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The Social and Economic Origins of Immigration

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ABSTRACT: Contemporary immigration patterns represent a sharp break from the past, when international movements were dominated by flows out of Europe to a few key destination areas. Europe has now become a region of immigration, and, like other developed regions, it draws migrants from a variety of Third World countries. The large-scale movement of immigrants from developing to developed regions has both economic and social foundations. Economically, immigration originates not from simple wage differentials between poor and rich countries but from the spread of economic development to rapidly growing Third World populations and from a persistent demand for low-wage workers in developed nations. Immigration has many social foundations, but the formation of migrant networks is probably the most important. Networks build into the migration process a self-perpetuating momentum that leads to its growth over time, in spite of fluctuating wage differentials, recessions, and increasingly restrictive immigration policies in developed countries.

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IN the years since the end of World War II, international migration has emerged as a major demographic force throughout the world. This globalization represents a significant break from the past, when international migration was dominated by movements between Europe and a few select non-European countries. At present, virtually all developed nations receive immigrants from a variety of less developed countries, and immigration is rapidly transforming the social and economic composition of sending and receiving societies alike.

The modern history of international migration can be divided into four periods. From 1500 to 1800, world immigration patterns were dominated by Europe and stemmed from processes of colonization and economic growth under mercantilism. Over the course of 300 years, Europeans colonized large portions of the New World, Africa, and Asia. Although the exact number of European emigrants is unknown, the outflow was sufficient to establish colonial rule over a large part of the world. The emigrants generally fell into three classes: a relatively large number of agrarian settlers; a smaller number of administrators and artisans, who established colonial towns and cities; and an even smaller number of entrepreneurs, who founded plantations to produce raw materials for Europe's growing mercantilist economy.

Although the number of Europeans involved in plantation production was small, this sector had a profound impact on the size and composition of colonial populations, especially in the Americas. Plantations require large amounts of inexpensive labor, a demand met partially by indentured labor from Asia.[1] The most important source for plantation labor, however, was the forced migration of African slaves. Over three centuries of colonial rule, some 9.6 million Africans were imported into the Americas as slaves.[2] Together with European colonists, they radically transformed the racial and ethnic composition of the New World.

The second period of emigration begins in the early nineteenth century and stems from the industrialization of Europe, the achievement of independence by several New World colonies, and the spread of economic development to these newly formed countries. Industrialization is a revolutionary and destructive process that transforms rural, agrarian societies of small-scale institutions, stable social structures, and limited markets into urbanized nations of large bureaucratic institutions, fluid social organizations, and extensive markets. In densely settled Europe, this revolution inevitably displaced large numbers of people from traditional lands and livelihoods; in sparsely settled frontier societies such as the United States and Argentina, it created conditions of high labor demand.

Thus the period from 1800 to 1915 was characterized by a massive transfer of people from the industrializing countries of Europe to a few former colonies that were themselves in the throes of rapid development. Of the more than 48 million emigrants who left Europe from 1800 to 1925, 85 percent went to Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, or the United States, with the latter receiving 60 percent by itself.[3] Important sending nations were Britain, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and

1. Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree: Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

2. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

3. Imre Ferenczi, *International Migrations*, vol. 1, *Statistics* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1929).

Sweden.[4] Ebbs and flows in the volume of European emigration were closely related to cycles of economic expansion and recession and to the spread of industrialism across the European continent.[5]

This period of large-scale international migration from Europe ended with the outbreak of World War I, which brought European emigration to a halt and ushered in four decades of limited international movement. By 1920, several important receiving countries had passed restrictive immigration laws, and the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 stopped virtually all international movement. Except for a small amount of return migration, there was little movement during the 1930s; and during the 1940s, international migration was checked by World War II. What movement there was consisted largely of refugees and was not tied to conditions of economic growth or development.

