Meeting on Migration
Trinity College, Cambridge, 20 October 2003

The meeting was called for preliminary discussion of the ways in which the Centre for History and Economics at Cambridge, and the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard, might contribute to a Common Security Forum project on migration led by the Institute for Future Studies in Stockholm. (It was suggested that the Swedish institute studies the future, the Cambridge centre the past, and the Harvard initiative global equity: a good matrix for understanding migration.) Some participants had met for previous planning meetings in Berlin and Stockholm. Joakim Palme outlined the plans for a meeting in Stockholm in June 2004, and Emma Rothschild set the CHE concern with migration in the context of ongoing academic concerns with health, gender, security, and the way in which changing legal regimes affect both domestic politics and international processes of globalization. Lincoln Chen, for Harvard, recalled his own status as a migrant, and noted a profound concern with the way that migration of health workers is currently contributing to the devastation of human security in southern and eastern Africa.

A new impetus to the CSF project has been given by the initiative recently taken by the Swedish and Swiss governments to establish a Global Commission on Migration, and it was a privilege for the Trinity meeting that Jan Karlsson, who will co-chair that Commission, was present. Jan Karlsson explained that the initial Swedish concern was to get migration considered as an international issue, and that this dovetailed with the Secretary-General’s interest in considering certain issues outside of normal UN processes: Kofi Annan will ‘launch and land’ the Commission but take no part in its deliberations. Sweden and Switzerland had met with an initial group of representatives from the Philippines, Brazil, and Morocco (now chair of the G77) in the summer; now other countries were showing interest and he was seeking a co-chair. The task of the Commission would be to put migration on the global policy agenda; to analyze policy approaches and interlinkages with other issues; and to present recommendations to stakeholders. It would not undertake new research but collate existing research and network with groups of researchers. The question of institutions would be considered, if at all, only at the end of the Commission’s work.

The remainder of the meeting considered individual research topics of researchers affiliated with the Cambridge and Harvard nodes of the network. Summaries of the presentation and discussion of each research topic, and of the concluding discussion, follow.

Legal and illegal migration in France and Italy: Luca Einaudi

Luca Einaudi contrasted the prevalence of tolerated illegal immigration to Italy, with the French approach which had focused on strong legal migration policy from the 1870s to the end of the 1930s, and had from the 1970s closed the door to labour migration (allowing only some claims for family reunification and asylum). Italy having for so long been a country of emigration and of internal migration, state policy has never come to terms with the influx of replacement immigration associated with the demographic transition which began in the 1970s (the birth rate is now 1.25) and so this had remained illegal with periodic legalizations of existing immigrants carried out by governments of all ideological complexions. Indeed over 70 percent of non-legal migrants to Italy entered illegally. The paradox of the
demographic ‘pull’ for immigration was that economic growth had also declined and
unemployment risen between the 1960s and the 1990s, yet immigration continued. While
both France and Italy had seen the growth of anti-immigration parties, in Italy calls for
regularization were and are made by the unions and the Church. (The latter believe in a right
to migrate, especially of the poor; the Catholic Caritas organisation both advocates for
migrants, compiles statistics, and acts as first port of call.) Generally, the Southern European
recollection of problems faced by their own emigrants in previous generations created
greater social tolerance and even benevolence among many people toward migrants.
Nevertheless, political cycles and changes in wider European policy had unintentionally
created immigration crises: for example, the Schengen Agreement in 1986 blocked labour
migrants from entering on tourist visas and so created the problem of illegal boats.

In discussion, Lincoln Chen queried the extent to which demography alone was a driver, or
whether changes in what the more privileged expect and tolerate in their work and leisure
were also significant; Einaudi acknowledged both factors, but gave the example of the
Veneto (expecting a population decline of 20,000 adults per year for the next 20 years, with a
current population of 4 million) to illustrate the stark demographic reality facing parts of
Italy. He contended that immigrants can’t solve the pensions problem but can contribute
substantially to the labour market, although problems in the latter market arise when 2\textsuperscript{nd} and
3\textsuperscript{rd} generation migrants cannot break free of the low-pay jobs which attracted their forebears.
To Melissa Lane’s question about education and health policy for illegal immigrants,
Einaudi replied that illegal immigrants are entitled to both in Italy, and that there is no
punitive sanction associated with using these services, though in fact migrants tend to
underuse the health service out of fear (paradoxically, also, illegal immigrants don’t pay
for hospital use, while legal immigrants do). Intercultural initiatives are (only) beginning
to be discussed in education circles; so far there has been no anti-immigrant backlash
regarding schools – the more contentious impact of immigration is felt in the housing
market. Jan Karlsson contrasted the Swedish experience of migration dominated by
asylum seekers with the Italian case; he commented that the Swedish decision to treat
expulsion policy as a civilian matter and to take it away from the police had led to a
dramatic increase in successful expulsion of asylum seekers whose claims had been
rejected (some 65-70% compared to the British rate of 12%).

