



Migration: From «if» to «how much»

While the world is coalescing with regard to certain aspects - such as globalization, mobility or the internet - nationalism and national borders seem to gain in importance. In this development, migration is a co-occurring topic, also in Switzerland.

The positive effects of migration are important, especially for a small country as Switzerland, which aspires to be active on a global basis. Switzerland benefitted, for example, from the Huguenot's knowledge in watch making. Migrants founded several internationally prestigious corporations, such as ABB, Nestlé or Swatch. Especially noteworthy is the role of migrants in the building of infrastructure crucial to Switzerland, such as the Gotthard tunnels. Furthermore, the positive effects are not purely of economic character but reach into the intellectual and cultural development of a migration country.

With a portion of the population, a tendency towards a more negative perception of migration effects is observable. Hence, it is possible to identify an area of tension between openness and isolation. The key question is therefore not if migration is desired but rather how much of it. Therefore, we will discuss three potential steering mechanisms with regard to migration, a utilitarian, a fairness and a liberal based approach. We will subsequently present one representative of a liberal model that does not question the fundamental idea of the free movement of persons but envisages limited steering possibilities for countries with exceptional high migration. The model is then applied to the specific case of the United Kingdom in the context of Brexit.