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TRENDS AND ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION*

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In recent years, international migration has become so complex in composition and direction to be hardly recognizable as the well-known phenomenon of the inter-war years. It has also been the most neglected area of population studies,[1] most demographers having directed their attention to aspects of fertility and mortality, the determinants of natural increase. While the relatively few scholars who have maintained an abiding interest in international migration would readily concur that it is by far the minor determinant of population growth in most countries, they would also argue that the qualitative aspects of recent flows have

*Much of the data included, and argument developed, in this paper were first presented to a workshop on International Migration in the third World, held at Perth, Western Australia during November 1980 under the auspices of C.I.C.R.E.D's programme of Cooperative Research in the Population Field.

had a significance for economic and social change disproportionate to the numbers involved. This contention is especially opposite to migration between developed and developing countries. Indeed, a UN-sponsored survey in 1975 showed that while all governments took an understandable interest in administrative aspects of immigration control, the main concern of most was migration's impact on the size, growth and composition of population and especially workforce. The UN Report also contended that, except for countries in East and South Asia, "a much higher proportion of countries are interested in affecting emigration and immigration trends than trends of fertility and population growth."[2]

Riad Tabbarah holds the view that major changes in the composition and direction of international migration during the last twenty years have been so great as to make the subject a new field of inquiry from the point of view of problems and policies.[3] To most scholars, the term international migration is synonymous with the flow of over sixty million Europeans to the New World during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though the United States was the main receiver of immigrants during what has been termed the "century of migration", there were also significant flows of Europeans to Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and countries comprising Latin America.[4] Restrictions imposed by these receiving countries during the nineteenth century were not severe, but by the early years of the twentieth century the situation had changed considerably. For example, the United States recognized that internal difficulties were being exacerbated by relatively unrestricted intakes of immigrants and so passed Quota Acts in 1921 and 1924. About the same time, the United Kingdom (a major provider of emigrants during the nineteenth century) also saw the value of directing flows away from the United States (its major competitor in world trade) and towards its constituent Empire countries. The resultant "Empire Self Sufficiency" concept was an early example of economic community premised primarily upon Britain providing people and manufacturing goods to the outlying Empire countries which, in turn, provided Britain with agricultural products and raw materials.[5] Though by any reasonable criteria, the concept was not successful, policies enunciated during the 1920's consolidated British migration trends for many years thereafter, as the Quota Acts had consolidated both volume and composition of European migration to the United States.

While there is no doubt that the causes and consequences of emigration from Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been the prime concern of migration scholars, other regions of the world also experienced large population transfers during this period. For example, economic distress and recurring drought in

China was the main reason why at the end of the nineteenth century there were probably eight million Chinese living abroad. Better economic conditions outside their country also led approximately 2.8 million Indians to live abroad in 1922, mainly in Ceylon, Malaya, Mauritius and South Arfica. Japanese people also emigrated in large numbers during this period, an estimated two million being in Asiatic Russia, Havaii and continental United States.[6] Migration has clearly been an integral part of the historical process of demographic change; the salient feature of recent flows, however, has been increasing restrictions by governments on both the numbers and composition of flows.

World War II was the catalyst for a new phase in international migration; flows and composition thereafter reflecting fundamental shifts in economic and political power. In Europe at war's end there were an estimated fifteen million refugees awaiting resettlement. The majority returned to their European homelands, but over one million chose to re-settle in other continents. The United States, Canada and Australia willingly accepted the refugees because their economies required additional labour to service high rates of economic growth. The same conditions, in Australia's case, led to the emigration of thousands of British, Dutch and German migrants once the "pool" of refugees had dried up. In total, over ten million Europeans emigrated to other continents between 1945 and 1964.[7] However, the major thrust for this exodus had weakened long before 1964. As early as 1957 strong economic recovery in northern Europe, especially West Germany and the Netherlands, not only dampened the incentive to emigrate but led to these countries actively seeking workers from less prosperous countries in southern Europe and north Africa. Intra-European migration, as it became known, subsequently saw the northward movement of millions of workers even though they have not provided the easily-controlled or flexible labour pool expected at the time. They have not returned home in recession and, over the years, have brought dependants to join them on a permanent basis.[8]