The contemporary period of international migration begins about 1950 and represents a sharp break with the past. Rather than being dominated by flows between Europe and a handful of former colonies, immigration became a truly global phenomenon, as the number and variety of both sending and receiving nations increased. This greater variety is indicated by Table 1, which lists major sources and destinations for contemporary immigration. As can be seen, the global supply of immigrants has now shifted from Europe to the Third World. Whereas 85 percent of international migrants before 1925 originated in Europe,[6] since 1950 Europeans have become an increasingly minor part of the flow. Meanwhile, the number of immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America has steadily grown.[7]

The variety of destination countries has also increased. In addition to such traditional immigrant nations as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina, countries throughout Western Europe—notably Germany, France, Switzerland, Sweden, and the Netherlands—now also attract migrants; and for the first time, Europe has become an area of immigration rather than emigration.[8] By the 1980s even such long-time sending nations as Italy had become destinations for immigrants from poorer countries in the Near East and Africa.[9] Moreover, during the 1970s several less developed but capital-rich nations also began to attract immigrants, notably oil-exporting nations such

4. Douglas S. Massey, "Economic Development and International Migration in Comparative Perspective," *Population and Development Review*, 14:383-414 (1988).

5. Gino Germani, "Mass Immigration and Modernization in Argentina," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 2(11):165-82 (St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Social Science Institute, 1966); Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1954); Dorothy S. Thomas, *Social and Economic Aspects of Swedish Population Movements: 1750-1933* (New York: Macmillan, 1941).

6. Ferenczi, *International Migrations*.

7. Mary M. Kritz, Charles B. Keely, and Silvano M. Tomasi, *Global Trends in Migration: Theory and Research on International Population Movements* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1981).

8. Demetrios G. Papademetriou, "International Migration in North America and Western Europe: Trends and Consequences," in *International Migration Today*, vol. 1, *Trends and Prospects*, ed. Reginald Appleyard (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1988), pp. 311-80; John Salt, "Europe's Foreign Labour Migrants in Transition," *Geography*, 70:151-58 (1985).

9. Russell King, "Italian Migration: The Clotting of the Haemorrhage," *Geography*, 70:171-75 (1985).

TABLE 1

SOURCE COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRANTS FOR MAJOR MIGRANT-RECEIVING COUNTRIES DURING THE POSTWAR PERIOD

Destination Country	Major Migrant-Sending Countries, in Rough Order of Importance
North America	
United States	Mexico, Philippines, Korea, China, Dominican Republic, India, Vietnam
Canada	Britain, United States, China, Vietnam, India, Portugal, Italy, Jamaica
Western Europe	
Britain	West Indies, India, Pakistan
France	Portugal, Algeria, Morocco, Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey
Germany	Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece
Sweden	Finland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece
Switzerland	Italy, Spain, Germany, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Austria
South Pacific	
Australia	Britain, Italy, New Zealand, Yugoslavia, Greece
New Zealand	China, Hong Kong, Cook Islands, Netherlands, Britain, Hungary, Poland, Singapore, India
Latin America	
Argentina	Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay
Venezuela	Colombia, Italy, Spain
Africa	
Ivory Coast	Togo, Burkina Faso, Nigeria
South Africa	Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana
Middle East	
Saudi Arabia	Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan, India, North Korea, Indonesia
Kuwait	Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, India, Pakistan
Bahrain	Pakistan, India, North Korea

SOURCES: John Salt, "Europe's Foreign Labour Migrants in Transition," *Geography,* 70:151-58 (1985); Reginald Appleyard, ed., *International Migration Today,* vol. 1, *Trends and Prospects* (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1988); U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook 1988* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989).

as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Nigeria, and Venezuela.[10]

The source of migrants for any receiving nation depends on a variety of factors: geography, colonial history, trade, and politics. In general, countries are likely to receive immigrants from Third World nations that are geographically close, important trading partners, political allies, or former colonies. The vast majority of immigrants to the United States, for example, come from Asia, Latin America, or the Caribbean—only 10 percent are currently from Europe—and the most important source countries are Mexico, the closest developing country; the Philippines, a former colony; Korea, which has a large U.S. military presence and extensive trade relations with the United States; Vietnam, where a failed U.S.-backed regime gener-

10. Aderant Adepoju, "International Migration in Africa South of the Sahara," in *International Migration Today,* vol. 1, *Trends and Prospects,* ed. Appleyard, pp. 17-88; Jorge Balán, "International Migration in Latin America: Trends and Prospects," in ibid., pp. 210-63; Ian J. Seccombe, "International Migration in the Middle East: Historical Trends, Contemporary Patterns, and Consequences," in ibid., pp. 180-209.