**Migration and remittances: Devesh Kapur**

If Einaudi’s presentation had focused on current ‘receiving’ countries, Devesh Kapur’s
focused on the ‘sending’ country of India – though both emphasized the complex ties
between sending and receiving countries and the need to study the process as a whole.
(NB that India is a country primarily of skilled emigration, as contrasted with the largely
unskilled immigration into Italy.) Kapur identified four categories of possible effects of
migration on a ‘sending’ country. First, prospective effects: how does the effective
possibility of migration shape national and local policy and attitudes? In India, English
and science (as opposed to humanities) education were both now strongly preferred by
elites as ways of preparing their children for possible migration: he is surveying 140,000
elite Indian households to discover where they envisage the future of their children.
Prospective migration may also dramatically increase inequity, as possible would-be
skilled migrants can command greater shares of income and privileges as the ‘price’ of
staying: certainly the propensity of the highly skilled to leave correlates inversely with socio-economic inequality (as in Brazil, where the latter is high and the former low). Second, the effects of absence itself -- the classic brain drain -- which depend critically on the selection effect determining who actually leaves. Here data is very poor, but one can speculate that the Indian institutions of tertiary education may be being drained of the professors who would be needed to teach the next generation of skilled workers and to build and maintain the institutions themselves. More generally, the brain drain seems to have an inimical effect on public institutions as opposed to private ones, the former being less flexible and adaptive (and less well-resourced) so less able to withstand or compensate for emigration. Prospective migration and actual emigration change the incentive structure of all workers, for example, encouraging professors to publish rather than build up their institutions.

The third category was that of diaspora effects. Here most is known about remittances, which in net terms exceed all private flows of investment and official development assistance combined. These flows seem have a critical insurance function especially for weak or failed states (where there is however a corresponding lack of data), yet they are currently being caught up in the dragnet of new checks on money-laundering and terrorism-financing. What are the effects of remittances on inequity between households in ‘sending’ countries, and of the feminisation of migration (e.g. from the Philippines) on those left behind in the households themselves? And perhaps even more important than financial remittances are social ones or the flow of ideas: for example, the volume of phone calls from the United States to India has increased 32-fold in the last twenty years. How does having a large proportion of children studying abroad shape the interests and preferences of national elites, and how does the choice of where to study (e.g. the shift from the UK to the US) affect the international flow of ideas? The impact of ‘long distance nationalism’ and its effects on the understanding of citizenship is crucial (as is the effect of the expansion of dual citizenship programmes). Fourth and finally, the effects of return, for example of Indians returning from the US and from Saudi Arabia respectively: how do their ideas and expectations affect the societies to which they return? And return also has financial implications for the countries which are left (the previous ‘receiving’ countries), as for example the UK collects more in social security taxes for migrants who return home before retirement than all its foreign aid. Kapur concluded by outlining the dilemmas and choices facing Northern politicians and multinational companies: the question for the latter is which mix of policies (bringing in skilled labour, outsourcing, establishing subsidiaries abroad, or subcontracting) they will adopt, and this will be significantly shaped by international migration policies.

