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Trends in International Migration: Globalization, Localization, and Identity Politics

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This article (1) reviews the historical transitions that have led to the current global system, (2) analyzes the role of migration and identity politics in it, and (3) suggests how to move from systems of hegemonic to democratic globalization and communication.

Keywords: international migration, identity politics, globalization, localization

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Migration and globalization are processes that have been going on since some 1.8 million years ago when our common ancestor, homo erectus, started walking from his or her own to the neighboring cave. What motivated him? Curiosity? Trade? Spying? A blood feud? A criminal intent? The contemporary motivations have not changed much, but the process is now engulfing the entire Planet Earth. It also has accelerated so much that 'globalization' has become a buzzword in academic and media circles.

Human communication also is a process that has a long history. Ever since signs, both verbal and non-verbal, were invented to convey feelings and meanings, communication has assumed a central role in human affairs. Feelings of affection, threat, anger, approval, rejection, love, and hatred as well as semiotic systems such as road signs, numbers, musical notes, and visual symbols are all conveyed through powerful verbal and non-verbal communication systems. Once the signs could be transmitted over long distances, human communication became a powerful tool in globalization processes. The great technological breakthroughs in this process were the inventions of language, writing, books, libraries, postal services, print, telegraph, telephone, motion pictures, radio, television, satellites, computers, and the Internet. The current technological revolution in information storage, processing, and transmission has clearly advanced globalization to unprecedented levels.

Globalization and communication are thus inextricably tied together. Both processes have been going on since the dawn of human history and will continue so long as curiosity, exchange, domination, and resistance motivate humankind. The challenge for us is to discover the novel modalities in communication and globalization and to turn them toward creative, cooperative, and peaceful outcomes rather than aggressive, violent, and destructive results. Since the chief agents of globalization are currently transnational corporations (TNCs) and transnational media corporations (TMCs), driving it primarily toward market efficiency and profitability, the process is widening the gaps between centers and peripheries. The grass roots resistance to globalization is thus taking the shape of localist cultural and identity politics in the guise of a variety of ideologies, including pan-nationalism, ethno-nationalism, and religious nationalism. The latter are challenging the dominance of global corporations and their political allies. Globalism and localism thus present two competing ideologies that struggle in a complex global formation. Robertson (1994) has aptly called this formation glocalization, i. e. a combination of globalization and localization. Glocalization is accelerating the flows of people, money, news, images, data, goods, services, ideas, and crime across state boundaries.

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rent global system, (2) analyzes the role of migration and identity politics in it, and (3) suggests how to move from systems of hegemonic to democratic globalization and communication.

Three Historical Tsunamis

Globalization and communication have gone through three distinctly different “tsunamis” in history. “Tsunami” is the Japanese expression for the titanic tidal waves caused by earthquakes at the bottom of the oceans. They are typically undetected, travel fast for thousands of miles underneath the ocean, and appear only when they hit a landmass with considerable force. Tsunamis are thus a useful metaphor for those cataclysmic historical changes in which humans are caught without being fully aware of their direction and potential impact.

Our contemporary world is diverse, lopsided, and complex. But two generalizations about it can be made. First, the three tsunamis are compressed into a single one for the less developed countries (LDCs). Second, for the more developed countries (MDCs), they have appeared as phases in a more leisurely historical pace. That is perhaps why Western theorists have been so often preoccupied with stage theories of historical development (Marx & Engels 1848; Rostow 1960). In both LDCs and MDCs, however, domination and resistance have been perennial historical facts. To problematize that power and domination, I have termed the three tsunamis of human history “agrarian, industrial, and informatic imperialism”.

Table 1 puts all of this into a matrix. A few caveats are in order. The dates in the table represent significant historical watersheds with which any historian could reasonably argue. Although the table is organized around three phases and four modes of production, legitimation, regulation, and communication, these categories are heuristic devices and should not be considered as distinct stages of history or discrete domains of action. History is often conjunctural rather than neatly divided into stages.

In the first agrarian phase, the mode of production was primarily herding and agriculture. The agricultural revolution of some 10,000 years ago brought about societies that were technologically superior to the hunter-gatherers of a prior era. Human civilizations that developed in the major world river basins, such as the Fertile Crescent, Nile Valley, Indus and Yellow Rivers, eventually led to a succession of multinational, agrarian empires. These empires were the first instances of a global system stretching over vast territories, peoples, languages, religions, and cultures. Whereas the earlier attempts at domina-

tion often culminated in massacres of the enemies or their conversion into the religion and culture of the dominant group, the new multi-national imperial systems followed a policy of toleration. This perhaps began with the Persian Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC). When Cyrus the Great conquered Babylonia in 538 BCE and released the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem to build their temple, he was inaugurating a new policy of religious and cultural tolerance for the peoples of his empire.

