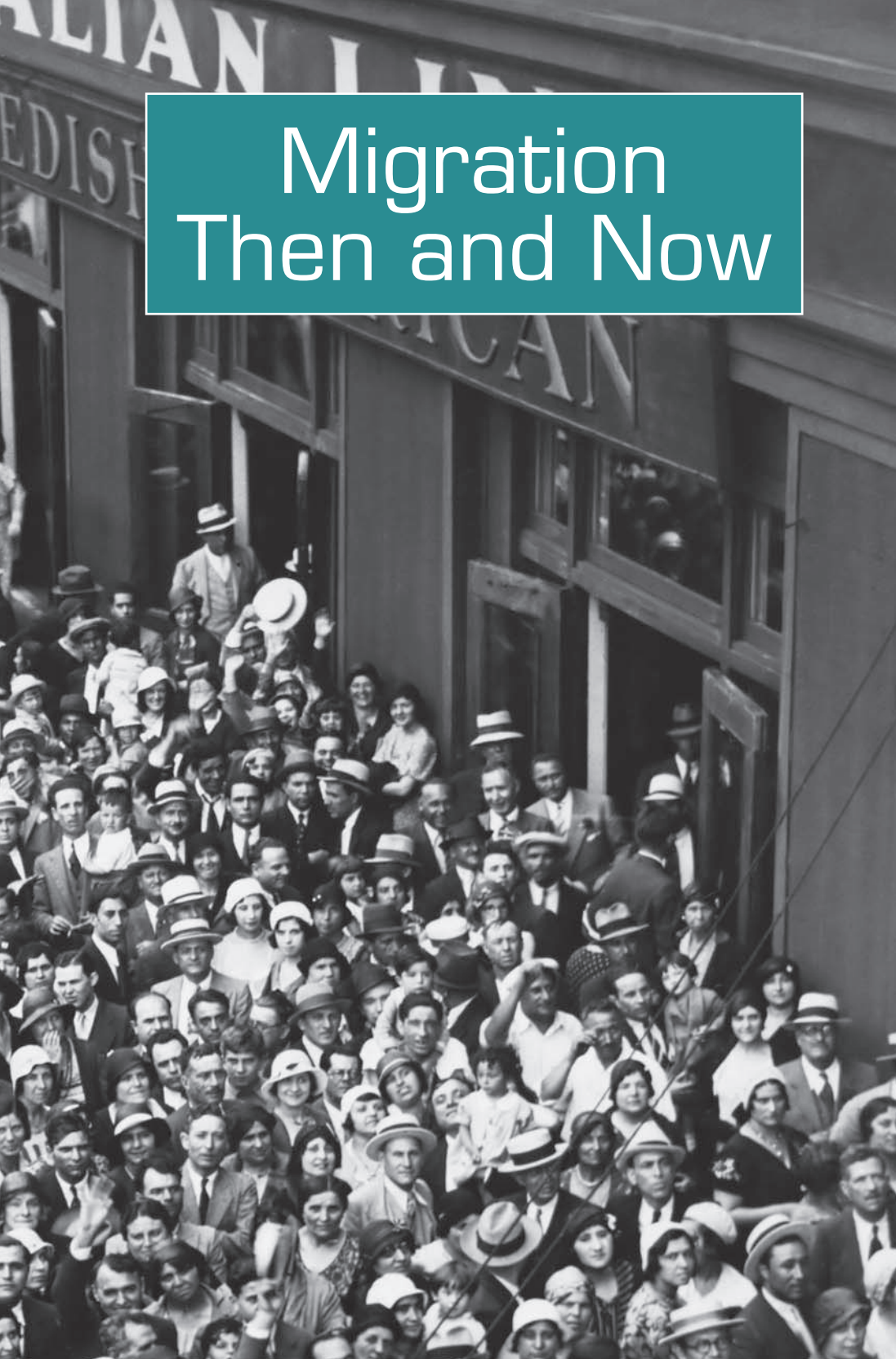




2

For almost as long as humans have walked the Earth, they have travelled in hope of finding new and better homes. Today, that journey continues for many millions of people – all told, around 3% of the world's population. Remarkably, they experience many of the benefits, drawbacks and challenges that confronted earlier generations of migrants.

Migration Then and Now



By way of introduction...

At a pier on the tip of Manhattan, the morning ferry is filling with tourists. They laugh and chat about the journey ahead, mostly in English but also in Chinese, French, Japanese, Filipino and many other languages. The ferry heads out into the Hudson river, leaving behind the skyscrapers of New York City, and then passes the Statue of Liberty, inscribed with the famous words, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses...”

A little later, the ferry docks at Ellis Island, where the tourists disembark and begin walking towards a great red-and-cream-coloured building, topped with four ornate towers, that looks like it might be some grand hotel in a European resort. But this was never a place to stay; it was a place to pass through, a transition point for new arrivals to the United States.

Over the course of many decades, around 12 million immigrants entered the US through here, beginning in 1892 with Annie Moore, a 15-year-old “rosy-cheeked Irish girl”. Arriving within sight of New York, immigrants like Annie were herded into lines and marched into the main building on Ellis Island. There, in the space of about six seconds, health inspectors checked their condition. Any who appeared ill had letters chalked on to their clothes – “L” for lame, “Ct” for trachoma, “Pg” for pregnant – and were sent for further inspection.

Then, clutching their bags, the immigrants who made it through the health check walked upstairs to the Registry Room, where inspectors checked to ensure that they satisfied a few basic legal requirements, wouldn’t become a burden on the public purse and could read 40 words in their own language. The exact requirements changed over the years, but even so most passed the tests; only around one in fifty were ever turned back.

Standing today under the vast, vaulted ceiling of the Registry Room, it’s hard to imagine what it must have been like on 17 April 1907 – the busiest day ever on Ellis Island – when 11 747 people landed here. The room must have been filled with the smell of bodies unwashed after days and weeks on boats, and with the sound of thousands of voices speaking hundreds of languages, all talking about their hopes and fears for this new land...

