

## Chapter 12

# Conclusion: Migration in the Global South: Indications for the Global Compact?



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Through representative country and case studies, the different contributions in this book aimed at identifying relevant and new aspects of migration in the Global South. Taking stock of them, they can be linked to the following questions:

1. What are the common issues and interests in migration at a Global South level, i.e. to the countries other than the established developed industrialized countries (the initial OECD countries)?
2. To what extent is it relevant to distinguish issues and interests of migration in the Global South from those of the established industrialized countries?
3. Does migration in the Global South require specific and adapted forms of policy and management?

At first view, the impact of migration in the Global South is qualitatively not different from the one in any origin or destination country. In general, migration affects social welfare and well-being through its effects on the interaction (integration) of new and foreign citizens with the local community and its effects on (economic) development. Yet, the shape the two determinants take in countries in the Global South has specific and particular features.

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In his contribution, **Craig Loschmann** points to the impact of refugee flows on the interaction between communities, which is much more present in Global South countries than in the major Northern destination countries of migration, where refugees tend to move intraregionally rather than between continents. Because of different levels of development and public institutions, the local impact of refugee flows can be substantial, though not necessarily negative. Loschmann stresses the heterogeneity rather than the direction of the impacts, which implies that good management of refugee flows can make a substantial difference, even resulting in a net positive effect on local communities. Only when it comes to health and the environment, do most of the studies he discusses seem to find a small negative effect. However, the *perceived* effect of refugee flows on the local community may diverge from the *effective* impact and as such affect social well-being. To cope with this, involving the host community in the management of migration is essential. In some sense, from Loschmann's discussion of the topic, we can conclude that disruptive effects of refugee flows can be controlled by turning them as much as possible into "regular" flows that foster development, allowing immigrants to establish in the host location and providing opportunities to work or to interact with the local community (e.g. the relevance of cash instead of in-kind aid). This is important in view of the average duration of a refugee displacement spell as well.

Overall, Global South countries are countries of net emigration, with more people leaving than arriving. The impact of migration on economic development therefore depends to a large extent on the contribution of expatriates to the origin countries, either through remittances or brain gain. Based on an exhaustive literature review, **Lisa Andersson** and **Melissa Siegel** distinguish four relevant areas. As regards the economic impact, they point out the prevailing role of remittances in contributing to poverty reduction, increasing consumption (but not necessarily investment) and affecting labor supply and financial services, provided the substitution effect of remittances on the latter remains limited. Heterogeneity and inconclusiveness of the impact of remittances is primarily explained by institutional differences. The soundness of the institutions, economic freedom as well as the development of financial services matters. From a global governance point of view, this points to the complementarity and interconnectedness of migration policy (e.g. the implementation of the Global Compact) and development policy. As regards the social and political impact of emigration, remittances in general stimulate enrolment in education (by relieving credit constraints), just like emigration implies a brain gain when the returns on emigration are sufficiently high. The institutional impact of the expat community or return migration, as well as the impact of knowledge diffusion seems, however, unclear. Emigration, if planned, may relieve the pressure on the local environment and hence reduce the willingness to move of the remaining people, which should be kept in mind when considering climate change as a driver of migration.

Similar to the impact of migration in Global South countries, the drivers of migration may be considered in general as similar to those of the OECD countries (i.e. fitting in a push-pull-policy framework) however distinctive in their specific features. Because of its expected incidence and intensity, in particular climate

change may have a much larger impact on migration in the Global South compared to the destination countries in the North and imply in the first place inter-regional rather than inter-continental movement of people as indicated by **Els Bekaert, Ilse Ruysen** and **Sara Salomone**. They point to the relevance of several transmission channels and hence different and complex ways in which climate change affects migration. A distinction has to be made between the direct and indirect impact (on income, liquidity constraints, health or violence), as well as between slow and sudden climate change. From the study of precipitation and temperature, it follows that slow prevails on sudden climate change in its impact on migration and is transmitted in particular through indirect rather than direct channels. Yet the impact of climate change on migration is far from clear. Individual idiosyncrasy is substantial and the link with income level (or economic resources in general) is non-monotonous: whereas climate change seems to imply a reduction of mobility in low-level income countries or of the most destitute, it increases mobility in middle-income countries or of people with a higher level of economic capacity and capabilities. From this follows that the global migration and development policy nexus should be sufficiently ingenuous to take the income specificity of climate change induced behavior into account.

