International Migration at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: The Role of the State

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UNTIL RECENTLY, THEORIES of international migration have paid short shrift to the nation-state as an agent influencing the volume and composition of international migration. To the extent that state policies have been mentioned at all, attention has focused primarily on immigrant-receiving countries. Little has been written about the regulation of emigration in countries of origin. As a result, the state's role either in promoting or in limiting international migration is poorly understood and lacks adequate theoretical underpinnings. Although scholars have surveyed national immigration policies (see Kubat 1979; Dib 1988; Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994), conducted case studies of state agencies (Calavita 1992; Morris 1985; Heyman 1995), and compiled legislative histories of immigration law (Hutchinson 1981), through 1990 few had attempted to describe in theoretical terms the behavior of bureaucrats and politicians with respect to immigration.

Since 1990, however, a body of theoretical and substantive knowledge has accumulated to describe the state and its influence in shaping international population flows. In this note, I review this literature to synthesize current understanding of the topic. I then apply this knowledge to predict the kind of immigration policies likely to prevail in the early decades of the next century. To place these policies in a broader context, I first summarize the forces driving international migration in the world today.[1]

The forces that produce international migration

Massey et al. (1998) conclude that any satisfactory account of immigration must consider four basic facts of international movement: the structural forces in developing societies that promote emigration; the structural forces in developed societies that attract immigrants; the motivations, goals, and aspirations of the actors who respond to these forces by migrating internationally; and the social and economic structures that arise to connect areas of out- and in-migration.

The leading conceptual account of the forces that promote emigration from developing countries is world systems theory. Together, world systems theory, segmented labor market theory, and neoclassical macroeconomics offer explanations for why developed countries attract immigrants. Social capital theory and world systems theory explain how structural links emerge to connect areas of origin and destination. Neoclassical microeconomics and the new economics of labor migration deal with the motivations of the people who become international migrants; and the theory of cumulative causation describes how international migration promotes changes in personal motivations and socioeconomic structures to give immigration a self-perpetuating and dynamic character.

Integrating these theories in light of the empirical evidence yields the following synthetic account of how international migration is initiated and sustained in the world today. Contemporary immigration flows originate in the social, economic, political, and cultural transformations that accompany the penetration of capitalist markets into nonmarket or premarket societies (as hypothesized under world systems theory). In the context of a globalizing economy, the entry of markets and capital-intensive production technologies into peripheral regions disrupts existing social and economic arrangements and brings about the displacement of people from customary livelihoods, creating a mobile population of workers who actively search for new ways of earning income, managing risk, and acquiring capital. In the short run, international migration does not stem from a lack of economic development, but from development itself.

One means by which people displaced from traditional livelihoods seek to assure their economic wellbeing is by selling their labor on emerging markets (neoclassical economics). Because wages are generally higher in urban than in rural areas, much of this labor commodification is expressed in the form of rural-to-urban migration. Such movement occurs even when the probability of obtaining an urban job is low, because when multiplied by high urban wages the low employment probabilities yield expected incomes well above those in rural areas, where wages and employment are both low. Wages are even higher, of course, in developed countries overseas, and the larger size of these wage differentials inevitably prompts some adventurous people to sell their labor on international markets by moving abroad for work. Whenever researchers have examined the empirical connection between wages in receiving countries and emigration from sending countries, they have found a significant positive correlation.

International wage differentials are not the only factor motivating people to migrate, however. Empirical evidence also suggests that people displaced in the course of economic growth move not simply to reap higher lifetime earnings by relocating permanently to a foreign setting (although some clearly do). Rather, households struggling to cope with the jarring transformations of early economic development also use international migration as a means of managing risk and overcoming market failures (the new economics of labor migration).

In developing countries, markets (or government substitutes) for insurance, futures, capital, credit, and retirement are rudimentary or nonexistent, and households turn to international migration to compensate for these deficits. By sending members abroad to work, households diversify their labor portfolios to control risks stemming from unemployment, crop failures, or commodity price fluctuations. Engaging in foreign labor also permits households to accumulate cash for large consumer purchases or productive investments, or to build up savings for retirement. Whereas the rational actor posited by neoclassical economics takes advantage of a geographic disequilibrium in labor markets to move abroad permanently to achieve higher lifetime earnings, the rational actor assumed by the new economics of labor migration seeks to cope with market failures by moving overseas temporarily to repatriate earnings in the form of regular remittances or lump-sum transfers.