▶ For a few decades around the turn of the 20th century, Ellis Island was at the centre of the long history of human migration until, once again, the story moved on. This chapter examines that history, from prehistoric times to our times, with the aim of showing, firstly, that the roots of present-day migration can often lie deep in the past and, secondly, that the patterns of the past are often repeated today. It concludes with a look at some explanations for why people migrate.

Migration yesterday

Migration is one of the great constants of human history – long before political border emerged, we were travelling the planet. Some of these journeys were cyclical, such as the seasonal treks of nomadic tribes with their grazing animals. Others were more open-ended – journeys begun in flight from natural disasters or in search of a better place to call home.

Scientists place the beginning of our global odyssey in eastern Africa and date it to around 50 000 or 60 000 years ago. Based on archaeological, genetic and linguistic evidence, it is believed that *homo sapiens*' first intercontinental move may have been into what we now call the Middle East, from where we moved into the Arabian Peninsula, around India and into southeast Asia and – probably – Australia. Later, we moved into southern and northern Europe and central Asia and then – *via* the Bering Strait – into North and South America.

Described like that in just a few sentences, it's easy to imagine this journey as a single, smooth and purposeful procession around the world. But, just as with migration today, there were no guarantees of success. Some groups thrived, others were wiped out by disease or conflict.

Throughout prehistory and into early recorded times, humanity's journey continued, both voluntarily and at the end of a sword – Greeks travelled and built cities and homes around the Mediterranean; Roman soldiers created an empire stretching from England to Turkey; the Mongols took China. Europe between the 4th and 7th centuries A.D. saw a period known as “the

migration of the nations”, when tribes like the Huns, Goths, Franks and Angles marched and sailed into new homelands, creating the foundations of today’s European nation states.

Europe was at the heart of another great period of migration beginning around the 15th century and lasting for more than 300 years. The great routes developed by the European powers for trade were also conduits for human movements, both forced and voluntary. From Africa, millions of slaves were shipped in desperate conditions, often to work – and die – in the Americas and the Caribbean.

Later, as slavery was gradually abolished in Europe and the Americas, a steady flow of indentured labourers emerged to work in Europe’s overseas plantations and in the Americas. These bonded labourers signed up – voluntarily or against their wills – for between five and seven years, usually with the promise of a return ticket home. Toiling for long hours and doing back-breaking work, their journeys took them around the world: Indians planted sugarcane in the Caribbean; Chinese “coolies” built railroads in East Africa;

What is migration?	
<p>Like any subject, international migration has its own terminology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emigration refers to people leaving a country for long periods or permanently; immigration to people coming in; international migration, or, sometimes, just migration are catch-all terms covering both phenomena. Permanent migration means people intending to settle in another country “for good”; temporary migration covers people who intend to return home, often within a year, and who are usually travelling to work (sometimes seasonally, like fruit pickers) or for training or for a long working holiday.• A migrant leaves an origin (or sending) country and goes to a destination (or receiving) country. Along the way, some, such as refugees and asylum seekers, may spend time in a transit country.	<p>It’s also common to hear countries spoken of in terms of whether they are countries of emigration (or sending or origin countries) or countries of immigration (or receiving or destination countries), even though these categorisations are not always clear cut. For instance, a country that is <i>mainly</i> experiencing emigration may also be experiencing some level of immigration. Nor are these terms permanent: economic or political change can see a country of emigration suddenly become a country of immigration, and <i>vice versa</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finally, net migration represents the difference between levels of immigration and emigration: negative net migration means more people are leaving than arriving, and positive net migration means more are arriving.

and perhaps as many as a million Japanese went to work in the US, Hawaii, Peru and Brazil. At the end of their agreements many went back home, but many others stayed on. It may seem odd that people who had been through what were often brutal experiences would choose not to return home once their contracts ended. But one of the great lessons of migration throughout the ages is that things rarely work exactly to plan.

The European powers – the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and others – sent their own people overseas, too. Spanish and Italians followed in the wake of Columbus to settlements in the Americas, while, later, more than a million Europeans would make their homes – at least for a while – in Algeria. But it was perhaps Britain that made the greatest use of such settlements – both forced and voluntary – to further its interests overseas. As early as 1606, a royal advisor told England’s King James I that sending people overseas would serve “a double commodity, in the avoidance of people here, and in making use of them there”. That advice was translated into action many times over the centuries: convicts were transported to Australia; orphans and children from troubled families were shipped off to Australia and North America; and Britons seeking a fresh start were sponsored to help settle “the colonies”.

In the early years of the 19th century, another great period of migration began as a flood of Europeans – Russians, Italians, Irish and many more – sought to make a fresh start overseas. Over the course of more than a century, that tide would ebb and flow, but all told around 55 million Europeans are believed to have emigrated permanently in the century following 1820, mostly to North America and Australasia. Although migration was a different experience for each migrant and for each migrant group, there were broad themes in the story of transatlantic migration that were – and still are – common to people from many nations. Some of those themes can be glimpsed in the experiences of one of the largest groups of migrants, the Scandinavians.

Scandinavia was one of Europe’s centres for migration, and initially most of those who left in the 19th century came from the countryside where “peace, the potato and the smallpox vaccine” had helped fuel a population boom. With land becoming tighter, rural Scandinavians had the choice of moving to cities in their own countries or going overseas. Many of those who left sought

out the American Midwest, where they found land in abundance. Just as happens today, these emigrants encouraged their relatives and friends to follow them in waves of “chain migration”. In the early 1870s, for instance, around two out of every five migrants leaving Oslo travelled on tickets sent by relatives. The influence of this phenomenon, where sisters followed brothers and nephews followed uncles to live in the same city or village, can still be seen in Midwestern states like Minnesota, where Scandinavian surnames like Johnson, Lindgren and Petersen abound.

