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Peter Scholten *Editor*

# Introduction to Migration Studies

An Interactive Guide to the Literatures  
on Migration and Diversity

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Peter Scholten  
Editor

# Introduction to Migration Studies

An Interactive Guide to the Literatures on  
Migration and Diversity

 Springer

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**Part I**  
**Introduction to Migration Studies**

# Chapter 1

## An Introduction to Migration Studies: The Rise and Coming of Age of a Research Field



Peter Scholten, Asya Pisarevskaya, and Nathan Levy

Migration studies has contributed significantly to our understanding of mobilities and migration-related diversities. It has developed a distinct body of knowledge on why people migrate, how migration takes place, and what the consequences are of migration in a broad sense, both for migrants themselves and for societies involved in migration. As a broadly-based research field, migration studies has evolved at the crossroads of a variety of disciplines. This includes disciplines such as sociology, political science, anthropology, geography, law and economics, but increasingly it expands to a broader pool of disciplines also including health studies, development studies, governance studies and many more, building on insights from these disciplines.

Migration is itself in no way a new phenomenon; but the specific and interdisciplinary study of migration is relatively recent. Although the genesis of migration studies goes back to studies in the early twentieth century, it was only by the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century that the number of specialised master programmes in migration studies increased, that the number of journal outlets grew significantly, that numerous specialised research groups and institutes emerged all over the world, and that in broader academia migration studies was recognised as a distinct research field in its own right. By 2018 there were at least 45 specialised journals in migration studies (Pisarevskaya et al., 2019, p. 462). The field has developed its own international research networks, such as IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe), NOMRA (Network of Migration Research on Africa), and the global more policy-oriented network Metropolis. Students at an increasingly broad range of universities can

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study dedicated programs as well as courses on migration studies. Slowly but gradually the field is also globalising beyond its European and North American roots.

Migration studies is a research field, which means that it is not a discipline in itself with a core body of knowledge that applies to various topics, but an area of studies that focus on a specific topic while building on insights from across various disciplines. It has clear roots in particular in economics, geography, anthropology and sociology. However, when looking at migration publications and conferences today, the disciplinary diversity of the field has increased significantly, for instance bringing important contributions from and to political sciences, law, demography, cultural studies, languages, history, health studies and many more. It is hard to imagine a discipline to which migration studies is not relevant; for instance, even for engineering studies, migration has become a topic of importance when focusing on the role that social media play as migration infrastructures. Beyond being multidisciplinary (combining insights from various disciplines), the field has become increasing interdisciplinary (with its own approach that combines aspects from various disciplines) or even transdisciplinary (with an approach that systematically integrates knowledge and methods from various disciplines).

## **1.1 A Pluralist Perspective on Migration Studies**

Migration studies is a broad and diverse research field that covers many different topics, ranging from the economics of migration to studies of race and ethnicity. As with many research fields, the boundaries of the field cannot be demarcated very clearly. However, this diversity does also involve a fair degree of fragmentation in the field. For instance, the field features numerous sub-fields of study, such as refugee studies, multicultural studies, race studies, diversity studies, etc. In fact, there are many networks and conferences within the field with a specific focus, for instance, on migration and development. So, the field of migration studies also encompasses, in itself, a broad range of subfields.

This diversity is not only reflected in the topics covered by migration studies, but also in theoretical and methodological approaches. It is an inherently pluralistic field, bringing often fundamentally different theoretical perspectives on key topics such as the root causes of integration. It brings very different methods, for instance ranging from ethnographic fieldwork with specific migrant communities to large-n quantitative analyses of the relation between economics and migration.

Therefore, this book is an effort to capture and reflect on this pluralistic character of field. It resists the temptation to bring together a 'state of the art' of knowledge on topics, raising the illusion that there is perhaps a high degree of knowledge consensus. Rather, we aim to bring to the foreground the key theoretical and methodological discussions within the field, and let the reader appreciate the diversity and richness of the field.

However, the book will also discuss how this pluralism can complicate discussions within the field based on very basic concepts. Migration studies stands out

from most other research fields in terms of a relatively high degree of contestation of some of its most basic concepts. Examples include terms as ‘integration’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘cohesion’ but perhaps most pertinent also the basic concept of ‘migration.’ Many of the field’s basic concepts can be defined as essentially contested concepts. Without presuming to bring these conceptual discussions to a close, this book does bring an effort to map and understand these discussions, aiming to prevent conceptual divides from leading to fragmentation in the field.

This conceptual contestation reflects broader points on how the field has evolved. Various studies have shown that the field’s development in various countries and at various moments has been spurred by a policy context in which migration was problematised. Many governments revealed a clear interest in research that could help governments control migration and promote the ‘integration’ of migrants into their nation-states (DeWind, 2000). The field’s strong policy relevance also led to a powerful dynamic of coproduction in specific concepts such as ‘integration’ or ‘migrant.’ At the same time, there is also clear critical self-reflection in the field on such developments, and on how to promote more systematic theory building in migration studies. This increase of reflexivity can be taken as a sign of the coming of age of migration studies as a self-critical and self-conscious research field.

An introduction to migration studies will need to combine a systematic approach to mapping the field with a strong historical awareness of how the field has developed and how specific topics, concepts and methods have emerged. Therefore, in this chapter, we will do just that. We will start with a historical analysis of how the field emerged and evolved, in an effort to show how the field became so diverse and what may have been critical junctures in the development of the field. Subsequently, we will try to define what is migration studies, by a systematic approach towards mapping the pluralism of the field without losing grip of what keeps together the field of migration studies. Therefore, rather than providing one sharp definition of migration studies, we will map that parts that together are considered to constitute migration studies. Finally, we will map the current state of the research field.

To provide a comprehensive overview of such a pluralist and complex field of study, we employ a variety of methods. Qualitative historical analysis of key works that shaped the formation and development of the field over the years is combined with novel bibliometric methods to give a birds-eye view of the structure of the field in terms of volume of publications, internationalisation and epistemic communities of scholarship on migration. The bibliometric analysis presented in this chapter is based on our previous articles, in which we either, used Scopus data from 40 key journals (Pisarevskaya et al., 2019, or a complex key-word query to harvest meta-data of relevant publications from Web of Science (Levy et al., 2020). Both these approaches to meta-data collection were created and reviewed with the help of multiple experts of migration studies. You can consult the original publications for more details. Our meta-data contained information on authors, years of publication, journals, titles, and abstracts of articles and books, as well as reference lists, i.e. works that were cited by each document in the dataset.

In this chapter you will see the findings from these analyses, revealing the growth trends of migration specific journals, and yearly numbers of articles published on

migration-related topics, number and geographical distribution of international co-authorships, as well as referencing patterns of books and articles – the “co-citation analysis”. The colourful network graphs you will see later in the chapter, reveal links between scholars, whose writings are mentioned together in one reference list. When authors are often mentioned together in the publications of other scientists, it means that their ideas are part of a common conversation. The works of the most-cited authors in different parts of the co-citation networks give us an understanding of which topics they specialise in, which methods they use in their research, and also within which disciplinary traditions they work. All in all, co-citation analysis provides an insight on the conceptual development of epistemic communities with their distinct paradigms, methods and thematic foci.

In addition, we bring in some findings from the Migration Research Hub, which hosts an unprecedented number of articles, book chapters, reports, dissertation relevant to the field. All these items are brought together with the help of IT technologies, integration with different databases such as Dimensions, ORCID, Crossref, and Web of Science, as well as submitted by the authors themselves. At the end of 2020, this database contains around 90,000 of items categorised into the taxonomy of migration studies, which will be presented below.

## 1.2 What Is Migration Studies?

The historical development of migration studies, as described in the next section, reveals the plurality of the research field. Various efforts to come up with a definition of the field therefore also reflect this plurality. For instance, King (2012) speaks of migration studies as encompassing ‘all types of international and internal migration, migrants, and migration-related diversities’. This builds on Cohen’s (1996, p. xi–xii) nine conceptual ‘dyads’ in the field. Many of these have since been problematised – answering Cohen’s own call for critical and systematic considerations – but they nonetheless provide a skeletal overview of the field as it is broadly understood and unfolded in this book and in the taxonomy on which it is based:

- Individual vs. contextual reasons to migrate
- Rate vs. incidence
- Internal vs. international migration
- Temporary vs. permanent migration
- Settler vs. labour migration
- Planned vs. flight migration
- Economic migrants vs. political refugees
- Illegal vs. legal migration
- Push vs. pull factors

Therefore, the taxonomy provides the topical structure—elaborated below—by which we approach this book. We do not aim to provide a be-all and end-all definition of migration studies but rather seek to capture its inherent plurality by

bringing together chapters which provide a state-of-the-art of different meta-topics within the field.

The taxonomy of migration studies was developed as part of a broader research project, led by IMISCOE, from 2018 to 2020 aimed at comprehensively taking stock of and providing an index for the field (see the Migration Research Hub on [www.migrationresearch.com](http://www.migrationresearch.com)). It was a community endeavour, involving contributors from multiple methodological, disciplinary, and geographical backgrounds at several stages from beginning to end.

It was built through a combination of two methods. First, the taxonomy is based on a large-scale computer-based inductive analysis of a vast number—over 23,000—of journal articles, chapters, and books from the field of migration studies. This led to an empirical clustering of topics addressed within the dataset, as identified empirically in terms of keywords that tend to go together within specific publications.

Secondly, this empirical clustering was combined with a deductive approach with the aim of giving logical structure to the inductively developed topics. Engaging, at this stage, with several migration scholars with specific expertise facilitated a theory-driven expansion of the taxonomy towards what it is today, with its hierarchical categorisation not only of topics and sub-categories of topics, but also of methods, disciplines, and geographical focuses (see Fig. 1.1 below).

In terms of its content, the taxonomy that has been developed distinguishes various meta-topics within migration studies. These include:

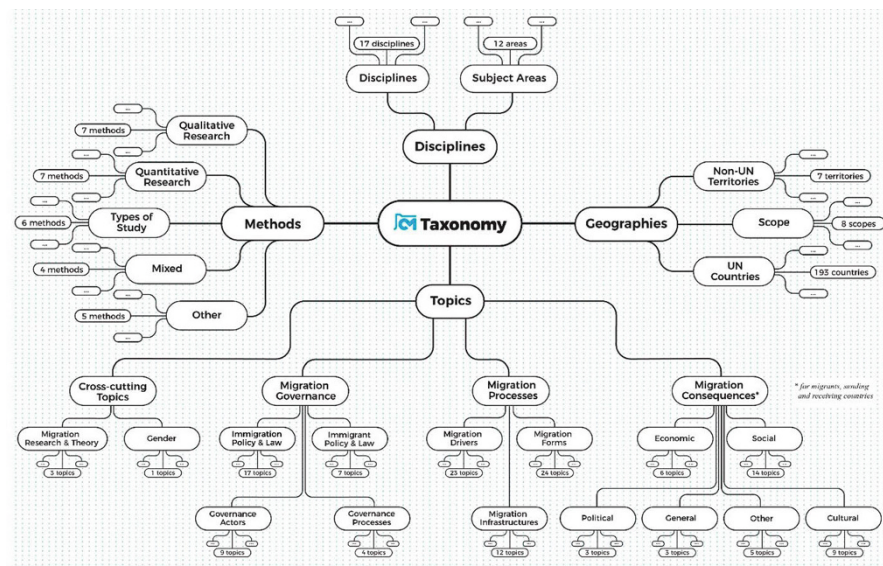


Fig. 1.1 The structure of the taxonomy of migration studies

- **Why do people migrate?** This involves a variety of root causes of migration, or migration drivers.
- **How do people migrate?** This includes a discussion of migration trajectories but also infrastructures of migration.
- **What forms of migration can be distinguished?** This involves an analytical distinction of a variety of migration forms
- **What are major consequences of migration**, and whom do these consequences concern? This includes a variety of contributions on the broader consequences of migration, including migration-related diversities, ethnicity, race, the relation between migration and the city, the relation between migration and cities, gendered aspects of migration, and migration and development.
- **How can migration be governed?** This part will cover research on migration policies and broader policies on migration-related diversities, as well as the relation between migration and citizenship.
- **What methods are used in migration studies?**

All the topics in the taxonomy are grouped into several branches: Migration processes, Migration Consequences, Migration governance and Cross-cutting. In Fig. 1.2 below you can see how many journal articles, books, book chapters and reports can be found in the migration research hub just for the period of the last 20 years. The number of items belonging to each theme can vary significantly, because some of them are broader than others. Broader themes can be related to larger numbers of items, for instance ‘migration forms’ is very broad, because it includes many types and forms of migration on which scientific research in this field chooses to focus on. On the contrary, the theme of ‘governance processes’ is narrower because less studies are concerned with specific processes of migration management, such as criminalisation, externalisation or implementation.

The various chapters in this book can of course never fully represent the full scope of the field. Therefore, the chapters will include various interactive links with the broader literature. This literature is made accessible via the Migration Research Hub, which aims to represent the full scope of migration studies. The Hub is based on the taxonomy and provides a full overview of relevant literature (articles, chapters, books, reports, policy briefs) per taxonomy item. This not only includes works published in migration journals or migration books, but also a broader range of publications, such as disciplinary journals.

Because the Hub is being constantly updated, the taxonomy—along with how we approach the question of ‘what is migration studies?’ in this book—is interactive; it is not dogmatic, but reflexive. As theory develops, new topics and nomenclature emerge. In fact, several topics have been added and some topics have been renamed since “Taxonomy 1.0” was launched in 2018. In this way, the taxonomy is not a fixed entity, but constantly evolving, as a reflection of the field itself.



