

International Development Policy Series – 14

# GOVERNING MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTHS

Challenges and Opportunities

*Edited by*  
Dêlidji Eric Degila and  
Valeria Marina Valle

**GENEVA  
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Governing Migration for Development from the Global Souths

# International Development Policy

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# Governing Migration for Development from the Global Souths

*Challenges and Opportunities*

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## Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the 14th thematic edition of *International Development Policy*, 'Governing Migration for Development from the Global Souths: Challenges and Opportunities'.

This volume presents a number of research projects and case studies from the global South that illustrate how different public policies and legal frameworks on all levels, from the subnational to the international, affect migration positively and negatively. It also addresses the links between sustainable development and migration by assessing migration policies using the '5 Ps' approach: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Importantly, the current context of migration presents its own challenges as we see a return to a new Westphalian system of sovereignty, as countries see a surge in nationalism and a rise in xenophobia, and as we struggle through the worst global health pandemic the world has seen in a century.

The thematic issue comprises contributions from about thirty authors with a broad range of backgrounds and expertise. Its focus is from regions of the global South, including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). These academics, researchers, practitioners and migration and healthcare specialists provide insights for both policymakers and researchers interested in understanding the impacts migration policies have on vulnerable populations.

The introduction to this edition provides an overview of the main themes addressed, and of the multilevel issues at stake in terms of governing migration. Chapters then wind geographically from the MENA region to Africa, on to Asia, and end with several case studies from Latin America. Each chapter touches on key issues associated with a particular region, while linking back to the global themes of governance, sustainable development and how recent developments such as COVID-19 have affected migration both positively and negatively.

The chapters on MENA and African regions look at questions of security, of mobility, of the diaspora and of growing xenophobia. The Asian context gives us a policy commentary on attracting highly skilled migrants, the impact of COVID-19 on health and migration, and how the migration of healthcare workers, specifically nurses, has been affected by COVID-19 and other recent global developments. Finally, in the Latin American case studies authors explore how migrants and migrant caravans have been affected by COVID-19, migration policies and legal frameworks. They also explore what countries are doing to achieve the migration-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), why

some countries have benefitted from migration while others have not been as successful in welcoming migrants, and the successes of and challenges facing health policies for international migrants.

These 14 diverse chapters piece together a snapshot of what migration looks like, as well as of how migration policies and frameworks have affected global migration. Given the constraints placed on travel early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, the guest editors and authors of this edition employed tremendous efforts to ensure internal peer review of early drafts of each chapter, and we thank all of them for doing so. In addition, we are grateful to two external anonymous peer reviewers, who provided input to all chapters in this volume.

*International Development Policy* also wishes to express its gratitude to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Republic and State of Geneva—Service for International Solidarity (SSI) for their financial support. Given the importance of the subject, we sincerely hope that this volume will provide the analysis of multi-level governance and the real-world case studies necessary to foster discussion by all stakeholders on how the development–migration nexus can best be served by policies and frameworks on many levels.

*The Editors*

Geneva, January 2022

## Preface

*International Development Policy* is a critical source of analysis of development policy and international co-operation trends, aimed at an audience of scholars, policymakers and development professionals. It offers a diverse range of academic views from both industrialised countries and emerging economies.

*International Development Policy* is edited by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, an institution of research and higher education dedicated to advancing world affairs. Located in Geneva, at the heart of an international centre of multilateral governance, the Graduate Institute benefits from a rich legacy linked to the founding of the international system and the League of Nations in the 1920s, and the emergence of the developing world in the 1960s.

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# Abbreviations

AAPC	All-African Peoples' Conference, Ghana
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACS	American Community Survey (of the United States Census Bureau)
AGCID	Chilean Agency of International Cooperation for Development
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMBA	Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, Argentina
AMCI	Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation
AMERM	Association marocaine d'études et de recherches sur les migrations
AMEXCID	Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AMVA	Asociación Mutual Venezolano, Argentina
ANSES	National Social Security Administration, Argentina
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASM	artisanal and small-scale mining
ASOENVEAR	Asociación de Enfermeros Venezolanos en Argentina
ASOMEVENAR	Asociación de Médicos Venezolanos en Argentina
ASOVEA	Asociación de Odontólogos Venezolanos en Argentina
ASOVEN	Asociación de Venezolanos en la República Argentina
AU	African Union
AUH	Universal Child Allowance, Argentina
BBVA	Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria
BCE	Before Common Era
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party, India
BoG	Bank of Ghana
BOP	balance of payments
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act, India
CAB	current account balance
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CAREF	Argentinian Commission for Refugees and Migrants (Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes)
CASEN	National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey, Chile
CBP	Customs and Border Protection, US
CCG	Center for China and Globalization
CELS	Centre for Legal and Social Studies (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales), Argentina
CI	confidence interval

CISAN-UNAM	Center for Research on North America, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
CIUP	Centro de Investigación de la Universidad del Pacífico
CNCPS	National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, Argentina
CNDH	National Human Rights Council, Morocco
CNR	China National Radio
COMAR	Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance
CONARE	National Refugee Commission (Comisión Nacional para los Refugiados), Argentina
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPP	Temporary Residence Permit Card (Carnet de Permiso Temporal de Permanencia), Peru
CSOS	civil society organisations
CYD	<i>China Youth Daily</i>
DACS	Directorate of Consular and Social Affairs, Morocco
DEMIG	Determinants of International Migration
DHA	Department of Home Affairs, South Africa
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippines
DNI	Argentine National Identity Card
DNM	National Migration Office, Argentina
DOH	Department of Health, the Philippines
DRDF	Demographic Research and Development Foundation
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix, IOM
EAA	Equitable Adversary Analysis
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine, the Philippines
EGP	Egyptian pound
EPH	Permanent Household Survey, Argentina
EU	European Union
EUR	euros
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	foreign direct investment
FONASA	National Health Fund, Chile
FUSINA	National Direction for Research and Intelligence of the Inter-institutional National Force, Honduras
FY	fiscal year
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, UN
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees, UN

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GHC	Ghanaian cedis
GHS	New Ghanaian cedi
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GMG	Global Migration Group
GZDDDI	Guangzhou Daily Data & Digit Institute
HB	House Bill, the Philippines
HCP	High Commission for Planning, Morocco
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLD	United Nations Second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRSS	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HT	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>
HTAS	Hometown Associations, Ghana
IAB	Artificial Intelligence and Biopharmaceuticals
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ICU	intensive care unit
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDEHPUCP	Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos, Peru
IDPS	internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development, Ghana
IFE	Emergency Family Income, Argentina
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration, South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMI	Index of Mobility Inclusion
INADI	National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism, Argentina
INAMI	National Institute of Migration, Mexico
INDEC	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, Argentina
IngVenAr	Asociación de Ingenieros Venezolanos en la Argentina
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOP	Instituto de Opinión Pública, Peru
IOS	international organisations
IT	information technology

KNOMAD	Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development, World Bank
LGUS	local government units, the Philippines
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights, South Africa
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MERCOSUR	The Southern Common Market
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa, Ghana
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
MPPS	Migrant Protection Protocols, Mexico
MTCS	money transfer companies
MTIGM	Intersectoral Working Table for Migration Management, Peru
NEM	new energy and new materials
NGOS	non-governmental organisations
NHPIM	National Health Policy for International Migrants, Chile
NNAS	National Nursing Associations
NPC	National Planning Commission, South Africa
NRC	National Register of Citizens, India
NRGS	Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat, Ghana
NTCA	Northern Triangle of Central America
OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	official development assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute, UK
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFW	overseas Filipino worker
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PAN	National Action Party, Mexico
PANAFEST	Emancipation Day and the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival, Ghana
PCR	polymerase chain reaction (for virus testing)
PDI	Comprehensive Development Plan for Northern Central America and Mexico
PHAP	Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines
PHP	Philippine peso
PJC	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Probing Violence against Foreign Nationals, South Africa
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group, South Africa

PMI	Permanent Mission of India in Geneva
PNA	Philippine Nurses Association
PND	National Development Plan, Mexico
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPP	purchasing power parity
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSOC	Philippine Standard Occupational Classification
PTP	Temporary Residence Permit, Peru
PUAM	Universal Pension for the Elderly, Argentina
R4V	Response for Venezuelans
RCPS	Regional Consultative Processes on Migration, UN
RMB	Rénmínbì, currency of the People's Republic of China
ROPAA	Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, Ghana
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAMP	Southern African Migration Project
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Packages
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
SCNU	South China Normal University
SCUT	South China University of Technology
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals, UN
SEGOB	Ministry of the Interior, Mexico
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIS	Integrated Health System, Peru
SMART	specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (indicator methodology)
SOR	safe, orderly and regular
SRE	Ministry of Foreign Relations, Mexico
SRG	Special Reference Group on Migration and Community Integration in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
SSI	Service for International Solidarity, the Republic and State of Geneva
SUNEDU	National Superintendency of Higher Education, Peru
SXI	SAMP Xenophobia Index
TTP	Thousand Talent Programme, China
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCAB	Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Chile
UG-DLP	Diaspora Linkage Programme, University of Ghana
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
UNCTS	United Nations Country Teams
UNDAFS	United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks
UN DOCO	United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVAR	Asociación Civil Unión de Venezolanos en Argentina
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOSD	United Nations Office for Sustainable Development
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UPPI	University of the Philippines Population Institute
US	United States
USD	United States dollar
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WGIS	Worldwide Governance Indicators, World Bank
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO Code	WHO's Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

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# Multilevel Governance of Migration for Sustainable Development: Perspectives from the Global Souths

*Délidji Eric Degila and Valeria Marina Valle*

## Abstract

This chapter introduces the thematic volume *Governing Migration for Development from the Global Souths: Challenges and Opportunities*. It presents the aims and scope of the volume, and a discussion on contributions to migration studies from the global Souths, in particular analysing positive and negative aspects of the multilevel governance of migration. It also provides an overview of a broad conceptualisation of sustainable development through five dimensions—people, planet, profit, peace and partnerships—before highlighting the main contributions of the individual chapters. Finally, we conclude by underlining the insights brought by a multiplicity of perspectives from the global Souths to an analysis of the complex configuration of migration governance.

## 1 Introduction

This thematic volume analyses the nexus of migration and sustainable development and how it is a key avenue of global governance. Migration has been considered a core human phenomenon in global development agendas advanced under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter, the 2030 Agenda) (UNGA, 2015), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) (Migration Data Portal, 2021) and the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, 2021)—the first adopted in 2015 and the last two in 2018. This political recognition of migration being a key issue at the international level is also materialised at the regional, national and subnational levels, even more so if the closure of borders and the existence of nationalisms and xenophobia are considered. These factors undermine the global aspiration to leave no one behind in the context of sustainable development, in which migration is also linked to economic, environmental and social dimensions. Such factors may be seen as ongoing surges in world politics, which should be analysed as cycles (Kaldor, 2018).

The 2030 Agenda constitutes the main global framework for dealing with contemporary development challenges, notably those related to human mobility. It is also the first international agenda to 'include and recognise migration as a dimension of development' (Foresti, Hagen-Zanker and Dempster, 2018, 2) and as a consequence of inequalities. About ten of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refer directly to migration-related issues. In particular, SDG 10, 'Reduced inequalities', refers to 'facilitat[ing] orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies' (UNGA, 2015). Target 10.7 was materialised in the process of the negotiation and adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco. At the same time, it is important to mention that the Global Compact's adoption was the result of decades of negotiations that had their antecedent in the International Conference on Population and Development (1984), followed by the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), the creation of the Global Commission on International Migration (2003) and the first High-Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development (2006) (Bayona, 2012; De la Mora, 2020). As underlined by Antoine Pécoud, however, the Global Compact for Migration was designed with the concern to avoid disagreements, and is grounded in the pressing need to depoliticise migration: 'This search for consensus leads to a depoliticization of migration. The GCM cannot eliminate the controversies and disputes over migration, but can reach [...] a certain level of discursive coherence in which they are neutralised' (Pécoud, 2021). Such a smooth approach is possible thanks to the coexistence of two conflicting perspectives on how human mobility should be governed: on the one hand, there is an open vision, promoted by countries from the global Souths that are mainly departure countries, and on the other hand, there is a more restrictive approach, promoted by global North countries, based on a logic of control. In this context, the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (2016) established the basis for human security as a paradigm of migration diplomacy (De la Mora, 2020). Within the framework of the New York Declaration, the international commitment of member states also led to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, 2018).

International commitments such as the Global Compact imply the operational execution of actions at different levels, from the international to the sub-national and between different governmental and non-governmental actors. This is related to the fact that 'migration should be part of regional, national and local level development planning and strategies, from initial context assessments, strategic goal-setting and planning, right through to monitoring

and evaluation' (Foresti, Hagen-Zanker and Dempster, 2018, 5). In this regard, '[the] 2016 New York Declaration and the negotiations regarding the Global Compacts have broadened the possibilities and patterns of [the multilevel governance of] migration policy' (Panizzon and van Riemsdijk, 2019, 1232). Due to specific configurations and realities, however, there are a variety of migration governance arrangements outside the global North that the field of migration studies has not yet paid enough attention to.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compacts, this volume, the 14th of *International Development Policy*, explores aspects of human mobility that are positive for sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on the global Souths and multilevel governance. This approach allows us to recognise jurisdictional levels as well as normative and empirical implications related to politics, policy and polity (Piattoni, 2010).

This chapter refers to the global Souths in the plural. This approach is not intended as simply a grammatical perspective. Above all it is a question of recognising the differences that exist between the countries that are grouped within this identity or category. The chapter connects migration effects to sustainable development in the global Souths through a multilevel governance approach. Multilevel governance in this volume is understood as the multiplicity of layers of governance that overlap at the global, interregional, regional, national and subnational levels. So, the spatial dimension of this volume refers to contributions to migration studies from the global Souths in relation to different levels of migration governance. Thus, analytical approaches from the global Souths and migration policies are studied, with particular attention being paid to differences and similarities across regions, countries and subnational territories of this geographic space.

We understand 'global Souths' as a meta category that refers to both a material and an ideational ensemble. From a geographic perspective it is associated with Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, and contrasts with the global North. It is commonly linked to socio-economically disadvantaged and less-powerful nations, often viewed as departure countries for migration. It comprises regions of the globe that have in common a political, social and economic history rooted in the inequalities of a colonial or imperialist past (Alden, Morphet and Viera, 2010). As underlined by Haug et al., the term global South is a general rubric for decolonised nations located roughly but not exclusively south of the old colonial centres of power. It has been used to discuss not only systematic inequalities stemming from the 'colonial encounter' but also the potential of alternative sources of power and knowledge (Haug, Braveboy-Wagner and Maihold, 2021). This latter aspect is of critical interest to



the present volume as we aim to shed light on how the global Souths can offer a heuristic approach to the study of migration governance.

The time frame of this volume is the current context of migration, and includes challenges such as COVID-19, the rise of nationalisms, an increase in xenophobia, the turning to a new Westphalian system, and public policies that impact migration negatively, especially in the five dimensions of sustainable development. The volume also focuses on opportunities, such as the design and implementation of public policies that impact migration positively. Again, especially in these five dimensions.

The volume is grounded in the social sciences, notably international relations, sociology, international law, public administration and economics, and uses governance as an analytical framework. Governance, though, requires definition. According to Marcela López-Vallejo, governance is inserted into the theoretical approaches of international relations that recognise the dynamism of reality, in which change coexists with rules, forms of collaboration and coordination (López-Vallejo, 2021). Drawing on its etymological origins—in Latin, *gubernator*—governance can be defined as the manner in which something is regulated. It means a self-acting contrivance for regulation, but also refers to an entity or person who steers. Governance requires some form of patterned regularity and connotes an authoritative system of rule (Biersteker, 2015). It indicates a set of rules and practices with the purpose of managing an issue. Global governance describes a process of rule-making and includes activities such as agenda-setting, negotiation, implementation, monitoring and enforcement. Its practice illustrates how a wide range of actors—notably states and international organisations—approach and deal with a policy domain or activity. The governance of migration is, on a global scale, very fragmented. There are the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compacts (Migration and Refugees), but Betts underlines that there are no formal or coherent multilateral institutional frameworks regulating state responses to international migration (Betts, 2011). The proliferation of soft law, for example, has been analysed both as a catalyst and as a symptom of global migration governance (Chetail, 2019). For Koslowski, global migration governance is divided into three global mobility regimes—namely, a refugee regime, a travel regime and a labour migration regime (Koslowski, 2011). Migration should also be analysed from a multilevel perspective, especially in relation to development.

In this volume, the concept of development is approached from a broad, holistic perspective, including aspects associated with human rights, well-being and environmental sustainability. The concept crosses sectors and involves a wide array of actors, including migrants. This multi-stakeholder

perspective acquires relevance in the framework of sustainable development, as it seeks alternative forms of governance that promote people-centred public policies. Prime examples include public policies that have been designed and implemented with migration firmly in mind and have at the same time promoted sustainable development, notably taking account of the critical contribution of diasporas, beyond the positive effect of remittances, including return skilled migration.

While it is common in the literature to find references to the negative aspects of migration, the authors of this volume emphasise the positive contribution of human mobility in countries of origin, of transit, and of destination, while still considering migration's negative effects, as suggested by Marta Foresti, Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Helen Dempster. These authors argue that 'migration is one of the defining features of the 21st century and contributes significantly to all aspects of economic and social development everywhere. It can have both positive and negative impacts on development outcomes in origin, transit and host countries—depending on the policies in place' (Foresti, Hagen-Zanker and Dempster, 2018, 1).

The nexus of migration and sustainable development is one of the key contributions this thematic volume makes to the debate. Although this interactive relationship has been studied in the literature (Gisselquist and Tarp, 2019), there are still links to be explored, especially related to the 17 objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the 23 objectives of the GCM (Foresti, Hagen-Zanker and Dempster, 2018). Addressing these links also requires analysis that takes a human rights perspective on development, not only because '[without] the protection of human rights, the human development potential of migration will be hampered' (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2014, 127), but also because the 2030 Agenda is also a human rights agenda.

This thematic volume features contributions from different regions of the global Souths. The reasoning behind this choice is threefold. First, there is a recognition in the international relations literature that regions are becoming a basic pillar of international policy due to the impact that their dynamics (threats, opportunities, diffusion of norms, learning and socialisation processes) have on the construction of global agendas (Costa, 2013). Based on the idea of concentric circles, African States used to promote regional ways of dealing with global issues (Amegan and Degila, 2016). During the diplomatic negotiations that led to the 2030 Agenda, for example, African states promoted the urgent need to protect biodiversity and an ambitious commitment to fight deforestation and desertification through the Common African Position (African Union, 2014). Second, in the migration governance literature

the regional level has been the most progressive. This is because states are willing to cooperate with each other outside the multilateral level, based on their shared common interests at the regional level, their ability to negotiate deeper commitments with fewer partners and the fact that a significant amount of cross-border movements take place within regional spaces

BISONG, 2019, 1294

Third, the consequences of migration in the global Souths have traditionally been relatively sparsely considered in migration studies (Rayp, Ruysen and Marchand, 2020). In this sense, 'building knowledge about migration governance and policy in the Global South' (Gisselquist and Tarp, 2019, 247) constitutes a priority for research and policy. As underlined in a UN report published in 2021, most of international migration is regional:

In 2020, nearly half of all international migrants resided in the region from which they originated, with Europe accounting for the largest share of intra-regional migration: 70 per cent of migrants born in Europe reside in another European country. The share of intra-regional migration among migrants originating in sub-Saharan Africa was 63 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, Central and South Asia had the largest share of its diaspora residing outside the region, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern America

UN DESA, 2020

With the above firmly in mind, this chapter answers the following questions, which also guide this thematic volume:

- What type of migration policies and programmes have been implemented in the global Souths to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the Global Compacts? How are these actions managed through a multilevel governance approach?
- What are the dimensions of sustainable development? How can public policies on migration influence sustainable development positively, beyond the positive effect of remittances? To what extent do migration policies produce negative outcomes?
- What are the main arguments of the authors of this volume, especially regarding the multilevel governance of migration, including the framework provided by the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compacts (Migration and Refugees), and the five dimensions of sustainable development? Can we identify positive and negative public policies regarding the governance of

migration? What specific spatial and temporal dimensions of migration policies designed by countries from the global Souths are addressed by each contribution? To what extent are COVID-19, the rise of nationalisms, increasing xenophobia, and a turning to a new Westphalian system—among other issues—challenges for human mobility? What opportunities can we identify from each contribution, beyond the positive effect of remittances?

These questions contribute to migration studies by underlying the relevance of the 2030 Agenda and its goals, targets and indicators, particularly indicator 10.7.2, which refers to the ‘number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people’ (UNSD, 2021, 11). Further, the aim of these questions is to identify and discuss ‘good practices’ in the global Souths.

This chapter is divided into three further sections. The first presents the multilevel governance approach and its connection to the SDGs and the Global Compacts (Migration and Refugees). Further, it proposes some analytical means of studying the differences and similarities of the global Souths in the current migratory context. The second of the three sections addresses the five dimensions of sustainable development and gives some examples of how public policies on migration can influence sustainable development positively or negatively. In the third and final section we present the various chapters of the volume through the lenses of multilevel governance and sustainable development.

## **2 The Multilevel Governance Approach: An Analytical Lens for Studying Migration and the Global Souths in the Current Framework of Sustainable Development**

Governance of migration operates through a multilevel framework involving subnational, national, regional and international (multilateral) policies. At the multilateral level, the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration, and the Global Compact on Refugees are examples of normative instruments that guide the actions of nation states and non-state actors. It is interesting to note that these normative instruments were created as a result of a series of negotiations that included a multiplicity of actors from both the global North and the global Souths. A case in point is the negotiations that led to the final text of the Global Compact for Migration. Two countries, one from the global North (Switzerland) and one from the global Souths (Mexico) took leadership roles. Switzerland hosts the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in Geneva, and Mexico hosts an important IOM office, in

Mexico City, with close links to the Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean, in San José, Costa Rica. Both countries have a history of being distinguished and active actors in multilateral arenas, but they also have something else in common: they host immigrant communities and have therefore implemented legal frameworks vis-à-vis migration.

Various dimensions of the multilevel governance approach are interrelated. As are economic, social, and environmental causes of migration. Human mobility is not new. People have always migrated to seek better living conditions, to study and gain new skills, or to flee from armed conflicts, authoritarian regimes and natural disasters, and still do. Today, we can add migration to flee the negative impacts of climate change to that list. Migration has always been linked to economic and social development, but it is usually seen as the consequence of inequalities. Mobility has increased both numerically and proportionally over time, exceeding the forecasts of international organisations. Another of the great differences between the past and the present is the current existence of normative frameworks that have been negotiated and agreed at an international level in order to make migration safe, orderly and regular. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), one of the most significant changes to the field recently concerns migration governance (IOM, 2019).

In the last three decades, international migration has increased from 2.9 percent to 3.5 per cent of the world's population (IOM, 2019). The prevailing opinion in developed countries is that migration flows have reached crisis point, against the backdrop of a rise in populist discourse and the emergence of new challenges. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reminded us of 'the political tensions associated with the field of immigration and health, highlighting the central role that nationalism, racism and xenophobia play in determining responses to communicable diseases' (Vearey, Gruchy and Maple, 2021, 1) in countries of both the global Norths and the global Souths. Thus, migration is alarmingly depicted as a threat to national security, identity, and values. Migration, though, can also be a key driver of development, particularly if one moves beyond a securitised discourse developed via international co-operation on travel security (Koslowski, 2019).

Awad and Natarajan argue that

much of the dominant discourse on migration turns on binaries: some migrants are voluntary, others are forced; some are international and others are internal; some are legal and others are irregular; and, perhaps the most formative of the binaries, some are migrants whilst others

are refugees. In actuality, people usually move for reasons of economic betterment

AWAD and NATARAJAN, 2018, 52

The authors not only criticise these Manichaeian discourses, they also make it evident that they have been imposed from the dominant global North, which ‘limit[s] or constrain[s] our knowledge, governance, and practices, particularly with regard to implications for the Global South, which makes up most of the world yet rarely receives most of our attention’ (Awad and Natarajan, 2018, 46). Deepening their analysis, they declare that ‘the dominant discourse of migration assumes that most migration happens in the Global North and ignores that movement and mobility of people had taken place in the South long before the emergence of European-like nation-states limiting migration’ (Awad and Natarajan, 2018, 52).

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Observatory on Migration, a 2014 report that ‘describes global trends of South–South migration and identifies relevant practices to harness the potential impact of South–South migration on development’ (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2014, 111), estimates that ‘roughly half of all migrants originating from Southern countries reside in another developing country’, and states, ‘South–South migration is overwhelmingly intraregional and extra regional mobility is relatively small compared to it. Nevertheless, extra regional migration represents an important trend which needs to be taken into consideration’ (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2014, 1). Moreover, the report affirms that ‘increasing South–South cooperation is creating new links among often geographically and culturally distant developing countries’ (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2014, 2).

Awad and Natarajan present more up-to-date figures, drawing from the 2017 United Nations International Migration Report, which states that the total number of international migrants increased from 173 million to 258 million from 2000 to 2017. The authors show that there is evidence that half of this increase took place in the global North and the other half in the global South (Awad and Natarajan, 2018). Specifically,

in 2017, 38 percent of international migration was from South to South countries, 35 percent from South to North, 20 percent from North to North and 6 percent from North to South. In Africa and Asia, 80 percent of international migrants headed for destinations in the two regions, the corresponding share being 60 percent for Latin America and the Caribbean

AWAD and NATARAJAN, 2018, 49

Further:

From the origin perspective, 60 percent of international migrants originating in Asia remained in the Asian continent, while the corresponding figure for Africa was 53 percent. However, for West Africa, the proportion of international migrants whose destination country was in the sub-region rose to 84 percent, seven times larger than migration to any other part of the world. Only four countries in West Africa had emigrant populations who chose an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country as their top destination. All of this means that migrants from the Global South(s) are staying more and more in the Global South(s) when they migrate. These authors forecast that the flow of South–South migration will increase in the coming years

AWAD and NATARAJAN, 2018, 49

Moreover, they state that countries of the global Souths

host 84 percent of the world's refugees, and this percentage is increasing, with the current number the highest in more than two decades. The poorest countries in the world—the least developed states or (LDCs)—host 28 percent of all refugees, and this number is also increasing. Indeed, just ten states host 57 percent of all refugees. What is clear from these statistics is that, first, the refugee issue is almost entirely confined to the Global South; and second, those least able to bear the responsibility are forced to shoulder it

AWAD and NATARAJAN, 2018, 52

Thus, paying 'more attention to migration in the South—who is moving, where, and why—is one way to change how we understand and talk about migration. It can move us toward a more accurate, effective, and just governance of migration' (ibid., 55). In accordance with this advice, a focus on South–South migration is one of the major objectives of this thematic volume.

The ACP Observatory (2014) has analysed the causes of South–South migration:

The reasons for choosing these new South–South migration corridors are often related on the one side to the tightening of European immigration policies and the proximity to the United States. [...] Furthermore, it has to be pointed [out] that the expanding economy of Latin American countries is increasingly attracting labour migrants. Finally, Latin America and the Caribbean are often considered as [...] less xenophobic and more

receptive societies, especially by African citizens. [...] Policy responses have been adopted in several countries in order to facilitate the protection of [migrants'] social and human rights although discrimination and exclusion are often reported

ACP Observatory on Migration, 2014, 7

Some of these causes are evidenced in the chapters of this thematic volume, including proximity to the United States for Mexicans and Central Americans and social policies that guarantee access to rights—such as the right to healthcare—for example in the cases of Argentina and Chile, countries that have been receiving migration from other countries of the global Souths.

Ensuring access to human rights is definitely associated with good practice in the governance of migration, not only by countries of the global Souths but in general. In a context of political and ideological tensions, migration governance has advanced through debate and thanks to the adoption of the principles of the 2030 Agenda. While some discussions focused on the use of terms to account for migration as a human process, IOM advanced the delimitation of principles through the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which requires: 1) Adherence to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights; 2) formulating policy using evidence and a 'whole-of-government' approach; and 3) engagement with partners to address migration and related issues. According to IOM, these guidelines facilitate the 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people through planned and well-managed migration policies' (IOM, 2020).

Regarding the terms to be used, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has suggested using 'governance' instead of 'migration management' because 'management is used more around control (or even containment) of migration. ["Management"] is used mainly around border management. The term governance comprises a set of regimes, structures and actors involved in human mobility' (ECLAC, 2019, 203). It is important to note that 'governance' has also garnered some critical appreciation from countries of the global Souths. With regard to *global* governance, meanwhile, López-Vallejo argues that it is assumed that governments and global actors (cities, provinces, municipalities or [non-governmental organisations]) have participation, development, financing and institutional capacity schemes that make them 'laboratories of democracy' and that they participate in 'bottom-up' governance architectures. However, in the Global South, local actors with these capacities are scarce; they are generally fragile or subject to highly centralized schemes of their national governments (López-Vallejo, 2021, 542, translation by the authors).



So, in the global Souths there are operational and capacity limitations of various kinds (including management competencies), as well as asymmetries with regard to power and to the recognition of inequalities that prevail between and within countries.

For the Mexican researcher Francisco Porras (2016), governance is characterised by being an ‘umbrella term’; since there is no consensus on its meaning, it gives ‘refuge to diverse perspectives, theories, definitions and methodologies that have elements among themselves, and [...] is identified as part of a large body of literature’ (Porras, 2016, 25, translation by the authors). Porras offers a typology that takes in various contributions to the concept and classifies them according to:

- a) their generality or degree of abstraction (governance can be seen as a theory, an analytical framework, a practice, a dilemma, a process, an interdisciplinary research program, a power technique or a socio-cybernetic system);
- b) the institutions and resources of the actors (governance can be social, private, self-organised ...);
- c) the steering capacities of the state-government (meta-governance; regulatory governance; without the presence of the state or as New Public Management);
- d) the redefinition of the public (public governance; new governance; modern governance; soft governance; evolutionary governance; etc.);
- e) new steering instruments (e-governance; information technology (IT) governance);
- f) indicators related to companies or organisations (corporate governance and organisational governance);
- g) indicators pertaining to international relations (governance as international interdependence; global and regional governance);
- h) indicators related to territorial spheres (national, metropolitan, local, multilevel and regional governance).

In the complex endeavour to understand what governance is and its respective adjectivation to understanding various interconnected problems, we consider multilevel governance to be a tool for recognising the territorial process and diversity of the global Souths. For example, Simona Piattoni (2010), who takes up the contributions of Gary Marks (1992),<sup>1</sup> recalls that the value of multilevel governance lies in ‘the transformation of the national state, both in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Marks proposed the concept of multilevel governance as a path to ‘understanding some of the decision-making dynamics of the European Union’ (Piattoni, 2010, 17).

its territorial articulation and in terms of its authoritative decision-making arrangements' (Piattoni, 2010, 3), which means that it analyses how political mobilisation (politics), policymaking arrangements (policy) and state structures (polity) 'intersect and decid[e] how they are related to one another. It also implies tackling [...] theoretical, empirical, and normative implications [in territorial jurisdictions, which] are becoming ever more relevant' (Piattoni, 2010, 9).

Territorial jurisdictions acquire importance not only through regional integration processes but also through the adoption of international regulatory frameworks. One such framework is the 2030 Agenda, within which territorialisation is promoted. Territorialisation refers to the 'process by which territorial actors appropriate the commitments adopted in the 2030 Agenda, which is made visible in the implementation of strategies and actions to advance in the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals' (Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019, 2).

### 3 Migration and Sustainable Development: Actions that Affect Migration Positively in Order to Leave No One Behind

The concept of sustainable development was defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 in its report *Our Common Future*, commonly known as the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) in recognition of the work of former Norwegian Prime Minister (1981, 1986–1989 and 1990–1996) Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Commission's Chairperson. In the report, sustainable development is described as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, 41). This definition of sustainability encompassed three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development bases its 17 SDGs on this definition, but goes further, delivering a broad conceptualisation of sustainable development through the '5 Ps' approach and its five dimensions: people (social), planet (environmental), prosperity (economic), peace, and partnerships. These dimensions are mentioned in the Preamble of the resolution 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (UNGA, 2015, 1). Migration in general and migration policies in particular can be assessed using these five dimensions, as shown in Table 1.1.

Progress in these five dimensions can be evaluated, and at the same time the dimensions constitute aspirations with regard to sustainability in a time-frame extending to 2030. Thus, our sustainability aims no longer involve only

TABLE 1.1 Five dimensions of sustainable development and their constitutive elements

Dimension	Constitutive elements/criteria for assessment
People	End poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions, and guarantee the potential of all people, with equal opportunities and in a healthy environment.
Planet	Through sustainable consumption and production and other measures, protect the planet from degradation, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change so that it can support the needs of present and future generations.
Prosperity	Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.
Peace	Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.
Partnerships	Mobilise the means required to implement the 2030 Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders, and all people.

SOURCE: AUTHORS' ELABORATION BASED ON UNGA (2015, 2)

economic, social and environmental issues (prosperity, people and planet), they also target, through 'partnerships', multi-actor solidarity, and 'peace', since it is recognised that 'there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development' (UNGA, 2015, 2).

The '5 Ps' affirm that migrants are first and foremost people. The 2030 Agenda is oriented to satisfy people's needs, from a human rights perspective and with the aim of leaving no one—especially the most vulnerable, including undocumented migrants—behind. People usually, as we have already mentioned, migrate in search of better living conditions, which have economic aspects but also social and environmental aspects. Migration due to environmental causes

is forecast to grow given the trends with regard to climate change and natural disasters. Migrants also leave their countries of origin in search of a more peaceful environment, or to flee from war. Multi-stakeholder partnerships—public, private, and public–private—are activated in order to protect migrants. Governments alone can no longer deliver effective migration policies. They need the contributions of non-governmental organisations, international organisations, civil society, business, foundations, etc., and partnerships between these actors.

Certain non-state actors—including specialised UN agencies, global and regional discussion forums, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—have gained influence in the field of migration governance. One important arena in which these actors interact is the Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPS), which encompass informal forums of governmental and non-governmental networks. The aim of the Processes is to discuss migration-related issues at the multilateral or the regional level and to create new partnerships among countries of origin, transit, and destination (Neira, 2020, 251, citing Kron, 2011). For example, the International Organization for Migration successfully developed a number of partnerships with global Souths groupings—including the African Union and the Arab League—thus contributing to the negotiation of the Global Compact for Migration (IOM, 2021).

One of the key questions guiding this volume is how do public policies affect migration positively, beyond the positive effect of remittances? As explained by Khattab and Mahmud,

One of the consequences of migrants' settlement abroad and their transnational engagement in their origin country is the development potential of migrants' remittance[s] and transnationalism. In addition to their remittance[s] as an alternative development fund, these migrants facilitate information sharing, technology transfer, foreign direct investment and so forth that together enhance their origin country's economic growth

KHATTAB and MAHMUD, 2019, 3

This can be seen, for example, in Amanda Coffie's contribution to this thematic volume (Chapter 5), in which she analyses diasporas' influence on development in countries of origin, citing—as positive aspects of migration—activities of home-town communities and organisations and 'remittances' of skills and knowledge.

Migration has another important positive effect: it is considered one of the most powerful strategies for poverty alleviation. If migrants are safe, well integrated and healthy and their rights are protected, they will contribute much more to development in their communities of origin and destination. It is thus necessary to implement social security systems that guarantee protection with regard to healthcare, that are inclusive, free of discrimination, and sensitive to contemporary aspects of human mobility, and that ensure the portability of rights and social security benefits (IOM, 2016, 4).

One way in which policy can affect migration positively is to promote education among migrants and refugees. A case in point is Rwanda, the government of which 'promoted a community-integrated approach to social services, meaning that where possible refugees and local Rwandans have access to the same services including schools' (Bilgili et al., 2019, 292). The approach, the aim of which vis-à-vis education has been the incorporation of refugees into local schools, has led to the building of extra classrooms and the provision of additional materials and educators. In the long run the aim is to allow refugees to achieve socio-economic inclusion, and to reduce their dependence on aid (Bilgili et al., 2019). As Bilgili et al. note, the 'long-term impact of refugees depends on how a response is provided to [...] increased demands [from] various stakeholders' (Bilgili et al., 2019, 293). In terms of education in Rwanda, the authors 'show that individuals who were of primary school age when the [educational] camps in their area were operational have better schooling outcomes' (Bilgili et al., 2019, 299).

In this thematic volume, contributors enumerate policies that are positive with regard to migration in, for example, South America. Gabriela Agosto and Fabiana Rubinstein (Chapter 12) give examples of public policies that are positive vis-à-vis migrants and that provide equal access to education and healthcare. Ariel González Levaggi and Luisa Feline Freier (Chapter 13) present the Argentine integration policy for Venezuelan migrants, and its benefits in terms of regularisation, the validation of professional degrees, and access to social services. In Chapter 14, Jossette Iribarne Wiff, Andrea Fernández Benítez, Marcela Pezoa González, Claudia Padilla, Macarena Chepo and René Leyva Flores analyse the formulation and implementation processes of the National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile, a policy that does not discriminate between nationals and migrants regarding access to healthcare.

Although positive migration policies can drive development, countries of the global Souths have unfortunately also implemented policies that provoke the opposite effect. In Chapter 11, René Leyva Flores and co-authors posit that border closures and other confinement measures imposed by some Central

American countries negatively affected migration, not contributing to a reduction in the spread of SARS-CoV-2 to the extent that policies in countries such as Mexico and Nicaragua—which maintained open borders and implemented more flexible mobility measures—did.

The case of China is interesting. The superpower projects an image of itself as a developing country and a partner of South–South cooperation, but some of its policies have not been favourable to sustainable development in the global Souths. For example, China has employed Chinese migrant workers in extractivist projects in the global Souths, including for gold extraction in Ghana.

From [...] mid-2000–2013, approximately 50,000 irregular Chinese migrants entered Ghana to engage in small-scale gold mining. These migrants overwhelmingly hailed from Shanglin County, in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region—an area with a tradition of alluvial gold mining, and also a nationally designated ‘poverty-stricken county’ (*pinkun xian*) that is home to the Zhuang ethnic minority group. Upon arrival in Ghana, the Chinese miners introduced new machinery and technology that dramatically increased the production of gold, although at the cost of serious environmental degradation. [...] The arrival of the Chinese miners was controversial, not least for reasons related to their legal status. According to the Minerals and Mining Act 2006 (Act 703, Section 83a), artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is reserved for Ghanaian citizens (Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, 2006). Thus, it is illegal for any foreign nationals to engage in small-scale mining operations.

BOTCHWEY et al., 2019, 310

The Chinese presence also provoked disputes between local artisanal miners and Chinese miners in relation to access to mining sites. Chinese miners were accused of displacing local miners, and of being involved in corruption, robbery, and gold smuggling (Botchwey et al. 2019, 311). The Ghanaian government did not react. This lack of a public policy is considered a public policy (by omission), in this case a negative one. While for years it seemed that the Ghanaian government was ignoring what was happening, in May 2013, pressed by the media, President Mahama established a ‘military-style task force against illegal mining’, resulting in the arrest of foreign miners and 4,500 Chinese nationals being deported or forced to leave ‘voluntarily’ (Botchwey et al., 2019, 311).

There follows a synthesis of the chapters of this thematic volume, and some observations on the relation between the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compacts (Migration and Refugees).

#### 4 The Chapters of This Thematic Volume

In addition to this introductory chapter, the volume comprises thirteen chapters, which refer to four regions of the global Souths: Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and South and Central America. These contributions were written by authors with varied experiences of migration. Either they were born in countries of origin, transit or destination, or are migrants themselves. Moreover, the contributors to the volume come from a multiplicity of disciplines and sectors, all being scholars and some having experience as practitioners or as members of international organisations. All this brings diverse perspectives to the analysis of the governance of migration from the global Souths.

In Chapter 2, Yusra Abourabi explores the case of Morocco and its liberal migration policy designed in response to the migration policies of the global North. Morocco has, Abourabi notes, become a new migratory junction that serves not only as a corridor to Europe but also as a destination for African migrants. This is due to Morocco's diplomatic efforts, which project a welcoming image to its African neighbours, and to Morocco's co-operative and humanitarian actions. However, while it is developing a positive migration policy and advocating for the de-securitisation of migration, Morocco is facing both external and internal challenges. According to Abourabi, the former include the integration of normative security approaches into the security apparatus and attempts by the European Union (EU) to externalise migration control, the latter structural weaknesses of integration and inclusiveness policies and the stigmatisation of migration in the media. The author concludes with a proposal to extend the typology of states developed by Adamson and Tsourapas (2020) by adding a new category—the 'consensual differentiation' state—which would include Morocco. The idea of this new category is expanded upon by the author in other of her works, and consensual differentiation can be seen as the autonomous quality that Morocco can employ to differentiate itself from European migration policy based on its institutions and the legitimacy of its implementation of its migration policies (Abourabi, 2017).

In Chapter 3, Daniel Naujoks offers an analysis of all current United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) adopted between 2015 and 2018 in the Middle East and North Africa region. Naujoks is particularly interested in the intersection of national migration and mobility policies, regional and global norms, and the role of international organisations and development partners. In order to measure the incorporation of migration and displacement issues into development plans and policies, Naujoks introduces the Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI). The IMI consists of three components—intensity of mobility inclusion, modality, and dimensionality of mobility inclusion—and

serves as a tool for detecting various mobility-related issues in policies and programmes. Overall, the analysis has shown that mobility realities, such as migrants, refugees, and remittances, are insufficient to explain countries' different scores on the IMI. Thus, Naujoks proposes some hypotheses as to what determines migration-related issues' inclusion in UNDAFs: mobility realities, norm creation as a result of international discourses, national priorities, and specific UN processes.

The way migration influences development in countries of origin is studied by Gerasimos Tsourapas in Chapter 4. His analysis is focused on Egypt—a state with a liberal emigration policy and the main provider of labour migrants in the Middle East. Tsourapas approaches the migration–development nexus by breaking down the migration process into three steps: exit (emigration), overseas (time abroad), and return. Since 1971, with the goal of combating unemployment and overpopulation, Egypt has changed its migration policy in order to benefit from emigration by promoting exit, encouraging the overseas diaspora to send remittances and ensuring the return of highly skilled citizens to Egypt. Tsourapas concludes with the idea that the states in the global South perceive migration as a multi-tiered process, and tailor both national and foreign policies to benefit from cross-border mobility.

From a similar angle, Amanda Coffie's analysis in Chapter 5 focuses on the influence that diasporas have on development in their countries of origin. In particular, Coffie studies the case of Ghana, its diaspora, and the way financial remittances are favoured by governmental policies over any other form of 'remittances'. According to Coffie, the Ghanaian diaspora is a major contributor to the economic development of Ghana through its contributions and cash inflows, which outweigh foreign direct investment made under poverty alleviation programmes. Through her research, she addresses the different ways in which the Ghanaian diaspora contributes to economic and community development: financial remittances (direct investments and money transfers), in-kind remittances, the activities of hometown associations, and 'remittances' in skills and knowledge. In conclusion, Coffie states that Ghana, like many African states, does not accommodate, via its development policy, the heterogeneous composition of its diaspora and the varied ways in which that diaspora can contribute to the country's development.

In Chapter 6, Jonathan Crush provides an analysis of national government responses to xenophobia with regard to migrants in post-apartheid South Africa. Crush studies the available data on the population's attitude to migrants, refugees, migration policies and refugee protection, concluding that high levels of xenophobia in society are translated into xenophobic behaviour and collective violence. Crush discusses the response of the South African



government to xenophobic attitudes to migrants, a response that can be characterised as a policy of displacement as the government denies both the fact of xenophobia and its own responsibility by displacing blame onto criminals, criminality, and migrants themselves. Crush concludes with the observation that the South African government's policy of xenophobia denialism results in its failure to fulfil its commitment under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) Objective 17 (Section) 33 'to eliminate all forms of discrimination, condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance against all migrants in conformity with international human rights law'.

In contrast to the preceding chapters, in Chapter 7 Wei Li, Ling Ma, Yining Tan and Meixin Liu examine local-level talent recruitment and retention policy initiatives. In particular, the authors focus on the talent recruitment policies established by the City of Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, China, in the period 1999–2019. The authors analyse and compare policy documents that are directed at finding ways to attract both Chinese returnees and foreign professionals. The authors note how China has shifted from being a migrant-sending to being a migrant-receiving state alongside the development of its national economy. The analysis allows us to track the evolution of the recruitment policies established in Guangzhou. Initially aimed at returnees, the policies grew to include foreign talent as the economic conditions of the city improved. Among the issues raised by the authors are the fairness and effectiveness of the recruitment process, the necessity of a feedback mechanism, and the balance between the 'race for talent' and the achievement of development goals. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the outcomes of talent recruitment policies introduced in China and in India.

In Chapter 8, Binod Khadria, Narender Thakur and Ratnam Mishra look at the relationship between migration, health and development in South Asian countries and China immediately before the COVID-19 outbreak and throughout the pandemic until early 2021. The authors shed light on and compare statements made with regard to the GCM by certain of its signatories—India, Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and China—and note statements made by Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan and Bhutan. The authors contrast the critical tone of the statements made by India with that of those made by the other countries, which recognise the positive role of the GCM. The authors then turn to an analysis of levels of economic growth and development and how they are linked to migration flows and health indicators. They note the obvious effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on world economies, development and healthcare systems, and the correlation between government expenditures, healthcare and development in general. The chapter concludes

with policy observations and recommendations with regard to migration data collection, a call for a change in India's approach to migration and the GCM, and recognition of the importance of collaboration and partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination if the GCM's objectives are to be achieved.

In Chapter 9, Jenny Lind Elmaco looks at the state of nursing in, and current trends in the migration of skilled healthcare professionals from, the Philippines. More precisely, she takes stock of the challenges faced by Filipino nurses as both frontline and migrant workers during the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case of the Philippines is unique, as the country is caught between a local labour market shortage of nurses and supplying the healthcare needs of the international community. With the aim of highlighting the nexus of migration and development, Elmaco based the research that contributed to this chapter on United Nations SDGs and complementary targets: SDG 3, on global health, and SDG target 10.7, on 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people'. She concludes with recommendations for the international community and the government of the Philippines with regard to legal framework and capacity development measures, based on the findings of assessments and interviews conducted.

Silvia Núñez García and Consuelo Dávila Pérez address, in Chapter 10, the measures proposed by Mexico between 2018 and 2020 in response to the challenges posed for Mexico's foreign policy by the migrant caravans from the Northern Triangle of Central America—Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The authors analyse Mexico's foreign policy with regard to migration and its transformation over recent years as a reflection of international development and crises. The authors pay particular attention to how Mexican migration policies and attitudes to migrants changed from 2018 to 2020 during the terms of Presidents Enrique Peña Nieto (2018) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2019–2020), especially given the pressure exerted by US President Donald Trump's Administration. In their analysis, the authors note the contradictions and lack of coherence in the Mexican government's migration policy and proposals to foster regional development.

In Chapter 11, René Leyva Flores, Karol Rojas and Belkis Aracena further this volume's analysis of migration policies in Central America and Mexico. More specifically, the authors analyse the different approaches to border closure and restriction-of-movement policies to control the COVID-19 pandemic adopted by Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Mexico—countries that share borders and a history of robust intra-regional population movement. A comparative case study and content and document analysis allows the authors to conclude that the Central American countries

implemented more restrictive mobility policies (border closures, curfews, confinement, etc.) whereas Mexico and Nicaragua did not impose cross-border or general mobility restrictions. According to Flores et al., border closures and confinement measures did not contribute to curbing the spread of COVID-19 and there was no difference in COVID-19 caseloads between those countries that implemented movement restrictions and those that did not.

Gabriela Agosto and Fabiana Rubinstein discuss the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and SDGs in Argentina along with the GCM and other public policies impacting migrants from 2015 through 2020 in Chapter 12. The authors evidence that Argentina is interested in the well-being of migrants and has developed public policies favourable to migrants by providing equal access to social services such as education and healthcare. In their assessment of Argentina's public policy, the authors recognise challenges related to structural deficits, social inequality and achieving economic and productive development and the SDGs and that these challenges were further exacerbated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors provide recommendations on developing social policies specifically targeting migrants.

Ariel González Levaggi and Luisa Feline Freier offer, in Chapter 13, a comparative analysis of the national policy responses to Venezuelan immigration in Argentina and Peru from a development perspective for the period 2015–2020. The authors review the approaches to Venezuelan displacement taken by the respective governments through the triangular relationship between state capacity, immigration and the development of policy responses. Despite the fact that governments of each country have recognised the development potential of highly skilled Venezuelan immigrants, the integration measures and policies developed by each state have been different. While Argentina has been more successful in integrating Venezuelan migrants through regularisation, validation of professional degrees and providing access to social services, Peru has only dealt with highly skilled professionals, such as doctors, as agents of development in the context of COVID-19.

In Chapter 14, Jossette Iribarne Wiff, Andrea Fernández Benítez, Marcela Pezoa González, Claudia Padilla, Macarena Chepo and René Leyva Flores analyse the formulation and implementation process of the National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile (NHPIM), as well as its short-term results, from 2014 to 2017. The NHPIM was developed as a response to the challenges economically disadvantaged international migrants with irregular status face in accessing health services in the country. An analysis of the drafting process of the NHPIM enables the authors to draw out the inclusive, participatory, representative and whole-of-society approach taken by the Chilean government. According to the authors, the example of Chile proves that the

practical inclusion of migrants in the framework of the principles of 'leave no one behind' and 'guarantee human rights for all' under the UN 2030 Agenda's SDGs is both possible and feasible.

## 5 Conclusions

It is difficult to capture migration phenomena from a global governance perspective, notably because we are living in a complex and interconnected world. Consequently, experiences from the global Souths grounded in a multilevel perspective offer an interesting way to approach migration governance, especially in relation to development. This multilevel perspective allows a comprehensive analysis that takes into consideration the global, regional, interregional, national and subnational levels, where a multiplicity of governmental and non-state actors play different roles. We have made reference here to the multi-stakeholder approach brought about by the 2030 Agenda, which, together with the Global Compacts (Migration and Refugees), constitute an example of the global governance of migration. Focusing on the global or systemic level does not mean we are living in a world where all actors play the same role. If we want to advance a more nuanced understanding of our contemporary international system, we should pay more attention to experiences outside the 'core', as human realities and policy activities are not conceived in an identical way everywhere. This is why a perspective from the global Souths is more crucial than ever before. In further research on this topic, presenting a comparative perspective on the governance of migration by countries of the global North and of the global Souths would be an important contribution. The motto of the 2030 Agenda, 'leave no one behind', is related to developing countries, but also to developed ones, and definitively to migrants, who should have their rights guaranteed everywhere.

We are certainly, today, experiencing big contradictions. On the one hand, in the present thematic volume we analyse the presence of intertwined global, regional, national and subnational policies that conform the multilevel governance of migration, which in turn opens up opportunities for migrants. On the other hand, migrants face challenges that constrain their human right to emigrate and prevent them accessing a multiplicity of other human rights, such as those related to health, education, housing and labour. All these human rights are related, as we see in this thematic volume, to the five dimensions of sustainable development, starting with the first, people. Migrants should not be left behind. This means we need disaggregated data in order to detect their

special needs and ensure there are policies to protect their access to human rights.

The current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of nationalisms, increasing xenophobia, and a turning to a new Westphalian system and other public policies analysed in this volume, most of which impact migration negatively, will remain great challenges to the multilevel governance of migration. This imposes the need to study this phenomenon from different perspectives, and in different disciplines and sectors. Although in this volume we try to provide a comprehensive approach to such challenges, much remains to be done. This volume constitutes a tribute to the people who dream of a better future away from their places of origin. Migration should be viewed as the moral horizon of a changing world.

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# Governing African Migration in Morocco: The Challenge of Positive Desecuritisation

*Yusra Abourabi*

## Abstract

As part of its new African integration policy, implemented under the reign of Mohammed VI, Morocco has developed a new migration policy. Traditionally, the Moroccan approach to migration was focused on the management of the Moroccan diaspora. Today, despite the low percentage of African migrants compared to European migrants in Morocco, special attention is paid to the regularisation of migrants coming from the South. The Kingdom of Morocco has therefore become an African migratory crossroads, not only for transit migration but also for incoming migration. While the European Union is trying to externalise the control of its borders to Maghreb countries, Morocco is striving to spread a positive and desecuritising discourse on migration to differentiate itself from Europe. This desire for differentiation is not an easy path, as this article demonstrates. It is motivated by the Moroccan will to affirm the African dimension of its identity and no longer be considered as a purely Arab-Muslim country looking to the Mediterranean region. To this end, Morocco has committed itself, as a 'champion of migration' within the African Union (AU, n.d.), to the dissemination of its own migration model over the continent and to the defence of an African vision of migration centred on continental mobility, promoting migration as a path to development and combating preconceived ideas about migration as a security problem. Overall, Morocco's foreign policy in Africa has further encouraged sub-Saharan migration, which in turn has had many positive effects. In addition to the cosmopolitanisation of several Moroccan cities, the new migration policy seems to illustrate a boost in public policies and a willingness to overcome European normative transfers through diplomatic negotiation.

## 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the reign of Mohammed VI, in 1999, Morocco has implemented a new foreign policy in Africa. Historically identified as an Arab and Muslim country, Morocco now wishes to be recognised as an African power,

in both its identity and its area of influence (Abourabi, 2016). To this end, the government has expanded its cooperation instruments, including in the fields of economy, finance, culture, religion, security, environment and migration. With regard to migration, Morocco promotes hosting African nationals, but through diplomatic efforts it must also deal with European interests. The European Union (EU) is Morocco's primary economic and political partner and expects it to play the role of border guard against irregular migration. This new geo-migratory situation worries many in Europe for whom the issue of migration has become a political obsession and an object of electoral manipulation.

From the Moroccan point of view, the development of a new welcoming approach to the governance of migration became inevitable from the 2010s onwards, as the country's desire to deepen its regional integration in Africa became apparent. Usually known as a land of emigration (14 per cent of the population live abroad),<sup>1</sup> Morocco has become not only a corridor to Europe, but more importantly a destination for African migrants. The proportion of migrants settling in Morocco for a medium or long period of time has increased sharply in the last fifteen years, making the country a real junction of migration. In order to strengthen its image in Africa, Morocco has formulated a new migration policy, advocating 'a humanitarian approach in conformity with our country's international commitments and respectful of immigrants' rights' (Maroc.Ma, 2013).<sup>2</sup> The Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad, part of the broader Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, has had, since 2013, an extended mandate including incoming migration as well. Before this date, only the Moroccan diaspora was taken into account in the migration policy. Since 2013, there has been a new strategy dedicated to inward migration. Between 2013 and 2015, this Ministry proceeded with the implementation of massive regularisation policies in record time. The new migration policy is based on an innovative discursive framework, which proposes a very different approach from that of Europe, in that it is intended both to be desecuritisising and to promote a positive outlook on

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1 According to Morocco's High Commission for Planning, using official statistics from the Directorate of Consular and Social Affairs (DACS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Morocco counted 4.8 million Moroccans living abroad in January 2019, representing 14 per cent of the total population. More than four-fifths of them live in Europe. The number of Moroccans migrating abroad has increased considerably despite the multiplication of obstacles to immigration. By contrast, in 2015, the OECD counted about 2.8 million emigrants, representing 8 per cent of the total population (HCP, 2020; OECD, 2017).

2 Unless otherwise noted, all translations of quoted material are provided by the author.

migration. In this discursive repertoire, emanating mainly from royal speeches, migration is presented as an opportunity for development and for the enrichment of Moroccan identity, rather than as a security issue. In a speech before the African Union (AU), King Mohamed VI stated that 'migration deserves a new Afro-centric approach reconciling realism, tolerance and the primacy of reason over fear' (Mohammed VI, 2017). The Moroccan discursive repertoire places particular emphasis on a humanistic approach to migration governance and on combating preconceived notions about the continent's migration statistics.

Nevertheless, in practice, Morocco faces many obstacles. The first stems from the pressure exerted by the EU attempting to externalise control of migration across its borders (El-Qadim, 2015) and the integration by the Moroccan security apparatus of normative security reflexes (Jimenez-Alvarez, Espiñeira and Gazzotti, 2020). The second relates to the governmentality of integration and inclusiveness, which, like other Moroccan public policies, shows many structural weaknesses (Lowe et al., 2020). The third is linked to the reticence marking part of public opinion, which sometimes negatively stigmatises migration in the media (Bahmad, 2015; El Miri, 2018). These three dimensions also have effects on each other.

However, for the past ten years, the emerging tension of these obstacles has led many institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs) to support the government's efforts by publishing studies and surveys that show the positive dimension of migration (including positive integration, positive stigmatisation, positive effects on social mix and economic development) (Hamdouch and Mghari, 2014). Also, thanks to its recent integration into the system of African multilateral governance, Morocco was designated 'African Champion of Migration' by the AU in 2018, positioning the country as a model and calling on Morocco to actively participate in the improvement of continental migration governance (AU, n.d.). Morocco has thus put itself in a position where it is pushed to improve its public policies.

In pursuit of such improvement, the government has participated in the creation of the African Migration Observatory. Based in Rabat since 2020 under the aegis of the AU, this observatory aims to produce quantitative and qualitative data on migration within Africa to better understand this phenomenon and to combat preconceived ideas. The observatory also aims to provide the continent with a unified source of data and to support existing initiatives across the continent to strengthen pan-African cooperation on the matter (AU, 2020). It is too soon to comment on the role that the observatory plays, but it is important to mention it in order for the reader to pay attention to its development in future years.

This chapter aims to show how and why Morocco is trying to develop a positive migration policy with regard to its geopolitical and diplomatic context. The method is both quantitative (using migration statistics) and based on a critical constructivist approach (paying attention to discourses and representations of the migration issue in Morocco). I do not use a formal model or positivist framework of analysis, although I propose, in conclusion, an opening to a discussion on the type of migratory state that Morocco represents. The research is based on a field study within the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation conducted between 2012 and 2016 as part of my doctoral thesis on Morocco's foreign policy in Africa. In this thesis, there is a specific chapter where I argue that the new migration policy results from the new African orientation of Moroccan diplomacy. After completing this thesis, I participated in several conferences of senior decision makers, including a series of meetings on Morocco's application for membership in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organised by the Amadeus Institute in three West African countries in 2018, and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Marrakech in 2018. During these events I had the opportunity to meet informally with several Moroccan decision makers involved in migration governance. I do not quote them, but it should be noted that these interviews have guided the analysis. More generally, the data used here often come from official Moroccan reports and international organisations, but they also come from the fieldwork of several other researchers. Not all of the academic references that I draw upon are produced by international researchers or publications in major Western peer-reviewed journals. A significant part of the academic literature comes from local researchers who have published according to the opportunities available to them (books funded by foundations, local academic journals, etc.). As Berriane (2018) points out, nearly 40 per cent of the literature on migration in Morocco is now produced by local researchers, who only began publishing in recent years. The references I have chosen to use are relevant for two reasons: on the one hand, they are often based on very precise and well-conducted field studies. On the other hand, they provide culturally diverse perspectives for analysis of a topic whose analysis is otherwise dominated by a Eurocentric approach that focuses on Morocco only as a country of departure (Berriane, Haas and Natter, 2015).

First, I show how Morocco is a case study worthy of interest since it constitutes a new migratory junction on an African scale. Secondly, I analyse the way in which the official Moroccan discourse on the development of the continent and the policies that accompany it carry a desecuritising and positive representation of migration. Then, I show how there is a close correlation

between this positive African diplomacy (in its actions and speeches) and the development of migration networks in Morocco composed of civil society organisations, new specialised institutions and solidarity channels constructed by migrants. Finally, I show that despite the political challenges of this policy, there is real willingness not only to attract, regularise and integrate African migrants in Morocco, but most importantly to be at the origin of an approach that is differentiated from that of Europe, which both leads to and is a consequence of political change.

## 2 Morocco: A Growing Migration Junction

A 'migration junction' is a place that exists at the crossroads of migration pathways. Naik and Randolph (2018, 3) define migration junctions as 'geographies where migration is especially influential in shaping present and future outcomes and where policymakers are likely to confront particular migration-related challenges and opportunities'. Morocco is a migration junction because it stands at the geographic crossroads of Europe and Africa and serves as a migratory gateway between the two continents. It is an important part of a transit route to Europe, encompassing a long stage in a multi-state migratory journey, and has also become a long-term destination for many migrants.

### 2.1 *A Transit Route to Europe*

Because it has become very difficult for Africans to get a visa to work in Europe, thousands of people try to cross the Mediterranean borders irregularly every year, hoping to find a better future in the global North. Irregular African migration to Europe now mirrors irregular Latin American migration to the United States (Slack and Martinez, 2021) in the sense that criminal organisations have taken control of this clandestine activity, using it for human and drug trafficking and making it an often tragic ordeal (Boyer, Lestage and Paris Pombo, 2018). Among the major land and sea migratory routes into Europe, the Western Mediterranean represented 44.7 per cent of irregular migration in 2018 (Frontex, 2021). In comparison, this route represented only 4 per cent of irregular migration flow in 2008 (Lahlou, 2018). Because many of the migrants pay as they go, they need to make enough money en route to pay for their journey, which consequently can last several years. As a result, many of them try to make a living in Morocco during that time. The estimated number of irregular migrants currently staying in Morocco is between 25,000 and 40,000 (Linard, 2017). Most of them come from West and Central African countries (*Vie Publique*, 2019).

During the past couple of decades, Europe has thus witnessed an increase in the share of other African nationalities among migrants transiting through Tangiers, Nador or Oujda, cities only a few kilometres from Spain. Already in 2002, 42 per cent of irregular migrants transiting through Morocco came from sub-Saharan African countries (51 per cent were Moroccans, and 7 per cent were Algerians or Asians). In 2006, more than 16,000 aborted emigration attempts were recorded: 58 per cent of these migrants came from sub-Saharan Africa (AMERM, 2008). This trend has continued to develop. In 2020, 17,000 African migrants landed on the Canary Islands border alone. It is also possible to enter Spain via the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Usually, migrants who reach these places and are not repatriated before the 40-day administrative detention period are immediately released into the Schengen area, even though there is a special law, adopted in 2015, that allows Spain to immediately send migrants back to Morocco instead of taking them to Spain (*InfoMigrants*, 2020).

These flows are continually increasing, even though the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are now protected by kilometres of fences, barbed wire and surveillance cameras, and despite the violent repression at the borders that is perpetuated by the Moroccan police alongside the Spanish police. Moreover, a large part of the risks endured by migrants during their journey comes from the inhospitality of the Sahara Desert, leading to dehydration, starvation, lack of healthcare and exposure to other human threats, especially against women. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) missing persons database shows for instance that a large majority of deaths are caused during the trans-Saharan journey.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the coronavirus crisis irremediably led to the closure of the borders of many states, including Morocco, and to the increase of territorial controls. These new restrictions put migrants crossing the desert under even greater threat to their security. For example, many decided to change their route, at the risk of getting lost (IOM, 2020).

Despite all these threats to the safety of migrants, African citizens continue to head to Morocco. According to the Frontex agency, Morocco was the third largest country of origin of migrants arriving irregularly in Europe in 2019. However, it is worth considering the factors behind this statistical increase. The first cause of this irregular migration is the increase in restrictions and difficulties in obtaining a visa or a residence permit to be able to enter Europe through regular channels. Therefore, the increase of migrants' insecurity and the development of associated criminal organisations is a consequence, not

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3 IOM Missing Migrants Project database, Geneva. Available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/> (accessed on 4 May 2021).

of migration per se, but of the non-facilitation, non-regularisation and non-inclusion of labour migration. Moreover, Morocco is a more ideal candidate for migration than other countries in the region, especially due to the violent experience that transiting through Libya represents (Reques et al., 2020). Furthermore, irregular migration is not increasing much more than the increase in population. Therefore, the percentage of irregular migration relative to the migrant population and the overall population is less alarming than the importance given to this matter in Europe would suggest. Finally, it should be recalled that, more generally, 70 per cent of African migratory flows take place within the continent, and that 90 per cent of the intra- and extra-African migration is regular: a statistical reality often ignored in favour of securitising migration.

### 2.2 *An Attractive Destination for Africans*

Morocco should be considered more as part of the intra-continental migration phenomenon as it has also become a semi-permanent or permanent destination for African migrants. It is difficult to gather homogeneous and up-to-date data on migrants in Morocco, because the reports are often contradictory or scattered across sources. However, based on the last survey published by the High Commission for Planning (HCP), we know that the regular migrants represent 86,000 people, i.e., 0.3 per cent of the total population of Morocco (HCP, 2020). It should be noted that this data is not consistent with an IOM report published in 2020, which estimates the regular migrant population to represent 2 per cent of the total population (IOM, 2020). In either case, Africans represent the largest community of migrants in Morocco, before Europeans. Of all foreigners in Morocco, 40 per cent are of European nationalities, 41.6 per cent come from African countries, of which 64.5 per cent are from sub-Saharan countries and 31.9 per cent are from the Maghreb (HCP, 2014). Among Africans, some nationalities are more represented than others: notably Senegalese (7 per cent of all foreigners), Guineans (2.9 per cent) and Ivorians (2.7 per cent) (HCP, 2017). Compared to European countries, migration in Morocco remains minor. However, the average increase in annual migration is 10 per cent. If we also consider the welcoming migratory policy promoted by Morocco since 2013, and the developments of its foreign policy in Africa, this increase suggests that long-term African migration to Morocco will grow significantly in the next two decades. The following paragraphs present the sociological characteristics of migrants and the reasons why their number is likely to grow.

While Morocco has one of the highest rates of students living abroad, it has become equally coveted by African students as a place to come to study. In 2012, there were nearly 15,577 foreign students from 134 countries in Morocco,



the majority of which were continental. This figure still seems relatively small, but the rate of increase in the number of foreign students residing in Morocco between 2000 and 2009 was 732 per cent (Mahamadou Laouali and Meyer, 2012). At present, student mobility is still increasing. According to the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI), responsible for granting scholarships to foreign students, there were about 12,000 sub-Saharan students from 47 different African countries enrolled in Moroccan universities in 2019–20 (Yahia, 2019). This data does not consider students enrolled in internships, in technical training or in private schools not accredited by the State. It is quite conceivable that the number of sub-Saharan students and then young graduates living in Morocco will become truly significant during the next decade. Nearly 4 per cent of these students claimed not to have plans for further migration, and intended to remain working in Morocco after their studies at least for a few years (AMERM, 2008). Many graduate students are already starting to integrate into the labour market by finding small student jobs. Although some of them chose Morocco because of the lack of opportunities in a country in the global North, half of those questioned stated that they had a link with Morocco, most often via a family member who was or is a resident there. It can therefore be observed that the networks of African students, clerics and workers who have lived or stayed in Morocco are strongly interwoven. As a UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report notes, 'For qualified Africans from sub-Saharan Africa, such as doctors, artists, entrepreneurs and traders, Morocco offers new economic opportunities for social advancement that Europe no longer offers' (UNECA, 2014, 16).

A second important migrant community is linked to religious brotherhood networks and, more generally, to the religious diplomacy developed by Morocco over the last two decades (Abourabi, 2020). Religious mobility has increased since the recognition of Sufism as part of official Moroccan Islam in 2002. Presented as a bulwark against extremism because of its mystical and spiritual dimension, Sufism has been accompanied by political and financial support for many transnational brotherhoods, particularly the Tijaniyya Brotherhood, whose founder's tomb is in Fez. This city now hosts numerous pilgrimages, religious conferences and other events of a theological nature. Moreover, this anti-extremism religious diplomacy has also motivated the creation of a training centre for imams in Rabat, which opened in 2013, and which regularly accommodates apprentice imams from many countries in the West African region. The large support given by the state to the Tijaniyya Brotherhood and the migration networks established by the latter have favoured the settlement of new Senegalese in Fez, some of whom have married Moroccan women. According to a study on Ivorian migrants, it appears that

'Morocco has become a reference, even a model, in the eyes of Ivorian Muslims and more particularly the Tîjanes community [...] In Côte d'Ivoire, these students sometimes present themselves as true scholars of Islamic sciences and participate, in their turn, in the propagation of Malekite Islam in the country' (Bamba, 2015, 75–76). Therefore, more religious people choose a long-term stay in Morocco because it consolidates their 'theological cv'. This flow then leads to other flows of domestic workers, trade and construction manufactures workers, and businessmen (Berriane et al., 2013).

All this data does not consider the irregular migrants who have settled in Morocco, but it should be noted that this category is also relevant to consider. Because many undocumented migrants are young and educated, they try to blend in with sub-Saharan students, and learn about the opportunities that may be available to them. Conversely, some students find themselves in a situation of administrative irregularity and are unable to renew their visas, which leads them to turn to the solidarity networks frequented by undocumented migrants. Moreover, the nationalities of undocumented migrants coincide with those of students and religious people living in Morocco, and some of them have the same level of education. Around 48 per cent of undocumented migrants in Morocco have primary education, 36 per cent have secondary education and 16 per cent have higher education. Both groups sometimes live in the same neighbourhoods, sometimes share the same conditions, and some of them have employment opportunities in similar sectors such as the medical and paramedical sector, call centres, the press or IT, due to their level of French and their specialised studies, even though the unemployment rate of Moroccan youth is 22 per cent (Peraldi, 2012).

The general picture I have just painted is intended to show two things: that sub-Saharan migration to Morocco is largely motivated by training (educational or religious) and skills exchange, and that it involves diversified labour migration. The socioeconomic characteristics of these migrants show that Morocco is a destination and not a default choice or simply a transit route. It is therefore not a site of 'parking' migration as is the case for Libya, since most migrants aspire towards professionalisation, regularisation and integration. This means that their migration project is part of a long-term process. This embedded process (one flow attracts another through community networks and family links) is comparable to the creation of the first European migratory hotbeds, which further supports the idea that this inward migration to Morocco is more likely to grow and become a settlement migration, especially since the government has supported this mobility of students, members of religious orders and workers by relaxing the laws on entry and conditions of stay for Africans. Indeed, Morocco's migration diplomacy tends to promote

a welcoming image in Africa, as the following section demonstrates. I have sought to show so far how immigration in Morocco is a case study worthy of interest. I will now focus on demonstrating the desecuritising dimension of Moroccan migration policy, as well as the diplomatic reasons for this willingness to welcome migration.

### 3 Morocco's African Diplomacy Desecuritising Migration

#### 3.1 *From Regional Integration to Visa-Free Travel*

At the diplomatic level, Morocco promotes a welcoming image toward its African neighbours through a set of speeches and sectoral policies referring to 'South-South' cooperation and humanitarian action. South-South cooperation refers to a system of economic, cultural and technical exchanges that emphasise solidarity rather than profit (Simplicio, 2011). To claim its new role in South-South cooperation, Morocco's first symbolic act was the debt cancellation of the least developed countries in 2000. In addition to development aid, food and health convoys were sent to fifteen African countries at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. This aid included masks, hydroalcoholic gels, chloroquine (during the first few months of the crisis), and other essential medicines, and was flown in when the borders were closed (*Le Monde*, 2020). This required special logistical and financial efforts in a context where states were ensuring their own health security first. These actions of solidarity have reinforced the recognition of Morocco's Africanness and consequently have helped to shape its image as a welcoming country.