While the early phases of economic development in poor countries promote emigration, postindustrial transformations in wealthy nations yield a bifurcation of labor markets. Jobs in the primary labor market provide steady work and high pay for native workers, but jobs in the secondary labor market offer low pay, little stability, and few opportunities for advancement, thus repelling natives and generating a structural demand for immigrant workers. Labor market bifurcation is most acute in certain global cities, where a convergence of managerial, administrative, and technical expertise leads to a concentration of wealth and a strong ancillary demand for low-wage services (world systems theory). Unable to attract qualified native workers, employers turn to immigrants and frequently initiate immigrant flows directly through recruitment (segmented labor market theory).

Although often instrumental in originating immigration, recruitment becomes less important over time because the same processes of economic globalization that create mobile populations in developing regions, and that generate a demand for their services in global cities, also create links of transportation, communication, politics, and culture to make the international movement of people increasingly easy and less costly (world systems theory). Immigration is also promoted by foreign policies and military actions taken by core capitalist nations to maintain international security, protect foreign investments, and guarantee access to raw materials. These policies and actions create intervening links and moral obligations that generate ancillary flows of refugees, asylum seekers, and military dependents.

However an immigration stream begins, it displays a strong tendency to continue because of the growth and elaboration of migrant networks (social capital theory). The concentration of immigrants in certain destination areas creates a "family and friends" effect that channels later streams of immigrants to the same places and facilitates their arrival and integration. If enough migrants arrive under favorable conditions, an enclave economy may form, which further augments the specialized demand for immigrant workers (segmented labor market theory).

The spread of migratory behavior within sending communities sets off ancillary structural changes, shifting distributions of income and land and modifying local cultures in ways that promote additional international movement. Over time, network expansion tends to become self-perpetuating because each act of migration causes social and economic changes that promote additional international movement (theory of cumulative causation). As receiving countries implement restrictive policies to counter rising tides of immigrants, they create a lucrative niche into which enterprising agents, contractors, and other middlemen move to create migrant-supporting institutions, providing migrants with yet another layer of infrastructure capable of supporting and sustaining international movement (social capital theory).

During the initial phases of emigration from any sending country, the effects of capital penetration, market failure, social capital formation, and cumulative causation dominate in determining the international flows, but as the level of out-migration reaches high levels and the costs and risks of international movement drop, movement is increasingly determined by international wage differentials and labor demand. As economic growth occurs in sending regions, international wage gaps gradually diminish and well-functioning markets for capital, credit, insurance, and futures emerge, progressively lowering the incentives for emigration. If these trends continue, the country ultimately becomes integrated into the international economy as a developed, capitalist society, whereupon it undergoes a transition: massive net out-migration fades and the country shifts to the net importation of labor. Historically, this transformation has occurred over a period of eight or nine decades (Hatton and Williamson 1998), although this time frame may have been compressed in recent years.

The role of the state: Receiving societies

Although the foregoing theoretical account does a reasonably good job of explicating patterns and processes of international migration throughout the world (see Massey et al. 1998), considerable variation stems from the fact that national governments universally intervene in an attempt to regulate the numbers and characteristics of the migrants involved. Although both sending and receiving countries have obvious interests (sometimes opposing) in the size and composition of migrant flows, theoretical work has focused almost entirely on receiving societies, and mainly on developed countries characterized by liberal democratic regimes.

Immigration policy is the outcome of a political process through which competing interests interact within bureaucratic, legislative, judicial, and public arenas to construct and implement policies that encourage, discourage, or otherwise regulate the flow of immigrants. Shughart, Tollison, and Kimenyi (1986) identify three key interest groups in the political competition to formulate immigration policy: workers, capitalists, and landowners. Workers want high wages and thus struggle politically to limit the supply of labor, pressuring politicians to pass more restrictive laws and strictly enforce them. Capitalists, in contrast, favor expanding the labor supply to reduce wages and keep labor markets flexible. They pressure politicians to pass more expansive legislation and relax enforcement of restrictions. Capitalists are joined by landowners in this effort, as the latter favor immigration as a means of increasing rents.