Between 1945 and 1964, traditional receiving countries maintained a continuing, if sometimes fitful, interest in immigration. Despite the Quota Acts, the United States received 2.4 million Europeans during this period, Canada and Australia each received over two million and New Zealand about 250,000.[9] Australia's intake was more sustained because successive governments were committed to achieving annual targets equal to one per cent of the population, partly for defense reasons and partly because she was unable to provide a workforce large enough to satisfy labour demand. Thus when the pool of Displaced Persons dried up, Australia wrote bilateral migration agreements with many countries in Europe under which financial assistance was given to

persons who prepared to undertake the long and expensive voyage. Though Canada's policy was based on similar precepts, intakes were more sensitive to Canada's current labour demand. The United States, with its high standard of living and long tradition as a country of immigration, remained the strongest magnet for Europeans and intakes would have been much higher during the period had entry restrictions not been so severe.

Though it is not possible to specifically date the beginning of what I call the new era in international migration, forces were already at work in the mid-1960's which would change dramatically the direction and composition of flows. I have already mentioned intra-European migration as a major new development in world migration. Mention should also be made of the fact that in addition to receiving 2.4 million immigrants from Europe between 1945 and 1964, the United States admitted a further 2.3 million from non-European countries, especially countries in southern and central America. After the early 1960's, composition as well as volume of intakes by traditional receiving countries were greatly altered.by significant changes in policies concerning non-Europeans. The **United States** government changed its Quota system in 1955 to eliminate ethnic discrimination and approve selection on the basis of "needed skill" and sponsorship of close kin. Effect on composition of intake was quite dramatic. By 1971, Europe had fallen to third place behind Latin America and Asia as an area of immigrant supply. By 1974, forty-five per cent of America's immigrants came from the American continent and thirty-two per cent from Asia. **Canada** also made policy changes which greatly altered composition of intake. Inflows from Europe which had comprised eighty-four per cent of intake between 1946 and 1950 fell to fifty per cent between 1968 and 1971 while the percentage of Asians rose from one to seventeen. **Australia** also responded to the new forces by altering its long-standing preference for Europeans and admitting a small number of highly-skilled and professional immigrants of Asian descent. Though the proportion of Asians in total intake was nowhere near as significant as the proportion to the United States and Canada, the new Australian policy nonetheless represented major changes in attitude towards non-Europeans as immigrants. By the mid-1960's a highly-qualified Asian who could speak English and had a job to go to was readily admitted as an Australian resident on the same terms as a European.

The passing of new legislation in traditional receiving countries favoured the intake of highly-skilled workers whereas earlier policies had favoured workers of specific ethnic backgrounds. New policies not only reflected the receiving countries need for such workers but was also a rapid, cheap and effective method of filling labour demands.

Given characteristically wide differentials in incomes between developed and developing countries, incentive to emigrate was very high. World War II, the catalyst for fundamental shifts in economic and political power, was no less important for developing as for developed countries. Tabbarah is of the view that significant economic and legal changes in **both** sending and receiving countries after the early 1960's collectively led to the significant changes in migration flows.[10] Not only did emigration from developing to developed countries take on major proportions, but it also changed significantly the ethnic structure of migration. Highly qualified workers in developing countries, able to obtain significantly higher wages and better opportunities in developed countries, moved in such lagre numbers that the flow was dubbed a **"brain drain"**. **Illegal** migration was encouraged perhaps as much by the reckoning that in a new political climate their expulsion would be unlikely as by the demand for their labour in high economic growth countries. Flows hitherto unknown between countries in continents containing mainly developed countries began to occur. **Refugee** migration between developing countries, often as a result of major political upheavals (e.g., the 'partition' of India), and from developing to developed nations (e.g., following the conflict in Vietnam), occurred in magnitudes not before experienced.

To the economic and legal forces identified by Tabbarah as facilitating new migration flows should be added significant political forces, especially the magnitude and rapidity of independence achieved by developing countries. Prior to their independance, immigration policies were generally at the convenience of the colonial power. Residents of that power who sought entry were accorded special concessions, and once admitted invariably obtained positions of economic and political power. After independence, governments passed immigration laws which were very restrictive, confining entry for permanent residents to the dependants of residents. Foreign professional and skilled workers were generally allowed entry, but only for limited periods to assist with programmes of economic development. On the expiry of their contracts they were required to leave.