ated large numbers of refugees; and Cuba, the location of another failed U.S.-backed regime that generated refugees and immigrants. In contrast, major source countries for France are Italy, Spain, and Portugal, which are the poorest and closest European countries; but the importance of these European sources has greatly diminished in recent years. Increasingly, French immigrants have come from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, former colonies and geographically among the closest developing nations.[11]

Thus, in the years since World War II, there has been a remarkable shift in the structure and composition of international migration. The massive transatlantic movement that stemmed from the industrialization of Europe and the rapid development of the New World has given way to a very different transfer of migrants, one between relatively poor Third World countries and more developed postindustrial societies in Europe, North America, and the South Pacific, as well as several oil-rich countries in the Middle East, Africa, and South America.

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF IMMIGRATION

Although international migration is widely recognized as an economic process, the economic foundations of immigration are frequently misunderstood and rest on two common misconceptions. The first is that immigration is caused by wage differentials between sending and receiving nations, and the second is that pressures for emigration stem from a lack of economic development in sending regions. Both views are well entrenched in the thinking of social scientists and policymakers alike and appear to follow logically from the application of economic theory.

Macroeconomic theory holds that wages are determined by the balance of labor supply and demand within regional markets. If there is a relative scarcity of workers in one market and a relative abundance in another, wages will be high in the former and low in the latter. Migration represents an equilibrating mechanism between the two regions. If the high wages are sufficient to cover the costs of interregional movement and adjustment, workers from the low-wage area will move to the high-wage area. The increased supply of workers in the high-wage area puts downward pressure on wages there while the loss of workers from the low-wage area creates upward wage pressure there. The process continues until, at equilibrium, the wage differential between the two areas equals the costs of interregional movement and adjustment.[12]

The corresponding microeconomics of this larger process have been developed in classic articles by Sjastaad and Todaro, which conceptualize migration as a cost-benefit decision.[13] Potential migrants figure the total future increase in earnings they can expect as a result of migrating to a higher-paying job, weighted by the probability of obtaining that job and discounted by a factor reflecting the lower utility of earnings in the future. From this expected gain they subtract expected costs. If the bal-

11. Philip Ogden, "France: Recession, Politics, and Migration Policy," *Geography*, 70:158-62 (1985); Salt, "Europe's Foreign Labor Migrants."

12. Michael J. Greenwood, *Migration and Economic Growth in the United States* (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

13. Larry A. Sjastaad, "The Costs and Returns of Human Migration," *Journal of Political Economy*, 70S:80-93 (1962); Michael P. Todaro, "A Model of Labor Migration and Urban Unemployment in Less-Developed Countries," *American Economic Review*, 59:138-48 (1969).

ance between anticipated gains and costs is positive, a person decides to migrate.

Although a large wage differential is clearly an incentive to movement, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition. Oded Stark and his associates have argued theoretically, and demonstrated empirically, that migration decisions in developing countries are typically made by families, not individuals, and that families migrate not only to maximize earnings but also to minimize risks.[14] Economic conditions in developing countries are volatile, and families face serious risks to their well-being from many sources — natural disasters, political upheavals, economic recessions. Sending different family members to geographically distinct labor markets represents a strategy to diversify and reduce the risks to household income.

This strategy requires only that earnings at points of origin and destination be uncorrelated or inversely correlated. With a zero or negative association between business cycles in sending and receiving areas, a household may not be greatly harmed by economic dislocations at home if one or more family members are abroad earning steady wages. If the place of destination has higher wages, so much the better, but higher wages are not a necessary condition for economic improvements to result from migration.

Higher wages also are not a sufficient condition for international migration. Research by Greenwood indicates that, within the United States, labor demand — that is, the availability of jobs — is far more important in attracting migrants than are high wages.[15] Other researchers have found that secular trends in migration between Mexico and the United States are uncorrelated with wage differentials between the two countries;[16] and Böhning's analysis of international migration within Europe suggests that wage rates are a minor predictor of labor mobility.[17] Thus the relative importance of wage differentials in causing international migration has often been overstated. Higher wages represent one of several possible incentives for international migration and not necessarily the most important.