To strengthen the South-South cooperation framework, King Mohammed VI has undertaken several state visits to African countries over the last twenty years and conducted dozens of interministerial or public-private cooperation agreements. These agreements cover agriculture, construction, electrification, training, finance, trade, banking, transport and telecommunications, among other sectors (Abourabi, 2020). After twenty years of intensive bilateral diplomacy, Morocco re-joined the African Union in January 2017 (Abourabi, 2017b), then applied to join ECOWAS in February 2017 (Abourabi, 2019a; 2019b). All this has also involved agreements concerning the mutual suppression of entry visas with many African countries, particularly West African countries. Moreover, the demand to join ECOWAS itself showed that Morocco was willing to integrate a free migratory region.

Many nationalities have benefited from consular facilities in order to travel to Morocco. This is the case of the Senegalese, in the first place, who do not need a visa to travel to Morocco, and who also have the right to reside and

work there, according to a convention signed in 1964. Other nationalities have more recently benefited from mutual visa suppression as part of Morocco's continental integration. This is the case for Guinea Bissau (2015), Ghana (2017), Mali (2018), Guinea (2018), Congo (2018), Togo (2018) and Burkina Faso (2020), among others. While Morocco was asking to join ECOWAS, several voices were raised to share their fear of a 'migratory wave' toward Morocco should the application be successful.<sup>4</sup> Yet at that time, Morocco had already abolished visas for 11 of the 15 countries in the organisation without causing an undesirable or uncontrollable flow of regular migrants, which shows not only that these fears were unfounded but most importantly that diplomacy was given priority over the concerns of other national decision makers. It also shows that although Morocco is often referred to as an 'illiberal' state, a consensual concept that follows on from the concept of 'authoritarianism', it is a state composed of diverse actors with differing points of view, all of whom have some degree of influence over the actions taken by the government.

### 3.2 *A Dynamic Migration Diplomacy*

While pursuing its foreign policy in Africa, Morocco is helping to disseminate a positive discourse on migration at the international level. The first spearheading of this policy was the launch of the 'African Alliance for Migration and Development' initiative on the sidelines of the United Nations Second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) that took place in October 2013. Let us recall that the goal of this multilateral discussion is not only to identify ways to maximise the positive impacts of migration for both migrants and countries, but also to strengthen international cooperation on the matter. According to King Mohammed VI, this initiative was based on 'an African vision and humanitarian principles to govern migration issues. It is also based on the shared responsibility between countries of origin, transit and host countries, and on the close link between immigration and development' (Mohammed VI, 2013). Therefore, the Moroccan representatives promoted the construction of a new African architecture to manage migration issues, characterised by a multidimensional approach, focusing more on 'human' rather than security issues. The initiative proposed to rely on regional organisations such as ECOWAS or AMU (Arab Maghreb Union) to develop a common institutional and legal framework, aimed at protecting the rights of migrants, and to strengthen political dialogue between state actors, the private sector and

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4 These fears were shared by several Moroccan policymakers and civil society representatives on the margins of a series of conferences I attended, and during informal interviews I conducted in Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in 2018.

civil society. Migration was presented not as a security problem, but as ‘a catalyst for development and a factor in bringing nations closer together’, while fundamental rights were described as ‘one of the fundamental points of the Moroccan vision through this “Alliance”’ (Amrani, 2013). Moreover, the initiative also addressed the shared responsibility of the EU in strengthening positive cooperation over the matter.

Despite its ambitious character, unprecedented and, above all, in line with the development/migration nexus promoted in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the initiative did not immediately lead to a concrete mechanism. Indeed, at that time, Morocco had not yet developed a migration policy aimed toward arrivals and had yet to face critical reports of violence perpetrated against irregular migrants transiting its territory, including those presented in the 2013 report of Morocco’s National Human Rights Council (CNDH, 2013). These seem to be the main reasons why this national migration policy was announced in September by the king and put rapidly into place a few months later, in December 2013.

The new migration policy started, as mentioned in the introduction, with the creation of a ministerial department in charge of migration affairs entrusted to the Ministry delegate in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad. Four sub-commissions, respectively in charge of the regularisation of illegal foreigners, the regularisation of statutory refugees, the upgrading of the legal and institutional framework relating to migration, asylum and trafficking, and diplomatic cooperation in migration matters, were also created. These institutional upheavals enabled the development of a governmental mechanism not only centred on the application of royal directives, but also based on a shared governance with civil society. Only a month after the launch of the new policy, the first residence permits for refugees were granted. A draft law on asylum was also drawn up for the first time, based on the principles of the 1951 Geneva Convention (ratified by Morocco in 1957). The objective advocated by the government was to provide ‘protection to any foreign person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, nationality, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’ (Debbarh, 2014). All this shows how much political will there was to put in place a policy welcoming migration quickly.

Indeed, following the launch of this policy, three massive regularisation campaigns were organised in 2014, 2016 and 2017. In 2014, almost 18,000 undocumented migrants out of approximately 35,000 applicants were regularised following a massive and exceptional campaign. Most of them came from sub-Saharan countries, in particular Senegal, Niger, Cameroon and Guinea (Chakir Alaoui, 2015). Applicants had to meet the following criteria: they either

had to have lived five years in Morocco, to have concluded a marriage with a Moroccan, to have a work contract, or they had to have a serious illness. The regularisation campaign has also been extended to all migrant women who requested it: there were 5,060 of them in 2015. In 2016, some 25,000 migrants were regularised (Berrissoule, 2018). In 2017, 28,400 migrants were regularised (Ghazouani, 2019), representing almost 90 per cent of applicants. The same year, Morocco also adopted a law on the fight against human trafficking and launched the legislative adoption process of two draft laws on asylum and immigration. It is important to note that although these campaigns were presented as targeting mainly sub-Saharanans, many Syrian refugees benefited from them as well.

The following years were dedicated to promoting these national efforts at the international level and making a place for Morocco in the international migration governance system. In 2017, shortly after Morocco's readmission to the AU, King Mohammed VI was designated 'Champion of Migration' by the organisation. This title gives Morocco a role in the formulation of a roadmap for African cooperation on migration, and more generally in the improvement of the continental governance model in this area, to better protect the security of migrants, states and their interests vis-à-vis Europe. It is important to note that at the same time, Morocco was co-organising with Germany, in their capacity as co-chairs, the 2018 edition of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Morocco had already participated in the previous editions, showing a strong and committed interest in making this approach to governance work. By 2018, the city of Marrakech was hosting both the GFMD and the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. These conferences led to the signing of two major agreements: the Marrakech Pact and the Global Compact for Migration, respectively. Even though these documents are not legally binding and are still criticised, they mark an important step forward in the history of global migration governance because they contribute to international accountability in addressing development and human rights issues through global dialogue (Oelgemöller and Allinson, 2020). Moreover, these events drew much attention to Morocco, which reinforced the government's conviction that the country has a role to play as a model of migration governance at the continental level.<sup>5</sup> Projected in the light of the major multilateral conferences since 2018,

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5 A report published by the Ministry of Migration stated that 'At the international level, the National Immigration and Asylum Policy has become a regional model of responsible and solidarity-based management of the migratory phenomenon' (Ministère chargé des affaires de la migration, 2017).

Morocco has no choice but to ensure that its migration policy meets its own international commitments. The following section demonstrates how this positive declaratory diplomacy has helped to normalise the presence and visibility of migrants' identities in Morocco.

### 3.3 *The Positive Affirmation of Migration in Morocco Linked to Its African Diplomacy*

As a result of this migration diplomacy, the number of migrants continues to grow, but most importantly the existing migration communities seem to have found more legitimacy in their presence and therefore asserted their visibility. Several West and Central African community areas have emerged in Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Tangiers, Oujda, Fez and Laâyoune. These neighbourhoods are also witnessing the multiplication of migrant support associations as well as informal places of worship, mostly Pentecostal, Protestant or prophetic (Bava, 2016). These house churches are set up inside the buildings where migrants live (Coyault, 2014). The whole Christian religious landscape of West and Central Africa seems to be represented in this network of informal churches. They are essential for the migrants because they often offer them all types of assistance (Coyault, 2015). Similarly, in certain Moroccan markets, the presence of African arts and crafts demonstrates the development of supply chains that follow the movements of migrants. These transformations confirm the normalisation of the migratory presence in Morocco.

Gradually, the non-concealment of the religious practices of Christian communities in Morocco has led to the revitalisation of official churches, especially evangelical churches with a Pentecostal dominance. It has been estimated by a member of the Mowafaqa Institute<sup>6</sup> in 2019 that the official churches gather a total of 30,000 faithful. The main nationalities represented are from Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Central Africa (Coyault, 2014), countries located in the area of cooperation favoured by Morocco (Abourabi, 2020).

The effect of Morocco's cultural diplomacy on migrants' social affirmation has been raised by many observers. The formulation of a migration diplomacy mainly focused on African countries will gradually become a leitmotif of migration policy at the domestic level, in line with the international commitments made by Morocco and the role it advocates. The nationalities represented in the social spheres vary according to the cooperation agreements

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<sup>6</sup> The Mowafaqa Institute is an ecumenical theological institute founded by the Catholic and Protestant Churches in 2012. It is based in Rabat.

signed by Morocco. This trend can be applied to many categories of migrants. Their nationalities depend of course on the economic and political context of their country of origin, but their assertiveness and visibility in the social and professional fields also coincide with the state of Morocco's relations with their country. Another example is the growing presence of Muslim pilgrims among African migrants, resulting not only from the consolidation of the links between the crown and the transnational Sufi brotherhoods, but also from the development of religious diplomacy at the regional level, discussed in a previous section.

Positive affirmation means here that migrants do not need to hide or experience repression of their identity. The examples given are linked to religious expression, but they could also have been other kinds of identity claims. The expression of religiosity seems, however, to be the most illustrative of the gap between the normative structures within Moroccan society, and the normality with which these norms have changed. Before the advent of the reign of Mohammed VI in 1999, Morocco was a country whose official Islamic institutions were close to the Salafi movement and did not recognise the Sufi Way. It was also a country in which the expression of the Christian faith was perceived as abnormal or reserved for Europeans within the limits of their discretion. The most curious or open-minded Muslim Moroccans did not dare to enter churches for fear of being associated with Christians and repressed accordingly. Today, this era seems very distant. Through the examples I have given, I argue that the presence of migrants is not hidden, and contrary to a common belief that migrants tend to hide, their strong presence is expressed positively through the visibility of their identities. My hypothesis here is that this normalisation is the result of a declaratory diplomacy favourable to migration.

#### 4 The Positive Effects of Desecuritising Migration in Morocco

There are many positive effects of desecuritising migration: in addition to the active participation of migrants in the economy of host countries, cultural diversity often acts as a factor of tolerance and mutual understanding. In the case of Morocco, all these consequences apply, especially the latter. This integration is neither sufficient nor homogeneous. Nevertheless, through their encounters with other African nationalities, many Moroccans (most of whom have never travelled across the continent) get to know new cultures and integrate new habits. When talking about Africa, King Mohammed VI has also stated that: 'all these constructive actions in favour of immigrants have thus precisely reinforced the image of Morocco and strengthened the ties that we



had already established' (Mohammed VI, 2017). As pointed out earlier in this chapter, in quantitative terms, this regular migration to Morocco appears to be marginal (between 0.3 per cent and 2 per cent of the population). However, in qualitative terms, and particularly in terms of its impact on Morocco's sociopolitical and diplomatic developments, this phenomenon is one of the most decisive of the current decade. The following sections will attempt to demonstrate this through two aspects: firstly, African migration constitutes a major regulatory lever with the EU and has enabled Morocco to differentiate itself from the European approach, without alienating Europe. Secondly, in comparison with other national issues subject to strong civil society involvement, migration has led more than others to the practice of multi-level governance.

#### 4.1 *Overcoming European Normative Transfers through Diplomatic Negotiation*

Through its declaratory diplomacy advocating inclusive migration and its active participation in multilateral processes, Morocco has learned to resist the normative frameworks that the EU wishes to impose. These include the EU's desire to externalise control of its borders to Morocco. It should be recalled that since the early 2000s, the European Union has put pressure on Morocco to become a buffer state that protects European borders from immigration (El-Qadim, 2015). Spain accused Morocco of not controlling its own borders and tolerating the passage of migrants. The objective of the Spanish government is to enforce an agreement drawn up in 1992 on the readmission by Morocco of any illegal migrants who have transited through its borders. These agreements consist in making African countries accept the return not only of their own citizens to their soil but also of migrants from third countries who have transited through their territory. For Morocco, this would mean the readmission of all sub-Saharanans who have already arrived in Europe but who have been arrested by the authorities, which Morocco refuses. This matter is a recurrent source of tension between the two countries (Arab, 2018; Larramendi and Bravo, 2006). The Moroccan government has agreed to readmit Moroccan citizens arrested at the border, but still resists the admission of other nationalities (Michalska, 2020).

The equilibrium with Europe is sensitive for both actors. It should be recalled that Morocco's diplomatic relations with Europe are part of continuous cooperation since 1963. Morocco gradually became the first beneficiary of the European financial envelope for the Maghreb in 2013. The new Action Plan for the implementation of the Advanced Status (2013–17) confirmed the special EU-Morocco relationship formalised by the initial granting of Advanced Status in 2008, as the financial envelope dedicated to the projects continued

to grow until reaching EUR 389 million in 2019. It can therefore be said that Morocco's economic development through growth has been strongly supported by European aid, loans and investments. Morocco recognises through this advanced status relationship that Europe can be not only a strategic ally or an economic partner, but also sometimes an institutional and normative model. Thus, the advanced status serves as a framework for strengthening bilateral relations: political consultation, inclusion of Morocco in European energy and transport networks, harmonisation of regulations, and strengthening ties between public and private actors.

The advanced status has also been used by Morocco to its advantage when negotiating migration issues. In order to put pressure on Morocco, the European strategy consists in using development aid as a lever for a 'carrot and stick' policy, meaning conditional aid (Belguendouz, 2005). Given that the EU wants to convert its neighbours into buffer zones at all costs, its strategy has consisted in introducing readmission agreements into trade agreements that were not directly linked to this issue.

The EU has thus proposed action plans to facilitate Morocco's takeover of migration management. Since the signature of its advanced status with the EU in 2008, Morocco has become the first beneficiary of aid for border management with Europe's neighbouring countries. However, Moroccan policy makers try to balance this policy. They have agreed to work together with the Spanish authorities through the establishment of joint surveillance patrols but continue to refuse the application of agreements for the readmission of migrants on their soil. They have also signed bilateral readmission agreements with many European countries (Italy, France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands), but voluntarily applied these agreements in an irregular manner (Martínez, 2009). Faced with Morocco's reticence regarding such provisions, the EU has redoubled its efforts to include the migration issue in many sectors of Moroccan-European cooperation (El-Qadim, 2015). One such cooperation sector is police capacity building. Between 2018 and 2020, Morocco received EUR 343 million in European aid to strengthen its police capacity. In 2019, new cooperation programs worth EUR 389 million were allocated by the European Commission in support of border management.<sup>7</sup> When this kind of agreement reveals itself to be not decisive enough, the EU resorts to compromises during direct negotiations. This was the case for example in December 2020, when European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson travelled to

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7 343 million EUR = 411 million USD, 2018 conversion; 389 million EUR = 445 million USD, 2019 conversion.

Morocco with a mandate to negotiate readmissions in exchange for visa facilitation. Despite these actions, the government continues to resist. In 2020, the governor in charge of migration and border control at the Ministry of Interior reaffirmed that 'Morocco is not in a logic of subcontracting'.<sup>8</sup>

How does Morocco try to resist European pressure without alienating such a strategic partner? Among the cooperation agreements between the EU and Morocco, there are several very sensitive fishery agreements. Negotiations on the exploitation of fishing resources off the Moroccan coast have always been subject to a balance between ratification and rejection since the signing of the first Spanish-Moroccan agreement in 1977. The main problem that arises is the definition of the maritime or land space within which exploitation is allowed, specifically whether or not the 'Western Sahara' is included as Moroccan territory. The agreement leads to different results at each renewal, which leads to constant negotiation between the two actors. The EU uses recognition of Morocco's authority in the Sahara provinces as a lever for negotiation, while Morocco uses the migration argument to protect its interests. This was notably the case in early 2017, after the European Court of Justice ruled in the last instance that the Agriculture Agreement does not apply to the Western Sahara. The Moroccan Minister of Agriculture had stated that the EU was facing a 'real risk of resumption of migration flows that Morocco, through a sustained effort, was able to manage' (Carretero, 2017). This had been interpreted as a threat that Moroccan forces would relax migration control. The following year, during a working meeting with the services of the commission on the fishery agreement, Moroccan representatives also stressed that:

the support provided by the EU is modest compared to what the Moroccan government is investing in the region through very ambitious regional plans. [...] Some of them also stressed the need to increase catches landed by EU vessels in the region, which would allow the local industry to develop further and create jobs for the local population, while cushioning the impact on employment resulting from the increasing sub-Saharan migration in the territory.

European Commission, 2018, 32

These discussions reveal that migration negotiations are not only about migration, and that many other issues are used by both partners as a lever of pressure.

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8 Declaration of Khalid Zerouali, governor in charge of migration and border control at the Ministry of Interior (*Le Desk*, 2020).

The scope of these issues and the interdependence between both actors are such that they tend, positively, to maintain a good level of mutual understanding and avoid hostility. Another example of the instrumentalisation of migration as a lever in the power relationship between Morocco and its European partners is the Ceuta crisis in May 2021. In protest against Spain hosting Polisario Front leader Brahim Ghali for medical treatment, Morocco relaxed its border controls, allowing some 10,000 irregular migrants to cross into Ceuta (*Africa News*, 2021). In response to Morocco's reaction, Spain acknowledged that Brahim Ghali faces a series of legal actions and must stand trial before leaving Spain (Kasraoui, 2021). On the one hand, while trying to resist European migration policy, Morocco inevitably internalised part of the normative framework that presents the immigrant as a security scourge that threatens Europe. Its resistance to readmission agreements therefore could not prevent the export of the European model of migration management: strengthening border control, intelligence against the trafficking of migrants, capacities development in the field of asylum, and many other practices that are taken up by the Moroccans. Many times, official media have emphasised the urgency of dealing with the migratory 'threat'. On the other hand, Morocco is clearly trying to differentiate itself from Europe, especially since its designation as Champion of Migration by the African Union. At the Intergovernmental Conference on Migration held in Marrakech, to which all UN state actors were invited, the royal speech confirmed this position. Mohammed VI declared:

Migration is not a security issue—nor should it become one. A repressive migration policy will not be a deterrent. Through some perverse effect, repression deflects migratory dynamics, but does not stop them. Migrants' rights cannot be ignored simply because there are security concerns. Their rights are inalienable. The side of the border on which a migrant stands does not make him or her more or less human. Addressing security concerns should go hand in hand with socio-economic development policies which tackle the root causes of risky migration. Finally, security concerns should not be invoked to deny mobility. In fact, the latter can be turned into a lever of sustainable development, at a time when the international community is seeking to implement the 2030 Agenda.

MOHAMMED VI, 2018

This shows that even though Moroccan migration policy is often described as exclusively reactive to its own geopolitical interests (Benjelloun, 2020), the way in which this policy is conducted with its partners, on the contrary, shows a proactive dimension. The Moroccan policy has gone so far as addressing

relatively new migratory movements (Cherti and Collyer, 2015). This type of timid discourse, non-existent some fifteen years ago yet increasingly clear-cut for the past five years, reveals a real affirmation of Morocco's interests in the face of European interests, thus strengthening the country's diplomatic voice.

With the advent of African diplomacy and its migratory component, Morocco is, now more than ever, at the centre of a relational mechanism, and must combine all its interests: continue to develop its partnership with the EU while resisting the pressures concerning readmission; encourage African migration to Morocco while having the capacity to control the routes of migrants entering the territory; and encourage regional integration while having the capacity to control the geopolitical and security issues that are gradually emerging. Morocco is thus a migration state in the whole sense of the term, and not only a transit state, even though as already stated many times in this chapter, the quantity of migrants entering legally is relatively small. The concept of transit migration was introduced by various organisations during the first processes of the externalisation of EU migration policies during the 1960s. Thus, this conceptual category carries a very strong normative burden since it has made it possible to legitimise the need to share responsibility for migration control with transit countries. As a result, Morocco has progressively stood up for itself and become an example to show that EU externalisation policies should not lead to readmission and that a migration state should not only be perceived as a transit state.

#### 4.2 *A Booster of Integrative Public Policies*

The second positive effect is that a migration policy, as a public policy, was born and developed in a concerted manner with diplomacy, civil society actors and other ministries. In a context where Morocco, in the midst of a democratic transition since the Arab upheaval in 2011, is seeking to improve the efficiency of its public policies, the difficulties encountered in the implementation of this migration policy on a domestic scale have favoured the gradual emergence of a new mode of 'internal-external' governance.

According to Natter, Morocco conducts a liberal migration governance because it is an illiberal regime. She argues that '[i]n Morocco, political power remains concentrated within the *Makhzen*, a network of politicians, families, and businessmen centred around the King' (Natter, 2018, 7). It rather seems that, on the contrary, migration policy illustrates a liberal way of practising public policies. In fact, Natter contradicts her own terms when she rightfully asserts that the Moroccan state 'is not a uniform, rational actor, but consists of fragmented institutions that can pursue multiple, potentially contradicting

goals' (Natter, 2018, 13). Indeed, the Ministry of Interior, in charge of national security and thus the border police, has a much more securitising vision of migration compared to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, which sees primarily the diplomatic benefits of migrants' protection.<sup>9</sup> Both institutions have enough prerogatives to balance policy practices on their side. The fact that the king's power and political style have made it possible to energise regularisation policies does not change a much more important aspect: the fact that this migration policy, in its rules and practice, has also been built in a dialectical way with the recommendations of civil society.

Indeed, the National Human Rights Council (CNDH), a public institution that submits its annual reports directly to the king, has established itself as one of the main levers for public action in the field of migration policy in Morocco. For them, Morocco cannot allow its relations with its African sister countries to be damaged by the repressive practices of the Moroccan authorities toward migrants. One of their reports states that 'this issue of migrants must also be dealt with on a regional level' (CNDH, 2006, 8). These recommendations provide a better understanding of the geopolitical representation of Moroccan actors. The fact that an institution dedicated to human rights considers the diplomatic interests of the country and reports directly to the king also shows the extent to which it is integrated into the migration governance process. It should also be remembered that it was following a CNDH report (2013) whose recommendations were based on field studies conducted by local CSOs, that the new migration policy was defined.

Such integration of civil society in the decision-making process has not always been possible. Between 2000 and 2010, the public authorities reacted ad hoc to each migration phenomenon, without consultation or a global vision of the migration policy to be adopted. In 2003, a first law on the status of migrants was enacted and the government committed itself to implementing the provisions of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. In 2007, the government signed a headquarters agreement with the High Commissioner for Refugees, while continuing to increase border control and arrests to meet European requirements. These arrests were often characterised by the practice of violence against migrants and non-respect of their fundamental rights, even though Morocco had signed and ratified the main international conventions

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9 Informal interviews conducted by the author with representatives of both institutions in the margins of a conference held at the International University of Rabat, 2018.

on human rights and migrants' rights, such as the Geneva Convention and the Palermo Protocol.

Today's evolution points toward the idea that Morocco is more likely to have a sustainable migration policy and to act on its engagements. The recommendations of the National Human Rights Council finally found a favourable echo within the palace. The king immediately invited the government to draw up a new global policy on immigration issues following 'a humanitarian approach in line with our country's international commitments and respectful of the rights of immigrants' (Mohammed VI, 2013). Between 2013 and 2020, the migration policy has constantly involved not only the CNDH but also, indirectly, multiple migrant defence CSOs (Groupe Antiraciste de Défense et d'Accompagnement des Etrangers et Migrants, Association des Amis et Familles des Victimes de l'Immigration Clandestine, Association des Sans-papiers et Demandeurs d'Asile au Maroc, Rassemblement des Réfugiés Ivoiriens au Maroc, etc.). The peculiarity of the regularisation campaigns is that they emanated from high royal instructions and had to be conducted quickly, efficiently and on a large scale. They were therefore extraordinary in every sense of the word. As Benjelloun (2020) observes, following her fieldwork at the Ministry delegate, in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs during the 2016 regularisation campaign, not only were many state agents and financial means mobilised to quickly regularise the greatest number, but above all, these agents showed the greatest possible flexibility regarding the criteria for regularisation that they had set themselves. She notices that '[t]he obsession with numbers was such that the foreigners' offices regularized migrants while knowing full well that the documents they have provided are falsified. Far from being anecdotal, the extent of this phenomenon is surprising' (Benjelloun, 2020, 12–13). The main reason for this flexibility seems to lie partly in the government's willingness to respond to the criticisms and recommendations of human rights organisations. This dynamic shows that Morocco could be an example to the neo-institutionalist argument that the State open their migration policy because of domestic pressure.

Never have so many associations in favour of the rights and living conditions of undocumented Africans been developed as in recent years. The public policies in Morocco that integrate so many civil society actors in the evaluation and decision-making process and are so quick to implement in the short term are less common. No other public policy is both so energised by a diplomatic projection and shaped by domestic multi-actor governance. This is a positive gain that deserves to be highlighted. It should not obscure the fact, though, that there is strong criticism regarding the treatment of irregular migrants by law enforcement agencies. However, as Cherti and Collyer reminds us:

Morocco has become the focus for much of this critique, not because its policy is unusually bad but because the activities of civil society and foreign researchers are unusually unrestricted—certainly compared to Algeria, Libya or Egypt, where the treatment of migrants is worse but there is a very limited evidence base on these issues.

CHERTI and COLLYER, 2015, 591

Comparing Morocco to its neighbours is not the only tool for measuring the dynamism of this governance (including its capacity for openness to civil criticism). The comparison of migration policy with other domestic public policies shows that migration is subject to a more integrative form of governance. For example, there is a strong associative activism focused on gender equality that may have driven social change, but it did not lead to a decisive response from the government (Ennaji, 2016; Lambert, 2017). In the case of migration, government representatives went so far as to organise, with civil society organisations, campaigns to attract and convince the hidden and reluctant migrants to regularise (Benjelloun, 2019). Again, in comparison to gender policy, the government does not conduct campaigns, for example, to encourage women to file complaints of rape or domestic violence. Yet again civil society activism over this particular matter is quite significant (Massoui and Séguin, 2020). All these observations tend to show that, indeed, Morocco's migration policy is playing the role of a booster in public policies.

## 5 Conclusion

Morocco provides an interesting case study to exemplify how the global South responds to migration policies in the North. According to Adamson and Tsourapas (2020, 862), Morocco fits well into the category of 'developmental state',<sup>10</sup> defined as a state that 'challenges the overwhelming focus on immigration by pointing to the important role of emigration and labour export in the economic development strategies of democratic and non-democratic states in the Global South' (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2020, 863). Yet this chapter was aiming to show that the government's attention to its migration policy demonstrates just the opposite. Morocco does not fall either into the authors' two

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10 The authors redefine the concept of 'Migration State' (Hollifield) as a 'liberal immigration state' and propose three other types of migration state—nationalising, developmental and neoliberal—in order to enlarge the theoretical tools for analysing different migration policies (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2020).



other categories: it is neither a nationalising nor a neoliberal state.<sup>11</sup> One can in fact add a new category to the list and define Morocco as a state of ‘consensual differentiation’.<sup>12</sup> While working to preserve its good relations with the EU by conceding to part of its policies for outsourcing control of migration, Morocco affirms its own inward migration policy. It does so by inserting itself consensually into the multilateral frameworks of the UN and the AU so that the conduct of its policy of migratory openness is protected and does not assert itself as a counterpoint to European interests. Neither can Morocco be too severely criticised for its police violations or lack of integration to justify more budget for police control if similar practices are still observed in EU countries. On the contrary, it seems that it is in Morocco’s interest to let social activism express itself and be a vector legitimising the advancement of integration and asylum policy, instead of it being perceived as a state which disengages from the European partner. The differentiation is then emphasised in speeches as Morocco refers to its UN and pan-African commitments and to the demands of civil society. At the same time, the Moroccan position remains very consensual since it is not very disruptive, but also significantly different from the European official discourses because it willingly desecuritisises migration. Morocco’s potential as a locomotive of continental migration governance certainly lies in this equilibrium.

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11 ‘The nationalizing migration state poses a challenge to the dominance of economic and market concerns as motivating factors for state migration policies, highlighting instead the political and ideological roots of state migration policy and the prevalence of state-driven instances of forced displacement. [...] The neoliberal migration state calls into question the centrality of rights-based migration policymaking and demonstrates how variations in state capacity (and autonomy) lead to differences in how states commodify cross-border migration flows’ (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2020, 863).

12 I discuss the concept of differentiation in this context in a discussion paper (Abourabi, 2017a).

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# Multilateral Approaches to Mobility in the Middle East and North Africa Region

*Daniel Naujoks*

## Abstract

Development plans increasingly integrate aspects of migration and displacement, reflecting the countless links between sustainable development and human mobility. To understand the incorporation of issues related to human mobility into development plans and policies, this chapter analyses all current United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The MENA region is characterised by high levels of outmigration and displacement, transit migration, immigration, and hosts a large share of the world's refugees. UNDAFs—planning documents that provide a system-wide overview of key United Nations (UN) activities and functions at the country level—provide a promising platform to investigate linkages between migration, displacement, human development, multilateral and interagency cooperation, and the politics of development aid and international relations. To assess how exactly UN development plans address immigration, emigration, transit migration, internal and international displacement, diaspora engagement and remittances, this chapter introduces the Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI) which measures the intensity, modality, and dimensionality of how mobility has been integrated into development plans. Based on an analysis of all current UNDAFs, the component and aggregate IMI levels show varying degrees of mobility inclusion. A comparison of the three IMI components for all 14 plans in the MENA region reveals that mobility-related policies include a broad range of public policy sectors and focus on various target populations. This paper concludes by offering initial insights into and hypotheses on what determines whether mobility is included in UN development plans.

## 1 Introduction

The scope of discourses on and investigations into human mobility is widening geographically and with regard to concepts and questions. Human mobility is an umbrella category to encompass various forms of movement and their legal

and policy ramifications. Specifically, it includes migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and diaspora populations (Naujoks, 2021).

Whereas migration research has traditionally focused on mobility-related policies in the so-called global North, the study of mobility in the global South has traditionally focused on diaspora affairs or refugee issues (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019a; Natter, 2018). As countries in the global South host 44 per cent of the world's migrants, there has been a recent shift in the attention to understand the realities of South-South migration (Hujó and Piper, 2010; Nawyn, 2016; Short, Moazzem and Adil Khan, 2017; Sadiq and Tsourapas, 2021) and migration policy-making in the global South with regard to immigration (Arcarazo and Freier, 2015; Klotz, 2013; Natter, 2018; Norman, 2018 and 2020; Thiollet, 2011) and emigration (De Haas, 2007; FitzGerald, 2014; Naujoks, 2013; Tsourapas, 2019a; Burgess, 2020).

Even though this scholarship shows a high diversity of mobility scenarios, narratives, and policy responses, Pisarevskaya et al. (2020) find that despite a rapidly growing field of migration research over the past 30 years, the diversity of topics has remained relatively stable. As global mobility research moves toward 'recentering the South' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020), new lines of inquiry should go beyond replicating studies and testing established theories from the global North to inductively use global South experiences, constellations, and processes to generate new theoretical insights. In fact, few comparative studies exist that extend their scope beyond a select few country examples. This chapter aims to establish such a new line of inquiry. The analysis is situated at the intersection of three research fields: national policies on human mobility in the global South, development planning, and the role of the United Nations (UN) and multilateral actors in supporting governments to address human mobility.

In the global South, UN agencies are involved in many aspects of development endeavours that range from macroeconomic policies over specific schemes on employment, rule of law, energy, health, and education, to programmes and policy advice on climate change, water management, national security and gender. While mainstream academic interest in migration policies in the global South is relatively recent, development actors and the UN have engaged in policy processes in the global South for more than 20 years (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014). This involvement has increased, in particular since the first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the UN General Assembly in 2006 (Naujoks, 2020). As of 2010, the UN interagency mechanism on migration, the Global Migration Group (GMG)—which in 2018 transitioned into the UN Network on Migration—has actively promoted integrating migration into development planning (GMG, 2010). Such

activities have grown since migration was attributed explicit targets in specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that guide development programming and specifically mobility-related development programming across the globe (Naujoks 2018; 2019). International discussions on norms and policies have also received an important boost through the discussions on, and adoption of, the Global Compacts on Refugees (GCR) and for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018 (Ferris and Martin, 2019; Micinski 2021).

Whereas scholars have devoted attention to global migration governance (Aleinikoff, 2017; Awad, 2017; Betts, 2011; Micinski and Weiss, 2018), little is known about the activities of the UN at the country level and its interactions with local processes. Geiger and Pécoud (2014, 866) stress that the 'role and activities of IOs [International Organisations] in the politics of migration remain under-researched'. A growing body of scholarship sheds light on the role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in executing European migration preferences in Northern Africa and its focus on 'migration management' (Brachet, 2016; Bartels, 2017; Dini, 2018; Bradley, 2020; Geiger and Pécoud, 2020), though the specific interactions with country processes and links to broader UN processes are generally not examined.<sup>1</sup>

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) provide an ideal platform to investigate some of these linkages. These planning documents provide 'a system-wide overview of key UN activities and functions at country level, in support of national policies, priorities and plans [...] while ensuring coordination, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency for maximum impact' (UN DOCO, 2017, 4). Given the fragmented system of UN entities (Karns, Mingst and Stiles, 2015), UNDAFs aim to bring more meaningful cooperation to the fragmented UN country teams (UNCTs).<sup>2</sup> However, such interagency processes are subject to competition between UN agencies, the limitations of joint planning, the influence of national politics, and donor preferences (Mele and Cappellaro, 2018).

In 2016, 91 per cent of all 119 current UNDAFs contained some reference to migration and displacement (GMG, 2017, 9). The GMG guidance note on integrating migration and displacement into UNDAFs found that:

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- 1 As an exception, Geha and Talhouk (2019) show how the relations between Lebanon's government and UN actors working on Syrian refugee issues evolved and how domestic and international factors, as well as stances by the UN, affected the plans and activities.
  - 2 In 2019, UNDAFs were renamed UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs or 'Cooperation Frameworks') but given the timeframe of the analysis, this article refers to UNDAFs. However, the research questions and methodologies developed here are equally applicable to the new Cooperation Frameworks.

Countries and UN agencies increasingly aim at mainstreaming migration into their development activities. Mainstreaming migration is generally understood as the process for integrating migration issues in a balanced manner into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in any sphere related to development and poverty reduction.

GMG, 2017, 6

The average annual budget for the 14 UNDAFs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region amounts to USD 210 million, with Lebanon alone accounting for USD 1 billion. However, not much is known about the details or processes of mobility inclusion and their impacts. Adamson and Tsourapas (2019b, 115–116) observe that states often engage in migration diplomacy vis-à-vis international organisations, migration diplomacy referring to ‘states’ use of diplomatic tools, processes, and procedures to manage cross-border population mobility’. This chapter aims to start a discussion on UN development plans at the national level as one of the key interfaces between international organisations, national governments, and global processes. The exploration of such plans provides an interesting venue to explore the impacts of changed mobility narratives, global norm diffusion, and the role of the UN and mobility-related priorities and policies in the global South.

The remainder of this chapter is organised in the following manner: After discussing the case selection, I introduce the Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI). The establishment of this novel, comparative framework that measures the incorporation of migration and displacement in UN cooperation frameworks constitutes one of this chapter’s main contributions. Based on all current UNDAFs in the Middle East and North Africa, the subsequent section illustrates the various dimensions of incorporating mobility-related ideas into development plans. Migration policy is often defined as laws and policies admitting newcomers or allowing and organising emigration processes (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019b; Arcarazo and Freier, 2015). Where nuanced frameworks exist, they remain rooted in concepts that may be limited in their transferability to the global South. For example, Rosenblum and Cornelius (2012, 253) differentiate between ‘admissions policies that determine who is permitted to enter; policies regulating the terms of admission, including visa time periods and naturalization rules; immigrant integration policies; and enforcement policies to deter, prevent the entry of, and remove unauthorized immigrants’. The examples from UN cooperation frameworks contribute to a broader understanding of mobility-related policies that include a broad range of public policy sectors. This advances a more nuanced understanding of public policies

beyond the ‘integration’ paradigm of differentiated policy options for various mobile target populations.

The final section will provide a few initial insights into and hypotheses on what determines whether mobility is included in UN development plans. While limitations in space do not allow for a comprehensive analysis, this chapter aims to offer avenues for future investigations.

## 2 Case Selection and Methodology

This chapter provides a content analysis of all current UN development plans—UNDAFs—in the MENA region adopted between 2015 and 2018.<sup>3</sup> The 14 countries analysed in this chapter jointly host more than a third of the world’s refugees. A quarter of all refugees originate from the region, which is simultaneously characterised by high levels of outmigration and displacement, transit migration, and immigration.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of key characteristics for the 14 MENA countries with current UNDAFs that are covered by the analysis. Four documents were analysed in French and the remaining ten in English. The sample includes countries of different sizes, ranging from Djibouti with under a million inhabitants to Egypt with a population of close to 100 million. It covers high income countries (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia), upper middle-income countries (Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon), lower middle-income countries (Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia) and low-income countries (Palestine, Syria, Yemen). The sample also represents varying levels of state fragility, from considerably fragile states such as Yemen, Syria and Iraq to those with low levels of fragility such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

The analysis of mobility-related content of the UN development plans is based on a three-step process. Using the qualitative research data analysis software NVivo, an automatic keyword coding query was supplemented by an automatic uncoding query following the coding scheme in Table 3A1 in the online annex.<sup>4</sup> The result was then manually checked and corrected by two coders. While the scheme is close to comprehensive for extracting all keywords, there remain minor terms that are not covered by the analysis such as when

3 The remaining countries in the MENA region, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Malta, Oman, and Qatar do not have an UNDAF and hence fall outside the scope of this analysis. Libya adopted the UN Strategic Framework for 2019–2020; however, this period is not yet comprehensively covered by the database underlying this analysis.

4 Annex to the chapter available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>, Table 3A1.

TABLE 3.1 Details of sample MENA countries. Sorted by per capita GDP in ascending order

	UNDAF details			Population (in millions)	Fragile States Index <sup>a</sup>	GDP per capita <sup>b</sup>	World Bank income group
	Start	End	Language				
Djibouti	2018	2022	FRE	0,9	88,9	4 885	lower middle
Palestine	2018	2022	ENG	4,7	..	5 755	low
Morocco	2017	2021	FRE	35,1	74,2	7 109	lower middle
Jordan	2018	2022	ENG	9,8	78,7	9 841	upper middle
Iraq	2015	2019	ENG	34,4	102,2	10 401	upper middle
Tunisia	2015	2019	FRE	11,1	77,5	10 505	lower middle
Egypt	2018	2022	ENG	96,4	89,8	11 014	lower middle
Algeria	2016	2020	FRE	39,7	79,6	11 511	upper middle
Iran	2017	2021	ENG	79,6	86,9	14 205	upper middle
Lebanon	2017	2020	ENG	6,7	89,6	16 109	upper middle
Bahrain	2018	2022	ENG	1,5	64,9	47 642	high
Saudi Arabia	2017	2021	ENG	32,4	72,2	48 627	high
Syria	2016	2018	ENG	18	107,8	..	low
Yemen	2017	2019	ENG	27,2	111,5	..	low

a Higher Fragile States Index scores indicate higher levels of fragility. Scores levels are classified as: above 90: "Alert"; 60.0-89.9: "Warning"; 30.0-59.9: "Stable"; 0.0-29.9: "Sustainable".

b GDP in PPP in constant 2017 international \$.

SOURCES: UNDAF DETAILS: AUTHOR'S COMPILATION. POPULATION, GDP, WB INCOME GROUP: WORLD BANK'S WORLD DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS DATABASE; FRAGILE STATE INDEX: FUND FOR PEACE (2020)

development plans refer to populations from ‘neighbouring countries’ or ‘non-Lebanese’; however, such references are rare, generally occur in conjunction with captured keywords, and do not appear to change the overarching trend.

The deeper understanding of integrating mobility concerns into UNDAF processes is based on the author’s involvement in such processes for more than 10 years, including as co-chair of the Global Migration Group’s (GMG) Working Group on Mainstreaming Migration, 15 semi-structured expert interviews on UNDAF processes conducted in February 2016, and 10 phone and email expert interviews conducted in August 2020 with specific reference to UNDAF processes in the MENA countries.

### 3 The Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI)

To understand the incorporation of issues related to human mobility into development plans and policies more broadly, this chapter introduces the IMI. The IMI is comprised of three components, measuring the intensity, modality, and dimensionality of how mobility has been integrated into plans, in this case into UNDAFs.

The *intensity of mobility inclusion* is based on how many references to migration and displacement are used in a text. As the specific count of references is less meaningful than the general level of inclusion, the IMI uses specific levels of intensity that range from no intensity (2 references or fewer) to high intensity (more than 75 references) (Table 3A2).<sup>5</sup> The coding categories for the intensity component follow inductively from the distribution of references in the broader sample of 489 UNDAFs analysed by the author. To allow for a more nuanced analysis, the intensity not only provides information on the total number of mobility references, but also specifically on those related to migration or displacement.<sup>6</sup>

Knowing merely how often a plan mentions mobility is of limited analytical value. For this reason, the IMI’s second component assesses the *modality* in which mobility is referenced. Importantly, the index distinguishes between plans that mention mobility only in the situation analysis or the narrative from those that include it in actionable outcomes. Pointing out the importance of migration or remittances for the economy or highlighting certain characteristics of displaced populations in the text shows an awareness of mobility issues,

<sup>5</sup> Annex to the chapter available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>, Table 3A2.

<sup>6</sup> This is based on a general attribution of keywords rather than individual coding.

but without a focus in the strategic priorities, indicators, and activities in the results framework, there is no direct incentive or mandate to focus programming and policy activities on mobility (Chimhowu, Hulme and Munro, 2019). Such inclusion is meaningful to the allocation of resources and the formulation of theories of change that may influence the actual impact (Deverajan and Kanbur, 2014). The lack of clear outcomes and results lead to a ‘migration gap’ between the migration-related announcements and general objectives on the one hand, and actual policies and their enforcement on the other (Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014).<sup>7</sup>

For this reason, the IMI differentiates between five modality levels. At level 1, there are *no references* to mobility. Level 2 denotes that mobility is integrated solely into the *narrative* of the document. The top three levels (3–5) assess how mobility is incorporated into *actionable priorities*. At the low-priority level, only a minor incorporation of mobility in the results framework occurs, for example, following the UN official guidance, UNDAFs define among several vulnerable groups IDPs, refugees, migrants, stateless persons, and survivors of trafficking (UN DOCO, 2017, 2). However, fewer than three specific mentions in targets exist. At the medium-priority level, development plans feature three or more explicit references in indicators and outcomes, but fewer than six *meaningful* mentions in indicators.<sup>8</sup> At the high-priority level, a plan shows a thorough integration of mobility questions in the results and outcomes and includes mobility issues in the monitoring and evaluation framework with at least six meaningful indicators.

The third component of the IMI is the *dimensionality of mobility inclusion*. Dimensionality is a composite indicator that combines a focus on different target groups with the policy areas in which they occur. Focusing on a variety of target populations is important because ‘there is so much variety within the global South and South-South migratory flows are so diverse, that one should be aware that [expressions such as South-South migration] are inevitably oversimplifications at best, or sweeping generalizations at worst’ (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Carella, 2020, 203–204). Thus, plans can include language

7 Obviously, there are reasons why even clearly formulated objectives may not lead to meaningful implementation.

8 Based on the SMART indicator methodology, the IMI defines indicators as meaningful when they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (UNDP, 2014, 41). Meaningful indicators have a clear migration focus (as opposed to mentioning migrants among a long list of potential target groups), and involve clear, achievable actions by the UN country team. For more details, see Table 3A2 available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>.



on different groups of emigrants, regular and irregular immigrants, transit migrants, returnees, diaspora contributions, refugees hosted in the country and own refugees residing abroad, IDPs, climate migrants, and others.<sup>9</sup> Drawing on the dashboards on policy coherence for migration and development (KNOMAD, OECD and UNDP, 2020) and general UN guidance (GMG, 2017), the IMI's dimensionality component considers whether mobility is included in a variety of policy domains, such as health, education, employment, social cohesion, agriculture, and environment. A greater level of engagement in different areas shows a higher level of mainstreaming. It also differentiates UNDAFs that list several categories of mobile populations as potential groups in the same indicator from plans that have a higher level of mobility mainstreaming. Dimensionality is coded in five categories. Leaving aside plans that do not feature mobility, the coding categories range from plans that focus on one or two groups and on not more than two policy dimensions to plans that explicitly mention more than four different mobile populations and also more than three policy dimensions (Table 3A2).<sup>10</sup>

For most purposes, the individual components of the IMI are the most meaningful measurements to assess the incorporation of mobility into development plans. In addition, the IMI offers two aggregations of the components to facilitate further comparisons. The aggregate IMI is a simple addition of the codes from its three components, which leads to an index range from no inclusion (0) to high levels of inclusion (11). Based on the aggregate IMI score, development plans are divided into the four IMI categories: zero, low, medium, and high.

The IMI measures the extent and quality to which human mobility has been incorporated into development plans or in this case UNDAFs. However, the IMI is not an expression of the extent to which mobility issues *should* have been included in such plans. For a variety of reasons, it is perfectly reasonable for governments and UNCTs not to include refugee, diaspora, or immigration issues. Thus, the IMI is not a direct expression of how well a country and UNCT understand mobility issues. However, in conjunction with other information, the IMI can be used to examine the mobility and political determinants for

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9 Only these broad groups of mobile populations are coded as groups, whereas a focus on different sub-groups, such as Lebanon's focus on Syrian or Palestine refugees, would not be coded as two distinct groups for the IMI, though it is acknowledged that a more fine-grained understanding of sub-groups is an important feature of a plan.

10 Annex to the chapter available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>, Table 3A2.

higher and lower levels of mobility inclusion. The final section of this chapter will briefly elaborate on these.

While the IMI is a useful tool for understanding various domains of mobility incorporation, it comes with inherent limitations. The dimensionality of mobility incorporation only assesses whether or not different populations and policy sectors are mentioned, without reflecting the intensity or meaningfulness of such incorporation. The limitations are necessary, however, to reduce complexity and allow the IMI to be scaled up with relative ease. As is the case with any index, building the IMI comes with certain inclusions and exclusions (Gest et al., 2014; Bjerre et al., 2015; Vink and Helbling, 2013; Helbling and Michalowski, 2017). I hope that it provides a useful tool to measure the complexity of mobility inclusion in development plans and policies. The next section applies the IMI to all UNDAFs in the MENA region and highlights particular areas of interest.

#### 4 The Index of Mobility Inclusion for UNDAFs in the MENA Region

The component, aggregate, and categorical IMI levels for UN development plans in the MENA region display varying degrees of mobility inclusion (Table 3.2). Lebanon's and Morocco's UNDAFs receive a high IMI score; those of Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria have a medium score; while those of Bahrain, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen are all in the low IMI category. Only Algeria and Iran are at IMI level zero. The three-dimensional model in Figure 3.1 visualises how countries' UNDAFs differ in the three index components. Unsurprisingly, a higher intensity of mobility inclusion is generally associated with more substantial inclusion in terms of modalities and dimensionality. However, the three index components show that important differences in mobility inclusion exist between the countries. Morocco's plan has the highest reference count in the sample—129 references—and is the UNDAF with the broadest inclusion of groups and policy sectors (dimensionality). However, as Lebanon's plan also has a thorough integration of mobility in the results, it receives the highest overall IMI score.

To highlight the differences in the components in the 14 countries in our sample, the next subsections will shed light on each component separately, starting with the intensity and modality and then presenting dimensionality aspects in the MENA region.

##### 4.1 *Intensity and Modalities of Mobility Inclusion in the MENA Region*

The UNDAFs in the MENA region incorporate human mobility to significantly different levels. Morocco's UNDAF tops the intensity of mobility references

TABLE 3.2 Components and aggregate for Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI) for UNDAFs in the MENA region. Sorted by IMI aggregate score in descending order. The aggregate IMI is based only on the total intensity. However, the migration and displacement intensities are given for illustrative purposes

	IMI Components				Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI)		
	Intensity			Modality	Dimensionality	IMI Aggregate Score	IMI Category
	Total	Migration	Refugees & Displacement				
Lebanon	3	1	3	4	4	11	3
Morocco	3	2	2	3	4	10	3
Iraq	3	1	3	3	2	8	2
Syria	2	1	2	3	2	7	2
Djibouti	2	1	2	2	2	6	2
Jordan	2	1	1	3	1	6	2
Egypt	2	1	1	2	1	5	1
Palestine	1	0	1	3	1	5	1
Saudi Arabia	2	1	1	1	1	4	1
Yemen	2	1	1	1	1	4	1
Bahrain	1	0	1	1	1	3	1
Iran	1	0	1	1	1	3	1
Tunisia	1	1	0	1	1	3	1
Algeria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SOURCE: AUTHOR

with 129 mentions, 95 of which are on migration-related keywords and 34 of which are on refugees and displacement. This is followed by Lebanon with a total of 108 references, 94 of which are on displacement and 12 on migration (Table 3.3).

At the low intensity level, Tunisia's UNDAF contains only three references to migration and none to displacement. Two references recall a previous joint programme on youth, employment, and migration in the section on lessons learned from past UNCT cooperation. In addition, migrants are enumerated among the vulnerable groups that require specific social protections in view of international treaties and human rights standards, but no specific outcomes mention migrants. In Bahrain, the framework refers to training for the government and civil society groups on international refugee law and protection of refugees, as well as medical assistance for Syrian refugees in Bahrain. Palestine has a special relationship to displacement, which permeates all areas of life for those in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as for the six million Palestinian refugees. However, while there are basically no references to migration in Palestine's UNDAF, the document also features only 18 references to displacement. Considering the relatively low intensity of mobility references, it is

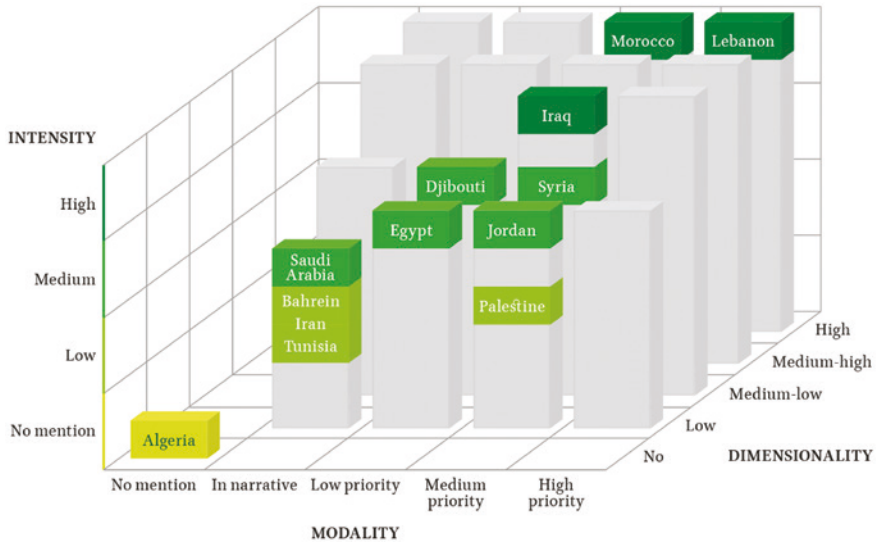


FIGURE 3.1 Index of Mobility Inclusion (IMI) for UNDAFs in the MENA region  
 Note: Columns without text only support the readability of the graph  
 SOURCE: AUTHOR

interesting to note that the UNDAF incorporates them in a meaningful way by establishing specific targets for reducing the unemployment rate of refugees in camps or lessening their food insecurity.

In the medium-intensity range, two countries have a low modality score, as they do not include specific priorities, indicators, and targets (Yemen and Saudi Arabia). While the remaining four UNDAFs in this bracket reference mobility in their key outcomes and priorities, two of them do this in the low-priority (Egypt and Djibouti) and the other two in the medium-priority category (Jordan and Syria).

Yemen is both a sending and a host country for refugees. Its UNDAF features 25 mobility references, 14 of which are on displacement and 11 on migration. Although the plan focuses on IDPs, it does not include actionable outputs. Saudi Arabia is the country with the highest per capita GDP in the sample. In 2015, it hosted more than 10 million migrants, corresponding to a third of its population, making it one of the major migrant host countries in the world. This relevance is only partly reflected in the UNDAF with its 27 mobility mentions, including 14 on migration and 10 on displacement. In addition, several of these references are counted twice due to repetition of text within the document. Although the UNDAF highlights the fact that the principle of ‘Leaving No One

TABLE 3.3 Mobility references and intensity of mobility references. Sorted by total mobility reference count

	Mobility references					
	Total	Migration	Refugees and displacement	Remittances <sup>a</sup>	Smuggling and trafficking	Deportation
Morocco	129	95	34	0	0	0
Lebanon	108	12	94	0	2	0
Iraq	97	12	83	0	2	0
Djibouti	71	19	47	0	5	0
Syria	59	16	41	0	2	0
Jordan	51	10	40	0	1	0
Saudi Arabia	27	14	10	0	2	1
Yemen	25	11	14	2	0	0
Egypt	23	11	7	0	5	0
Palestine	19	1	18	0	0	0
Bahrain	4	0	3	0	1	0
Tunisia	3	3	0	0	0	0
Iran	1	1	0	0	0	0
Algeria	0	0	0	0	0	0

a Remittance references are counted as migration references. However, given the prominence of the remittance discourse, these references have been highlighted separately.

SOURCE: AUTHOR

Behind' is applicable to foreign and migrant workers, referencing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 (Targets 10.7 and 10.c), it omits references to SDG Target 8.8 on migrant workers' social and labour rights, which is noteworthy given that Saudi Arabia has been criticised for its treatment of migrant workers' social and labour rights (HRW, 2019).<sup>11</sup> The UNDAF outlines plans for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to support Saudi Arabia in the building of inclusive and tailored human rights

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion SDG target 8.8, see Naujoks (2018, 102–114).

indicators on migration and migrants and to work with the country on a rights-based approach to business sector involvement for migrant labour recruitment and employment policies. The document also lists refugees, migrant workers and stateless persons among the vulnerable groups whose rights the UNCT will focus on.<sup>12</sup>

The UN development plans in Egypt and Djibouti show a similar intensity of mobility references to Saudi Arabia, but a higher degree of mobility modalities. Egypt's UNDAF incorporates a total of 23 references to human mobility, 11 of which are on migration, seven on displacement and five on human smuggling and trafficking. Among the five key focus areas in which the UN sees its comparative advantage, Egypt's UNDAF focuses on improving the balance between labour demand and supply and on improving the flows of internal and external migration. The plan highlights that the UN system will be

instrumental in providing support to the large numbers of refugees and migrants that Egypt is generously hosting. This support includes direct provision of assistance to refugees and migrants and assistance with repatriation to countries of origin and resettlement in third countries. The UN system also provides targeted support to national agencies that have to cope with the demands of refugees and migrants for services including health and education. The UN system further works on improving relations between refugees/migrants and host populations and countering human trafficking.

In addition to this comparative advantage, the plan recognises the possible limited emigration opportunities for Egyptians as presenting a risk to achieving the agreed targets for sustainable, resilient and job-producing economic development. However, as this does not translate into specific activities and agreed outcomes, Egypt's UNDAF receives only a medium-low score with regard to the modalities of mobility incorporation.

Djibouti's UNDAF includes a total of 71 references to mobility. Under the UNDAF's fourth 'effect' to provide legal protection for vulnerable populations, the UNCT envisions supporting the government in providing access to legal protections, including for migrants and refugees, and especially in connection with a recently adopted refugee law.

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12 The UNDAF also lists activities where not the UNCT per se, but specific agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the OHCHR, work on migration issues.

Jordan and Syria also figure in the medium intensity of mobility references, but both countries' UNDAFs have a meaningful integration of mobility in the results framework. Jordan is one of the top refugee-hosting countries in the world, it is part of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for the Syria crisis, and two years before the start of its UNDAF, the government entered into the Jordan Compact with key donor countries that would provide for additional rights and support for Syrian refugees (Tsourapas, 2019b). The narrative section of the UNDAF stresses that the Syrian crisis has had 'a significant impact on Jordan's development gains, affecting the overall capacity to provide adequate services to its people and refugees alike', citing a baseline survey according to which more than 80 per cent of refugees live below the national poverty line. To foster institutions at national and local levels that are more responsive, inclusive, accountable, transparent and resilient, Jordan's plan foresees the ratification and translation into domestic law of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The plan further conceptualises refugee-specific challenges toward achieving the goal that '[p]eople, especially the vulnerable, proactively claim their rights and fulfil their responsibilities for improved human security and resilience'.

Since 2016, civil war has made Syria the country of origin of the largest absolute number of refugees in the world, while simultaneously having to contend with a large number of IDPs. In a country that faces active conflict and massive disruption of general life, development endeavours are challenging, and while development planning instruments have shorter durations, they often have a stronger link to humanitarian actions. Syria's UNDAF includes a total of 59 mobility references, 41 of which relate to displacement and 16 to migration.<sup>13</sup> The UNDAF explains, '[a]s a consequence of the crisis, Syria has witnessed multiple displacements which, combined with the refugee caseload, exceed more than 50% of the population'. For this reason, the framework plans to concentrate the UN's investments on 'programmes that deliver basic essential services to the population at national and local levels, with particular emphasis on displaced people and host communities and people facing deprivation and different forms of vulnerability'. Even though IDPs figure prominently in the overall vision of the UN's engagement, they are not included significantly in the results framework, where they only feature as risk factors for two outputs. Specifically, output 2.4 on rehabilitating housing and essential infrastructure

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13 When using migration-related keywords, the UNDAF is often referring to international movements, including refugee movements, or internal displacements.

sees IDPs or refugees lack of willingness to return as a risk, and output 3.3 on rehabilitating the environment and natural resources conceptualises the potential of a worsening drought as a risk for exacerbating urban migration and increasing social tension and crisis.

Only three UNDAFs in the sample reach the highest intensity level of 75+ mobility references, namely Iraq, Lebanon, and Morocco. They all integrate mobility into their strategic outcomes to some extent, but only Lebanon does this in a comprehensive way.

Iraq's UNDAF has the third-highest level of mobility references, and the second highest count of references to refugees and displacement. Overall, the plan has a considerable focus on IDPs, who 'represent a particularly vulnerable segment of the population. Some are exposed to the constant risk of eviction by the authorities, and they struggle to access basic services and adequate resources'. To address their plight, the UNDAF includes a large programme on durable solutions. The plan highlights that the country is facing challenges associated with Syrian refugees. With regard to specific targets, under the UNDAF priority to address acute vulnerability and participation gaps, strengthened resilience through enhanced government and community disaster risk management capacities is measured by the reduced number of IDPs and informal settlers. While this is an important objective, it could be argued that given the limited influence of the UNCT on many factors leading to internal displacement and the overall complexity of this issue (Orchard, 2019), it is hard to establish clear causal links, which may not be ideal for the actual implementation of programming activities.

Morocco's UNDAF tops the overall and migration-specific references in the sample with 129 total mentions, 95 on migration, and 34 on displacement. In the next section of this chapter, which discusses the dimensionality of UNDAFs, Morocco's plan shows a high level of mainstreaming and awareness of mobility concerns, yet there are relatively few direct indicators or targets in its results framework. Where migrants or refugees are included they are generally named as one of the vulnerable populations, and none of the indicators or targets focus directly on mobility. Mobility is, however, referenced in the chapeau of the health objective and in the UN activities in the economic development objective. Nevertheless, the UNDAF mentions specific programmes to reduce school dropout that focus on the retention of vulnerable groups, especially girls, migrants, and refugee children.

With a total of 108 mobility references, Lebanon's UNDAF has the second-highest number in the MENA region and it has the most references to displacement, reflecting the fact that the country has been the top refugee-hosting country in the world for many years, when measured in terms of refugees as



share of the population (UNHCR, 2020). The integration of human mobility and particularly refugee issues in Lebanon's UNDAF stands out not only with regard to the extent of this, but also in terms of the qualitative inclusion, as the plan integrates mobility concerns into actionable outcomes, indicators, and activities. Out of a total of 57 indicators in Lebanon's UNDAF Results Framework, 15 include refugees. Seven of these have a specific target and focus on refugees, while a further eight mention refugees for the disaggregation of data. This matters because it enables specific programming, especially given the overall strong focus on refugees in the document and Lebanon's policy environment.

Specifically, Lebanon's UNDAF states that the UN will support local peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives by helping to establish local peacebuilding committees that bring together displaced populations and host community representatives. The development plan includes a specific target number of policies and plans to be adopted by the government vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers that are in line with international standards. It aims at increasing the number of court rulings that make reference to international human rights, refugee and labour norms, the number of new legal measures adopted to facilitate timely and affordable access to justice for vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrant workers, or victims of trafficking, and to increase the share of refugee newborn babies whose birth is registered with the Lebanese authorities from 32 per cent to 90 per cent. It also envisages specific development outcomes for refugees with regard to access to social protection, direct assistance (for example cash assistance, shelter, emergency assistance, food assistance) and access to health care for vulnerable refugees without formal health insurance coverage.

Concerning outcomes on data collection, the development plan foresees disaggregation with regard to refugees and non-Lebanese for indicators measuring people accessing services from social development centres; short and long-term employment; girls and women reporting satisfaction with services provided; improved access to local, communal infrastructure and services in the most vulnerable areas; safely managed drinking water services; managing wastewater safely; enrolment in preschool, primary and secondary education; and improved access to electricity.

#### 4.2 *Dimensionality of Mobility Inclusion in the MENA Region*

Of the 12 UNDAFs in the sample with mobility references, seven have low dimensionality, meaning that they consider a limited range of target populations and policy sectors. Three UNDAFs have medium-low dimensionality and none have medium-high dimensionality. Only two of the UNDAFs reference more than four different mobile populations and also more than three policy

dimensions, leading to them being categorised as having high dimensionality. I will first provide an overview of the target groups mentioned in the plans and then highlight key policy areas that are covered.

#### 4.2.1 Target Populations

As mentioned above, the majority of countries in the sample have a clear focus on refugees and displacement and a lesser focus on other aspects of migration (Table 3.3). For this reason, many UNDAFs focus predominantly on refugees or IDPs (for example in Jordan, Palestine, Djibouti, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen). Refugee target groups can refer to refugees from a country living abroad, returned refugees or refugees hosted. In this regard, Syria, Iraq and Yemen are not only refugee sending countries—despite their domestic crises they continue to host refugees. Thus, Syria's UNDAF counts Palestine refugees as vulnerable populations and aims to provide health care services for up to 450,000 of them. In 2016, the year prior to the start of the UNDAF, Yemen hosted 280,000 refugees, predominantly from the Horn of Africa. Despite the ongoing conflict in the country, Yemen sees new arrivals each year. Importantly, the same year, Yemen saw a large inflow, when 100,000 migrants and refugees crossed the Red or Arabian Seas (IOM, 2017).

Other forms of population inflows are referenced more sparingly. In addition to refugees, Saudi Arabia's and Egypt's UNDAFs include language on resident migrant workers as vulnerable groups.<sup>14</sup> Djibouti's UNDAF mentions irregular transit migrants, mostly hailing from Ethiopia, moving toward the Gulf countries via Yemen. It also mentions the negative impact on food security of the influx of agro-pastoralists from neighbouring countries, who were displaced by the drought caused by the knock-on effects of the weather phenomenon El Niño. Lebanon's UNDAF has a differentiated system of explicitly focusing on resident populations ranging from the broadest group of 'non-Lebanese' to migrants, refugees per se, and more specifically Syrian or Palestinian refugees.

Considering the prevalence of the migration and development discourse since the first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006 and the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) the following year (Rother, 2019), it is remarkable that diaspora populations and their positive contributions are almost entirely absent from the plans. Yemen's UNDAF mentions consultative meetings with the diaspora

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14 Saudi Arabia's UNDAF also includes a mention of stateless persons. However, as stateless persons in Saudi Arabia are mostly not connected to migration and refugee issues (van Waas, 2010), they were not counted as a specific mobile population.

in the drafting of the UNDAF. Morocco's UNDAF flags the role of Moroccans abroad for the commercialisation and marketing of agricultural production and plans to support a strategy on agricultural value chains that seeks partnerships with migrants and, in particular, diaspora actors. Interestingly, countries with active diaspora policies and sizeable diaspora populations abroad, such as Tunisia, Lebanon, and Egypt (Table 3A3),<sup>15</sup> do not include any diaspora references in their UNDAFs.

Yemen's UNDAF is also the only framework in the sample to include references to remittances. However, it does this only to highlight the negative economic consequences deriving from the decrease in such transfers. Specifically, the framework predicts a contraction in real GDP and the purchasing power of the population, which is also influenced by the decline in remittances. It also reports that the return of 900,000 migrant workers in 2014 increased the burden on agricultural production, while simultaneously reducing their families' remittance receipts.

Additionally, emigration is largely absent from the plans—especially as a meaningful policy area. In line with Egypt's permissive emigration policy (Tsourapas, 2019a), its UNDAF mentions the potentially limited emigration opportunities for Egyptians as being a risk to achieving the agreed targets for sustainable, resilient and job-rich economic development. Jordan's UNDAF acknowledges the perils of sustained emigration of 'educated or talented individuals', as 'whole population segments are thus unable to fulfil their potential and make their contribution to Jordan's development'. In Syria, displacement and outmigration of teachers are presented as key challenges for the education system.

Morocco's UNDAF has the broadest range of mobile target populations, referring to immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Moroccan returnees, as well as diaspora and emigrants. It also includes estimates and policy approaches towards irregular immigrants, originating—according to the plan—from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Europe and Arab countries. These populations are flagged as vulnerable groups and the UNDAF refers to the exceptional regularisation campaign of irregular migrants that was implemented in 2014.

#### 4.2.2 Incorporating Mobility into Different Policy Sectors

The diverse incorporation of mobility issues in the 14 UNDAFs in the MENA region is reflected in the policy areas for which migration and displacement

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15 Annex to the chapter available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>, Table 3A3.

are referenced. Key sectors for integrating the concerns of mobile populations are employment and livelihoods (Djibouti, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon), education (Djibouti, Syria, Morocco, Lebanon), health (Djibouti, Morocco, Lebanon), social protection (Djibouti, Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon), social cohesion (Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon), and rights and justice (Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Lebanon). This reflects the conceptualisations in Naujoks' (2019) 'mobility mandala', which show that human mobility is a key aspect of economic growth and employment, health, education, democratic governance, climate change and other sectors, linking it to all 17 SDGs and nearly all of their 169 targets—often in multiple ways.

The bulk of migration references describe facts or programmatic activities relating to the *vulnerabilities* of migrants, refugees or displaced persons. In a few instances, UNDAFs also refer to drivers and root causes of mobility. For example, Syria's plan highlights that '[t]he crisis has devastated Syria's infrastructure, and greatly diminished access to basic services that were previously widely available. Combined with insecurity and impoverishment, the consequent difficulties of life *trigger growing displacement and migration*, further reducing service delivery capacities' (emphasis added).

Djibouti's UNDAF emphasises the need for employment generation for vulnerable populations to address the root causes of displacement. Morocco's framework stresses the country's exposure to significant climate change vulnerabilities, including desertification, as a root cause of migration.

Syria's UNDAF offers two interesting insights into how displacement can affect education. First, it stresses the consequences of outmigration, as the education system suffers from teachers having left their schools due to internal displacement or migration. In addition, nearly one in four schools have been destroyed, damaged or are being used as IDP shelters, showing that the effects of displacement can be more indirect.

The multifaceted incorporation of mobility concerns in Lebanon's and Morocco's UNDAFs deserves special attention. As indicated in the above discussion on the wide-ranging inclusion of refugee indicators in Lebanon's UNDAF results framework, Lebanon's plan integrates mobility issues into policy dimensions such as peacebuilding and conflict prevention, rule of law and justice, social protection, healthcare, access to services, employment, education, and access to electricity.

Morocco's UNDAF includes some of the most advanced mainstreaming language. Morocco is party to and an early advocate for the Migrant Worker Convention (Norman, 2020). As such, its UNDAF specifies that signing the convention, combined with the government's recent actions to regularise and receive migrants, is meant to guarantee access to health services without

discrimination. The plan states that the UNCT will work toward the integration of migrants and refugees into health policies, provide them with the same health care as nationals, and encourage research on migrants' health outcomes. It adds that the UNCT will support Morocco's National Employment Strategy and work toward equal access to employment, including for migrants and refugees, for whom it will also work toward creating economic activities. Migrants and refugees, it states, will be included in an integrated social protection system. It envisages safer working conditions and health outcomes for entrepreneurs and workers, explicitly including migrants,<sup>16</sup> and proposes that living conditions and mobility within cities be improved, increased, and better adapted to the needs of citizens and migrants. It acknowledges the need for international protection for refugees who have not yet been processed, lack access to the formal labour market as a consequence, and are deemed to be in a situation of great precariousness. However, for the most part, Morocco's UNDAF focuses explicitly on regular migrants. In addition, it flags the role of migrants and diasporas for the commercialisation and marketing of agricultural production and plans to support a strategy on agricultural value chains that seeks partnerships with migrants and, in particular, diaspora actors. Morocco's UNDAF aims to establish a mechanism to recognise educational qualifications and guarantee access to education and vocational training for vulnerable populations, including immigrants, refugees and returnees, and decrease school dropout for migrant and refugee children.

Among the development plans in the sample, Morocco's UNDAF has the strongest focus on the mobility-climate change nexus. It emphasises that Morocco is exposed to significant climate change vulnerabilities, including desertification, the significance of which the plan highlights as a root cause of internal migration and immigration from sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, the UNDAF anticipates transversally and systematically integrating climate change, energy, and migration into all territorial (local) development plans, establishing rules for an integrated management of environmental and migration data—disaggregated by gender—and creating a mechanism for green diaspora investments. Morocco's UNDAF is the only plan in the sample to include positive diaspora contributions (for example by mobilising the competences of migrants and the diaspora).

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16 Interestingly, the UNDAF does not refer to SDG target 8.8, one of the indicators of which focuses on working conditions and work-related deaths among migrants (Naujoks, 2018, 102–107).

## 5 Puzzles and Determinants: Explaining the Different Levels of Inclusion

The comparison of the intensity, modalities, and dimensionalities of mobility inclusion in the 14 UNDAFs in the MENA region shows significant differences in the way these plans conceptualise government and UN activities in different areas. This section discusses what may explain them. While limitations in space do not allow for a full investigation of the determinants for including migration and displacement concerns in UNDAFs, this section offers a few insights, hypotheses, and puzzles that may be developed and explored more fully in the future.