As newly-independant countries gained experience and their views were expressed in world forums; as they aligned their countries with one or another power bloc; as they argued strongly and convincingly for redistribution of world wealth in their favour; and as they formed regional alliances, so their influence on world politics gained momentum. The power and complexity of the new forces are clearly reflected in changing policies and patterns of international migration. Indeed, changes have been so rapid and complex as to leave scholars and administrators floundering for theory and methodology adequate to explain

them. Roger Böhning, for one, early expressed the view that a major effort should be made to obtain standard and acceptable procedures for data collection and definition with "satisfactory explanation" being the major goal.[11] Likewise Donald Heisel saw the measurement problem as central to success in monitoring causes and consequences of the new migration flows.[12] Difficulties in obtaining data adequate to achieve these objectives have not deterred other scholars from articulating theory to explain causes and consequences of the flows. Among the more imaginative propositions in this regard is the view of Nora Federici that explanation of contemporary and future flows would be facilitated by a methodology which accepted that a well-known phenomenon in the evolution of migratory flows is their constant transformation linked to the evolution of economic structure. Within this evolution, she has argued, are not only changes in direction but also changes in meaning. Countries that were once emigrant-sending become, in time, immigrant-receiving. The notable value of Federici's approach is that it provides adequate opportunity to study sociological, anthropological and psychological issues especially concerning decision-making processes.

Scholars now generally agree that a necessary prerequisite for devising an appropriate typology to explain realatively new and complex streams is to separate movers who express intentions to stay **permanently** from movers who express intentions to stay **temporarily**. To the extent that movers later change their minds (e.g., a person who intended staying permanently later decides to return home), so the value of statistics based upon intention is reduced. However, this problem can largely be overcome by clearly separating statistics on migrant **stocks** from those referring to **flows**. The main objective of a working typology is to classify aggregate flows according to status and intention. One typology which has gained favour amongst scholars is:

A. permanent
B. temporary workers
C. transient professionals
D. clandestine
E. refugees

Such a typology certainly goes a long way toward facilitating understanding of the magnitude, causes and consequences of the new migration.

The emigration of persons intending to settle **permanently** still comprises a significant proportion of current international migration. Economic recession for nearly a decade has nonetheless greatly reduced traditional receiving countries demand for 'economic' settlers. And because opportunities/vacancies are confined mainly to persons with

skills not readily available in the country of immigration, the skill/professional component of type A migration is high. Traditional receiving countries have also admitted many persons under 'family reunion' programmes, typically close relatives of former permanent settlers (including refugees, type E). These trends pose two major issues. The combination of relaxation of restrictions on intake on the basis of ethnicity and a demand for highly qualified vorkers has led, first to a "brain drain" of workers from developing countries and, second, to processes of socio-cultural adaption not experienced during the heyday of European migration.

The inportance attached by governments and scholars to the consequences of brain-drain migration was clearly reflected in the literature during the 1960's and 1970's. For example, Zahlan has shown that LDC's provided only twenty per cent of international migration of talent to the United States in 1952, but thereafter the rate increased "exponentially", and by the mid-1960's LDC professionals exceeded European professionals. By 1970, sixty per cent of the 60,000 foreign medical graduates working in the United States were from LDC's.[13] Europe and Canada also admitted (and lost) professional and highly skilled workers during this period. The literature emphasised causes and impacts of migration of talent on developing countries, especially that it impeded sending countries programmes for economic growth. Morality also entered the arena: whether developed countries should accept the professionals, whether the professionals should opt to stay at home and contribute to economic growth, whether any government has the right to enforce restrictions on entry, whether receiving governments should pay the education costs of professional immigrants, and so on. Set against these issues is the view, heard more often in developed than developing countries, that there is no 'drain' at all; that LDC's overproduce various categories of professionals and developed countries simply have the capacity to absorb them. The debate rather fizzled out in the 1980's when neither sending nor receiving countries were prepared to invoke policies necessary to curb the movement. In recent years, however, NIC's (newly-industrialized countries) have, by the employment opportunities they can now provide, attracted back nationals who left as brain-drain losses. It is in this regard that Federici's evolutionary theory is helpful in explaining differential flows and compositions over time.

The second main issue concerning traditional receiving countries concerns socio-cultural adaptation. At least two countries now receive more non-Europeans than Europeans; and so color has become a new dimension of adaptation. Furthermore, as studies in Australia concerning the adaptation of Greek immigrants during the 1960's and 1970's

show, the processes occurred during a period of high economic growth and low unemployment.[14] Surveys on the resettlement of Asian immigrants in Australia, and some Pacific Island migrants in New Zealand, indicate worrying levels of intolerance on the part of the host communities.

