

Macro Roundup Article

Headline: [Immigration Is Both Essential and Impossible](#)

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Tweet: Martin Wolf argues the aging of rich countries with low fertility rates and the need for low-skilled in-person work will likely result in widespread "temporary contract work, without either family reunification or the possibility of citizenship."

Summary: High-income countries may have to abandon today's binary view of the options — either exclusion or a pathway to citizenship — in their own interests and those of developing countries. First, the combination of aging with low historic fertility will generate such large increases in the ratio of the old to those of working age that support for the former will become unaffordable without immigration. In Spain, for example, this ratio would collapse from 2.45 in 2020 to 1 in 2050. Second, many essential jobs are unskilled, but the workers have to be present. Care of the old is one example. Finally, none of this requires fundamental changes in attitudes towards immigrants in rich countries. But it would probably require the creation of secure digital identities for the various categories of legitimate residents. The penalties for employing people who do not possess such identities would be very high. If mass immigration remains unacceptable, but becomes essential, then something more acceptable must be found. The only likely solution is temporary contracts.

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Primary Topic: Immigration

Topics: Database, Demographics, Immigration, Important!, Op-Ed/Blog Post, Politics, Unemployment/Participation, Workforce

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