

E-BULLETIN

Digital Diplomacy and Inclusive Peace Studies Platform for Youth

GLOBAL MIGRATION DEFINE

GLOBAL MIGRATION HISTORY

GLOBAL MIGRATION IMPACTS

IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN THE EU : CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES



GLOBAL MIGRATION



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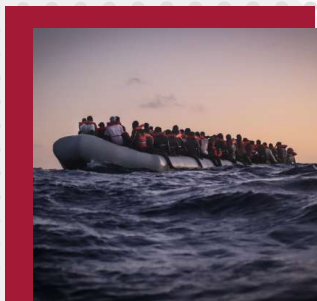
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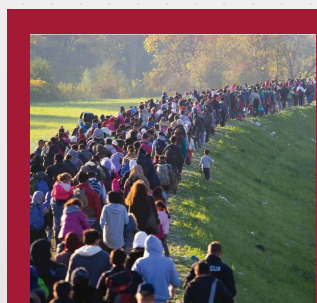
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WORLDWIDE NEWS

**1**

GLOBAL MIGRATION DEFINE

Since the dawn of men, people have migrated. Communities across the world have been formed through this process, even to this day. People migrate now more than ever before. Sometimes people choose to move for anything from employment to better weather. In some cases, however, migration is involuntary. Whatever the reason, migration can bear a big impact on people's lives. Have you ever lived in another country?

Do you know anybody who has? Read on to find out more about migration around the world. Another term for global migration is international migration. This type of migration occurs when people cross state boundaries and stay in a host state for a certain amount of time. People migrate (move) across the globe, either voluntarily or involuntarily (forced). With the latter, the movement is not of the person's own will, where people may be forced to migrate from conflict or natural disaster. This freedom of movement is a protected human right. You can read more about human rights in our Human Rights explanation! The geographical definition of migration is the movement of people across a specified boundary to establish a new permanent or semi-permanent residence.

Migrants:

A migrant is a person who is moving from one place to another. Someone may be considered a migrant regardless of a person's legal status, the cause of migration (voluntary or involuntary), or how long they intend to stay. There are different types of migrants. Let's define them.

– **Asylum seeker:** this is a person who is applying for asylum. Usually, asylum seekers have had to flee their home countries and cannot return due to fear of persecution, or even death. An asylum seeker searches for international protection, however, the claim for refugee status has not yet (and may not at all) been granted.

– **Refugee:** A refugee describes someone who is leaving a country (or fleeing), due to things like conflict or natural disaster, or other forms of persecution. Legally speaking, a refugee is an asylum seeker whose claim for asylum has been successful, meaning they are granted refugee status in a new country to live there permanently.

– **Economic migrant:** a person who has voluntarily left their country of origin to seek, by legal or illegal means, employment in another country.

Types of migration

Although migration always involves the movement of a person from one place to another, there can be many reasons for this movement and many different ways it can occur. This gives rise to different types of migration:

– Labour migration

Labour migration is the movement of individuals from one country to another for work, or in response to recruitment drives. **High-skilled labour migration** is a type of migration most demanded by host countries looking to attract highly skilled workers. In most cases, countries seek highly skilled workers in certain occupations when there is a shortage. This type of migration is not as common.

Temporary migration is also a characteristic of labour migration, where people migrate for the specific purpose of working. In some cases, people may migrate who have low skill levels, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and human rights violations. In some cases, this migration can be illegal.

Within many countries, the ability to migrate is dependent on the skill level or education. In some places, like Australia, this is more visible, with their point-based entry system. In the EU, this is not as common, therefore more unskilled worker migration can be facilitated.



- Forced migration

Forced migration may occur when people are forced to flee their home country due to conflict or political repression (refugees and asylum seekers). Forced migration can also happen due to natural disasters, limited food production and water insecurity, (often exacerbated by climate change). Human trafficking is also characterised by forced migration.

- International Retirement Migration (IRM)

Retired people may have the financial power to buy properties abroad, which can be either a first or a second home. These people put a lot of pressure on urbanisation and the mass construction of housing, significantly in coastal and rural areas. This type of migration can also include people leaving their job and moving to a rural location in another country. These people may telework or set up a business.

- Internal migration

Separately to international and global migration, this type of migration involves a person moving from one area to another within the same country, such as from the north of England to the south of England. No international borders are crossed. This type of migration crosses over with 'Rural-Urban' migration, or 'Counter-Urbanisation'.

Why do people migrate?

International migration can have so-called 'push' and 'pull' factors:

Push factors are based upon the country of origin. These are factors which may cause the migrants to have the desire to move.

- Wars, conflict, political instability, and economic crisis
- Ethnic and religious persecution
- Natural and man-made disasters, such as earthquakes
- Poverty
- Unemployment, low wages and poor working conditions
- Shortages of food, water, or healthcare Limited opportunities

Pull factors are based upon the intended destination of the migrant (the host country). These are factors that attract people to a new place.

- Better quality of life and standard of living
- Varied employment opportunities, higher wages
- Better healthcare and access to education services
- Political stability, more freedom, better life prospects
- For retirees; a range of services to cater to their needs, or environmental characteristics, such as the coast.





