



Migration magnets

Immigration is part of economic development strategies and, especially in low-fertility economies, nations position themselves to attract migrants.

Migration both within and between countries has been on the increase for many years and shows little sign of slowing as we move forward. As Professor Richard Black highlighted in the initial perspective on the topic:

“Although international migration has increased over the past few decades, it has done so slowly, rising from just 2% to around 3% of the world’s population over the period from 1970 to 2005. It seems highly probable that this percentage will continue to rise slowly over the coming decade, or at least not fall, implying that by 2020 there will be more international migrants in the world than there are today.

“In addition, although it appears that new migration flows – in terms of origins and destinations – are emerging all the time, it also seems likely that the major ‘channels’ of international migration will be the same in 2020 as they are today, with few new major ‘poles of attraction’, and few new emerging countries of emigration – beyond the possibility of mass exodus associated with economic or political collapse in a small number of countries.”

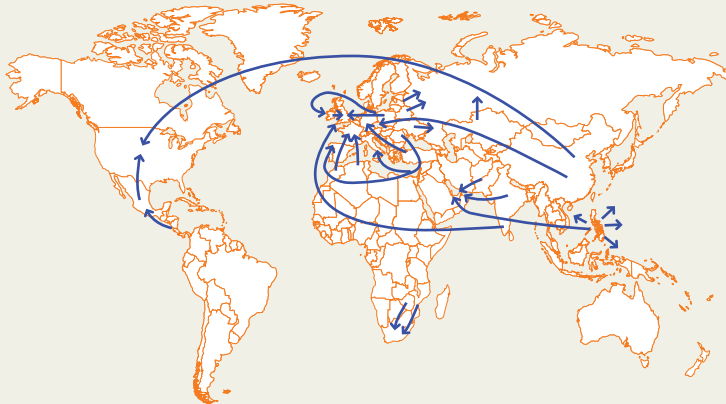
These so-called ‘poles of attraction’ have also been termed ‘migration magnets’ as they highlight where and why people want to move from one area to another. In many countries, the internal migration magnets are increasingly the cities where wealth

generation is seen to occur, which in turn attracts the people who are able to move – generally the young. As mentioned by Ricky Burdett in the initial point of view on the future of cities:

“Urban growth is being fuelled by new levels of mobility and migration of diverse populations within and across nations, especially in China, Brazil and India. These rural-to-urban migrants are attracted by the tantalising prospects of jobs and opportunity and driven by the harsh realities of rural life. Cities like Mumbai experience forty-two people moving into the city per hour.”

In several of the Future Agenda events, it was mentioned that, in the coming years, cities and city economies within countries will increasingly compete for the best talent. Just as in the past decade or so, as some regions have campaigned ferociously for direct investment and sought to attract companies to create jobs and stimulate economic growth, over the next ten years we can expect to see different cities within the same country competing with each other to attract the best people to help drive future growth. Whether this is by creating the best universities, hosting the best companies to attract top graduates or providing better housing and living conditions for families, the fast-growing urban environments and city-states in India and China – as well as in developed economies like Europe and the US – are all gearing up to market themselves

Some Important Current Migration Routes



Source: National Public Radio: The Economist

as attractive growth magnets. Being the magnet that attracts the best talent will increasingly be seen as an economic and social priority by many a city mayor.

At a national level, as fertility rates continue to drop, dependency ratios accelerate and the desire for sustained economic growth continues in many developed countries, country-to-country migration will be increasingly seen in a positive economic light.

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As such, countries will start to compete more for the migrants they need. Today, there are just a few nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand that are actively and openly seen to encourage skilled immigration. They all have a unique model aimed at building their populations with the best people and only accept skilled migrants that fill specific gaps as clearly laid out in their public policies. In New Zealand, 23% of the population are migrants, and, in Auckland, this figure is nearly 40%. In Canada, the government's immigration plan clearly sets out how and where another 250,000 immigrants who arrive annually will be integrated into the country and help to drive economic growth.

Following the lead of such countries as Canada, where immigration has clearly supported growth to such an extent that it has become multinational as well as multicultural, others will seek to selectively attract the best skill sets available. As one workshop participant highlighted, 'over the next decade, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will be joined by such countries as Japan, much of Western Europe and maybe even the US'. Japan and Western Europe especially are facing declining birth rates and rising pressures on their economies to sustain growth in the long term. As such, although in the past they have been accused of creating barriers to immigration, in the future they are expected to seek immigrants to provide specific skills. No longer satisfied with nominal net migration, at a country level they will all compete for the best doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers.

Consequently, as people like Peter McLeod have highlighted, 'Feeder countries will be specifically targeted in order to provide nations with the right skill and cultural mix and countries will promote themselves as ideal migration destinations.'

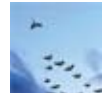
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New feeder countries will, in turn, evolve their emigration strategies. Whereas today there are just a few countries, such as the Philippines, that actively encourage skilled workers to emigrate to other countries to work and send back money to their families, as international remittances from migration scale up in their contribution to national economies, more and more countries will follow suit. This may be especially significant in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa and could place a major burden on the successful growth of the homeland. In addition, through tax incentives and the like, more countries

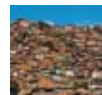
in Europe and beyond will seek to attract back the skilled workers that they may have lost in the past.

With this changing dynamic, migration may well cease to be seen in a negative light and couched as a cultural threat in the media. If they want to be top of the migration magnet league table, cities and countries will need to place greater emphasis on supporting a multicultural society, ensuring that migrants are welcomed and their skills put to good use.

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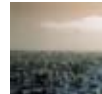
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