Open Borders: Absurd Chimera or Inevitable Future Policy?

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ABSTRACT

In the current climate of security concerns, the movement of people across borders is becoming increasingly criminalised. Yet there is a parallel political and economic reality in which borders are opening and the movement of people is being liberalised: zones of free movement such as the European Union expand; other bilateral and multilateral agreements include provisions for more fluid cross-border movement; international trade negotiations seek to facilitate the flow of those providing goods and services; developing countries’ push for greater access for their citizens to the labour markets of the industrialised world; and a new class of “gold collar” professionals moves with increasing ease around the globe. This paper explores the possibilities of universal open borders as a future policy option. The author accepts realpolitik and understands that the free flow of immigrants is currently impossible, but also maintains that open borders are an inevitable long-term consequence of globalisation, as well as a policy option for addressing North-South inequalities and a moral touchstone for the global extension of human rights. The paper does not advocate for more migration, but instead explores the paradox that the creation of the conditions that would allow for the opening of borders is likely to reduce the incentives for emigration. The paper explores the policy changes needed to achieve open borders.

INTRODUCTION

In February 1942 the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig committed suicide with his wife in Petropolis, Brazil. It was an act of desperation both over his plight as a stateless Jewish exile from Nazism and because World War II was the ultimate refutation of his vision of a Europe without borders. Hitler’s Third Reich had created the antithesis of the

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moral and cultural meeting of the minds that Zweig had so vigorously advocated in the 1920s. If there were to be a future for a Europe united in “brotherly community”, he had decided it was beyond his reach and he wrote in his suicide note: “I salute all my friends! May it be granted them yet to see the dawn after the long night” (Schüler, 2005: 3).

In July 1995, the Schengen agreement, which suppressed border controls between a core group of six European Union (EU) nations, came into effect. Schengen was an important symbolic milestone for the freedom of movement that had been granted to EU citizens under the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Now, with the May 2004 and January 2007 incorporation of a total of 12 Eastern European countries into the EU (but not yet fully into Maastricht/Schengen, as the free movement of citizens from some of the new members is being gradually phased in) and the December 2007 expansion of Schengen to include 24 countries (including some Eastern European EU members and other non-EU countries), the prospect of a united and borderless Europe is closer than ever. One can only speculate what Zweig would have thought of the Europe of the new millennium. Would he consider this the fulfilment of his seemingly unattainable dream?

This somewhat apocryphal tale of Stefan Zweig introduces a paper that seeks to explore the feasibility of open borders as a legitimate policy option. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, it is “Zweigian” to even imagine a world that would allow the free movement of immigrants between nations. The advocacy of a universal open border policy is seen at best as a policy-irrelevant chimera and utopia (Schuster, 2003) and at worst a dangerous sedition (Macarthur, 2001). Few people seriously maintain that it is a feasible option in the near future to throw open all national borders. Even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seeks to guarantee only the right of freedom of movement within the borders of a country and the right to leave one’s own country, but it does not recognise the right to settle in another country (UN, 2005a). The right to live and work where one chooses within the borders of one’s own country is considered an inalienable right of democracy, and it is only the most authoritarian and coercive regimes that restrict it, but there is little political pressure to apply this democratic right on a global scale.

In the current climate of concern with security, the general trend is towards a hardening, or “securitisation” of attitudes towards immigration (Huysmans, 2000). The movement of people across borders – be it
for settlement or tourism – is becoming more restrictive, bureaucratic, and burdened by security concerns. Even before the terrorist attacks in 2001, anti-immigrant rhetoric had become entrenched in the political dialogues of many countries and the current security climate has helped reinforce anti-immigrant attitudes across the board. Particular vehemence is accorded to the debates over the immigration of those considered by some to be a cultural or security threat to the host country. In Western democracies, recent terrorist bombings and high profile crimes such as the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands have led to new tensions over immigration issues.

Yet, despite the seemingly anti-immigration zeitgeist of the beginning of the new millennium, the openness of borders is in fact on the policy agenda of many countries and international entities. The most evident large-scale example is the expansion of the European Union and the gradual extension of the internal EU freedom of movement provisions on the citizens of the new member nations. Other smaller scale initiatives exist, including the Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement between Australia and New Zealand which creates an effective open border between the two countries under a series of ministerial understandings (DFAT, 2004; MFAT, 2004), the labour agreements covering the free movement of selected workers between the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM, 2005), and the continued efforts to provide for cross-border movement between the countries of the Nordic Council (Schlüter, 2004). Over the last decade numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements based on historical ties and geographic proximity have been signed that include some aspect of the liberalisation of the movement of immigrants (ILO, 2004a).

In the arena of international trade agreements, the liberalisation of the movement of certain classes of workers is also being explored under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations. Within GATS, the term Mode 4 is used to designate the temporary movement of service workers, and while the negotiations over this movement are progressing much slower than other international trade talks on the movement of capital, goods and services, there continues to be a push for greater liberalisation (WTO, 2004). Developing countries are demanding greater access for their workers to the labour markets of the developed countries (Raihan, 2004), and both the World Bank and the UN tout the economic benefits of greater labour mobility for these countries (World Bank, 2006a; World Bank, 2006b; UN, 2006a).
In these contexts, more open borders are seen as an instrument of economic cohesion, development, and integration of political and social values. However, these experiments remain in a parallel political universe that manages to avoid overlapping with other debates on immigration. Europe takes down internal borders while throwing up external walls that are often classified as a “fortress” (Legrain, 2006). Australia has enjoyed decades of open borders with New Zealand and liberalise temporary work opportunities for young foreigners from a select few nations, but also maintains a harsh regime of detention of unauthorised entrants and curtly dismisses Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) attempt to include access to Australian labour markets for PNG workers as a point of negotiation in the development package known as the Enhanced Co-operation Programme.

Governments around the world are assuming the ever-growing cost of closed borders. According to an oft-quoted UK Home Office report, an estimated 30 million people are smuggled across international borders every year, a trade worth between US$ 12 and US$ 30 billion annually to the criminal enterprises and small-scale black market entrepreneurs (Stelzer, 2001). The response to this illegal trade entails direct financial burdens on governments as the costs associated with border control, detention, and deportation escalate. There are also considerable social costs as debates about immigration raise tensions over racial matters and undermine attempts at promoting diversity. Most importantly, there is a considerable human cost as some immigrants pursue even more desperate measures to circumvent restrictions on entry; the sinking off Indonesia of the SIEV X in 2001 resulted in the deaths of some 353 people trying to reach Australia; an estimated 4,000 people died between 1997 and 2002 attempting to cross the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain (Migration News, 2002); and there is an upward trend in the number of deaths on the Mexico-US border, with the annual toll increasing from 266 in 1998 to 472 in 2005 (GAO, 2006). Taking advantage of the desperation of those excluded by restrictive immigration provisions, organised criminal enterprises are corporatizing the growth industry of people trafficking (Stelzer, 2001). These criminal enterprises often use their new corporate structures to enforce debt bondage and sexual slavery and to link closely with other criminal activities, such as illegal drugs distribution and money laundering.

The rejection of the freer flow of immigrants and the willingness of governments to spend ever increasing funds on border control is in a way surprising given that the current regimes of immigration restrictions
for the most part date only to the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s, which created new equilibriums in the global demand and supply of immigrant labour. Despite their relatively short history, they have quickly become fixed in public opinion and political rhetoric as though they were “natural” and necessary to protect the integrity of sovereign states and the well-being of their citizens, yet the seemingly common sense of border controls continues to have deep ideological and racial subtexts.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric continues to pay good political dividends for right-wing parties and has forced a hardening of the immigration policies of more mainstream parties seeking to gain or maintain office. But immigration restrictions increasingly affect only the poorer and less-skilled. For business elites, skilled workers, talented students and affluent retirees there are still administrative aggravations to their moving around the globe, but they are also courted in official immigration programmes, protected by the internal labour markets of global organisations, and aided by a lucrative immigration law industry that ensures that they are able to exploit all means to move to a new country. In effect, it is already a borderless world for those who have the resources to exploit it.

This paper explores the possibilities of universal open borders as a future policy option. “Future” is the operative word here. The author accepts realpolitik and understands that the free flow of immigrants is currently impossible, but also maintains that it is an inevitable long-term consequence of globalisation, and that there is a moral and economic imperative to give equity of access to migration to the world’s poor. Current debates on globalisation address the movement of goods, capital and services, but shy away from the movement of labour. This paper seeks to redress that imbalance by exploring the arguments in favour of open borders and the political processes that would lead to their acceptance as a long-term policy option. The free flow of people and the recognition of the right to live and work wherever one wishes should be part of our future vision of the globe. To do this we need to bring a discussion of open borders from the political fringe and make it part of mainstream policy options that deserve serious consideration. They may be rejected in the short-term, but they need to form part of the framework of debates around immigration.