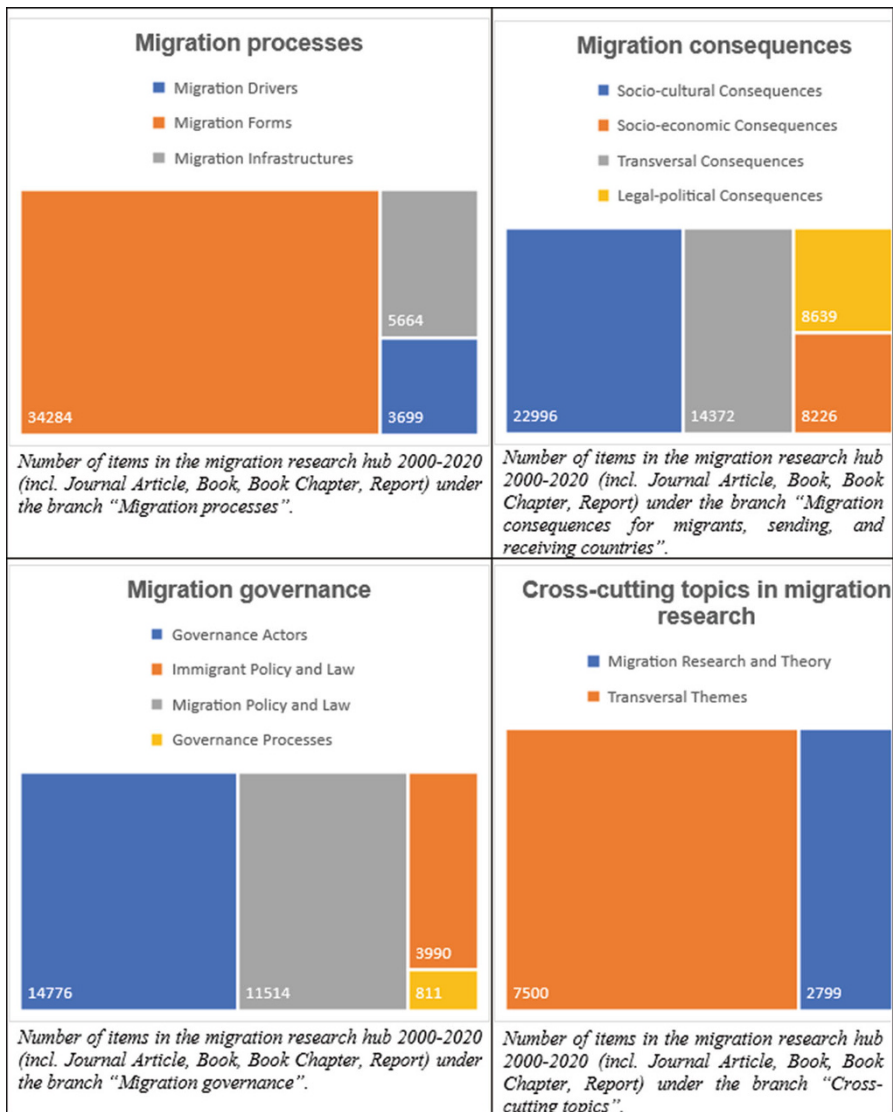


Fig. 1.2 Distribution of taxonomy branches in the Migration Research Hub

### 1.3 The Historical Development of Migration Studies

#### 1.3.1 An Historical Perspective on "Migration Studies"

A pluralist perspective on an evolving research field, therefore, cannot rely on one single definition of what constitutes that research field. Instead, a historical perspective can shed light on how "migration studies" has developed. Therefore, we use this

introductory chapter to outline the genesis and emergence of what is nowadays considered to be the field of migration studies. This historical perspective will also rely on various earlier efforts to map the development of the field, which have often had a significant influence on what came to be considered “migration studies”.

### 1.3.2 *Genesis of Migration Studies*

Migration studies is often recognised as having originated in the work of geographer Ernst Ravenstein in the 1880s, and his 11 *Laws of Migration* (1885). These laws were the first effort towards theorising why (internal) migration takes place and what different dynamics of mobility look like, related, for instance, to what happens to the sending context after migrants leave, or differing tendencies between men and women to migrate. Ravenstein’s work provided the foundation for early, primarily economic, approaches to the study of migration, or, more specifically, *internal or domestic migration* (see Greenwood & Hunt, 2003; Massey et al., 1998).

The study of *international* migration and migrants can perhaps be traced back to Znaniecki and Thomas’ (1927) work on Polish migration to Europe and America. Along with Ravenstein’s *Laws*, most scholars consider these volumes to mark the genesis of migration studies.

#### ***The Polish Peasant and the Chicago School***

*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*—written by Florian Znaniecki & William Thomas, and first published between 1918 and 1920—contains an in-depth analysis of the lives of Polish migrant families. Poles formed the biggest immigrant group in America at this time. Thomas and Znaniecki’s work was not only seminal for migration research, but for the wider discipline of sociology. Indeed, their colleagues in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, such as Robert Park, had a profound impact on the discipline with their groundbreaking empirical studies of race and ethnic relations (Bulmer, 1986; Bommers & Morawska, 2005).

Greenwood and Hunt (2003) provide a helpful overview of the early decades of migration research, albeit through a primarily economic disciplinary lens, with particular focus on America and the UK. According to them, migration research “took off” in the 1930s, catalysed by two societal forces—urbanisation and the Great Depression—and the increased diversity those forces generated. To illustrate this point, they cite the bibliographies collated by Dorothy Thomas (1938) which listed nearly 200 publications (119 from the USA and UK, 72 from Germany), many of which focused on migration in relation to those two societal forces, in what was

already regarded as a “broadly based field of study” (Greenwood & Hunt, 2003, p. 4).

Prior to Thomas’ bibliography, early indications of the institutionalisation of migration research came in the US, with the establishment of the Social Science Research Council’s Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration (see DeWind, 2000). This led to the publication of Thornthwaite’s overview of *Internal Migration in the United States* (1934) and one of the first efforts to study migration policymaking, Goodrich et al’s *Migration and Economic Opportunity* (1936).

In the case of the UK in the 1930s, Greenwood and Hunt observe an emphasis on establishing formal causal models, inspired by Ravenstein’s *Laws*. The work of Makower et al. (1938, 1939, 1940), which, like Goodrich, focused on the relationship of migration and unemployment, is highlighted by Greenwood and Hunt as seminal in this regard. *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* regards Makower and Marschak as having made a “pioneering contribution” to our understanding of labour mobility (see also the several taxonomy topics dealing with labour).

### 1.3.3 *The Establishment of a Plural Field of Migration Studies (1950s–1980s)*

Migration research began to formalise and expand in the 1950s and 1960s (Greenwood & Hunt, 2003; Pedraza-Bailey, 1990). A noteworthy turning point for the field was the debate around assimilation which gathered pace throughout the 1950s and is perhaps most notably exemplified by Gordon’s (1964) typology of this concept.

#### **Gordon’s Assimilation Typology and the Problematisation of Integration**

Assimilation, integration, acculturation, and the question of how migrants adapt and are incorporated into a host society (and vice versa), has long been a prominent topic in migration studies.

Gordon (1964) argued that assimilation was composed of seven aspects of identification with the host society: cultural, structural, martial, identificational, behavioural, attitudinal, and civic. His research marked the beginning of hundreds of publications on this question of how migrants and host societies adapt. The broader discussions with which Gordon interacted evolved into one of the major debates in migration studies.

By the 1990s, understandings of assimilation evolved in several ways. Some argued that process was context- or group-dependent (see Shibusani & Kwan, 1965; Alba & Nee, 1997). Others recognised that there was not merely one type nor indeed one direction of integration (Berry, 1997).

(continued)

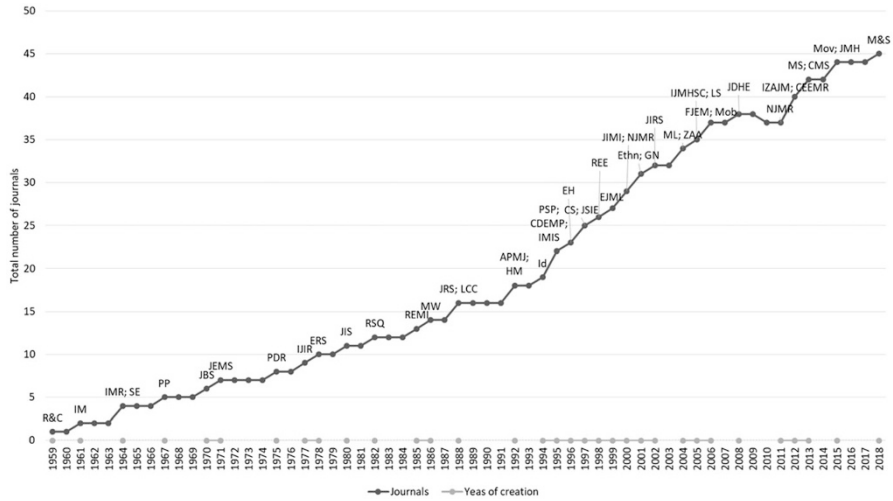
The concept itself has been increasingly problematised since the turn of the century. One prominent example of this is Favell (2003). Favell's main argument was that integration as a normative policy goal structured research on migration in Western Europe. Up until then, migration research had reproduced what he saw as nation-state-centred power structures. It is worth reading this alongside Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2003) to situate it in broader contemporary debates, but there is plenty more to read on this topic.

For more on literature around this topic, see Chaps. 19, 20, and 21 of this book.

Indeed, these debates and discussions were emblematic of wider shifts in approaches to the study of migration. The first of these was towards the study of international (as opposed to internal) migration in the light of post-War economic dynamics, which also established a split in approaches to migration research that has lasted several decades (see King & Skeldon, 2010). The second shift was towards the study of ethnic and race relations, which continued into the 1970s, and was induced by the civil rights movements of these decades (Pedraza-Bailey, 1990). These two shifts are reflected in the establishment of some of the earliest journals with a migration and diversity focus in the 1960s—the establishment of journals being an indicator of institutionalisation—as represented in Fig. 1.3. Among these are journals that continue to be prominent in the field, such as *International Migration* (1961-), *International Migration Review* (1964-), and, later, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (1970-) and *Ethnic & Racial Studies* (1978-).

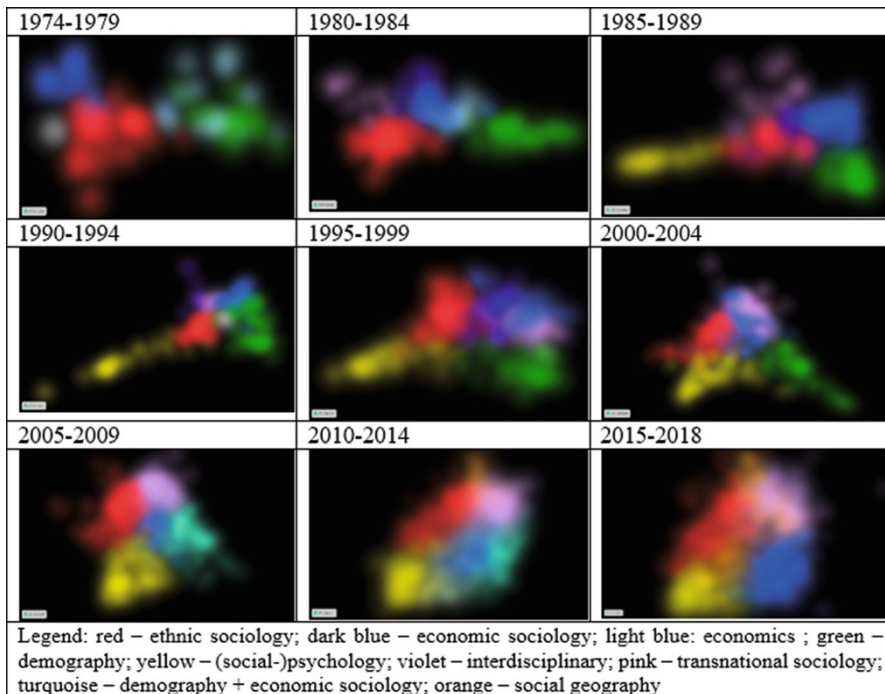
By the 1970s, although several new journals of migration studies had emerged and the field was maturing in terms of theory-building, there remained a lack of interdisciplinary “synthesis” (Kritz et al., 1981; King, 2012). This is reflected in the research of Levy et al. (2020). Based on citation data showing who migration researchers cited over the years, Fig. 1.4 maps the embryo-like development of migration studies every half-decade from 1975 to the present day. In the early decades it shows distinct “epistemic communities” (represented by colours) clustered together based on disciplines in migration research. For example, the earlier decades show economists focused on development (sky blue); economic sociologists analysing the labour market behaviour of migrants (royal blue); demographers (green); and sociologists studying the assimilation topic (red) mentioned above. By the late 1980s, a new cluster of social psychologists (yellow) emerged, with a combination of demographers and economists clustering (pink) in the 1990s. The figure shows an increasing coherence to the field since then, as the next section elaborates, but the 1970s and 1980s was a period of disciplinary differentiation within migration studies.

Although the field may not have been interdisciplinary in the 1980s, it was indeed *multidisciplinary*, and research was being conducted in more and more countries:



**Fig. 1.3** Number of journals focused on migration and migration-related diversity (1959–2018). (Source: Pisarevskaya et al., 2019, p. 462) (*R&C* Race & Class, *IM* International Migration, *IMR* International Migration Review, *SE* Studi Emigrazione, *PP* Patterns of Prejudice, *JBS* Journal of Black Studies, *JEMS* Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, *PDR* Population and Development Review, *IJIR* International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *ERS* Ethnic & Racial Studies, *JIS* Journal of Intercultural Studies, *RSQ* Refugee Survey Quarterly, *REMI* Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales, *MW* Migration World, *JRS* Journal of Refugee Studies, *LCC* Language, Culture, and Curriculum, *APMJ* Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, *HM* Hommes et Migrations, *Id.* Identities, *PSP* Population, Space, and Place, *CDEMP* Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, *IMIS* IMIS-Beitrag, *EH* Ethnicity & Health, *CS* Citizenship Studies, *JSIE* Journal of Studies in International Education, *REE* Race, Ethnicity, and Education, *EJML* European Journal of Migration and Law, *JIMI* Journal of International Migration and Integration, *NJMR* Norwegian Journal of Migration Research, *Ethn.* Ethnicities, *GN* Global Networks, *JIRS* Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, *ML* Migration Letters, *ZAA* Zeitschrift für Ausländerrecht und Ausländerpolitik, *IJMHSCL* International Journal of Migration, Health, and Social Care, *LS* Latino Studies, *FJEM* Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration, *Mob.* Mobilities, *JDHE* Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, *NJMR* Nordic Journal of Migration Research (merger of *NJMR* and *FJEM*), *IZAJM* IZA Journal of Migration, *CEEMR* Central and Eastern European Migration Review, *MS* Migration Studies, *CMS* Comparative Migration Studies, *Mov.* Movements, *JMH* Journal of Migration History, *M&S* Migration & Society. For more journals publishing in migration studies, see [migrationresearch.com](http://migrationresearch.com))

This period entailed a “veritable boom” of contributions to migration research from several disciplines, according to Pedraza-Bailey (1990), along with a degree of internationalisation, in terms of European scholarship “catching up” with hitherto dominant North American publications, according to Bommes & Morawska, (2005). English-language migration research was still, however, dominated by institutes based in the global North and the ‘West’.