GLOBAL MIGRATION HISTORY

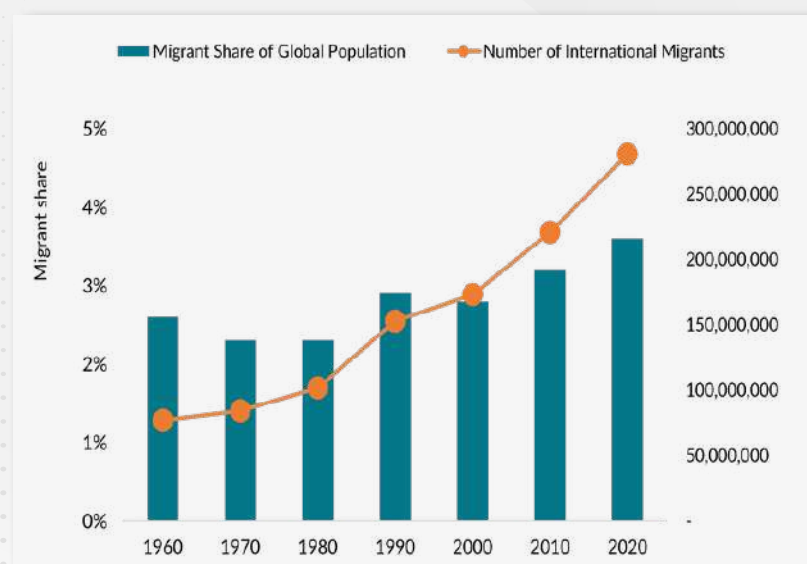
How many migrants are there? What is their share of the world's total population? And how have the size and share of this population changed over time?

According to the latest available estimates, there were 280.6 million global migrants in 2020 representing close to 4 percent of the world's 7.8 billion people. To put this in perspective, if migrants formed their own country, it would have been the fourth most populous country in the world in 2020 after China, India, and the United States (and just ahead of Indonesia).

The number of people worldwide living outside their origin countries as of 2020 was at its historical high almost quadruple the level in 1960 when this population stood at 77.1 million. In the last decade alone, nearly 60 million more people became international migrants. Much of this increase has been driven by labor or family migration. The international migrant share of the world's population also is rising, standing at 3.6 percent in 2020, up from 3.2 percent a decade earlier, and 2.6 percent in 1960.

Which regions and countries receive the most global migrants?

Migrants do not move across the world uniformly. Most choose to go to high-income countries such as the United States or in Europe because of the greater economic and social stability they offer as well as oil-producing countries in the Gulf that attract Asian and other migrants who come largely through temporary worker programs. As Table 1 shows, more than 52 percent of international migrants resided in Northern America and Europe. The Northern Africa and Western Asia region followed, with 18 percent of the international migrant stock.



*Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA),

	Destination	
	Number	Share of International Migrant Population (%)
Total International Migrant Population	280,598,105	100%
Europe and Northern America	145,414,863	52%
Northern Africa and Western Asia	49,767,746	18%
Sub-Saharan Africa	22,221,538	8%
Eastern and Southeastern Asia	19,591,106	7%
Central and Southern Asia	19,427,576	7%
Latin America and the Caribbean	14,794,623	5%
Australia and New Zealand	9,067,584	3%
Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand)	313,069	0%

*Source: MPI tabulation of data from UN DESA Population Division, International Migrant Stock 2020: Destination, Table 1: International Migrant Stock at Mid-Year by Sex and by Region, Country or Area of Destination, 1990-2020.

Note: In some cases, UN Population Division estimates of migrant stock do not match those provided by national statistical agencies. There could be several reasons for data differences, including periods referenced, definitions, and estimation methodologies. For instance, the U.S. Census Bureau's estimate of the foreign-born population as of 2019 is several million lower than the UN estimate because the Census Bureau considers persons born outside the United States and its dependent territories to a U.S.-citizen parent as "U.S. born," whereas the UN Population Division defines them as born abroad.

While the United States has the largest absolute number of migrants, it does not crack the top 25 countries in terms of the share of the overall population that global migrants represent. Here the Gulf nations, such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, lead the way with 88 percent and 77 percent, respectively, of their overall populations comprised of migrants.

What countries are the sources for the largest numbers of migrants?

While it is well known that Europe and Northern America receive the largest share of migrants, it is perhaps less well understood that these countries also send the largest number of migrants abroad. Central and Southern Asia takes second place as the largest emigrant-origin region, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 2).

Among sending countries, middle-income nations such as India, Mexico, Russia, China (mainland), and Syria send the most migrants in absolute numbers, including refugees in the case of Syria. While nearly all Mexican migrants (97 percent) reside in the United States, international migrants from India are more scattered across the world, including in the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Oman.

The United States is the world's top migrant destination: The country accounts for 5 percent of the global population but has attracted 18 percent of all migrants. Put differently, the United States has more global migrants (more than 50.6 million as of 2020) than the next four receiving countries Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United Kingdom combined (50.2 million). Australia, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom have joined the ranks of the top 10 destinations since 1990.

How many migrant workers are there worldwide?