This paper is not the first to explore open borders. At least two books have “open borders” as part of their titles (Gibney, 1988; Hayter, 2001), numerous other books and articles have the advocacy of the free
movement of immigrants as a central theme (in particular see the work of Bauder, 2003; Carens, 1979, 2003; Düvell, 2003; Ebeling and Hornberger, 1995; Hardt and Negri, 2001; Harris, 2003, 2002, 1995; Legrain, 2006; Norberg, 2003; Schuster, 2003; Sharma, 2006) and a number of websites are devoted to promoting the cause (see for example http://www.noborder.org). These publications state a case for open borders based on moral stances, a progressive ideology in favour of the oppressed, a belief in the benefits of globalisation, or as a result of a free trade, libertarian ideology. They, however, generally do not explore the policy steps that must be taken to achieve the goal. This paper seeks to add to the debate by also exploring the processes for achieving open borders. It is divided into three sections: the first gives a short history of attempts to control the movement of people; the second analyses the various arguments in favour of open borders; and the third explores the policy steps necessary to move towards open borders.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BORDER CONTROLS

There have been sporadic attempts to promote global open borders as a viable policy option. The participants in an 1889 International Emigration Conference in London affirmed “the right of the individual to the fundamental liberty accorded him by every civilised nation to come and go and dispose of his person and destinies as he pleases” (in Harris, 2002: 131). An unhindered migration would protect individual liberty and allow for more perfect labour markets in which labourers would move freely to follow jobs (Walsh, 2000), a notion already suggested in the eighteenth century by Adam Smith, who in *The Wealth of Nations* advocated for the free circulation of labour (1776). The mood of the 1889 conference, however, was contrary to the general policy shifts of the late nineteenth century, which heralded the modern era of immigration restrictions, based initially on racial grounds.

Current international practices that regulate the rights of individuals to migrate across international borders are fundamentally linked to the development of modern nation states and their concepts of sovereignty. By definition, the immigration policies discussed in this paper are predicated on the existence of borders defined by countries that have the right and power to grant or withhold permission to settle. At the same time, the identification of outsiders and the restrictions on movement and settlement – particularly if there was a danger of the strangers competing for scarce resources, becoming indigent, or if they were enemies in times
of war – evidently date to well before the emergence of modern nation states (Torpey, 2000; Lloyd, 2003). The movement of the relatively few who travelled or resettled in earlier epochs was regulated by their economic and social relations with local elites and authorities through a patchwork of conventions and customs that sought to control the movement of people as they moved between tribal lands, to other fiefdoms and kingdoms, or from rural areas to towns and cities.

Decisions on who had the right to reside in a territory were often based on religion or ethnicity and involved prohibitions or expulsion. Jews were expelled from England in 1290 by Edward I, from France in 1306 by Felipe the Fair, and from Spain in 1492 by Isabel and Ferdinand, the Catholic Monarchs (who also defeated and expelled the Moors). Gypsies were expelled or prohibited from living in France in 1504, Germany in 1500, Norway in 1687, and Denmark in 1708. Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868) essentially sealed itself off from the rest of the world and prohibited the entry of all foreigners.

Movement between pre-national political structures such as kingdoms, territories or independent cities often required some form or identification or permission, which was generally effected through letters of request for safe conduct. Although there are historical references to documents that identified the bearer and requested their safe passage to foreign lands from at least Ancient Persia in the fifth century B.C.E., such documentation was rare and until the early 1800s were individually signed by sovereigns or their direct representatives. It was not until 1914, in the context of World War I, that use of passports became an international standard for identification (Torpey, 2000; Lloyd, 2003; Fahrmeir, Faron and Weil, 2003).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, industrialisation and colonisation triggered the mass mobility of workers to cities and to foreign lands, particularly to the “New World” of the Americas, Australasia and the colonies in Asia and Africa. Alongside the relatively small groups of colonisers and free settlers in the New World, it was the slaves, indentured labourers and convicts who were the first [forced] migrants of the new economic structures. As the indigenous populations of the new worlds were decimated, colonisers relied on the 15 million slaves who were forcibly exported from Africa and some 35 million indentured manual labourers, primarily Indian and Chinese (Potts, 1990; Stalker, 2005). As a more democratic and rights-based form of capitalism emerged after the French and American revolutions, and as societies
moved to abolish slavery, the displaced rural workers became the new mobile labour force.

As the industrialised democracies emerged, the oversight of the movement of people in Europe shifted from the existing patchwork of local controls based on parishes and cities to weak nation-state controls on international movements in the early nineteenth century. These early state-level controls were thrown into crisis by the introduction of mass rail and sea travel and as a consequence the mid- to late-1800s witnessed a 30 to 40 year period essentially without international controls. The New World of the European colonies had a voracious need for workers, which encouraged the movement of immigrants and anyone who had the resources and could demonstrate good health could move freely. Until the 1880s migration to the United States was unregulated, anyone who could afford the ocean passage and pass through the health checks could come and seek a new life. Racist campaigns led to exclusionary laws to keep out Chinese and other Asians from the 1880s, but strict quotas favouring northern European immigrants were not introduced until the 1920s (Borjas in Castles and Miller, 2003: 57; Cato Institute, 2004). Unregulated migration movement did not signify lack of control over labour. On the contrary, those free to move often found themselves working in harsh, dangerous and exploitative conditions, but these realities were based more on the lack of regulation of labour rights than on immigration restrictions.

In the Old World of the European colonial powers, the freedom of movement of the late nineteenth century was mitigated by old prejudices of religion and race and by the fear of contagion of foreign revolutionary ideas. In France, the Constitution of 1791 had guaranteed liberté d’aller, de rester, de partir (the freedom to come, stay and leave) but concerns about Jewish immigration at the end of the 1800s lead to the first immigration restrictions. In Britain, Jewish settlement became the focus of racist campaigns leading to the first restrictionary legislation on immigration, the Aliens Act of 1905, and Aliens Restriction Act of 1914. Throughout Europe, restrictions were also focused on those deemed to be dangerous contagions of the radical ideas fomented in the revolutions of the mid- to late-1800s.

Through the primarily race-based exclusionary laws of the European countries and their colonial outposts, immigration restrictions began to be re-established by the beginning of the twentieth century. Until World War I, European countries exercised only weak immigration controls on
those not excluded by race-based provisions or pursued for their revolutionary ideas, effectively leaving most population movements to the free play of market forces and to the capacity of local authorities and voluntary associations to resist the settlement of outsiders who might become a burden on the nascent welfare provisions (Hargreaves, 1995). Despite the introduction of the regime of passports and visas in the context of World War I, prospective immigrants who had the means to leave countries of origin could settle in most countries of destination relatively easily until the 1970s (Fahrmeir et al., 2003). The major European exceptions to free movement of that era were the Eastern European regimes behind the Iron Curtain and the Fascist regime in Spain. Until the late 1950’s Spain restricted internal movement between regions to those who held work contracts. The police in cities such as Barcelona regularly sent internal migrants who could not accredit their work status back to their home villages.

The decades following the Second World War were in many ways a second golden age of migration, comparable to the mid-1800s, with relatively few controls on workers, skilled and unskilled, seeking opportunities in the Americas, Australasia and Northern Europe, and then later in the oil-rich Middle East or the booming Asian economies (UN, 2006a). Germany began a series of guest worker programmes to attract workers from southern Europe and Turkey, while Australia openly solicited immigrants and ran numerous publicity campaigns in more “desirable” countries such as the United Kingdom to attract workers and highly subsidised their passage. However, the racial-ethnic exclusions that gave rise to the round of immigration restrictions at the turn of the twentieth century generally continued, so any claim regarding the relative ease of post-war migration must be tempered by an acknowledgment that only White Caucasian workers were fully able to benefit from the opportunities presented. Moreover, despite the possibilities for movement, all new immigrants, but particularly any non-White immigrants, were relegated to the so-called “3D jobs” – difficulty, dirty and dangerous – and were often met with nativist backlashes. While there is considerable variation across the world in who is admitted and against which groups discrimination and exclusion are focused, it is a constant that immigration has been, and continues to be, racialised (see Collins 2006 for a discussion of the racialisation of immigration in Australia, Sharma 2006 for a discussion of Canada).

In effect it was not until the economic restructuring that resulted from the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s that strict border control became
the norm in the industrialised nations. Western European countries severely restricted immigration as a result of the 1973 oil crisis and because membership of the European Union required them to abandon previous immigration arrangements with former colonies (Hargreaves, 1995). Border controls also became more significant throughout the twentieth century as a result of the demarcation of more national borders: decolonialisation and nationalist liberation movements increased the number of sovereign countries from 43 in 1900 to 191 in 2000 (Martin, 2003a). The last decades of the century were also marked by the decreasing costs and increasing availability of mass transportation, and the consequent greater mobility of tourists, business travellers, and immigrants.

The hardening of border controls since the 1970s has ultimately meant the restriction of the movement of low-skilled and poorer people. Immigration programmes currently operating in industrialised countries now focus almost exclusively on skilled workers and their families. Skilled workers and students can also avail themselves of temporary work and study visas in many countries, which can often be converted into permanent residence. Those with marketable skills and economic resources can also afford to retain the services of immigration lawyers to successfully navigate the maze of immigration laws, and they possess the social cachet needed to find local marriage partners, genuine or sham, which gives them access to residence in a new country. In the meantime, multinational corporations are increasingly creating their own internal labour markets of executives and skilled technicians. Many countries have provisions that allow the settlement of business entrepreneurs willing to invest in the host country and of affluent retirees who guarantee they will not become a burden on social welfare provisions. The net effect is that the skilled and those who can pay already enjoy a range of opportunities to move reasonably freely between countries. These elites have all but achieved freedom of movement and numerous writers have noted the emergence of a global class of transnational “gold collar” workers (Huntington, 2004).