The presentation sparked a lively discussion. Participants noted the dramatic extent to which both UK and US PhDs in science, technology, and economics are earned by foreign nationals. In response to popular demand Kapur also explained the workings of hawala and its historical links to the gold market.
The role of history in the immigration debate: David Feldman

David Feldman began by outlining the theme events on ‘Migration’ being held by CRASSH this year (the Cambridge Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and the Humanities). Turning to the question of what history can offer to the immigration debate, he opened by recommending modesty to historians, noting a book published in 1994 (*The Limits of Citizenship*) which had claimed that states were dead or dying as authority shifted to transnational regimes including those regulating migration: after 9/11 that argument looks very different. Nevertheless, history can contribute three things for the debate. First, it can draw parallels and so identify similarities and differences between the past and the present, making us more critical of our concepts. The parallels between the Black Death and HIV/AIDS in southern and eastern Africa, and between British refugee policy in 1882 (following Jewish pogroms in Russia) and today, are both instructive. Second, history can identify path-dependency or the impact of past decisions on the present, as for example the way that British immigration policy for decades was shaped by the unintended consequences of the Nationality Act of 1848. Third, history can help to underline the novelty of the present: for example, in the last 15 years, migration to Europe has dramatically shifted from being primarily a movement of people from ex-colonies to the ex-imperial power, to a movement of peoples from many different states not linked by previous imperial ties.

In Britain also, 1988 saw a sharp change in the policies affecting immigrants’ relationship to the welfare system.

In discussion, Emma Rothschild recalled the role of people-traffickers in the eighteenth century. She also stressed how history itself is important in the dynamics of migration and identity, for example in the educational curriculum: how do Bengali-majority schools in central London teach the history of the Raj? Several participants illustrated Feldman’s point of the complex and sometimes unexpected consequences of changes in legal regimes. In the United States, more draconian border policing had led to an increase in permanent as opposed to temporary migration from Mexico (because people could no longer rely on being able to go back and forth – Kapur); when Spain joined the EU in 1988, French fears of an influx of Spanish immigrants were unrealized (in fact the Spaniards in France went home, because now they could rely on being able to return – Karlsson); the lifting of restrictions on passport-granting by many African countries, as part of entrenching liberalism and human rights, is now being criticised by some donors who believe it increases the flow of migrants to their countries (Thandika Mkandawire). Finally, William O’Reilly remarked with reference to Britain and Ireland on the ways that informal ties between empires and former colonies can continue to flow even across formalized border controls.

Intellectual history of UN statistics on migration: Sunil Amrith

Sunil Amrith noted that the League of Nations had tried to collect data on the global movement of people across frontiers in the 1920s and 1930s, although this was complicated by debates about eugenics and race, and the beginnings of anticolonial
nationalism. With the establishment of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council was set up in 1945-6 primarily to focus on DPs (Displaced Persons) as the key postwar problem. New statistical and population commissions sought data from national population offices. But the attempt to standardize statistics was complicated by the redrawing of boundaries as previously colonized countries became independent, which led to major debate in the 1940s and 1950s. Similarly, there were great debates about how to define ‘migrant’, ‘refugee’ and ‘naturalization’, which divided the US and the USSR and shaped later government policies, and also some attempt to explain the causes of global migration. In the early 1950s, with the revolution in mortality recognized yet the demographic transition in fertility not yet fully apparent, a fear of global overpopulation arose, which contrasted and yet interacted with European fears earlier in the century of decline in the ‘quality’ of European population. These fears may be one reason why migration has become so controversial a political issue.

In discussion, the unreliability of forecasts of demography was remarked (in the 1930s, forecasts for the 1980s suggested a decrease in population of 20-30% in Europe and the United States – Einaudi; geographers had predicted famine in the developing world by around 2000 - Karlsson). The problem which Amrith had identified, of the unit of analysis changing with decolonization, was underlined by Lincoln Chen -- how did decolonization change definitions of movements? -- and the intellectual and ethical depth of the questions raised by the definition of statistical concepts, was underlined by Emma Rothschild and Jan Karlsson. Thandika Mkandawire remarked on the way that longstanding black suspicion of family planning policies due to their promotion by colonial powers continued to shape African discourse today, though Devesh Kapur discerned a more general shift among LDCS from suspicion of family planning (eg at a Bucharest meeting in the early 1970s) to a demand for it today against the views of the Catholic Church and the United States. The emergence of passports and passport data was highlighted: Caitlin Anderson remarked that they had been used from the French Revolution until 1860 but not left much trace of data, then abolished in Europe from about 1860 to the outbreak of WWI (but used in Latin America in the 19th century for social control purposes, and similarly in Italy after the 1860s to control internal migration); Emma Rothschild added that German states had issued letters of manumissions and passports already in the eighteenth century.