According to Shughart et al., as a country's economy goes through the business cycle its policy mix shifts, with economic downturns giving greater leverage to workers and economic expansions benefiting capitalists and landowners. The degree of enforcement therefore oscillates in tandem with the rhythm of economic growth. Consistent with this prediction, Shughart and his colleagues found that the relative number of immigrant deportations from the United States was negatively related to the real value of the gross national product and real wages, but positively related to the level of unemployment, controlling for the size of the enforcement budget, underlying policy changes, and the political party in power. The largest and most consistent effect was associated with fluctuations in gross national product.

Foreman-Peck (1992) advanced a theory of state policy formulation that likewise focused on who gains and who loses through immigration. He assumed that immigrants are mostly unskilled and that unskilled native workers thus lose most when immigration expands. In contrast, owners of complementary factors of production (capital, land, and skills) can be expected to gain through immigration. During periods in which real wages are falling, he argued, workers exert political pressure for restriction, whereas during periods when wages are rising restrictionist pressures from workers subside while expansionist pressures from capitalists, landowners, and skilled workers increase. To the extent that wages are institutionally "sticky" downward, however, the expansion of immigration may increase unemployment rather than lower wages. In this case, costs are raised for capitalists because of labor unrest and a greater volume of transfers into unemployment insurance, but they derive no benefit from lower wages. Under these circumstances, capital and labor may enter a temporary political alliance to curtail immigration.

Foreman-Peck made no effort to test his model empirically, but consistent with his theorizing, Goldin's (1994) analysis of a 1915 US congressional vote on whether to impose a literacy requirement on immigrants (thus restricting immigration) revealed that representatives from districts with low wages generally favored restriction while those from districts with high wages opposed it. The presence of immigrants in a district, however, sharply lowered the odds of voting to restrict immigration, and once the percentage foreign-born exceeded one-third, there was practically no chance that a representative would support restrictive legislation. Similar results were obtained by Lowell, Bean, and de la Garza (1986) on a vote taken nearly 70 years later on another piece of restrictive legislation (the 1984 Simpson–Mazzoli Bill; see Fuchs 1990). They found that representatives from districts with rising per capita incomes were significantly less likely to vote for the bill, and that the odds of favoring restriction declined steadily as the percentage of Hispanics increased.

Timmer and Williamson (1998) developed a more comprehensive theoretical model of policy determination and tested it using time-series data on immigration policies in five countries between 1860 and 1929. (The countries were Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, and the United States.) They developed a quantitative index of immigration policy that varied from −5 to +5, with a positive score indicating the enactment of pro-immigration laws and policies and a negative score indicating the implementation of anti-immigration actions. After computing a five-year moving average to focus on underlying trends rather than short-term shifts in policy, they regressed the index on measures of the political environment (openness and competitiveness), macroeconomic conditions (land values, export and import values, trade shares, per capita gross domestic product, unemployment, relative wages, and levels and changes in both nominal and real wages), trade policy (relative openness), as well as numerous indicators associated with immigration itself: its volume (expressed as a ratio of immigrants to domestic population), the size of the foreign stock (percentage foreign-born), the quality of immigrants (average wages earned in the country of origin and the ratio of this average to average wages in the country of destination), and the degree of economic threat implied by a particular volume and quality of immigrants (the interaction between rate and quality indicators).

Their analysis revealed that shifts in immigration policy had little to do with the political environment, the relative number or quality of immigrants, or most macroeconomic circumstances (levels and trends in real wages, GDP, or unemployment). Rather, the strongest and most consistent influence on immigration policy came from relative wages—specifically, the ratio of unskilled wages to per capita income. As the relative earnings of unskilled workers declined compared with average earnings, countries tended to adopt restrictive immigration policies. Less restrictive policy was associated with support for free trade, although the effect was not as strong or consistent as that associated with relative wages.

Whereas Timmer and Williamson focused exclusively on national policies in the industrial era before 1930, Meyers (1995) analyzed US policies in both the industrial and postindustrial periods. For years between 1890 and 1989, he coded immigration policies using a 0–6 ordinal scale of restrictiveness and regressed it (using both ordinary least squares and ordered probit methods) on a set of indicators derived from a theory of policy determination he specified, dividing the analysis into two periods: 1890–1939 and 1940–89.

