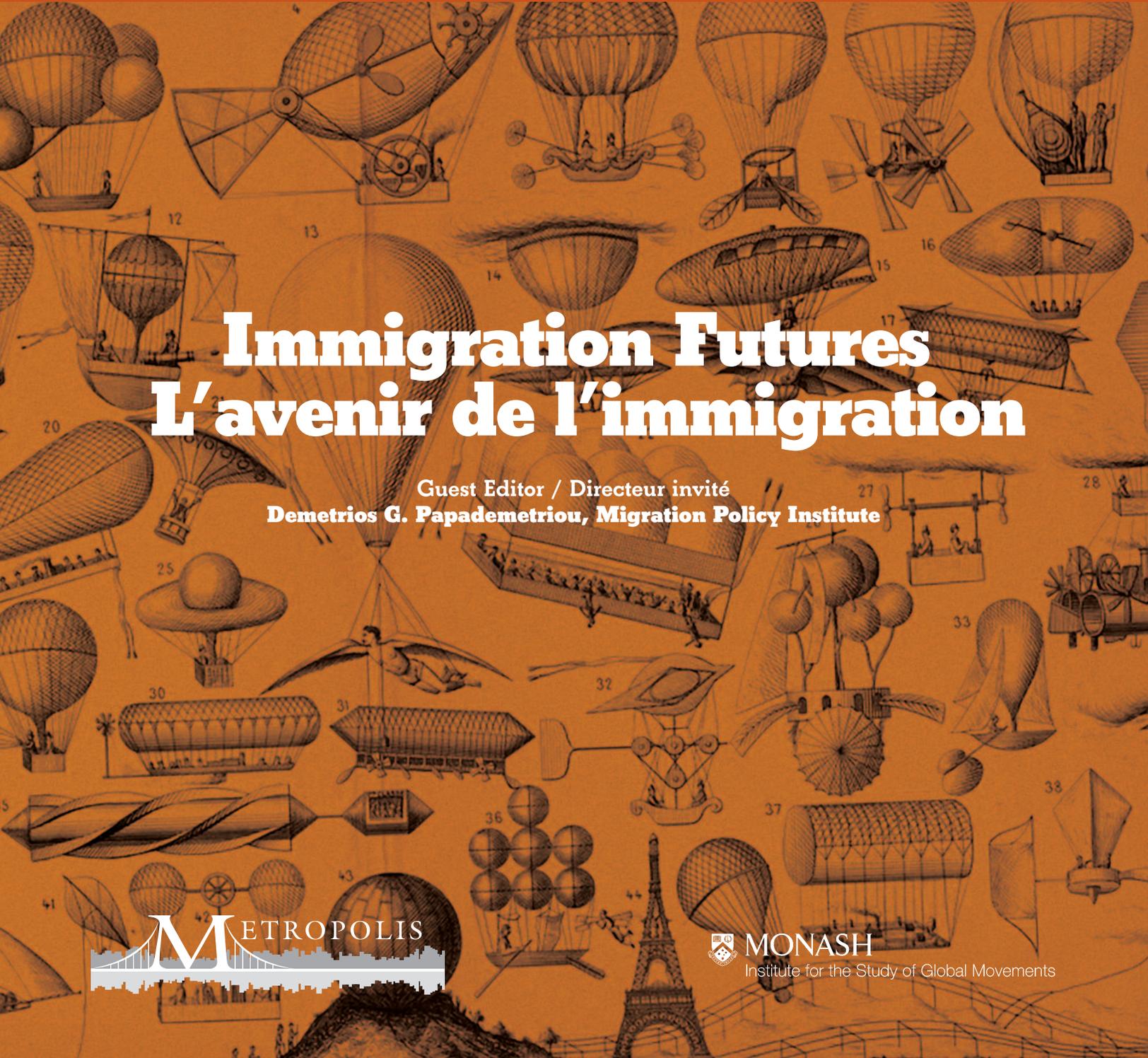


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Immigration Futures L'avenir de l'immigration

Guest Editor / Directeur invité
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MANAGING EDITOR / DIRECTRICE À LA RÉDACTION

Marie-Pascale Desjardins

PRODUCTION

Llama Communications • 819-776-6888 • marc@llamacom.ca

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ACS ADDRESS / COORDONNÉES DE L'ÂÉC

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REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SYSTEM

Introduction

International migration is already this century's unavoidable issue. More countries are now significant players in the international migration system than at any other time in history. In fact, almost all high-income countries, as well as most fast-growing middle-income ones, are now already or are fast becoming major migration actors. For the biggest such actors, which now number well into the dozens, migration is fuelling rapid, profound and highly visible social and cultural change – and the resulting transformation is happening almost literally before people's eyes.

This context was the impetus for a seminar on Immigration Futures, which was hosted by the Metropolis Project and the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements in May 2006. Papers from this seminar formed the basis of this issue of *Canadian Diversity*, and they have been supplemented by papers presented at the 12th International Metropolis Conference in October 2007, as well as by submissions from a number of additional contributors. This collection thus brings together articles from a range of perspectives, linking together research, policies and practice on an issue fraught with uncertainty, complexity and social, economic and ethical challenges.

Indeed, the absolute size of international migration has grown significantly in the last few decades, although certainly not at disproportionate rates relative to the world's population. If one removes the nearly 30 million people who are presently counted as immigrants in the United Nations' (UN) population statistics but who never actually "moved" (because it was borders that moved, not them, when the Soviet Union gave way to the Commonwealth of Independent States), the 160 to 170 million or so remaining immigrants today comprise about 2.5% of the world's population of 6.7 billion. This proportion is only slightly larger than the percentage of the world's population (approximately 2.3%) counted as immigrants by the UN throughout most of the last 40 years.

Of course, as John Martin implies in his article in this issue, absolute numbers do matter. In the last 30 years, immigrant density in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nearly doubled (from about 4.5% to 8.3% of the population) and now accounts for 60% of all the world's immigrants, while staying relatively stable (at about 2%) for the less- and least-developed countries. Making an already complex picture even more so, nearly half of that total is intra-OECD country migration, and hence of much less interest in terms of its contribution to the social, cultural, economic and political arguments about migration in most high-income countries. On the flip side of this argument, the UN numbers that analysts use refer to the immigrant *stock* and thus do not account for the much more dynamic – and politically troubling – *flows*, which are thought to include ever increasing proportions of unauthorized immigrants.

Yet the volume of migration, large as it is, may not be at the root of the anxiety with which most immigrant-receiving countries now view immigration. That distinction belongs to the speed at which migration has been growing in many countries and to its composition.

The rate at which immigration has been growing in many high-income countries is simply unprecedented. Some of these countries have become *major* immigration players for all practical purposes in the course of a single decade. Spain, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Russia (which now has more immigrants than any other country except for the United States), South Africa, South Korea and other East Asian countries are the best known, but there are others. Similarly, the ranks of large-scale emigration countries have been growing briskly, as have those of migrant-transit countries – and increasing numbers of countries are simultaneously significant *immigration* and *transit* countries.

Furthermore, unlike migration trends for most of the last century, among the defining features of today's flows is the fact that the majority of those who move – and virtually all those who move outside of legal channels – come from countries of vast social, cultural and often racial "distances" from the countries in which they enter. And there is more. In the world of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the subsequent attacks in Madrid and London, and thwarted or unsuccessful attacks elsewhere, religious

distance often seems to take pride of place among these differences. These realities increase the “visibility” and “other-ness” of newcomers, which in turn fuels the discomfort of host populations and their reactions to them.

Confronting migration's challenges

Public and private sector institutions, including civil society writ large, are struggling to respond to the challenges that migration poses, but the effort is extremely complicated. Consider, for instance, how the issue fares in most European countries. Some European governments and societies, most notably Germany, chose to deny for far too long the permanence of immigration and its embedment in the host society's “life,” thereby delaying essential efforts to have immigrants become members of the German society and polity. Remarkably, alternative policy choices, whether officially “welcoming” (the Dutch and Nordic models) or of “splendid neglect” (the French model), seemed to have had similar outcomes. In fact, in virtually all cases, most immigrants and their offspring are well behind the native born in terms of educational achievement and access to opportunity – and, accordingly, in how they measure up in such economic benchmarks as employment rates, earnings and quality of housing, among other considerations – and of social and political engagement. (Countries with much less experience in migration, such as those in Southern and Eastern Europe, are understandably struggling even more, and do so mostly without the full legal and administrative framework required to manage an immigration system and begin the long and difficult effort of immigrant integration.) These cumulative disadvantages translate into varying degrees of economic, social and political marginalization. Marginalization, in turn, breeds mutual wariness: many immigrant communities see themselves as aggrieved, while many native-born residents view immigrants and their children with impatience, if not mistrust and suspicion.

The size and characteristics of today's – and even more so tomorrow's – international migration is challenging nations to better manage the transformation that the process entails. Success promises political and economic gains through migration's dynamism and the potential for contributing to the host country's growth and prosperity, especially at a time when demographics make such contributions nothing short of essential. The articles by Skeldon, Legrain, Martin and Castles in this issue make that clear. Failure risks social unrest and political instability. More importantly, perhaps, it foregoes the opportunity for dramatically improving the immigrant's, and his or her family's, circumstances.

With the benefits of success and the costs of failure both so high and hanging in the balance, managing the international migration system through thoughtful regulation and other policy interventions at the local, national, regional and, gradually and carefully, international levels becomes paramount. In their articles, Skeldon, Hugo, Teitelbaum, Rowthorn, Vertovec and Yeoh all speak to this issue, if from different angles and often referring to different types of immigrants. As Vertovec and Yeoh both argue, the case for doing so is strengthened further when the development potential of well regulated migration for the countries of origin is also taken into account.

Mitigating strains, maximizing gains

States that host substantial numbers of immigrants are trying to find ways to gain better control over the process and produce better policy outcomes. In doing so, their objectives are laudable: to shape the process in ways that advance their national economic interests and priorities while minding social cohesion; and to be fastidious in applying the rule of law while staying true to their commitments to social justice, human rights and the protection of refugees. Teitelbaum's article on this issue emphasizes some of the same questions.

These goals may be more complementary than is commonly assumed, as may be the goals of societies of origin, host or destination societies, and those of the immigrants themselves. The appearance of divergent, even conflicting, interests is fuelled partly by the fact, noted above, that in all but a few states (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and, in recent years, perhaps the United Kingdom, being notable exceptions) too much of overall migration is neither “selected,” nor otherwise “truly regulated,” and that changing immigrant admissions' formulas is akin to trying to negotiate a political minefield.

There is seemingly widespread agreement in the literature that given the skill needs of high-income countries, actively selecting substantial shares of one's immigrants leads to greater economic benefits for host countries. Hugo's thoughtful article about Asia and its future as a source of skilled immigrants is both reassuring about where the skills are likely to come from but also sounds the alarm about the long-term reliability of the skills' supply chain as intra-regional migration in Asia grows and the economic vitality of the region is beginning to attract highly skilled immigrants from outside the region, a trend that he expects will grow. The articles by Skeldon, Rowthorn and Castles address similar issues as does, somewhat more skeptically, that by Teitelbaum. Teitelbaum is particularly cautious about most aspects of skilled migration – from the definition of skilled immigrants and the ambiguous evidence and rationale for admitting them in large numbers, to the effects of their presence on the career choices of native students – while also expressing concern both about the utilization of their skills *and* their treatment. (See also Yeoh's article on the underutilization, and even wastage, of the human capital of university educated female immigrants in South East Asia and on their isolation from the receiving society.)

At the other end of the skills continuum, one finds both large scale needs and even greater variability both in how such workers are perceived by host populations and in how they are treated by employers. Legrain, by arguing quite provocatively for open borders, and Rowthorn, by making the practical and moral cases against the “cherry picking” of skilled immigrants by immigrant receivers, sensitize readers and policy-makers alike to the complexity of cost/benefit analyses of all forms of migration, as does Castles and, from the perspective of returning Chinese immigrants from Canada, Sin Yih Teo.

Many of the authors in this issue of *Canadian Diversity* acknowledge, if mostly in passing, that poorly regulated and illegal migration generally interferes with the ability of immigrants to get the highest returns on their investment in migration. This lowers their potential for earnings, and hence remittances, and reduces the benefits to immigrants and, by

extension, to their families and communities back home. Both Rowthorn and Vertovec, in their emphasis on the importance of maximizing the benefits of migration for immigrants and their households, recognize the drag that unregulated and illegal migration have on such benefits. Of course, there are even greater reasons to be concerned about illegal migration in that it increases the costs for almost everyone concerned – unscrupulous employers being one of the exceptions – and tends to wrap all migration into a shroud of illegitimacy, while enriching the criminal syndicates and smuggling networks that organize it. These organizations find in human smuggling a highly profitable business whose costs – regardless of how they are measured – are worth the risk in large part because they are borne primarily by the immigrants themselves. (Castles’ emphasis on the “migration facilitating industry,” the network of labour recruiters, travel agents, job brokers, lawyers and landlords, is another important economic segment that makes billions from all forms of migration – and one deserving closer study.)

With illegal immigration growing apace, the policy options available to policy-makers for greater openings to legal migration are reduced severely. The ultimate policy goal is nonetheless as clear as it appears to be unattainable, at least in the near term: creating political space for managing an orderly, smartly and flexibly regulated flow of legal immigrants whose contributions to the economy and society are higher in large part because the process is successfully *regulated*. Skeldon’s article is also clear on the need for regulation and controls, a policy and analytical area that is either ignored or treated rather cavalierly in this compendium and must be addressed.

Let me be even clearer on this point. For migration’s gains both to grow and become more obvious to everyone, governments must succeed first and foremost in reducing illegalities of all types and must prove adept at managing the inevitable tensions and strains of the process. In this latter respect, nothing may be more urgent than demonstrating to the public that immigrants as a group are law abiding, that they are respectful of their hosts’ values, that they make every effort to engage constructively in the community of which they are now part, and that they contribute to the economy more than they take out of it, that is, that they add to the host society’s overall economic welfare.

Looking all around and looking ahead

For nearly two decades now, capital and the market for goods, services and workers of many types have woven an ever more intricate web of global economic and, increasingly,

social interdependence. In the last few years, however, globalization seems to be on the defensive as governments and publics alike across the globe have begun to reexamine some of the phenomenon’s tenets and look more carefully at its effects.

As this and the authors’ articles make clear, few by-products of globalization are pricklier for the publics of the advanced industrial societies than the movement of people. Such movement, however, also preoccupies the less-developed countries, albeit from different perspectives. For them, migration is first and foremost an essential lifeline to both their citizens and to their economies. (In the most obvious example, noted by several of this compendium’s articles, the World Bank reports that formally recorded financial remittances now exceed \$300 billion per year, and informal and other unrecorded transactions add considerably to this amount [Ratha and Xu 2008]).

However, the less-developed countries’ pre-occupation with migration has another, darker, side. They are deeply concerned about three additional issues. First, that some aspects of the behaviour by the authorities and the population in the countries where their citizens live and work borders on a gross disregard for their human, labour and other basic rights. Second, that the trafficking industry that has grown around the unauthorized movement of their nationals endangers their citizens’ lives and systematically exploits them, while undermining the legitimacy of their public institutions and complicating their relationships with transit and destination country governments. Third, that increasingly selective immigration policies by the advanced industrial societies may be tapping too deeply into their human capital pool (the “brain drain” issue). Although not all of these themes are explored to the same degree in this issue of *Canadian Diversity*, the first and last

one are treated in sufficient depth.

And what of the future? Projecting how international migration is likely to evolve in the next 20 years is both easier and more difficult than it may appear at first. It is *easier* because we now understand the phenomenon’s behaviour well-enough – from what might be called the supply-side, but also, increasingly, from the demand-side – and the articles by Skeldon and Hugo do a particularly good job at laying out the various possibilities. Also, we now much better understand the triggers, drivers and facilitators of migration (Papademetriou 2006). It is *more difficult* because of two factors whose effects are akin to that of wild cards in a game of chance: security (terrorism) and the sociocultural reaction to migration. Both of these factors have been referred to

Advanced industrial societies must resist the temptation to retreat in the face of immigration’s challenge and retrench behind increasingly restrictive, and ultimately undemocratic, controls. As is already apparent, unilateral actions and fortress mentalities misread the complexities of the migration system while denying receiving societies an essential ingredient for their own economic success and social enrichment.

already. In addition, as McLeman and the International Organization for Migration point out in their articles, the potential impact of environmental degradation or climate change is not yet known, and it is difficult to predict how migrants and states may respond.

For the next 20 years, the supply – the so-called migration “pipeline” – will remain robust. There is nothing within this rather short horizon that will change dramatically for the better to affect the major developing country suppliers of immigrants in ways that will lead to a pronounced drop in the interest of many of their nationals to emigrate. If anything, a number of still relatively small migration “players” are likely to grow in importance, while China, India and South East Asia could well become massive players in the international migration system with relatively little “notice.”

While the supply is thus expected to remain, in practical terms, near infinite, the demand for immigrants will also grow substantially, though arithmetically. Three factors will account for the lion’s share of that growth. First, demography, and especially the one-two punch of the birth dearth and the growth in the share of the old and very old in the North’s population. Second, increasing skill and more general labour shortfalls (including skill and geographic demand and supply mismatches) – a topic that is addressed from different angles in several of the articles following this issue. Third, the sheer momentum of the process itself, whereby pro-immigration coalitions form in support of immigration while formulaic, legal and “rights-based” openings to migration, such as family (re)unification, refugee resettlement and asylum grants, continue to build stronger immigration streams.

As the various articles here make clear, during the next two decades the reach of migration will expand and go beyond the advanced industrial West, Japan and the other “Asian Tigers” to emerging market societies everywhere. The seeds for such an expansion are sown every day. Initially, the government-led or -assisted part of this expansion will most likely take the form, primarily, of regulated temporary (circular?) entry by needed high- and low-skilled foreign workers. But it will not stop there. “Front gate” provisions for converting valued “temporary” legal immigrants into permanent ones will also proliferate, turning temporary admission streams into filtration and transition systems for selecting permanent immigrants. In addition, opportunities for admitting better skilled foreigners outrightly as permanent immigrants will also increase, particularly as the world economy rebounds and global competition for talented foreigners intensifies.

At the same time, pressure from unauthorized migration is also likely to remain robust and managing it will continue to be a major preoccupation of governments. Changing the status quo, however, will require much more than the “tried and failed” paradigms of simply applying always greater resources to border and interior controls. It will also require unaccustomed policy discipline, unusual degrees of coordination across policy competencies, and new models of cooperation between countries of origin and destination.

Conclusion

Given the significant economic, social, political, human rights and demographic differentials that continue to divide the world, the realistic response to migration cannot be

denial. Advanced industrial societies cannot simply exhort people to stay home without a serious commitment to a long-term and costly endeavour to improve conditions there. Yet, investing substantially in attacking the root causes of flight, a worthy and necessary effort, has a long horizon that will exact substantial domestic political costs before it yields measurable long-term benefits.

In the interim, advanced industrial societies must resist the temptation to retreat in the face of immigration’s challenge and retrench behind increasingly restrictive, and ultimately undemocratic, controls. As is already apparent, unilateral actions and fortress mentalities misread the complexities of the migration system while denying receiving societies an essential ingredient for their own economic success and social enrichment. Policies designed within such naïve frameworks are destined to fall short of even relative long-term success.

The facts are not in dispute. Migration ties sending, transit and receiving countries – as well as immigrants, their families, and their employers – into often reinforcing, and always intricate, systems of complex interdependence. It takes the cooperation of virtually all these actors – as well as smart policy decisions, thoughtful regulation and sustained enforcement – to make real progress in limiting the effects of migration’s challenges enough so as to draw out even more of its benefits.

For longer than many may wish, people will continue to seek to move and settle elsewhere for reasons that are as old as civilization itself: economic and physical survival (security), improvement of circumstances for themselves and their families, freedom from obvious and not so obvious threats, opportunity (however one chooses to define it, sheer frustration or just a spirit of adventure. For many of these people, the channels that migration opens up will continue to be channels for starting all over in a new place.

Hence the imperative of better managing the migration system. Doing so requires far greater across-the-board cooperation than is now the case (or even possible), across relevant governmental agencies within a single state, across relevant competencies across states, and between the governmental and non-governmental sectors within and across state actors.

Reform is long overdue. Whether such reform will be the product of a judicious effort to address all of a nation’s interests, as well as to balance these interests with those of societies on whose workers immigrant receivers rely (whether they care to acknowledge it or not) or whether it will be little more than the by now typical knee-jerk yank on the control levers, cannot be known at this time.

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RÉFLEXIONS SUR LE SYSTÈME MIGRATOIRE INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

La migration internationale constitue déjà l'enjeu inévitable de ce siècle. Jamais autant de pays n'ont été des intervenants clés au sein du système migratoire international. De fait, presque tous les pays à revenu élevé, de même que la plupart des pays à revenu intermédiaire qui vivent une forte croissance, sont déjà ou deviennent rapidement des intervenants majeurs sur le plan de la migration. En ce qui concerne les plus importants de ces intervenants, dont le nombre atteint largement plusieurs dizaines, la migration alimente un changement social et culturel rapide, profond et très apparent – et la transformation qui en découle se produit presque littéralement sous les yeux de la population.

C'est ce contexte qui a entraîné la tenue d'un colloque intitulé *Immigration Futures*, organisé par le projet Metropolis et le Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements, en mai 2006. Les articles issus de ce colloque constituent le fondement de ce numéro de *Diversité canadienne* et sont complétés par des articles issues de la 12^e conférence internationale Metropolis, tenue en octobre 2007, ainsi que par des articles rédigés par d'autres chercheurs. Cette revue réunit ainsi des articles fondés sur divers points de vue, reliant la recherche, les politiques et la pratique touchant une question remplie d'incertitudes, de complexités et de défis d'ordre social, économique et éthique.

L'ampleur absolue des migrations internationales s'est considérablement accrue au cours des dernières décennies, bien qu'elle n'ait pas augmenté à un rythme démesuré par rapport à la population mondiale. Si l'on exclut les quelque 30 millions de personnes actuellement considérées comme des immigrants selon les statistiques démographiques de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU), mais qui ne se sont jamais réellement « déplacées » (car ce sont les frontières qui se sont déplacées, et non pas les personnes, lorsque l'Union soviétique a cédé la place à la Communauté des États indépendants), les 160 à 170 millions d'immigrants qu'il reste représentent environ 2,5 % d'une population mondiale de quelque 6,7 milliards de personnes. Cette proportion n'est que légèrement supérieure au pourcentage d'immigrants parmi la population mondiale, qui avoisine 2,3 %, selon les statistiques établies par l'ONU au fil des 40 dernières années.

Évidemment, comme John Martin le laisse entendre dans son article publié dans le présent numéro, les nombres absolus comptent. Au cours des 30 dernières années, la densité d'immigrants dans les pays membres de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE) a presque doublé – passant d'environ 4,5 % à 8,3 % de la population – et représente maintenant 60 % des immigrants à l'échelle mondiale, tout en demeurant relativement stable (c'est-à-dire à environ 2 %) dans les pays en développement et dans les pays les moins évolués. La conjoncture est d'autant plus complexe compte tenu du fait que la migration interne dans les pays de l'OCDE compte pour près de la moitié du total, et présente donc un intérêt nettement moindre du point de vue de sa contribution aux arguments sociaux, culturels, économiques et politiques relatifs à la migration dans la plupart des pays à revenu élevé. Par ailleurs, les chiffres de l'ONU utilisés par les analystes ont trait aux *stocks* d'immigrants, et ne tiennent pas compte des *mouvements* beaucoup plus dynamiques – et troublants d'un point de vue politique – d'immigration, qui comporteraient une proportion toujours croissante d'immigrants non autorisés.

Néanmoins, le volume des migrations, aussi important soit-il, n'est pas nécessairement à l'origine de l'anxiété actuelle à l'égard de l'immigration, telle que ressentie dans la plupart des pays qui accueillent des immigrants. Cette anxiété relèverait plutôt de la rapidité de la croissance de la migration dans de nombreux pays, ainsi que de sa composition.

Dans bon nombre de pays à revenu élevé, l'immigration augmente à un rythme sans précédent. En une seule décennie, certains de ces pays sont pratiquement devenus des intervenants *majeurs* en matière d'immigration. L'Espagne, l'Irlande, le Royaume-Uni, la Grèce, la Russie (qui compte aujourd'hui plus d'immigrants que tout autre pays, à l'exception des États-Unis), l'Afrique du Sud,

la Corée du Sud, ainsi que d'autres pays d'Asie orientale, ne représentent que les cas les plus connus, mais ils ne sont pas les seuls. De même, le nombre de pays sources d'émigration à grande échelle augmente rapidement, tout comme le nombre de pays de transit de migrants – en outre, un nombre croissant de pays sont des intervenants importants à la fois du point de vue de l'immigration, de l'émigration et du transit.

En outre, contrairement aux migrations observées durant la majeure partie du siècle dernier, les mouvements actuels se caractérisent notamment par le fait que la plupart des personnes qui se déplacent – et pratiquement toutes celles qui se déplacent en dehors des circuits licites – proviennent de pays qui présentent de vastes différences sociales, culturelles et, souvent, raciales par rapport aux pays qui les accueillent. Et ce n'est pas tout. Dans le contexte des attentats du 11 septembre 2001 contre les États-Unis, des attentats subséquents de Madrid et de Londres et des attentats contrecarrés ailleurs dans le monde, la religion semble souvent occuper une place de premier plan parmi ces différences. Cette réalité accroît la « visibilité » et l'« altérité » des nouveaux arrivants, ce qui, dès lors, alimente le malaise des populations d'accueil et leurs réactions à leur égard.

Faire face aux enjeux liés à la migration

Les institutions des secteurs public et privé, y compris la société civile dans son ensemble, s'efforcent de réagir aux défis que présente la migration, mais la tâche se révèle des plus complexes. Notons, par exemple, la situation à cet égard dans la plupart des pays européens. Certains gouvernements et certaines sociétés d'Europe, en particulier l'Allemagne, ont choisi de nier pendant beaucoup trop longtemps la permanence de l'immigration et son intégration à la « vie » de la société d'accueil, ce qui retardait les démarches essentielles pour intégrer les immigrants à la société et à la politique allemandes. Il est à noter que l'adoption de stratégies autres que cette dernière – qu'il s'agisse de celles officiellement « accueillantes » (modèles néerlandais et nordiques) ou d'une « splendide négligence » (modèle français) – semble avoir produit des résultats similaires. En fait, dans pratiquement tous les cas, les immigrants et leurs descendants accusent un retard marqué par rapport aux natifs du pays en ce qui concerne le niveau d'instruction et l'accès aux possibilités – et donc sur le plan de leur rendement en ce qui a trait au taux d'emploi, au revenu et à la qualité du logement, ainsi que du point de vue de l'engagement social et politique. (Évidemment, les pays dont l'expérience en matière de migration est nettement moindre, notamment les pays d'Europe du Sud et de l'Est, éprouvent encore davantage de difficultés, et ce, pour une bonne part, sans disposer d'un cadre juridique et administratif complet, essentiel à la gestion d'un système d'immigration et au déploiement d'efforts complexes et de longue haleine axés sur l'intégration des immigrants.) Ces désavantages cumulatifs se traduisent par un degré varié de marginalisation économique, sociale et politique. Cette marginalisation engendre, à son tour, une méfiance mutuelle : de nombreuses communautés immigrantes s'estiment lésées, tandis que nombre de résidents « de souche » font preuve d'impatience, voire de défiance et de suspicion à l'égard des immigrants et de leurs enfants.

L'ampleur et les caractéristiques des migrations internationales d'aujourd'hui – et d'autant plus de demain – mettent les pays au défi de gérer d'une manière beaucoup plus efficace la transformation qui découle du processus. La réussite entraînerait des gains politiques et économiques, grâce au dynamisme des migrations et à la possibilité de contribuer à la croissance et à la prospérité des pays d'accueil, particulièrement à une époque où les données démographiques rendent ce type de contribution pratiquement essentiel. Les articles de Skeldon, de Legrain, de Martin et de Castles, dans le présent numéro, en soulignent l'évidence. L'échec, quant à lui, entraînerait un risque de troubles sociaux et d'instabilité politique. Mais surtout, il risquerait de compromettre la possibilité d'améliorer de façon marquée la situation des immigrants et de leurs familles.