Not only did migrants from various parts of Scandinavia tend to settle in the same areas, they also often worked to maintain their own identities – holding on to their native languages and religions for decades and rarely marrying outside their own communities. A letter from a Swedish immigrant in 1896 makes the point: “Many Swedes are settled here and more come each year, so there will soon be a little Sweden here, especially around the Swedish church. There is a post office and three stores as well as a Swedish doctor, Carlberg. The name of the place is Nya-Sverige, in English ‘New Sweden.’”

Other groups, too, like the Irish, Italians and Jews, only slowly integrated into the North American “melting pot,” in part because they chose exclusion, in part because they were excluded. Today, integration remains one of the hottest issues in migration – should societies foster a spirit of multiculturalism, where migrants are encouraged to retain their own cultures and traditions, or should newcomers be expected to “blend in”.

The scale of transatlantic migration in the 19th and early 20th centuries can obscure the fact that people were on the move in other parts of the world. In the 1850s, around 50 000 newcomers a year arrived in Australia, many drawn by the promise of gold. Chinese immigrants were the single largest group after Britons, but – as will be shown later – their welcome was not to last. The Chinese travelled elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific, too: between 1860 and 1915, around 3 million of them made new homes in southeast Asia, including in Thailand, Indonesia, present-day Malaysia and Singapore, the Philippines and India.

And, even within Europe’s boundaries, there were extensive movements of people in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Britain saw an influx of Irish migrants after the potato famines of the 1840s. Later in the century, France witnessed a flood of Poles

and Italians as the country's emerging industries struggled to find workers – a shortfall caused by falling birth rates in France and the reluctance of French smallholders to move to the cities. In 1881, there were around a million Italians in France; 50 years later their number had almost trebled to 2.7 million.

Passports, please

Looking back at the 19th and early 20th centuries, it can seem remarkable that migrants from much of the world – with a notable exception – travelled with very few restrictions. Providing they could afford their tickets and survived a possible health check on arrival, would-be emigrants normally needed no green cards or visas to make a fresh start in another country.

The exception was Asians. Starting in the 1850s in the Australian colonies, laws began to be passed in many of the major settlement countries to keep out Chinese, Indians, Japanese and other Asians. When federal Australia was established in 1901, one of its first acts was to institute a “white Australia policy”, with one parliamentarian declaring that his countrymen were “determined that Australia shall be kept free from alien invasion and contamination”. Australia was not alone. In the 1880s, Canada and the United States followed suit, effectively closing the door on Asian migrants. Gradually, over the next few decades, restrictions against migrants from other parts of the world began to pile up. In 1920, the United States finally ended its policy of free entry for Europeans and Latin Americans; in the 1930s, Canada began restricting immigration from southern and eastern Europe, favouring English-speaking migrants and dependents of existing residents.

These restrictions, fuelled by xenophobia and coupled with the great trauma of unprecedented global warfare and economic recession, sharply restricted voluntary migration across much of the world in the 1920s and 1930s. By the time it re-emerged in the mid-1940s – the beginning of the “thirty glorious years” of growth in North America, Europe and Japan – its character had changed.

Post-war migration

One of the major developments in migration in the post-war years was the emergence of the “guest worker”. As western Europe rebuilt itself in the years after the war, countries like France, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and others actively

Who are the migrants?	
<p>The phrase “international migrants” covers a remarkably diverse group of people. Understanding this diversity can help explain why people migrate and provide clues to how countries can best manage the challenges and opportunities of migration.</p> <p>Temporary labour migrants: Workers who travel for limited periods.</p> <p>Long-term, low-skilled migrants: Receiving countries typically prefer these migrants to be temporary, but – as the experience of the guest workers in western Europe shows – this is often not the case.</p> <p>Highly skilled and business migrants: Some transfer within multinationals while others are hired on the international job market. Recruitment of highly skilled migrants is becoming a major focus for some developed countries.</p> <p>Irregular migrants: Also known as undocumented or illegal migrants. They are migrants who live in a country without the necessary documents. Some may arrive legally, but then overstay or work illegally. Migrant labour forces around the world include many irregular migrants.</p> <p>Refugees: Defined by the United Nations as people living outside their own countries who are unable or unwilling to return home because of a “well-founded fear of persecution”. Most OECD countries have given international commitments to shelter</p>	<p>refugees. Although substantial in the past, refugee flows are not currently a major component of migration into the OECD area.</p> <p>Asylum seekers: Definitions vary, but asylum seekers are mainly distinguished from refugees by the fact that they make their claim for protection as refugees when they arrive in the receiving country, and not in their own country or in an intermediate country. Governments frequently turn down asylum claims.</p> <p>Forced migrants: May include refugees and asylum seekers, but also people fleeing famine and natural disasters.</p> <p>Family members (family reunion and family formation): People joining relatives who are already living abroad as well as people who have married or are about to marry a resident of another country. The right to family reunion and to create a new family is widely recognised, including by Australia, Canada, the United States and most EU members, although rules vary considerably on who may be admitted.</p> <p>Return migrants: People returning to their home countries after a period living abroad.</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Based on material in <i>Where Immigrant Students Succeed: A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA 2003</i> (OECD, 2006), drawing from the work of Stephen Castles.</p>

recruited workers from less economically advanced parts of the continent and further afield. Some came to do purely seasonal work, such as grape picking; others came on longer contracts to work in key industries, like car manufacturing.

No country was more associated with guest workers – or *gastarbeiter* – than the former Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), where the number of foreign workers rose from 95 000

in 1956 to 2.6 million in 1973. The German experience with guest workers is a lesson in the law of unintended consequences. German politicians thought initially that they could hire mainly young men – and later young women – from countries such as Spain, Italy, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Morocco, who would work for short periods with no expectation of winning rights as citizens or being allowed to bring in families. But, as the Swiss writer Max Frisch famously said, “We wanted workers, we got people.”