An apolitical, technocratic hypothesis posits that the inclusion of mobility correlates with the scale of the phenomena: the greater the number of migrants, refugees and remittances, the more likely the UNDAF is to reference such phenomena. The data indicates that mobility realities such as the total number or percentage of immigrants, emigrants, refugees, or remittances are insufficient alone to explain differences between countries' IMIs.<sup>17</sup> Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran and Lebanon each host more than a million migrants and refugees—Saudi Arabia's immigrant count alone is at more than 10 million. Persons born abroad also account for a large share of the total population in Bahrain (51 per cent),<sup>18</sup> Jordan (41 per cent), Lebanon (34 per cent), Saudi Arabia (33 per cent) and Djibouti (13 per cent).<sup>19</sup> But of these countries, only Lebanon has a UNDAF that includes migrants per se and only Morocco, which has fewer than 100,000 migrants and refugees and a low immigrant/population ratio of 0.3 per cent, has a UNDAF that features immigration prominently. An important caveat to this is the reliability of official migration data, which is generally derived from population censuses. For Morocco, Natter (2018, 7) states that 'census data certainly underestimates Morocco's total migrant population', adding that for Tunisia, 'census data does not capture the unprecedented immigration from Libya since 2011'. Although the official migration data is likely to be unreliable for most countries in the sample, the official figures—which are often estimates—enter policy processes. In addition, while the real numbers may vary from official statistics, in the case of Morocco, 'even higher estimates of around 200,000 migrants do not challenge the overall conclusion that immigration remains a minor phenomenon' (2018, 7).

17 See Tables 3A3 and 3A4 available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>.

18 Migrants account for 79 per cent of Bahrain's workforce.

19 See Table 3A3 available at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4548>.

Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Iran and Yemen each have emigrant and external refugee populations exceeding one million. Those born in the country who now live abroad correspond to 82 per cent of the resident population in Palestine, 35 per cent in Syria, 12 per cent in Lebanon, 9 per cent in Morocco, 8 per cent in Jordan, and 7 per cent in Tunisia. As discussed above, while Egypt's, Jordan's and Syria's UNDAFs mention emigration as a threat, only Morocco's plan includes emigrants. The lack of incorporation of emigration is even more striking when it comes to migrant remittances. Not only have remittances been described as a development mantra (Kapur, 2010) and feature prominently in publications by the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other major development organisations, they were also given a full target in the SDGs, namely target 10.c that aims to reduce the cost of transferring such funds (Naujoks, 2018). Such transfers correspond to more than 10 per cent of GDP in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, and the estimated cost for transferring remittances to these countries is above the highest threshold of 5 per cent of the remitted amount that is anchored in both SDG target 10.c and the G20's remittance agenda. Costs are particularly high in Lebanon (12 per cent), Algeria (12 per cent), and Tunisia (9 per cent). With migrant workers sending more than USD 36 billion back to their families, in 2017 Saudi Arabia was the third-highest source of remittances. However, as highlighted above, Yemen is the only country to reference remittances in its development plan, while also not from an active policy perspective.

Analysing national immigration policies, Natter (2018, 8) finds that 'Tunisia has seen an important increase in immigration, but policies have remained stable. In contrast, Morocco set immigration on the political agenda and enacted fundamental policy changes despite only moderate growth in immigration'. For a similar reason, it is paramount to investigate the political and institutional factors that explain where and how mobility has been incorporated into the UN development plans.

Based on the analysis of UNDAFs in the 14 sample countries, the analysis of hundreds of other UN Development Plans, and the interviews conducted, I conceptualise that four broad areas determine the inclusion of mobility concerns into UN development plans: (1) mobility realities; (2) international norms and discourses are filtered through; (3) national priorities; and (4) specific UN processes (Figure 3.2). National priorities are in turn affected by local and regional politics, including relations with significant donor and sending countries, national capacities, and the role that development cooperation and the UN play within a country.<sup>20</sup> Norman (2020, 3) finds 'paying close attention

20 Jacobsen (1996, 660) establishes four categories of factors that affect refugee policies in the Global South, namely (1) bureaucratic choices made by the government; (2) international

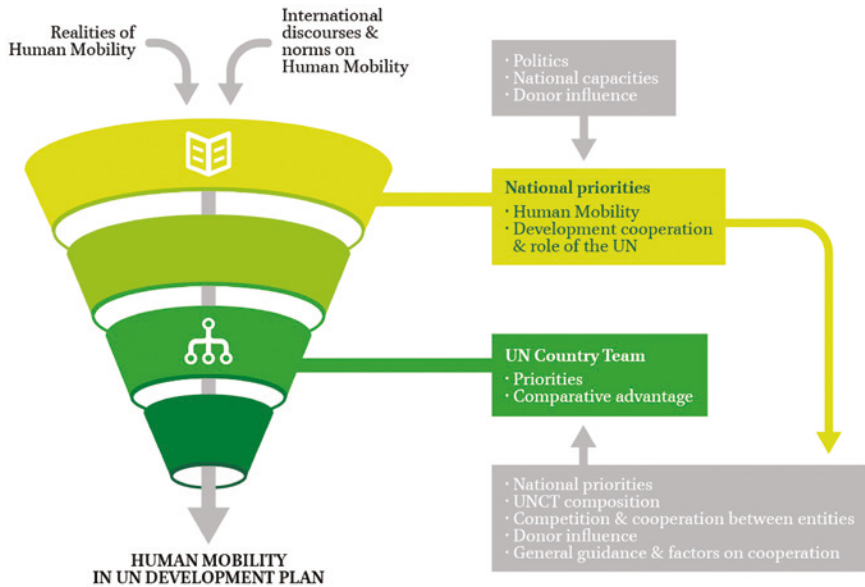


FIGURE 3.2 Factors and filters influencing the inclusion of mobility into UNDAFs  
SOURCE: AUTHOR

to the international influences driving domestic decision-making can help us better understand migration policy reform for host states situated between powerful countries to the north and geostrategically important sending countries to the south'. She observes that given international power hierarchies, certain 'non-Western states ... are embedded in a migration system in which more powerful states can exert influence over their domestic policy decisions' (p.4). But priorities can also have purely domestic origins derived from the relevance of mobility and the political weight of diaspora or other populations, government and regime-related factors or global and regional aspirations. Based on an in-depth study of Egypt, Tsourapas (2019a, 2016) shows that '[a]n authoritarian regime is more likely to develop policies that produce short-term political gains that enable ruling elites to remain in power. This implies that measures that may be economically beneficial in the long term, but involve heavy immediate political costs, are unlikely to be implemented'. Morocco's decision to adopt an active migration policy is believed to be driven, in part, by a reorientation toward sub-Saharan countries (Cherti and Collyer, 2015, 602; Natter, 2018; Jacobs, 2019; Norman, 2020, 11). Geha and Talhouk (2019) show

relations; 3) the absorption capacity of the local host community; and 4) national security considerations.



how Lebanon's government stance toward UN activities relating to Syrian refugees changed from a *laissez-faire* approach to becoming a more active player in shaping crisis response policies and planned UN involvement.

While international organisations need the consent of the host country for all activities they undertake, certain countries set strict limits on what international organisations can do. Such political barriers potentially restrict UN activities in relation to certain or all migrant populations, as my interviews indicate is the case in Iran, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Processes at the UN country team level are influenced by national priorities—as the official mission of the UNCT remains to support the national development agenda—but are also influenced by the composition of the UNCT, in particular the role played by the IOM, donor influence, and general factors that impact cooperation and UNCT activities, such as specific funds or guidance from the UN Development Group (now the UN Sustainable Development Group).

Unfortunately, limitations in space do not allow for an in-depth analysis of the various factors here. Instead I will briefly discuss one factor and offer a few hypotheses in passing that need to be investigated in the future and that relate to international and UN-specific factors.

From a policy learning and constructivist perspective, it can be argued that international discourses and norms on mobility influence the degree of mobility inclusion. Discussions at the UN, the annual GFMD (Rother, 2019), the global debates that led to the adoption of the GCR and GCM (Ferris and Martin, 2019), or regional and bilateral fora to discuss migration and displacement issues among governments and often international organisations, can lead to the creation of certain norms—either concrete rules and treaties or general expectations about government action (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Weiss, 2011, Chapter 2). Gamlen (2014) points to a governmentality logic of global migration debates that render certain policies both empirically normal and normative, inducing other governments to mimic the initiatives of certain first-movers. FitzGerald and Cook-Martin (2014) have shown how political pressure and governments' reputational aspirations led to domestic policy change with regard to racist immigration policies in the Americas.

In particular, it could be argued that UNDAFs drafted after the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugee and Migrants in September 2016 would be likely to include mobility in more robust ways. None of the UNDAFs in the low IMI category took effect before 2017, while half of those in the low and medium IMI bracket and all those in the high IMI category did so. However, the individual country data shows that several UNDAFs that started in 2018 show a significantly lower IMI than those adopted one or two years earlier, even though the drafting process of the former may have been affected by

the debates on the GCM and the GCR, and the Global Migration Group (2017) Guidance Note on Integrating Migration and Displacement into UNDAFs. For this reason, the time of adoption seems to matter, but it does not fully explain the level of mobility inclusion. In addition, countries in the medium and high IMI bracket are considerably more likely to be part of a regional refugee or migrant response plan. This would be even more perceptible if Morocco (as an outlier UNDAF that focuses more on migration) were taken out of the average.

Djibouti's UNDAF explicitly references a promise given by the country's president at the New York Summit on Refugees and Migrants in 2016 to integrate refugees in the education system. As a pilot country of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Djibouti's UNDAF refers to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants—the framework that was adopted as part of the outcome document of the New York Summit—and which in turn became an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees that was adopted two years later.

Morocco is a special case among the sample because of its strong participation in international processes. In 2017–18, Morocco—jointly with Germany—chaired the GFMD during the historic time of drafting both Global Compacts. Since 2014, Morocco has also participated in the UNDP-IOM joint programme on mainstreaming migration into development planning, which has engaged with various ministries and government agencies on the integration of mobility concerns into development strategies (Egger, 2017). Since 2016, Morocco has been a pilot country in the project to establish a dashboard for measuring policy coherence for migration and development that was led by the OECD and the UNDP under the auspices of the World Bank's Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD).<sup>21</sup>

The factors discussed are not exhaustive. Other possible explanations for variations in the degree of mobility inclusion include the fact that the IMI is low where mobility is highly securitised. Or it may be that a higher level of national capacities may lower the IMI—because of the subsidiary, supplementing role of UN engagement in national development processes—or increase it, as the absence of significant capacities to understand and explore mobility concerns may lead to a lack of priorities. This chapter has also not investigated the role of donor pressure, especially from the European Union (EU) and its member states. For example, Morocco received considerable budget allocations from the EU for signing the Mobility Partnership, which Norman (2020) links to the

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21 As the author served as research coordinator of this project, it bears mention that although the report was launched in July 2020, the recommendations were shared and discussed with the government in 2018.

adoption of its progressive migration and asylum legislation. However, Tunisia also signed a Mobility Partnership the year before its UNDAF took effect and no such change and inclusion is noticeable. Jordan also entered into a specific partnership, yet still only figures in the medium IMI range. Higher dependency on development assistance or a higher emigrant stock in the EU appear to explain the IMIs of the countries in the sample.<sup>22</sup> Another hypothesis assumes that the stronger the role of the IOM in the UNCT, the higher the IMI due to the IOM's institutional lobbying and a stronger UNCT comparative advantage on migration.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the analysis of the 14 UNDAFs suggests that refugee issues are more suited for inclusion into UNDAFs than economic migration issues. This could be a function of refugee issues being framed as an international responsibility (Aleinikoff and Zamore, 2019) that allows specific refugee rent-seeking behaviour (Tsourapas, 2019b) and enables governments to engage in bargaining processes over refugee protection (Betts, 2009). Lastly, beyond structural factors, it is possible that the role and positioning of certain policy entrepreneurs—be they institutions or persons, and at the national or the UN level—have a key influence on mobility-related aspects of UN Cooperation Frameworks.

## 6 Conclusion: UN Cooperation Frameworks as Objects of Analysis

The analysis has shown that UNDAFs and the future UNSDCFs are a promising platform to study the intersection of national migration and mobility policies, regional and global norms, and the role of international organisations and development partners. These are individual country plans that follow the same global guidance, have comparable timeframes, contain similar elements, and thus offer a good basis for comparison. In contrast to national development plans, which come in a broad range of languages, all UNDAFs and Cooperation Frameworks are available in English, French, and Spanish, which allows for relative ease of analysis. However, these 'Development Assistance Frameworks' are not comprehensive development plans that encompass all aspects of a country's policy and development environment. They are thus only partly an

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<sup>22</sup> This statement is based on data tables not included in this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> Gamlen (2014, S201) documents the influence of the IOM with regard to national diaspora policies and Micinski and Weiss (2016) explore the changes that came with the IOM becoming a UN-related organisation. For the role of the IOM in UNCTs and the relevance for its global positioning, see Bradley, 2020; Geiger and Pécoud, 2020; Lebon-McGregor (forthcoming).

assessment of national mobility priorities and partly an expression of the role and capacity of the UN in the country. A caveat of studying any plan or strategy is that they do not reveal much about their implementation and impacts. And while since 1997 at least 135 countries have adopted one or more such plans, this does not include countries in the global North.

Based on the IMI that measures the intensity, modality, and dimensionality of migration and displacement issues in development plans and policies, the UNDAFs in the MENA region reflect a broad range of different policy foci. The IMI is a multidimensional tool that helps to discern various aspects of mobility-related policies and programming. This chapter has used the IMI's components to discuss and contrast the 14 UN plans in the region. The discussion on the various target groups and policy dimensions is of interest not only because it differentiates the different plans and provides a basis for further analysis of the determinants and political processes on migration and displacement. It is also of interest because it reflects policy learning on the link between human mobility and UN-led development activities. Thus, insights from national-level UN development plans can serve as a heuristic to studying the global governance of migration and displacement and the emergence of certain themes over time.

Expanding Hollifield's (2004) conceptualisations of the migration state, Adamson and Tsourapas (2019a) categorise state migration management regimes in the global South as nationalising, developmental or neoliberal, depending on whether the mobility is state-organised and forced, on whether a state's infrastructure focuses on emigration and remittances, and on whether or not rights and access are sold as economic goods, for example through investor-citizenship programmes. The discussion of the UN Development Assistance Frameworks in the MENA region shows a greater variety of policy regimes and highlights where they interlink with international processes. This begs the question as to what extent and under what conditions these processes produce more rights and better outcomes for migrants and displaced persons. UN development plans also offer an opportunity to study interagency cooperation, that is: when, how, and on what issues do different UN programmes, agencies and funds work together on mobility issues (Naujoks, 2020). This is even more the case with the newly reformed UN Cooperation Frameworks that are meant to have a stronger focus on cross-border issues.

Natter (2018, 5) observes that studies on immigration policies in the global South 'often treat states as single, homogeneous entities without paying attention to the fragmentation of state interests, and ignore their decision-making autonomy in front of international actors'. The analysis of UNDAFs in the MENA region cannot be explained by clear international determinants and processes.

The limited incorporation of mobility concerns into UNDAFs in the MENA region may be a sign of incomplete policy learning, a prioritisation of other issues, the politicisation of certain forms of human mobility, existing national capacities that do not require external support or institutional constellation in the UN country team. In all likelihood, there is not a single factor that can explain a policy focus on mobility in UN development plans, but a number of constellations that facilitate or hinder it. While this chapter's exploration of the factors that lead to a stronger or weaker inclusion of mobility concerns is limited, I have offered several hypotheses that may be considered by future research.

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# Migration and Development in Egypt: A Holistic View

*Gerasimos Tsourapas*

## Abstract

The importance of labour migration as an instrument for states' development has been a key consideration for a range of countries across the global South. Egypt was one of the first states across North Africa and the Middle East to establish specific policies on the governance of labour migration in the context of social and economic development, which have been effective since the early 1970s. This chapter aims to identify the range of policies introduced by the Egyptian state with the aim of governing migration, and to examine the distinct contributions of cross-border socioeconomic mobility to development. Drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources in Arabic and English, as well as extensive fieldwork in Cairo, the chapter points to the fact that Egyptian public policies aim to attract far more than economic remittances; and demonstrates how Egypt approaches migration in a holistic manner, seeking to maximise the benefits from citizens' emigration and their time abroad, while also encouraging return skilled migration.

## 1 Introduction

How does cross-border mobility facilitate development for countries of origin across the global South? This question has been a critical component of a number of research agendas across a variety of disciplines and sub-disciplines, which have produced a diverse array of frequently contradictory viewpoints on how migration affects different types of development. The question has become even more prescient in the context of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes an ambitious range of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that states are invited to meet. This chapter takes a slightly different perspective on the debate, aiming to 'unpack' the phenomenon of migration itself: all too often, researchers' attention has focused on development, and this has led to the adopting of a rather mono-dimensional approach to the complexity of migration, which, in the context

of sending states, has been synonymous with emigration. Yet, the process of emigration contains various stages that have yet to be considered fully by the relevant literature. It is for this reason that this chapter poses the initial research question and addresses how development processes in countries of origin might be affected by the entire trajectory of citizens' migratory journeys.

Building on previous work that aimed to nuance existing understandings of state-diaspora relations in the Middle East (Tsourapas, 2020), this chapter deconstructs the phenomenon of migration into three distinct, albeit interconnected, stages: *exit*, *overseas*, and *return*. *Exit* refers to the phenomenon of emigrating from the sending state; *overseas* refers to life beyond the territorial boundaries of the home country; and, finally, *return* refers to migrants' readmission into the country of origin. This chapter puts forth the argument that each of these stages holds distinct developmental importance. If well-managed, processes of *exit* will enable the sending state to benefit from lower domestic rates of unemployment and overpopulation, while granting unique opportunities for human development to those emigrating abroad. Once *overseas*, citizens abroad are able to contribute to the economy of the home country via the dispatch of migrant remittances. Finally, migrants' *return* can result in processes of 'brain gain' via an infusion of new talents and skills into the sending state's economy.

In order to demonstrate the workings of such a holistic view, this chapter examines the single-case study of Egypt over the last fifty years. The Arab Republic of Egypt, as it is officially known, formally liberalised its migration policy in 1971 and has, since then, become a key country of origin for migrant labour across the Middle East. At the same time, Egypt enjoys a central role within Middle East and African politics as well as being, historically, a major power outside the global North. The country's long engagement with managing cross-border mobility, as well as Egypt's key position within the Middle East and the broader global South, make it ideal for testing the chapter's argument in detail: that evaluating the impact of Egyptian *exit*, *overseas*, and *return* allows for a multi-dimensional approach to the interplay between migration and development for countries of origin across the global South.

The chapter proceeds as follows: a brief overview of the interplay between migration and development—particularly in non-Western contexts—paves the way for the chapter's main contribution, which takes a more holistic view. This is followed by a brief note on methodology and the strengths of the case-study method as an analytical mode of inquiry, before the chapter begins its main discussion on Egypt: three separate sections detail the developmental importance of the *exit*, *overseas*, and *return* dimensions of citizens' emigration, paying particular attention to the rationale behind Egyptian state policies.

The chapter concludes with a broader note on how this framework could be applied to other sending states—in the Middle East and beyond—and how it nuances existing approaches to the interplay between migration and development in the global South.

## 2 Understanding Migration and Development—Towards a Holistic View

A significant body of research examines how states' migration policymaking, and, in particular, the regulation of emigration, are influenced by domestic developmental necessities (Carling, 2019). A number of distinct phases may be identified: in the decades following the end of World War II, scholars adopted the expectations of modernisation theory, which argued for migration as one of the ways out of poverty (Todaro, 1969). Building on neoclassical approaches to migration, this group of scholars expected cross-border mobility to facilitate the shift of resources between capital-poor/labour-rich countries in Europe and North America and capital-rich/labour-poor ones across the non-West (Rostow, 1960). The hope was that international migration would facilitate 'win-win' outcomes that would culminate in wage convergence within a global equilibrium. Once this occurred, it was thought, the incentives to emigrate would decrease.

Critical theorists challenged this view, highlighting a number of issues that implied a need to problematise political scientists' linear expectations of development in the non-West. A range of novel frameworks were introduced—world systems theory, dependency theory, globalisation theory—in order to identify the structural factors that impeded international migration. At the same time, scholars highlighted the phenomenon of brain drain; a main factor in cross-border mobility exacerbating, rather than ameliorating, the global rich-poor country divide (Bhagwati, 1976). Critical scholars identified how migration was in fact contributing to uneven trade relations that were widening the gap between 'developed' and 'developing' countries—with some even going so far as to argue that migration was contributing to the 'development of underdevelopment' (Frank, 1966).

In recent years, there has been a re-evaluation of both positions, with scholars and practitioners broadly recognising the positive effects of migration on states' development. This has, in particular, been driven by the literature on economic remittances (De Luna-Martinez, 2005), as well as broader debates within the migration-development nexus (Piper, 2009). A range of countries have come to constitute 'developmental migration states', characterised by a specific 'relationship between cross-border mobility and economic

growth' that relies on labour export via emigration (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2020, 860). However, while the emphasis on migrants' financial transfers is warranted—notable researchers have characterised them as 'mother's milk for poor nations' (Kapur and McHale, 2003)—it nonetheless tends to blur the range of potential contributions that mobility may make to migration states' developmental goals. In particular, two sets of literature allow for a stronger understanding of under-researched aspects of this phenomenon: work on migration as a 'safety valve', and research on return migration.

In terms of the former, social scientists have long identified how labour emigration affects states' domestic political economy, particularly in the global South, arguing that it constitutes a safety valve that enables countries to tackle issues such as unemployment or overpopulation by encouraging citizens' emigration (Castles and Wise, 2008). At the same time, research has identified the importance of return migration as a form of 'brain gain' that allows sending states to benefit from the skills, networks, capital, and expertise that returnees acquire while abroad (Cassarino, 2004). Thus, a more careful look at migrants' trajectories identifies how both the *exit* and *return* components of cross-border mobility—separate from their time *overseas*—may have distinct socio-political and economic importance (Tsourapas, 2020).

In order to pinpoint the developmental value of this three-stage process of migration, this chapter draws on the single-case study of Egypt (for a detailed discussion of the case, see Tsourapas, 2019). The case-study method is well-suited for theory development purposes (George and Bennett, 2005), particularly given that 'inferring and testing explanations that define how the independent causes the dependent variable are often easier with case-study than large-n methods' (Van Evera, 1997, 54). The chapter draws on data collected during fieldwork in Cairo that includes archival research across different depositories as well as extensive, semi-structured interviews with experts and elites conducted during 2013–14 for the purposes of a research project on the politics of Egyptian migration, which became a monograph with Cambridge University Press (Tsourapas, 2019). Drawing on these sources, the chapter aims to accurately provide an ambitious overview of the interplay between migration and development in Egypt. But first, a brief introduction to the Egyptian migration state will provide the necessary contextualisation for the reader.

### 3 The Egyptian Migration State

The study of Egypt allows for a wealth of insights into the importance of migration for development for the broader Middle East and North Africa (Fargues,

TABLE 4.1 Egyptian migrants in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 2016

Country	Number of Egyptians
Saudi Arabia	2,925,000
Jordan	1,150,000
United Arab Emirates	765,000
Kuwait	500,000
Sudan	500,000
Qatar	230,000
Oman	56,000
Lebanon	40,000
Iraq	22,000
Bahrain	21,000
Palestine	14,500
Algeria	6,600
Morocco	3,000
Syria	2,000
Tunisia	800
Mauritania	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,236,050</b>

SOURCE: CAPMAS (2017)

2013). Egypt is a key state in terms of regional migration processes: with a population of 100 million in 2019, Egypt constitutes the Arab world's largest country, and over half of its citizens are under the age of 25 (Di Bartolomeo, Fakhoury and Perrin, 2010). As a result of the liberalisation of emigration in the early 1970s, Egyptians have become highly mobile, forming vibrant communities across most Arab states, particularly Libya, Iraq, Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council states. The Egyptian diaspora (for precise statistics, see Tables 4.1 and 4.2) is also spread across much of the global North and has had a key role in mobilising for political change in the home country, most recently during the 2011 'Arab Spring'.

### 3.1 *Egyptians' Exit and State Development Exigencies*

The liberalisation of Egypt's emigration policy took place in 1971 when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat established the country's new 'Permanent' constitution. Article 52 stated that 'Egyptian citizens shall now have the right

TABLE 4.2 Egyptian citizens and descendants living outside the MENA region, 2016

Country	Number of Egyptians
United States	981,000
Canada	600,000
Italy	560,000
France	365,000
Australia	340,000
Germany	77,000
United Kingdom	62,500
The Netherlands	45,000
Austria	33,000
Turkey	25,800
Greece	25,000
Sweden	8,000
Switzerland	7,500
Belgium	5,000
Ukraine	5,000
Ireland	4,500
Spain	4,000
China	3,500
Cyprus	3,500
Malaysia	3,500
Other countries	76,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,234,600</b>

SOURCE: CAPMAS (2017)

to permanent or temporary migration' (Tsourapas, 2019, xvi). In 1974, President Sadat abolished all existing restrictions—most significantly, doing away with the 'exit visas' that President Gamal Abdel Nasser had used to restrict emigration in the 1950s and 1960s. Egypt had already begun promoting citizens' *exit* via Presidential Decree 73 of 1971, which gave public sector employees who emigrated in pursuit of employment abroad the right to be reinstated in their positions in Egypt if they returned home within a year of their resignation (this later became 2 years). In addition, the Egyptian state would restore any salary increments they had missed. A number of agreements were negotiated with migrant host states (Tsourapas, 2020, 147). The country's educational



TABLE 4.3 Youth unemployment in Egypt, 1991–2010

Year	Unemployment rate <sup>a</sup>
1991	29.7
1995	32.6
2000	25.5
2005	33.7
2010	26.3

a % Total Labour Force, ages 15–24.

SOURCE: WORLD BANK (2021)

curriculum also shifted in order to encourage emigration: Egyptian school curricula taught that ‘people emigrate, just like birds’<sup>1</sup> (quoted in Tsourapas 2019, 107), while Egyptian preparatory school students were tasked to write an essay on ‘the joys of a person who could obtain work in an Arab country’ for their school-leaving certificate exam (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 107).

The liberalisation of Egypt’s emigration policy was dictated partly by developmental exigencies: for one, combatting unemployment had become one of the most pressing issues of post-1970 Egypt. ‘Even according to official projections based on inflated estimates by various agencies in the mid-sixties’, Ayubi once argued, ‘the country was, by the early seventies, graduating more than four times the number of engineers it was expected to need until 1980’ (Ayubi, 1983, 434). According to Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, ‘unemployment is a bomb that will explode [...] sooner or later if we are not prepared to confront it now’ (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 168; see also Table 4.3). ‘Egypt with 20 million people could have been a Mediterranean country, a Greece or Portugal’, Former Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali once drily remarked. ‘Egypt with 70 million people will be Bangladesh’ (Lippman, 1989, 164).

At the same time, the issue of overpopulation had also become prominent (see Table 4.4). ‘[W]hile the country’s population doubled from 9.7 million to 19 million in 50 years (between 1897 and 1947)’, writes Zohry, ‘the next doubling to 38 million people took less than 30 years (from 1947 to 1976). Since then, the population has almost doubled again, totalling 76 million in 2006’ (Zohry, 2014, 76). This was frequently, and openly, discussed by Egyptian elites: ‘We

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations of quoted material are provided by the author.

TABLE 4.4 Egyptian population growth, 1975–2010

	1975	1980	1990	2000	2010
Mid-year population (millions)	38.6	44.95	56.83	67.64	81.11
Population growth rate (annual %)	2.12	2.45	2.44	1.8	1.97
Fertility rate (live births per woman)	5.59	5.37	4.35	3.31	2.88
Life expectancy at birth (years)	54.69	58.32	64.55	68.59	70.45
Infant mortality rate	154.70	114	67.8	22.3	15.5

SOURCE: WORLD BANK (2021)

have a small cultivable area of land', Sadat once remarked, 'and a big population that is increasing maybe by the biggest rate in the world' (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 163). Mubarak would openly state his fears that Egypt's population was growing 'faster than the speed of sound [...]. What will happen when there are 70 million of us, keeping in mind that resources do not increase at the same rate as population? [...] What about houses, food, education, medical treatment, and many other needs for [these] millions? Where will we get these things?' (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 163).

The encouragement of citizens' *exit* has been instrumental in the developmental goals of the Egyptian state since the 1970s (Sadiq and Tsourapas, 2021). 'The high rates of Egyptian population growth at the time dictated a change in the state's emigration laws', former Minister Ali Dessouki argued (personal interview, 2014). Emigration as a 'safety valve' became a key component of the Egyptian state's solution to its domestic political economy issues. Boutros-Ghali argued that the 'complicated' problem of overpopulation, in particular, 'should be tackled through a comprehensive strategy based on family control, the regulation of internal migration, and migration on both the Arab regional and international levels' (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 168). 'We should not fear surplus in manpower', Prime Minister Hegazy declared in 1974, given that 'Arab, African, and even European countries [seek] Egyptian manpower' (quoted in Tsourapas, 2019, 168). In 1975, Prime Minister Mamduh Salem announced that the promotion of citizens' *exit* was an official target for the Egyptian state, as a way to provide a durable solution to a number of issues (Tsourapas, 2019, xvii).

### 3.2 *Egyptians Overseas and State Development Exigencies*

Beyond the developmental importance of citizens' *exit*, the Egyptian government placed particular emphasis on how those who had already emigrated

might be able to contribute socioeconomically to the betterment of the homeland. For much of the twentieth century, there was a long tradition of highly-skilled Egyptians travelling and pursuing employment abroad (Tsourapas, 2016), but it was after the British occupation ended that the Egyptian government sought to use expatriates as an instrument of development. Under the Nasserite era—1952 to 1970—the state primarily relied on high-skilled Egyptians abroad for political purposes: they would be tasked with promoting discourses of anti-colonialism, anti-Westernism, and anti-Zionism across the Arab world. In sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt engaged in direct competition with Israel over establishing economic links with newly-independent African states; in this, the activities of Egyptian teachers, engineers, and other professionals were instrumental (Siniver and Tsourapas, forthcoming).

The effort targeting members of the Egyptian community abroad in order to aid in the country's socioeconomic development occurred in the aftermath of the 1971 liberalisation of emigration. From the early 1970s until the beginning of the 1990s, Egypt considered economic remittances to be a key source of income. Despite a short period in which remittance inflows fell in the aftermath of the Iraq-Kuwait War, they now constitute—once again—a significant share of the country's gross domestic product (GDP, see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.1 below). Given that money transfers are also conducted via unofficial, untraceable channels, the economic importance of migration for Egypt is even higher. In fact, Egyptian policy and media circles have, since the 1970s, often ascribed a great developmental role to those in the diaspora (Müller-Funk, 2017).

TABLE 4.5 Official remittances by Egyptians working abroad (EGP millions)

Year	Financial transfers	Declared imports financed by own-exchange system	Total remittances
1974	124	16	140
1975	164	93	257
1976	364	167	531
1977	384	265	649
1978	654	587	1241
1979	666	883	1549
1980	818	1070	1888
1981	591	936	1527
1982	931	1396	2327

SOURCE: TSOURAPAS (2019, 183)

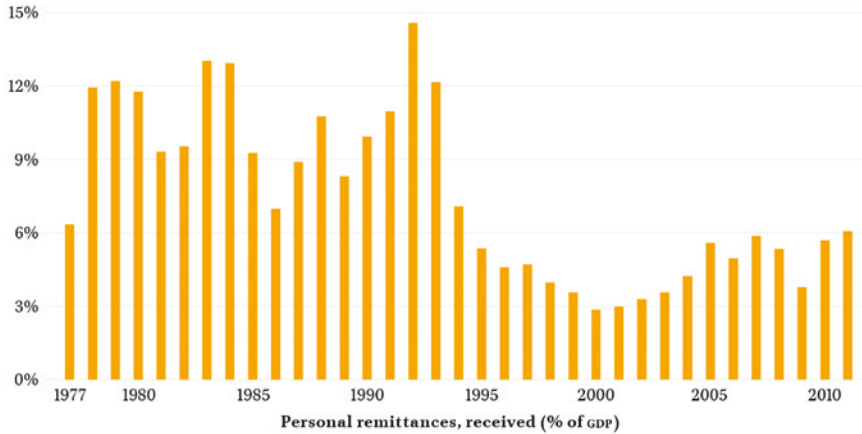


FIGURE 4.1 Personal remittances received, 1977–2011 (% of Egyptian GDP)  
SOURCE: TSOURAPAS (2019, 173)

Belief in the developmental importance of Egyptians abroad resulted in a multi-tier policy, in which the sending state actively courted select groups of *overseas* citizens, particularly those residing in Europe and North America. The 1971 Constitution introduced a formal tiering of Egyptians abroad, characterising those seeking employment regionally (primarily in oil-producing countries) as ‘temporary workers’, while those who emigrated to Western states were considered to be ‘permanent migrants’. This filtered into a broader policy of targeting the latter, who were believed to be much more significant for the development of the home country than those working across the Middle East (for a detailed discussion, see Tsourapas, 2015; Müller-Funk, 2017). The expectation that ‘permanent’ migrants would contribute to the country’s development is further evidenced in the titles of the state-sponsored conferences organised through the *Friends of Egypt* organisation, held bi-annually from 1974 until 2009 (Table 4.6). These events targeted Egyptians residing in Western countries and, according to organiser and former Minister of Health Dr. Badran, the professed aim was to ‘bring successful Egyptians back to the homeland’ (personal interview, 2014).

The state’s attempts to court their citizens abroad was extensive: many would receive formal invitations to fly back to Cairo and Alexandria on all-expenses-paid trips, where they would meet with President Sadat and his wife, as well as select members of the administration. The Egyptian government showed particular interest in various unions of Egyptians abroad—especially students: in 1976, the Egyptian President granted USD 50,000 (or over USD 200,000 today) to the Union of Egyptian students in North America—only a

TABLE 4.6 *Friends of Egypt* conference titles

Year	Conference title
1974	Organising Modes of Communication with Egyptian Scholars Abroad
1974	Development of the Desert
1978	Development of the Countryside as a Source of Complete Development
1980	Development under the Umbrella of Peace
1982	The Role of Science and Technology in Egyptian Development
1984	Environmental Problems of Development
1986	Economic Development in Egypt
1988	Education in Egypt
1990	Egypt's Human Resources
1992	Water Resources and Development in Egypt
1994	Energy and Continuous Development in Egypt
1996	Unemployment in Egypt
1998	Development of the Desert in the Third Millennium
2001	Modernizing Egypt
2003	Human Development in the Third Millennium
2005	Information Technology and its Role in Development
2009	Care, Communication and Development

SOURCE: TSOURAPAS (2015, 2203)

year before, he had offered the presidential airplane to fly back Egyptian students who were unable to find employment abroad (Tsourapas, 2015). These processes continued well into the Mubarak years, while a separate Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs was created in 1981, replaced in 1996 by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (Tsourapas, 2020).

### 3.3 *The Developmental Value of Egyptians' Return*

Finally, a key dimension of Egypt's migration-development nexus was the attempt to ensure that citizens abroad *return* to the homeland. In many ways, encouraging migrants' return to Egypt is linked to the state's initial encouragement of emigration—given that the initial rationale, at least partly, aimed to allow younger Egyptians to pursue employment and improve their skillsets abroad. For a country that has historically placed a high value on education,

the appeal of having highly skilled citizens return to improve conditions in the homeland was particularly strong. Dual citizenship mechanisms were adopted, in order to ensure that Egyptians abroad did not relinquish their ties to the homeland. Housing and employment perks were also not uncommon for Egyptians wishing to return to Egypt. The Egyptian government also introduced an amnesty process that aimed to attract Egyptians that had fled abroad for political—rather than socioeconomic—reasons. This was the rationale behind the agreement signed between the Egyptian state and the United Nations Development Programme, which invited Egyptian scientists working abroad to return to Egypt for an average period of one month, financed by the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, in order to transfer expertise and build contacts with local Egyptian staff.

It is worth noting that the Egyptian state invested its energy in the return of permanent migrants, rather than temporary workers, whom it believed would be returning home anyway (Tsourapas, 2015). As I have argued elsewhere, the Egyptian regime ‘embraced’ the country’s ‘permanent’ migrants for distinct political economy and foreign policy reasons (Tsourapas, 2015). In terms of political economy, the regime expected certain benefits from these migrants—in much the same way that its overall rapprochement with the United States was also expected to produce economic results. For one, these migrants were traditionally perceived across Egyptian policy circles as the core of the state’s brain drain issue (Ayubi, 1983). Statistical data on Egyptian migrants’ levels of education in each host state is unavailable, but the dominant belief within Egyptian policymaking remains that permanent migration to more developed countries mainly attracted educated workers. While high-skilled Egyptians did emigrate across the region, particularly after 1990, the literature concurs that brain drain occurred mainly toward the West and particularly toward the United States and Canada. This, again, is linked to the ‘temporary/permanent’ divide (Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003, 47–48). As Ayubi explained:

[I]t is possible to argue that temporary emigration does not represent a kind of brain drain in the proper sense: first, because it is by definition temporary; second, because its output is still made use of within the same region; and third, because such people disburse a significant proportion of their incomes back to their home country [...]. In addition, although temporary migrants feature a reasonably high percentage of personnel who were employed in Egypt in scientific, professional and technical occupations [around 38 per cent], this percentage is not as high as it is with permanent migrants, and its internal composition is also quite different.

Few ‘permanent’ migrants returned, according to most estimates and secondary accounts.<sup>2</sup> ‘Many [permanent emigrants] realised that a return would mean a lowering of [living] standards and much overtime to keep income levels up. There was apprehension that contact might be lost with developments in their academic fields abroad’ (McDermott, 1988, 241). Overall, the hopes for significant flows of permanent migrants’ economic investments into the country have been obstructed by government bureaucracy and suspicion from many Egyptians abroad (Zohry and Debnath, 2010). A survey study by Saleh on the country’s brain drain problem in the 1970s identified similar sentiments among Egyptians abroad:

I came back with hopes that with the degree and experience I got, I could help Egypt, but I was shocked. My efforts in England didn’t help Egypt [...]. There is a shortage of [professorial positions] that I could fill, but I am not taken [...]. Even my salary, that they cut for two years in England, was not given back to me. I am treated as a ‘colored’ where I work (army), for I have a doctor’s degree [...]. I feel that colleagues have envy and hatred for me and my degree.

SALEH, 1979, 55

Another returnee recalled:

I was shocked by many things in Egypt as soon as I arrived. I stayed in a state of unbalance for a long time [...]. During that time, I met the worst difficulties that a returning scientist meets [...] at the customs, bribery of government employees and all that [...] just to get my car out [...]. Difficulties came one after the other [...]. At present I am trying to acclimatise to life in the framework of the actual reality around me.

SALEH, 1979, 64

Ultimately, it is widely acknowledged that this extensive return policy did not yield the expected results,—which is not surprising: firstly, despite a different perception across Egyptian policymaking circles, it has historically been regional emigrants that have procured the vast majority of economic

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2 An evaluation of whether Egyptian diaspora policies positively contributed to the return of Egyptians (and shifted their attitudes towards their home country) would not be possible within this study’s methodological framework and due to the unavailability of statistical data. That said, I encountered very few elites or experts willing to argue that Egyptian policy was a success in this aspect. The wider literature corroborates this.

remittances, rather than Egyptians living in Western countries. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, a large percentage of Egyptians living in the United States and Canada—a population that includes many Copts—were rumoured to have abandoned Egypt for political, rather than purely economic, reasons (Tadros, 2013).

#### 4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the interplay between migration and development in a key state of the global South—Egypt. Egypt boasts one of the largest emigrant populations in the world, estimated at 6.5 million in 2012, not including emigrants' descendants. It constitutes the main provider of migrant labour within the Middle East, and the Egyptian diaspora is one of the largest internationally. This chapter has aimed to nuance existing understandings of the migration-development nexus by unpacking the process of migration into *exit*, *overseas*, and *return* components that highlight citizens' emigration, time abroad, and return to the home country, respectively. In so doing, the chapter highlights the keen interest that Egyptian policymakers demonstrated toward capturing the full developmental potential of cross-border mobility in the post-1971 era.

An attempt at a more holistic approach to the developmental value of migration for global South states would shed valuable light on a range of countries: for instance, Turkey, Libya, Jordan and Syria have also established similar processes (to a lesser or greater extent) in an effort to benefit from their citizens' cross border mobility (Tsourapas, 2020). But going beyond the Middle East, it is evident that states across the global South view the process of migration as complex and multi-tiered, consequently developing separate sets of policy instruments to benefit as much as possible from migration flows. Such policies frequently become interlinked with foreign policy priorities within states' migration diplomacy aims (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019). India, for instance, places particular importance on processes of citizens' *exit*, and has developed a range of domestic and foreign policy processes aiming to maximise emigration (Kapur, 2010). At the same time, most global South states have developed intricate diaspora policies that seek to profit from their diverse communities abroad (Gamlen, 2008). Finally, Mexico and others have implemented concrete return migration policies seeking to benefit from 'brain gain', given the large communities of migrant workers they have abroad (Cassarino, 2004).

Overall, this chapter aims to make a contribution to the growing field of research on the developmental importance of migration by pointing out the



diverse ways through which state elites aim to ‘capture’ the benefits of citizens’ cross-border mobility. The existing research tends to highlight specific aspects of migrants’ trajectories, and this does not fully capture the range of policies implemented by global South ‘emigration states’. A closer look at migrants’ trajectories paves the way for a more careful analysis of how states can achieve the SDGs and how they may be able to rely on rising rates of global interconnectedness and mobility as they work toward a more economically sustainable future.

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# Channels for Financial and Non-financial Remittances from the Ghanaian Diaspora toward Development

*Amanda Coffie*

## Abstract

This chapter deepens the discourse on diaspora and development in countries of origin. It proposes a shift from focusing narrowly on inflows of foreign currencies to also considering other forms of remittances such as goods, skills and ideas, which help maintain emotional bonds between family and communities across generations. Ghana acknowledges the diaspora's beneficial role in development and has established gateways to facilitate the flow of resources. However, these formal gateways are skewed toward financial remittances, seen as the essential source for the State's developmental agenda. With its varied composition and resources, the Ghanaian diaspora uses multiple channels to contribute toward their families and local community projects through individual contributions and resource pooling. Thus, the Ghanaian diaspora's engagement reflects a participatory approach that has received limited State recognition but is appreciated and encouraged by recipients within Ghanaian communities. The chapter recommends government provision of secure channels for financial transfers while recognising cultural remittances and social connections as crucial for sustaining families, especially for reducing poverty and ensuring food security, which are specific and immediate concerns for communities.

## 1 Introduction

Diaspora groups, a subpopulation of migrants, have in the last half-century attracted increasing policy and scholarly attention for many reasons. The relatively strong sentimental and material links they have with their countries of origin—their homelands—makes them greatly important in the arena of development (Sheffer, 1986; de Haas 2006, Nieswand, 2009). Both scholarly and policy records have noted an increasing trend in remittances being sent from the diaspora to their respective countries of origin. In Africa, the data indicate that accumulated migrant cash and investment remittances are

higher than official development assistance (ODA) sent to recipient countries. The World Bank estimates that in the next “five years, remittances will likely become larger than development assistance and FDI [foreign direct investment] combined” (Dilip Ratha [Lead Economist and Manager, Migration and Remittances at the World Bank], cited in Barne and Pirlea, 2019). Furthermore, migrants’ cash remittances are considered more stable than foreign direct investment. They are thus a critical and stable source of external finance for Africa (World Bank, 2019a; 2019b).

According to the World Bank (2019b), since 1990, migrants’ cash contributions to sub-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup> have steadily increased. In 2017, there was an increase of 9.2 per cent amounting to USD 42 billion and an increase of 9.6 per cent in 2018, totalling USD 46 billion. In 2018, Nigeria and Ghana were the highest recipients with inflows of USD 28.9 billion and USD 3.8 billion respectively. Other African countries receiving high amounts were, Kenya, (USD 2.7 billion) Senegal (USD 2.2 billion) and Zimbabwe (USD 1.9 billion) (World Bank, 2019b).

Individually, African countries are harnessing diaspora resources for their socioeconomic development, with varying results. In this article, I focus on the case of Ghana and the Ghanaian diaspora. Ghana, the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence from colonial rule, in 1957, has always encouraged its diaspora’s participation in its development agenda. Ghana’s leadership role in the pan-African movement, initiated by the first president, Kwame Nkrumah, has always called on the diaspora not to disengage from the continent in general and Ghana more specifically.

Ghana’s development history is chequered and shows how the country has adopted different approaches with various stakeholders. When it gained independence, Ghana turned to the developmental state model in its quest to transform its economy and lift millions of Ghanaians out of poverty. From this perspective, ‘the State constitutes a superior means for the fulfilment of economic and social aspirations; participation in its activities is deemed beneficial’ to every societal sector (Azarya and Chazan, 1987, 106). This claim is anchored in the assumption of attributes accorded to the State as an actor that does not sit on the fence concerning the development process, and instead actively participates in it (Laird, 2007; Dadzie, 2013). The model was successful, leading to growth in industry and infrastructural development. However, internal political instability began with the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966. External economic factors such as the oil shocks of the 1970s triggered by the OPEC

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1 The World Bank lists 46 of Africa’s 54 countries as “sub-Saharan”, excluding Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia.

(Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil price hike set the process back and eroded most of the gains that had been made. These economic and political challenges became push factors for Ghanaians who migrated to Europe, North America and some other African countries.

By the 1980s, Ghana's economic crisis had worsened. The country therefore sought relief from external actors and institutions; unfortunately, these partnerships did not yield the needed results. Indeed, to a great extent, the already dire financial situation was exacerbated by the Structural Adjustment Packages (SAPs) imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Some negative impacts include higher unemployment levels, an increase in poverty levels, and an increase in the cost of social services (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001).

The economic conditions of the 1990s contributed to new patterns of migration from Ghana that had emerged in the early 1980s. Ghana experienced high brain drain levels from the 1980s through the 1990s. Highly skilled professionals, diplomats and international civil servants left and were joined in the diaspora by large numbers of semi-skilled, young and irregular migrants. These economic and political challenges contributed to the changes in the profile of the Ghanaian diaspora.

Since the 1990s, similar to other African countries, Ghana has been on a quest for a new development paradigm. The emerging nexus between diaspora and development presented itself as a viable alternative to stimulate growth and development. In the new wave of development, the diaspora's relevance to African home countries has been well recognised and appreciated by their Ghanaian counterparts at home. In response, the government redirected significant structures and policies to harness the diaspora's contribution effectively.

Currently, Ghana's development outlook on both economic and non-economic scores is good relative to other African countries. The African Development Bank estimated Ghana's 2019 real GDP growth at 7.1 per cent and placed Ghana among Africa's ten fastest-growing economies. Ghana's 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) score was 0.611, above the average of 0.547 for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The HDI rated Ghana as showing medium human development in relation to other countries. Ghana's HDI ranking has seen an incremental increase since the 1990s (UNDP, 2020). However, the country needs to accelerate or maintain the incremental growth to ensure healthy societal growth and transformation in its citizens' lives.

Conceptually, this chapter observes that the state-led development agenda focused on economic growth indicators partly explains Ghana's privileging of financial remittances over other forms of remittance. Also, the government's focus on financial remittances is explained by the inability of policies and

institutions to accommodate the varied composition of the diaspora community. Although the literature on migrant remittances has noted the complexities of diaspora composition, resources and transfers (Levitt, 1998; Brinkerhoff, 2011; Lacroix, Levitt and Vari-Lavoisier, 2016), policymaking remains inadequate to accommodate these variations. Instead, policymakers perceive the diaspora as homogeneous and offer narrow narratives of diaspora and development. This chapter contends that the State's privileging of financial remittances members of the diaspora, with the means to make other forms of contribution. Additionally, government approaches have resulted in the provision of formal gateways incapable of accommodating the multiple forms of contribution from the Ghanaian diaspora to development at both the family and community levels.

This chapter notes the variations in the composition of diaspora contributions using narratives of migrants' migratory experiences, but first it begins with a brief narrative defining the Ghanaian diaspora. This introduction is followed by a discussion of Ghana's gateways for harnessing diaspora resources and the challenges these formal systems present. Here, the chapter examines the various government gateways for facilitating and directing financial remittances to recipients that explicitly contribute revenue to the State and provide for the recipients' expenditure. Finally, the article presents other gateways and multiple ways adopted by the Ghanaian diaspora to support their families' and local communities' well-being and maintain emotional and generational bonds.

## 2 Defining the Ghanaian Diaspora

The term diaspora is used in several different contexts worldwide (Van Hear, 1998; Akyeampong, 2000; Zeleza, 2008). The core features of a group associated with the term diaspora include dispersal from a homeland to two or more other territories, an enduring presence abroad and the flow or exchange of social, economic, political or cultural resources between the spatially separated populations.

Concerning Africa, the term 'African diaspora' is therefore generally used to describe the worldwide group of people who either migrated from or trace their origin to the African continent (Zeleza, 2005, 2008; Coffie, 2020). From a policy perspective, the African Union (AU), adopted the following as the continent's formal definition of the African diaspora: 'The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the

development of the continent and the building of the African Union' (AU, 2014, Art.1).

Faal (2019) identifies seven categories within the African diaspora (See Table 5.1). These categories can be split into two major groups to reflect the significant patterns of migration outside the continent. The first four groups are associated with migration preceding Africa's struggles for independence. The remaining three are linked with movements outside of the continent during the post-independence era. These categorisations are not meant as a ranking of one group over the other. Instead, they are primarily for practical policy reasons. Faal (2019) notes that identifying these categories enables policymakers and practitioners to devise and implement appropriate policies, strategies and programmes for effective and optimal diaspora engagement, investment and development.

At the state level, terms such as the Somali diaspora, Liberian diaspora, Rwandan diaspora, Zimbabwean diaspora or Ghanaian diaspora have been used to name and represent African diaspora populations associated with the respective states.

TABLE 5.1 Typology of people within the African diaspora

Type of African diaspora	Period of migratory wave	Main location around the world
Primordial diaspora	ca. 100,000 BCE	All of humankind across the world
Prehistoric diaspora	ca. 50,000 BCE	Australasia, Melanesia, Andaman Islands, etc.
Oriental diaspora	8th to 18th century	Arabia, Levant, Indian subcontinent, Far East
Atlantic diaspora	16th to 19th century	Brazil, North America, Caribbean, Latin America
Post-War diaspora	1945 to 1990	Former European colonial countries, North America
Post-Cold War diaspora	1990 to present	Western Europe, North America
Cosmopolitan diaspora	1970s to present	African professional and expatriate families in major cities across the world

SOURCE: FAAL (2019, 5)



In this article, I contextualise the Ghanaian diaspora as Ghanaians and their descendants living outside Ghana. They have developed a transnational identity with dual or multiple obligations toward both their country of residence and Ghana as their country of origin. They are not likely to return to Ghana permanently or visit regularly. Still, they maintain ties with their families and wider communities, as well as the State. Also, I note that the Ghanaian diaspora, like other diasporic groups, is neither a homogeneous group nor a fixed category. Its composition, location and relation to Ghana are diverse and not static. The fixed characteristic of the Ghanaian diaspora is its members' ties to Ghana either as members of a displaced population or as descendants of forced and voluntary migrants out of Ghana.

### 3 Method

Methodologically, this study is qualitative and based mainly on archival research. Compiling the chapter's data involved extensive review and analysis of academic literature, as well as financial, legal and institutional documents. Additionally, I conducted four key persons interviews via phone. The study adopts Faal's (2019) typology of the African diaspora to distinguish the various categories of the Ghanaian diaspora. It focuses on the second major category, which comprises the post-War diaspora, post-Cold War diaspora and cosmopolitan diaspora. The temporal scope of my analysis of the various government gateways for harnessing diaspora remittances covers the period from 1992 to the present, generally referred to as the Fourth Republic of Ghana. The focus on this period and these categories of the Ghanaian diaspora does not discount the rich history of the African diaspora and its members' engagement with Ghana as developmental partners before the 1990s or the Ghanaian diaspora's activities before the 1970s. However, selecting the period of the Fourth Republic enables the chapter to look at subsequent government engagements with the diaspora and the diaspora's responses within the same kind of governance structure. The period from independence to the Fourth Republic has not seen a structured and consistent engagement with the diaspora. Military takeovers from 1966 to 1990 (interspersed with brief moments of constitutional rule; 1969–72 and 1979–81) interrupted relations between governments and the diaspora. Also, the periods of military and authoritarian regimes served as significant sources of development challenges. They led to the dispersal of Ghanaians, which changed the composition of the Ghanaian diaspora. The Fourth Republic also represents a shift in government and general migrant

relations: that is, from relations characterised by ill feelings between the government and Ghanaians abroad to much more solid relations between Ghana and the diaspora. Both sides have developed cordial ties, each showing mutual respect and seeing each other as significant stakeholders in order to drive development (Teye, Alhassan and Setrana, 2017; Manuh, 2006).

#### 4 Government Gateways for Engaging the Ghanaian Diaspora

Until 2015, Ghana had no comprehensive migration policy, and the process of formalising diaspora engagement initiated in 2001 remains at the draft stage. Nevertheless, a modest diaspora engagement framework has been developed, streamlining the government's relationship with the diaspora community. Since independence, successive governments have carried out numerous political, cultural and socioeconomic initiatives to engage the diaspora (Coffie, 2012; 2017). The history of Ghana's engagement with the Ghanaian diaspora is organised in two thematic policy practical areas: symbolic celebrations and the formalisation of rights and responsibilities.

##### 4.1 *Symbolic Celebration of Ghanaian Diaspora*

Ghana has a rich history of engagement with its diaspora, predominantly involving ceremonial celebrations to incorporate the diaspora into Ghanaian society. These include conferences, facilitating dialogue through workshops and fora to enhance cordial ties between the government and the diaspora.

Thus, as part of former president Kwame Nkrumah's agenda on emancipation and uniting African countries against imperialism, Ghana launched the All-African Peoples' Conference (AAPC) in 1958 (Manuh and Asante, 2005; Mazzucato, 2007). Although the AAPC was then made up of eight independent African states, the conference was organised to court the support of all social groups, including the diaspora. The aim was to join forces to demand that Africa be returned to the people from whom it was taken through colonialism. Nkrumah extended invitations to Africans living in the diaspora and freedom fighters exiled or fleeing from colonial rule and Apartheid to move to the newly independent Ghana. Thus, under Nkrumah, Ghana was presented as a safe haven for members of the African diaspora (Coffie, 2012). However, Ghana broke ties with the diaspora after Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 (Mazzucato, 2007).

The 1990s saw a renewed interest on the part of Ghana's government in reinvigorating its engagement with the diaspora. It organised several conferences

and celebrations, including Emancipation Day and the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST), under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, to promote tourism among the African diaspora (Alhassan, 2010). These became annual celebrations for Ghana to display itself as a home for the African diaspora. This included Ghanaians, but there is little evidence of their participation in these events. Indeed, the government mainly showcased the migratory experiences of the transatlantic slave trade, which excluded the majority of the Ghanaian diaspora with varied migration histories.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Ghana relaunched itself as a home for the African diaspora. It began a process of formalising a relationship with the diaspora community. This started with a 'Homecoming Summit' in 2001. The summit focused on enhancing dialogue, exploring opportunities for new relationships, and identifying ways of tapping into Ghanaians' acquired capacities and resources abroad. Another conference was organised in 2007, the 'Joseph Project', named for the biblical character of Joseph and his return home after his stay in Egypt. This project, like its predecessors, was organised to evoke a sense of belonging among the transnational community. These celebrations intended to shift Ghana's attention away from the previous focus on the African diaspora in general toward the Ghanaian diaspora more specifically.

Most recent celebrations have been inclusive of descendants of both the African and more specifically Ghanaian diasporas. Some of the activities include the 2012 Colloquium of Diaspora Engagement Project and the Diaspora Business Summit of 2013 and 2014. The most recent is the 2019 Year of Return. This event was promoted as an invitation to the African diaspora as a celebration marking '400 years since the first arrival of enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Virginia' (Year of Return, Ghana, 2019).

#### 4.2 *Extending the Rights and Responsibilities of the Ghanaian Diaspora*

With the enactment of the dual citizenship provisions of the Citizenship Act, 2000 (Act 591)<sup>2</sup> and the Citizenship Regulations, 2001 (LI 1690),<sup>3</sup> the government allows Ghanaian citizens to acquire a second nationality without losing their Ghanaian citizenship. The law also provides for the 'Right of Abode',

2 Citizenship Act, 2000 (Act 591). Available at <https://www.gis.gov.gh/ACTS%20AND%20REGULATIONS/ACT%20591.pdf> (accessed on 5 May 2001).

3 Citizenship Regulations, 2001 (LI 1690). Available at [https://www.mint.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Citizenship\\_Regulations\\_2001-1.pdf](https://www.mint.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Citizenship_Regulations_2001-1.pdf) (accessed on 5 May 2021).

which grants diaspora visas to persons who cannot access dual citizenship. Through the work of the Diaspora Vote Committee,<sup>4</sup> proxy voting or electoral expression was provided for in the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act (ROPAA, Act 699) of 2006.<sup>5</sup>

Ghana has established centres and institutions to house and promote these and other interventions of the diaspora's rights and responsibilities. These include the Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat (NRGS) created by the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) in 2003, which coordinates activities and serves as the centre for promoting homeland investment opportunities for members of the diaspora (Vezzoli and Lacroix, 2010). In 2007, the Ghana Opportunity Network was established to provide 'easy access to credible information to Non-Resident Ghanaians and other potential investors' (Vezzoli and Lacroix, 2010, 28). In 2006, the Ministry of Tourism was renamed the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations. In the same year, the Ministry of the Interior also instituted the Migration Unit to coordinate the various national institutions to manage migration and build migration into national development activities. In 2009, Diaspora Affairs was moved from the Ministry of Tourism. Subsequently, the government created a Diaspora Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. Currently, the government has incorporated Diaspora Affairs as part of the Office of the President.

The government's work of granting rights to members of the Ghanaian diaspora and establishing institutions to ensure these rights has been complemented with the formalisation of extracting responsibilities. The State's demands for members of the diaspora to meet certain obligations have mainly focused on the diaspora's contribution to economic development bills. Thus, within this space, the government has made several interventions to facilitate and harness the diaspora's resources. Among these are the issuing of bonds targeted at the Ghanaian diaspora in 2007. The government instituted new regulations to reduce the financial system's legal and procedural constraints to facilitate economic remittances. For example, in 2008, the Bank of Ghana (BoG) introduced an e-zwich payment system to enable cash withdrawals and card transactions, even in rural banks. To further draw the diaspora into development, the government offers a 'two-year tax holiday' for direct investments

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4 The Diaspora Vote Committee was made up of Ghanaian migrants located particularly in the US to engage the government to enact laws that will allow them to vote in Ghanaian elections.

5 Representation of the People Act, 2006 (ROPAA, Act 699). Available at <http://www.electionaccess.org/en/resources/countries/GH/233/> (accessed on 5 May 2021).

in the four deprived regions of the country (Central, Northern, Upper East and Western) (Awumbila and Teye, 2014).

## 5 The Diaspora's Modes of Contributing to Development in Ghana

Undoubtedly, the Ghanaian diaspora community is a major resource in the scope of Ghana's development. Its growing prominence is attributed to the fact that the diaspora's contributions and cash inflows outweigh the foreign direct investment pumped into Ghana's economy under the cloak of poverty alleviating programmes. Furthermore, the statistics supporting this assertion are collated from formal and recognisable channels of inflows. What is entailed in undocumented channels remains unknown and could significantly change the reported figures (Higazi, 2005; Mazzucato, van den Boom and Nsowah-Nuamah, 2004). The following section explains the different methods employed by the diaspora to augment government efforts toward development.

### 5.1 *Government-Facilitated Gateways for Harnessing the Diaspora's Financial Remittances*

As noted above, Ghana receives a substantial amount in remittances from the diaspora each year. The World Bank (2021) records that the inflow of remittances saw an immense increase from USD 32,396,800 in 2000 to USD 135,852,160 in 2005, and further to USD 4.982 billion in 2015. As a result of the global financial crisis of 2015 to 2016, there was a drop in 2016 to 2.98 billion. Inflows began to increase in 2017, and in 2019 about one million migrant Ghanaian workers in foreign countries and others in the diaspora remitted USD 4.054 billion—equivalent to about 6.1 per cent of GDP.

To enhance financial transfers, the government has rolled out several policies and financial services to both the diaspora and recipients at home. These include savings and investment schemes and money transfer schemes.

#### 5.1.1 Direct Investments and Savings

Direct investment schemes are a significant avenue created by the government to channel financial remittances from the diaspora toward socioeconomic development. These include regular savings accounts and diaspora-specific financial products like individually managed accounts and investment disbursement accounts. These allow members of the Ghanaian diaspora to operate foreign accounts in Ghanaian banks.

Another formal savings and investment scheme is the diaspora bond. In 2007, the government issued a Golden Jubilee Savings Bond. The local currency

bond was GHC 50 million (Ghanaian Cedis)<sup>6</sup> (around USD 50 million at issue),<sup>7</sup> with an interest rate of 15 per cent.

It was available to Ghanaian citizens only, although the marketing mainly targeted members of the non-resident Ghanaian diaspora. The nationality restriction excluded members of the Ghanaian diaspora without Ghanaian citizenship. Of the target of GHC 50 million, the bond subscription amounted to only GHC 20 million (40 per cent). Of the GHC 20 million raised, GHC 18.73 million (94 per cent) was raised from local sales, and GHC 1.10 million (6 per cent) was from the Ghanaian diaspora in the UK, Canada and the US.<sup>8</sup>

FAAL, 2019, 12

### 5.1.2 Money Transfers

Money transfer companies (MTCs) and financial institutions are the two central means of transferring and receiving cash in Ghana. Through their global networks, these institutions have provided avenues for diaspora communities to remit money to Ghana. They offer a variety of delivery service channels, such as direct-to-account, cash-to-mobile phone, cash-to-card and person-to-person (also known as cash-to-cash) transfers. Their platforms are integrated to allow money transfers from bank to bank, from MTC to bank, and through a mobile money system.

The Ghanaian diaspora relies on money transfer companies' services because of their reliability, speed of delivery, accessibility and convenience in the recipient's location (Quartey, 2009; Teye, Badasu and Yeaboah, 2019). The MTCs work with financial institutions and many of the financial institutions in Ghana are agents to two or more MTCs. MTCs like Western Union and MoneyGram offer the best access to sending and receiving money because of their broader coverage, even though their charges are very high. Others such as Ria and Small World have lower fees but offer limited geographic range and unreliable networks (Teye, Badasu and Yeaboah, 2019).

6 The Old Ghanaian Cedi (GHC) was replaced with the New Ghanaian Cedi (GHS) on 1 July 2007. However, GHC is used throughout this chapter.

7 In 2007, the Ghanaian government introduced a new currency, which was 0.0001 (1/10000) of the old currency. Around the time of issue of the bond, the GHC rate to USD was around 1 (GHC 50 million = USD 50 million). Subsequently the Ghanaian currency has devalued 80 per cent against the USD (as of 2021).

8 Please see footnote above for the conversion to USD.

Beyond the inflow of foreign cash, the use of these systems accrues other socioeconomic benefits to Ghana. These include money from service charge fees that is received by the MTCs and financial institutions. In Ghana, the recipient does not pay cash for these fees because the remitter pays the charges whenever they send money. However, the system also enables financial institutions to receive a proportion of remitters' fees as a commission. These create both income revenues for the institutions and tax revenues for the State.

Additionally, expanding these institutions to accommodate the increasing number of remitters and total amounts sent is linked with job creation in both the private and public sectors. All major telecommunication companies in Ghana have expanded their services to include receipt and disbursement of financial remittances. Again, commercial service providers have increased their presence in communities by opening and maintaining branches to make them more accessible to remittance recipients. Finally, numerous job opportunities have been created by improving and expanding technology to offer easy transfer and receipt of money from abroad. All of these factors contribute to Ghana's economic growth and an increase in government revenues for development.

### 5.1.3 Challenges of the Formal System of Financial Remittances

Notwithstanding the accumulated benefits of financial remittances toward Ghana's development, challenges exist associated with the transfer process and mobilisation of such funds toward the State-led development agenda. For instance, many international remittances to Ghana are transferred through informal channels, such as friends, relatives, self-carry when visiting home, and hiding money in posted letters (Ahinful, Boateng, and Oppong-Boakye, 2013). These informal processes have proven to be unreliable and challenge the State's quest to monitor cash inflow for planning purposes. As described by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the transfer of remittances through informal channels tends to drain receiving countries of some of the benefits that can accrue from remittances (for example, savings and investments) (IFAD, 2006).

General challenges of money transfer to Ghana include the high cost of transfers, unfavourable exchange rates, and strict financial limitations on the amounts that can be transferred via mobile money systems. According to the World Bank (2020), the average sending cost of cash remittances to sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest at 9 per cent of the amount sent, almost double the cost of sending money to South Asia, against a global average of 6.8 per cent. For example, Ghanaian remitters in the US pay close to 20 per cent on any amount between USD 50 and 500, 3 per cent for amounts between

USD 550 and 1,000 and 2 per cent for amounts of USD 2,000 and above (Teye, Badasu and Yeaboah, 2019). Indeed, the less money you send, the higher the rate of the charges.

A significant challenge of using the formal forms for sending remittances is the system's exclusion of some Ghanaians abroad, namely irregular migrants. The majority of MTCs and financial institutions, especially banks, demand State-issued identification and utility bills detailing one's identification before allowing one to open an account. However, most irregular migrants, who form part of the Ghanaian diaspora and regularly send remittances, do not possess these identification documents and thus are excluded from using these forms of money transfer.

Again, the refusal of financial institutions to pay remittances in foreign currencies, as well as the relatively lower exchange rates of the banks and MTCs compared to the forex, are some of the reasons why about 50 per cent of remittances from members of the Ghanaian diaspora are transferred through informal channels (Ahinful, Boateng and Oppong-Boakye 2013; Teye, Badasu and Yeaboah, 2019). Indeed, a more recent study by Teye, Badasu and Yeaboah (2019) indicates that financial institutions' unfavourable exchange rates lead to high economic losses for both the senders and recipients of remittances. For example, a person in Ghana receiving USD 1,000 sent through a formal financial institution on 17 August 2020 would get GHC 5,230. If the sender had sent the same amount via an informal channel, such as through someone visiting Ghana, the recipient would have been able to exchange this through a forex bureau for GHC 5,770. Thus, the recipient would have received GHC 540 (USD 94) more, meaning that about 10 per cent of the amount sent would be lost by the person who received the money through the bank. The sender through the informal channel would also have saved on the transfer charges.

## 6 The Diaspora's Non-financial Remittances toward Ghana's Development

Discussions regarding the diaspora-development nexus are predominantly centred on the inflow of cash to home countries, technically ascribed as financial remittances. Other contributions toward development from migrant communities rarely receive any attention. The inability to quantify these forms of remittances in forex terms and the lack of data on them has contributed to the limited recognition of such resources in policy discourses on diaspora and development.



### 6.1 *Individual In-Kind Remittances toward Community Well-Being*

Although we can observe the widespread presence of different formal institutions for financial remittances, most members of the Ghanaian diaspora also remit other forms of resources to improve their families', friends', and communities' well-being. Door-to-door freight delivery services are a primary mechanism for such remittances, which generally transfer consumer goods, business equipment and physical assets from members of the Ghanaian diaspora living in Europe and North America.

In a telephone interview, a door-to-door operative in Accra reported that about 80 per cent of these goods are food and household items such as canned meat and fish, milk, baby food, cooking oils, sanitary items, washing and cleaning detergents, food supplements, clothes, small home cooking appliances and stationery. The operative further noted that the freight service he works for has regular clients who deliver these items to their families and friends on average every two months. For example, an elderly client receives her package of household supplies, food items and medication from her daughter every other month (interview by the author, August 2020). Such supplies guarantee the well-being of their recipients, which is an essential component of human development.

In the wake of the spiralling effects of food insecurity, aggravated by erratic rainfall patterns, reduction in the amount of rainfall and lack of food alternatives, food remittances as a form of in-kind remittance are undoubtedly crucial for survival among households. Sulemana, Anarfo and Quartey (2019) conducted a study in three northern regions of Ghana to test the relationship between in-kind remittances and households' survival. They concluded that remittances are positively correlated with household food security. The study further noted that remittances' frequency is essential, adding that people who receive fewer remittances are susceptible to food insecurity. In contrast, those who receive more remittances are unlikely to be food insecure.

### 6.2 *Hometown and Community Associations as a Mode for the Maintenance of Emotional and Transgenerational Bonds*

There is a growing body of studies on hometown associations (HTAs) and their role in community development, particularly in rural areas across Ghana. Although these contributions are classified as diaspora philanthropy (Faal, 2019) and in most instances are not included in the declared amounts of financial remittances, their impact on poverty alleviation and provision of social intervention are appreciated by traditional authorities and recipients. The contributions of HTAs to home communities are telling, covering a spectrum of development initiatives from the provision of infrastructure to deprived

communities through to rolling out social intervention programmes. Studies show that the enormous contributions of HTAs can be defined as an act of altruism and a means of giving back to society (Kandilige, 2017; Levitt, and Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Vasta and Kandilige, 2009; Orozco, 2005; Solimano, 2004). As posited by Kandilige (2017), this act of altruism also serves the interests of those who contribute to HTAs, sometimes serving as opportunities for investment. Some migrant associations aim to make a return on their investments but simultaneously provide a social function. These involve the construction of things such as recreational and educational facilities and guesthouses (Kandilige, 2017, 33).

However, studies on Ghanaian HTAs have mainly focused on their contributions to development schemes in Ghana. HTAs are presented as avenues for raising funds for activities in members of the diaspora's communities of origin. This chapter notes that within destination communities, HTAs additionally serve as spaces for socialisation, enabling people to maintain bonds with their communities of origin. Also, they are mechanisms for fostering emotional and transgenerational bonds. These roles are essential in maintaining a core and growing diaspora population that sustains the memory and culture of the community of origin among future descendants.

HTAs also act as social networks for members of the diaspora in the places where they currently live. Moreover, they are spaces for the production and reproduction of sociocultural identities that sustain people's ties with their home communities. The central ceremony for each of the known Ghanaian HTAs is the observance and celebration of annual traditional festivals associated with their Ghanaian communities of origin. For example, the Akwasidae Festival is celebrated by the Asante people and chiefs in Ashanti, Ghana, and Asante people in the diaspora. The festival is celebrated on Sunday, once every six weeks (Fuller, 2014). Other social activities organised by HTAs include annual parties, cultural celebrations and meet-and-greet events. Such events promote transgenerational transfers of linguistic, attitudinal and symbolic cultural norms that are essential for members of the diaspora to maintain ties with their communities of origin. Faist (2008) concludes that HTAs undoubtedly foster enduring relationships with families and clans in home countries.

Additionally, these activities ensure the maintenance of people's memories of their communities of origin and their ties with the next generation. These ceremonies present learning opportunities for children and descendants of diasporic Ghanaians. They are vessels for socialising the next generation of the Ghanaian diaspora. These celebrations are defined through modes of cultural reproduction or a type of consciousness (Vertovec, 1999), and are a principal source of ensuring that Ghanaian descendants and future generations

maintain links with their parents' communities of origin. While such remittances are necessary to maintaining the State's relations with the diaspora, they have remained under-explored and under-appreciated in discourses on migration in general and on the diaspora-development nexus in particular.