**Fig. 1.4** Co-citation clusters of authors cited in migration studies literature 1975–2018. (From Levy et al., 2020, p. 18)

### Interdisciplinarity and Internationalisation in Migration Studies: Key Readings

There have been several publications dealing with the [development of migration studies](#) over the years. These readings identify some of the key points related to interdisciplinarity in the field, and how the field has evolved internationally.

*Brettell, C. B., & Hollifield, J. F. (2000). Migration theory: Talking across disciplines (1st ed.). Abingdon: Routledge; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2008); 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (2015).*

*Talking Across Disciplines* has been used as a standard textbook in migration studies for several years. It represents the first effort towards highlighting the key ideas of the multiple disciplines in the field. It offers an introduction to the contributions these disciplines, as well as critical reflections on how those disciplines have interacted.

(continued)

*Bommes, M., & Morawska, E. (2005). International migration research: Constructions, omissions and the promises of Interdisciplinarity. Farnham: Ashgate.*

*International Migration Research* is one of the first attempts to explore and synthesise migration studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. In this book, scholars from multiple disciplines provide a state of the art of the field which illuminates the contrasts between how these disciplines approach migration studies. It is one of the first works in which migration studies is understood to be an institutionalised field of study.

*Thränhardt, D., & Bommes, M. (2010). National Paradigms of migration research. Osnabrück: V&R.*

In this book, readers are introduced to the idea that migration studies developed as a policy-driven field in several countries in the twentieth century. Not only did this entail diverse policy priorities, but also diverse “paradigms” of knowledge production in terms of terminology, concepts, and measures. This diversity reflects different national science policies. There are chapters reflecting on these processes from multiple continents, and from both “old” and “new” immigration countries.

In the decades before the 1990s—with a heavy reliance on census and demographic data—quantitative research abounded in migration studies (Greenwood & Hunt, 2003). But by the beginning of the 1990s, a “qualitative turn”, linked more broadly to the “cultural turn” in social sciences, had taken place (King, 2012). In other words, migration studies broadly shifted from migration per se, to migrants. King notes the example of geographical research: “human geography research on migration switched from quantitatively inclined population geography to qualitatively minded cultural geographers [. . .] this epistemological shift did not so much re-make theories of the *causes* of migration as enrich our understanding of the migrant *experience*” (King, 2012, p. 24). Indeed, this is also reflected in how Pedraza-Bailey (1990, p. 49) mapped migration research by the end of the 1980s into two main categories: (i) the migration process itself and (ii) the (subjective) processes that follow migration.

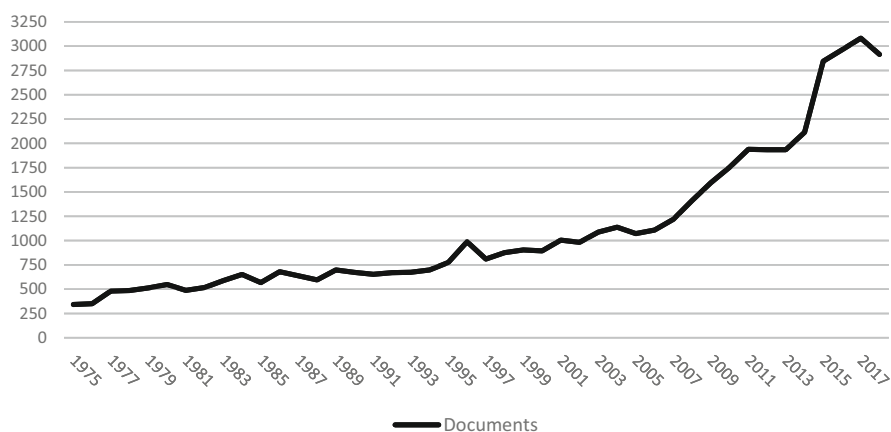
Even though it is clear that migration studies is made up of multiple communities—we have already made the case for its pluralist composition—it is worth re-emphasising this development through the changing shape and structure of the ‘embryos’ in Fig. 1.4 above. The positioning of the clusters relative to each other denotes the extent to which different epistemic communities cited the same research, while the roundness of the map denotes how the field can be considered an integrated whole. We clearly see that in the period 1975–1979, the disciplinary clusters were dispersed, with loose linkages between one another. In the 1980s through to the mid-1990s, while some interdisciplinarity was emerging, several clusters, such as

demographers and psychologists, were working largely within their own disciplines. In other words, in the 1970s and 1980s, authors working on migration referred to and were cited by other scholars primarily within their own disciplinary traditions. In this time, although a few migration journals had been established, this number was small compared to today. Without many scientific journals specialised in their topic, migration scholars were largely reading and publishing in disciplinary journals. By today—particularly in Europe—this has changed, as the increasing roundness of the maps demonstrate and as the rest of this chapter substantiates.

### 1.3.4 Expansion of Migration Studies Since the Turn of the Century

In the 2000s the expansion of migration studies accelerated further (see Fig. 1.5). In 1975, there were just under 350 articles published on migration; there were 900 published in 2000; in 2017, over 3000 articles were published. This growth not only involved a diversification of the field, but also various critical conceptual developments and the rise of an increasingly self-critical approach to migration studies. One of these critical developments involved a move beyond a strong focus on the national dimension of migration and diversities, for example in terms of understanding migration as *international* migration, on integration as a phenomenon only within nation-states, and on migrants as either being connected to the ‘home’ or ‘host’ society.

Several key publications marked this important turn. Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002) refer to “*methodological nationalism*” and critique the notion of taking the nation-state as a given as if it were a natural entity. In fact, for Wimmer and Glick



**Fig. 1.5** Number of articles, per year, in migration studies dataset based on advanced query of Web of Science for Migration Research Hub, 12 March 2019. (Based on Levy et al., 2020, p. 8)



Schiller, this way of understanding reality helps contribute to nation-state building more than it enhances scientific knowledge. In a similar contribution, Favell (2003) critiques the concept of ‘integration’ as naturalising the nation-state in relation to migration. Favell’s main argument was that integration as a normative policy goal structured research on migration in Western Europe. Up until then, migration research had reproduced what he saw as nation-state-centred power structures. Thranhardt and Bommers (2010) further substantiate this point by showing empirically how migration studies developed within distinct national context leading to the reification of distinct national models of integration/migration.

Where did this turn beyond methodological nationalism lead to? Several important trends can be defined in the literature. One involves the rise of perspectives that go beyond nation-states, such as *transnationalist* (Faist 2000, Vertovec 2009) and *postnationalist* (Soysal & Soyland, 1994) perspectives. Such perspectives have helped reveal how migration and migrant communities can also be shaped in ways that reach beyond nation-states, such as in transnational communities that connect communities from across various countries or in the notion of universal personhood that defines the position of migrants regardless of the state where they are from or where they reside.

Another perspective takes migration studies rather to the local (regional, urban, or neighbourhood) level of migration and diversity. Zapata-Barrero et al. speak in this regard of the *local turn* in migration studies (2010). They show how migration-related diversities take shape in specific local settings, such as cities or even neighbourhoods, in ways that cannot be understood from the traditional notion of distinct national models.

Also, in the study of migration itself, an important trend can be identified since the 2000s. Rather than focusing on migration as a phenomenon where someone leaves one country to settle in another, the so-called “mobility turn” (Boswell & Geddes, 2010) calls for a better comprehension of the variation in mobility patterns. This includes for instance variation in temporalities of migration (temporary, permanent, circular), but also in the frequency of migration, types of migration, etc. In this book we will address such mobilities in the forms of different types of migration, frequencies and temporalities by discussing very different *migration forms*.

### ***1.3.5 Growing Self-Critical Reflection in Migration Studies***

Since the 2000s, there has also been a growing reflexive and self-critical approach within migration studies. Studies like those of Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, Favell, and Dahinden are clear illustrations of this growing conceptual self-consciousness. The field of migration studies has itself become an object of critical reflection. In the context of this book, we take this as a signal of the coming of age of migration studies.

This critical reflection touches upon a variety of issues in the field. One is how the field has conceptualised ethnicity, which was criticised as “ethnic lensing” (Glick

Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). This would involve an inherent tendency to connect and problematise a broad range of issues with ethnicity, such as studies on how ethnic communities do on the labour market or the role that ethnicity plays in policies. The core argument to move beyond ethnic lensing is that focusing only on ethnicity risks defying social complexity and the importance of intersectionalities between ethnicity and, for instance, class, citizenship, education, location, cultural, or political disposition, etc. Dahinden (2016) calls in this context for a “[de-migrantisation](#)” of migration studies to avoid the naturalisation of migrants in relation to all sorts of issues and problems. Vertovec (2007) develops the concept “[super-diversity](#)” in this context to capture the social complexity of migration-related diversities.

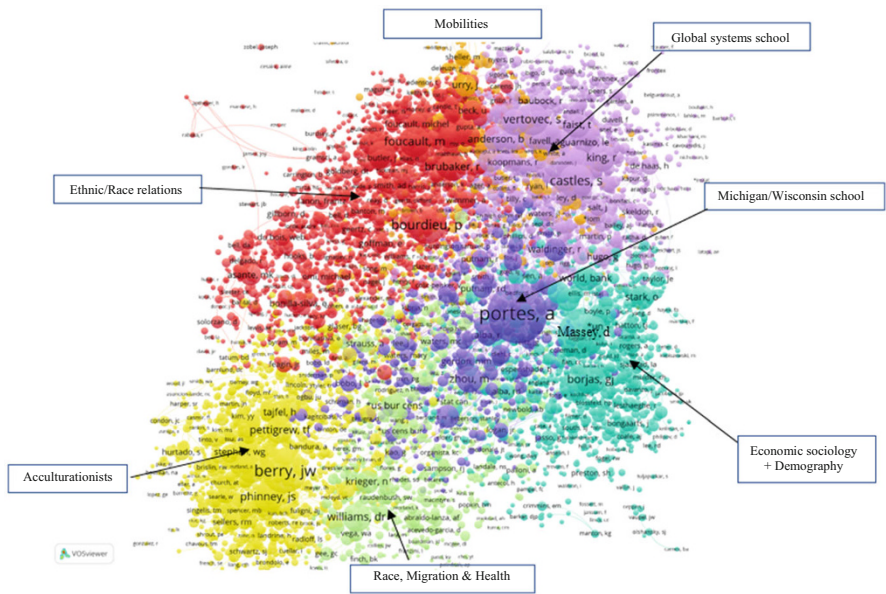
Another strand of critical reflection concerns the field’s [relationship to policymaking](#). Studies like those by Scholten et al. (2015) and Ruhs et al. (2019) offer critical reflection on the role that the relationship between migration studies and broader policy settings has played in the conceptual and methodological development of the field. On the one hand, the evolution of the field has been spurred on in its policy relevance, for instance in research on migration management or ‘migrant integration’. This relationship has contributed to the co-production of knowledge and key concepts, such as ‘integration’, and impeded the critical and independent development of the field. On the other hand, the field also leaves important gaps in research-policy relations, leaving important areas of knowledge production hardly connected to knowledge utilisation. Such studies have raised awareness of the necessity of research-policy relations for the societal impact of the field, while also problematising the nature of research-policy relations and their impact on the development of the field itself.

Finally, also in the context of growing public awareness on racism, the field has increasingly become self-reflexive in terms of how it deals with issues of [discrimination and racism](#). This includes a growing awareness of institutional racism in the field itself, such as in institutes or training programs. Besides contributing to the broader field, there has been an increase of instances where institutes revise their own management and procedures in order to enhance racial justice. This includes participation of scholars from the global south, but also a proliferation of diversity policies in the field. At the same time, criticism remains on the extent to which the field has acknowledged issues of racial justice, for instance in studies on integration, migration management, or social cohesion.

## 1.4 Mapping Migration Studies Today

### 1.4.1 *Co-Citation Communities*

Nowadays, migration studies has become a more interdisciplinary field. In the last 15 years, as the “embryo” development in Fig. 1.4 shows, it became more oval-shaped without sharp “tails”. This form indicates a [cross-disciplinary osmosis](#); a growing interlinkage of epistemic communities. Co-referencing of authors from



**Fig. 1.6** Co-citation map of authors with 10+ citations in migration research in the period 2005–2014. (From Levy et al. 2020, p. 17)

different disciplinary orientations became more common in the twenty-first century. Such developments can be attributed, on one hand, to the rapid digitisation of libraries and journals, as well as the multiplication of migration-focused journals, which accepted relevant contributions to discussion on migration, no matter the discipline. On the other hand, interdisciplinary endeavours were encouraged externally, for instance via grants (see European Union, 2016) and interdisciplinary master programmes created in various universities. It became fashionable to work at the intersection of disciplines, to an extent that nowadays it is often difficult to determine the disciplinary origin of a publication about migration. Whether such developments have yielded any theoretical or empirical breakthroughs is yet to be seen. In any case, it is clear that migration studies moved from being a multi-disciplinary field (with few connections between them) to an interdisciplinary field (with more connections between multiple disciplines) (Levy et al., 2020).

Let us now dive into the most recent co-citation clusters. Such clusters are, of course, not only categorised in terms of disciplines. They also have certain topical focuses. Figure 1.6 below zooms in to the data from Fig. 1.4 and shows the co-citation network in the period 2005–2014 in more detail. We can see seven different groups of migration scholarship that are nevertheless rather interlinked, as the oval shape of the network indicates. At 1 o’clock we can see the cluster we have elsewhere called the “Global systems school”, which has developed around such scholars as Vertovec, Soysal, Levitt, Favell, Faist, and Glick-Schiller, who introduced and developed the concept of transnationalism since the late 1990s.

Contrasting with longstanding conventions of looking at migration as having an ‘endpoint’ in the countries of reception, they developed a different view of migration as a global, on-going, and dynamic process impacting receiving as well as sending societies, along with the identities, belonging, and ‘sense of home’ of migrants themselves. Nowadays, this cluster includes a very diverse group of scholars with different thematic focuses, such as the migration-development nexus (see also Chap. 18, this volume) including de Haas, Carling, and Castles; prominent scholars on Asian migration, such as Ong and Yeoh; and many others, Guarnizo, King, Anderson, Sassen, Joppke and Baubock. Yet, the fact that they all belong to one cluster, proves that their work has been cited in the same reference lists, thus constituting an interlinked conversation on migration as global phenomenon.