In contrast, unskilled labour only has legal access to relatively few seasonal or short-term work visas in some industrialised countries, or to longer-term but still temporary work that does not confer permanent residence status or give access to citizenship in areas such as the Persian Gulf states and the stronger Asian economies. The unskilled are generally excluded from official immigration programmes, and so are subject to the dictates of semi-clandestine and underground markets. Those with
some resources or other capacities to persuade destination countries of their bona-fides can enter legally as temporary visitors and then overstay and move into undocumented status, while the most desperate subject themselves to various forms of clandestine entry, which can be highly dangerous (as attested to by the hundreds of deaths worldwide annually) and often expensive.

Governments both vigorously pursue irregular immigrants and simultaneously give them tacit approval. Industrialised countries are spending increasing amounts of funds combating irregular immigration. However, they also recognise the need for such workers to fill jobs in the most precarious fringes of their labour markets and they seek to avoid the social costs of vast numbers of people living clandestinely by offering periodic amnesties. In countries such as Spain, which have no effective processes for recruiting workers externally or granting potential immigrants visas in their countries of origin, the periodic amnesties of undocumented immigrants constitute the de facto immigration intake system.

Despite the relatively short history of what we now consider to be the norm, and despite the evident prejudice against the poor, the prospect of liberalizing immigration controls evoke visions of the nightmare of invading hordes of the poor flooding over the broken fence of their rich neighbours. The racial and ethnic exclusions that were dominant until the 1970s have generally been replaced by seemingly non-discriminatory, merit-based immigration policies in Western industrialised countries, but by focusing on the skilled they have in effect served to racialise the poor and unskilled. The term immigrant is becoming increasingly associated with the movement of the poor and unskilled from the global South and with clandestine entry, despite the fact that it is the skilled workers and the affluent from the North who are moving between countries with greater ease. Clandestine entry, irregular immigrants and the increasing temporalisation of certain workers are the new boundaries of a long history of negative racialisation of immigrants (Sharma, 2006).

Open borders are currently dismissed by most writers on immigration, and even those who are readily identified as pro-immigrant discount it as an option, often invoking the need to avoid playing into the hands of the xenophobic anti-immigration lobbies (see Castles, 2003). The vast majority of the population is against such a policy and there is widespread opposition to immigration in general (Hiebert, 2003; Browne, 2002; Pew Research Center, 2007). Certainly the Internet has its share of virulent anti-immigration websites warning of the various pestilences.
that will be brought by the arrival of more foreigners (see for example, http://www.immigrationinsanity.com).

The reality is that caution in the face of immigration flows represents mainstream social opinion and public policy. This caution is usually predicated on the assumption that the dismantling of border controls would lead to a huge surge in the number of arrivals that would swamp any capacity of absorption by the countries of destination. Most importantly, the free movement of immigrants is seen as threatening current living standards – often seen as most impacting on the working poor – but there are also fears about loss of existing cultures, about rising crime, and even greater ecological damage. Support or opposition to open borders is not directly correlated with either progressive or conservative political agendas, with many self-professed conservatives supporting greater flows of labour, while those pushing progressive agendas, such as workers’ rights, environmentalism and anti-globalisation, are often hostile to increased immigration or open border agendas. In the current security climate, control of the external dangers that potential immigrants supposedly represent is often seen as a necessary trade-off for protecting internal freedoms and privileges.

Control over borders is increasingly seen as one of the last bastions of sovereignty. As globalisation takes hold and countries lose a large measure of control over an increasing range of economic and social policies, they appear to cling desperately to the notion that they can control the movement of people to national territory. Yet, as Burke (2001: 329) notes “perhaps the ‘sovereignty’ our leaders so gravely speak of is an illusion. It is a concept whose time has passed, whose selfish image of a bounded national subject is inadequate to the transnational existence this globalised world imposes on us, inadequate to the transnational obligations it demands of us”.

As globalisation takes even greater hold, it will become increasingly impossible to stop the flow of people. Pressure is mounting and it is reasonable to assume that sometime in the not so distant future the current regime of border controls will become unviable, counterproductive and irrelevant. Just as the slave and coolie systems were replaced as the framework for labour mobility by free movement in the mid- to late 1800s, which was then subsequently replaced by the restrictions we are now familiar with, we can expect that the future movement of workers and citizens will operate within new arrangements that are still in their infancy. The current controls on immigration exercised by nation states
replaced the earlier controls exercised by more localised political entities such as cities. Additionally, bilateral, multilateral and regional immigration agreements are emerging; these cross-national arrangements are likely to be the basis for the future evolution of immigration controls, as they move inexorably towards more open borders.

Bauder states that open borders as a policy option is currently emerging at the fringes, but it could be argued that it has always been at the political periphery, and is simply left to languish there as a spectre whose name we dare not speak (2003). Even the international agencies most disposed to immigration are not prepared to broach the subject of open borders. Recent reports such as the International Labour Organisation’s *Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy* and the UN’s *International Migration and Development* demonstrate a highly positive orientation to the impacts of immigration and generally advocate a more open attitude, but they in no way can be interpreted as a calling for open borders (ILO, 2004a; UN, 2006a). Notwithstanding this apparent reluctance to broach the issue, it is the contention of this paper that it is in fact time to move debates about open borders into the policy mainstream.

THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF OPEN BORDERS

It is necessary to analyse the arguments in favour of open borders in order for such policies to be seen as a viable future option. In this section these arguments are categorised on the basis of whether their focus is from the perspective of the putative countries of destination (also often referred to as the *receiving*, *labour importing*, *host*, *settlement* or, more vernacularly, the *rich*); from the perspective of the countries of origin (the *sending*, *labour exporting* or, more vernacularly, the *poor*); or whether they focus on more global issues. The impact on countries of destination is considered first, as it those countries that exercise their power and invoke their sovereignty to exclude what they perceive as excess numbers of immigrants.

This is done with full consciousness that “destination/receiving/importing/rich” and “origin/sending/exporting/poor” are relative terms and while the former suggests Western developed economies, oil-rich Middle Eastern countries and the emerging economies of Asia, it can also mean any country that is in better circumstances than its neighbours. Just as the United States is concerned about restricting immigration from the Dominican
Republic, the Dominican Republic, in turn, seeks to restrict those from its even poorer neighbour Haiti. Moreover, the circumstances that lead to categorisations of destination or origin countries are not only based on economic wealth, but also on political stability, the relative tolerance of political and ethnic plurality, as well as on the occurrence of natural disasters and environmental changes. The distinctions between countries of origin and those of destination are being blurred and many countries are now both, with immigration flows being almost equally divided between South-to-North, North-to-North, and South-to-South (UN, 2006a).

The arguments below are first presented from the perspective of the richer countries of destination, but they need to be considered in their totality. Immigration is not a zero-sum game, but instead is a process that can benefit both countries of destination and countries of origin (UN, 2006a). The aim here is not only to assuage the fears of the destination countries, but to consider new global equilibriums.

The impact on rich/destination countries

As noted earlier, the primary fear of the countries of destination is that with the dismantling of borders, uncontrolled surges of immigrants would swamp their economy, their culture, their well-being and even physical safety. Advocating for open borders therefore becomes largely a matter of responding to or alleviating these fears.

The hordes probably won’t come … and certainly won’t keep coming

The first supporting argument is in fact an attempted rebuttal of the most prevalent anxiety that the opening of borders evokes: that of an overwhelming invasion of the rich countries by the hordes of the poor.

It is a particularly difficult task to attempt to predict how many immigrants would arrive in any destination country under open border policies. However, all indications from past experiences of free movement between richer and poorer areas are that in fact there is no continuing mass movement to the richer areas. Any spike in arrivals in richer areas is temporary and soon drops off, and the spike is counterbalanced by the return to the countries of origin of established immigrants, who had in effect been held captive by immigration restrictions. The potential for this return of immigrants to their countries of origin, often referred to as “remigration” or “return migration”, is consider-
able, as evidenced by the significant return rate from developed countries that already exists, despite the current constraints (Coppel et al., 2001; UN, 2006a). Even countries that receive considerable numbers of immigrants each year find that total net immigration is relatively low when they factor in the number of previous immigrants returning home and locals emigrating. For example, New Zealand, with a total population of just over four million, accepts around 80,000 permanent and long-term arrivals each year, but also has some 70,000 long-term departures, for a total net immigration of just 10,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

Departures continue despite the fact that current immigration provisions in many destination countries generally revoke the right to residence of immigrants who are deemed to abandon the country. We can speculate that if there are fewer restrictions on movements, immigration flows will tend to circulate between countries of origin and destination, with many immigrants choosing to spend periods in both, creating transnational communities. Circular migration and transnationalism are increasingly a feature of the contemporary movement of immigrants, and the opening of borders is likely to magnify this trend (IOM, 2005b; UN, 2006a).