The number of international migrant workers stood at 169 million in 2019, or nearly 5 percent of the global workforce, according to International Labor Organization estimates. Migrant workers can be found across all skill levels and sectors, but are often concentrated in lower-skilled industries such as agriculture, construction, and tourism.

Close to 70 percent of all migrants of working age (15 and older) are workers. Women represented 70 million (almost 42 percent) of all international migrant workers.

	Origin	
	Estimate	Share of International Migrant Population (%)
Total International Migrant Population	280,598,105	100%
Europe and Northern America	67,601,621	24%
Central and Southern Asia	51,229,549	18%
Latin America and the Caribbean	42,890,481	15%
Eastern and Southeastern Asia	38,400,740	14%
Northern Africa and Western Asia	37,563,820	13%
Sub-Saharan Africa	28,284,538	10%
Australia and New Zealand	1,404,924	1%
Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand)	565,281	0%

*source: MPI tabulation of data from UN DESA Population Division, International Migrant Stock 2020: Origin, Table 1: International Migrant Stock at Mid-Year by Sex and by Region, Country or Area of Origin, 1990-2020.

What level of financial remittances do migrants and their relatives send? What are the largest remittance-receiving countries?

Money sent by migrant households to family and friends in the origin country, referred to as remittances, helps to keep loved ones out of poverty, weather a temporary economic or health crisis, or support the education of migrants' children. In some cases, remittances are an important source of investment in national education, health, and infrastructure projects. Collectively, remittances are larger than the foreign direct investment and official development assistance received by low- and middle-income countries.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, officially recorded remittances hit a record-high US \$719 billion in 2019, including \$548 billion to low- and middle-income countries, the World Bank estimates. The numbers dropped in 2020 because of pandemic-related disruptions, though not as sharply as initially prognosticated. For 2020, \$702 billion was recorded in remittances through formal channels, with \$539 billion going to low- and middle-income countries.

The top five remittance-receiving countries in 2020 were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Egypt. Combined these five countries received more than \$250 billion (36 percent) of all officially recorded remittances. While the absolute total of remittances is important, it may be a small source of income for some countries. For instance, remittances represent just 3 percent of India's gross domestic product (GDP). When remittances are measured as a proportion of GDP, the top receiving countries are very different. In 2020, Tonga (38 percent of GDP), Somalia (35 percent), Lebanon (33 percent), and South Sudan and Kyrgyz Republic (29 percent apiece) relied on the remittances the most.

How many humanitarian migrants are there globally?

The number of persons forcibly displaced worldwide (including refugees, people in refugee-like situations, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons [IDPs], Venezuelans displaced abroad; and returned refugees and IDPs) exceeded 100 million, according to early 2022 estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These estimates included 26.6 million refugees, 4.4 million asylum seekers, and 50.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Representing 1 percent of the global population, the forcibly displaced figure is equivalent to the 14th most populous country in the world.

Over the last two decades, the forcibly displaced population quintupled from its 20.7 million level in 2000, driven by large flows from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. Neighboring countries often become the hosts: 72 percent of refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad lived in neighboring countries.

There is no doubt that 2022 will set another unenviable record, as the already record-high population of the forcibly displaced swelled with millions of new entrants fleeing conflict and violence. UNHCR announced on May 23 that in the first few months of 2022, an additional 11.8 million people were forced to flee their homes. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has displaced millions beyond the Ukrainian borders, and millions more inside the country. As of mid-July 2022, close to 6 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe, one of the biggest mass displacements since World War II and comprised overwhelmingly of women and children. The situation in Myanmar with the Rohingya and in Burkina Faso, both of which already have large numbers of IDPs, continues to get worse.

How many women and girls are global migrants?

In 2020, 48 percent (134.9 million) of all international migrants worldwide were women or girls, according to mid-2020 UN estimates. The number of female migrants grew by 26 percent over the past decade, up from 107 million in 2010. The number of male migrants grew slightly faster, by 28 percent during the same period. Most migrant women move for work, family, or education. Some leave their countries due to man-made or natural disasters. Women and girls made up approximately half of the refugees and other vulnerable humanitarian migrants.

How many international migrants are children?

Of the 280.6 million international migrants in 2020, 35.5 million of them were children under the age of 18, according to the mid-2020 UN estimates. This is the highest level ever recorded, according to the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move.

How many humanitarian migrants are children?

According to 2021 UNHCR estimates, 36.5 million children under age 18 were forcibly displaced. Overall, 1.5 million children were born into refugee life, with 350,000 to 400,000 joining child refugee rolls every year on average between 2018 and 2021.

3

GLOBAL MIGRATION IMPACTS



Migration has been the focus of intense political debate in recent years. While most people have positive perceptions about immigrants, there are misconceptions and concerns. For instance, some think that migrants are a burden on economies. A new study in Chapter 4 of the April 2020 World Economic Outlook looks at the economic impact of migration on recipient countries and finds that migration generally improves economic growth and productivity in host countries.

Immigrants in advanced economies increase output and productivity both in the short and medium

But the pandemic has led to an abrupt stop to migration. While the Great Lockdown is temporary, the pandemic may add to a general sentiment of reticence and disbelief in openness and have longer term effects on countries' willingness to receive migrants. Less immigration and high unemployment in destination economies would hurt origin countries, especially poorer ones, that rely significantly on the remittances that migrant workers send back home.

