

HAS THE WORLD REALLY BECOME MORE MIGRATORY? Mixed evidence from a new *Migration Globalisation Index*

Common beliefs that international migration has generally increased in volume, diversity and geographical scope do not really fit the facts, according to researchers at Oxford University's International Migration Institute.

They find that the global migration rate has actually declined since the 1960s, but the rate varies greatly for different countries and world regions. What's more, while the diversity of origin countries has increased globally over the last half century, the number of net immigration countries has actually declined.

The study by **Mathias Czaika** and **Hein de Haas**, to be presented to the NORFACE migration conference at University College London this week, asks 'has the world really become more migratory?'

The findings show that international migration has not accelerated but the main shifts in migration patterns have been *directional*, as with much of Europe, which has been changing from a continent of emigration to one of immigration. These shifts are linked to major geopolitical and economic transformations, such as the rise of new 'migration magnets' and the lifting of emigration restrictions.

The study also finds that there has been a globally significant increase in immigration diversification, but only a minimal increase in emigration dispersion. In other words, migration is occurring from an increasingly diverse array of origin countries but to a shrinking pool of prime destination countries such as those of Europe and the Gulf. The authors argue that this migration pattern reflects the highly asymmetric nature of globalisation process more in general.

The study proposes a *Migration Globalisation Index* to capture changes in the spread, distance and intensity of international migration for more than 200 countries over the past decades.

Dr Mathias Czaika, co-author of the study, says:

'The answer to the question 'has the world become more migratory?' is yes and no. It really depends on whether we analyse the spread, distance and intensity of migration at the global, regional or national level.

'We perceive through the media that migration is generally increasing yet the global migration rate has actually declined since the 1960s. But the rate varies greatly for different countries and world regions.

'When we look at the global spread of where migrants come from and go to, the diversity of origin countries has increased globally over the last half century, but the number of net immigration countries has actually declined.

'But our analysis shows also that average migration distances are longer today than 50 years ago.'

ENDS

'Has the world really become more migratory?' by Mathias Czaika and Hein de Haas

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IMI is a member of the Oxford Martin School and also forms part of the Oxford Department of International Development at the University of Oxford. IMI analyses migration as an intrinsic part of broader global processes of development and change, rather than as a problem to be solved. IMI's aim is to advance understanding of the multi-level forces driving current and future migration processes.

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