Tolerance was a pragmatic imperial policy. So long as the subject populations would obey the laws and pay their taxes, the empire stood to gain by allowing them to practice their religion and culture. But religion became both the source of legitimation of empires as well as resistance to it. The Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Chinese, and Indian empires, each had their own dominant religious belief system that legitimized the power of the Pharaohs, Shahanshahs, and Caesars. On the other hand, the three great Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) each owed its origins to resistance movements against domination, oppression, and exploitation. Christianity and Islam became subsequently imperial ideologies in vast territories such as the Byzantine (395-1453), Abbasid (749-1258), and Ottoman (13th to 20th centuries) Empires.

It was also during this phase of history that writing was invented some 8,000 years ago in Egypt (Hieroglyphics), Mesopotamia (Cuneiform), China (characters), and among the Maya in Central America and Incas (Quipu) in South America. The transition from hunting and gathering to agricultural settlements had produced sufficient surplus beyond mere subsistence to allow the rise of feudal lords and a leisure class of scholars and scribes. Ancient writing was first carved into stones and clay tablets, but with the invention of transportable media such as paper, it became possible to produce documents, books, and libraries that transmitted messages and knowledge across continents. The processes of globalization were thus accelerated and empires could now assume continental proportions. The twin religious and secular bureaucracies of church and state were empowered by writing as a method of recording, transmitting, and enforcing commands.

As the next major technological revolution in communication, printing revolutionized the extent of empires. Although movable type had been already invented in China and Korea before Gutenberg, it was the invention of mechanical lettered printing in the 15th century that led to a series of stunning developments in Europe. These developments culminated in the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century and Industrial Empires of the modern world. The rise of vernacular languages (English, French, Spanish, etc.), modern nationalism, nation-states, and universities all owed themselves to printing.

Print democratized knowledge and undermined the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church and monarchies. It also fostered the European Renaissance, Protestant Reformation, and the scientific and political revolutions of the 17th-19th centuries. Along with the revolution in transportation, printing thus enabled the European voyages of exploration to turn soon into colonial projects in the New and Old Worlds.

I have chosen 1492 as a date to signify the transition from Agrarian to Industrial Empires because that is when Columbus sailed from Spain. That year also coincides with the expulsion of Muslims from Spain by the Christians starting a reverse process of colonization of the East by the West. The subsequent European, American, Russian, and Japanese empires emerged out of the transformation of agrarian into industrial societies. These societies were primarily based on manufacturing and mining rather than agriculture. With the rise of secular nation-states, political legitimation also shifted from Divine Rights of Kings and religious laws to popular sovereignty and secular laws. In the meantime, print technology had empowered a secular priesthood of scholars, bureaucrats, and soldiers who were nurtured on a linear, rational, scientific, and technological culture. The rise of a public sphere of discourse, in which the literate population could be informed of public issues through books, pamphlets, and newspapers, encouraged more democratic participation. Another product of print, the institution of parliamentary democracy in one European country after another, also imposed some measure of accountability on governments.

However, the Industrial Empires sowed the seeds of their own destruction through the spread of science, technology, and political ideas via the modern mass media. Print, photography, film, telegraphy, telephone, radio, and television were double-edged swords. On the one hand, they propagated the political ideologies of imperialism embedded in such slogans as the White Man's Burden, Manifest Destiny, and Asia for the Asians. On the other hand, they undermined the colonial regimes by the spread of the political ideas of liberalism, nationalism, and communism. While liberalism and communism provided globalist ideologies, nationalism largely fueled localist resistance against imperial hegemony. It was the combination of this political cocktail that exploded into the open during the 20th century in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It led to a variety of national liberation movements employing all of the modern media of communication.

