The Centre for Independent Studies Policy Monograph 54
ISBN 186432 067 2
ISSN 0158 1260
A$14.95 NZ$16.95

IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS: A GLOBAL VIEW
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FOREWORD
Immigration is an issue that can divide people who agree on most other things. For liberals in particular, it poses acute dilemmas. On the one hand, those of us who believe in free markets and open societies will be disposed to favour open borders. We understand that immigration can be a net benefit to a country's economy, and we recognise the importance of the principle that people should be free to move in order to improve their lives without governments getting in the way.

But it is also possible to argue just as strongly from within the liberal tradition that any society has a right to decide who can come in and who cannot. While people are free to exercise their right of exit by leaving their country, that doesn't necessarily mean that the country to which they wish to move has a duty to accept them. Furthermore, the net benefits that immigration can bring to an economy may mask significant social and cultural costs, particularly when immigrants fail to integrate successfully.

Immigration and asylum seeker issues have been dominating Australian political debate for some time, but this debate has often generated more heat than light. At The Centre for Independent Studies, we think it is important to explore and try to clarify the various claims and counter-claims in this debate, and to do so from a clear liberal position. We have therefore commissioned several authors who share a commitment to liberal values but who disagree over this particular issue to contribute to a series of short monographs exploring the facts and what should be done. We hope that these publications will not only assist policymakers in striking the optimal balance between doing the right thing by both the nation and the immigrants, but also that it will aid the public in gaining an understanding of the issues involved.

This is the first of those monographs. In it, Professor Helen Hughes notes the economic benefits that accrue to countries of immigration, but argues that because it involves people, migration is fundamentally different from the movement of capital, goods and services and has to be subject to different rules to ensure the best possible outcome for the migrants, home countries and host societies. The challenge facing policymakers is to balance the returns to all three.

We live in an age of mass movement in which the sheer number of people on the move has increased enormously. This monograph provides a timely and authoritative global overview of current international migration trends—from cross country comparisons of data on inflows and sources of immigration (both legal and illegal) to asylum applications and refugee recognition rates.

Migrants seek to better their lives. 'Push' factors include escape from poverty or flight from religious, political or ethnic persecutions. 'Pull' factors include the lure of higher living standards, job opportunities and the generous welfare benefits available in Western countries. Their migration is made possible by the rapid communication of opportunities and the falling costs of transportation.

Some seven and a half million immigrants move to Western countries annually. About four million of these are illegal immigrants, mainly from developing countries. As Professor Hughes points out, today's high levels of illegal entry and asylum seeking would not be possible without the involvement of criminal syndicates in people smuggling. It is this huge trade in illegal immigrants that is causing Western countries to impose stricter border restrictions and tighten visa controls and immigration laws because illegal immigration is causing major social, political and legal problems. It is also creating a populist backlash against all immigration.

The key challenge for policymakers is to transform illegal into legal immigration. Professor Hughes argues that countries must improve the rate and transparency of immigrant processing and introduce novel selection procedures to compete with the criminal syndicates and avoid the human tragedies of people smuggling. Post-immigration policies could also be improved—including an examination of the costs and benefits of multiculturalism—to facilitate integration of immigrants into host country societies.

Interestingly, Professor Hughes reports that only 12% of asylum seekers were found to be refugees under the 1951 Convention between 1990 and 1999. Refugee numbers are negligible in relation to the more than 35 million displaced persons within countries and across national borders as a result of man-made economic disasters and civil and international wars. Their numbers are so large that only the cessation of conflict and defeat of repressive regimes can return these people to their homes with reasonable prospects.

Most migrants are from developing countries because living standards there have only improved slowly during the past 50 years. But calls for Western countries to increase their immigration intakes so as to relieve economic and social problems in developing countries are unrealistic. Radical change in developing countries towards the rule of law, liberty, democracy and economic openness is the only long-term solution, for this will ultimately raise living standards to the point where no-one will be forced by poverty to leave their home country.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Migration is as old as human history. Migration benefited millions, creating such countries as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, but it also caused havoc by displacing peoples in areas of immigration. Where immigrants failed to integrate into the societies to which they moved, centuries of civil and international wars persist today, notably in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Because it involves people, migration is fundamentally different from the movement of goods, services, capital and technology and has to be subject to different rules if it is not to lead to misery for the migrants, the home country and the host country. Liberal Western democracies have tried to establish rules that balance returns to all three, and to integrate immigrants into host country societies, so as not to create social and political problems.

About seven and a half million migrants, looking for better living standards, move to liberal Western democracies annually:

- more than three million are permanent and temporary immigrants entering Western countries legally under immigration rules; half a million of these are from other Western countries, almost half a million are from former communist countries and two million are from developing countries;
- about four million are illegal immigrants, mainly from developing countries;
- half a million are 'asylum seekers'; only 12% of these are refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The pressures of immigrants without legal access documents have caused Western countries to tighten visa controls, border patrols, immigration laws and immigrant employment policing because immigration outside national rules is leading to severe social, political and legal problems. Disturbingly, illegal migration also leads to a strong animus against all immigration.

Illegal immigration is the business of syndicates that combine people smuggling with drug, arms and other trafficking. Estimated to be earning $7–12 billion a year, they thrive on excess demand for immigration places. They encourage 'forum shopping'—the practice of seeking countries with the least rigorous immigration controls—recruiting would-be emigrants prepared to risk illegal entry, advising many to enter as asylum seekers, and exposing them to such severe conditions that hundreds have died in transit. The syndicates charge extortionate fees, often collecting them from immigrants' earnings in host countries.

Most immigrants are from developing countries because standards of living have only improved unconscionably slowly during the past 50 years. *Dirigiste* policies have favoured elites in most transitional and developing countries, failing to provide basic freedoms under the rule of law and hence growth and decent living standards for most people. Enough development has taken place, however, for better educated, middle income people to want to emigrate to the West. These number 10 million currently and would be likely to rise to a potential 100 million and more if movement to the West were free. All Western countries thus have substantial queues for legal immigrant entry.

Repressive regimes and civil and international conflicts have created some 50,000 refugees (under the 1951 Refugee Convention rules) annually during the past 10 years. Refugees are queued for entry into Western and other countries. More than 35 million displaced people are living in acute misery in camps in their own countries and abroad. They want to return to their families and farms. The West can help refugees, but the numbers of displaced persons are so large that only the ending of conflicts and the defeat of repressive regimes can return these people to their homes with reasonable prospects.

The global excess of demand for immigration places is creating serious problems in host countries through illegal immigration and 'forum shopping'. Liberal Western democracies are presented with hard choices between compassion for the victims of policies that favour rich elites in developing countries and maintaining absorptive immigration capacities that protect social harmony. The involvement of criminal syndicates in people smuggling has led to harsh border restrictions and created a severe backlash against further migration. Rational political debate has been undermined, making it difficult to expand immigration even in those countries that have traditionally been open to newcomers. Removing migrants, particularly children, from the clutches of people smuggling syndicates by improving and accelerating immigration processing by liberal Western democracies, and expanding immigration volumes through democratic processes in countries where this is appropriate, are urgent policy imperatives.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is as old as human history. Individuals and families, clans and whole nations, have moved and been moved. All the continents were washed by waves of migration in prehistoric times and migration is a constant theme of early oral history reaching back to 6,000 B.C. and further. It has been a prominent theme since the beginning of written history.

The earliest migrations were probably stimulated by climate and other environmental changes, causing great hardship for the populations of emigration. They often inflicted even greater suffering on the areas of immigration. Where migrants did not integrate into the societies of immigration, continuing to pursue ethnic and religious differences, conflicts continue to this day in every continent. Years of conflict in Northern Ireland, 'ethnic cleansing' in the Balkans, the murder of Tutsis in the Great Lakes region of Africa and the long Palestine-Israel conflict warn that migrations without integration into host country societies cannot be lightly dismissed.

The closing of land bridges between continents ended transcontinental migrations until the development of long distance sail led to Arab incursions into Southeast Asia and Africa and European conquests, with the displacement of native peoples in the Americas and in Australasia and Africa. The age of steam began mass migration to these 'countries of new settlement'. The mass economic migrations of the 19th century helped to build the prosperous industrial societies of the United States, Canada and Australasia, but at the cost of rapid displacement of communities of previous immigrants that still cause discord and heartache.