Equally importantly, there are considerable emotional, social, economic, and psychological barriers that restrict the outflow of emigrants from sending nations. As Martin notes, the number one form of migration control is “personal inertia” (2003a: 6). Migration is the exception not the rule as most people do not want to move away from family, friends, and the sanctuary of their language and ethnic group. Traditionally we speak about the “push-pull” factors that create migration, but there are also the opposing “pull-push” factors that keep most people at home and encourage those who have emigrated to return when the situation at home changes, when they finish their working life in the immigration countries, or when simply the pull of home becomes too great (Castles and Miller, 2003; Martin, 2003b). Even in situations where borders for workers are minimised, or eliminated such as in the European Union, there are significant impediments to mobility that include language and cultural differences, recognition of qualifications, and social security provisions. Immigrants represent only 2.9 per cent of the world population (ILO, 2004a; UN, 2006a), and even within the open borders space of the European Union less than two per cent of EU citizens live in another member country, despite their absolute right to do so (Straubhaar, 2001).
A study by the European Union in preparation for the accession of the ten Central and Eastern European countries in 2004 estimated that annual migration from the ten new countries would peak at 370,000 in 2005 and taper off after that. Over the next 25 years, an estimated 3.2 to 4.5 million people, some five per cent of the new EU countries would move west, which would increase the population of the existing EU countries by barely one to two per cent (Straubhaar, 2001; Munz and Fassman, 2002). The impact, for example, on Germany over the next three decades is represented in Figure 1. The line with the “wave” represents the net annual immigration until 2030, while the line with the increase represents the size of the foreign population in Germany.

The EU has also had earlier experience with expansion, when Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain, significantly poorer countries than the original members of the European Economic Community, were incorporated into the union in the mid-1980s. Although these countries joined the EU some nine years before Schengen allowed full free circulation, there were still significant opportunities for the movement of workers from the new member countries. Yet the incorporation of these poor countries in the mid-1980s and the latter introduction of free internal movement in the EU did not lead to mass migration from the poorer southern region of Europe to the richer North. On the contrary it is generally acknowledged that there appears to have been a net reverse effect, with any new emigration from the South being more than compensated by the movement back of former emigrants.
who saw the free circulation as a chance to again pursue opportunities in their homeland or to retire there, and by the movement of citizens of Northern Europe to the warmer climates of Mediterranean Europe. Despite the opening of borders, internal EU immigration between the countries of the pre-2004 expansion has never again reached the high figures of the labour recruitment periods of the 1960s and 1970s, and the return of EU immigrants to their countries of origin is high (Muus, 2001).

Extrapolating EU figures to a world scale is evidently difficult. Any migration flows between regions is likely to be affected by a range of factors such as distance, language differences, and historical-cultural ties. The main factor, however, is the wealth differential between two regions. Munz and Fassman, using US figures, and an assumption of full freedom of movement, state that an average income gap of ten per cent between the two regions leads to annual net migration of 0.05–0.15 per cent of the region with lower income level to the one with the higher income level (2002). When we consider that more than a third of the world’s population of 6.7 billion lives on less than US$2 per day, and that the income per person could increase by an average 22 times by moving from a poorer country to a richer country, the potential for freedom of movement to generate huge shifts in population is evidently enormous (Martin, 2003b). But we also know that it is not the poorest who emigrate, but those who already have the economic and personal capital needed to take the initiative to emigrate and to have reasonable expectations of success in the destination country, so paradoxically greater disparities in wealth do not necessarily lead to greater immigration pressure (UN, 2006a).

And, as mentioned earlier, immigration flows tend to stabilise, even when there are continued economic disparities. An often cited example is Puerto Rico, which unlike surrounding Caribbean and Latin American countries has no immigration barrier to the United States, given its status as an associated commonwealth. It is estimated that as many “Puerto Ricans” live in the United States as on the island (but exact numbers in the United States are difficult to establish as it includes those of Puerto Rican heritage and not just emigrants), yet as Griswold notes, since the 1980s 46 per cent of Puerto Ricans who have moved to the United States have stayed for less than two years and emigration has now stopped completely despite continuing high unemployment in Puerto Rico (2002).

The wave in Figure 1 above could be seen as representative of any future projections of immigration. The height of the wave (i.e. the magnitude of
the initial increase in net immigration) and its width (i.e. the time in which increasing immigration changes to decreasing) are subject to many factors. It is possible that numbers of immigrant arrivals would not even reach the upper limits of what some people claim would be desirable immigration figures (e.g. a United Nations 2000 population study suggested that the EU needs 13.4 million immigrants a year to maintain the current ratio of workers, which is some 12 times the current level – see comment on ageing in the following section), or that circular migration patterns would mean that net immigration figures do not in fact increase significantly.

But most significantly, governments in destination countries have the means at their disposal to mitigate migration by ensuring that there is less pressure for people to leave areas that are currently more depressed. The countries of destination are generally richer and through their aid, development, and trade policies are in a position to help determine the future economic conditions in current countries of origin. How many people come in the first wave and how long the wave lasts when applied to any future open border scenario will be the direct product of the economic and social policies of the various stakeholders. Countries of destination can prepare for the future opening of borders by investing in potential regions of origin, just as the European Union has invested “cohesion” funds in the more economically depressed regions of the expanding Union. These interventions in the countries of origin are addressed in later sections below.

Finally, while the focus of this paper is on immigration, we need to also take into account that other societal shifts may have a significant impact on the workforce and will also serve to temper any economic and social impacts of immigration. Factors such as changes in the participation rates of women and older workers, low birth rates, the cohort of “baby boomers” moving through the workforce, and access to early retirement have had as much or greater influence on labour markets than has immigration. Politicians in many industrialised countries exhort local women to have more babies and older workers to stay active beyond traditional retirement ages, yet rarely are these exhortations linked to debates about immigration.

There are probable economic benefits

Whether immigration contributes to or hinders economic growth has been the subject of considerable research. Studies tend to be partial, definitions of immigration and research methodologies used vary greatly,
and it seems that for every study that demonstrates that immigration has a positive impact on the economy, there appears another that demonstrates negative consequences. Authors such as Norberg and Legrain are convinced of the economic benefit open borders would confer on industrialised nations, but many others are sceptical (Norberg, 2003; Legrain, 2006).

The most rigorous reviews of the wide range of studies on the economic impact of immigration, primarily in developed nations, indicate that immigration (but not necessarily open borders) does in fact lead to net economic gains for the countries of destination because of a combination of factors, including the increased opportunities for existing economic activities facilitated by the presence of immigrants and their families as both labourers and consumers; the new economic activity created by the immigrants themselves; the rebalancing of demographics resulting from the younger age of immigrants; the dynamism created by the inflow of people with entrepreneurial spirit and ideas; and the urban renewal of the emerging “world cities” (Coppel et al., 2001; Glover et al., 2001; UN, 2006a). As Glover et al. note, immigration creates new businesses and jobs, fills labour market gaps, improves productivity and reduces inflationary pressures (2001). The economic benefits of immigration have been endorsed at a global level by the representatives of both the business sector (WTO, 2004) and labour (ILO, 2004a).

Where there is concern about the impacts on the standard of living and earning power of locals, it focuses not on the rich, who generally benefit from the cheap labour, but the poor who are potentially exposed to competition because low-skilled and low-waged labour is theoretically substitutable by immigrants (Coppel et al., 2001). A relatively small segment of the current domestic labour market may need to be supported through investment in skill development and welfare payments. But even on this issue, economists have failed to reach consensus and some claim there is no negative impacts for native workers as the same conditions that are favourable to migration also create opportunities for all workers, and immigrants often create economic enclaves with their own partly separate economies (Sutcliffe, 2004).

By far, the most common economic argument in favour of increased immigration is the need to compensate for the ageing population in industrialised nations. There is a “demographic deficit” (ILO 2004) in all industrialised nations, who are facing record low birth rates at the same time that life expectancy increases. In the absence of immigration,
some EU countries would lose a quarter of their population by 2050 at the same time that the ratio of retired citizens to working age population would increase from 0.35:1 to 0.75:1, with a net result of an 18 per cent reduction in living standard (Moses and Lenes 2002, Norberg 2003). According to the UN, to address the demographic and economic issues resulting from the ageing population, European countries would need close to 1 million immigrants per year just to maintain the current population and up to 13.4 million immigrants per year if the goal is to maintain the ratio of workers under 65 and pensioners over 65 (UN 2000). As Lander (2004: 4) comments, “if the scare mongers stop to think about it, the real danger for Europe with its ageing population and anaemic birth-rate, may be too little immigration, not too much”.

Another area of economic benefit that is likely to result from ending immigration restrictions is the saving of the bulk of the billions of dollars currently spent annually on the detection, detention and deportation of undocumented or irregular immigrants, as well as on the control of human trafficking and people smuggling operations and the processes of asylum claims. In the last decades the clandestine border crossing trade has moved from small-scale local entrepreneurs to more organised syndicates that constitute a criminal human smuggling and trafficking industry that links directly to prostitution, labour exploitation and drug distribution (Stelzer, 2001). Efforts to combat these outcomes have been largely ineffectual. For example, the cost of controlling the US-Mexican border increased ten-fold between 1986 and 2002, but this investment has had almost no impact on clandestine entry and seems only to have resulted in the crossings becoming more dangerous and more expensive (Massey, 2005). This investment has also had the unintended consequences of increasing the death-rate of those seeking to cross the border and of increasing the undocumented population in the United States by turning formerly seasonal sojourners into long-term unauthorised residents because of the cost and difficulty of illegal re-entry (Martin, 2003b; Massey, 2005). Martin estimates that the 25 richest countries spend US$ 25–30 billion a year on immigration enforcement and asylum processing, which equals almost two-thirds of what is spent on development aid (2003).