Meyers argued that the restrictiveness of immigration policies was determined by six basic factors. First was the economy, operationalized by the employment rate, with downturns generating greater pressures for restriction. Second was the volume of immigration, measured by the number of immigrants expressed as a percentage of the receiving country's population, with relatively high levels of this index yielding greater pressures for restriction. Third was social conformity, measured by an index that coded limitations on freedom of expression. He argued that broader shifts toward social conformity were associated with a reaction against immigrants as aliens, and, hence, restrictive immigration policies. For his fourth factor, foreign relations, Meyers created a dummy variable to indicate years corresponding to the failure of anti-communist movements overseas and to peak years of the Cold War conflict. He hypothesized that Cold War tensions would be associated with relatively expansive immigration policies. Fifth, like Foreman-Peck, he argued that industrial unrest, measured by the frequency of strikes, would yield moves toward restriction. Finally, Meyers entertained the possibility that the party in power might make a difference, with Republican presidents generally being more conservative and, hence, more restrictionist compared with Democratic presidents.

Over the entire period 1890–1989, Meyers found that the restrictiveness of US policy was unrelated to the frequency of strikes or to the party in power. It was strongly and positively related, on the other hand, to the unemployment rate, the volume of immigration, and the degree of social conformity. It was also strongly and negatively related to Cold War tensions. When he divided the sample into industrial and postindustrial periods, however, Meyers found very different patterns in the two epochs.

Before World War II, US immigration was tied principally to unemployment, the volume of immigration, and social conformity, while afterward unemployment fell substantially in significance and policy came to be dominated instead by foreign policy considerations, social conformity, and, again, the volume of immigration. Neither the frequency of strikes nor the party in power influenced immigration policy in either period.

Research conducted so far yields several tentative conclusions about the determinants of immigration policy in receiving societies. First, even though doubt remains about precisely which economic conditions are most relevant, it is clear that a country's macroeconomic health plays an important role in shaping its immigration policy. Periods of economic distress are associated with moves toward restriction, whereas economic booms are associated with expansive policies. The results presented by Timmer and Williamson suggest that wage inequality—more than unemployment or absolute wage level—may be the crucial factor in triggering restrictive policies. Second, immigration policy is sensitive to the volume of international flows, with higher rates of immigration generally leading to restrictive policies, even though in the long run the effect of such policy shifts may be mitigated as a growing stock of immigrants exerts its influence within specific legislative districts (an effect obviously limited to representative democracies that enfranchise immigrants). Third, immigration policy is associated with broader ideological currents in society, tending toward restriction during periods of social conformity and toward expansion during periods of support for open trade and also periods of intense geopolitical conflict along ideological lines.

These conclusions suggest that developed countries will increasingly move to restrict in-migration from the developing world, even as they act to lower barriers to movement among themselves. Although passport controls have been eliminated among states within the European Union, and while most OECD countries do not require visas for short-term travel among themselves, since the late 1980s all seem to have moved forcefully to impede the entry of migrants from developing countries. The past two decades have been associated with a rising volume of immigration, increasing inequality, and, outside of North America, persistent unemployment, precisely the conditions that prior work has shown to be associated with the implementation of harsher immigration restrictions. At the same time, the end of the Cold War has eliminated a major foreign relations motivation for developed countries to accept international migrants from poor countries. Only the continued hegemony of free trade ideology throughout the globe would seem to augur for more open immigration policies; but on balance recent economic and political trends suggest a more restrictive immigration policy regime in the next century.

The role of the state: Sending societies

Few analysts have considered the role of the state in immigrant-sending societies; yet even a cursory review of recent history underscores the importance that state policies have had. Well into the 1980s, the governments of the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and to a lesser extent other communist-dominated countries employed repressive measures to limit international travel by their citizens, holding rates of emigration well below those that might otherwise have prevailed. The opening of China, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War ushered in a new era in which these artificial constraints on international mobility have largely disappeared or at least been drastically reduced, unleashing a variety of new population movements (see Roberts 1997; Frejka 1996; Pieke 1998). The annual number of emigrants from Russia, for example, grew from some 16,000 during 1985–89 to more than 102,000 in 1990–94, a sixfold increase in just a few years; likewise, the annual number of officially registered workers emigrating from China grew from just over 37,000 in 1982–84 to 135,000 by 1990–91 (Zlotnik 1998). Moreover, whereas only 2,000 citizens of the Soviet Union and 12,000 citizens of China entered the United States in 1979, by 1990 the respective figures were 25,500 and 32,000 (US Immigration and Naturalization Service 1991).