Putting migration into perspective

In 2019, 270 million people in the world were migrants—defined as people not living in their country of birth. The migrant population has increased by 120 million since 1990. However, the share of migrants in the world's population has hovered around 3 percent over the past 60 years. Strikingly, the share of immigrants in the total population of advanced economies has risen from 7 percent to 12 percent, while the share of immigrants in emerging market and developing economies has remained at around 2 percent.

Migrants often settle within their home region. However, a significant part of international migration takes place over long distances (for example, from South Asia to the Middle East) and, in particular, from emerging market and developing economies toward advanced economies.

In contrast, refugee migration is a more localized phenomenon as vulnerable populations leave home suddenly with few resources and travel to a safe destination, usually close to the home country. Emerging and developing economies are therefore both the origin and the main destination of refugees.

Push and pull factors

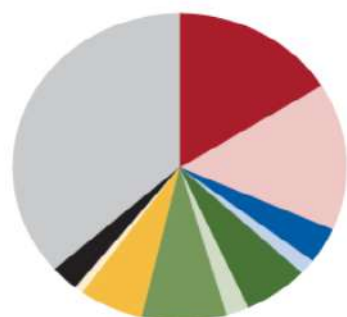
Emigrating to another country is very costly, which explains why only a very small fraction of the population migrates. The costs of migration include geographical and linguistic barriers, which together explain a large share of the variation of migration flows.

Factors influencing migration

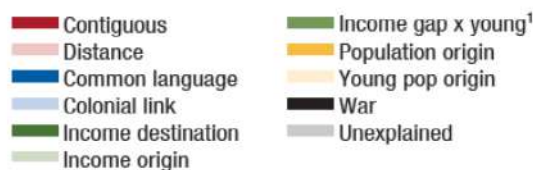
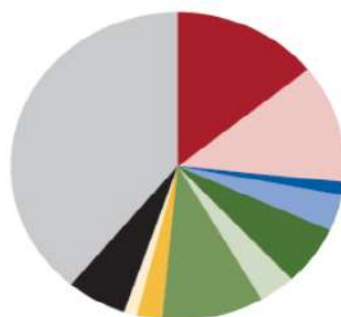
Migration costs due to geography and other barriers limit people's desire to move in search of higher incomes.

(determinants of observed migration flows and their relative contribution, 1990–2015)

1. From EMDEs to AEs



2. From EMDEs to EMDEs



Source: IMF staff calculations.

Note: The figure summarizes the contribution of the baseline migration drivers to explaining observed migration flows for the two most relevant migration corridors. See Annex 2 for more details. AEs = advanced economies; EMDEs = emerging market and developing economies.

¹/ Denotes the product between the income gap and the share of young population.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

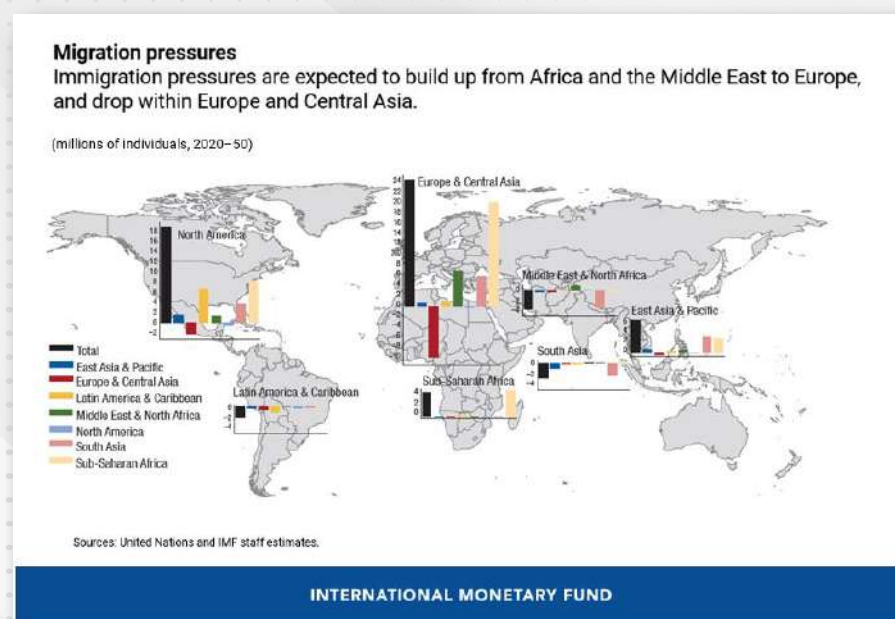
A major reason why people migrate is income differences between origin and destination countries. Richer countries attract more immigrants, especially from countries with younger populations. Countries with lower per capita income experience more emigration, but only if they are not too poor. We find that when per capita income at the origin is below \$7000, countries with lower incomes have lower emigration toward advanced economies. This suggests that people get trapped in poverty since they are deprived of the resources needed to overcome migration costs.

Wars mainly explain migration between emerging and developing economies—corroborating the importance of geographical proximity for refugee flows. Lastly, and importantly for the analysis of future migration pressures, the size of source country populations is a key driver of migration flows.