Closer to the centre of the network, we find a blue cluster, centred around Portes, a [widely-cited](#) founding father of migration studies in the USA. Next to him we also see other leading American scholars such as Waldinger, Alba and Zhou, Waters, Rumbaut, and Putnam, whose primary concern is the (economic) integration of immigrants. This cluster of scholars has elsewhere been understood as the “Michigan-Wisconsin” school of migration research, given the two universities’ success in training migration scholars in the US (cf. Hollifield, 2020). Traditionally this scholarship has developed in the USA and has been very prominent in the field for decades. Especially Portes is cited extensively, and widely co-cited across the epistemic communities of the whole field.

This cluster is closely interlinked with the neighbouring (at 4 o’clock) cluster of economists, demographers, and other quantitative social scientists (turquoise). At the centre of it is [Massey](#), another giant of migration studies, who mainly conducted his migration research from a demographic perspective. Here we also see economists such as Borjas, Chiswick, and Stark, who predominantly studied the immigration reality of the USA.

Then, at 6 o’clock, we see a light-green cluster. The highly cited scholars in its core are Williams and Krieger, who study migration- and race-related differences in health. For instance, Williams’ highly-cited paper is about the experiences of racism and mental health problems of African Americans, while [Krieger](#) investigated how racism and discrimination causes high-blood pressure. Health is one of the ‘younger’ topics in contemporary migration studies; the amount of research on the intersection of [migration and health](#) has increased significantly in the last decade (Pisarevskaya et al., 2019).

Closely interlinked with ‘health’ is the cluster of ‘acculturationists’, positioned at 7 o’clock. The cluster is formed around J.W. Berry, a social-psychologist who introduced a [theory of immigrant acculturation](#) (1997). Scholars in this cluster investigate cross-cultural and intercultural communication from the psychological perspective. Other prominent authors in this cluster include Phinney, Pettigrew, Ward and Tajfel who studied cognitive aspects of prejudice, and Stephan famous for their integrated threat [theory of prejudice](#) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Another significant group of scholars is positioned between 9 and 12 o’clock of the co-citation network. These are scholars focused on the politics of ethnic and race relations; prominent critical sociologists such as Foucault and Bourdieu are

frequently co-cited in this cluster. Among the key authors in this group are Hall, Gilroy, Brubaker, Kymlicka, Asante, Du Bois, and Bonilla-Silva.

At 12 o'clock, we can see an orange cluster, positioned between the ethnic/race relations cluster and the "Global systems school" – this is a relatively new cluster of scholars working on the topic of mobility, developed by Urry, Scheller, and T. Cresswell. Other researchers within this loosely connected cluster focus in their research on mobilities from related to work and studies from the perspective of social and economic geography. The focus on mobility has been on the rise; it entered top three most prominent topics in migration studies in the period 2008–2017 (Pisarevskaya et al., 2019).

Overall, in the twenty-first century, the scholarship of migration in its variety of approaches and intertwined themes has seemed to move away from "*who'- and 'what'- questions, to 'how'- and 'why'-questions*", compared to the early days of this field. Efforts towards quantifying and tracing geographies of migration flows and describing migrant populations in the receiving countries have somewhat declined in academic publications, while research on the subjective experiences of migrants, perceptions of migrants' identity and belonging, as well as attention to the cultural (super)diversity of societies has become more prominent (ibid.).

### 1.4.2 *Internationalisation*

Since migration is a global phenomenon, it is important that it is studied in different countries and regions, by scholars with different academic and personal backgrounds, as well as for knowledge to be transferred around the world. Only by bringing together the diversity of perspectives and contexts in which migration is studied we can achieve a truly global and nuanced understanding of migration, its causes, and its consequences.

Over the course of the field's development, migration studies has internationalised. Even though analysis of internationalisation trends has only been conducted on English-language literature, the trends seem to be rather coherent. The number of the countries producing publications on migration has increased from 47 to 104 in the past 20 years. Publications from non-Anglophone European countries have increased by 15%, to constitute by today almost a third of English-language publications on migration, while the relative share of developed Anglophone countries (USA, UK, Canada, Australia) has declined (Pisarevskaya et al., 2019). The proportion of migration research that is internationally co-authored has also increased over the past 20 years, from 5% of articles in 1998 to over 20% in 2018 (Levy et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, international collaboration is not equally spread across the world. European and North American migration scholars have produced the highest absolute number of international collaborations between 1998 and 2018, though the relative share of collaborations among Europe-based scholars is much higher (36%) than that of their North American colleagues (15%). The suggested reasons

behind these trends could be that critiques of national paradigms in migration studies have been taken up in Europe more eagerly than in North America. This has not happened without facilitation by [broader science policies](#), particularly in the European Union, which funded the creation of the IMISCOE Network of Excellence, a network which intensified international collaborations between the research institutes working on migration and integration issues in various European countries.

In the global south, similar initiatives have been established, such as the Network for Migration Research on Africa and the Asia Pacific Knowledge Network on Migration. In these regions, international co-authorships are not uncommon, but the absolute number of publications in English compared to those from the north is small. We have thus observed an “uneven internationalisation” of migration studies (Levy et al., 2020); in the case of the gender and migration nexus, for instance, Kofman (2020) argues that the concentration of institutions and publishers in migration studies headquartered in the north perpetuates such inequalities.

## 1.5 An Outlook on This Interactive Guide to Migration Studies

This book is structured so as to provide an overview of key topics within the pluralist field of migration studies. It is not structured according to specific theories or disciplines, but along topics, such as why and how people migrate, what forms of migration are there, what the consequences of migration are, and how migration can be governed. Per topic, it brings an overview of key concepts and theories as well as illustrations of how these help to understand concrete empirical cases. After each chapter, the reader will have a first overview of the plurality of perspectives developed in migration studies on a specific theme as well as first grasp of empirical case studies.

The book is designed as an ‘interactive guide’; it will help connect readers to readings, projects, and reports for the selected themes via interactive links. To this aim, the book outline largely follows the official [taxonomy of migration studies at migrationresearch.com](#). Throughout the text, there will be interactive links to overview pages on the Migration Research Hub, as well as to specific key readings. This marks the book as a point of entry for readers to get to know the field of migration studies.

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# Chapter 2

## Migration Histories



Marlou Schrover

It is impossible to cover the history of global migrations in one chapter. Dirk Hoerder (2002) in his seminal work *Cultures in Contact* needed 800 pages to map global migrations in the past millennium (see also Bosma et al., 2013; Lucassen & Lucassen, 1997, 2009, 2010; Lucassen et al., 2014). The *Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* takes five thick volumes to cover global migration since Antiquity (Ness et al., 2013). The literature on global migration has increased rapidly since the 1980s. This increase is more-or-less in line with the increase in publications on migration control and migration management. The number of publications about global migration *history* is much less (see Fig. 2.1).

This chapter will and cannot not cover the global migrations in the past 2000 years, but rather it will look critically at data collections, present biases in [migration history](#), and will give a helicopter view of major migrations.

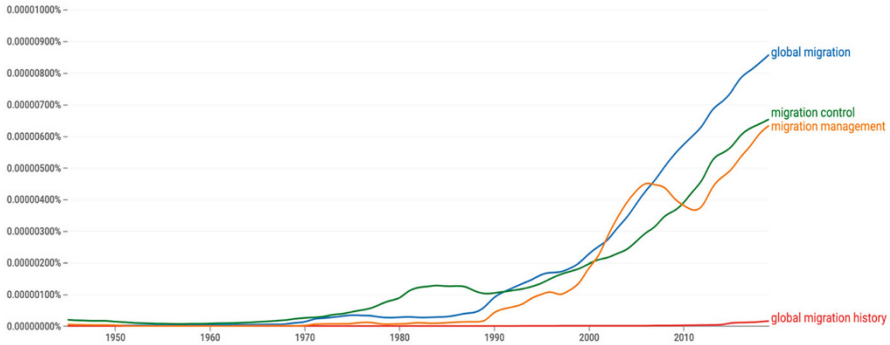
### 2.1 Biases and What Is New?

It is easy to argue—and many people have—that the migration of today is different from that of the past. In politics, this is done to pitch the ‘good’ migrant of the past against the ‘bad’ migrant of today, or to problematise current migration (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2011; Winter, 2012). Furthermore, if migration and integration are not presented as new issues, it is not news and thus not worthy of a journalist’s attention, nor is there need for new policies or government intervention.

There is a tendency to present the immigrants of the past as desired immigrants, while many of today’s immigrants are presented as not. For instance, 1 million

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**Fig. 2.1** Publications on global migration history compared to global migration, migration control, and migration management

Protestants—Huguenots—fled from France in the seventeenth century, after their right to exercise their religion was revoked, and many thousands had been killed. They fled to the Dutch Republic (and to Dutch colonies in South Africa, the Dutch East Indies and the Caribbean), England and Wales, Switzerland, Brandenburg, the Palatinate, and Prussia. They are remembered as the welcome immigrants because they strengthened Protestantism, and brought with them skills, money, and networks. However, when not all Huguenots proved to be as wealthy as the authorities had hoped they would be, the refugees were forced to [set up their own churches](#) (separate from the existing Calvinist churches) so that they could support their own poor (Briels, 1985; Gelderblom, 2002). Some of the Huguenots were welcome, others much less so. And this is similar for the migrants of today.

Today’s migrants come from and go to different countries than they did in the past. Over time, migration routes have always changed and shifted; there is continuity in change, and change in itself is nothing new. When comparing the present to the past it is important to keep in mind that currently the distances that are travelled are generally longer and the frequency of travel is higher, but the number of hours spend travelling is not: it took 3 weeks to cross the Atlantic from Europe to the US at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 5 days at the end of the nineteenth century, and 8 h now (Feys, 2016). Travel became faster, safer and cheaper and this meant that overall mobility increased (not only that of migrants). Furthermore, also knowledge ‘travelled’ faster and more easily. This begs the question which indicators we should use to compare the migrants of today to those of the past.

Overall, there is a strong Western-centric bias in the literature. Migrations to, within and from Asia and Africa are largely presented as the results of what Europeans did or did not do (Bosma et al., 2013; Lucassen, 2004). Many of the migration histories about Africa, for instance, start with European colonisation (cf. Asiwaju, 1976). This obscures the fact that there were migration trajectories that started before Europe took control, and which continued after the Europeans arrived. Contact between the Indian subcontinent and East Africa, for instance, goes back 2000 years. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Mozambique, Mombasa, and

Malindi in 1498, he was surprised at how many Arabs and Indians he found there (Oonk, 2013; Dussubieux et al., 2012). There was also migration from Hadramawt (currently in Yemen) which started before the time of Mohammed and continued for centuries after (700–1500). It connected the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to the African shore (Bahl, 2017; Martin, 1974; van den Berg, 1886). Students from the Horn of Africa were studying in Cairo since the Middle Ages, and the students were following in the footsteps of traders and vice versa, over centuries (Loiseau, 2019). Multiple other examples of migrations that started before colonisation, and continued after it began could be given.

From the sixteenth century onwards, European colonisation disrupted existing migrations and later colonisers rather randomly drew international borders on the world's map, making people into to cross-border migrants although their migration routes did not change. Since the borders were important to the colonisers, but not *per se* to the colonised, some authors have argued against the use of the term 'migration' (which holds the implicit assumption that state borders are important), preferring the term 'mobility' instead. This so-called mobility turn approach underscores the need to make clear which boundaries matter to whom, when and why.

The literature pays too little attention to continuities. For instance, there were already in the nineteenth century large and long-standing Chinese immigrant communities in South Africa, Mauritius, Reunion and Madagascar (Neame, 1909). The nature of the Chinese migration to the African continent did change over time. In the 1950s to 1970s, the People's Republic of China promoted and organised migrations to African countries as part of its anti-imperialist policy of co-operation and solidarity with, what was called at the time, the Third World. In the 1980s, the number of migrants in African countries from Hong Kong and Taiwan increased, followed by an increase in the numbers from mainland China. In 2008, there were 700–800 Chinese companies in Africa employing 80,000 Chinese workers (Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2008; Mung, 2008). It is correct to say that migration from China to Africa today is different from what it was 200 years ago. However, it is not as new as it is often made out to be.

The literature about the migration of men is still much larger than that about women, despite efforts to remedy this bias (for an overview, see Schrover & Moloney, 2013). Migration researchers and policymakers endlessly repeat the claim that a *feminisation* of migration has taken place (see, e.g., King & Zontini, 2000; Oso & Garson, 2005; El-Cherkeh et al., 2004; Kawar, 2004; OECD SOPEMI, 2001; Wihtol de Wenden, 2003). It is presented as one of the key characteristics of current migration (Castles & Miller, 2003, pp. 7–9, 188). Authors generally offer no proof for feminisation except the observation that women today form about 50 percent of the migrants. Although this is true, it was also true for many other migrations worldwide in much earlier periods, for which we have reliable data (Schrover, 2013). The claim that a feminisation has taken place in recent years, is followed by observations regarding migrant women's health hazards, the problems of women work, and to issues such as prostitution and trafficking (Wihtol de Wenden, 2003; El-Cherkeh et al., 2004; Yamanaka & Piper, 2005; Dobson, 2008). The rhetoric about the feminisation of migration is part of, on the one hand, attempts to generate

attention for the understudied migration of women, and on the other hand, it is part of the problematisation of migration (Schrover, 2013).

Over time, people moved because they had to, wanted to, were allowed to, or were forced to. They were driven out by poverty or saw better economic opportunities elsewhere. They were seeking adventure, luck, love, a family and freedom, or they fled repression, war, persecution, and disaster. Motives for moving have been the same throughout history. Frequently, reasons to move overlapped: people fled, but they directed their steps toward a country that offered both freedom and economic opportunities. Currently, there is attention for ‘[climate refugees](#)’; people who move because of drought, floods, or other environmental disasters. However, also that migration is not new. In April 1815 Mount Tambora in Indonesia erupted, and a veil of volcanic dust wrapped around the Earth, blocking the sun in 1816, 1817, and 1818. It led to 3 years without a summer and floods, droughts, storms, the spread of disease, and failed crops, thousands of kilometres away from the eruption site. Hundreds of thousands of refugees took to the road, trying to escape poverty and hunger (D’Archy Wood, 2016). Attention to ‘[climate refugees](#)’ is new, but the migration itself is not.

Lastly, the assumption has been made that the number of immigrants today is larger than in the past. To some measure this is true. The absolute number of people living outside their country of birth increased from 93 million in 1960 to 244 million in 2016. However, this increase is in line with the growth of the global population, which grew from 3.0 billion in 1960 to 7.5 billion in 2016. The global share of people living outside their country of birth is 3 percent now as it has been in the last six decades. Within the EU, the percentage of people born in another country is larger (57 million or 11.3 percent of the population) than ever before. However, 20 million of these migrants come from other EU countries. Within the EU there is [free mobility](#) and encouraging this has been a goal since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957. The migration within the EU has become more like [internal migration](#). If we look percentages on a worldwide scale, migration has not increased.