The impact on poor/origin countries

Poorer countries generally favour the liberalisation of immigration (Raihan, 2004). In international forums, poorer countries seek the opening of borders in order to provide their citizens with opportunities to
emigrate to more developed labour markets, while the richer countries continue to resist (see for example the GATS Mode 4 debates discussed later in this paper). For countries of origin, there are potential negative impacts from the outflow of emigrants, but there are also considerable advantages that tip the balance sheet in favour of seeking the net benefits of freer migration (UN, 2006a). While immigrant sending countries suffer from the drain of both brain and brawn, it is also true that immigration is a safety valve for economies not able to create sufficient jobs for their labour force, particularly for the young people who constitute a much larger proportion of the population than in more developed nations. It also provides greater incentives and pressure for increasing levels of education and other services that in effect prepare the young of the countries of origin to emigrate. Even more importantly, emigration creates a crucial pool of expatriates who remit funds that are vital to the economy of many developing nations. It is estimated that since 1996 remittances have surpassed official development assistance to developing countries (UN, 2004). The UN estimated that in 2004 remittances represent an inflow of US$ 172 billion to developing nations, while aid represents some US$ 50 billion (UN, 2004, 2005b). Remittances represent the equivalent to about 20 per cent of exports in countries such as India and Morocco and are growing at an average of eight per cent annually (Coppel et al., 2001, Migration News 2005, UN 2005b). Table 1 summarises the possible negative and positive effects of emigration for poorer nations.

Current immigration controls only serve to amplify the brain drain phenomena. Richer countries “cherry pick” the best and brightest from poorer countries through their immigrant selection programmes and then effectively try to hold them captive with continuous residence conditions that make it difficult for immigrants to return home for anything but short-term stays (Norberg, 2003). Open borders would both more equitably distribute the gains from emigration and facilitate the return of expatriates who may seek to temporarily or permanently apply their skills and knowledge in their countries of origin.

While the transfer of skills and knowledge tends to focus on the labour market, there is also a significant contribution to the social and political capital of the countries of origin through a similar transfer of skills related to political and social development. Expatriates often pressure for political changes at home from their destination countries through their work in solidarity movements and if they return may work with the opposition or with emerging regimes. Sending countries have
benefited considerably from the political expertise of expatriates and a number of newly democratic countries in Eastern Europe and South America have appointed expatriates into senior government positions or elected them to high office.

The liberalisation of the movement of people is likely to amplify the benefits of migration for countries of origin. More open borders will convert the brain drain into a brain flow and would increase the potential for return migration. It would also allow the poorer countries to benefit from the skills and knowledge of the emerging class of the international ‘‘gold collar’’ workers, mentioned earlier in the paper. As Moses and Letnes conclude, the anticipated economic gains for poorer countries from more liberalised immigration should encourage policymakers to consider it as an important means for bridging the income gap between the world’s richest and poorest inhabitants (Moses and Letnes, 2004; see also World Bank, 2006a, 2006b; UN, 2006a). However, migration should not be used as a substitute or excuse for not addressing domestic structural and political change in developing countries. High levels of emigration will not lead to development if not accompanied by domestic structural reforms.

Depending on the region, open borders may also mean that countries of origin are likely to also receive an increasing number of ‘‘lifestyle immigrants’’ from richer nations, who can contribute to the economy of

### TABLE 1

**“BALANCE SHEET” OF ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION ON POORER COUNTRIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Effects</th>
<th>Positive Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of skilled workers (“brain drain”) and motivated, healthy workers (“brawn drain”) impacts on productivity and quality of services.</td>
<td>Return and circular migration of skilled workers increases local human capital and creates links to foreign networks (“brain gain”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of taxation revenue from absent workers.</td>
<td>Substantial inflow of remittances and foreign exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower return from investments in public education and health.</td>
<td>“Safety valve” which allows excess labour to seek opportunities not available in home country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective emigration (and subsequent remittances and return of workers) may cause increasing disparities of income that further segment population.</td>
<td>Technology transfer, investments and venture capital contributed by diaspora.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade flows established between destination and origin countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulus to invest in domestic education, health and other individual human capital investments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from United Nations (UN), 2004.
poorer nations. With the opening of borders in the EU, and the creation of easier capital flow through the common monetary system, the Mediterranean EU countries have quickly consolidated themselves as the “Florida” of Europe, with their historically high levels of tourism spurring a parallel retirement community of year-round residents. Other areas that border on developed nations, for example parts of Central America and North Africa, may enjoy the same economic boom as Florida (Mead, 2004).

But equally importantly for countries of origin is the continuing threat that they will remain a source of emigrants, particularly irregular ones, unless economic, political and social conditions are improved considerably. This is likely to spur countries of destination to invest heavily in development and partnership programmes. There is increasing awareness among industrialised countries that they are wasting time and resources in combating irregular immigration, when they do not work at the same time to change the economic conditions that force people to emigrate (Bhagwati, 2003). Just as developed countries invest in their own economically depressed areas, and the EU has made considerable investment in newly accepted nations, the impending and continuing reality of open borders is likely to spur increased investment from developed countries in the areas seen as the greatest potential source of migrants. There also appears to be a greater awareness by some developing countries that they can use emigrants to extract concessions and aid. The 2006 influx of irregular immigrants into the Spanish Canary Islands has resulted in increased aid to the source countries of Mauritania, Western Sahara and Senegal, and has forced the EU to place greater emphasis on the development of regions that are major sources of immigrants. Ultimately, the opening of borders becomes an issue of global equity, and this is addressed in the following section.

Global Equity Issues

In addition to the direct benefits that may be accrued by destination and origin countries, there are a number of global equity issues that are also key arguments in favour of open borders.

Taking down the primary barrier between the North and South

It could be argued that closed borders are one of the primary political instruments that sustain the separation between rich and poor nations. What keeps the poor separate is the immigration restrictions that
supposedly keep them from moving to the rich countries (although, as it has been argued above, even without restrictions this movement is less likely to happen than those in the rich countries would think). If open borders become part of the future policy commitments there is an increased imperative for rich countries to make a greater investment in poor ones. The goal is to make the South more attractive for those that would prefer to stay at home and to ensure that emigration from poorer regions is no longer an economic imperative (Curzon Price, 2003).

At the moment, the industrialised countries spend only 0.23 per cent of their GDP in development aid, which is less than half of the 0.54 per cent target for 2015 suggested under UN Millennium Development Goals and even further from the 0.7 per cent target that has been widely accepted as the desirable standard and entrenched in international debate through the 2002 Monterrey Consensus (UN Millennium Project, 2005). Currently only five countries have met or surpassed the 0.7 per cent target, while six others have committed themselves to meeting the target by 2015. This relatively paltry contribution by rich countries can be compared to the investments they make for internal development. European Union Structural and Cohesion Funds were distributed throughout the 1990s to the poorer EU regions, particularly in Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain and now the new Eastern European members will be beneficiaries. These structural and cohesion funds represented up to 1.27 per cent of GDP of the EU in 1999 (Pastor, 2003). It is estimated that the total internal support for agriculture within Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries is currently US$ 318 billion, roughly five times more than the aid given to developing countries (Wintour, 2004).

There is a growing movement that seeks to provide greater aid support and debt forgiveness to the world’s poorest countries, as evidenced by the recent proposal for an African “Marshall Plan”. Equally importantly, such proposals usually also seek an end to the protectionism and internal subsidies that shut out producers in developing countries from the markets of developed countries. Gordon Brown (currently the British Prime Minister, but at that time the Chancellor of the Exchequer) is quoted as stating that: “Barriers erected by rich nations to protect their industries are scandalous. More is spent daily on an average European cow than on a poor African” (Wintour, 2004).

The UN Millennium Project is currently setting the agenda for assistance for poorer nations. It sets clear goals for the provision of health
education and social programmes to poor countries and for the strengthening their infrastructure. It also calls for tariff- and quota-free access to more developed markets for the exports of poor countries, the end to discriminatory internal subsidies in rich nations, and debt relief. The Millennium project seeks to ensure that poorer countries develop rule-based, predictable, and non-discriminatory trading and financial systems and that they commit to good governance (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

In June 2006, the UN Secretary General presented a report *International Migration and Development* (UN, 2006a) that emphasizes a co-development approach that benefits countries of origin and of destination. The report explores policy developments, such as multiple-entry visas that provide more fluid and better regulated access to needed immigrant workers, support for immigrant entrepreneurship and host country training programmes, international cooperation to increase training of skilled workers in countries of origin to allay “brain drain”, and support of emigrant diasporas to increase their contribution to their countries of origin.

Neither politicians such as Gordon Brown nor the UN tie development directly to the greater freedom of cross-border movement, but the reality is that if rich countries will not make a more voluntary commitment, then open borders need to become more integral to development debates. As Barry and Goodin note: “Rich countries faced with strong moral arguments for global redistribution have only two options. Ideally, they should provide the poor with substantial sums of foreign aid; failing that, as a moral minimum they must alternatively be willing to admit substantial numbers of immigrants from the poorest countries” (1992: 8). In the context of a world economy with little commitment from rich countries to the elimination of poverty, the notion that all workers would be free to move can only increase equality (Sutcliffe, 2004).