**Nidhi Nagabathla** and **Cameron Fioret** confirm the complexity of the climate change mechanism from a more in depth study of water-related climate stress (quality, extremes as well as accessibility) as a cause of migration. The comprehensiveness and multi-level character of the policy they advise to manage the water-migration nexus, testifies as well to the heterogeneity of migration behavior that climate determinants induce. However, as indicated in other chapters of the book, labor is probably as strong a driver of migration in the Global South and we should beware of not reducing the migration process to just one potential mechanism.

To the specificities in impact and drivers of migration in the Global South corresponds the much more complex pattern of the migration flows compared to the Northern destination countries. Many countries of the Global South are simultaneously countries of emigration, immigration and transit, as argued by **Chiara Janssen** and **Katrin Marchand** for West-Africa as well as **Zachary Strain** in his chapter on the East and Horn of Africa, notwithstanding the momentaneous differences in the structure of migration between these regions. In West-Africa, Janssen and Marchand find that in addition to conflict, labor is one of the most important historical and present motives for migration, also seasonal and circular, nomadic or cross-border. Intra-regional or -continental movements mainly concern lower-skilled labor to countries with moderately better economic and living conditions. Increasingly, such opportunities are seized by -independently moving- women, which points to the relevance of the gender dimension of migration policy in a Global South context as well. The big cities of the coastal area are large poles of migration attraction, not only for intra-regional mobility, but for intercontinental migration as well. The three corridors they define (the South coastal, "Middle" and Sahelian route) are used for flows of all kinds such that issues of South-South as well as South-North migration get intermingled.

This complexity in the composition of the migration flows is confirmed by Strain's analysis for the eastern part of the African continent, characterized by movements of refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants in addition to internally displaced people. Geographically elaborated corridors bring people in all four cardinal directions, both inter-regionally and inter-continentially. Emigration of the last type is found to have increased in recent years, though the majority of the movements remain within the region.

Despite their mixed and complex character, there is a long-developed tradition of migration flow management, not surprisingly in multiple forms that are regionally specific and tailored to the prevailing pattern of flows. **Leiza Brumat** describes 40 years of migration policy in South-America in four waves, the two first of which mainly concern cross-border labor movements, whereas a third generation of policies was more characterized by free movement within the continent and regional convergence in migration policy. She mentions in particular the constitutive dimension of the Residence Agreement that was eventually applied in the whole region. She stresses the role two South-American regional organizations (the Andean Community and Mercosur) have played in the development and evolution of migration policy in the continent that nevertheless kept its fundamental national character. International agreements on migration policy concerned in the first place policy coordination rather than (supra-national) unification. Brumat wonders whether the recent political changes in South-America announce a major policy shift, which would announce a fourth wave. In most scenarios this would mean a return to labor- rather than right-based migration. This is, however, resisted by labor unions who try to maintain their bargaining power by intervening more actively on the regional level and through measures favoring the mobility of the higher skilled. However, a sophisticated and long tradition in regional migration policy is unlikely to disappear.

As migration in Asia is mainly driven by employment opportunities, one can easily understand that migration management in this continent mainly concerns labor issues and the rights of migrant workers. From **Richa Shivakoti's** analysis, it is immediately clear that the institutional framework of migration policy in Asia is substantially different from that in other parts of the world. It can be characterized as a multi-layered governance structure with both a state and non-state led component, yet without an encompassing regional legal body based on international migration conventions. It mainly focuses on regional or sub-regional cooperation based on norms and principles more adapted to the nations' specific situation, indicated by Shivatoki as a migration regime complex. In contrast with the active role they play in South-America, the role of regional organizations is rather to provide the forum for state-led meetings. In addition, regional cooperation also takes the form of regional consultative processes. The most striking feature of migration governance in Asia is probably the substantial involvement of non-state actors, like trade unions, NGOs and migrant organizations, who engage in an autonomous regional cooperation process in particular on labor rights and working conditions. Rather than on its form, Shivatoki argues that priority in Asia should be given to the substance of migration governance, e.g. improving information provisions, creating an insurance system (welfare fund), financial regulations and access to justice.