### 6.3 *Remittances of Skills and Knowledge*

Another critical aspect of remittances from the diaspora is the transfer of skills and knowledge that help to drive development projects. Through significant partnerships and effective networking, members of the Ghanaian diaspora with considerable expertise in particular fields bring their professional skills and expertise to stimulate development. The diaspora is extensively involved with measures like Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA), which seeks to curb brain drain from Ghana. Migrants who subscribe to such partnership programmes channel their expertise or bring their knowledge on certain issues to the fore, tackling complex and pressing problems inhibiting development (IOM, 2005). This aspect of the diaspora's contribution to Ghana is realised, for example, through the facilitation of short visits by health professionals from migrant communities, who might adopt health facilities and provide services in urology, surgery, dentistry and other areas (Alhassan, 2010).

In terms of education, universities in Ghana have benefited enormously from knowledge transfer programmes. For instance, the University of Ghana, under a Carnegie Next Generation of Academics in Africa Project, has been running a Diaspora Linkage Programme (UG-DLP) since 2011. This programme allows Ghanaian professors and research fellows in the diaspora to share their expertise with students in Ghana. Teye, Alhassan and Setrana (2017) underscore that since the inception of this programme in 2011, postgraduate education at the University of Ghana has benefited from the experiences shared by these Ghanaian researchers.

## 7 Conclusion

This chapter deepens the discourse on diaspora and development in members of the diaspora's country of origin. It notes that, collectively, members of the Ghanaian diaspora relate to the call for development at home. They have therefore responded in multiple ways, including by providing both financial and non-financial remittances. The Ghanaian government facilitates and guides the Ghanaian diaspora through formal gateways, which are directed mainly toward financial inflows.

The two approaches for ensuring the safety of financial inflows in Ghana are money transfers and investment and savings options designed specifically for the Ghanaian diaspora. These options have formalised the inflow of cash to the country and, as the data indicate, are a significant source of revenue for the government's development projects. However, due to structural challenges such as transfer costs, low exchange rates used by the financial institutions and their demands for identity documents, a high proportion of the Ghanaian diaspora continue to use informal means of sending remittances. These informal channels are unsafe and unreliable for the sender and receiver and drain Ghana of some of the benefits that can accrue from remittances (for example, savings and investments).

Also, Ghana's over-reliance on financial gateways ignores other sectors of the Ghanaian diaspora and their contributions. These include in-kind remittances such as the inflow of food items, household items, medications and school supplies. These items are generally delivered directly to the recipient through the door-to-door freight business model. Many households and communities rely on these remittances. Studies among Ghanaians indicate that they have a direct bearing on living standards among families and communities.

Furthermore, members of the diaspora contribute significantly toward creating, maintaining and reproducing emotional bonds between themselves and communities in Ghana. For most members of the Ghanaian diaspora in North America and Europe, hometown associations have become the primary means of mobilising their cultural capital. The celebration of events such as hometown festivals and religious and social gatherings, allows members of the Ghanaian diaspora, through their respective HTAs, to promote transgenerational bonds through the transfer of linguistic, attitudinal and symbolic cultural norms.

Finally, although diaspora scholarship acknowledges the complexities in the composition of diasporas, including sometimes acknowledging their various resources and transfers, policymaking remains inadequate to accommodate these variations. The limitations of a narrower conceptualisation of the diaspora and its potential value partly account for the government's provision of limited formal gateways incapable of accommodating the multiple ways in which the Ghanaian diaspora can contribute to development at both the family and community levels. At the policy level, this study recommends conceptualising the Ghanaian, and more widely African, diaspora as a heterogeneous group endowed with varied resources. These people actively deploy their resources toward sustaining families and lives with specific and immediate concerns for their communities, both home and abroad.

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# Xenophobia Denialism and the Global Compact for Migration in South Africa

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## Abstract

The United Nations (UN) Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) commits signatories to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and to condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance. The growth of xenophobia across the global South has become increasingly apparent. Governance responses to anti-immigrant sentiment and action take three main forms: intensification, mitigation and displacement. In South Africa, policy on international migration to the country focuses more on the perceived negative impacts of migration than any potential development benefits. As a direct result, negativity pervades both public policy and popular discourse about migrants and their impact on the country. Migrants encounter an extremely hostile environment in which their constitutional and legal rights are abrogated, their ability to access basic services and resources is constrained, and their very presence in the country is excoriated by the state and citizenry. Xenophobic attitudes are deeply entrenched, and xenophobic attacks have become common. In this context, this chapter examines the response of the national government and argues that displacement is the dominant governance model. This takes two forms: xenophobia denialism and the scapegoating of migrants. Xenophobia denialism and blaming migrants for their own victimisation act as barriers to South Africa recognising, promoting and arguing for migration as a positive developmental tool and operationalising the anti-xenophobia provisions in the Global Compact.

## 1 Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) has recently been labelled a ‘depoliticised document’ marked by major internal contradictions (Pécoud, 2021). There is at least one respect, however, in which it is neither contradictory nor depoliticised; the agreement of signature states to eliminate all forms of discrimination against

migrants and their families. Objective 17.33 of the GCM makes a commitment 'to eliminate all forms of discrimination, condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance against all migrants in conformity with international human rights law' (UNGA, 2019, 24). To further this objective, states commit to establishing mechanisms 'to prevent, detect and respond to racial, ethnic and religious profiling of migrants by public authorities, as well as systematic instances of intolerance, xenophobia, racism and all other multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination', to promote awareness-raising campaigns to inform public perceptions about the evidence-based positive contributions of migration, and 'to end racism, xenophobia and stigmatization against all migrants'. This may be idealistic and unachievable, but it is certainly not contradictory or depoliticised; instead, it puts the onus on states to deal with evidence of a growing challenge accompanying increased global mobility and migration: the growth of xenophobia in countries of migrant destination (Crush and Ramachandran, 2010).

The character, drivers, and impacts of xenophobia and policy responses to this phenomenon have been a topic of recurrent scholarly interest in recent decades, generating a sizable literature, most of which has focused on negative attitudes towards and the discriminatory treatment of migrants in Europe and North America (see d'Appollonia, 2017; Gorinas and Pytliková, 2018; Peterie and Neil, 2020; Rensmann and Miller, 2017). Much less attention has been paid to xenophobia in the migrant-receiving countries and regions of the global South (Crush and Ramachandran, 2010). This mirrors a broader research and international policy disinterest in South-South migration and its role in the development of countries of origin and destination in the global South (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). At the same time, evidence of intensifying xenophobic sentiment in the global South is beginning to accumulate in disparate settings including in India (Adibe 2017; Ramachandran, 2019), Singapore (Gomes, 2014; Yang, 2018), the Gulf (Ullah et al., 2020), Latin America and the Caribbean (Gill and Danna, 2018; Meseguer and Kemmerling, 2018; Jones, 2020), and a number of West and Southern African countries (Akinola, 2018; Miran-Guyon, 2016; Campbell and Crush, 2015; Crush and Pendleton, 2007; Whitaker, 2015). One extremely common xenophobic trope associates migrants with threats to the health of citizens by bringing disease and using up scarce health resources. There is evidence, for example, of a global upsurge in COVID-19 related xenophobic reaction (Ahuja et al., 2020, Castillo and Amoah, 2020; Chan and Strabucchi, 2021; Reny and Barreto, 2020). The significance of the new literature prompted by the pandemic is that it draws close attention to the politics of xenophobia and, in particular, the ways in which the national and local

state is imbricated in the development, reinforcement and reproduction of xenophobia.

State responses in the global South to evidence of xenophobia in the general population range across a broad terrain. Populist political parties invariably embed anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy proposals in their election platforms and, if and when they come to power, enact policies that are demonstrably xenophobic. The ruling right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, for example, has long advocated a punitive approach to 'infiltrators' from neighbouring states and has enacted a range of new policies designed to exclude millions of Muslim migrants (both internal and international) (Ramachandran, 2019). In post-colonial Africa, as Fourchard and Segatti (2015, 6) point out, 'the attention paid to exclusionary discourses and practices that haunt the politics of belonging throughout the continent is not always balanced by an interest in countervailing discourses and practices (reconciliation, diffusing ethnic oppositions, everyday conviviality etc.)'. The main reason why there has been little interest in countervailing discourses is that there are few, if any, good examples to study. The nation-building projects of most post-colonial states tend to focus more on the perceived threats to national sovereignty posed by incoming migrants and immigrants. Opportunities to take up permanent residence and citizenship in other countries are generally extremely constrained. As well as the governance of xenophobia by mitigation (rare), disinterest (more common) and intensification (extremely common), the South African case suggests that there is a fourth alternative; governance by displacement. This can take a variety of forms including denial that xenophobia exists and is a problem (xenophobia denialism), and displacing blame for xenophobic actions onto their victims or onto so-called criminal behaviour of anti-social and marginalised citizens.

The apartheid state was deeply racist and xenophobic in its immigration policies, only allowing white immigrants from Europe to settle in the country while simultaneously barring all Black immigrants other than temporary contract workers in the mining industry (Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, 1991; Crush, 2000; Klotz, 2016; Peberdy, 2009). Apartheid South Africa also did not accede to the UN and African Union (AU) refugee conventions, although the Mozambican civil war in the 1980s displaced several hundred thousand people to South Africa. The state did everything in its power to keep these refugees confined to border communities far away from the large urban centres (de Jongh, 1994). One of the effects of racist immigration and refugee policies was that very few South Africans came into direct contact with migrants from other African countries. The collapse of apartheid in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought a decisive shift in perceptions of South Africa as a desirable

destination within and outside Africa: the official census number of migrants from other countries in the South increased from 780,000 in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2019 (UN DESA, 2020). The range of countries from which migrants came also expanded from neighbouring Southern African countries to more distant countries in West Africa and the Horn, as well as Asian countries such as Bangladesh, China and Pakistan. During the first decade of apartheid rule, and despite the limited personal contact, attitudes hardened towards the new migrants who were widely perceived as bringing crime and disease and using resources (housing, services, jobs) that should have been reserved for citizens (Crush and Peberdy, 2003).

Between 1994 and 2005, the post-apartheid state deported over one million migrants (mainly to neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique) (Sutton and Vigneswaran, 2011). In order to justify these increasingly harsh and unconstitutional measures of arrest, deportation and exclusion, the stereotype that the country was being 'flooded' by migrants was popularised by the media and the pronouncements of government officials, including the Minister of Home Affairs, with constant exaggerated references to the millions of 'illegal aliens' supposedly storming the country (Crush and Williams, 2001; Danso and McDonald, 2000). State discourse and policy reinforced the increasingly widespread perception that all migrants (simply by being from elsewhere) were a fundamental threat to citizens. Very early on, critics of state, media and popular representations attached the label xenophobia to the phenomenon, calling it a 'new pathology' and the 'dark side of democracy', adopting the standard dictionary definition of the term as extreme fear, hatred and prejudice towards strangers or people from other countries (Crush, 2001; Harris, 2002). Early attitudinal surveys in the late 1990s confirmed that xenophobic hostility and prejudice, directed particularly towards migrants from Africa and Asia, had become widespread (Mattes et al., 1999).

There were isolated incidents of violence against migrants and refugees in the first decade or so of South African democracy after 1994, but systematic, orchestrated, nationwide violence targeting the lives and property of migrants did not occur until May 2008 when over 70 people were murdered and over 100,000 people driven out of their homes across all of South Africa's major cities (Crush, 2008). Since then there have been regular upsurges of this extreme manifestation of xenophobia, in 2011, 2015 and again in 2018–19 (Crush, Ramachandran and Pendleton, 2013; Landau, 2012; Misago, 2017). Hardly a day goes by, however, without reports of isolated attacks or local mob violence directed at migrants in different parts of the country (Crush, Chikanda and Skinner, 2015). The drivers of recurrent xenophobic violence in South Africa have been debated at length without a great deal of consensus

about its fundamental causes (Gordon, 2020; Hassim, Kupe and Worby, 2008; Landau, 2012; Matsinhe, 2016; Neocosmos, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Steinberg, 2012 and 2018; Tevera, 2013; Misago, 2016). Less attention has been paid to the responses of national, provincial and municipal governments and whether these responses mitigate or exacerbate xenophobia (Misago, 2017; Musuva, 2015). In terms of the proposed governance typology, are state responses to xenophobia best characterised by disinterest, intensification, mitigation or displacement? This chapter focuses primarily on national government responses to xenophobia in South Africa and argues that displacement (and its defining characteristics of scapegoating and denialism) best characterise the reactions of government to post-1994 xenophobic attitudes and behaviours. Deliberate policies of intensification have been more evident at sub-national provincial and local levels. However, in the South African case, displacement and the failure to mitigate has arguably intensified xenophobia in the populace at large. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the evidence for the existence of xenophobic attitudes and violence in the country. The next section provides an overview of the violence that appears to the victims and most independent commentators as motivated by xenophobia. The chapter then turns to the response of the South African government and its policy of displacement as a response to such xenophobia. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the implications for implementing the GCM commitments to eliminating xenophobia in the country.

## 2 Profiling Xenophobia

In the absence of globally comparative surveys of public opinion, it is hard to say whether South Africa is exceptional or typical in its antagonistic response to immigration and immigrants. However, Wave 6 of the World Values Survey (2010–2014) provides a preliminary answer around the single common question in all its representative country surveys of whether government should allow migrants into the country under one of four conditions: prohibit entry, strict limits, as long as jobs are available, and letting anyone come. Table 6.1 clearly shows that South Africans have the most negative attitudes towards immigration of all global South countries surveyed. As many as 30% want completely closed borders (the same percentage as in India), while 78% support closed borders or strict limits on entry (compared to only 55% in India). Only Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia have comparable or greater scores on both metrics combined. The South African Migration Programme (SAMP) has conducted three national surveys of South African attitudes towards migrants,

refugees and migration policies (in 1998, 2006 and 2010), in which the same question elicited very similar results for South Africa (Crush, 2001 and 2008; Crush, Ramachandran and Pendleton, 2013; Debrosse et al., 2016). The survey also collected representative data on a broad range of attitudes and their demographic, social, economic and cultural determinants.

The 2010 survey used Principal Components Analysis to develop a composite measure of xenophobia based on a range of attitudinal questions (the SAMP Xenophobia Index or SXI) (Auger et al., 2011). SXI scores range from 0 (no xenophobia) to 10 (intense xenophobia). Figures 6.1 to 6.3 cross-tabulate the SXI with three independent variables showing high overall levels of xenophobia

TABLE 6.1 Comparative citizen attitudes toward immigration (%)

Country	Prohibit entry	Strict limits	As long as jobs available	Let anyone come
South Africa	30	48	16	6
India	30	25	22	23
Egypt	26	43	25	5
Jordan	25	46	28	2
Malaysia	18	72	8	2
Mexico	17	25	45	12
Zambia	15	44	30	11
Thailand	14	65	16	5
Morocco	11	20	41	28
Brazil	11	33	47	9
Trinidad & Tobago	10	55	32	4
Chile	9	35	50	6
China	8	21	51	20
Indonesia	8	72	15	6
Guatemala	7	21	55	17
Ghana	6	36	39	18
Peru	6	21	50	23
Argentina	6	34	45	15
Ethiopia	5	27	28	40
Mali	4	16	46	34

SOURCE: INGLEHART ET AL. (2014)

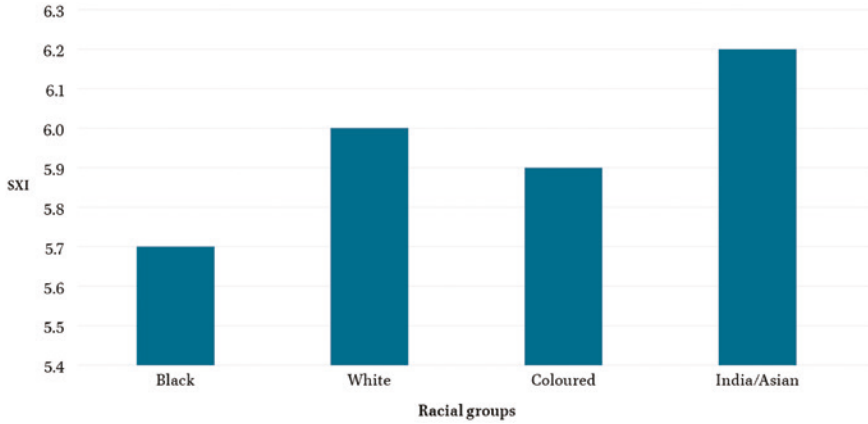


FIGURE 6.1 Xenophobia intensity by racial group, 2010  
SOURCE: SAMP (2010)

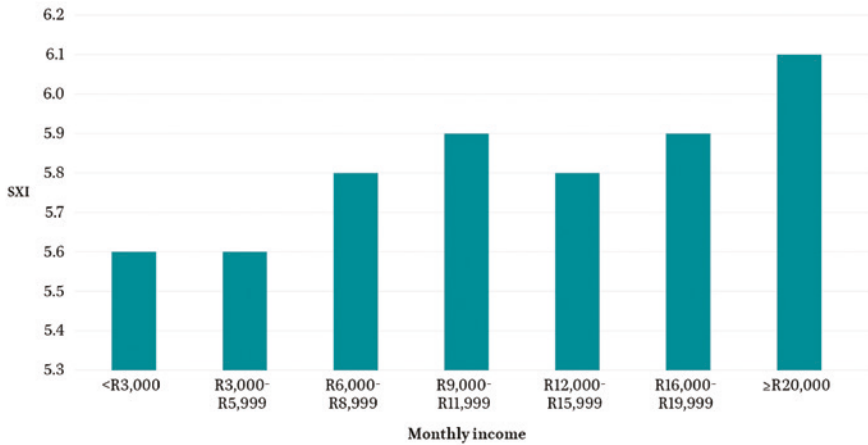


FIGURE 6.2 Xenophobia intensity by personal income, 2010  
SOURCE: SAMP (2010)

but variations in the intensity of xenophobic sentiment by racial group (with Black South Africans being least xenophobic and Indian/Asian South Africans most xenophobic), by household income (with levels of xenophobia increasing with household income), and by amount of contact with migrants (with levels of xenophobia decreasing with increased amounts of contact). The SXI did not vary significantly with age, sex, education or employment status of citizens.

Xenophobia also expressed itself in negative attitudes toward refugee protection, willingness to take action against migrants in the neighbourhood, and



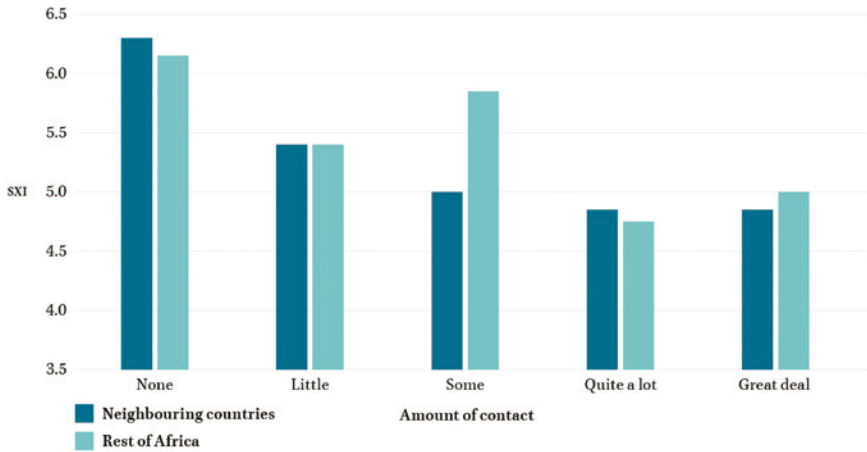


FIGURE 6.3 Xenophobia intensity by amount of contact with migrants, 2010  
SOURCE: SAMP (2010)

perceptions of reasons for xenophobic violence against migrants. Table 6.2 shows strong opposition to taking in more refugees (57% opposed, 11% supportive), using taxpayer money to support refugees (46% opposed, 16% supportive), and granting permanent residence to long-term refugees (44% opposed, 18% supportive). Contrariwise, there was strong support for repatriating refugees when they are no longer at risk (56% supportive, 14% opposed) and for mandatory HIV testing of all refugees (41% supportive, 29% opposed). Next, as Table 6.3 shows, around a third of South Africans said they would take various actions against migrants in their neighbourhood, with 15% saying they were prepared to force migrants to leave the area and 11% being prepared to use violence to do so. Finally, the survey asked respondents why they thought the 2008 nationwide violence had occurred. Around two-thirds of residents of hotspots experiencing violence agreed that migrants were largely to blame by engaging in crime, taking jobs from locals, being culturally different, using health services for free, and 'stealing women' (a misogynistic reference to intermarriage between migrants and South Africans) (Table 6.4). As many as 62% agreed that 'migrants do not belong in South Africa'.

Other attitudinal surveys conducted since 2010 confirm the persistence of high levels of xenophobia in the country (Claassen, 2017; Dube, 2019; Facchini, Mayda and Mendola, 2013; Gordon, 2015; 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2018a and 2018b; Gordon and Maharaj, 2015; Ruedin, 2019). Xenophobic attitudes translate readily into routinised xenophobic behaviour involving negative stereotyping, exclusionary language, verbal denigration, denial of access to services such as

TABLE 6.2 Attitudes toward refugee protection, 2010 (%)

	Support	Oppose
Grant asylum to those escaping war and persecution	38	23
Increase refugee intake in South Africa	11	57
Grant permanent residence to refugees in South Africa for > 5 years	18	44
Send refugees back when they are no longer at risk	56	13
Refugees must live in special camps near the border	31	32
Use government budget to look after refugees	14	46
Allow refugees to work in South Africa	25	35
Test refugees for HIV	41	29

SOURCE: SAMP (2010)

TABLE 6.3 Likelihood of taking action against migrants, 2010

	% likely	% unlikely
Report them to police	36	39
Report them to employer	27	45
Report them to community association	27	45
Combine to force them to leave	15	73
Use violence against them	11	72

SOURCE: SAMP (2010)

health and education, and insistent demands from citizens that government rid their communities and the country of 'foreigners'. Xenophobic attitudes have also been closely linked to xenophobic actions including collective violence. South Africa has experienced intense nationwide rounds of violence targeting the businesses, homes and lives of migrants and refugees in 2008, in 2015 and again in 2019 (Bekker, 2015; Burke, 2019; Desai, 2015; Hayem, 2013). These moments constitute 'a heightened form of xenophobia in which hostility and opposition to those perceived as outsiders and foreigners is strongly embedded and expressed through aggressive acts directed at migrants and refugees (and) recurrent episodes of violence' (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014, 3).

Collective violence is also manifested on an almost daily basis in particular localities with the looting and destruction of migrant-owned businesses in the informal sector and bodily injury and murder of business owners and their employees (Crush, Chikanda and Skinner, 2015; Ramachandran, Crush and Tawodzera, 2017). Episodes of collective violence targeting small businesses include combinations of written or verbal threats and insults, public intimidation through protests or marches, forced shop closures, physical assaults and the murder of migrant store owners or their employees, looting of store contents, arson or other damage to the physical structure of shops, damage or destruction of business properties including homes and vehicles, temporary or permanent forced displacement, and extortion for protection by local leaders, police and residents. Crush and Ramachandran (2015) document 220 episodes of collective violence against migrant and refugee businesses in various locations around the country between 2005 and 2014 (excluding the violence of 2008). The frequency of collective violence has increased over time (Table 6.4). In December 2018, Xenowatch reported 529 xenophobic violence incidents in post-apartheid South Africa resulting in 309 deaths, 901 physical assaults, 2,193 shops looted and over 100,000 people displaced (Mlilo and Misago, 2019).

### 3 Governance by Denial and Displacement

This section of the chapter discusses the response of the South African national government to the evidence outlined in the previous section for the existence and persistence of xenophobia in South Africa. The chapter argues that the dominant response is governance by displacement which has two complementary elements: denialism and scapegoating (or blaming the victim) (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). First, with regard to xenophobia denialism, the Mandela and Mbeki governments did little if anything to acknowledge or address growing xenophobia in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Crush, 2001). However, in 2007, the AU's African Peer Review Mechanism's (APRM) report on South Africa said that xenophobia was a serious issue for South Africa and urged the government 'nip it in the bud' (AU, 2007, 26–27). The review came at the same historical moment that Mbeki was espousing pan-Africanism and the idea of an African renaissance on the one hand, and engaging in the HIV and AIDS denialism that cost hundreds of thousands of South African lives on the other (Fassin and Schneider, 2003; Bongmba, 2004; Nattrass, 2003). Xenophobia directly undermined his case for a South African leadership of the African renaissance and undercut the ideology of pan-Africanism. Xenophobia

TABLE 6.4 Frequency of collective xenophobic attacks

Year	No. of incidents	% of total
Pre-2005	9	4
2005	4	2
2006	9	4
2007	9	4
2008	19	8
2009	17	7
2010	46	20
2011	22	10
2012	25	11
2013	36	16
2014 (to end-August)	32	14
Total	228	100

SOURCE: CRUSH AND RAMACHANDRAN (2015)

denialism was also perfectly consistent with his tendency to ignore scientific evidence and avoid taking responsibility for catastrophic social outcomes.

Against the backdrop of mounting AU and international scrutiny and condemnation, Mbeki denied any connection between attacks on migrants and xenophobia. Under his leadership, xenophobia denialism became official government policy and was initially deployed to explain away nationwide violence against migrants and refugees in 2008. In a public address meant to commemorate the more than 60 people who had died, Mbeki announced that he had never met a xenophobic South African. Furthermore, he stated that anyone who called South Africans xenophobic was themselves guilty of xenophobia: 'None in our society has any right to encourage or incite xenophobia by trying to explain naked criminal activity by cloaking it in the garb of xenophobia' (Mbeki, 2008). The idea of 'naked criminality', rather than xenophobia, took root and became a central plank in the state orthodoxy that continues to the present (Gerber, 2019). Mbeki's successors abandoned HIV and AIDS denialism, but reinforced xenophobia denialism. From 2008 onwards, politicians from the ruling party carefully avoided the term xenophobia when referring to violence against migrants, which they instead blamed on criminality. As some have pointed out, the rate of arrest and prosecution of these 'criminals' over the years has been abysmal at best.

In 2010, the Minister of Police characterised attacks against migrants as 'crimes of opportunity' where criminal or anti-social elements 'take advantage of the situation to engage in such misdeeds' (Sapa, 2010). Commenting after a Zimbabwean migrant was stoned to death in 2011, police spokesperson Zweli Mnisi echoed this view: 'Once you start talking about xenophobia and Afrophobia, you are talking about semantics. It is crime disguised under xenophobia' (Isaacson, 2011). On another occasion, Mnisi is quoted as saying that 'holistically speaking, South Africans are not xenophobic and many cases are merely crime' (Bauer, 2013). In mid-2013, following an upsurge of violent assaults on Somali refugees, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, announced that 'the looting, displacement and killing of foreign nationals in South Africa should not be viewed as xenophobic attacks, but opportunistic criminal acts that have the potential to undermine the unity and cohesiveness of our communities' (Patel, 2013). The South African Cabinet also issued a public statement on the violence, noting that 'Cabinet is cautious not to label this violence as xenophobia because preliminary evidence indicates that these acts may be driven primarily by criminality' (RSA, 2013).

At an African Union meeting in Johannesburg in June 2015, President Jacob Zuma reiterated the government's position by arguing that 'South Africans are not xenophobic. We do not believe that the actions of a few out of more than 50 million citizens justify the label of xenophobia' (*News24*, 2015a). Zuma also publicly declared that 'millions of peace loving South Africans are in pain also because they are being accused of xenophobia, which is not true. South Africans are definitely not xenophobic. The actions of a small minority should not be used to wrongfully label and stereotype more than 50 million people' (Zuma, 2015). In a parliamentary debate following the upsurge of xenophobic violence in late 2019, Defense Minister Mapisa-Nqakula restated the official line that the attacks were 'mostly acts of criminality irrespective of the nationality of those involved. Crime is crime. It is not South African to hate thy neighbour'. In the same debate, Police Minister Bheki Cele stated that 'for us it's nothing to do with xenophobia, it is criminality' (Gerber, 2019).

The second component of governance by displacement is scapegoating or assigning blame for the violence to migrants themselves. In 2015, for example, Defence Minister Mapisa-Nqakula expanded the definition of criminality to include migrant 'criminals': 'While government is going to be taking resolute actions against South Africans who attack foreign nationals, we are equally determined to take action against all foreign nationals who commit crime in our country' (Merten, 2015). The ruling party's Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe, openly blamed the rising numbers of migrants for the violence and

said the solution was the 'tightening [of] immigration laws' and 'if need be, establish[ing] refugee camps' to geographically segregate migrants from citizens (Finnan, 2015). However, scapegoating has been most evident in government responses to the country's recurrent episodes of violence, looting and destruction of the premises of migrants and refugees operating small informal businesses (called spazas) in the informal sector. First, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration (IMC) was constituted in 2015. Fifteen government ministers sat on the IMC, an indication of how seriously government viewed the crisis. The official brief of the IMC was 'to promote orderly and efficient migration and peaceful co-existence between citizens and non-South Africans, as well as to consider social, economic and security aspects of migration' (PJC, 2015, 19). Second, an Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee was constituted by both houses of parliament with the mandate to investigate the causes of the violence (the Ad Hoc Parliamentary Joint Committee on Probing Violence Against Foreign Nationals, PJC) (PJC, 2015).

The Chair of the IMC, Minister Jeff Radebe, briefed the Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee on the findings, stating that the primary cause of the violence against foreign nationals was 'increased competition arising from the socio-economic circumstances in South Africa' and the 'business models used by migrants to discourage competition such as forming monopolies, evading taxes, avoiding customs and selling illegal and expired goods' (PMG, 2015). Competition had been heightened by 'a decade of poor implementation of immigration and border controls'. Furthermore, foreign nationals were placing a strain on government services such as health, housing, education and social grants and 'dominating trade in certain sectors such as consumable goods in informal settlements which has had a negative impact on unemployed and low skilled South Africans'. He also blamed the victims for the attacks: 'They roam, they go to townships to occupy the economic space. We never invaded economic space in exile' (*News24*, 2015b). At a press conference he further observed that 'as the Inter-Ministerial Committee, we've concluded that South Africans are not xenophobic' (Davis, 2015).

The Ad Hoc Parliamentary Joint Committee's investigation went even further, repeatedly asserting that xenophobia as a phenomenon does not exist in South Africa (*News24*, 2015b; Nicolson, 2015; PJC, 2015). The Committee claimed that South Africans do not hate or loathe migrants and refugees. In the parliamentary deliberations leading up to the adoption of the report, it was recommended that the term 'xenophobia' be omitted completely from the report because no convincing evidence had been found that the phenomenon existed (PMG, 2015). The final report notes that 'Parliament had not yet come to the conclusion that the incidents of violence against foreign nationals were

due to xenophobia as per the dictionary definition of extreme, irrational hatred of foreign nationals' (PJC, 2015, 19). The Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee concluded that 'the main causes of the violent attacks were criminal actions that started with stealing of goods from foreign owned spaza shops by South African criminals who are often drug addicts. The spaza shop owners would react by shooting at those who steal from their spaza shops using unregistered firearms rather than reporting to the police. When this happens and someone is killed, local communities retaliate by looting spaza shops owned by foreign nationals rather than reporting to the police' (PJC, 2015, 35).

The idea that migrant spaza owners were responsible, by their very presence, for the attacks on their persons and premises resonated strongly with the views of many citizens and even beyond.

Independent commissions of enquiry, such as that headed by the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), argued that the immediate cause of the outbreak of violence was 'deliberate efforts of select individuals, some of whom had interests in the informal trading sector, to drive away competition by foreign national-owned businesses. [...] These deliberate efforts sparked the outbreak of widespread incidents of criminality, violence and looting of properties owned by foreign nationals'. Furthermore, 'many of the perceptions of foreign national traders, although largely unfounded, contributed to heightened tensions' (SRG, 2015, x). However, the Special Reference Group on Migration and Community Integration in KwaZulu-Natal (SRG) studiously avoided labelling the violence 'xenophobic' or seeing xenophobia as a contributing or even motivating factor. At most, it conceded that 'the violent attacks against foreign nationals were, in some measure, fuelled by dominant and negative perceptions that exist amongst locals and foreign nationals about one another' (SRG, 2015). This implies that the attitudes of foreign nationals were responsible for their own victimisation. In addition, none of the mob violence that took place was perpetrated by migrants against South Africans. An anti-xenophobia protest march organised by NGOs and migrant groups to Durban's City Hall on 7 April 2015 was declared illegal and the police used water cannons, teargas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd.

In April 2015, in the wake of the violence, the IMC began to implement its strategy in the form of the controversial and militaristic 'Operation Fiela'. Operation Fiela was described on the government website as 'a multidisciplinary interdepartmental operation aimed at eliminating criminality and general lawlessness from our communities. As the word 'fiela' means to sweep clean, we are ridding communities of crime and criminals so that the people of South Africa can be and feel safe. The ultimate objective of the operation is to create a safe and secure environment for all in South Africa' (RSA, 2015).

The central objective of Operation Fiela was not, in fact, to protect migrants or arrest the perpetrators but instead to launch a nationwide campaign by the police and army to harass migrant-owned businesses, locate undocumented migrants, and deport them. By the end of 2015, the government boasted that Operation Fiela had searched 460,000 people, 151,000 vehicles and 38,000 premises. A total of 41,000 arrests had been made. Between April and June 2015, 10,242 migrants were deported, of which Zimbabweans constituted over a quarter (SRG, 2015). The absence of due process in Operation Fiela prompted Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) to (unsuccessfully) challenge its constitutionality in the North Gauteng High Court in June 2015. An application for leave to appeal to the Constitutional Court was dismissed in December 2016 (Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2016). LHR characterised Operation Fiela as institutional xenophobia which 'have the unfortunate trend of creating a link between foreign nationals and crime, which is both misleading and inaccurate. It does nothing to address the core problems around xenophobia' (LHR, 2015).

#### 4 Conclusion

The global migration and development agenda puts great emphasis on the positive development impacts of migration. As the former UN Special Representative for International Migration, Louise Arbour, noted: there exists a global 'virtuous circle' in which 'migration is overwhelmingly positive for migrants and their communities, both origin and destination [...] [and] a potent motor of development' (Arbour, 2018). In order to achieve these outcomes, governments and citizenries need to openly recognise and acknowledge the existence of this virtuous circle, work assiduously to ensure its realisation, and remove institutional and attitudinal obstacles that stand in the way. In post-apartheid South Africa, there has been little recognition of the positive relationship between migration and development, and even fewer concrete efforts to mainstream development in migration policy and migration in development policy. The country's omnibus National Development Plan 2030 does make isolated references to the need for greater openness for skilled migrants and a 'more progressive' immigration policy (NPC, 2012). On just one occasion it observes that well-managed migration can 'contribute positively to South Africa's development', but this is followed almost immediately by a statement about the burden of migration (NPC, 2012, 105). Nor is there a systematic plan for how to make migration work for development, other than by recruiting high-level skills. While the still unimplemented 2017 White Paper



on International Migration claims to be that plan and pays lip-service to the migration-development relationship (DHA, 2017), its managerial framework focuses more on how to better control, monitor and manage migration and refugee flows. Neither document mentions xenophobia as an obstacle to the development of a well-managed migration system, nor to making migration work for development.

A major under-explored barrier to realising the full development benefits of migration is negative attitudes, shading into passive and active xenophobia, amongst the citizenry of migrant destination states. In this context, the South African case has particular relevance. While the country occupies an unenviable position at one extreme of the spectrum of attitudes to migration, xenophobia is also a growing phenomenon in many countries in the global North and South. In South Africa, as this chapter suggests, there is incontrovertible evidence that xenophobia is rife throughout the country and in the corridors of state power. State responses to xenophobia vary considerably but can basically be distilled into three models of governance; mitigation, intensification and displacement. South Africa has eschewed mitigation and, in contrast to countries where populism is on the rise, none of the country's political parties have sought to use anti-migrant hostility as a central policy platform, promoting and intensifying xenophobia. Instead, the South African response has been characterised by displacement; first, in the face of ferocious collective violence against migrants, government denies that xenophobia exists or is responsible in any way for the mayhem. Blame is invariably displaced onto criminals and criminality. The acts are certainly criminal, but they are not generally perpetrated by organised crime groups or habitual criminals. Since 2015, however, blame has increasingly been displaced onto migrants themselves, not least by all of the government ministers on the influential IMC which launched a punitive campaign against migrants in the aftermath of collective xenophobic violence.

One obvious objection to this characterisation of the governance response is the acceptance by Cabinet of a long-awaited National Action Plan to Combat, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (RSA, 2019). This plan, which fulfilled a longstanding commitment made by South Africa to develop and implement the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, took almost 20 years to develop and was riven with internal debate about whether xenophobia should even be included in the Plan. Earlier drafts from the Department of Justice removed it entirely. The National Action Plan might, however, be read as signalling that Cabinet may finally have accepted that xenophobia is a real phenomenon and needs to be combatted. Nonetheless, government ministers

have simultaneously continued to deny the existence of xenophobia and to displace blame onto criminals and migrants themselves. The Plan treats xenophobia in a perfunctory manner, providing no information about the nature and extent of the phenomenon and proposing no proactive steps to deal with it. The proposed remedies are largely reactive: condemning violence when it occurs, enacting hate crime laws, strengthening law enforcement and prosecuting offenders. One sentence is devoted to the need to monitor and report on attacks and another to 'promot[ing] a spirit of integration through engaging communities where xenophobia is rampant'. The primary concrete measure proposed is to implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee and the SRG Report (RSA, 2019, 61). It remains to be seen whether government will act on the SRG's more progressive and proactive remedies (SRG, 2015, 172–178) or the calls for greater controls on migration and the disadvantaging of migrant businesses proposed by the PJC (2015, 36–39).

One consequence of two decades of xenophobia governance by displacement in South Africa is, in fact, intensified xenophobia on the ground as there is no countervailing discourse about the benefits of migration. The police and justice system seem generally unable or unwilling to bring perpetrators of xenophobic violence to book, and xenophobic sentiment is licensed by policies toward refugee protection and migrants in the informal sector that are generally extremely hostile to both (Crush, Skinner and Stulgaitis, 2017). At best, the authorities (aided and abetted by international organisations) have brokered 'deals' to limit the number of migrants working in the informal sector, a dispute resolution move that Gastrow (2018) finds completely unconstitutional. With official policies of xenophobia denialism and blaming in place, there seems little hope that South Africa will address one of the core commitments of the Global Compact on Migration; that is, 'to, condemn and counter expressions, acts and manifestations of [...] xenophobia, and related intolerance'. Indeed, if xenophobia does not exist, then, by definition, there is nothing to condemn and counter. In this environment, the consequences for migrants in South Africa will continue to be extremely deleterious and deadly.

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# Attracting Highly Skilled Migrants to Guangzhou, China: A Policy Commentary

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## Abstract

The scope and the study of international migration have reached unprecedented levels. The UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) recognises that ‘migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination’, and calls for ‘integrat[ing] migration into development planning and sectoral policies at local, national, regional and global levels’. Such policies may include targeting individuals who are highly skilled/highly educated or lower skilled/less educated to fulfil different developmental goals. China, with its globalised economy, rapid economic growth, and wealth accumulation in recent decades embodies such a trend. With recruitment policies for top-tier Chinese returnees and foreign professionals, China has become an emerging destination for overseas talent. However, there is a lack of city-level/local-level analysis of the roles that local incentives and policies play when people choose a destination city. We aim to fill this gap by focusing on city-level talent recruitment and retention policies in Guangzhou, the capital of China’s Guangdong Province. In this policy commentary, we will 1) Compare and contrast the talent recruitment and retention policies instituted and implemented by the City of Guangzhou to attract Chinese returnees and foreign professionals in the last two decades; and 2) Assess the effectiveness and fairness of such policies, and their implications for other areas and countries in the global ‘race for talent’.

## 1 Introduction

With a total of 272 million people in the world living and working outside their country of origin (UN, 2019), the scope and the study of international migration have reached unprecedented levels. When examining the relationship between migration and development, traditional scholarship almost exclusively focuses on the impacts of remittances (financial or social) sent to home countries by international migrants who have relocated from the global South

to the global North. 'Now, ideas on the positive effects of migration on development are at the centre of policy initiatives' (Khondker, 2019, 42). The United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), an agreement endorsed by the majority of UN member countries, states that 'migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination'. It advocates 'integrat[ing] migration into development planning and sectoral policies at local, national, regional and global levels' (UNGA, 2018, 5 and 28). Similarly, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development target 10.7 calls for 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people' to be facilitated, 'including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies' (UNGA, 2015), squarely connecting migration policy to sustainable development goals. Such policies include those that target highly skilled/highly educated or lower skilled/less educated migrants, matching with various developmental goals. Attracting large numbers of highly skilled/highly educated migrants to a country or a city can directly contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) in particular. Policies attracting these types of migrants have become increasingly popular at local, national, and global levels, and have been instituted by countries in both the global North and global South alike: whereas about two-thirds of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries had such policies to attract global talent in 2015, by 2011 two-thirds of the world's top 25 migrant sending countries also had policies to attract returnees, including the highly skilled, back to their home countries (Czaika and Parsons, 2017; Hooper and Sumption, 2016). This marks the departure of global South countries from being purely countries from which migrants originate, to migrant destination countries as well, a phenomenon which requires new thinking and new policy initiatives to facilitate migrants' contributions to sustainable economic and social development.

Meanwhile, there have been changes in the scholarship of highly skilled migration. Historically, it involved studying the involuntary movement of professionals as a result of political conflicts, followed by the emergence of 'brain drain' situations, which largely occurred among African, Asian, and Latin American countries in the 1960s. Highly skilled and well trained professionals often left their home countries in the global South to settle permanently in the global North while migrant-sending countries incurred both the financial expense of the educational investment and the negative effects of this out-migration to their economic development. Such migration trends could often be attributed in part to the recruitment policies of global North countries.

In recent decades, the brain drain has transformed into a 'brain circulation' among developing countries with the financial resources and/or policy incentives in place to attract both skilled returnees and foreign professionals to contribute to their development (Li et al., 2019).

China, with its globalised economy, rapid economic growth and the wealth accumulation of recent decades embodies such a trend of transformation from migrant-sending to migrant-receiving country and to being both simultaneously. China is an emerging destination for both highly skilled returnees (Li and Yu, 2012) and foreign professionals (Yeoh and Willis, 2005). Highly skilled return migration is influenced by a host of migrant recruitment and integration policies in both sending and receiving countries. Foreign professionals are often attracted by China's job opportunities, high financial returns, family reunification or cultural attractions (Zhuang, 2018).

The existing literature demonstrates that highly skilled migration is affected by institutional factors such as China's specific *hukou* (household registration) system, general market factors (Huang, Tian and Wang, 2013; Ma and Pan, 2014; Ma and Yue, 2011), individual human capital possession, career considerations (Cui, Geertman and Hooimeijer, 2016) and attachment to place (Du, 2015; Ma, Tan and Li, forthcoming). It is clear, however, that China's recruitment policies, such as the Thousand Talent Programme (TTP), have played an important role in attracting top-tier overseas talent: Chinese returnees and foreign professionals (Zhou, et.al, 2018). Introduced in 2008, the TTP is a top-down initiative to attract the world's 'best and brightest' to China to tap into their knowledge and international networks. In its first decade, the programme attracted more than 8,000 top-level academics, entrepreneurs and other professionals from different parts of the world to China with lucrative incentives and research and development funding (Li et al., 2019).

The question of whether subnational-level incentives and policies have played roles in people's decisions to choose specific cities has been the subject of less inquiry, however, despite the national-level analysis that has shown the most popular destinations in China. For instance, the report on China's regional international talent competitiveness shows that Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangdong Province are the top three most competitive areas in attracting foreign professionals (CCG, 2017). Shanghai, Beijing and Guangdong Province, China's most developed cities and regions, have attached great importance to attracting top-tier talent from overseas. In 2009 Beijing, the capital, implemented the 'Beijing Overseas Talent Gathering project' which introduced two sets of policies to attract overseas talent, including the introduction of a residence or work residence permit (known as the 'talent green card'), which not only gives top-tier foreign professionals preferential treatment, but also aims

to facilitate their spouses' permanent residency, their children's schooling, and access to medical services (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, 2009). Shanghai, a key economic hub in China, has set itself the goal of becoming a national science and technology innovation centre with global influence. In 2015, its municipal government established a series of preferential policies to attract, support and encourage overseas high-level talent to seek employment or set up businesses in the city, including issuing the foreign talent visa (also known as the 'R visa'), and for the first time it permitted foreign students with degrees from Chinese academic institutions to work in Shanghai (Shanghai Municipal People's Government, 2015). Guangdong Province, one of the first regions in China to open up to the outside world, with its pioneering policy to attract overseas talent instituted in 1999,<sup>1</sup> implemented them prior to both Beijing and Shanghai. Thus, it can be seen that the paucity of city- or local-level analysis in the existing literature on migration and development needs to be addressed in order to provide insights into how lower-level policies can contribute to local development by tapping into migrant talent.

We aim to fill this gap by focusing on city-level talent recruitment and retention policies in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, China. In this policy commentary piece, we will:

1. Compare and contrast the talent recruitment and retention policies instituted and implemented by the city of Guangzhou to attract overseas talent: Chinese returnees and foreign professionals/; and
2. Assess the effectiveness and fairness of such policies in sustainable development, and the implications for other areas and countries in the global 'race for talent'.

## 2 Guangzhou's Policies to Attract Skilled Migrants

Guangzhou, located at the northern tip of the Pearl River Delta region in southern China, is an important trading centre and a busy port (Figure 7.1). The city has a population of around 10 million and is one of the most important centres of foreign commerce in southern China. With a highly developed economy, its 2019 GDP of USD 342,520 million ranked 4th among all Chinese cities (*Netease News*, 2020), just behind the GDP of Denmark (USD 350,104 million), ranked 40th in the world that year.<sup>2</sup> Guangzhou is an educational and cultural hub

<sup>1</sup> see appendix: <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4735>.

<sup>2</sup> Calculation based on <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.MKTP.CD&country=#> (accessed on 9 April 2021).

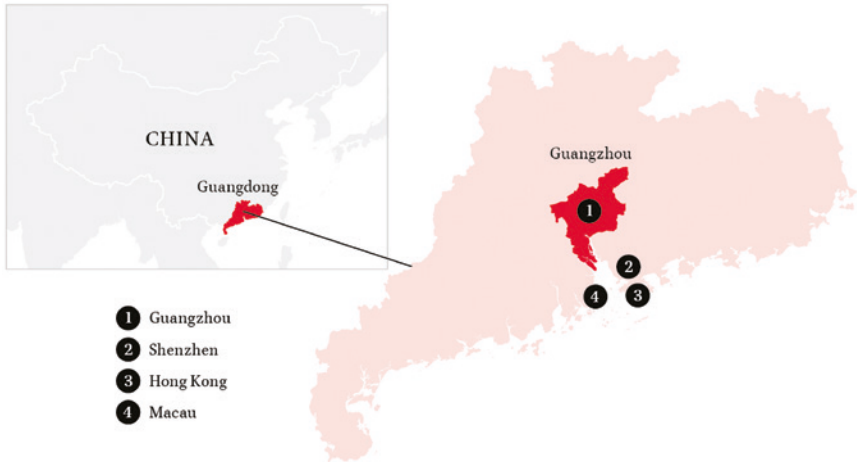


FIGURE 7.1 Situation of Guangzhou  
SOURCE: AUTHORS

in southern China, with top-tier universities such as Sun Yat-sen University, South China University of Technology, and Ji-nan University.

The development of policies to attract overseas talent reflects the development process of the city. Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, Guangzhou has transformed from a planned economy to a market economy, becoming deeply involved in the global economy and in international competition. In the process, the city has encouraged and facilitated the free inflow of talent, investing tremendous financial resources in attracting overseas talents in order to ‘catch up’ with Western developed countries. As one of the earliest cities to undergo opening-up, it has aimed to attract talent from both home and abroad. In 1999, Guangzhou’s municipal government issued the first talent recruitment policy, entitled ‘Guangzhou Municipality Regulations on Encouraging Overseas Returnees to Work in Guangzhou’. Since then, the city has issued new policies almost every year in a bid to attract high-level talent from overseas.

These policies have yielded positive outcomes. According to Guangzhou Foreign Experts Bureau, 67,200 returnees chose Guangzhou as their home in 2017 (CNR, 2017), accounting for over ten percent of all returnees to China (480,009) that year (HRSS, 2018). In the same year, Guangzhou hosted 51,430 foreign citizens, including 12,068 (23.5 per cent) working in foreign firms or Sino-foreign joint-ventures, 9,429 (18.3 per cent) foreign students, and 2,366 (4.6 per cent) teachers and other experts. More than 12,000 of these foreign



citizens were issued residence permits valid for more than two years (Cai, Liu and Wen, 2019).

We will compare the 21 Guangzhou government talent recruitment documents (policy documents and detailed regulations) from 1999 to 2019. Most were published by the General Office of Guangzhou Municipal People's Government and Guangzhou Municipal Party Committee.<sup>3</sup> In this section, we will analyse the policies to attract all overseas talent, and those specifically geared toward Chinese returnees and foreign professionals respectively.

### 2.1 *Policies Attracting All Types of Overseas Talent*

Since 1999, Guangzhou, a pilot zone of China's economic reform, has launched a series of overseas talent recruitment policies with incentive measures to support the work and lives of those who migrate to the city. Over the years, Guangzhou has developed a relatively comprehensive talent recruitment system. Here we summarise two main characteristics of talent policies in Guangzhou: the definition of talent, and policies at multiple levels of governments.

Firstly, Guangzhou has established a set of criteria for the overseas talent (both Chinese returnees and foreign professionals) it wishes to attract, with a primary focus on the fields of economics, technology and education, three key areas for sustainable development. The revised Kapok Plan (红棉计划) of 2019 defines 'overseas talent' as those who 1) are high-level talent selected by national talent attraction programs; 2) have earned at least a bachelor's degree overseas; 3) have worked in enterprises or high-education institutions overseas; 4) are foreign students that have obtained a master's degree in China; 5) are overseas Chinese. It defines 'high-level talent' as leaders in technology, entrepreneurship, management, academia or public policies, and holders of PhD from overseas universities who have worked in Guangzhou for at least 9 months in a single year.

Secondly, Guangzhou has established a system that is primarily composed of municipal-level policies supplemented by those at district or development-zone levels. These policies aim to attract talent with the offer of funding, a supportive environment, and comprehensive services. For example, in 2016 Guangzhou designed and implemented the Talent Green Card System to attract both Chinese returnees and foreign professionals (Southcn, 2019). As of September 2018, Guangzhou had issued 4,470 talent green cards, including 3,663 primary applications and 807 dependent applications from both inside

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3 Details in the appendix online at <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4735>.

and outside China (GZDDDI, 2019). The city also introduced the ‘household management method’ for talent in 2019, ensuring that the measures were flexible, allowing financial incentives and support services to be provided to the recruited talent and their families. Meanwhile, in 2019, at district and development-zone level, Guangzhou’s Huangpu zone, Development zone, and High-tech zone all issued their own measures to recruit and retain high-level overseas talent, including favourable conditions in the career promotion process, business investment, housing, children’s education, social insurance, and providing more opportunities for the recruited talent to participate in major economic and social policy-making within the district.

## 2.2 *Policies Attracting Chinese Returnees*

Guangzhou’s talent recruitment policies started with attracting returnees, which was the sole objective at the initial stage (1999–2000). The Guangzhou government defined returnees as, 1) persons sent by the Chinese government or at their own expense to study abroad and obtain a master’s degree or above; and 2) those who had obtained a bachelor’s degree or above in China and then studied abroad or worked as a visiting scholar for more than two years with specific scientific research achievements in certain fields. The incentives included: 1) Professional development: offering returnees positions as employees at state-owned institutions and incentives such as the continuous calculation of the length of employment before going abroad and after returning,<sup>4</sup> salary adjustment, awarding professional and technical titles, and social insurance; 2) Favourable policies for their families: allowing returnees and their spouses, children, and parents to apply for local *hukou*, providing additional family subsidies and temporary housing in Guangzhou, permitting returnees’ children to enrol in nearby schools and adding bonus points to the results of their high school entrance examination; and 3) Financial policy: giving returnees with foreign citizenship priority approval for multiple exit and entry permits. Considered different from other Chinese citizens, returnees were permitted to purchase foreign currency and remit it abroad through designated banks, forming a ‘reverse remittance’ stream to the global North, a departure from the traditional migration phenomenon of remittances flowing only from the global North to the global South.

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4 In the previous Chinese system, everything, including promotions and salary increases, depended on how long a person had worked inside China. Therefore, counting their years overseas into the length of total employment period became a critical advantage for returnees.

The second stage (2000–2009), while ensuring the continuity of the policies established during the initial stage, was characterised by an increased emphasis on attracting high-level talent (such as those with a doctoral degree) and the provision of services and financial support for returnees, in particular for those planning to start a business in Guangzhou. The government had realised that overseas talent was playing a leading role in the technological and innovative industries (key to SDG 9). Such policies accelerated after the global financial crisis, and this was consistent with promoting technological innovation at the national level (Li et al. 2019). In 2008, for example, the Guangzhou government set up a special fund of RMB 200 million (worth USD 28.8 million at the time) for high-level talent, with the aim of supporting these returnees in setting up high-tech enterprises or engaging in scientific research in key development areas for the city. For each high-level talent attracted, a one-time settlement fee ranging from RMB 300,000 to RMB 1 million (Worth USD 43,200 to 144,000 at the time) was provided.

During the third stage (2010 to the present), the government has expanded the scope of recruitment by providing more professional services to attract and retain overseas returnees, offering special Guangzhou Certification for high-level overseas (returnee) talent and providing preferential treatment for all returnees with at least a PhD degree. Such returnees are eligible for a RMB 100,000 subsidy for relocating to Guangzhou, with higher subsidies available to those defined as high-level overseas talent. In addition to the incentive policies for all high-level overseas talent, during this third stage, Guangzhou has also introduced preferential policies for young overseas returnees, consistent with the national-level Youth TTP. For example, in order to attract overseas (returnee and ethnic Chinese living overseas) doctoral graduates to Guangdong to engage in postdoctoral research and create a pool of young high-level talent for the province, the ‘Pearl River Talent Plan’ (overseas youth talent introduction plan and for postdoctoral funding) was implemented in 2016. This includes financial support for returnee young post-doctors in the form of salary supplements, settlement fees and a variety of research funds. Such policies have yielded positive outcomes by recruiting leaders in the fields of science and education. Professor Zhou of South China Normal University, for instance, returned from the Netherlands in 2010. By 2014, he had been awarded a total of 85 Chinese patents, 50 US patents, and one Japanese patent. He now serves as the Dean of South China Academy of Advanced Optoelectronics and has set up his own company in Shenzhen (SCNU 2014). Such academic and innovation leaders propel economic development toward the goal of sustainability.

In sum, in comparison to inland Chinese cities, Guangzhou is reputed for its greater financial support, good research and business environments, and relatively open and flexible policies for the attraction and retention of overseas returnees.

### 2.3 *Policies Attracting Foreign Professionals*

Compared with the well-established policies targeting Chinese returnees, Guangzhou's policies to recruit foreign talent have been developed more recently and are often embedded within the broader scheme to attract overseas talent. In particular, Guangzhou has designed and implemented policies to attract foreign long-term professionals, entrepreneurs, and students to attain the city's evolving objectives in the areas of economic development and technological innovation.

As part of the innovative Talent Green Card System that Guangzhou introduced in 2016, incentives were established to specifically target foreign professionals. In particular, those categorised as 'Type A talent' in China's new work permit system are eligible to apply for the talent green card, which entitles its holders to permanent residency. Green card-holders and green card applicants enjoy privileges in several areas: 1) a streamlined process to apply for the foreign talent visa (the 'R visa'), an alternative to foreigner's residence permit in China; 2) eligibility for their children to enrol in public schools; 3) permission to purchase residential property and automobiles; 4) permission to purchase foreign currency at designated banks; and 5) eligibility for the spouse, child(ren) under 18, parents, and spouse's parents to apply for the 'dependent talent green card' and enjoy similar benefits (Guangdong Talent Network, 2019). As of 2018, the Talent Green Card System had attracted 319 foreign professionals, 8.71 per cent of all primary applicants. The US, Canada, and Australia are the top three countries for foreign recipients of the talent green card (GZDDDI, 2019).

The policies to attract foreign talent are continuously evolving to reflect the city's goal of upgrading its economic structure in part by offering attractive conditions for foreign entrepreneurs. To keep pace with the city's aspirations, in 2017 Guangzhou updated its Kapok Plan to encourage overseas talent to lead start-up projects related to information technology, artificial intelligence and biopharmaceuticals (IAB) and new energy and new materials (NEM) industries, the two new directions of the city's economic restructuring that directly target SDG nine. Since 2018 Guangzhou has aimed to fund up to 30 entrepreneurial projects annually for five years. Each selected project receives up to RMB 2 million in start-up capital with a discounted interest rate for loans. The Guangzhou government also coordinates the actions of different municipal

departments to foster a supportive institutional and social environment for the entrepreneurs in receipt of funding. Furthermore, it streamlines the enterprise registration process for foreign passport holders and enforces the intellectual property protection mechanisms (Government of Guangzhou City, 2017).

Moreover, the 2011 version of the Kapok Plan expanded the target group between 2012–2017 to include, in addition to those with overseas educational qualifications and professional experience, foreign students who had obtained a master's degree or above in China (CYD, 2011). This policy, aimed at retaining top-tier foreign students, was considered to be an important measure in the race for talent, similar to policies implemented by many global North countries. The Kapok Plan is now integrated into the Talent Green Card System to retain foreign students in Guangzhou after graduation.

The implementation of such policies has brought positive impacts to the local society and contributed to making its development sustainable, including in the higher education and innovation sectors. For instance, the foreign professors at the International School of Advanced Materials at South China Normal University helped create an English language immersive learning environment, sharing the most advanced research activities in the field with students, thus contributing to the intellectual development of students and the globalising of higher education at the University (SCUT, 2020). Moreover, the 2019 Convention on Exchange of Overseas Talents was attended by almost 3,000 overseas 'talents' from 30 countries, attracting 1,761 collaboration projects in the fields of information systems, biomedical engineering, energy conservation, new materials, etc. (Southcn, 2019).

In summary, Guangzhou's policies to recruit foreign professionals derive from the city's existing plans to attract Chinese returnees with additional elements that specifically apply to foreigners. The general strategy to attract foreign professionals has been to customise policies to serve different groups of foreign talent: long-term professionals, entrepreneurs, and students. The strategy has benefited both foreign talent and the city. It fits the city's needs to diversify the talent pool and helps achieve its development goals. For policies to recruit long-term foreign professionals, Guangzhou has emphasised providing support services to incoming professionals and their families to help them settle in, along with a simplified visa process, housing opportunities and benefits to children's education. The policies to attract foreign entrepreneurs offer start-up capital and a supportive environment to sustain the growth of their business, while the policies to attract foreign students to study/work in Guangzhou provide employment and settlement opportunities and encourage foreign graduates to start businesses in Guangzhou.

### 3 Policy Commentary

From the above discussion, we can summarise and comment on the policies instituted and implemented by the City of Guangzhou in attracting ‘overseas talent’, including both Chinese returnees and foreign professionals, as the following:

Guangzhou, a major economic hub, has joined the global race for talent and complemented China’s nationwide initiatives by instituting its own policies at the municipal level, such as the Pearl River Talent Plan and the Guangzhou Talent Green Card System. At the vanguard of Chinese cities opening up to the world, Guangzhou has taken its own initiative in the race for talent by issuing a large number of citywide or local-level policies.<sup>5</sup> We note that Guangzhou issued policies to attract overseas talent before either Beijing or Shanghai, although the scope of the policies’ aims and the implementation are similar in all three cities.

These policies aim to promote educational and economic development, especially regarding SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). The various stages of the policies are based on different development goals and target different migrant groups. At the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s, the policy goal was only to attract returnees, mainly tapping into their homeland affinity and attachments. But as China’s economic take-off led to the availability of more financial resources and improved employment opportunities—particularly since the global financial crisis—China in general and Guangzhou in particular increased their financial incentives and offered other supplemental policies to attract both highly skilled returnees and foreign professionals, increasingly with the aim of facilitating long-term plans for working and living in the city. Guangzhou has recently added foreign PhD students studying in China to the list of target groups, competing with the traditional advantage of global North countries to recruit within this demographic. In terms of target development sectors, the policy initiatives have also evolved over time: the initial eligibility criteria were largely based on human capital levels, attracting returnees or foreign talent to teach in Guangzhou’s higher education institutions (Ma, Tan and Li, forthcoming). The target increasingly became more sector-specific and more development goal-oriented, focusing on IAB and NEM industries, all of which are key to both

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5 These are detailed in the appendix : <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/4735>.

the nation's and the city's economic development goals, as well as to ensuring more sustainable development in new industries while remaining at the forefront of the global race for talent. Such capability-enabled, development-stage related, sector-specific recruitment policies may be adopted by other cities or countries for their own respective development goals at specific periods in time.

In assessing the policies introduced to attract overseas talent, we also note the normative frameworks applied to the governance of labour migration. In particular, international organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) play an important role in supporting labour migration programmes between countries and in facilitating regional cooperation for maintaining effective and efficient labour migration flows in synergy with individual nations' own development goals. Nevertheless, the success of international normative frameworks remains limited if their application is not accompanied by institutional changes at other levels (Kneebone, 2010). Similar to policy challenges for labour migration, recruiting overseas talent should always keep up with labour market dynamics and the changing development priorities at municipal, regional and national levels. In addition, labour and living standards for overseas talent should be established to protect migrant workers' rights within the workplace and in the destination societies. Similarly to the Overseas Talent Gathering Project in Beijing, the Thousand Talents Plan in Shanghai and the Pearl River Talent Plan in Guangzhou, significant support should be given to overseas talents in terms of working conditions, living conditions and entrepreneurship.

Despite Guangzhou's overall success in attracting overseas talent, there are several issues that need to be addressed. For instance, at the individual level, there is a lack of a mechanism to solicit feedback from those being recruited on the fairness and effectiveness of the policies, and on how to balance one-time financial incentives to settle with long-term support for their work and lives. At the city level, there is a constant need to evaluate whether a particular recruitment policy has reached its goal in facilitating sustainable development, and when may be the time to withdraw certain policies. At the same time, with the increasing number of overseas talent coming to China in recent years, questions of how to develop more targeted public policies, recruitment and retention measures for different types of talent, and of how to better evaluate and utilise the different forms of capital that they bring from overseas in order to align with urban development goals, are also a long-term challenge for local government. How to balance the development of overseas talent with that of

domestically trained talent is another issue that needs to be better addressed if equity, inclusion and belonging are to be achieved. It is important to make sure that talent recruited from overseas and talent trained domestically are both able to fill positions that best match their skills and capital, to avoid vicious competition between the two groups.

Last but perhaps most importantly, is the question of how to achieve a balance between the race for talent and development goals in order to alleviate inequality at city, regional, national, and global levels. While attracting top-tier talent from overseas for economic development purposes helps economic growth and contributes to alleviating poverty and hunger overall (SDGs 1 and 2), the implementation of these policies may not contribute to gender equality or reduce inequality (SDGs 5 and 10). If not designed or implemented fairly and in a just manner, such policies may actually hinder the achievement of these goals and instead increase inequality at individual, local, national and global levels.

Li et al. (2019) demonstrate the differential goals and outcomes of talent recruitment policies between China and India. China's broader reach, greater incentives and more successful results are due in large part to its more advanced economy and better financial capability. We see a similar pattern in our analysis of Guangzhou's policies and outcomes. As one of China's most advanced economies, Guangzhou has ample financial resources to recruit and retain overseas talent. If the global race for talent becomes a zero-sum game in which those with the financial means are the winners and the rest are the losers, a more severe brain drain situation is likely to occur both internationally and domestically. We, therefore, following Khadria's (2017) urge for South-South collaboration in migration and development, call for more developed countries/cities to collaborate with those that are less developed to consider implementing mutually beneficial policies with the potential to yield fairer and more balanced outcomes.

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# Migration, Health and Development in India, South Asia and China: Perspectives in the COVID-19 Era

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## Abstract

This chapter revisits the relationship between migration, health and development in the context of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) objectives interrupted by the external shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. By using recent and emerging data from global sources like the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank, it looks at health indicators, migration stocks and economic development parameters in select South Asian countries, including India, over the last three decades—1990–2020. These are compared against both the world totals and those for China—the East Asian country at the epicentre of COVID-19. The chapter provides background on comparative indicators of economic development in India, other major South Asian countries and China, and critically examines three issues: (a) lessons from the challenges COVID-19 posed to the GCM objective of making migration ‘safe, orderly and regular’ (SOR); (b) indicators of the relationship between migration, health and development in the context of the GCM and COVID-19; and (c) challenges emerging from the dynamic relationship between migration, health and development in the COVID-19 era.

## 1 Introduction

Following the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period in 2015, the United Nations (UN) member states embarked upon a wider and disaggregated global agenda of development under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015–2030. Although there was a certain happiness about migration being included in Target 10.7 under the catch-phrase ‘no one to be left behind’, strictly speaking migration had once again missed the bus on account of it not being designated on its own as a major goal among the other SDGs. In fact, disappointment at this exclusion was voiced during the plenary session of the Metropolis International Conference held in

Mexico City in September 2015 (Khadria, 2015). As the Syrian refugee crisis also engulfed parts of Europe around the same time, what followed was an initiative aimed to convince the UN member states to agree upon two compacts, both of which came into effect in 2018: the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The GCM thus finally came out of a long process of multilateral negotiations over international migration initiated by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2002. It took the UN 16 years to bring some member states on board to negotiate and deliberate upon the sensitive subject of international migration, which countries considered to be their exclusive sovereign territory. Although a few countries later withdrew from the GCM, 152 countries out of 193 voted in favour of the agreement and its 23 objectives. Not every objective among these 23 is relevant to all countries and regions of the world. For the nine countries of South Asia, nine objectives seem to be of higher priority. These nine objectives are related to fair and ethical recruitment of nurses, global shortage of human capital etc. (objective 9), smuggling/trafficking of women and children, including fake and fraudulent marriages from India (objectives 9 and 10), more certain and predictable pathways for regular migration (objectives 5 and 12), basic services for migrants like health, education, water, sanitation etc. (objective 15), skills development and mutual recognition of qualifications, including for learning-by-doing and on-the-job training (objective 18), faster, cheaper and safer remittances (objective 20), and totalisation and portability of social security contributions and earned benefits (objective 22).

The pathways to implementing these objectives are subject to the country positions spelled out in their respective statements made at the concluding multilateral forum preceding the agreement (Khadria et al., 2019). These are reflected in the statements that each of the South Asian countries and China made at the time of ratifying the GCM, presented later in this chapter. The GCM derives its mission from SDG 10, which is to 'reduce inequality within and among the countries', and more specifically its Target 10.7—to 'facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies'.

This chapter analyses the relationship between migration, health and development during the period immediately prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and throughout the pandemic up to early 2021 in South Asian countries and China with a view to recommending comprehensive policy initiatives for the post-COVID-19 period. The chapter is divided into seven sections. Following this

introduction, the second section covers the background on global inequalities and migration and the third addresses the chapter's objectives and sources of data. Section four looks at the country statements on the GCM in light of the different situations prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and following it during the pandemic. Section five highlights the economic condition of South Asian countries and China by comparing various economic indicators. Section six examines the relationship between migration status, health and economic indicators in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The final section includes a summary and considers policy implications.

## 2 Background

The income inequalities and development gaps between developing economies, like those of India and China, and developed economies, like those of the United States (US) contribute greatly to human mobility across borders as a result of wage differentials (Li, Bedford and Khadria, 2019). At the global level, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is an important indicator of economic development in the countries of origin and the countries of destination of migrants. Dependency theory (Singer, 1950; Prebisch, 1959) and world-systems theory (Wallerstein, 1974) during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s talked about the factors of underdevelopment among Asian, African and Latin American countries. According to dependency theory (Toye and Toye, 2003), developed countries are rich because of the profit they gained at the expense of developing countries through the exploitation of cheap labour and resources available in the latter (i.e., periphery countries) in exchange for obsolete technologies from the former (i.e., core countries). Similarly, world-systems theory explains that underdevelopment in developing economies is the result of globalisation and the economic imperialism of developed economies. This theory emphasises that the world system is based on the classifications of core, semi-periphery and periphery countries. The core countries utilise high-skill and capital-intensive production techniques, whereas the rest of the world (comprising semi-periphery and periphery countries) are dependent on low-skill and labour-intensive production techniques.

Since the early 1990s, with economic globalisation, mobility of people has increased from the global South to the global North countries, resulting in more remittances (in the current account of balance of payments (BOP)) from the destination countries to the sending countries of migrants. For example, migration of high-skilled people from India and China to the US in this phase

of globalisation contributed to a rise in remittances that has been counted as an economic gain compensating for the brain-drain for these two major countries of origin. In contrast, the growth of foreign trade in goods and services led to a rise in the flow of foreign capital from the global North to the global South, and thereby of profit in the reverse direction. This resulted in lower net foreign exchange earnings for the global South countries in the periphery. For instance, India experienced an adverse BOP in comparison to the US (Thakur, 2016). At a macro level, remittances could not redress poverty and income inequalities resulting from underdevelopment in the peripheral origin countries such as India and other South Asian countries and there was hardly any transfer of technology worth its name.

According to world-systems theory and dependency theory, the income inequality and development gaps between the centre and periphery economies cannot be bridged with the ongoing market economic structure, as reflected in the divergence of GDP per capita between the US and India as well as other South Asian countries. Whatever increase India and China experienced in their GDP per capita due to globalisation could not bridge the gap between them and the US. This was mainly because of multinational companies having the US as the source of their foreign capital, which facilitated a positive BOP account for the US and other developed destination countries.

During economic crises, mainstream economics has both neglected the theories and stayed ignorant of the gaps in economic development and income inequalities. Therefore, there is a need to address these issues within mainstream economics and work on the causes and effects behind the underdevelopment that ultimately leads to migration pressures. Uneven development and income inequalities are instrumental to the migration decisions of migrants from the global South to the global North for their better living and working conditions. These issues have in some instances been addressed more actively during times of crisis by multilateral institutions like the UN. However, the gaps and inequalities could not be reduced at a greater scale even though migration did lead to improvements in the living standards of migrants and their families in the global South via higher wages in the destination countries and remittances to migrants' countries of origin, such as India, which is the highest global recipient of remittances sent by migrants. Migrants also contributed to a greater scale in economic growth and development in their destination countries in the global North.

The UN has been instrumental in bridging the challenges of migration with approaches to development. In 1990, the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) came up with the Human Development Index (HDI) to comprehensively estimate human development at the country level based on three prominent indicators: income, health and education. The HDI shows the limitations of economic growth and development for human lives, sustainability of material production and neglect of income inequalities at the country and global levels. To address development gaps, the UN launched eight MDGs for 2000 to 2015 and seventeen SDGs for 2015 to 2030. The rise in economic inequality between and within countries was witnessed during the global financial crisis of 2007, which revealed the fault lines of development pathways across different nations. However, migration, which had not been among the first eight goals also did not get included among the second set of seventeen. It was only through the back door of the GCM and the GCR, finalised in 2018 to support the safe, orderly and regular migration of migrants and refugees that the UN finally succeeded in upholding migration as an independent global agenda without piggybacking on that of global development (IOM, 2019). The GCM and GCR were thus acknowledged to address the reduction of income inequalities specified under SDG 10.