Compte tenu de l'importance et de la possibilité des avantages de la réussite et des coûts de l'échec, la gestion du système migratoire international, à l'aide d'une réglementation éclairée et d'autres interventions en matière de politiques aux échelons local, national et régional et, selon une approche graduelle et minutieuse, à l'échelle internationale, revêt une importance primordiale. Dans leurs articles, Skeldon, Hugo, Teitelbaum, Rowthorn, Vertovec et Yeoh abordent cette question, bien que sous divers angles et en traitant de différents types d'immigrants. Comme Vertovec et Yeoh le font valoir, ce type de démarche est d'autant plus justifié quand le potentiel de développement d'une migration bien réglementée, en ce qui concerne les pays d'origine, sont également prises en compte.

Atténuer les difficultés, maximiser les avantages

Les pays qui accueillent un grand nombre d'immigrants tentent de trouver des moyens de mieux contrôler le processus de migration et de produire de meilleurs résultats sur le plan des politiques. Ils visent ainsi des objectifs louables : modeler le processus de manière à promouvoir leurs priorités et leurs intérêts économiques nationaux, tout en tenant compte de la cohésion sociale, et adopter une approche rigoureuse dans l'application de la règle de droit, tout en demeurant fidèles à leurs engagements à l'égard de la justice sociale, des droits de la personne et de la protection des réfugiés. L'article de Teitelbaum sur ce sujet met en évidence quelques-unes de ces questions.

Ces objectifs sont peut-être plus complémentaires qu'on ne le présume généralement, tout comme les objectifs des sociétés d'origine et des sociétés d'accueil ou de destination, et ceux des immigrants eux-mêmes. L'émergence d'intérêts divergents, voire conflictuels, est alimentée en partie par le fait que dans pratiquement tous les pays (le Canada, l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande et, peut-être, ces dernières années, le Royaume-Uni constituent des exceptions), une trop grande part de la migration n'est ni fondée sur une « sélection », ni véritablement réglementée, et par le fait que de modifier les formules d'admission des immigrants équivaut à s'aventurer sur un terrain politiquement miné.

Dans la documentation existante, on semble généralement convenir que, compte tenu des besoins en matière de compétences des pays à revenu élevé, la

sélection active d'une grande part de ses immigrants accroît les avantages économiques pour les pays d'accueil. L'article de Hugo au sujet de l'Asie et de son avenir à titre de source d'immigrants qualifiés est à la fois rassurant en ce qui concerne la provenance probable des compétences, et alarmant en ce qui a trait à la fiabilité à long terme de l'approvisionnement en compétences, compte tenu de l'accroissement de la migration intrarégionale en Asie et du fait que la vitalité économique de la région commence à attirer des immigrants hautement qualifiés provenant de l'extérieur – tendance qui, selon l'auteur, continuera de s'accroître. Les articles de Skeldon, de Rowthorn et de Castles traitent de questions semblables à celles abordées, d'une manière un peu plus sceptique, par Teitelbaum. Ce dernier est particulièrement prudent en ce qui concerne la plupart des aspects de la migration de travailleurs qualifiés – de la définition applicable aux immigrants qualifiés aux conséquences de leur présence sur les choix de carrière des étudiants nés dans les pays d'accueil, en passant par l'évidence et le bien-fondé ambigus de leur admission en grands nombres, tout en se disant préoccupé par l'utilisation de leurs compétences et par la manière dont on les traite. (Voyez également l'article de Yeoh sur la sous-utilisation, voire le « gaspillage », du capital humain lié aux immigrants ayant reçu une formation universitaire en Asie du Sud-est, de même que l'isolement de ces dernières par rapport à la société d'accueil.)

À l'autre extrémité du continuum des compétences, on trouve à la fois des besoins de grande échelle et une variabilité encore plus grande pour ce qui est de la manière dont de tels travailleurs sont perçus par la société d'accueil et sont traités par les employeurs. Legrain, qui prône l'ouverture des frontières, et Rowthorn, qui dénonce, d'un point de vue à la fois pratique et moral, la « sélection aléatoire » des immigrants qualifiés par les pays d'accueil, sensibilisent les lecteurs et les décideurs à la complexité des analyses coûts-avantages de toute forme de migration, tout comme le font Castles et, du point de vue des immigrants chinois de retour du Canada, Sin Yih Teo.

Plusieurs des auteurs dans ce numéro de *Diversité canadienne* reconnaissent, même si ce n'est qu'en passant, que les migrations illicites et assujetties à une réglementation déficiente nuisent généralement à la capacité des immigrants à tirer un rendement maximal de leur investissement dans la migration. Cet obstacle réduit leur potentiel de revenus – et, par conséquent, le montant de leurs envois d'argent dans leur pays d'origine, et amoindrit les bénéfices de l'immigration

pour les immigrants mêmes ainsi que pour leurs familles et leurs communautés dans leur pays d'origine. En soulignant l'importance de la maximisation des avantages de la migration pour les immigrants et leurs familles, Rowthorn et Vertovec reconnaissent que les migrations illicites et non réglementées sapent ces avantages. Évidemment, les migrations illicites suscitent d'autant plus de préoccupations qu'elles accroissent les coûts pour presque tous les intervenants touchés – sauf, par exemple, pour les employeurs sans scrupules –, et tendant à entourer toute forme de migration d'un linceul d'illégitimité, tout en enrichissant les syndicats criminels et les réseaux de migration clandestine qui l'organisent. Le passage de migrants clandestins constitue, pour ces organisations, une entreprise très lucrative dont les coûts – quelle que soit la manière dont ils sont mesurés

– valent les risques, notamment parce qu'ils sont principalement assumés par les immigrants eux-mêmes. (Castles pointe du doigt l'« industrie de facilitation de la migration », soit le réseau formé des recruteurs de main-d'œuvre, des agents de voyages, des courtiers en emploi, des avocats et des propriétaires bailleurs. Cette industrie représente un autre segment économique qui tire des milliards de dollars de profits de toutes les formes de migration – et mérite qu'on l'étudie de plus près.)

Compte tenu du rythme croissant de l'immigration illicite, les options qui se présentent aux responsables des politiques en vue d'accroître les perspectives liées aux migrations licites sont considérablement réduites. L'ultime objectif stratégique est néanmoins aussi clair qu'il semble inatteignable, du moins à court terme : créer un espace politique pour gérer de manière ordonnée, intelligente et souple un flux d'immigrants licites qui contribuent davantage à l'économie et à la société, en grande partie parce que le processus est réglementé de manière efficace. L'article de Skeldon fait clairement

valoir la nécessité d'une réglementation et de contrôles, secteur de politiques et d'analyses ignoré ou abordé d'une manière plutôt cavalière dans ce numéro.

Permettez-moi de préciser encore davantage ce point. Pour que les gains découlant des migrations augmentent et soient plus évidents pour chacun, les gouvernements doivent avant tout réussir à réduire toutes les formes d'illégalité et gérer habilement les tensions et les contraintes inévitables liées au processus. En ce qui concerne le second point, rien n'est plus urgent que de prouver à la population que les immigrants forment un groupe respectueux des lois et des valeurs du pays qui les accueille, qu'ils mettent tout en œuvre pour participer d'une manière constructive à la

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collectivité dont ils font désormais partie et que leur contribution à l'économie surpasse les avantages qu'ils en tirent, c'est-à-dire qu'ils améliorent la prospérité économique de la société d'accueil.

Vision d'ensemble et vision prospective

Depuis maintenant près de 20 ans, les marchés financiers et le marché des produits, des services et des différents types de travailleurs ont tissé une toile toujours plus dense et créé une interdépendance mondiale sur le plan économique et, de plus en plus souvent, sur le plan social. Ces dernières années, cependant, avec les gouvernements et le public qui commencent à réexaminer certains des aspects de la mondialisation et à en étudier les effets de plus près, il semble qu'on soit en train de remettre le phénomène en question.

Comme l'indiquent clairement le présent article et ceux des autres auteurs, quelques sous-produits de la mondialisation sont plus problématiques que les mouvements de personnes aux yeux des citoyens des sociétés industrielles évoluées. Toutefois, ces mouvements préoccupent également les responsables des pays moins développés, même si ceux-ci ont une vision différente. À leurs yeux, la migration constitue en premier lieu un élément vital pour leurs citoyens et leur économie. (Dans l'exemple le plus flagrant de cette réalité, cité dans plusieurs articles du présent recueil, la Banque mondiale rapporte que les fonds envoyés par les immigrants dans leur pays d'origine dépassent maintenant 300 milliards par an, et les transactions informelles et les autres transactions non déclarées font augmenter ce chiffre considérablement [Ratha et Xu, 2008].)

Les préoccupations des pays moins développés quant au phénomène migratoire comportent un volet plus sombre, lié à trois problèmes additionnels. Premièrement, le comportement des autorités et du public des pays où leurs citoyens vivent et travaillent est à la limite du non-respect flagrant des droits humains, des droits des travailleurs et d'autres droits fondamentaux. Deuxièmement, la véritable industrie du trafic de personnes qui s'est développée grâce aux déplacements non autorisés des ressortissants de ces pays met en péril la vie des citoyens et crée une exploitation systématique de ces derniers, tout en nuisant à la légitimité des institutions publiques de ces pays, et en compliquant leurs relations avec les gouvernements des pays de transit et de destination. Troisièmement, les politiques d'immigration de plus en plus sélectives des sociétés industrielles évoluées risquent de drainer le capital humain des pays en question (c'est le phénomène de l'« exode des cerveaux »). Même si tous ces thèmes ne sont pas explorés au même niveau dans le présent numéro de *Diversité canadienne*, le premier et le dernier sont abordés de façon suffisamment détaillée.

Et que nous réserve l'avenir ? Il est à la fois plus facile et plus difficile qu'il n'y paraît de prévoir la façon dont les migrations internationales vont évoluer au cours des 20 prochaines années. C'est *plus facile*, parce que nous comprenons désormais assez bien l'évolution du phénomène, qui était auparavant ce qu'on pourrait appeler un phénomène axé sur l'offre, mais aussi, de plus en plus souvent, axé sur la demande – à cet égard, les articles de Skeldon et de Hugo expliquent très bien les diverses possibilités. Par ailleurs,

nous comprenons beaucoup mieux les éléments déclencheurs de la migration, ses « moteurs » et les éléments qui la facilitent (Papademetriou, 2006). C'est *plus difficile*, en raison de deux facteurs dont l'effet est comparable à celui des jokers ou des cartes blanches dans les jeux de hasard : la sécurité (terrorisme) et la réaction socioculturelle aux migrations. Ces deux facteurs ont déjà été mentionnés. En outre, comme le soulignent McLeman et l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations dans leurs articles respectifs, les répercussions possibles de la dégradation de l'environnement ou du changement climatique ne sont pas encore connues, et il est difficile de prédire la façon dont les migrants et les pays pourraient réagir.

Au cours des 20 prochaines années, l'offre – cette soi-disant « pipeline migratoire » – va demeurer forte. À relativement court terme, rien ne changera de façon radicale pour le mieux ou ne touchera les principaux fournisseurs en immigrants des pays développés, ce qui pourrait entraîner une baisse d'intérêt prononcée pour l'émigration chez les ressortissants des pays concernés. En fait, un certain nombre d'intervenants secondaires du « marché » migratoire vont sans doute gagner en importance, tandis que la Chine, l'Inde et l'Asie du Sud-Est pourraient bien devenir des acteurs de premier plan du système migratoire international, dans un délai relativement court.

On s'attend à ce que l'offre demeure donc, concrètement, presque infinie, mais la demande d'immigrants augmentera aussi fortement, même si c'est d'un point de vue arithmétique. Trois facteurs seront les principaux responsables de cette augmentation. En premier lieu, citons les données démographiques, en particulier les conséquences de la pénurie de naissances et de l'augmentation du taux de personnes âgées et très âgées dans les populations des pays de l'hémisphère Nord. En deuxième lieu, il y a le problème grandissant du manque de compétences et, plus généralement, du manque de main-d'œuvre (ce qui inclut la demande de compétences et la demande de nature géographique, et le décalage de l'offre par rapport à la demande) – sujet qui est abordé sous différents angles dans plusieurs des articles de ce numéro. Enfin, nous avons le dynamisme inhérent au processus lui-même, dans le cadre duquel des coalitions « pro-immigration » se forment, tandis que les approches de la migration basées sur des formules, sur les lois et sur les droits (par exemple, le regroupement familial, le rétablissement des réfugiés et l'octroi du droit d'asile) continuent de stimuler les flux migratoires.

Comme le précisent les articles publiés ici, le phénomène migratoire va prendre de l'expansion au cours des 20 prochaines années et sortir des limites traditionnelles de l'Ouest industrialisé et évolué, du Japon et des autres « tigres asiatiques », pour toucher les marchés émergents dans le monde entier. Les graines d'une telle expansion sont semées chaque jour. Au départ, la part de cette expansion imputable à l'intervention ou à l'aide des gouvernements se traduira fort probablement par la réglementation temporaire (circulaire ?) de l'entrée de travailleurs étrangers hautement qualifiés et peu spécialisés très en demande. Mais l'expansion ne s'arrêtera pas là. Les dispositions appliquées « à l'entrée », qui visent à faire de précieux immigrants licites « temporaires » des immigrants permanents, vont

elles aussi se multiplier, et transformer les systèmes de gestion des flux de migrants temporaires en systèmes de filtrage et de transition permettant de sélectionner des immigrants permanents. En outre, les possibilités d'accorder directement à des étrangers plus qualifiés le statut d'immigrants permanents vont se multiplier, en particulier quand l'économie mondiale va reprendre de la vigueur et que la concurrence mondiale pour les travailleurs qualifiés va s'intensifier.

En même temps, il est probable que les problèmes créés par les migrations illicites vont subsister, et que leur gestion va demeurer un sujet de préoccupation pour les gouvernements. Toutefois, pour changer le statu quo, il ne faudra pas se contenter d'appliquer des paradigmes éprouvés, mais peu fructueux, qui consistent à affecter toujours plus de ressources aux contrôles frontaliers et intérieurs. Il faudra également appliquer et coordonner les diverses politiques avec une rigueur hors du commun et établir de nouveaux modèles de coopération entre les pays d'origine et les pays de destination.

Conclusion

Compte tenu des écarts importants observés à l'échelle planétaire sur les plans économique, social, politique, démographique ainsi qu'en matière de droits de la personne, on ne peut fermer les yeux sur les migrations. Les sociétés industrielles évoluées ne peuvent exhorter les gens à demeurer dans leur pays si elles ne s'engagent pas fermement à investir le temps et les ressources nécessaires à l'amélioration des conditions de vie de ces populations. Or, pour s'attaquer efficacement aux raisons fondamentales qui poussent les gens à quitter leur pays, effort du reste tout à fait louable et nécessaire, il faudra beaucoup de temps et une volonté politique inébranlable.

Dans l'intervalle, les sociétés industrialisées ne doivent pas succomber à la tentation de baisser les bras devant les problèmes liés à l'immigration et de s'en remettre à l'application de mesures de contrôle de plus en plus restrictives, voire antidémocratiques. Comme nous pouvons déjà le constater, les initiatives unilatérales et les comportements protectionnistes découlent d'une mauvaise compréhension des mouvements migratoires et privent les sociétés d'accueil d'un élément essentiel à leur enrichissement et à leur prospérité économique. Les politiques échafaudées sur la base de cadres aussi simplistes ne sauraient donner de bons résultats à long terme.

Les faits ne sont absolument pas contestés. Les migrations créent des interdépendances extrêmement complexes entre les pays d'origine, de transit et d'accueil – et entre les immigrants, leurs familles et leurs employeurs. Si nous voulons limiter les problèmes liés aux migrations de manière à profiter encore plus des avantages qu'elles apportent, il faudra une collaboration entre tous les intervenants – de même que des politiques et une réglementation sensées, et une application soutenue.

Pendant une période trop longue aux yeux de certains, les êtres humains continueront de chercher à s'établir ailleurs, et ce, pour des raisons qui remontent aux origines de la civilisation : leur survie économique et physique (sécurité), l'amélioration de leurs conditions de vie et de celle des membres de leur famille, la protection contre les menaces concrètes ou moins concrètes, les *nouvelles perspectives* (quelles qu'elles soient), ou simplement la frustration ou l'esprit d'aventure. Pour nombre de ces personnes, les migrations continueront d'ouvrir des portes sur une vie nouvelle.

Il faut donc assurer une meilleure gestion du système de migrations. Pour ce faire, il faut une plus grande collaboration entre tous les intervenants – entre les organismes gouvernementaux à l'intérieur d'un même pays, entre les organismes de différents pays, et entre les secteurs public et privé au sein d'un même d'un pays et d'un pays à l'autre.

Il est grand temps de procéder à une réforme. Il est cependant impossible de déterminer, pour l'heure, si cette réforme sera l'aboutissement d'une démarche judicieuse visant à répondre à tous les intérêts d'un pays, de même qu'à établir un équilibre entre ces intérêts et ceux des sociétés d'accueil sur lesquelles les travailleurs immigrants fondent bien des espoirs – que ce fait soit reconnu ou non – ou si elle ne sera rien de plus qu'une réaction irréfléchie aux mesures de contrôle.

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IMMIGRATION FUTURES*

ABSTRACT

This article provides a wide-ranging overview of what migration may look like in the future. The author examines the impact of skilled migration, irregular migration, the sourcing of unskilled labour and new forms of migration. He notes that one of the greatest “unknowns” is the ways in which nation-states will respond to the changes that we are likely to see in migration.

Concern about migration has emerged despite the fact that the number of international migrants in the world was estimated at 191 million in 2005, or only some 3% of the world’s population (United Nations 2006). Even if problems with this figure exist, the number of people who have moved across an international boundary represents but a tiny minority of the world’s population. However, migrants come from a relatively small number of source countries and, even more importantly, go to a yet smaller number of destination countries, mainly those in the developed countries of the “North” but also to some more developed countries in the so-called “South” (United Nations 2006).

Nevertheless, the destinations include the most powerful economies and the most open societies, where debate on immigration has revealed that certain groups are fearful that their jobs and way of life might be threatened by the admission of peoples of very different appearance and persuasion. Thus, future immigration policy takes on a growing importance.

Any discussion on immigration futures has to take into account the way in which the world economy is likely to move. A recession would almost certainly lead to protectionist pressures, rising nationalism and yet more anti-immigration rhetoric and restrictive policies. Yet, despite 9/11, a second war in Iraq and a sharp increase in the price of oil, between 2001 and 2005 the global economy showed its most robust growth in 30 years.

Continued globalization will see a sustained demand for the mobility of labour. Many of the reasons creating immigration pressures, such as the ageing of human populations and the emergence of core regions of advanced economic development, are already well established and are unlikely to change markedly in the immediate future. Thus, some speculation upon immigration futures that is based not entirely upon fancy can perhaps be made.

Towards convergence?

“Management of migration” has emerged as an area of common ground among countries. Officials from most countries, as well as representatives of NGOs and international organizations appear to agree that migration needs to be better “managed” for the benefit of countries of origin, countries of destination and, ultimately, migrants themselves. However, just what “managing” means in practice is not easy to define. To some it means further opening legal channels of migration – many would like to see issues of migrant rights and protection as an integral part of any effective management. To others, management implies greater control and monitoring of those who enter – essentially a security issue.

The transition of western and southern European countries from emigration to immigration was one of the remarkable shifts during the last half of the 20th century. Even today, several European countries do not see themselves as countries of immigration. A basic tension exists between freedom of movement within the European Union, particularly between Schengen countries, and the wish to control movement into the Union as a whole, to the extent that the idea of a “fortress Europe” emerged (Harris 2002). However, and despite the legal immigration of almost 1 million immigrants per year, the United States is increasingly giving the impression of a “fortress U.S.” Increased immigration and border control, particularly along the border with Mexico, contribute to this image. The developed economies of East and Southeast Asia are also faced with immigration pressures, but none of them implements a policy for permanent settlement that might lead to citizenship; instead, they rely almost exclusively on temporary immigrant-worker programs for their labour needs.

The most obvious conclusion might be that the developed world is either closing the borders or keeping them closed. Yet, such a conclusion would be wrong. It is unlikely for the United States to significantly restrict its existing legal channels of immigration, which currently allow some 1 million

RONALD SKELDON
Ronald Skeldon is a Professorial Fellow in Geography, University of Sussex.

people per year to enter, live and work in the country. The United Kingdom has introduced a new immigration policy and even a country like South Korea is considering a program for the long-term entry of certain categories of people. Two general trends appear to exist across the developed world: a wish to keep unauthorized immigrants out and the need to attract highly skilled migrants. Increasingly, the latter are coming in through non-immigrant, temporary entrant channels or under specially created categories such as the H-1B in the United States, as well as through channels specifically designed for this purpose.

Skilled migration

Given that the developed countries will wish to remain competitive in a global economy, the competition for the highly skilled is almost certain to intensify. One of the critical questions for the future is where the highly trained and skilled migrants will come from. At present, English is the international language and most of the centres of training are to be found in North America, Europe and Australasia. While no logical reason exists for English to retain indefinitely its position as the dominant language of science and technology, in the near term no rival seems likely to replace it. However, training in English need not be carried out within the confines of English-speaking countries. Already we see British and American schools establishing campuses in the developing world.

Thus, key centres of excellence are emerging in the periphery to produce increasing proportions of highly skilled workers for local and global markets. Urban centres in China and India will be among the leaders in this process, but smaller countries are also participating in this trend. So, although skilled migration will continue in any immigration future, I see significant shifts in the composition of these flows by origin and by place of training. A more multi-nodal international system of the circulation of the highly skilled will emerge, which may have profound implications for the relative power of states and even for the global languages of communication.

Irregular migration

Conversely, irregular or illegal migrants are to be universally excluded unless they have a valid claim for political asylum. The perceived abuse of the asylum system as a channel for illegal entry into Europe by so-called “economic migrants” was one of the major points of the anti-immigration debate in the countries in question. However, the large number of people simply walking into a country – often, it must be emphasized, in extremely hazardous circumstances – gives the impression that states have lost control of their borders. Increased surveillance and construction of border defences are the result.

Not that freedom to enter need be a bad thing. There are a number of economic arguments for doing away with border controls altogether and allowing the market to regulate the flows: immigration will continue until surplus labour at destinations depresses wages to the point where the returns from migration do not warrant the cost. During the transition to a new equilibrium, surplus labour keeps wages and inflation down in the destination area, to the overall benefit of the economy.

The jury still appears to be out on the real economic impact of immigration on native populations, but immigration is about much more than economics. Within liberal democratic political systems, where the rights of citizens are perceived to be under threat from outsiders, anti-immigration movements are likely to emerge. Irregular migrants themselves are in vulnerable positions and open to exploitation, and it is not in their interest to have a large disenfranchised community. Removing immigration procedures would essentially remove the critical difference

between regular and irregular migrants and undermine the issue of migrant protection. However, given that native-born peoples, as citizens of the state, make up the largest lobby group and have clear rights under present democratic systems, “thinking the unthinkable” (Harris 2002) and doing away with immigration controls does not seem to be a realistic part of any immigration future. This argument is quite independent of the organizational view that once bureaucracies are established, they take on an inertia of their own. So many vested interests are tied up in the “migration-control industry” that it will be exceedingly difficult to dismantle.

The demand for entering developed countries will continue to exceed the supply of legal authorizations to enter. Although opening legal channels of migration might

reduce irregular migration, it is not going to eliminate it. Trafficking, particularly of women and children, is seen as an unmitigated evil. However, the only way to eliminate trafficking is to remove either the demand or the supply. The demand can be changed by moving the activity offshore, perhaps even to the source of supply. Clearly, however, not all activities can be so moved.

The supply of workers shifts because of changing age structures and education levels in areas of origin. For example, with sustained fertility decline, children become a scarce commodity, which, in turn, leads to an increase in their value as reflected in rising education. For example, in northern Thailand, Thai entrants at the lower end of the sex industry in a provincial city became increasingly scarce with fertility decline, and workers were sourced from neighbouring countries with higher fertility and lower levels of education.

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Different contexts

The sourcing of unskilled labour

Areas of convergence in future immigration with respect to skilled migration and to irregular migration and trafficking have been identified. However, differences among the principal destination areas also exist. Critical here, though, is that skilled and unskilled migrations can be identified as separate mobility systems, though clearly linked. Skilled migrants generate a demand for particular services that are essentially staffed by the unskilled. To consider one without the other is a denial of the whole nature of the division of urban labour. The way in which the three major regions of immigration pressure (traditional settler societies, Europe and East Asia) are planning for lower-skilled labour seems different, even if an eventual convergence may emerge.

To some extent, these differences will be a function of the relative rates of ageing among the populations. The United States, with a higher fertility rate than any European country and most East Asian economies, partly as a result of its large immigrant intake, will age more slowly than the other two regions. Thus, pressures to import labour will not be so intense in the United States which, with its increased border control, appears to be seeking to provide for its needs through a regular migration program. European countries, on the other hand, seek to provide for the supply of less-skilled labour in the countries of new accession. In 2005, roughly 300,000 people entered the United Kingdom to work, mainly from Poland but also from the Czech Republic. After Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union in January 2007, up to 70,000 immigrants from these countries were expected to migrate to other European Union states. If the experience of the Polish migrants is typical, most will find work and many will either return home after a spell in the United Kingdom or circulate back and forth.

The critical aspect here is that Europe is essentially extending its borders to incorporate its future unskilled labour force. The United States, built, according to one interpretation, on the concept of a moving and inclusive frontier (Turner 1894), now seems to be following a strategy based on a fixed and exclusive frontier along the Mexican border. Europe on the other hand is opting for a moving frontier. Yet, this latter strategy is unlikely to provide a lasting solution for an indefinite immigration future. The age-sex structures of the countries of new accession show that they, too, will age and that cohorts of those most likely to migrate will decline. These economies will also be looking for immigrants ere long.

The East Asian economies, as stressed above, make no provision for permanent immigration, but rely on temporary migrant programs for both skilled and unskilled labour. These are advanced economies of immigration, but not of settlement, and they are looking closely at the experiences of both traditional settler societies and European countries for pointers on where they should move in terms of their own immigration future. Japan, the most rapidly ageing society in the world, has turned to its overseas population as a source of labour: people who look Japanese and who should “fit in” but who are also culturally quite different. The *nikkeijin*, who came from Brazil in 2004, numbered some 231,000, about one-quarter of all foreign workers in Japan at that time. Almost half of the foreign workers in Japan, however, came from other countries in East Asia, showing that Japan had developed a regional as well as an ethnic dimension to its immigration.

Perhaps paradoxically, the Asian economies may have found the model upon which the other two regions may increasingly come to rely: the well-managed temporary worker program (Martin 2004). Thus, a convergence may emerge from the three different contexts in the near future. Nevertheless, the disadvantages of temporary worker programs are well known. Most critically, workers are separated from their families and make up a constantly circulating group of migrants without a stake in the destination society. Such a situation is anathema to the traditional settler societies that have been built on the ethic of immigration as central to nation building. Also, although the Asian economies may provide a model for well-managed temporary programs, these are managed primarily with the interests of the destination-states and of companies in those states in mind. Whether the programs represent models of best practice for migrants them-

selves, managed as they are through subcontractors and sub-subcontractors (see Lee 2006, for example), is much more questionable.

Outsourcing and new migrations

Over the medium term, the direction of immigration will be profoundly influenced by what happens in the regions of origin. From this point of view, what has happened and what is likely to happen in East Asia is particularly instructive. New nodes of attraction have emerged in several parts of the region. While not all the economies might have experienced a clear-cut “migration transition” (Abella 1994), the model of a shift from net emigration towards net immigration very generally describes the complex process. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan,

Any attempt to envisage what future immigration will look like is fraught with danger. However, future migration will not simply be more of the same. New destinations will emerge and competition for skills will intensify. Perhaps the greatest unknown refers to the future global architecture and, particularly, to the structure of the state.