In two complementary contributions, **Amanda Bisong** on the one hand and **Maud Martens, Ilke Adam** and **Florian Trauner** on the other, consider the conflict of interests between the destination countries of the North and the Global South based on the discussion of the implementation of the EU policies on migration, the Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) in particular. Though conceived as complementary with and not a substitute for the EU development policy, fears were expressed that the MPF might introduce an EU migration policy compliance conditionality for (additional) development funding. Based on the dominating narratives in the MPF, Martens, Adam and Trauner find that a positive perspective on migration for development is lacking. Emphasis lies on the prevention of migration. Bisong adds that by focusing only on the inter-continental dimension of migration flows, i.e. the Sahel countries (the first to be involved in the MPF) as transit or origin countries of migration to Europe, its potentially distorting impact on the intra-regional migration flows (like described by Janssen and Marchand) risks to be fundamentally neglected. In this sense, the MPF can have a negative impact on development, cooperation or the institutional economic framework of the Sahel countries. Martens, Adam and Trauner propose to give the fourth narrative more weight in the MPF, i.e. acknowledging the positive impact of regular migration on development.

When discussing the impacts of migration, the impacts on migrants themselves should also not be overlooked, especially also in the context of labor migration in the context of the Global South. In their contribution, **Hannah Thinyane** and **Francisca Sassetti** address the issue of exploitative working conditions in times when booming markets and rapid urbanization have led to a constant demand for cheap labor. In their chapter they introduce a system that is currently being piloted in Thailand to support a sentinel surveillance approach to identify patterns of exploitation. Thinyane and Sassetti argue that information collected through such a system directly from migrant workers can become a critical resource to inform migration policy as the responses provide a nuanced understanding of trends and patterns of exploitation. This shows that technology has increasing potential to facilitate the prevention of new cases of exploitation, protection of victims and prosecution of exploiters.

Overall, we draw two main policy conclusions for migration in Global South countries from the contributions in this book.

First, the need to view migration and development policy as complementary rather than as substitutable and hence to integrate international migration policy and economic development policy. It is straightforward that economic development policy creates opportunities that people will attempt to seize and that will induce them to move. The strength of the labor motive of migration also in a South-South framework witnesses this. Provided that migration can take place in a safe, orderly and regular manner (as demanded in the Global Compact on Migration) it will contribute to the well-functioning and development of the economy in the host country. Sound and transparent institutions will allow the economy in the origin country to benefit from migration through remittances as well. In addition, migration as an inclusive component of development will improve resilience of host and origin countries for sudden and irregular movements of people that are a substantial

component of the complex migration flows in the Global South. Refugees may find the support of networks of their own community abroad more easily. A development policy in function of their integration in the host economy may increase the benefits for the local community and hence the social acceptance of the presence of a refugee community. In (environmentally or other) vulnerable regions, migration relieves the population stress on the environment and contributes directly as well as indirectly (by means of remittances) to the living conditions of the remaining population (see also ACP 2014).

Viewing migration and economic development as complementary is at odds with the dominant perspective, in particular in the developed Northern industrialized countries, to consider economic development as a substitute for migration, by reducing incentives to migrate through local economic growth. While eventually (i.e. in the long-run), economic development and migration are substitutes, in the short and medium run, the link is far from clear, as economic development reduces the poverty constraint to migration. The non-monotonous link between income and mobility also testifies to this. Yet, we do not consider this as particularly problematic. One could link the complementarity of development and migration policy to two-stage mobility, where people would move first within the Global South and next from South to North. Given that we may assume that the latter will be the more skilled, it is the kind of migration that faces socially lesser obstacles in the North.

Second, in function of safe, regular and orderly migration, the relevance of *mini-multilateralism* (Newland 2017) in managing the complex migration flows in the Global South and hence of the regional policy dimension, implying that the UN rather take a position as *wingman* (Thouez 2018). Migration policy in the Global South countries shows the need for policy flexibility and adaptability in view of the complexity and the local characteristics of the flows, as well as the feasibility thereof. Different experiences and practices with migration policy provide a rich portfolio of best practices. A strengthening of the regional dimension and a stronger involvement of regional organizations may also contribute to moderate potential conflict of interest on migration between the Northern industrialized countries and the countries of the South and, as such, strengthen the complementarity between migration and economic development.

## References

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