## 2.2 Who Counts?

There is an extensive debate about numbers when it comes to global migrations. As said above, migrations from, to, or within the Western world, have over time been described much more than other migrations.<sup>1</sup> Attempts have been made to remedy that unbalance, but it still exists (Bade et al., 2011; Ness et al., 2013; McKeown, 2004, 2010; Moya & McKeown, 2010). One reason for it is a lack of [data](#). Many migrations in the past went unrecorded. The further away from the Western world, and the further back in time, the more difficult it becomes to estimate the number of

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/todays-immigration-policy-debates-do-we-need-little-history>

people on the move. In part this has to do with definitions (Who is a migrant? Which borders are relevant?) (Urry, 2010; Cresswell, 2010; de Bruijn, 2014), and in part with authorities caring less about certain categories of migrants. States were as a rule more interested in men, as taxpayers and potential soldiers, than in women (Schrover et al., 2008). In the nineteenth century, German states forbade the migration of women who were planning to leave their children behind, but not of men who were planning to do the same (Schrover, 2001). Women left despite the restriction, but without being registered. Under-registration was influenced by gender as well as by skin colour. In the period 1946–1970, 617 thousand white people migrated to South Africa, 39 percent of them from the UK and 41 percent from other European countries. Between 1913 and 1986, black people could only enter South Africa illegally or as contract workers. They came mainly from Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi (Peberdy, 1999). The white migrants to South Africa were recorded, but the black migrants—who mostly could not move legally—were not. The lack of data is a result of a lack of interest, a deliberate choice to not register some people, and restrictions on the migration of some of the people (Manning, 2005, 2006; van Schendel & Abraham, 2005).

One problem with historical sources relating to non-Western countries is that many of them have been made by colonial authorities, or organisations strongly aligned to them. This, however, does not mean the information has to be discarded. A critical view on who collected material, when, and why is standard practice for historians. Information that has been gathered by colonisers can still provide us with information about the colonised, and others. Furthermore, part of the material remains underused because the focus in research is on movement between the Metropolis and the colony. Other movements receive less attention, although information is available. For instance, in 1952, the British made plans to resettle the Kazakhs, who had fled from Tibet to Kashmir, in Turkey, and in 1955, British authorities made a plan to resettle Chinese refugees in Hong Kong in Paraguay.<sup>2</sup> A Eurocentric focus on working with these types of sources often means these migration plans are ignored.

Regime changes lead to breaks in data collections. For the Russian Empire-USSR there is, for instance, a gap between 1920 and 1990 (Siegelbaum & Page Moch, 2014). From the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the Imperial Russian Government, which included eastern Poland and Finland, had consulates throughout North America. These consulates collected data on migrations from the Russian Empire to the US and Canada. An online database provides access to about 11,400 references to the passport and identity papers. After 1920 this information stops, because of the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Soviet Union. From 1990 onwards, data about migration in the (former) USSR are again available.<sup>3</sup> Data

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup>USSR statistics on migrations in the period 1987–2009 [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QKWkxJaBDYXGmWuZUMg-fLE0iIKMyzvvhPCknp\\_4NQZk/edit?hl=en\\_US&hl=en\\_US#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QKWkxJaBDYXGmWuZUMg-fLE0iIKMyzvvhPCknp_4NQZk/edit?hl=en_US&hl=en_US#gid=0)

for the gap in between can be pieced together. The Electronic Repository of Russian Historical Statistics, for instance, brings together data extracted from various published and unpublished sources with a focus on Russian history from the eighteenth until the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to global migrations, it is interesting to have data covering long periods of time. These types of [data](#) have been collected, for instance, via censuses, and by SOPEMI (Système d'Observation Permanente sur les Migrations), by Ferenczi and Willcox, and in the UN's Demographic Yearbooks (Salt, 1989).

Statistics that relate to [nationality](#) (i.e. in the censuses) are problematic because migrants can and do sometimes have more than one nationality, and it is often not clear how these migrants were dealt with in statistics. Data on flow (arrivals and departures) make it possible to see year-to-year changes. Not all countries, however, use the same length of stay as a measure [to distinguish migrants from, for instance, tourists](#), and the indicators used tend to change over time (Simmons, 1987). A matrix of data on migration, constructed in 1972, showed that figures for a particular flow reported by the country of immigration were substantially higher than the figures for the same flow reported by the country of emigration (if data were correct and immigrants were defined in the same manner the numbers should be the same). Of the 342 flows between pairs of countries in the matrix the total reported number of immigrants was 57 percent higher than that of the number of emigrants (1,072,500 versus 683,200) because countries used different definitions of migrants with varying measures for the minimum duration of stay (Kelly, 1987).

In 1973, SOPEMI was established to provide the European Member States of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) with mechanisms to share information on international migration. SOPEMI annually publishes Trends in international migration.<sup>5</sup> Data in these reports are not comparable (as is true for all other sources) (Salt, 1987).

Imre Ferenczi and Walter F. Willcox, in their 1929 publication *International Migrations* published data on migrations in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Imre Ferenczi was the Technical Adviser on Migration and Population Questions at the International Labor Office (ILO) in Geneva since 1920, and acting chief of its Migration Section. The emphasis in this work is on emigration, mostly from Europe, but it includes a wealth of other data. The ILO has collected massive data on labour migration, since 1920, and this includes extensive data for labour migrations between African countries during colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup><https://ristat.org/topics#>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.oecd.org/general/trendsinternationalmigrationreflectincreasinglabour-relatedimmigrationandpersistentintegrationproblems.htm>

<sup>6</sup><https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

For the last 60 years of the twentieth century, data can be extracted on immigration to European countries from the United Nations Demographic Yearbooks (UN, 1949; 1951; 1953; 1955; 1958; 1960; 1963; 1967; 1971). The tables in the Yearbooks come with very long explanatory footnotes regarding the comparability of numbers. In the *Demographic Yearbooks* data on flow (arrivals) are only available for some countries over any length of time. Albania, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Greece, Malta, Romania, and the USSR never supplied data on immigration or emigration well into the 1980s or later. Data on Eastern European countries and the USSR are missing for almost all years, except the most recent. Portugal only supplied data on emigration, not immigration.

The data in the UN Yearbooks and other sources only include people who were regarded as foreigners. This means that people who returned from former colonies, such as the *pied noirs* in France and repatriates in the Netherlands, are not included, and neither are the *Aussiedler* or *Spätaussiedler* who came to Germany. Since 1950, 4.5 million *Aussiedler* or *Spätaussiedler* moved to Germany, about half of whom came from the Soviet Union and successor states. In recent years, new EU Member States mirrored these policies of return and gave preferential rights to ‘returnees’, frequently descendants of people who left generations ago, or were deported under Soviet and communist rule. Poland grants rights to co-ethnic returnees from Kazakhstan; Greece for co-ethnic returnees from the former republics of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Armenia; and Hungary does so for co-ethnics from Romania, Ukraine, and former Yugoslavia. Numbers are substantial. Finland, for instance, encouraged 60,000 Ingrian Finns to ‘return’ from the former Soviet Union. In statistics they are frequently not visible.

As said, the information on older migrations is scant. There are exceptions. There is for instance an interactive map portraying Jewish migrations during Antiquity.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there is a digital collection of so-called prize papers: documents pertaining to tens of thousands of seized ships (“prizes”) making it possible to analyse who travelled on them in the Early Modern and Modern period. An option in the Map Tool allows users to see in what places emigrant sailors from Scandinavia ended up,<sup>8</sup> or from where for example Boston drew its foreign sailors.<sup>9</sup> It can identify the birthplaces of illiterate mariners,<sup>10</sup> or generate a visual representation

<sup>7</sup><https://www.pbs.org/wnet/story-jews/explore-the-diaspora/interactive-map/>

<sup>8</sup>[https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?bpl\\_country=Sweden%20or%20Norway%20or%20Denmark%20or%20Finland&res\\_country=not%20Sweden%20not%20Norway%20not%20Denmark%20not%20Finland&searchfilter=res](https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?bpl_country=Sweden%20or%20Norway%20or%20Denmark%20or%20Finland&res_country=not%20Sweden%20not%20Norway%20not%20Denmark%20not%20Finland&searchfilter=res)

<sup>9</sup>[https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?or\\_place=Boston,%20MA&bpl\\_country=not%20United%20States%20of%20America&searchfilter=birth](https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?or_place=Boston,%20MA&bpl_country=not%20United%20States%20of%20America&searchfilter=birth)

<sup>10</sup><https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?crewlit=Cross&searchfilter=birth&iconsizefilter=small>

of the places of residence of married seamen.<sup>11</sup> The data are enormously rich, but they cover only a small percentage of the migrants.

For recent periods there is much more material to work with. Information about migration to the US is especially abundant. Shipping companies, rather than state authorities, collected data on who migrated across the Atlantic (Feys, 2010; Brinkmann, 2008). Much of the material of the shipping companies is available digitally.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, digitised information is available (also visualised in maps) about everybody who migrated to the US since 1820.<sup>13</sup> For the US there are in addition large online archival collections on migration.<sup>14</sup> This includes the 1911 full report of the US Dillingham Commission (41 volumes) on migration, with extensive data on immigrant groups in the US. The Library and Archives of Canada similarly hold immigration records and travel guides, passenger lists, letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, newspapers, maps, art, photographs, music, and films.<sup>15</sup> The Immigration History Research Center Archives in Minneapolis holds an enormous amount of information on immigration, including digitised immigrant letters.<sup>16</sup> There is also systematic information on, for instance, migration to and from Germany in the period 1950–2017.<sup>17</sup>

The World Economic Forum published an interactive map covering the period 1990–2017 and including migrations to the US from all countries in the world.<sup>18</sup> Similar information is provided based on data from the UN Population Division, providing a map with the net number of migrants per country for the period 1950–2015.<sup>19</sup> The Migration Policy Institute has mapped the largest refugee populations by country of destination for the period 1960–2019. The map displays which countries report refugee populations greater than 500,000 in each decade since 1960 and in 2015 and 2019. Furthermore, it lists the 25 largest refugee populations by the country of destination and the refugee share of the total

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<sup>11</sup> <https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/>; <https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map?jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?crewmstat=Married&searchfilter=res&iconsizefilter=small>

<sup>12</sup> Database for new arrivals on Ellis Island in New York:  
<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://metrocosm.com/animated-immigration-map/> The same information is also used for other websites: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/foreignborn/#decade=1960&country=Germany>

<sup>14</sup> For instance: [https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/immigration-to-the-united-states-1789-1930?utm\\_source=library.harvard](https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/immigration-to-the-united-states-1789-1930?utm_source=library.harvard)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/Pages/introduction.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.lib.umn.edu/ihrca>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Wanderungen/Tabellen/wanderungen-werte.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/diversity-in-the-us-mapped>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/net-number-migrants-country-1950-2015-five-year-intervals?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>



population.<sup>20</sup> The UNHCR provides historical refugee data from 1960 onwards.<sup>21</sup> The flow of people across the world in the period 1990–2010 has been mapped, this time trying to take a global approach.<sup>22</sup>

Overall, there have been numerous projects on mapping human migration across time and space, although mostly focused on recent migrations (Zambotti et al., 2015).

### 2.3 A Helicopter View

This section will provide a helicopter view of global migrations, focusing on major moves. As long as there are people, there has been human migration, starting with the migration of *Homo sapiens* across the African continent 300,000 years ago, their dispersals to the southern coast of Asia and Oceania 70,000–50,000 years ago, and into Europe 40,000 years ago. As with all later migrations, also the ‘Out of Africa’ migration has led to extensive debates about when, in which numbers, how and why people migrated. Currently climate change is being offered as an explanation for why the *homo sapiens* started to move (Rito et al., 2019). The ‘Out of Africa’ migration led to the creation of several interactive maps.<sup>23</sup> The *Interactive Human Migration Map* retraces the paths of the first humans across the world.<sup>24</sup>

Skipping ahead ten thousands of years, brings us to the period between 3000 and 2000 years ago, when 60 million Bantu speakers from West and Central Africa, moved South and East across the African continent. Linguists, archaeologists, and DNA specialists provided the information, which allowed for the reconstruction of this large-scale migration (de Luna, 2014; Li et al., 2014).

From 500 BCE onwards the Silk Road started to develop, which connected Southern Europe to East Asia, with traders, troops, scholars, goods, and ideas moving from East to West and vice versa. Imperial Rome, in turn, housed migrants from all parts of the Roman Empire, including Gauls, Spaniards, Syrians, Persians, Britons, Greeks, Libyans, and Egyptians, as well as migrants from India and Africans from unspecified countries. After the onset of decline of the Western Roman Empire, 750,000 Germanic people moved into the Roman Empire. The number of these migrants, and the nature of the migration, are highly contested (Geary, 2012). Their migration is usually presented as a destruction narrative, in

<sup>20</sup><https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/largest-refugee-populations-country-destination?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>

<sup>21</sup>[https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?type%5B%5D=document&global\\_filter%5Bdoc\\_type%5D%5B%5D=7&maps=1](https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?type%5B%5D=document&global_filter%5Bdoc_type%5D%5B%5D=7&maps=1)

<sup>22</sup>[http://download.gsb.bund.de/BIB/global\\_flow/](http://download.gsb.bund.de/BIB/global_flow/)

<sup>23</sup>See the interactive maps to illustrate this  
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/interactive-human-migration-map/interactive-map/>  
<http://atlasofhumanevolution.com/Maps.asp>

<sup>24</sup><https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/interactive-human-migration-map/interactive-map/>

which Germanic masses immigrated from the North and East into Central Europe, causing the end of the civilised world of classical antiquity (Wiedemann, 2020). The same destruction narrative is applied to Muslim migrations into Europe from the South, and Vikings coming from the North, from the eighth century onwards. The Vikings reached the Mediterranean and North America, and the Muslims governed most of Spain and Portugal. In the same period there were also other large migrations. In the ninth and tenth century, for example, large numbers of people moved South in what is now China and mixed with the Han people already living there. There is no consensus on how large these various groups of migrants were (Hoerder, 2012).

As is true for today, also in the past motives were mixed. As a rule, pilgrimage and trade intertwined (Bahl, 2017). West African Muslims, for instance, travelled to Mecca already in the early twelfth century. Rulers of Mali made the pilgrimage in the 1260s. Most famous was Mansa Musa, who made his pilgrimage with 60,000 people in 1324, as witnessed and recorded by Italian traders. Mansa Musa was born in 1280 and ruled the kingdom of Mali from 1312 to 1337. His regime controlled the routes to the Bambura and Bambuhu gold fields. His fame, especially because of his pilgrimage, led to stories in the Middle Ages in Europe and the Arab world about an Island of Gold in central Africa (Keech McIntosh, 1981). Many explorers set out to find it, paving trade routes while doing so (Masonen, 1997).

