LAUCKS FOUNDATION

Reprint Mailing 146 March 1998

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In this issue of the Reprint Mailing (our third in the human population series), we focus on a topic central to U.S. population growth -- immigration. Currently the U.S. has the world's highest immigration rate: 800,000 legal and an estimated 300,000 illegal immigrants enter the U.S. annually. This population increase, due to U.S. immigration policy, is the highest among developed nations. If these rates continue, the Census Bureau estimates that the U.S population could be well over 350 million by 2050.

The debate over immigration has created major divisions across the U.S. political spectrum. On the right, business has traditionally favored high levels of immigration, which tend to lower labor costs. Other groups on the right, fearing the effects of other cultures and languages, demand limits to immigration. On the left, labor unions, as well as some environmentalists, are generally against high levels of immigration. Others on the left disagree for humanitarian reasons, to affirm multiculturalism, or out of a sense of unease with the implied elitism of a restrictive immigration policy. The divisions in the environmental community are clearly evident in the current debate within the Sierra Club as to whether the Sierra Club's endorsement of limits on population growth should also include support for limits on net immigration.

We present three different perspectives on U.S. immigration policy:

1) The New Economics of Immigration, George J. Borjas
Reprinted with permission. Copyright 1996, George Borjas, as first published in *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1996.

2) Can We Still Afford to Be a Nation of Immigrants, David M. Kennedy
Reprinted with permission from David Kennedy, first published in Atlantic *Monthly*, November 1996.

3) Environmental and Ethical Aspects of International Migration, Virginia Abernethy
Reprinted with permission from *International Migration Review*, vol. 30, no.1, 1996, published by the Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island, New York.

George Borjas (Professor of Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University) presents an economic argument showing how immigration can have a small net positive affect on the overall U. S. economy, but at the same time have a large negative effect on less skilled workers. David Kennedy (Professor of History, Stanford University) disagrees with Borjas and argues that immigration is necessary for the continued economic growth of the U.S. economy. Virginia Abernethy (Professor of Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University Medical Center), in contrast to both, argues that immigration may harm both the source and receiving countries in ways not directly measurable by traditional economic methods.

The New Economics of Immigration

Affluent Americans gain; poor Americans lose

by GEORGE BORJAS

The United States is on the verge of another great debate over immigration. Thus far the focus of this still-inchoate debate has been on illegal immigration or welfare benefits to legal immigrants, not on the larger issue of the character and consequences of the current high levels of legal immigration. Economic factors by themselves should not and will not decide the outcome of this debate. But they will play an important role. Economics helps us to frame answerable questions about immigration: Who gains by it? Who loses? And in light of the answers to these questions, what should U.S. immigration policy be?

There have been two major shifts in immigration policy in this century. In the twenties the United States began to limit the number of immigrants admitted and established the national-origins quota system, an allocation scheme that awarded entry visas mainly on the basis of national origin and that favored Germany and the United Kingdom. This system was repealed in 1965, and family reunification became the central goal of immigration policy, with entry visas being awarded mainly to applicants who had relatives already residing in the United States.

The social, demographic, and economic changes initiated by the 1965 legislation have been truly historic. The number of immigrants began to rise rapidly. As recently as the 1950s only about 250,000 immigrants entered the country annually; by the 1990s the United States was admitting more than 800,000 legal immigrants a year, and some 300,000 aliens entered and stayed in the country illegally. The 1965 legislation also led to a momentous shift in the ethnic composition of the population. Although people of European origin dominated the immigrant flow from the country's founding until the 1950s, only about 10 percent of those admitted in the 1980s were of European origin. It is now estimated that non-Hispanic whites may form a minority of the population soon after 2050. More troubling is that immigration has been linked to the increase in income inequality observed since the 1980s, and to an increase in the costs of maintaining the programs that make up the welfare state.

These economic and demographic changes have fueled the incipient debate over immigration policy. For the most part, the weapons of choice in this debate are statistics produced by economic research, with all sides marshaling facts and evidence that support particular policy goals. In this essay I ask a simple question: What does economic research imply about the kind of immigration policy that the United States should pursue?

A Formula for Admission

Every immigration policy must resolve two distinct issues: how many immigrants the country should admit, and what kinds of people they should be. It is useful to view immigration policy as a formula that gives points to visa applicants on the basis of various characteristics and then sets a passing grade. The variables in the formula determine what kinds of people will be let into the country, and the passing grade determines how many will be let into the country. Current policy uses a formula that has one overriding variable: whether the visa applicant has a family member already residing in the United States. An applicant who has a relative in the country gets 100 points, passes the test, and is admitted. An applicant who does not gets 0 points, fails the test, and cannot immigrate legally.

Of course, this is a simplistic summary of current policy. There are a lot of bells and whistles in the immigration statutes (which are said to be only slightly less complex than the tax code). In fact the number of points a person gets may depend on whether the sponsor is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident, and whether the family connection is a close one (such as a parent, a spouse, or a child) or a more distant one (a sibling). Such nuances help to determine the speed with which the visa is granted. A limited number of visas are given to refugees. Some are also distributed on the basis of skill characteristics, but these go to only seven percent of immigrants.

Although the United States does not officially admit to using a point system in awarding entry visas, other countries proudly display their formulas on the Internet. A comparison of these point systems reveals that the United States is exceptional in using essentially one variable. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have more complex formulas that include an applicant's educational background, occupation, English-language proficiency, and age along with family connections.

Sometimes a host country awards points to people who are willing to pay the visa's stated price. Canada, for example, has granted entry to virtually anyone who would invest at least $250,000 in a Canadian business. Although this "visas-for-sale" policy is a favorite proposal of economists (if we have a market for butter, why not also a market for visas?), it is not taken very seriously in the political debate, perhaps because policy makers feel a repugnance against what may be perceived as a market for human beings. I will therefore discuss the implications of economic research only for policies in which points are awarded on the basis of socioeconomic characteristics, not exchanged for dollars.

What Have We Learned?

The academic literature investigating the economic impact of immigration on the United States has grown rapidly in the past decade. The assumptions that long dominated discussion of the costs and benefits of immigration were replaced during the 1980s by a number of new questions, issues, and perceptions.

Consider the received wisdom of the early 198Os. The studies available suggested that even though immigrants arrived at an economic disadvantage, their opportunities improved rapidly over time. Within a decade or two of immigrants' arrival their earnings would overtake the earnings of natives of comparable socioeconomic background. The evidence also suggested that immigrants did no harm to native employment opportunities, and were less likely to receive welfare assistance than natives. Finally, the children of immigrants were even more successful than their parents. The empirical evidence, therefore, painted a very optimistic picture of the contribution that immigrants made to the American economy.

In the past ten years this picture has altered radically. New research has established a number of points:

- The relative skills of successive immigrant waves have declined over much of the postwar period. In 1970, for example, the latest immigrant arrivals on average had 0.4 fewer on years of schooling and earned 17 percent less than natives. By 1990 the most recently arrived immigrants had 1.3 fewer years of schooling and earned 32 percent less than natives.
- Because the newest immigrant waves start out at such an economic disadvantage, and because the rate of economic assimilation is not very rapid, the earnings of the newest arrivals may never reach parity with the earnings of natives. Recent arrivals will probably earn 20 percent less than natives throughout much of their working lives.
- The large-scale migration of less-skilled workers has done harm to the economic opportunities of less-skilled natives. Immigration may account for perhaps a third of the recent decline in the relative wages of less-educated native workers.
- The new immigrants are more likely to receive welfare assistance than earlier immigrants, and also more likely to do so than natives: 21 percent of immigrant households participate in some means-tested social-assistance program (such as cash benefits, Medicaid, or food stamps), as compared with 14 percent of native households.
- The increasing welfare dependency in the immigrant population suggests that immigration may create a substantial fiscal burden on the most-affected localities and states.
- There are economic benefits to be gained from immigration. These arise because certain skills that immigrants bring into the country complement those of the native population. However, these economic benefits are small -- perhaps on the order of $7 billion annually.
- There exists a strong correlation between the skills of immigrants and the skills of their American-born children, so that the huge skill

differentials observed among today's foreign-born groups will almost certainly become tomorrow's differences among American-born ethnic groups. In effect, immigration has set the stage for sizable ethnic differences in skills and socioeconomic outcomes, which are sure to be the focus of intense attention in the next century.

The United States is only beginning to observe the economic consequences of the historic changes in the numbers, national origins, and skills of immigrants admitted over the past three decades. Regardless of how immigration policy changes in the near future, we have already set in motion circumstances that will surely alter the economic prospects of native workers and the costs of social-insurance programs not only in our generation but for our children and grandchildren as well.

Whose Interests Will We Serve?

If economic research is to play a productive role in the immigration debate, research findings should help us to devise the formula that determines admission into the United States. We need to decide what variables are to be used to award points to applicants, and what is to be the passing grade. Before we can resolve these issues, however, we have to address a difficult philosophical question: What should the United States try to accomplish with its immigration policy?

The answer to this question is far from obvious, even when the question is posed in purely economic terms. We can think of the world as composed of three distinct groups: people born in the United States (natives), immigrants, and people who remain in other countries. Whose economic welfare should the United States try to improve when setting policy -- that of natives, of immigrants, of the rest of the world, or of some combination of the three? The formula implied by economic research depends on whose interests the United States cares most about.

Different political, economic, and moral arguments can be made in favor of each of the three groups. I think that most participants in the U.S. policy debate attach the greatest (and perhaps the only) weight to the well-being of natives. This is not surprising. Natives dominate the market for political ideas in the United States, and most proposals for immigration reform will unavoidably reflect the self-interest and concerns of native voters.

Immigration almost always improves the well-being of the immigrants. If they don't find themselves better off after they enter the United States, they are free to go back or to try their luck elsewhere -- and, indeed, some do. A few observers attach great weight to the fact that many of the "huddled masses" now live in relative comfort.