Related to this overemphasis on wage differentials is a second misconception, that international migration is caused by a lack of development and that, by promoting economic development in poor nations, the pressure for international movement can be reduced. This view misinterprets the nature of the development process, which is inherently destructive and destabilizing and in the short run enhances the pressures for emigration rather than reduces them.

14. Oded Stark and D. Levhari, "On Migration and Risk in LDCs," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 31:191-96 (1982); E. Katz and Oded Stark, "Labor Migration and Risk Aversion in Less Developed Countries," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 4:131-49 (1984).

15. Greenwood, *Migration and Economic Growth;* Michael J. Greenwood and G. L. Hunt, "Migration and Interregional Employment Redistribution in the United States," *American Economic Review*, 74:957-69 (1984).

16. W. Parker Frisbie, "Illegal Migration from Mexico to the United States: A Longitudinal Analysis," *International Migration Review*, 9:3-13 (1975); Mario I. Blejer, Harry G. Johnson, and Arturo C. Prozecanski, "An Analysis of the Economic Determinants of Legal and Illegal Mexican Migration to the United States," *Research in Population Economics*, 1:217-31 (1978); J. Craig Jenkens, "Push/Pull in Recent Mexican Migration to the U.S.," *International Migration Review*, 11:178-89 (1977).

17. W. R. Böhning, "The Differential Strength of Demand and Wage Factors in Intra-European Labour Mobility: With Special Reference to West Germany, 1957-1968," *International Migration*, 8:193-202 (1970).

Industrial societies develop out of peasant economies characterized by an economic orientation that emphasizes sustenance and full employment rather than output maximization and profit.[18] In peasant economies, output is determined not by markets but by the size and composition of households, and economic and social relations are predicated on assumptions of stability and continuity. Economic development necessarily destroys this stable social and economic system through three mutually reinforcing processes: the substitution of capital for labor, the privatization and consolidation of landholding, and the creation of markets. The destruction of the peasant political economy creates a pool of socially and economically displaced people with weakened ties to the land, the community, and past ways of life. These displaced rural dwellers provide the source for both internal and international migrants.

The intrusion of capital into peasant agriculture is extremely destabilizing because it is labor saving rather than labor generating. Investments in machines, new crops, improved seeds, insecticides, and irrigation all reduce the number of workers needed to produce a given unit of agricultural output. Although the investment of capital greatly increases the food surplus and makes high levels of urbanization possible, within rural villages capitalization reduces the demand for labor, often quite dramatically, and makes peasant farmworkers increasingly underemployed and redundant to agricultural production.

Processes of agricultural enclosure and land consolidation generally accompany capitalization. Peasant landholdings are typically organized on a communal or kinship basis. Land either is held in common by all members of an agricultural community, with families receiving customary rights of usufruct, or is held directly in small plots by specific family groups. These land-tenure arrangements are not well suited to capital-intensive agriculture, however. Machines and mass-production techniques are most effectively applied to large private tracts, creating incentives for elites to consolidate landholding under private auspices, thereby destroying another foundation of peasant social and economic organization.

The enclosure of peasant land and its use for the capital-intensive production of cash crops contributes to a third process by which peasant communities are effaced: the creation of markets. Without access to communal lands, peasant farmers are forced to sell their labor, either as sharecroppers or as wage workers. The selling of labor undermines the peasant social and economic system, which views work as part of a complex system of rights and reciprocal obligations. Over time, rigid social and economic relationships that would normally preclude participation in the more fluid social order of the industrial world are attenuated.

With the emergence of markets, social relationships are increasingly separated from economic relationships, and the rational pursuit of self-interest and personal gain gradually supplant adherence to well-defined social norms as the basis for human action. In this process of social transformation, households shift their orientation from subsistence agriculture to market production, and family workers increasingly sell their labor to others rather than donate it to household production. With the emergence of widespread market behavior, the

18. Alexander V. Chayanov, *The Theory of Peasant Economy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

peasant political economy is gradually, but irrevocably, effaced.

The processes of capitalization, enclosure, and market creation are inherently revolutionary, and many people are displaced from traditional livelihoods and past ways of life. These displaced people constitute the source for the mass population movements that inevitably accompany development. Most become internal migrants, responding to prospects for economic betterment and enhanced productivity in emerging urban areas. But newly emerging cities historically have not been able to absorb all of the rural migrants displaced by development and, inevitably, some of the displaced have migrated abroad.