Economic impact

Our analysis looks separately at the effect of overall immigration (which is mostly driven by economic reasons) into advanced economies and refugee immigration into emerging market and developing economies. We find that immigrants in advanced economies increase output and productivity both in the short and medium term. Specifically, we show that a 1 percentage point increase in the inflow of immigrants relative to total employment increases output by almost 1 percent by the fifth year.

That's because native and immigrant workers bring to the labor market a diverse set of skills, which complement each other and increase productivity. Our simulations additionally indicate that even modest productivity increases from immigration benefits the average income of natives. However, the positive impact of productivity is not visible for refugee immigration to emerging market and developing economies. This reflects the difficulties that these migrants face in integrating into local labor markets.



Future migration pressures

The population in emerging market and developing economies (in sub-Saharan Africa in particular) will continue to rise over the next 30 years and migration pressures toward advanced economies are likely to increase. For example, the chart shows migration pressures building up from Africa and the Middle East to Europe between 2020 and 2050. However, global migration pressures will remain roughly constant at 3 percent of the world's population. Higher incomes in emerging market and developing economies will reduce migration pressures. But, as already discussed, this is not necessarily the case for poorer countries, like those in sub-Saharan Africa, where rising (though still low) incomes may enable more people to emigrate.

Other pressures (explored as alternative scenarios) will also impact migration. For instance, climate change is expected to lead to a significant increase in internal and regional migration in emerging market and developing economies. At the same time, our findings suggest that its impact on migration toward advanced economies is less clear-cut, given that lower incomes in many poorer countries may "trap" more individuals in their region of origin.

Magnifying the gains

Migration brings big gains to recipient countries and provides an opportunity for a better life to migrants. However, it may also create distributional challenges, as native workers in specific market segments could be hurt economically, at least temporarily. Fiscal and labor market policies should therefore be used to support the income and retraining of those natives facing labor market difficulties. Moreover, active labor market and immigration policies geared toward integrating immigrants, such as language training and easier validation of professional titles, can help build even better outcomes from immigration in recipient countries.

Finally, international policy coordination is needed to tackle the challenges from refugee migration. This includes sharing the costs from hosting refugees and fostering their integration with emerging and developing economies.

4

IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN THE EU : CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES



Immigration rank high in the public debate in EU countries. Participants in this debate often have different opinions on the subject. On the one hand, supporters of more liberal attitudes towards immigration – many economists are among them – propose some solid arguments why the EU needs more immigrants. One such argument is related to the ageing of the European population, which implies that pension systems are coming under strain. In this context, immigrant inflows are beneficial because they may slow the pace of ageing and consequently relax tensions in the pension system. Another pro-immigration argument refers to the low geographical mobility of European workers within the EU. A consequence of the latter is that migrants play a crucial role as a stabilizer after asymmetric shocks by moving into areas where labour is scarce.

On the other hand, many European countries experience high levels of anti-immigrant opinions. As Card, Dustmann and Preston (2005) document with the use of the immigration module of the European Social Survey, the proportion of respondents favouring tight immigration policy ranges from a low of 17.9% in Sweden to a high of 86.1% in Greece. According to Boeri (2009), negative opinions about immigration are in the first place associated with the fiscal burden perception. Some Europeans fear that immigrants drain public resources as recipients of the generous social transfers introduced in Europe to prevent social exclusion. As a consequence, in addition to tighten up migration policies several national governments are cutting on welfare access by migrants. Boeri (2009) argues that this constitutes a paradox. While the European Union strongly believes in measures favouring social protection and social inclusion, these measures are becoming “weapons of mass exclusion”. There are several additional reasons why in many countries the proportion of natives favouring tight immigration policy is high. Natives fear that immigration has an impact on their wages and employment, which would imply a redistribution of wealth across different subgroups of the population. Schiff (2002) proposes a different explanation related to social capital. Differently from the movement of goods, migration affects culture, norms and values in the host country. Some people dislike immigration because they believe it may jeopardise common values.

The complexity of migration requires a global approach to policies. First, the several externalities at work ask for a high level of coordination among EU member states. A simple example may help in clarifying this point. Once undocumented migrants enter the Schengen zone, they can freely move from one country in the zone to another. There is therefore a need for coordination among EU member states for policies related to irregular immigration. In addition to stress this, the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum – which was formally adopted on 16 October 2008 in Brussels – underlines the importance of strengthening cooperation with countries of origin and transit on a number of fronts, including managing migrant inflows, fighting against the trading of human beings and against international criminal networks. Second, a global approach requires an in-depth analysis of all the factors determining migration, as Brady (2008) suggests. Helping immigrants' origin countries in alleviating problems of political instability, poverty or high unemployment through official development assistance or reducing barriers to trade are some examples of policies dealing with "push" factors, i.e. the reasons why migrants want to move out of certain countries. Immigration policies should also take into account the factors that attract migrants into the destination country, i.e. the pull factors. An example of such factors is the labour market condition in host countries. According to the above-mentioned pact, it is the responsibility of each EU country to decide on the number of persons it wishes to admit and this should be done according to its individual labour requirements.