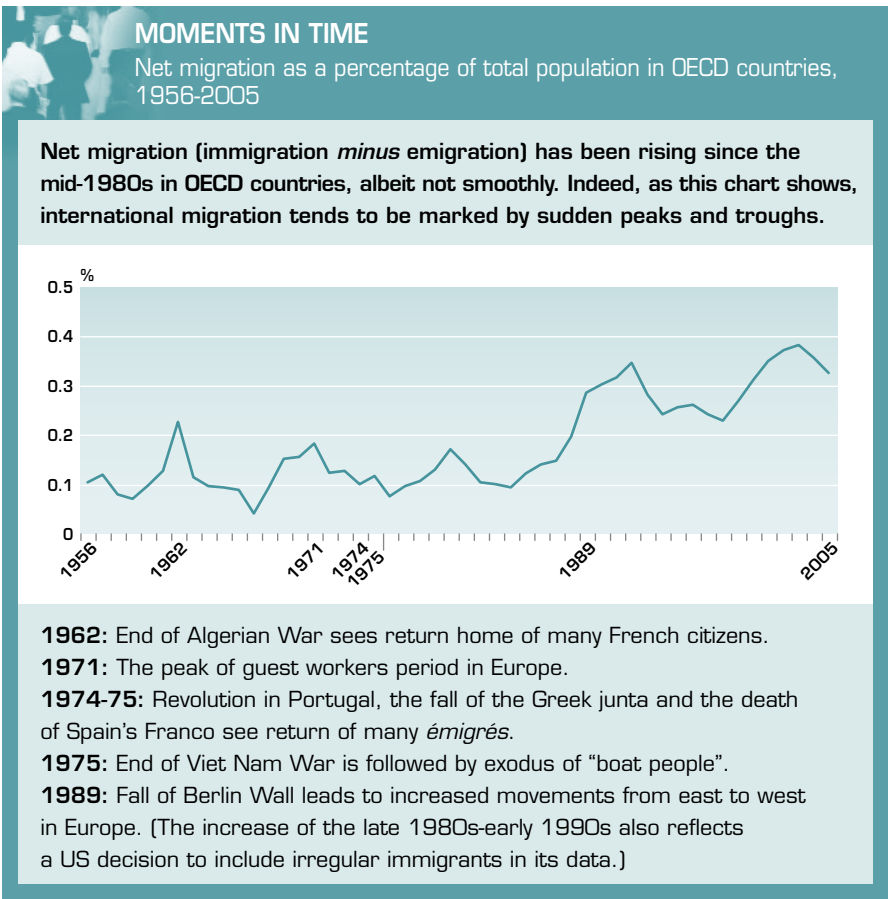
By the 1960s, Germany had no option but to relax its laws on family reunification as it competed with other European countries to hire overseas workers. As workers’ ties with their home countries loosened, their economic roots in Germany deepened, although social integration and acceptance remained – and remains – elusive for many. The family of Eren Ünsal, a Berlin-based sociologist whose parents moved from Turkey in 1972, is typical of how time altered the plans both of politicians and migrants: “My mother insisted we were going to stay in Germany just long enough to earn money for a new sewing machine, to start a tailor shop back home,” she told a reporter. “Now we’re into the third generation, and my mother still hasn’t bought her sewing machine. Of course, that’s because they made comfortable lives. No one really wanted to go home.”

Europe also looked for workers from its former empires and overseas territories. Fading since the 1920s, and even earlier, the old European empires all but vanished in the years following 1945. But old relationships remained. Many of the former European colonial powers saw arrivals from their former empires as they raced to rebuild their economies after the Second World War – Indians, Pakistanis and West Indians came to Britain; Moroccans, Tunisians and Senegalese to France; Surinamese and Indonesians to the Netherlands.

And permanent migration began again in some of the traditional settlement countries. Canada and Australia both encouraged mass immigration, gradually widening their scope beyond northern European countries, sometimes through the use of points systems. The United States, too, saw substantial numbers of new arrivals in the decades after the Second World War, albeit at only a fraction of the levels seen earlier in the 20th century.

The oil crash, and beyond

In the early 1970s, another turning point in the history of international migration: a global economic turndown triggered by the 1973 oil crisis effectively ended the mass recruitment of guest workers in Europe. Immigration stalled, but it didn't end. Far from it – in the decades following 1980, international migration took on new life: between 1985 and 1995, the numbers of migrants worldwide grew by 62% and more than doubled in the most developed nations.



Source: International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2007 (subsequently updated)

StatLink : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/015200172027>

“Since about the oil crisis, the net migration rate within the OECD has been increasing, with international migration contributing more and more to population growth ...”

International Migration Outlook 2007

The forces driving migration also evolved. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s economics became less important as a driver of immigration while other justifications – including family reunification and providing shelter to refugees and asylum-seekers – became more prominent. In the United States, migration rose significantly from the 1970s following a change in the law that made it easier for existing immigrants to bring in family members. This helped drive a shift in where migrants came from – Europe became less significant, and the Americas, especially Mexico and the rest of Latin America, as well as Asia became far more important. In the 1990s, the United States also started to provide new openings for migrants based on the skills they could bring to the economy – an approach that was also pursued in Australia and Canada.

In Europe, chain migration also became more noticeable, but there were other trends, too. Within the expanding European Union area, it became ever easier for EU citizens to go to work and live in other member countries, although relatively few chose to do so. More significantly, after the collapse of Iron Curtain in 1989, eastern Europeans were increasingly tempted to look west, a trend that accelerated in the early years of this century as the EU took in former Soviet-bloc countries like Lithuania, Poland and Hungary.

Migration today

So, what about migration today? The picture is, as it always has been, highly complex, but before looking at the details of who’s going where, it’s worth stepping back to note three major characteristics of migration in the early 21st century.

Firstly, migration is rising, and has been since the 1980s. The trend is neither steady nor consistent – for instance, the rate of increase slipped back in the 1990s. Still, the evidence is clear that migration is affecting ever greater numbers of people around the world. How

How migration varies across the OECD area

For a range of reasons – historical, cultural, economic and so on – each of the main migrant-receiving countries in the OECD area has attracted a different mix of immigrants. In some, permanent settlement has been the main theme; in others there have been influxes of short-term workers. Even still, the main immigration countries in the OECD area can be divided into four main categories:

1. The traditional settlement countries

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States

These states were largely founded on immigration, and they continue to admit large numbers of immigrants for permanent residence.