Rise of Pancapitalism

A three-way ideological struggle characterized the Cold War years of 1945-1989. From Yalta to Malta, the world was divided into three camps, each with its own worldview and globalist strategy. Liberalism was led by Western powers, communism was charged by the Sino-Soviet bloc, and nationalism was primarily employed by the Third World. The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 ushered in a new and distinctively different era of globalization. This era is characterized by the dominance of what may be called Pancapitalism. Pancapitalism is a project different from commercial or industrial capitalism of the earlier eras in several distinctly different ways:

1. Pancapitalism is global in scope

Although capitalism has always been an international system, with the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the opening of Eastern Europe and China to trade and foreign investment in the 1980s and 1990s, a new form of global capitalism is emerging that calls for a new name, i. e. Pancapitalism. Some 37,000 transnational corporations (TNCs) manage the new global market. The top Global 1000 TNCs dominate the markets. Their loyalty is primarily to their stockholders who are spread around the world. Regardless of their national origin, the TNCs are multinational in their sources of capital, investment, and employment. To survive, they need to have a global strategy beyond national boundaries and loyalties. They frequently come into conflict with national governments but need to cooperate with them. TNCs often use their power to locate wherever taxes, wages, rents, and government regulation are lowest and profits are highest.

2. Pancapitalism breeds informatic imperialism

The economic power of Pancapitalism depends on a global transportation, telecommunication, and information system that has allowed TNCs to centralize their strategic decision making while decentralizing their operations. Moreover, TNCs' power rests on the control of major world industries through command of research, development, patents, licenses, and copyright. Informatic imperialism differs from industrial imperialism in that it is deterritorialized. TNCs can pack up and go wherever political stability and comparative economic advantage allow them to generate the highest profits. A product's parts are often produced in half a dozen different countries and then assembled at an offshore location where corporations enjoy the greatest freedom from taxes and regulation. Although governments still continue to have considerable power of resistance by their sovereign rights over particular state territories, the TNCs in combination with the major industrial countries (notably the 29 rich OECD

members) can impose their will on smaller and medium-size states. Over 50% of the largest economic units in the world are, in fact, TNCs.

3. Pancapitalism encourages lop-sided development

The Pancapital regime has clearly fostered rapid economic growth in the postwar years. It has done so by transfers of capital, science, technology, and management skills from the more to the less developed areas of the world, from the Northeast to the Western and Southern United States, and from Europe and the U. S. to East Asia. In a process of creative destruction, Pancapitalism has also caused lop-sided development. Left alone to its own devices, market forces tend to privilege the centers against the peripheries, the rich against the poor, and the information-haves against have-nots. The United Nations Human Development Reports have documented these inequalities best during the 1990s. The metaphor of a champagne glass best demonstrates the glaring inequalities. The richest 1/5th of the world population is receiving 82.7% of world income while the poorest 1/5th receives only 1.4%.

4. Pancapitalist development can be hegemonic or democratic

Much of the history of imperialism is a history of military conquest and colonization. However, through political struggles, capitalist development in the West has been followed by institution of civil liberties. In the post-colonial era also, capitalist penetration of traditional societies has created new educated middle classes that often demand political liberties. On the one hand, the Pancapital regime has often tolerated and sometimes actively supported or installed military dictatorships (e.g. Iran, the Philippines, Indonesia, Chile, etc.). In the post-Cold War phase, however, Pancapitalism has selectively championed the cause of human rights in Cuba, China, Iran, and Iraq. The tension between hegemonic and democratic Pancapitalism is therefore real and will continue well into the 21st century. The outcome is ultimately determined by indigenous democratic struggles if and when they can use this contradiction to their own advantage.

Pancapitalism, Labor, and Migration

As an emerging mode of production and regulation, Pancapitalism is creating three distinctly different types of international migration that may create a variety of cultural and identity insecurities (Cohen 1987, Sassen 1988; Borjas 1990, Castles & Kosack 1985). International migrations may be termed manual, intellectual, and refugee labor. While the first two types results from market demand for labor and voluntary migration, the third is a consequence of revolutions, civil wars, ethnic cleansing, and forced migration.

The Pancapitalist regime needs two distinctly different kinds of cheap

manual labor. Export processing zones in the newly industrializing countries (NICs) heavily depend on especially trained labor for routine and repetitive tasks. Pancapitalism also has created a class of newly rich countries and individuals in need of domestic service. Because they are cheap and malleable, young women frequently supply both types of manual labor. Hence, feminization of migration. As Castle and Miller (1998, 150) note,

"...about 1.5 million Asian women were working abroad by the mid-1990s, and in many migratory movements they outnumbered men. For instance, two-thirds of Indonesian migrants from 1984 to 1994 were women. About half of Philippine overseas contract workers (OCWs) in 1994 were female. Most migrant women are concentrated in jobs regarded as 'typically female': domestic workers, entertainers (often a euphemism for prostitution), restaurant and hotel staff, assembly-line workers in clothing and electronics".