In addition to the fostering of cooperation both among member states and between the EU and migrant's countries of origin, two of the main arguments at the center of the debate on European immigration policy are the EU willingness of attracting more qualified immigrant workers and of reducing the number of undocumented immigrants. The rest of the paper focuses on these two priorities in the light of recent findings of the economic literature. In particular, section 2 deals with the introduction of the EU Blue Card, through which the EU shows its ambitions in globally competing for talents. Section 3 instead analyzes policies related to the control of irregular immigrant inflows. Section 4 briefly concludes.

Global competition for talents and the EU Blue Card

In May 2009 the European Council adopted a directive (2009/50/EC) concerning the introduction of a European work visa known as Blue Card.

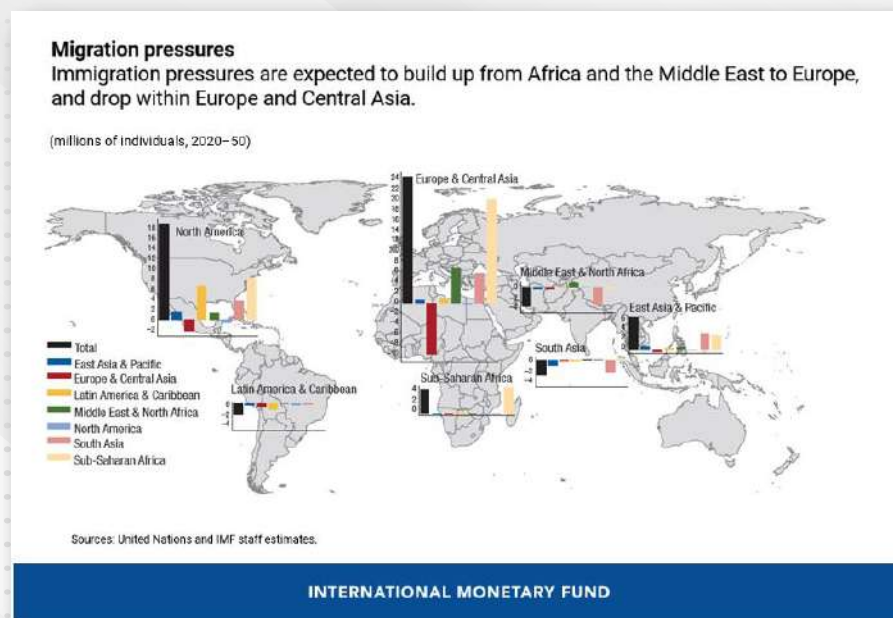
This visa is inspired by the US Green Card, and the "Blue" comes from the colour of the EU flag. The aim of the new visa is to attract highly skilled immigrants by making their legal status fully transferable within the EU. The directive states that after 18 months of legal residence in the first member state as an EU Blue Card holder, the person concerned and her family members may move to a member state other than the first country for the purpose of highly qualified employment (see article 18 of the directive).

The main criterion for admission is a valid one-year work contract with a gross annual salary that is not inferior to a relevant salary threshold defined by the member states. This threshold should be at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in the member state concerned (article 5). The immigrants would gain permanent residency after five years (article 16). When the proposal for the Blue Card was unveiled in October 2007, the European Commission president José Manuel Barroso stressed that one of the reasons why Europe has been less successful than Canada, Australia and the US in attracting qualified migrants has been the different procedures.

These often conflicting procedures have implied that work and residence permits of immigrants have only been valid for the member states where the permits have been issued. This may have represented a serious limit to the mobility of migrants inside the EU. To support this argument, in the same occasion the former Justice and Security Commissioner Franco Frattini reported that about 85 per cent of global unskilled migrant labour heads to the EU while only 5 per cent goes to the US. In contrast, 55 per cent of skilled labour goes to the United States and just 5 per cent to the European Union. The aim of the Blue Card is to make the EU more attractive for highly-skilled migrants by improving their mobility within the EU.

Why should Europe be willing to attract skilled people? Borjas (2000) summarizes several advantages from attracting highly-educated rather than lowly-educated immigrants. Skilled immigrants are likely to be more beneficial for the host country's economy: they pay higher taxes, they require fewer social services and they integrate faster than unskilled immigrants. In the presence of externalities, natives can benefit from immigrants' set of knowledge and abilities. This may happen if for instance native and immigrant labour are complements in the production function, i.e. the additional input of one production factor raises the marginal productivity of the other. Another argument proposed by the supporters of selective immigration policies is that an inflow of skilled immigrants may have favorable effects on the distribution of income. An increase in the supply of skilled workers might decrease the wage of highly-educated workers because of higher supply of skilled labour, and consequently reduce income inequality.

There are however some disadvantages from the introduction of a selective immigration policy. The latter is probably the best policy if one wants to maximize the economic well-being of the native population only. The introduction of policies that screen applicants by education is however not a Pareto improvement, because it may negatively affect the welfare of other groups of people. For instance, the origin country may lose its brightest individuals, a phenomenon that is known as "brain drain".