2. European states that recruited labour in the post-war years ...

Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland

Many European states experienced substantial immigration (and, in some cases, emigration) over the course of their histories, but their development as modern nation states was not founded on it. Amid the labour shortages of the post-war years, these states – to a greater or lesser extent – actively recruited workers from abroad, often in the expectation that they would return home. However, many of these “guest workers” stayed on. Today, these states have quite high immigrant populations.

... some of which later shifted to humanitarian settlement

Sweden

Since the 1970s, Sweden and other Nordic countries like Denmark and Norway have

placed a greater emphasis on admitting refugees and asylum seekers.

3. European states with migration linked to a colonial past and to post-war labour recruitment

Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom

The experience of these states has been reasonably similar to countries in the previous category (No. 2). However, for historical reasons, many immigrants to these states have tended to come from former colonies, and so are often able to speak the language of the country they settle in, which can have implications for social and educational integration.

4. New immigration countries

Ireland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Norway

A number of European states, previously countries largely of emigration, have in recent years become countries of immigration. As well as the arrival of foreign nationals, some of these states have also seen return emigration, most notably people who left as guest workers in the 1970s and 1980s.

And the rest... among other OECD countries, some, such as Japan, Korea and Finland, have low levels of immigration by international standards, while others, most notably Turkey and Mexico, are mainly countries of emigration.

many? The United Nations estimates that around 190 million – or a little under 3% – of the Earth’s 6.7 billion people live outside their country of birth. That figure may seem low, but because migrants

tend to move to a relatively small number of destinations, they may account for quite large slices of the population within individual countries. In the OECD area, migrants account for more than 23% of the population in both Australia and Switzerland but only around 3% in Finland and Hungary.

Secondly, migration is essentially a story of movements of people from poorer to richer – or, from less developed to more developed – countries. That characterisation can be a little deceptive, however. What it doesn't reveal is that there is also a very substantial amount of movement between developed countries (or, as they're sometimes collectively known, "the north") and between developing countries ("the south"). Overall, about one-third of the world's migrants travel from north to north, in other words from one developed country to another; another third travel from south to north; and the final third travel from south to south.

That said, there has been a clear shift in migration towards the world's most developed countries. In the mid-1970s, just under half of all migrants in the world lived in less developed countries, with 42% in more developed countries. Today, only a third of the world's migrants are in less developed countries, with 60% in more developed countries.

"... if one plots the growth of immigration against other facets of globalisation it is clearly a key component of the globalisation process".

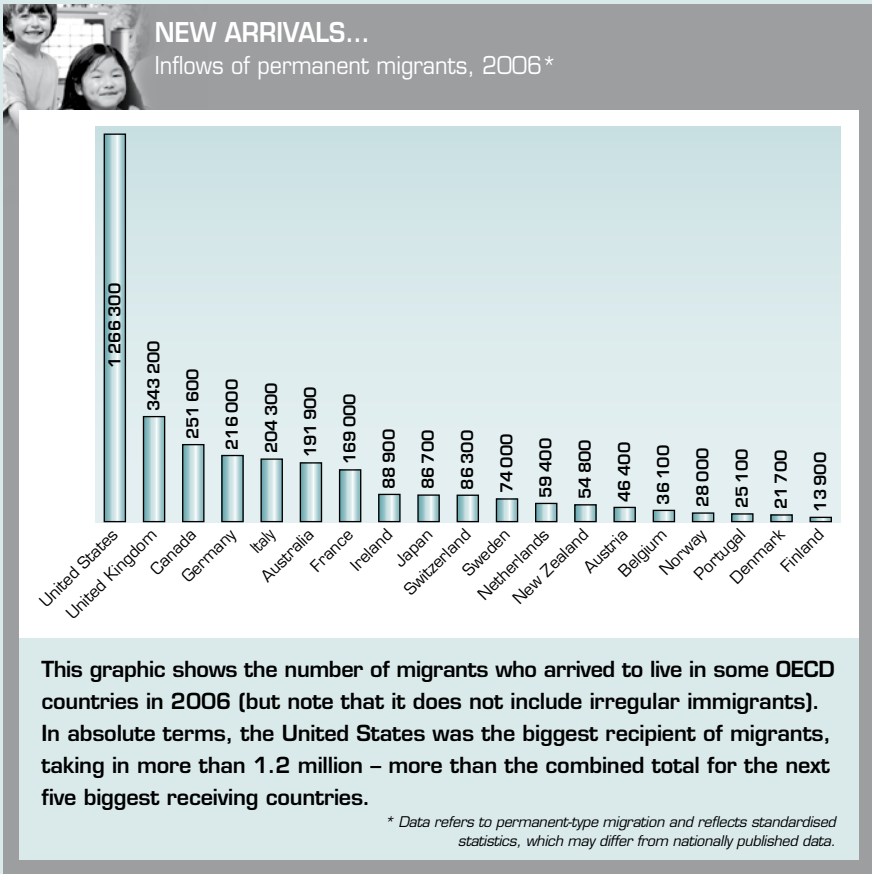
B. Lindsay Lowell, *Trends in International Migration Flows and Stocks, 1975-2005* (an OECD Working Paper)

Thirdly, international migration is part of an even larger social and economic process that has been helping to transform the world in recent decades – namely, globalisation. Just as goods and services are being traded more freely across borders, more and more people are looking to live and work overseas. And, although freedom of movement is not necessarily increasing – except within some economic zones like the European Union – there's increasing recognition of the role of migration as a component of globalisation and, at a national level, of the role of migrants in driving economic growth. In the years to come this is likely to translate into increasing competition, especially between developed countries, for highly skilled migrants.

Migration: some numbers...