With the transfer of billions of dollars of petrodollars to the Persian Gulf oil exporting countries in the 1970s and 1980s, demand for manual labor resulted in a flood of migration from Asia to that region (Castles and Miller 1998, 147). By 1985, there were 3.2 million Asian workers in the Gulf States, of whom 2 million were in Saudi Arabia. Recruitment declined as oil prices fell sharply in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1990-91, 450,000 Asians were forced to leave Kuwait. In particular, the politically undesirable Palestinians and Yemenis were compelled to leave Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Gulf states generally, and Saudi Arabia particularly, have developed a quasi-caste system in which European migrants are placed on top while Asian migrants are positioned in the middle and bottom of the social structure.

The second type of demand for labor generated by Pancapitalism takes place at the opposite pole of the labor market, i. e. to satisfy the need for highly skilled, intellectual labor. In contrast to national capitalism that focused on manufacturing, Pancapitalism is critically dependent on knowledge and financial service industries entailing overseas assignments. The internationalization of production and finance is leading to increasing mobility of intellectual labor. An ILO's official has aptly termed Western Europe's growing number of professional workers the "highly invisible" migrants (Castles and Miller 1998, 167-168). He has estimated that they comprise one-quarter of legally resident aliens living in the EC and included 2 million citizens of European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states, which have since joined with the EC to create the world's most populous free trade zone, the European Economic Area. The remainder of the EC's highly invisible migrants mostly

consists of Americans, Canadians, and Japanese. However, guest workers such as Turks in Germany are often stereotypically seen as blue-collar workers, but they also include surprising numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs.

The third category of international migration under the Pancapitalist regime consists of victims of revolutions, civil wars, and ethnic cleansing who are forced to migrate. Such migrants may or may not appear in the UNHCR's statistics of refugees. The refugee migrants may be considered as an unintended consequence of a postwar bipolar regime in which dictatorial regimes were propped up in the Third World countries by the Western or Soviet blocs. In Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, such regimes have sooner or later succumbed to social and political upheavals such as those in Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iran, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and communist countries in Eastern Europe. This in turn has resulted in waves of political migrations from those countries into Western Europe and North America. Civil wars such as those in Somalia and Ethiopia also are in part legacies of the Cold War era in which different sides were supported and armed by the Soviet and Western camps. Colonial policies of divide and rule in Congo and Rwanda also have contributed to the postcolonial civil wars. Despite its human rights rhetoric, Pancapitalism continues to support dictatorships wherever they guarantee safe havens for foreign investment, as in the Gulf States. To that extent, we may expect continuing waves of migrants when and if revolutions occur in any of the client states.

The Kurdish migrants in Germany and the Iranian students abroad present two interesting cases of unintended consequences. About two thirds of Turkish guest workers in Germany are of Kurdish origin. Germany thus became a base of operation for Kurdish nationalist movement. Kurdish migrants in Germany and Lebanon have significantly assisted the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey (Castles and Miller 1998, 122-23). Iranian students in Western Europe and North America present another case of unintended political consequences of migration. While opposition to the Shah was severely repressed in Iran, starting in 1959, students who were sent abroad formed a Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS) that led the struggle against the monarchical dictatorship until it finally succeeded in the revolution of 1979 (Shokat 1999; Matin 1999). During the 1960s and 1970s, the CIS also played a significant role in the European student movement, particularly in Germany.

Trends in International Migration

Accelerating international migration in the last few centuries has both enhanced and undermined cultural security. The diffusion of the human rights discourse and its incorporation into state constitutions and international declarations have, no doubt, legitimated cultural security as an issue in global and national governance. Castles and Miller (1998, 8-9) have identified five contemporary trends in international migration that have created unique problems and opportunities for cultural security. Their list consists of globalization, acceleration, differentiation, feminization, and politicization of migration. However, we should add commodification of migration to the list as another significant trend.