This can be dangerous and costly for developing countries, especially for African countries where the brain drain also concerns the migration of well-qualified health sector staff. In order to solve this inconvenience, the article 22 of the above-mentioned directive states that EU countries should refrain from pursuing active recruitment in developing countries in sectors suffering from a lack of personnel and key sectors, such as the health sector. Moreover, the directive encourages the development of appropriate mechanisms to facilitate both circular and temporary migration. The EU is not the first immigrant's destination area to adopt a selective immigration policy. In the 1960s, Canada began to allocate visas to immigrants on the basis of the applicant's socioeconomic characteristics. Immigrants were screened through a point system, which awarded points according to the immigrant's education, age and occupational demand. Only those applicants who had enough points obtained the entry visas. In the 1970s, there was a revision of this application screening method, which made easier family reunification. Australia and New Zealand followed Canada in the adoption of point-based systems.

In the late 1990s, there was a major reform in Australian immigration policy, which has provided an appropriate experimental setting for economists to study selective immigration policies. Cobb-Clark and Khoo (2006) analyze the effectiveness of this reform of the Australian immigration policy and find that the reform did improve the immigrants' skill. In particular, they show that immigrants who entered Australia after this major policy change had higher



labour market participation rates and lower unemployment rates than immigrants arrived before the reform. Before the introduction of the Blue Card, some EU member states adopted policies aimed in attracting skilled immigrants. In 2008, UK became the first European country to introduce a point-based system. Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands have used "green card" or work permit systems, in partnerships with employers, to attract and select highly educated workers (see Brady, 2008).

How does a selective immigration policy tool such as the point system work? Borjas' (1993) empirical analysis shows that the Canadian point system works not because it attracts more skilled workers from a particular source country, but because it alters the national-origin mix of the immigrant flow. It is worth to stress that a selective immigration policy is only one of multiple forces that may affect the educational composition of immigrants, as shown in a recent work by Belot and Hatton (2008). They investigate both economic and non-economic determinants of immigrant selection by education, using data from OECD countries. Their regression analysis shows that the higher the returns to skill in the destination country and the lower the returns to skill in the source country, the more highly educated the immigrants are. This finding is in line with the predictions of the Roy model and appears once the authors control for the fact that poverty may constrain many potential migrants from migrating from poor countries.



History matters as well. Past colonial links are associated with negative selection from the source country. One possible reason why this result holds is that postcolonial policies gave preferential access to unskilled migrants from former colonies. A qualitatively similar effect on the immigrants' educational distribution comes from the level of poverty in the origin country. Belot and Hatton's (2008) estimates show that the poorer the source country, the more educated its emigrants relative to the population from which they are drawn.

A positive selection by education may also be due to a greater distance between the source and the host country. In the regression analysis, this represents a proxy for the migration costs. Finally, when Belot and Hatton (2008) look at the effects of selective migration policy on skill selection, results are not particularly robust. This may be due to two very different reasons, either the measures of selective policies used in their regression analysis are imperfect or the immigration policies have not been effective in increasing the education level of immigrants. The authors caution the readers that more definitive conclusions about the effects of policies on skill selection need the development of better measured policy indicators.

The results presented above imply that there are several reasons why the introduction of the Blue Card in the European Union may be less effective than the adoption of point-based systems in other countries. For instance, the European colonial history may represent a constraining factor in the change of national-origin mix of the immigrant flows, which is the mechanism through which selective immigration policies seem to work. However, colonial links also imply that several origin countries share the official or primary language with some EU member states. As stated above, this should imply a more positive selection by education.

Hatton (2008) proposes another reason why the Blue Card in the EU may work less well than point systems in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In Europe the majority of immigrants come through family reunification or as refugees. The immigrants who will be screened through the Blue Card are therefore only a small proportion of all immigrants. The new European work visa would only be effective in case of an increase in the share of employment-based immigrants in the population. The latter is not compatible with the limits imposed by international treaty obligations towards providing sanctuary for asylum seekers and favouring family reunification, unless European countries are willing to accept a significant increase in the total number of immigrants. The EU Blue Card aims to attract up to 20 million highly skilled workers from outside the EU, but each member state keeps the right to define the quotas of highly qualified workers they allow into their territory. The effectiveness of this policy will depend on whether the countries will decide for high volumes of admission of third-country nationals entering their territory.

Another concern that has been raised is related to the choice of the screening criteria. Is the choice of income (at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in the member state concerned) a screening mechanism that is appropriate for evaluating an immigrant's benefits to the host society? While income is often positively correlated with education, it is not clear whether it will help in attracting those immigrants for which there is a skill shortage. In this context, the heterogeneity of EU countries' labour markets has made impossible to design a single application procedure that solves the skill shortages in the 27 member states.

Selective immigration policies that encourage the entry of highly-educated immigrants are likely to be less beneficial for countries with high levels of occupational downgrading. The latter is a situation where the allocation to jobs is inappropriate to the immigrants' skills. In many host countries immigrants are overqualified for the jobs they hold. For instance, this may happen if they lack complementary skills like language. Another reason for occupational downgrading is that the search for the best job matches is time consuming, especially for individuals with little knowledge of the local labour markets such as non-native workers during the first years of permanence in the destination country. In Table 1, I use information from the Database on Immigration in OECD countries (see also OECD, 2008). For several OECD countries, the table presents the over-qualification rate of immigrants relative to natives, which is computed dividing the proportion of persons born abroad who are overqualified by that of the overqualified native-born. An overqualified individual is defined as an individual who holds a job that requires lesser qualifications than one that would theoretically be available at her education level. Countries with a large value of this ratio suffer from occupational downgrading of foreign workers. In all countries in the table – New Zealand and the Slovak Republic represent the only two exceptions – immigrants are on average more overqualified than natives.