This section introduces some basic numbers on migration in the OECD area. By its nature, this data only covers legal and authorised migration, and not illegal and irregular migration, even though this is substantial in many countries. Migration data makes a key distinction between “flows” and “stocks” of migrants:

- **Flows:** The number of migrants who have arrived in a country over a fixed period of time, such as the previous 12 months. “Net flows” refers to the number of people arriving into a country (immigrants) *minus* the number who are leaving (emigrants). A negative flow means more people are leaving than arriving, and a positive means more people are arriving.
- **Stocks:** The existing population of immigrants in a country (although, as Chapter 7 points out, countries take different approaches to how they count their immigrant populations).



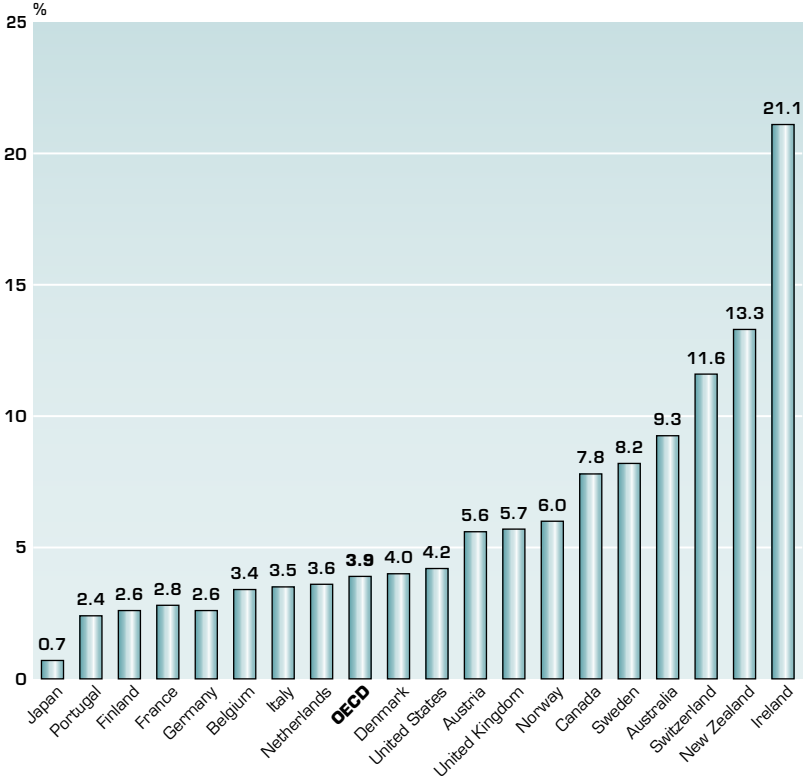
Source: International Migration Outlook – SOPEMI 2008.