Migrants seek to better their lives. 'Push' factors include escaping from economic hardship and religious, ethnic and political persecution. 'Pull' factors beckon economic migrants to start life anew, particularly for their children, in countries with economic, social and political opportunities. Migrants overcome the risks and difficulties entailed in abandoning family and friends, language and culture for the unknown, prospering in their new homelands. Some migrants are moved by a spirit of adventure and search for new horizons. They are often the ones most motivated to integrate into a new society, as they become highly productive and are eagerly sought. Where 'push' factors dominate, migrants may be shattered and unwilling to depart from their own cultural mores. At best, even if migrants are driven by repression and poverty and find prosperity and opportunities for their children in a host country, migration requires tremendous adjustment efforts. If migrants and their descendants do not integrate into the society of immigration, they suffer personal misery and may experience generations of conflict.

The costs and benefits of migration

Migration is both complementary to, and competitive with, trade in goods and services. Countries import capital and technology to produce goods and services. They may also import people to produce goods and services with domestic or imported capital and technology. Migration is thus a component of economic trends that have led to greatly accelerated and sustained growth and prosperity for those countries that take part in international trade and capital movements. But migration does not have the same characteristics as international trade and capital movements. Goods, services, capital and technology do not have associated social attributes that mark people. They can thus move freely within and among nation states. People cannot. Language, concepts of freedom, religion, law, political behaviour and culture in a broad sense vary among nations. Such differences do not have to be accommodated in trade and capital flows that hence have low transaction costs.[1] Integrating migrants into a society, however, means adjustments by nationals as well as immigrants. Adjustment carries considerable transaction costs as well as benefits for the migrants, for the societies from which they have moved (the home country) and those to which they are moving (the host country). If the personal traumas and conflicts that followed from past migrations are not to be repeated, the costs and benefits of migration to the migrants, to the home country and to the host country have to be balanced by policies that consider all three. Thus, while it has become increasingly evident that international trade and capital flows should be free (except for arms trafficking and money laundering), migration has to be managed to ensure the best possible outcomes for migrants, home countries and host countries.

Major economic benefits accrue to countries of immigration. Immigrants stimulate productivity and hence growth, particularly when migrants are young, skilled, professional and entrepreneurial. But there are also costs. Generous Western welfare payments can lead to welfare dependency because immigrants can live much better on welfare in host countries than in transitional (former European and Central Asian communist) and developing countries. This is the main reason why some immigrants have lower work participation and higher unemployment rates than other host country labour forces. Immigrants who can access welfare payments are not motivated to learn the language of the host country and this makes it difficult for them to find jobs. Humanitarian and family reunion immigrants include a high proportion of older people and women not used to (or not allowed to) work outside the home. Many other immigrants, in marked contrast, have higher labour participation rates and lower unemployment than native-born labour force members (OECD 2001). The principal costs of immigration to host countries, however, are the formal and informal costs of integration[1] (Kasper 2002).

In poorly managed transitional and developing countries, emigration reduces pressures on labour markets. They benefit from remittances which sometimes exceed export earnings. Governments too incompetent or corrupt to foster economic growth stimulate waves of temporary emigration because remittances decline with the length an emigrant stays in a host country. Short-term immigrants in the West are paid accumulated social security benefits on departure. These 'nest eggs' bring capital to the home country. Languages and skills learnt stimulate the economy. Returning entrepreneurial emigrants helped to build tourism in Mexico, electronics in Taiwan and the IT industry in Bangalore. Fujian province thrives on a tourist industry servicing former emigrants. Less favourably for repressive and corrupt governments, returning migrants bring back liberal social and political ideas, strengthening democratic politics.

Emigration can also have costs for home countries. When some temporary migrants return home once a year to see their families, they are likely to father a child, impeding the demographic transition that normally comes with rising incomes. In some instances, villages denuded of men initially face problems, although in the longer run, women are able to play a more significant role in the economy and society. In the 1970s, Indian expatriate economists formulated a 'brain drain' cost theory to justify their departures for better salaries and opportunities in the West. Their guilty feelings arose from their highly subsidised education in India. The solution was not in stopping international movements of professionals, but in charging middle and upper income groups for tertiary education and, most importantly, reforming the Indian economy to improve job opportunities for skilled workers and professionals. Contrary to 'brain drain' theories, the benefits of professional experience abroad have contributed high returns to home economies through the permanent or part-time return of migrants. Such gains notwithstanding, home countries would have benefited even more had they adopted open market and trade policies that would have enabled them to employ educated and enterprising young people at home instead of pushing them to emigrate.

IMMIGRATION

Internal migration has always been an important component of national economic development, contributing to dynamism and change. The formation of the European Union (EU), with its relatively free international mobility, and expectation of mobility from the nations 'in waiting' to join, distorts migration data in relation to large scale internal migrations in the United States. But there is also considerable movement of people among other Western countries because the movement of students and hence professionals has almost become free. Since World War II, however, new large-scale immigration has emerged from developing and transitional economies.

'Pull' factors

At the end of World War II, as acute labour shortages developed, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, Germany and other European countries sought unskilled workers abroad as permanent and temporary immigrants. Their example was later followed by Middle Eastern petroleum rich countries and by such labour short economies as Singapore and Malaysia. Large scale flows of unskilled emigrants from Asia, North Africa and Latin America followed. Host country inhabitants were thus unfortunately persuaded that unskilled work was for immigrants, while they could enjoy a monopoly of more skilled blue collar and white collar occupations. Although these divisions have broken down over time, they have left a bitter residue of ethnic differences and conflicts.[2]

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[1] 'That is, the petty frictions in the humdrum business of daily life, the efforts and risks of learning and coordinating daily pursuits. These costs are real. In our highly specialised economy, they account for no less than half the cost of producing and distributing the national product' (Kasper 2001: 6).

[2] During the 1950s and 1960s labour shortages in Australia, in marked contrast, immigrants were semi-skilled displaced persons from war torn Europe and northern and southern Europe. When the White Australia policy was finally abandoned in the 1970s, labour shortages had given

Host country demand for skilled, professional and entrepreneurial immigrants continues unabated in the West as labour markets for these workers become more integrated and open. But technological change and high unemployment in several European countries have sharply reduced demand for unskilled labour. In some countries, such as Austria, the Netherlands and Denmark, environmental issues of population overcrowding have affected demand for immigrants. The high transaction costs of integrating some immigrants into society have become a major political issue. Voters in liberal Western democracies[3] have reduced their support for immigration. Recent immigrants often lead the calls for constraint.

Immigration policies now focus on skilled and professional immigrants. West European countries concerned with 'ageing' began to place a premium on young immigrants, but awareness is now rising that immigration levels alone cannot offset the challenges posed by ageing. Management and social strategies that avoid wasting the prime 'middle age' working years of host country populations and take into account not only increasing longevity, but also the vastly improved health of older people, are efficient offsets to ageing. So are family-oriented social and economic policies. There is no ageing 'crisis'. Social compatibility, willingness to integrate into the new society by learning the language quickly, sharing liberal religious, social and political attitudes and respecting other liberal institutions, rather than youth alone, remain important immigrant attributes.

'Push' factors

Major new factors have increased emigration flows. Communications technology has brought the living standards of liberal Western democracies to the television screens of transitional and developing countries. Access to the Internet has spread rapidly. Other communications and transport costs have fallen dramatically.