The occupational downgrading is particularly severe in Southern European countries (Italy, Greece and Spain), and – among the Northern European countries – in Denmark and Sweden. As the OECD (2008) report clarifies, countries in Southern Europe have high levels of immigrants' over-qualification because they are relatively new immigration countries. Immigrant workers seem ready to accept unskilled jobs upon arrival, with the hope of upward professional mobility as their stay in the host country lengthens. In Northern European countries, the high occupational downgrading in Denmark and Sweden may instead be related to the high proportion of refugees. The sudden character of refugee migration is often associated with the impossibility of providing an official certification of the education and job market experience level. In addition, another peculiarity of asylum migration is represented by the higher uncertainty concerning the expected length of stay in the host country, which may influence the quality of the job match.

	Total	Natives	Immigrants	Over-qualification rate of immigrants compared to that of natives
Austria	10,9	9,9	20,0	2,0
Czech Republic	5,8	5,6	9,6	1,7
Denmark	11,9	11,2	24,5	2,2
Finland	16,2	16,1	21,6	1,3
France	11,0	10,8	13,7	1,3
Greece	13,1	10,1	32,4	3,2
Hungary	5,1	5,0	7,4	1,5
Ireland	17,5	16,9	21,0	1,2
Italy	7,3	6,9	15,4	2,2
Luxembourg	7,6	5,4	11,7	2,2
Poland	7,8	7,8	9,0	1,2
Portugal	9,0	8,3	13,6	1,6
Slovak Republic	26,9	26,9	24,5	0,9
Spain	8,1	7,3	19,8	2,7
Sweden	8,7	7,6	18,6	2,4
United Kingdom	14,4	14,0	18,4	1,3
Australia	14,5	12,9	18,9	1,5
Canada	22,1	21,3	25,2	1,2
New Zealand	18,6	18,9	17,2	0,9
Switzerland	7,8	7,2	10,6	1,5
United States	14,4	14,0	17,3	1,2

Note: The source is the Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC). Immigrants are defined as foreign-born individuals. The column denoted as "Natives" ("Immigrants") reports the percentage of employed natives (immigrants) holding a job for which they are overqualified.

Before turning to the analysis of policies aimed to reduce the size of the undocumented immigrant population, it is worth to mention some of the most interesting proposals made during the public debate on the introduction of the EU Blue Card. von Weizsäcker (2008) suggests to introduce a “Blue Diploma”, which would allow foreign-born graduates with a Master’s degree (or equivalent) from a participating university to find a job in the EU without being subject to the normal salary threshold of the Blue Card. This would help to attract foreign talents to EU universities and to the European labour market afterwards. He also stresses the importance of investing in complementary measures, such as expatriate infrastructure, in order to better compete for skilled migrants. An example that often has an important weight in the migration decision is the existence of suitable foreign schools for children. As measures designed to mitigate any adverse impact of the EU Blue Card on the development of low and middle-income countries, von Weizsäcker (2008) proposes to offer the possibility of an opt-out from the Blue Card to any developing country concerned about brain drain. He also suggests offering financial support for tertiary education to developing countries with particularly high rates of high-skilled emigration to the EU.

Undocumented immigration

The presence of undocumented immigrant population is a widespread phenomenon in OECD countries. The majority of these migrants enter the destination countries legally on short-term visas and stay on after these visas expire. In the European Union, recent estimates quantify the irregular foreign resident population for the year 2008 in the interval range 1.9 million (minimum) - 3.8 million (maximum). These numbers correspond to about 7%-13% of the total foreign population (Kovacheva and Vogel, 2009). There is however a large heterogeneity among European countries.

Hanson (2007) stresses the strong economic rationale of undocumented immigration. Irregular immigrants tend to arrive in larger numbers when they are really needed, for instance when the destination country’s economy is booming (relative to the source country’s economy). Regular immigration is instead subject to bureaucratic delays, which implies that there is often a disconnection between the destination country’s labour conditions and migrant inflows. In Hanson’s words, illegal immigration tends to provide businesses with the types of workers they want, when they want and where they want.

Of course, the above-presented rationale does not imply that a strictly positive level of undocumented immigrant population is desirable. It instead confirms that there might exist costs from closing the borders. From the migrant’s point of view, the consequence of the undocumented status is an extremely uncertain place in society. This comes from the fact that irregular immigrants have a restricted set of employment opportunities and therefore have limited upward social mobility. Moreover – as Hanson (2007) documents – natives often tend to have negative attitudes towards the undocumented immigrant population, because they perceive that undocumented migration may affect wages of low-skilled workers, generate a net fiscal burden on native taxpayers (by using public services and not paying taxes) and represent a threat to national security.

There are several immigration policy tools that deal with the control of immigrant population without residence permit. Sub-sections 3.1 and 3.2 discuss immigration amnesties and border controls, respectively.

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