

Technology -Bigger Threat to Global Stability than Immigration

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Introduction

'Migrants, How Many More Can We Take?' (Daily Mail), 'Britain Needs to Draw the Line on Immigrants' (The Sun), '[Mexican] Deportations to Begin' (Boston Globe). Watching media, it doesn't take long to believe immigration is one of the most pressing issues of the twenty-first century. With over sixty-five million refugees in the world (UN Refugee Agency, 2015) and increased illegal migration to first world countries such as the United States, immigration is a prodigious problem. While many people are compassionate for the refugee and immigrant's plight of searching for a better life, there are a plethora of arguments against accepting refugees in stable countries. Studies show that immigration can negatively impact a country's economy (Davis & Weinstein, 2002) and immigrants can change the culture and politics of a country. However, there is a greater threat to current world stability -*technology*. Stephen Hawking stated (2014), "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race." Castella (1980) best quantifies the threat:

What defines a system of structural crisis is that it becomes impossible to expand or reproduce the system without a transformation or reorganization of the basic characteristics of production, distribution, and management and their expression in terms of social organization. (p. 8)

Technology poses a bigger threat to the global economy than immigration.

Discussion

Labor and Economics

One of the most prominent arguments against immigration is that it steals jobs from national labor forces and fills them with cheaper immigrant labor. In the United States immigrants make up sixteen percent of the labor force and compose the majority of low-wage workers in the cleaning and farming industries (Singer, 2016). Davis & Weinstein (2002) found that, "Although immigration increases the size of the U.S. economy and the income of the immigrants, all native-born Americans lose from immigration. That is, there is no net gain from immigration to natives and the wages losses for Americans total nearly \$70 billion dollars". As a result, politicians like to scapegoat immigrants as a cause for the loss of manufacturing jobs and economic slumps. However, technology has a much broader impact. In a highly discussed research study, Frey and Osborne (2013) stated, "The share of tasks that are performed by robots will rise from a global average of around ten percent across all manufacturing industries today to around twenty-five percent by 2025". Due to increasing automation, within the next two decades less than fifty percent of people will have the jobs they are currently trained for (agriculture, industry, services) (Helbing, 2015). The job impacts are not limited to blue collar workers, "Experts predict now that computers will be able to perform most tasks better than humans in 5 to 10 years and reach brain-like functionality within 10 to 25 years" (Frey & Osborne, 2013).

With so much automation and labor force change, there are many challenges ahead. Jobs like manufacturing pay on average \$20.17 an hour (Lehmacher, 2016); as these jobs are automated there could be a decline in the middle class -the backbone of American society. As the middle class dissipates, society will continue to see a rise in job polarisation (Nowrasteh,

2016). The wage gap will increase as the wealthy proprietors manufacture more goods at a lower production cost; while the lower class will struggle to live on the minimum wage -if they can find a job at all. The same concept applies on a global scale. Many periphery countries do not have access to the technology needed to make themselves competitive in a robotic world (Wiley, 2009). They will grow poorer as they watch core countries obtain greater wealth. Immigration does have a small negative impact for low wage workers; however, it only hurts a small percent of the population -and even helps middle class business owners by providing cheap labor. Technology poses a much greater threat and leads to increasing inequality.

Terrorism

In the light of recent European terror attacks such as the shooting at the Bataclan Theater in Paris and the bombing of the Belgium Airport, people fear immigration because they associate it with terrorism. Norasteh (2016) states, "Foreign-born terrorists who entered the country, either as immigrants or tourists, were responsible for 88 percent (or 3,024) of the 3,432 murders caused by terrorists on U.S. soil from 1975 through the end of 2015". Additionally a large portion of the refugee crisis has been caused by radical Islamic terrorism forcing people from their homelands. The World Economics Forum (2016) reports that immigration has led to a rise in extremist sects in western cities such as Bruges and Paris; but modern terrorism (such as ISIS) would not be possible without technology such as social media. In fact, "propaganda production and dissemination is at times considered to be even more important than military jihad" (Cohen, 2016).

Terrorism has become a global problem in the twenty-first century. An article from the Cato Institute by Norasteh (2016) states:

In the year 2000, there were 3329 deaths due to terrorism. In 2014, there was a nine-fold increase to 32,685 deaths. From 2013 to 2014 alone, there was an eighty percent increase in deaths. Most terrorism is restricted to five countries: seventy-eight percent of deaths in 2014 were in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria.

From a Western society perspective, the solution seems simple. Keep terrorists and anyone with radical views out of their country. Western culture targets their emotions on refugees fleeing war torn countries fearing the refugees will bring their violent society with them. However, prominent philosophers such as Benjamin Barber argue that the rise in Western dependence on technology is leading to the rise in Jihad. In his Jihad vs. McWorld Barber (notes:

Jihad... -a vibrant local identity, a sense of community, solidarity among kinsmen, neighbors, and countrymen, [and] deference to leaders and intolerance toward outsiders- ... may be a last deep sigh before the eternal yawn of McWorld.... -[the globalizing idea of] order and tranquillity, and freedom—as [indicated by] the phrases "free trade," "free press," and "free love."

The nature of war is changing. In the past, with the exception of a couple of pictures in a newspaper and a short segment in the evening news, there would be very little evidence of European terrorist attack in other societies. Nowadays, an attack on one city can be felt around the world in minutes through Facebook Live, Twitter, and Snapchat. Taking advantage of Western addiction to media, ISIS not only conducts horrendous killings but even records them to post online for the world to see. Turlitto (2010) states:

Instantaneous transfer of information via the Internet has increased the number of participants in war... The battlefield has become virtual. It is no longer fought on the ground but also on the web. Any willing person can become a belligerent in war, not just by fighting, but also by instantaneously transferring information, money, or technology.

Additionally, there are more available 'soldiers'. Extremists can radicalize young people through the internet which leads to homegrown terrorist activities such as the Boston Marathon Bombing. While there is a small percent increase in terrorism deaths, technology greatly increases terrorism's impact because, "Media weapons [can] actually be more potent than atomic bombs" (Winter, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite media headlines and election campaign promises, technology poses a much greater threat to current world order than immigration. While immigration can lead to some societal changes -altering culture and ethnicity; it retains the existing social structure. People still go to work, perform their job, and come home to their family. Technology is altering the way we communicate, but it is dividing the world we live in. In the words of Albert Einstein, "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity".

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