With this background, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to further uncertainties resulting from the stricter immigration policies intended to contain fatalities and rising unemployment among the local population in countries of destination, particularly the US, as well as countries of origin such as India, other South Asian countries and China. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global recession, the inflows of remittances were also expected to decline in India by 9 per cent from USD 83.3 billion in 2019 to USD 76 billion in 2020 and in South Asian countries by 4 per cent from 2019 to 2020 (World Bank, 2020). Along with the decline in remittances to global South countries, immigration restrictions and travel bans were initiated by the US to protect life and the livelihood challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that migration pressures will increase with stricter immigration policies in destination countries, creating more challenges of development gaps and income inequalities in the post-COVID-19 era. It has been argued by economists and scientists that the neglect of the sustainable development indicators and early warning signals of the communicable disease at the global level have made the situation grimmer (Seshaiyer and McNeely, 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges of underdevelopment already existed as income inequalities along with emigration pressures in South Asian countries as well as China. It is now being observed that the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even more challenging.



### 3 Objectives and Data Sources

This article has three main objectives in examining the dynamic relationship between migration, health and development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: (I) to highlight and assess the critical statements of India on the GCM objectives as compared to those of the other South Asian countries and China during the COVID-19 period, particularly in the light of slower economic development and greater income inequalities during this time; (II) to establish the relationship of migration and health with economic development in these countries in the pre-COVID-19 period; and (III) to highlight the challenges of migration, health and development in these countries during the COVID-19 period. The sources of data used to examine these objectives are the World Bank, the UNDP, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WHO, and the UN. On the basis of an analysis of these dynamic relationships, we suggest a number of policy implications to enhance the positive relationship between inclusive migration, sustainable development and the public health system.

### 4 Looking Back at the Country Statements on the GCM

This section analyses the statements on the GCM made by a select few signatory South Asian member states (India, Pakistan, Iran and Sri Lanka) and China. The statements of other countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan and Bhutan) are also briefly commented upon.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1 *India*

In 2017, India stated that with regard to the GCM it

[...] may like to flag that in certain cases stringent and lopsided policies of the receiving States make the migrants vulnerable, make it difficult for the migrants to comply with obligations of retaining legal migratory status and in quite a number of cases migrants were forced to face criminal proceedings even for minor violations.

PMI Geneva, 2017, 1<sup>2</sup>

1 All country statements are available at <https://www.un.org/en/conf/migration/statements.shtml> (accessed on 22 May 2021).

2 See also, 'GCM: India calls for protecting Human Rights of migrants, liberalising [sic] norms for economic migration, no to any additional barriers to migration', official tweet of the Permanent Mission of India in Geneva at the UN on its representation at the first informal

In 2018 it declared, '[The GCM] recognizes the sovereign right of each state in determining its migration policy. Individual states can distinguish between regular and irregular migrants and determine the conditions of entry and stay of non-nationals in their jurisdiction and need not follow a prescriptive approach' (UN, 2018b, 2).

India further stated:

International migrants are said to contribute nearly 10% of the global GDP even as they formed only 3% of global population [...] There is a legitimate purpose to legal migration as the means of global economic development as opposed to illegal migration. [...] India looks forward to continuing our engagement with partners to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

UN, 2018b, 2, 4

Of the above three statements made by India, the second and third, made in 2018, seem to be inconsistent with the first statement, made in 2017. The first raised concerns regarding the vulnerability of Indian overseas migrants to the discretion used by destination countries and employers through conflating minor and major violations of the legality of their status. The second concerns the definition of illegal or irregular immigration of 'non-nationals' in India, purporting it to be the sovereign jurisdiction of the country and not to be prescribed by the GCM. The third statement raises a doubt as to how 10 per cent of the global GDP could all be attributed to be the contribution of legal migrants alone who comprise just 3 per cent of the global population, assuming thereby that the contribution made by irregular migrants has not been recognised.

#### 4.2 *Pakistan*

Pakistan gave three different statements on the GCM in 2018. It said, 'While States retain the sovereign right to strengthen their border security, this right should be consistent with international law. Migrants regardless of their migration status, are entitled to the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, which must be respected, protected and fulfilled across all stages of the migration cycle' (UN, 2018d, 4). Further, it added another statement: 'The tendencies of xenophobia, racial profiling and Islamophobia in the countries of destination against migrants must be countered. All States must

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thematic session on 'Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion, and all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance', 10 May 2017, <https://twitter.com/indiaungeneva/status/862309983400206337?lang=en> (accessed on 22 May 2021).

foster inclusive and cohesive societies by empowering migrants to become active members of society' (UN, 2018d, 4). Third it stated: 'As we move towards implementing the GCM provisions, we look forward to enhanced bilateral engagements, energized regional dialogues and global cooperation that are responsive to the GCM commitments' (UN, 2018d, 4).

Pakistan emphasised that the human rights of migrants should be taken care of irrespective of their legal or so-called illegal status in destination countries. It called for countering the increasing tendencies of xenophobia, racial profiling and Islamophobia against migrants in countries of destination.

#### 4.3 *Iran*

In 2018, Iran stated that

the GCM could enhance the positive impact of cross-border migration for all through effective management and international cooperation. The validity of these notions depends on taking the various and unequal capacities of member states into account as well as the implementation of the compact by all members of the international community in good faith.

UN, 2018c, 1

It further entreated:

Let's not forget that the impact of migrants on their host countries is a function of the specific circumstances such as level of development and demographic situation of any given host country. We should also keep it [in] mind that [a] majority of developed countries have been well equipped with normative tools and natural and man-made barriers to shield themselves from negative impacts of migration and to tailor migratory flows in a way to maintain or even enhance their level of development.

UN, 2018c, 1

Iran also expressed concerns about the withdrawal from the GCM by developed countries, specifically the US.

#### 4.4 *Sri Lanka*

In 2018, Sri Lanka gave its statement:

The adoption of the Migration compact in our view marks a beginning of a new journey, a collective journey-consciously departing from the

path of negative and toxic narrative of migration and migrants, aiming at safe, regular and orderly migration, and adding real value and dignity to human mobility. [...] Sri Lanka places high importance on inclusivity, particularly the active engagement with the business and private sector involved in labour migration.

UN, 2018e, 1

#### 4.5 *Other South Asian Countries*

The statements made by the other five South Asian countries, specifically Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan and Bhutan, are in support of the GCM and offer assurance of the countries' implementation of their commitments. The five countries made statements more or less similar to the statements made by Pakistan and Iran to work for positive relationships between international migration and sustainable development.

#### 4.6 *China*

The statement made by China was more generic than those of the South Asian countries, especially that of India. It appears more sensitive and balanced toward making migration safe, orderly and regular for both immigrants in China and emigrants from China. The second paragraph of China's statement reads as follows:

In today's era of globalization, orderly migration flows help stimulate vitality for innovation, promote economic development and global inclusive growth, and enhance mutual understanding and cultural integration among nations. Meanwhile, one should also realize that irregular migration flows without effective governance may breed organized transnational crime and increase pressure on and challenges to countries in border control and societal governance. The protection of migrants' own rights and interests is also often under threat. We need to strengthen global governance in the field of migration to bring about safe, orderly and regular migration.

UN, 2018a, 1

On the governance of global migration, China advocated four points: the first was related to upholding the principle of respect for national sovereignty; the second focused on the regularity, safety and orderliness of global migration flows; the third addressed resolving the main issues of migration, such as underdevelopment and unbalanced development; and the last point considered cooperation among member states to implement the GCM. In the last

paragraph of the statement, China recognised the positive role migration plays in development.

Just around the time when stock-taking was due for the indicators of the GCM objectives being achieved at the end of the year, in December 2019, the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic, which 'left no one behind' and created a ripple of disruption in people's lives, livelihoods and migration. It remains to be seen how consistent the South Asian countries will be with respect to the GCM's objectives, particularly in and after the extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The next part of this chapter examines the consistencies and contradictions in the relationship between migration and development by looking at the precariousness of the health risks let loose by the extraordinary circumstances in South Asia and China, which was the epicentre of the contagious infection.

## 5 Comparative Economic Indicators in India, South Asia and China

During times of recession, economic theory suggests increasing government expenditure so as to expand aggregate demand to counter the economic slowdown and to contain rising unemployment. It is therefore pertinent to examine the share of government expenditure in GDP. Table 8.1 shows that, at the world level, government expenditure in GDP was 16 per cent in 1990 and 1995 and increased to 17 per cent in 2015 and 2018.

However, the government expenditure in India remained stagnant at 11 per cent in 1990 and 1995, thereafter declining to 10 per cent in 2015, and catching up again to 11 per cent in 2018. China's government expenditure was relatively higher at 14 per cent in 1990, 13 per cent in 1995 and 2015, and 15 per cent in 2018. Both India and China were, however, lower than the world indicators for these years (World Bank, 2020).

The shares of government expenditure, especially in times of recession, are interlinked with the economic growth of GDP. The lower government expenditure in India was accompanied by higher economic slowdown as opposed to China's higher government expenditure and lower economic slowdown. The world GDP growth rate also increased in 2018 along with higher government expenditure. Thus, it is clear from this analysis that there is a need to increase government expenditure to improve the demand conditions and employment generation in times of recessionary pressures.

Table 8.2 depicts the score values of the HDI from 1990 to 2018. The level of human development in China improved over these years, which is reflected in the improved HDI scores surpassing even the world HDI trend in 2010. The HDI

TABLE 8.1 General government final consumption expenditure in India, other South Asian countries and China (% of GDP)

Country/Region	1990	1995	2015	2018
Afghanistan	NA <sup>a</sup>	NA	12	NA
Bangladesh	4	5	5	6
Bhutan	15	12	18	NA
China	14	13	14	15
India	11	11	10	11
Iran	11	14	13	NA
Maldives	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nepal	9	9	11	12
Pakistan	15	12	11	12
Sri Lanka	10	11	9	9
South Asia	11	10	10	11
World	16	16	17	17

a NA denotes data not available.

SOURCE: WORLD BANK (2020)

values for China were 0.50 in 1990, 0.70 in 2010 and 0.76 in 2018 as compared to the world's scores of 0.60, 0.69 and 0.73 respectively. The values of Indian HDI scores in 1990, 2010 and 2018 were 0.43, 0.58 and 0.65 respectively, showing lower values than those of both China and the world. The lower Indian HDI scores pulled down the overall South Asian HDI values over the years, which also remained lower than the HDI values for both China and the world. The respective HDI values for South Asia were 0.44, 0.59 and 0.64 in the three years. In comparison to China and the world, lower economic development in India, as reflected in lower HDI scores, is linked with low growth rates of GDP and GDP per capita.

Table 8.3 shows that India's GDP growth rate experienced a sharper decline of 1.2 percentage point from 8 per cent in 2015 to 6.8 per cent in 2018 whereas China's GDP growth rate experienced a slower decline of 0.3 percentage points from 6.9 per cent in 2015 to 6.6 per cent in 2018. For improving human and economic development conditions, there is a need for higher government expenditure via expansionary fiscal policy in times of recession and the COVID-19 pandemic to universalise the public healthcare system, increase employment opportunities and ensure safe, regular and orderly emigration and immigration.

TABLE 8.2 Human development in India, other South Asian countries, China, South Asia and the world, 1990–2018

HDI rank <sup>a</sup>	Country	1990	2010	2015	2018
65	Iran	0.577	0.756	0.789	0.797
71	Sri Lanka	0.625	0.75	0.772	0.78
85	China	0.501	0.702	0.742	0.758
104	Maldives	NA <sup>b</sup>	0.669	0.709	0.719
129	India	0.431	0.581	0.627	0.647
134	Bhutan	NA	0.571	0.606	0.617
135	Bangladesh	0.388	0.549	0.588	0.614
147	Nepal	0.38	0.527	0.568	0.579
152	Pakistan	0.404	0.524	0.55	0.56
170	Afghanistan	0.298	0.464	0.49	0.496
	South Asia	0.441	0.585	0.624	0.642
	World	0.598	0.697	0.722	0.731

a The Human Development Index (HDI) ranking pertains to the 2018 index.

b NA denotes data not available.

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING UNDP (2020)

TABLE 8.3 GDP growth of a selection of Asian countries (1990–2020, annual %)

Country name	1990	2015	2018	2020
Afghanistan	NA <sup>a</sup>	1.5	1.0	NA
Bangladesh	5.6	6.6	7.9	NA
Bhutan	10.9	6.6	2.3	NA
China	3.9	6.9	6.6	1.0
India	5.5	8.0	6.8	4.5
Iran	13.8	-1.3	NA	NA
Maldives	NA	2.9	6.9	NA
Nepal	4.6	3.3	6.7	NA
Pakistan	4.5	4.7	5.8	NA
Sri Lanka	6.4	5.0	3.2	NA
South Asia	5.4	7.5	6.7	NA
World	2.9	2.8	3.0	-4.9

a NA denotes data not available.

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING WORLD BANK (2020) AND IMF (2020)

TABLE 8.4 GDP per person employed in a selection of Asian countries (1995–2019, constant 2011 PPP USD)

Country name	1995	2015	2018	2019
Afghanistan	3,572	5,082	4,897	4,916
Bangladesh	4,311	8,222	9,216	9,691
Bhutan	8,092	16,419	19,524	20,436
China	4,497	24,267	29,499	31,380
India	5,645	15,898	18,565	19,589
Iran	54,727	56,766	66,427	68,776
Maldives	28,809	28,551	33,072	34,036
Nepal	2,729	4,189	4,393	4,468
Pakistan	11,997	14,095	15,430	15,906
Sri Lanka	12,970	29,137	32,673	34,134
South Asia	6,032	14,687	16,890	17,747
World	21,975	34,290	36,750	37,739

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING WORLD BANK (2020)

The level of economic development is examined by using World Bank data on GDP per person employed at the constant prices of 2011 at purchasing power parity (PPP) for the four years, specifically 1995, 2015, 2018 and 2019 (see Table 8.4 and Figure 8.1). The level of Indian GDP per person employed increased in each of these years. However, the difference between the world GDP per person employed and that in India also continuously increased through these years. The GDP per person employed in South Asian countries as a whole is slightly lower than that in India, even if only by a slight margin. The GDP per person employed in China was lower than that in India in 1995, but it surpassed the Indian GDP per person employed in the subsequent years of 2015, 2018 and 2019. The gap between the world GDP per person employed and that of China also reduced in the latter three years (see trends shown in Figure 8.2).

Thus, China experienced higher economic development in comparison to India as reflected in the two indicators. These indicators reflect a lower rate of economic development in India as compared to that in China, which can be linked to the migration trends in these countries as discussed in the next section.

Table 8.5 shows the percentage of youth unemployment in the labour force in South Asian countries, including India, as well as China, South Asia as a



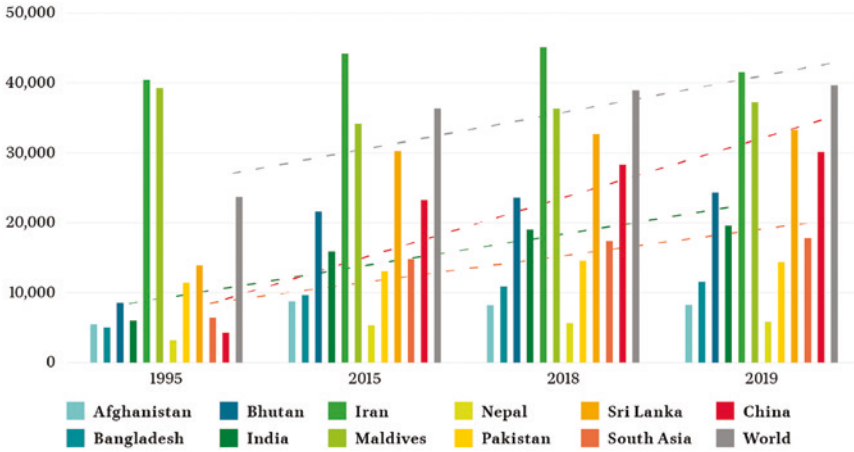


FIGURE 8.1 GDP per employed person in a selection of Asian countries (1995–2019, constant 2011 PPP USD)

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WORLD BANK (2020)

TABLE 8.5 Youth unemployment among 15–24-year-olds in a selection of Asian countries (1995–2019, % of labour force)—International Labour Organization (ILO) modelled estimate

Country name	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018	2019
Afghanistan	6	5	5	4	3	3	3
Bangladesh	6	10	9	6	11	12	12
Bhutan	5	6	9	9	10	10	10
China	6	7	10	10	11	11	11
India	7	8	9	9	11	10	11
Iran	20	23	24	28	26	28	29
Maldives	2	4	6	9	15	17	18
Nepal	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Pakistan	1	1	1	1	7	6	6
Sri Lanka	35	24	27	19	21	23	23
South Asia	7	7	8	8	10	10	10
World	11	12	13	12	13	13	13

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING WORLD BANK (2020)

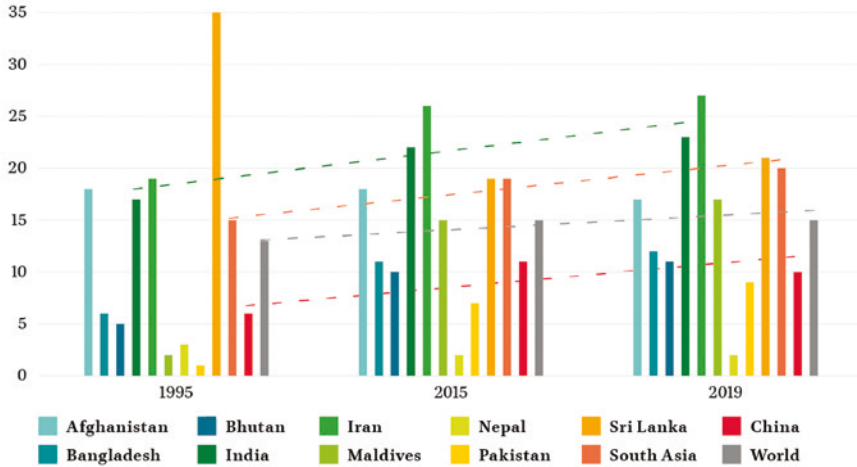


FIGURE 8.2 Youth unemployment in a selection of Asian countries (1995–2019, % of total labour force aged 15–24)—modelled ILO estimate  
SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WORLD BANK (2020)

whole and the world at five-yearly intervals from 1995 to 2015 and then for 2018 and 2019. There is an increasing trend of youth unemployment at the world level, reflecting recessionary pressures in times of economic slowdown as it fluctuated between 11 per cent in 1995 and 13 per cent in 2019. The percentage share of youth unemployment in China increased from 6 per cent in 1995 to 11 per cent in 2019. Over the same years, the share of youth unemployment in India increased from 7 per cent to 11 per cent.

Figure 8.2 drawn for just three years—1995, 2015 and 2019—from amongst those in Table 8.5, shows that in other South Asian countries a similar trend was observed with an unemployment rate of 7 per cent in 1995 rising to 10 per cent by 2019. The latter double-digit figures of youth unemployment reflect recessionary pressures arising from economic slowdown, particularly after 2008. Before any effective recovery measures could come into force to uplift employment, there were a number of uncertainties that continued to destabilise the employment scenario, such as the Syrian refugee problem since 2015 followed by the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in December 2019. Whereas the GCM signed in 2018 was an effort to make migration safe, orderly and regular through better governance, what followed in India was widespread public unrest triggered by the inaccurate results of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in 2018–19, on the one hand, and the confusion around the effects of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019–20 on the other. This could be seen as part of a global trend for selectivity in immigration as reflected, for

example, in China's preference to welcome the talented and the highly skilled in its recent immigration policy.

## 6 Migration, Economic Development and Health in the Context of COVID-19

In times of ongoing global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic slowdown at the global level, the most populous countries, such as India and China, are also affected adversely with declining growth rates of GDP, which eventually affect the growth rates of the GDP per capita, and more importantly GDP per employed worker (as explained in the previous section). Figures 8.3 and 8.4 both show lower economic growth rates of GDP and GDP per capita respectively in 2020, i.e., the year of the pandemic and consequent recession. However, the same figures show an expected recovery being forecasted for 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the current account balance (CAB) adversely, reflected in the negative shares of CAB in GDP in all the South Asian countries except Afghanistan in both 2020 and 2021 (Figure 8.5). However, it has been projected that the share of CAB in GDP would be positive in both years in the case of China.

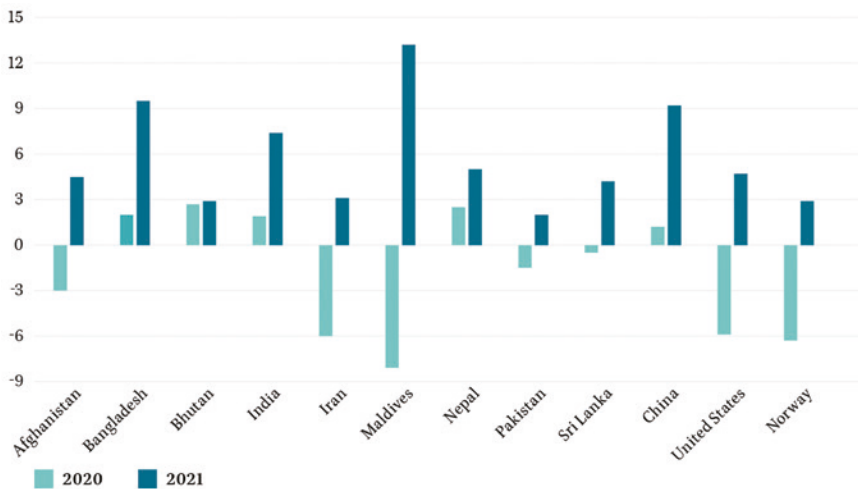


FIGURE 8.3 Country-wise growth rates of gross domestic product at constant prices in 2020 and 2021 (estimates in April 2020)

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM IMF (2020)

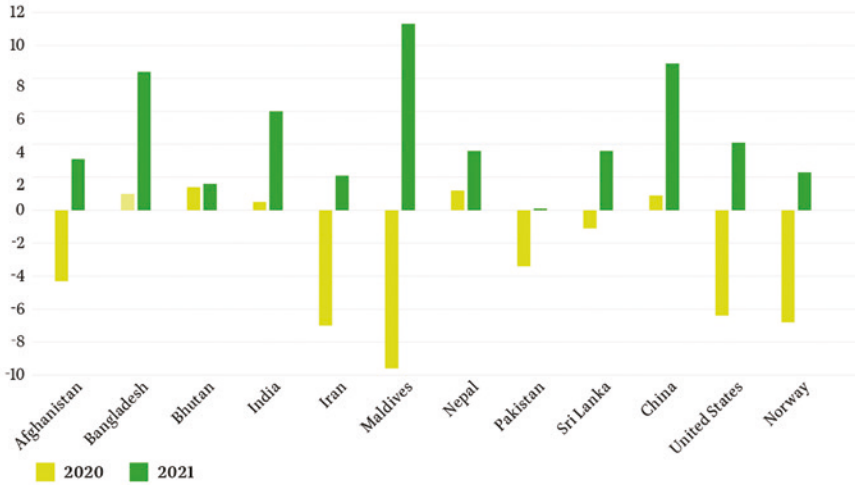


FIGURE 8.4 Country-wise growth rates of gross domestic product per capita, constant prices in 2020 and 2021 (estimates in April 2020)  
 SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM IMF (2020)

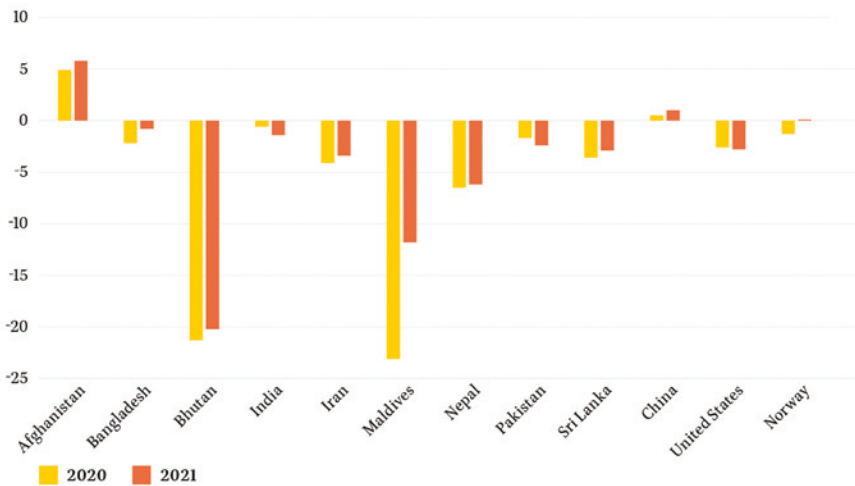


FIGURE 8.5 Country-wise current account balance (CAB) as percentage of GDP in 2020 and 2021  
 SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM IMF (2020)

These indicators of economic growth and development are dynamically linked with migration flows and health indicators across different countries. As India and China are main sending countries of migrants to the US, in the global North, the GDP per worker and the growth rate of GDP per capita are

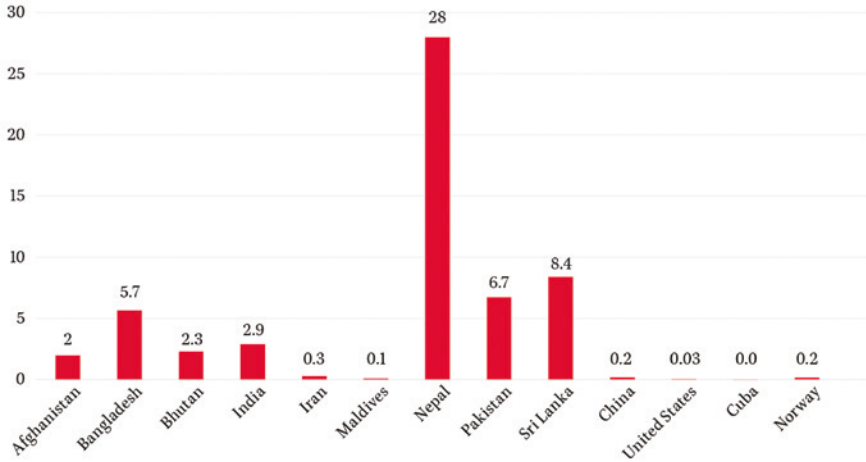


FIGURE 8.6A Remittance inflows (% of GDP), 2018  
SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM UNDP (2020)

important determinants of migration from the sending to the destination countries. Skilled migrants and students are the main categories of migrants from India and China to the US. The low growth rate of GDP per capita and the trends of GDP per employed person in India, other South Asian countries and China, as mentioned earlier, are reflective of the development gaps highlighted in dependency theory and world-systems theory vis-à-vis the US (Li, Bedford and Khadria, 2019).

The higher shares of South Asian migrants in other countries had a positive impact on the inflow of remittances measured using the receiving country's GDP. For example, in 2018, these shares ranged between a high of 28 per cent and low of 2 per cent as follows: Nepal (28 per cent), Sri Lanka (8.4 per cent), Pakistan (6.7 per cent), Bangladesh (5.7 per cent), India (2.9 per cent), Bhutan (2.3 per cent) and Afghanistan (2.0 per cent). The other South Asian countries and China had lower shares of remittances in their GDPs (Figure 8.6a).

The COVID-19 pandemic and global recession have adversely affected the inflows of migrant remittances in India and China. Figure 8.6b shows the level of remittances in India declining from USD 83.3 billion in 2019 to USD 76 billion in 2020 and in China from USD 68.4 billion in 2019 to USD 59.5 billion in 2020. These declines are expected to continue to have detrimental effects on development in the global South countries in the COVID-19 period.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the recessionary trend, leading to deep and widespread adverse effects on world economies. It dampened economic growth and development by causing large-scale loss of precious human

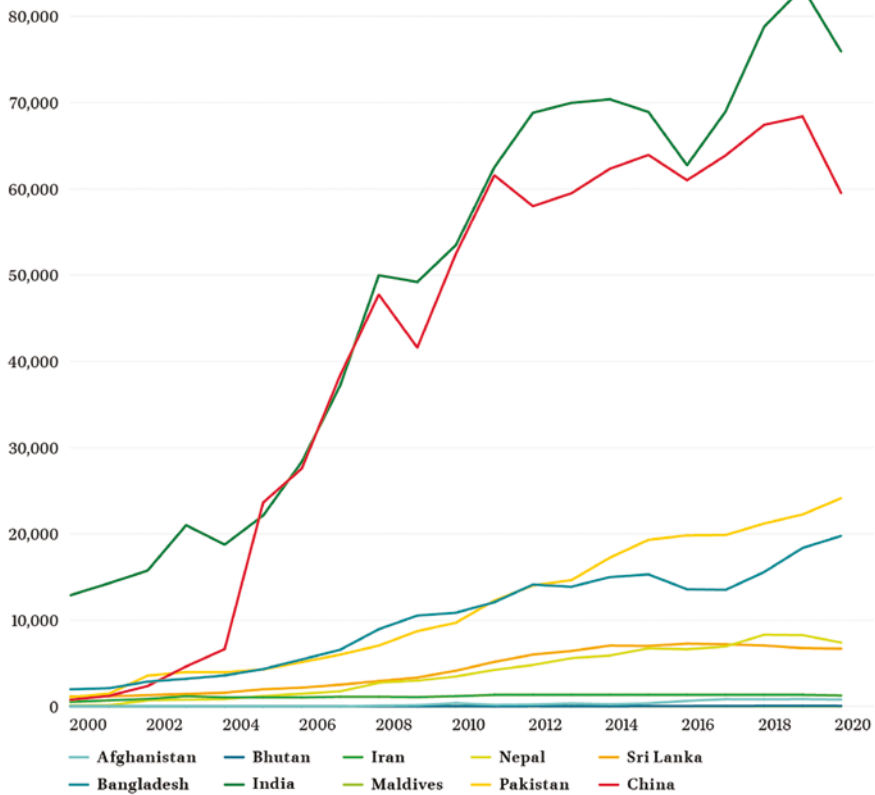


FIGURE 8.6B Migrant remittance inflows (USD millions) in India, South Asian countries and China, 2000–20  
 SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WORLD BANK (2020)

capital, preventing the stabilisation of migration and remittances. Neither India nor the US, among the foremost sources and destinations of migration respectively, could flatten the curve on their COVID-19 cases between March and August 2020 (see Figures 8.7 and 8.8); instead, both experienced exponential growth of infections during this time. Indeed, except for Cuba, a small communist island country, and Norway, a democratic Nordic country with the highest HDI ranking, no country in the global North or global South, with or without a highly developed healthcare system, was successful in flattening the curve of COVID-19 fatalities until August 2020. While smaller countries in South Asia like Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal reported lower numbers of cases and rates of deaths, other larger South Asian countries like Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced significant losses.

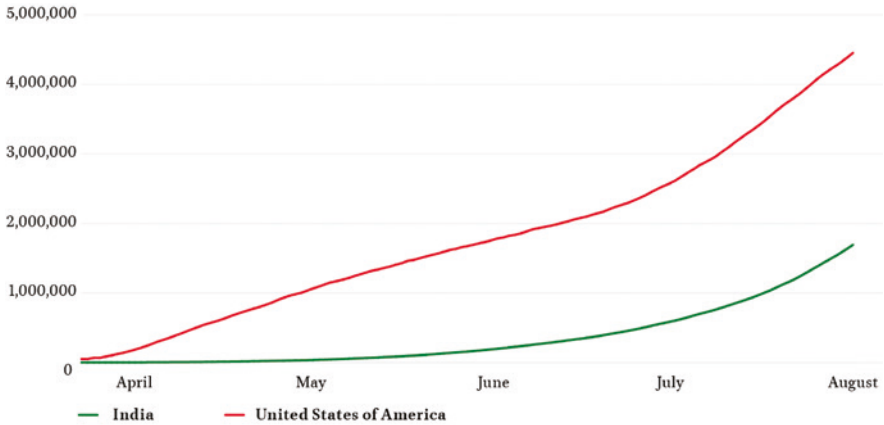


FIGURE 8.7 Cumulative cases of COVID-19 from 24 March 2020 to 1 August 2020 in India and the United States of America

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WHO (2020)

While the impact of COVID-19 was thus significant across countries with diverse states of development and widely varying healthcare systems, we still expected that a high-quality healthcare system as a driver of high human development indicators would turn out to be instrumental in containing the pandemic. Thus, we strongly believe that government expenditure would continue to be a significant factor to ensure good health as well as the other indicators of human development in future as they have been in the past.

The three important health indicators related to a country's ability to contain the pandemic are the lost health expectancy (in %), the number of physicians per 10,000 people and the number of hospital beds per 10,000 people. In the case of India, the three indicators are 14, 8 and 7 and for China 12, 18 and 42 respectively, reflecting poor health infrastructure in terms of numbers of doctors and hospital beds in India in comparison to China. In contrast to Norway and Cuba, ranked first and seventieth in the HDI respectively and having highly developed healthcare indicators of 15, 46 and 39 for Norway and 12, 82 and 52 for Cuba, these health indicators in South Asian countries are 14, 8 and 8, respectively (see Figure 8.9).

The poor health infrastructure indicators are also dynamically related to the health and education priorities of governments in comparison to their military expenditure. Figure 8.10 shows that expenditure on education and health as a percentage of military expenditure is lower for India at 3.1 per cent in comparison with that of the world at 6.7 per cent. The share in South Asian countries is only 3 per cent, reflecting their poor health expenditure.

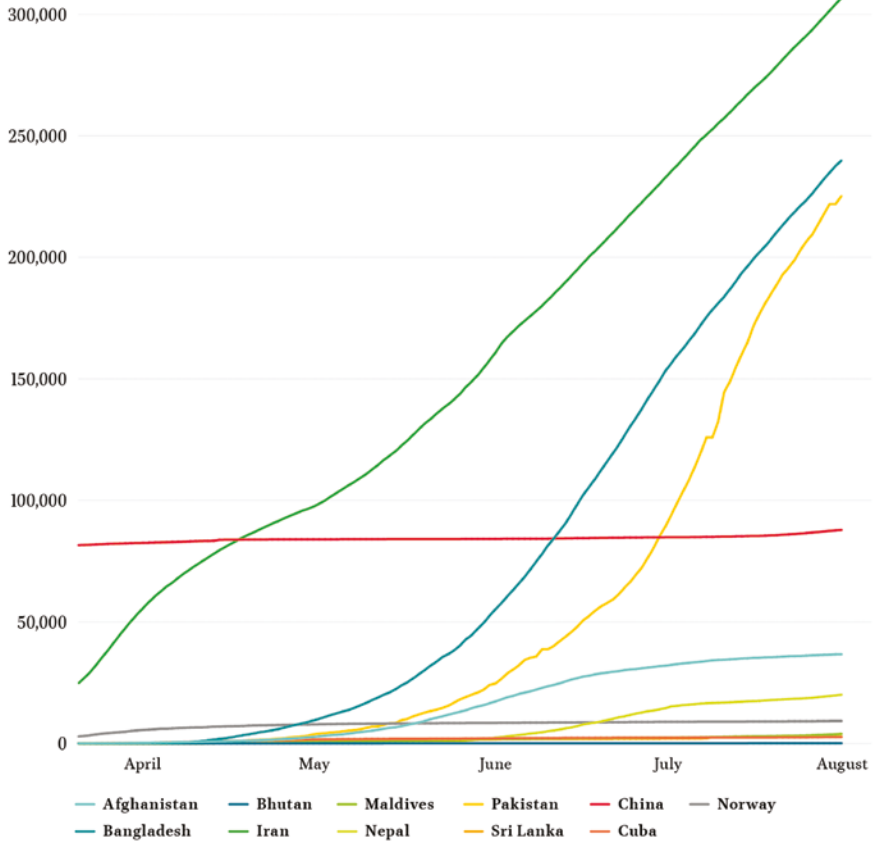


FIGURE 8.8 Cumulative cases of COVID-19 from 24 March 2020 to 1 August 2020 in South Asian countries (except India), China, Cuba and Norway  
 SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WHO (2020)

Because they are simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination, these countries can also be referred to as overlapping ‘hubs’ and ‘hinterlands’ of migration (Khadria, 2011 and 2020). This means that a country at various points in time or in its development trajectory may be exclusively a country of origin or a destination, but at a later time may take on the characteristics of a country of transit, destination and/or origin all at the same time. India and three other South Asian countries, specifically Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, are characterised by large-scale migration of highly skilled individuals to developed countries and of low- to medium-skilled individuals to the Middle East, Southeast Asia and East Asia. Nepal also sends large numbers of low- to medium-skilled individuals to India and the rest of the world. Afghanistan and Pakistan have cross-border refugee migration from the former to the latter



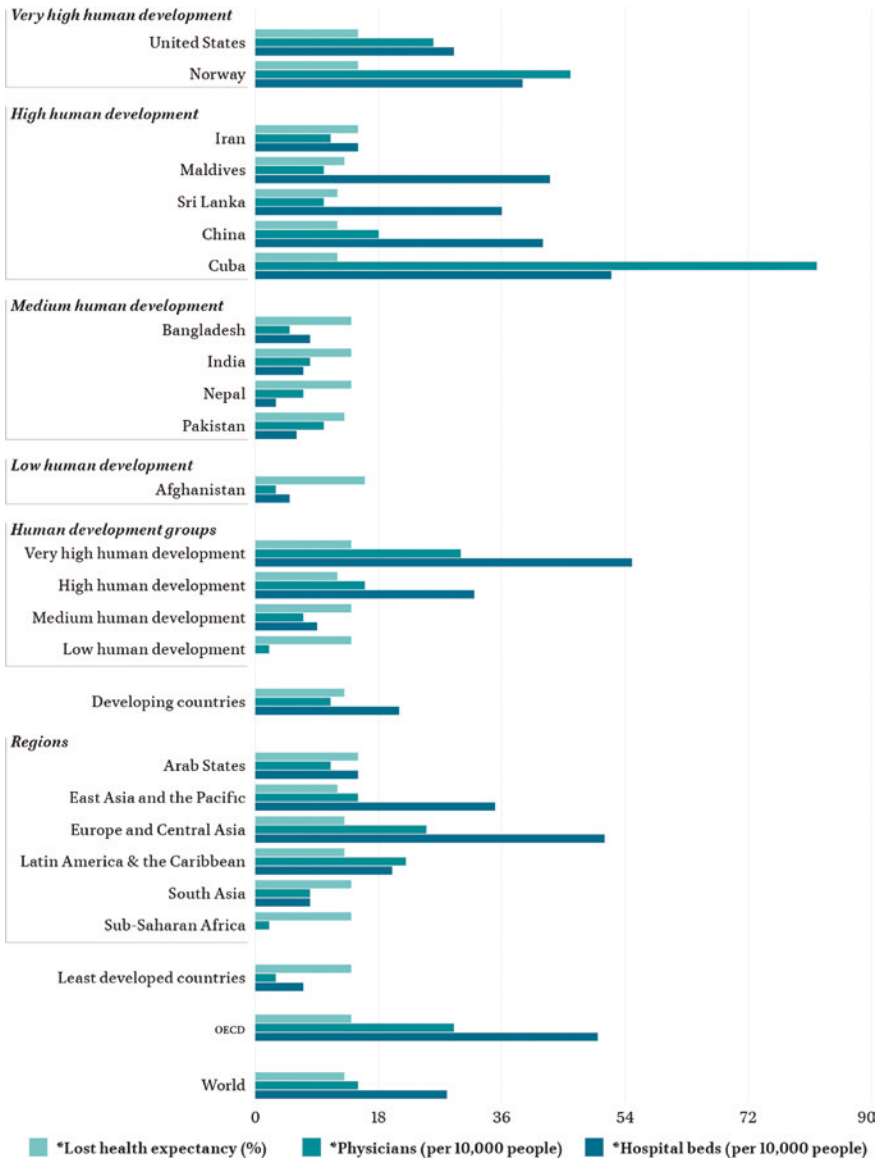


FIGURE 8.9 Quality of health indicators in India, China, other countries and the world (various years)

Note: Data not available for Maldives, China, Bhutan, High human development, East Asia and the Pacific

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM UNDP (2020)



FIGURE 8.10 Expenditure on education and health as a percentage of military expenditure (various years)  
 SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM UNDP (2020)

where safety of the migrants has been an issue. There is ‘dis-orderly’ migration from Nepal to India and from Bhutan to Nepal and vice-versa, whereas there has been substantial ‘irregular’ migration from Bangladesh to India. Meanwhile, Bhutan and Maldives are more preoccupied with the alternatives of a happiness index and environment index respectively, and are less bothered about international migration.

The number of immigrants in South Asia declined from 19.54 million in 1990 to 15.28 million in 2000. It declined further to 14.05 million in 2015 and remained at a lower level, 14.08 million in 2019 (see Table 8.6). India, the most populous country in South Asia, also experienced a sharp decline from 7.59 million in 1990 to 6.41 million in 2000 to 5.24 million in 2015, and it declined further

TABLE 8.6 Immigrants in South Asian countries, India, China and the world, 1990–2019 (in millions)

Major area, region, country or area of destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
World	153.01	161.32	173.59	191.62	220.78	248.86	271.64
South Asia	19.54	15.34	15.28	13.72	14.31	14.05	14.08
Afghanistan	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.49	0.15
Bangladesh	0.88	0.93	0.99	1.17	1.35	1.42	2.19
Bhutan	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05
India	7.59	6.95	6.41	5.92	5.44	5.24	5.15
Iran	4.29	2.94	2.80	2.57	2.76	2.73	2.68
Maldives	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.07
Nepal	0.43	0.69	0.72	0.68	0.58	0.51	0.49
Pakistan	6.21	3.67	4.18	3.17	3.94	3.51	3.26
Sri Lanka	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
China	0.38	0.44	0.51	0.68	0.85	0.98	1.03

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING UN (2020)

to 5.15 million in 2019. However, China has experienced an increase in immigrants from 0.38 million in 1990 to 0.51 million in 2000 to 0.98 million in 2015 to 1.03 million in 2019 crossing the million mark, reflecting higher economic progress of China in the last 30 years.

The share of India's stocks of immigrants in the world shows a declining trend in the three decades, during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries—from 4.96 per cent in 1990 to 3.69 per cent in 2000, to 2.46 per cent in 2010, to 2.11 per cent in 2015 and 1.90 per cent in 2019. This determined the declining trend of South Asia's share in world immigrants from 12.77 per cent in 1990, to 8.80 per cent in 2000, to 6.48 per cent in 2010, to 5.65 per cent in 2015 and 5.18 per cent in 2019. China's share of world immigrants has remained lower at 0.25 per cent in 1990, increasing slightly to 0.38 per cent in 2019 (see Figure 8.11).

The total number of emigrants from South Asian countries was 24.53 million in 1990, which slightly declined to 24.29 million in 2000, then sharply increased to 33.95 million in 2010. Furthermore, it increased to 38.86 million in 2015 and 42.19 million in 2019, showing an increasing trend of emigration from

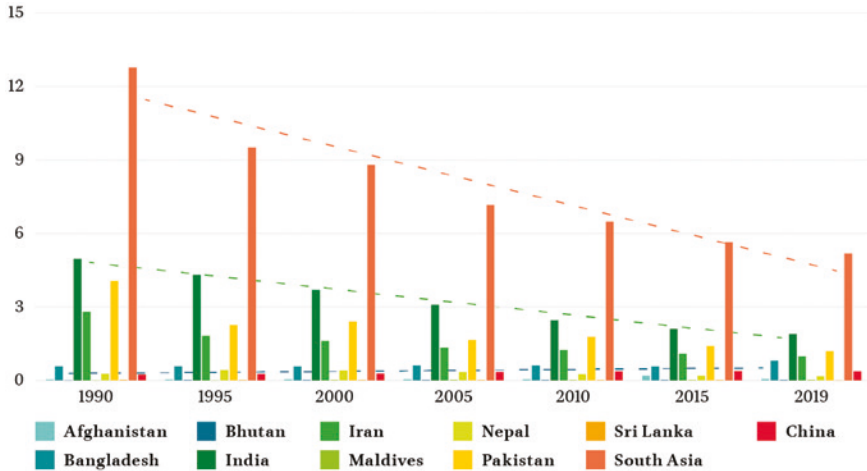


FIGURE 8.11 Percentage of world immigrants in South Asia and China, 1990–2019

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM UN (2020)

South Asian countries during the last 20 years (see Table 8.7 and Figure 8.12). The first and second decades of the twenty-first century witnessed sharply increasing trends of emigration. The number of emigrants has been increasing since 1990 because the economic policy of 1991, implemented to liberalise, globalise and privatise the Indian economy, caused an increase in the global mobility of Indians. The number of emigrants from India was 6.62 million in 1990, which increased to 7.93 million in 2000, increased further to 13.23 million in 2010 and 15.93 million in 2015 and finally increased to 17.51 million in 2019.

The dominance of Indian emigrants in world migration can also be analysed with the help of Figure 8.12. The percentage share of Indian emigrants in world migration increased from 4.33 per cent in 1990 to 4.57 per cent in 2000 and then from 5.99 per cent in 2010 to 6.40 per cent in 2015, reaching 6.45 per cent in 2019, reflecting a slowdown in the rate of increase in 2019. However, the share of South Asian emigrants in world migration declined in the last decade of the twentieth century from 16.03 per cent in 1990 to 13.99 per cent in 2000 but increased thereafter to 15.38 per cent in 2010 to 15.62 per cent in 2015 and remained at 15.53 per cent in 2019, which was still lower than in 1990. The share of Chinese emigrants in world migration has followed the same trend as India's, increasing from 2.76 per cent in 1990 to 3.39 per cent in 2000, then 3.95 per cent in 2010 to 4.08 per cent in 2015, showing a slight decline thereafter in 2019.

Thus, the South Asian countries experienced increasing trends in the aggregate stocks of emigrants, dominated by Indian emigrants in comparison

TABLE 8.7 Emigrants from South Asian countries, China and the world, 1990–2019 (in millions)

Year	World	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	China	India	Iran	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	South Asian countries
1990	153.01	6.82	5.45	0.03	4.23	6.62	0.63	0.0022	0.75	3.34	0.89	24.53
1995	161.32	3.72	5.43	0.12	5.03	7.16	0.75	0.0017	0.86	3.35	0.93	22.32
2000	173.59	4.61	5.44	0.12	5.89	7.93	0.83	0.0012	0.98	3.40	0.98	24.29
2005	191.62	3.90	5.79	0.12	7.33	9.60	0.89	0.0018	1.14	3.90	1.14	26.48
2010	220.78	5.06	6.75	0.09	8.73	13.23	0.99	0.0027	1.43	4.99	1.41	33.95
2015	248.86	4.98	7.31	0.05	10.16	15.93	1.17	0.0029	2.01	5.91	1.50	38.86
2019	271.64	5.12	7.84	0.05	10.73	17.51	1.30	0.0031	2.29	6.30	1.78	42.19

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING UN (2020)

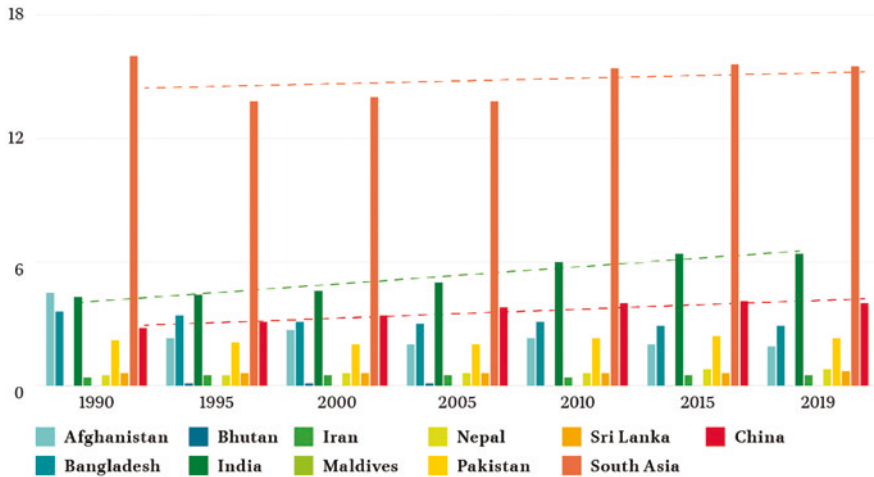


FIGURE 8.12 Percentage of world emigrants from South Asia and China, 1990–2019

SOURCE: AUTHORS, USING DATA FROM WORLD BANK (2020)

to other South Asian countries in the three decades of globalisation. China also experienced an increasing trend of stocks of emigrants in the same decades, although the rate of growth has been higher for India. The dominance of Indian emigrants has been the result of pull factors such as English language knowledge and push factors such as adverse exchange rates, lower employment opportunities, lower real wages and other working and living conditions. Since 1995 and until 2019, even among major countries of origin throughout Asia, India thus continued to be the largest contributor of emigrants in the world, with its share being far higher than the shares of other major countries of origin like China and Bangladesh. The UN data, however, do not provide the overall number of emigrants originating from Asia as a whole, which keeps the intercontinental comparison immigration-focused and therefore one-sided (Khadria and Mishra, 2021, 16).

## 7 Concluding Remarks and Policy Implications

This article dwells on the GCM objectives as the benchmark for South Asian countries' desirable SDG targets on migration, health and development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first among the 23 objectives of the GCM is for signatory member countries to 'collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies' (UN Task Force on Data Integration for Disaggregated Statistics on International Migration, 2020). The

greater the quality and quantity of data available, the more accurately the realities of migration and migrants they report on are reflected, which ultimately determines the quality of migration policy for each country at unilateral, bilateral and multilateral levels, and eventually their ability to achieve the objectives of the GCM. For example, the data used for this article on South Asian countries have been drawn from the United Nations and the World Bank, reflecting a whole host of dimensions of immigration and emigration, specifically the numbers of international migrant stocks by country, region, gender, age, population, etc. But there is a need to expand these data sets to more accurately capture other up-to-date dimensions of migrants and migration, such as education, skills and employment, countries of transit, country of earlier stay, year of entry in the destination country, data on family and their stay, wages, social security, health indicators, savings and investment by migrants, amounts and costs of remittances, and data on employers of migrants, etc. Such requirements of better data on education and employment are also highlighted in GCM objectives 3, 6 and 18.

The second objective of the GCM is to 'minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin'. Although all nine South Asian countries are in the category of developing economies belonging to the global South, and all have higher rates of emigration than of immigration, leading to a negative net migration rate over the 27 years between 1990 and 2018, they are diverse in their levels of economic growth and development and their consequences. For example, even with higher economic growth in India, the level of inequalities of income and wealth in the country has increased, leading to underdevelopment of large sections of society. These structures of inequalities and underdevelopment are dynamically and significantly driving the outflow levels of migrants, comprising both high-skilled and low-skilled workers, as elaborated in the case of India's emigration. Other than economic factors, there are also social and political factors that drive such out-migration, like caste-, gender- and religion-based discriminations in India and other neighbouring countries (Thakur and Khadria, 2018; Akhil, 2019; Rejimon, 2018). There is, therefore, a need for the countries to work at all levels to minimise the economic, social and political differences and to ensure peace and harmony among South Asian countries in order to attain sustainable development and reduce the compulsions of migration.

Objectives 3 to 14 of the GCM are primarily meant for the safety of migrants in the destination countries. The measures suggested in these objectives are more relevant to migration of low-skilled and unskilled workers from the nine South Asian developing countries, like domestic workers, nurses, construction workers, taxi drivers, electricians, plumbers and carpenters, for example,

in Middle East countries rather than the highly skilled workers who are less vulnerable to the discrimination and risks in the destination countries due to their occupations and higher level of education. Toward this, India's attempt to legalise the registration of employers of migrants overseas especially in the Middle East through the 'eMigrate portal' is a case in point (Akhil, 2019). The hurdle to its success has been the lower response from employers based overseas who consider it as an interference of foreign governments.

GCM objective 13 provides a ray of hope to facilitate safety and security for irregular migrants prior to resorting to their detention. This applies to the irregular immigrants from Bangladesh and Rohingya refugees from Myanmar entering India since 2015 and living in fear of detection and deportation (HT, 2019). Objectives 15 to 17 are meant to reduce the chances of scapegoating migrants in destination countries by enhancing their inclusivity. Objectives 18 to 23 are aimed at increasing the link between migration and development through partnerships.

Based on the study of economic development and health indicators and migration status in South Asian countries and China in the context of the GCM and the current pandemic situation, three prominent and significant issues have emerged. First, there are some gaps in the UN migration data. Therefore, there is a need to address these gaps to facilitate a qualitative study of migration stocks and flows that can clearly guide the migration policies for sustainable development. Secondly, compared to other South Asian countries and China, India's stand on the GCM's overall philosophy of reducing inequalities of wealth and income in tandem with the SDGs reflects an inconsistency in its position between emigration and immigration. India's stand on immigrants ranges from being indifferent to being negative, whereas for emigrants it ranges from being concerned to being proactively positive. This creates a lack of clarity on India's position with respect to the GCM objective of making migration 'safe, orderly and regular'. The former approach promotes risks and fear among immigrants in India in contrast to the latter approach building hope and confidence among Indian emigrants in destination countries. This dichotomy acts against arriving at a triple-win situation for migrants, the receiving country and the destination country for sustainable development of all stakeholders. There is thus a need for change in the outlook and understanding on the part of India to create a win-win condition for itself as a country of destination as well as a country of origin. Simultaneously, there is a need for collective understanding on the part of the leading South Asian nation-states like India to have a wider horizon for reinforcing the positive link between migration and development by removing the above kind of inconsistencies from their migration policies. Such a collective understanding would facilitate a win-win-win condition



for the three prime stakeholders, namely countries of origin, the destination countries and the migrants that supposedly are at the centre of the GCM objectives. Thirdly, collaboration, partnership and working together, trust-building between countries of origin, countries of destination, and transit states would be essential for achieving the GCM objectives. This can be achieved by pursuing the innovation of 'Equitable Adversary Analysis' (EAA) suggested by Khadria (2017a). According to this, the adversaries ought to exchange places, stepping into each other's shoes so that they can see things from other countries' perspectives, and then try to solve the problem. This would also facilitate so-called mini-multilateralism for the successful implementation of the GCM, to use the term used by the former UN Special Adviser for International Migration Peter Sutherland. In addition, this would bring similar countries of the global South together through their respective 'objective functions' of the GCM, incorporating their 'wish list', their 'strategies to reinvent the wheel' and their 'innovative ideas', as per the statements of Khadria, as the thematic expert, given in the 'Second Informal Thematic Session' (Khadria, 2017b).

There has been a declining trend in the stock of immigrants and an increasing trend in the stock of emigrants in India between 1990 and 2019 and increasing trends in the stocks of both in China. China has undertaken a positive stance for immigration in its national immigration policy toward the GCM whereas India has undertaken a stringent stance on immigration in its statement on the GCM. These trends have policy implications for suitably adapting the recommendations of the GCM for sustainable migration and development in times of recessionary uncertainties and emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are two primary lessons drawn in this article: (I) there is a need for expansionary fiscal policy to revive GDP growth which has been forecasted by the IMF to be negative for India and other South Asian countries and lower for China in the post-COVID-19 period. The same is required to protect livelihoods and employment, which were adversely affected due to the crash of demand and supply caused by the nationwide lockdowns initiated by various governments; and (II) there is an urgent need to universalise the public healthcare system, keeping in view that quality health indicators are instrumental in containing the recurrence of a COVID-19-type pandemic in the future even if the development of vaccines seems to have helped us tide over the present crisis.

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# Philippine Nurse Migration: Assessing Vulnerabilities and Accessing Opportunities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

This chapter studies Filipino nurses' skilled migration, factoring in their lived experiences during the onslaught of the COVID-19 crisis. Anchored in the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the chapter contributes to the existing literature and policy discussion on nurse mobility in healthcare during a global crisis and on the nexus between migration and development. A key aim is to underscore the particular vulnerabilities of nurses as frontliners in both their host and home countries. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a Policy Comment that takes into consideration the question of 'brain drain' while also attempting to address the challenges the country faces as it seeks to promote better conditions for its highly skilled medical workforce and creating a more nuanced understanding of a nurse's role in public and global health during a pandemic. The qualitative study described in this chapter uses semi-structured, open-ended interviews with Filipino nurses working in different parts of the world to elicit exploratory perspectives and understand respondents' views on nurse migration and policy.

## 1 Introduction

This chapter calls for greater attention to be paid to the mobility of nurses in order to assess both source and host countries' abilities to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during a pandemic. Here, I look at complementary targets: SDG 3 on global health and SDG target 10.7 on 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people' (UN DESA, 2020, para 1). I examine the extent to which healthcare practitioners receive adequate access to healthcare, given the risks experienced by Filipino nurses during the onslaught of COVID-19 as local frontliners and as migrant workers at the heart of the global pandemic. This Policy Comment also delves

into issues that nurses encounter related to factors such as mental health, questions of diversity and inclusion, and gender. It recognises the 'brain drain' phenomenon (Beine, Docquier and Rapopor, 2008) and 'high-skill migration' (Hart, 2006) in the Philippines and its population of nurses.

The chapter starts by providing a background on nursing as a global profession and the mobility of Filipino nurses. Integrated into the Comment are interviews with Filipino nurses working in different parts of the world; these were conducted from January to August 2020, online and using questionnaires. The chapter also captures responses from nurses on the frontlines of the pandemic, before concluding with policy recommendations.

## 2 Background

On 1 August 2020, over 80,000 doctors and a million nurses from 80 groups sent a collective note to Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte lamenting that the country was on the brink of defeat in its battle against COVID-19 (Morales, 2020) and underscoring that it was critical to formulate a cohesive and clear action plan (Hallare, 2020). The note called for the national government to return Metro Manila, which had the most infections, to the stricter enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) regime for two weeks. Medical frontliners cautioned that the healthcare system could, without tighter controls, collapse under the continuously escalating number of infections. Following warnings from health workers, the president approved the extension of the quarantine regime (Parrocha, 2020). Effectively, the order to stay at home was back for the Philippine population. During that very month, the number of health workers testing positive for the coronavirus reached 5,008 (Tomacruz, 2020), with most contaminations found among doctors and nurses.

According to McLaughlin (2020), the coronavirus pandemic has revealed the fragility and inequity present in systems and societies around the globe, including in the healthcare sector. In the war against the coronavirus, health workers are the frontline soldiers. Arguably, the risk to health workers has been one of the significant vulnerabilities of the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those working in hospitals are handling a massive rush of patients while also usually dealing with a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the worry of acquiring the virus, coupled with an increased workload and less time for rest (ILO, 2020).

Nursing has been identified as an 'indispensable profession, discipline and occupation' (Thuon Northrup et al., 2004, 55). In developed countries the

recruitment of foreign nurses is seen as an appropriate way of catering to the needs of growing, resource-intensive healthcare services coupled with ageing populations (Buchan, 2006). Because of this outward movement of nurses, however, source nations may struggle to meet their own need for health workers (Mackey and Liang, 2012).

The World Health Organization's (WHO) *State of the World's Nursing—2020* reveals that unless appropriate interventions take place there will be a shortfall of 4.6 million nurses worldwide by 2030 (WHO, 2020b). Over the years, the number of healthcare practitioners in the Philippines has increased. Abrigo and Ortiz (2019) capture this robust growth in their study on healthcare professionals employed in the Philippines, comparing data from 1990, 2010 and 2015 based on the 2012 Philippine Standard Occupational Classification (PSOC) and from the Census of Population (see Table 9.1).

The 2015 Census of Population, meanwhile, revealed that the Philippines had 488,800 health professionals for a population of over 100 million (2015 census cited in UPPI and DRDF, 2020), while the 2018 National Migration Survey estimated that under 1 per cent of working Filipinos in the Philippines are employed as health professionals (PSA and UPPI, 2019). Within this small demographic, the majority (59 per cent) are nurses, 12 per cent are medical doctors, and 11 per cent are midwives (PSA and UPPI, 2019). If the country fails to invest more in retaining its nursing population, it is looking at a deficiency of 249,843 nurses by 2030 (WHO, 2020b). The Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) has stated that 60 per cent of the 500,000 Filipino registered nurses work in other countries (PNA cited in Malig, 2020). Further, in 2014, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), 19,815 nurses emigrated from the country (POEA, 2014).

TABLE 9.1 Number of selected healthcare workers by year who responded that they were employed in the professions in question (numbers in thousands)

Profession	1990	2010	2015
Physicians	27.3	32.3	52.0
Dentists	15.1	23.6	23.9
Professional nurses	54.8	253.5	351.1
Pharmacists	8.6	17.1	27.5

SOURCE: ABRIGO AND ORTIZ (2019)

### 3 Filipino Nurses, Global Nursing, and Healthcare

Filipino nurses are important frontliners in the Philippines and abroad. At the onslaught of the deadly pandemic, the Philippines tried to curb the rise in infections within its borders while also dealing with reports of infections, even casualties, from overseas. Inside the country, the opportunity to react effectively to those in need of medical treatment and support was hampered as a consequence of insufficient numbers of health professionals, while there was also an increasing demand for facilities.

The Philippine experience is unique because the country is engaged in a balancing act, simultaneously attempting to manage the healthcare personnel shortfall within its borders while meeting the healthcare needs of the global community. The manner in which the Philippines navigates demands for models that respond to new pandemics and the ecology of global health is worth investigating, especially as it relates to attempts to achieve the SDGs.

#### 3.1 *Nursing and the Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which gives ‘a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, in the present time and for the future’ (UNOSD, 2015). Nursing has an essential function with regard to Sustainable Development Goal 3: to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (UNOSD, 2015).

The active mobility of nurses, meanwhile correlates with the SDGs’ aims with regard to migration, and in particular Target 10.7, to ‘facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including implementing planned and well-managed migration policies’ (UN DESA, 2020, 1), which is part of SDG 10, ‘to reduce inequality within and among countries’ (UNOSD, 2015). The intersection of nurse migration with sustainable development and human rights, such as the right to movement, is supported by targets set by the international community.

#### 3.2 *The State of Global Nursing*

The revival of interest in nurses’ international migration is a consequence primarily of the global shortage of nurses in recent years (Buchan and Calman, 2004). According to the WHO report on the *State of the World’s Nursing—2020*, the result of the collaborative effort of 191 countries, nursing is the largest category in the health sector, with nurses accounting for 59 per cent of all health workers. In the period 2013–18, nurse numbers grew by 4.7 million worldwide (WHO, 2020b). Given nurse-to-population ratios, however, this increase is



marginal and barely matches the pace of population increase, resulting in just a small increase in these ratios.

The global nursing workforce currently stands at 27.9 million, with 19.3 million of these considered professional nurses (WHO, 2020b). Around 6.0 million (22 per cent) are associate professional nurses, and 2.6 million (9 per cent) do not fall into either of these two categories (WHO, 2020b).

These figures reveal that worldwide nursing numbers are not proportionate to the demands of universal healthcare or to the targets regarding inequality reduction set out in the SDGs. The shortfall in the number of nurses worldwide fell slightly from around 6.6 million in 2016 to 5.9 million in 2018 (WHO, 2020b). Around 5.3 million of that shortfall, however, involves low-income and lower-middle-income countries (WHO, 2020b). Figure 9.1 shows the diversity of densities of nursing personnel to populations, revealing major shortages in countries in Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

In its report *Human Resources for Health: Overcoming the Crisis* (2004), the Joint Learning Initiative explains that providing a supportive climate and sharpening human resources for health is vital to efforts to shape 'sustainable health systems' globally and to combat healthcare disasters in the world's most vulnerable countries (Joint Learning Initiative, 2004). The *World Health Report 2006: Working Together for Health* (WHO, 2006) underscores this message and encourages efforts to understand what motivates the mobility of health professionals and the effect that this mobility has on society.

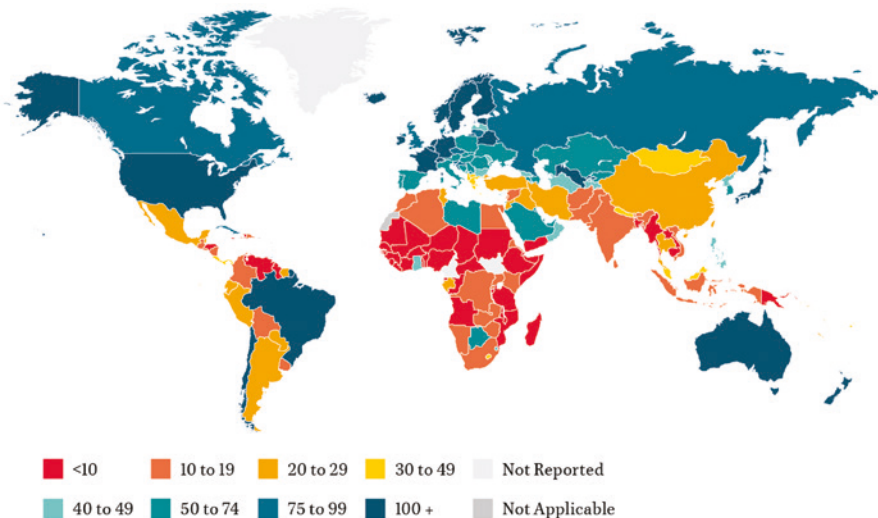


FIGURE 9.1 Density of nursing personnel per 10,000 population in 2018  
SOURCE: WHO (2019A), AS CITED IN WHO (2020B, XIII)

According to a study carried out by the Institute for Immigration Research of George Mason University (Hohn et al., 2016), 13 to 15 per cent of working nurses in the United States are foreign-born, which indicates how crucial immigrants are for the long-term performance of the healthcare market (Hohn et al., 2016). The same report predicts a shortfall of more than one million new and replacement nurses by 2022. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics, meanwhile, suggests that another 372,000 registered nurses will be needed by 2028 (Smiley, 2020).

The Philippines is the second most populous country in Southeast Asia. Despite this, many of the country's registered nurses remain either unemployed or 'mis-employed' (Dabu, 2019). In 2017, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that, with 90,308 practising nurses in private and public hospitals, the healthcare system fell short of the target nurse-to-patient ratio (see Table 9.2). In the Philippines, the target ratio in government institutions is 1:60, as revealed by the Philippine Nurses Association (Cortez, 2020). This is some way from the Department of Health's (DOH) ideal ratio of 1:12 (Cortez, 2020).

An irony of the Philippine health sector is that even with the numbers of health professionals the country trains each year, there are not enough staff to cater to the needs of the growing population (UPPI and DRDF, 2020). Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippines suffered from an estimated shortfall of 23,000 nurses according to the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines (PHAP, cited in Maru, 2020). The Philippine situation runs contrary to the WHO's Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel (hereafter, WHO Code), which frowns upon recruiting health personnel from countries that have a shortage (WHO, 2010). With its lack of nursing personnel, the Philippines is ill-placed to encourage the mobility of its healthcare human resources.

TABLE 9.2 Population of nurses in the Philippines

Year	Estimated population <sup>a</sup>	Total number of nurses <sup>b</sup>	Ratio of nurses <sup>c</sup>
2017	104,218,176	90,308	8.67
2016	102,587,042	87,482	8.53

a Based on PSA Population Counts and Growth Rates

b HRD (human resource development) in hospitals + field healthcare professionals

c Per 10,000 population

SOURCE: UP COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAM (2020)

### 3.3 *Filipino Nurses and Their Migration*

The presence of Filipino nurses in the United States, writes Dr Catherine Choy in her book *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (2003), can be mapped back to the point at which the Philippines became a US territory, when new professions such as nursing were introduced to the country in time making the Philippines 'the leading exporter of nurses in the world' (Choy, 2003). Nursing schools sprang up in the Philippines beginning in 1907 and were interlaced with an Americanised medical training that equipped Filipino women to be employed as nurses in the United States, not in the Philippines (Choy, 2003). Today the country is 'the leading exporter of nurses in the world' (Lorenzo et al., 2007, 1406).

From 2008 to 2012, close to 70,000 Filipino nurses worked abroad according to government data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (cited in McLaughlin, 2020). In 2017, some 145,800 Filipinos worked as registered nurses in the United States according to the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute (cited in Batalova, 2020). According to government data, around 18,500 Filipinos were employed in the UK National Health Service in 2020 (McLaughlin, 2020). Japan has been recruiting nurses from the Philippines to care for its elderly population. Filipino nurses are also present in great numbers in the Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia (McLaughlin, 2020). Spain, meanwhile, announced in early 2020 that it would fast-track Filipino nurses' entry to relieve its straining healthcare system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aboy, 2020).

Many nurses leave the Philippines unofficially. Many, moreover, are selected via direct recruitment by overseas employers, while others depart on immigrant visas. These three types of mobility are not reflected in the Philippines' international employment estimates. Hence, the nurse mobility estimates found in Philippine government must be treated with caution (Pang, Lansang and Haines, 2002). The POEA and the Commission on Higher Education estimate that from 2012 to 2016 the country trained an annual total of around 26,000 licensed nurses, while around 18,500 moved overseas each year (Lopez and Jiao, 2020), meaning that the emigration rate for trained nurses was 71 per cent.

The Philippines is a preferred source of nurses because of its exceptionally well-educated workforce, which is a result of the Philippine education system and the quality of training the population receive. The country's overseas population is an enormous source of remittances, which help the national economy greatly, and thus transnational mobility has enjoyed widespread support. Even at the height of the pandemic, Filipinos living abroad sent USD 2.9 billion

home (Focus Economics, 2021). Philippines nurses working in Philippine public hospitals and government offices, meanwhile, had to campaign for almost two decades before they secured a pay increase required by law (de Vera, 2020), the pandemic ensuring that the increase was, finally, approved. Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado released Budget Circular No. 2020-4 (Department of Budget and Management, 2020) in July 2020, thus officially bringing Section 32 of Republic Act No. 9173—also known as the Philippine Nursing Act—into effect. This gave nurses a monthly salary equivalent to the government's Salary Grade 15, of PHP 28,890 (USD 580) to PHP 33,423 (around USD 671) in state-run health institutions. As the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the Philippines, details of the working conditions and pay shortfalls of nurses were discovered and brought to the national attention.

With 233 nursing schools, and producing more than 20,000 graduates per year since 1999, the Philippines' strategy for healthcare migration is reflected in the country actively training a surplus of registered nurses that cannot be absorbed by the local market, with the intention of providing for the international market (Corcega et al., 2002). The number of nursing schools has increased over time, illustrating the country's approach of creating a workforce for export with the expectation that the results of this tactic will be instrumental to the country's progress (Ortiga, 2017).

As noted in a study commissioned by the International Council of Nurses, the local health system in the Philippines needs to support the growth of nursing as a profession and to address the dilemmas present with regard to work environments and pay (Buchan, 2020). A balance must be achieved between assisting in the provision of global healthcare expertise by the relocation of Filipino health workers and ensuring that no capacity gaps exist in the Philippines itself (Buchan, 2020).