As open borders are created we are likely to see a change in language in regard to the distribution of development aid. Perhaps there will be less talk of “foreign aid” and more about EU-style structural and cohesion funds and about targeted regional development.

*The last piece of the globalisation puzzle*

As economic globalisation takes hold, there is no shortage of advocates for the liberalisation of the circulation of three key pillars of economic
activity: capital, goods, and services. The question then becomes why liberalisation of economic flows should not also include labour as a fourth pillar. Although the EU provides a working example of how the “four freedoms” of movement can be included in a common market, the liberalisation of labour movement is generally marginalised in trade-related talks at bilateral, regional and global levels. Moses and Letnes note that “governments claim impotence in the face of other globalising forces, [but] they remain remarkably potent in shielding domestic economies from international labour flows” (2002: 2). It is a great error to think that borders can be open to goods, capital, and services, but not to people (Sutcliffe, 2004).

The attempts to also include the movement of labour into globalisation debates is typified by the Mode 4 dimension of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) GATS negotiations, which involves the supply of services by the service supplier of one country through the “temporary movement of natural persons” in the territory of another country. The WTO maintains that temporary “sojourners” bring significant benefits to destination and origin countries through stimulating trade, addressing concerns in labour market fluctuations, promoting technology transfer and human capital development, and providing a flow of remittances (WTO, 2004). While currently Mode 4 represents only some two per cent of the value of the flow of the services under GATS and mainly impacts on higher skilled workers, there is a push to expand such provision to lower skilled service workers. WTO and others involved in Mode 4 negotiations are at great pains to point out that the movement of workers under these provisions is temporary in nature, involving stays of less than 5 years, would occur within the regulatory framework of existing governmental policies and practices on migration, and excludes permanent access to host country labour markets (i.e. permanent settlement is excluded) (Lloyd, 2002; WTO, 2004; IOM, 2004). The WTO emphasizes that negotiations over the temporary movement of natural persons do not seek to circumvent national immigration provisions or impinge on issues of sovereignty and that “temporary presence avoids the deeper economic and social problems associated with [permanent] migration” (WTO, 2004: II).

Similar temporary movement of workers are an integral part of a range of bilateral, regional and international agreements. While the tendency is to focus on the skilled and the employees of international enterprises, there is also increasing scope for the movement of the unskilled from poorer nations. In the Middle East, there are significant numbers of
temporary unskilled workers from Asia, and the United States and European countries have programmes for temporary sojourns of rural workers during harvests. Developing countries generally support the temporary movement of workers and, for the reasons outlined in an earlier section above, see direct benefits for their economies, but developed countries continue to resist (WTO, 2004; Raihan, 2004).

It is important to re-emphasize that currently the push to liberalise the movement of workers lags far behind the push to liberalise capital, goods, and services, and that in the context of trade talks the focus is kept on temporary stays. The question remains, however, whether temporary worker provisions such as GATS Mode 4 end up becoming stepping stones to more permanent immigration. As “guest worker” experiences have demonstrated in a number of countries, short-term stays often build pressure for long-term immigration. Ultimately the goal would be to link trade liberalisation to freedom of movement and to the more permanent opening of borders. The impacts of trade liberalisation are hotly debated, but there appears to be a consensus that within areas of liberalisation there will eventually be a convergence of wages, prices and other factors of production, which would lead to fewer incentives for workers to migrate to seek higher wages elsewhere (ILO, 2004a).

Current frameworks of globalisation are criticised for not meeting social justice, equity or parity criteria: existing agreements are seen as favouring rich nations; multinational corporations are accused of ignoring workers’ rights and environmental issues; and international trade structures lack transparency. Rich countries do not want to open borders as they claim that the free trade of goods and services substitutes for the movement of labour. In contrast, the demands of developing countries include the liberalisation of labour mobility, which they consider a core tenet of the social dimension of globalisation.

**Human rights and democracy**

Open movement of citizens within a nation is a fundamental tenet of democratic polities and existing open border zones, such as the EU or Australia-New Zealand. Open movement agreements function on the assumption that citizens of certain countries, which share democratic political cultures, should be able to move freely. As economists and political scientists have noted there is a correlation between democracy and economic development (Griswold, 2004). Therefore, a fundamental
part of aid packages and of incentives to encourage good governance and the reduction of corruption should be a commitment to allow the citizens of developing and newly democratic countries that are meeting international standards of human rights to operate with a global space that recognises the rights of citizens to move freely. The leaders of the European Union have dangled the “carrot” of membership and free circulation of citizens to Eastern European countries that played by the rules not only of EU economic systems but of democratic ideals embodied by a united Europe.

The creation of a global democratic space in which citizens move freely should be conceptualised as the proposed end of the current global version of the apartheid-era “pass system” that relegates the poor to their homelands (Sutcliffe, 2004). Open borders would also in effect put an end to people smuggling and the perils it currently entails, thereby preventing the deaths of thousands of people annually.

TOWARDS OPEN BORDERS POLICIES

Open borders as a global policy is decades away. If asked to speculate from a current perspective, it is always an option to fall back on the anecdote that started this paper: Stefan Zweig was advocating for open borders in Europe some 70 years before they became a reality. Perhaps then open borders by 2060, or even by the beginning of the twenty-second century, is the target to be established and in this section the means to achieve such a goal are explored. The challenge is to extend to a global scale the models provided by the circulation of the citizens of the European Union and other similar spaces of freedom of cross-border movement. We are seeking to apply on a global scale the domestic situation of any democracy, and shifting the emphasis from aid to investment in the world’s poorest regions to lessen the pressures to emigrate.

Just as citizens of a democracy currently have the right to travel freely within the borders of their own nation, in the future people will move across national borders, overseen by the same tools of macro-economic and social policy used internally to control migration of people within a democratic market economy and to control the international flow of capital, goods, and services. The emphasis would not be on the control of people, but on other policy instruments or levers that regulate public goods and services, such as labour market programmes, housing stock development, welfare payments, and taxation policies, which influence
regional economic outcomes and population movements. Decisions to move would be derived from individual motivations and any control of immigration would be based not on a restriction of the right of movement, but on the capacity of the international community to control the motivators of that movement.

There is no denying the complications involved, given the huge disparities in wealth, the diversity of political systems and the significant cultural differences existent in the world. But perhaps more importantly there is no denying the almost absolute rejection of open border policies currently among those who have the power to impose immigration restrictions, the political elites and citizens in the destination countries. In general, the rich countries fear for their economic stability and seek to protect their cultures and way of life, and even those who support more open immigration also set limits and invoke the need to avoid more disadvantage to the disadvantaged, to protect the environment, and to control crime. Any discussion of open borders is dismissed as “pie in the sky” utopias (see for example Castles, 2003).

However, it also needs to be recognised that perhaps it comes down to a few significant roadblocks created on the basis of the “frightened and the frightening”. The few top destination regions (i.e. North America, Europe, Middle East and Australia-New Zealand) are most wary of open borders and need to be convinced of the advantages of liberalizing the movement of labour while a few potential sending countries with large populations present the greatest threat (e.g. Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia). However, the next 50 years may also be a period of significant global economic realignment, with the current industrialised democracies becoming a shrinking part of the world economy. In fact, four of the “frightening” countries are among the group of potentially emerging economic powers commonly referred to as the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) that, if properly managed, could become a larger force in the world economy, with the result that by 2050 of the current list of the world’s largest economies only the United States and Japan will remain amongst the top five (Wilson and Purushothaman, 2003). As they develop, the BRICs will face the same problems of ageing and shrinking population that are already evident in developed countries. This may mean that by 2050 the world’s emigrants would rather go to Shanghai or Mumbai than to New York or London.

There is also no denying the enormity of the work that needs to be done on all levels, from the macro-economic adjustments to the most prosaic
administrative realignments. Current areas of free movement provide many excellent illustrations of the level of adjustments needed (see Schlüter 2004 for a discussion on how a major bureaucratic obstacle to cross border flow within the Nordic Council was the Icelandic system of creating surnames by adding –son or -dottir to the father’s first name, which was not accepted by the bureaucracies of other member nations). The following sections outline the key policy changes needed to build towards open borders.

**Key discourses will need to be reframed**

Public policy is built on the framing of ideas and agendas (Kingdon, 1997). It is just as much about polemics and the shifting of policy frameworks and paradigms, as about any rational evidence of policy outcomes. Therefore a key issue that must be addressed is the broad endorsement of immigration as a positive political value and the recognition that open borders are the goal to work towards.

The magnitude of the paradigm change required cannot be underestimated. It would mean abandoning immigration as an electoral bully pulpit, and creating a new discourse which seeks a controlled process of increasing freedom of cross-border movement. It requires a groundswell of public support and for politicians to act responsibly and to promote immigration as a positive opportunity. There will need to be constant vigilance so that, in the words of Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, the “benefits of migration can be maximised and its problems minimised” (UN, 2004: iii).