As for the vast populations that remain in the source countries, they are affected by U.S. immigration policy in a number of ways. Most directly, the policy choices made by the United States may drain particular skills and abilities from the labor markets of source countries. A brain drain slows economic growth in the source countries, as the entrepreneurs and skilled workers who are most likely to spur growth move to greener pastures. Similarly, the principles of free trade suggest that world output would be largest if there were no national borders to interfere with the free movement of people. A policy that restricts workers from moving across borders unavoidably leads to a smaller world economy, to the detriment of many source countries.

The three groups may therefore have conflicting interests, and economics cannot tell us whose interests matter most. The weight that we attach to each of the three groups depends on our values and ideology. For the sake of argument I will assume a political consensus that the objective of immigration policy is to improve the economic well-being of the native population.

Beyond that, we have to specify which dimension of native economic well-being we care most about: per capita income or distribution of income. As we shall see, immigration raises per capita income in the native population, but this does not mean that all natives gain equally. In fact some natives are likely to see their incomes greatly reduced. We must therefore be able to judge an immigration policy in terms of its impact on two different economic dimensions: the size of the economic pie (which economists call "efficiency") and how the pie is sliced ("distribution"). The relative weights that we attach to efficiency and distribution again depend on our values and ideology, and economics provides no guidance on how to rank the two.

For the most part, economists take a very narrow approach: policies that increase the size of the pie are typically considered to be better policies, regardless of their impact on the distribution of wealth in society. We shall begin our construction of an immigration policy by taking this narrow approach. In other words, let's assume that immigration policy has a single and well-defined purpose: to maximize the size of the economic pie available to the native population of the United States. We shall return to the distributional issues raised by immigration policy later on.

The Economic Case for Immigration

To see how natives gain from immigration, let's first think about how the United States gains from foreign trade. When we import toys made by cheap Chinese labor, workers in the American toy industry undoubtedly suffer wage cuts and perhaps even lose their jobs. These, losses, however, are more than offset by the benefits accruing to consumers, who enjoy the lower prices induced by additional competition. An important lesson from this exercise, worth remembering when we look at the gains from immigration is that for there to be gains from foreign trade for the economy as a whole, some sectors of the economy must lose.

Consider the analogous argument for immigration. Immigrants increase the number of workers in the economy. Because they create additional competition in the labor market, the wages of native workers fall. At the same time, however, native-owned firms gain, because they can hire workers at lower wages; and many native consumers gain because lower labor costs lead to cheaper goods and services. The gains accruing to those who consume immigrants' services exceed the losses suffered by native workers, and hence society as a whole is better off.

Immigration therefore has two distinct consequences. The size of the economic pie increases. And a redistribution of income is induced, from native workers who compete with immigrant labor to those who use immigrants' services.

The standard economic model of the labor market suggests that the net gain from immigration is small. The United States now has more than 20 million foreign-born residents, making up slightly less than 10 percent of the population. I have estimated that native workers lose about $133 billion a year as a result of this immigration (or 1.9 percent of the gross domestic product in a $7 trillion economy), mainly because immigrants drive down wages. However, employers -- from the owners of large agricultural enterprises to people who hire household help -- gain on the order of $140 billion (or 2.0 percent of GDP). The net gain, which I call the immigration surplus, is only about $7 billion. Thus the increase in the per capita income of natives is small -- less than $30 a year. But the small size of this increase masks a substantial redistribution of wealth.

My calculation used the textbook model of a competitive labor market: wages and employment are determined in a free market that balances the desires of people looking for work with the needs of firms looking for workers. In this framework an increase in the number of workers reduces wages in the economy -- immigrants join natives in the competition for jobs and bid down wages in the process. There is a lot of disagreement over how much native wages fall when immigrants enter the labor market. Nevertheless, a great deal of empirical research in economics, often unrelated to the question of immigration, concludes that a 10 percent increase in the number of workers lowers wages by about three percent

If we accept this finding, we can argue as follows: We know that about 70 percent of GDP accrues to workers (with the rest going to the owners of companies), and that natives make up slightly more than 90 percent of the population. Therefore, native workers take home about 63 percent of GDP in the form of wages and salaries. If the 10 percent increase in the number of workers due to immigration has lowered wages by three percent, the share of GDP accruing to native workers has fallen by 1.9 percentage points (or 0.63 x 0.03). Thus my conclusion that in a $7 trillion economy native earnings drop by $133 billion.

Those lost earnings do not vanish into thin air. They represent an income transfer from workers to users of immigrants' services -- the employers of immigrants and the consumers who buy the goods and services produced by immigrants. These winners get to pocket the $133 billion -- and then some, because the goods produced by immigrant workers

generate additional profits for employers. Under the assumption that a 10 percent increase in the number of workers reduces wages by three percent, it turns out that the winners get a windfall totaling $140 billion. Hence the $7 billion immigration surplus.

We can quibble about assumptions, but the rigor of economic theory suggests that this nit-picking may not alter our conclusions much. For example, one could argue -- and many do -- that immigrants do not reduce the earnings of native workers. If we wished to believe this, however, we would also be forced to conclude that natives do not benefit from immigration at all. If wages do not fall, there are no savings in employers' payrolls and no cost savings to be passed on to native consumers. Remember the lesson from the foreign-trade example: no pain, no gain.

One could also argue that immigration has reduced the earnings of natives very substantially -- by, say, 10 percent. The immigration surplus would then be about $25 billion annually. The net gain from immigration, therefore, remains small even with an unrealistically high estimate of the impact of immigration on native earnings. Imagine what U.S. policy would look like today if our earnings had fallen by 10 percent as a result of past immigration.

The immigration surplus has to be balanced against the cost of providing services to the immigrant population. Immigrants have high rates of welfare recipiency. Estimates of the fiscal impact of immigration (that is, of the difference between the taxes paid by immigrants and the cost of services provided to them) vary widely. Some studies claim that immigrants pay $25-$30 billion more in taxes than they take out of the system, while other studies blame them for a fiscal burden of more than $40 billion on natives.

It is doubtful that either of these statistics accurately reflects the gap between taxes paid and the cost of services provided. Studies that claim a beneficial fiscal impact tend to assume that immigrants do not increase the cost of most government programs other than education and welfare. Even though we do not know by how much immigrants increase the cost of police protection, maintaining roads and national parks, and so forth, we do know that it costs more to provide these services to an ever larger population. However, studies that claim a large fiscal burden often overstate the costs of immigration and understate the taxes paid. As a result, estimates of the fiscal impact of immigration should be viewed with suspicion. Nevertheless, because the immigration surplus is around $7 billion, the net benefit from immigration after accounting for the fiscal impact is very small, and could conceivably be a net loss.

How Many and Whom Should We Admit?

In principle, we should admit immigrants whenever their economic contribution (to native well-being) will exceed the costs of providing social services to them. We are not, though, in a position to make this calculation with any reasonable degree of confidence. In fact, no mainstream study has ever attempted to suggest, purely on the basis of the empirical evidence, how many immigrants should be admitted.

This unfortunate lack of guidance from economic research has, I believe, led to sudden and remarkable swings in policy proposals. As recently as 1990 Congress legislated an increase in the number of legal immigrants of about 175,000 people annually. Last year the Commission on Immigration Reform, headed by Barbara Jordan, recommended that legal immigration be cut by about 240,000 people a year -- a proposal that was immediately supported by President Clinton. (The Clinton Administration, however, successfully resisted congressional efforts to follow up on the commission's recommendations.) Although we do not know how many immigrants to admit, simple economics and common sense suggest that the magic number should not be an immutable constant regardless of economic conditions in the United States. A good case can be made for linking immigration to the business cycle: admit more immigrants when the economy is strong and the unemployment rate is low, and cut back on immigration when the economy is weak and the unemployment rate is high.

Economic research also suggests that the United States may be better off if its policy of awarding entry visas favors skilled workers. Skilled immigrants earn more than less-skilled immigrants, and hence pay more in taxes, and they are less likely to use welfare and other social services.

Depending on how the skills of immigrants compare with the skills of natives, immigrants also

affect the productivity of the native work force and of native-owned companies. Skilled native workers, for example, have much to gain when less skilled workers enter the United States: they can devote all their efforts to jobs that use their skills effectively while immigrants provide cheap labor for service jobs. These gains, however, come at a cost. The jobs of less-skilled natives are now at risk, and these natives will suffer a reduction in their earnings. Nonetheless, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that the American work force, particularly in comparison with the work forces of many source countries, is composed primarily of skilled workers. Thus the typical American worker would seem to gain from unskilled immigration.

How does immigration affect companies' profits? Companies that use less-skilled workers on the production line gain from the immigration of the less-skilled, who reduce the earnings of less-skilled workers in favor of increasing profits. However, other companies -- perhaps even most -- might be better off with skilled immigrants. Many studies in economics suggest that skilled labor is better suited to the machines that are now used widely in the production process. Most companies would therefore gain more if the immigrant flow were composed of skilled workers.

Most workers prefer unskilled immigrants, whereas most companies prefer skilled immigrants. This conflict can be resolved only by measuring bow much native workers gain from unskilled immigration and how much companies gain from skilled immigration, and comparing the two. Although there is a lot of uncertainty in the academic literature, we do know that the productivity of capital is very responsive to an influx of skilled workers. The large increase in the profits of the typical company, and the corresponding reduction in the cost of goods produced by skilled workers, suggest that the United States might be better off with a policy favoring skilled immigrants.

The gains from skilled immigration will be even larger if immigrants have "external effects" on the productivity of natives. One could argue, for example, that immigrants may bring knowledge, skills, and abilities that natives lack, and that natives might somehow pick up this know-how by interacting with immigrants. It seems reasonable to suspect that the value of these external effects would be greater if natives interact with highly skilled immigrants. This increase in the human capital of natives might offset -- and perhaps even reverse -- the harm that immigration does to the wages of competing workers.