Malaysia and Thailand, as well as the cities of Singapore and Hong Kong, have emerged as significant destinations for international migration. Will these trends intensify and will other nodes emerge, providing alternative destinations to those who might have migrated to more traditional destinations in North America or Australasia, or the more recent destinations in Europe?

Perhaps the most intriguing potential destinations are the demographic giants, China and India. It may sound far-fetched to suggest that these economies will have to resort to importing labour, even in the more distant future; yet, in 2004, 2 million job vacancies were reported in the south-east coastal region of China (*Economist*, October 9-15, 2004) and in 2005 labour shortages spread north up to the Yangtze River and the northern coastal region (Wang, Fang and Weshu 2005). Although these shortages reflect bottlenecks in China's internal labour market for certain types of labour, more recent evidence suggests that the shortages in question may be more structural than cyclical. China's accession to the World Trade Organization and programs to diffuse development into the interior have created opportunities closer to the areas of origin of internal migrants. The result has been severe labour shortages in coastal regions and increases of around 25% in the basic wage (*International Herald Tribune*, March 3, 2006). China is not yet seeking to import workers from overseas, but already the era of cheap labour in China is ending.

India, like China, is characterized by huge internal differences in levels of development. Both countries, among others in Asia, are also benefiting from the movement offshore of industries and services from developed countries, where labour costs are high, in a process of "outsourcing." This began initially with labour-intensive industrialization and moved on to labour-intensive services such as telephone call centres, but also to more skill-intensive industries such as computer software (Khadria 2003). The emergence of Bangalore in southern India may be the classic example of this process, but several nodes in Asia and elsewhere can perhaps be identified for future development, and particularly in the area of health care. The ageing populations of the developed world, with their patterns of recurrent and degenerative diseases, are experiencing strains to their medical services. These problems are exacerbated by personnel shortages in the health sector, rising costs of medical care and increasing waiting times for non-emergency surgeries. One way for non-emergency care to be provided is to allow the patients to travel to a place where treatment can be delivered more quickly and at a lower cost than at home.

Not that there is anything particularly new about travel for health care, but these days a global market appears to be emerging, with India, South Africa, Cuba, Costa Rica, Malaysia and Thailand all promoting medical care for patients from overseas. The principal market for India is likely to be its expatriate community, who can combine non-emergency medical care with trips back home. However, regional markets are emerging, with people from the Middle East going to South and Southeast Asia for treatment, and hospitals in Bangkok treating patients from Hong Kong, Bangladesh and Australia.

Much of the future potential for the development of this kind of outsourcing depends on the public confidence

in developed countries with regards to the kinds of treatment being offered. Longer-term aftercare, for example, presumably depends on the continued availability of relatively cheap international air travel. The extent to which programs to outsource medical care can encourage migrant doctors to return or even to retain local talent remains unproven. Nevertheless, cases to date suggest that regional markets are emerging for health care, as middle-class or middle-income groups emerge in developing economies.

Education, too, is likely to diffuse from core to periphery. The role of skilled migrants in the investment of new industrial or service industries in their home countries, or simply returning to participate in those activities, is as yet poorly understood. Nevertheless, many do return and they may be the pioneers in laying the tracks for the development of significant immigration futures. For example, it is reported that there may be as many as 500,000 migrants from Taiwan working on a long- or short-term basis in Shanghai (Lee 2006). This is suggestive of a future migration towards a global city such as we have seen in the West. Initially, this migration will come from internal sources, but later on, international movements may become just as important, depending on the range of industries and services that evolves.

Clearly, not all countries will be able to follow such a route; developments will depend on a number of conditions and will only be possible:

- where prior demand exists from an expatriate population;
- where regional and, ideally, global networks of air transportation are available;
- where, in the case of medical outsourcing, there is a local supply of high-quality health professionals and, in the case of educational outsourcing, teachers can readily be recruited on acceptable conditions;
- where the government acknowledges the significance of the private sector in promoting health and educational activities.

The combination of such factors is likely to be found only in the larger cities of middle-income developing countries: throughout Southeast Asia, in coastal China, parts of India, Mexico, coastal Brazil and Argentina, South Africa, North African countries, and Nigeria and possibly Ghana in West Africa. Geography matters and not all countries will be able to deal with the flows of the skilled in the same way. Equally clearly, not all countries generate skills in similar numbers, not all have the same demand for skills and the impact of the movement of skills both in and out is variable. The location and the size of the labour market are critical in any assessment of the impact of the exodus of the highly skilled, and policy responses need to be adjusted accordingly.

Conclusion

Any attempt to envisage what future immigration will look like is fraught with danger. However, future migration will not simply be more of the same. New destinations will emerge and competition for skills will intensify. Perhaps the greatest unknown refers to the

future global architecture and, particularly, to the structure of the state. Over the centuries, the way in which territory has been governed has changed and it would seem unlikely that this process of change has ceased. That is, the nation-state, still the key building block of our present world, may not be the primary basis for the “management” of migration in years ahead. Whether some entity such as the “market state” (Bobbitt 2002) supersedes the nation-state need not detain us here. However, it does appear certain that some functions of the nation – such as access to employment, health, education and perhaps even some of the services of protection, including prisons – may be hived off to the private sector. This process will certainly be facilitated by the increasing mobility of populations, on a shorter- or longer-term basis, to access the services. Some of the nodes for these services will be overseas but concentrated in a few key areas. We are likely to see the emergence of new regional patterns of migration centred around these economies.

Although migrants are required in the rural sector, and particularly in agricultural activities in the more developed economies, the majority of future migrants will move to the present and future global cities. Where decentralization of power has occurred, metropolitan governments may take on a greater role in the management of migration, once the preserve of national governments. Paradoxically, supra-national organizations, too, are likely to become more important. Initially, their role may be to set common standards for recruitment but, in time, regional entities such as the present European Union are likely to play a more proactive role in the management of population movement. Thus, the actual migration management process is likely to become ever more complex, with a whole series of players involved at different political levels. It may be too early to say which entities are likely to emerge as the key players, but the global management role of metropolitan governments within a context of market states may see them emerge as among the most powerful drivers in the management of future immigration.

Speculative though these trends might seem, they appear solid when compared with my last point: future migrations that result from environmental change. Evidence for global warming seems increasingly plausible. As yet unknown proportions of the polar ice caps will melt, leading to a rise in mean sea levels. Projecting the likely areas and populations that will be affected by such a rise is highly problematic. However, assuming a (conservative?) rise of 1 metre this century, and taking present populations into account, it has been estimated that some 6 million people in Egypt, 13 million in Bangladesh and 72 million in China will be directly displaced (Gommes et al. 1998). Tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land will also be inundated.

Global warming will not simply result in rising sea levels but will bring changes to regional and local climates, with some areas likely to become hotter and drier and others colder and wetter, each with implications for population movement. How many people will be affected and where they may move is simply unknown, but they will be part of any future migrations.

Looking into an immigration future, certain trends appear clearer than others. The competition for skills will

increase globally. The outsourcing of some basic services will stimulate immigration to a relatively small number of centres as regional migration systems intensify. Management will also entail greater control as governments seek to reduce, if not eliminate, irregular migration and particularly that which is the result of trafficking. As local populations perceive themselves to be under greater threat from apparently “uncontrolled” immigration, more authoritarian governments may emerge. Even if this should be the case, those governments will still have to manage immigration to bring in the necessary skills.

Political pressures to keep the number of migrants to a minimum are likely to increase pressures for outsourcing of some services as well as industries. Essentially, it is difficult to envisage a highly developed economy without high levels of labour-market flexibility and of population mobility. More spatially static societies are likely to be economically less competitive.

Although the consequences of migration, such as remittances channelled back to poorer origins, will continue to be important for development, the fundamental driver of future immigration will be the path taken by the global economy. And that is the great unknown. Continued steady growth will surely guarantee a steady increase in the numbers and types of future migrants. Economic collapse, or even a dip in the economic cycle, is likely to lead to fewer migrants and strategies to close the borders to outsiders. A shift towards a growing pessimism in recent development thinking seems to be emerging, perhaps less strident and more cautious than that of the neo-Malthusians of the 1960s, but certainly less self-assured than the writings of just a few years ago (see, for example, Diamond 2005, Saul 2005, Osborne 2006). Such thinking occurs against the background of possibly major environmental change as the world reaches a “tipping point” on a path of global warming. If collapse in the face of geographical change is indeed the likely scenario, immigration futures will be variable and unpredictable, but perhaps that itself is a speculation too far.

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IMMIGRANTS: YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS THEM

ABSTRACT

Immigration controls are economically stupid, politically unsustainable and morally wrong. Opening our borders would bring huge benefits to rich and poor countries, as well as to migrants themselves. Fears about the threat to jobs, the welfare state and being “swamped” are misplaced. Campaigning for open borders is a noble cause for our time.

When people talk about immigration nowadays, their starting point is usually how high it is. But in a globalizing world, the striking thing is actually how low it is. International trade now accounts for over 25% of world output, and trillions of dollars zip around the world each day, yet international migrants represent a mere 3% of the world population. Even in Canada, where one in five people are foreign-born, net migration adds a mere 0.6% per year to the population.

This is partly because people are less footloose than products and money. But mostly, it is because goods, services and capital are generally allowed to circulate freely, while workers are not. After all, when governments allow people to circulate freely, they become more mobile than ever before. International tourist trips have increased 30-fold in recent decades. And while many Europeans and North Americans feel threatened because a few million people from poor countries arrive each year, in China alone 10 million people move from the countryside to the cities. This mass migration within China has hardly brought the country to its knees. And North America did not do too badly when millions of poor European migrants arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

So perhaps migration isn't such a terrible thing after all? Within domestic economies, governments are forever urging people to move to where the jobs are. But if it is desirable for people to move from Liverpool to London if their labour is in demand there, surely the same applies to people moving from Manila to Munich?

Economic opportunities no longer stop at national borders; why should people? Governments think it is fine for international bankers to cluster in London, dotcomers in Silicon Valley and actors in Hollywood, and for multinational companies to scatter their executives around the world. Yet the shutters go up for Mexican construction workers, Filipino care-workers and Congolese cleaners, even though they are simply service providers plying their trade abroad, just as American bankers do. And just as it is often mutually beneficial to import computers from China and IT services from India, it often makes sense to import low-skilled services, such as cleaning, that have to be delivered on the spot.

No government, except perhaps North Korea's, would dream of banning cross-border trade in goods and services, yet it is seen as perfectly reasonable for governments to outlaw the movement across borders of most people who produce goods and services. This is perverse. Immigrants are not an invading army, they are mostly people seeking a better life. Many are drawn to rich countries by the huge demand for workers to fill the low-end jobs upon which our ageing and wealthy societies rely, but that our increasingly well-educated and comfortable citizens are unwilling to take. But since it is almost impossible for most people from developing countries to come and work legally, it is no wonder that illegal immigration is on the rise.

Our immigration controls are economically stupid, politically unsustainable and morally wrong. Freedom of movement is one of the most basic human rights, as anyone denied it can confirm. Article 13 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” But what is the right to leave a country if one cannot enter another?

We, in rich countries, take it for granted that we are free to move around the world more or less as we please. We go on holiday in Thailand and safari in Africa; many of us study and work abroad for a while; some of us end up settling elsewhere. Why, then, do we seek to deny this right to others?

This is not a point of abstract principle. Each year thousands drown trying to reach Europe. More people have died trying to cross from Mexico to the United States in the past decade than were killed on 9/11. By denying desperate people the opportunity to cross borders legally, we are driving them to risk death. Of course, voters and government officials would rather migrants not die.

PHILIPPE LEGRAIN

Philippe Legrain is the author of *Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them* (Little Brown and Princeton, 2007). He is a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics' European Institute, a journalism fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the U.S., and a contributing editor to *Prospect*.

But implicitly, they consider it a price worth paying for protecting our borders. That sounds shocking – and it is. But how else can we explain the general indifference towards the deaths that our immigration controls cause? Why is the official response always that we must remain tough in enforcing our border controls, rather than questioning whether the system makes sense?

Freeing up migration is not just morally right, it is economically beneficial. When workers from poor countries move to rich ones, they too can make use of advanced economies' superior capital, technology and institutions, making them much more productive and the world much better off. It is reckoned that removing immigration controls could more than double the size of the world economy, and even a small relaxation of immigration controls would yield disproportionately big gains.

Just look at the benefits of existing immigration. Migrants from poor countries can earn wages many times higher in rich ones, and the money they send home – some \$300 billion a year officially, perhaps the same again informally – dwarfs the \$100 billion that Western governments give in aid.

These remittances are not wasted on weapons or siphoned off into Swiss bank accounts; they go straight into the pockets of local people. They pay for food, clean water and medicines. They enable children to stay in school, they fund small businesses, and they benefit the local economy more broadly. Where remittances account for a large share of the economy, they slash the poverty rate by one-third. Even in countries that receive relatively little, they can cut the poverty rate by nearly one-fifth. And by keeping children in school, paying for them to see a doctor and funding new businesses, remittances can also boost economic growth. What's more, when migrants return home, they bring with them new skills, new ideas and the money to start new businesses. Africa's first Internet cafés were started by migrants returning from Europe.

Opening up our borders would do more to help the poor than any other policy change by Western governments: lowering our trade barriers, cancelling Third World debt and increasing overseas aid. If you believe the world is unfair and we should do more to help the poor, you should be campaigning to let them work here.

Rich countries would benefit too. Economic theory suggests that the gains from trade are greatest when countries are different. Rich countries generally have ageing, well-educated populations: as the baby-boomers retire, the workforce is set to shrink, putting a strain on businesses and public finances. In contrast, the developing world has a much younger and generally less well-educated population. In effect, their workforces complement each other.

Indeed, rich countries arguably need low-skilled migrants more than they do skilled ones. So the premise on which most rich countries' immigration policies are based – skilled migrants are good, or at least acceptable; unskilled ones are less desirable, or plain harmful – is wrong.

The supply of low-skilled workers in rich countries is shrinking fast, as less-skilled older workers retire and younger ones with higher aspirations replace them. Whereas 73% of Canadians aged 55 to 64 have finished secondary school, 91% of those aged 25 to 34 have, and high-school graduates understandably aspire to better things, while even those with no qualifications do not want to do certain dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs. Yet low-skilled jobs still account for over one-quarter of the labour force in rich countries, because as advanced economies create high-skilled jobs, they inevitably create low-skilled ones too.

Many low-skilled services cannot readily be mechanized or imported: the elderly cannot be cared for by a robot or from abroad; cabdrivers have to operate locally; hotels, hospitals and streets have to be cleaned on the spot. And as people get richer, they increasingly pay others to do arduous tasks that they once did themselves, such as home improvements, freeing up time for more productive work or more enjoyable leisure.

Over the next 40 years, the number of old people in rich countries will soar. Many will need looking after, but young Canadians do not want to work in retirement homes. To persuade them otherwise would require a huge wage hike – and that implies pensioners making do with less care, budget cuts elsewhere, or tax rises. But immigrants face a different set of alternatives: since wages in Manitoba are a multiple of those in Manila, Filipinos are happy doing such work.

This is not exploitation: it makes everyone – migrants, taxpayers, Canadians young and old – better off. It does not undercut wages, since Canadians do not want these jobs in any case. And it does not undermine social standards: if there is abuse, legal migrants have recourse to unions and the law.

Nor does it entail creating a permanent underclass. If migrants are temporary, as most aspire to be, their point of reference is their home country – and thanks to their work in a rich country, they return home relatively well off. If they end up settling, their wages tend to rise over time as they gain skills, contacts and experience, while their locally born children ought to have the same opportunities as other native kids. If it turns out that some children are left behind, whoever their parents may be, it is a reason to redouble efforts to ensure equality of opportunity, not to keep out immigrants.

We, in rich countries,
take it for granted
that we are free
to move around
the world more or
less as we please.
We go on holiday in
Thailand and safari
in Africa; many of
us study and work
abroad for a while;
some of us end up
settling elsewhere.
Why, then, do we
seek to deny this
right to others?

Governments are not only mistaken in thinking advanced economies need skilled migrants rather than unskilled ones. They are also wrong to pretend that they can pick and choose the “right” migrants a country needs. Governments cannot possibly second-guess or project the employment requirements of the vast number of businesses in the economy, let alone how people are going to contribute to society more broadly. Government officials are not any good at picking winners. Toronto is full of cabdrivers with PhDs – while poor people who would love to drive taxis there are turned away. Surely progressive governments that believe in opportunity for all should realize that you cannot – and should not – determine people’s life chances based on their background. After all, who would have guessed that a Kenyan goat-herder named Barack Obama would have a son who could be the next American president?

Bureaucratic skills-based immigration schemes also ignore the huge contribution that immigrants’ collective diversity and dynamism can make to the economy and society. Diversity is not only good in itself. It also acts as a magnet for talent. Go-getting people are drawn to cities like London, New York and Toronto because they are exciting, cosmopolitan – and thus thriving – places. However, the biggest economic benefit of diversity is that it stimulates innovation.

The exceptional individuals who come up with brilliant new ideas often happen to be immigrants. Instead of following the conventional wisdom, they tend to see things differently, and as outsiders they are more determined to succeed. Twenty-one of Britain’s Nobel-prize winners arrived in the country as refugees.

Most innovation comes from groups of talented people sparking off each other, and foreigners with different ideas, perspectives and experiences add something extra to the mix. If there are ten people sitting around a table trying to come up with a solution to a problem and they all think alike, then those ten heads are no better than one. But if they all think differently, then by bouncing ideas off each other they can solve problems better and faster, as a growing volume of research shows. And an ever-increasing share of our prosperity comes from solving problems – developing new medicines, computer games and environmentally friendly technologies, designing innovative products and policies, providing original management advice.

Just look at Silicon Valley. Google, Yahoo! and eBay were all co-founded by immigrants who arrived not as graduates selected by some clever points system, but as children. Nearly half of America’s venture-capital-funded start-ups have immigrant co-founders. So since diversity boosts innovation, and innovation is the source of most economic growth, critics who claim that immigration has few or no economic benefits are profoundly mistaken.

John Kenneth Galbraith said “Migration is the oldest

action against poverty. It selects those who most want help. It is good for the country to which they go; it helps break the equilibrium of poverty in the country from which they come. What is the perversity in the human soul that causes people to resist so obvious a good?”

One reason is that people fear for their jobs. Yet just as women entering the labour force have not deprived men of work, immigrants create jobs as well as take them. Their wages fuel demand for people to produce the goods and services they consume, and their work stimulates demand for complementary labour. An influx of foreign builders creates new jobs for people selling building supplies, as well as for interior designers. Far from competing with native workers, immigrants often complement their efforts. A foreign child-minder may allow a local nurse to return to work, where her productivity is enhanced by hard-working foreign nurses and cleaners.

Rich countries arguably need low-skilled migrants more than they do skilled ones. So the premise on which most rich countries’ immigration policies are based – skilled migrants are good, or at least acceptable; unskilled ones are less desirable, or plain harmful – is wrong.

Of course, some individuals may lose out from immigration, as from any change, and the government must be there to help them. Yet studies find no evidence that immigration raises unemployment overall. Spain has received more immigrants in recent years than anywhere else in Europe, and its employment rate has soared. And because newcomers are more willing to move to where the jobs are, and to shift jobs as conditions change, they make the economy more adaptable, allowing it to grow faster for longer without sparking inflation. Hard-working migrant workers have given Britain’s economy a new lease of life, boosting everyone’s living standards. France and Germany would do well to allow in the much-maligned Polish plumber too.

Another worry is that immigrants want to come scrounge off rich countries’ generous welfare states. And it is true that if people are better off on welfare in a rich country than working at home, this could conceivably motivate them to migrate, and if enough did, welfare provision could become economically and politically unsustainable. Yet immigrants would still be even better off working than on welfare, so they would have to be enterprising enough to uproot themselves, but then suddenly sapped of enterprise once they arrive. This is highly improbable – and there is no evidence that rich countries actually do act as a “welfare magnet.”

In countries where we observe high unemployment among immigrants, the reason is not that foreigners are lazy and do not want to work. The blame generally lies with labour-market restrictions that privilege insiders at the expense of outsiders. Throwing immigrants out wouldn’t reduce unemployment, it would raise unemployment among native-born people. In any case, if rich countries allowed in more migrants, they could at the same time restrict the availability of welfare initially.

Underlying fears about jobs and welfare are more basic ones: fear of change and fear of foreigners. Psychological studies confirm that opposition to immigration tends to stem from an emotional dislike of foreigners. Intelligent critics then construct an elaborate set of seemingly rational arguments to justify their prejudice. When immigrants are out of work, they are scrounging off the state; when they are working, they are stealing our jobs. When they are poor, they are driving standards down; when they are rich, they are driving prices up.

One British Member of Parliament with whom I was debating bemoaned that Poles were earning misery wages and living in squalid conditions 12 to a room, and then blamed them for rising house prices. Harvard academic Samuel Huntington, who shot to fame by warning about a global “clash of civilizations” in which he lumped Mexicans and Americans together in a single civilization, now claims that Latinos in the United States threaten a domestic clash of civilizations. In his book *Who Are We?*, he starts by worrying that Latinos tend to cluster in only a handful of cities and states, and later that they are starting to spread out. Immigrants can’t win: they’re damned if they do and damned if they don’t. So while it is important to address people’s fears and consider people’s arguments, it is also important to see them for what they often are: a rationalization of xenophobia.

The system we have now, where the rich and the educated circulate increasingly freely but the poor are expected to stay put, amounts to a form of global apartheid. It is unworkable, unfair and it must go.

Yet many people fear that if we opened our borders, everyone in poor countries would move and our societies would collapse. It is a deep-rooted fear, as if immigrants were the barbarians at the gates. But it is misplaced. When Britain opened its borders to the new European Union member states in 2004, all 75 million people in those much poorer countries could conceivably have moved, but in fact

only a fraction have, and most have already left again. Many are, in effect, international commuters, splitting their time between Britain and Poland. Of course, some will end up settling, but most will not. Most people don’t want to leave home at all, let alone forever: they want to go work abroad for a while to learn English and earn enough to buy a house or set up a business back home.

Studies show that most migrants have similar aspirations. If they could come and go freely, most would move only temporarily. But perversely, our border controls end up making many stay for good. A Brazilian who overstays his visa knows that if he returns home, he will find it extremely difficult to re-enter Canada legally.

We need to rethink our outdated notions of migration and adapt our national institutions for a 21st century where people are increasingly on the move rather than tied to one place. We need to start treating immigration not as threat, but as an opportunity. Ultimately, the prize is huge: open, dynamic and progressive societies instead of closed, stagnant and reactionary ones.

I believe our borders should be open. At the very least, we should open up a legal route for people from developing countries to come work in rich ones. Over time, hopefully, we can move to a position where everyone can move freely.

Persuading sceptics will not be easy. This is why I think the argument for setting people free has to be made at several levels. First, a principled case: it increases freedom and reduces injustice; second, a humanitarian case: it helps people in developing countries; third, an economic case: it makes you richer; and finally, a pragmatic case: it is inevitable, so it is in everyone’s interests to make the best of it.

Allowing people to move freely may seem unrealistic, but so too, once, did abolishing slavery or giving women the right to vote. Campaigning for open borders is a noble cause for our time.

The Bridge

The *Bridge* is an information bulletin published and broadcast electronically every six weeks by the Metropolis Secretariat. Using short summaries and links to longer documents, it highlights Metropolis’ recent activities and provides information on events and publications related to immigration, integration and diversity. *The Bridge* is aimed at policy-makers looking to develop evidence-based policy, at academics interested in strengthening the link between research and policy, and at students and community partners looking for timely and accessible information.

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MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: SOME STYLIZED FACTS*

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the links between international migration and globalization, providing an analysis of historical and current trends in migration. It contains data on past and present migration flows, with a focus on the countries of the OECD and on the gender dimension of the so-called “brain drain.”

At a time when the subject of “globalization” is on everyone’s lips, it is timely to reflect on the contribution of international migration to the ongoing wave of globalization. Just how significant an engine of globalization is international migration? What have been some of the main trends in international migration over the past half-century and how do they compare with the first great wave of international migration from the 1820s to the beginning of World War I?

This article seeks to provide answers to these questions drawing on data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and other sources. The first part of the article presents data on the current scale of migration and compares it with other major drivers of globalization, while the second part delves into the great wave of migration of the 19th and early 20th century, when it played a key role in the first globalization episode. The third part provides an update on the second, on-going globalization surge. Data on the composition of current migration flows to OECD countries are presented in the last part of the article, with a special focus on a neglected element – the gender dimension of the so-called “brain drain.”

The current scale of international migration

One obvious starting point for assessing the significance of migration as a driver of the current wave of globalization is to ask how many of the current world population of 6.7 billion people are international migrants, defined as persons living outside their country of birth¹. The latest United Nations estimates put this at close to 185 million in 2005, or 2.9% of the global population. This can be compared to an equivalent share of 2.2% in 1970. At first sight, these seem rather “small” numbers, suggesting that international migration is only a bit player in the globalization saga compared to the much larger roles played by growing world trade in goods and services and international capital flows. For example, the unweighted average of the trade-to-GDP ratios for all OECD countries in 2005 was 45%, while the equivalent ratios for inward and outward foreign direct investment (FDI) stocks to GDP were around 20% or more in 2004.² But when comparing the immigrant population *stock* data with data on trade and GDP (which measure imports, exports, annual output and FDI *flows*), there is the issue of comparing apples and oranges. If we were to put the immigrant data on a similar footing, say by relating inflows of working-age immigrants to new additions to the working-age population, the resulting measure would average 30% to 40% for the OECD area, very close to the trade-to-GDP ratio.

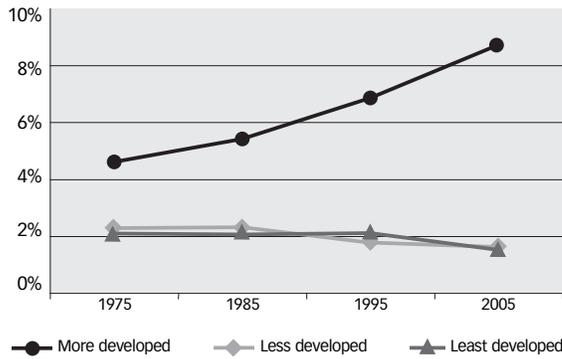
It is also important to disaggregate the global migration stock in order to better understand the international migration process. One obvious disaggregation is by level of economic development. Figure 1 shows the stocks of migrants as a percentage of the host country’s population for: a) the most developed countries (essentially the OECD countries); b) the less developed countries; and c) the least developed countries. It reveals that *all* of the growth over the past three decades in the migration propensity among the world’s population has been concentrated on the OECD countries: the share of immigrants in the OECD population almost doubled from just over 4.5% in 1975 to 8.3% in 2005. At the same time, the share of immigrants in the populations of both the less developed and least developed countries is much lower, and even dropped slightly during the past decade to under 2%. In 2005, approximately 60% of the world’s stock of migrants lived in Europe and North America, followed by 26% in Asia, leaving only 15% in the other major regions of Africa, Oceania and Latin America. It is also noteworthy that 45% of immigrants living in OECD countries in 2008 came from other OECD countries (see OECD 2008).

JOHN P. MARTIN

John Martin is the Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The views expressed are those of the author and cannot be held to represent those of the OECD or of the governments of its member countries.

Figure 1
Immigrants' share of host population by level of development, 1975-2005



Source: Lowell (2007).

In sum, while migrants account for only a tiny fraction of the global population, when the contribution of immigrants to globalization is measured in an equivalent way to that of trade in goods or FDI flows, it appears to be an important driver. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the attractiveness of the OECD countries as a destination for immigrants over the past half-century, including from other OECD countries.

Mass migration during the first wave of globalization

It is very helpful to remind ourselves that there is nothing unique about the current increase in international migration. The 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the first great wave of globalization, partly fostered by mass migration in a world of unrestricted migratory movements and rapidly declining costs of transportation between Europe and the New World.