In retrospect, it is clear that the end of the Cold War was a watershed event in the history of global migration, ending a policy regime that had held world emigration rates at artificially low levels for more than 40 years. The relatively open acceptance by Western democracies of refugees from communist countries in the East was always predicated on the assumption that the latter would work assiduously to prevent emigration from occurring in the first place. In effect, the West agreed to take in refugees who managed to escape only on the tacit assumption that socialist countries would do their utmost to stop them from leaving. When this implicit agreement on the regulation of emigration collapsed with the end of the Cold War, the expansive refugee and asylum policies of Western countries began to disintegrate.

A growing number of sending states have adopted policies to promote the export of migrant workers (Hugo 1995). Sending countries such as the Philippines, South Korea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, and Egypt have all established special government-sponsored programs to encourage the emigration of labor as part of broader strategies to acquire foreign exchange, reduce unemployment, and develop skills. The national economic plans of the Philippines (Battistella 1995) and Indonesia (Hugo 1995), for example, explicitly incorporate labor migration as a policy tool and set specific targets for emigration and remittances.

Institutional support by governments takes a variety of forms. Some countries have established labor-export agencies to manage the outflows, control recruitment, train potential migrants, explore new labor markets, and encourage wealthy countries to employ their workers, although the precise mix of policies varies from setting to setting (see Shah and Arnold 1986; Abella 1992). In China, several provinces have established labor-export companies to encourage and facilitate international migration (Qian 1996). Several countries have also established financial programs to attract remittances (Shah and Arnold 1986; Athukorala 1993), while others have negotiated bilateral labor agreements on behalf of their migrant workers. A few countries provide assistance to migrants seeking to readjust after a period of work abroad (Athukorala 1990), and some have special programs to attract back emigrants who have acquired high levels of skill or accumulated significant wealth overseas (Shah and Arnold 1986; Athukorala 1993). In light of these facts, theorists should broaden their attention to embrace the policies of sending as well as receiving societies.

The efficacy of restriction

The foregoing review suggests the emergence of a postmodern paradox by century's end: while the global economy unleashes powerful forces that produce larger and more diverse flows of migrants from developing to developed countries, it simultaneously creates conditions within developed countries that promote the implementation of restrictive immigration policies. These countervailing forces intersect at a time when artificial constraints to emigration from several populous regions have been eliminated by the end of the Cold War, and when developing countries increasingly find it in their interests to promote international labor migration. The central question for demographers seeking to project future migratory movements is which set of forces will prevail: those promoting the restriction of international migration or those promoting its expansion. Put another way, will the restrictive policies that developed countries impose be effective in stemming a rising tide of immigrants arising from the penetration of markets into developing countries?

Meyers (1995) divides receiving-country immigration policies into three basic categories: those affecting labor migrants, those affecting refugees, and those affecting permanent residents (which may include former labor migrants and refugees). Labor migration policies are generally determined bureaucratically by economic interest groups (employers and workers) who interact with public officials outside the public eye, yielding a "client politics of policy formulation" (Calavita 1992; Meyers 1995; Freeman 1995; Joppke 1998). Refugee policy is likewise formulated bureaucratically outside the public arena, yielding a slightly different "client politics of negotiation" between the executive branch and various social groups having political or humanitarian interests (Meyers 1995).

The formulation of policies regarding permanent immigration, in contrast, takes place in public arenas where the interests of politicians, legislators, and ordinary citizens weigh more heavily against those of bureaucrats and special interests. Citizens, albeit at greatly varying degrees, tend to be xenophobic and hostile to immigration, or to exhibit pro-immigration attitudes reflecting narrowly personal considerations. Small but significant minorities also oppose immigration on ideological grounds, as part of a commitment to zero population growth or to reducing strains on the environment. Most citizens, though, are poorly organized and politically apathetic, leaving immigration policies to be determined quietly by well-financed and better-organized special interests operating through bureaucratic channels. During periods of high immigration, stagnating wages, and rising inequality, however, the public becomes aroused, and some politicians inevitably draw upon this arousal to mobilize voters, thus politicizing the process of immigration policy formulation and moving it from client politics to public politics.