Differences in personal freedom and material standards of living are considerable. The only exceptions are the high living standards of two small developing economies—Hong Kong and Singapore—that have chosen market-oriented economic policies so that they have caught up with Western living standards. Hong Kong and Singapore are countries of immigration. A few other developing and transitional countries are catching up.[4] But for most people living in other transitional and developing countries, the attractions of migration to the West are enormous.[5]

The *dirigiste* development strategies adopted by most transitional and developing countries have meant that development has been highly skewed toward governing elites and their cronies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, United Nations (UN) and bilateral aid organisations have spoken and written endlessly of the benefits of markets, trade and transparency, but in fact have made it possible for governments that have ignored basic commonsense and justice to survive. The luxurious life of the elites contrasts with mass poverty in many developing countries. As the late Peter (Lord) Bauer predicted (1971), the fungibility of aid funds has meant that billions of dollars poured into grossly inefficient, and even more grossly corrupt, governments have maintained them in power. In extreme cases, some 40 developing countries are, after 50 years of foreign aid, in deep debt and their people are desperately poor. Minority ethnic and religious groups, and sometimes whole populations, border on starvation. Civil conflicts and international incursions are prevalent, notably in Africa but also in the Middle East. Millions have been displaced from their homes and are living in camps in desperate misery, on the verge of starvation. The overwhelming majority of these poor people lack the education, the basic skills and the will that would enable them to emigrate to the West.

In less extreme cases, although development is still skewed toward the elites, some growth has taken place, at least in spurts. Here, typically, less than a third of the population lives in poverty (still some 300 million people each in China and in India), but standards of living have risen with commensurate improvements in health, longevity and education, so that substantial middle income groups with 'middle class' aspirations have emerged. In Southeast Asian and Latin American countries that have taken some advantage of international trade (albeit still limited by their own and Western protectionist policies) and capital flows, the population in poverty has dropped to below 20% or less, middle income groups are substantial, and health, longevity and education standards for most people have risen.

For middle income groups material standards of living are high. They have the benefit of cheap servants because development is distorted. But pollution is high and dangers of infection are ever present. Crime and violence are endemic. Political and social freedoms are limited or absent. Even those with more moderate incomes and a little education want to emigrate.

The end of the Cold War freed an exodus of emigrants from the East European transitional economies. Incomes are low, but levels of education are high with access to media and travel facilitating emigration.

The current annual pressure for migration from middle income groups for the limited immigration places available in the West is estimated to be 10 million. If immigration to the West were free, the number of potential migrants from China, India and Indonesia alone would probably shortly rise to 50 million, with another 50 million wanting to emigrate from other developing countries. This would make a total of 100 million potential immigrants. To this must be added several million who would seek to emigrate from the transitional economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Table 1 overleaf gives some indication of the principal source regions of some two million (of a total of over three million) legal immigrants to the West. In 1998 migration among Western countries was the largest block, with 40% of the flows within the EU. Flows from the former European communist countries came next. East Asia had the highest flow from developing countries, (with 153,000 from China and 109,000 from the Philippines), followed by Latin America, where numbers going to the United States have fallen sharply since the beginning of the 1990s because of the tightening of United States borders. The Middle East and North Africa (with 48,000 each from Morocco and Tunisia) followed, with South Asia (with 85,000 from India) next. Sub-Saharan Africa came last. Per capita incomes, education levels and proximity appear to be the principal determinants of legal immigration. The 'other' entries largely appear to represent developing countries.

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way to unemployment and immigration had become focused, and has remained concentrated, on skill. Thus 'old' as well as 'new' Australians continued to do dirty jobs in Australia. Australians' first contact with Asian immigrants was usually with well educated English speakers. When the 'boat' people immigration from the Indo-Chinese countries brought uneducated Asians, they found it difficult to integrate into Australia, so that similar difficulties to those experienced in France and the United Kingdom became evident, but in small measure. Educated, middle income immigrants from Indo China adapted to Australian society (Viviani 1996).

[3] The high income parliamentary democracies of Western Europe, Canada, the United States, Japan and Australasia.

[4] Taiwan and South Korea in East Asia, Mauritius in Africa, Chile in Latin America , Malta and Cyprus in the Mediterranean, and the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia in Central Europe.

[5] Per capita income of developing and transitional countries as a percentage of the per capita income of liberal Western democracies by region, 1999

Developing Countries	*Percent*
Latin America and Caribbean	22
Middle East and North Africa	21
East Asia and Pacific	16
South Asia	8
Sub-Saharan Africa	6
Transitional Economies	
Central Europe	33
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	20

Source: Buckingham et al. 2001: 178.

Table 1. Principal sources of legal immigration to liberal Western democracies, 1991, 1998 and 1999 (Thousands)

	1991	*1998*	*1999*
Industrial countries	509	522	491
(Of which intra-European Union)	(220)	(208)	—
Former European communist countries	335	314	416
East Asia	560	397	355
Latin America	1,353	345	351
Middle East & North Africa	258	222	195
South Asia	116	120	99
Sub-Saharan Africa	5	33	44
Other	884	640	942
Total	4,020	2,593	2,893

Note: — means data not available.
Source: OECD 2002: 287-300.

Legal immigration to the West

Liberal Western democracies have clearly articulated immigration policies designed to meet their national policy objectives and take migrants' welfare into account. Long-term immigrants are expected to integrate into the host country societies to avoid future problems for both the immigrants and the societies. Levels of immigration reflect the political views of electorates. Selection processes vary. Australia's immigration selection consists of a 'points' system for economic immigrants, business immigration, humanitarian, including family reunification immigration, and refugee categories. The Australian system stands out for its non-discrimination and transparency.[6] Selection is necessarily time-consuming to exclude drug and arms traffickers as well as other criminals. It is feared that members of terrorist networks have been added to these. All liberal Western democracies have substantial queues of applicants because the demand for immigration places greatly exceeds availability.

Table 2. Inflows of foreign population into selected liberal Western democracies, 1991, 1992, 1998 and 1999 (Thousands)

	1991	*1992*	*1998*	*1999*
Inflow data based on population registers				
Belgium	54	55	51	58
Denmark	18	17	21	—
Finland	12	10	8	8
Germany	921	1,208	606	674
Japan	258	258	266	282
Netherlands	84	83	82	78
Norway	16	17	27	32
Sweden	44	40	36	35
Switzerland	110	112	75	86
Inflow data based on Residence permits or on other sources				
Australia	122	108	77	84
Canada	231	253	174	190
France	110	117	138	104
Italy	—	—	111	268
New Zealand	27	26	39	36
United Kingdom	—	204	258	277
United States	1,827	974	661	647
Total	3,834	3,480	2,628	2,859

Note: — means data not available.
Source: OECD 2002: 278.

Legal immigration to the West was reduced in the 1990s when high unemployment levels followed the recession of the early 1990s. With unemployment, the welfare costs of immigration rose. The skill composition of migrants was changing, with a greater demand for skilled and professional workers. Most countries increased special arrangements for business migrants wishing to invest in the host country. The principal pressures for reducing immigration numbers, however, came from perceptions that high numbers of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers were swamping legal immigration. In addition vigorous, even extreme, multicultural rhetoric reduced the willingness of some immigrant groups to integrate into host country societies, thus eliciting extremist anti-immigration demonstrations. The transaction costs of immigration to many host country voters increased, with consequent support for restrictionist immigration attitudes.

Immigrants that fill labour demands today, lead to humanitarian immigration for spouses, children, parents and other relations tomorrow. Family reunion and similar programmes thus form an important component of immigration following primary flows of immigrants. They dilute the skill content of immigration because they consist of high ratios of children and older people, but they do not make heavy welfare demands because the family members who sponsor them are usually working.

Temporary immigrants

Until the middle of the 20th century, while communications and transport remained slow and costly, most migrants expected to leave their home countries permanently. Today the low cost of transport and the high integration costs of low skilled immigration leads to a growing share of temporary migrants. Not all long-term immigrants stay. Some return to their country of origin and some acquire two homes and move between them. Some temporary workers extend their stay several times and periodic special arrangements enable some to become permanent settlers. The short-term nature of their immigration arrangements makes temporary workers less able and willing to integrate into host society cultures. Such lack of integration creates language and other integration problems if they become permanent immigrants.

[6] Australia's selection system was substantially reformed after The Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (Fitzgerald Report),1988. The Committee recommended radical improvements in immigrant processing.

Data on temporary workers are partial and weak. They attempt to gauge the intention of settlers (see Table 3 below). In 1999, of the 1.1 million immigrants to Australia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, perhaps 600,000 were temporary workers.