Although such effects now play a popular role in economic theory, there is little empirical evidence supporting their existence, let alone measuring their magnitude. I find it difficult to imagine that interaction with immigrants entering an economy as large as that of the United States could have a measurable effect. Nevertheless, if external effects exist, they reinforce the argument that the United States would gain most from skilled immigrants.

Efficiency Versus Distribution

Participants in the immigration debate routinely use the results of economic research to frame the discussion and to suggest policy solutions. Perhaps the most important contributions of this research are the insights that immigration entails both gains and losses for the native population, that the winners and the losers are typically different groups, and that policy parameters can be set in ways that attempt to maximize gains and minimize losses. If the objective of immigration policy is to increase the per capita income of the native population, the evidence suggests that immigration policy should encourage the entry of skilled workers. It is important to remember, however, that even though the immigration of skilled workers would be beneficial for the United States as a whole, the gains and losses would be concentrated in particular subgroups of the population.

As we have seen, the net gains from current immigration are small, so it is unlikely that these gains can play a crucial role in the policy debate. Economic research teaches a very valuable lesson: the economic impact of immigration is essentially distributional. Current immigration redistributes wealth from unskilled workers, whose wages are lowered by immigrants, to skilled workers and owners of companies that buy immigrants' services, and from taxpayers who bear the burden of paying for the social services used by immigrants to consumers who use the goods and services produced by immigrants.

Distributional issues drive the political debate over many social policies, and immigration policy is no exception. The debate over immigration policy is not a debate over whether the entire country is made better off by immigration -- the gains from immigration seem much too small, and could even be outweighed by the costs of providing increased social services. Immigration changes how the economic pie is sliced up -- and this fact goes a long way toward explaining why the debate over how many and what kinds of immigrants to admit is best viewed as a tug-of-war between those who gain from immigration and those who lose from it.

History has taught us that immigration policy changes rarely, but when it does, it changes drastically. Can economic research play a role in finding a better policy? I believe it can, but there are dangers ahead. Although the pendulum seems to be swinging to the restrictionist side (with ever louder calls for a complete closing of our borders), a greater danger to the national interest may be the few economic groups that gain much from immigration. They seem indifferent to the costs that immigration imposes on other segments of society, and they have considerable financial incentives to keep the current policy in place. The harmful effects of immigration will not go away simply because some people do not wish to see them. In the short run these groups may simply delay the day of reckoning. Their potential long-run impact, however, is much more perilous: the longer the delay, the greater the chances that when immigration policy finally changes, it will undergo a seismic shift -- one that, as in the twenties, may come close to shutting down the border and preventing Americans from enjoying the benefits that a well-designed immigration policy can bestow on the United States.

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Can We Still Afford to Be a Nation of Immigrants?

Comparing yesterday's immigration with today's, a historian is struck by the unprecedented nature of our present situation

by DAVID M. KENNEDY

The question in my title implies a premise: that historically the United States has well afforded to be a nation of immigrants -- indeed, has benefited handsomely from its good fortune as an immigrant destination. That proposition was once so deeply embedded in our national mythology as to be axiomatic. More than a century ago, for example, in the proclamation that made Thanksgiving Day a national holiday, Abraham Lincoln gave thanks to God for having "largely augmented our free population by emancipation and by immigration."

Lincoln spoke those words when there were but 34 million Americans and half a continent remained to be settled. Today, however, the United States is a nation of some 264 million souls on a continent developed beyond Lincoln's imagination. It is also a nation experiencing immigration on a scale never before seen. In the past three decades, since the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the first major revision in American immigration statutes since the historic closure of immigration in the 192Os, some 20 million immigrants have entered the United States. To put those numbers in perspective: prior to 1965 the period of heaviest immigration to the United States was the quarter century preceding the First World War, when some 17 million people entered the country -- roughly half the total number of Europeans who migrated to the United States in the century after 1820 (along with several hundred thousand Asians). The last pre-war census, in 1910, counted about 13.5 million foreign-born people in the American population, in contrast to about 22.5 million in 1994. Historians know a great deal about those earlier immigrants -- why they came, how they ended up -- what their impact was on the America of

their day. Whether America's historical experience with immigration provides a useful guide to thinking about the present case is the principal question I want to address. I want not only to explore the substantive issue of immigration but also to test the proposition that the discipline of history has some value as a way of knowing and thinking about the world.

With respect to immigration itself, I intend to explore two sets of questions.

- Why did people migrate to America in the past, and what were the consequences, for them and for American society, once they landed?
- Why are people migrating to America today, and what might be the consequences, for them and for American society, of their presence in such numbers?

The Pull of America

A generation or two ago upbeat answers to the first pair of questions so pervaded the culture that they cropped up in the most exotic places -- in Tunisia, for example, on July 9, 1943. The occasion was the eve of the invasion of Sicily, and General George S. Patton Jr was addressing his troops, who were about to embark for the battle. He urged, "When we land, we will meet German and Italian soldiers whom it is our honor and privilege to attack and destroy. Many of you have in your veins German and Italian blood, but remember that these ancestors of yours so loved freedom that they gave up home and country to cross the ocean in search of liberty. The ancestors of the people we shall kill lacked the courage to make such a sacrifice and continued as slaves."

In his own inimitable idiom Patton was invoking what for most Americans was -- and still is -- the standard explanation of who their immigrant forebears were, why they left their old countries, and what was their effect on American society. In this explanation immigrants were the main-chance-seeking and most energetic, entrepreneurial, and freedom-loving members of their Old World societies. They were drawn out of Europe by the irresistible magnet of American opportunity and liberty, and their galvanizing influence on American society made this country the greatest in the world.

A radically different explanation of immigration has also historically been at work in the American mind. As the noted social scientist Edward Alsworth Ross put it in 1914:

> Observe immigrants not as they come travel-wan up the gang-plank, nor as they issue toil-begrimed from pit's mouth or mill-gate, but in their gatherings, washed, combed, and in their Sunday best.... [They] are hirsute, low-browed, big-faced persons of obviously low mentality.... They simply look out of place in black clothes and stiff collar, since clearly they belong in skins, in wattled huts at the close of the Great Ice Age. These ox-like men are descendants of those who always stayed behind.

Ross was describing in these invidious terms what he and his turn-of-the-century contemporaries called the "new" immigrants -- new because they came predominantly from eastern and southern Europe, as distinct from the "old," early-and-mid-nineteenth-century immigrants, who had come mainly from northern and western Europe. Ironically, Ross was also talking about the parents of those very troops (at least the Italian-American troops) whom Patton addressed in 1943.

Between those two poles of explanation American views of immigration have oscillated. On the one hand, as Patton reminds us, immigrants were judged to be noble souls, tugged by the lodestone of American opportunity, whose talents and genius and love of liberty account for the magnificent American character. On the other hand, as in Ross's view, especially if they had the misfortune to arrive on a more recent boat, immigrants were thought to be degraded, freeloading louts, a blight on the national character and a drain on the economy -- the kind of people described all too literally, so the argument goes, by Emma Lazarus's famous inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty: "your tired, your ....the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

Yet for all their differences, the two views have several things in common. Both explain immigration in terms of the moral character of immigrants. Both understand immigration as a matter of individual choice. And both implicitly invoke the American magnet as the irresistible force that put people in motion, drawing them either to opportunity or to dependency.

Those concepts do not bear close analysis as adequate explanations for the movement of some 35 million human beings over the course of a century. This was a historical phenomenon too huge and too specific in time to be sufficiently accounted for by summing 35 million decisions supposedly stimulated by the suddenly irresistible gravitational attraction of a far-off continent.

The Push of Europe

For the first three centuries or so after the European discovery of the New World the principal source of immigrants to the two American continents and the Caribbean was not Europe but Africa. Only in the early nineteenth century did the accumulated total of European settlers in the New World exceed the approximately 10 million Africans who had made the trans-Atlantic voyage in the years since 1492. To explain the African diaspora by entrepreneurial instincts, the love of democracy, or the freely chosen decisions of migrants to follow the lodestar of American promise would be a mockery. Clearly, the involuntary movement of those 10 million Africans is best explained not in terms of their individual characters and choices but in terms of the catastrophically disruptive expansion of large-scale plantation agriculture and its accursed corollary, large-scale commercial slavery.

A comparable -- though, to be sure, not identical -- element of involuntariness characterized emigration from nineteenth-century Europe. Any generalization about what prompted a phenomenon as long-lived and complicated as the great European migration must, of course, be subject to many qualifications. All discussions of the migration process recognize both push and pull factors. But at bottom the evidence convincingly supports the argument that *disruption* is essential to the movement of people on such a scale. And, as in the African case, the best, most comprehensive explanation for a process that eventually put some 35 million people in motion is to be found in two convulsively disruptive developments that lay far beyond the control of individual Europeans. Those developments had their historical dynamic within the context of European, not American, history.

The first of these needs little elaboration. It was, quite simply, population growth. In the nineteenth century the population of Europe more than doubled, from some 200 million to more than 400 million, even after about 70 million had left Europe altogether. (Only half of these, it should be noted, went to the United States -- one among many clues that the American-magnet explanation is inadequate.) That population boom was the indispensable precondition for Europe to export people on the scale that it did. And the boom owed little to American stimulus; rather it was a product of aspects of European historical evolution, especially improvements in diet, sanitation, and disease control.

The second development was more complex, but we know it by a familiar name: the Industrial Revolution. It includes the closely associated revolution in agricultural productivity. Wherever it occurred, the Industrial Revolution shook people loose from traditional ways of life. It made factory workers out of artisans and, even more dramatically, turned millions of rural farmers into urban wage-laborers. Most of those migrants from countryside to city, from agriculture to industry, remained within their country of origin, or at least within Europe. But in the early stages of industrialization the movement of people, like the investment of capital during the unbridled early days of industrialism, was often more than what the market could bear. In time most European societies reached a kind of equilibrium, absorbing their own workers into their own wage markets. But in the typical transitional phase some workers who had left artisan or agricultural employments could not be reabsorbed domestically in European cities. They thus migrated overseas.