Between 1547 and 1860, European ships carried 11–14 million enslaved people from Africa across the Atlantic (Lofkrantz & Ojo, 2012; Matlou, 2013). African people were also brought to Asia as enslaved people. It is estimated that between 800 and 1900, 12 million enslaved people were transported across the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This migration started earlier – in 2900 BC when Nubian captives were moved to Egypt – and continued longer. Between 800 and 1600, 4.7 million enslaved people moved North across the Sahara, and 2.7 million did so between 1600 and 1900, part of whom were moved East from there (Ralph, 1992). The literature on this forced movement is overshadowed by that on the transatlantic slave trade, also in the debates about numbers (Collins, 2006). After the formal abolition, slavery was partly replaced by indentured labour. In total, 1 million indentured workers were brought from India to the Caribbean (Lal & Jahaji, 2000; Kaur, 2012).

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth migration increased. Between 1840 and 1940, 60 million people left Europe, 21–23 million left South China, 30–33 million moved from China to Manchuria, 43–50 million moved within or left India, 20–40 million moved within China, 9–13 million left from the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia, 74 million moved within Europa and 35 million within the Americas (Moya & McKeown, 2010; McKeown, 2004; Gottschang, 1982). Over 4 million people left Ireland between 1841 and 1911. Between 1846 and 1932, 52 million people in total left Europe. Between 1880 and 1914, 4.3 million Russians migrated to Siberia (Anderson, 1980). In 1910, there were officially 111 thousand of Chinese subjects in Russia (according to estimates, there were 1.5–2 times more). In 1923 there were 250 thousand Russians in China (according to some authors, 400 thousand—see Kireev 2016)). In 1907, after a treaty had been concluded between Japan and Brazil, thousands of people moved from

Japan to Brazil, mostly to work on coffee plantations (Tsuda, 2003). Overall numbers were higher than in previous eras.

Mobility increased because travel became cheaper, faster, and safer (after the introduction of railroads and steam ships). It affected travel all around the world (Feys, 2010; Neyens, 2016), including crossing the South Chinese Sea and the Arabian Sea (Kaur, 2009). This led to a sharp rise in the number of pilgrims from the European colonies in Asia to Mecca; a trip that previously had been made by much fewer people, and also a trip from which many did not return because they died on the way (Moch Nur, 2008; van Bruinessen, 1995). The number of pilgrims returning led to a rise in pan-Islamism, which created fears among colonial authorities, who in response started to register and monitor pilgrims much closer than before.

After the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, 1–2 million Russians fled (Simpson, 1939). During the First World War, 20 million people became refugees and internally displaced persons in Europe (Lissner, 1977). In the First World War, there were large-scale forced migrations. Germany deployed 1.5 million Prisoners of War (POWs), and Austria-Hungary put to work more than 1 million Russian POWs. 2.1 million Austrian-Hungarian and 0.17 million German POWs worked in Russia, and tens of thousands of German POW worked in France and Britain. In 1916, the German occupation forces deported 5000 Polish workers from Lodz, mostly Jews, and 61,000 Belgian workers to Germany. Part of these migrations or deportations were meant to be temporary, but they ended up to be permanent, because POW stayed or died in the countries they were brought to.

Immigration restrictions, introduced in the US in the 1920s, greatly reduced migrations to the US. Other countries that received large numerous migrants in the past decades followed suit (Cook-Martin & Fitzgerald, 2010). The onset of the economic crisis of the 1930s reduced possibilities for labour migration, although not all labour migration came to a halt. In France employers cooperated in a *Société Générale d'Immigration*, which between 1920 and 1930 recruited 490,000 Polish migrants, to work as miners (Knotter, 2015). In the 1920s and 1930s, the discovery of oil led to migrations into the Gulf region. The migrants were senior staff of the oil companies from the US and UK, high-skilled workers from India, and low skilled migration from countries in the region (Errichiello, 2012).

In the 1930s there was a sharp rise in refugee migration. Poles fled in large numbers, as did the Chinese, and 500,000 Spaniards fled to France during the Civil War. After Hitler's rise to power, Jews and others sought to escape Nazi Germany. During the Second World War, the scale of forced labour migration increased dramatically. Two Soviet decrees of 1942 forced 316,000 ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union into so-called labour armies and moved them to far away sites to cut timber, build factories and railroads, work in coal mines, and in oil industries (Mukhina, 2014). In 1944, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin accused the Chechen people of helping the Nazis and forced 700,000 people to migrate to Central Asia. During the Second World War, Japan established a forced labour regime and deported 1 million Korean men and women and 40,000 Chinese to Japan. Many more examples of these large forced migrations could be given.

In Nazi Germany differences were made between forced labour migrants. The German word for guest worker—*Gastarbeiter*—was coined in Nazi Germany in order to distinguish the more or less voluntary temporary labour migrants from other migrants – *Zwangsarbeiter* and *Ostarbeiter* – who were forced to migrate and work, and who were deemed racially inferior and not capable of doing all tasks (Herbert, 1986; Didier, 1943; Hachtmann, 2010). Between 1939 and 1945, there were 13.5 million foreign forced labourers in Nazi Germany, of whom 12 million were coerced to move (Spoerer & Fleischhacker, 2002).

The Second World War created 60 million refugees worldwide, 30 million of whom in Europe (Davies, 2006). After the war, most of the European refugees returned home voluntarily. However, some of the people refused to return to their countries of origin. Poles, “Balts”—Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians—and Jews comprised the three largest groups among them (Dinnerstein, 1982). The UNHRC states that its ‘most recently estimated for 30 June 2020 shows that, for the first time in recorded history, the number of people forcibly displaced is now 80 million, and over 26 million refugees.’ The data for the period around the Second World War provided above and below question this observation.<sup>25</sup>

In the immediate post-war period, there were, in addition to the 60 million refugees, 14 million Displaced Persons (DPs) in Europe, plus 12–16.5 million expellees (ethnic Germans from countries that had been under Nazi rule and who were expelled to Germany after the war) (Cohen, 2011). The expellees were explicitly defined as non-DPs and non-refugees by the parties discussing an international solution to the DP or refugee problem (Schrover, 2015). In addition, there were other movements. The Partition of British India in 1947 into India and Pakistan, for instance, displaced 17 million people.<sup>26</sup>

In the post-WWII years, authorities in Western European countries regarded their countries as too full. There were severe housing shortages, and it was feared that the pre-war unemployment would return. In the US it was feared that dissatisfaction would increase the support for communism in Western European countries. European authorities therefore encouraged emigrations from Europe. About 2 million people migrated to Australia in the immediate post-1945 years from the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany. From Germany 80,500 people migrated to Australia as labour migrants (Schmortte, 2005; Jones, 2002), and 200,000 to Canada between 1951 and 1957 (Schmalz, 2000). From the Netherlands about 400,000 people left. Most of these post-war European emigrants moved within assisted passage schemes: this means that their journey was paid by their country of origin, provided they had been selected for emigration (Schrover & van Faassen, 2010). Authorities encouraged, organised and financed large-scale mobility.

The countries of origin selected the people whom they thought they could miss, and countries of settlement such as Australia selected the people whom they wanted

<sup>25</sup><https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/how-many-refugees/#:~:text=UNHCR%20most%20recently%20estimated%20for,and%20over%2026%20million%20refugees.>

<sup>26</sup>For an oral history archive and interactive map see: <https://www.1947partitionarchive.org/>

to come. Bilateral treaties regulated the support the migrants got before, during and after their journey, as well as the criteria for selection. Over a four-year period, Australia entered into agreements with Italy and the Netherlands in 1951, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Spain and West Germany in 1952, and with Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States in 1954. In 1955 Australian authorities, implemented ‘Operation Reunion’ which was intended to assist family members to migrate to Australia. Within a decade, 30,000 people migrated from countries such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Canada in a similar manner sought to attract people from Europe.<sup>27</sup> In the period 1946–1980, 4.8 million people migrated to Canada, including 1.1 million from Great Britain, 0.5 million each from the US and Italy, 326 thousand from Germany and 185 thousands from the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup> Ideas about how to best organise emigration from North-Western European countries in the 1950s - via bilateral treaties and based on selection – formed the blueprint for the organisation of guest worker migration a few years later. Civil servants organising emigrations, moved to new positions in which they organised the new immigrations. Countries were different but underlying ideas were the same.

In the period of 1958–1972, about 8 million work permits were issued to guest workers to work in Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. Initially, they were recruited to fill vacancies in mining and the steel industry, and as a result 80 percent of the guest workers were men. It led to a masculinisation of migration, although the word was never used, not at the time, nor in later publications. In the UK, which was outside the European Coal and Steel Community (established in 1951) and the European Economic Community (est. 1957) workers from its (former) colonies were used in as similar manner to fill vacancies.

Authorities emphasised the circular nature of the guest worker migration to pacify the labour unions, who feared that the guest workers would stay and compete with local workers, when economic growth would slow down. The emphasis on the temporariness of the guest worker migration was a way to make this migration acceptable, so shortly after hundreds of thousands of people had been stimulated to migrate from Europe. When the guest worker migration system came to an end in the mid-1970s, guest workers reduced the number of trips back and forth, fearing (correctly) that they would not be able to re-enter the recruiting countries once they had left. The economic crisis, which was the reason to stop the recruitment of guest workers, also hit the countries of origin. Migrants did not want to return to their countries or origin in the midst of an economic crisis, and especially when this coincided with a period of political instability (Grotti & Goldstein, 2005).

Among the **labour migrants** there were people who could have applied for **refugee status** but did not: people were **fleeing the regime** of Franco in Spain, of Salazar in

<sup>27</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016006-eng.htm>

<sup>28</sup> <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/QuebecHistory/readings/SourceofCanadianImmigrants1921-1945.html>

Portugal, the Colonels regime in Greece, the coups in Turkey and the repressions in Morocco. Most of them simply chose to move as labour migrants, which was easy under the guest worker migration regime. Those who did apply for refugee status were turned down and allocated by the authorities to the category of labour migrants (Walaardt, 2013).

East Germany also had a guest worker migration regime, albeit with smaller numbers of labour migrants than West Germany. Labour migrants were called *ausländischen Werktätigen* and *Vertragsarbeiter*. Until the German reunification, there were 69,000 Vietnamese, 50,000 Poles, 40,000 Hungarians, 25,000 Cubans, 22,000 migrants from Mozambique, 8000 from Algeria, 2000 from Angola and several hundreds from China and North Korea. About 70 percent of them were men. Bilateral treaties were concluded between the countries of origin of the labour migrants and the DDR (Rabenschlag, 2014; Ireland, 1997). In the 1980s, there were in total 300,000 mostly unskilled workers who worked in Communist Bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany (Schwenkel, 2014). Although the East and the West of Europe seemed to be worlds apart, the way labour immigration was organised was not that different.

Between 1942 and the 1960s, the US had the rather similar the so-called Bracero Program, which regulated migration from Mexico (Blank, 2013). Canada also had a similar programme for the recruitment of temporary workers, mainly from the Caribbean. The Bracero Program was established in 1942 as a temporary wartime measure. It was extended by US Congress and expanded in the latter half of the 1950s. The migration was meant to be temporary and circular, as the labour migration in Europe was perceived to be. In the period 1955–1959, half a million Mexicans were entering the USA each year. In total the program brought 4–5 million people into the US, 89 percent of whom came from Mexico and 4 percent from the British West Indies or Jamaica (Massey & Pren, 2012).

Organised labour migration, based on selection, did not stop after the economic crisis of the 1980s. In the Philippines, the government since the 1960s organised the ‘export’ of nurses to other countries, hoping that remittances would stimulate the Philippines’ economy (Yeoh et al., 1999; Panayiotopoulos, 2005; Urbano, 2012; Nesadurai, 2013). This continued beyond the period of guestworker migration. Currently, the total number of overseas workers from the Philippines is 10 million, of whom 3.5 million are in the US and 1 million in Saudi Arabia. The remittances of the Overseas Contract Workers—the official Philippine policy category—constitute 30–40% of the Philippine’s BSP (McKay, 2007).

The economic growth that led to the migration to North-Western Europe, also caused the migration of large numbers of construction workers to the Middle East, during the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s (Dito, 2013). Furthermore, in the 1960s, Mauritania, Ghana or Côte d’Ivoire attracted Senegalese, Malian, Guinean and Gambian migrants to fill vacancies. In 1969, after the 1966 coup, Ghana expelled 155,000–213,000 immigrants, mainly from Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger. In 1983 and 1985, during the economic crisis, Nigeria similarly expelled two million west-African migrants, mostly Ghanaians, who had come during earlier periods of

economic growth. In the 1970s and 1980s, people from Mali, Niger and Chad migrated to construction sites and the oil fields in Algeria and Libya (de Haas, 2007).

As before, there were refugee migrations as well as other migrations. In 1962, Chinese refugees fled to Hong Kong at a rate of 2000 per day. In 1967, 1.8 million people fled from other parts of Nigeria to Biafra, after persecutions and mass killings. After the start of the Civil war in 1968, Nigerian authorities tried to starve the Biafran population to death, resulting in the death of 1000 children per day at the height of the conflict. Some of the Biafrans fled to neighbouring countries, but most were unable to do so. In 1971, after the start of the war between India and Pakistan, 10 million people fled from Pakistan (Bangladesh) to India. In the 1970s, 1–2 million people fled from Vietnam, and in the 1980s 2.5 million people fled from Afghanistan. The outbreak of the civil war in Yugoslavia in 1991 led to new refugee migration in Europe. By August 1992, approximately 2.5 million people had fled their homes as fighting in the Balkans spread. Almost 2 million were displaced within former Yugoslavia and 633,938 sought asylum in Western European countries by 1994 (Helfer, 2006). The civil war in Syria, which began in 2011, led to the displacement by 2018 of 6.6 million people within Syria, while 5.6 million were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries. Between 2011 and 2017, over one million Syrians applied for asylum in the EU.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The brief overview presented above, with its dazzling numbers, makes clear that global migration is by no means new. The largest problem with the literature on global migrants in the past is that it is Western-centric, as has been observed above. The reason for this is that there is much more source material on migrations to or from Western countries. The material that is available is frequently not studied from a comparative perspective. This creates the image that migration to, from, and in the West, was and is different from that in the rest of the world. Awareness of these biases will help us find new material, or look at existing material from a different perspective. The overview also showed the many aspects of how migrations were organised or problematised were not new either. Attempts to monitor, manage and control migrations always built on practices and ideas from the past. Lastly, the overview showed that numbers are rather unreliable (especially is who go further back in time, or away from Western countries), and that counting is influenced by gender, ethnicity and class. Yet, numbers are frequently used to claim the newness of current migrations.