During the period from 1945 to 1975, immigration policies in receiving countries reflected prevailing political and economic conditions. Rapid economic growth, falling inequality, and relatively low rates of international movement kept immigration largely off the public agenda, and in most developed countries immigration policy was formulated primarily through a client politics of negotiation between bureaucrats and special interests. Immigration policy took the form of decisions made about temporary labor migration and the admission of political refugees. Since 1975, however, as the volume of immigration has risen, as the presence of immigrants has become more permanent, as economic growth has slowed, and as wage inequality has increased, policymaking has progressively shifted from the bureaucratic to the public arena, and from client to electoral politics.

The politicization of immigration policy creates dilemmas for political parties and politicians, because the interests favoring and opposing immigration do not fall neatly along party lines. On one side are special interests such as employers, ethnic lobbies, and humanitarian and libertarian groups that favor immigration; on the other side are nativist politicians, environmentalists, the general public, and unions who oppose it—both sides operating against a backdrop of globalization that encourages international movement. Given these alignments, Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield (1994) have noted the emergence of two common policy trends throughout the developed world: a convergence in the policy instruments chosen for immigration control and a widening gap between the goals served by these instruments and actual immigration outcomes.

In recent years, despite increasingly restrictive policies, virtually all developed countries have come to accept a large (although varying) number of "unwanted" immigrants (Joppke 1998). Even though most countries have enacted formal policies to severely restrict the entry and settlement of immigrants, liberal democratic states have found their abilities to fully enforce these restrictions constrained by several factors. First is the global economy itself, which lies beyond the reach of individual national governments but which generates structural transformations and unleashes socioeconomic forces that tend to promote large-scale international population movements (Sassen 1996, 1998). Second is the internal constitutional order of liberal democracies, reinforced by the emergence of a universal human rights regime that protects the rights of immigrants and makes it difficult for political elites to address the racial or ethnic concerns of citizens (Hollifield 1992; Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994; Freeman 1992, 1994, 1995, 1998; Jacobson 1997).

Although rights-based policies have taken different forms in different countries, the net effect has been similar in liberal democracies: increased civil rights for immigrants, an outcome that significantly undermines the capacity of states to control immigration. As Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield (1994:10) note, "it is the confluence of *markets* and *rights* that explains much of the contemporary difficulty of immigration control in Europe and the United States" (emphasis in original). In many countries, universal human rights are reinforced by moral obligations that stem from specific histories of colonialism, guestworker recruitment, or Cold War politics (Joppke 1998).

A third constraint on the restriction of immigration is the existence in most representative democracies of an independent judiciary that is shielded from the political pressures to which elected politicians must respond. Immigrants and their advocates turn to the courts to combat restrictive policies implemented by the legislative and executive branches. According to Joppke (1998), the rise of a liberal doctrine of human rights is not sufficient to protect the rights of immigrants and thwart governmental efforts at restriction. There must also be a means of guaranteeing those rights within a specific national polity, and this typically requires a written constitution and a strong, independent judiciary.

Faced with mounting public pressure to control immigration, but with the root causes of international migration lying largely beyond their reach in the forces of the global economy, and with formal policies of restriction under growing moral and judicial challenge, politicians in many developed countries have turned increasingly to symbolic policy instruments to create an appearance of control (Calavita 1992; Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994; Andreas 1998). Even in the industrial era of migration before the 1930s, policies had two functions: to change the status quo and to signal to influential groups that their interests were being considered seriously (Timmer and Williamson 1998). Repressive policies such as vigorous border enforcement, the bureaucratic harassment of aliens, and the restriction of immigrants' access to social services may or may not be effective, but they all serve an important political purpose: they are visible, concrete, and generally popular with citizen voters (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Forceful restrictive actions enable otherwise encumbered public officials to appear decisive, tough, and engaged in combating the rising tide of immigration.

Little research has been done outside North America to evaluate the efficacy of such policies, although it is clear that, despite the growing restrictions, undocumented migration is on the rise worldwide (see Massey et al. 1998). The efficacy of restriction, however, is likely to vary substantially from country to country depending on five basic factors: the relative power and autonomy of the state bureaucracy; the relative number of people seeking to immigrate; the degree to which political rights of citizens and noncitizens are constitutionally guaranteed; the relative independence of the judiciary; and the existence and strength of an indigenous tradition of immigration. The interplay of these five factors produces a continuum of state capacity to implement restrictive immigration policies, as illustrated in Table 1.