Work in a much more advanced society offers many nurses the opportunity to change their lives for the better and to secure the quality of life they aspire to (Xu and Zhang, 2005). Which explains why many nurses consider moving and working overseas as one of their future goals. Over 80 per cent of interviewees of the present study admitted that migration was always a part of their plans (Figure 9.2).

In the Philippines as in other source countries, people study nursing with the intention of working abroad, an intention that is not only accepted but is also supported by their families and the government (Dussault, Buchan and Craveiro, 2016). This rationalisation seems to be supported by responses to the question, 'What was your reason for getting a nursing degree?'

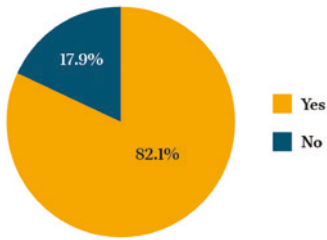


FIGURE 9.2  
 Respondents' answers to the question, 'Was migrating to another country a plan from the beginning?'  
 SOURCE: AUTHOR

One nurse respondent in the UK explained:

Ever since I was a kid, it was always my dream to become a nurse and work abroad. One of the things that motivated me to pursue a nursing degree is my passion for caring for the sick since when I was growing up I [...] [saw] my grandparents suffer from different illnesses. Second is the ongoing demand for nurses all over the world and lastly, the endless learning opportunities. Working as a nurse, we have the opportunity to interact with doctors and other medical staff as well as patients daily, which allow[s] us to learn from other people and allows us to improve our interpersonal skills.

Nurse 1, UK

Several respondents also mentioned that they were pressured by family members, especially their parents:

Nursing was never my choice. It was my mom's. I just did it for the sake of my parents. I never really liked or loved it at all, even after graduation. Until I was exposed to Emergency Nursing. My perception was changed then [and I] started loving it.

Nurse 2, UK

My mom and sisters are nurses so [there was ]a bandwagon effect

Nurse 3, UK

It was my aunt who was also a nurse who motivates me to become a nurse. Since I was a child, I really wanted to become one to help the sick

Nurse 4, US

[It was my] parent's choice

Nurse 1, the Philippines

### My mother told me to study nursing

Nurse 5, the Philippines

I come from a family of nurses and the nursing profession offers a more stable employment in Europe

Nurse 6, Switzerland

The International Centre on Nurse Migration has stated that there are several ‘push’ factors that encourage nurses to leave their home countries, including constrained access to educational and career opportunities, low pay, a lack of resources, limited social benefits, political instability and the absence of safe and secure conditions, that last of these including the incidence of HIV/AIDS (Li, Li and Nie, 2014). ‘Pull’ factors that attract nurses to developed countries include better working conditions, job security and advancement, avenues to improve skills, and travel opportunities. (Aiken et al., 2004). It can be argued that these push and pull factors are reflected in the Philippine migration experience, especially as it relates to nurse mobility.

There are more women than men in the diaspora, and this been referred to as the feminisation of migration (Camlin, Snow and Hosegood, 2014). Nurse mobility is no exception to this rule. Around the world 90 per cent of nurses are women (WHO, 2020b). In the Philippines 74.1 per cent of nurses are female and 25.9 per cent are male (2015 figures) (Figure 9.3) (PSA, 2016).

Women can play an active role in migration, particularly among healthcare workers. A majority of the world’s nurses are female (Brush and Sochalski, 2007). Women migrants are, however, particularly vulnerable to the ‘dark side’ of migration. While they may have decided on their own mobility pathways, as reported by the WHO (2019b), a considerable number in the healthcare workforce encounter partiality and discrimination as well as harassment (WHO, 2019b). Migration is highly gendered and understanding female nurse mobility therefore calls for a gender-responsive approach.

### 3.4 *Filipino Nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Through the POEA, the government—in its bid to protect healthcare workers—issued Resolution No. 9 on 2 April 2020, stopping nurses from departing the Philippines pending the lifting of the national state of emergency (POEA, 2020). Some days after this memorandum was released, the Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary announced that health workers with an existing overseas contract, signed before 8 March, were allowed to leave (Cheng, 2020). New applications for healthcare positions in other countries were, however, halted. Citing Republic Act 8043 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of

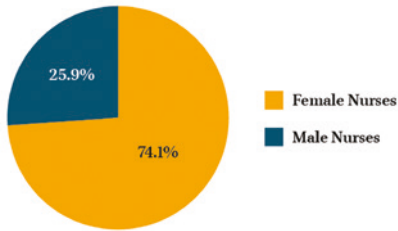


FIGURE 9.3  
Gender of nurses in the Philippines  
SOURCE: PSA (2016)

1995, Section 5 on the Termination or Ban on Deployment, the Administration argued that it was within its rights to have implemented the ban. The Act states, 'Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4 the government, in pursuit of the national interest or when public welfare so requires, may, at any time, terminate or impose a ban on the deployment of migrant workers' (Republic of the Philippines, 2010). A respondent, Nurse 9 living in the UK, shared that

During the pandemic, a lot of fellow Filipino nurses working here in the UK were affected. Some [even] lost their lives while taking care of COVID-19-positive patients. It was a difficult time for us, knowing that every time we [went] to work we [could] be affected by the virus [...]. For some of my colleagues working in intensive care units it is [...] challenging and difficult for them to work a 12-hour shift with complete personal protective equipment on and [have] only a specific toilet and water break as well as time for them to have their lunch. For me, working in the post-operative cardiac ward, I would say that I am very lucky in [...] that [I] can continue taking care of our patients using our comfortable scrubs. Here in the UK, I still feel lucky despite the fact that we are at great risk of being affected by the virus, because we were able to have free transportation for a short while going to work and even free food during our shift provided by our hospital.

The same respondent also related their anxiety and their fear for themselves and their family members, noting that it is their faith that keeps them going.

Emotionally we are very much affected in [the] way that this is our calling and we have no other choice but to work. Going to work with our anxiety levels [...] sky[-high] because we are directly taking care of [...] COVID-19 patients. We are scared for our [lives] and our family member[s] if we get infected. But on the other side, I believe that this is the only way we can

pay back God's blessings to us and that he will cover us with his mantle of protection.

Nurse 9, UK

Over 25 per cent of the Filipinos in the New York–New Jersey region work in the healthcare sector. According to a report produced by the non-profit ProPublica, in this region alone there were 30 deaths in the community of Filipino frontliners between the end of March and early May 2020 (cited in Martin and Yeung, 2020). Al Jazeera, in its documentary 'Filipino Nurses: New York's Frontliners', reported that at the peak of the outbreak Filipino nurses were fighting to protect Americans on the front lines of New York's COVID-19 disaster, with some risking their lives (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Nurse 10, living in the UK, made a parallel assertion:

When COVID-19 peaked here in the UK, Filipino nurses were placed ahead of all the frontliners. We were sent to the ICU and placed in the COVID-19 wards with no proper PPE. If you look into the statistics and reports, the highest cases of frontliners that died during the peak of the pandemic were Filipinos. Because of the resilience of our race, we still continue to provide high-quality care to our patients in spite of the fact that our lives are at risk. We need to think about the welfare of our patients before our own.

In California, with the highest concentration of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the world, 20 per cent of all nurses are Filipino, and they have noted a lack of PPE as one of the primary routes to exposure to the virus (McFarling, 2020). Many health workers are too nervous to complain because they fear they could be punished by being given longer shifts, which would increase their risk of exposure (McGannon, 2020).

It affected us in so many ways. We have always been resilient and flexible. However, being in [that] personal protective equipment for hours is no joke. Some of us get pressure sores and end our shift with a terrible headache due to dehydration. Psychologically, very traumatic. As we often say, we feel like we are in a battle without guns, and we can't see our enemies. It was tough knowing that we can get infected. Especially when we had patients who are also nurses in our hospital. I work in ICU, so I've seen the worst COVID-19 can do. Nevertheless, the bond we have with our fellow nurses became stronger than ever. We looked out for each other every



time we prepare[d] to enter the COVID-19 zone. And we see to it that we talk to each other in order to release the stress.

Nurse 12, US

Frontline medical staff are vulnerable not only to physical but also to psychological consequences of COVID-19 (Adams and Walls, 2020). According to a *Lancet* study conducted in Wuhan, which is thought to be where the virus emerged, frontline nurses encountered tremendous mental health problems, including the 'prevalence of burnout, anxiety, depression, and fear' (Hu et al., 2020, 6). Caregiving roles such as raising small children, having a family member that has acquired the disease, and financial problems were shown to be correlated with negative mental health effects in research into the social effects on healthcare workers employed during an epidemic of any infectious disease (Kisely et al., 2020). The respondents of the present study shared similar observations:

Nurses are dealing with a lot of emotional stress from working in these times. From wanting to stay at home to keep their families safe and working to keep others safe, nurses are battling with mental and emotional stress in dealing with this pandemic. Many nurses were broken-hearted from working tirelessly for others and get little to no assurance from the company/government they are working [for] about the hazard they are dealing with. The uncertainty that this pandemic has brought to light made the nurses rethink how passionate they are about their profession. Some even contracted the disease and got discriminated against at work. I personally encountered discrimination for working in an area catering to patients with moderate-to-severe cases of COVID-19. Even inside our workplace, we are sometimes denied [...] some basic services just because we work in COVID-19 areas and are asked to go back when we are off duty. Nurses' plans on working abroad had been halted due to restrictions in travel.

Nurse 8, Switzerland

The Philippine Department of Health recognised this problem. In response to the growing mental well-being needs of frontline workers and repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), the Department unveiled its Telemental Health Response programme, a virtual platform that provides psychosocial help (DOH, 2020). Even the University of the Philippines' Psychosocial Services, with its 100 volunteers, has offered free tele-psychotherapy sessions.

Another challenge faced by nurses during this pandemic is discrimination. Nurse 13 (US) shared that ‘most are being bullied and harassed in the community thinking that nurses are carriers of the virus’. Yet another, Nurse 14, said, ‘A lot of nurses were being thrown out of their apartments just because they work inside the hospital’. Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police reported attacks on and discrimination against health workers during the lockdown (Santos, 2020). This prompted the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to urge all local government units (LGUs) nationwide to pass and enforce anti-discrimination and anti-harassment ordinances to protect frontline workers. Many LGUs responded to this mandate and enacted laws to protect frontliners and overseas Filipino workers, many of them nurses. The country’s Congress also issued House Bill (HB) No. 6817 (House of Representatives, 2020b), which outlaws discrimination against persons either directly involved in or affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill is currently awaiting its counterpart from the Senate. Once it becomes a law, it will be used to punish those who commit these crimes, with jail sentences of between six months and ten years and fines ranging from PHP 50,000 to PHP 1 million (between 1,000 and 20,000 US dollars). The WHO had already issued a guide to preventing and addressing the social stigma associated with COVID-19 (WHO, 2020c).

Nurse 20 (the Philippines) lamented her experience:

Working as a nurse in the Philippines, [one of the] common challenges we’ve encountered [is] working beyond duty hours to complete all necessary paperwork. Sometimes, you offer possible solutions to certain problems encountered in your area that may help in revising old protocols and creating new ones that may benefit the workers and the hospital, but then you get no response or even alternate solutions from the management. Discrimination is one of the challenges any nurse is dealing with at this time of the pandemic.

Even prior to the current pandemic research (Gee et al., 2006) had found that daily experiences of prejudice were linked to Filipino Americans’ chronic health conditions. And de Castro, Gilbert and Takeuchi (2008) had discovered that the self-reporting of occupational discrimination was associated with worse health outcomes among Filipino Americans, the authors concluding that it is important to consider the work setting as a specific source of discrimination when studying health disparities.

As these words are being written, the WHO-Western Pacific Region COVID-19 Incident Manager, Abdi Mahamud, is expressing concern over the infection

rate of 13 per cent in the Philippines (CNN Philippines, 2020). The vulnerabilities of Filipino health frontliners are twofold: they are at risk if they stay in the Philippines but are also exposed if they are deployed abroad.

### 3.5 *The Evolving Role of Nurses in Global Health*

The WHO, the International Nurses Council and the global campaign Nursing Now emphasise the role of nurses in contributing to national and global health priorities, including the achievement of the SDGs, in their report on the *State of the World's Nursing* (WHO, 2020b).

In an interview carried out for the present study, Nurse 17 (UK), in affirming the role of nurses, confidently shared, 'We are pretty much the blood that runs [and keeps] the hospitals alive'. Other respondents also stated that nurses are essential. Nurses 'care for the sick and the dying' (Nurse 1, the Philippines) and 'help the community get better, and provide education on prevention of diseases and spread of infection' (Nurse 11, UK). All respondents believe in nurses' vital role in the world as 'role models of health practices and healthy living' (Nurse 20, the Philippines). Nurses play a vital role in the community. Regardless of race, age group or cultural diversity nurses have the ability and capability to give the best possible care. Nurse 17 shared, 'nurses are the caregiver[s] of those who are ill and needing hospitalisations; nurses can be agents of change health-wise by providing people [with] [...] information regarding health education and prevention of illness'. Nurse 14 (US) stated emphatically: 'I believe that our role in the global community always focuses on health promotion and disease prevention. And the primary goal for us nurses is always to protect and promote the health of all people from different age group[s], gender[s], race[s], etc.'.

Nurse 15 (UK) said, 'The role of nurses is crucial, especially in the provision and promotion of the healthcare delivery system to the global community'.

The World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution WHA64.7 (WHO, 2011) directs its Member States to support nursing and midwifery through a number of initiatives, such as using nurses' skills and integrating them into the development of human capital for health policy. Moreover, the framework set by the *Global Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery 2016–2020* gives the WHO and other actors the platform to 'develop, implement and evaluate nursing and midwifery accomplishments to ensure accessible, acceptable, quality, and safe nursing and midwifery interventions' (WHO, 2020a, 12).

Recognising the importance of 'adequate and accessible' health personnel, the WHA has approved a guide to ensuring secure conditions for people taking part in foreign migration. This WHO Code proposes a series of non-binding guidelines for state and non-state players participating in foreign health

worker recruitment (Efendi et al., 2017). Based on principles of fundamental human rights, the Code was created to encapsulate rights to health, including the right to find work abroad (Efendi et al., 2017).

Nurse 16, based in the US:

With the pandemic right now, being a nurse has a great impact on the community. We are the frontliners; we are the ones who directly take care of sick patients.

The calling of a nurse is to assess the well-being of individuals, families and the whole community. To be the advocate for all [...] patients and to promote justice and equality. To uphold everything mentioned in the 'Nightingale [...] Pledge' when we took our oath.

A nurse is many things. But for me, the best role of a nurse is being the mediator. You are the only bridge between the patient and the rest of the healthcare team and even to the relatives. The information you relay will be the basis of care plans, therefore expecting good outcomes. Through the nurse, you also protect the patient's privacy and dignity, ensuring that nobody insignificant to the care of the patient is getting important information.

During times of crisis and disaster, nurses are strategically positioned not only to contribute but to lead. With their experience and education as well as their role in society, they can push for partnerships and collaborations and for a new health paradigm that is more efficient, inclusive and responsive.

## 4 Policy Recommendations and Moving Forward

Global health has evolved not only due to the emergence of new diseases but also because of our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Recognising that policy is an essential part of the ecosystem of health sciences, the following recommendations are offered to the international community, and to the Philippines.

### 4.1 *Recommendations for the International Community*

In a study commissioned by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), Buchan (2020) mentions three main factors of concern for national nursing associations (NNAs): The first is maintaining secure minimum staffing levels while nurses are unavailable due to COVID-19 symptoms, and ensuring that personnel and patients are protected. Employers have to ensure that nurses are

provided with sufficient protective equipment as well as the right planning and training. A second concern is the shortage of adequate PPE, which has been identified in all countries. The third is ensuring the impartial treatment of staff who report back to work and those on provisional contracts (Buchan, 2020). A further challenge, ensuring 'ethical' recruitment, includes guaranteeing that migrants have the same access to working standards and job prospects as locals do. This goal of ensuring 'ethical' recruitment is intended to protect migrant professionals' interests in areas where unions are not so prominent, such as in private clinics, hospitals, or households (Dussault, Buchan and Craveiro, 2016).

In an attempt to respond to the needs of nurses worldwide, the *State of the World's Nursing—2020* lists guidance measures for future nursing staffing policies, including the need for countries with nursing crises to raise investment in order to train and recruit, collectively, at least 5.9 million nurses (WHO, 2020b). Furthermore, countries should improve their ability to collect, analyse and use health workforce data. Nurses' mobility must be efficiently supervised and handled professionally and ethically. The same report stresses that leadership and governance are essential (WHO, 2020b). Authorities should boost nurses' participation in decision-making on matters that affect their lives and practice. Actions should, in order to ensure decent work for nurses, be harmonised between those in charge of policy, human resources and standards.

Connectedly, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, specifically Article 7, contains guidelines for 'just and favourable' working standards, such as the 'right to secure working conditions' (UNGA, 1966). In the General Comment on the Right to Work, respect for workers' rights and individuals' fundamental rights, respect for workers' physical and mental integrity, and appropriate remuneration are elucidated as the main components of decent work (UNCESCR, 2006). In relation to this, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda provides four strategic goals: encouraging sustainable jobs, guaranteeing workplace security, promoting dialogue and ensuring social security (ILO, 2016).

Ultimately, the aim is for both origin and source countries to benefit while ensuring the protection and rights of health workers moving abroad (ILO, 2009). Bilateral and multilateral guidelines and codes of ethics have been established in collaboration with partner nations to devise and enforce agreements that specifically discuss standards and policies for the nursing profession. There are also reciprocal arrangements that lay down the rules and regulations, as well as the performance criteria, for health staff hired from source by destination countries. There needs to be a consistent review and monitoring of these arrangements, intertwined with a regular assessment of their implementation.

#### 4.2 *Recommendation for the Philippines*

When asked if the Philippine government should do a better job in its response, Nurse 22, based in the US, answered:

Yes. I think the government should step up in its action towards flattening the curve. The community must do its part in preventing the spread of the disease. We must strengthen our campaign towards promoting prevention, starting from our homes. We should all step up in realising that we have to live with the new normal for the next couple of years. The government should start distributing or localising jobs in municipalities so as not to overwhelm cities with people returning for work. The government needs to rebuild the distribution of jobs to promote a safe workplace.

The Philippines' battle against COVID-19 is far from over, and the Department of Health reports that more health personnel will be required for COVID-19 facilities. As a result, the Department began an emergency recruitment campaign to treat COVID-19 incidents. A guaranteed 20 per cent bonus over the government's minimum wage levels, accommodation, hospitalisation benefits and even compensation of PHP 1 million (USD 20,000) in case of loss of life are all on offer (Lopez and Jiao, 2020).

One of the priority measures identified by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in his State of the Nation Address (Duterte, 2020) was passing the Advanced Nursing Act, which seeks to modify some aspects of the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002 to create an advanced nursing education program. Senator Bong Go, the bill's sponsor in the upper chamber, hopes to persuade Filipino nurses to remain in the Philippines rather than work abroad. Senate Bill No. 395 will mandate higher learning institutions approved by the Commission on Higher Education to develop harmonised basic and graduate nursing education programs (House of the Senate, 2019). Lower House Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur 2nd District Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr. provided the lower house version of the bill (House of Representatives, 2020a).

Nurse 24, who had just returned to the Philippines from the Middle East, recommended that the Balik Scientist programme, an existing programme of the Department of Science and Technology, should 'allow willing Filipino health professionals to return to share their skills and talents gained from experience with[in] the destination country without risk of job loss' and that this should also be included in the provisions of bilateral agreements with host countries.

Indeed, apart from legislation, there needs to be support given to improving the practice of nursing in the Philippines, support that also includes the

strengthening of research and innovation. There also has to be an exchange of best practices and a space in which migrant Philippine health workers can contribute to their home country.

Acknowledging the stories of Filipino nurses on active duty in the Philippines and abroad while taking stock of the frameworks created by the UN, WHO, and other agencies advances the need not only for a mapping exercise that tracks geographical nurse mobility but also for becoming conscious of the leaky faucets that disturb the career trajectories of nurses. Measures to ensure that standards are followed, codes are committed to, and concerns are addressed must be implemented in partnership with different sectors, but, more importantly, guarantee that the voices of nurses are heard and valued, as they inform both policy and a more inclusive, safe and secure work environment.

## 5 Conclusion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the profile of the nursing population from the Philippines has shed light on two issues: the challenges the current health system holds for health workers, in particular nurses, seeking to provide services to the country during a crisis such as the pandemic, and the question of Filipino nurses' ability to work abroad and their working and life conditions as they navigate the uncertainties and vulnerabilities brought about by a deadly virus.

This chapter has attempted to relate the perspectives of nurses themselves in order to understand the impact of migration on their lives through their experiences and to capture their lived realities, hoping to provide solutions that are practical, inclusive and sustainable. These contributions are critical to designing policies for source countries such as the Philippines.

Health workers in the Philippines during the COVID-19 outbreak hoped, via their unified call, to convince national governments and receiving nations to look deeper into their daily lives and recognise that improving their conditions, positions and pay would benefit society as a whole.

At the height of the health crisis, the government tried to dissuade nurses from leaving the Philippines, especially given the loss of frontline personnel to the disease, a loss that exacerbated the dearth of responders who would be required if the country was to successfully combat this insidious virus. However, as echoed by nurse respondents to the present study, the international migration of nurses can serve as a means of empowerment, and of providing spaces for nurses' engagement and collaboration. This has the potential to enable their wider participation, particularly in decision-making.

Nurse migration and the health ecosystem are multidimensional and complex. The UN, the WHO and local counterparts have attempted to put safeguards in place to ensure the safety and well-being of nurses and other health workers. The challenge of dealing with COVID-19, however, has pressured the global community to reassess its methods. And it is important for host countries to have a better grasp of the needs of its migrant population, especially those on the frontlines. Further, the intersection of the issue of nurse migration with other issues—including those of diversity, inclusion and gender—has to be more closely examined.

As is often said, a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. It is hoped that the common experience of dealing with COVID-19 ignites a fire in Filipino nurses, encouraging them to take a more active role in global health and migration policy. And that while the world tries to ‘build back better and stronger’, nurses will be able to take the opportunity to address the leaky faucets that impact their careers, and create an enabling environment in which they themselves will flourish, since doing so will proportionately benefit the global health system and the entire environment of care.

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# New Migration's Gordian Knot: Mexico and the Caravans of the Northern Triangle of Central America

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## Abstract

Migration processes in Mexico are varied and complex; the country sends migrants abroad and receives returnees in addition to migrants in transit and others wishing to settle there. In this sense, Mexico may be considered a global migration hub (a country of origin, reception, transit and destination). This chapter focuses on transit migration and the reception of migrants seeking asylum, with a particular focus on migrant caravans from the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) between 2018 and 2020. These caravans, characterised by thousands of people (Kahn, 2018) fleeing their countries of origin due to situations of violence and threats to their personal security—in addition to economic factors—have posed challenges for Mexico's domestic and foreign policies, especially in terms of its relations with the United States.

In this context, we explore the actions and policies introduced to deal with migrants and refugees transiting Mexico, and the impact these have had. Taking mid-2018—the end of Enrique Peña's presidential term—as the point of departure for our analysis, we examine Mexico's migration policies more generally, together with the response of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's administration to Donald Trump's immigration policies and the pressure the Trump administration exerted on Mexico to contain the flow of irregular migrants.

## 1 Introduction

We were motivated to write this chapter by the need to highlight, and to provide insights for the evaluation of, the complexity of the migrant caravans that passed through Mexico between 2018 and 2020.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we wanted

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1 The term 'migrant caravans' emerged as a way to describe large groups of people moving by land across international borders. Migrant caravans from Northern Central America have increased in number and frequency since 2018 (Astles, 2020).

to address the phenomenon that has produced adverse and high-risk conditions for the thousands of Central American men, women and minors who pass through Mexico in pursuit of the 'American dream'. These migrants band together in caravans to avoid being subject to a variety of attacks such as robbery by common criminals, as they seek to escape extortion by organised crime and some members of Mexico's security forces, hoping to avoid paying traffickers (the so-called 'coyotes') and receive assistance from government and non-government organisations (Astles, 2020). This chapter also aims to analyse the migration policy designed by the Mexican government for the period 2018–2024 (SEGOB, 2018b) to deal with this migratory flow, in the context of existing United States (US) policy and President Trump's immigration containment policy.

A preliminary evaluation of the current complexity of this singular phenomenon of human mobility is made along these lines, using qualitative analysis methods based on the selection and study of specialised bibliographic sources, official documents and newspaper articles from Mexico and the United States, resulting from investigative journalism and drawing on well-known columnists, academics and political figures.

This migration flow is above all the result of the combined presence of persistent violence and adverse economic conditions. From our perspective, both of these factors play an important role and, based on the available evidence, neither can be singled out as the primary motivating factor. We argue that they form a vicious circle that could be considered a complex driver of migration. This chapter examines some aspects of migration from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) between June 2018 and July 2020. We offer a critical reflection on Mexico's migration policies: the regional policy, involving the Comprehensive Development Plan for Northern Central America and Mexico (Plan de Desarrollo Integral del norte de Centroamérica y México, or PDI),<sup>2</sup> which reflects several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the

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2 'The PDI (ECLAC, 2019) is an ambitious and comprehensive proposal that deals with the structural causes of poverty, inequality and emigration. Central to its implementation are the governments of the countries in the area (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico), along with support from international organisations, foreign direct investment (FDI) and the co-operation of friendly countries. The plan emphasises investment in infrastructure: electricity connections, gas pipelines, roads and railways, which are all essential to boosting development. This is complemented by programmes and projects that, according to the proposal, address the causes of migration (transit, destination and return) at source, from the perspective of human rights and the United Nations paradigm of human security' (Castillo, 2019). *Translation from original.*



United Nation's 2030 Agenda; the bilateral policy, essentially with the US; and Mexico's domestic migration policy and the policies that concern the US government's response to the same challenge between June 2018 and July 2020. We also analyse the policy proposals derived from the PDI.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Proceeding from a detailed description of the factors that have produced increased migration from the NTCA, this chapter draws upon an understanding of ethnomethodology that assumes that 'social knowledge is inherently unstable' (Clifford, 1998, 393). By this, we mean to emphasise, as a point of departure, that the theories that attempt to explain international migration only partially respond to the complexities of a topic that involves social and spatial transitions that are themselves often imprecise (Micolta León, 2005).

We also note that Douglas Massey's theoretical concept of push–pull factors (Massey et al., 1998), which attempts to explain the causes of international migration by identifying the factors that drive people out of certain territories, as well as the factors that attract people to other countries, is appropriate for this study. The extremely precarious living conditions in the NTCA—repression, violence, and a severe lack of economic and political freedoms—compel migrants to leave their country of origin. The conditions prevailing in the US, meanwhile—better wages, networks of institutionalised protection for refugees and irregular immigrants, and networks shaped by family or identity-based solidarity—constitute factors that attract immigrants. In this interpretation, conditions may influence the motivations of individuals who are willing to face the risks of migration, creating a stimulus to emigrate, which implies an instrumental rationality.

We want to emphasise throughout this chapter that for the migrants, the transit of the caravans represents a change in a highly conflictive social, political and cultural environment (Massey et al., 1998). Moreover, unlike similar processes—such as African migrants seeking asylum in Europe—it is important to consider that the widespread use of the Spanish language in the region (Mexico, Central America and the southern US) is believed to be one of the elements of attraction that orient migratory flows. 'The language spoken is one of the characteristics of the destination that the person willing to migrate considers when choosing the destination of their journey' (Bermejo, 2008). Use of the same language has multiplied and strengthened migrants' networks in

the region,<sup>3</sup> leading us to consider it a bridge of communication and resilience worthy of mention (Gutiérrez, 2007; Otero Roth, 2007).

Another theoretical concept useful to our analysis is globalisation. It is a fact that divergences between countries are marked by crises that may coincide in time but produce different economic impacts (Criado, 2001). For example, a marked imbalance exists in the international distribution of income and the exclusion of entire regions of the world that remain left out of global circuits. In this context, where differences in working conditions and wage gaps between countries are polarised, accompanied by closed borders and restricted human mobility (Abad Márquez, 2002), selection criteria (whereby states determine migrants' eligibility for entry) provide the benchmark for measuring the success of migration management.

It is precisely in this context that the widening economic, wage and social gaps between NTCA countries, Mexico, and the United States make undertaking the journey north an attractive prospect. If we add to this the increased presence of organised crime and the violence it entails, which has become another push factor for migrants in vulnerable situations, we can better understand the reasons for the growing numbers of migrants who decide to travel in large groups to reduce the risks they face on the journey north.

### 3 Mexico's Foreign Policy and Transit Migration

As mentioned above, Mexico is a country of origin, return, transit and destination for migrants. Departure and return have taken place with respect to the large numbers of migrants heading north to the US, while transit migration and the reception of asylum seekers in the national territory comes from the south, and has been occurring on a visible scale since the 1980s. This has increased in recent decades, particularly for migrants from the NTCA countries,<sup>4</sup> but also for migrants from other countries such as Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. This has forced the Mexican state to reformulate its migration policy (Gómez Johnson and Espinosa Moreno, 2020).

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3 Spanish is the common language of Mexico and Central America, in addition to being spoken by 41 million people in the US (Sulbarán Lovera, 2019).

4 Migration to Mexico has historically been cyclical and has never been massive. Even today, with the new wave of migrants seeking refuge, essentially from Central America, the total number of migrants represents barely 0.1% of the population, although it has doubled in recent decades (Bobes, 2019, 2).

Mexico's migration policy has mainly focused on defending the human rights of the millions of Mexicans who migrate to the US, emphasising a policy of protection. Mexico has been a promoter of important international mechanisms for defending migrants' rights and participated in the drafting of the 1990 'International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families', which was only signed by 54 states at the United Nations (UN). It also championed the first 'High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development', held in 2006 (IOM, 2013). These efforts were limited in scope, however, because the vast majority of countries were opposed to a global discussion of migration issues, which were officially seen as a matter of state sovereignty as opposed to one of humanitarian law.

The perspective changed significantly in international organisations when events such as the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the global economic crisis of 2008, and the eruption of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 amplified migratory flows dramatically, to the extent that questions were raised about the handling of the issue at the global level. The need to analyse the migration situation from a multidimensional perspective arose, and the adoption in 2015 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development meant that, for the first time, the perspective on migration changed. In the list of SDGs, targets, and indicators, Target 10.7 clearly states the need to 'facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies' (UN, 2021, 11). The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted by the UN in 2018, representing an important step towards a comprehensive vision of migration from a human security perspective.<sup>5</sup> The UN General Assembly entrusted Mexico and Switzerland with carrying forward the negotiations to reach the GCM, thereby completing the virtuous circle of Mexico's historical treatment of migrants.

It is also important to take into account the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Adopted by the UN in December 2018, it provides a framework for governments, international organisations and other stakeholders to contribute to the social and economic inclusion of refugees in host communities so that these refugees can contribute to their new communities and ensure their own conditions for survival (Aragonés, 2020).

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5 Fernando de la Mora Salcedo points out that the events that triggered the establishing of a dialogue on migration from a human security perspective were the thousands of deaths in the Mediterranean and the large flow of refugees and migrants that caused the European migrant crisis in 2015, which also exacerbated xenophobia and the prevalence of hate speech, and the rise of populism and exclusionary nationalisms (de la Mora Salcedo, 2020, 90).

Mexican diplomacy displayed great commitment in all the meetings that were organised to conclude and sign the GCM. Nevertheless, Mexico's favourable migration policy for its own citizens abroad has not been echoed in the way that transit migrants or those wishing to settle in Mexico are treated.<sup>6</sup> Hence, as Sánchez Cano (2020) states, it is necessary to improve domestic legislation in this respect.

Throughout the twentieth century Mexico experienced isolated episodes of serving as a destination for migrants, essentially for asylum seekers: Spaniards fleeing the civil war and Francoism; Europeans fleeing World War II and Nazism; and from the 1960s onwards, Latin Americans seeking asylum from persecution by the military dictatorships in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. In all of these cases the migrants were workers and intellectuals who integrated into life in Mexico with relative ease. But beginning in 1980, Mexico saw an unprecedented influx of Guatemalan and Salvadorean refugees, approximately one hundred thousand in 15 years, who crossed the border into Mexico, fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries (Somohano and Yankelevich, 2011). In light of these events it became evident that the Mexican government had no policy for dealing with such a situation; initially it was left to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and churches to provide help for the refugees. In 1980 the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados, or COMAR) was created and two years later an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in Mexico. It was not until 2011, when the Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum Act (*Ley Sobre Refugiados, Protección Complementaria y Asilo Político Federal de México*) was passed, that the country finally defined and recognised the concept of asylum in Mexico.

#### 4 The Central American Situation That Spurs Migration

The economic crises and armed conflicts that, since the end of the last century, have taken place in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua unleashed a series of violent political and social conflicts that in turn led to a rise in mass migration transiting through Mexico, which later also included

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6 For decades the Mexican government's protection policy was called into question by experts and public opinion in general, as it applied double standards to its own citizens abroad and to migration from Central America.

Venezuelans, Cubans, Haitians and others. Many of the migrants coming from the south who originally intended to cross Mexico to reach the US sought, in light of the border restrictions applied by the US when Donald Trump became President, to remain in Mexico for some time before continuing their pursuit of the American dream (Gómez Johnson and Espinosa Moreno, 2020). The numbers speak for themselves: according to data from the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid, in 2013 there were 1,296 applications for refugee status in Mexico; by 2017 there were 14,619 such applications, and in 2018 29,647 (Gómez Johnson and Espinosa Moreno, 2020, 10).

Furthermore, and contrary to expectations, the end of the military conflicts in Central America did not lead to peace in the region. As Pedro González Olvera explains,

In El Salvador the end of the conflict meant demobilisation and unemployment for dozens of guerrillas, police officers and members of the armed forces, and a disproportionate rise in crime, which soon became a huge problem and a threat to national security in both Mexico and Central America; in Nicaragua, counter-revolutionary groups financed by the US appeared; and in Guatemala, while the peace negotiations lasted longer, the underlying problems—inequality and structural poverty affecting vast sectors of the population—have remained unresolved and continue to be a not insignificant factor in the high levels of violence.

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Crime rose in the Northern Triangle with the proliferation of the '*maras*', criminal groups that spread throughout the region and even into Mexico, engaging in all types of crime, robbery, extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking, as well as being linked to drug trafficking and transnational organised crime. This led to even greater vulnerability for the populations in these countries, many of whom saw migration as the only means of escaping such violence (González Olvera, 2020).

## 5 The Magnitude of the Migrant Caravans

By October 2018 migration from Central America had taken on massive proportions, as migrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador fleeing the difficult conditions prevailing in their countries of origin began joining together in caravans to enter and cross through Mexico. Their aim was to cross Mexico

TABLE 10.1 Country of origin for Central American immigrants already in the US, 2017

Region and country	Number of immigrants	%
Central America (total)	3,527,000	100
El Salvador	1,402,000	39.7
Guatemala	959,000	27.2
Honduras	655,000	18.5
Nicaragua	263,000	7.5
Panama	107,000	3
Costa Rica	83,000	2.4
Belize	49,000	1.4
Others	10,000	0.3

SOURCE: AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS BASED ON STATISTICAL DATA FROM THE MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (MPI), AS QUOTED IN O'CONNOR, BATALOVA AND BOLTER (2019) WITH FIGURES FROM THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) OF THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU IN 2017

more safely, in the face of the types of violence to which they were subjected on their way to the US: rape, trafficking, robbery and extortion, as well as other forms of violence perpetrated by criminal groups. Some of the migrants had the intention of applying for temporary asylum in Mexico.

Table 10.1 shows the magnitude of these groups of irregular migrants originating primarily from the three countries mentioned above. According to official US data (O'Connor, Batalova and Bolter, 2019), by June 2019 more than 363,000 migrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador had been apprehended by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), with the authorities warning that the number of apprehensions was already triple the previous fiscal year's total.

Table 10.2 shows US government data about the total number of individuals—including minors—apprehended by the US authorities at the Mexican border in 2019.<sup>7</sup> A record of 775,488 human beings was reached according to the CBP (2019). A comparison of apprehensions by country for the four-year period 2016–2019 shows that the number of apprehensions rose significantly for Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (CBP, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> These figures correspond to the US fiscal year running from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019.

TABLE 10.2 Southwest Border Family Unit<sup>a</sup> apprehensions by country (fiscal years 2016–19)

Country	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
El Salvador	27,114	24,122	13,669	56,897
Guatemala	23,067	24,657	50,401	185,233
Honduras	20,226	22,366	39,439	188,416
Mexico	3,481	2,271	2,261	6,004

a A Family Unit represents the number of individuals (either a child under 18 years of age, parent, or legal guardian) apprehended with a family member by the US Border Patrol.

SOURCE: CBP (2019)

## 6 Mexico's Response to the Migrant Caravans and Pressure from the Trump Administration

By 2017, meetings entitled a 'Strategic Dialogue on Obstruction of Transnational Criminal Organizations' were being held between the governments of Mexico and the United States, in which both countries recognised their shared responsibility in the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime, and agreed to promote joint actions to tackle the problem. In the context of these dialogues, the 'Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America' (SRE and SEGOB, 2017) was held to promote sustainable, inclusive and safe development in the Northern Triangle countries. It was believed that this strategy would help reduce the number of migrants passing through Mexico in an attempt to reach the US. However, in 2018 the problems related to violence and insecurity increased in the countries in which the migrant caravans originated, as did the pressure the US government exerted on Mexico to help curb the caravans. By the end of 2018, the migrant caravans' attempts to flee violence coincided with the final months of Enrique Peña Nieto's term as President of Mexico.

In the Mexican media it was reported that the President had informed his supporters that only regulated entry to the country would be permitted, while Mexico was faced with the combined threat of a wall being built along the border with the US and President Trump's decision to force Mexico to pay for it (*Expansión Política*, 2018). In addition, the US administration threatened its counterparts in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, as well as Mexico, with the imposition of economic sanctions if they failed to stem the flow of undocumented migrants heading towards the US (Domínguez, 2019).

In October 2018 two meetings were held in Washington DC to prepare the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America with the objective

of exploring 'formulas for regional development based on enhanced competitiveness and private investment, to ensure that migratory flows, if not halted, would at least be orderly, safe and regulated, in accordance with the UN's Global Compact on Migration' (González Olvera, 2020, 6). This was complicated by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's demand for 'an intense effort by Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico to combat irregular immigration', along with Trump's threat to cut off development aid to Central America if an end was not put to the migrant caravans (González Olvera, 2020).

The Mexican government implemented some programmes, such as 'Frontera Sur' (Southern Border),<sup>8</sup> 'Quédate en México' (Remain in Mexico)<sup>9</sup> and 'Estás en tu casa' (You are at home),<sup>10</sup> to offer temporary jobs to migrants while their migratory status in Mexico was being resolved. However, according to the available data the number of people expelled increased at the end of Enrique Peña Nieto's six-year term in office (González Olvera, 2020).

This situation coincided with a new, leftist government in Mexico, whose arrival initially entailed a change in attitude towards migrants as it sought to bolster a development agenda. The National Development Plan 2019–24 (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2019–2024, PND) states that given Mexico's tradition as a country of asylum and refuge, it is obliged to respect the rights of migrants arriving in Mexico and offer them hospitality and the opportunity to build a new life.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior's 'New Migration Policy of the Mexican Government (2018–24)' ('Nueva Política Migratoria del Gobierno de México (2018–2024)') announces a policy 'based on a paradigm whose focal point is migrants as persons and social and economic development as the basis for human mobility in a regular, orderly and safe manner' (SEGOB, 2018b). The policy document underlines that Mexico, as a signatory of the GCM, is committed to developing a 'migration policy that respects the rule of law and recognises the human rights of migrants', and fulfils the goals of the 2030 Agenda for

8 The 'Frontera Sur' ('Southern Border') programme coordinates actions to trigger social and economic development in the region and establishes measures to protect migrants' rights (SEGOB, 2015).

9 The 'Quédate en México' ('Remain in Mexico') policy, implemented by the Mexican government since 2019 in light of Donald Trump's threats, involves those applying for asylum in the US waiting in Mexico for their hearings to be scheduled. The colloquial name 'Quédate en México' corresponds to the US Government's Migrant Protection Protocols policy. This policy was ended on 1 June 2021 and was substituted with transitional programmes.

10 The 'Estás en tu casa' ('You are at home') plan was issued by the Mexican government in October 2018 with the primary objective of providing temporary work options to Central American migrants while their immigration status is being resolved (SEGOB, 2018a).

11 PND 2019–2024 (SEGOB, 2019).



Sustainable Development and the dignified treatment of migrants, 'recognising the positive contributions that migrants offer to countries of destination, transit and return' (SEGOB, 2018b). Yet this attempt to implement a positive immigration policy in line with the GCM and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has not yet succeeded.

At first, President López Obrador's declarations favouring a human rights perspective on migration, and what was stated in the National Development Plan on policy, were taken as an invitation for Central American migrants to enter and cross through Mexico without fear, implying that they would be well received and supported in obtaining visas and jobs, and even receive monetary assistance (Ruiz Sandoval, 2019).

To that effect, in December 2018 Mexico's National Institute of Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración de México, or INAMI) began, for humanitarian reasons, distributing visitors' cards to those participating in the caravans, thereby confirming the open-door policy for irregular migrants. This process only lasted two months, however, and was stopped after the issuance of 13,270 cards, distributed in Chiapas, Mexico City and Coahuila (INAMI, 2019).

The cards were valid for one year and allowed migrants free movement and the right to work. It should be noted that Andrés Manuel López Obrador was elected president with 53 per cent of the overall vote (Navarro, 2018), and his popularity generated enormous expectations on the part of Mexican society, a circumstance that worked against leniency in granting benefits to undocumented migrants, generating pockets of discontent. Diverting money from the income-redistribution social programmes designed by the new Mexican government would have been deemed unacceptable.

The scale of this human mobility, concentrated in the Northern Triangle countries, amounted to more than 151,000 undocumented migrants entering Mexico between January and December 2019, as well as more than 142,000 deportations in the same period, according to Mexican government data (SEGOB, 2019). According to researcher Erika Ruiz Sandoval, 'in October 2018, 60,000 people were detained at the southern border of the United States; by February 2019 it was more than 75,000; and the number exceeded 100,000 in both March and April, totalling 132,887 in May 2019, in contrast to the 40,339 registered in May 2018' (Ruiz Sandoval, 2019, 5).

The complexity of analysing these events should not see us lose site of the public policy decisions that the US government implemented in parallel, seeking to curb the incursion of undocumented migrants across its border with Mexico. One of the actions implemented from the end of January 2019 until the end of May 2021, known as 'Quédate en México' (Remain in Mexico)

consisted,<sup>12</sup> as previously mentioned, of allowing asylum seekers from other countries to remain in Mexican territory while awaiting the official (US) decision on their cases (Domínguez, 2019).

As a result, by the end of August 2019—according to the US Department of Homeland Security—the number of undocumented migrants stranded in Mexican locations along the US border totalled more than 37,000, and many began to disperse through Mexico (O'Toole, 2019). While for Trump this was a highly successful measure, the suffering and insecurity endured by migrants in Mexico exposed Mexico's difficulty in protecting them.

The measures that the US implemented on its border with Mexico at the same time as the number of people entering Mexico through its southern border was increasing presented escalating difficulties, leading López Obrador to make a public statement on 24 April 2019 in which he radically modified his original open-door policy, stating that '[w]e don't want them to have free passage, not only for legal reasons, but also for security reasons. Unfortunately, in the north, we have had problems with migrants being murdered in the past' (*El Herald*, 2019). This statement refers to the fact that the violence and insecurity that exist in Mexico make it difficult for the Mexican government to provide protection or guarantee the human rights of migrants.

By June 2019, the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación) had established 58 immigration stations and temporary shelters for migrants in 23 of the Federal Republic's 32 states. One of the most significant of these, in terms of protecting the migrants in the caravans, is the Siglo XXI ('Twenty-first Century') holding facility in Chiapas. In June 2019, it had already exceeded its very limited capacity of 960 people, with numbers reaching 1,230, setting a precedent that has become a recurrent situation in these shelters, where capacity is sometimes exceeded by 400 per cent (Gutiérrez and Villa, 2019) leading to increased tensions between residents and locals.

As was to be expected, throughout 2019 Mexico received a significant number of asylum applications. According to data from UNHCR (2020), around 69,500 applications were made, an increase of 137 per cent in comparison to 2018 and generating an administrative deficit for the country as it had to handle an average of almost 6,000 applications per month. Hondurans formed the highest proportion at 43 per cent of asylum seekers, followed by Salvadoreans with 13 per cent and Cubans with 12 per cent. Women and children constituted

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12 The 'Quédate en México' programme, officially called the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPPs) in English, was originally set up as a temporary programme.

69 per cent of the total, their numbers highlighting the extreme vulnerability of both groups.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to recognise that Mexico, in the midst of this extremely complex regional migration scenario, has strengthened its collaboration with agencies such as UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), making an effort to comply with their recommendations. One example of these efforts to comply involves an assessment that these agencies carried out to identify the needs and capacity of 60 shelters, which led to the Mexican authorities being pressured to adapt accordingly and transform their interventions into public policies to benefit the population served. It must, however, be pointed out that most of the shelters in Mexico are run by civil society organisations, and their leadership in this area should be recognised.

A new threat to Mexico was added to this complex environment when, on 31 May 2019, the Trump Administration hardened its position on condemning the country for not making a greater effort to stop the growing flow of undocumented migrants who continued to seek an opportunity to reach the US. Trump threatened to raise tariffs on imports from Mexico by as much as 25 per cent, thereby forcing Mexico to formally adopt the aforementioned 'Quédate en México' ('Remain in Mexico') policy along all the land crossings of the shared border (Mars, Ximénez de Sandoval and Farisa, 2019). Mexico's response to President Trump's threat signified, as previously stated, a shift in Mexican policy on Central American migration. After tough negotiations, Mexico accepted a deal according to which it would 'take unprecedented measures' to stop irregular migration and human trafficking (Domínguez, 2019; Aragonés, 2020).

When, following the June agreement with the US, the military was empowered to detain migrants under the pretext of supporting the work of the INAMI, Mexico made a flagrant change to its humanitarian approach to migrants. The journalist Pedro Domínguez reported that '[o]n the southern border, on the borders with Guatemala and Belize, they have deployed two thousand National Guardsmen, and 4,500 more have been added toward the interior of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, while on the border with the United States there are fifteen thousand federal police officers to stop irregular migration'

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13 'Mexico, as a transit country, does not offer a better panorama in this regard: organised crime and drug trafficking networks that often commit crimes of extortion, assault, murder, trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping, sexual violence, disappearance and recruitment, are part of a harsh environment that complicates the mechanisms for guaranteeing the safety of those who transit through Mexico' (Gómez Johnson and Espinosa Moreno, 2020, 27–28).

(Domínguez, 2019). The reinforcement of the National Guard increased conflict and led to an expansion of the human trafficking industry.

The outcome, for the year, would prove positive for both the government of Mexico and that of the US, showing that the restrictions, detentions and deportations of migrants were having an effect. With the deployment of the National Guard along the southern and northern borders, Mexico became the *de facto* safe third country.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to this migration crisis, there is another factor that has not been very visible, but which exists in Mexico and has to do with attitudes within the communities and localities that have received significant numbers of migrants and refugees. Since 2018, in the wake of the migrant caravans, xenophobic and intolerant slogans have become manifest. A public opinion survey conducted in February 2018 by Francisco Abundis of the polling company Parametría, addressing the general impression of Mexicans regarding the foreign population in their country, indicated a 70 per cent disapproval rate toward Central Americans (Abundis, 2020).

In the same survey, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the Mexican government allowing Central Americans to enter the country, with only 23 per cent answering in the affirmative. This data, it could be argued, should oblige Mexico to make a significant effort to develop policies for the integration of migrants and refugees.

## 7 The Comprehensive Development Plan for Northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras) and Mexico

We will now address the PDI, which we consider to be the most ambitious regional policy on Central American migration, promoted by Mexico and with the participation of the Northern Triangle countries and the US, which is expected to provide strategic funding.

A detailed knowledge of the PDI is an important tool for fully understanding the objectives of this chapter. Drafted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, (Comisión Económica para América Latina, or ECLAC), agreement on the plan was reached on 1 December 2018, the day

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14 Those seeking asylum in the US were being returned to Mexico to await their asylum hearing and the resolution of their claiming refugee status. With a growing population without economic resources on the northern border and the subsequent COVID-19 health crisis, however, the challenges that Mexico began facing in 2019-2020 have made the situation of irregular migrants in Mexico even more vulnerable.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador assumed office as the President of Mexico (ECLAC, 2019). On the same day, the heads of state of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico signed a political statement of intent to implement the PDI, which would be based on the recognition of the structural factors driving subregional migration and open the door to co-operation to promote prosperity and combat underdevelopment. The PDI came to represent a paradigm shift in the treatment of migration and has become the prevailing mechanism for implementing the GCM in the region (Gómez Camacho and de la Mora Salcedo, 2019). A clear example of this is the four axes of the PDI explained later in this chapter.

On 20 May 2019, Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, presented the first version of the PDI to the Mexican president. The plan included recommendations for improving the quality of life of the region's population, addressing the migration cycle within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. The PDI was subsequently adjusted to accommodate the projects presented by the countries involved (UN Mexico, 2020a).

We consider it pertinent to outline some of the most important components of this plan. Its design and content constitute added value, in terms of identifying the common challenges for the promotion of regional development, seeking to resolve structural problems, and also taking into account that the governments of the four countries involved agreed to sign it, which represents a significant political accomplishment.

The zone covered by the plan has exceptional access to the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, with a young demographic and a population that together represent a potential market of 60 million people. The plan is divided into four programme axes: economic development, social welfare, sustainability, and management of the migration cycle. The first axis addresses issues related to taxation and investment, trade integration, energy and logistics. Education, health and labour issues are included in the second, while risk management and environmental protection appear in the third.

The fourth axis, which refers to migration management, lists various elements that place the human rights of migrants and refugees at the centre of the entire migration cycle, including the principle of non-discrimination; attention to people displaced by violence and disasters; comprehensive actions for deprived neighbourhoods located in migrants' places of origin, transit, destination and return; and programmes to overcome rural poverty and hunger; as well as programmes for the inclusion of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and returnees in education systems. Another more ambitious and long-term

element is the proposal to reach agreements concerning the portability of rights and social security benefits.

The following macroeconomic aspects are decisive for the proper implementation of the plan: transparency and accountability; progressive taxation to prioritise public investment and eliminate tax privileges; strengthening the administration of tax revenues; and promoting employment and the minimum wage, as well as labour protection; together with fostering industrial policies that promote science, environmentally sustainable technology and innovation.

As can be seen, in all of the specific aspects of the four axes of the PDI, there is clear concordance with many of the UN SDGs, some of the most prominent being: no poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), good health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDGs 10 and 5), and climate action (SDG 13) (UN Mexico, 2020b). It is also necessary to consider that unfortunately the PDI has not been implemented (Prado Lallande, 2020). Presidential elections in Guatemala and El Salvador in 2019, as well as the 2020 US presidential election, got in the way. But the most significant factors in this failure have been a lack of financial resources and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the most striking aspects of the PDI are its promotion of development in the place of origin, as migration is intended to become an option rather than an obligation, and the insertion of human mobility into a model that stimulates equality and sustainability. In 2019, Mexico estimated that the annual cost of implementing the plan would be USD 10 billion. There were also expectations of support from the European Union, Spain, Germany and Chile, and the added backing of 14 UN agencies.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, it is worth noting that the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that the plan's actions would begin in July 2019, through the 'Sembrando Vida' ('Sowing Life') programme to support farmers, and a

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15 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

youth-oriented programme, 'Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro' ('Youth Building the Future'), both of which were initiated after the forming of the López Obrador government. 'Sembrando Vida' offers resources to farmers to work their lands in their communities rather than migrate. 'Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro' offers young people who are not employed or studying opportunities to work in companies and receive a stipend from the government, thus making them less easy prey for organised crime. The 'Sembrando Vida' programme, in collaboration with El Salvador, sought to generate 20,000 beneficiaries in addition to another 13,000 in Honduras. One year on, however, the desired results had not been achieved due to cuts to the programmes' funding, which was diverted to combatting COVID-19 in Mexico (Prado Lallande, 2020; Pradilla, 2020).

For the sake of objectivity, it is useful to illustrate some of the more substantive criticisms of the PDI in order to evaluate it properly. Marcela Valdivia, a specialist on the region, acknowledges that the plan takes into account the various factors that influence the decision to migrate—the search for economic improvement and security as well as other challenges such as climate change and inequality—but warns that expectations of what the plan can achieve are disproportional, as the priority projects, tied to large infrastructure works in the energy and communication fields, will not necessarily serve to deter Central Americans from moving to the US (Valdivia, 2019).

Another issue is that one of the great uncertainties related to the plan is that its implementation requires constant and consistent political will from the parties involved. To this, Professor Farid Hannan Goyri adds that 'regardless of the technical or regulatory issues related to this assistance, the fact that the countries have a roadmap is important per se for orienting existing efforts and resources' (Hannan Goyri, 2019).

A study published in the well-known Mexican magazine *Letras Libres* emphasised that one of the most important keys to the initiative's successful progress would be the effective participation of the US (*Letras Libres*, 2019). It also pointed to the fact that the wide range of tasks to be carried out remained open-ended, and that the resources required, the necessary schedule and an evaluation of results were all lacking.

Conversely, specialist Rolando Castillo recalls that while the current government of Mexico is presented as being at the vanguard of this plan, the country has a history of pursuing development initiatives in Central America. Some were promoted by administrations headed by the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, or PAN), including the Puebla-Panama Plan, later known as the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project (Proyecto de Integración y Desarrollo de Mesoamérica), which for various reasons failed

to progress. For the PDI, Castillo notes in his analysis that the López Obrador government indicated that the US would participate with substantial funding for the region. In September 2019, however, the Trump administration performed an about-face and announced a parallel plan of its own. As was commonplace in Donald Trump's approach, the strategy was to divide and rule, pursuing negotiations that privileged bilateral rather than joint agreements (Castillo, 2019). Trump's plan to negotiate separately with each country provided no solutions and went nowhere.

Fernando de la Mora Salcedo, meanwhile, diplomat and negotiator of the GCM, warns of the importance of 'not falling into the old dichotomy of migration and development' (Gómez Camacho and de la Mora Salcedo, 2019, 16), pointing to studies by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) that show that a lack of development does not necessarily lead to migration, and that neither do remittances from migrants promote development. Development and migration, he argues, must therefore be analysed from a multidimensional perspective, where economic, political and social factors play a role, along with climate change and public security, among many other factors. 'One of the [GCM] lessons is that if migrants return to the same conditions that led to their departure, it is unlikely that they will remain, giving rise once again to cross-border movements motivated by need' (Gómez Camacho and de la Mora Salcedo, 2019, 16).

Since March 2020 and the onset the COVID-19 health crisis, the PDI has been adrift; the resources that were supposed to be allocated to the plan have not arrived, due to the problems faced by all of the world's economies. In June 2020 Mexico contributed USD 30 million to the PDI, but there is no sign that more capital will be forthcoming or that what was previously agreed upon will be achieved. Moreover, the general situation in Central America has worsened as a result of the pandemic (Arista, 2020).

It is worth noting that on 8 July 2020, President López Obrador made his first official visit to Washington. His encounter with the then US president was symbolic and was permeated by the context of the upcoming presidential election in the US. The issues of migration and the PDI were not discussed, meaning that the US–Central America relationship and any approach to the issue of migration remained, to say the least, uncertain (Sánchez Cano, 2020).

## 8 Conclusion

In order to address the complexity of migrant caravans from Central America, we have reviewed the actions and policies proposed by Mexico between 2018



and 2020 initially under the government of Enrique Peña Nieto, who had a restrictive policy towards this form of migration, and then from the end of 2018 under the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, which designed a new migration policy to respond to this growing group of migrants. These actions took place in the context of the Trump Administration's threats to build a border wall and the pressures the US leadership exerted on Mexico, including the 2019 threat to impose tariffs if Mexico did not collaborate in containing the flow of irregular migrants, an issue that presented Mexico with challenges at the domestic, bilateral and regional levels.

First, we addressed the environment created by the political, economic and social push factors that compelled many inhabitants of Central America's Northern Triangle to migrate in caravans in order to minimise the risks encountered on their journey towards the United States. Second, we examined the way in which Mexico, primarily under the López Obrador government, implemented—in both the National Development Plan and the New Migration Policy—a policy that was open to migration and fostered a human development perspective, in line with the country's international commitments in the GCM and the GCR. However, in 2019, facing pressure from the Trump administration, Mexico reversed this policy and began containing migrants at the country's southern border thanks to the deployment of the National Guard. Mexico also became the recipient of all such migrants seeking asylum in the United States, who have been obliged to remain on the country's northern border until their situation has been resolved, with Mexico functioning as a 'safe third country'.

We reviewed the most important mechanism that Mexico has promoted to find a long-term solution to emigration from the NTCA, the Comprehensive Development Plan for Northern Central America and Mexico (Plan de Desarrollo Integral del norte de Centroamérica y México), drafted by ECLAC. In our initial evaluation of the PDI we recognise that it provides good analysis and proposes four axes of action to respond to the precariousness and defencelessness of irregular migrants; these actions are closely linked to many of the SDGs of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This represents an opportunity that should be contemplated operationally, establishing a road map for gradually moving forward.

The set of elements outlined above allows us to see the contradictions in the Mexican government's actions, as well as the lack of coherence between the proposals to foster regional development and Mexico's migration policies. Mexico followed the course imposed by the Trump administration for the containment and exclusion of migrants, but progress must now be made

in coordinating asylum policies if they are to be pursued effectively, and this must be done on the basis of reciprocity between Mexico and the US. While the June 2019 agreement also included other commitments related to assistance for migrants, including joint efforts to dismantle human trafficking networks, US co-operation on the PDI has not materialised. The US has not provided the agreed economic resources to contribute to economic development in the Northern Triangle countries, development that might prevent people from migrating and being subjected to violence, common and organised crime, and extortion by human trafficking networks.

In 2019, actions were initiated to implement the PDI through the 'Sembrando Vida' ('Sowing Life') programme for farmers and the youth-oriented 'Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro' ('Youth Building the Future') programme. However, one year on, no progress had been made because of a lack of resources (Pradilla, 2020; Prado Lallande, 2020).

Mexico has also strengthened its collaboration with UN agencies. For example, in coordination with UNHCR migrant shelters were evaluated in order to improve their services and with the aim of influencing local and federal authorities in Mexico to design and improve public policies for migrants.

The migration crisis and the deteriorating economic and security situations, together with the COVID-19 health crisis, are affecting institutions and public policies in a way that foreshadows more complex situations in all areas. This is why we believe that international co-operation will have to be even more decisive and forthcoming if it is to facilitate regular and circular migration, where migrants' skills and abilities are put to good use and contribute, upon their return, to the development of their communities of origin. As de la Mora Salcedo points out, in political matters there has to be a real and comprehensive strengthening of institutions. Both the National Institute of Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración) and the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comisión Mexicana para Atención a Refugiados) require more staff specialised in migration and human rights, and more economic resources, in order to carry out the tasks assigned to them, with respect for the human rights of migrants and the integral development of Central America at their core.

In terms of human rights, international migration is an emblematic area for learning about good practices and the policy implementation of international instruments (protocols, conventions, etc.). Human rights violations are widespread and much remains to be done to ensure migrants' security and respect for their human rights.

Another challenge that must be urgently addressed is the adverse reactions of various parts of the Mexican population that, as mentioned above,

have been developing negative and xenophobic attitudes towards migrants. The realities of being a country of destination, refuge and transit have not yet permeated public opinion in many Mexican communities, and xenophobic and intolerant slogans targeting migrant caravans are manifest. A survey of public opinion already mentioned in this chapter (Abundis, 2020) shows that Mexicans have highly negative attitudes towards Central American migrants. This indicates the need for the Mexican government to make a concerted effort to develop policies for the integration of migrants and refugees. The challenge is to develop multidimensional public policies in the economic, social, political and human rights spheres to guarantee the well-being, dignity and respect of these migrant communities.

It is also imperative to recognise that the year 2020 will go down in history for the havoc that the global spread of COVID-19 wreaked, with the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives, illness, unemployment and a state of collective anxiety that led to high levels of violence. This situation obliges those of us who have remained healthy and kept our jobs to recognise, first of all, that among the most vulnerable are precisely those irregular migrants, refugees, displaced persons and the thousands of people who have not been repatriated, who have lost their sources of livelihood or the hope of starting a new life elsewhere.

Furthermore, it obliges us to build bridges of solidarity to support them wherever we can: as academics and as a substantive part of civil society we can explore new alternatives such as promoting more international research projects that are underpinned by strategic alliances with the activism of human rights organisations, to help preclude policy improvisation and to remedy the lack of experience of various stakeholders. We believe this would help to properly manage the complex phenomenon of human mobility that many countries, Mexico included, will continue to face.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed us on an accelerated learning curve that was never foreseen or imagined, one on which we have learned that irregular migration remains an unmet challenge for humanity. In this logic, the innovative and committed promotion of development is now a *sine qua non* for a better world.

Meanwhile, objective living conditions in the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America are driving the population to leave their countries of origin. These push factors, related to the disparities created by globalisation and reflected in precarious political, social and economic conditions, together with natural phenomena and high levels of violence, compel Central Americans to flee their places of origin, seeking a better standard of living—in short, the American dream.

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# Blocking the Spread of COVID-19: Global Border Closure Policies in Central America and Mexico

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## Abstract

One of the main actions implemented globally to control the COVID-19 pandemic has been the restriction of population mobility, by closing borders (aerial, terrestrial and maritime), restricting circulation, and ordering mandatory confinement. Latin America has been no exception, and various countries in the region have implemented, among other measures, border closures and curfew policies. Other countries, such as Mexico, have opted instead for persuasive measures appealing to the good will of the populace, asking them to stay at home and practice frequent handwashing, and have provided the public with daily information regarding the current state of the pandemic. It is to be expected that interventions that fall at either of the two extreme ends of this spectrum lead to different effects on the behaviour of the pandemic. This study aims to analyse the pandemic response measures of border closure and internal mobility restriction, and their relation to the behaviour of the COVID-19 pandemic (by case number trends), comparing Central American countries and Mexico. A document analysis was conducted, using official government publications and mass communication channels that provided information on actions taken to control COVID-19, as well as epidemiological reports from each country. The epidemic curve, which reflects confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, was not significantly different between the Central American countries, which mostly implemented border closures and curfews, and Mexico, which did not. Mandatory border closures and restrictions on internal mobility in Central American countries—with the exceptions of Nicaragua, which imposed neither, and Costa Rica, which imposed border controls but only minimal internal restrictions—were found to constitute human rights violations.

## 1 Introduction

Despite recent health emergencies in various regions the world over (WHO, 2017), the magnitude of the health and economic consequences of

COVID-19, including in developed countries, has taken the entire world by surprise (Bauman, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the scientific and technical developments of the modern world still lack the capacity to prevent and take on massive health catastrophes. Much like when faced with similar challenges in premodern times, human survival is effectively still a question of individual immune capacity and the individual and collective options available for risk management.

From the onset of the pandemic, the global response has been characterised by a common thread. Between February and March of 2020, just days after the first COVID-19 cases were identified, governments of 70 countries around the world turned to health and sanitation measures that have been used since before the birth of Christ: borders were closed (ports, airports and any mode of physical cross-border travel) and individuals were placed under mandatory confinement, complete with sanctions for lack of compliance (*Onda Cero*, 2020; Coloma, 2020; De Gracia, 2020; Municipal Council of Panama, 2020; Cárdenas and Corro Ríos, 2020; Sequeira, 2020; López, 2020). The argument that reducing population movement would help slow viral transmission and consequently allow short-term control of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 was used to justify these policies.

In the initial phase, the spread of the pandemic was explained by the arrival of 'imported cases' (WHO, 2020b; PAHO, 2020), mainly originating from China; but very soon Italian, French, German, Spanish and Mexican cases were identified, as well as cases from a long list of other countries. The rapid and frequent movement of the global population, which is integral to the modern social dynamic, was not factored in. This is why when measures such as border closures and population confinement were finally announced, the virus had already been identified in multiple regions of the world, with a presence initially concentrated in countries with greater human mobility. In 2018, 4 billion 233 million people around the world travelled by air (World Bank, 2020c); most (51.2 per cent) travelled to or from Europe, China or the United States. In contrast, Central America and Mexico contributed only 1.9 per cent of global air travel passengers (World Bank, 2020a).

This explanation of the global spread of COVID-19 mirrors the reflections of Cipolla in his *Who Broke the Gates of Monte Lupo?* (*Chi ruppe i rastelli a Monte Lupo?*), set in a small, walled Tuscan village crippled by the plague between 1630 and 1631 (Cipolla, 1984). Today, much like in those days, political decisions made to address COVID-19 have led to the closure of 'the gates' and the isolation of families. Like the authorities in those days, today's figures have in some cases

promoted fiscal reform to relieve the poverty of the people, but found a strong opposition by the wealthy families of the population, who refused to contribute their money to alleviate the costs stemming from the pandemic. As a result of this situation, the social fabric is deteriorating, the poor are being forced to abandon their homes, and thievery and looting is rampant [...] meanwhile, the plague continues to decimate the population.

TORNAFOCH, 2020

Despite the predominance of border closure policies throughout most of the world, some governments took other positions or, for any number of reasons, did not choose to adopt this measure as a tool for pandemic control (Paterlini, 2020). The Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and Mexico, who share borders as well as a history of robust intra-regional population movement, took different approaches to one another. The Central American countries implemented border closures, including the closure of ports and airports; Nicaragua has been the only Central America country to neither close its borders nor impose other restrictions. Most also took more drastic measures such as military curfews in their interiors; again, Nicaragua is an exception, as is Costa Rica, which only imposed voluntary isolation measures and restricted circulation by vehicle. Mexico, meanwhile, did not implement border closures or mandatory confinement policies; rather, its actions focused on informing, sensitising and persuading the population of the importance of social distancing.

It is to be expected that the implementation of differing measures among countries would yield differing results as far as the epidemiological behaviour of the COVID-19 pandemic is concerned. The present case study analyses the country-level measures implemented to control the pandemic in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and Mexico, and observes their effects on the spread of COVID-19, from the first reported case until December of 2020. Contrary to expectations, the behaviour of COVID-19 in each country was relatively similar.

## 2 Methods

A comparative case study was performed between Central American countries and Mexico, each of which implemented different policies to control the COVID-19 pandemic. A document analysis was conducted on statements made via electronic communication channels, public policy statements and

government websites reporting information related to COVID-19. The period of analysis begins on the date of the first registered COVID-19 case for each country, and ends in December 2020.

A content analysis was conducted to identify convergences and divergences between actions implemented by the countries of interest. The following analytic categories were applied: reasons or motives justifying border closures (when, why, for how long, what the desired result was), and the translation of these statements or orders into specific control measures with regard to both internal and international population mobility.

The content analysis studied information taken from daily Internet publications of official government sources and other mass communication channels found using the search engine Google. Epidemiological information was obtained from official reports released by the health ministry of each country. The socio-economic situation of each country at the onset of the pandemic was also characterised. All analysed information was publicly available, and ethical guidelines to guarantee the anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy of sources were observed.

### 3 Results

The analysis allowed the characterisation of the form in which global pandemic control measures were adopted nationally, difficulties regarding their implementation, and unwanted effects on human rights. Most Central American countries imposed mandatory measures restricting population movement. These included the closure of aerial, terrestrial and maritime borders, as well as school closures, the suspension of public events, general restrictions on international travel and the implementation of work-from-home policies except in essential sectors. The Mexican and Nicaraguan governments did not adopt any of these measures (Table 11.1).

Table 11.1 shows that the implementation of internal mobility restrictions differed between Central American countries. The governments involved crafted and disseminated arguments to justify the implementation of mobility restriction measures aimed at containing COVID-19. Nevertheless, little to nothing was explained regarding the management of externalisation effects or the unwanted consequences that affected resident populations as well as mobile groups in border areas. The following sections outline the processes undertaken by governments to impose control measures and selected consequences of these processes and measures that have changed the dynamics of social, commercial and political interactions.

TABLE 11.1 Measures implemented to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Central America and Mexico, 2020

	Measures altering internal mobility				Measures altering external mobility		
	Curfew	Ban on large gatherings	Restriction of constitutional rights law	National-level home quarantine policy	Entry ban on foreigners	Bordure closure	Border controls
Mexico							
Costa Rica		+	+	+	+	+	+
El Salvador	+	+		+	+	+	+
Guatemala	+	+			+	+	+
Honduras	+	+			+	+	+
Nicaragua							
Panama	+	+		+	+	+	+

SOURCE: AUTHORS, BASED ON INFORMATION FROM ECLAC (2020)

### 3.1 *Costa Rica*

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Days later, the government of Costa Rica adopted 'immediate and efficacious measures to confront the current circumstances' and on 16 March declared a 'national state of emergency' (Government of Costa Rica, 2020e).

In this context, the government ordered an evaluation of the current national and international epidemiological situation in order to inform potential migration-based health measures as part of the actions essential for controlling the emergent pandemic. Clinical characteristics of COVID-19 infection (symptomatic and asymptomatic) were factored into the assessment of a potential saturation of healthcare services. On 19 March, with 87 confirmed cases (Ministry of Health Costa Rica, 2020), the government imposed entry restrictions on foreigners and declared by executive order that 'only Costa Ricans and foreigners possessing a Special Category, Temporary Residency, or Permanent Residency in Costa Rica and who exited the country prior to March 24th, 2020 may enter national territory'. In this way, tourists were temporarily banned from entering the country. Furthermore, the general population was urged to practise voluntary isolation and restrictions were ordered

on vehicular circulation (Ministry of Public Works and Transportation and Ministry of Health Costa Rica, 2020).

During the first three months of the national state of emergency, Costa Rica was considered to be among the Latin American countries that were handling the pandemic best (Brooks, 2020). This perception was reversed several months later in July of 2020 when COVID-19 cases spiked, particularly in the lowest socio-economic stratum consisting mainly of migrants working in agriculture near the border with Nicaragua and inhabitants of areas with the highest rates of poverty and overcrowding (Murillo, 2020).

As case numbers increased, the policing of aerial, terrestrial and maritime borders hardened in response to popular demands calling, with a high degree of xenophobia, for the 'protection' of the border with Nicaragua and of the country as a whole in the face of the pandemic (Adhanom and Etienne, 2020). The Costa Rican government responded with a large police deployment for border control (Government of Costa Rica, 2020a), despite relatively low reported case numbers on the other side of that border.

The actions taken at the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua strained the already fragile diplomatic relationship between the two countries and negatively affected Nicaraguans residing in Costa Rica (Directorate of Integration and Human Development Costa Rica, 2017). The border closure also meant greater barriers for asylum seekers, who have increased significantly in number since the political crisis of the 2018 Daniel Ortega Administration in Nicaragua. Furthermore, although the government expressed its commitment to provide care to all individuals who display COVID-19 symptoms, it released an order not to provide care to undocumented migrants (Ugarte, 2020), which was subsequently revoked (Ruíz, 2020).