Table 1, drawn from the seminal book by Hatton and Williamson (2005), illustrates this nicely. It shows a

dominant trend of emigration from Europe to the New World in the period from 1820 to just before World War I. Immigration into the main European countries was a minor phenomenon during that period.

However, the pattern of migratory movements and the preferred destinations of migrants shifted significantly during the half-century after World War II. While some of the main settlement countries (Canada, United States, Australia) continued to attract large inflows of immigrants, Europe became a major destination for migrants, many of whom from Africa, Latin America and Asia. As a result, while the largest immigrant-to-population stocks in the New World countries were recorded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the highest stocks in Europe are those currently recorded. That being the case, it is useful to examine the trends in OECD migration over the past half-century or so in more detail.

A half-century of international migration to the OECD countries

Given the growing significance of international migration for the OECD countries, it is important to disaggregate the trend over the past half-century and see how it has been affected by specific factors such as the end of the colonial era, the oil shocks of the 1970s, the collapse of the Iron Curtain, and so on. Figure 2 does this using an OECD data set on *net* international migration rates from the mid-1950s onwards.

In Figure 2, OECD countries have been divided into two groups, “traditional immigration countries” on the one hand, and countries that were largely “emigration countries” or that saw limited movements of any kind in the first half of the period considered here. The latter include the countries of southern and central Europe, Ireland, Japan and the nordic countries (except for Sweden). Not included among these are Korea, Mexico and Turkey, all of which would qualify as former or current emigration countries but for which long time-series data on net migration do not exist.

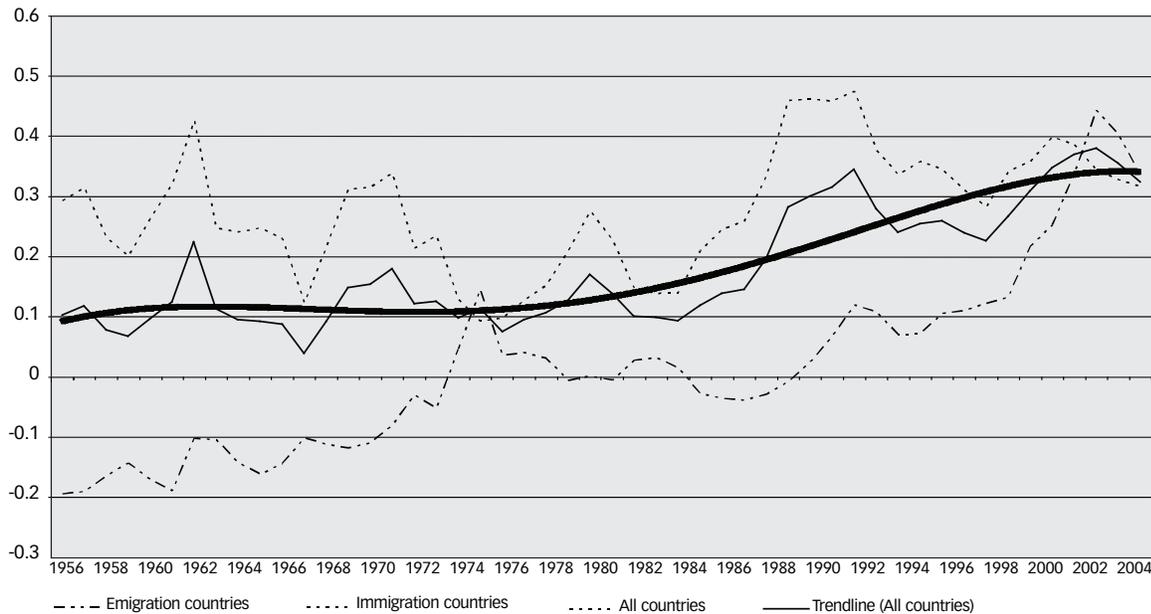
Table 1
Percentages of foreign-born in European and New World populations, 1870-1910 and 2000

	1870-1871	1890-1891	1910-1911	2000-2001
Europe				
Germany	0.5	0.9	1.9	8.9
France	2.0	3.0	3.0	10.0
United Kingdom	0.5	0.7	0.9	4.3
Denmark	3.0	3.3	3.1	5.8
Norway	1.6	2.4	2.3	6.3
Sweden	0.3	0.5	0.9	11.3
New World				
Australia	46.5	31.8	17.1	23.6
New Zealand	63.5	41.5	30.3	19.5
Canada	16.5	13.3	22.0	17.4
United States	14.4	14.7	14.7	11.1
Argentina	12.1	25.5	29.9	5.0
Brazil	3.9	2.5	7.3 ^a	

Source: Hatton and Williamson (2005), Table 2.2.

^a 1990

Figure 2
Net migration rates, traditional immigration and emigration OECD countries, 1956-2005^a



Source: OECD (2007a) and Labour Force Statistics.

^a This group includes the countries of Southern and Central Europe, Ireland, Japan and the Nordic countries except for Sweden. Not included are Korea, Mexico and Turkey because net migration data for these countries are sparse or non-existent. All other OECD countries are classified as immigration countries.

By definition, net migration within each country group is in principle zero, essentially because in-migration from any country in the group to any other country of the same group is cancelled out by the corresponding out-migration observed in the origin country. Thus, the net migration rates shown for each group represent the net effect of movements between the group and the rest of the world.

The trend net migration rate for OECD countries with respect to non-OECD countries was approximately 1 person per 1,000 population from 1956 until the early 1970s when the first oil shock arrived. This was the period of the so-called “guest-workers,” but the OECD net migration rate was relatively stable over this time, although with a number of peaks and troughs due to particular well-defined historical events or developments.

Since the first oil crisis, however, the net migration rate within the OECD has been increasing, with international migration contributing more and more to population growth, compared to natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) with each passing year. The increases in international migration during the 1990s, therefore, would appear to be part of an underlying trend that dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Over the period considered, net migration from outside the OECD to OECD countries averaged 790,000 persons per year from 1956 to 1976, 1.24 million per year from 1977 to 1990 and 2.73 million per year thereafter up to 2005.

The net migration movements shown in Figure 2 are also characterized by a number of peaks and troughs, which generally correspond to well-defined historical events or developments. The 1962 peak in the immigration countries series corresponds to the end of the Algerian War and the massive return of French citizens from Algeria; the 1969-1971

hump to the height of the “guest workers” era; the late 1970s and early 1980s increase to the migration of the boat-people; the late 1980s and early 1990s upswell to the appearance for the first time in United States statistics of large unauthorized movements from Mexico as well as the general increase in movements following the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Emigration countries show a more or less steady increase over the period in the net migration rate that was perturbed in the mid-1970s, mainly by the returns to Portugal from its former colonies in Africa. It is striking that the trend increase in net immigration to the emigration countries over the 1956-2003 period has accelerated since the turn of the century, to the point where the net migration rate of former emigration countries now equals that of traditional immigration countries.

Families and educated women on the move

Currently, *family migration* is the dominant motive among inflows of permanent immigrants to OECD countries, accounting on average for around 60% of inflows. Labour migration has been on the rise in recent years but still only represents about one in three permanent immigrants. Humanitarian migration, which has been declining in recent years, accounts for the rest.

Two other trends in migration have attracted much attention recently: the growing feminization of migration flows and the increased selectivity of migration towards the highly skilled.

Firstly, for the world as a whole, the share of women among immigrants has risen slowly from 47% in the early 1960s to almost 50% in 2005. Overall, the gender mix was not significantly unbalanced even in the 1960s, but it now almost exactly mirrors that of the native-born population.

Secondly, a more surprising result, given that women still face an unequal access to tertiary education in many less developed countries, that the brain drain is stronger for highly educated women. This latter finding gives a new twist to long-standing concerns about the brain drain given the key role played by women in human capital development. Estimates in a recent paper which I have co-authored with two OECD colleagues, Jean-Christophe Dumont and Gilles Spielvogel, show a negative impact of emigration of highly skilled women on three key education and health indicators in developing countries: infant mortality, under-five mortality and secondary school enrolment rates (for more details, see Dumont, Martin and Spielvogel 2007).

These results raise concerns about the potential impact of the female brain drain on the poorest countries. This is heightened by the fact that highly skilled immigrant women are increasingly targeted in labour migration, especially in the health, domestic and caring sectors. Development and aid policies need to offer women better opportunities to use their human capital in their home countries, if they are to contribute to the social and economic development of the latter.

Conclusion

OECD countries have seen a large increase in immigration from the rest of the world over the past two decades, a trend that seems unlikely to stop. While it may be imprudent to speculate about the future, it is very likely that population ageing in the OECD area will increase the pressure to allow in more immigrants in order to help alleviate growing labour shortages in the coming decades and to ease funding pressures on OECD social protection systems.

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Notes

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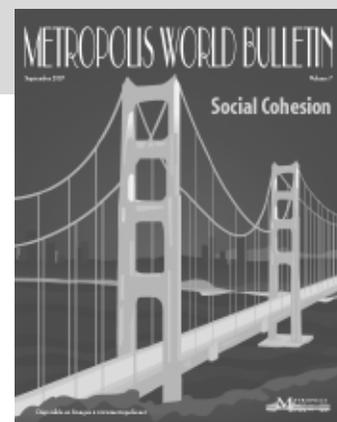
¹ The preferred definition of a migrant used here is based on the concept of foreign-born as opposed to foreign nationality. While the former concept is less than ideal, particularly for countries with large repatriate populations, it is much more suitable for the purposes of international comparisons of migration than the latter. See OECD (2005) for a thorough discussion of the pros and cons of these definitions.

² See OECD (2007b) for data and further details on the definitions and sources.

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The Metropolis World Bulletin is the annual publication of the International Metropolis Project. It includes feature articles on key issues in the field of migration and diversity and is launched in conjunction with each International Metropolis Conference. Past issues have examined Migration and Development, Managing Migration, Our Diverse Cities, Diasporas and Transnationalism and Social Cohesion.

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THE MEANINGS AND THE FUTURES OF SKILLED MIGRATION*

ABSTRACT

This article provides a brief overview of skilled migration, focusing on the ways in which it has been conceived, the factors affecting demand and supply, and the forces that may have an impact on future patterns.

Before we can have a sensible discussion of the future patterns of migration – and of skilled migration flows, in particular – we must be sure we are in agreement about what “skilled migration” actually means. It is only fair to note that there is a good deal of confusion here.

The phrase itself is remarkably elastic, with many different denotations and connotations that are not commonly specified in use. Moreover, there are at least two rationales provided for admission of “skilled migrants,” although these are often conflated or confused. Let us deal with each of these sources of confusion in turn.

The sprawling meanings of “skilled”

The term “skilled” is often used in a generic way related to educational attainment. Migrants who have accumulated some level of post-secondary education in any field are defined as skilled – in this view, a bachelor’s degree in ancient history has the same skills value as one in electrical engineering.

Others only apply the term to persons possessing specific skills, whether or not these require post-secondary education; for example, welders, physical therapists and engineers might fit into this usage. Within this definition, some further emphasize that the skills must be in demand in the labour market of the destination country, while others tend to minimize or ignore the demand side.

There is further diversity in use as to whether a person should be judged to be skilled based on the skills distribution of the source country or the destination country. A university graduate or a nurse in Chad may be highly skilled in that country, but of average skill in Switzerland.

Finally, in some countries, such as the United States and Germany, the term “skilled migrants” is sometimes used as synonymous with migrant professionals such as scientists, engineers, physicians and designers of computer hardware and software. Consider, for example, how the concept of skilled migrants has been translated into law and practice in traditional immigration countries such as Canada and the United States.

In Canada, immigrant admissions are made under a particular definition of “skilled worker.” Applicants for such visas must qualify by achieving 67 composite points under a points system based on six factors: years of education, work experience in occupation, proficiency in English or French, age, arranged employment and adaptability. It is particularly notable that under the current points system there is only a five-point difference between a person holding an advanced (master’s or doctoral) degree and 17 years of study versus one with only a two-year diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and 14 years of study. Moreover, while in theory some occupations may be designated as ineligible for skilled worker points so as “to make sure that Canada does not have too many people with the same skills,” in practice there are no such restricted occupations at the present time.¹

In the United States there is nothing analogous to Canada’s points system (and to a similar system in Australia). Most legal immigrants to the United States are admitted solely on the basis of family connections, whatever their skill levels may be and no matter how these are defined. Only a small minority of legal immigrants are admitted on employment rather than on family criteria; in this minority of cases, applications receive a crude labour market test in the form of requiring that an office in the Department of Labor approve a petition by an employer certifying that he or she has been unable to identify a qualified domestic job applicant for the position and that the wages being offered meet a rather ambiguous “prevailing wage” standard.

In addition to permanent visas, a temporary employment-based visa known as “H-1B” was initiated during the 1990s. This visa has attracted much controversy and is often described loosely as a “skilled migrant” visa. However, the enabling legislation defines it as a visa for persons with a

MICHAEL S. TEITELBAUM
Michael Teitelbaum is a Demographer and
Vice-President of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in New York.

“specialty occupation” (or, mysteriously, for a “fashion model of distinguished merit and ability”), which would require:

...the theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree or the equivalent in the specific specialty (e.g., sciences, medicine and health care, education, biotechnology, and business specialties, etc...). (U.S. Department of Labor)

There is a core numerical cap of 65,000 new H-1B visas to be issued per year, plus recent additions under trade agreements of 6,500 per year for Chile and Singapore and a further 10,500 per year for Australia. In addition, H-1B workers hired by American universities are excluded from these caps, so depending on the numbers in this last unlimited category, the total new admissions per year may be in the order of 100,000. Generally, the H-1B visa is valid for six years of residence.

Employers seeking H-1B visas must attest that the positions will pay “prevailing wages.” The latter is a term of art; employers may choose from five sources of evidence, including not only official data but also “a survey conducted by an independent authoritative source...[or] another legitimate source of information.” Moreover, employers are allowed to specify the occupational title of H-1B hires, and some allege that employers select occupational categories with lower prevailing wages than would normally be paid to other employees with similar qualifications. Enforcement of these requirements is in any case quite lax, requiring, for example, that employees first file complaints before any serious scrutiny is undertaken.

Differing rationales for admission of skilled migrants

If the underlying definitions of “skilled migrants” are ambiguous and elastic, so too are the rationales used to justify preferential admission of skilled migrants (however defined).

First, admissions of skilled migrants may be seen as part of a country’s labour force strategy. In effect, preferential admission of skilled migrants represents a strategy for selective importation of human capital developed elsewhere. Selective admission of skilled migrants is seen as a contribution to a receiving country’s level of skilled workers, who are thought to contribute differentially to the progress of its overall economy.

Second, selective admission of skilled migrants may be subsidiary to reasons other than labour force for a country deciding to admit immigrants. For example, some countries have long sought, often for strategic reasons, to increase the size, growth rate or density of their populations, sometimes at a national level, sometimes with a focus on sparsely populated regions (obvious examples include Australia and Canada). In such cases, decisions are often first made about the total numbers of immigrants to be admitted and then, preferences

are applied that favour admission within such totals of skilled migrants. In such cases, the goals of these preferences may be to increase the likelihood that individual new immigrants find decent employment and thereby have greater prospects of economic success and social integration.

Sources and destinations, current and future

Like most other streams of human migration, skilled migration is somewhat independently driven by issues of demand and supply in both source and destination countries, along with differentials in career prospects and remuneration.

Demand

In many industrialized countries, employer groups argue that there is need for additional skilled workers. We can distinguish among at least three types of such insufficiency of supply relative to demand: genuine, professed and mandated.

Genuine need for additional skilled workers may arise from short-term booms in certain economic sectors (consider recent boom and bust cycles in computing, information technology, telecommunications, energy) or from long-term insufficiencies in a country’s educational system relative to its economic needs. In cases of genuine insufficiency of supply, there would be clear evidence in the normal measures of strong demand in the labour market: unemployment rates would be very low; wage offers would be buoyant; delays in hiring to fill slots would be lengthy and/or increasing, and so on.

Demand for additional skilled workers may also be “professed” rather than genuine. Here one might include cases in which employers do not offer wages and benefits that are competitive by domestic standards, are unable to attract applicants from

the domestic workforce to such positions, and then assert they are unable to hire the skilled workers they want.

Finally, demand can also be created or “mandated” by political decisions. The 2000 “Lisbon Agenda” of the European Union (EU) provides an enlightening example of such demand. EU member states agreed to a ten-year reform program that would make the EU the world’s most competitive and dynamic economy by 2010. Among other measures, they agreed to increase research and development (R&D) expenditures in their economies to 3% of gross domestic product by 2010. On the assumption they would do so, the European Commission has estimated that there would be an estimated shortfall of about 700,000 scientists and engineers by that year. (As the time of writing this article, R&D expenditures by EU states are far from being on track to reach the 3% target by 2010.)

Supply

With respect to supply, substantial pools of potentially mobile skilled workers may be available in those countries that provide ready access to higher education but whose

If the underlying definitions of “skilled migrants” are ambiguous and elastic, so too are the rationales used to justify preferential admission of skilled migrants (however defined).

economies fail to offer attractive career opportunities for many of those so educated. There are many examples of such countries: Egypt, Jordan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India (at least until the 1990s).

In many of these cases, national governments have explicitly or implicitly chosen policies that might be described as “investment in human capital for export.” While the economic sense of such policies might well be questioned, in political terms they:

- provide opportunity for children of politically influential middle classes;
- reduce pressures on domestic labour markets; and
- capture hard-currency remittances sent back by overseas workers.

This kind of phenomenon does require careful assessment of the validity of claims for compensation for “brain drain.”

Future needs and demand

There have been many assertions in recent years that in the future, industrialized countries will need to import substantial numbers of skilled workers to sustain their economies. In reality, it is a daunting task to develop objective and credible assessments of the future need, among immigrant-receiving countries, for a continued supply of specifiable skills.

Firstly, there is the inherent weakness of long-range economic forecasts in general. To this weakness must be added a second layer of uncertainty about future technological change as it may affect the relative demand for skilled versus unskilled workers. Finally, the rapid growth in globalization, and with it the apparently accelerating offshore outsourcing of skilled services from workers in low-wage countries, adds a third layer of ambiguity about future levels of demand for such services within immigrant-receiving countries.

With regards to limiting attention to skilled scientists and engineers at the doctoral level, for example, a recent report by a committee of the United States National Academy of Sciences noted that past efforts in forecasting labour market conditions for such occupations have proven unsuccessful (National Research Council 2000). This type of forecasting may, if anything, become even more challenging. The failed efforts did not suffer under the additional uncertainties posed by the recently increased offshoring of such employment by multinational corporations.

There is another important question, usually not considered in discussions of such matters: to what extent do we believe that there might be impacts or feedback loops affecting interest among domestic students and workers in skilled occupations involved in large-scale offshore outsourcing or importation of skilled or specialty workers? Should we anticipate, and hence build into any forecast efforts, that some proportion of domestic students will – at the margin – shift their career decisions away from such occupations and toward those less subject to competition from skilled workers from low-wage countries (whether via offshore outsourcing or immigration)?

If indeed there were to be such impacts on domestic career choices, this might best be understood in system terms as a positive feedback loop:

- increased offshoring or importation results in less robust demand for skilled workers in domestic markets;
- this, with a lag, evokes reduced influx of domestic supply, as younger citizens shift toward occupations less affected by such trends; and
- in turn, declining domestic supply, leading employers to increase offshore or imported recruitment, and so on.

How real and, if real, how large might such effects prove to be?

Attracting and retaining skilled migrants

If an industrialized country, for whatever reason, wishes to recruit skilled migrants, what policy levers might it deploy? What other factors, less susceptible to policy, might also make a given country a more attractive destination than another?

In the policy sphere, increasing ease of admission for skilled migrants is clearly one important factor. At one extreme would be direct affirmative recruitment, including not only advertising and other promotional efforts, but also governmental payment of the costs of transportation and resettlement; such measures have been used in the past by the Australian government.

Another important element is the extent to which would-be migrants can expect to have full access in their country of destination to the career for which they have qualified at home. This phenomenon is especially significant in the case of fields in which licensure is required for practice (such as medicine, nursing and, in some countries, engineering). This issue has been energetically debated in Canada, for example.

Would-be migrants who are members of what some countries term “visible minorities” would presumably prefer to move to countries where there are effective legal prohibitions against discrimination.

More generally, of course, levels of remuneration compared with those in other possible destination countries are important attractants. In addition, offers that include permanent rather than temporary residence, easy paths to citizenship and admission of family members are more attractive to would-be migrants than visas that are limited in time or for the migrant only (what the German government termed its “green card” visas).²

Finally, migrants are more likely to be attracted to destination countries where their language is spoken, where there is already some presence of co-nationals or co-ethnics who might be earlier pioneer migrants, and where the broader indigenous population is receptive to immigrants.

Summary and conclusions

Coherent discussion of skilled migration is hobbled by confusion and ambiguity as to the fundamental meaning of the category, with large differences in usage among

countries. Similar confusion surrounds differing rationales for preferential treatment of such migrants.

Demand for skilled migrants, however defined, may be genuine, professed or mandated. In all likelihood, the impacts of skilled migration will differ considerably depending on which of these types of demand is effective. As to supply, global disparities in economic conditions, coupled with implicit or explicit policies by some large countries favouring investment in human capital for export, suggest that vast pools of potential skilled migrants are likely to be available.

It is a daunting task to develop credible forecasts of future demand or need for skilled migrants in industrialized countries. Many of the forces that could drive such demand are essentially unknowable: long-term economic growth, technological change, the future of globalization of skilled occupations. Moreover, it would be important to assess whether importation of foreign workers and/or placing offshore of such occupations might affect future career decisions by domestic workers and students, thereby affecting domestic labour force supply.

The extent to which a given country can attract and retain skilled migrants can be affected by both policy and non-policy elements. Governments can take action to ease admission of would-be skilled migrants, can make immigration visas permanent rather than time-limited, and can undertake affirmative measures to recruit and subsidize movement of such workers. Policy actions can also be taken to assure migrants of ready access to the practice of the

profession for which they have qualified, and to prohibit discrimination in employment. Other elements less subject to policy intervention include prevailing levels of remuneration and standard of living relative to other available destinations, compatibility of language and culture between destination country and migrants, cultural receptivity to immigrants, and presence or absence of migrants' co-nationals and co-ethnics.

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Notes

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¹ For more on Canada's current selection factors and point allocations for "skilled workers" visas, go to www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp.

² Oddly enough, these German visas, which were for temporary residence only, were named after the United States' "green card," the colloquial term for visas for legal permanent residents.

Canadian Diversity

The Experiences of Second Generation Canadians

The Metropolis Project, in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies, has produced a special issue of the magazine *Canadian Diversity* about the experiences of second generation Canadians. The issue (Spring 2008) presents a range of perspectives on the second generation in Canada and includes two articles from international researchers on the experiences of the second generation in Los Angeles, United States, and in Europe. This publication describes issues of diversity, identity and integration as they pertain to and affect those of the second generation, and features an introduction by Audrey Kobayashi of Queen's University. The publication includes more than 25 articles by knowledgeable policy-makers and researchers.

Spring 2008

Guest Editor: Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University

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CHERRY PICKING: A DUBIOUS PRACTICE*

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the practice of importing skilled workers from other countries, providing an overview of its costs, benefits, moral arguments and common justifications. The author argues that countries that engage in such “cherry picking” should either discontinue the practice, export equal numbers of skilled migrants, or provide compensation to sending countries.

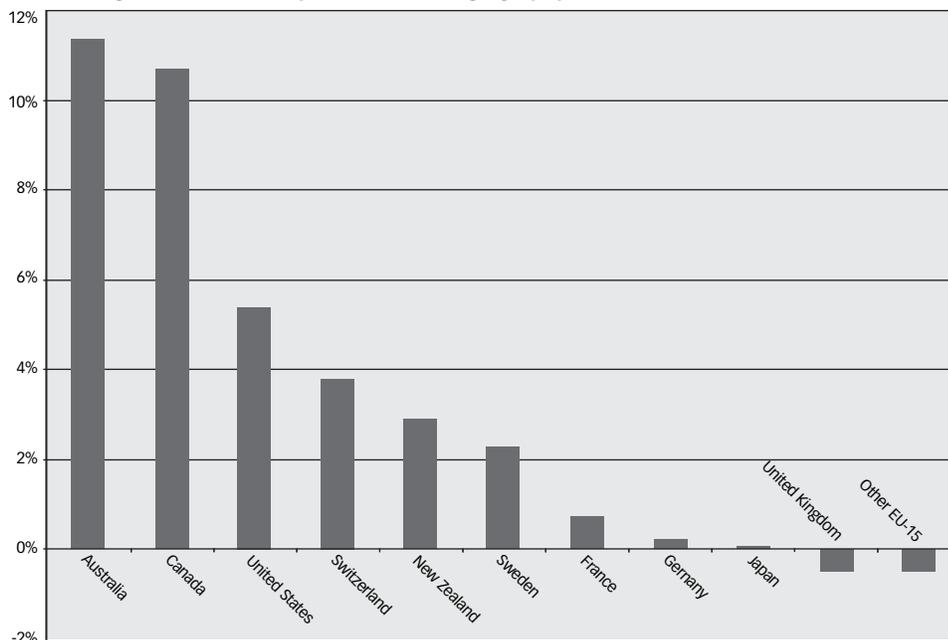
There are now more than 190 million people living in countries in which they were not born (United Nations 2002). Many of these are highly educated migrants, whose numbers will rise as more countries follow the lead of Australia and Canada, which actively encourage the immigration of skilled workers.

Many countries both export and import skilled workers. If a country imports more skilled workers than it exports, it enjoys a “net brain gain” from the rest of the world. The extent to which individual countries have enjoyed such a gain varies widely. In relative terms, Australia and Canada are the leaders, with a net brain gain equivalent to around 11% of their working-age population (Figure 1). In absolute terms, the United States is the largest beneficiary, followed by Canada and Australia (Figure 2). Western Europe as a whole has not been a net importer of skilled workers.

The World Bank estimates that the rich industrial countries have enjoyed a net brain gain equal to 14 million at the expense of poor countries (Docquier and Marfouk 2005). Official spokespersons from Australia and Canada frequently extol the virtues of their selective immigration policies, with the implicit message that other developed countries should follow their example. If this does occur, the result will be an even larger brain drain from poorer countries.

BOB ROWTHORN
Bob Rowthorn is a Professor Emeritus and
Fellow of King's College, University of Cambridge

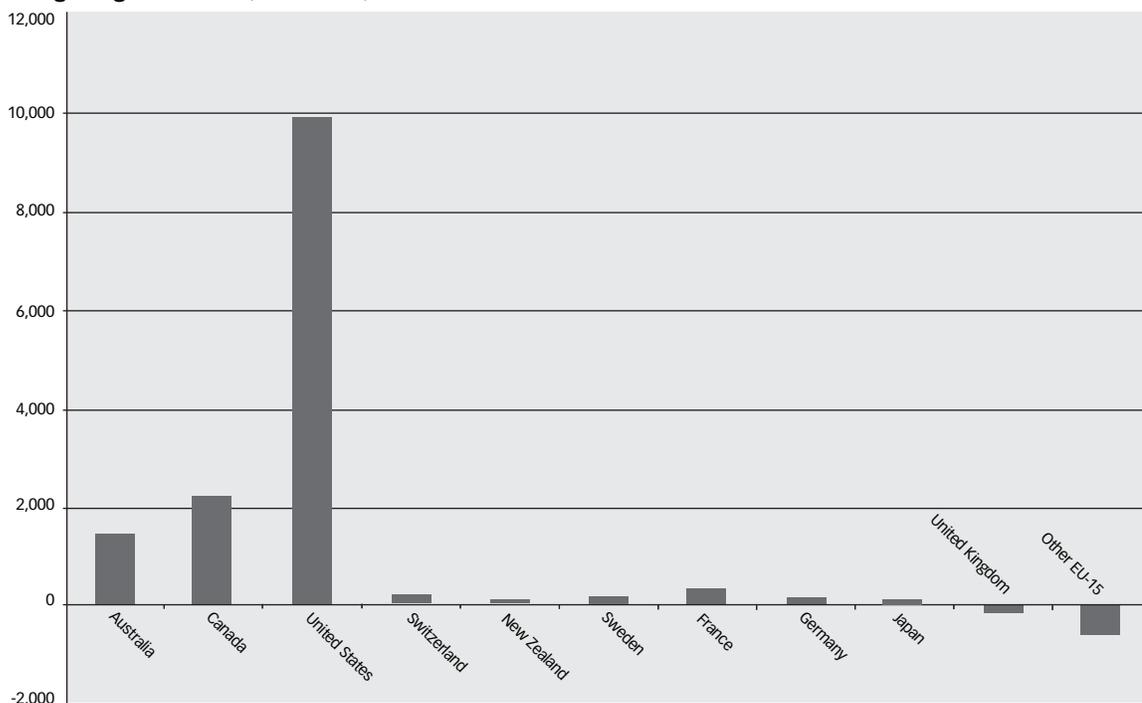
Figure 1
Net brain gain in 2000 (compared to working-age population)^a



Source: Docquier and Marfouk 2005.