A series of ideas should permeate global political consciousness:

- Immigration should be viewed more as circulation, mobility and flow, and not necessarily as permanent settlement in destination countries.
- The response to immigration should not be based on fear but on notions of opportunity. The fear of invasion should be replaced by an understanding of opportunities for economic development in the economic North and South and for the extension of human rights.
- Sovereignty should be decoupled from the state’s capacity to exclude people. The ability to control immigration (but not capital, goods, foreign policy etc.) should not be idealised as a mainstay of sovereignty.
- Debates on development aid to the world’s poorer regions should be linked to more open immigration, both in the sense that access to labour markets for workers from poor countries is a development tool and that aid to poor regions will create domestic incentives that decrease the need for emigration.
- Free trade agreements should always include significant provisions for the liberalisation of the movement of workers and their families.
- There should be widespread acceptance of the reality that current restrictions on immigration and considerable spending on border control have only had minimal impact on irregular immigration. Ultimately, the “decriminalisation” of immigration is the only answer to irregular immigration.

Promoting these agendas means working in the face of virulent anti-immigration lobbies, which bring together those who resist immigration for economic reasons with those who wield objections based on environmental, cultural or public safety concerns, and with the hard core racists and xenophobes. In today’s political climate it appears that it is only brave or foolhardy politicians who allow themselves to be branded as “pro-immigration” (The Economist, 2005). However, there are those who continue to promote the relaxation of immigration restrictions, and it is possible that the political space they occupy will continue to expand. There is also likely to be greater consciousness about the direct relation between immigration flows and the imperative to assist in the development of poorer nations. As Curzon Price suggests, a confluence of Europe’s fear of mass migration and American fear of terrorism may produce a more realistic and liberal development policy (2003). Moreover, wider globalisation dynamics will force realignments of our understanding of territory, authority, and rights (Sassen, 2006).

It should be noted that other objectives of national and international policy are as equally problematic as open borders. The achievement of true free trade, the effective reduction of greenhouse gases, and the elimination of poverty are proving to be all but impossible to achieve in the short- to mid-term, yet these policy goals have been widely adopted as legitimate aspirations. The July 2006 collapse of the Doha round of free trade talks, the continued refusal by key countries to adopt the Kyoto Protocol or to dedicate 0.7 per cent of GNP to development aid demonstrate just how far we are from achieving those goals, but world leaders still subscribe to the general targets. Open borders should at least be
afforded that same status of a normative narrative that drives political and policy processes.

**“Comfort zones” of free circulation must be expanded**

A starting point for increasing the spaces of open immigration is to work with existing structures of international relations that reflect geographic proximity and the historical, cultural and economic ties that constitute the basis of formal bilateral and multilateral agreements as well as informal patterns of trade and immigration flows. These relationships and structures form the “comfort zones” of each country and these zones should be seen as the foundations for future open border initiatives. The European Union, the Caribbean Community, the Nordic Council, and the Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement between Australia and New Zealand are examples of working models of such comfort zones that already exist. Recent moves to strengthen economic unions in other parts of the world demonstrate that there is a continued interest in expanding the role of other existing political and economic structures to create more of these zones.

The comfort zone of each country is often demarcated by the politics of fear, the exclusion of racialised others, and securitisation of immigration (Huysmans, 2000). The reluctance to admit Turkey to the European Union, or Australia to some Asian cooperative structures, clearly demonstrate that cultural, religious, or ethnic differences can trump geographic proximity and economic interests. But there are a range of discourses that can be exploited to ensure that the dynamics of exclusion are balanced, or outweighed, by those of inclusion (Boswell, 2006). In the context of economic globalisation, comfort zones are commonly being defined through trade agreements. In addition to the global trade talks such as those of the WTO discussed earlier in this paper, there are numerous specific free trade agreements between two or more countries. As recently as 1980 there were only about 20 such trade agreements, but there are now more than 200 in force (WTO, 2007). Currently, such trade agreements generally do not include the movement of labour, or at most they have restricted or incidental provisions, such as those within GATS Mode 4, which provide for the temporary movement of persons providing goods and services, or they may create special visa categories for a restricted number of professional workers and time-limited “working holiday” provisions for young people. The recent Australia-US free trade agreement has created a new visa category, which will allow 10,000 Australian professionals each year to obtain US working
visas ("Green Cards"). Australia currently has bilateral agreements with 23 countries which allow young people to work for up to two years under restricted conditions.

On a broader scale than bilateral or multilateral free trade agreements are regional economic groupings that promote some level of economic, and often also social and political integration. Over 30 agreements, including ASEAN in South East Asia, Mercosur and the Union Suramericana in Latin America, the Islamic Conference, and the African Economic Community, form an overlapping patchwork across all continents. A recent survey by the International Labour Organisation documented some 200 bilateral agreement between OECD countries and countries from all regions of the world that seek to regulate the movement of workers, and notes that the pace of the creation of such agreements is increasing (ILO, 2004a).

The regional economic groupings generally also treat migration as a peripheral issue but, along with the bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, they have the potential to become the basis of new economic social agendas (Castles and Miller, 2003) and perhaps to move towards the inclusion of the freedom of movement. This is said with full realisation that these structures are generally instituted with the idea that they would allow the flow of capital, goods, and services, but not necessarily people (Lloyd, 2002). At the same time, such structures are widely seen as integral to the future of regions and continents and trade liberalisation is seen as having the potential to assist in the development of poor nations (Boquet, 2006). Moreover, a number of watchdog and advocacy groups are pushing for a greater emphasis on the social justice dimensions of economic and trade agreements, which includes increased rights of circulation of workers.

While economic imperatives are likely to continue as the main impetus for the creation of the comfort zones, other factors can continue to play a part. The current attempts by the Western industrialised countries to export political reform could also include an immigration component. As with the development programmes discussed earlier, one of the incentives offered to target countries should include greater access to the labour markets for citizens of those countries promoting democracy (Griswold, 2004).

This integration through free trade agreements, regional groupings and other such comfort zones essentially become the testing grounds for
freedom of movement and the mechanisms needed to reduce migration pressure in sending regions. The expanding of migration options based on these zones and future amalgamations of such zones – until a patchwork of zones in effect becomes a single world-wide zone – are the building blocks of a process to create global open borders. A range of overlapping integration processes would include: OECD countries establishing short- and mid- and long-terms plan for opening borders in their own zones of influence; existing regional grouping moving towards full integration of labour markets; and like-minded rich countries liberalizing migration between themselves in order to test models and entrench political support for such initiatives.

Integration of labour markets does not necessarily need grand treaties. The Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement, which effectively creates the open border between Australia and New Zealand, for example, is not expressed in the form of any binding bilateral treaty between New Zealand and Australia, but rather is a series of immigration procedures applied by each country and underpinned by joint expressions of political support (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – New Zealand, 2004). But ultimately, such integration does need grand plans and visions, such as those recently offered by Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi who exhorted Africa to form a federation with a single government in order to “unite or die” (Al Jazeera, 2007).

Economic growth and political stability in poor and unstable regions must be prioritised

Given that the key to lowering concerns about immigration is ultimately to reduce the need to emigrate, the major focus of a world heading towards open borders is to invest in the economic, social and political structure of poor and unstable regions. There is a fundamental need to invest in strengthening the interdependent pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection and in supporting the institutions that promote good political governance, a vibrant civil society and an effective state that provides public goods and social protection (ILO, 2004b). In the context of globalisation, this includes ensuring that producers in the developing countries have access to the markets of developed countries through fair trade provisions which ensure the lowering of the subsidies and trade barriers that make it difficult for producers from poorer regions to compete with subsidised and protected producers from richer regions. The UN report on international migration and development cited above also provides a blueprint
for using immigration realities as one of the drivers of development in countries of origin through a range of policies that include even relatively simple initiatives such as reducing the transaction costs of remittances and the portability of pensions and benefits (UN, 2006a).

Earlier in this paper there was discussion about the need to shift discourses from aid to investment, co-development and partnership and to eliminate the barrier between the North and South created by immigration restrictions. The threat of potential mass migration of the poor to the rich countries in a world that seeks to liberalise movement is the best incentive for the developed world to invest in the developing world. The aim is to make the South more attractive so that people stay home, former emigrants from those regions decide to return and those from the North might even choose to migrate to the South.

**Entities that seek to strengthen the governance of migration must be strengthened.**

One of the basic tenets of migration theory is that immigration operates along established "bridges" that reflect historical and economic relationships, as well as geographical proximity (Castles and Miller, 2003). Government-sponsored recruitment of workers to meet domestic labour shortages, cultural and linguistic ties between the past imperial powers and their former colonies, the simple realities of proximity, and continuing informal systems of chain migration, all add up to the fact that countries of destination can invariably identify a few countries that are the origin of the vast majority of their immigrants. This concentration of immigration flows allows for considerable opportunities for the management of those flows. These opportunities are already being pursued by governments and non-government organisations and these efforts can be the basis for the movement towards wider open borders.

Specific projects such as the Cooperative Efforts to Manage Emigration (CEME) at the University of California examines ways in which countries of origin, transit, and destination can cooperate to manage migration flows and better deal with illegal flows. CEME researches best practices for organizing the "three R's" – recruitment, remittances, and returns – to protect migrants and to reduce emigration pressures and for promoting ongoing cooperation on migration matters between countries of origin, transit, and destination. CEME, similar to the recent 2006 UN report, also uses the term co-development to describe the benefits to be gained from policies at both origin and destination, and seeks to
facilitate circular migration and to ensure that the re-integration of returnees is feasible (CEME, 2005). The best migration policy, according to the CEME co-chairs is “one that seeks not to block but to regulate smoothly international flows of people” (Martin, Martin, and Weil, 2006). Other non-governmental efforts to design new frameworks and structures from migration include the People Flow debate on the online Open Democracy forum that explore the establishment of international mobility websites and transit centres and the various innovative proposals for co-development, entrance fees and internal controls recently explored by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (Veenkamp, Buonfino and Bentley, 2003; Jandl, 2006).