Table 3. Inflows of permanent and temporary foreign workers into selected liberal Western democracies, 1991, 1998 and 1999 (Thousands)

	1991	*1998*	*1999*
Australia			
Permanent settlers	48	26	28
Temporary workers	-	37	37
France			
Permanents	26	10	11
Temporary workers	4	4	6
United Kingdom			
Long term	13	25	31
Short term	13	24	22
Trainees	4	-	-
United States			
Permanent settlers	60	76	57
Temporary workers	170	431	526

Note: - means data not available. These data, reflecting the intentions of settlers, do not add to total immigration in Table 2.
Source: OECD 2002: 284.

There are two main categories. One consists of skilled workers, professionals and entrepreneurs. Skilled workers move increasingly for short-term engagements within the European Union. Term engagements for professionals (including managers) by multinationals, but also by smaller host country firms, and independent professional and business movements, have increased worldwide.

The origins of the second, unskilled temporary category lie in seasonal agricultural and tourist workers who came every year from lower income South European to higher income North European countries, from Mexico to the United States, and were also common in other regions. To avoid the problems of unskilled migration into France and the United Kingdom, other European countries contracted unskilled and low-skilled workers for months and even years. Contracts could be renewed, sometimes several times. The source countries were extended beyond Europe with Turkey becoming important for Germany and Sweden. Communist Czechoslovakia contracted Vietnamese workers. The range of jobs undertaken has expanded, with some temporary workers engaging in retail trade and other services on their own account in their spare time, and eventually full time. Japan has contracted workers from South Korea and China, often classifying them as students to avoid domestic political difficulties.

Migrants from transitional economies work temporarily in neighbouring countries. Within Europe there are flows from less to more rapidly growing countries, such as from the Ukraine to the Czech Republic and Hungary. But most of the migrants from the European transitional economies are looking to liberal Western countries for economic opportunities. This is notably so for ethnic minorities such as Gypsies from Hungary and Romania, Hungarians from Romania and Slovakia, and Serbs, Croats, Macedonians and other nationalities finding themselves in alien environments in Balkan states.

South Africa has long recruited workers for its mines in other Sub-Saharan countries. The Middle Eastern petroleum rich countries followed European practices, contracting Muslim workers from Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also Roman Catholics from the Philippines.[7] Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong recruit temporary workers in Indonesia, the Philippines and China to do unskilled jobs, much as France and the United Kingdom did, but turn over the short-term workers to avoid the social costs of unintegrated unskilled workers in their societies. There are many temporary movements of workers throughout Latin America.

Australia's Working Holiday Maker Programme for young people, professional and temporary professional, and business entrants grew in the 1990s, exceeding those who claimed to want to settle permanently in 1999. The Working Holiday Maker Programme is an important source of labour for fruit picking and nursing. It may also be a pre-selection process for immigrants who, after experiencing life in Australia, may later wish to settle in Australia permanently.

Students and migration

Study in the West is becoming an important legal path to emigration for people with means. Tertiary studies abroad, mainly in liberal Western democracies, but also in some developing countries such as Turkey and South Korea, have grown rapidly in recent years. The United States has large numbers in its undergraduate 'junior year abroad' programmes, but most of the undergraduate students are from upper middle and middle income groups in developing countries. Lower middle income families also scrape together funds to send one member of an extended family to study abroad. For postgraduate students there is a wide range of exchanges among liberal Western democracies countries, but again there are large numbers of students from middle and upper middle income groups in developing countries. Some of these students are on home country (or international aid) scholarships and have to return home for at least a period of years, but the majority are self-financed and so free to emigrate to the country in which they are studying. That is, indeed, often their purpose in pursuing studies abroad. They can work part-time (as many host country students do) reducing the costs to their families. Because such students learn the language of the host country, acquire its qualifications and are familiar with its social environment, they are regarded as highly desirable immigrants and are thus fast-tracked in immigration programmes. As they become residents and citizens, depending on host country rules, they can bring in other family members under family reunion programmes.

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[7] **Gulf States, population and percentage of non-citizens,2002**

	Total 2002 population '000	*Non-citizens as percent of total*	*Expatriates as percent of workforce*
Bahrain	650	40	64
Kuwait	2,300	64	81
Oman	2,400	26	55
Qatar	720	80	90
Saudi Arabia	23,000	27	55
UAE	3,300	82	90

Source: *The Economist* 2002: 7.

Table 4, Foreign students in selected countries, 1998

Country	*Per 1000 students enrolled*
Luxembourg	305
Switzerland	223
Australia	126
Austria	115
United Kingdom	108
Germany	82
France	73
Denmark	60
Ireland	48
Sweden	45
New Zealand	37
Norway	32
United States	32
Canada	28
Hungary	26
Iceland	24
Japan	20
Czech Republic	19
Finland	17
Spain	17
Turkey	13
Italy	12
Poland	5
South Korea	1

Note: Includes non resident foreign students.
Source: OECD 2002: 100

Except for Luxembourg and Switzerland, with highly developed tertiary sectors for their small populations, Australia has the highest proportion of both foreign students per 1,000 students enrolled and of foreign students to population. Foreign students can work part-time in Australia and can make immigration applications.

The impact of immigration

The proportion of foreign born in the labour force and population takes into account immigrant departures as well as arrivals. Australia has the highest ratio of foreign born, both in its labour force and population, reflecting 50 years of positive immigration policy. Switzerland and Canada come next. The United States, Sweden and the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany record less than half Australia's foreign born labour force and population ratios. The percentages of foreign born for the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States are probably understated by illegal immigrants who try to avoid censuses and surveys.

Table 5 Stocks of foreign and foreign born in labour force and population in selected liberal Western democracies, 1999

	Percentage in labour force	*Percentage in population*
Australia	25	24
Belgium	*9	9
Canada	-	**17
Denmark	4	6
Finland	2	3
France	6	6
Germany	9	9
Italy	4	2
Japan	0	1
Netherlands	*3	4
Norway	*3	4
Sweden	5	6
Switzerland	18	19
United Kingdom	3	4
United States	12	10

Note: * 1998
** 1996
-means data not available
Source: OECD 2002: 281,282 and 286

Determining the number of immigrants and their composition is being debated vigorously. In the countries of 'new settlement'—Canada, the United States and Australasia—as well as in some European countries (and some developing countries), strong arguments are still being made for increasing immigration, despite the rise of restrictionist policies since the 1990s. The Committee to Advise on Australian Immigration Policies (1988) recommended an immigrant intake of 150,000 a year. Both Canada and the United States have strong voices for increasing immigration levels. The debate is not only about numbers, but also about the selection criteria that can determine skills and about the proportion of humanitarian immigrants that should be accepted. The integration of immigrants into host societies is seen as being of great importance, with consequent attention to post-immigration policies such as the need to learn host country languages and the positive and negative content of multiculturalism. Feminists are concerned with restrictions on the equality of women in some immigrant groups. Conducted objectively and rationally, these debates are essential to the democratic resolution of immigration issues in liberal

Western societies. It is not surprising that differences of opinion remain widespread, except on the damage done to the support for immigration by illegal immigration, people smuggling and 'forum shopping' by asylum seekers.

Illegal immigration to the West

llegal immigration has a long history, notably in the United States. Illegal immigration pressures increased worldwide in the 1990s, reflecting rising numbers of middle income earners in developing countries. They created severe social dislocations and reduced voter support for immigration. The total annual flow of illegal migrants to liberal Western democracies was estimated at four million in the late 1990s (IOM 1997) compared to some three million legal immigrants (See Table 1, p. 12). Illegal immigrants generally take care not to be included in labour force or population data. Not all illegal immigrants seek permanency. Some return to their home countries, though some move again, legally or illegally, to the host countries.

The United States has the highest stock of illegal immigrants, with estimates from seven to nine million in 2000 (OECD 2001: 262), reflecting past open attitudes to immigration of low paid workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries, and the relative ease of crossing the border with Mexico. This border has been appreciably tightened but Latin American inflows remain high.[8] The United States is also a high recipient of illegal immigration from China. An overwhelming majority of United States voters oppose illegal immigration (Jim Lehrer News Report, SBS, 26 March 2002), but strong special interests, mainly agribusiness, want it to continue to keep down rural wages. Perhaps the most promising aspect of the debate is a growing interest in shifting from illegal to legal immigration, despite some costs in raising wages, as this would undermine people smuggling syndicates and improve the integration of immigrants into United States society on lines following earlier immigrations (Jacoby 2002).