^a This chart shows net brain gain (stock of immigrants with tertiary education – stock of expatriates with tertiary education) as a percentage of the working-age population.

Figure 2
Net grain gain in 2000 (thousands)^a



Source: Docquier and Marfouk 2005.

^a This chart shows net brain gain (stock of immigrants with tertiary education – stock of expatriates with tertiary education) as a percentage of the working-age population.

The countries that have been most affected by the brain drain are the small island economies of the Caribbean and the Pacific where, on average, more than 40% of their skilled workers have left (Docquier and Marfouk 2005). There are 16 other countries with populations greater than 5 million that have lost more than 25% of their skilled workforce through emigration. The figure is often much higher in individual sectors.

Impact on the sending country

The emigration of highly skilled workers has both costs and benefits for sending countries.

Costs

The World Bank (2006) summarizes the costs as follows:

Large outflows of high-skilled workers can reduce growth in the origin country for these reasons: (a) the productivity of colleagues, employees, and other workers may suffer because they lose the opportunity of training and mutually beneficial exchange of ideas; (b) the provision of key public services with positive externalities, such as education and health (particularly in the control of transmissible diseases), may be impaired; (c) opportunities to achieve economies of scale in skill-intensive activities may be reduced; (d) society loses its return on highly skilled workers trained at public expense. Highly educated citizens, if they stayed in their

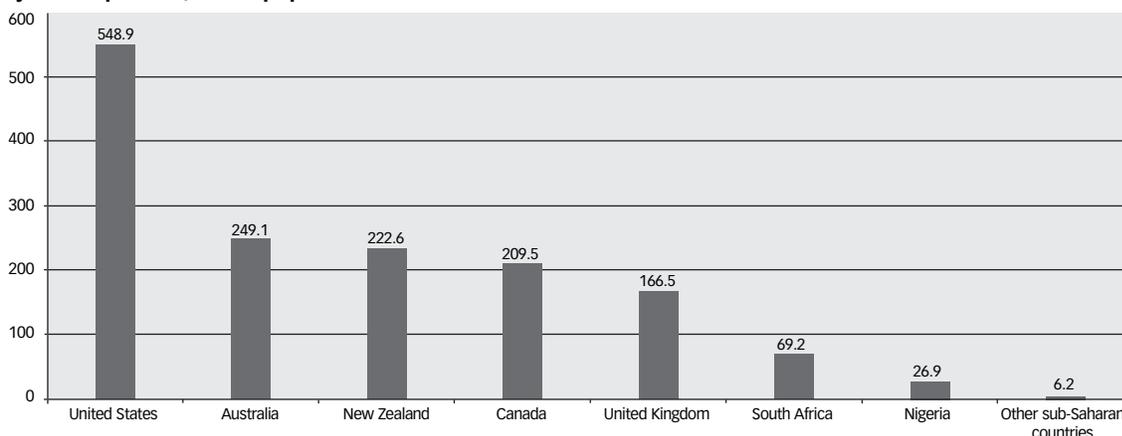
countries, could help improve the quality of debate on public issues, encourage education of children, and strengthen the administrative capacity of the state – contributions that would be lost through high-skilled emigration.

Health – a striking example

Many poor countries have a severe shortage of skilled medical personnel. Excluding Nigeria and South Africa, the average country in sub-Saharan Africa had 6.2 doctors per 100,000 population in 2004. This compares to 166 in the United Kingdom, 249 in Australia, 210 in Canada and 549 in the United States, as shown in Figure 3.

Despite such inequalities, some rich countries have been importing medical personnel on a large scale from poor countries. The United Kingdom is a prime example. Some 31% of doctors currently practicing in the United Kingdom come from overseas, as compared to only 5% in France and Germany. Chanda (cited in World Bank 2006) estimates that at least 12% of the doctors trained in India now live in the United Kingdom. The National Health Service does not actively recruit from sub-Saharan Africa. However, until recently, medical personnel from sub-Saharan countries were free to apply for public-sector jobs in the United Kingdom and there has been no constraint on private-sector recruitment. In 2003, work permits were approved for 5,880 medical personnel from South Africa, 2,825 from Zimbabwe, 1,510 from Nigeria and 850 from Ghana, despite the fact that these countries are among those proscribed for National Health Service

Figure 3
Physicians per 100,000 of population in 2004



Source: World Health Organization.

recruitment. The government has now announced new visa guidelines that may reduce this flow.

Some of the factors that influence the migration of medical personnel from Africa to the United Kingdom are summarized in Table 1.

While emigration may be understandable from an individual point of view, the loss of these professionals is a serious blow for countries whose health services are already under severe strain. As Eastwood et al. (2005) point out:

Doctors and nurses are the linchpins of any health-care system. In countries already severely deprived of health professionals, the loss of each one has serious implications for the health of the citizens. The idea that repatriated overseas earnings could make up for the deficiency is unrealistic, as there is no way of ensuring that such repatriated income will find its way into investments in health care, particularly without the professionals to champion and lead such improvements. Indeed, senior officials in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Uganda have cited shortage of health personnel as the main constraint to mobilising responses to health challenges.

Table 1
Factors influencing the migration of medical personnel from Africa to the United Kingdom

Push factors away from Africa
Lack of postgraduate training facilities
Poorly funded work facilities
Lack of work posts
Low pay
Civil unrest
Pull factors towards the United Kingdom
Training and career opportunities
Attraction of centres of medical excellence
Better pay and working conditions
Availability of posts

Source: BBC News, based on Eastwood et al. 2005.

Benefits

On the other hand, the emigration of skilled workers may benefit the sending country.

Remittances

Migrants from poor countries often send remittances home to finance consumption, house building, land purchase and education. Remittances are a regular source of income for many families, and migrants may send extra money back to their homelands in periods of family or regional emergency. Remittances may also provide valuable foreign exchange for the national balance of payments. Indeed, for a few countries, remittances and foreign aid are almost their only sources of foreign exchange. Such countries live by exporting labour.

The impact of remittances on economic growth is disputed. Wisely invested, remittances can contribute to growth just like any other kind of investment. In practice, however, this may not happen. The fact that a country can rely on remittances from abroad may encourage its leaders to pursue policies that are harmful to growth. Remittances may also discourage effort by the families who receive them. Finally, a large inflow of remittances may drive up the exchange rate, making the economy uncompetitive in world markets (the so-called Dutch disease). Some statistical evidence suggests that on average remittances may be harmful to economic growth (Chami, Fullenkamp and Jahjah 2003).

In the context of skilled labour, remittances are of secondary importance, since skilled migrants tend not to remit large amounts of money back home (Faini 2003). Skilled migrants often come from privileged backgrounds and their relatives at home may not require support. They often bring their families with them, so there is no need to send money home. Many of them also settle permanently and the flow of remittances tends to fall as they put down roots in their new country. The workers who remit the most are the unskilled, unaccompanied, temporary migrants. If the aim of immigration policy were to maximize remittances, these people would get priority.

Incentive for education

The concept of a brain drain has been criticized by a number of authors on the grounds that it takes the supply

of educated labour in poorer countries as fixed (Mountford 1997, Beine et al. 2003, Stark 2004). It assumes that if one educated person leaves there will be one fewer educated person in the sending country. The “revisionists” argue that this is a static way of thinking that ignores the dynamic effects of migration. Graduates who emigrate from poor countries get a large “prize” in the form of better pay and working conditions abroad. The prospect of winning such a prize may encourage more people to enter college, thereby providing additional graduates to offset the loss from emigration. Theoretically, this could result in the sending country ending up with more graduates than before. For example, suppose that rich country Y announces that it will accept 100 graduate scientists from poor country X. For those who manage to emigrate this will be a huge bonus and the prospect of winning such a prize may induce more students to study science. If 200 more students graduate in science as a result, the country will end up with an additional 100 graduate scientists, despite the loss of 100 through emigration.

This is a neat theoretical argument, although some experts question its underlying assumptions (Faini 2003, Schiff 2006). For example, it assumes that the number of students who graduate is primarily determined by the individual demand for higher education. However, in many developing countries there is a supply constraint arising from inadequate facilities and a shortage of suitable educators. The prospect of emigration may well stimulate more demand for higher education, but without extra capacity this may not be available. Indeed, the loss of high-quality graduates through emigration may reduce the nation’s capacity to train people.

Circulation, return and diaspora

It is often said that the brain drain is an out-of-date concept, because many emigrants eventually return to their home country or “circulate” by moving back and forth between their home country and abroad. There is some truth in this claim, but it is exaggerated. The return and circulation of graduates depends on conditions in the home country. Economies that are growing rapidly offer many opportunities for graduates, so they tend to experience a high return flow from abroad and more ongoing circulation. Stagnating economies experience less return flow and less circulation. For them, the emigration of graduates is often permanent.

Countries that have experienced mass emigration over a long period of time have a large diaspora abroad, which can help the home country in many different ways, providing access to capital, technology, information and business contacts. They can also lobby the government on behalf of their home country. This is a useful asset, although one should not exaggerate its importance.

Some moral issues

The migration of highly skilled workers raises a number of moral issues. Some countries actively seek to attract skilled labour from other countries, while keeping out unskilled workers. Even if the sending country is rich, this is a morally dubious practice. The modern state rests upon an implicit contract between generations. Taxpayers in one generation make an investment in young people in the expectation that the latter will give something back to their country in the form of taxes and services when they grow up. If educated young people emigrate when they grow up, the returns on public investment in them are appropriated by the receiving countries. Even when no deliberate attempt is made to lure skilled migrants, it is still the fact that countries who admit such people are reaping the benefit of investments made by taxpayers in other countries.

Flows of skilled labour between countries are not of great importance if they are symmetrical. Losses in one direction are balanced by gains in the opposite direction. However, if flows are seriously unbalanced, then a country with a large excess of skilled immigrants over emigrants will gain a large unrequited transfer from the taxpayers of other countries. This is obviously true for countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States. Such countries could, in theory, compensate foreign taxpayers for their lost investment in human capital, but in practice they do not. Their policy towards skilled migrants is, in my view, predatory. Australia and Canada, in particular, deliberately set out to entice skilled workers from other countries and benefit from the investments that taxpayers in other lands have made in human capital. The United States is less systematic in its immigration policy, but by a combination of

It is often said that the brain drain is an out-of-date concept, because many emigrants eventually return to their home country or “circulate” by moving back and forth between their home country and abroad. There is some truth in this claim, but it is exaggerated.

accident and design it gets a huge net transfer of highly skilled workers from the rest of the world, which has been of great benefit to the American economy (Chellaraj, Maskus and Mattoo 2006).

The loss of human capital through emigration is particularly important if the sending country is poor and has a severe shortage of skilled workers. When poor countries export skilled labour to rich countries, they lose scarce professionals who may be impossible to replace. They may also lose the brightest and most dynamic of their potential leaders – those who would normally build and sustain the institutions required for development (Kapur and McHale 2005).

Some common justifications

A number of arguments are advanced to defend the countries that are large net importers of skilled labour.

National interest

It is said that every country has the right to pursue an immigration policy in its own national interest. This is a dubious claim. At one time land was the foundation of national prosperity, so stronger countries conquered and settled foreign lands to get rid of their own surplus population and appropriate natural resources. Such predatory behaviour was justified by appeal to national interest. This is how Australia, Canada and the United States came into being. Nowadays, land is no longer so important, and conquest and colonization are no longer in vogue. However, countries are still competing for scarce resources and the strong are still taking the lion's share for themselves. This time, however, the scarce resources are not land and minerals but brains and education – or as they are now called, “human capital.” The means are different from in the past, but the objective is still the same – to benefit one's own people at the expense of others by appropriating a scarce resource without payment. And once again this policy is justified by appeal to national interest.

Human rights

It is sometimes claimed that it would be a breach of human rights to ban skilled immigration from poor countries. Such a claim has some force as part of a general argument for the complete abolition of migration controls, but it is unconvincing in the context of selective migration policies. One cannot consistently argue that it is a human right for skilled workers to enter a country, while at the same time supporting the exclusion of unskilled workers.

In my view, the question of human rights is not the central issue. I see nothing morally wrong in refusing entry to skilled migrants from poor countries because they are needed at home, nor in requiring that students from poor countries return home once their period of study is over, nor in requiring that skilled migrants leave once their contracted period of temporary employment is over. However, there are some practical issues to consider. Policies that restrict the immigration of skilled workers from poor countries are more likely to be effective if they are complemented by measures which make it attractive for these workers to spend much of their time in their home country. Such measures may include higher pay and better working conditions at home, together with ongoing contact with counterparts in the rich countries. Academic and professional exchanges, international collaboration and other forms of networking all serve to reduce emigration pressure by reducing the isolation which many professionals in poor countries feel if they are stuck at home, cut off from the intellectual stimulation of the developed world. Negative policies to regulate the flow of skilled workers from poor countries should be accompanied by positive steps to

encourage skilled workers to commit themselves to their countries of origin.

Lack of work

Some poor countries cannot find suitable employment for even their small stock of highly educated workers, and it may be of no economic benefit to them if their surplus professionals are forced to stay at home. Under these conditions it might seem sensible for them to migrate to a rich country where there is a demand for their services. They will benefit themselves, the receiving country and even the sending country through the remittances they send back. However, there is a downside. The emigration of educated people who cannot find work at home may act as a safety valve which permits failed economic policies to continue. If potential emigrants were to stay at home, they might provide the leadership and the personnel required for political and economic reform.

Some countries actively seek to attract skilled labour from other countries, while keeping out unskilled workers...Australia and Canada, in particular, deliberately set out to entice skilled workers from other countries and benefit from the investments that taxpayers in other lands have made in human capital.

Global benefit

African scientists working in Harvard may discover a cure for a disease that afflicts people in developing countries. Or they may educate postgraduate students from these countries who then return home. In some cases, such activities could have been performed just as well in the emigrants' own country as in the United States, but in other cases they could not. Where there is a clear global advantage in performing certain activities in the rich countries, the emigration of skilled personnel from poorer countries may ultimately benefit the latter. However, it may also be feasible to design forms of international collaboration that achieve the same global benefits without involving the permanent concentration of the world's best graduates in today's rich countries.

Concluding remarks

The Irish sometimes describe a person as “having one arm longer than the other.” Such a person exploits the rest of the world by systematically taking from others more than he gives in return. His taking arm is longer than his giving arm. This saying provides a clue to what our attitude towards skilled labour migration should be. Some countries have a very long taking arm and a very short giving arm. They take vast numbers of skilled migrants from the rest of the world and give few in return. Such predatory behaviour should be unacceptable. Irrespective of our national loyalties, we all have global responsibilities and we should not exploit others in this way.

This does not apply simply to relations between rich countries and poor countries. It also applies to relations between rich countries. One rich country can exploit

another by importing a large number of skilled workers whose upbringing and education were financed by taxpayers in the sending country. Countries that seek to attract huge numbers of skilled migrants from other countries (whether rich or poor) should either give up this practice or should educate enough of their own people so they can export a similar number of skilled migrants to the rest of the world in return. Where this is impractical, they should compensate the countries from where their skilled immigrants come, either financially or in some other way. Our giving arm should be as long as our taking arm.

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Note

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International Human Rights Conference

Montréal, Quebec - December 8-9, 2008

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The conference will address the current state of affairs with respect to human rights throughout the world and investigate the impediments and possible solutions to its improvement globally. Conference session themes include:

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- Identity
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- Language
- International Recognition of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
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Participants will include academics, government officials, jurists, representatives from non-governmental organizations and others. Confirmed speakers include: Philippe Kirsch (International Criminal Court), Alex Neve (Amnesty International), Emina Tudakovic (United Nations Rapporteur on Refugees), Deborah Anker (Harvard University), François Crépeau (Université de Montréal), Will Kymlicka (Queen's University), Pearl Eliadis (Human Rights Lawyer), Kent Roach (University of Toronto), Ayelet Shachar (University of Toronto), Roderick Macdonald (McGill University), José Woerhling (Université de Montréal)

For a preliminary conference program and to register visit: www.acs-aec.ca



CIRCULAR MIGRATION: THE WAY FORWARD IN GLOBAL POLICY?*

ABSTRACT

This article reviews research findings and policy documents on circular migration. The author argues that the phenomenon of circular migration is not new, but policy interest is somewhat recent. While he suggests that circular migration policies may make some positive contributions to economic development, labour shortages, public opinion and illegal migration, he notes that such policies are not a “magic bullet.”

Circular migration appears to be the rage in international policy circles. A variety of policy-makers within national and international institutions are advocating measures to facilitate the movement of migrants to-and-fro between their homelands and foreign places of work. Their main idea is that circular migration systems could be managed in ways that bring proverbial “win-win-win” results (i.e., benefits for receiving countries through meeting labour-market shortages, for sending countries through guaranteeing remittances for development, and for migrants themselves through offering employment and control over the use of their wages). Circular migration is also being advocated as a potential solution (at least in part) to a number of challenges surrounding contemporary migration. What are policy-makers suggesting, why now, and what should we bear in mind if circular migration is indeed to be the way forward in global policy?

Much of the interest in circular migration stems from the way migration itself is now widely understood. These days, many academics and policy-makers alike comprehend migration largely through a paradigm that emphasizes the importance of border-crossing social networks. Through the course of their movement, migrants utilize, extend and establish social connections spanning places of origin and places abroad. By means of such connections or networks, migrants learn and inform each other about where to go, how to get jobs, places to live, and so on; they also maintain families, economic activities, political interests and cultural practices through these transnational ties. While such networks have practically always functioned among migrants, modern technological advances and reduced costs surrounding transportation and communication have allowed for the intensification of transnational connections, practices and mobility.

While migration scholars have increasingly studied migrant transnationalism over the past 15 years or more (e.g., Glick-Schiller et al. 1992, Portes et al. 1999, Vertovec 2004), policy-makers have also recently come to recognize the ways in which transnational ties condition migration processes. This shift largely came through a rather sudden realization that remittances, the transnational flows of money earned by migrants abroad, have become a major global economic resource. The value of worldwide remittances doubled during the 1990s to well over \$105 billion annually – more than twice the level of international aid. The scale of remittances has continued to soar. The United Nations (2006) puts the annual figure of official global remittances at some \$232 billion; the amount of unofficial flows is estimated to be much higher still. These staggering figures have prompted policy-makers to delve into migration matters as never before.

Subsequently, there has been widespread interest in the role national, binational or multinational and international policies can play in fostering and managing various dimensions of migrant transnationalism. For instance, several international agencies, intergovernmental forums and government departments are now drafting policies with regard to the relationship between migration and development (especially concerning the transfer and use of remittances), the activities of migrant hometown associations (mostly regarding support for specific development projects), and ways to “tap” diasporas for various purposes (mainly through philanthropy, entrepreneurship or political lobbying). Similarly, policy-makers have acknowledged transnational connections in their efforts to create policies to reverse the impact of brain drain by facilitating “brain circulation” of professionals through temporary return visits or through “virtual return” over telecommunication systems.

Circular migration patterns themselves are based on, and create further, transnational networks. The current policy turn – or better, re-turn (see below) – to temporary and circular migration policies

STEVEN VERTOVEC
Steven Vertovec is the Director of the Max Planck Institute
for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity

stems in large part from the relatively recent recognition of the significance of migrant transnational practices. Indeed, most of the policy documents cited below preface their remarks on circular migration with statements acknowledging the prevalence, ubiquity and significance of transnational practices among migrants today.

A look at several recent documents produced by international and national agencies shows not only the prominence of circular migration as a preferred, forward-looking mode of migration management, but also the diversity of issues which circular migration policies might also address.

The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), established by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, published its report after two years of extensive consultations (GCIM 2005). As part of its comprehensive overview, the GCIM noted how “the old paradigm of permanent migrant settlement is progressively giving way to temporary and circular migration...The Commission underlined the need to grasp the developmental opportunities that this important shift in migration patterns provides for countries of origin” (p. 31). In order to make the most of this shift, the GCIM recommends that “countries of destination...promote circular migration by providing mechanisms and channels that enable migrants to move relatively easily between their country of origin and destination” (p. 31). In keeping with its terms of reference, the GCIM did not offer much more on this topic by way of suggesting specific measures or potential impacts.

In *World Migration 2005*, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) also proposes that more circular migration could bring benefits, especially to developing countries (IOM 2005). The IOM advocates that migrant-receiving countries should open up more avenues for regular, repeat temporary labour migration and give incentives to migrants by offering future return to the same job. It also suggests that making residence or dual citizenship available to certain migrants and establishing more flexible visa regimes will act as encouragements to productive, free exchange between countries.

The World Bank's Europe and Central Asia Region section has produced a major study on international labour migration in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (World Bank 2006). Here, interest in circular migration goes beyond economic development of migrant-sending contexts. The report suggests that managed circular migration might increase broad opportunities for trade and investment linkages, reduce brain drain by facilitating the international transfer of skills, and reduce negative social and familial consequences associated with illegal migration.

It is also noteworthy that, in advocating circular migration, the World Bank is not suggesting that such systems will necessarily provide superior economic benefits; rather, it pragmatically suggests that circular migration might be a more palatable idea in places where public opinion is strongly resistant to proposals surrounding permanent migration of the unskilled.

In 2005, the European Commission addressed circular migration in two documents. The first, *Communication on Migration and Development* (2005a), proposes that circular migration policies could play a key role in fostering the transfer of skills to the developing world (p. 25). It also advocates that:

Policies to maximize the developmental impact of temporary migration...should focus on encouraging circular migration, by giving a priority for further temporary employment to workers who have already worked under such schemes and have returned at the end of their contract, and also by offering appropriate rewards to participating migrants. (p. 7)

This document reiterates general calls elsewhere, but adds a degree of specificity by suggesting such employment priority measures could become European Union policy.

The second document, the Commission's *Policy Plan on Legal Migration* (2005b), outlines at least three possible measures that could enable viable, managed circular migration systems: the provision of long-term multi-entry visas for returning migrants; an understanding that former migrants be given priority for obtaining new residence permits for further temporary employment under a simplified procedure; and the creation of a European Union database of third-country nationals

who left the European Union at the expiration of their temporary residence or work permit. Again, a broad interest in circular migration and its benefits is taken a step further by way of proposing specific policy instruments.

A final policy document to consider comes from the United Kingdom. Following a lengthy review process, the House of Commons International Development Committee published its report titled *Migration and Development: How to make migration work for poverty reduction* (House of Commons 2004). “The UK Government,” it says, “should explore the potential development benefits which might be gained from more circular migration, and – alongside its developing-country partners – should examine the different ways in which such circular migration might be encouraged” (p. 48). The Committee interestingly approaches circular migration from a rather different vantage point, as it were, when it recommends that in sectors such as health, policies

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could be created so as “to help migrants to return home temporarily by offering leave of absence from employment and other forms of assistance” (p. 88). Here circular migration is envisioned as taking place from the receiving country to the sending country and back. The committee’s advice also goes beyond that of other agencies by suggesting that circular migration schemes could act as incentives for sending countries to assume more responsibility for countering illegal migration (p. 41).

To recap, many policy-focused agencies are promoting the creation of managed circular migration systems. Perceived potential benefits include: a) (with reference to the interests of migrant-sending states) encouraging circulation of human capital and ensuring flow of remittances for development; b) (with reference to the interests of migrant-receiving states) plugging sectoral labour shortages, ensuring that temporary migrants leave, and mitigating illegal migration. We might also add: c) (with reference to employers’ interests) recruiting from a known and reliable pool of workers, retaining trained and experienced people, and keeping wages low.

What about the migrants themselves? What does circular migration hold for them? It is important to underscore the fact that circular migration represents an age-old pattern of mobility, whether rural-urban or cross-border (see, for example, Elkan 1967, Chapman 1979, Cordell, Gregory and Piché 1996). Such patterns have variously been called repeat, rotating, multiple, seasonal, cyclical, shuttling or circuit-based modes of migration. Most research on circular migration patterns has examined what we might call “unregulated” systems – that is, migration flows that have been established by migrants themselves between homelands and places of work, as opposed to formal or regulated systems by which employers and states collaborate to recruit, transport and employ workers from abroad. Based on such research (including Massey 1987, Massey and Espinosa 1997, Duany 2002 and Constant and Zimmerman 2004), the following traits seem evident.

In today’s world a considerable proportion of migrants are not “first movers” – many have made multiple trips within their home country and abroad (from across a near border to indeed across the world) in order to work. Moreover, frequency matters: studies indicate that there is an increasing probability of making repeat moves the more an individual has already moved. This finding underscores what, in migration theory, is known as the self-perpetuating nature of migration. With each move, migrants learn more about migration, where and how to find jobs and housing, and so on. Such knowledge, set of social connections and experience is also referred to as “migration-specific capital”; the more you have of this, the less risk you face moving, the lower the costs and the better the chances of success – all factors encouraging circular migration.

Further, after a few moves, it seems that a migrant’s legal status is not relevant to the likelihood of repeat movement. Once people learn how to cross borders (or have established reliable facilitators to help them cross), they are less concerned with whether they go legally or not. The exception comes with rising human capital: as people gain skills and experience that may allow them to progress in terms of socioeconomic mobility, they become more concerned with being legal. The likelihood of circular migration also depends on social traits. Repeat movements are most likely among young, unmarried men; this likelihood falls with marriage and increases again with children. However, when migrants have children in school (particularly in receiving contexts), they are less likely to engage in circular migration. Dual citizens are more likely to circulate – not surprisingly, since they generally can do this with little hassle at the border.

Of special note with regard to the development agenda behind much emerging policy, circular migrants tend to remit more money to their home localities. This finding makes sense, given that circular migrants plan to return in

the near future in order to make use of these posted earnings themselves. And does circular migration increase or diminish opportunities for socio-economic mobility? Here social scientists come up with contrary analyses. Some researchers suggest that the experience and money obtained abroad does give migrants scope to get better jobs (either in the homeland or receiving context); others say that circular migrants tend to remain stuck in low levels of employment, such as seasonal agricultural labourers. This might particularly be the case in regulated circular migration systems, which see people returning year after year to the same job, rather than trying

to negotiate their way into better jobs and localities like unregulated circular migrants might do.

Examining one well-known, regulated system of circular migration, Tanya Basok’s (2003) study of the Canadian Mexican Seasonal Workers Programme importantly shows contrasting dimensions of such schemes. Basok demonstrates that the programme provides undoubtedly positive development benefits in migrants’ homelands. The circular migrants on this scheme invest their earnings in land, business, children’s education, housing and medical treatment. More widely, their remittances stimulate local economic growth around their villages and towns in Mexico. While working in Canada, they might be doing the same low-level work; back in Mexico, they might be building a business. However, Basok points out, “in order to maintain the lifestyle which these migrants and their households enjoy, migrant workers need to continue participating in the Canadian guest worker programme for many years and this dependency forces them to accept various forms of abuse by Canadian growers” (p. 20).