The large scholarly literature documenting this process might be summarized as follows: Imagine a map of Europe. Across this map a time line traces the evolution of the Industrial Revolution. From a point in the British Isles in the late eighteenth century the line crosses to the Low Countries and Germany in the early and mid nineteenth century and to eastern and southern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Across the same map a second line traces the chronological evolution of migration to the United States. As it happens, the two lines are almost precisely congruent -- migration came principally from the British Isles in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, then mainly from Germany, and finally from the great watersheds of the Vistula and the Danube and the mountain ranges of the Apennines and Carpathians to the south and east.

The congruence of those lines is not coincidental. Industrialization, in this view, is *the* root cause and the most powerful single variable explaining the timing, the scale, the geographic evolution, and the composition of the great European migration.

For another perspective on the importance of understanding the European migration from a European point of view, consider the lyrics of a nineteenth-century Italian folk song called "The Wives of the Americans." In this case, the "Americans" were men who had gone off to America and left their wives behind in Italy -- specifically, the southern region of Campania. In fact, men, young men in particular, predominated in the nineteenth-

century migratory stream, and their predominance constitutes a reliable indicator of their purposes. Many of them never intended to settle permanently elsewhere but hoped to work abroad for a time and eventually return to the old country. Repatriation rates for European immigrants averaged nearly 40 percent. Only the Jews and the Irish did not go home again in significant numbers. For some later, "new" immigrant groups, especially from the southern Danube regions, repatriation rates ran as high as 80 percent.

The song describes the wives of the Americans going to church and praying, "Send money, my husband. Send more money. The money you sent earlier I have already spent, I spent it on my lover. I spent it with pleasure. Send more money, you *cornuto fottuto* [damnable cuckold]." Those lyrics conjure an image of immigration quite different from the one General Patton urged on his Italian-American troops in 1943. Together with the figures on repatriation, they offer a strong corrective to uncritical reliance on the American-magnet explanation for the past century's European migration.

The Immigrants in America

What happened to European immigrants, and to American society, once they arrived? Much historical inquiry on this point focuses on immigrant hardship and on recurrent episodes of nativism, anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-foreign-radicalism, from the Know-Nothing movement of the 185Os to the American Protective Association of the late nineteenth century and the revived Ku Klux Klan of the early twentieth century, culminating in the highly restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s. Those are important elements in the history of American immigration, and we would forget them at our peril. But getting the question right is the most challenging part of any historical investigation, and there is an analytically richer question to be asked than Why did immigrants meet sometimes nasty difficulties?

An even more intriguing question is How did tens of millions of newcomers manage to accommodate themselves to America, and America to them, without more social disruption? How can we explain this society's relative success -- and success I believe it was -- in making space so rapidly for so many people?

The explanation is surely not wise social policy. Beyond minimal monitoring at the ports of entry, no public policy addressed the condition of immigrants once they were cleared off Castle Garden or Ellis Island. But three specific historical circumstances, taken together, go a long way toward composing an answer to the question.

First, somewhat surprisingly, for all their numbers, immigrants -- even the 17 million who arrived from 1890 to 1914 -- never made up a very large component of the already enormous society that was turn-of-the-century America. The census of 1910 records the highest percentage of foreign-born people ever resident in the United States: 14.7 percent. Now, 14.7 percent is not a trivial proportion, but it is a decided minority, and relative to other societies that have received large numbers of immigrants, a small minority. The comparable figures in Australia and Canada at approximately the same time were 17 percent and more than 20 percent, and even higher in Argentina. So here is one circumstance accounting for the relative lack of social conflict surrounding immigration a century ago: at any given moment immigrants were a relatively small presence in the larger society.

A second circumstance was economic. Immigrants supplied the labor that a growing economy urgently demanded. What is more, economic growth allowed the accommodation of newcomers without forcing thorny questions of redistribution -- always the occasion for social contest and upheaval. Here, as so often in American history, especially during the period of heavy immigration before the First World War, economic growth worked as a pre-emptive solution to potential social conflict.

The third circumstance was more complicated than sheer numbers or economic growth. I call this circumstance "pluralism" -- by which I mean simply that the European immigrant stream was remarkably variegated in its cultural, religious, national, and linguistic origins. These many subcurrents also distributed themselves over an enormous geographic region -- virtually the entire northeastern quadrant of the United States -- and through several political jurisdictions. By the 1920s immigrants were distributed widely across the great industrial belt that stretched from New England through New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and beyond: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The states with the most immigrants, not incidentally, also had per capita incomes higher than the national average -- an important fact pertinent to

understanding the relationship between immigration and economic vitality.

The varied composition and broad dispersal of the immigrant stream carried certain crucial implications, one being that no immigrant group could realistically aspire to preserve its Old World culture intact for more than a few generations at best. To be sure, many groups made strenuous efforts to do just that. Legend to the contrary, last century's immigrants did not cast their Old World habits and languages overboard before their ship steamed into New York Harbor. In fact, many groups heroically exerted themselves to sustain their religions, tongues, and ways of life. The Catholic school system, which for a generation or two in some American cities educated nearly as many students as the public school system, eloquently testified to the commitment of some immigrant communities to resist assimilation. But circumstances weighed heavily against the success of such efforts. The virtual extinction of the parochial school system in the past generation -- the empty schools and dilapidated parish buildings that litter the inner cores of the old immigrant cities -- bears mute witness both to the ambition and to the ultimate failure of those efforts to maintain cultural distinctiveness.

A second and no less important implication of pluralism was that neither any single immigrant group nor immigrants as a whole could realistically mount any kind of effective challenge to the existing society's way of doing things. No single group had sufficient weight in any jurisdiction larger than a municipality to dictate a new political order. And there was little likelihood that Polish Jews and Italian Catholics and Orthodox Greeks could find a common language, much less common ground for political action.

To recapitulate: The most comprehensive explanation of the causes of immigration a century ago is to be found in the disruptions visited on European society by population growth and the Industrial Revolution. The United States was, to use the language of the law, the incidental beneficiary of that upheaval. The swelling immigrant neighborhoods in turn-of-the-century American cities were, in effect, by-products of the urbanization of Europe. And once landed in America, immigrants accommodated themselves to the larger society -- not always easily assimilating, but at least working out a modus vivendi --without the kinds of conflicts that have afflicted other multinational societies. That mostly peaceful process of accommodation came about because of the relatively small numbers of immigrants at any given time, because of the health of the economy, and because of the constraints on alternatives to accommodation inherent in the plural and dispersed character of the immigrant stream.

Having lit this little lamp of historical learning, I would like to see if it can illuminate the present.

Today's Immigration

The biggest apparent novelty in current immigration is its source, or sources. Well over half of the immigration of the past thirty years has come from just seven countries: Mexico, the Philippines, China (I am including Taiwan), Vietnam, Korea, India, and the Dominican Republic.

Not a single European country is on that list. Here, would seem, is something new under the historical sun. Europe has dried up as a source of immigration and been replaced by new sources in Latin America and Asia.

And yet if we remember what caused the great European migration, the novelty of the current immigration stream is significantly diminished. Though particular circumstances vary, most of the countries now sending large numbers of immigrants to the United States are undergoing the same convulsive demographic and economic disruptions that made migrants out of so many nineteenth-century Europeans: population growth and the relatively early stages of their own industrial revolutions.

Mexico, by far the leading supplier of immigrants to the United States, conforms precisely to that pattern. Since the Second World War the Mexican population has more than tripled -- a rate of growth that recollects, indeed exceeds, that of nineteenth-century Europe. And as in Europe a century ago, population explosion has touched off heavy internal migration, from rural to urban areas. By some reckonings, Mexico City has become the largest city in the world, with 20 million inhabitants and an in-migration from the Mexican countryside estimated at 1,000 people a day.

Also since the Second World War the Mexican economy, despite periodic problems, has grown at double the average rate of the U.S. economy. Rapid industrialization has been accompanied by the swift and widespread commercialization of Mexican agriculture. A Mexican "green revolution," flowing from improvements in mechanical processing, fertilizers, and insecticides, has in fact exacerbated the usual disruptions attendant on rapid industrialization:

depopulation of the countryside, urban in-migration, and movement across the national border. But as in nineteenth-century Europe, most of the movement has been within Mexico itself. Since 1970 some five million Mexicans have entered the United States to stay; probably more than 10 million have moved to Mexico City alone.

Thus we are in the presence of a familiar historical phenomenon, impelled by developments that are for all practical purposes identical to those that identical to those that ignited the great European migration of a century ago.

What Does the Future Hold?

If the causes of present-day immigration are familiar what will be the consequences for today's immigrants and tomorrow's America?

I have suggested that three historical circumstances eased the accommodation between immigrants and the American society of a century ago -- the relatively small number of immigrants present at any given time, the needs and vitality of the economy, and the plural and distributed character of the immigrant stream. How do those factors weigh in an analysis of immigration today?

With respect to numbers, the historical comparison gives a basis for confidence that the answer to our original question -- Can we still afford to be a nation of immigrants? -- is yes. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that as of 1994 foreign-born people represented 8.7 percent of the American population, or just a bit more than half the proportion they made up in the census of 1910. (Comparable recent numbers for Canada and Australia, incidentally, are approximately 16 percent and 22 percent.) So, with reference to both American historical experience and contemporary experience in other countries, the *relative* incidence of current immigration to the United States is rather modest. Surely the United States at the end of the twentieth century is resourceful enough to deal with an immigrant inflow proportionally half what American society managed to deal with quite successfully in the early years of this century.