Globalization of Migration

Although population movements across spatial boundaries has been recurrent in history, international migration took on new proportions in 1492 when Columbus sailed for the New World. We may identify at least three distinct waves in international migration that have been driven by different motivations and consequences. In the first colonial wave of modern migration, the Europeans moved into "empty" territories and nearly wiped out the indigenous population of North and South America and the Pacific islands (Stannard 1989, 1992). They also brought millions of Africans as slaves to work the newly established plantations in the New World. In the second postcolonial wave, starting in 1945, international migration reversed itself. Millions of Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans sought better standards of living or refuge in North America and Europe. In the current third wave of globalized migration, beginning with the oil shock of 1973, international migration has proliferated in many different directions. Most notably, immigrants have come from Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe moving toward the rich oil producing countries of South West Asia, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. In addition, millions of global nomads are roaming around the world as transnational corporate or government employees, guest workers, refugees, or tourists.

Acceleration and Deceleration of Migration

Although there has been an acceleration in the rate of international migration in the 1973-1993 period, this is not an inexorable trend. During this period, the rise in migration was mainly due to the rising fortune of the oil exporting countries that attracted guest workers from all over the world, the

fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and civil wars in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Rwanda, and Tajikistan. Government policies that restrict migration can and have had a depressing effect on the rate of population movements.

Differentiation of Migration

Whereas in the first wave of migration, the main objective was colonization, in the second phase the purpose was chiefly to seek higher standards of living in the mother country. In the third wave, however, types of migrants and their motivations have proliferated. Revolutions in Cuba and Iran, for instance, drove millions of Cubans and Iranians out of their countries into Western Europe and North America (Naficy 1993, Kelly et al. 1993; Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996). These immigrants are mostly high status professionals. By contrast, the civil wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Yugoslavia have driven out masses of people who cannot all easily pursue a new professional life in their host countries. The unification of Germany is another unique case in which a low income population from East Germany flooded the high income West Germany. The migrations in Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Sudan, etc.) are mostly motivated by civil and tribal warfare. The complexity of this picture makes policy formation more difficult if not impossible.

Feminization of Migration

Another notable trend in migration is the increase of women in the ranks of migrants. There are pull as well as push factors in this phenomenon. On the one hand, this trend may be considered a reflection of the increasing entry of women into the labor force. On the other hand, in many instances such as those in the rich oil exporting countries or post-communist Europe, host countries prefer women as house workers, concubines, or prostitutes. A new slave trade also transports women and children as illegal immigrants from poor to rich countries for prostitution and labor exploitation in sweat shops (Williams 1999).

Politicization of Migration

While certain countries such as the United States, France, and Britain have a long history of immigration, others such as Nordic countries, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand have embarked on multiculturalism rather recently. The latter countries are thus facing more severe tests than the former. When

25% of the population of a relatively homogenous country such as Sweden becomes populated by newly arrived immigrants, the cultural shock to the old inhabitants can be severe. Even in the old immigration countries, labor migrants such as the Mexicans in Texas and California can become a sensitive political issue. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in the face of rising unemployment in Europe and North America has thus politicized international migration. The presence of huge numbers of cheaply available migrant labor, some without legal papers, has often been supported by business and opposed by the labor unions. Language is another politicized issue. A number of individual states in the United States have already passed legislation to impose English as the sole language in schools and places of work.

Commodification of Migration

The latter two trends suggests a sixth trend reminiscent of the colonial period when large numbers of slaves and immigrants were brought by the colonists to provide labor for their plantations. Australia started as a penal colony; the British and the Dutch brought Indians and Chinese to their colonies (Indonesia, Malay, and Fiji) to provide cheap and reliable labor. American landlords brought Asian and Portuguese labor to Hawaii to work their sugar plantations. In some of the Persian Gulf states today citizens can bring immigrants to work for them. While this provides for immigrants' remittances to their mother countries (the Philippines, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh), it also has opened up the door to abuse. There are agencies that specialize in bringing women and children from abroad to serve their new masters as servants and concubines. There are also sweat shops in New York and Los Angeles that employ illegal immigrants from Asia who cannot have any human rights except those granted by their new bosses. A particularly distressing aspect of commodification is the exploitation of children that appears even more severe than those of women. As Williams (1999, 3) notes, "*In some instances, unscrupulous traffickers are deliberately injuring or mutilating children in order to extract maximum sympathy and cash—all of which goes into the pockets of the traffickers. In other cases, children are sold to agents by their parents and then taken to another country or region where they are forced into prostitution.*"

International Migration Policies and Governance

International migration policies are caught in a complex web of national, regional, and global policies.