The border closure measure was amended in the final months of 2020 to allow the opening of airports (Government of Costa Rica, 2020b), and more relaxed control measures for those entering the country by air (elimination of COVID-19 PCR testing requirements at ingress, with the aim of incentivising tourism). Nevertheless, land borders remained closed (General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners Costa Rica, 2020; Madrigal, 2021). This contrasts with the fact that the first 'imported' cases entered the country by air.

### 3.2 *El Salvador*

On 14 March, 2020, the government of the Republic of El Salvador released Order No. 593, approved by the Legislative Assembly, which declared a 'State of National Emergency, State of Public Catastrophe and Natural Disaster due to the COVID-19 pandemic [...] for a period of thirty (30) days [...] as a result of the risk and immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic' (Legislative

Assembly El Salvador, 2020); this was later extended to 1 May 2020. This order prohibited the entry of all foreigners to the country with the exception of permanent residents and diplomats, whereas Salvadorean citizens outside the country were required to submit to quarantine or clinical testing to determine whether or not they were infected with COVID-19 upon returning home.

According to estimates by the Salvadorean government, if the rate of COVID-19 transmission was to continue unchecked—confirmed cases numbered just three on the date of the order—cases would rise to 768 by 14 April and to 49,152 by 3 May. The worst-case scenario, as calculated by the Executive Head of Government, was a potential 3,145,728 cases by 20 May 2021. From this position, the government justified ‘taking rapid measures to slow this progressive curve’ including border closures and the declaration of exceptional circumstances due to the health emergency; the government subsequently noted that both measures were ‘highly successful’ (*Hoy*, 2020).

Many of the numerous, often undocumented, migrants who transit Mexico toward the United States originate in El Salvador. Mexican migration authorities routinely deport Salvadorean migrants, and in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic the Mexican government has continued the deportation process using vehicles, which cross the land border. The Salvadorean government, meanwhile, has rejected Salvadorean migrants returned from third countries upon arrival, using the COVID-19 border closure policies as its justification (Mariscal, 2020). By 17 March 2020, the national government had ordered ‘the immediate closure of the arrival runway of the Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero International Airport of El Salvador, and announced that those flights already on their way to the airport must turn away’ (*BBC News*, 2020). The government of El Salvador blocked the landing of an airplane originating from Mexico and with it the entry of Salvadorean citizens, citing that on board were ‘12 individuals infected with COVID-19’, thereby provoking diplomatic tension between Mexico and El Salvador.

For the resident population of the country, actions to control internal mobility were intensified with the application of sanctions, including incarceration, for those who did not comply with the regulations.

### 3.3 *Guatemala*

On 6 March 2020, the President of the Republic of Guatemala declared a state of ‘Public Catastrophe’, in accordance with the WHO’s statement that the COVID-19 pandemic was a global public health emergency (Government of Guatemala, 2020c). Soon after, the country’s first case of COVID-19 having already been confirmed, the President of the Republic broadcast by radio and television the measures that would be implemented ‘to mitigate COVID-19

transmission' (Ministry of Social Development Guatemala, 2020; Government of Guatemala, 2020a).

These measures, effective from 17 to 31 March 2020 with the promise that they would be re-evaluated one week later, included 15 prohibitions affecting labour, the socio-economic and cultural spheres, and population mobility and healthcare services. Regarding labour, work activities were suspended in both public and private institutions. In the social sphere, educational, cultural, religious, sporting and entertainment events were prohibited; visits to detention centres and facilities for the elderly were prohibited; commercial centres, bars, nightclubs and all other types of entertainment venue were closed; and all types of commercial establishment were closed between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m., with the exception of pharmacies, petrol stations and establishments offering essential services. The sale of alcoholic beverages was prohibited between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. Furthermore, the operation of urban and intra-urban public transport, as well as the entry of foreigners into the country, was suspended, and all aerial, terrestrial and maritime borders were closed. Outpatient healthcare services were restricted—external consultations were prohibited—in order to allocate resources to COVID-19-related emergencies, and bans were put in place to prevent the hoarding of basic goods and medicines (Government of Guatemala, 2020b).

The border closures did not apply to cargo transport, which could still enter and exit Guatemalan territory by air, land or sea. Entry by individuals was prohibited for anyone arriving from the People's Republic of China (and anyone who had been in that country during the previous month), Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Iran, Korea, the UK or Japan, and for all Salvadoreans independently of their immediate provenance. Nonetheless, citizens and residents (temporary or permanent) of Guatemala, as well as those working for diplomatic bodies, were authorised to enter freely, independently of their immediate provenance, with the stipulation of an obligatory quarantine period. The closures were quasi absolute for entry into the country; exit by land was, however, freely permitted (Guatemalan Migration Institute, 2020).

Following up on these measures, on 21 March 2020 the Congress of the Republic issued a new order, Order No. 8-2020, which extended the declared state of catastrophe.

### 3.4 *Honduras*

The Honduran government responded to the pandemic by issuing executive order PCM-021-2020, whose objective was to 'avoid the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus' by way of ordering 'the closure of aerial, terrestrial, and maritime borders in national territory [...] except for the entry of Hondurans and



residents (temporary or permanent) and the diplomatic body accredited in the country'. Conditions were placed on entry, including a mandatory quarantine period, in accordance with the guidelines of the Health Secretary. Initially, the order was to take effect for seven days beginning at its issuance on 16 March 2020 (Government of Honduras, 2020).

Beyond border closures, this order imposed significant restrictions and sanctions on internal mobility within the national territory, establishing that the Armed Forces, National Police, National Direction for Research and Intelligence of the Interinstitutional National Force (FUSINA) and other institutions must 'detain any person found circulating in public areas outside of the established exceptions' (Government of Honduras, 2020, Article 6). At the time this order was issued, six COVID-19 cases had been registered in the country.

On the day following the release of the order (17 March 2020), governmental actions restricting and controlling internal population mobility intensified, and the press was informed that

[c]onfirmed cases of COVID-19 climbed to nine and, to avoid the continued spread of the virus, curfews were extended indefinitely in four regions [...] the Security Ministry indicated that this measure will be applied [...] and that absolutely no one will be permitted to circulate freely in the streets.

DEUTSCHE WELLE, 2020d

Initially this measure was applied to inhabitants of the Central District (Tegucigalpa and Comayagüela), the city of Choluteca, La Ceiba in the department of Atlántida, and San Pedro Sula. The measures limiting internal mobility of the population were initially proposed for seven days; at the time of writing, however, they remain in force (*Europa Press*, 2021). The reopening of land borders with neighbouring countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua) occurred seven months after the closure (at the beginning of the fourth week of October 2020) (*La Vanguardia*, 2020), by which time an estimated 80,000 individuals had been affected by COVID-19.

### 3.5 *Nicaragua*

In Nicaragua, official and publicly accessible information on the COVID-19 pandemic was scarce. According to available data, the Nicaraguan government did not restrict cross-border movement, impose quarantines or suspend work or academic activities or those involving mass gatherings. The president declared that 'the fight against COVID-19 in Nicaragua has been possible thanks to the health model put in place, which is oriented toward prevention' (Álvarez,

2020). According to this health model, the Ministry of Citizen Power for Health ordered that those individuals not showing COVID-19 symptoms would not be restricted in their mobility or circulation, even if they arrived from countries with a high risk of transmission (Ministry of Health Nicaragua, 2020).

Official numbers show that the containment plan implemented in Nicaragua has been a success. However, the information provided through official channels has been highly criticised by a number of regional groups (including the Central American Integration System (SICA)) and international entities (including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)) that have called on the government to review and reinforce preventive actions (*Deutsche Welle*, 2020a). The government's response to these calls was to promote and conserve the current dynamic with no further social distancing measures, with the aim of protecting the national economy. For its part, civil society promoted voluntary social distancing through the 'Stay at home' ('Quédate en casa') campaign. This was deemed 'radical and extreme' by the country's president, who also stated that 'here, if we stop working, the country dies, the community dies' (Romero, 2020).

In this context, countries with land borders with Nicaragua tightened their control mechanisms and increased police deployment, with Costa Rica blocking the entry of more than 15,580 Nicaraguans between March and June of 2020 (Government of Costa Rica, 2020c). In response to the restrictions imposed by the Costa Rican authorities, the government of Nicaragua opted to close its borders to commercial activity and block the transit of merchandise to and from Costa Rica (*Deutsche Welle*, 2020b), which heavily impacted Central American commerce.

### 3.6 Panama

On 12 March 2020, Panama declared a state of emergency, leading to the implementation of a series of COVID-19 containment measures. It was among the countries in the region that applied the greatest number of different measures, some national and others by province (including mandatory quarantine, mobility restriction in public areas by day of the week and by sex, a curfew starting at 5:00 p.m., and a ban on circulating on Sundays). Then, on 18 March an order was issued to close the borders (SICA, 2020b).

The measures implemented in Panama affected Operation Controlled Flow ('Operación Flujo Controlado'), resulting in the retention of over 1,500 migrants in Darién province—in March, in overcrowded conditions, with a lack of resources for food and personal hygiene—with great uncertainty surrounding the response of the Panamanian government (IOM, 2020a, 2020b). The measures also affected the transit of freight to Costa Rican territory.

For this reason, a binational pilot plan was enacted between Costa Rica and Panama, but it did not factor in the Regional Coronavirus Contingency Plan approved by SICA (Government of Costa Rica, 2020d). Despite this binational agreement, the opening of the terrestrial border between the two countries occurred only after the opening of the aerial border, similarly to other countries in the region (*Deutsche Welle*, 2020c).

With regard to the epidemiological situation and COVID-19 case detection, Panama was one of the Central American countries with the greatest number of clinical tests carried out (Lima, 2020) and, consequently, the greatest number of positive cases reported. The largest proportion of cases was detected in indigenous areas in the Ngabe Buglé district, Bocas del Toro and the border at Peñas Blancas, as well as the peripheral, rural zones. This led the Ministry of Governance, alongside the Ministry of Health, to mobilise resources to improve basic services and infrastructure to strengthen the health response capacity in the 12 indigenous territories of the country (OHCHR, 2020).

### 3.7 *Mexico*

Near the end of February 2020, the Mexican health authorities declared their alignment with the guidelines issued by the WHO. The Secretary of Health defined three phases and established COVID-19 control mechanisms corresponding to each phase. Phase one, where registered COVID-19 cases were strictly imported and with isolated outbreaks (cases numbering in the dozens), did not initiate restrictions on international travel into the national territory, but required screenings consisting of temperature checks and health questionnaires for those arriving from countries with active transmission (Health Secretary Mexico, 2020d). Campaigns were implemented advocating handwashing with soap and water, noting that this could reduce the number of respiratory infections by up to 20 per cent; ‘courtesy sneezes’ (into the crook of the elbow) or sneezing into a disposable handkerchief thrown away immediately afterwards, followed by handwashing; staying home if sick and using a face mask if it was necessary to leave home in order to seek medical attention; and resting for rapid recovery from illness (Health Secretary Mexico, 2020a). In phase two, marked by localised community transmission of the virus (cases numbering in the hundreds)—for example, in schools, neighbourhoods or workplaces (Government of Mexico, 2020)—the Mexican government implemented the National Safe Distance Campaign (*‘Jornada Nacional de Sana Distancia’*) and called on individuals to voluntary stay at home whenever possible (Health Secretary Mexico, 2020c). Phase three implied regional outbreaks (widescale propagation, with virus transmission across the country and cases numbering in the thousands), and was addressed by intensifying calls for safe

distancing and stay-home practices, in addition to the suspension of non-essential activities (Health Secretary Mexico, 2020b).

These measures were designed according to the characteristics of each phase and knowledge gained from the experiences of those countries affected earlier by the virus; they were broadcast to the public through official channels (institutional social networks) and various modes of mass communication. The goal was to inform and to create an impact with regard to the behaviours of the population, in order to mitigate the epidemic (Leyva et al., 2020): to reduce the number of infections, halt the advancement of the disease, and lower hospitalisation numbers (Health Secretary Mexico, 2020c), in order to avoid the collapse of the health system (Martín-Moreno, 2020).

In addition, the Mexican government—as did other countries—opened a formal communication channel in the form of daily evening press conferences, in which a spokesperson for the health sector (the Subsecretary of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion) provided information on the pandemic situation at the global and the local level, and the corresponding social and institutional responses and/or those that would be required for transmission control, based on the available scientific evidence. These conferences were broadcast via television channels, and YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other platforms.

#### **4 Effects of the Actions Implemented to Control the COVID-19 Pandemic in Central America and Mexico**

Mexico was the first country in the region to officially report a COVID-19 case, on 27 February 2020, while Nicaragua was the last, on 19 March. Thirty days after reporting its first case, Panama was the country to report the highest increase, with a total of 2,200 cumulative cases, trailed distantly by Mexico with 848 registered cases. At the end of the first trimester, Mexico, with 78,023 cases detected, showed 92 times the number of registered cases it had during the first month; Costa Rica was the country with the lowest growth in caseload between the first and third month (2.6-fold). When contrasting the ninth month with the first, Mexico can be found at one extreme, with its 1,286-fold caseload increase, while El Salvador showed the lowest increase (227-fold); no information was available for Panama in the ninth month (Table 11.2).

A trend analysis of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, as shown in Figure 11.1, allows a common trend to be observed across all countries during the first three months of the pandemic. This common trend remained constant during the first six months, with the exception of Panama, which

TABLE 11.2 Evolution of confirmed COVID-19 cases in 2020, Central America and Mexico

Country	First registered case (between 27 February and 19 March 2020)	Months after the first registered case				
		1	2	3	6	9
Costa Rica	1	454	755	1,194	47,947	145,845
El Salvador	1	190	1,413	4,066	27,420	43,195
Guatemala	1	181	1,389	9,607	82,136	129,427
Honduras	1	382	1,736	6,450	65,802	112,337
Mexico	1	848	15,529	78,023	579,914	1,090,675
Nicaragua	1	10	25	1,823	4,961	5,938
Panama	1	2,200	7,900	16,000	79,400	NA <sup>a</sup>

a NA: Not available.

SOURCE: AUTHORS, BASED ON INFORMATION FROM THE SECRETARIES AND MINISTRIES OF HEALTH OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND MEXICO

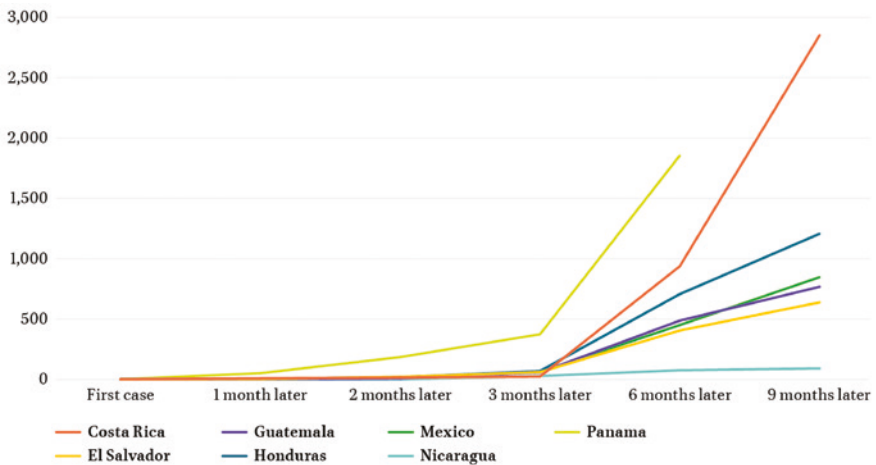


FIGURE 11.1 Trends of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020, Central America and Mexico

SOURCE: AUTHORS, BASED ON INFORMATION FROM THE SECRETARIES AND MINISTRIES OF HEALTH OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND MEXICO

registered a much faster growth in caseload than the other countries (despite significant restrictions on population mobility). At the final measurement point, nine months from the first registered case, Costa Rica registered the greatest rate (2,853.4 per 100,000 inhabitants), almost 2.4 times greater than the country in second place, Honduras, which showed a rate of 1,207.5.

## 5 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that (using available official data) the behaviour of the pandemic has not been substantially different between the Central American countries that applied mandatory public confinement policies—curfews—along with mobility restriction measures and border closures and Mexico and Nicaragua, which opted to keep borders open and allow free internal circulation.

Through these results, we can infer that in Central America actions such as border closures and control of the population's mobility, along with others that view neighbouring countries as a source of risk (Embassy of Italy in Spain, 2021), functioned as relatively symbolic and/or political measures, with significant repercussions for human rights and commerce while not serving to control the pandemic. Although the traditional epidemiological perspective has established the restriction and control of population movement as the foundation of containment measures for infectious diseases, among these SARS-CoV-2 (Honigsbaum, 2017), evidence in support of this position is scarce. Human rights violations linked to COVID-19 measures were experienced in addition to difficulties already experienced by migrants in multiple contexts (Anderson, 2012). Nonetheless, they could constitute a window of opportunity in which to spark dialogue on the politics around migration, particularly in developed countries (Czaika and De-Haas, 2013).

International population movement at the global level can be found to have links with immediate disease transmission; however, this fact cannot lead to the mechanical response of imposing border closures as an effective disease control measure, above all when taking account of the high-density, pace, and concentration of movement that directly correlate with the regions of greatest global economic movement (World Bank, 2020a). These regions may be 'origin points' and facilitators of a global 'exportation process', as has been the case with the COVID-19 pandemic, where the geographical regions with the greatest economic and population movement coincide directly with the origin and dissemination of the pandemic. In such circumstances, border closures

will always be belated and ineffective in containing the global distribution of infections with high transmission rates, as has been the case with COVID-19.

In the countries analysed—Mexico and the countries of Central America—mobility levels are very low by global standards. These countries may consider themselves to be predominantly sites of destination for global populations, although this contrasts with the way international migrants, many living in undocumented conditions, identify these places as countries of origin. These mobile groups are assigned a role equivalent to vectors (transmitters of infectious or pathogenic agents), upon which must be imposed rigorous procedures of maximum restriction of movement with the aim of controlling the spread of risk (Leyva, 2018). This contrasts with other mobile populations globally—tourists, businessmen and -women, diplomats, Europeans, Americans, Asians, etc.—which do not represent a societal ‘risk’ to their intended destinations. This perspective may help explain the differential application of mobility control measures between these groups, as well as the priority given to reopening Central American airports to flights arriving from Europe and the United States (not Latin America), despite the fact that the first ‘imported’ cases were registered as having entered by air from these same locations; meanwhile, land borders remained closed.

Border closure measures are consistent with the International Health Regulations (WHO, 2005), which emphasise the importance of applying health control measures, particularly in ‘terrestrial border’ crossings since they may be the setting for the informal transit of individuals, who are cast as propagators of disease (WHO, 2020a). In contrast, those transiting ports and airports are assumed to be subject to better ‘control’ and security that governs their movement. These priorities serve to reveal stigma and xenophobic or discriminatory attitudes as common factors in the politics of mobility control, politics whose rationale and objective go beyond the dimension of health measures for disease prevention. These global health policies, based in a national security perspective, contradict other global governance frameworks, such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to reduce inequalities, stigma and discrimination, seek local and global alliances to confront social and health challenges, and in the case of migration work towards its safe, orderly and regular management.

During the first phase of the pandemic, ‘imported’ cases of COVID-19 were attributable to socio-economically privileged groups—those that moved in airplanes and cruise ships—and this was used as a justification for the closure of ports and airports. Once the pandemic continued its ‘natural’ course, the affected groups multiplied and, mirroring the distribution of poverty, the lowest income strata came to be the main group affected by COVID-19 (World

Bank, 2020b). Measures to restrict internal population mobility within countries became countries' principal preventative action.

The majority of Central American countries applied mandatory measures to restrict population mobility, which in extreme cases included the declaration of exceptional circumstances due to the health emergency and curfew policies for populations living in conditions of high social vulnerability. Over 50 per cent of the populations of these countries live in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty, with high rates of unemployment or underemployment and endemic violence, no social security, and governmental institutions with very limited response capacity for the provision of social support to communities (World Bank, 2021). Added to this is the low social credibility of these institutions, which, long before the pandemic, represented significant challenges for the governance and functionality of public administration.

Furthermore, border closures generated a series of unwanted consequences, among which were the weakening of regional institutions and an increase in political tensions between countries. SICA formulated a Regional Coronavirus Contingency Plan (SICA, 2020a), which could have constituted a political instrument to facilitate collaboration between countries and to optimise the use of limited available resources, although it prioritised aspects of commerce as opposed to other relevant areas such as mobility, migration, human rights and health. Countries opted for a focus on national response in favour of regional agreements, generating 'outbreaks' of confrontation between governments and straining diplomatic relations; this included discrediting countries for their handling of the pandemic, and blocking the transit of individuals in border zones, which, contrary to the desired effect, provoked a massive grouping of individuals and potentially contributed to the transmission of COVID-19. The distancing and the minimal collaboration between governments were symptoms of a global strategy based in national security, which relegated regionally constructed health initiatives to a secondary position. Under these conditions, the pandemic maintained its course, independently of border closures and other measures to reduce the internal mobility of the populace.

Information available on the topic of global mobility, comprised of millions of people moving daily all over the world, questions the rationale of border closures and the declaration of exceptional circumstances when confronting health matters. Despite this, history repeats itself, and the experiences of the seventeenth-century inhabitants of Montelupo have now been scaled up to the global level; political motives and socio-economic and health effects today are no different than they were four hundred years ago. The experiences of Central American communities who have suffered particularly intense mobility control measures in El Salvador and Honduras constitute human rights violations



that we thought were behind us, that we thought we had moved past with our notions of modernity and ‘progress’ (Bauman, 2012, 2014). In Mexico, where no border closures or mandatory confinements were imposed, the spread of the pandemic was similar to that observed in Central America, without the consequence of the rights violations evident in other countries.

## 6 Conclusions

Border closures, mandatory confinements and declarations of exceptional circumstances due to the health emergency contributed to the exacerbation of fragile relationships between governments and societies, created human rights violations, and deepened the poor social dynamics already prevalent in the Central American region. Meanwhile, the pandemic maintained its course, despite restrictive measures implemented to reduce the internal mobility of populations.

Border closures and mandatory confinement policies have not contributed to controlling the spread of COVID-19. No differences were observed in the trends for caseload, adjusted for population, between countries who implemented these actions and those who opted not to.

Countries that, like El Salvador, applied extremely severe measures (a country-wide military curfew and the activation of the restrictions on constitutional rights laws) reported similar COVID-19 case numbers as Mexico, a country that focused its response on providing information and appealing to the population to voluntarily reduce mobility.

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# Migration and the 2030 Agenda in Argentina

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## Abstract

The United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute the most ambitious development agenda agreed upon at the global level, with an integrated and indivisible approach to economic, social and environmental dimensions. All 17 SDGs, and initiatives to achieve them, have a direct impact on the well-being of migrant populations—which is reinforced through the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

Argentina has been receiving and welcoming migrants for many years and has in place favourable regulations on migration, such as equal access to social services. Migrants have made important contributions to the construction of Argentina and to its development process, in social, economic and cultural matters.

The country, however, faces major challenges related to overcoming structural deficits, reducing social inequality, achieving economic and productive development and achieving the SDGs. These challenges were heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to migrants, overcoming inequality when it comes to their incorporation into and full participation in the labour market—as well as to other deficits affecting them, such as poverty and housing conditions—is a matter for the public agenda if the country is to achieve the full inclusion of migrants and to comply with the 2030 Agenda's criterion of leaving no one behind.

Argentina has shown that it is interested in the well-being of migrants and has recognised their contribution to development and the shaping of its society. This is reflected in the deployment of public policies that have a positive impact on the living conditions of the migrant population. But it is also evident in the approach that the country has taken to the 2030 Agenda, which constitutes the main framework for development and for facing pending challenges.

## 1 Introduction

Argentina has been receiving and welcoming migrants for many years and has in place favourable regulations on migration, such as equal access to social services. The country, however, faces major challenges related to overcoming

structural deficits, reducing social inequality, achieving economic and productive development and achieving the SDGs. These challenges were heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global and continental political and economic transformations that have taken place in recent decades have accelerated intra-regional human mobility in South America. In the Southern Cone, some countries are mainly recipients of migration (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) whereas others are clear net expellers of migrants (Venezuela, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay), with the expelled mainly going to Argentina.

Simultaneously, development theories are being intensely debated, both because of challenges to conventional economic development ideas, based on alternative development approaches related to sustainable development, the feminist economy, etc., and because of conceptualisations of disciplines related basically to practical philosophy. Thus, the concept of development has become more heterogeneous and the debate more complex, with new perspectives and dimensions (the green economy, circular economy, technology revolution and 'capitalism with human face').

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute the most ambitious development agenda agreed upon at the global level, with an integrated and indivisible approach to economic, social and environmental dimensions. This chapter will address the characterisation of the migrant population in Argentina. It will also analyse that population's living conditions, as well as public policies that impacted migrants from 2015 to 2020 within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) (UNGA, 2019), recognising that these instruments' contribution to public management in the field lies in their capacity to operationalise government goals in the form of indicators, and in the political agreements struck for this purpose. Argentina has shown that it is interested in the well-being of migrants and has recognised their contribution to development and the shaping of its society. This is reflected in the deployment of public policies, such as access to education and healthcare, that have a positive impact on the living conditions of the migrant population. But it is also evident in the approach that the country has taken to the 2030 Agenda, which constitutes the main framework, approved by the Argentinian government in 2015, for development and for facing pending challenges.

Argentina faces challenges related to overcoming structural deficits, reducing social inequality, and economic development within the framework of the SDGs. These challenges, heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, are linked directly to social inclusion and redistribution mechanisms. Even though Argentina is a middle-income country, gaps remain.

The country is a republic with a long history of the regular reception of migrants. There are different migration flows, with characteristics that are reflected in current migrant groups. Migrants' access to mechanisms that enable them to meet their own basic needs and to have a good quality of life is determined by the social situation of the society to which they migrate, and other factors such as the regulatory framework, social representations regarding migrants and the social protection system and social policies implemented.

This chapter presents the situation of the migrant population of Argentina from a development perspective linked to the 2030 Agenda, understanding that the concept of development contained in the Agenda provides the guidelines that allow the dynamics of development to be operationalised from an integral perspective and shared internationally.

The chapter's analysis aims to contribute to the implementation of public policies. Overcoming inequality when it comes to migrants' incorporation into and full participation in the labour market—as well as to other deficits affecting them, such as poverty and housing conditions—is a matter for the public agenda if the country is to achieve the full inclusion of its migrant population.

## 2 Definition of Development and the 2030 Agenda

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, when it approved its 17 SDGs and its 169 targets that, among other aims, seek to eradicate poverty and hunger, ensure healthy lives and quality education, promote gender equality, guarantee access to water and sanitation, reduce inequalities, combat injustices and protect the planet (UNGA, 2015).

Our starting point for this chapter was a broad notion of 'development', understood as a series of fundamental transformations, including industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation. Development thus understood constitutes a planned intervention for the improvement of human well-being, or the expansion of achievable opportunities. Every definition of development itself entails an ethical framework.

According to authors such as Gasper (2012), development is a field that is heavily charged with ethics. What risks are to be taken, and what are interventions for? What do 'improvement of living conditions', 'well-being', and 'a good life' mean? Who benefits; who loses? Who decides what 'winning' or 'losing' looks like? Who decides on the prioritisation of values? Various conceptions focus on different dimensions of development. The field of development is so broad that there are limits to how far the analogy with other areas

of professional ethics can be stretched. This does not in itself constitute an argument against careful ethical consideration of problems and possibilities in development policy and practice. The global scope of 'development' makes it less a particular, specialised area and more a meta-area that aims to link and inform many other areas.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the definition of and discerning the dimensions of the conceptualisation of development are rendered impossible in complete and univocal terms. The establishment of development action dimensions and development's actionability require agreements and consensus, many and much of which should be the starting point for specific adaptations linked to the context and time frame.

The ethics of development lies at the intersection of other fields. Each has its own concerns and the nature of each may change over time.

Various 'development' practices relate, for example, to socio-economic development; policies, programmes and projects; human rights activism and practices; emergency aid, conflict, and humanitarian intervention; the world of employment and corporate social responsibility; migration; and climate change. Each practice, in turn, brings with it various theories, such as the criticism of conventional economics,<sup>1</sup> the theory of human rights and its jurisprudence, or feminist theory. The ethics of development includes and interconnects each of these multiple reflection sites (Gasper and Truong, 2010).

An introduction to the various concepts of development and unfolding the body of literature thereon is beyond the scope of this chapter, which focuses, rather, on the complexity and diversity of currents. As previously stated, development is more a meta-area that aims to link and inform many other areas.

Since the 1990s, in part through the leadership provided by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and later that of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, a positive link has been established between development and human rights. The 1945 Charter of the United Nations proclaims the dignity of the human person and respect for human rights, and seeks to maintain peace through international co-operation and collective security by fostering peace among nations and promoting social progress and better standards of life and respect for human rights.

The first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in 2006, the second, in 2013, the inclusion of migration in the SDGs in 2015, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, the Global

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1 Including Amartya Sen's work on welfare economics criticism and human development theory, or criticism of capitalism or of neo-Marxism.

Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), adopted in December 2018, constitute some of the milestones that highlight the role that migration has been playing in the international community's development and migration debates, and are interconnected instruments that contribute to migration governance.

The role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at the international and the national level has been key both in promoting the agendas of states and civil society and in the role given to the voices of migrants, as can be seen in the documents of the IOM, published on its official pages.

How can development ideas be proposed so that they have broad appeal and yet practical applicability? And so that they are also widely promoted and adopted?

The worlds of ideas and of actions are not always linked linearly. The cultural and ideological component imparts its perspectives and lines of action, but in human history these have not always strengthened cohesion and the common good. In the history of humankind, however, there are achievements that show the ability of people around the world to co-operate and agree on basic principles, one such being the Declaration of Human Rights.

Since its creation, the UN has made efforts to take agendas that promote rights and to translate them into resolutions and action plans, agendas for the various areas of human activity. The speed of the globalisation process increasingly requires that such agreements be validated by a large number of countries if they are to be effective.

The work carried out by UN Member States and by academics, civil society and the private sector—in parallel with the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—led, after 15 years of negotiations, to the adoption of the 2030 sustainable development agenda, in which a conceptual framework is proposed based on an integrated and comprehensive vision of development focusing on people, prosperity, peace, partnerships and the planet.

Both the MDGs and the next step—so, the 2030 Agenda—constitute the arena in which 193 countries of the world agreed on guidelines for advancing development, defined as sustainable development.

The conceptual framework proposed by the Agenda translates into 17 SDGs, which in turn seek to be reference points with metrics for monitoring progress and achievements, and link the SDGs with the means necessary for their achievement.

The 2030 Agenda calls on countries to work to adapt these metrics to their individual reality at the national and the local level. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there is also a regional monitoring platform, led by the Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), that aims for follow-up with regard to countries that have adopted the Agenda.

The adaptation process carried out by Argentina, in addition to including indicators adapted or adopted for the 17 SDGs as recorded in METADATA,<sup>2</sup> established cross-cutting parameters to highlight specific aspects or population groups. In this way, Argentina was able to establish gender perspectives and address people with disabilities and indigenous and migrant populations in a cross-cutting logic.

### 3 The 2030 Agenda in Argentina vis-à-vis Migrants

All the SDGs and the initiatives designed to achieve them have a direct impact on the well-being of migrant populations since they constitute an integrated and deeply rooted group in Argentine society. It is worth mentioning that the definition of migrant is the one established by the IOM:

a person who moves away from his or her usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

IOM, 2019, 132

Full implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires states to carry out an analysis of their goals and targets in light of their local context in order to orient their policies with the aim of achieving all the SDGs. In the Agenda, the central reference to migration appears in Goal 10, 'Reduce inequality within and among countries', Target 7 of which calls on states to 'Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies' (UNGA, 2015, 21).

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<sup>2</sup> METADATA is a system of indicators that tracks goals, targets and indicators, and establishes baselines, as well as final and intermediate targets.

Argentina adheres to the 2030 Agenda and manages and prioritises in a manner adapted to the local reality, setting national targets and indicators. Monitoring is organised through an inter-ministerial body, with the participation of all national ministries, in coordination with provincial and municipal governments and the involvement of civil society organisations and business sectors.

This process of implementing and monitoring the SDGs is coordinated by the National Council for Coordination of Social Policies (CNCPS), an agency created in 2002 by National Decree 357 to coordinate, articulate and monitor social policies at the national level in order to ensure they are implemented in an efficient manner (Government of Argentina, 2002). Thus, in a similar vein to its mandate to implement the outcomes of the Millennium Summit, in December 2015 this agency was mandated to coordinate the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. It is in charge of placing the SDGs on the public agenda, and with the commitment of various levels of the state and society it seeks to achieve the goals and works to define targets and indicators and their subsequent monitoring. This is a participatory process, in which through debate and the building of political and technical consensus the national agenda is defined in relation to the SDGs by adapting the international agenda to the national context and establishing actions to achieve the proposed goals (CNCPS, 2021).

The engagement of UN representatives during the process of prioritising the Agenda worked as a catalyst for the country's implementation strategy. The inclusion of IOM in the UN system in 2016 further boosted migration dynamics in inter-agency work and in state–civil society relations within the framework of the sustainable development agenda.

In this process, Argentina has taken a rights-based approach, recognising cross-cutting issues, especially gender, migrant status, cultural affiliation, life cycle, disability status and any particularly vulnerable situation. This is reflected in Target 17.18,<sup>3</sup> which, adapted, states: 'By 2030, improve support for capacity-building, to significantly increase the availability of timely, reliable and high-quality data disaggregated by brackets such as income, gender, age, migration status, disability, geographical location and other relevant features in the national context'.<sup>4</sup>

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3 SDG Indicators, Metadata repository, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=17&Target=17.18%E2%80%9D> (accessed on 20 October 2021).

4 ODS Argentina, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/politicassociales/ods> (accessed on 20 October 2021).

In Argentina's initial monitoring system, the indicators related to migration corresponded to five SDGs (1, 3, 6, 8 and 10), six targets (1.2, 1.4, 3.3, 6.2, 8.8 and 10.7) and 12 indicators that enabled quantification based on various official sources (Census, Permanent Household Survey (EPH), Complementary International Migration Survey, and various administrative records); detailed information can be found on the official pages of Argentina's 2030 Agenda (CNCPS, 2020).

Thus, the country's interest in issues related to migration is reflected both in the inclusion of goals related to the migrant population and in work carried out in coordination with Argentina's IOM country office. A base scenario of the investment by the Argentine state in the welfare of migrants was created, estimating public social spending allocated to migrants. And migrant living conditions were analysed to facilitate monitoring with regard to SDG 1 (End poverty).

Migrants have been central players in Argentina's history and development, as protagonists, drivers and beneficiaries. This central role of migration in Argentina led to it being considered an important axis in the approach to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. The consolidation of the Argentine nation state took place largely due to the migratory waves of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Following a change of Administration in December 2019 and in the context of COVID-19, the continuity of the prioritised objectives is being reassessed. Argentina's Second Voluntary Report, presented in July 2020 at the UN High-level Political Forum, highlighted a focus on SDG 1 and SDG 2 (CNCPS, 2020).

#### 4 Migrants in Argentina

As Gurrieri (2016) argues, Argentina's migration policy has a continuity in the sense of the country's acceptance of the contributions of international migration. Governmental contexts (democratic or dictatorial) change the politics of migration. Democratic governments respect migration rights; dictatorial regimes, meanwhile, establish restrictions, and allow entry only when certain criteria (secured income or 'legal' work within the country) are fulfilled.

The country's long history of receiving and welcoming migrants has long been reflected in Argentinean law. As early as 1853, the preamble to the first National Constitution reflected how open Argentina was and how rights extended to 'all men in the world who want to inhabit the Argentine territory' (General Constituent Assembly of Argentina, 1994). Article 25 of the Argentine Constitution states, 'The Federal Government shall foster European



immigration; and may not restrict, limit or burden with any tax whatsoever, the entry into Argentine territory of foreigners who arrive for the purpose of tilling the soil, improving industries, and introducing and teaching arts and sciences' (General Constituent Assembly of Argentina, 1994).

Thus, during the period when Argentina was being shaped as a nation the legal bases for facilitating and promoting migrants' access to the country were laid. It is worth mentioning that the first Immigration Law (1876), referred to as the 'Avellaneda Law' (after the then president), promoted policies to attract immigrants—in particular from Europe—in order to populate the Argentine territory, within the framework of an agro-export economic model (Government of Argentina, 1876).

Subsequent regulations, however, took a more selective approach, and adopted a more repressive bias with regard to 'undesirable' migrants. The 1902 Residence Act, for example, extends the powers of the executive branch to expel migrants, and the 1910 National Defense Act, which enforced a selective policy vis-à-vis immigrants, and Law 22.439, issued by the country's last military dictatorship in 1981 and referred to as the 'Videla Law', both take a more restrictive view of migration. Despite the fact that the establishment of democratic governments brought with it debates about law, legislative projects, regulations, the activation of civil society and human rights organisations, and constitutional reform, it took more than two decades for the last of these laws to be repealed (Government of Argentina, 1981).

In 2004, a democratic government repealed the Videla Law by consensus. A new law was passed with a view to recognising migration as a human right. Article 4 of the new law reads, 'Migration is an essential and inalienable human right, which the Argentine Republic will guarantee based on principles of equality and universality' (OAS, 2006). The law, which also deals with the labour and social and cultural integration of foreigners residing in the country, was amended in 2010.

Alongside the migration paradigm shift that took place in Argentina in 2004, it is also worth mentioning the National Programme for Migration Documentary Standardization for Migrants from Mercosur Countries, known as the 'Patria Grande Programme', which was implemented for the regularisation of migrants and the integration of residents in irregular situations under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (Ministerio del Interior).

A legal framework conducive to migration does not, however, always guarantee the full integration of migrants into society. The various levels of acceptance of the migrant population in Argentina are linked to their countries of origin and their economic situations. Cohen (2016, 164, translated by the authors) points out that

the current discourse of civil society on migration at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century is an uplifting discourse, rich in positive qualifications, which recognize in [migrants] a very important part of our national identity. However, the discourse on migrations of South American origin and other more recent migrations of oriental origin is disqualifying, inferiorising, and constantly establishes impervious borders that separate what should be from what not, what should be normal from what is pathological, what is proper from what is alien.

Throughout its history, Argentina has received different migratory flows, which have shaped a heterogeneous social group from different backgrounds. From the mid-1800s to 1930, there was a large influx of Europeans, in particular Italians and Spaniards, which created a ‘white Argentina’ and is at the origin of the phrase ‘Argentines come from the boats’, although both the phrase and the concept ignore and reject native populations and migration from neighbouring countries.

Levels of this strictly speaking overseas migration fell in later years—with the exception of the last years of WWII—and from the mid-twentieth century on migrants have increasingly come from neighbouring countries.

The presence of migrants from neighbouring countries was already recorded in early national censuses. In particular Paraguayans, Uruguayans and Bolivians were present, and their proportions have increased in recent censuses, rising from 20 per cent of the total number of migrants in the first national census, of 1869, to 69 per cent in the 2010 census, as can be seen in Figure 12.1. This decrease in migration from Europe and increase in migration

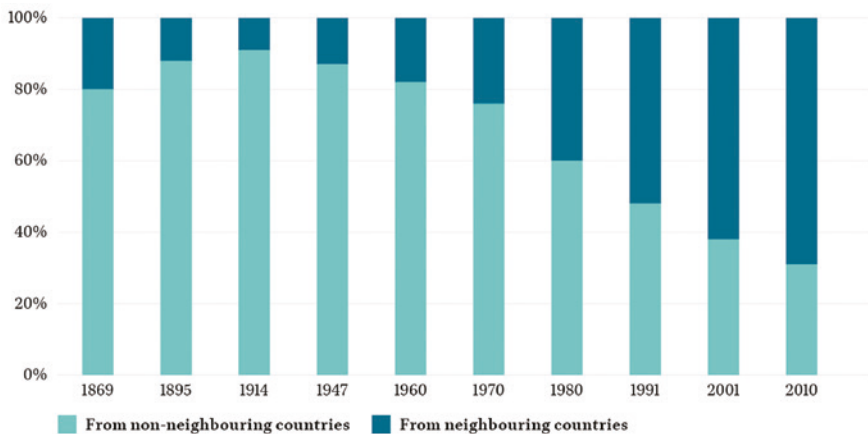


FIGURE 12.1 Proportions of migrants by origin (1869–2010)  
SOURCE: NATIONAL CENSUSES (INDEC, 2021)

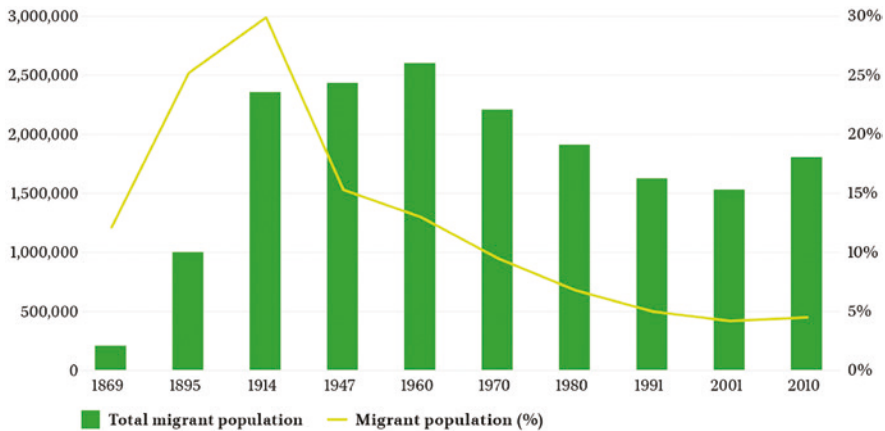


FIGURE 12.2 Total number of immigrants in Argentina and their proportion of the total population

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENSUSES (INDEC, 2021)

from neighbouring countries has generated a migrant population of a variety of origins.

The impact of the great migratory wave that began in the mid-1800s can be seen clearly in the data from the 1914 Census, which shows that three out of ten inhabitants of the country were foreigners. This number falls in subsequent censuses but remains high. More recent censuses, meanwhile, reveal that around 5 per cent of the population are migrants, and that this proportion is stable. This evolution can be seen in Figure 12.2.

The massive migratory waves of the last century are linked to economic crises, such as the Great Depression, and to civil wars and the world wars. These different waves and migratory flows, each with their particular characteristics in terms of both their intensity and their origin, are reflected in the current migrant collective, which comprises overseas migration, in particular of Europeans, and migrants from neighbouring countries and other countries in Latin America, such as Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.

A decade has elapsed since the last census, but the Permanent Household Survey conducted by INDEC (Argentinian National Institute of Statistics and Censuses) provides more recent data, in particular about urban centres throughout the country. By 2019, 5 per cent of the Argentine population was not native and one in ten households had a migrant among its members. The United Nations estimates that the total number of migrants in Argentina reached 2.2 million in 2019 (UN, 2019).

This population has settled and consolidated itself in the country, and many of its members have been resident for a number of years: only 11 percent of migrants arrived in the last five years, and at the time of the last National Census (2010) seven out of ten migrants had resided in Argentina for more than ten years.

The migrant population is most concentrated in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (AMBA), where it makes up around 8 per cent of the total population (EPH and INDEC, 2021).

Within the migrant population, with regard to origin three groups can be distinguished, as shown in Figure 12.3: those from Latin American countries (with significant numbers from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru, and more recently Colombia and Venezuela), which account for 84 per cent of the total; those from Europe, an ageing population with a significant presence and longer residence; and those from elsewhere in the world, including migrants from Asian and African countries.

Within the population of Latin American origin, Paraguayans, Bolivians and Peruvians stand out, collectively comprising 71 per cent of migrants in the country. If, however, we consider the total number of permanent and temporary residency permits granted between 2018 and 2020, Venezuelans also come to the fore, accounting for 36 per cent of grantees (10M, 2021). The political instability that Venezuela has been experiencing for more than a decade due to certain characteristics of the 'regime of President Maduro' has led many Venezuelans to leave in search of better living conditions.

If we analyse the age of the migrant population, we observe that most are in the active working age bracket (68 per cent) (between 19 and 65 years of age), while older adults comprise a quarter of the total and children and teenagers up to the age of 18 only 7 per cent. These figures reveal a more adult and ageing population than that of native Argentines. The low figure for the young speaks of migration mainly comprised of individuals forming families with other migrants or with a native of the country, and the fact that children

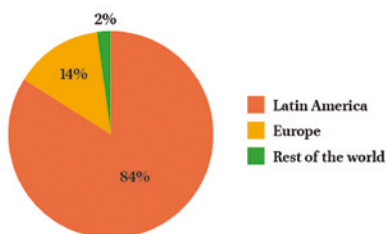


FIGURE 12.3  
Migrants by origin  
SOURCE: EPH AND INDEC (2021) (DATA  
FOR 2018)

born in Argentina to migrant parents or to migrant–Argentine households are considered Argentine.

There is also a phenomenon of the feminisation of migration, since the percentage of women in the total number of migrants is higher than that in the native population (55 per cent against 52 per cent).

With regard to living conditions, it is worth mentioning that in 2019 poverty affected migrants and non-migrants in Argentina to a similar degree (35.2 per cent and 35.7 per cent, respectively), but the numbers change if the heterogeneity of migrants is taken into account, the figure rising to 42.7 per cent for those from neighbouring countries. Destitution also affects migrants more than it does native Argentines—9.7 per cent versus 8 per cent. For those migrants from neighbouring countries, this figure increases to 12.4 per cent (EPH and INDEC, 2021, data for the second semester 2019).

The incidence of poverty among the migrant population varies according to age. While half of the migrant children in Argentina belong to poor households, the figure is only 8.7 per cent for adults 65 years of age and over (IOM and CNCPS, 2019).

With regard to the household unit, households with migrant members are in a relatively disadvantaged position, with 26 per cent having incomes that do not cover their total basic basket; the figure falls to 21 per cent for non-migrant households (IOM and CNCPS, 2019).

A study of the living conditions of migrants in Argentina (IOM and CNCPS, 2019) concludes that one of the main determinants of poverty among migrants is their working conditions, not in particular because they are affected by unemployment but because there is a tendency for migrants to have more informal jobs and thus lower incomes. Among migrants, there are lower rates of waged employment and a higher proportion of self-employed, and they also tend to be involved in certain branches, such as commerce, construction and domestic service. Difficulties in accessing quality jobs and the precarious inclusion conditions faced by migrants result in higher levels of poverty.

In short, the living conditions of migrants are largely determined by their access to coverage of their basic food, housing, health and education needs and access to employment. Social inclusion does not, however, end there. As Marmora (2017) argues, the social inclusion of migrants takes place in three dimensions. The first involves guaranteeing the recognised human rights of migrants, understanding them as beneficiaries of civil, political, and social rights, and recognising their social and cultural diversity. The second dimension concerns the interaction of migrants with the host society, as social players with the capacity to transform their social surroundings. The third includes

the governance of the migrant inclusion process, and it is there that the state and its public policies play a central role.

## 5 Public Policies Impacting Migrants' Living Conditions

Migrants' degree of access to their basic needs and a good quality of life is mainly determined by the social situation of the society to which they migrate. There are, however, other relevant factors at work, including the regulatory framework of the host country, dominant social representations and collective thinking regarding migrants, and the historically constructed social protection system, as well as the social policies that are deployed and implemented.

Argentina, as already noted, has favourable regulations with regard to migration. Equal access to social services is guaranteed for migrants by the legislation currently in force. The Immigration Act, Law 25.871, states in article 6 that 'The State, in all its jurisdictions, shall ensure equal access for immigrants and their families under the same conditions of protection, due process, and rights enjoyed by citizens, especially as regards social services, public assets, health, education, justice, labour, employment, and social security' (OAS, 2006). Thus, the regulatory framework ensures migrants' access to healthcare, education and social protection, regardless of their residence and documentation status, equating migrants' rights with those of native nationals.

The image that is built in society vis-à-vis foreigners is another determinant of migrants' access to social services. Representations that see migrants as a threat, the association of their presence with an increase in crime, seeing them as abusive in their use of public services, or the idea of their being responsible for growing unemployment are hindrances to the social inclusion of migrants, and thus impact their quality of life.

According to the National Discrimination Map put together in 2014 by the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI), representations of migrants are closely linked to perceptions of their professional competence; in other words, migrants were seen as denying Argentines employment opportunities. The same report notes that migrants from neighbouring countries were victims of significant discrimination, with Bolivians being the most affected (INADI, 2014).

Historical, overseas migration is not judged using the same framework as that used to judge more recent, South American migration: while the former's contribution to the social construction of Argentina and the shaping of national identity is valued, in some cases the latter has been negatively viewed.

With regard to the social protection system, the state is an important player in the system's efforts to ensure a basic level of well-being for the entire population, guaranteeing full enjoyment of rights.

In Argentina, the social protection system and the enjoyment of social benefits have been built on access to salaried work and consequently on a contributory system. However, successive socio-economic crises, which resulted not only in increased unemployment but also in the proliferation of informal work, have forced the state to expand its intervention to non-contributory policies—that is to say, benefits are granted irrespective of contributions, with the aim of making rights universal.

The Argentine social protection system therefore includes not only traditional social security benefits but also interventions aimed at ensuring the well-being of the entire population, in particular non-remunerative income programmes. As Cecchini and Martínez argue, social protection 'goes beyond people living in poverty by seeking to guarantee minimum levels of protection for all citizens: "protection as a citizen guarantee", which provides basic guidelines for achieving comprehensive and inclusive social protection' (Cecchini and Martínez, 2011, 38–39).

We will now discuss access to health, education, and social protection including retirement and pensions, as well as income transfer policies, before addressing national public social expenditure and its impact on the situation of migrants.

### 5.1 *Access to Healthcare*

With regard to healthcare, article 8 of the Immigration Act states that 'Access to the right of health, and to social or medical care for all foreign nationals that require it, shall not be denied or restricted under any circumstances, regardless of their legal status' (OAS, 2006).

The health system in Argentina has a public healthcare subsystem. Although there are other health subsystems—such as those linked to worker compensation and union healthcare services (referred to as '*obras sociales*'), or those related to private health insurance services—it is the state that guarantees universal access to healthcare through primary healthcare centres and public hospitals. Administrative barriers (such as the need to present Argentine documents) or communication problems (due to language issues) with healthcare providers or other sociocultural differences contribute to different access outcomes; a stereotypical and prejudiced approach by healthcare professionals can also affect migrants' access to healthcare (Jelin, 2006).

According to the last National Census, of 2010, 38 per cent of the population of Argentina have access to public healthcare alone, 46 per cent have social security benefits, and 16 per cent have private healthcare.

As they have more precarious and unregistered jobs, migrants show higher levels of dependence on public healthcare. While three out of ten Argentines have public healthcare coverage only, for migrants the figure rises to four out of ten, and is even higher if we only consider Latin American migrants (46.5 per cent).

The 'Sumar Programme', created by the Argentine Ministry of Education, provides coverage for mothers, for children and young adults aged from 6 to 19, and for women and men up to the age of 64 who are not covered by worker/union or private health insurance. The programme offers the migrant population access to healthcare by allowing registration with an Argentine National Identity Card (DNI), but also with a foreign passport or other ID document (Government of Argentina, 2012).

The opportunity to access treatment in hospitals and public healthcare centres does not, however, necessarily imply treatment's effective use by migrants, as other obstacles may interfere with unrestricted access to healthcare.

In the above-mentioned study conducted by INADI, 39 per cent of respondents agree with the statement, 'When you go to a hospital there are no available appointments/beds because many people come from other places to get healthcare services'. Thus, migrants are not only perceived as a threat in the labour market, but also when it comes to access to hospital care (INADI, 2014, 98).

Finkelstein (2017) explores the perceptions of public healthcare professionals in the City of Buenos Aires with regard to service use by migrants, identifying four categories—migrants are seen as: (I) service abusers, (II) users who pose challenges and/or difficulties when it comes to addressing their problems, (III) users in a vulnerable condition, or (IV) carriers of imported, exotic diseases that are considered 'health hazards'. These negative perceptions limit access to healthcare and thus the implementation and achievement of global development goals.

## 5.2 *Access to Education*

With regard to education, article 7 of the Immigration Act states that 'Under no circumstances shall a foreign national's illegal migratory status preclude enrolment as a student in a public, private, national, provincial, or municipal educational institution at the elementary, secondary or higher levels' (OAS, 2006).



In a similar vein, the National Education Act states that

The National State, the Provinces and the City of Buenos Aires shall guarantee access, and favourable conditions for migrants without a National ID Document (DNI) to remain in the education system until graduation by presenting documents issued in their countries of origin, in accordance with article 7 of Law #25.871.

Government of Argentina, 2006, translated by the authors

The Act also assigns responsibility to the state to ensure equality and free education.

In Argentina, the public education system is free of charge at all levels (pre-elementary, primary, secondary, tertiary and university) to ensure universal access. School attendance by children from migrant households is high, reaching more than 96 per cent (IOM and CNCPS, 2019).

The numbers of migrant children in primary schools, meanwhile, are low, in line with the low numbers of foreign children generally, who comprise only 7 per cent of the total number of migrants in Argentina. Current migration is dominated by the middle aged, who start their families in their country of destination and whose children are thus *de facto* considered Argentine (IOM and CNCPS, 2019).

In the City of Buenos Aires, the proportion of foreign students at all levels is 8 per cent, being slightly higher for high schools (9 per cent) than for the primary level (6 per cent) (Buenos Aires City Statistics, 2019).

With regard to university education, 3.6 per cent of all undergraduate students and 9.4 per cent of postgraduate students are foreign; 95 per cent of foreign university students come from the Americas and three-quarters of these study at state-run universities (Argentinian University Statistics, 2018–2019).

The 'Progresar Programme', which grants scholarships to young people aged 18 to 24 at all levels of education, requires migrants to reside in the country for five years to qualify for such a scholarship (Government of Argentina, 2014).

While migrants do have access to education services, they continue to face other challenges, such as stigmatisation and communication problems due to cultural and, in some cases, language differences.

The inclusion of migrants in schools (primary and secondary) generates tension in an education system that was created to foster unification and that has historically deployed assimilationist practices. The school was conceived as an instrument for building a common identity and shaping a sense of nation and belonging to a heterogeneous group. Thus, the incorporation of new sociocultural diversities in the school system generates new inclusion challenges.

In recent decades, as Novaro, Diez and Martínez (2017, 16, translated by the authors) point out,

The rhetoric of inclusion and interculturalism, the discourse of human rights and the imperative of respect for diversity have also challenged schools (primary and secondary). However, the changes have been relative, especially in terms of the need to review the invisibility and absence, or the presence, of “others” in a stereotyped and folklorised format.

Those ‘others’ include Latin American migrants.

### 5.3 *Access to the Social Protection System*

The social security system in Argentina consists of a number of programmes designed to protect the population and maintain its standard of living in the face of risks and contingencies such as sickness, disability, accidents at work and occupational diseases, as well as maternity, loss of a family member, old age, unemployment and family responsibilities. Benefits are administered, managed and supervised by the National Social Security Administration (ANSES) and include, inter alia, pensions and unemployment insurance (ANSES, 2021).

The social security system consists of a contributory system to which a quasi-contributory system has been added through successive reforms. The former, which involves contributions made during periods of active work, requires at least 30 years of contributions if benefits are to be accessed. Thus, migrants who have access to these benefits have reached pensionable age and have resided in the country for many years. This is the state’s largest migrant-related expense, particularly benefiting older migrants from Europe (IOM and CNCPS, 2018).

Argentina has wide, almost universal social security coverage; the system reaches 90 per cent of migrants. However, while European migrants enjoy the highest levels of coverage, in line with their longer residency status and their higher contributions during their working years, among older people from Latin American countries benefit rates are significantly lower (IOM and CNCPS, 2018).

The Universal Pension for the Elderly (PUAM)—which consists of a benefit for people over 65 years of age who do not receive any other retirement or pension benefits—is less accessible to migrants as its requirements include being Argentine or having adopted Argentine citizenship after ten years of residence in the country (prior to application) or being a foreigner with a minimum residence period of 20 years (Government of Argentina, 2016).

The barriers to older adult migrants' access to this type of benefit are a concern, as these individuals are traversing a stage in their lives characterised by economic insecurity and during which a possible decrease in income from active work exists alongside an increase in costs, especially those related to healthcare.

Migrants' access to the social protection system and its various programmes dealing with direct money transfer is provided for by law, but in reality many of these programmes have other requirements, such as residency, a certain number of years spent in Argentina and/or available documentation. These requirements impede migrants from fully enjoying their social rights and from equality of treatment with nationals by restricting the access of foreigners with fewer years of residence or with irregular residence situations.

This is the case for the system of Universal Child Allowance (AUH). Created in 2009, AUH is a non-contributory benefit for children and teenagers under 18 years of age whose parents are unemployed or are informal workers, domestic workers, or self-employed and earn an income equivalent to the minimum wage.<sup>5</sup> It consists of a monthly monetary benefit conditional on school attendance and compliance with health checks (Government of Argentina, 2009), and complements the family allowance received by formal workers with dependent children. AUH was implemented with the aim of universalising the protection of children and teenagers. One of the requirements for access to the benefit is to be a native Argentine or to have adopted Argentine citizenship, or to be a legal resident in the country for a period of at least three years (Government of Argentina, 2009).

In 2011, the Social Protection Universal Pregnancy Allowance was created to cover women who are unemployed or have informal work during their pregnancy. If a pregnant woman is a foreigner, she is required to have an Argentine National ID Card and to have resided in the country for three years to qualify for this allowance (Government of Argentina, 2011).

Non-contributory pensions consisting of economic transfers and health coverage have a long history in Argentina and include old-age pensions (Government of Argentina, 1948), disability pensions (created in 1970) and benefits for mothers of seven children (from 1989 on). These benefits are the

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5 The vital and mobile minimum wage is established by the National Council of Employment, Productivity and the Minimum, Vital and Mobile Wage, under the institutional remit of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security. It is established through negotiation between the representatives of workers, employers, and the State National and the Federal Labor Council (provincial governments).

most restrictive with regard to migrant access, and require between 15 and 40 years of residency.

#### 5.4 *National Public Social Expenditure and Its Impact on the Situation of Migrants*

The study conducted by IOM together with the CNCPS in 2018 under the title 'Baseline Scenario for the Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals through the National Public Social Expenditure Linked to Living Conditions of Migrants' quantifies the public expenditures of the state that impact migrants (IOM and CNCPS, 2018, translated by the authors).

According to the report, state expenditures that have an impact on the lives of migrants amounted to 5 per cent of national public social expenditures in 2015, reflecting the migrant population as a portion of the total population. This expenditure constitutes 0.7 per cent of GDP (IOM and CNCPS, 2018, 91).

Most of this public expenditure on migrants goes into retirement expenditures, which account for 70 per cent of the total figure. This benefits older migrants, and thus particularly those from Europe, and is part of the contributory layer. Other expenditures that affect the lives of foreigners include those on health (7%); family allowances (5%); education (4%); public works, housing and infrastructure (4%); non-contributory pensions (4%); employment and work (2%); and social promotion (1%). Centrally, it is with regard to SDG 1 (End poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduce inequality) that the greatest impact of this public spending is observed.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that migrants are included in social programmes aimed at the entire population, and that there is no budgetary programme dedicated exclusively to the migrant population.

## 6 **New Challenges**

Argentina faces major challenges related to overcoming structural deficits, reducing social inequality, and achieving productive economic development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

These challenges were heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a differential impact depending on the conditions of each country affected.

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6 The Budget Office of the National Congress analyses the budget taking into account SDGs, indicators and prioritised targets in order to assess the effective impact on the proposed achievements. The structure of the national budget makes the work of segmenting by migrant population complex, but exercises are being developed to that end.

Argentina has experienced an economic and productivity crisis, with strong social consequences that have highlighted social problems, inequalities, and deficiencies in healthcare for and the social protection of the population, and the most vulnerable sections of the population have been hit harder.

The pandemic has revealed this social reality, together with its concomitant social, economic and gender inequalities. It has also shed light on the importance of the role of the state as the guarantor of individual and social rights, and on the need to build more inclusive societies, which work to enhance not only health policies but also social policies aimed at the protection of homes and individuals, as well as at the preservation and generation of employment.

The pandemic and the consequent response of border closures and preventive, compulsory social isolation have had an impact on the migrant population across three dimensions: (I) the restrictions on entering the national territory imposed on persons in border areas have caused family separations, obstacles to applying for international protection and, in some cases, a lack of food and accommodation; (II) it has been relatively difficult to obtain residence status due to the temporary closure of some public administration offices, which has led to difficulties in obtaining national ID cards and the consequent inability to access social programmes; (III) sources of income have been lost or reduced, particularly for self-employed migrants or migrants with informal jobs (UN, 2020).

At the same time, the economic and productivity crisis generated by the pandemic will have an impact on new and deeper inequalities and vulnerabilities, leading to greater destitution, poverty, and unemployment, and worsened working conditions, all of which will entail new challenges.

This situation led the Argentine government that took office in December 2019 to deploy a massive food plan as one of its first measures. In addition, the state launched Emergency Family Income (IFE) to guarantee a minimum income floor for informal workers and the self-employed in the lowest income categories. Access requirements include being a native Argentine or adopting Argentine nationality, and being a regular resident in the country for not less than two years as well as being between 18 and 65 years of age (Government of Argentina, 2020).

Challenges, though, will only increase in the future. With regard to the migrant population, overcoming employment inequalities and creating better-paid jobs and formalised working conditions, as well as dealing with other deficits affecting the migrant population such as poverty and housing conditions, are issues that must be addressed if the full social inclusion of migrants in Argentina is to be achieved.

In addition, the question of access criteria for income transfer programmes, including requirements related to documentation and years/conditions of residence in the country, should be on the agenda. The current set-up excludes certain migrants from the social protection provided by the state, in particular those who may well be among the most vulnerable given their recent arrival in the country and their consequent inability to build any kind of social safety net.

We should also ponder whether it is necessary to implement social programmes especially focused on the migrant population, in view of the difficulties they face in achieving full inclusion into the labour market.

In addition, the discrimination and sociocultural barriers facing migrants must be removed. This means continuing to work towards an intercultural approach that allows for the full enjoyment of social rights and equal access to social services guaranteed by law. An intercultural approach to the implementation of public policies must consider communication and programme management mechanisms that recognise various languages, cultural particularities and different ways of life, focusing not on assimilation but on respect for diversity. This requires training policy makers to exercise an empathic understanding of cultural diversity. As Marmora (2017, 10, translated by the authors) argues, 'in the "intercultural" perspective, tolerance is replaced by "respect" between cultures and their mutual integration. This dynamic and open vision of cultures is based on a process of dialogue, negotiation and mutual learning'.

Once the pandemic is over, the path forward will involve increasing efforts to achieve sustainable, inclusive, more equitable development and full enjoyment of social rights, for both natives and migrants, with a strong state that articulates these efforts to the business sector and civil society organisations that provide effective development responses. To this end, the Argentine government is proposing the setting up of an Economic and Social Council (Government of Argentina, 2021).

## 7 Conclusions

Argentina is faced with the need to expand social protection and develop economic and social recovery policies that enable the participation of all stakeholders in leading the country on the path to sustainable development, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. The outcome of the present crisis must be framed by a comprehensive and sustainable development perspective

that aims to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs should continue to be a guideline for post-pandemic social and economic reconstruction focused on economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

In this process, there is still a long way to go in terms of the full delivery of the rights set out in law to guarantee migrants full access to services, and in terms of overcoming the disconnect between legal requirements and the reality migrants face when seeking to access educational, healthcare and social services. Migrants' access to the education system and the healthcare system is, in legal terms, guaranteed, but they may still face administrative obstacles, stigmatisation and prejudice that undermine their educational trajectories and their health. Income transfer policies, meanwhile, employ certain restrictions on access. All public policies have requirements linked to specific characteristics, such as sex, age, and poverty level. For the migrant population, most of these restrictions relate to years spent in the host country, even if no social programme excludes migrants per se. Integrate into the social protection system those still excluded, guarantee that migrants enjoy their rights fully and are treated equally, achieve migrants' full integration into the labour market and combat the conditions that lead to poverty: these are the tasks and challenges inherent in the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in Argentina.

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# Immigrants' Contribution to Development in the Global South: Comparing Policy Responses to Venezuelan Immigration in Peru and Argentina

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## Abstract

By April 2021, Venezuela's multidimensional crisis had led over 5.6 million of the country's citizens to emigrate, mostly across South America. This chapter offers a comparative analysis of national policy responses to Venezuelan immigration in Argentina and Peru from a development perspective in the period 2015–2020. Although the government of each country recognised the potential of disproportionate numbers of highly skilled Venezuelan immigrants, Argentina has been more successful than Peru in offering them legal pathways to immigration and incorporating them into the formal labour market. Our key argument is that Argentina has been able to foster the integration of Venezuelans—in terms of granting regular status, validating academic and professional degrees and providing access to basic social services—for three reasons: first, the lower overall numbers and higher socio-economic characteristics of the migrants; second, Argentina's progressive legislative immigration framework; and third, the prominent role of civil society actors lobbying for immigrants and pushing for more inclusive public policies. In the case of Peru, the rapid increase in numbers of immigrants has led to a surge in xenophobic public opinion, which has generated pressure to implement non-inclusive policies. The country's new immigration law lacks institutional consolidation, and there is no strong civil society to act as a counterweight to restrictive policy developments. The chapter contributes to the literature on the migration–development nexus, pointing out the importance of state capacity and civil society when thinking about migration and development in the global South.

## 1 Introduction

More comparative case studies are needed to reach a better understanding of the development–migration nexus in migrant-receiving countries in the global South (Hujo and Piper, 2010), which includes developing nations and transitional economies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of eastern Europe.

The term 'South' refers to comparatively less-developed regions and countries, whereas the term 'North' refers to more-developed regions or countries, including Europe and Northern America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan (UN DESA, 2012).<sup>1</sup> Understanding the development potential of and related policy reactions to Venezuelan displacement across South America is an especially important topic in this regard.

Over the past five years, more than 5.6 million Venezuelan citizens have been forced to emigrate, mainly to destinations in South America. Looking beyond the question of whether Venezuelans should be considered migrants or refugees (Freier, Berganza and Blouin, 2020), state and non-state actors and international organisations have pointed out the development potential that disproportionate numbers of highly skilled Venezuelan citizens offer to economies across the region (Bahar, Dooley and Huang, 2018; BBVA Research, 2019; R4V, 2019; World Bank, 2019).

In order to take advantage of this potential, and in their efforts to reach the migration related development goals of the Agenda 2030, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), host governments need to offer Venezuelans pathways to regularised entry and residence, validating their academic degrees, incorporating them into the formal economy and giving them access to social services (World Bank, 2019).

State responses to Venezuelan displacement across Latin America have, however, varied significantly (Acosta Arcarazo, Blouin and Freier, 2019; Seele et al., 2019). Although regional scholarship on policy responses to the Venezuelan displacement crisis is emerging in both Spanish and English (Aron Said and Castillo Jara, 2020; Doña-Reveco and Gouveia, 2021; Freier and Parent, 2019; Freier, Berganza and Blouin, 2020; Sánchez Nájera and Freier, 2021; Seele and Bolter, 2021; Zapata and Tapia Wenderoth, 2021), the mainstream migration literature has paid little attention to this significant situation. Specifically, studies that shed light on Venezuelan emigration from the perspective of a development–migration nexus are lacking. This is surprising given the comparatively high levels of education of Venezuelan migrants (Freier and Parent, 2018).

In this chapter, we offer a comparative analysis of national policy responses to Venezuelan immigration in Peru and Argentina during the period between

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1 It is important to point out that the South–North terminology is somewhat misleading because it does not fully correspond to historic and geographic realities and poses the normative risk of naturalising a developmental divide between the two hemispheres; but it is heuristically useful and thus applied here.

2015 and 2020. This analysis addressed regularisation, the validation of academic and professional qualifications and providing access to basic social services, with an institutionalist approach as its departure point. Despite the fact that they do not share a border with Venezuela, Peru and Argentina received a significant number of Venezuelans migrants, and each responded differently to this challenge. Although the governments of both Peru and Argentina have recognised the development potential of disproportionate numbers of highly skilled Venezuelan immigrants and have promised them integration in terms of legal status and inclusion in the formal labour market,<sup>2</sup> Argentina has been more successful than Peru in integrating Venezuelans.

In section 2 we discuss our contribution to the relevant literature. We then provide an overview of Venezuelan displacement in the region before turning to the discussion of our case-study countries. We conclude with a discussion on this chapter's empirical and theoretical contributions and with a number of policy recommendations.

## 2 The Migration–Development Nexus and the Importance of State Capacity

The relationship between migration and development has been the subject of much academic debate. Since the mid-1950s, the discussion has revolved around the manifold links that connect migration with multidimensional development challenges (Castles, 2009). The migration–development nexus itself became an epistemological battleground in the last two decades (Novak, 2016), regarding the definition of both development and migration, the direction of the causal link between the two, and the unintended consequences of their interaction. The literature can be organised into different phases of thought (Faist und Fauser, 2011), which reflect a range of approaches, some pessimistic, some more optimistic, that describe the nexus in negative or positive terms (Bastia, 2013; de Haas, 2010).

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2 Rogelio Frigerio, Argentina's former Minister of the Interior, declared in February 2018: 'We are facilitating entry so that those Venezuelans who are expelled from their country may come to Argentina to work and be part of this process of development and growth' (<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/nuestro-pais-abre-las-puertas-los-venezolanos-que-quieran-formar-parte-del-crecimiento> (accessed on 15 July 2021; translation by the authors)). Former Peruvian president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski declared in January 2018: 'Come to Peru and we will pay you legal salaries' (<https://gestion.pe/peru/politica/ppk-venezolanos-vengan-peru-les-pagaremos-sueldos-ley-228593-noticia/?ref=gesr> (accessed on 15 July 2021; translation by the authors)).

Gamlen (2010) points to a wave of optimism among international organisations, NGOs and academics since the 1990s. Geiger and Pécoud (2013) and Delgado Wise, Covarrubias and Puentes (2013) underline a set of elements that constitute an optimistic orthodoxy, such as the central role of diasporas and remittances for the development of countries of origin, the positive impact of labour mobility liberalisation on world development, and the need for temporary and circular labour migration schemes. Proponents of a more recent critical turn in the debate on the migration–development nexus, however, identify a number of shortcomings of this optimistic orthodoxy (Faist and Fauser, 2011), which focuses on the experiences of Western liberal democracies as migrant-receiving countries despite the fact that around half of all international migrants reside in the global South (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2014; Natter, 2018). This has led to a gap regarding the agency of the state and state capacity in developing countries vis-à-vis advanced industrial countries (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019).

We contribute to the critical debate on the migration–development nexus by focusing on the role of state capacity and civil society, going beyond mainstream narratives that render the agency of many receiving countries in the global South invisible. State capacity involves several areas, including coercive/military, fiscal, administrative, transformative, territorial, legal and political capacity (Cingolani, 2013). Following an institutionalist approach, we understand state capacity to be a question of ‘whether a state is able to implement official goals, especially over the actual or potential opposition of powerful social groups or in the face of recalcitrant socioeconomic circumstances’ (Skocpol, 1985, 9). When presented with external challenges, administrative capacity, ‘technical competence, trusted and professional state agents, monitoring and coordination mechanisms, and effective reach across the state’s territory and social groupings’ (Hanson and Sigman, 2013, 4)<sup>3</sup> are key to developing and implementing adequate policy responses.