StatLink  : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/427003461010>



... AND THE SIZE OF THEIR IMPACT


Inflows of permanent migrants per thousand people, 2006*

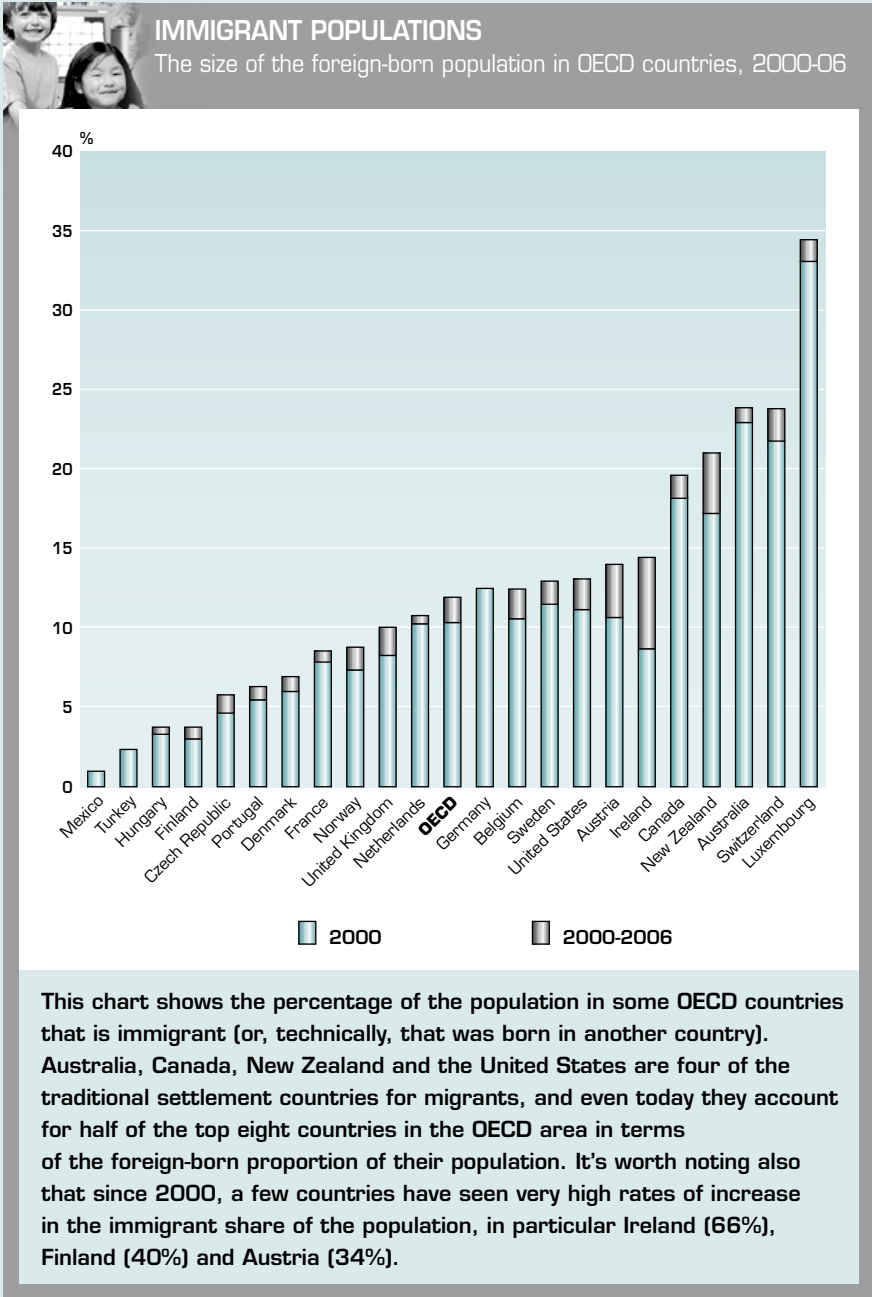


This chart offers another way to look at migration flows. It shows the number of migrants flowing into some OECD countries for every thousand people already in the population. In 2006, there was fewer than one permanent immigrant for every thousand people living in Japan. At the other end of the scale, there were more than 21 per thousand people in Ireland. So, Ireland saw the biggest influx of migrants in the OECD area in terms of the existing population, even though the absolute number of immigrants arriving into Ireland (88 900) was not especially high by international standards.

* Data refers to permanent-type migration and reflects standardised statistics, which may differ from nationally published data.

Source: International Migration Outlook – SOPEMI 2008.

StatLink  : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/427133481271>



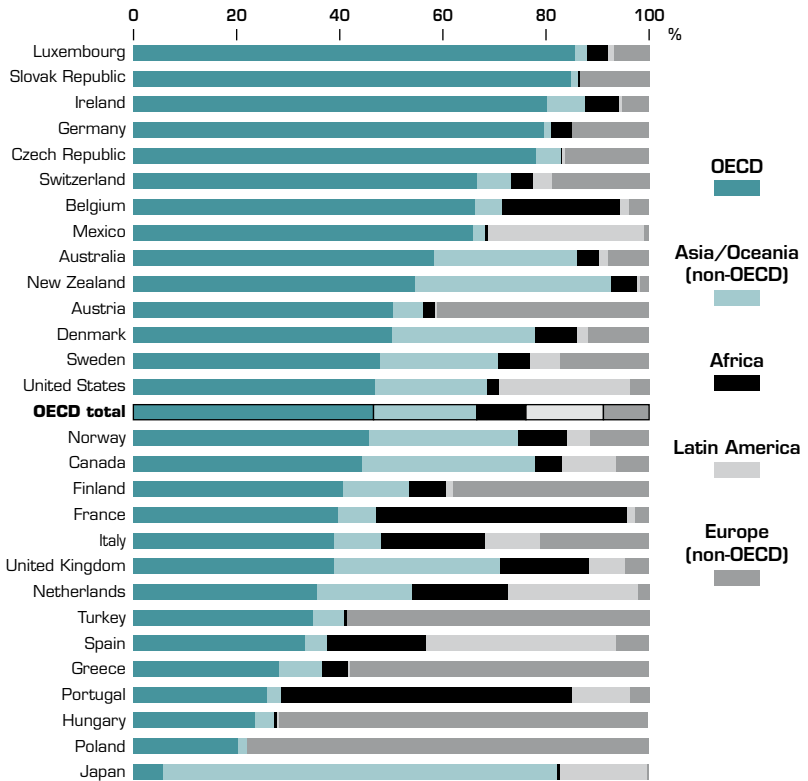
Source: International Migration Outlook – SOPEMI 2008.

StatLink : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/427243430285>



WHERE MIGRANTS COME FROM

Percentages of migrants who come from each region, 2000



This chart shows where migrants came from in OECD countries in the year 2000 (the most recent year for which this sort of data is available). The numbers tells some interesting stories: for example, the colonial histories of Belgium, France and Portugal in Africa are reflected in the relatively high numbers of immigrants who come from Africa. Japanese migration, which is traditionally low, shows signs of two major influences: geographical proximity – most of its immigrants come from the Asia-Pacific region – and its history in the 19th and 20th centuries of sending workers to Latin America, the descendants of some of whom later returned to the land of their ancestors.

Source: OECD Factbook 2007.

StatLink  : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/516224313186>

Why do people migrate?

In a provincial town about 60 kilometres northeast of Moscow, an Uzbek migrant is painting the pedestal of a bust of Lenin. It's not much of a job, but Kuram, a 49-year-old former tractor driver, says he's doing better than he was back in Uzbekistan, where he was only earning the equivalent of \$16 a month. Reflecting on whether he'd prefer to be in Russia or to be back home in Uzbekistan, he tells a reporter, "If things were better there, I wouldn't be here."

As a simple explanation of migration, Kuram's words are hard to beat. For many people throughout history and around the world, migration has been a response to economic necessity – a reflection of the fact that they could build a better life by moving to a new country. But this is true of many billions of people, and yet most people don't migrate.

So what is it that both drives and enables people to move to another country? Typically, these forces are described by sociologists and economists in terms of "push" and "pull". The "push" represents the state of things at home, such as the strength of the economy; the "pull" is the situation in the migrant's target country, such as the prospects of finding a decent job.

Push and pull factors are constantly changing, as is the balance between them, which helps to explain why migration numbers fluctuate so much. An example: in the 1990s, the Central American country of Honduras saw increasing levels of emigration, a situation that was suddenly exacerbated in 1998 by Hurricane Mitch, which destroyed around 80% of the country's infrastructure. By the end of the decade, two out of five Hondurans were unemployed and three out of five were earning less than the official minimum wage of \$128 a month. The push factors were clear, but there were also important pull factors, including the prospects of finding work in wealthier countries like the United States, and the existence there of well-established Honduran communities.