**Internal and external migration in Pakistan:** Magnus Marsden

Magnus Marsden picked up on the theme of the transmission of ideas from Kapur’s presentation, arguing that migration transforms and transmits ideas about the self in relation to forms of social constraint, and in Pakistan connects to the politics of identity and of religious identity. Anthropology as a discipline when studying migration had stressed the social role of remittances and the effects of migration on identity, but Marsden wished to challenge some of the optimistic emphasis on fluidity and hybridity of current U.S. anthropology as exemplified in the work of Arjun Appadurai, arguing instead that there are more constraints on the negotiation of migration even within Pakistan than such accounts would suggest.
Marsden remarked first on the historical role of migration in the region of Chitral, in the Northwest Frontier province (a region quite isolated and dominated by Sunni and Ismaili Muslims), on which his research has focused. With the effort to impose sharia law in the province, Ismailis especially have often migrated to more liberal Pakistani cities, while Sunnis have migrated there to study at madrasas; others have become Chitral Scouts in the security services and then sought work as security guards, though this is less true of Chitral than of more martial regions in the NW Frontier. Many people from Chitral have also emigrated abroad by claiming refugee as Afghans, drawing on the historical and linguistic (Persian) ties between Chitral and Afghanistan. Now, many Pakistanis are emigrating also to work for NGOs not in the West but for example in Tajikistan. Second, he explored the relation of the self and autonomous action in the decision to migrate: many Chitrals see migration as a correction to what they see as failing village life (the village having ‘lost the beauty of the past’), but others are constrained by their families or villages to leave. Most migrants have in the past been single men, but now more are taking their families, and many young women are migrating to cities like Peshawar and Karachi to study nursing and health care, a decision which involves both them and their families in breaking long village traditions of purdah. Third, he reflected on the relationship between migration and Islamic revival. The widespread assumption that rural to urban migration in Pakistan is associated with support for Islamic radicalism has some truth in it, but matters are more complicated: many migrants to the cities seek and experience a different conception of modernity.

In discussion, Devesh Kapur asked about the selection effects of who leaves and who stays behind: might it be the more liberal-minded who leave? And what are the political effects when it is predominantly one ethnic or religious group who leaves? Thandika Mkandawire stressed that the choice of who leaves within a given family may be constrained by morality, as when a son threatens to stain the family’s reputation and so is told to leave. He also asked about the way in which the Aga Khan’s association with the West affects Ismailis in Chitral: Marsden replied that it is difficult for Ismailis there to negotiate that association, and that although the Aga Khan Foundation officially does not discriminate in favour of Ismailis in his programmes, in fact Sunni leaders in Pakistan might reject his aid, so that the effects of the Foundation’s activities can be indirect segregation and unequal development.

**Ethical issues in migration policy:** Melissa Lane

Melissa Lane selected only a few of the many ethical issues in migration policy to survey. She focused primarily on the ethics of ‘constitutive justice’: how should membership in a political community be determined? She outlined three arguments for the state ability to limit immigration: the argument from sovereignty (either top-down or bottom-up); the argument from culture; and the argument from welfare. All of these arguments are in her view more problematic than is commonly supposed. For example, the claim that ‘deep sovereignty’ entitles states to limit and select immigration lest they lose their ability to control the population, fails to take account of their inability to control births and deaths.
The racial prejudice historically associated with the argument from culture in United States immigration debates – and the fact that such feared immigrants have historically always been assimilated -- should lead us to suspect that argument also. Alternatively, human rights and human security may have more radical implications for migration policy than is commonly assumed, although the popular attempt today to argue that free trade should imply free movement of labour may be misconceived (the normative foundations should run the other way). She also highlighted ethical issues concerned with the definition of ‘refugees’, with the ‘means’ of migration, and with the relationship between sending and receiving countries.