With reference to the needs and vitality of the economy, the historical comparison is more complicated. Economic theory suggests that immigration is a bargain for any receiving society, because it augments the labor supply, one of the three principal factors of production (along with land and capital), essentially free of cost. The sending society bears the burden of feeding and raising a worker to the age when he or she can enter the labor market. If at that point the person emigrates and finds productive employment elsewhere, the source society has in effect subsidized the economy the host society. That scenario essentially describes the historical American case, in which fresh supplies of immigrant labor underwrote the nation's phenomenal industrial surge in the half century after the Civil War.

The theory is subject to many qualifications. Unskilled immigrant workers may indeed increase gross economic output, as they did from the Pittsburgh blast furnaces to the Chicago packinghouses a century ago, and as they do today in garment shops and electronic assembly plants from Los Angeles to Houston. But as productivity has become more dependent on knowledge and skill, the net value of unskilled immigrant labor has decreased, a point that informs much of the current case for restricting immigration. Yet it is important to note that argument on this point turns on the *relative* contribution of low-skill workers to overall output; the theory is still unimpeachable in its insistence on the *absolute* value of an additional worker, from whatever source, immigrant or native. Nevertheless, large numbers of unskilled immigrants may in the long run retard still higher potential outputs, because the inexpensive labor supply that they provide diminishes incentives to substitute capital and improved technology for labor, and thus inhibits productivity gains. On the other hand, just to complicate the calculation further, insofar as the host society continues to need a certain amount of low-skill work done, the availability of unskilled immigrants may *increase* the economy's overall efficiency by freeing significant numbers of better-educated native workers to pursue higher-productivity employment. And overhanging all this part of the immigration debate is the question of whose ox is gored. Low-skill immigrants may benefit the economy as a whole, but may at the same time impose substantial hardships on the low-skill native workers with whom they are in direct competition for jobs and wages.

Of course, the theory that immigration subsidizes the host economy is true only insofar as the immigrant in question is indeed a worker, a positive contributor to the productive apparatus of the destination society. Even the crude American immigration-control system of the nineteenth century recognized that fact, when it barred people likely to become social dependents, such as the chronically ill or known criminals. The issue of dependency is

particularly vexatious in the United States today for two reasons. First, the 1965 legislation contained generous clauses providing for "family reunification," under the terms of which a significant portion of current immigrants are admitted not as workers but as the spouses, children, parents, and siblings of citizens or legally resident aliens. In 1993, a typical year, fewer than 20 percent of immigrants entered under "employment-based" criteria.

Because of family-reunification provisions, the current immigrant population differs from previous immigrant groups in at least two ways: it is no longer predominantly male and, even more strikingly, it is older. The percentage of immigrants over sixty-five exceeds the percentage of natives in that age group, and immigrants over sixty-five are two and a half times as likely as natives to be dependent on Supplemental Security Income, the principal federal program making cash payments to the indigent elderly. Newspaper accounts suggest that some families have brought their relatives here under the family-reunification provisions in the law expressly for the purpose of gaining access to SSI. Thus it appears that the availability of welfare programs -- programs that did not exist a century ago -- has combined with the family-reunification provisions to create new incentives for immigration that complicate comparisons of the economics of immigration today with that in the nineteenth century.

But on balance, though today's low-skill immigrants may not contribute as weightily to the economy as did their European counterparts a hundred years ago, and though some do indeed end up dependent on public assistance, as a group they make a positive economic contribution nevertheless. It is no accident that today's immigrants are concentrated in the richest states, among them California (home to fully one third of the country's immigrant population), just as those of the 1920s were. And just as in that earlier era, immigrants are not parasitic on the "native" economy but productive participants in it. The principal motivation for immigration remains what it was in the past: the search for productive employment. Most immigrants come in search of work, and most find it. Among working-age males, immigrant labor-force-participation rates and unemployment rates are statistically indistinguishable from those for native workers. The ancient wisdom still holds: *Ubi est pane, ibi est patria* ("Where there is bread, there is my country"). Not simply geography but also that powerful economic logic explains why Mexico is the principal contributor of immigrants to the United States today: the income gap between the United States and Mexico is the largest between any two contiguous countries in the world.

One study, by the Stanford economist Clark W. Reynolds, estimated the future labor-market characteristics and prospects for economic growth in Mexico and the United States. For Mexico to absorb all the new potential entrants into its own labor markets, Reynolds concluded, its economy would have to grow at the improbably high rate of some seven percent a year. The United States, in contrast, if its economy is to grow at a rate of three percent a year, must find somewhere between five million and 15 million more workers than can be supplied by domestic sources. Reynolds's conclusion was obvious: Mexico and the United States need each other, the one to ease pressure on its employment markets, the other to find sufficient labor to sustain acceptable levels of economic growth. If Reynolds is right, the question with which I began -- Can we still afford to be a nation of immigrants? -- may be wrongly put. The proper question may be Can we afford *not* to be? (For another perspective on this question see the following article by George J. Borjas.)

The Reconquista

But if economic necessity requires that the United States be a nation of immigrants into the indefinite future, as it has been for so much of its past, some important questions remain. Neither men nor societies live by bread alone, and present-day immigration raises historically unprecedented issues in the cultural and political realms.

Pluralism -- the variety and dispersal of the immigrant stream -- made it easier for millions of European immigrants to accommodate themselves to American society. Today, however, one large immigrant stream is flowing into a defined region from a single cultural, linguistic, religious, and national source: Mexico. Mexican immigration is concentrated heavily in the Southwest, particularly in the two largest and most economically and politically influential states -- California and Texas. Hispanics, including Central and South Americans but predominantly Mexicans, today compose 28 percent of the population of Texas and about 31 percent of the population of California. More than a million Texans and more than three million Californians were born in Mexico. California alone holds nearly half of the Hispanic population, and

well over half of the Mexican-origin population, of the entire country.

This Hispanicization of the American Southwest is sometimes called the Reconquista, a poetic reminder that the territory in question was, after all, incorporated into the United States in the first place by force of arms, in the Mexican War of the 1840s. There is a certain charm in this turn of the wheel of history, with its reminder that in the long term the drama of armed conquest may be less consequential than the prosaic effects of human migration and birth rates and wage differentials. But the sobering fact is that the United States has had no experience comparable to what is now taking shape in the Southwest.

Mexican-Americans will have open to them possibilities closed to previous immigrant groups. They will have sufficient coherence and critical mass in a defined region so that, if they choose, they can preserve their distinctive culture indefinitely. They could also eventually undertake to do what no immigrant group could have dreamed of doing: challenge the existing cultural, political, legal, commercial, and educational systems to change fundamentally not only the language but also the very institutions in which they do business. They could even precipitate a debate over a "special relationship" with Mexico that would make the controversy over the North American Free Trade Agreement look like a college bull session. In the process, Americans could be pitched into a soul-searching redefinition of fundamental ideas such as the meaning of citizenship and national identity.

All prognostications about these possibilities are complicated by another circumstance that has no precedent in American immigration history: the region of Mexican immigrant settlement in the southwestern United States is contiguous with Mexico itself. That proximity may continuously replenish the immigrant community, sustaining its distinctiveness and encouraging its assertiveness. Alternatively, the nearness of Mexico may weaken the community's coherence and limit its political and cultural clout by chronically attenuating its members' permanence in the United States, as the accessibility of the mother country makes for a kind of perpetual repatriation process.

In any case, there is no precedent in American history for these possibilities. No previous immigrant group had the size and concentration and easy access to its original culture that the Mexican immigrant group in the Southwest has today. If we seek historical guidance, the closest example we have to hand is in the diagonally opposite corner of the North American continent, in Quebec. The possibility looms that in the next generation or so we will see a kind of Chicano Quebec take shape in the American Southwest, as a group emerges with strong cultural cohesiveness and sufficient economic and political strength to insist on changes in the overall society's ways of organizing itself and conducting its affairs.

Public debate over immigration has already registered this prospect, however faintly. How else to explain the drive in Congress, and in several states, to make English the "official" language for conducting civil business? In previous eras no such legislative muscle was thought necessary to expedite the process of immigrant acculturation, because alternatives to eventual acculturation were simply unimaginable. Less certain now that the traditional incentives are likely to do the work of assimilation, we seem bent on trying a *ukase* -- a ham-handed and provocative device that may prove to be the opening chapter of a script for prolonged cultural warfare. Surely our goal should be to help our newest immigrants, those from Mexico especially, to become as well integrated in the larger American society as were those European "new" immigrants whom E. A. Ross scorned but whose children's patriotism George Patton could take for granted. To reach that goal we will have to be not only more clever than our ancestors were but also less confrontational, more generous, and more welcoming than our current anxieties sometimes incline us to be.

The present may echo the past, but will not replicate it. Yet the fact that events have moved us into *terra nova et incognita* does not mean that history is useless as a way of coming to grips with our situation. To the contrary, the only way we can know with certainty as we move along time's path that we have come to a genuinely new place is to know something of where we have been. "What's new in the starry sky, dear Argelander?" Kaiser Wilhelm I is said to have asked his state astronomer, to which Argelander replied, "And does Your Majesty already know the old?" Knowing the old is the project of historical scholarship, and only that knowledge can reliably point us toward the new. As Lincoln also said "As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

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Environmental and Ethical Aspects of International Migration

by VIRGINIA ABERNETHY

U.S. immigration policy has a beneficent intent. However, recent work suggests that the signal it sends internationally -- that emigration can be relied upon to relieve local (Third World) population pressure -- tends to maintain high fertility rates in the sending country. This effect is counterproductive because high fertility is the primary driver of rapid population growth. In addition, it appears that the relatively open U.S. immigration policy has resulted in a rate of domestic population growth that threatens both the well-being of American labor and cherished environmental values.

In recent years, Western industrialized countries have extended their traditions of community responsibility to encompass much that is beyond their national and even continental borders. Embracing an ideal of international beneficence does not preclude giving weight to the national interest; nevertheless, beneficence has sometimes guided U.S. policy in directions which appear inimical to the nation.