States play a key role in shaping ‘favorable conditions for positive development impacts of migration to occur’ (de Haas, 2010, 227). States often formulate policies, but—in the global South in particular—limited capabilities challenge policy implementation. Only an effective state can provide internal stability, foster economic growth, promote social development and advance goals both domestically and internationally. In the global South, and particularly in South America, state capacity is limited by a wide range of structural

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3 This aspect of state capacity usually corresponds with the notion of good governance that is tested in indexes such as the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs) or political risk indexes.

constraints, from economic resources to technological skills (Prashad, 2013), in addition to structural underdevelopment (Gray and Gills, 2016).

State capacity is a necessary condition for developing and implementing an effective integration policy that can maximise the migration–development nexus, but by itself it is insufficient. It is also necessary to consider that other policy constraints on immigration policies remain intrinsically ambivalent (de Haas et al., 2019). The socio-economic characteristics of migrants matter, as do internal constraints such as political ideology (with ideological splits often within the same parties and the same government) and the structure of political systems (de Haas et al., 2019; Natter, Czaika and de Haas, 2020). Jacobsen (1996) presents a set of factors that motivate host-state governments in less-developed countries to admit incoming refugees in either a generous or a restrictive way. These include speculation on international assistance, relations with the sending country, national security considerations and political calculations regarding the local community's absorption capacity (Jacobsen, 1996). In this chapter we discuss how these factors have influenced the triangular relationship between state capacity, immigration and development in Argentinian and Peruvian policy responses to Venezuelan displacement.

### 3 Venezuelan Displacement

Venezuelan emigration has its origin in the deep social, economic and political crisis of a country that was once one of the richest states in Latin America but now fails to guarantee basic human needs such as the preservation of life, liberty and personal security. According to both academic analyses and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), these conditions qualify the Venezuelan emigration as forced displacement. As of mid-2021 over 5.6 million Venezuelan emigrants (R4V, 2021) are refugees, based on the Cartagena Declaration (Freier, Berganza and Blouin, 2020). Cartagena defines as refugees 'persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order', and 15 countries across the region have incorporated this definition into their national legislation. Most Venezuelan migrants have settled within Latin America, posing a serious challenge for receiving states given that most have not experienced large inflows of forced immigration in recent decades. As of mid-2021, the countries that have received the most migrants and refugees from Venezuela are Colombia (1.7 million), Peru (1 million), Chile (657,000) and Ecuador



(431,000). Argentina has received comparatively few Venezuelans (200,000) (R4V, 2021).

Most Venezuelan migrants are highly educated and of working age. There is, however, some regional variation. For example, in 2018 around 80 per cent of Venezuelan migrants in Costa Rica had a university degree, compared to 50 per cent in Argentina and 40 per cent in Peru (Freier and Parent, 2018). However, over 90 per cent of the Venezuelan migrant population in Peru and approximately 70 per cent in Argentina (Beheran, 2019) work in the informal economy. The lack of sustainable integration of Venezuelan immigrants presents a lost opportunity, given their potential contribution to development in their host countries as well as with a view to their own well-being and that of the recipients of remittances in Venezuela.

In the absence of a unified regional response, receiving states have developed individual and often unsustainable policies. While initial policy responses were considered generous and welcoming in comparison with those adopted during other international crises (Freier and Parent, 2019; Seele et al., 2019), in the last two years the criminalisation of Venezuelan immigrants and a shift towards more restrictive migration policies—including the closure of legal pathways to migration—have been observed in Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Peru (Aron Said and Castillo Jara, 2020; Concha Villanueva, 2018; Freier and Luzes, 2021; Freier and Pérez, 2021; Ramírez 2020). Irregularity and precarious legal status pose a challenge to socio-economic integration and to the development potential that Venezuelan migrants in the region represent (Freier, Castillo Jara and Luzes, 2020). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a worsening of the situation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. During the national lockdowns, Venezuelan migrants suffered a severe loss of income, particularly due to the loss of jobs in the informal economy. This loss affected their quality of life, decreased the remittances that they were able to send back to their families, and increased the incidence of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (Bird, Freier and Luzes, 2020).

In the following section we will discuss the development potential of Venezuelan immigration and state responses to this immigration for the cases of Peru and Argentina, moving from a description of development potential and policy response to an analysis of political motivations, legal and financial state capacity, and the involvement of civil society organisations.

### 3.1 *Venezuelans in Peru: Changing State Responses and Lost Opportunities*

Until recently, Peru was itself a country characterised by high levels of emigration (Blouin and Freier, 2019). It was ill-equipped to adequately respond to the

TABLE 13.1 Venezuelan migration in Argentina and Peru

	Argentina		Peru	
Approximate number of Venezuelan immigrants	179,203	March 2021	1,049,970	March 2021
Immigrant level (immigrants as a percentage of the total population)	0.40 %		3.36 %	
Immigrants with higher education (university or technical)	60.0 %	1st DTM, <sup>a</sup> July 2018	68.2 %	1st DTM, October–November 2017
	53.3 %	4th DTM, September 2019	30.7 %	4th DTM, February 2020
Immigrants with high school education only	24.0 %	1st DTM, July 2018	30.8 %	1st DTM, October–November 2017
	31.7 %	4th DTM, September 2019	55.5 %	7th DTM, February 2020

a DTM: International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix.

SOURCE: CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS UCAB (2021); IOM (2017, 2018A, 2019A, 2020); R4V (2021)

rapid increase in Venezuelan immigration, and this represents a lost development opportunity of significant dimensions. According to a representative survey of the Venezuelan migrant population in Peru conducted by Equilibrium GenDE (2020) in June 2020, 68.9 per cent of respondents had some form of higher education (ranging from incomplete technical education to postgraduate degrees). In 2019, the World Bank estimated that Venezuelan migrants could contribute more than USD 623 million in net tax revenues to Peru for the period 2020–2025, and increase labour productivity by 3.2 per cent, merely due to their (2018) numbers (World Bank, 2019). According to the Bank's 2021 estimates, full labour integration of Venezuelans would imply a potential annual fiscal gain of USD 3.2 billion.

Peruvian policy responses to Venezuelan immigration, however, have passed through several increasingly restrictive stages. Peru initially made significant advances in providing Venezuelans with the documentation necessary for their integration into the formal labour market. Although Peru did not apply the refugee definition of the Cartagena Declaration, or the MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) Residence Agreement,<sup>4</sup> as we will discuss in the case of Argentina below (Acosta Arcarazo, Blouin and Freier, 2019), it was the first country in the region to create a special residence permit for Venezuelan migrants: the Temporary Residence Permit ('Permiso Temporal de Residencia', or PTP), which allowed Venezuelans to reside and work in Peru for one year, was launched in early 2017. The scheme was extended four times,<sup>5</sup> but ended in December 2018.<sup>6</sup> Roughly half a million Venezuelans received PTP status, and by mid-2020 about 200,000 had been able to transfer to a temporary 'special residence status', valid for another year (Freier and Brauckmeyer, 2020).

In mid-2019, the Peruvian government introduced the requirement of the so-called Humanitarian Visa, which could only be issued by the Peruvian Consulate/Embassy in Venezuela (and some consulates in third countries, such as Colombia and Ecuador) and necessitated a valid passport and certified clean criminal record—requirements that have long been prohibitive for most Venezuelans (Freier and Luzes, 2021). Entering Peru and residing and working there legally thus became much more difficult, if not impossible, for most Venezuelans. By mid-2021, close to half a million Venezuelans had filed asylum claims in Peru. But as the majority of these claims were either not resolved or involved the provision of inadequate documentation, asylum seekers were left with a precarious legal status. According to a report by Equilibrium CenDE (2020), in April 2020 only 54 per cent of Venezuelans in Peru had legal status. In contrast to Argentina, Peru had no previous experience with large-scale immigration, and had not developed state capacities to deal with the migration challenge. In 2020, Peru announced a new temporary permit for one year for people of all nationalities in an irregular situation, the Temporary Residence

4 The agreement, signed in 2002, created a free residence regime that focuses on equal treatment, socio-economic inclusion and regularisation. It provides the right of residence for citizens of member states for up to two years, after which migrants can apply for permanent residence after proving a 'lawful source of livelihood' (Art. 5).

5 PTP 1: Supreme Decree N° 002-2017-IN (3 January 2017); PTP 2: Supreme Decree N° 023-2017-IN (29 July 2017); PTP 3: Supreme Decree N° 001-2018-IN (23 January 2018) and PTP 4: Supreme Decree N° 007-2018IN (19 August 2018).

6 The PTP programme was ended in the context of the increasing politisation of Venezuelan immigration, and the criminalisation of Venezuelan immigrants, in Peru (Freier and Luzes, 2021; Freier and Pérez, 2021).

Permit Card ('Carnet de Permiso Temporal de Permanencia', or CPP), and in early 2021 a pre-registration programme registered 370,000 foreigners.

The Peruvian government did not develop a well-coordinated, multi-sectorial policy to integrate Venezuelan migrants into the formal labour market, a move that would have allowed the country to benefit from their potential. The procedures involved with and costs incurred by the recognition of professional degrees,<sup>7</sup> as well as the policy of applying a 30 per cent income tax rate to non-domiciled workers, have acted as significant obstacles to the inclusion of professional migrants in the formal labour market (Berganza and Solórzano Salleres, 2019). Even for those Venezuelan immigrants and refugees who were able to obtain all the necessary documentation, access to the formal labour market was limited for structural reasons, as over 70 per cent of Peru's economy is informal. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, this had already led to over 90 per cent of Venezuelan migrants either being employed in the informal sector or being self-employed (CIUP, 2020; Koechlin et al., 2019). Given the vulnerability of Venezuelan migrants, labour exploitation has been widespread (Blouin and Freier, 2019).

The socio-economic integration of Venezuelans has also been very limited with regard to access to healthcare and education. In Peru, migrants' and refugees' access to public health services is extremely limited. Access to the Integrated Health System (Seguro Integral de Salud, SIS) requires at least temporary residence status, with a Foreigners' Identity Card ('Carné de Extranjería'). Exceptions are made for children under five, pregnant women, people with life-threatening chronic diseases, and those in emergency situations. For employees it is also possible to pay for an affiliation to the SIS. For the majority of migrants, with irregular migration status and/or a precarious economic situation, it is impossible to join the SIS or to afford such an affiliation. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary access to the SIS was offered to all people showing COVID-19 symptoms or testing positive for the disease.<sup>8</sup>

One exception to the Peruvian state not showing agency with regard to reaping the development potential of Venezuelan immigrants has been its attempt

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7 The recognition and validation of professional degrees in Peru is carried out by the National Superintendency of Higher Education (Superintendencia Nacional de Educación Superior Universitaria, or SUNEDU). The procedure costs approximately USD 90. Validation does not, however, necessarily mean an opportunity to work in one's profession. In the case of regulated professions (those overseen by a professional association, such as medicine, law or architecture) additional procedures and costs apply.

8 Legislative decree 1,466, of 21 April 2020.

to integrate Venezuelan doctors and healthcare professionals in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. In April 2020, a special service called *SERVICER* was created, allowing Peruvian and foreign health professionals to be employed in the fight against the pandemic, granting them temporary contracts and life insurance financed by the state. In August 2020, opportunities to hire foreign health workers were further expanded by the temporary suspension of the requirements of professional degree validation and inscription in the relevant medical professional association. These policies, however, were specific to the state of emergency generated by the pandemic.

How can the fact that Peru did not treat Venezuelan migrants and refugees as agents of development be explained? Regarding political motivations, the change in Peruvian immigration policy with regard to Venezuelan citizens, from openness to restrictiveness, coincides with a change of presidencies, from Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016–2018) to Martín Vizcarra (2018–present), and is related, among other factors, to the different priorities given to foreign and domestic policy considerations. Kuczynski gave a high priority to Peruvian involvement in the centre-right Lima Group and welcomed Venezuelan citizens in the context of opposing the Maduro regime (Freier and Parent, 2019). His successor, Martín Vizcarra, was more focused on domestic political tensions, and soon gave in to public pressure based on rising xenophobia and the criminalisation of Venezuelan immigrants (Aron Said and Castillo Jara, 2020; Freier and Pérez, 2021). The political crisis of November 2020 and the presidential election of 2021 further dampened any efforts within both the Foreign and Interior Ministry to develop a coherent integration policy.

Regarding rent seeking behaviour, in contrast to its neighbour Colombia, which actively sought to take advantage of the Venezuelan displacement crisis to receive international assistance (Freier, Micinski and Tsourapas, 2021), the Peruvian government did not want to be seen as a Third World country in need of international aid, a wish that can be linked back to the presidential discourse of former president Alan Garcia, who declared in 2009 during his second mandate that Peru would leave its status as a Third World country behind it thanks to the vigorous eradication of poverty. This made Peru reluctant to ask for international assistance or to incur debt with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The steep increase in the number of Venezuelan migrants over this period meant that the local community's absorption capacity was put to the test. In 2015 there were only 3,768 Venezuelans registered in Peru. By 2016, the number had already tripled. This pattern continued, with numbers reaching 650,000 in 2018, 860,000 in 2019 and more than 1 million in 2021 (EFE, 2019; R4V, 2020). In late 2019, 87 per cent of Venezuelans in Peru resided in the capital, Lima

(Gestión, 2018). The socio-demographic characteristics of the Venezuelans arriving in Peru changed over time, with a tendency towards lower socio-economic status and lower educational levels among the Venezuelan migrant population (Vivas Peñalver and Paez, 2017). Thus, more recent Venezuelan migrants in Peru are poorer, less educated, and more vulnerable than their predecessors (CIUP, 2019).

According to data from the first Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), assembled by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in October 2017 Venezuelan migrants in Peru were largely young, male, single, educated and documented: 82 per cent were between 18 and 35 years old, 63 per cent were male, 76 per cent were single, and 68 per cent had a university or technical education. Furthermore, 98 per cent had entered the country with a valid passport (IOM, 2017). Of the 43 per cent of migrants who declared that they had children, 75 per cent had left them in Venezuela (IOM, 2017). Within two years this population's characteristics had shifted significantly, and it had become more vulnerable. In July 2019, 66 per cent of Venezuelan migrants entering Peru through the northern border were between 18 and 34 years old, 58 per cent were women, 59 per cent travelled in a family group (51 per cent of these groups including at least one minor), only 20 per cent had completed university studies, 15 per cent had undertaken some university studies, 5 per cent had a technical education, and only 35 per cent had entered with a passport (IOM, 2019a).

The high numbers of Venezuelan immigrants and the public perception of their increasing vulnerability led to a surge in xenophobic public opinion in Peru (Aron Said and Castillo Jara, 2020; Freier and Pérez, 2021). Perceptions of migrants as constituting economic competition and being an additional burden on already precarious public services led an increasing proportion of the national population to oppose immigration (World Bank, 2019). Between February 2018 and April 2019, the number of Peruvian residents in Lima who opposed the presence of Venezuelans in their city increased from 43 per cent to 67 per cent (World Bank, 2019). During the same period, a perceived (albeit unfounded) link between immigration and crime added to the economic argument and worsened the public perception of Venezuelans in Lima, and this in turn generated pressure on the government to implement non-inclusive reception policies (IOP and IDEHPUCP, 2020; Freier and Pérez, 2021).

In terms of legal and financial state capacity and the structure of political systems, including the involvement of civil society organisations, negative public opinion in Peru influenced the executive without either state institutions or strong civil society actors acting as a counterweight. In facing the challenge of massive and sudden immigration, the Peruvian state has shown

limited capacity. Although Peru reformed its outdated immigration legislation in 2017, from a human rights and development approach Peru's reactions to Venezuelan immigration have, in practice, been characterised by the temporariness of the measures; the ambiguity of the criteria for entry, employment and access to public services; and public officials exercising personal discretion (Berganza and Freier, 2021). With respect to financial capacity, insufficient budget allocation has been a significant barrier to the development of integration policies on both the national and local government level (Luzes and Freier, 2020). Linkages between territorial levels of government in generating and enforcing laws and regulations also remain weak.

With regard to civil society, the Venezuelan Union (an association of Venezuelans that helps compatriots in need), religious organisations, and some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) already working in Peru with a focus on issues such as poverty alleviation, education and child welfare (for example World Vision, CARE, Save the Children and Ayuda en Acción) have included support for the migrant population in their remit in recent years (since 2017, approximately). These organisations often work in coordination with international organisations such as UNHCR, IOM and the World Food Programme (WFP). A group of NGOs formed a working group on human mobility under the National Human Rights Coordinator in late 2019, advocating for migrants' and refugees' rights, for example with regard to unlawful legislative proposals. The pandemic, however, limited the visibility and impact of the group. NGOs have not been sufficiently influential to be able to act as counterweights to negative public opinion and have not been successful in persuading the state to develop more inclusive policies.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the assistance provided by NGOs has been vital to migrants' and refugees' survival during the long lockdown periods, given that many experienced a severe reduction in their income and that they were not included in the government's programme of subsidies for vulnerable households. The activism of the human mobility working group operating under the National Human Rights

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9 The Intersectoral Working Table for Migration Management (Mesa de Trabajo Intersectorial para la Gestión Migratoria, or MTIGM), a deliberative space on migration policy run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in which NGOs and civil society actors are represented, did not invite civil society organisations to participate from November 2019 to August 2020. Furthermore, during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MTIGM was left without leadership due to the fact that its president had fallen ill. This undermined the necessary connection and deliberation between the state and civil society in the initial phase of the pandemic.

Coordinator was successful in obtaining PTP holders and asylum seekers access to SERVICER, the system that enabled Peruvian and foreign health professionals to be employed in the fight against the pandemic. It should also be stressed that President Guaidó's Diplomatic Representation in Lima, headed by Carlos Scull, provided essential legal and social assistance to Venezuelan citizens, providing more than 14,000 co-nationals with direct humanitarian aid, assisting more than 15,000 in co-operation with Peruvian Ministries, and responding to over 11,000 consular queries in 2020.

### 3.2 *Venezuelans in Argentina: Positive Legal Response and Structural Challenges*

Argentina has historically been a country of immigration, which continued until the mid-twentieth century with migrants arriving mostly from Europe, and later from the country's Southern Cone neighbours. The Argentinian state has long seen immigration as a development tool, and Argentinian society has a largely positive attitude towards immigration and the integration of migrants. In the same vein, the reception of Venezuelan immigrants in Argentina provides a positive case of a government trying to take advantage of immigrants' development potential. Argentina has been described in the literature as the avant-garde of progressive immigration policies in Latin America (Acosta Arcarazo and Freier, 2015).

The number of Venezuelans coming into Argentina has been relatively small, almost a quarter of the Peru figure. According to official data from the National Direction of Migration, 130,820 Venezuelans settled in Argentina between 2009 and 2018, although the number might be slightly higher when considering irregular entries. Nevertheless, in 2018 Venezuelans became the largest group of migrants, surpassing Bolivians and Paraguayans, with more than 70,000 approved settlements across permanent and temporary categories (DNM, 2019). Between 2012 and 2018, around 92 per cent of Venezuelan migrants to Argentina decided to live in the heart of the country's most economically and socially dynamic region, in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan area; 75 per cent of these decided to live in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (DNM, 2018a).

The development potential of Venezuelan immigration to Argentina, meanwhile, is comparable to that of the Peruvian case. The DTM conducted by IOM in Argentina during July 2018 shows a young, male, single, and highly educated migrant population: 57 per cent were between 18 and 35 years old, 56 per cent were male, 58 per cent single, and 63 per cent had a university or technical education (IOM, 2018a). The generally positive approach to migration was maintained with a view to the reception of Venezuelan citizens. Although the



National Refugee Commission (Comisión Nacional para los Refugiados, or CONARE) accepted only 15 asylum claims from over 1,000 applications made between 2016 and 2018 (Pacecca, 2019), as early as 2012 Argentina started according Venezuelans legal status by unilaterally granting them MERCOSUR residence permits for two years (Acosta Arcarazo, Blouin and Freier, 2019; Pacecca, 2019).<sup>10</sup>

In early 2019, the Macri government (2015–2019) introduced the ‘Assistance Program for Venezuelan Migrants’—a major change to respond to the increasing numbers of Venezuelan immigrants. The National Migration Office (Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, or DNM) recognised that there were reasons that prevented or hindered presentation of the required documentation, including the inability of Venezuelan authorities to provide documents such as passports or certified criminal records (DNM, 2018b). The new programme authorised the entry of migrants with expired passports or identity cards and the entry of children upon presentation of their birth certificate at land borders, in addition to an ambitious re-localisation plan to improve the positive local development impact of Venezuelan immigration in the interior provinces (Casa Rosada, 2019).

Neither the Macri nor the Alberto Fernandez Administrations (the latter 2019 to date) applied a specific policy to proactively incorporate Venezuelan immigrants into the labour market, but there are two main factors that have facilitated immigrants’ socio-economic integration: access to social services and a straightforward process for the validation of professional degrees. With a temporary MERCOSUR residence permit, not only do Venezuelan migrants have access to free public education and healthcare (as provided for all immigrants irrespective of legal status by the 2004 Migration Law), importantly, they also have access to the formal job market. These two aspects have been key advantages. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, access to social benefits such as Emergency Family Income (Ingresos familiares de emergencia, or IFE) was limited, since there is a minimum requirement of two years’ residence to receive it (Vales, 2020), meaning that many immigrants were not eligible for this form of assistance and relied on access to the informal job market.

The validation of degrees has been an issue of key concern to Venezuelan migrant associations, alongside the residency process and integration into the labour market, especially in the healthcare and engineering sectors. By late 2018, almost 4,000 engineers, more than 600 doctors, 111 pharmacists,

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10 Despite becoming a member of MERCOSUR in 2012, Venezuela never ratified the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement. Caracas’s membership of the regional integration process was suspended in August 2017.

213 psychologists and almost 300 dentists had been registered by migrant associations such as ASOMEVENAR (Asociación de Médicos Venezolanos en Argentina), ASOVEA (Asociación de Odontólogos Venezolanos en Argentina) and IngVenAr (Asociación de Ingenieros Venezolanos en la Argentina) (IOM, 2019a; IOM, 2019b). Following requests from the above-mentioned organisations and a significant increase in applications for degrees to be recognised and validated, in early 2018 the Ministry of Education decided to give preferential treatment to Venezuelan and Syrian migrants/refugees due to the scale of the unfolding humanitarian crises in these countries. In the case of Venezuelans, the validation process recognises both complete and incomplete studies (to enable migrants to continue their studies in Argentina) (Kobelinsky, 2018).

In a recent report, IOM (2019b) recognised Argentina's degree validation policy as a 'best practice' to be imitated, although the process still presents some implementation challenges, especially in the healthcare sector, where applicants are still required to take several exams at a local university, which can delay the validation process substantially (Herman, 2018). The Argentine government also showed agency in integrating Venezuelan doctors and healthcare professionals in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. ASOMEVENAR and ASOENVEAR (Asociación de Enfermeros Venezolanos en Argentina) publicly offered to join the official efforts in the healthcare sector. The city of Buenos Aires responded positively to this call, incorporating more than 250 healthcare professionals into the 'Plan Detectar' for the early detection of COVID-19 cases, in addition to the several dozen health professionals who were incorporated into the healthcare sector in the provinces thanks to re-localisation plans<sup>11</sup> encouraged by the central authorities (van Strahlen, 2020).

Despite the efforts of the Argentinian government, the integration of Venezuelan migrants into the labour market has been complex, especially due to the imbalance between informal employment and access to the formal job market. According to an April 2019 survey by the private consulting firm Adecco, 35 per cent of respondents declared that they were unemployed while 32 per cent stated that they were in stable employment. The rest were in employment but trying to get a better job, and most of these found a job within six months, with around 35 per cent finding one in less than three months. Among the overall number of employed, only 4.5 per cent were working in the professions they worked in before migrating (The Adecco Group, 2020). A previous IOM survey carried out between 2014 and 2018 showed more positive results, with 90 per cent of respondents in employment, 70 per cent of whom

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11 These re-localisation plans encouraged professionals newly arrived from Venezuela to voluntarily relocate to small cities and rural areas by providing a range of incentives.

had found work within a month of arriving in the country and only 36 per cent of these working informally (Pacecca, 2019). The Adecco survey reversed these findings, with more than 60 per cent of respondents working in the informal sector (The Adecco Group, 2020), which contrasts with the figure of around 44 per cent informal sector employment overall (Bertranou and Casanova, 2013). These different results may be explained by the economic crisis Argentina has been facing since 2017, which has affected the labour market, but also by the increasing number of Venezuelan migrants that have arrived since 2017.

Despite structural barriers to the labour integration of Venezuelan immigrants in Argentina, both the Macri and the Fernández government sought to facilitate regularisation of the entry, residence, and economic integration of Venezuelan immigrants. How can this approach be explained? Regarding political motivations, it is important to bear in mind that Argentinian politics have suffered from intense polarisation since the late 2000s, and that one of the most politicised issues in Argentinian foreign affairs has been the relationship with Venezuela.

The centre-left governments of Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and Cristina Kirchner (2007–2015) had a particularly good political relationship with Hugo Chávez's Venezuela in the context of Latin America's 'left turn' (Gonzalez Levaggi, 2019), despite the opposition's criticism of the governments' silence on democratic backsliding in Venezuela and corruption in bilateral projects. After the victory of Mauricio Macri's centre-right Republican Proposal party, Argentina began voicing harsh criticism of Caracas, supporting the Lima Group in its efforts to find a peaceful solution to the undemocratic developments in Venezuela and recognising Juan Guaidó as the country's legitimate president (Simonoff, 2019). As the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela worsened, the Macri government signalled strong political commitment to the Venezuelan people by further facilitating their legal arrival and residence in Argentina, and their access to the job market.

Public perception of Venezuelan immigrants has been positive. In this regard, the role of civil society has been critical to neutralising any concerns over arriving migrants. Both international civil society organisations, such as Cruz Roja Argentina and *Cáritas*, and national organisations dealing specifically with immigrants' rights, such as the Centre for Legal and Social Studies (*Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales*, or *CELS*) and the Argentinian Commission for Refugees and Migrants (*Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes*, or *CAREF*), provide significant support to newcomers and/or pressure the authorities to facilitate their integration.

At the same time, Venezuelan migrant organisations have become increasingly influential, with *ASOVEN* (*Asociación de Venezolanos en la República*

Argentina), UNEVAR (Asociación Civil Unión de Venezolanos en Argentina) and AMVA (Asociación Mutual Venezolano Argentina), among others, focusing on the migrant community's problems while facilitating communication between international and national organisations and the Venezuelan community in Argentina. As in Peru, President Guaidó's Diplomatic Representation in Buenos Aires, headed by Elisa Trotta, provides legal and social assistance to Venezuelan citizens, attending to more than 2,500 co-nationals in 2020.

As regards the state's legal and financial capacity, at least during the first stage of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis Argentina's legislative framework proved adequate to deal with Venezuelan immigration. As the numbers of immigrants and the vulnerability levels of their circumstances increased, the state adjusted its policies accordingly. A central belief with regard to state capacities is related to previous migration experiences. Argentina is a country of high immigration and moderate emigration patterns (IOM, 2018b), with a long history of receiving migrants (since the late nineteenth century) and generous laws, especially in the last two decades. As already indicated, its 2004 Migration Law, which enshrined the MERCOSUR Residence Visa, facilitated the legal entry and residence of South American citizens. Argentina has also been at the forefront of immigration policy liberalisation in the region (Acosta Arcarazo and Freier, 2015).<sup>12</sup>

#### 4 Discussion

Venezuelan immigration has presented a development opportunity to both Peru and Argentina. However, Argentina has been more successful than Peru in integrating skilled Venezuelan migrants in terms of regularisation, validation of professional degrees, and access to social services. Peru has only treated select groups of highly skilled Venezuelans, such as doctors, as agents of development, and specifically in the context of COVID-19. Given the increasing political polarisation in Peru and the politicisation of Venezuelan immigration, which has been reflected in various unconstitutional bills proposed

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12 According to the DEMIG Policy Dataset (DEMIG, 2015), in the period 2002–2013 Argentina implemented 41 migration policy changes, of which 37 introduced less restrictive measures. In addition, Nestor Kirchner's government adopted the 'Patria Grande' programme, which facilitated the regularisation of regional migrants, with more than 400,000 successful cases in the first four years (Perera and Velázquez, 2013), while the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement surpassed 1.25 million temporary permits between 2004 and 2018 (Pacecca, 2019).

by Congress (Freier and Vera Espinoza, 2021), it is highly unlikely that Peru will adopt policies to effectively include migrant workers in the formal labour market in the near future. Argentina has been more open towards Venezuelan immigrants, treating them as agents of development first by facilitating their arrival through existing flexible immigration legislation and second by adopting specific norms to ease their legal and professional difficulties. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, more Venezuelan professionals have been integrated in each country.

Regarding the determinants of immigration policies discussed in the theoretical framework, neither Argentina nor Peru show strong national security concerns with respect to the Venezuelan crisis (although Venezuelan immigrants and refugees have been criminalised in the case of Peru), nor were expectations of significant international assistance decisive. Political ideology mattered initially in Peru's welcoming response to Venezuelans in the context of the government's opposition to the Maduro regime. Similarly, in Argentina Macri's centre-right Administration pushed for Venezuelans to be accommodated with respect to legal requirements for entry, residence and degree validation. And while the ideology of the national government changed with the election of left-wing president Alberto Fernández in late 2019, there was no change in the policy response to Venezuelans, possibly because it was Fernández's party that led progressive immigration policy reform in Argentina in the early 2000s.

Political calculations concerning the local community's absorption capacity and the size and characteristics of the inflow of migrants and refugees seem critical. In Peru, the steep increase in immigration and the change in socio-economic characteristics towards less-educated migrants and increased migrant vulnerability in the context of the country's lack of recent experience with immigration meant that xenophobia and the criminalisation of immigrants grew and significantly influenced the government's response in the form of growing restrictions. In Argentina, meanwhile, the arrival of a relatively limited number of migrants and the long tradition of receiving migrants both from the region and beyond have shaped a positive response from the government and in public opinion, despite the country being in an economic crisis since 2018.

Finally, regarding state capacity and the role of civil society we also find significant differences between the two countries, despite the broader humanitarian support that local NGOs offer Venezuelan migrants. Argentina's flexible and rights-based legislative migration framework and the prominent role of civil society actors advocating for migrants has contributed to the implementation of more inclusive policies. In contrast, the relative novelty of the

phenomenon of immigration, limited state capacity and the absence of strong civil society actors in Peru have contributed to a lack of inclusive policies. In Argentina, civil society has had significant influence on those government migration policies that push for special treatment for the new Venezuelan migrants, while in Peru NGOs and civil society organisations do not have the necessary strength to balance xenophobic public opinion's pressure on the government to limit immigration.

## 5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed how a number of policy determinants have influenced the triangular relationship between state capacity, immigration, and the development of the policy responses of Argentina and Peru to Venezuelan displacement in the period 2015–2020. Based on these empirical findings, we can draw a number of broader theoretical conclusions regarding migration and development in the global South. First, large numbers of migrants and refugees in increasingly vulnerable conditions present challenges to weak state capacities in countries of the global South, while small numbers of highly skilled foreigners facilitate social and labour integration. Second, strong institutions and a dynamic civil society can decelerate restrictive policy tendencies, despite negative public opinion, and foster migrant regularisation and integration. Third, such integration is nevertheless limited by the largely informal economies of developing countries in the global South (see Freier and Zubrzycki, 2019).

Overall, the case of Venezuelan displacement presents empirical support for the optimism among international organisations, NGOs and politicians regarding the development potential of both voluntary and forced migrants. This chapter contributes to the critical debate on the migration–development nexus by focusing on the role of state capacities and civil society in the responses of Argentina and Peru to Venezuelan displacement. It also contributes to the literature on the role of state capacity in the global South and on immigration policy determinants in South America. Public policies can play a key role in enhancing the contribution of immigrants to their host countries' development (OECD, 2018). In order to reap the development potential that Venezuelan immigration represents, it is essential to implement policies that include lifting documentation-related barriers, as well as promoting equality of wages and working conditions between national and foreign workers. Migrant regularisation will be key to Venezuelans being able to contribute to their host societies. Future studies should deepen our understanding of the

determinants of policy reactions to Venezuelan displacement from a development perspective in other Latin American countries, testing the relative importance of state capacity, progressive legislation, civil society activism and migrant and refugee numbers and characteristics. Cross-regional comparative approaches should draw parallels and tease out differences between Latin America and other regions, such as Southern Africa.

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# The National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile, 2014–17

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## Abstract

At the global level, the equal recognition of migrant rights is among the most important challenges for modern society. This chapter aims to analyse the formulation and implementation processes of the National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile (NHPIM), as well as its short-term results, from 2014 to 2017. It is based on a review of the literature on and deriving from the consultative processes performed in communities with high mobility and residency rates for international migrants, and key documents related to the Policy. It analyses public sector health coverage from the National Health Fund of Chile (*Fondo Nacional de Salud*, or FONASA), health service usage, and fulfilment of health needs, comparing the general Chilean population to the migrant population in Chile using data from the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN Survey) from 2013, 2015 and 2017.

The formulation of the NHPIM was a response to evidence generated through consultation and social participation. It eliminated legislative and legal barriers, and favoured financial protection through coverage by FONASA. Over the period analysed, the number of migrants with FONASA coverage doubled (from 243,000 to 506,000); the rate of healthcare service usage increased (from 0.81 to 1.36 per 100 migrants); the rate of hospital discharges remained steady (3.2 per 100 migrants), although the net number of discharges doubled; and the proportion of migrant hospital discharges without FONASA coverage fell from 25.5 per cent to 7.8 per cent.

The protection of the right to health for international migrants in Chile is a prime example of the effective translation of political discourse into concrete social practice.

## 1 Introduction

Numerous initiatives have been conceived at the global level with the goal of promoting and protecting the rights of international migrants and their families (UNGA, 1990). This complex web of declarations and strategies includes the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNGA, 1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNGA, 1966b), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNGA, 1966a), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UNGA, 1965), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UNGA, 1979) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNGA, 1989). International political consensus has targeted guaranteeing the exercising of the rights of population groups that, for diverse reasons, have had to abandon their birth communities, often in search of a better quality of life.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promotes greater visibility of and attention to the needs of historically marginalised groups, and may contribute to transforming the public health landscape. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated and indivisible, and encompass economic, social and environmental action areas. International migration is specifically addressed (under SDG 10: Reduced inequalities), with the primary migration-related target being to achieve the facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration. This target is closely related with other goals, including SDG 3, Good health and well-being, which comprises multiple dimensions including universal healthcare coverage, protection against financial risks, and access to quality, essential health services, medicines and vaccines (UNGA, 2015). The aspirational nature of the SDGs is reflected in the fact that the majority of governments—whether their countries are principally sites of origin, transit, or destination for migrants—do not allocate resources specifically to these commitments, with certain exceptions, including Canada (Government of Canada, 2020).

The exercising of rights, in any given social space, is a key element in the reduction of pre-existing gaps and in the construction of a culture of mutual respect (Penninx, 2005). This has critical implications for the well-being and health of society given that the groups with only a limited capacity to exercise their own rights are also those that experience greater social, economic and health risks (Bronfman et al., 2002; Black, Natali and Skinner, 2005; Devaux, 2015). Social and political action is one clear pathway to creating conditions that favour the assurance of these rights (Soss, 1999; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller, 2003).

Latin America has a long history of experiences that have put the rights of its people to the test (Zapata, 1986). Nonetheless, the past few decades have seen some Latin American societies consolidate their capacity to demand the promotion and respect of basic rights; among them Chile, which has demonstrated steady progress towards reducing social inequity across multiple social and economic spaces (National Library of Congress of Chile, 2020).



From the start of the current century, Chile has attracted significant global attention as a destination country for migrants, particularly for the populations of neighbouring countries (Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina and Ecuador) but also for those of more distant countries, including Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, or European and Asian countries, who see in Chile the opportunity to develop and exercise their skills and abilities (Martínez Pizarro, 2003). Thus, the proportion of international migrants in the total population of Chile rose from just 1.3 per cent in 2002 to nearly 4.4 per cent in 2017 (National Institute for Statistics of Chile, 2018a), and recent estimates indicate that this figure may have reached 7.8 per cent by 2019 (an estimated 1,492,522 individuals) (Department of Foreign Affairs and Migration of Chile, 2020).

In 2017, the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants in Chile, as compared to the general Chilean population, reflected a difference in age (the former are younger) and a higher level of formal education among migrants; the migrant population demonstrates a greater frequency of poverty and overcrowded living conditions (Table 14.1).

TABLE 14.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of migrants in Chile and of the general Chilean population, according to the CASEN Survey 2017

	Migrants (CI <sup>a</sup> 95%)	Chileans (CI 95%)
Estimated population size	777,407 inhabitants 4.4%	16,843,471 inhabitants 94.6%
Sex (female)	51.4% (49.0–53.7)	52.5% (52.3–52.8)
Age	31.7 (30.9–32.4)	37.4 (37.1–37.6)
Years of formal education (for adults ≥18 years of age)	13.1 (12.8–3.4)	11.1 (11.0–11.2)
Multidimensional poverty	24.6% (20.1–29.8)	20.5% (19.8–21.2)
Occupation <sup>b</sup>	73.7% (70.6–76.7)	51.8% (51.4–52.2)
Overcrowding (moderate or critical)	26.9% (23.8–30.1)	9.1% (8.6–9.5)

a Confidence interval.

b Response to the question: “In the last week, have you worked at least one hour, not counting housework or daily maintenance?”.

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE (2020A)

The Chilean government and society in general have been sensitive to this change in the socio-demographic and social dynamic of their country, and in 2014 a process was initiated to simultaneously formulate and implement and test and adjust the National Health Policy for International Migrants (NHPIM) in Chile. The Policy, published near the end of 2017, constitutes a response to the challenges international migrants—particularly those who are economically disadvantaged or who have irregular migration status—face in accessing social services, including those associated with health. This chapter aims to analyse the processes involved in formulating the Policy and their short-term results considered as part of the process of designing, testing and adjusting the NHPIM, during the period 2014 to 2017.

## 2 Methods

The processes of formulating and implementing the NHPIM in Chile between 2014 and 2017 were analysed through a document review of the technical reports from a series of consultative forums related to social participation processes called '*Diálogos Ciudadanos*' (Citizen Dialogues), and of meetings held by health professionals for the revision of the technical, legislative, and legal aspects of the formulation (Intersectoral Board on Migrants and Health, 2015; Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015b, 2015d, 2015c, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; Division of Healthy Public Policy and Promotion, 2017). Participating actors were identified, as was the specific contribution of each to defining the legislative, legal, and financial aspects of the Policy. The information that guided the present work is in the public domain.

Given the simultaneous nature of the processes (design–testing–adjustment) that went into the development of the NHPIM, short-term results were measured on two dimensions. The first was financing, which included legislative or legal changes related to financial coverage provided through public sector health insurance via the National Health Fund of Chile (Fondo Nacional de Salud, or FONASA), nominal coverage of migrants by FONASA, and the effective use of FONASA. This measurement was based on hospital discharges in cases where patients had FONASA coverage as an indicator, considering that inpatient hospital care implies the highest cost of any type of medical attention. The second dimension was access to and use of healthcare services by migrants. Barriers to effective access to services were estimated using the proportion of individuals who reported difficulties obtaining a medical appointment. Healthcare service use was measured using the following indicators: the population who reported any health problem and who accessed healthcare

services (according to the CASEN Survey); rate of general use of healthcare services including general medical check-ups, emergency care, and specialist and dental care (according to the CASEN Survey); proportion of women aged 18 and older who reported being a beneficiary of programmes providing family planning measures or prenatal care (Department of Health Information Statistics of Chile, 2020a); and the proportion of hospital discharges by nationality (Chilean or migrant) during the period 2014 to 2019 (Department of Health Information Statistics of Chile, 2020b).

Information regarding access to and use of healthcare services is available to the public through the CASEN Survey for the years 2013, 2015, and 2017, precisely in those chapters specific to migration (Ministry of Social Development of Chile, 2020b). The survey is representative of the national population residing in private households across the 16 regions of the country, both urban and rural. The present analysis considers the general population, and the subpopulation of migrants. To calculate rates for the year 2016, estimates of the population size by group within the CASEN 2015 and 2017 were used, as was data on the number of international migrants in Chile according to the National Institute for Statistics (Department of Foreign Affairs and Migration of Chile, 2020), and estimates of and projections for the Chilean population between 1992 and 2050 (National Institute for Statistics of Chile, 2018b). Given the high mobility of the migrant population in Chile during the years covered by this analysis, it is possible that the number of migrants entering the country in the months prior to or following the CASEN Survey was under-reported, leading to distorted estimations of FONASA coverage, which could in turn have limited access to the information needed to register migrants under FONASA. Data on accessing and using outpatient and inpatient hospital services are from the CASEN Survey for each year during the period of interest; they are self-reported measures, which may imply memory bias (not estimated) in outpatient service data (three months prior to the survey) and for those who used inpatient services (one year prior to the survey). In both cases, the effect of this data on the results presented here may be an underestimation of healthcare service use. The data from hospital outpatients and users of family planning and prenatal services are derived from publications of the Department of Health Information Statistics of the Health Ministry of Chile.

Finally, regarding the quality of the data presented in this study, information on FONASA coverage, inpatient and outpatient health service access and use, hospital discharges, and family planning and prenatal care is all from verifiable, publicly available sources. The CASEN Survey, meanwhile, is among the instruments with the greatest scientific rigour with regard to an evaluation of the socio-economic conditions of the inhabitants of Chile.

### 3 Results

The formulation of the NHPIM began in 2014 as a response to increased migrant flow, reports of human rights violations and studies revealing equity gaps (Demoscopica, 2009; Liberona Concha, 2012; National Institute for Human Rights of Chile, 2013; González, 2014; Scozia Leighton et al., 2014). Furthermore, the current Chilean government, as part of its political platform, decided it was necessary to formulate a national migration policy that would operate within a framework of respect for human rights and the promotion of social integration for migrants, which would become the basis of the NHPIM (Sandoval, 2017). This decision was supported by Ministry of Health officials, who proposed that evidence was needed regarding the experiences of migrants in the community and in the context of healthcare services, as well as regarding the primary actions necessary to facilitate healthcare service access; these would both contribute to the basis of the NHPIM (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015d). These events gave rise to a series of analyses, with the participation of different government sectors (those responsible for external relations and migration, human rights, and health), the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) and civil society organisations that directly serve migrant communities.

As part of this initial process of the critical analysis of healthcare service access for migrants, it was necessary to formulate the Policy around the new socio-demographic reality represented by the significant increase in migrant numbers in Chile (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015d). To this end, in September 2014, the Sectoral Advisory Board of Immigrants of the Ministry of Health was created (made up of representatives from the Public Health Subsecretariat, Aid Networks Subsecretariat, FONASA and Health Superintendency) with the goal of developing the legislative, legal, technical, financial and administrative guidelines necessary to construct the NHPIM.

Rapidly, without introducing legislative discourse that could prolong the process, the Ministry of Health released a memorandum (Bulletin 6, 2015) (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015a) that explicitly decoupled healthcare service access and migratory status (residency permits), and instructed healthcare providers to provide all care required by children, adolescents up to age 18 and pregnant women, and the following services to all: emergency care, universal public health services (such as emergency contraceptives, vaccines, and care related to communicable diseases including tuberculosis, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases) and health and hygiene education. Furthermore, this memorandum established that all irregular migrants 'lacking in resources' would be incorporated into FONASA as non-contributory

beneficiaries with free access to all healthcare services offered. This was among the most significant stipulations that immediately served to guarantee financial protection for the health of migrants, especially those with an irregular migration status.

This memorandum was further endorsed in 2016 by the national government of Chile through the publication of Decree No. 67 (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2016), which institutionalised the circumstances and mechanisms under and via which migrants could be classified as 'lacking in resources'. This measure provided a normative backstop and allowed progress to be made in the implementation of the legislative framework around healthcare service access with financial coverage for migrants, independently of their migration status. In addition, specific funding was allocated to the creation of the Healthcare Access Programme for Migrants (Programa de Acceso a la Atención de Salud de Personas Migrantes), which allowed resources to be channelled to municipal-level actions aimed at diminishing access gaps (the hiring of operational personnel, professional training, activity development for promoting health and human rights, and other aspects of primary care). With these normative and budgetary foundations, a more expansive regional intervention, both sectoral and multisectoral, was set in motion, with the participation of social and migrant-formed organisations, in order to identify barriers to healthcare service access and propose solutions.

This process became known as the Health Pilot for International Immigrants (Piloto de Salud de Inmigrantes Internacionales) (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015d). It involved testing and adjusting the design of the Policy, already in its initial development stages, with the goal of measuring short-term results at the territorial level (municipalities and regions) that would serve as evidence enabling health inequities in the immigrant population to be addressed.

The pilot was developed and ran from 2015 to 2017 in the Chilean regions with the largest migrant populations: Arica Parinacota, Tarapacá, Antofagasta, and the Metropolitan Region (Santiago). Results were analysed through qualitative studies known as National Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Campaigns (Jornadas Nacionales de Monitoreo y Evaluación Intermedia), which had the main objective of identifying and disseminating achievements and lessons learned in the pilot (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2018c).

Notable achievements were identified: the institutionalisation of actions relating to migrants by their becoming the responsibility of the Department of Health of Indigenous Peoples and Interculturality; the identification of gaps in healthcare access at each level of the healthcare system; improvements in health data collection for evidence generation; the reporting and resolution of complaints, together with the intersectoral working groups; and the

explicit acknowledgement of ‘intercultural’ gaps in healthcare for migrants. Furthermore, ‘substantial improvements’ were documented in the ‘reduction of health access gaps for the migrant community’ and it was noted that ‘clear guidelines and vision exist to orient efforts towards migrant health’ (IOM, 2015; Division of Healthy Public Policy and Promotion, 2017; Superintendence of Health of Chile, 2019).

Analysis and evaluation of these results was carried out through Citizen Dialogues (ten public analysis forums) in 2017, with the participation of 1,500 individuals, including migrants and representatives of national civil society, as well as health officials and authorities (Division of Healthy Public Policy and Promotion, 2017). The Dialogues were a platform from which to revise and discuss the approach, principles and guidelines of the Policy, while also serving to provide feedback on the necessities and barriers faced by migrants both inside and outside the health arena (Región XV; Division of Healthy Public Policy and Promotion, 2017; Regional Government of Tarapacá, 2017). The analysis highlighted multiple barriers to receiving care (particularly at the hospital level), discrimination, poor treatment in health institutions and limited information regarding their functioning, and the challenge of responding to a highly multicultural society. One recurring topic was poor labour conditions and injuries and abuses suffered by migrants in the workplace, alongside general discrimination, xenophobia and racism in Chile and their effect on the mental health of migrants (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2018c).

Within this framework, the National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile was created as an institutional response to both voluntary and forced international migration with the aim of guaranteeing migrants the right to health under the same conditions as the national population and acknowledging them as subjects protected by the law. The main goal of the NHPIM is to ‘contribute to achieving the maximum health conditions possible for international migrants, with equity, under the human rights approach’ (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2017, 30).

The Policy was established under the principles of civic engagement, equity, equality, and non-discrimination, and those of integrated healthcare (sectoral and multisectoral), multiculturalism, gender, social cohesion and universality. As a whole these features are meant to engage a health sector response that accommodates the social conditions faced by migrants and seeks the resolution of key obstacles in order to ensure access to and use of necessary healthcare services.

The following strategies were proposed in order to achieve the Policy’s goals:

- Unification and adaption of the corresponding legal framework. This strategy used the pre-existent normative advancements as a reference point

(Decree No. 67, on the financial protection of migrants' health through FONASA coverage) (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2016).

- Development of a system sensitive to migrants, one that ensures accessibility as a path to exercising the right to health and seeks acceptance of available service options. This included actions to confront language barriers. In this way, a novel new sector was conceived around sociocultural action for health, which has allowed the incorporation of migrants as health service personnel, as intercultural mediators, and as linguistic facilitators. This contributed decisively to improving the quality, acceptability and interculturality of health services in Chile.
- A comprehensive approach to health for international migrants. This strategy acknowledged the multideterminant nature of health and illness, and the subsequent need for a response that engages different social and government sectors with a territorial approach, and adjusts to the diverse living conditions of the population.
- A shift towards a transnational approach to the health of international migrants within health programmes and interventions. This strategy allowed the insertion of migration into all different healthcare and health promotion programmes: notably, in those programmes related to life course, indigenous populations, mental health, communicable disease prevention, and the detection and management of chronic degenerative diseases.
- Work, health and migration. This was a key issue within the intersectoral health response given the significant contribution of migrants to economic development in Chile. In order to address this, the Ministry of Health promoted the prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses that affect physical, mental and social integrity and require action in the legislative, regulatory, executive, auditing, and health promotion spheres.
- Communication and action against discrimination, xenophobia and the stigmatisation of migrants. Health is considered key to facilitating cohesion through participatory processes, social networks and positive attitudes to migration. In this way, step-by-step results are expected, beginning in the healthcare system itself and then developing concurrently within other government sectors and in the Chilean society, thereby contributing to reducing or eliminating xenophobic attitudes and the stigmatisation of migrants.
- Monitoring, evaluation and health data. Since the implementation of the Policy, health information regarding migrants in Chile has been included in the Chilean health information system. It is now possible to characterise the health situation of the migrant population, evaluate and analyse trends, and identify distinct groups and differences among diverse migrant populations and well as between them and the Chilean population. Thus,

the health system has the information necessary to guide evidence-based decision-making.

Within this framework of legislative changes, and as part of the process of policy design, testing and adjustment, some short-term results are available. These serve to demonstrate the translation of political declarations into practice, and the contributions of these practices to economic and social development aligned with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.

In Chile, the contribution of migrants to national economic and social well-being is well-documented, representing USD 4 billion, 4 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Urria, 2020). Furthermore, migrant remittances have made a significant contribution to countries of origin: USD 1,520,000,000, as documented in 2018. Colombia, Peru and Haiti together received 65.6 per cent of this total, followed by Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and China, among others (Central Bank of Chile, 2020).

In the health field, the following sections show the contributions of the NHPIM in Chile (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2017), which are directly linked to the creation of conditions that allow the effective exercise of the right to health, in line with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) through the following dimensions: universal health coverage, including protection against financial risks, and access to essential and high-quality health services (including sexual and reproductive health, neonatal and child care, and communicable and non-communicable disease care).

Health insurance coverage is shown in Table 14.2 in the form of the distribution of health insurance coverage (self-reported beneficiary status with regard to any public or private health insurance) for the Chilean population and the migrant population in Chile. The proportion of the migrant population covered by FONASA remained steady without significant variation during the period of interest; nonetheless, the net number of migrants covered by this public insurance doubled between 2013 and 2017. In total, 81.1 per cent of migrants reported coverage by some form of public or private health insurance in 2017.

The collective levels of barriers to health service access are shown in Figure 14.1. Public sector outpatient health services use a scheduled care agenda; the population was surveyed on their ability to schedule a care appointment at a date and time that met their needs. A comparison between migrants and Chileans between 2015 and 2017 demonstrates important changes in the frequency of perceived problems in scheduling timely care in both populations; these changes were more favourable for migrants than for the general Chilean population.

The rate of general healthcare service usage increased across both populations (Figure 14.2). With regard to effective usage, however, a considerably



TABLE 14.2 Distribution of health insurance coverage (public and private) for the Chilean population and the migrant population in Chile, 2013–17

	2013		2015		2017	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Chilean</i>						
FONASA	13,116,511	78.6	13,189,144	77.7	13,248,136	78.7
Private	2,361,099	14.2	2,542,521	15.0	2,419,529	14.4
Other	493,162	3.0	492,232	2.9	476,681	2.8
None	422,224	2.5	459,799	2.7	378,239	2.2
<i>Migrant</i>						
FONASA	243,599	68.7	288,539	62.0	506,353	65.1
Private	64,095	18.1	81,733	17.6	114,039	14.4
Other	8,088	2.2	13,409	2.9	12,378	1.6
None	31,535	8.9	73,071	15.7	123,013	15.8

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE (2020A)

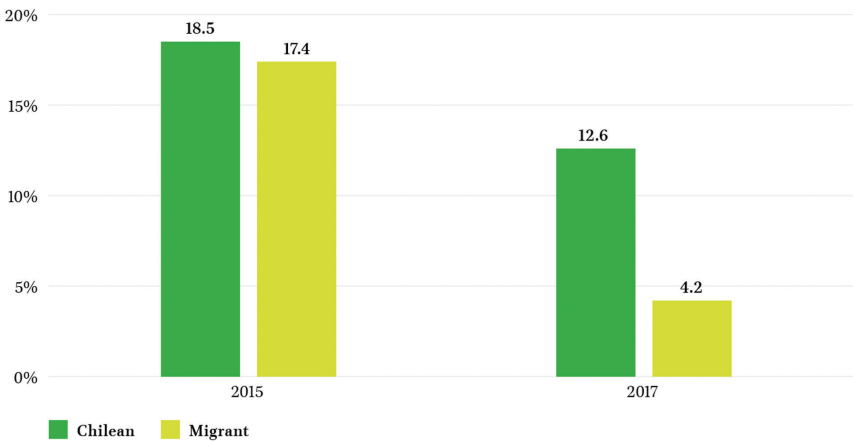


FIGURE 14.1 Proportion of patients who received healthcare services and declared experiencing a problem obtaining a medical appointment, 2015–17  
SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE (2020A)

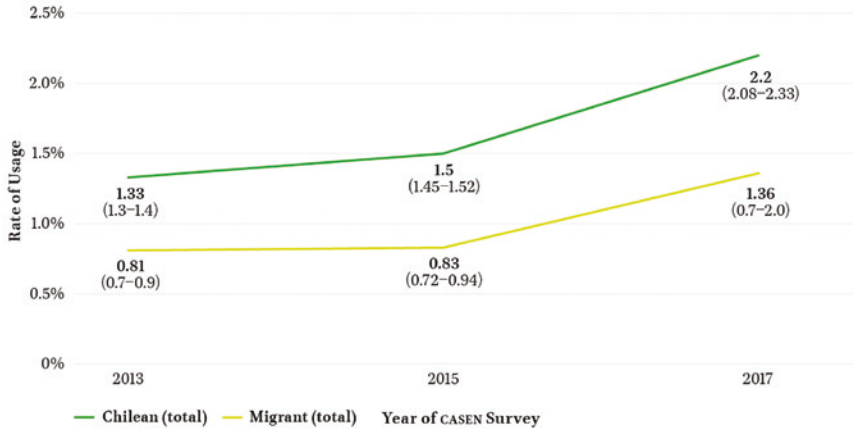


FIGURE 14.2 Rate of general healthcare service usage for the Chilean population and the migrant population in Chile, 2015–17

Note: Rate of general healthcare service usage: number of instances of care provided by outpatient services for general medicine, emergency, mental health, or specialisations including dental, over the total population for each year according to the CASEN Survey (CI 95%).

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE (2020A)

lower rate is observed for the migrant population than for the general Chilean population throughout the period.

Healthcare provision for health issues (receiving medical attention for a health issue in the three months prior to the survey) is addressed in Figure 14.3. A reduction was observed in the gap between Chileans and migrants during the period 2013 to 2017, the figure falling from 3.6 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Figure 14.4 shows rates of hospital discharge. The rate of hospital discharge in the general Chilean population was over twice that in the migrant population across the full period of interest.

The differences observed in the rate of hospital discharge may be attributable to, among other factors, the structure of the populational pyramid of migrants in Chile as compared to Chileans instead of to economic obstacles to direct payment for hospital services. This may be affirmed by the proportion of discharged patients who were not covered by health insurance, which fell from 25 per cent to 7 per cent of total migrant hospital discharges from 2014 to 2019 (Figure 14.5).

Finally, as far as access to healthcare services providing family planning and prenatal care to Chilean and migrant women between 2015 and 2017 (Table 14.3),

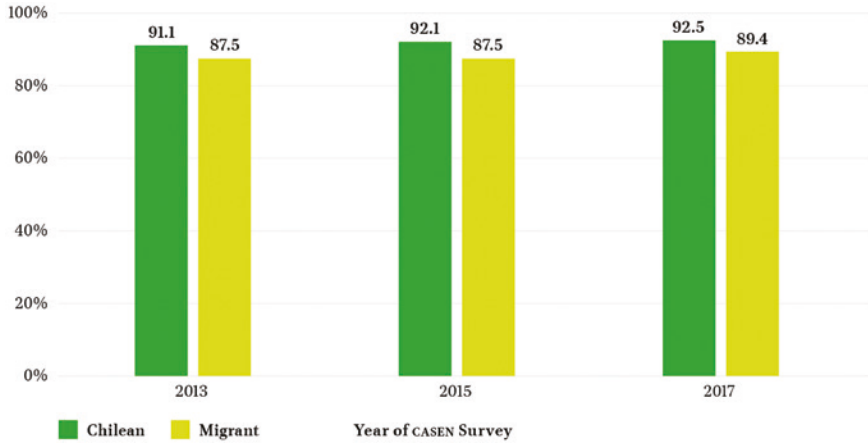


FIGURE 14.3 Percentage of Chileans and migrants in Chile who received healthcare services for a health issue in the past three months, 2013–17  
 SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILE (2020A)

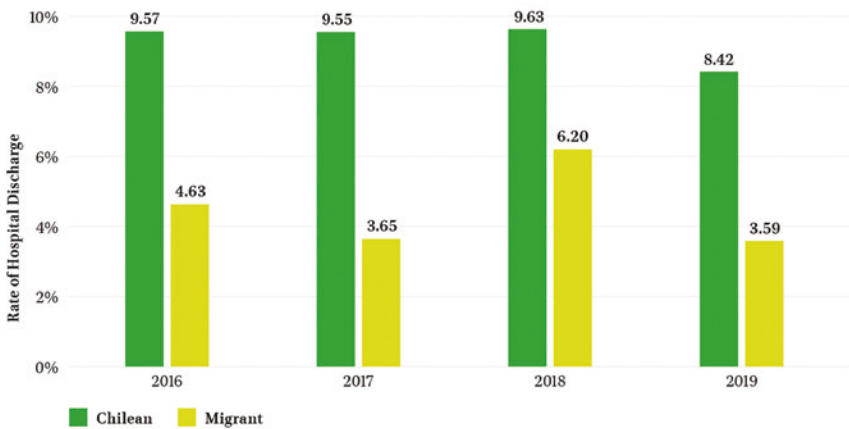


FIGURE 14.4 Rate of hospital discharge for the Chilean population and the migrant population in Chile, 2016–19  
 SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION STATISTICS OF CHILE (2020A)

a remarkable change was observed in the number of female migrants using these healthcare services. The number of pregnant women receiving prenatal care more than doubled, representing a 1.23-fold increase as compared to the total of migrant women from the age of 15 to 49 in the same period. The number of migrant women who reported using family planning services increased

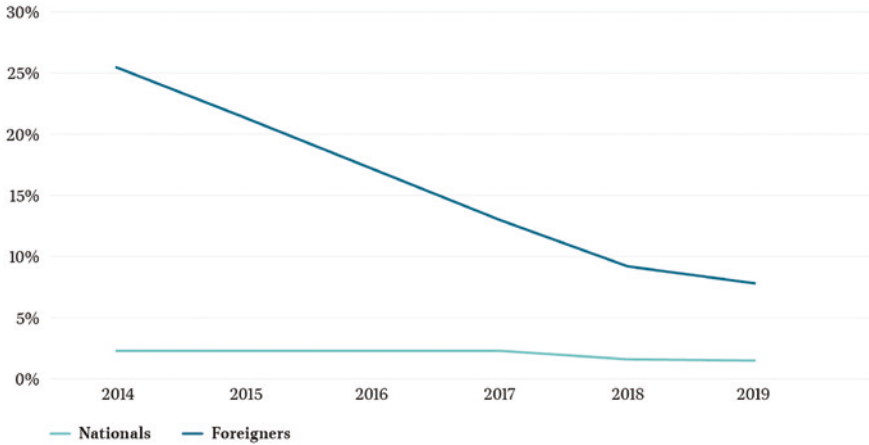


FIGURE 14.5 Proportion of patients discharged from hospital who were not covered by any health insurance, by nationality, 2014–19

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION STATISTICS OF CHILE (2020B)

by 76 per cent during the period of interest, reflecting improved service access. In Chilean women, no significant changes were observed in either the number or proportion of users of family planning services.

#### 4 Discussion

The protection of human rights is a principle established mainly within instruments that require only voluntary governmental compliance, which frames it as a humanitarian action. Under such conditions, highly varied discourses around migrant rights have multiplied, but concrete mandates are rarely obligatory given that they generally remain subject to good will and current political interests.

The present analysis explores the formulation and implementation processes, and the short-term results, of the National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile. The formulation of the NHPIM was based on evidence generated through an extensive participatory process involving social organisations, co-operative entities, academic institutions and government, and constitutes one of only a few examples globally that demonstrates a path to translating political discourse into social practices related to the protection and promotion of migrants' right to health. It is not a policy designed within the four walls of a government office, but one that was crafted and almost simultaneously put to the test by those working alongside the populations

TABLE 14.3 Access to prenatal and family planning services for the general Chilean population and the migrant population in Chile, 2015–17

Year	Pregnant women with prenatal care (n)	Proportion of pregnant women/total women 15–49 years of age	Women 15–49 years of age using contraceptives (n)	Proportion of women 15–49 years of age using contraceptives	Estimated population (women of reproductive age: 15–49 years old) <sup>a</sup>
2015	91,349	2.3	1,412,898	42.3	3,343,206
	4,795	3.98	17,955	14.9	120,521
2017	79,842	2.47	1,417,464	43.8	3,238,403
	10,302	4.88	31,623	15.0	211,125
Difference	-0.13	1.07	1.00	1.04	-3.13
	2.15	1.23	1.76	1.01	75.18

a The population was estimated using the CASEN Surveys of 2015 and 2017 for each age group range (Ministry of Social Development of Chile, 2020a).

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION STATISTICS (2020A)

represented by the various participating institutions. Its formulation drew certain criticisms, which then enabled the reconsiderations that were necessary to adjust its content to the current needs of society. The migrant population is part of the new social dynamics in Chilean society; the country's institutions create and recreate guidelines that favour the functioning of organisations and society as one, and the health policy for migrants is an instrument that helps facilitate processes based on the acknowledgement of migrants as having equal rights with the non-migrant population. Consequently, the NHPIM represents a significant advancement towards facilitating the guaranteeing of migrants' rights and ensuring migrants' access to public sector health services, which has frequently been either restricted or denied to them in their countries of origin. Today, the legislative and legal status of the Policy, as well as the regulatory and financial documents that support it, must be acknowledged by the greater overarching framework (laws) in order to minimise discretionary interpretations and implementation practices (Stefoni, 2011; Liberona Concha and Mansilla, 2017; Larenas-Rosa and Cabieses, 2018).

The process of formulating the Policy had three elements that enabled the representation of different interests and perspectives of society regarding migrant health. First, it was established as a collective construction process with participation by migrants and health professionals in the field who performed participatory diagnostics and created solutions relevant to the territory in question, using an intersectoral approach. Second, the creation of the Policy was part of a creative space designed to be a laboratory for the exchange of ideas, which aimed to incorporate strategies for reducing healthcare service access barriers and to test and monitor them through public campaigns in the follow-up period in order to adjust the Policy to specific conditions as needed.

The NHPIM took on structural barriers that are key determinants of healthcare service access: first, the legislative and legal aspects of public sector health insurance coverage, and second, the financial resources necessary to cover institutional costs associated with healthcare service use across different areas (health promotion, risk prevention, care for damages and rehabilitation). The Policy integrates guarantees previously established in Decree No. 67 (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2016), applying the principles of equality and non-discrimination by incorporating migrants in the list of groups recognised as experiencing the greatest conditions of vulnerability, and recognising them as subjects of equal rights under the law and as legal beneficiaries of FONASA. It acknowledges 'equality of rights between migrants and [Chilean] nationals', which forms a structural condition necessary to support the exercising of the right to health (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2017). This process of institutionalisation has enabled progress to be made in specific programmes such as the

Healthcare Access Programme for Migrants, which began in just five *comunas* (the smallest national legal division of territory) and has, at the time of writing, expanded to over 24 municipalities (*El Nacional*, 2019).

One of the most important adjustments to the organisation and functionality of the public sector health system has been the inclusion of sociocultural diversity through the incorporation of 'intercultural mediators', mostly migrants themselves, into healthcare services; this has been especially impactful for Haitian communities, who encounter significant language barriers. The actions of these intercultural mediators have been critical, not only in translation and the social interpretation of language but also to spark social interaction in healthcare spaces, considering that cultural diversity is a core value and as such represents a resource and not an obstacle. Nonetheless, it has been noted that this initiative requires increased budget allocations and formal consolidation within the health sector (Sepúlveda and Cabieses, 2019).

The observed short-term results include ample coverage of the migrant population by FONASA. This coverage remained steady across the period of interest, despite the increase in the net number of migrants at the national level (this figure nearly doubling). Nevertheless, the proportion of migrants who reported not having health coverage also remained steady, thereby demonstrating a challenge in incorporating the growing number of migrants. It is possible that the population who reported not having FONASA coverage is one of more recent migrants, who have spent one year or less in Chile. Nevertheless, this lack of coverage is not a result of legislative or legal barriers, but may be related to information access barriers or the complex processes involved in insertion into social networks. Furthermore, the increase in nominal health coverage by FONASA does not necessarily imply corresponding use of services, especially for high-cost services including those provided by hospitals. The present analysis revealed a 3.2-fold decrease in the proportion of hospital discharges without FONASA health coverage, while the rate of hospital discharges remained constant across the study period. The trends in this indicator reveal one of the most significant results with regard to more effective financial protection for healthcare services, with an important impact and relevance for the economy and the lives of migrants in Chile.

Furthermore, both the general healthcare service usage rate and the percentage of migrants with any health issue who received healthcare showed a remarkable increase across the period of interest. In both cases, the gap observed at the beginning of the study period was reduced, although a difference remained between service usage rates among migrants and among the general population, with migrants reporting lower rates. This difference may be related to other socio-demographic factors (age, for example) or cultural

factors, as well as to factors related to information and stigma. It does not, however, appear to be attributable to economic (direct payment for services), legislative, or legal factors (Benítez and Velasco, 2019). One hypothesis is that despite the high proportion of the migrant population with financial coverage through FONASA, this did not translate into excessive health service demand and usage; on the contrary, it would appear that the socio-demographic features of the migrant population (younger than the Chilean population) determine service usage patterns distinct from those of the general population.

As far as healthcare service usage goes, the primary level of care (including the population receiving prenatal care and family planning services) also reflected important changes related to service access improvements for migrants. The number of pregnant women in the prenatal care programme more than doubled, and there was a 76 per cent increase in the number of women accessing contraceptives. Changes in these highly sensitive indicators could be associated with other factors such as behavioural changes; however, they also reflect improved access to healthcare services for migrants in Chile.

Finally, the response of the healthcare system to the demands of the migrant and general Chilean populations demonstrates very favourable changes, from a migrant perspective. According to the CASEN Survey, the proportion of individuals receiving healthcare services who also declared having experienced problems making an appointment or scheduling care between 2013 and 2017 decreased sharply for migrants over the period; that is, those seeking care obtained a medical appointment with far fewer issues. One possible explanation for this is that dissemination activities such as the distribution of flyers, communication campaigns, intercultural mediators, etc. effectively reached the target population. Another important factor that could contribute to an understanding of this gap is the differential capacity for the exercise of rights between migrants and native-born Chileans; although in both cases an improvement can be seen, this improvement is greater for migrants (Intersectoral Board for Migrants and Health, 2015; Ministry of Health of Chile, 2015d, 2015c; Health Services of Viña del Mar, 2017).

The greatest area of challenge and opportunity was related to rejection and discrimination. Although the qualitative study of the systematisation and evaluation of pilot studies described a perceived improvement in healthcare, with a positive evaluation of strategies such as the provision of intercultural mediators (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2018c), evidence exists showing stigmatisation, discrimination and poor treatment of migrants within the health system (Chepo et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2020). Reports reveal that the most vulnerable groups in this regard are Afro-Latinos, pregnant and postpartum migrant women, and migrant children and adolescents. It is critical to continue



advancing the principles of the NHPIM, and to work towards culturally relevant health and intersectoral action, as well as the design of permanent mechanisms for the promotion, monitoring and oversight needed for migrants to receive dignified care.

The scientific literature on migration and health in Latin America, and at a global level, reveals only limited advancements in migrants' access to and effective use of financially protected healthcare services (Leyva-Flores et al., 2015; Larenas-Rosa, Astorga-Pinto and Cabieses, 2018). In contrast, the NHPIM addresses precisely the conditions that have attracted attention within numerous scientific publications, including barriers to healthcare system access (Hacker et al., 2015), financial obstacles (Magalhaes, Carrasco and Gastaldo, 2010) and cultural (Fleischman et al., 2015; Hacker et al., 2015) and other (Winters et al., 2018) barriers. For this reason, the Chilean experience, based as it is in evidence supporting the value of health promotion and the protection of rights, is a reference for the design and implementation of health policy around international migrants, especially those experiencing the greatest social vulnerability.

## 5 Conclusions

The National Health Policy for International Migrants in Chile guarantees migrants access to healthcare with conditions equal to those applicable to the general population and provides evidence of the remarkable contributions made with regard to goals related to gender equity, maternal and infant health, reducing financial (FONASA coverage) and sociocultural (intercultural mediators) barriers to healthcare service access, and more. It also brings to light migrants' economic contributions to destination countries (in the form of tax revenues) and to their countries of origin (in the form of remittances), which combined support the economic development of Chile and that of migrants' countries of origin, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda.

The experience of formulating this evidence-based policy, with the participation of different governmental and societal sectors, has allowed legislative and legal changes that formally separate migratory status from migrants' right to health. These changes have facilitated the emergence of public sector financing, through FONASA, which covers the costs of outpatient and inpatient care, and of other financial resources necessary for the development of activities related to culturally relevant health promotion. The reduction of legislative, legal, financial and cultural barriers was clearly demonstrated through evidence of the use of inpatient and outpatient services and of significant reductions in high-cost hospital discharges without FONASA coverage.

Finally, evidence shows that migrants in Chile are on average a young population, and that these improvements have not translated to excessive demand for or use of high-cost services, even though there may be sufficient financial protection for migrants to do so. Assertions to the contrary are only one of the many aspects of stigma present in societies that are traditional destinations for migration, and in Chile ignore evidence that migrants contribute to the economic development of the country.

The Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda were founded on guiding principles including 'leave no one behind' and 'guarantee human rights for all'. Globally, evidence regarding the inclusion of migrants within the framework of these principles is scarce. Experiences in Chile, however, show that it is possible to translate aspirational discourse into concrete social practices that favour human rights. This process is not free of the social tensions fuelled by stigma and discrimination, and these must be consistently monitored and addressed. When it comes to migration, Chile is currently confronting new realities, changes in styles and forms of government, global epidemiological crises, and problems with stigma and discrimination, all of which can only be addressed with the active participation of both Chilean society and migrants in Chile.

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