Canada, a country of immigration, also had an ambivalent attitude to illegal immigrants in the past, so that it interpreted the 1951 Refugee Convention broadly. Since 1999 all aspects of immigration and immigration controls have been tightened. Many illegal immigrants used to choose Canada as a point of initial entry to the United States because document checks were so cursory that even poor forgeries passed. Since September 11, 2001, Canada has, however, tightened border controls. Despite growing restrictionism, sentiment for further immigration remains strong.

European land borders and entry points have become much more stringently controlled since the late 1990s, notably in Germany, Sweden and Denmark, with strong public support (Rod & Brunton 2002). Illegal immigrants are turned back at borders, are subject to detention and deportations have increased. The most liberal countries have taken the toughest stances because they became targets for illegal immigration.

Anglophone countries, notably the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, have more serious illegal immigrant control problems than continental Europe because they do not have the identity cards that are used to check and expel illegal immigrants. International relations problems are emerging. The location of a French Red Cross camp for migrants at the entrance to the channel tunnel to the United Kingdom has led to such high illegal boarding of freight trains that night freight trains have been discontinued. This has led to freight delays, so that large freight companies are returning to trucks, undercutting the profitability of the tunnel railway. The United Kingdom has recently increased detention for asylum seekers subject to expulsion orders.

Distance, bolstered by strict visa procedures, for a long time gave Australia and New Zealand protection against illegal immigration. Because immigration has long been a serious political issue in Australia, with trade unions concerned to ensure that prevailing high standards of local remuneration and working conditions were not undermined by uncontrolled immigration, Australia introduced a preventive detention system for immigrants arriving informally by sea outside main ports of entry without appropriate entry documents. Sending these arrivals to offshore camps in the Pacific has been the most recent development in this policy.

Policing the employment of illegal immigrants by fining those who employ them is widespread in continental Europe and has also been increased in the United States. Such measures, however, shift the onus of illegality from the immigrants to home country citizens and are thus widely resented and often poorly policed, with many judges being reluctant to impose fines that are high enough to be a deterrent.

Most countries have not policed student visa holders, either to ensure that foreign students study as well as work, or to ensure that they do not overstay. In Japan, for example, student visas are accepted as proxy permissions for unskilled temporary immigrants. European countries are strengthening identity card checks to reduce overstaying.

In the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom the policing of overstaying tourist and student visas was notoriously slack in the past and hence regarded as an illegal migration route. The weakness of the United States' policies recently caught public attention when it emerged that two of the September 11 terrorist pilots' student visas had been renewed. Ways of tightening overstaying as well as other ways of limiting illegal immigration are now being discussed in Congress. Australia is an exception among Anglophone countries that do not have identity cards, with stringent policing of study conditions and departure on visa expiry limiting 'overstayers' to some 60,000 people, many of whom return to their home countries in due course.

The movement of four million illegal immigrants, in addition to more than three million legal immigrants, plus half a million asylum seekers to the West has created serious social integration difficulties in host societies. These problems are clearly reflected in political debates and outcomes. At the margin they have also led to a resurgence of racism, anti-immigrant hooliganism and violent responses by some immigrant groups. Better post-immigration policies that seek actively to integrate immigrants into host country societies could ease some of these problems. Some host countries could increase their immigration intakes to their and the migrants' advantage with improved selection, processing and post-immigration policies. But it is quite unrealistic for the World Bank (2001) to urge liberal Western democracies to increase their immigration intakes so as to relieve economic and social problems in developing countries. The conflicts that have followed unintegrated migrations in the past, and still do so now, warn against such migrations. Radical change in developing countries toward the rule of law, liberty, democracy and open economic policies is the only path to improving living standards in developing countries and reducing emigration pressures.

PEOPLE SMUGGLING, DRUGS AND ARMS TRAFFICKING

Today's high levels of illegal entry and asylum seeking would not be possible without the criminal syndicates that have moved from drug and arms trafficking to include people smuggling. Initially, 'mom and pop' smugglers, such as Mexican *coyotes,* helped illegal migrants to cross poorly guarded borders or to land boats in remote harbours at night. At the same time, drug smugglers began to use illegal migrants as drug couriers, distributors and enforcers, and saw rich pickings in trafficking women and children (often sold by their parents or kidnapped) for prostitution. With increasing illegal migrant flows, crime syndicates began to engage in moving people until people smuggling was estimated to be worth $7 to $12 billion annually in 1997 (Loescher 2001: 321; Dupont 2002: 12).

Tightening of border security required more sophisticated approaches to people smuggling, making the syndicates' roles more profitable. Forged documents and travel networks became vital, notably for trails that go from East Asia to the United States via Latin America or from the Middle East to Australia via Malaysia and Indonesia. The 'mom and pop' operators have been relegated to minor roles, working for large scale criminal enterprises engaged in trafficking drugs and arms with such subsidiary activities as debt collection, enforcement and money laundering. It is feared that the criminal syndicates could provide a highway for terrorists such as al Qaeda warriors.

The criminal syndicates' operations are not targeted to rescue refugees from repressive regimes with which they often have drug deals. Political and religious refugees pay bribes to local officials to obtain exit papers, but rely on local dissident groups that, at great risk, organise escape routes from countries such as Iran, Iraq, China and Vietnam, so that they can apply for refugee status in transit countries. Criminal syndicates recruit illegal immigrants in transit countries such as Pakistan and Turkey. They provide them with forged papers, where appropriate advise them to destroy such legal documents as birth certificates and school reports that indicate their true nationality, present them as asylum seekers if possible, and coach them to present themselves in a favourable light in transit and host countries (Koser 2001).

The criminal syndicates' success in presenting immigrants as asylum seekers seeks to exploit compassion in liberal Western democracies to bypass refugee and immigration queues. Their 'travel agencies' in seedy shop fronts and bazaars in cities like Peshawar and Istanbul sell their services to emigrants who have the resources to buy travel, forged document and other services. Not all the half million migrants who become asylum seekers use people smuggling syndicates' services, and they are only a partial, though apparently rising, proportion of the illegal migration volume the people smuggling syndicates handle.

In communist countries (China, Vietnam and Cuba) the criminal syndicates make arrangement with bureaucrats (with whom they may also have other illegal business) who issue passports and thus control the volume of emigrant flows. Chinese *snakehead* syndicates are composed of mainland Chinese as well as Taiwanese operators. Some Chinese illegal immigrants use forged Malaysian, Indonesian and other East Asian passports. They often travel with legitimate delegations or groups of students, melting into the host

[8] During the last three years, some 600,000 emigrants have left Colombia, 500,000 have left Ecuador, 150,000 have left Venezuela, some 400,000 have left Uruguay and about one million Central Americans have emigrated north since the 1980s. In 1998 there were seven and a half million Mexicans living in the United States (legally and illegally) and many more have joined them in the last three years (*The Economist,* 23-31 March 2002: 45-46). The television screens are full of Argentineans queuing to obtain visas to emigrate

country after landing. The cost for a Fujian illegal immigrant ranges from $30,000 to $47,000, sometimes only payable on arrival.[9] New York is the main destination, but there are many others, including Australia (Liang & Ye 2001). These immigrants work for years to pay off their debt, often in sub-standard conditions, but as they earn more than they would have if they had remained in China, the trade continues.

The people smuggling syndicates expose migrants to shocking transit conditions in containers on the back of trucks and on freight trains and in 'rust buckets' in the Mediterranean or off the coast of Australia. Children, including unaccompanied minors, are often included to ensure sympathy on arrival. Hundreds, if not thousands, including children, have died in transit. News of boat sinkings is suppressed. Many have died on the United States and Mexico border. The syndicates embroil the migrants in breaking the law in transit countries, such as Indonesia and Mexico, as well as in host countries.[10][10] Where the migrants have funded their payments by loans, upfront or for repayment after arrival, the criminal syndicates' enforcers ensure that the loans are repaid. The criminal syndicate principals have almost entirely escaped penalties, although Mexico has recently arrested relatively high-level syndicate bosses as a result of pressure from the United States.