National Policies

The variety of national policies on international migration has made the development of an international migration regime difficult if not impossible. We may identify at least three basic national policies: Exclusionary, Assimilationist, and Multiculturalist. States can follow a mix of policies with respect to different segments of their migrant population. Exclusionary policies, typified by those in Germany and Israel with respect to Turkish and Palestinian guest workers, consider the arrangements of a temporary nature and deny the migrants the rights of citizenship.

Assimilationist policies have been widely practiced in the older immigrant societies such as Britain, France, the United States, and Israel (in case of its Palestinian citizens). Assimilationist policies expect the immigrants to leave their past identities behind and dissolve into the French, American, or Israeli national melting pots. Theodore Roosevelt's famous dictum that "we do not need hyphenated Americans" reflects the underlying spirit of such policies. Assimilationist policies, however, have run into serious difficulties with the North Africans in France, Mexicans in the United States, and Eastern European and Oriental Jews in Israel. In each case, ties with past religious or national identities have proved too strong to break.

Since the 1960s when cultural roots assumed a new importance in the lives of African-Americans in the United States, ethnic consciousness among old and new immigrants has inspired a new Multiculturalist policy alternative. Such policies have already been followed consciously in Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but they are matters of controversy in France and the United States (Schlesinger 1992; Berman 1992; Taylor & Gutman 1994; D'Souza 1996). Multiculturalist demands and practices by new migrants, such as the Muslim women's hijab (covering), has led to new anti-immigrant sentiments in Germany, France, Scandinavia, and the United States. Such sentiments have combined with the rise of Islamic militancy to create a poisoned international atmosphere, particularly for Muslim immigrants.

Regional Policies

We may recognize at least two distinct migration policies at the regional level: open and closed labor migration. The European Union has pioneered a policy of open labor migration that accompanies its drive towards monetary and political union. Other regional organizations, however, lag behind and mostly continue to practice closed national borders for labor migration. Although there is some receptivity to intra-regional migration, as evidenced in the Arab, Iranian, and East Asian regions, migrants continue to be treated as

"foreign" to be employed in mostly menial jobs and discharged as necessary.

Global Policies

Conflicting national policies toward migrants leave little room for developing an international migration policy. However, global attitudes and policies toward one category of migrants, namely refugees, have evolved in response to major historical disasters. As the Minority Rights Group points out (www.minorityrights.org), the international system to assist refugees has emerged out of World Wars I and II. The right to claim asylum was thus formally established in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the end of World War II, 6 million people were displaced in Europe. Their numbers soon swelled by refugees fleeing the political turmoil that led to the division of most of Europe into Western and Soviet blocs. In the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations established a new international mechanism in December 1950. In 1951, the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees came into force. It provided a mechanism in international law for individual protection. Under the Convention, a refugee is defined as any person who has "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion".

From the 1970s, attention shifted from Europe to the newly decolonized states in the South. Just as the formation of national states and the dissolution of empires had resulted in conflict and mass movements in Europe, so the collapse of colonial empires and the formation of new states led to internal and international conflicts and new waves of refugees and migrants. For two decades these movements had little direct impact on Europe. Refugees moved to the neighboring states to be housed in camps or among the local population. European and North American governments and voluntary organizations provided assistance and UNHCR tried, with varying degrees of success, to coordinate relief and offer protection. Many of the host countries were among the world's poorest countries. During this period, small numbers of people continued to seek asylum upon arrival in Europe and governments initiated some programs for accepting quotas of refugees from a specific crisis on a case by case basis.

Refugees from Vietnam arriving by boat in Hong Kong marked a change in the manner of caring for refugees in Europe. An international conference in 1979 allocated responsibility for resettling the refugees primarily in Western Europe and North America. This plan met with some reluctance in these regions, brought on by deepening economic recession and implementation of

strict immigration policies. Yet the response was still considerably more generous than that given to new refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1972, 13,000 people applied for asylum in Western Europe. By 1979, this number had increased to 77,000. The number of applications for asylum in Europe rose every year from 1983, when there were 73,700 applications, and reached a peak in 1992 when there were 692,685 applicants, many from the war in former Yugoslavia. The number of applicants has subsequently decreased every year. In 1995 there were 283,416 applicants and preliminary figures from 1996 show a further decrease. These numbers are much lower than the many millions of refugees assisted in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

In the mid-1980s, Western European governments concluded that they needed to harmonize their asylum policy. Two major events precipitated this process: the Single European Act (aimed at abolishing internal borders in the EU) and the dramatic increase of asylum-seekers arriving in Europe at a time when economic recession made newcomers unwelcome. Restrictive changes in Europe have frequently originated in agreements reached at intergovernmental meetings between ministers. The resulting proposals have created largely uniform measures that reduce the number of asylum-seekers and refugees in Europe.