Among European countries, there was a close historical correlation between the onset of industrial development and the beginning of mass emigration.[19] This association is created by the cyclical nature of economic growth. No matter how rapid or dynamic a country's transformation in the course of development, economic growth is never monotonic. No country has followed a steady upward growth path; rather, economic growth is characterized by short-term cycles of expansion and contraction that only in the long run yield a rising curve.[20] The periodic nature of urban industrial expansion, combined with a constant pressure for out-migration from rural areas, creates a potential for emigration that is structurally built into the development process.

Historical data from Europe show that rates of emigration are inversely correlated with upswings and downswings in the domestic business cycle, whereas rates of rural-urban migration are positively correlated. In contrast, European emigration historically was positively related to the American business cycle. During periods when European industries were expanding, rural out-migration was directed primarily to European cities, but when the urban industrial economy was in recession, peasants were drawn to opportunities overseas.[21] If we define cycles of recession in Europe as push periods and cycles of American growth as pull periods, then emigration was greatest when periods of push and pull coincided and was least when there was neither a push nor a pull. A pull from America was generally ineffective in promoting emigration during periods of European prosperity, suggesting that population movements were dominated by conditions in the European urban-industrial sector.[22]

The historical experience of Europe is not wholly generalizable to contemporary developing countries, however. Significant differences in demographic and technological conditions make the pressures for emigration from developing countries today much greater than they were for European nations in the past. In Europe, the transition from high to low mortality rates occurred slowly and fertility levels were modest because of a distinctly European pattern of late marriage and widespread celibacy. After a relatively short lag, fertility rates began to fall because the desire for family limitation stemmed from the same social and economic changes that produced the mortality decline. As a result, the gap between birth and death rates was not large and it closed rapidly, yielding modest and

19. Massey, "Economic Development and International Migration."

20. Simon Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth: Rate, Structure, and Spread* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

21. Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth.*

22. Thomas, *Social and Economic Aspects.*

progressively declining rates of natural increase.

In the developing world, however, the decline in mortality occurred rapidly in a few years after 1945, but fertility remained high because of universal early marriage and a lack of desire for family limitation. The resulting large gap between birth and death rates persisted for decades because the declines in mortality stemmed from imported technologies and public-health measures rather than from socioeconomic changes that simultaneously reduced birth rates. As a consequence, during its period of dynamic population growth, the Third World displayed very high rates of natural increase that were far in excess of those experienced by European countries during the nineteenth century. These higher population growth rates have exacerbated the pressures for emigration in contemporary developing countries by increasing the ratio of population to land and driving down agrarian wages.

At the same time, the technology of production has become increasingly capital intensive. During the nineteenth century, gains in productivity were achieved largely through the reorganization of production and the division of labor; the machines themselves were crude by modern standards. The number of peasants displaced by agricultural mechanization was limited while the demand for unskilled labor in urban factories was high. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, technology has become increasingly capital intensive. Agricultural mechanization now has the potential to displace far more people from rural employment, while factories need fewer workers to produce the same output. Technological improvements have also reduced substantially the time and money required to travel internationally, and modern mass communications have made inhabitants of the Third World more aware of opportunities and conditions abroad than were European peasants of the past.

Thus the economic foundations for modern international migration lie not simply in low wages or a lack of economic development in poor countries but in the spread of increasingly capital-intensive economic development to rapidly growing Third World populations that are linked to the developed world by modern systems of transportation and communication. Although the high wages in developing countries provide an incentive to migrate, the uncertainty created by economic development also makes emigration an attractive strategy for risk diversification.

THE SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF IMMIGRATION

International migration also has important social foundations that must be taken into account to achieve a complete understanding of contemporary immigration patterns. The social structure of migration explains such apparently anomalous outcomes as the growth of immigration rates during periods of stable or falling wage differentials and the continuation of immigration despite the implementation of restrictive immigration policies. Immigration is far more dynamic than standard economic analyses suggest because it tends to feed back on itself through social channels. As a result, immigration becomes progressively independent of the economic conditions that originally caused it. Once a critical takeoff stage is reached, migration alters social structures in ways that increase the likelihood of subsequent migration. This feedback process has been called "the circular and cumulative causation of migration" by Myrdal,[23] and it relies on a variety of social-structural mechanisms, the most important of which is network formation.

Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that link together migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin.[24] They increase the likelihood of migration because they lower the costs of movement and therefore increase the expected net returns to migration.[25] Migrant costs include the direct monetary costs of making a trip, the information and search costs paid to obtain a new job, the opportunity costs of income forgone while searching for work, and the psychic costs of leaving a familiar environment and moving to a strange setting. All of these costs are reduced when a prospective migrant has a personal tie to someone with prior experience in a particular destination area.

The first migrants who leave for a new destination have no social ties to draw upon, and for them migration is costly, particularly if it involves entering another country without documents. After the first migrants have left, however, the costs of migration are substantially lower for their friends and relatives living in the community of origin. Because of the nature of kinship and friendship structures, each new migrant creates a set of people with social ties to the destination area. Migrants are inevitably linked to nonmigrants through bonds of kinship and friendship, and the latter draw upon obligations implicit in these relationships to gain access to employment and assistance at the point of destination, substantially reducing their migrant costs.

Once the number of network connections in an origin area reaches a certain threshold, migration becomes self-perpetuating because migration itself creates the social structure needed to sustain it. Every new migrant reduces the costs of subsequent migration for a set of friends and relatives, and some of these people are thereby induced to migrate, which further expands the set of people with ties abroad and, in turn, reduces costs for a new set of people, causing some of them to migrate, and so on.

Networks also make international migration extremely attractive as a strategy for risk diversification.[26] When migrant networks are well developed, they put a destination job within easy reach of most community members, making emigration a reliable and very secure source of income. In other words, the self-feeding growth of networks that occurs through the progressive reduction of costs may also be explained theoretically by the progressive reduction of risks. Every new migrant expands the network and reduces the risks of movement for all those to whom he or she is related, eventually making it virtually risk free and costless to diversify house-

23. Gunnar Myrdal, *Rich Lands and Poor* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

24. Charles Tilly and C. H. Brown, "On Uprooting, Kinship, and the Auspices of Migration," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 8:139-64 (1967); John S. MacDonald and Leatrice D. MacDonald, "Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation, and Social Networks," in *An Urban World*, ed. Charles Tilly (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

25. Douglas S. Massey and Felipe García España, "The Social Process of International Migration," *Science*, 237:733-38 (1987).

26. J. Edward Taylor, "Differential Migration, Networks, Information and Risk," in *Research in Human Capital and Development*, vol. 4, *Migration, Human Capital, and Development*, ed. Oded Stark (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1986), pp. 147-71.

hold labor allocations through emigration.

Thus, from either a cost-benefit or a risk-aversion perspective, migration generates a social structure that leads to its cumulative causation over time. Migration may begin for a variety of reasons, but once the number of migrants reaches a critical threshold, expanding networks cause the costs and risks of movement to fall and the probability of migration to rise. These trends feed off one another, and over time migration spreads outward to encompass all segments of society, giving immigration a strong momentum that persists in spite of changes in economic conditions or the implementation of restrictive immigration policies in destination countries.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF IMMIGRATION POLICY

The overemphasis on wages as determinants of immigration and the failure to appreciate the social dimensions of the migration process have led to immigration policies that often yield outcomes opposite those desired. Thus the recruitment of temporary foreign workers usually ends up generating a large, permanent minority population; and policies designed to ration immigrant visas end up reinforcing the process of network formation and generating still more migrants, both legal and illegal.

Viewing immigration as an economic phenomenon, governments in developed countries naively assume that the flow of immigrants can be managed and regulated like other economic processes, much as the money supply is managed through budgetary and fiscal policies. In the postwar period, therefore, many Western governments attempted to recruit foreign guest workers to fill short-term economic needs, assuming that when the needs ended, the flow of immigrants could be turned off as easily as it was turned on. In all cases, however, this assumption proved to be unfounded.