What about the migrants themselves? What does circular migration hold for them? It is important to underscore the fact that circular migration represents an age-old pattern of mobility, whether rural-urban or cross-border.

Contemporary calls for the policy systematization of circular migration may well address many of the various issues raised in the documents discussed above. For migrants themselves, the rolling out of more circular migration schemes may indeed bring considerable benefits too. However, as with other kinds of temporary migration policies (see Martin 2003 and 2005, Ruhs 2005), there are a number of concerns to bear in mind when designing circular migration policies. These include questions such as:

- Will migrant workers get “locked in” to modes of dependency and exploitative relationships with employers?
- Will circular migrants’ work permits be non-portable (i.e., restricted to specific employers or sectors), thereby increasing chances of exploitation and lessening chances of socioeconomic mobility?
- Will policy-regulated circular migration systems become closed labour markets, with limited opportunities for access among new would-be migrants?
- Since any temporary migration scheme will only function if migrants indeed return after their statutory period of employment, will enforcement mechanisms become more draconian?
- Since circular or other temporary migrants will be required to leave after short stays, will this preclude any kind of “integration” strategies for them (including language training or information about living in the society of reception)? Consequently, will lack of integration strategies make migrants more vulnerable, socially excluded and geographically encapsulated?
- Again, since they will have to leave after a time, will there be no chances for circular migrants to naturalize (and, in doing so, gain dual citizenship which would help them “circulate” more easily)?
- Even given creation of ideal circular migration policies and systems, will it not remain cheaper and less bureaucratically burdensome for employers simply to continue hiring undocumented migrants? Or will tough employer sanctions be put in place to mitigate against this at the same time as circular migration schemes are put in place?

A final question arises when considering the current popularity of circular migration in policy circles. Haven’t such schemes, such as the American *bracero* programme and the German *Gastarbeiter* system, all been tried – and dropped – a long time ago? This question is directly addressed by Stephen Castles (2006), who answers both “yes” and “no.” He details how, while they do indeed have important features in common, current approaches are significantly different from the well-known pre-1974 temporary migration policies.

Why are many policy-makers specifically calling for circular migration now? There are surely numerous reasons (again see Castles 2006), but at least four can be drawn from the documents considered above: a) recognition of the prevalence and importance of transnational practices

among migrants has spurred new thinking, especially about remittances and the developmental potential of organized migrant labour schemes; b) the “win-win-win” mantra is being taken seriously, again especially around migration and development. Circular migration appears to be a readily available option to provide immediate three-way benefits; c) circular and other temporary forms of migration are considered by policy-makers to be more amenable to public opinion, which has clearly and increasingly hardened against migration in most parts of the developed world; and d) many policy-makers believe they now have the technical know-how (such as “e-borders,” Advance Passenger Information Systems, and large shared databases) that would potentially enable them to keep track of numerous eligible migrants as they come and go between homelands and foreign places of work. It remains to be seen whether these lines of reasoning will prove sufficient to roll out new international guidelines and schemes.

For sending countries, receiving countries and migrants themselves, mutual gains may indeed be had if circular migration policies become manifest. Moreover, as recent policy documents suggest, circular migration policies might positively contribute to tackling challenges around economic development, labour shortages, public opinion and illegal migration. Yet when considering anything – particularly an approach to global policy – that portends to be a kind of magic bullet, caution should certainly be taken. The “wins” of the win-win-win scenario may not be as mutual as imagined.

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Note

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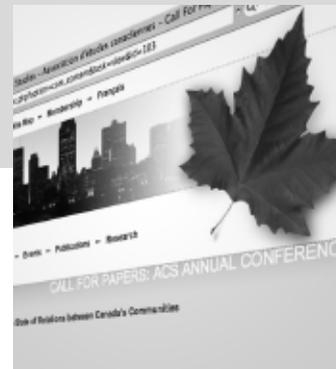
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TRENDS IN ASIA THAT WILL INFLUENCE ITS FUTURE AS A SOURCE OF SKILLED MIGRANTS

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author discusses a number of economic, social and demographic changes that are likely to affect Asia's future as a source of skilled migrants. Population shifts, increasing education and skill levels, student migration, generational changes, networks and increasing cooperation on migration issues in Asia are all having an impact. These developments may require traditional immigrant-receiving countries to look elsewhere for the skilled workers that they require.

One of the defining features of the new era of large-scale international migration, as opposed to those of earlier eras such as that from Europe to North America before World War I, has been the significance of skilled migration. In knowledge-based economies, countries seek to maximize their stocks of human capital not only by training their own populations but also by attracting skilled persons through migration. Hence the “global” quest for talent has become an important part of the strategies of more developed economies (OECD 2002, Kuptsch and Fong 2006). With 57% of the world's population, Asia has emerged as the pre-eminent source of skilled migrants for several developed nations. This article addresses some of the contemporary and impending developments in Asia that are likely to impinge on the extent to which it can remain a source of skilled migrants into the future. With its vast population including the demographic giants of China and India, which together account for 37.2% of the world's population, Asia is seen by some as an inexhaustible supply of skilled labour. The argument here however is that there are developments within Asia that are likely to influence its role in providing skilled migrants and that may require some rethinking of immigration policies and strategies in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and in other developed countries.

Continued growth of the Asian youth population

While there is considerable demographic diversity between Asian countries, the region as a whole has experienced a “youth bulge” which saw the youth population (aged 15 to 24 years) peak at 20.5% of the total population in 1985 (Hugo 2005a). This had a number of impacts including the so-called “demographic dividend” whereby countries have the opportunity to increase economic growth because the ratio of working age to non-working age population is high. It also concentrates populations in the ages at which they are most likely to migrate since one of the most universal of findings in migration research is that mobility tends to peak in one's 20s or early 30s. Both of these characteristics are of course of interest to OECD nations who are faced with unprecedented numbers and proportions of their citizens moving into older age groups. Hence, the demographic outlook of Asian countries is of relevance to any consideration as to whether the region can continue to be a migrant source region.

In fact, the peak of the youth bulge has passed in most Asian nations, which have experienced rapid declines in fertility since the 1970s (Hugo 2005a). However, there are still a few countries that are in that peak situation while in most, the impact of falling trends of fertility is having its effect on the numbers of young people moving into the labour force entry age groups. Table 1 shows the patterns of recent and anticipated future growth of the main migration age groups (aged 20 to 34 years). While there is always an element of uncertainty in such population projections, it should be stressed that many people in these age groups were already born when the projections were made; thus, the projections have simply aged them forward so the numbers are likely to be quite robust. According to the projections, while the total number in the 20 to 34 age group grew by 14.6% between 1990 and 2000, the rate of growth over the next two decades will be only half that. Hence, the number of potential candidates for international migration will continue to grow but at a reduced rate. Table 1 also indicates that there will be significant

Table 1
Asian countries: actual and projected population
aged 20 to 34 years, 1990-2020 (in thousands)

Year	Males	Females	Total	Percent growth
Asia				
1990	374,124	350,788	724,912	
2000	427,133	403,832	830,965	14.6
2010	456,755	428,718	885,473	6.5
2020	493,429	461,284	954,713	7.8
East Asia				
1990	172,834	165,470	338,304	
2000	187,805	178,627	366,432	8.3
2010	171,729	159,346	331,075	-9.6
2020	171,069	155,972	327,041	-1.2
South-Central Asia				
1990	141,940	129,454	271,394	
2000	171,087	157,341	328,428	21.0
2010	207,132	192,530	399,662	21.7
2020	240,515	225,098	465,613	16.5
Southeast Asia				
1990	56,349	55,863	112,212	
2000	68,241	67,866	136,107	21.3
2010	77,895	76,842	154,737	13.7
2020	81,847	80,212	162,059	4.7

Source: United Nations Projections.

differences between the main sub-regions of Asia; there is indeed considerable inter-country variation within these sub-regions. In East Asia, the young population will in fact decline over the next two decades due to the very low fertility rate in the region, especially in the demographic giant, China. It must be borne in mind that this decline is occurring at a time of unprecedented economic growth in China.

The situation is somewhat different elsewhere in Asia. In both South-Central and Southeast Asia, the 20 to 34 age group will continue to grow over the next two decades, although the actual rate of growth will decline. The fertility decline observed in almost all Asian nations was slowest in South Asia, where the young adult population will continue to grow by more than 20% in the 2000-2010 period, but at a somewhat lower rate in the following decade. In Southeast Asia, the rate of growth in 2000-2010 will be half that of 1990-2000 and less than a quarter in 2010-2020.

A growing gender imbalance in some Asian countries

A striking feature of Table 1 is the increasing dominance of males in the 20 to 34 age group, especially in East and South-Central Asia. There is a long-standing pattern of son-preference and greater male survival in South Asian nations due to the differential care, teaching and attention given to young males and females. In addition, the introduction of ultrasound machines has allowed couples to express their preference for male children before birth (Bannister 2004, Jha et al. 2006) and resulted in an increased male dominance in younger ages. In China, the introduction of similar technology together with the “One Child Family Policy” also served to increase the ratio of male children to female children (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 14, 2004).

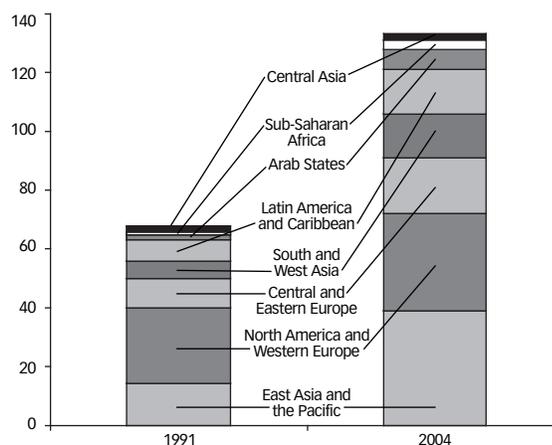
Hence, the number of males per 100 females in the 20 to 34 age group in China will increase from 104.5 in 1990 to 109.7 in 2020.

The increasing shortage of women in young adult age groups in China and India and to a lesser extent in other countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore is already contributing to increased marriage immigration of young women from countries like Vietnam (Hugo and Nguyen Thi 2004). Already in China, there is a group of young men with little or no prospects of finding a partner or having a family; they have come to be known as *guang gun-er* or “bare branches.” On the surface this might appear to provide an incentive for young skilled males to emigrate. However, it is apparent that the “bare branches” men belong primarily to the lowest socio-economic groups, are rural-based and unemployed or underemployed and have low levels of education. Hence they do not have the skills sought by destination countries.

Changing education and skill levels in the Asian population

One of the most profound changes in Asia over the last three decades has been the extension of universal education to most countries in the region, although higher education has remained the prerogative of a privileged elite in many nations. Nevertheless, there has been in recent years a spectacular increase in the numbers of Asians receiving tertiary education and training. Figure 1 shows that the number of tertiary students worldwide has doubled between 1990 and 2004, to reach 132 million students. The fastest growing region, East Asia and the Pacific, witnessed an increase of 25 million students over that period while the numbers doubled in South and West Asia. The data are subject to a number of caveats (UNESCO 2006: 23) but it is apparent that there has been a spectacular increase in the number of tertiary students across Asia. In China, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education doubled between 1998 and 2002, and doubled again between 2001 and 2004. Indeed, there were 19 million tertiary students in China in 2004, more than in any other country and 15% of

Figure 1
Number of tertiary students worldwide,
1991 and 2004 (in millions)



Source: UNESCO 2006, p. 21.

the world total (UNESCO 2006: 23). While the increase in other countries such as India has been more modest, the overall picture for Asia is of substantial growth.

On the surface, it would seem that the massive increase of tertiary students in Asia, especially in East Asia, would be substantially expanding the pool of potential skilled migrants to OECD nations. However, there are some concerns about the quality and type of education received in some contexts and the acceptability of those qualifications. A recent report (*Straits Times*, April 17, 2006), for example, expresses concern about the skills and experience of Chinese graduates. The issues of recognition of qualifications and of language (many do not have high-quality English language skills), together with questions surrounding the quality of education, place some restrictions on the potential for the large numbers of new graduates to migrate to OECD countries.

Increased availability of skilled jobs within Asia

While there is considerable variation from country to country, economic growth has been strong in Asia, especially in China and, to a lesser extent, India. Countries like Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and of course Japan are now able to offer wages and conditions commensurate with those in OECD nations and their economies are increasingly reliant on skilled workers. Moreover, they have had low fertility rates for several decades and are facing a situation where the number of young people reaching the age for entering the workforce is smaller than the number of people reaching retirement age. Indeed, Japan's population declined for the first time in 2005. These countries are becoming increasingly dependent on not only retaining their own skilled labour, but also on recruiting skilled workers from elsewhere. The data presented in Table 2 reflect this trend. It shows that significant numbers of Asians have returned home after settling in Australia but also that many native Australians are moving to Asian countries on a long-term basis to live and work (Hugo, Rudd and Harris 2003). For some time, Singapore has had an active policy of seeking skilled migrants to settle for at least an extended period (Yap 2006). In Hong Kong as well, there are large communities of expatriates from elsewhere in Asia as well as from countries like Australia and the United Kingdom (Chui 2006). While these expatriates are predominantly on temporary residence permits, the Hong Kong government announced in 2006 a small immigration program designed to attract around 1,000 relatively young and well-educated people to settle in Hong Kong (*The Business Week*, February 23, 2006). It planned to use a Points Assessment Scheme similar to those used in Australia and Canada.

Even in China the rapid economic growth of recent years has seen a significant influx of skill migrants albeit mostly on temporary residence permits (Ma 2006). In recent years, China has been one of the largest sources of skilled migrants to countries like Australia, but there have been increasing reports that a shortage of skilled workers in China is a constraint on the country's development (*Economist*, April 14, 2005). This is being felt especially by the multinational companies that invested US\$60 billion in China in 2005 (*Straits Times*, April 27, 2006).

There is little doubt that OECD countries will face increased competition for skilled migrants from Asian

Table 2
Australia: Asian country of origin – overseas and Australia-born permanent arrivals and departures, 1994-1995 to 2004-2005

Country of origin	Total departures	Permanent departures as a % of settler arrivals
Southeast Asia		
<i>Mainland</i>		
Burma (Myanmar)	97	5.1
Cambodia	459	9.2
Laos	203	47.3
Thailand	5,517	46.7
Viet Nam	5,139	21.1
<i>Maritime Southeast Asia</i>		
Brunei	1,343	126.8
East Timor	128	246.2
Indonesia	8,819	32.8
Malaysia	5,473	23.7
Philippines	2,711	7.8
Singapore	19,061	63.9
TOTAL Southeast Asia	48,950	30.8
North East Asia		
<i>Chinese Asia</i>		
China	17,322	26.2
Hong Kong	34,248	101.0
Macau	366	56.0
Mongolia	29	116.0
Taiwan	6,495	48.2
<i>Japan and the Koreas</i>		
Japan	6,918	89.2
North Korea	1	10.0
South Korea	3,135	39.9
TOTAL North East Asia	68,514	52.8
Southern Asia		
Bangladesh	87	2.0
Bhutan	1	33.3
India	1,162	3.0
Maldives	92	278.8
Nepal	28	3.5
Pakistan	238	1.9
Sri Lanka	400	3.1
Afghanistan	43	3.3
TOTAL Southern Asia	2,051	2.9
TOTAL Asia	119,515	33.3

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

destination countries over the next two decades, if they are not beginning to experience it now. This pressure is being felt, and this will increasingly be the case, in a number of ways:

- Asian countries experiencing rapid economic growth and structural change toward more high-level economies will be able to offer their nationals comparable positions at home, to which they could previously only aspire if they emigrated;

- Equally, the nationals of those countries who are already abroad will be tempted to return. This pattern has already been observed in Taiwan (Tsai 1988), in Korea (Lucas 2005) and, increasingly, in China (Zweig, Changgui and Rosen 2004). It is also strongly evident for several Asian countries in the Australia data presented in Table 2;
- Skilled workers from Asian countries that are not experiencing as rapid an increase in demand for skill and whose economies are less developed will be faced with a choice of moving to another Asian country or to an OECD country. There is some evidence that other Asian economies may have some attractiveness because of proximity and cultural factors;
- Asian economies will become increasingly attractive to native skilled workers from OECD nations and be able to bid for their services. Again Table 2 shows a significant numbers of Australian native workers (who are overwhelmingly skilled) moving to Asian countries.

Clearly the dichotomy regarding Asia, Africa and Latin America as “underdeveloped” and Europe, North America, Japan and Oceania as “developed” is a now false and will become even more so over the next two decades.

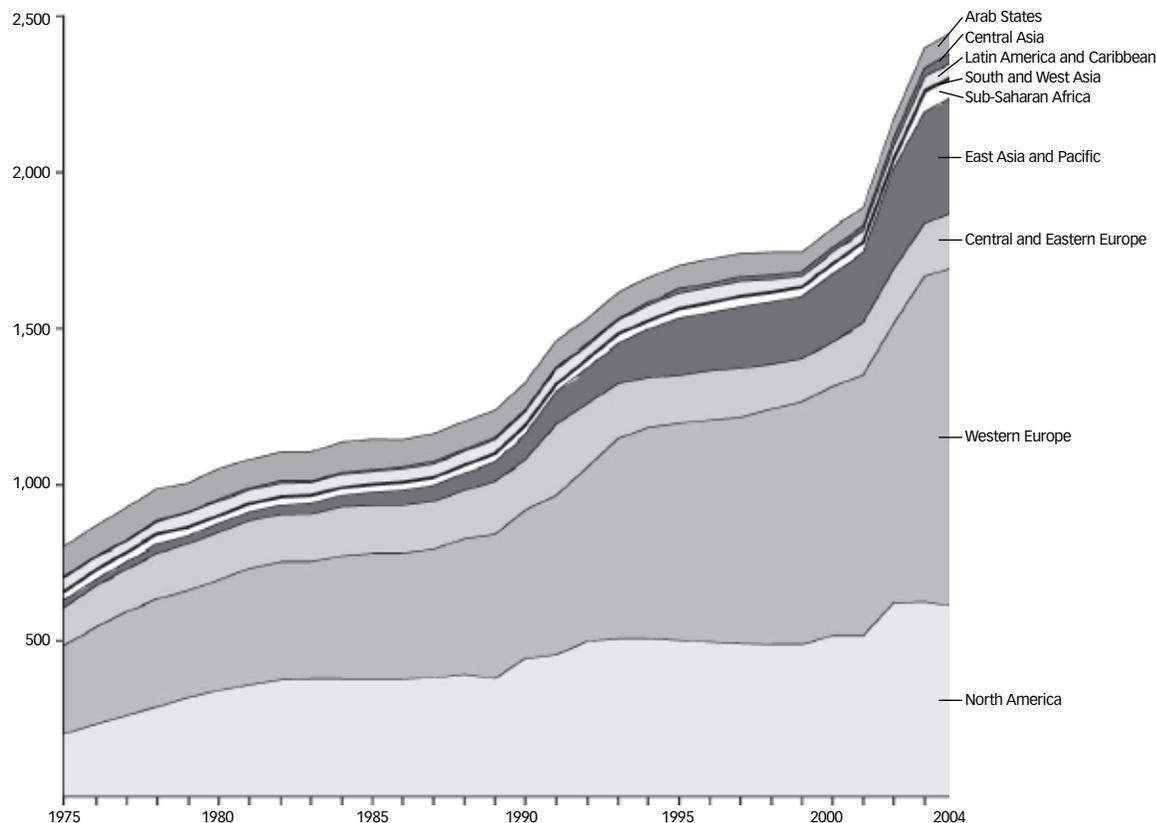
The future of student migration

There has been an exponential increase in international student migration in the last decade. This is evident in Figure 2, which shows that the number of foreign students in tertiary education doubled between 1990 and 2000 and increased by another third between 2000-2003.

Clearly much of this movement has been to OECD nations and has originated in Asian countries. However, it is interesting that Figure 2 shows a large increase in the number of foreign students in China, Japan and Korea. Moreover, in recent years Malaysia has become very successful in attracting students from poorer neighbouring countries. In South Korea, the number of foreign students increased from 3,963 in 2000 to 22,624 in 2006 (*Asian Migration News*, September 1-15, 2006), while 20% of Singapore’s university students are foreign.

Nations are beginning to appreciate the benefits of foreign students namely as a significant source of foreign exchange: it is estimated that foreign students paid US\$30 billion to their destination countries (*Migration News*, April 2005) and in Australia, the immigration of foreign students has been estimated to contribute A\$4 billion to the economy (Hugo 2005b). Increasingly though, foreign students are seen as the “raw material to train some of the human capital they need” (Skeldon 2005: 17). They are the next generation of skilled migrants who differ from the

Figure 2
International mobile students by region of study, 1975 to 2004



Source: UNESCO 2006, p. 34.

previous generation in that they are what Simmons (1999) describes as “designer migrants,” or specifically “designed” by the destination country to meet their skilled human resource needs.

Hence, competition for foreign students is also increasing substantially, and any skilled migration policy that becomes dependent on producing foreign graduates to fill the ranks of its future skilled migrants will need to be cognisant of, and deal with, this increased competition.

In short, the increasing availability of higher educational opportunities for Asians within their own countries and in other Asian countries (with cost, proximity and perhaps cultural advantages) by no means ensure that the exponential increase in Asian student migration to OECD countries like Australia will continue well into the next two decades. Moreover, increased competition between OECD nations to attract such students will also have an effect. The recent concern with falling foreign student numbers in the United States may be a harbinger for other OECD nations although post-9/11 events have had an influence in that country (*Migration News*, January 2005).

Generational changes

Each birth cohort differs from the previous one as they enter each successive stage of the life cycle because they live through different periods with different influences, levels and types of education, exposure to the mass media, levels of prosperity, and so on. Hence, it has become commonplace to compare the characteristics of the baby boom generation, Generation X and Generation Y. In Asia, the new youth generation now beginning to enter the high migration age groups are different in many ways from earlier cohorts (Hugo 2005a and 2006). They are the first generation that have grown up during the era of globalization, accelerated economic growth and prosperity in Asia, universal education, access to mass media, the electronic age, and so on. This not only has a major influence on the human resource skills they have acquired, but on their aspirations, preparedness to move, and knowledge of the outside world, among others. The implications of this for future migration is not known. Their education, language ability and knowledge of the world may result in them being more likely to make an international move than earlier generations as is the case in countries like Australia (Hugo, Rudd and Harris 2003). Yet, it may be that they are less inclined to move to OECD nations and more attracted by other Asian destinations.

Extension of networks

Another relevant development in Asia is the intensifying of the linkages between Asians, on the one hand, and people and institutions in OECD nations, on the other. This is partly a function of the considerable expansion of the size of Asian communities in OECD nations described earlier in this paper. This expansion means that the proportion of Asians with some social capital located in OECD countries in the form of relatives and friends has increased. Although the willingness of the diaspora to provide information and assistance to migrate and settle to their relatives and friends in the home country varies, it is apparent that for many Asian groups the strength of those bonds is considerable and networks are a major facilitating

factor in migration (Massey et al. 1993 and 1998). Much of the discussion on the salience of social networks for encouraging and channelling migration focuses on family reunion and unskilled or semi-skilled migrations, but it is rarely considered in terms of skilled migration. However, there is increasing evidence that the existence of social networks can be of crucial significance in deciding whether or not skilled Asians migrate to an OECD nation and if so, to which one. Social networks can also spill over into professional linkages, allowing networks to operate in such a way to exchange information about job opportunities, job conditions, and other factors. Hence, it is possible to see concentrations of compatriot migrants in particular sub-sectors of the economy in OECD nations. A most notable example is the information and communications technology industry in Silicon Valley, California, where it is apparent that social networks have been crucial in channelling Indian IT professionals to this region (Biao 2004 and 2006). While social networks have always been an important factor in initiating, facilitating and channelling international migration to Australia (Price 1963), information and communication technology make exchanges between origin and destination cheaper and more instantaneous, detailed and intimate than ever before, so networks can operate even more effectively than in the past to influence migration. A somewhat related element is the expansion of the migration industry, which operates to facilitate migration. The number of agents, lawyers, travel providers and others involved in this industry in Asia has increased and their presence is a major element in sustaining the migration to OECD nations.

Increasing co-operation on migration issues in Asia

Until recently, there has been little co-operation or even dialogue between Asian nations on international migration issues. Migration was seen as the sole concern of individual nations. This however has changed in recent years, partly as a response to 9/11, which saw Asian nations meeting together and co-operating on migration, security and trafficking issues such as in the Bali Process (Hugo 2004). However, dialogue and co-operation has been extended through a number of regional fora like APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the APC (Association for Progressive Communications) (Solomon 2005). While there is little direct co-operation on skilled migration, it is not unreasonable to expect that, as the regional and bilateral dialogues continue, agreements between Asian countries on skilled migration may eventuate.

Conclusion

Asia has been experiencing rapid and profound economic, social and demographic change. The elements outlined above are part of this transformation although their full implications for the future of skilled immigration to OECD nations are not entirely clear. Obviously some would appear to work in favour of such migration and others against it. What is clear is that the situation will not stay the same, nor can Asia be taken for granted to be an almost limitless support of the skilled labour that OECD nations will increasingly need over the next two decades

to maintain their global competitiveness and enhance national prosperity.

At the very least, immigration policy in OECD countries must be developed in full recognition of the changing dynamics within some countries. This has not been a strong point of such policy in the past. Discussing the situation in the United States, Sassen (1989: 828) has put this argument strongly:

The Achilles' heel of US immigration policy has been its insistence on viewing immigration as an autonomous process unrelated to other international processes. It should be clear by now that powerful international forces are at work behind the outflow of emigrants from the developing world and the influx of immigrants into the United States.

This draws attention to the fact that policies relating to international migration must take account of it being an integral part of a complex system of flows and linkages between countries. Policies in OECD countries relating to immigration must be based on an understanding of the context in origin countries and cannot be formulated in isolation from other policies and relationships with those countries.

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TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND WOMEN ON THE MOVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

ABSTRACT

Globalization processes have both accelerated the pace of international migration and diversified its streams, which this article specifically investigates by exploring the developmental impacts of feminized migration (with)in Southeast Asia. Through the twin-contexts of family and nation-state, it advocates a keener awareness of the gendered inequities involved in migration and calls for greater advocacy work.

As the forces of globalization reconfigure the world, labour migration flows have quickened and their nature has changed. New streams of migration have evolved, rapidly transforming the lives of millions and their families whilst inextricably linking the fates of states and societies. Of concern, there has been a growing feminization of many of these flows as a result of changing production and reproduction processes worldwide. First, the globalization-led relocation of production activities from core economies to the low-cost periphery has seen the targeting of cheap, flexible female workers for factory employment in export processing zones in rapidly industrializing countries. Second, opportunities for commercialized reproductive work have motivated other women to migrate to become providers of domestic and sexual services.

Transnational flows of Southeast Asian labour migrants

The unprecedented pace and scale of economic, political, social and demographic change in Asia in recent decades has brought about a parametric increase in population mobility, with Southeast Asia emerging as an important scene of this development. Presenting migrant stock figures *to* and *from* Southeast Asian countries, Table 1 and Table 2 are indicative of this, showing how the region features as both “source” and “destination.”

From the 1990s, there has been a noteworthy shift towards intra-Southeast Asian migration where less developed economies in the region supply surplus labour to fast-growing newly industrializing economies (NIEs) with labour shortages. Migration is thus intrinsically linked to development, as disparities in living standards, capital and labour supply and demand between these nations create the conditions for intra-regional movements. In Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore alone – three major destination countries – there was an estimated 1.3 million foreign workers at the end of 1998 from a number of different countries in the region and beyond.

Amidst these changes in migration flows from and within Southeast Asia, an important trend noted from the 1980s is that Southeast Asian women were increasingly prominent participants of contract labour systems. This “feminization of migration” is primarily due to the increasing demand for labour in the service and entertainment industries from the Middle East and Asia. In the Philippines and Indonesia, not only do women now comprise the majority of migrant workers, most are also employed as domestic workers (and entertainers in the Philippines’ case).