Like drug and arms smuggling syndicate principals, those particularly responsible for people smuggling live in luxury in money laundering centres such as Monaco, or in the transit countries, where they mix with the rich and famous on whose assistance they rely. When their employees are caught and have to serve prison sentences, their families at best receive pittances. Far from being benign social workers that facilitate passage for disadvantaged people, people smuggling syndicates are criminal organisations making large profits by extorting money from would-be migrants and undermining the rule of law. Illegal migration persists on a large scale because, in spite of hardships and deprivations, most emigrants from developing countries that are not committed to growth do better than those who stay behind.

REFUGEES, DISPLACED PERSONS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

refugees have fled persecution since time immemorial. Since the rise of Christian and Muslim religions, religious persecution has been creating refugees from repression and war when stubborn believers have refused to adopt the religion of conquerors. The modern concept of refugee persecution dates from the emergence of liberal societies when freedom of speech, religious and political beliefs became enshrined in the rule of law. Refugees were those persecuted for practising such rights.

International recognition was given to refugees when Fridtjof Nansen was appointed as the first High Commissioner for Refugees by the League of Nations in 1921. The extermination of Armenians in Turkey in 1914-1919 was still a vivid memory and the nationalist and communist upheavals in Eastern Europe were spilling refugees into Central and Western Europe. In July 1938 an Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees organised a conference at Evian in France, on the initiative of Franklin Roosevelt, to save Jews from Hitler. Some 40 countries attended. Unemployment was still high after the 1930s depression and anti-Semitism was widespread.[11][11] The conference refused to save German Jews, the largest refugee group of the time, paving the way for Kristallnacht in November of that year and the Holocaust thereafter. Only a few political and Jewish refugees with knowledge, funds and determination were able to escape.

In the aftermath of World War II large numbers of forcibly moved people—slave labourers, Ukrainians, members of Soviet minorities that had fought for Germany, and people displaced by the re-drawing of maps—emerged, mainly in Germany and Austria. Several million displaced persons thus came to be identified as refugees. The United States took the lead in establishing the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Agency and the UN Refugee Emergency Fund to facilitate repatriation and resettlement of displaced persons in countries of immediate asylum and other countries. The focus was on Europe. The Marshall Plan was designed to enable European countries to deal with the economic destruction caused by World War II and hence to employ displaced persons.

International involvement was revived in 1951 when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by Statute. The 1951 Refugee Convention (expanded in 1967) identified refugees as individuals who had a well founded fear of persecution and could not be returned to their home countries for fear of placing their lives in jeopardy. The UNHCR's primary mandate was to protect refugees and improve national policies towards refugees in the interest of international stability, but its civil rights mandate was muddied by the presence of displaced persons (some of whom had themselves committed crimes against humanity in fighting on the side of fascism). The first task that faced the UNHCR was not a refugee problem, but some 200,000 displaced persons still left in Europe.

Refugees and displaced persons

From the 1950s, refugees in the West came to be seen mainly as those escaping from communist oppression. The Soviet invasion of Hungary turned a trickle into a stream, providing the UNHCR's first major challenge. Investigation of refugee status had to be suspended when some 200,000 people left Hungary for neighbouring Austria and Yugoslavia. About 180,000 were resettled. Only 18,000, mainly underage youngsters, returned voluntarily to Hungary under UNHCR auspices (Loescher 2001). Not all, or even most, of those who left Hungary were refugees in the sense of the 1951 Convention. Many, including some Communist Party members, took the opportunity to leave a society they resented. They were looking for better economic and social opportunities.

The UNHCR became concerned with Algerians fleeing from France's brutal colonial war in the 1960s, expanding operationally to organise support for people fleeing to neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco. These camps became centres of military as well as political resistance and support for the anti-colonial forces. Most of these displaced persons returned to Algeria. The UNHCR did not intervene in the major displaced person movements from China, North Korea and from Cuba (first from the Bautista and then Castro regimes). These fell, respectively, on Hong Kong, Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries, South Korea and the United States. India and Pakistan were left to struggle with the aftermath of Partition.

The UNHCR nevertheless grew rapidly to provide assistance programmes for displaced person emergencies with other UN agencies and NGOs. The UNHCR was not structured for such a role and it was swamped. In 1971, the UN Secretary General called on the UNHCR to take the lead in coordinating relief for the 10 million people displaced by the Bangladesh crisis. This opened the way for UNHCR's activity throughout Asia.

The ending of fighting in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos led to the next refugee and displaced person explosion. Many of those fleeing from Cambodia were in danger of their lives. The Khmer Rouge, drawing on young teenage recruits, exterminated its own countrymen. Laotians and Vietnamese who had fought with the United States felt at risk from the victorious communist governments, subject to, at the very least, 're-education'. Many others simply wanted to get away to a better life than the bleak communist states offered. Ethnic Chinese were subject to discrimination and affected by the nationalisation of all economic activities. Thousands of 'boat people' left for Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, with many drowned and killed by pirates. The Southeast Asian countries could not (and did not wish) to deal with the influx, so that liberal democracies, notably the United States, Canada and Australia, made special arrangements for 'boat people'. News of their willingness to take in Indo-Chinese immigrants increased the outflow. Vietnam was happy to cooperate. It confiscated the wealth of those it allowed to leave. China and Vietnam continued to be a source of political refugees during the 1980s. In Asia the principal refugee and displaced persons problem has now moved to North Korea where thousands are fleeing political repression and starvation. More would flee if they did not fear an even worse fate after being sent back home by China.

Latin America's repressive regimes saw refugee and economic emigration from the 1960s to the 1980s. Civil war in Colombia and repression in Cuba and Haiti remain the main sources of refugees and displaced people.

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[9] Reliable data on payments to syndicates is very scarce because few social scientists have tackled the difficulties of collecting accurate information from frightened illegal immigrants whose interest it is to deny or reduce the sums paid. Liang's and Ye's (2001) scholarly work is exceptional

[10] Many asylum seekers from the Middle East can use Malaysia legally as a transit country because it does not require Muslims to have visitors' visas.

[11] Australia was more honest than other participants. Lieutenant-Colonel T.W. White, Federal Minister for Trade and Customs and head of the Australian delegation, bluntly informed the conference that his country was committed to its policy of British migration. Pointing out that Australia's current intake rate of refugees was (pro rata to its population) comparable to that of any other nation, White emphasised his government's reluctance to unleash a potential racial problem through the large importation of 'foreigners'. (Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Evian 1938)

Conflicts created major refugee and displaced persons problems in the Middle East. The repression of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq has led to refugee and displacement pressures. Politically and religiously repressive regimes that target religious minorities and those wishing to exercise democratic rights create refugees in Iraq and Iran and strong pressures for emigration to the West. Thirty years of war, culminating in the Taliban regime, destroyed Afghanistan, driving more than three million people to starve on its borders.

In proportion to population, the greatest displacements of people have been in the Great Lakes region of Southern Africa, following the colonial drawing of maps and use of minorities through which to rule. The genocide of the Tutsi people in Rwanda finally drew the outside world's attention to the region in 1994. After their pleas for help were ignored, at least 800,000 people were slaughtered in a hundred days. Neighbouring Burundi, Uganda, the Congos and Tanzania became unwilling hosts to hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. UNHCR and NGO relief, channelled through the Hutu militias, enabled the latter to continue their war against the Tutsis, until neighbouring countries pushed the Hutu militias to the West coast and thus enabled many Hutus as well as Tutsis to return home (Wrong 2000). Civil and inter-state wars have torn apart Angola, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan, with large displacements of population. Robert Mugabe's regime has killed some 12,000 members of the Ndebele tribe in Zimbabwe, as well as driving many more into neighbouring countries.

Compared with the Asian and African tragedies, the European creation of displaced persons by Slobodan Milosovic's dictatorship has been relatively limited. The NATO intervention in Kosovo, moreover, put an end to massacres and enabled a high proportion of Kosovars to return to their homeland. The United States and its allies will hopefully have the same effect in Afghanistan.