Given so determinative an ideal of beneficence, one must be doubly confident that what is intended to do good indeed has that effect. Harm to intended beneficiaries is unconscionable, the more so when policies serendipitously entail sacrifice of the national interest, and in particular (as will be shown), threats to the environment and the well-being of this country's more vulnerable sectors.

One U.S. policy that is believed to be beneficent in both intent and effect is the relative openness to international migration. Those who immigrate to the United States expect to improve their own lives and, often, help relatives by sending home remittances. This article contends, nevertheless, that the net consequences of international migration are negative for:

- the countries which emigrants leave;
- vulnerable sectors of the host country's labor force with which immigrants compete;
- the host country's economy generally (addressed in Abernethy, 1993; and work in progress);
- the environmental goal of conservation and minimization of pollution.

These effects would suggest that a pause in international migration deserves deliberate consideration.

THE COUNTRIES WHICH EMIGRANTS LEAVE

Emigration can be counterproductive for immigrant-sending countries in two ways at least. Emigration provides an escape for dissident and energetic elements who might otherwise provide leadership and a critical mass for change. Where would Poland be, for example, if Lech Walessa was an electrician in Chicago? How long would Fidel Castro retain control in Cuba if the opposition there stayed put?

In addition, emigration appears to alter the incentive structure so that high fertility and large family size become more desirable. Only a very rapid fertility decline, however, offers even the semblance of hope that the ordinary citizens of most Third World countries will be able to enjoy a healthy and dignified existence.

Demographers usually attribute the rapid population growth which occurred after World War II to a decline in mortality. Some experts also grant a small role to rising fertility due to cultural change, acknowledging that traditional behavior patterns which depress fertility are discarded as a side effect of modernization. These real and true effects are not, however, the whole story.

Unfortunately, well-meant policies intended to implement the dominant "demographic transition" model seem also to have encouraged high fertility. The idea of a demographic transition has been popularized to incorporate certain causal assertions which are essentially unfounded but have mislead two generations of policy makers. Scholars, including historian Paul Kennedy (see Connelly and Kennedy, 1994), former editor-in-chief of the *Scientific American* Gerald Piel, and politicians including Nafis Sadik of the United Nations and Vice-President of the United States Albert Gore, remain in thrall to the demographic transition model. Its tenets -- that prosperity, modernization, declining infant mortality and socioeconomic development produce a preference for small family size, and thus will eventually correct population growth -- are based

mainly on correlations. The postulated causality breaks down when tested systematically with chronological data (historical and modern) or controlled comparisons (Abernethy, 1979, 1993,1994, 1995).

Some professional demographers have long doubted the causal postulates of demographic transition theory (Teitelbaum, 1975), and others have tried to illuminate the motivational aspects of reproduction. Lant Pritchett (1994) suggests that desired family size explains up to 90 percent of the variance in actual family size. Kingsley Davis (1963), Paul Demeny (1988), Charles Westoff (1988), and Sergio Diaz-Briquets and L. Perez (1981) have addressed particular motives and incentives which determine completed family size. For example, economist Richard Easterlin (1962) analyzed the U.S. baby boom, showing that the low fertility of the 1930s depression years gave way to early and frequent childbearing, probably because of the bright economic prospects of the late 1940s and 1950s. Raymond Firth's (1956, 1957, 1967) studies of Tikopia also support an economic opportunity explanation of fertility.

The analysis of Sergio Diaz-Briquets and L. Perez (1981) of the baby-boom in Cuba after the 1959 Fidel Castro revolution is one of the more compelling cases showing that perception of expanding economic opportunity encourages couples to raise their family size target. The authors conclude that the spike in Cuban fertility has a "straightforward" explanation:

> The main factor was the real income rise among the most disadvantaged groups brought about by the redistribution measures of the revolutionary government. The fertility rises in almost every age group suggest that couples viewed the future as more promising and felt they could now afford more children. (p.17)

Linkages between economic/resource variables and behaviors which determine family size are usually not so conveniently ready-drawn. Investigators are just beginning to ask the questions which would establish causal sequences.

My work is synthesis, from which I propose a hypothesis to account for couples wanting either more or fewer children. A first book (Abernethy, 1979), summarizes the findings from controlled comparisons of New Guinea and Eskimo societies, and various other historical and anthropological materials. For the most part, I have had to use separate sources to match the economic variables with predicted demographic effects.

I continue to find that historical and crosscultural data point, with startling consistency, to a causal relationship between perceived economic conditions and desired family size. It appears that people who see expansive economic opportunity want and have more children; conversely, a sense of limits or contracting horizons promotes reproductive and marital caution (Abernethy, 1979, 1993, 1994, 1995). I have little hesitation in stating that family size increased worldwide after World War II as a result, in part, of people anticipating prosperity and therefore wanting more children.

Perceived opportunities (postulated to raise fertility) come in the guise of new technology; widely distributed gains in income or subsistence subsidies, populist political changes, and migration. For the main rationale and data, I refer you to earlier publications. As a sample of one type of evidence, the flavor of the day, I offer a new case.

Peru embarked on over a decade of unforeseen prosperity after explosive development of the *anchoveta* industry, an opportunity that was unrecognized before World War II but which was taking off by 1950. A corresponding increase in fertility was to be expected and, indeed, occurred. Whereas from 1876 through at least 1940, Peru's total fertility rate (TFR) remained in the range of 5.6 to 5.82 ("*la fecundidad permanecio mas o menos constante*"), it then rose, right on schedule, to 6.85 ("*Hacia 1950 ... llego a 6.85 hijos por mujer*") (Montenegro and de Muente, 1990:70-71). That is, the time sequence supports a causal explanation; it is plausible that widespread prosperity from the *anchoveta* industry triggered the fertility increase of more than one child per woman. For the record, I learned of the *anchoveta* industry boom and predicted the rise in fertility rate before seeking out the demographic study which, as it happens, confirms my prediction.

Fertility remained at a historically high level for some fifteen years. A fertility decline was heralded by the plateau and then, in 1972, collapse of the *anchoveta* fishery and associated industries. The TFR was 6.85 in 1965, 6.56 by 1970, 6.00 by 1975, 5.38 by 1980, and 4.59 by 1985 (Ferrando y Ponce, 1983, *cited in* Montenegro and de Muente, 1990). The 1995 Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet shows Peru with a 3.5 TFR. The predictably steep fall was no doubt accelerated by the economically induced guerrilla activity that, before 1992, threatened to engulf Peru in anarchy.

Migration opportunity appears to be another powerful contributor to perception of expanding economic horizons. The ethos of expansionism

appears to affect not only those who move toward relative prosperity, but also those who stay home and occupy niches which neighbors and relatives have vacated. Hebe Lutz (1985), past president of the Foreign Nurses Association in Japan, recounts a conversation with a Nepalese elder who spontaneously observed that the new practice of the young moving away from their birth village was creating the impression of limitless space and opportunity and was a factor in rising fertility rates.

The insights of sophisticated native informants are meaningful, but there is more. Giving examples from late nineteenth century Ireland and early twentieth century Japan, Kingsley Davis (1963) suggests that emigration expands a country's ecological niche and, thus, allows high fertility rates to persist. Similarly, John F. May (1995) suggests that mid-twentieth century policies of dispersing the Rwandan population to undeveloped agricultural land and neighboring countries attenuated land hunger and, thus, encouraged higher fertility rates than would otherwise have occurred. The fertility decline began in Rwanda in the late 1980s as the lands colonized 20 years earlier began to lose productivity, the economy faltered, and further population dispersal became impossible.

Some countries make export of labor a way of life and appear to depend significantly on the foreign exchange earnings and remittances sent home by emigres. In 1990, global remittance credits reached $71 billion, nearly double from 1980 (Teitelbaum and Russell, 1994). High fertility rates persist in many high emigration countries, *e.g.*, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. On the contrary fertility rates have declined rapidly when the emigration option closed, as it largely did in the CARICOM countries (formerly the British West Indies) by the early 1980s (Guengant, 1985).

Systematic controlled comparisons within matched West Indian communities show fertility remaining high during the 1970s and 1980s where there was a tradition of emigration, whereas a precipitous fertility decline occurred specifically in those communities where emigration was not seen as an escape valve (Brittain, 1990). Similarly, nineteenth century English and Welsh villages from which many emigrated, had continuing high fertility. In contrast, fertility declined rapidly in similar communities which absorbed their own young (Friedlander, 1983). The common themes appear to be perception of opportunity (niches opening up where some leave as well as, possibly, the psychological effect of having the option to move toward beckoning prosperity).

Thus, the prospect of immigration to richer territory, even if only a few of the large number who consider it will actually make the move, appears to be one factor supporting large family size. Psychologically, the contrasting state is a sense of limits (being bottled up; crowding and no expectation of relief).

First Do No Harm

Advocates for beneficence as a guide to foreign policy should be concerned that inappropriate international aid and generous immigration policies both signal that some regions have wealth which they are willing to share. Such misinformation fosters the belief that it is unnecessary for recipients to adjust to the limited resources of their own environment, and thus it undercuts incentives to restrict family size. The consequent slow or no decline in fertility rates leaves countries vulnerable to a very uncertain, probably dismal future. The almost inevitable rapid population growth tends to divert income into consumption, impedes capital accumulation, dooms societies to deepening poverty, and becomes an insurmountable barrier to environmental protection. Misleading signals about the long-term prospects of immigration into the United States can only add to the eventual chaos.

THE HOST COUNTRY

Immigration also harms Americans. Working Americans and established immigrants compete with new waves of immigrants for jobs, education, housing, and other essentials. As the American dream recedes beyond grasp, many become alienated from society and others search for redress or remedies. Every poll now shows a base of 65 percent or more of all Americans (and 79.4% of Mexicans in the United States (LNPS, 1992)) believing that there are too many immigrants (CCN, 1995; Espenshade and Hempstead, 1995). Such disaffection as well as violent expressions of genuine anger reflect the US economic, fiscal and carrying capacity woes.