Concerning **temporary workers** (Type B), a recent **Population Report** estimated that in 1974 workers in seven countries of Western Europe from southern Europe and North Africa numbered almost six million. In Luxembourg, immigrant workers comprise one-third of the workforce.[15] As noted above, intra-European flows were the first major migrations of workers from less developed to developed countries. Another major flow, stimulated by similar conditions (high demand for labour) occurred during the early 1970's when revenue from higher oil prices stimulated large migration flows to the Middle East. By 1980 there were about 2.7 million immigrant workers in the region, about one-third having come from the Asia region. Because of their typically small population, the socio-economic impact of immigrant workers on Persian Gulf countries has been very considerable, and many receiving countries have invoked policies designed to keep workers for strictly finite periods, allow them little or not contact with local workers and rarely allow them to bring their dependants. Though these policies are designed to minimise socio-cultural dislocation, the fact that large factories and infrastructures once built do not run themselves indicates that migrant workers are destined to play permanent roles in labour forces of countries in the region. Two major labour migration flows also commenced in Africa recently. One in West Africa where, in 1975, about 2.8 million people lived outside their country of birth. Destinations, according to the **Population Report**, vary according to the prosperity and the immigration policies of richer coastal countries. The other labour flow is from sub-Saharan Africa to southern Africa where employment opportunities greatly exceed those available in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. In Latin America, labour migration is also from poor to rich countries: Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela attract workers from neighbouring poorer countries.

In recent years there has been much interest shown, but little research undertaken, on the impact of labour migration on sending countries. The assumed benefits include acquisition of scarce foreign exchange through remittances, relief from unemployment and underemployment, increase in national income per capita and a consequential increase in rate of savings and investment, as well as new skills acquired by workers which can be utilised upon their return.[16] While achieved benefits clearly depend upon a complex of related variables, there is no doubt concerning the beneficial impact of remittance payments.

In 1972 remittance payments to all developing countries exceeded $ 4.6 billion; by 1975 it had reached $ 8.1 billion. Impact on balance of payments hås been very significant.[17] In 1981 Pakistan earned $ 2.1 billion from this source, representing nearly nine percent of its GNP and eighty six per cent of its trade deficit.[18] However, empirical research on the likely acquisiton of "free capital" when workers return home suggests that benefits may be less substantial. One study showed that many workers returned unskilled, having held jobs which offered little opportunity for advancement and skill acquisition.[19] Guest worker migration may also exacerbate rural-urban migration and disrupt economic and social life when substantial numbers of young people leave a village.[20] Much more research needs to be done on this type os international migration, especially in view of the magnitude of contemporary flows and remittance payments.

Perhaps less is known concerning the flow and impact of transient professional migrants (Type C) than any other type of migration. This is partly because developing countries are reluctant to provide data and partly because the workers characteristically stay in a country for short periods. In the Background paper I wrote for the Asian and Pacific Population Conference in 1982 I observed that such persons were not newcomers to international migration. In the interwar years the transient professional served for a period in the Company's overseas office, plantation or mine, generally as overseer of construction and production, or perhaps as supervisor of local workers. Nowadays, independent developing countries decide the number and composition of transient professionals according to objectives for economic growth. A typical situation is for a private foreign investor to propose some development project which requires skilled workers not readily available in the developing country. If the "investment package" is acceptable, then the professionals are readily admitted. Although little is known concerning magnitude of type C migration, there is no doubt concerning its importance. The professionals not only direct their skills to development projects, but their presence clearly exposes indigenous workers to a wider spectrum of ideas and relationships.[21]

Clandestine migration (Type D) has reached enormous proportions. The **Population Report** believes that the total number may exceed ten million: up to 700,000 in the Ivory Coast, one million in western Europe, up to two million in Venezuela and up to six million in the United States, mainly Mexicans.[22] While sending countries usually encourage, or do not discourage, clandestine migration because the migrants send back remittances (an estimated $ 24 billion in 1978), the disadvantages under which they work and live hardly need to be stated. Countries having long and poorly-policed borders with poor neighbours

are unable to prevent the flow, and many actually do little to prevent it if the illegals provide services not readily available in the receiving country. However, the illegals are very vulnerable to unscrupulous employers, have no rights of social security and will be returned home when the receiving country no longer deems their presence an advantage.