In Western Europe, large-scale labor recruitment began during the 1950s, when rapid economic growth created an intense demand for unskilled workers in many sectors of the European economy.[27] Foreign labor was imported to meet this demand, and it allowed European economic growth to occur faster and to be sustained longer than would have been possible without it.[28] With the advent of the 1973 oil boycott and the ensuing recession, however, recruitment ended and foreign workers were encouraged to return home. But the number of foreign workers declined in only a few countries, and everywhere the size of foreign populations increased.[29] Faced with the prospect of being denied reentry, guest workers opted to remain in Western Europe and sent abroad for family members. As a result, the demographic composition of Western Europe's foreign population shifted—from temporary migrants to permanent residents, from males to females, from workers to dependents, and, increasingly, from immigrants to a second generation born or reared in Europe.[30]

America's guest-worker program began in 1942 as an emergency measure to ease

27. W. R. Böhning, *The Migration of Workers in the United Kingdom and the European Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

28. Charles P. Kindleberger, *Europe's Postwar Growth: The Role of Labor Supply* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

29. Philip L. Martin and Mark J. Miller, "Guestworkers: Lessons from Western Europe," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 33:315-30 (1980).

30. Stephen Castles et al., *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities* (New York: Longwood, 1984).

labor shortages caused by World War II.[31] Although intended as a temporary wartime measure, the program was extended for 22 years. When the program was finally phased out in 1964, however, Mexican migration did not stop. Both legal and undocumented migration began a long, sustained rise in the early 1960s. In fact, Bracero migrants were not at all temporary; they were very likely to make additional trips without documents, were likely to introduce other family members into the migration process, and ultimately went on to settle permanently in the United States in large numbers.[32]

Another area where governments often work at cross-purposes with stated policy objectives is in attempting to limit and ration immigrant visas. Most countries employ a rationing system that relies on the principle of family reunification, where immigrants are admitted if they already have a relative living in the country. Family-reunification systems work at cross-purposes with the limitation of immigration because they reinforce the process of network formation and over time actually encourage further immigration.

All countries base their immigration laws on the principle of family reunification to some degree, but in the United States the principle predominates. U.S. immigrant visas are allocated by a system that assigns priorities to classes of people defined by kinship to citizens and resident aliens. This system codifies the process of network migration, since each person given legal residence creates another set of people—spouses and unmarried children—with the right to apply for legal entry themselves. If the immigrant goes on to become a U.S. citizen, additional entry slots within the system open up to an even larger set of relatives, including sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters, along with all of their spouses and children. Moreover, some relatives of citizens—spouses, children, and parents—are exempt from numerical limitation and may be admitted outside the preference system entirely. These newly admitted relatives may, in turn, sponsor the immigration of other relatives, especially in-laws of the original immigrant, thereby perpetuating the chain. Jasso and Rosenzweig estimate that, because of family reunification, every new immigrant admitted for work in the United States generates 0.6 to 0.7 extra adult immigrants and another 0.5 immigrant children within 10 years of entry.[33]

In the long run, therefore, immigration tends to breed more immigration, and if there is one prediction for the future it is that the current period of global immigration will continue. The economic foundations of migration lie in the spread of capital-intensive economic development to rapidly growing Third World populations that are linked to the developed world by modern systems of transportation and communication. Developed countries display a strong and persistent demand for low-wage workers, and the availability of jobs has been shown to be the strongest determinant of immigration. Once immigration has begun,

31. Joshua S. Reichert and Douglas S. Massey, "Guestworker Programs: Evidence from Europe and the United States and Some Implications for U.S. Policy," *Population Research and Policy Review*, 1:1-17 (1982).

32. Douglas S. Massey and Zai Liang, "The Long-Term Consequences of a Temporary Worker Program: The U.S. Bracero Experience," *Population Research Policy Review*, 8:199-226 (1989).

33. Guillermina Jasso and Mark R. Rosenzweig, "Family Reunification and the Immigration Multiplier: U.S. Immigration Law, Origin-Country Conditions, and the Reproduction of Immigrants," *Demography*, 23:291-312 (1984).

the social foundations of migration build a self-perpetuating momentum into the process. The growth and expansion of migrant networks progressively reduce the costs of international movement and make emigration a very attractive strategy for risk diversification among poor families in developing countries. Once a stage of mass migration has been reached, migration will tend to continue regardless of changes in wages, employment, or government immigration policies.