



Controlling the flow of people entering a nation is a key element of migration policy.

MIGRATION

The porous frontier

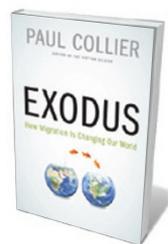
L. Alan Winters weighs up a call for evidence-based debate on international migration.

In *Exodus*, Paul Collier's objective is to initiate an evidence-based debate about international migration and debunk the biases — especially among 'liberal thinkers' — that he says make such a debate taboo. Worldwide, about 3% of people live in a country other than that of their birth, but in England and Wales, for example, that proportion is 13% and rising. Collier argues that liberal elites wilfully ignore the views of ordinary citizens, who think that this influx can undermine society and the economy. He provides an analytical framework to account for migration, surveys some of the evidence, identifies supposed intellectual biases and offers policy conclusions.

Collier makes many powerful and thought-provoking points accessibly, and migration scholars would mostly agree with his analysis. But his contribution to the debate is weakened by occasional lapses in consistency, citation and tolerance for opposing views (including mine). For example, Collier argues that the policy question is not whether migration is good or bad, but whether a bit more of it is desirable. However, most economists would argue this

way too, and Collier himself periodically slips into extremes. For example, he writes that "the obligation to help the poor cannot imply a generalized obligation to permit free movement of people". Who said that it did? Referring to the migration debate, Collier predicts that the "guardians of orthodoxies stand ready with their fatwas". It would be a better debate if there were no fatwas, either pursued or perceived.

Considering the host countries, Collier contends that the economic benefits of migration are small and the social costs potentially large. He argues persuasively that when a society has too many incomers, trust is eroded and that this undermines the provision of public goods, including support for society's weaker members. This belief underpins Collier's paean to nationalism as an



Exodus: How Migration is Changing Our World

PAUL COLLIER
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important, if not vital, cement for societies. Collier justifiably provides a reminder that nationalism need not be militaristic or war-mongering.

He also argues that, left unconstrained, migration from poor to rich countries would increase almost without limit, because, as more migrants settle in the rich country, it is easier for others to follow. On this basis, he says that migration must be controlled. Almost all migration scholars recognize this relationship and its implication, so it is wearing that Collier inveighs so frequently against "the open door favored by economists" and "universalist utilitarianism", which he says favours moving "the entire world population ... to the country in which people were most productive". Frustratingly, he offers no citation for these views.

International migration moves people from regions of low to high productivity, and it is widely acknowledged that migrants themselves reap almost all the economic benefits through their increase in income. Collier argues that it might be reasonable for a share of these benefits to accrue to host societies, because it is their struggles that ▶

► have created the high-productivity environments. But he wisely suggests that trying to collect that share would do more social harm than economic good.

Collier contends that the populations of small poor countries would experience major losses from the emigration of skilled workers if immigration elsewhere went uncontrolled. This is further grist to his mill — he believes that rich countries should impose controls partly for the sake of poor countries, and should also pay compensation to those who move. The brain drain is vigorously debated among specialists: almost all recognize the possibility of such losses, but many argue that poor countries make such an ineffective use of skills that the losses are small. For example, most qualified physicians in such countries serve the urban elite and have almost no impact on the health of the poor.

On policy, Collier recognizes that temporary migration programmes have widespread economic benefits. However, citing the example of Turkish people in Germany, he argues that open liberal democracies cannot enforce departure when temporary migrants' contracts end. He accuses advocates of such temporary mobility (specifically including me) of ignoring non-economic aspects of migration and of having a "tin-eared detachment from a workable ethics."

His recommendations include requiring the return of asylum seekers when their countries stabilize, and granting "the initial status of guest worker" to all entrants (other than to those who join a lottery for permanent immigrant status). Such guest workers would join a queue to become permanent immigrants, but until they gained that status, they would pay taxes, receive no social benefits and have only limited access to public services. If they declined to register for permanent immigration, they could be deported without appeal. This is not a formal guest-worker scheme, which requires people to leave when their work contracts expire, but is it more ethical?

Collier's book offers a feast of ideas. For this I commend it, but the dominance of rhetorical spice over evidence-based nutrition makes the meal rather indigestible. ■

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A distant HMS *Beagle* off Tierra del Fuego in South America in the 1830s, painted by Conrad Martens.

NATURAL HISTORY

Hell in the Pacific

A turbulent history of early naturalists and the maritime explorers who hosted them fascinates **Andrew Robinson**.

A keen tension runs through Glyn Williams's *Naturalists at Sea*, his chronicle of 14 Pacific Ocean expeditions spanning the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The source of this tension is the often-fraught dynamic between the expeditions' on-board naturalists and the seamen who made their research possible. Fieldwork, onerous enough in the primitive naval conditions of the era, was often scuppered by the demands of maritime exploration and surveying, and by international political rivalries.

So Williams's odyssey — beginning with English buccaneer William Dampier's foray to New Holland (modern Australia) in the 1680s, and sailing on through other celebrated English, French, Russian and Spanish voyages — is almost as much a history of psychology as of scientific derring-do and discovery. Even Captain James Cook, who on his first great voyage had harmoniously hosted naturalist Joseph Banks, was not immune to discord. On his second expedition, in 1772–75, Cook fell out with naturalist Johann Reinhold Forster, and before setting off on his third, with the ship's surgeon now doubling as a naturalist, is said to have exclaimed: "Curse scientists, and all science into the bargain."

During the 1831–36 circumnavigation of HMS *Beagle*, the conservative Captain Robert FitzRoy famously clashed with the young Charles Darwin over slavery in Brazil; Darwin even considered leaving the ship. Dampier's expedition avoided such tension, because Dampier was both a seaman and a naturalist. Among his many beguiling descriptions is that

of the hummingbird, which "haunts about Flowers and Fruit, like a Bee gathering Honey, making many near addresses to its delightful Objects".

The main cause of all this on-board strain, argues Williams, was identified by biologist Thomas Henry Huxley. In the 1840s, Huxley served as an assistant surgeon in the Royal Navy before becoming a celebrated scientist. The hard physical work of the sailor, "in his constant battle with the elements, is as far apart from the speculative acuteness and abstraction necessary to the man of science as ever", he wrote in an 1854 essay.

His friend Darwin had a more personal explanation. After four years away from home, he wrote from Tasmania: "I hate every wave of the ocean... I believe there are very few contented Sailors. — They are caught young & broken in before they have reached years of discretion. Those who are employed, sigh after the delights of the shore, & those on shore, complain they are forgotten & overlooked."

As Williams explains, whatever their psychology, naval captains of these times were concerned first and foremost with the safety of their ships. Their second priority was to explore and survey coastlines, while claiming lands for their home countries and searching for the fabled Northwest Passage or *Terra Australis Incognita* — the unknown southern continent of Antarctica. Finally, they had to consider the vagaries of European politics and wars, which could see the imprisonment of an expedition's members. This happened, for instance, when Joseph-Antoine Bruny d'Entrecasteaux's expedition, dispatched from France in 1791, docked its two vessels in