Cold War politics, the IMF, the World Bank and other aid donors have made substantial if sometimes inadvertent contributions through aid flows to the conflicts and repression that have been endemic in transitional and developing countries. The UNHCR, other UN agencies and NGOs relief for displaced persons have fed military forces in displaced person camps. The criminalisation of drugs in the West has funded military adventurers, fuelling conflicts in Colombia, Afghanistan, on Burma's borders, in Chechnya and Kosovo, and funding much other civilian and international fighting. These conflicts have also been fed by arms trafficking from the former communist countries, the West and developing countries, exacerbating the fierceness of the fighting and displacing millions.

The UNHCR has been so driven by displaced persons emergencies that it has ceased to regard the protection of individual human rights of refugees, for which it had been established, as its principal function. Gil Loesher, who has spent many years in refugee and displaced person work, with and separately from the UNHCR, has concluded:

> While the UNHCR has had many successes over the past 50 years, it has also had many failures. Slow and inadequate responses to refugee emergencies and protection crises have sometimes risked the lives of countless numbers of refugees. A number of internal and external constraints inhibit the organisation from achieving its full impact. The Office has an organisational culture that makes innovation and institutional change difficult. Some UNHCR senior management are arrogant and insensitive to the real needs of refugees. The UNHCR is confronted with persistent problems of lack of learning and policy effectiveness. (Loescher 2001:18)

The UNHCR's Protection Division finds asylum for some 50,000 refugees a year (See Table 6 opposite), but does not do so efficiently. Their settlement essentially falls to the liberal Western governments with which they seek refuge. Refugees are selected by the UNHCR for the ten countries that have agreed to receive a quota of refugees annually,[12][12] but many apply on their own initiative or the advice of various UN agencies and NGOs as soon as they arrive outside their repressive home countries, and some apply after arrival in a host country on a tourist or student visa. Liberal Western democracies thus have refugee processing queues that greatly exceed the number of places they allocate under the humanitarian components of their immigration programmes to refugees.

Table 6. Asylum applications, refugee (1951 Refugee Convention Status) admissions and refugee recognition rate in liberal Western democracies, 1990-1999

	Asylum Applications	*Granted 1951 Refugee Convention Status*	*Recognition Rate of 1951 Convention Status*
	Thousands	*Thousands*	*Percent*
Australia	92,800	10,400	11.2
Austria	129,600	10,400	8.0
Belgium	180,500	13,000	7.2
Canada	277,700	131,800	47.4
Denmark	73,100	13,400	18.3
Finland	18,200	190	1.0
France	296,900	73,100	24.6
Germany	1,879,600	156,700	8.3
Ireland	18,300	950	5.1
Italy	85,500	5,000	5.8
Japan	1,100	60	5.5
Netherlands	321,500	50,700	15.8
New Zealand	11,000	1,300	11.8
Norway	54,300	880	1.6
Sweden	245,500	9,000	3.6
Switzerland	282,600	21,900	7.7
United Kingdom	374,000	24,900	6.7
United States	897,600	82,300	9.2
Total	5,239,800	605,980	11.6

Note: Refugee status, and hence these data, do not include humanitarian visas granted to asylum seekers [UNHCR tabulations in Thuy Do (2001) that include humanitarian determinations such as Australian Temporary Protection visas]. National selections of refugees according to the 1951 Refugee Convention vary from country to country.
Source: UNHCR 2000: 321-4.

Refugees are a distinct, but small, group. Only 12% of total asylum seekers were refugees under the 1951 Convention definition between 1990 and 1999 (See Table 6, p. 35). Refugees have, in the main, had to leave their countries because they have attracted the attention of domestic 'security' forces by being active opponents of repressive regimes or working for liberal and democratic reforms and for equal rights for minorities. Refugees have not created the illegal immigration and 'forum shopping' problems that are leading to harsh border controls. Their numbers are negligible in relation to more than 35 million persons displaced within countries and across national borders at the turn of the 21st century as a result of natural and man-made economic disasters and civil and international wars (US Committee for Refugees, 2000).[13][13] The plight of refugees, particularly from African countries is nevertheless real and Western countries should be pressing UNHCR to improve its processing and accelerate their own refugee processing to ensure that internationally determined refugee quotas are filled promptly and, if necessary, expanded.

Many refugees want to return to their own countries, as soon as changes of government permit, to play a role in their rebuilding. Many refugees from Allende's and Pinochet's eras (many of them refugees twice) and other Latin American dictatorships returned to rebuild their countries. Returned Ugandan refugees and their children are struggling to make their country a democracy. Afghan refugees are returning and so are the displaced people from the Afghanistan border camps. Facilitating the return home of refugees should be an important charge on liberal Western democracies.

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[12] The ten countries that offer UNHCR a quota for resettlement, in order of size of quota in 2000, are: United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Finland and Japan. Other countries also accept refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

[13] Medecins sans Frontieres suggests that displaced persons total of 45 million (SBS news broadcast, 6.3.02). Some allowance must be made for the need of this compassionate and hardworking NGO to raise funds for its work.

The millions of displaced persons are mostly ill-educated, disoriented and living in shockingly deprived conditions. They are subsistence farmers, craftsmen and petty traders.They want to go home to a decent life in their own countries, in familiar environments where they should have the opportunity to build their societies. Their future lies in resettlement in their own country as repressive regimes are defeated and overthrown.

Asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are mainly economic and social emigrants thwarted by limited Western immigration places.[14][14] The criminal syndicates focus on migrants with financial resources to bypass immigration restrictions. They are not less deserving of compassion than other emigrants because they have some money. Sometimes a family or a clan will fund an asylum seeker in the hope that he (women are rarely chosen for this migration route) will be able to become established in a country of asylum and then bring out other family members under family reunion arrangements. These migrants are trying to escape from countries with such repressive regimes as Iran and Iraq. They are often members of religious and ethnic minorities created by past unintegrated immigrations such as Kurds from Turkey, Iraq and Iran, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Chinese from Vietnam and many African ethnic minorities.

Ethnic and religious minorities are accepted in host countries in which they have integrated with mainstream societies. But in countries in which integration has not taken place either because minority groups do not wish to integrate or because mainstream societies do not permit them to do so, conflicts ensue. Discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities becomes rife and religious and ethnic protesters against discrimination bring out latent bigotry and racism in mainstream societies. This has led to street fighting in such liberal Western democracies as the United Kingdom, Germany and France and severe oppression in many developing countries that have not yet achieved political maturity.

Many minority members want to get away to a country that they believe does not discriminate on ethnic or religious grounds. Some become asylum seekers. Unfortunately this does not always mean that they are prepared to integrate into the host country society. New conflicts have thus arisen in such liberal countries as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands where asylum seekers have sought to perpetuate traditions, such as arranged marriages with brides from their country of origin, that run counter to liberal traditions and the equality of women in host countries.

Asylum seekers are privileged if successful in their claims. They are able to work legally, and often able to access social security and even housing. Their numbers rose from some 250,000 in 1983 (Loescher 2001:317) to a peak of 850,000 in 1992 (Table 7 opposite). Western countries found that these high inflows crowded out their legal immigration programmes and led to high welfare costs and domestic political opposition to immigration. Arrival and detention centres have been created, notably for unsuccessful asylum seekers subject to deportation. In the United States and some other countries prisons are used to detain asylum seekers pending the determination of their status. Many asylum seekers have been returned to their home or transit countries. Europe and North America tightened asylum determinations in the 1990s so that total asylum numbers have declined, but 'forum shopping' is trying to find new countries of asylum. Hence the increase in arrivals from the Middle East in Australia in 2000 and 2001.