At one extreme are centralized authoritarian governments that lack an independent judiciary and a well-established regime of constitutional protections, and that have no tradition of immigration, as in the oil-exporting countries of the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, for example, are homogenous Islamic societies led by hereditary monarchs who preside over centralized, nondemocratic states. Officials in the Gulf States are thus in a strong position to enforce restrictive immigration policies, and laws and regulations governing migration within the region are consequently much harsher than those prevailing in Europe or North America (Halliday 1984; Dib 1988; Sell 1988; Abella 1992). None of the Gulf States recognizes the right to asylum, allows residence without a job, recognizes a right of family reunification, guarantees legal access to housing, social benefits, or medical care, or grants migrants any right of appeal with respect to decisions about

TABLE 1 Conceptual classification of factors affecting state capacity to implement restrictive immigration policies

	Strength of bureaucracy	Demand for entry	Strength of constitutional protections	Independence of judiciary	Tradition of immigration	Continuum of state capacity
Relationship to state capacity:	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Negative**	**Negative**	**Negative**	
Kuwait	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High
Singapore	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	|
Britain	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low	|
Switzerland	High	Moderate	High	High	Low	|
Germany	High	High	High	High	Low	|
France	High	High	High	High	Moderate	|
Argentina	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	|
Spain	Low	Moderate	High	High	Low	|
Canada	High	High	High	High	High	|
United States	Moderate	High	High	High	High	Low

their status; all permit deportation at any time by administrative decree (Dib 1988). Although migrants may be incorporated into the economic organization of the Gulf States, they are explicitly excluded from their social and political structures (Weiner 1982).

Next on the continuum of state capacity to restrict immigration are democratic states in Western Europe and East Asia with strong, centralized bureaucracies, but with moderate demand for entry and little native tradition of immigration. Political elites in these countries can expect to meet with some success in restricting immigration, but, as described above, immigrants nonetheless have important resources—moral, political, and legal—to forestall state actions and evade legal restrictions on entry and settlement. Next on the scale of state capacity are the nations of Southern Europe and South Asia, which likewise lack strong traditions of immigration but which also lack strong centralized bureaucracies capable of efficiently imposing their will throughout society. Immigrants to Spain, Italy, Greece, Thailand, or Malaysia thus have considerably more leeway to overcome barriers, and the states have less capacity to enforce restrictive immigration policies and bureaucratic procedures.

Finally, at the opposite end of the spectrum from the Gulf States are countries that lack a highly centralized state and that have strong traditions of individual liberty and long-standing cultures of immigration. Such countries as Canada and Australia have well-developed social and political infrastructures to support immigrants, protect their rights, and advance their interests. The most extreme case in this category is obviously the United States, which faces an intense demand for immigrant entry and has a deeply ingrained commitment to individual rights, a long-standing history of resistance to central authority, a strong written constitution protecting individual rights, and an independent and powerful judiciary. In the United States immigration is not simply a historical fact, it is part of the national myth, and the very idea of a national personal identification system is anathema.

The imposition of restrictive policies in the United States does not appear to have been effective in limiting either documented or undocumented migration. Despite successive amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act intended to make it more difficult for migrants from developing countries to enter the United States legally, the volume of legal immigration has continued to grow, rising from an average of 330,000 per year during the 1960s, to 450,000 per year during the 1970s, 734,000 per year during the 1980s, and finally exceeding 1 million per year during the 1990s (US Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997).

Since 1986, the US also has embarked increasingly on a less tolerant policy toward undocumented migrants, criminalizing the hiring of unauthorized workers, denying legal as well as illegal migrants access to selected social benefits, increasing inspections at work sites, and expanding the personnel and resources devoted to border enforcement (Heyman 1995; Dunn 1996; Massey 1998). Yet there is little evidence that these measures have succeeded in deterring undocumented migrants from seeking to enter the United States (Cornelius 1989; Kossoudji 1992; Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992; Espenshade and Acevedo 1995); in discouraging former undocumented migrants from undertaking return trips (Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992; Massey and Espinosa 1997); in preventing illegal migrants from successfully crossing the border (Espenshade 1990; Espenshade and Acevedo 1995; Crane et al. 1990; Massey and Singer 1995; Singer and Massey 1998); in convincing settled undocumented migrants to return home (Massey and Espinosa 1997; Durand, Massey, and Parrado 1999); or in preventing employers from hiring unauthorized workers (Donato and Massey 1993; Lowell and Jing 1994; Cobb-Clark, Shiells, and Lowell 1995; Fry, Lowell, and Haghighat 1995; Phillips and Massey 1999). As a result, the number of undocumented apprehensions has continued to increase, climbing from an annual average of 830,000 during the 1970s, to 1.2 million in the 1980s, and reaching 1.3 million in the 1990s (US Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997). Over the same period, estimates of net undocumented migration to the United States have continued to climb (Massey and Singer 1995; Van Hook and Bean 1998; Woodrow-Lafield 1998).