In Western Europe and North America, new measures to deter asylum seekers have taken a number of forms. These include new visa requirements, heavy fines on airlines and other transporters for carrying undocumented passengers, more difficult application procedures, long periods of detention for applicants, often in conditions worse than those experienced by prisoners; and, increasingly, restricted freedom of movement, prohibition on employment and political participation, lack of social welfare benefits and settlement provisions, and decreased opportunities for family reunification. The new measures extend to sending asylum-seekers back to the first country to which they fled ("country of first asylum") or to a "third host country" outside of Europe. The asylum-seeker then risks forcible return to the country of persecution or an unending cycle of chain deportations.

What Is To Be Done?

The problems of international migration are so complex and many-faceted that it is nearly impossible to offer solutions that cover all circumstances and predicaments. At the risk of underestimating the complexity and variety of such problems, the following general proposals deserve consideration.

Broadening of UNHCR's Functions

UNHCR is currently mandated to assist international refugees. Either its functions should be broadened to include all problems of international migration or a new UN specialized agency should be established to deal more exclusively with the problems of non-refugee population. The abuses against international migrants are often no less than against refugees who are covered by UNHCR.

Global Fund for Refugees

This fund should be established to enhance the work and effectiveness of UNHCR. It can be financed from voluntary contributions from individuals, corporations, and states as well as a special tax on international travel. The tax on international travel will justly finance aid to refugees from the high-end beneficiaries of the global economy.

UNHCR Branch Offices

The problems of international migrants must be dealt with systematically, day by day, and on the ground. For this reason, it would be timely to establish branch offices of UNHCR in major cities of the world where migrants often can be found struggling in their daily lives.

Strengthening the International Criminal Court

The recently established International Criminal Court should be empowered to take up any violations of human rights of the migrants. An International Human Rights Watchdog Commission should be established at global and regional levels to bring such cases before the Court for prosecution.

UN Multiple Citizenship

We are increasingly living in a multicultural world of high population mobility. In spite of some government policies against it, many mobile professionals carry more than one passport. The nation-state system runs against the fact of an increasing global economy in which capital, trade, and investment are mobile but people are held back within the confines of the territorial states. It would be proactive to reach a new international agreement that allows mobile citizens to carry more than one passport and to permit stateless persons to carry a United Nations passport that entitles them to basic human rights in their temporary or permanent host countries.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the transition from agrarian to industrial and post-industrial societies is currently being conducted under the banner of a Pancapitalist regime. Pancapitalism is inducing three types of demand for labor migration: manual, intellectual, and refugee labor. The size of this migration is difficult to gauge because global flows of people, both legal and illegal, are not systematically recorded. But globalization has clearly led to transnationalization, acceleration, differentiation, politicization, feminization, and commodification of international migration. Negotiations of identity for the migrants and their hosts are thus taking place in a complex variety of contexts and at levels from global to regional, national, and local. The article also offers some recommendations to ease the suffering of the migrants who are caught up in the whirlwind of global transformation.

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Table 1: Three Tsunamis in History: Overlapping Phases in Global System Development

	AGRARIAN IMPERIALISM 550 BCE-1648	INDUSTRIAL IMPERIALISM 1492 - 1991	INFORMATIC IMPERIALISM 1991- PRESENT
Mode of Production: Economy	Herding, Agriculture	Mining + Manufacturing + Services	Knowledge Industries
Mode of Legitimation: State	Religious	Political	Economistic
Mode of Regulation: Society	Multinational Agrarian Empires + City States + Feudalism	Nation-States + Nationalist Industrial Empires	Superstates, TNCs, TMCs, IGOs, NGOs, AGOs, UNPOs
Mode of Communication: Technology Identity Community Legitimacy	Writing Religious Local Metaphysical	Print Secular National Ideological	Electronic Cosmopolitan Glocal Ecological

Source: Adapted from Tehranian 1999, p. 18

Abbreviations:

- TNC Transnational Corporation
- TMC Transnational Media Corporation
- IGO Intergovernmental Organization
- NGO Non-Governmental Organization
- AGO Alternative Government Organization
- UNPO Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