Labor Market Effects

Most studies which show net negative or mixed effects on American workers are relatively recent.

Economist Steve H. Murdock (1995) suggests that immigration adds to aggregate income

(because of the larger labor force) but harms American families individually. Murdock concludes that, by the year 2050, average per-household annual income (in 1990 dollars) would be approximately $600 lower because of immigration. Murdock assumes continuation of present numbers and labor force characteristics of immigrants.

Economist George Borjas (1995), who originally saw no negative impact on workers, now concludes that the increased labor supply resulting from inflows into the United States costs working Americans over $133 billion annually in job opportunities, depressed wages, and deteriorating conditions of work. Symmetrically; these effects put $140 billion into the pockets of employers. The net $7 billion added to the economy comes at the cost of increasing polarization between rich and poor. This easily translates into a highly divisive and perhaps dangerous trend.

Labor economist Vernon Briggs, Jr. (1990, 1992) and political scientist Frank Morris (1990, 1995) contend that immigration harms first and worst America's own poor and unskilled workers, many of whom are minorities. Briggs (1990) testified before the Congressional Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law that the lower end of the U.S. labor pool is victimized by immigration. It is disruptive for both citizens and established, earlier immigrants whose labor force characteristics resemble those of newcomers. Frank Morris (1990), Dean of Graduate Studies and Urban Research at Morgan State University, Baltimore, testified in the same hearings

> My first concern is that the black community, in looking at the slow rate of growth of our numbers in the labor force and our increasing need for higher skills, may find that any encouraging assumptions we had about opportunities for young black workers and prospective workers have been sidetracked by hasty immigration policies....
>
> It is clear that America's black population is bearing a disproportionate share of immigrants' competition for jobs, housing and social services.

Indeed, Booker T. Washington pleaded for an end to immigration in his well-remembered "Put Down Your Buckets Where You Are" speech at the 1895 Atlanta Exposition. Only after immigration was effectively ended in the early 1920s did African Americans begin to take advantage of industrial job opportunities in the North.

Lind (1995:111) notes that Frederick Douglass, a prominent black leader in the nineteenth century; also saw "that European immigrants were taking entry-level jobs away from black American workers. No one who lives in a city where taxi service and many other trades are almost monopolized by new immigrants can doubt that the same phenomenon is occurring again." Richard Estrada (1991), editorial writer for the *Dallas Morning News*, concurs:

> Apologists for massive immigration appear to blame the large-scale replacement of black workers by Hispanic immigrants in the hotel-cleaning industry of Los Angeles on the blacks themselves, instead of acknowledging the obvious explanation that the immigrants depressed prevailing wages and systematically squeezed thousands of citizens out of the industry. (p.25)

Earlier immigrants also lose, even when an influx is their own ethnic group. Estrada (1990) attributes unemployment among established Hispanics to new arrivals who compete down wages and benefits, adding (1991:28),

> In sum, the evidence shows that Hispanic Americans have emerged as the greatest victims of U.S. immigration policy since 1965, instead of its greatest beneficiaries. The notion that Hispanics in this country favor more immigration, while the rest of America favors less, is a false one that has poisoned the debate for too long. This distortion must he corrected, especially by those who explicitly claim to represent Hispanic Americans.

Economists George Borjas and Richard Freeman (1992) see a double-edged sword falling on labor: competition from immigrants and net imports of goods manufactured by unskilled labor outside of the United States are causes -- both direct and indirect -- of the deterioration in the economic position of high school educated U.S. workers. High-school dropouts face the most competition; in this sector, immigration and the trade imbalance together raised the 1988 effective supply of labor by 28 percent for men and 31 percent for women. The large labor supply, these economists say, accounts for up to half of the 10 percentage point decline in the wages of unskilled labor between 1970 and the late 1980s.

Demographer William Frey (1995) reinforces economic findings by showing that low-skilled black and white Americans flee states that are heavily impacted by immigration. Thus, local unemployment figures often do not reveal the extent to which Americans are displaced by foreign workers. The rapidly increasing supply of labor competes down wages and conditions of work so that whole

industries -- construction, meat-packing, and hotelery, for example -- devolve toward jobs which it is said, "Americans won't do." But various sources suggest that Americans often do want those jobs and are excluded by immigrant networks which capture access (Huddle, 1992, 1993).

American skilled labor is also under pressure, particularly in fields where fluent English is not required. Immigration is viewed by the 250,000-member Institute for Electronic and Electrical Engineers as the cause of significant increases in unemployment and underemployment among engineers. Similar labor surpluses exist in mathematics (*Science*, 1991) and other specialties (CCN, 1994). Thus, parts of the skilled sector of the labor market appear to be approaching saturation.

The national security implications of these economic trends are a concern (Wiarda and Wiarda, 1986). Displacement of specialized professionals by immigrants who often will work for much lower wages threatens the viability of science education and engineering schools. Undergraduates often reject mathematics, for example, when teaching assistants are difficult to understand because of poor English language skills. And at advanced levels, students begin to doubt the economic value of a technical degree. The United States cannot afford to cede preeminence in mathematics, physical sciences, and engineering education.

Among these labor force trends, perhaps the polarization of society into rich and poor (Rattner, 1995) should alarm one most. Historical demography shows that such polarization is an inexorable result of a rapidly growing labor force (Lee, 1980, 1987). Underemployment and competing down the wages and conditions of work -- as occurs when the demand for new jobs exceeds the capacity of the economy to create good (*i.e.*, well-capitalized) net new jobs -- endangers the very fabric of a society. Not only despair of ever joining the mainstream, but also crime, riots, vigilantism, scapegoating and other signs of disappointment and anger erode civil society, tolerance, and respect for democracy. To knowingly impoverish a large proportion of one's countrymen is a betrayal of the highest magnitude.

Economic Effects

Lester Thurow, Dean of the MIT Sloane School of Business Administration, postulates that "No country can become rich without a century of good economic performance and a century of very slow population growth" (*cited in* "Lind, 1995). Indeed, current U.S. data confirm that rapid growth in the labor force negatively affects both wages, the conditions of work (*see* above and Bernstein, 1994), and the wealth of the nation. Real wages stagnated for up to 80 percent of the population beginning in the early 1970s, a period coincident with women and the baby-boom generation bursting simultaneously onto the labor market. That one-time surge from women and baby boomers is passed, but continuing growth in the supply of workers is driven by immigration. About three-quarters of immigrants enter the labor force, and their number nearly doubles the annual need for net new jobs. This aggravates underemployment (the unemployed plus involuntarily part-time workers), which rose from 9.8 percent of the labor force in 1989 to 12.6 percent in 1993 (Morris, 1995) and is an obstacle to the absorption of a probable 10 million discouraged workers, the many welfare recipients whose government benefits may end, and the 900,000 more young Americans entering than older workers leaving the labor force each year.

By 1990, immigrants were 10 percent of the total U.S. labor force and one-quarter of all workers without a high school diploma. The U.S. economy does not need low-skilled workers.

Immigration accounts for nearly half of the annual growth in the U.S. labor force. In addition, immigration imposes public costs in excess of taxes paid by the immigrant sector which are variously estimated to range from several billions up to $51 billion annually (CIS, 1994; huddle, 1995; Vernez and McCarthy, 1995). Such costs are ultimately born by all sectors of the economy, making it more difficult to accumulate savings for investment in any productive enterprise.

Population Growth: The Ultimate Environmental Threat

The United States has the fastest population growth rate in the industrialized world. At 1.1 percent per year (and rising), the U.S. growth rate is approaching that of some Third World countries and puts the population on track to double in 50 or 60 years. A population size of one-half billion by 2050 was "the most likely" variant projected by demographers Ahlburg and Vaupel (1990). The number might now be higher in contemplation of the annual flow of 1 million legal immigrants, including refugees and asylees, the conservatively estimated net 400,000 illegal immigrants, and the many who overstay visas.

Demography explains much of the environmental stress in America (Arrow *et al,* 1995). The insatiable thirst for oil and energy (Holdren, 1991), the annual erosion or paving-over of 3 million acres of U.S. farmland (Pimentel and Giampietro, 1994; Pimentel *et al.*, 1995), the appropriation for residential purposes of rural habitats with an attendant loss of species (Stevens, 1995), the buildup of carbon dioxide loads (Rosa and Dieta, 1995) and such all indict the human load factor: too many people living in an energy-guzzling society.

Population growth, particularly as reflected in the transformation from agricultural to residential and other more intensive uses of land, is visibly connected to loss of habitat for wild species and extirpation of species. Between the 1780s and 1980s the United States lost 53 percent, or nearly 120 million acres, of its wetlands. The loss has been proportionally greatest (91% of wetlands lost) in California (Balance Data, 1993) where, not coincidentally, the population growth rate is higher than in many developing countries. Population growth and environmental quality also clash in southern Florida (Balance Data, 1994) and in the Chesapeake Bay watershed adjacent to rapidly urbanizing areas of Maryland and Virginia (McConnell, 1995).

Depletion of nonrenewable and very slowly renewable resources including underground water (aquifers), the topsoil, and oil are further evidence that the U.S. population may already have exceeded the carrying capacity of the environment. Worldwide, per capita use of oil began a precipitous decline in about 1980 (Duncan, 1993) and a parallel peak followed by decline has been predicted for the United States by 2005 (Gever *et al,*1986). In fact, Americans' per capita use of energy has already nearly ceased to increase. Most (93%) of a 25 percent increase in total energy use between 1970 and 1990 was driven by population growth. That is, consumption per capita leveled off, but increased efficiency and conservation efforts were, and continue to be, overwhelmed by growing population numbers (Holdren, 1991). Ongoing research suggests that carbon dioxide loads, a correlate of energy use, are disproportionately large for the largest nations "across the entire spectrum of national incomes" (Rosa and Dieta, 1995).