Those pull factors increased in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, in part because of a decision by the Honduran government to help its citizens to find work overseas, even if only for short periods. The government signed bilateral agreements that eased the way for Hondurans to take up seasonal jobs on Canadian farms and short-

PERSONAL VIEW	George Alagiah
<p><i>George Alagiah is a journalist and anchorman with the BBC. In these reflections (edited for space), he reflects on his journey from Sri Lanka to London.</i></p> <p>I was born in one continent, moved to a second and settled in a third. Asia, Africa and Europe; Sri Lanka, Ghana and Britain. They are stepping stones to a better life, landmarks along the journey of one migrant family.</p> <p>Our motivation for leaving the land of our birth over 40 years ago was no different to the reason so many make similar journeys today. True, we took the legal route while some today opt for the sometimes perilous, often illegal and always expensive journey offered by the people smugglers. Yet others claim a sanctuary to which they are not entitled to – they are economic migrants rather than people genuinely seeking refuge from persecution. But the impetus is the same as it was for us – a desire to improve on the poor hand dealt by fate.</p> <p>The fact that these latter-day migrants are willing to risk so much underlines a fundamental truth about migration – the movement of people from poor and failing states to rich and stable ones is as inevitable as water running downhill. Every child who's ever built a sandbank on a beach will tell you just how futile it can be to try to stem the tide. If water is a force of nature, then migration is a force of history. The challenge is not to try to stop it but how to manage</p>	<p>it. The first step is to see migration for what it is, rather than through the prejudiced eyes of some headline writers.</p> <p>Historically, the net effect of migration has been a benign one. Where would America be without the unparalleled movement of Irish people in the mid-to-late 19th century? Where would modern Australia be if it had continued to rely solely on the flow of people from the "mother" country. And where would we, in Britain, be without the commercial energy and professional skills of the Indian diaspora?</p> <p>When I discuss migration with people who have a rather different take on it there is always that comical moment when they realise that – despite my English tones – I am an immigrant. An embarrassed "oh but you are different" is the best they can offer to hide their prejudice. My answer is always the same. There is just as much chance that the timid Kosovan child who enrolls in a school today will one day go on to read the news on the BBC.</p> <p>I am where I am because I've been able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by a Britain at its best – a land of hope that is open and confident. To deny these chances to a new generation of migrants would be an injustice to the individuals concerned but, more important, it would mark a profound loss of faith in our nation's place in this new century of globalisation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">© BBC.</p>

term contracts on ships run by lines in countries like Greece and the Netherlands. It also agreed an arrangement with the United States to regularise Honduran illegal immigrants and to let them stay there legally for 18 months.

The case of Honduras illustrates the point that migration never occurs in a vacuum. An individual's decision to stay or go is always shaped – and either facilitated or blocked – by a range of factors that go well beyond his or her own reach. Indeed, some analysts argue that the push-pull theory of migration places too much emphasis on the role of the individual's choice and ignores the wider social, economic, cultural and political contexts that may affect those choices.

To take account of all the wider forces that shape migrants' decisions, some sociologists prefer to think in terms of a more complex set of relationships described as “migration systems theory”. This views migration as an interaction between, at one level, events and circumstances in the wider world and, at the other, the individual situation of the migrant. Or, to use the terminology, it represents the interaction between...

- **Macro-structures:** The economic and political state of nations and the world, globalisation, and laws and practices to control and manage migration. And
- **Micro-structures:** The migrant's own social networks of friends and family, community links to the destination country, the availability of information to migrants, and so on.
- A third level – meso-structure – is also sometimes identified, which covers the intermediaries in the migration process, including organisations that recruit migrants as well as agents and people smugglers.

Managing migration...

Journalist George Alagiah states in this chapter that “migration is a force of history”. It is an illusion to think that it can be simply turned off. Migration has shaped our world and will continue to do so. Unquestionably, it brings challenges – for migrants, the countries they leave and those to which they travel. But it also has the potential to bring enormous rewards. As Alagiah says, the challenge is not to try to stop migration, “but how to manage it”, and that is the theme of the next chapter.

Find Out More

FROM OECD...

On the Internet

For a general introduction to OECD work on international migration, visit www.oecd.org/migration.

For OECD statistics on international migration, go to www.sourceoecd.org/database/oecdstat. Click on *OECD.stat*, where there are two migration databases:

➤ International Migration Database contains OECD's most up-to-date data on international migration.

➤ Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries is based largely on data from the 2000 round of censuses in OECD countries.

OECD data can be also accessed via www.oecd.org/statistics/demography.

Publications

International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI:

This annual Outlook provides the latest data on migration in the OECD area as well as assessments of the size of foreign and foreign-born populations and numbers of naturalisations. Notes on individual OECD member countries detail recent developments. Each edition also includes chapters devoted to topical issues in migration.

A Profile of Immigrant Populations in the 21st Century: Data from OECD Countries (2008):

This book describes the origin and structural characteristics of immigrant populations in OECD countries. Nine thematic chapters cover issues including the age structures of immigrant populations, education and employment levels and migrants' occupations. Other issues covered include the gender dimension of the brain drain and the migration of health professionals.

Also of interest:

Trends in International Migration Flows and Stocks, B. Lindsay Lowell (2007):

This OECD "working paper" discusses trends in

international migration over the past three decades and some of their demographic and policy implications.

www.oecd.org/els/workingpapers.

Migration and the Global Economy: Some

Stylised Facts (2008): John P. Martin of the OECD discusses migration as part of globalisation and compares current and previous waves of international migration. www.oecd.org/els/migration/policies.

... AND OTHER SOURCES

The International Organisation for Migration

(www.iom.int): IOM is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes international co-operation on migration issues, seeks solutions to migration problems and provides humanitarian assistance to migrants.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Population Division

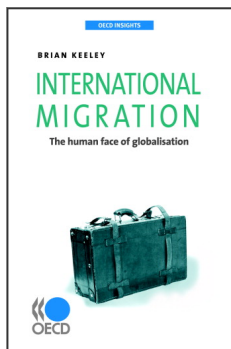
(www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm): This UN division studies migration flows as part of its broader role to monitor and assess the impact of population changes. See also <http://esa.un.org/migration/>.

Global Commission on International Migration

(www.gcim.org): Launched on the initiative of the United Nations and some member governments, the GCIM was asked "to provide the framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to the issue of international migration". Its remit ended in 2005, when it published its final report.

Global Migration Group

(www.un.int/iom/GMG.htm): This group of intergovernmental agencies aims to promote "the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration".



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