In discussion, Devesh Kapur questioned whether it can be ethical for noncitizens to be able to die for a country but not to be able to vote (as for example happened in the Iraq War with non-citizens the first casualties among the US forces); he also questioned the ethics of dual citizenship, which may lead to ‘representation without taxation’. He further noted that countries which both send and receive migrants often tolerate and even insist on a double standard: fiercely protective of their ‘own’ migrants abroad, but willing to exploit immigrants at home. Emma Rothschild and Caitlin Anderson connected Lane’s questioning of ‘deep sovereignty’ to the contrasting assertion of universal sovereignty by the Church, which has led to the defence of the right to migrate by the Pope (in encyclical ‘Migrantes’) and to the work of the Catholic societies in Italy mentioned by Einaudi. Islam in contrast both insists on the need to migrate (to Mecca and Medina: Marsden) and may conceive of movement among Islamic countries not as migration but as the movement of brother Muslims (O’Reilly). David Feldman suggested that Lane was assuming that all people want to move, but that there might be an ethical issue as to why people have to move, why can’t they stay where they are – a point which Emma Rothschild took to indicate the significance of rights of temporary migration today. Both Feldman and Jan Karlsson also felt that the welfare issue of access to collective goods was a real problem, as understood by Michael Walzer: Feldman noted that this had been a problem for parishes in the seventeenth century, and for welfare states in the era of universal or means-tested entitlements, though the shift in the last fifteen years towards contributory entitlements was on the whole good for immigrants. Returning to the issue of decolonization raised by Amrith, Thandika Mkandawire reflected that under imperialism many people had been more free to move than with independence, when they gained the right to be in one country but at the price of being excluded from others (and excluding others from their own). Sunil Amrith asked what historical narrative of the development of human rights regimes Lane was assuming or proposing, while Sabina Alkire stressed that equity issues extended beyond human rights and that the ethics of the residual or refugee remained apart from the arguments for more or less immigration (which presuppose an Other). Finally, Jan Karlsson noted that the definition of ‘refugees’ was now not simply economic vs political, but included sex, religion, and so on; and that the ethical issues attending the choice of integration or assimilation problems needed also to be faced.

**Closing discussion**
Joakim Palme began by emphasizing the need to select papers and an agenda for the meeting in Stockholm in 2004, rather than try to cover everything, and to do so with an eye on contributing research to the new Global Commission on Migration. Lincoln Chen suggested that the present meeting should be the model for Stockholm 2004 in terms of the level of discussion, and that clusters were emerging in terms of sending/receiving countries, conceptual/ethical questions, and historical studies. Emma Rothschild suggested that Palme seek papers which would complement those presented at Trinity from Harvard and Cambridge, in particular papers on migration and gender; migration and health; national and international legal regimes for migration; and migration and ‘hard security’. (On gender, Thandika Mkandawire mentioned that UNRISD is writing a major report on gender which will include a study of gender and migration, which might be presented at Stockholm. On health, the GEI is already studying the effects of HIV/AIDS in southern and eastern Africa, while Harvard and Cambridge are planning to collaborate in studying the political and social implications and governance of epidemics – David Feldman suggested that in the 19th century typhus was seen as the disease of migrants, more than cholera, and so is a better parallel for SARS today, though William O’Reilly recalled the cholera epidemic in Hamburg as a port city at the end of the nineteenth century, which led to the city’s paying for holding areas along the Baltic coastline.)

Other participants suggested: a need for studies of the social policies of both sending and receiving countries (Mkandawire); use of UNRISD work on the way people use information technology in Senegal (Mkandawire); research not only on migration, but also on migrants, as in future the world will need a functioning Convention on the Rights of the Migrant (Karlsson); a study not only of sending and receiving countries (many countries are both) but also of transit countries (Karlsson); the role of trade (Karlsson); a study of Japan, as facing one of the worst demographic crises yet having in the past been among the most closed societies to migrants (Kapur); study of migration between less developed countries (Feldman); study of the debate in the social sciences and political science as to whether the best protection for migrants lies in the nation-state or in international regimes (Feldman); gauging the views of human-traffickers, as they have their finger on the pulse of migration (O’Reilly). Karlsson noted that the Commission will seek to fill a new toolbox with policy tools and regulatory designed to meet different individual needs (such as distinguishing between those who wish to move and those who are forced to move) as opposed to the current Procrustean beds onto which all migrants are placed. Kapur asked whether migration may be the biggest bargaining chip for Southern countries in world affairs, as if they do nothing the North will find itself in what it takes to be an intolerable position.

The meeting closed with Lincoln Chen reiterating that it had been a model meeting and that the collaboration between concerns with the past, the future, and with equity was both fruitful and promising.