Rapid population growth magnifies the difficulty and cost of making headway or even holding past environmental gains. The resulting frustration has led to foundation support for a coalition for population stabilization in the United States. The rationale is:

> ...as a funder entertaining proposals from conservation groups around the country, the Foundation had seen population growth, as manifested in extensive land development and widespread environmental degradation, emerge as the primary, never-ending scourge counteracting the good work these groups were doing on the homefront every day. This was true whether a group's purpose was to clean up our bays and estuaries, protect fisheries, save our rivers, improve habitats for bird, animal and plant species, preserve important ecosystems, or defend our forests from further unwise exploitation.
>
> At times the Foundation asked these organizations why they had not attempted to communicate their concerns over growth, specifically population growth, to Congress and the Administration. The replies, of course, varied considerably, ranging from not wanting to urge fertility reduction lest they be drawn into the abortion conflict, to fear of being called racist by pro-immigration interests. However, by far the majority of answers spoke to the fact that they were small or specialized organizations working toward a specific goal and not staffed to engage in advocacy of that nature. They believe that, even if raised, their voices would be lost in the labyrinths of Washington.[1]

Well-meaning citizens have decreasing options for addressing environmental quality. Deteriorating systems arc everywhere apparent. Many factors (deforestation, pollutants, infrastructure, traffic congestion) could be substituted for habitat, oil, water, and topsoil loss to illustrate stresses which population growth places upon the environment. Resources are being depleted even at the present rate of use. More people demand more resources; in using them, people create more pollution. Some systems have no substitute and, once used up or degraded, the loss is irretrievable. Other systems are remediable but at a cost -- for example, $25 billion is the estimated annual cost of implementing the Clean Air Act.

In the Third World and Russia, the linkage between wealth, population growth, and environmental devastation has long been evident. Protection and conservation take real money, lots of it, and such efforts are low on the list of priorities in poor countries. In the United States, the linkages between population growth and the environment have been masked by affluence. (Affluence lets one afford environmental protection and restoration -- as well as the much-reviled overconsumption.)

Until recently, environmentalists relied on government regulation and a mix of private and

[1] For information regarding the coalition, contact Population-Environment Balance, 2000 P Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20036 or telephone (202) 955-5700.

public (taxpayer) funds for environmental protection. But the cost of such programs has provoked a political backlash, recision of some environmental legislation, and possible retrenchment of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) activities. The cost of mitigating the environmental damage done by large populations grows along with population size, but it seems likely that less money, rather than more, will be available in the future.

Thus, environmentalists may have little choice but to confront the linkages between population growth and environmental quality. This appeared to be the gist of questioning by Senator Harry Reid (D-Nev) at July 13, 1995, hearings on the Endangered Species Act. Senator Reid, who also has sponsored an immigration moratorium (bills in 1994 and 1995), pressed the connection between human appropriation of wildlife habitat and species loss.

As natural wealth diminishes and population grows, human demands crowd out other values. Do people need jobs? Is housing scarce and too expensive? Forget the spotted owl! Rescind the Clean Water and Wetlands Acts! People vote; other species are no one's constituency.

Environmental battles are perennially refought because the needs of people and intrusion into wildlands habitat grow in proportion to the number of people. Environmental values are overwhelmed by population growth. People's wants trump the environment.

CONSERVATION ETHIC

These few examples suggest that a conservation ethic in America should start with the goal of maintaining this country at as small a population size as possible. This goal is incompatible with a relatively open door immigration policy. Therefore, the United States should not undertake to relieve other countries of their excess population even if such a policy were neutral to the immigrant-sending country. However, the U.S. open door policy probably is not neutral but actually, because of the misleading signals it sends, does harm.

Whereas equalizing opportunity within every nation remains a politically and ethically valid goal, cross-national transfers of wealth and carrying capacity jeopardize the incentive to make adjustments which only local societies and families can undertake. Americans have voluntarily limited fertility to below replacement levels. Others cannot expect to raise their standard of living without doing the same.

Even at present population size, the U.S. environment is continually compromised despite the considerable sums spent to improve quality and mitigate harm -- and present levels of expenditure may not be sustainable. Environmental and conservation programs compete with other economic and fiscal uses for resources and money.

In fact, environmental protection is probably a luxury available only to relatively rich nations with stable populations. Nations, institutions, families and individuals can afford and are likely to conserve only if income is sufficient to support the expected quality of life. At the extreme of poverty where consumption hovers near subsistence level, individuals are compelled to consume their wealth, including natural capital, as a last-ditch survival strategy. A tragic testament to today's destitution and overpopulation is that those who believe they can afford to conserve may be in the minority.

Wealth facilitates but does not guarantee conservation. Control over some critical minimum of resources as well as secure rights to benefit from them in the future - in order to avoid the mentality of the commons (Hardin, 1968) -- are necessary conditions for conservation, but alone they may not be sufficient (Abernethy, 1993). For most people, privatizing wealth to generate future income takes priority over conservation of the commons and will lead to overexploitation of resources whenever rights to future benefits are insecure.

V.S. Naipaul (1989), a widely read commentator on the Third World, states that the element of society most upsetting to him is "cynicism." He explains cynicism as

> fouling one's own nest at home and feathering another abroad. The cynicism, bred perhaps by this availability of emigration abroad... is very demoralizing. People are able to create a mess at home, build dreadful skyscrapers in cities like Bombay, yet buy nice apartments for themselves in foreign countries that are better organized. (p.48)

The very rich have global mobility, and increasingly neither people nor corporations appear to have the loyalty to country that economists such as David Ricardo and John Maynard Keynes took for granted. Citizens of the world may be patriots of nowhere.

For example, virgin timber is a core element of national wealth and exports represent depletion of barely-renewable natural capital, but until recently Brazil regarded as intrusive offers of international assistance in protecting the rain forest. Tax policy rewarded those who exploited the trees because exports earn foreign exchange; wealthy Brazilian

nationals and foreigners jointly lumbered off the rain forest, shipped whole logs to countries which import carrying capacity (e.g., Singapore and Japan), sold the denuded land, and deposited untaxed profits in offshore banks. This treatment of forest lands as "resources to be exploited and as space for its fast-growing population" was ostensibly a public response to populist demand, writes an appropriately skeptical *Wall Street Journal* staffer (Cohen, 1989).

In part, as well, the deforestation and earnings repay international debt. Excusing the debt as lenders often are urged to do would, nevertheless, be wrong. The great, original harm of the loans (besides their misappropriation) was that government leaders used funds for consumption subsidies which probably mislead ordinary people into believing that larger family size was affordable (Abernethy, 1993, 1994, 1995). Excusing the loans would have the perverse effect of, again, suggesting an abundance of international resources to be tapped, *ad lib*, for consumption.

Certain industrialized countries' business interests and multinational corporations also espouse globalism at the expense, it sometimes appears, of their own country. The export of high-value-added jobs and especially the import of cheap labor to compete with one's own show a disregard of country. Such business practices amount to letting the few ruin one niche before moving on to the next. Not only does this happen, but globalism is held before us as an ideal.

In my view, the incentive system and ethics have gone awry. And for this, opinionmakers, the intellectual elite, and the government bear major responsibility. Critical, liberal or conservative voices are a welcome but rare and recent counternote (see Lind, 1995).

Economists John Culbertson (1989), as well as Herman E. Daly writing with ethicist John B. Cobb (Cobb and Daly, 1990), tackle the problem. A consensus is growing that the neoclassical myth of perpetual economic growth underlies the business community's addiction to globalism. Culbertson, Daly, Cobb, and many others challenge the possibility of perpetual growth, calling not only upon ecology's concept of "carrying capacity"[2] but also on David Ricardo, the father of classical economics. Ricardo understood limiting factors (land). He also assumed that virtually all investment would be national. John Maynard Keynes concurs with the desirability (and still in his time the apparent inevitability) of primarily national investment.

Cobb and Daly (1990) follow classical - not neoclassical - economics. With this paradigm, free trade and an open arms immigration policy are exposed as a betrayal of both the environment and the interests of wage-earners in countries with a relatively higher standard of living. Free trade may result in exporting jobs, and immigration brings surplus labor and additional population. Cobb and Daly write that either strategy runs the risk of undermining "the national community that embraces both labor and capital." Immigration has the more lasting negative impact because people are not easily sent away. Both strategies, however, irresponsibly undercut a cornerstone of the conservation ethic, the confidence that one can benefit tomorrow from what one saves today.

Behaviors are subtly shaped, I think, by the mostly subliminal sense that the United States has become a commons. Waste and degradation of natural resources become normal practice when the private, local incentive to conserve the carrying capacity disappears. If everyone owns or uses a resource, if so many can enter and claim a share, who will conserve? Overconsumption and loss of natural capital are inevitable when ownership is ambiguous. The key to conservation appears to be accountability and appropriate incentives. Without control, without secure rights to long-term benefits, with the possibility of moving on, or with gain unrelated to risk,[3] conservation is a sometime thing.

The mobility of monetized capital makes it difficult to envision a sufficient incentive, or workable enforcement mechanism, to tie wealthy individuals to land or any particular natural resource so that they have a stake in conserving its long-term productivity Yet this must eventually be part of a solution. Whereas conspicuous consumption has

[2] Carrying capacity refers to the number of individuals who can be supported without degrading the physical ecological, cultural and social environment, i.e., without reducing the ability of the environment to sustain the desired quality of life over the long term.

[3] It should be noted that U.S. domestic policies often support unwise exploitation of natural capital. For example, sale of cheap (below market price) crop insurance encourages planting grain in the fragile, drought-prone prairie grasslands of Oklahoma and other dry states. When the crop fails, the U.S. taxpayer pays for it. Meanwhile, the soil erodes and irrigation drains underground aquifers at unsustainable rates. Similarly, water subsidies throughout the U.S. west encourage agriculture in areas that are naturally desert. Given the price incentives, flood irrigation -- which wastes water -- will continue.

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