At the inter-governmental level, numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements seek to promote better oversight of migration flows. The ILO has documented hundreds of such agreements. There are also numerous regional and international organisations dedicated to researching the promotion of productive migration and the minimisation of the exploitation of immigrants. According to the ILO, there are currently 13 regional consultative mechanisms in place that deal with migration issues (2004: 132). While the focus tends to be controlling irregular immigration and repatriations they also deal with the regularisation of flows.

Many of these regional mechanisms are sponsored by the intergovernmental IOM which from a global perspective seeks to assist governments in managing migration. The IOM works with other international organisations through The Global Migration Group, which brings together key UN entities such as the Office on Drugs and Crime, the High Commissioner for Refugees, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Population Division and the Development Programme, the Conference on Trade and Development, with other organisations such as the World Bank and the ILO (IOM, 2006). In 2001, the IOM launched the Berne Initiative as an on-going consultation process for inter-State cooperation on immigration (IOM, 2005a). Other international efforts at managing migration include a long-standing commitment of the ILO to promoting models for the regulation of migratory flows and ensuring proper working and living conditions for migrant workers. In 2005, the ILO presented its Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, which provides guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration (ILO 2005).

These international dialogues generally seek to strengthen the governance of immigration and to promote its more positive aspects (Newland,
2005). As the Terms of Reference of The Global Migration Group indicates, the perspective of the participating organisations is that:

[We] recognise that migration is an important, complex and multi-dimensional issue, and that, properly managed, in full respect for the human rights and international legal principles at issue, migration benefits individuals and societies, and can make an important contribution to the early achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals (IOM, 2006).

It is important to note that all of the UN-sponsored immigration organisations and the various coordinating groups and dialogues mentioned above are all predicated on the concept of respecting the sovereignty of the member countries and as such do not in any way endorse open borders as a current policy option. Their efforts seek to improve the governance of migration within the context of current political and economic agendas and seek to highlight the benefits and advantages that migration can bring to origin and destination countries.

The UN has acknowledged that international immigration was “traditionally considered too controversial for a global institution to handle”, but also that “the issue has recently been moving up the UN agenda (UN, 2006a). The UN Secretary General formed the Global Commission on International Migration in 2003, which in its final report recommended the creation of a global migration facility that would bring together international migration and economic structures, with the aim of establishing a “comprehensive and coherent approach in the overall institutional response to international migration” (GCIM, 2005b). The UN General Assembly conducted a High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006, where the Secretary General endorsed the establishment of a standing forum (UN, 2006a; UN, 2006b). In July 2007 the first meeting of the new Global Forum on Migration and Development took place in Brussels (GFMD, 2007).

**Political and social structures to address social tensions must be strengthened**

There is no escaping the reality that immigration continues to be racialised, and so the impact of simmering racial tensions and the potential for social conflict is a key issue that must be addressed as
cross-border movements are liberalised (Collins, 2006; Sharma, 2006). As the number of immigrants increases in a destination country, or simply if there is a possibility of such an increase, the latent fears of the local population can be exploited. As Sutcliffe notes, the potential of such conflicts cannot be wished away and destination countries must ensure that they create adequate government structures and promote civil society responses that can work to avoid tensions and respond to conflicts that may arise (2004). Equally important to allaying any fears of the existing population is the work needed to ensure that new arrivals are given the opportunity to integrate into the destination society.

The rioting in French cities in November 2005 put the focus on two key discourses that serve to summarise both the fear of immigration and the need for programmes to promote integration. Firstly there is the notion of a seuil de tolerance (tolerance threshold), which suggests that societies have a limit to the number or percentage of immigrants they can accept without giving rise to widespread rejection, xenophobia, and racism. Yet, as many examples demonstrate, the relationship between immigration levels and tolerance are highly elastic, and may often have an inverse relationship; the areas where there are more immigrants show more tolerance (Tucci, 2005). In many countries, and in some cities and regions within countries, immigrants and foreigners make up a much higher percentage of the population than would seem possible if thresholds were a fixed reality; an extreme example is the United Arab Emirates, where 80 per cent of the resident population are non-citizen foreigners. The second key concept is that of the ascenseur social (social elevator), which is the guarantee of social mobility that will raise minorities to mainstream prosperity. The riots in France and similar riots among minority populations in other countries, demonstrate graphically the need to ensure that the elevator continues to work. Integration and adaptation of immigrants to the destination societies also depends on legal status, family structures and political participation, so countries should seek to provide opportunities for stability of residence, family reunification and political enfranchisement.

Racism and xenophobia are realities and, as much as we would like to will them away, it takes more than goodwill. There must be a commitment by politicians and the press to act responsibly and not use immigration as a bully pulpit and a commitment by key public sector services, such as education, police, and immigration services to fairly administer laws and regulations.
Timetables must be established for opening borders and for commitments from both destination and origin countries

The Schengen agreements on the abolition of border controls between EU countries came into effect in 1995, some 10 years after the signing of the first protocols in the Luxemburg town that lent its name to the agreements. Now the citizens of Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 face up to a 12-year moratorium on the freedom of movement as the economies of the new member countries must reach certain economic and social benchmarks before it will take effect. Such firm timetables and clearly defined commitments from both destination and origin countries are likely to be the basis for all future roll-outs of open border arrangements.

Destination countries should be working with origin countries to set timetables for both liberalisation of cross-border flow between them and for the creation of the conditions which would reduce the pressure to emigrate from poorer regions. All destination countries can identify those countries and regions that create major immigration pressures, and they should focus on negotiating the parameters of future agreements with them. The immediate aim need not be open borders but instead to create a range of interim and stepped measures that gradually liberalise movement and assist with the economic and social development of countries of origin. The goal is the controlled expansion of the comfort zones discussed above.

CONCLUSIONS

It cannot be emphasized enough that the current opposition to open borders policies is considerable. The following is just one small example:

Of course, no respectable economist would call the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a free-trade agreement because real free trade implies not only duty-free movement of goods and capital, but free movement of labour across borders, which neither the U.S. nor Canada can tolerate. Pure free trade is a utopian madhouse, even crazier in concept than communism. Just imagine the damage to the social structure – not to mention wages – if either country permitted unlimited Mexican immigration (Macarthur, 2001: 1).
This quote is one of the numerous examples of the barriers facing those who advocate open borders. Perhaps ironically, opposition to the freedom of movement knows no borders and crosses ideological divides. Yet, the other irony is that the warnings against unlimited Mexican immigration perfectly echo the alarmist arguments in opposition to the free circulation of workers within a united Europe or within any of the current arrangements to facilitate the movement of workers. The future of migration is almost always presented as doomsday scenarios of threats to security, culture and welfare (see for example Watson, 2007), yet alarmist predictions have not proved to be correct in the past and there is reason to question whether they will be in the future.

To forecast that there will be global open borders sometime in the future is perhaps more an attempt at clairvoyance than serious policy analysis and can always be dismissed as an attempt to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. However a serious exploration of open borders as a future policy option is necessary as both an inevitable consequence of globalisation that needs to be managed as it unfolds and as a moral touchstone of what should be achieved in creating new global equilibriums. Whether globalisation leads to greater integration between sovereign countries or to a form of global government it can be assumed that the governance of the freer movement of people will be an issue high on the agenda. Freedom of movement has been achieved within the borders of democratic countries and between a few alliances of sovereign nations, and there is reason to be confident that it will eventually be realised on a global scale. It is important to emphasize that the term of choice for this paper has been open borders and not no borders, in recognition of the continued importance of national sovereignty. Borders will continue to exist, but they will be more permeable to human migrations.

There is also a fundamental paradox in the goal of open borders. It seeks to guarantee the right of all people to migrate if that is their choice, but at the same time, the aim is to create a world in which people are not forced into that choice. The "open border paradox" is that the creation of the conditions that would allow freedom of movement, are likely to reduce the incentives for migration (ILO, 2004a). This paper maintains that open borders are a feasible future policy option, but it does not necessarily advocate for higher levels of immigration. Open borders should be the driver for less migration, and those who move should do so out of choice and not because of necessity. And while open borders entail freedom of emigration they also mean the freedom of return to one's place of origin.
The challenges are many. As this paper has outlined, there are significant political and social barriers and a complex array of administrative and practical hurdles to overcome.

But the world is globalising. Capital, goods and services flow ever more freely. Why do we expect that “labour” (read “immigrants”, read “people”) will not or should not move as freely? Closed borders only entrench the global apartheid that keeps the poor in their homelands (Legrain, 2006). Any move to establish open borders on a bilateral, regional or global scale can only create new possibilities for equity and the extension of human rights. There will be tensions and challenges; nonetheless it is possible to create a dynamic that drives a continual and incremental move towards greater freedom of movement. A crucial step is to cease thinking of open borders as an absurd chimera and to start considering the prospect as a tangible policy goal and an integral part of how we imagine the future of the planet. Is it any more of a chimera than free trade, the reduction of greenhouse gases, or the end of poverty?

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