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**Part II**  
**Conceptual Approaches: Migration  
Drivers, Infrastructures, and Forms**

# Chapter 3

## Migration Drivers: Why Do People Migrate?



Mathias Czaika and Constantin Reinprecht

Growing social and economic inequalities, and consequently, unfulfilled life aspirations trigger the migration intentions of millions, if not billions of people around the world. Surveys by Gallup World Poll suggest that more than 750 million adults would like to migrate if they had the chance to do so (Esipova et al., 2018). Hence, globally ‘only’ one in eight adults express a desire to migrate. This is a surprisingly small fraction given the fact that a much larger but unknown number of people would have good reasons to migrate in order to realise economic, professional, political, or social opportunities elsewhere. At the same time, only small fractions of those who aspire to migrate are actually able to realise it.

However, *why do people want to migrate* in the first place? At specific moments in people’s lives a number of factors come together and stimulate migration intentions, which, given some achievable livelihood opportunities, may end up in temporary or permanent moves to another domestic or international destination. Factors that drive both migration intentions (and aspirations) and actual moves are manifold and multifaceted, and over the past decades, migration researchers have been identifying and describing numerous factors and contexts that shape both individual migration trajectories and broader migration processes. Researchers studying drivers of migration are hereby asking: *what are relevant factors that are driving migration, and how do these drivers operate in time and space? To what extent and in what ways do they influence, i.e. trigger or hinder, migration decision-making of some people but not of others? Moreover, how do multidimensional migration drivers interact and create complex driver configurations that may affect some people more than others in aspiring and realising migration as a viable behavioural option?*

A term that is often used in migration studies is *migration determinants*, suggesting a structural and ‘deterministic’, i.e. causal, relationship between some

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external factors and migration. However, this conception is rather misleading as it ignores the central role of human agency in migration processes (Bakewell, 2010; Carling & Talleraas, 2016) and the often indirect or intervening role of some contextual factors in a migration (decision-making) process. *Root causes* is another term widely used, particularly in policy circles, where root causes are mostly understood as ‘the social and political conditions that induce departures - especially poverty, repression, and violent conflict’ (Carling & Talleraas, 2016, p. 6). But also this concept of a migration-inducing factor is relatively narrow because it is rarely a single or specific fundamental causal factor that is setting people in motion. Rather, it is a number of factors that are mutually mediating and conjointly shaping migration decisions and broader migration dynamics and patterns. We therefore prefer the term *migration drivers* (rather than causes or determinants) of migration as ‘structural elements that enable and constrain the exercise of agency by social actors’ and make ‘certain decisions, routes or destinations more likely’ (Van Hear et al., 2018, p. 928).

At a higher level of aggregation, structural disparities between places, which may turn out as locations of origin and destination, create the context that make migration decisions more likely. These spatial disparities may reflect long-standing social and economic inequalities and gaps in living standards both within countries and internationally between, for instance, the global North and South—as well as cyclical or seasonal economic fluctuations. At lower levels of aggregation, i.e. at the meso- and micro-level, migration drivers facilitate or constrain migration by affecting perceptions about migration opportunities and influencing people’s capacities to realise these opportunities. Consequently, people’s perceptions about spatial *opportunity gaps* are necessary pre-conditions in people’s migration decision-making.

Besides structurally embedded and therefore mostly slow-changing disparities in livelihood opportunities, specific events, and sudden developments, including some rapid policy changes, may both predispose and ultimately trigger migration. The complex interplay of multiple economic, political, social, and other gradual developments and sudden events may dynamically change migration opportunities for heterogeneous groups of people. The concept of *complex driver environments*, that is time-space-dependent configurations of multidimensional drivers that define people’s willingness and ability to change life situations through migration, forms the theoretical underpinning of this chapter.

In the remainder of this chapter, we briefly outline some key, and by now, classical theories of migration that are often referred to in explaining migration outcomes. We then propose a taxonomy of 24 migration drivers, categorised into nine driver dimensions, and elaborate on the key features of their configurational interplay that characterises migration driver environments. Following that, we provide a meta-review of scholarly work on migration drivers and discuss the state of knowledge on person-specific, group-specific, and more macro-structural and external migration drivers.

## 3.1 Migration Drivers: The Theoretical Basis

### 3.1.1 *Classical Theories of Migration: An Overview*

The reasons why people migrate have been theorised and studied for decades and the scientific literature has identified a number of [fundamental dimensions of migration drivers](#) including economic, political, social, cultural, demographic, and ecological factors (for comprehensive reviews see Ghatak et al., 1996; Hagen-Zanker, 2008; King, 2012; Massey et al., 1993). We briefly outline some influential theories of migration including functional perspectives of migration being instrumental for income maximisation or historical-structural theories explaining migration as the result of class-based deprivations in (global) capitalist systems.

Neoclassical migration theory, based on Sjaastad's (1962) [cost-benefit model](#) and Lee's (1966) [push-pull model of migration](#), suggests that individuals migrate due to the discrepancy in economic opportunities between those available at a destination and a lack thereof at the place of residence. The interrelated decisions of *whether* and *where* to migrate are linked to existence of substantive income or utility differentials between places. People tend to move if expected returns to migration are beneficial. Although Lee's push-pull model, as well as the augmented gravity model, explain overall migration flows between locations relatively well, these models have also been criticised for failing to explain why the majority of people do *not* migrate despite severe income differentials (Bogue, 1977; Hagen-Zanker, 2008). One reason for immobility is the fact that migrants are not simply pushed and pulled between places according to wage gaps or livelihood differentials, but people's own agency and self-determination decides whether and where to relocate (Bakewell, 2010).

Another critique of the neoclassical migration model is that it suffers from methodological individualism, i.e. it assumes that individuals are the main decision-making units. However, individuals belong to households and communities who influence or even take the decisions, or people may even move as a family. Scholars have therefore urged for a reconsideration migration decision-making, and two perspectives on the role of households have emerged (Boyd, 1989; Sell & De Jong, 1978). First, [family structure and functions](#) have both direct and indirect effects on migration decision-making but the individual remains the decision-maker, and secondly, the family is the ultimate migration decision-making unit.

Harbison (1981) argues that family structure and function are not merely additional explanatory variables. Families transmit information and shape individuals' motivations, values, and ultimately migration norms, thereby directly and indirectly affecting migration decision-making. Further, structural and functional family characteristics affect the perceptions of costs and benefits associated with migration. However, it is unclear how potential intra-family dissent affects migration decision-making processes. Bargaining models explain family migration decisions by inter-related utility maximisations at the household and the individual level, respectively (Abraham & Nisic, 2012). However, bargaining do often not consider coordination and communication problems (Kalter, 1998).

The [new economics of labour migration](#) (Stark & Bloom, 1985) put the household or family at the centre of migration decision-making, arguing that households are able to diversify income risks and control uncertainty by allocating individual household members to specific income sources, and therefore, alternative migration options (Haug, 2008; Massey et al., 1993). Family ties embody important social externalities, which affect migration decision-making (Mincer, 1978). For instance, negative externalities, represented by strong ties to the place and people at origin, decrease the likelihood of migration. At the same time, family and friends living elsewhere establish positive externalities by transmitting valuable information that reduces migration-related uncertainty (Stark & Bloom, 1985). Externalities are also the driving force behind migration when relative rather than absolute deprivation is spurring migration aspirations, as people compare their own well-being, income and living standards to others around them (Stark & Taylor, 1989, 1991). More recent migration decision-making models have been adapted as they combine individual factors with a focus on the family or household (Anam & Chiang, 2007).

[Network theory](#) claims that migration as a social outcome is based on the complex interplay of decisions taken by individual actors, family and friends, migrant organisations, and other economic and political factors (Boyd, 1989). Social networks hereby influence not only whether and how migration takes place, but also where migrants are predominantly moving to (Haug, 2008). Ritchey (1976) states that people with access to relevant social capital incentivises migration by providing information, financial assistance, and practical support. However, Heitmueller (2006) adds that network effects can go in both directions, that is information provided through networks is not necessarily only positive but can also discourage migration. More migrants at a particular place has a positive community and family effect attracting more migrants to this destination. At the same time, local labour markets may saturate and wages might in turn decrease. Therefore, there might be a point where migrants in destination countries either withhold information or send even negative messages ‘[...] to hamper further migration’ (Heitmueller, 2006, p. 706).

Network theory is also a useful perspective to understand the perpetuation of migration (Massey et al., 1993) and destination choice once migrant networks are established. However, network theory does also not explain migration when migrant networks are absent, or how migrant networks dissolve (de Haas, 2010). Epstein (2008) distinguishes between network and herd effects. Herd behaviour means discounting or disregarding private information to follow the behaviour of others. This is rational given the assumption that others base their decisions on better information (Epstein, 2002). Herd behaviour results in migrants following the flow rather than the stock (i.e. established network) of previous migrants. While herd effects cannot account for new, pioneering migration, they can explain migrant clustering in destinations when network effects are still likely to be small.

As emigration may continue over time, a “[culture of migration](#)” might emerge that changes a society’s values and perceptions associated with migration (Massey et al., 1993). The culture of migration manifests at the individual level—people who have migrated in the past are more likely to migrate in the future—and the

community level when migration becomes a normative behaviour—a “rite of passage”—in the community (Kandel & Massey, 2002). When information about migration options diffuses widely in the community, it can perpetuate migration. In a culture of migration, this information can also spread to people without direct access to migrant networks. The culture of migration, in contrast to network theory, can hence explain why people may migrate even in the absence of networks (Ali, 2007).

While the theories discussed so far have mostly focused on individuals or households as the decision-making unit, more structural theories conceptualise migration as an intrinsic part of historical processes and societal developments. Zelinsky (1971) argues that demographic transitions and modernisation processes explain the development and changing patterns of human mobility in Europe over the last 200 years. Historical-structural models, based upon neo-Marxist interpretations of capitalism, stress the importance of structures and forces operating at the macro-structural level. Migration is driven by the global demand and supply of cheap and flexible workers in segmented labour markets to sustain continued economic growth and development in capitalist labour-recruiting countries (Piore, 1979; Sassen, 1991). In the same way, world systems theory holds that capitalist systems destroy traditional economic structures and livelihoods, and thereby shape domestic and international migration patterns (Wallerstein, 1974). The world capitalist system, disguised in colonialism, has hereby triggered an ‘age of migration’ in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Contemporarily, in the postcolonial era, world systems theory claims that postcolonial systems resemble those during colonialism due to neoliberalism and corporate capitalism, including transnational ties (international trade, foreign investment etc.) between former colonial powers and colonies, but also a shared history and culture, language, administrative links, and migration governance (Fawcett, 1989). Historical-structural models have mainly been criticised for denying migrants’ agency and regarding them “as little more than passive pawns in the play of great powers and world processes presided over by the logic of capital accumulation” (Arango, 2004, p. 27). Migration flows further do not always correspond to capital flows, as demonstrated by increasing South-South migration. These models also disregard the role of states, which political economy models of migration sought to rectify. Proponents of political economy models hold that political systems and geopolitical shifts in global economic, political, and military power drive migration processes (Castles, 2010; Czaika & de Haas, 2014).

### ***3.1.2 Migration Drivers: Dimensions and Functions***

Migration theories establish multiple reasons of why, when, where, and how people migrate. They attribute different forms and levels of agency to individual migrants. While some theories point to specific factors that drive migration, others remain vague about the actual factors that drive migration. The circumstances, the ways and

modes, and the extent to which a set of driving factors may influence migration (decision-making) processes are dependent on the functionality of migration drivers, which is a central aspect in understanding the specific role (single or combinations of) migration drivers may play in migration. What almost all migration theories have in common is that migration, as both an individual behavioural option and a broader collective action, is highly context-dependent. Consequently, the interplay of factors and configuration of complex driver environments the effect on migration outcomes is very specific to the time and space in which migration decisions are taken.

Context-specific functionalities of migration drivers can be distinguished along some key functions (cf. Van Hear et al., 2018). *Predisposing* factors reflect fundamental societal structures and structural disparities and define the broadest, most fundamental layer of opportunity structures (cf. de Haas, 2010). As a basic methodological premise, we may assume that people respond to extrinsic or intrinsic predisposing stimuli when deciding about migration (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2020). Predisposing factors do not directly, nor in an ‘unfiltered’ manner, affect people’s decision-making but are mediated by drivers that facilitate, constrain, accelerate, consolidate, or diminish migration (Van Hear et al., 2018). For instance, structures of economic and social inequalities may be mediated by cultural norms (e.g. class-based, social status) or provisions of political and civil rights, which may absorb or neutralise the migration-stimulating effect of inequality structures. Similarly, drivers of immobility constrain migration and stimulate individuals to stay put (Schewel, 2019).

*Proximate* drivers ‘downscale’ and localise predisposing macro-structural factors bringing them closer to the immediate ‘decision context’ of a potential migrant. Macro-structure context and developments are disaggregated and translated into situational *triggering* factors of migration that establish the actual reasons for migrating, including unemployment, job offer, marriage, persecution, flooding, etc. Beyond the degree of immediacy, migration driver functions can further be characterised by their temporality, selectivity, and geography. Temporality refers to the permanent or transitory character of a driver. For instance, demographic transitions or adaptations of cultural norms are usually slow-changing and therefore relatively inelastic (‘resilient’) structural drivers while natural disasters, or a coup d’état, are phenomena resulting in rapidly changing driver environments (‘shocks’). Selectivity refers to the fact that broader social, economic, or political transformations do not normally homogeneously affect all societal groups in the same way and to the same extent. Business cycles, for instance, can affect societal groups in very different ways and to an extent that depends on the age, gender, ethnicity, social status, or profession of the potential migrant. Finally, the geography refers to the locus and scope of a migration driver. The geographical scope of a macro-structural driver can be anything between local and global, while the locus of a migration driver refers to the geographical location of a migration journey where a driver may be operating (origin, transit or destination).