Asylum seekers cannot be blamed for their aspirations. Liberal Western democracies try to find room for them. Canada, and to a lesser degree France, interpreted the 1951 Refugee Convention generously so that many asylum seekers were classified as refugees with corresponding privileges (Table 6, p. 35). Australia grants three year Asylum Protection Visas that enable asylum seekers to work in the hope that they will return home if conditions improve. Because there is considerable compassion for migrants coming from countries with repressive regimes, if their first attempt fails, asylum seekers have recourse to legal appeals in which, with the help of host country advocates and sympathetic judges, they have often been successful. Appeals could last for so long in the past in some countries that legal status could be acquired by the lapse of time. Because of the bias this created against legal migration queues, however, appeal systems have been considerably tightened in recent years. Asylum seekers are always hopeful of moratoria (such as that given to all Chinese students in Australia at the time of Tiananmen Square) that will give them legal status in a host country.

Attempting to enter a country without appropriate visa documents undermines the law that underpins the prosperity of the very countries to which asylum seekers want to emigrate. Rules that indicate that refugees and asylum seekers should apply for settlement in the first transit country in which they arrive are well known and understood. Air travel is carefully scrutinised. Airlines check that passengers have appropriate documents for arrival in a transit or host country because they have to return passengers to the point of departure at their own expense if appropriate documentation is not produced.

The granting of settlement rights to asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds has been seized upon by people smuggling syndicates so that they may earn profits out of 'forum shopping' by migrants. The smugglers advise their clients on where the soft spots are in immigration regulations. Some behave antisocially when they face deportation because their claims have been rejected. But they have been cheated by the crime syndicates, not by the countries of immigration. Such behaviour breeds strong anti-immigration sentiments in host country voters. A high rate of success for asylum seekers encourages more claimants. People smugglers advertise the news of successful asylum claims in their areas of recruitment. Fortunately, reports of tough policies that deny asylum to those that do not qualify also travel fast.

CONCLUSION

The pressures for emigration from transitional and developing countries are very considerable. They are increasing, because in spite of the sluggish pace of development, the numbers of middle income earners in developing countries are growing. In their home countries millions of relatively well educated people can view the Western world on television and the Internet, realising the great contrast between the opportunities offered by liberal Western societies and their own *dirigiste* home countries that deny them economic, social and political opportunities and often subject them to political repression and even to violence.

The seven and a half million, legal and illegal immigrants and asylum seekers now entering liberal Western democracies annually are creating severe social and political national and international strains. About 10 million people would be willing to move from developing countries now and their number would rise to 100 million if immigration to the West were free.

It is clear that migration to liberal Western democracies cannot solve the problems of transitional and developing countries. The contributions the West can make to solving these countries' problems are very limited. Western markets—except for agricultural products, clothing and textiles, and selected products such as steel—are already wide open to trade. Most of the advantage of this openness has been taken by intra-industrial country trade and by a few, very successful, East Asian economies. Most developing countries have directly and indirectly, while paying lip service to the openness of trade, barricaded their countries from trade and capital flows. Industrial countries should certainly complete the opening of their markets, but the additional trade created will be small beside the unused opportunities that already exist.

The international aid industry, in spite of heroic public relations efforts, has failed to show that its 50 years of spectacular growth have done more to support development than to undermine it by keeping corrupt and incompetent regimes in power. The rhetoric of helping countries with 'good' policies and reducing poverty has not been matched by actual aid policies. Some bilateral aid (notably Australia's) has been less damaging than multilateral aid, but even here there is room for improvement. The share of bilateral aid should increase. Hopefully, increased levels of education, together with access to cheap and effective communications, will be able to persuade the citizens of developing countries of the immense opportunities that beckon if they, too, build liberal institutions and if their governments follow liberal policies.

At the margin, liberal Western democracies are transparently trying to establish levels of immigration flows that will not exceed the absorptive capacity of their societies for immigrants. An examination of the costs and benefits of multiculturalism and ways of improving post-immigration policies in host countries is underway. Avoiding past disasters of unintegrated migrations that have led to centuries of violence and conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and above all, in Africa is important. Countries of 'new settlement' are still struggling with the damage done to the original immigrants by the influx of population from Europe.

Some strains and conflicts are being created by slow, clumsy, inept and non-transparent processing of immigration. Host countries should accelerate the rate of processing and improve its transparency. New selection processes such as auctioning immigrant places could build on existing business and student immigration. Immigrant queues should move more quickly. Post-immigration policies should be markedly improved to facilitate integration of immigrants into host country communities. Countries of 'new settlement' (and some others), including Australia, could increase their legal immigration intakes.

But if all these steps were taken, the liberal Western democracies would still not be able to accommodate more than a small proportion of potential immigrants. The pressures on borders will thus remain so that border controls and, or, internal policing will have to continue if illegal immigrants are not to flood in. Border controls are particularly important for countries that do not impose identity cards on their citizens. Without them, internal policing is extremely difficult. The imposition of identity cards on a population is thus a trade off against harsh border control policies.

The less successful the selection of immigrants and their integration into host societies, the harsher the controls that democratic processes are likely to impose in host countries to protect their right to selective immigration policies. Despite loud and vigorous protests by asylum seeker support groups, political majorities in liberal Western democracies support determined and even harsh measures to contain the entry of immigrants without appropriate immigration documents.

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[14] Australia suspended the processing of humanitarian, including refugee, visas, overseas in February 2000 following indications that up to half the humanitarian programme allocation could be taken up by successful asylum seekers (Millbank 2000:1)

Refugees—as defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention—are not a major component of the immigration problem. They only number some 50,000 a year and represent 12% of asylum seekers. The UNHCR is institutionally weak and unable to deal with refugees. It has shifted its focus, however commendably, to the more than 35 million people displaced by natural disasters, destructive economic policies, civil conflicts and international wars, where its efforts are also far from effective. The plight of displaced persons is indeed terrible, but they can only be helped to resettle at home by improved economic policies, the ending of repression, and the resolution of civil and international conflicts. International intervention has been effective in Kosovo, East Timor and hopefully in Afghanistan, and more such action is likely to be needed. Australia should explore aid opportunities for direct grants to displaced persons returning home from transit countries rather than to governments.

Any improvement in assisting refugees will have to come from better refugee recognition and processing by liberal Western democracies, including Australia. Refugees urgently needing protection are currently located mainly in East Asia where gulags thrive, and in Sub-Saharan Africa where repression is rife.

The principal immigration policy challenge lies in transforming illegal into legal immigration to end the cruel exploitation by people smuggling syndicates of unfortunate migrants, and particularly, of their children. Criminal syndicates use goodwill towards disadvantaged people to make asylum seeking appear to be a high road to immigration. The migrants who break into immigration queues in this way, and other illegal migrants, earn higher incomes (even taking repayments to the criminal syndicates into account), than they would in their home countries, but they impose terrible costs on themselves, and particularly on their children, and on host countries. Their rage when, having paid out considerable sums to the syndicates, they are thwarted and threatened with expulsion, not only damages them and their families but also discourages attempts to increase immigration. While illegal immigration is successful, there will be a demand for the criminal syndicates' services. The purveyors will try to ensure that the failures of the system, including death by suffocation or drowning and return to countries of transit or origin, are not publicised. To the extent that transition and host countries are ambivalent about illegal immigration, criminal syndicates will continue to foster 'forum shopping' to find soft immigration pathways. Ways of competing with the criminal syndicates by improving immigrant processing and introducing novel selection procedures must be found to avoid the human tragedies of people smuggling.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Asylum seekers	Migrants who seek refugee or other humanitarian settlement in host countries.
Displaced persons	Persons who leave their home districts or countries because of danger to their lives emanating from natural disasters, civil violence or armed conflict.
Economic emigrants	People primarily emigrating to improve their standards of living.
Home countries	Countries of emigration.
Host countries	Countries of immigration.
Humanitarian immigrants	Immigrants admitted to host countries for family reunion and other humanitarian considerations and those given temporary settlement visas while awaiting a return to normalcy in their home countries.
Illegal immigrants	Persons who enter and, or remain in a country without a valid authority to do so.
Immigrants	Persons who, temporarily or permanently, move to a host country after meeting its immigration rules and regulations.
Migrants	Persons who move from their region or country of origin to another region or country
Refugees	Persons who have fled their home country because of a well founded fear of persecution and who cannot return to their home countries for fear of placing their lives in jeopardy as defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention (and as amended in 1969)
Transit countries	Countries through which migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, pass on their way to destinations in which they wish to re-settle.

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