Gendered migration, the family and the nation-state

Gender-differentiated movements are especially significant in societies undergoing developmental change, since these not only reflect gender divisions of labour, but also serve as a template for understanding socio-economic development. Its impacts will be examined below in two ways: first, how gendered labour migration has altered the way households and communities function, in terms of familial relations, the gender division of labour and the traditional balance of power in Southeast Asian societies; second, the way female migrants are (un)incorporated into the nation-state and the challenges of transnational civil society.

Feminized migration and impacts on the “family/household”

The “family” or “household” is becoming a vital unit of analysis in studies of migration impacts, for it is where migration dynamics are most keenly felt, and where roles are constantly reworked

BRENDA S. A. YEOH
Brenda S. A. Yeoh is Professor, Department of Geography, as well as Head of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore. She is also Research Leader of the Asian Migration Research Cluster at the University's Asia Research Institute. Her research interests include the politics of space in colonial and post-colonial cities; and transnational mobilities and globalizing cities. This article was first presented at the 12th International Metropolis Conference in Melbourne, Australia.

Table 1
Stock of registered migrants *in* selected Southeast Asian countries

Destination	Year	Stock	Source
Singapore	2004	621,400	Orozco (2005)
Malaysia	2004	1,470,000	Bloomberg (2005)
Thailand	2004	1,269,074	Asian Migration News (May 15, 2005)
Philippines	2004	9,408	Go (2006: 5)
Indonesia	2004	91,736	Soeprono (2005)

amid changing familial circumstances. The increasing participation of Southeast Asian women in migration has only augmented the need for such a perspective, since women are oftentimes considered the lynchpin of the typical “Asian” family, which, in turn, serves as a traditional institution and bedrock of society. Women’s increasing participation in various labour migration streams – resulting in their long absences from home – thus considerably raises the level of anxiety about the well-being of the “Asian family,” and fuels increasing interest in what would become of it with Southeast Asia’s development.

The detrimental social and emotional consequences reaped by “left-behind” families and dependent members, particularly when the wife/mother is the migrant, has often been highlighted in academic research. In Indonesia, for instance, a higher incidence of mental disorders among women and children, impeded school performance and socio-psychological development among children, and the abandonment of the elderly due to the dwindling “carer generation” have been documented. Yet, these effects are far from predetermined, but depend on the availability of support networks for left-behind families in maintaining resilient family lives. The migrants themselves can still contribute to the durability of the family also, by working actively to maintain a sense of connection with their children through long-distance communication, material goods and financial support. Notwithstanding, whatever the costs and triumphs, establishing and maintaining the family is in itself clearly a form of resistance against the circumstances.

With the dispersal of the family due to migration, remittance flows often feature as an important link between family members located in both “source” and “destination” countries as well. This is significant given that the act of sending remittances of earnings back home is frequently an integral part of the strategy behind migration in Southeast Asia. While remittances generally constitute a valuable

Table 2
Stock of registered migrants *from* selected Southeast Asian countries

Origin	Year	Stock	Source
Malaysia ^a	-	-	-
Thailand	2004	148,596	Chalamwong (2006: 8)
Philippines	2004	933,588	Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (n.d.)
Indonesia	1998	380,173	Nazara (2001: 225)
Vietnam	2004	67,447	Nguyen (2006: 7)

^a Official records for emigration from Malaysia were unavailable.

economic contribution to sustaining the family’s basic necessities, their long-term effects, mitigated by kin obligations, are more contentious. In some cases, the extended family helps to utilize migrant remittances for business investment purposes, thereby facilitating wealth creation for left-behind kin; other households, however, remain trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty even upon the receipt of remittances. It should also be noted that not all members of the left-behind family benefit equally from remittances. In many parts of Southeast Asia, the privileging of male over female offspring often means that the income sent back by young women migrants are channeled to their brothers’ education or migration, excluding the women from similar opportunities for self-improvement.

But for the female migrant, mobility may be seen as a means of female empowerment, especially if increased participation in wage employment, more control over earnings, and greater participation in family decision-making are attained. However, while such spaces for resistance, disruption and emancipation are possible, migration may still leave gender asymmetries largely unchanged, sometimes even deepening women’s subordination. While women migrants, through their work overseas, could theoretically learn skills which they can then bring back to their own countries and households, de-skilling often occurs instead in female migration streams flowing from developing to developed economies. One well-documented case is the employment of thousands of university-educated Filipino women in domestic work in countries like Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In short, the relationship between migration and *improved* gender relations is clearly a moot point, with the position of migrant women improving in some cases, while worsening in others.

Gender-differentiated migration may also lead to altered gendered divisions of labour within the left-behind household, negotiated along the lines of age, gender and the relationships among household members.

Table 3
Composition of migrants in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore

	Indonesia	Philippines	Thailand	China	Bangladesh	Burma	Others	TOTAL
Thailand	-	-	-	-	-	75,091	15,381	90,472
Malaysia	490,550	14,828	7,222	-	224,609	-	37,501	774,710
Singapore	100,000	60,000	60,000	46,000	-	-	184,000	450,000

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2002.

While the migration of male heads may lead to women and children performing tasks traditionally done by men, including agricultural work, the migration of women does not necessarily see men taking on the responsibilities previously assumed by women. Hence, when women respond to the economic pull of new feminized migrant labour streams, they leave gaps in household work which are often picked up by other female family members. Yet, women who are “left behind” in the source area from which *men* migrate may find themselves taking on a wider range of roles and responsibilities, becoming more involved in decision-making processes. In contrast, while being left behind may give women more authority over family governance, it also increases their domestic burdens and overall workloads.

On another front, while migration may lead to the expansion of women’s roles beyond that of “nurturer” to include that of “provider,” the personas of migrant women as daughters, sisters, mothers or wives may not be suspended while they are away, as they continue in these roles transnationally. Indicatively, migrant women oftentimes do not see themselves as replacing any male member of their families economically or otherwise, or deemed their status vis-à-vis men’s as being enhanced by their sojourn. Clearly then, while the question as to whether migration is a strategy of empowerment for Southeast Asian women yields mixed conclusions, it is unlikely that there would be any significant change in women’s identity as lynchpins of the family anytime soon.

Feminized migration, the nation-state and civil society

Increased mobilities in a spatially fluid Southeast Asian world and the feminization of migration present a range of challenges to the national policies of both migrant-sending and receiving countries. With labourers ceaselessly moving in and out of these territorial regimes, nationalisms on the part of Southeast Asian countries have also been re-ignited to strengthen or reconfigure the nation-state. Often, in clarifying the relationship between transnational communities and their “host,” “mainstream” societies, the notion of the migrant “other” is used in the nationalist discourse of the established.

In exploring the links between transnationalism and nation-building projects, feminist scholars have raised crucial issues of nation, state and citizenship, arguing that gendering and racializing of migrant flows have complicated citizenship definitions. Today, citizenship is no longer a clear-cut relationship linking a single state and an individual, but a negotiated relationship shaped by ideologies of gender, race and class operating within and beyond national levels. Being differentially incorporated into the employment and citizenship framework in destination countries, women transmigrants thus often find

themselves accorded few citizen’s and civil rights, being trapped within patriarchal notions of “women’s work” and “women’s place.”

In Asia’s rapidly industrializing nations, female transnational migration is furthermore concentrated in domestic services to fill the reproductive labour gap left by local women absorbed into paid work. Brought in to perform supposedly low-skilled work, migrant women are thus admitted as transient contract workers, rather than subjects of civil society. In Singapore, a range of policy measures have been implemented to ensure that these migrants can gain no permanent foothold in the nation’s geobody; these include tying the validity of their work permits to specific employers, preventing family formation and settlement, prohibiting marriage to Singaporeans, and immediately repatriating the worker if she is found pregnant. By virtue of being a “foreign female domestic,” therefore, not only is the “maid” in Singapore excluded from participation in public spaces but her physical invisibility also signals her exclusion from notions of citizenship and civil society.

It is precisely such policies ensuring the transience of female foreign bodies in the receiving nation-state that, in turn, reinforce the permanence of transnational family forms among them. With little chance of sustainable employment in her home country where she is a citizen, and even less likelihood of becoming an immigrant-turned-citizen in the country of employment, the migrant domestic worker is locked into unending circuits of transnational care, affection, money and material goods in order to sustain the family across borders. In Asia, where the notion of turning immigrants (except the highly skilled) into citizens is unthinkable, marriage to a national of the host country thus presents the unskilled contract worker with the only opportunity of obtaining

secure residential permits, and addressing the shame of domestic work through new national affiliations.

These rules of marginality and “otherness” which operate to keep transmigrant contract workers in their place are moreover refracted through the gendered lenses of the host nation. Consequently, in comparison with their male counterparts, female migrants often find their bodies subject to a more oppressive disciplinary regime, their skills further devalorized, and their spaces even more circumscribed. In Japan, for instance, research has shown that while male migrant workers in construction and manufacturing are often discussed in terms of labour policy, immigrant women working as entertainers are instead framed in terms of morality and policing. This asymmetry further deepens, and naturalizes, the lines of gender inequalities already patent in the host country, even as such transnationalisms fail to transcend the ideological gender bases upon which nationalisms are built.

The unprecedented pace and scale of economic, political, social and demographic change in Asia in recent decades has brought about a parametric increase in population mobility, with Southeast Asia emerging as an important scene of this development.

As for the possibilities of transnational activisms, feminist scholars have been generally wary about overstating their potential. In the first place, activisms, even if transnational, are often rooted in particular local contexts. While transmigrant women may build for themselves new roles and political spaces, it is also clear that through continued connections with their homelands, networks and traditions, they may (re)create the same patriarchal structures in their new homelands. Another challenge lies in the difficulty of performing gender politics locally while tracing the vital connections between different activisms across times and spaces. Such a conception points to the expansion of transnational resistance to a global scale where new alliances between migrant, feminist and other organizations may be envisaged. Yet, if indeed these advocacy networks promise new supranational forms of activisms and political spaces, it is likely that they will continue to have to grapple with the tensions between national and transnational politics.

Conclusion

In Asia's context, it is clear that the gap between male and female mobility is rapidly closing, with female migrants even outnumbering males at times. The issues and challenges that this entails have not been adequately addressed by structures of states, trade and political institutions, and other organizations in civil society. There have thus been strong calls for relevant organizations to collaborate in order to devise rules and mechanisms that would promote a more equitable apportionment of migration's benefits and costs, as well as more resilient protection regimes and safety nets to, particularly, assist vulnerable female migrants.

As a starting point, migration policy in Asia needs to be better informed by stronger research efforts to clarify and valorize the developmental impacts of female migration. This is crucial given that the scale and significance of female migrants' economic contributions have often been underestimated. Beyond this, the negative aspects of female transmigration can only be ameliorated by the concerted efforts of a range of institutions and actors, including politicians and bureaucrats in both sending and receiving countries. These actors must not only show strong political will to carry out much-needed reforms to ensure that the issues feature prominently on both national and international agendas, but also engage in regional dialogue and collaborative agreements which would look beyond economic benefits to the overall welfare of the migrants and their families.

It is also important to see to it that civil society support and vigilance – such as from NGOs, women's groups, labour organizations, think-tanks and churches – are strong and vibrant in partnering with governments and ensuring policy implementation. Involving NGOs also usefully helps surface different perspectives and widen our understanding of the issues involved, while providing avenues to encourage active networking among female migrant workers, thus allowing them to participate as active agents in advocacy work. This has, moreover, the potential to take on transnational dimensions as female contract workers form transnational alliances to negotiate for rights and better working conditions.

Finally, it is crucial to remember that a number of issues embedded in Southeast Asian women's migration go beyond the reach of migration policy. Such areas include social development programmes, such as health care, family law – including domestic violence prevention – and labour legislation and enforcement to minimize the commodification of unskilled migrant women's labour. At the heart of the dilemmas that beset socio-economic development and women's mobility and vulnerability, is hence the need to valorize women's reproductive work, to respect their personhood, to eschew gender stereotypes, and to work towards greater equality in gender relations in what are still largely patriarchal worlds in the region.

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CIRCULAR MIGRATION BETWEEN CHINA AND CANADA: A FOCUS ON THE “RETURN” SEGMENT*

ABSTRACT

This article examines return migration, with a focus on immigrants from the People’s Republic of China to Canada. Using qualitative interviews, the author describes the reasons for return, as well as the potential for future circular migration.

Since 1998, the People’s Republic of China (PRC)¹ has been the top source country of immigration to Canada, replacing Hong Kong’s leading position. The growth has been particularly rapid, rising from 13,309 in 1995 to a peak of 40,363 in 2001 (CIC 2004). During this period, skilled workers have constituted the largest category of immigrants, overshadowing the family immigrant class. The impact of this large and concentrated flow of immigration from a single country within a relatively short period has altered the Canadian landscape in a number of ways, ranging from labour-market changes to societal effects, to settlement service agencies employing Mandarin-speaking staff, to issues of cultural diversity.

While understanding the motivations and settlement experiences of these PRC immigrants is important, there is an interesting counter phenomenon emerging, which is the return migration of highly skilled PRC immigrants from Canada back to China. This circular migration appears to contradict a fundamental assumption of the Canadian immigration model, that integration and permanent settlement follows after arrival. Does return migration indicate a weakness in the immigration system? Has there been a failure of integration that has resulted in immigrants leaving? Or are economic opportunities proving irresistible for these new migrants, just as they are for Canadian-born migrants to China?

Perhaps it is more constructive to think of return movements as being rooted in particular contexts. On a political level, the Chinese State has recently changed its attitude towards returnees, seeing them as a valuable economic resource in terms of human capital and investment. Various State efforts have been set in place to attract returnees, including the establishment of “science parks” and “special development zones” in Chinese cities, as well as recruitment fairs in countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia. Secondly, there is the economic context. Although the Canadian immigration policy may encourage skilled immigration, there may be a gap between the warmth of the State’s welcome and the availability of job opportunities in the local economy. Thirdly, these political and economic developments have been accompanied by a cultural dimension, where resources such as television drama series and websites form a cultural context for imagining return.

Why return?

In recent years, media reports and anecdotal accounts by immigrant service agencies have noted the emergence of a return stream of migrants from Canada to China. However, research on return migration is difficult, as Canada does not collect exit data and therefore, there is a lack of reliable statistical information. For my research, I have adopted a qualitative approach to understand migrants’ motivations for return, as well as their experiences thereafter in China. I conducted interviews with more than 100 respondents in Canada and China, with the aim of having access to a wide breadth of migration experiences and, as far as possible, I sought representation on the criteria of age, gender, marital status, occupation, number of years in Canada and citizenship status.

Among these respondents, the quest for better economic opportunities was the most common reason given for returning to China. Many had faced great difficulties in obtaining employment in Canada commensurate with their education and skills, resulting in the common scenario of former engineers, teachers and doctors working as technicians, factory workers and even dishwashers.

SIN YIH TEO
Sin Yih Teo is a doctoral candidate in Geography at the University of British Columbia. She has written a number of articles on skilled immigration from China to Canada.

Respondents identified three main obstacles hindering their employment: the licensing requirements set by professional associations, the expectation of Canadian credentials and work experience from employers, and English language difficulties.

One respondent, Stanley, had worked as an engineer for seven years in China. He was 30 when he arrived in Toronto in 2000 with his wife. After spending four months searching for a job, he finally found a position as a sales assistant at a major electronics retail store, earning a salary that was dependent on commission. There was a basic salary of \$1,000 but, according to Stanley, “if you received only the basic salary for two months in a row, you would be kicked out.” He worked there for over a year. After his child was born in 2002, he reconsidered his prospects and moved to Vancouver to study for an MBA. By then, he had also decided that he “didn’t see a promising future, not much job opportunity” in Canada, and after completing his MBA, returned to Beijing with his family in 2004, eventually becoming a business development manager for a listed American company. It was with an air of realism that he declared, “The position I’m holding is something I would not be offered in Canada. No matter whether it’s the kind of company, the position, or income, these are impossible in Canada.”

Upon return, however, some respondents found that their prospects were not as rosy as they had imagined. Many found that Chinese society attitudes to returnees had changed. Previously, returnees had frequently been portrayed as successful high fliers who were better paid than locals, and even acquired the term *haigui* (sea turtle) as opposed to the locally educated natives who were termed “land tortoises.” Although this kind of admiration still persists to some extent, there has been a growing scepticism towards returnees in the past few years, such that *haigui* have now been called *haidai* (seaweed), a pun that refers to those returnees unable to find employment. Respondents frequently recounted that unlike the past, when returnees were scarce, employers are now very practical and are less likely to pay more to hire candidates based on their overseas experience alone; instead it was their actual ability that was central.

Another return?

When asked where returnees consider their home to be, a fairly common response was that it is where their family members were. Although working in Shanghai, Chen Shu, 43, considered his home to be in Vancouver, since that was where his wife and son were living, and it was also a place that he liked. Equally, Lindsay, 32, is living in the city of her birth, Shanghai, but feels that it is not her home – at least not until her husband joins her. The experience of having lived in both Canada and China

appears to introduce fluidity to the concept of home, which changes according to the prevailing circumstances.

At the same time, some respondents indicated a preference to locate their home in Canada because it offered a better quality of life. Though they were concentrating on their careers in China, many respondents yearned to spend their twilight years in the more peaceful environment of Canada. For those with children, there were plans to bring them back to Canada either in time for elementary school or high school, depending on how long they felt it would take for the children to be integrated into the education system. Parents varied in their assessment of Canadian elementary education; some prefer what they deem as a more “relaxed” way of learning, while others favoured the relative rigour in Chinese schools, especially in maths and sciences. Also, the time spent in China provided an opportunity for the children to be immersed in Chinese culture and language. The goal, however, was to return in time for the children to be able to study in a Canadian university, which they believe to be superior to a Chinese university. Return to Canada

was also considered as an option in case of future political instability in China. Ultimately, this second return epitomizes how circular migration is determined by both the wider contexts of sending and receiving countries as well as the changing expectations of a migrant over his or her lifetime.

Conclusion

There are two broad policy implications from return, and by extension, circular migration. First, the return of immigrants to their countries of origin may not necessarily mean a permanent departure. Respondents from my research often maintained linkages with Canada, whether with family, friends and ex-colleagues or through Canada-China business dealings, such as in the

trading of goods and the provision of education services. Many professed an interest in returning in the future. Moreover, they revealed a change in personal identity that had resulted from their time in Canada. Most retained their Chinese ethnic identity but often expressed a sentiment of being both Chinese and Canadian in terms of their national identity. It is worth noting that China does not recognize dual citizenship, so once PRC immigrants obtain Canadian citizenship, they are meant to relinquish their Chinese citizenship. For a returnee, this may bring certain inconveniences; however, Canadian citizenship is also valued for the mobility that its passport offers relative to a Chinese one.

Furthermore, formal citizenship may not always reflect the layered nuances of a migrant’s personal identity, yet there are real consequences in its impact on a migrant’s life, such as in deciding their length of stay in order to fulfil the three years minimum residency requirement to obtain citizenship. For many respondents, citizenship became an

The quest for better economic opportunities was the most common reason given for returning to China. Many had faced great difficulties in obtaining employment in Canada commensurate with their education and skills.

objective *after* their arrival in Canada, rather than the main motivation for their initial decision to immigrate to Canada. Rather the hope for personal development, the chance to give their children a better education, and a desire for a different environment, whether social or natural, were the major reasons for their immigration (Teo 2003b). My reason for highlighting this is to demonstrate that an understanding of a migrant's decision-making process is absolutely critical. Otherwise, drawing correlations between citizenship acquisition and migration motivation not only oversimplifies the story, but may also impute a strategic intent that may not have been there in the first place.

By focusing on the return segment in circular migration, I hope to have shown that migration is not always a one-way journey. Rather, it is a dynamic process depending on the changing contexts of nation-states and migrants' personal lives. Essentially, circular migration, like all migrations, is a profoundly human topic, with all the reasons and feelings, complexities and surprises that accompany our everyday lives.

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Notes

* For the purpose of this article, all references to the "People's Republic of China" or "China" exclude Hong Kong.

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MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY*

ABSTRACT

This article examines migration in the context of globalization. The author argues that one of the key challenges in the migration field today is precisely that migration is viewed as a problem and a challenge to national sovereignty. He advocates for the creation of an international body for cooperation on migration issues.

The hunger for skills

After years of stagnation, Germany's economy finally began to grow again in 2006, but shortages of electrical and mechanical engineers soon threatened to stall the boom. The solution? Employers lobbied Chancellor Angela Merkel to allow the recruitment of skilled personnel from Eastern Europe and elsewhere. In August 2007, Merkel announced a relaxation of immigration rules. Moreover, foreigners graduating from German universities would be allowed to stay on – if they had the right skills. Germany was merely following the example of Australia, Canada and the United States, which all have privileged immigration rules for highly skilled workers.

After a long period of “zero immigration” policies, Europe is becoming more aware of its labour needs. Health services in the United Kingdom have long been dependent on the recruitment of doctors and nurses from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Now other sectors are competing for migrants. In 2006, the British Government announced a new points-based system to bring in “migrants who are highly skilled to do key jobs that cannot be filled from the domestic labour force or from the EU.” France's 2006 Immigration and Integration Law (known as the *Loi Sarkozy*) had a similar thrust. Germany too is considering a points system to recruit the “brightest and best” from around the world.

Exploitable labour: contract workers and irregular migrants

Something unprecedented happened in Dubai in March 2006: foreign workers building the world's tallest building demonstrated against low wages, squalid dormitories, and dangerous conditions. Their main grievance was that employers often simply refused to pay wages. Dubai is one of the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, where the migrant workforce – mainly from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh – far outnumbers the local population. Lack of workers' rights, prohibition of unions and fear of deportation have forced migrant workers to accept exploitative conditions. Women migrants, who often work as domestic helpers, are especially vulnerable.

Around the world, expanding economies rely on migrant workers to do what Asians call the “3-D jobs” – dirty, difficult and dangerous. Many low-skilled workers are irregular (or illegal) migrants. Malaysia has 2.6 million foreign workers (12% of its workforce), of whom 1 million are estimated to be irregular. Japan has strict rules limiting labour migration, yet has 200,000 irregular migrant workers. The situation is similar in other fast-growing Asian economies.

Yet, the main magnets for irregular migrants are western countries. The American agriculture industry has relied on Mexican migrants since the 1940s. Today the United States is officially estimated to have 12 million irregular immigrants, who play a crucial role in industry and services in nearly every state. The U.S. Congress recently rejected a plan for “earned legalization” of migrants with good work records. Instead they decided to plough billions into new border fences and surveillance equipment. But the wall along the border with Mexico has not stopped migration from the South. Rather, it has raised the death rate – some 500 migrants a year die in the deserts of Arizona and Texas – and provided a financial bonus to the *coyotes* (people smugglers) who charge desperate migrants US\$1,000 a head.

Experts put the number of irregular migrants in the European Union (EU) at between 4 and 7 million. In 2005, a European Commission Green Paper stated that EU member states had labour shortages in “the full range of qualifications – from unskilled workers to academic professionals.” European governments rushed to liberalize rules for migrant professionals, but refused to recognize the need for less-skilled workers. Fear of a backlash from a public hostile to immigration meant that new workers for building, catering, hospitals and aged care would mainly be irregular migrants. In 2006, there were red faces at the United Kingdom Home Office when newspapers discovered that many of its office cleaners were irregular migrants. Throughout Europe, hiring of irregular migrants

STEPHEN CASTLES

Stephen Castles is Senior Researcher at the International Migration Institute, and Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies at the University of Oxford. He has carried out research on migration and multicultural societies in Europe, Australia and Asia.

through chains of sub-contractors allows mainstream employers to turn a blind eye.

Globalization and migration

International migration is changing rapidly, as a result of major economic, technological and cultural shifts. One way in which globalization drives migration is by increasing economic inequality. The wage differential between American and Mexican workers is about 11:1. Between European and African workers it can be as much as 40:1. Inequality within countries has also grown, and often it is migrant workers (and especially migrant women) who get the lowest wages.

Demography is another area of change. Low fertility in European countries leads to shrinking workforces, which have to support more aged persons. Japan too has a fast-ageing population, and new industrial countries like Singapore and Korea are experiencing a rapid decline in fertility. By contrast, less-developed areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America still have fast population growth, and few job opportunities for young labour market entrants. Migration seems to meet a mutual need.

Globalization also transforms technology and culture. Electronic media beam idealized images of western lifestyles into the poorest villages, encouraging people to move. Cheaper air transport makes migration easier. The use of mobile phones and the Internet facilitates the growth of migrant networks. First-time movers can rely on prior migrants from their community to help find accommodation and jobs.

Facilitating migration has become a new global industry worth billions of dollars. Labour recruiters, travel agents, job brokers, lawyers and landlords all make their living by organizing mobility – even when states try to stop it. Much of the “migration industry” is legal, but there is also a criminal element involved in trafficking of modern-day slaves – especially women and children for the sex industry.

From global economy to global society?

Globalization has meant the elimination of national barriers to investments and trade: production is carried out wherever the factors of production – including labour – are cheapest. But movements of finance and commodities are closely linked to flows of workers. The result is a global labour force that is segmented on the basis of origins, ethnicity, gender and legal status.

Governments like to recruit temporary migrant workers who keep the wheels turning, but don't stay. That was the rationale of Europe's guestworker systems in the 1970s, and it is still the principle of contract labour schemes in the Middle East or Asia. But such systems tend to break down, because workers are people with social and cultural needs. No migration is just economic – it always changes society too.

In the past, migration often meant a once-in-a-lifetime move, followed by assimilation into a host society. Today new communication technologies make it possible

for migrants to maintain business relationships, religious practices and social contacts across large distances. Migrants form “transnational communities,” with a sense of belonging to several places. This is a challenge for nation-states still based on the idea of singular loyalties.

Even countries that see themselves as culturally homogenous find that globalization brings change. A few years ago, Japanese social scientists noted that local women were reluctant to marry farmers, who increasingly sought their brides through marriage brokers in the Philippines and Thailand. Today, bride migration has become important in rural areas of Korea, Taiwan, China and India too. Foreign mothers pass on their cultures to their children, which can help change traditional values.

The governance vacuum

The key problem of migration today is precisely that it is seen as a problem – something exceptional and threatening. Other types of cross-border flows are seen as normal aspects of globalization and themes for international cooperation. For all their flaws, organizations like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund do represent a step towards global governance. There is no parallel for migration. Controlling cross-border movement is still seen as part of national sovereignty. Rich countries can plunder the scarce skilled personnel of poor countries and impose strict limits on low-skilled migrants, without any concern for the interests of migrants and their homelands.

Yet there are pressures for cooperation. Efficient labour markets require the rule of law and rights for workers. Security concerns since 2001 have increased the pressure for regulated migration. In 2006, the United Nations hosted the first-ever High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. This led to the establishment of a Global Forum on Migration and Development, which met for the first time in Brussels in July 2007. So far, these are merely symbolic acts, but they may be first steps on the way to genuine cooperation between migrant-sending and receiving states.

What I'd like to see

If I were to make a policy recommendation, it would be the creation of a “World Migration Organization” with the tasks of promoting standards based on recognition of the human rights of migrants and their families and helping to match global labour demand with supply. This could eliminate exploitative irregular migration, and provide a forum for cooperation between migrant-sending countries migrant associations, and labour-importing countries.

Note

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ON CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN MIGRATION AND WORST-CASE SCENARIOS

ABSTRACT

This article provides readers with a taste of some of the concerns being discussed by scholars and policy-makers over the potential impacts of climate change on human population movements, and emphasizes the need for greater involvement by demographers and migration scholars in the field of climate change impact and adaptation research.

In February 2008, I attended a two-day conference in London with the self-explanatory title “Living with climate change: Are there limits to adaptation?” Organized by the United Kingdom’s Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, the conference featured presentations from leading researchers preoccupied with how we shall adapt to the increasingly inevitable impacts of human-induced climate change. Unlike many academic conferences, there was a long waiting list of people seeking to be in the audience, many of whom were turned away. Presentations covered topics as diverse as how Inuit in Canada’s Nunavut are adapting to shrinking sea ice and how climate-related changes in migratory bird patterns may increase the risk of an avian flu pandemic among humans.