Though refugee migration (type E) is not a modern phenomenon, the magnitude and persistence of flows in recent years has made it one of the world's most intractable problems. Of special concern is that current flows are **between** poor countries and unlike earlier refugees they will remain there, imposing an extended burden on already fragile infrastructures.[23] The sheer numbers of refugees (an estimated ten million in the world today), and their long-term implications for development in countries of origin and of asylum, argues Susan Goodwillie, mean that refugees have become an important issue for development. In areas where refugee populations are large, East Africa for example, they compete with local people for scarce resources and in the longer term impose strains upon already strained infrastructures. Though all refugees suffer, it is their children who probably suffer most. The sudden displacement of a family and its transfer to a squalid refugee camp, declares ICMC, can combine to disrupt the child's security, interrupt his schooling; expose him to serious health hazards, and mar his sense of confidence in his fellow man - all at a critical stage of his intellectual, moral and physical development.[24]

Though international migration has been the most neglected area of population studies, the problems and issues posed by contemporary flows have attracted scholars from all the social science disciplines. Which is just as well because modern migration, for reasons articulated in this paper, poses problems and issues requiring great effort to understand and resolve.

FOOTNOTES

1. Riad Tabbarah, "International Migration: Issues and Policies", **Migration Today**, April, 1979 - a condensed version of a paper presented to the Ninth World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, Sweden, August 1978, pp. 14-19
2. **Ibid**, (UN Secretariat, 1975, 586)
3. Riad Tabbarah, "International Migration and National Population Policies",

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4. R.T. Appleyard, "Major International Population Movements and Policies: An Historical Review", **International Population Conference**, Mexico, 1977 (IUSSP papers), Vol.2, pp. 291-305
5. See Brinley Thomas, **Migration and Economic Growth**, Cambridge, 1954; W.K. Hancock, **Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs**, Vol.2, Problems of Economic Policy 1919-1939, Part 1, Oxford, 1940.
6. Maurice R. Davie, **World Immigration**, New York, 1947; United Nations, **The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends**, Vol.1, New York, 1973.
7. W.D. Borrie, **The Growth and Control of World Population**, London, 1970, p. 98.
8. R.T. Appleyard, "International Migration in a Changing World", **International Migration** (forthcoming; September, 1984)
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10. Tabbarah, "International Migration: Issues and Policies", **Migration Today**, April, 1979.
11. CICRED, **International Migration in the Third World**, No.4, A New Approach to Cooperative Research in the Population Field, para. 23.
12. **Ibid.**
13. A.B. Zahlan, "The Brain Drain Controversy", **International Population Conference**, Mexico, 1977 (IUSSP), Vol.2, pp. 319-327.
14. R.T. Appleyard, "Issues of Socio-cultural adaptation and Conflict", a paper presented to the UNESCO symposium on Issues on New Trends in Migration, Paris, October 4-7, 1983. pp. 19-20.
15. Johns Hopkins University, Migration, Population Growth and Development, **Population Report**, Series M, No. 7, Sept/Oct. 1983, p. M249-250.
16. Charles W. Stahl, "International labour Migration and International Development", a working paper in the series **International Migration for Employment**, ILO, Geneva, 1982.
17. J. Wilczynski, "The Political Economy of the Recent International Migration of Workers", a paper delivered to the ANZAAS Congress, Brisbane, May 1981 (section 28), p. 12.
18. Fred Arnold and Nasra M. Shah, "Asian Labour Migration to the Middle East", unpublished paper, p.8.
19. Charles W. Stahl, **op.cit**, p. 27.
20. Donald Heisel, "International Migration and the ESCAP Region: An Introduction and Overview", a paper to the Expert Group Meeting on Migration and Human Settlements, Bangkok, June 1977 (restricted) p. 13. See also R. T. Appleyard, "International Migration in the ESCAP Region", background Paper for the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, Colombo, September 1982.
21. Appleyard, **op.cit.**, p. 15.
22. Johns Hopkins University, **op.cit.**, p. M274.
23. Susan Goodwillie, "Refugees in the Developing World: A Challenge to the International Community", **Migration News**, No. 1, 1984.
24. ICMC Newsletter, Vol.7, No.4, 1983, "Children among the Displaced".