Implications for the dawn of the twenty-first century

Although policies implemented in migrant-sending countries have played an important role in shaping levels and patterns of international migration since World War II, the attention of theorists has focused almost exclusively on policies within immigrant-receiving societies. Most sending societies, however, have a strong interest in promulgating policies to encourage the international migration of labor, and in the future more countries can be expected to adopt policies that either directly or indirectly favor the emigration of labor (see Taylor et al. 1996a). Even if relatively few migrant-sending countries implement policies to promote emigration, moreover, it is hard to imagine them voluntarily executing policies to prevent emigration from occurring. The thrust of recent state policies has been to remove political constraints to mobility that before 1990 had kept world immigration levels artificially low.

This shift in policies within sending countries has coincided with the rapid expansion of the global market economy and the incorporation of ever greater numbers of regions and countries within it. As a result, none of the conditions known to play a role in originating international migration—wage differentials, market failures, labor market segmentation, and the expansion of global transportation, communication, and social networks—is likely to end any time soon; and once begun, the forces that perpetuate international movement—human capital formation, social capital formation, and other processes of cumulative causation—will tend to ensure that the resulting migrations will persist and expand into the future. Current theoretical and empirical knowledge thus suggests that, if anything, migratory flows will grow throughout the world.

At the same time, current theoretical and substantive knowledge portends a growing trend toward restrictive immigration policies in developed countries, at least with respect to potential migrants from the developing world. Globalization and technological change have combined to raise income inequality and/or unemployment, and have increased both the absolute and relative number of people seeking to enter as immigrants, conditions known to push receiving-country governments toward restriction. The shift to a restrictive policy regime has been aided by the end of the Cold War, which removed a major ideological prop for expansive immigration policies.

The likely result is that core receiving countries will employ increasingly strict measures to hinder the entry of immigrants from poorer countries, discourage their long-term settlement, and promote their return. The ability of states to regulate the behavior of immigrants and, hence, control the volume and composition of international migration is constrained, however, by a variety of factors. Globalization itself limits the power and influence of nation-states to control the transnational movement of labor as well as capital, goods, and information. Likewise the protection of human rights constrains the ability of democratic states to respond to the racial and ethnic concerns of voters and to impose harshly restrictive measures on immigrants or their dependents.

In the event, the ability of immigrant-receiving states to impose restrictive immigration policies successfully is likely to depend on the five factors shown in Table 1 and discussed earlier. The interplay of these factors yields a continuum of state capacity to restrict immigration. It would be useful to measure empirically how successful countries at different points along this continuum can expect to be as they attempt to limit and control immigration over the next century. Evidence suggests that undocumented migration is not unknown even in the Gulf States and is growing throughout Europe and Asia. In the United States, in particular, both legal and illegal migration continue to expand, and there is little evidence that the restrictive measures imposed so far have had much success in reducing either of these flows. Rather, policies in the United States have been largely symbolic, signaling to angry or fearful citizens and workers that their concerns are being addressed while marginalizing immigrants socially and geographically to make them less visible to the public. What remains to be seen is whether the majority of countries that lie between these two extremes will tend toward North America or the Persian Gulf in their inclination and ability to regulate and control immigration as we enter the next century.

Note

1 This section draws largely on the work of an interdisciplinary committee on the forces producing and sustaining international migration throughout the world. Under the auspices of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the author collaborated with Joaquín Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor to synthesize theories of international migration and evaluate their underlying precepts in light of empirical research emanating from the world's principal international migration systems: North America, Western Europe, the Persian Gulf, Asia and the Pacific, and the Southern Cone of South America. In the course of our five-year investigation, we published several articles (Massey et al. 1993, 1994; Taylor et al. 1996a, 1996b) and recently released a comprehensive report of our conclusions (Massey et al. 1998).

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