The evening keynote speaker was the United Kingdom government’s chief advisor on climate change science, who spoke of the need to know how human migration patterns will respond to the impacts of climate change. More specifically, he wanted to know if, when and how many people around the world may become environmental refugees as a result of climate change. My presentation the following day gave an overview of my recent empirical research into how household migration decisions are made during times of climatic stress, how rapid demographic change can undermine a community’s adaptive capacity, and how geographical information systems can be used to trace drought-related migration. It undoubtedly came as a disappointment to the science advisor, it being a dry and detached review of methods and issues directed more at my fellow academics than at answer-seeking policy-makers.

This conference was not the first occasion at which the need for better information on climate change-related migration has been raised; both the most recent assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹ (Adger et al. 2007) and the *Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change*² (Stern 2007) have made similar statements. Nor is the concern about climate change triggering large-scale migrations a new one; the suggestion has appeared in scientific journal articles for more than two decades now. However, it appears that calls for more research are becoming louder and more voluminous than at any time previously.

There are a number of possible explanations for this; I will suggest three. The first is that there has been considerable sharpening in recent years of the scientific understanding of how the Earth’s climate functions, and how anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and ongoing reduction of the Earth’s forests modify climatic processes. Scientists are becoming increasingly confident that changes currently being observed in many regions – such as shrinking sea ice and melting permafrost in the Arctic, the rapid retreat of mountain glaciers worldwide, and slow but steady increases in sea surface temperatures and mean sea levels – cannot be explained away as being solely due to the inherent, natural variability of climate. As understanding of the biophysical aspects of climate change has improved, governments have started to recognize that there will be consequences for human well-being, and decisions will need to be made in the not-so-distant future. Consequently, policy-makers now demand more information on options for adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Scholarly research has shown that climate change adaptation can be undertaken at any scale, from the individual or household right up to the international community as a whole (Smit and Wandel 2006). Some socio-economic and resources sectors (such as agriculture, water, fisheries and health) have received greater attention than others. Northern regions and developing countries – whose populations are widely believed to be especially vulnerable to climate change-related risks –

ROBERT MCLEMAN

Robert McLeeman is Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Ottawa. His research focuses on how human well-being is affected by environmental conditions and change, and places a special emphasis on generating information and advice for public policy-makers. His current research includes a multi-year study of drought-related migration that includes the development of computer models for identifying high-risk areas.

have also been the focus of a growing number of adaptation studies. As knowledge of adaptation processes in these areas and sectors continually improves, it has become increasingly evident that migration is one of the ultimate forms of adaptation to which households may resort when other adaptation options fail.

A second driver of current interest in climate change-related migration has its origins in the media. The Hollywood disaster movie *The Day After Tomorrow* (with its spectacular if physically impossible images of people fleeing a quick-frozen New York City) and Al Gore's inescapable and shrewdly-titled *An Inconvenient Truth* have done more for creating public awareness of climate change than did decades of scientific reporting. At the same time, there has been a continuous stream of commentaries in the print media and on talk radio juxtaposing climate change "believers" against climate change "skeptics," in much the same style that evolution and creationism are periodically offered up as competing "theories" of human origins.

One outcome of this dynamic has been a desire within the media and in the press releases of many environmental organizations to ascribe extreme weather conditions, droughts, storms and any number of other natural events as being the direct results of climate change. Where once Hurricane Katrina, California wildfires or droughts in the southeastern United States would have been declared "acts of God," they are now presented as evidence that global warming is upon us. This in turn has led journalists to anoint at least four different groups in areas as distant from one another as Alaska and New Guinea as being the first official climate change refugees (McLeman and Smit 2006a); in each case a population near the ocean shore has had to be relocated inland due to erosion or storm surges threatening built infrastructure.

This lack of criticality in attributing undesirable events to climate change extends to a third driver of climate-migration discussion, that being the preoccupation of western governments with security. Security in this context takes on two forms – what Americans refer to as "homeland security" (the prevention of terrorist acts on home soil, in other words) and "failed states" (areas where conflicts emerge that break down civil governance and require outside intervention to resolve). In both instances, there is an anxiety that the impacts of climate change may become a driver of security risks, especially in less-developed and conflict-prone areas. A few years ago, a Pentagon-commissioned study of worst-case scenarios projected such possibilities as large-scale displacements of populations, international movements of environmental refugees and the potential need for American intervention in a number of regions (Schwartz and Randall 2003). The military intelligence community is not alone in making worrisome projections about the future

impacts of climate change on global migration patterns; a variety of academic researchers and non-governmental organizations have issued warnings to expect widespread famine, political instability and anywhere up to a billion environmental refugees by the middle of this century (see McLeman 2008).

The environmental security literature that sees climate change leading to large-scale violence in developing nations often underestimates the power of local institutions to resolve conflicts without violence. It also often overlooks the many windows of opportunity for international development assistance, diplomacy and trade partnerships to mitigate the development of political and economic instability. While the conflicts in Darfur and Rwanda are often described as having environmental degradation and resource scarcity featured in their origins, severe environmental stressors have existed and do currently exist in many parts of the world where they have *not* led to outbreaks of violence. Why the difference? Resource competition led to violent conflict in Darfur because the government of Sudan encouraged violence; powerful elites played a similar role in Rwanda. In other words, there is no

predetermined ecological inevitability stating that when scarcity occurs, violence is the only possible outcome.³

The types of risks associated with climate change are clearly severe, and it is *possible* that millions, hundreds of millions or more may eventually be displaced from their homes as an outcome. But are such outcomes likely? In reviewing existing climate change migration literature specifically, or environmental refugee literature more generally, one routinely finds that the research is underlain by facile "push-pull" explanations of migration behaviour and that the empirical foundation is thin (McLeman and Smit 2006b). Many of the exciting

developments in migration and demographic research made in recent years have been slow to percolate into climate change scholarship. This is not entirely surprising; academic disciplines, like government departments, are silos whose occupants do not always communicate very well with the occupants of neighbouring silos. Also, the climate change research silo has tended to be populated by large numbers of natural scientists whose backgrounds in demographic and human migration science may be limited.

In my own relatively brief research career, I have focused on developing theoretically grounded empirical research on human migration behaviour, targeted at the climate change and environmental security research communities and the policy-makers who draw upon their expertise. I have been particularly interested by events in living memory where climatic conditions have played a contributory role in stimulating migration (the 1930s Dust Bowl migration in the United States, for example), seeing such events as analogues from which to learn about the complex interrelationship of environmental conditions, human well-being and household migration behaviour

Scholarly research has shown that climate change adaptation can be undertaken at any scale, from the individual or household right up to the international community as a whole.

(McLeman 2006). I am also interested in how demographic change in rural areas due to out-migration of young, skilled workers affects the capacity of those who remain behind to adapt to changing climatic conditions. My particular concern is for those who live in geographically isolated or marginal areas and for communities in developing nations, who are vulnerable to the risks associated with climate change but enjoy none of the benefits of the west's unmitigated fossil fuel-based production and consumption.

As much as we might like to wish it away, anthropogenic climate change and environmental degradation are poised to become overriding influences on migration patterns in coming decades. The impacts of climate change are being felt right now, and not just in the Arctic and developing countries. I am currently wrapping up a research project in an area of eastern Ontario, between Ottawa and Toronto, where rapid changes in climatic conditions are already being experienced.⁴ Such changes are having observable impacts on the economic and social well-being of the local population. Small businesses that depend on winter tourism for revenues are hurting due to milder, less snowy winters, while increased frequency of localized extreme windstorms leads to increased property damage, power failures and risk of personal injury. These and other local changes in climatic conditions are real, not hypothetical, and they undermine the future potential of the small communities of the region. These communities already see many of their brightest young people migrate to urban centres in search of higher education and better job opportunities; I fear, as do they, that the negative impacts of climate change will further erode the quality of life in the area and exacerbate this out-migration.

In writing this article, my goal was to provide readers who have expertise in human migration behaviour, demography and related fields a taste of some of the issues being discussed in the climate change research community and that might interest them. I hope this article might encourage such readers and young migration scholars still developing their future research programs to engage with the climate change research community in the future. Your expertise is much needed. There is any number of insights and discoveries waiting to be made. There is much hubris to be dispelled, much clarity to be brought to critical debates about how climate change will influence human migration patterns. You will have the ear of policy-makers in

Europe (immediately) and in North America (inevitably). These are convenient truths.

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Notes

- ¹ The international body of scientists that reports to the world's policy-makers on ongoing development in climate change science.
- ² Headed by former World Bank chief economist Nicholas Stern.
- ³ For further discussion see Brown, Hammill and McLeman (2007).
- ⁴ Project website: <www.addington.uottawa.ca>.

NEW MIGRATION TRENDS: ENVIRONMENTALLY INDUCED MIGRATION

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the effects of environmental degradation and climate change on the movement of people. It focuses, in particular, on the most vulnerable regions and geographic areas, and discusses the notion of “environmental migrants.”

The environment and migration are both issues of high prominence on national and international political agendas. However, while environmental degradation, climate change and migration themselves are certainly not novel for the international community, their complex interrelations have not been studied sufficiently in an empirical and comprehensive way so as to better understand and address the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on people’s livelihoods and population movements while meeting the urgency of the challenges posed.

This article takes a closer look at how environmental degradation and climate change impact people’s livelihoods and contribute to, or directly cause, the movement of populations. This article focuses, in particular, on the regions, areas and communities that are most vulnerable in the face of adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. We also look at the on-going debate over the term and notion of “environmental migrants.” Some possible policy responses to the management of environmentally induced migration will be explored.

A debated notion

To begin with, significant debate persists, both in academic and policy circles, over the concepts employed, the underlying mechanisms involved, the urgency and magnitude of the challenges faced and possible policy responses to climate change and environmental degradation. Most notable, perhaps, are conflicting views about the definition and status of persons opting for or forced to migrate for environment-related reasons.

The term “environmental refugee,” first coined by Lester Brown in the 1970s and widely quoted since, is a misnomer. The 1951 *United Nations Refugee Convention* defines as refugees “people outside of their own country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion.” There is no suggestion today that displacement as a result of environmental factors constitutes persecution, except in extremely limited and unlikely circumstances. Moreover, there is no definition in international law for persons moving as a result of environmental factors. Indeed, people rarely move for a single reason alone: economic and environmental factors often arise in combination. The Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) itself has expressed concern over the term “environmental refugees” as it could blur the responsibility of governments towards their citizens and result in diluting emphasis on the distinctive need of refugees for protection.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has proposed a working definition of “environmental migrants” as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad” (Brown 2008: 15). The purpose of this working definition is to focus attention and emphasis on the needs and conditions of environmental migrants, rather than on likely contentious legal definitions with implications for status.

Contextualizing climate change, environmental degradation and migration

The face of climate change

Throughout its existence, the earth has experienced numerous evolutions between warm and cold periods (including orbital variations, solar fluctuations, volcanic activity, to name just a few).

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The International Organization for Migration works to promote, facilitate and support discussion on migration issues. It offers expert advice, research, technical cooperation and operational assistance to states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and stakeholders, as well as support for those who require international migration assistance.

The changes we are witnessing today, however, are occurring at a much more rapid pace, with stronger magnitudes and patterns as yet not entirely explicable by natural cycles. Average global surface temperatures – a key measure of climate change – have arguably been the highest in any 50-year period for the past 1,300 years. Over the past 100 years, the earth has warmed by 0.7°C (Watkins 2007: 31).

Human-induced climate change results primarily from the alteration of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. By increasing the greenhouse effects of naturally occurring atmospheric trace gases, human activity further enhances them, leading to accelerated global warming. For example, with the doubling of carbon dioxide, the globe is estimated to warm by 1.9°C to 4.4°C.

Some of the main *natural causes of climate change* are the following: volcanic eruptions, solar variability, and El Niño Southern and North Atlantic oscillations (Kniveton et al. 2008: 14)

The meteorological impacts of climate change can be divided into two distinct groups of drivers of migration: first, *climate processes* – such as sea-level rise, salinization of arable land, desertification and growing water scarcity; second, *climate events* – such as storms and floods. Each of these two groups has a specific impact on the movement of people, with events displacing entire populations suddenly and mostly unpredictably, and processes displacing communities, households or individual people over the course of a time period that extends far beyond usual migratory patterns in a given region. In addition, it should be emphasized that non-climate related drivers of migration, such as government policies, changes in demographics, community-level resilience to natural disasters, to name a few, are also relevant determinants (Brown 2008: 9)

The impact of climate change on human mobility

As early as 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated that the greatest single impact of climate change might be on human migration – with millions of people displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and agricultural disruption. The 2001 *World Disasters Report of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* estimated the number of what they referred to as “environmental refugees” at 25 million persons that year (Ibid.: 11). All in all, forecasts of the number of persons having to move or being displaced due to climate change and environmental degradation by 2050 varies from 25 million to 1 billion, with the most widely quoted figure of 200 million suggested by Norman Meyers (Ibid.). The wide variation among these figures is a clear indicator of the need for further evidence-based research on environmentally induced migration.

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The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2007/2008* featured an overview of key transmission mechanisms through which climate change could stall and even reverse human development (Watkins 2007: 9-10):

Agricultural production and food security. Climate change will affect rainfall, temperature and water availability for agriculture in vulnerable areas....The additional number of persons affected by malnutrition could rise to 600 million by 2080...

Water stress and water insecurity. Changed run-off patterns and glacial melt will add to ecological stress....An additional 1.8 million people could be living in a water scarce environment by 2080...

*Rising sea levels and exposure to climate disasters....*Global temperature increases of 3-4°C could result in 330 million people being permanently or temporarily displaced through flooding [in coastal areas prone to such disasters already. Cumulative vulnerability will increase in proportion.]...

Ecosystems and biodiversity. Climate change is already transforming ecological systems....With 3°C of warming, 20-30 percent of land species could face extinction...

*Human health....*greatest health impacts will be felt in developing countries because of high levels of poverty and the limited capacity of public health systems to respond. Major killer diseases could

expand their coverage...

Put simply, by making certain parts of the world significantly less “viable,” climate change and environmental degradation will cause major population movements. However, as elaborated below, migration is rarely driven only by an environmental “push” linked to a slow onset climate process. Except for cases of extreme environmental events, where people flee for their lives, the decision to migrate is usually also based on a combination of “pull” factors (environmental, social and economic, to name just a few) (Brown 2008: 19).

Towards a better understanding of the complex linkages between climate change and migration

According to the most recent volume of the *IOM Migration Research Series*, conclusive evidence on how the shocks and stresses caused by climate change might

influence migration is not yet available (Kniveton et al. 2008: 6). The extent to which migration occurs in response to the various types of climate stresses and shocks remains to be verified. However, such an analysis needs to take into account that individuals, households and communities alike may opt for migration as just *one* of the many possible strategies in response to climate-induced stress and shocks. In addition, climate change should be considered as just one among many other factors impacting migration decisions. In view of this, further analysis is needed on how relevant the climate change factor is in decision-making as well as how (and whether at all) climate change and/or environmental degradation influences the choice of destination, the length of stay and the number of people migrating (Ibid.: 7).

As IOM research suggests, there are two principal approaches to understanding the linkages between climate stimuli and migratory behaviour. First, there is the *sustainable livelihoods approach*, which aims at explaining the possible responses of households to external vulnerabilities in terms of their natural, physical, financial, human and social assets and different coping strategies. Second, there is the *new economics of labour migration approach*, which explores the reasons for migration at the individual level and in the context of household decision-making. Another step in attempting to assess the climate change-migration linkages (following the process of understanding how people cope with the different types of adverse climate change effects) involves “quantitative methods of statistical regression and agent-based modelling in order to integrate the multiple variables involved in migration and vary the values of these to obtain simulations of future migration patterns” (Ibid.: 7).

Vulnerability distribution: The mapping challenge

In terms of vulnerabilities, it is unfortunately the developing countries, including the least developed countries and *small island developing states* – often the ones least responsible for man-made climate change – and within them, the most vulnerable communities, that are at the greatest risk of suffering from the adverse effects of climate change. According to some estimates, developing countries suffer 98% of the casualties of natural disasters.

Geographically, South and East Asia, parts of Africa such as the Sahel region, and small islands states around the world are the hardest hit. In particular, warming is likely to be above the global average throughout sub-Saharan Africa, eastern Asia and South Asia. In many water-scarce regions, climate change is expected to further reduce water availability through increased frequency of droughts as well as increased evaporation and changes in patterns of rainfall and runoff (Watkins 2007: 90).

Six of Asia’s ten mega-cities are located in coastal areas (including Tokyo and Shanghai), which makes the region’s communities especially vulnerable to sea level rise. Moreover, “By the 2050s, freshwater availability in Central, South, East and South-East Asia...is projected to decrease” (IPCC 2007: 11). In Africa – a continent of low adaptive capacity and heavy dependence on arable lands – three-quarters of agricultural drylands are already degraded to some extent, with 70% of the poor living in rural dryland areas (Leighton 2008). Major threats on this continent are posed by changed patterns of rainfall, desertification and land erosion. An estimated 10 million people have been displaced in Africa over the last two decades, while 60 million people are expected to move from desertified areas of sub-Saharan Africa toward North Africa and Europe by 2020, according to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (Kalbermatten 2008).

Small island states have been facing increasing threat for decades as a result of rising sea levels because much of their territory is at an altitude of just a few meters above sea level. Moreover, many island states are characterized by

relatively high levels of development and important density of populations near their coastlines. In addition, other adverse effects of climate change are also having an impact on the environment and livelihoods of the populations of these islands. By way of example, Cape Verde is currently undergoing vast desertification and has an established migratory tradition with close to half of the overall population living abroad (either in the region – with Senegal as the main destination – or in developed countries, mostly in the United States and in Canada), while Haiti is facing massive out-migration due to environmental degradation.

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Climate change, environmental degradation and human security

Today, almost 2 billion people in the world depend on fragile ecosystems in arid and semi-arid areas with 90% of them living in the developing world where increasing ecological stresses are threatening livelihoods (Ibid.). In particular, *coastal communities* and mostly poor *rural communities* – largely reliant on arable lands – are the groups facing the most imminent threats resulting from climate change.

Rural households in developing countries most often rely on natural resources sensitive to climate change, such as water supplies and arable land as well as on activities such as arable farming. Some of the implications of climate change for the availability of these natural resources can be seen in decreasing soil fertility, in subsequent lower levels of crop yields, in less viable grazing areas, and in dropping levels of firewood and fishery production – all of which further strain the already limited livelihood options for rural households. In Southern Africa, for example, yields from

rainfed agriculture are expected to fall by as much as 50% between 2000 and 2020, according to the IPCC Working Group (Watkins 2007: 91).

Rural regions in Latin America are also likely to be affected. In the drier parts of the region, climate change is expected to bring about increases in the saline content of the soil, which reduces crop productivity. With the increasing level of aridness of previously productive land, the continent could also experience greater desertification.

Desertification linked to many factors such as dropping rainfalls and advancing sands has especially dire implications for *subsistence farmers and pastoralists*, increasing incidences of poverty – a key determinant of migration. The sectors of food production and agricultural employment are particularly affected by desertification, directly impacting people's livelihoods. Hence, as a result of declining incomes from agriculture, individuals, families and communities are forced to consider alternative employment options, often in other sectors, and often through migration as an adaptation strategy.

Populations of coastal areas residing at an altitude of less than 1 meter above current sea level are considered directly vulnerable to rising sea levels. A prominent study estimates the size of this group at a considerable 146 million people (Piguet 2008). Mainly concentrated near the major rivers and deltas, the flood zones are very densely populated in South and East Asia. These two regions account for 75% of the population at risk from this phenomenon. The increase in sea levels is arguably the aspect of global warming posing the greatest direct threat to numerous populations (Ibid.).

Cumulative group vulnerability refers to a state of relative disadvantage of a group due to multiple levels of socio-economic limitations and stresses. For example, the poor and less-skilled populations, in addition to residing in vulnerable areas (rural or coastal), are generally most affected by the adverse impacts of climate change given their strained resources and limited options for successful local adaptation. They frequently lack (formal or informal) insurance to limit the impact of environmental shocks, and are also likely to face greater obstacles to internal and international labour mobility, due to their limited access to labour markets.

The capacity and strategies of the most vulnerable groups to address and adapt to climate change are further restricted by various forms of discrimination, injustice and social marginalization. For example, women will tend to be more heavily affected by climate change than men. In many societies where women are traditionally responsible for collecting water, their role is directly dependent on weather conditions. In addition, there are a great number of countries (mostly poor) where women are disproportionately represented in agriculture – with this sector possibly hardest hit. Groups of indigenous people, the elderly, the disabled as well as orphans are also at a greater risk. For example, in Alaska, four coastal indigenous communities (Shishmaref, Kivalina, Shaktoolik and Newtok) are currently faced with a critical situation because of their geographic location on the west coast of Alaska and dozens of others are at risk. Climate-induced sea-level rise and the reduction of sea ice are

leading to stronger storm surges and to the erosion of the land on which these communities are situated, forcing the population to relocate. The only available option is migration as there is no higher or distant ground where the communities could move in order to avoid the erosion. Detrimental impacts include those affecting infrastructure and their indigenous way of life (Bronen 2008).

To move or not to move: Is that the question?

The decision for a household to opt for migration as a coping strategy, as well as the form and duration of the migration itself, are dependent on a number of factors, including the following (IOM-MPRC 2008: 28):

- *Economic factors*, such as differences in available financial resources, security of land tenure, relocation costs and employment opportunities in the area of destination;
- *Social factors*, such as family composition, level of social mobility and education;
- *Cultural factors*, such as differences in the cultural costs of moving.

Moreover, those who choose to migrate abroad tend to move to places with existing linguistic, cultural or ethnic ties. Likewise, intercontinental migration may often follow pre-existing paths and/or former colonial relationships. Thus, France is likely to be a destination for migrants from francophone West Africa (Senegal and Mali, for example), while the United Kingdom may be attractive for Pakistanis, West Indians, Nigerians, Ghanaians, etc. (Brown 2008: 23-24). However, it should be remembered that migration is normally *not* the first adaptive response by households and individuals to stresses of climate change, but is rather an option to which they will resort when other means of adaptation are insufficient to meet their basic and immediate needs (Ibid.: 22).

According to some estimates, environmentally induced population movement is largely expected to be internal, as migrants are likely to move, for example, from arable regions or fishable coastal areas within their country. In Burkina Faso, for instance, residents of dry, rural areas are likely to migrate to rural regions with greater rainfall (Hunter 2008). International migration tends to be less common in a period of rainfall shortage, perhaps partly because of the investment required for an international move. In any event, both internal and international environmentally induced migration can take temporary, seasonal or permanent forms.

In some cases, entire households migrate on a short-term basis, waiting for the environmental conditions back home to improve. This applies more specifically to regions where environmental degradation is still reversible. In other cases, some household members migrate, while others stay behind to care for the local livelihoods and property. In particular, young men may be the first to migrate, leaving women in charge of the families and homes left behind. Migrants who find work in destination areas or countries often send parts of their salaries to their families, who may use these remittances for, among other

things, purchasing substitutes for goods previously produced or harvested from the local environment (Ibid.).

While temporary migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change is already a standard practice in many regions, the possibility of actually migrating continues to depend heavily on resources and mobility. This often prevents the poorest members of the community from being prepared and able to migrate. However, where environmental degradation, both man-made and induced by climate change, is particularly persistent and irreversible, migration can become permanent (IOM-MPRC 2008: 28).

Regardless of the varying statistics and models and despite the lack of consensus with regard to terminology, a number of authors have attempted to quantify the potential flows of environmental migrants for the next decades. These efforts are further hindered by the fact that most of this migration is internal, and information on internal migration is even less readily available and reliable than information on international migration. Already in 1994, the *Almeria Statement* estimated that 135 million people are potentially at risk of being displaced as a consequence of severe desertification (Renaud et al. 2007: 17). According to Meyers, 25 million people in 1995 had migrated for environmental reasons, with this number possibly rising to 50 million by 2010 (Ibid.).

The challenge of adequately differentiating between direct and indirect causal links between migration, environmental degradation and climate change is faced by researchers and policy-makers alike.

Towards an integrated and comprehensive approach to environmentally induced migration

Climate change has an increasingly significant impact on the livelihoods of a growing number of persons, at times posing a threat to their very existence – their fundamental human right to life. Though migration is, for now, just one among many response options to climate stresses, it is gaining importance and magnitude given the swelling numbers of environmentally induced migrants and the comparatively low levels of adaptive capacity of the regions most deeply affected. Moreover, mass migration caused by climate change has various further implications for human well-being such as, for example, the potential of conflict over already scarce natural resources in the area of destination, lack of basic health care services, severe impediments to development, and perhaps, most importantly, the direct threat to basic human rights. Put simply, the *urgency* of the need for action is undisputable.

First and foremost, there is a need for more coordinated and effective interstate and multi-stakeholder cooperation at all levels to address the above-mentioned challenges with countries of origin and destination playing a key role. Civil society, the private sector and

non-governmental organizations, in particular, have an important contribution to make, especially in the area of capacity building. In particular, steps should be taken to coordinate efforts of the humanitarian and environmental communities in managing environmentally induced migration through interagency cooperation, dialogue and experience sharing. It is essential for migration issues to be integrated into climate change-related discussions and policies, instead of being considered as an ancillary issue or a negative side effect. We are talking about the future of mankind, nothing less.

Furthermore, there is a need for more policy-oriented and interdisciplinary research in the field with the focus on understanding the causal links and impacts between climate change and migration, as well as current and future scenarios of migratory flows.

Finally, greater comprehensiveness is required for tackling these issues to cover emergency relief and humanitarian assistance as well as preparedness and long-term planning. The strategies aimed at forecasting and preventing major population movements due to severe environmental degradation will need to include observatories and early-warning mechanisms. As for coping mechanisms, mitigation and adaptation strategies should be further developed. The latter might usefully target dry land areas where desertification and migration are underway but not yet established as a pattern. They could also aim at developing the adaptation capacity of people in rural areas (drylands) to alleviate climate impacts as well as improving infrastructure in poor rural areas with the aim to limit the push factors. In particular, support (both financial and through capacity building) should target developing countries – with a focus on the least

developed countries – and their populations in order to strengthen their coping capacities and improve the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

To this end, IOM and several partners, including the UN Environment Programme and the UN University, are launching an Alliance on Migration and the Environment to promote critically needed research and direct project interventions now, to help keep today's migratory pressures resulting from gradual environmental degradation from becoming tomorrow's massive human displacement from extreme environmental events, resulting in huge losses of life, livelihoods and major setbacks for sustainable development.

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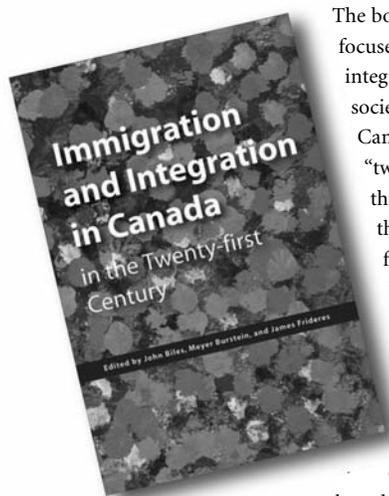
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Contributors include: Christopher G. Anderson, McGill University; Chedly Belkodia, Université de Moncton; John Biles, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Metropolis Project; Jerome H. Black, McGill University; Meyer Burstein, International Consultant; Hélène Destrempe, Université de Moncton; John Foote, Policy Research Group, Department of Canadian Heritage; James Frideres, University of Calgary; M. Sharon Jeannotte, Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa; Jack Jedwab, Association for Canadian Studies; Minelle Mahtani, University of Toronto; Patricia Rimok, Conseil des relations interculturelles, gouvernement du Québec; Ralph Rouzier, Conseil des relations interculturelles, gouvernement du Québec; Marjorie Stone, Dalhousie University; Arthur Sweetman, Queen's University; Casey Warman, Queen's University.

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