditional gender power relations failed and even rural communities that were expected to exercise more restrictions on female autonomy accepted idea of women participation in labor migration. In some cases, such as migration form rural regions, women are the only members of a household to migrate[[18]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn18" \o "). Documentation from different case studies, particularly of East Europe[[19]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn19" \o ") and south Asia[[20]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn20" \o ") female migrants disclose the reality of a new phenomenon. That is woman that migrate leaving men behind rather than staying behind or following them in migration.  Moreover, only a small percentage of women had their husbands to rejoin them after establishing themselves abroad.

While the nature of labor in construction or other heavy industries exposes male workers in public, the nature of jobs in domestic or care industry conceal female workers from the public eye in fixed (live-in) location within employers’ household. The seclusion of domestic placement obviously makes it harder for authorities to interfere and to regulate the employer/employee relationship and at the same time such seclusion opens possibilities of abuse. However, this relative isolation turned out to be a form of protection from state antimigration policies for women workers. Which consequently placed illegal domestic employment oversees as more reliable and valuable than male questionable employment. According to survey of the State Commission on Migration Issues the percentage of female migrants steadily increased while percentage of men diminished from 2012 to 2017, with a total number of female migrants in such countries as Greece, USA, and Germany even exceeding the number of male migrants[[21]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn21" \o ").

**Hardships of Overseas Labor**

International migration studies tend to focus on negative effects and conditions of emerged global care chains. In an overwhelming number of contemporary studies on transnational migration and social adaptation of female domestic workers, personal accounts are dominated by themes of hardship and insecurity. There are also clear patterns of exploitation. Consequently, abuse, exploitation, and disempowerment of women employed in domestic industries appear as a central theme in many case studies. Beside actual physical abuse there could be such negative effects as psychological stress from experiencing a downward mobility by being locked in and contained in single location with limited excess to world outside premises of the employing family[[22]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn22" \o "). Evidently, the initial total or partial lack of a language and/or general cultural and normative knowledge of a receiving country, as well as lack of legal status and most importantly the private nature of domestic work often isolate female domestic workers from the exposure and contact with the outside world. These conditions leave female domestic workers in a highly vulnerable position susceptible to various forms of abuse and detriment.[[23]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn23" \o ") The psychological suffering of married women making decision to leave behind their children and husbands in order to become “transnational moms” elsewhere across the globe is also evident from many international cases.

**Remittances and its Social Implication**

According to World Bank’s 2018 [Migration and Development Brief](http://www.knomad.org/publication/migration-and-development-brief-29), after two consecutive years of decline, remittances to low- and middle - income countries rebounded to a record level in 2017. Among top recipients is Philippine, one of the leading donor countries in supply of female labor force for domestic labor oversees. In 2017, remittance to Philippine amounted to 33 billion of US dollars[[24]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn24" \o "). At any rate a remittance from domestic employment oversees is often essential for the survival of families in developing countries. According to Dante Disparte of Forbes remittances play crucial role for national economies of developing and transitioning countries and at present, arguably, are “the world’s most important international cashflow”. To quote the author, “during the 2008 global financial crisis, all cross-border cashflows declined precipitously, while remittances held their course, charging to a projected $715 billion globally in 2019, which is merely the tip of the iceberg as the officially reported figure”.

**Conclusion**

It is noteworthy that men migrants are found less efficient in providing for their families then women migrants because later adhere to the gender role expectancy of women being frugal, pragmatic and preoccupied with care instincts in contrast with men’s tendency to spend for themselves and being impractical[[25]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn25" \o "). United Nations report revealed that remittance by female migrant workers to their families exceed that of male migrant workers.

Apart from the fact that remittances improve household’s economic well-being, they must affect the hierarchical standing of a female provider in societies where role of a provider was traditionally escribed to male members of a household. While this effect is indeed observed, it must be mentioned that its progress in many cases partially impeded or slowed down by migrant women themselves, who fulfill their “homesickness” by adherence to the familiar, traditional norms[[26]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftn26" \o "). While Georgian women do fail to utilize fully their migrant experience for personal empowerment, this process does take place and keep on providing more opportunities and possibilities to sustain liberation processes in patriarchal society. Interesting linguistic expression emerged among Georgian emigrants in the United States. Female migrants are labeled as ‘contemporary Georgian Mamluks’. To unpack this expression, one needs to look into its historical roots.

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[[3]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-labor-migration-global-socio-economic-development" \l "_ftnref3" \o ")-   Karuna Kar Patra, *Approaches to International Relations*, p.71

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**تأثير هجرة اليد العاملة في التنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية العالمية**

خلقت العولمة ذات الجذور العميقة مع ما يتبعها من سياسات التحرير الاقتصادية زيادة هائلة في تنقّل اليد العاملة عبر الحدود، بما يشبه الحرية غير المحدودة للتحويلات الرأسمالية ونقل التكنولوجيا عبر مختلف القارات. تميل العولمة إلى إضعاف سيادة الدولة القومية واستقلالها عن طريق السيطرة على تدفّق رأس المال. لهذا الغرض أصبحت الهجرة الدولية حاجة مشتركة لجميع الأطراف المعنية وبالتالي فهي جزء لا يتجزأ من العولمة. سهّلت العولمة عملية الهجرة بشكلٍ كبير من خلال تحسين الاتصالات ونشر المعلومات عبر وسائل الإعلام وتحسين وسائل النقل بالإضافة إلى الإغراءات المالية. إن زيادة التدفقات التجارية والاستثمارية في العديد من البلدان هي التي سهلت الاهتمام بالهجرة والوعي لها.

أدت العولمة إلى زيادة التفاوتات الاقتصادية بين البلدان. لن يكون تدفّق السلع ورؤوس الأموال بين البلدان الغنية والفقيرة كبيرًا بما يكفي لتعويض الحاجة إلى العمل في البلدان الأكثر فقرًا. من المرجح أن يؤدي الخلل الاجتماعي الناجم عن إعادة الهيكلة الاقتصادية في مجتمع نامٍ معين إلى تشجيع المزيد من الناس على هجرة مجتمعاتهم والبحث عن عمل في مجتمعات أكثر ازدهارًا.

ومع ذلك، تؤدي الهجرة إلى تقويض القيم القديمة وبخاصةٍ الأدوار المناسبة اجتماعيًا للجنسَين. يواجه الذكور في الدور الأبوي تحديات بسبب الظروف الاقتصادية المتدهورة التي أبقت الرجال عاطلين عن العمل وبالتالي غير قادرين على الوفاء بالتزاماتهم التقليدية القائمة على كونهم المعيلين الرئيسيين لأسرهم. وقبلت فكرة مشاركة المرأة في هجرة اليد العاملة. في بعض الحالات، مثل النزوح من المناطق الريفية، تكون المرأة هي العضو الوحيد المهاجر في الأسرة.