International Migration and Global Demographic Reality

- International migration in contemporary times in many aspects is similar to what happened in the history
  - People
    - pursue better employment opportunities
    - avoid political or religious persecution
    - displaced by wars and conflicts
    - pursue desirable lifestyles or environments
  - Countries
    - receive migrants for increasing population sizes and scales of economy/markets
    - Nation-building, national security

- New “silent” driving force of international migration – changing global demographic reality
Low Fertility and Very Low Fertility

- Major industrialised countries have experienced low fertility in the past five decades and some have reached to very low level
  - Europe TFR 2.66 in 1950s, 1.60 in 2015
  - US TFR 3.3 in 1950s, 1.89 in 2015
- Fertility in major European countries and Japan are among the lowest.
  - Spain TFR 1.32 in 2015
  - Germany TFR 1.39 in 2015
  - Japan TFR 1.40 in 2015
- Major demographically important country, China, has also reached to very low fertility level, a reversal of the trend is unlikely in the future.
  - China TFR 6.11 in 1950s, 1.55 in 2015
Total fertility Rate, 1950-2015

Consequences of Low Fertility - Slow or Negative Population Growth

- Politicians see this as “Death of the West” – caused by “demographic malnutrition” (e.g. Buchanan 2002 and others)
- Concerns about Europe’s shrinking population would lead its diminishing influence on the world stage (Longman, 2004; Wattenberg 2004).
  - 2015 - 738 million (Europe)
  - 2050 – 706 million (Europe)
- UN’s Long-term projections suggest that Europe’s share of the world’s population will be reduced to only 7.3% by 2050 (10% in 2015 and 25% in the late 19th century).
- Populations in “the West” are not sustainable without implementing more vigorous and effective immigration strategies.
In a number of countries, the number of deaths have exceeded the number of births

- Germany since the 1970s
- Italy since the 1990s
- Russia and other Eastern European nations since the mid-1990s

Immigration prevented the overall population decline in Germany and Italy

Russia and Eastern European population have been in decline for more than two decades, due to low fertility and no inflow of immigrants (UNDP, 2015; Coleman, 2015).
Consequences of Low Fertility - Ageing

- Countries experienced sustained low fertility in the past decades are ageing and some have reached to unsustainable level of ageing.

- % of aged 65+ in 2015
  - World 8.3%
  - Europe 17.6%

- % of aged 65+ will increase further, by 2050:
  - S Europe 33%
  - E Europe 26%

Coleman, 2006; UNDP 2005.
Structural Labour Shortage

- Structural labour shortages are evident in many countries, both unskilled and skilled labour force, e.g. in UK 2014:
  - Labour intensive sectors: Elementary process plant occupations (43% are migrants workers), cleaning and housekeeping (34%), and food preparation and hospitality (30%)
  - Health professionals (28%)
  - Educational sector – Natural and social science professionals (24%)
  - Other sectors…

- Similar in many other countries
Formation of Middle Class in Emerging Economies and Student Migration

- Rapid growth in major emerging economies in recent decades, especially China (to a lesser extent, India), created an increasingly important middle class (and upper middle class), who completed accumulation of wealth in a very short period of time.

- Middle class wealth → makes it possible for many middle class children to study in overseas educational institutions.

- Good education is considered as a ladder to higher social hierarchy; Western qualification is valued highly

- The number of international students from the emerging economies to major English-speaking western countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, plus other non-English speaking European countries) has grown exponentially in recent years.
Increase in international student enrolments

- **US**
  - 2005 – 564,000
  - 2015 – 975,000

- **UK**
  - 2006 – 356,000
  - 2015 – 437,000

- **Germany**
  - 2006 - 233,000
  - 2015 - 301,000

- **Australia**
  - 2005 - 160,000
  - 2015 - 270,000

Institute of International Education (2016).
Student Migration → Skilled Migration

- Global race for talents – locally qualified international students are considered to be able to better integrate in to local labour market compared with those who do not have local qualifications.

- International students are encouraged to become permanent residents in some countries (e.g. Australia skilled migration policy awards additional score for local qualifications).

- International students contribute to the host countries in two ways
  - Revenue for educational sectors
  - Reservoir of young and skilled labour force
Australia’s Skill Migration Policy – responding to sectoral labour shortage

- “Point System” skilled migration policy – rewards extra skilled points for specific occupations in designated sectors that suffer labour shortage.

- International students have also responded to the policy by enrolling in “designated degrees” in Australian universities, e.g. Accounting, IT, Nursing, Engineering etc

- Regional migration scheme – encourage migrants, skilled or non-skilled, to have permanent settlement in non-metropolitan areas, as ageing and labour shortage problems in regional Australia are even more severe due to out migration of young people to major cities, such as Sydney and Melbourne.
Australia’s Unskilled Migration Policy

- “Seasonal guest worker scheme” – Guest workers from the Pacific Islands as part of Australia’s international aids program
- “Working Holiday Maker scheme” – Australia’s agribusiness heavily relies on temporary workers, known as “backpackers” from Europe and Asia, e.g. harvest seasons in orchards or working in abattoirs etc.
- Similar to the European Union’s guest worker programs
- Recent policy proposal of increasing “backpacker” tax frustrates many agricultural business owners as the new tax would increase the costs of production and make Australia’s agricultural sector unsustainable.
Australia’s Humanitarian Migration Policy

- Refugee issues have always been very political, sometimes could influence federal election result (e.g. John Howard government was elected due to its hard line policy toward refugees, the Tampa incident)
- Current policy “Pacific Solution” – offshore detention centers in PNG. All illegal arrivals by boats (asylum seekers or otherwise) are sent to offshore detention centers. Their applications will be processed there.
- Justification of offshore detention centers – as a deterrent for illegal arrivals by boat to avoid deaths on the sea.
Australian Population Age Structure, 1993, 2013
Re-thinking International Migration

- Ageing in the West (and traditional migrant-source countries) is unavoidable.
- Studies suggested that reversal of fertility in the near future is highly unlikely (e.g. Japan)
- Global race (or war) on talents will be intensified and structural labour shortage will be persistent in the decades to come.
- Countries need to re-adjust immigration policies to proactively and strategically prepare for the forthcoming ageing of the labour force and ageing of the societies.
Thank You!