## 3.2 Migration Drivers: Interactions and Configurations

Migration is a decision taken in the context of personal needs, livelihood challenges and opportunities, stress, urgency and uncertainty, based on incomplete information about migration prospects and possible outcomes of alternative behavioural options. Thus, migration decisions are both situational and contextual, that is the configuration of *complex driver environments* is very specific to the time and place in which migration aspirations are formed and decisions taken. It is usually not a single driver but more often a complex combination of economic, political, social, and other developments and events that may dynamically influence both migration opportunities as well as the willingness *and* ability to migrate. The intertemporal accumulation of triggering factors leads to certain ‘tipping point’ situations, at which larger population movements are suddenly set in motion. For instance, many Syrians stayed in their hometowns years into the civil war and only fled to neighbouring countries once their economic basis of subsistence eroded and was further degrading through environmental stress to an extent where staying was no longer a viable option (Bijak & Czaika, 2020). Migration drivers may trigger, enable, mediate, or predispose an individual, a group of people, or a population to move. Migration drivers usually ‘cluster to operate as more than the sum of the single drivers that constitute them’ (Van Hear et al., 2018, p. 934). That is, migration drivers do not work in isolation but in combination with other migration drivers establishing migration driver configurations.

As we will see in the empirical part of this chapter, most studies analysing migration drivers only focus on very specific drivers of migration. Few studies explore complex configurations of drivers, including their often non-linear, interacting, and combined effects on migration processes. Interaction effects in particular are regularly neglected. They occur when the effect of one driver depends on the presence and intensity of one or more other factors. Interaction effects reflect the importance of third factors that may influence causal relationships between a driver of migration and migration outcomes.

## 3.3 Migration Drivers: Some Empirical Evidence

### 3.3.1 *A Typology and Meta-review*

Following the conceptualisation of migration drivers in the previous section, we now provide an overview of the existing evidence on the migration driver dimensions and factors and discuss the empirical state of knowledge. We synthesise evidence about migration processes more profoundly and hereby elaborate on key insights and

**Table 3.1** Migration driver taxonomy: driver dimensions and driving factors

Driver dimensions	Driving factors (with link to migration research hub index)
<i>Demographic</i>	<a href="#"><i>Population Dynamics</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Family Size &amp; Structure</i></a>
<i>Economic</i>	<a href="#"><i>Economic &amp; Business Conditions</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Labour Markets &amp; Employment</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Urban / Rural Development &amp; Living Standards</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Poverty &amp; Inequality</i></a>
<i>Environmental</i>	<a href="#"><i>Climate Change &amp; Environmental Conditions</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Natural Disasters &amp; Environmental Shocks</i></a>
<i>Human development</i>	<a href="#"><i>Education Services &amp; Training Opportunities</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Health Services &amp; Situation</i></a>
<i>Individual</i>	<a href="#"><i>Personal Resources &amp; Migration Experience</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Migrant Aspirations &amp; Attitudes</i></a>
<i>Politico-institutional</i>	<a href="#"><i>Public Infrastructure, Services &amp; Provisions</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Migration Governance &amp; Infrastructure</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Migration Policy &amp; Other Public Policies</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Civil &amp; Political Rights</i></a>
<i>Security</i>	<a href="#"><i>Conflict, War, &amp; Violence</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Political Situation, Repression &amp; Regime Transitions</i></a>
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	<a href="#"><i>Migrant Communities &amp; Networks</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Cultural Norms &amp; Ties</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Gender Relations</i></a>
<i>Supranational</i>	<a href="#"><i>Globalisation &amp; (Post)Colonialism</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>Transnational Ties</i></a>
	<a href="#"><i>International Relations &amp; Geopolitical Transformations</i></a>

findings from the scientific literature across multiple domains of migration drivers.<sup>1</sup> To evaluate the driving factors of why people migrate, we consulted a vast amount of the empirical academic literature on migration drivers. The total number of studies of migration drivers has increased more than eightfold since 2010 with an average annual growth rate of over 12%.<sup>2</sup> In an attempt to structure this knowledge accumulation on the drivers of migration, we have developed a taxonomy consisting of nine driver dimensions and 24 driving factors that may all play a direct (independent) or indirect (conjoined) role in enabling or constraining migration processes at different analytical levels (Table 3.1). The dimensionality of migration drivers refers

<sup>1</sup>At this point, we acknowledge that the vast majority of the world's population never migrates, at least not internationally. While this may be partly due to the absence of one or a combination of the migration drivers reviewed in this study, there may also exist drivers of immobility (Schewel, 2019). However, we only review and synthesise existing knowledge of the circumstances under which people do, or intend to, migrate.

<sup>2</sup>This figure is based on a calculation of the total population of journal articles covering migration drivers in the IMISCOE Migration Research Hub (<http://migrationresearch.com/>) database since 2000.

to the nine societal areas a migration driver belongs to, each comprising a number of driving factors further specifying these broader dimensions. An extensive literature review has revealed that these 24 driving factors are not only priority areas of migration driver research but also play a key role for a more fundamental understanding of the dynamics of migration processes.

We identified driving factors both deductively through our and experts' knowledge of the migration literature, and inductively using a rapid evidence assessment (REA) of almost 300 empirical studies of migration drivers in 2019. The analysis builds on a rapid evidence assessment of this vast amount of scientific literature published until 2019.<sup>3</sup> We have not attempted to systematically assess the quality of the studies analysed but trust that collectively these studies are authoritative for understanding the role, effects, and functions of driving factors in migration processes. Figure 3.1 displays the share and distribution of reviewed empirical and non-empirical studies by driver dimension. On average, we identified 2.5 migration drivers per empirical study, which explains why the total number of drivers exceeds the total number of studies analysed (463). Economic and socio-cultural drivers hereby outnumber the other driver dimensions while environmental drivers have received relatively little attention. While this might reflect a biased selection of the literature, we believe that our extensive literature search is broadly representative of the core body of literature on migration drivers.

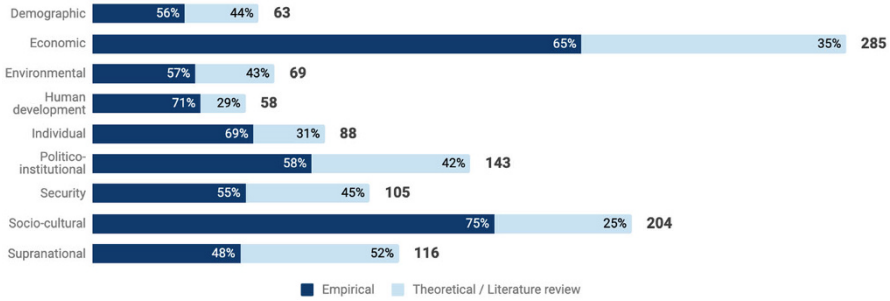
Figure 3.2 displays the distribution of the reviewed empirical studies according to driver dimension, method and level of analysis, locus of the migration driver, and data sources used. Almost half of all studies evaluate economic and socio-cultural

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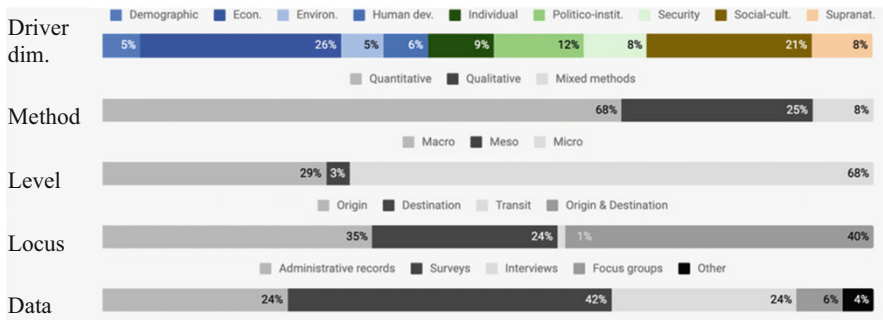
<sup>3</sup>The synthesis of research on migration drivers is based on a widely organized collection and assessment of over 660 research documents that we collated between February and April 2019. The compilation of this comprehensive (though not exhaustive) repository of English-language studies includes articles in peer-reviewed journals, particularly empirical ones, but also books, book chapters, reports, and working papers published and indexed. Other rapid evidence assessments of migration studies include Cummings et al., 2015 (138 documents, focus on irregular migration to Europe) and EASO, 2016 (195 documents, focus on asylum migration).

A key selection criterion was that these studies present empirical evidence or have been influential in the migration studies field and/or come from respected organizations (e.g. King, 2012; EASO, 2016). Of the 660 studies that we identified using various search engines (such as Google Scholar and Scopus), authors' literature databases, documents' cross-references, and through an expert workshop in June 2019, about 200 documents have been excluded, as they were not relevant or inaccessible. As a consequence, we reviewed a sample of 463 studies, of which 293 were empirical ones using primary and/or secondary data (72 studies employing qualitative methods, 198 studies using quantitative methods, and 23 mixed methods studies). The remaining studies were either theoretical (64), experimental (3), or qualitative but non-empirical (125). The total number exceeds 463, as studies can be both theoretical and qualitative or quantitative. For each study we coded the type and year of publication, driver dimensions (9 codes), driving factors (24 codes), methodology, type of data source, migration form addressed, locus of study, level of analysis, observation period, and geographical coverage of study. We further extracted the main findings of each study to synthesize the state of evidence-based knowledge on migration drivers. Obviously, studies are of different quality in terms of the justification and application of the methodological approaches, but also with regard to their external and internal validity and reliability.





**Fig. 3.1** Number and distribution of empirical and non-empirical studies, by migration driver dimension (n = 463)

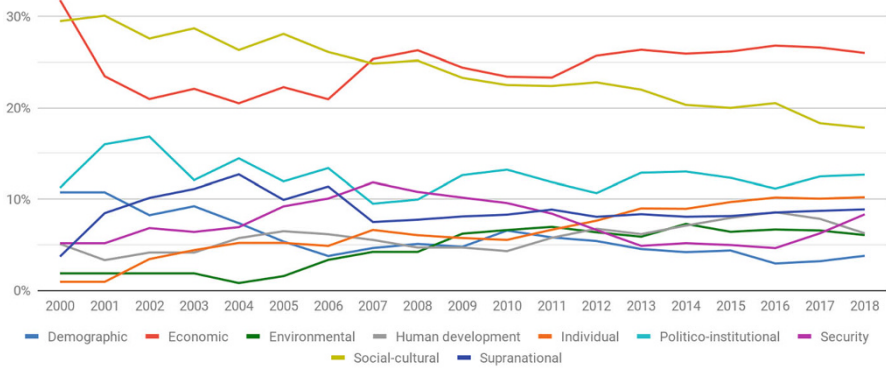


**Fig. 3.2** Overview of empirical studies (n = 296)

drivers. Two thirds use quantitative methods and only 8% mixed methods. Micro-level studies dominate in our review, accounting for two thirds of all studies while meso-level studies merely representing a small minority of 3%. The level corresponds to the study, which is not necessarily the same level the driver operates. There is an almost equal proportion of studies evaluating migration drivers that operate at the origin, destination, or at origin *and* destination. Merely 1% focuses on drivers in transit contexts. Almost half of all studies use surveys with administrative records and interviews accounting for almost a quarter each. Other methods (e.g. experimental, participant observation) account for 4%.

Figure 3.3 shows that the distribution of migration driver studies across the nine driver dimensions has remained relatively stable over time with economic drivers accounting for around a quarter of all migration drivers. The relative importance of socio-cultural and demographic drivers has decreased while that of individual and environmental drivers has increased.

As an indication of the relevance of complex migration driver configurations, Table 3.2 shows the existing coverage of empirical studies in the migration driver literature that address more than one specific driver. Note that the percentages in rows and columns do not add up to 100, as on average one study elaborates on 2.5



**Fig. 3.3** Distribution of migration drivers in empirical studies, 2000–2018, 5-year rolling averages (n = 271)

**Table 3.2** Analytical coverage of migration driver dimensions in (n = 296 studies).

	Demog.	Econ.	Envir.	Human dev.	Indiv.	Pol. Instit.	Sec.	Soc.-cult.	Supra-nat.	single driver
Demographic		69%	0%	14%	23%	17%	9%	66%	17%	9%
Economic	13%		13%	18%	17%	31%	23%	54%	21%	10%
Environmental	0%	62%		13%	8%	5%	23%	28%	10%	31%
Human dev.	12%	80%	12%		17%	37%	34%	51%	20%	5%
Individual	13%	51%	5%	11%		11%	11%	48%	3%	25%
Politico-institut.	7%	70%	2%	18%	8%		36%	48%	27%	10%
Security	5%	74%	16%	24%	12%	52%		50%	29%	7%
Socio-cultural	15%	65%	7%	14%	19%	26%	19%		19%	11%
Supranational	11%	70%	7%	14%	4%	39%	30%	52%		11%

driver dimensions. For instance, the first row indicates that 69% of all empirical studies of demographic drivers also evaluate economic drivers. Demographic studies are almost equally likely to be examined conjointly with socio-cultural drivers (66%) but a lot less likely with security (9%) and have never been examined conjointly with environmental drivers in our sample. The column on the far right indicates that 9% of all studies that examine demographic drivers do so without reference to any of the other eight driver dimensions.

Table 3.2 demonstrates that the dominance of economic drivers stems not from the fact that many studies only examine economic drivers but that they are analysed conjointly with many other migration drivers, for instance in 51% of the studies with individual-level drivers or in 80% of the studies with factors representing human

development (column ‘Econ.’). Economic drivers are predominantly studied conjointly with socio-cultural drivers, reflecting a considerable number of quantitative studies that examine the importance of economic push and pull factors in combination with, for instance, migrant networks. Environmental factors are often investigated in conjunction with economic drivers, reflecting the link between economic opportunities and climate change and natural disasters. However, almost a third of all studies focusing on environmental drivers examine these in isolation. Human development drivers are overwhelmingly examined conjointly with economic drivers, reflecting the interplay between employment, education, and training. Individual drivers are often studied together with socio-cultural drivers, as personal migration experience is often linked to migrant networks and cultural ties. The miniscule overlap with supranational drivers (3%) highlights the fact that studies generally evaluate micro- and macro- levels separately but very rarely together. A quarter of studies have evaluated individual aspirations, attitudes, and resources without recourse to other driver dimensions. Politico-institutional drivers are rarely studied in combination with environmental drivers but rather with security-related drivers.

The following sections explore these driver dimensions in detail. We emphasise driver dimensions where certain drivers have been studied disproportionately for certain migration forms or geographical regions. We group migration-driving factors into individual-specific, group-specific, and macro-structural drivers. We hereby provide a succinct and comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge of all relevant migration drivers. However, due to their relevance in both academia and [public discourse](#), we put some more elaboration on four driver dimensions, namely economic, political (public and migration policies), security-related, and environmental factors.

### ***3.3.2 Individual-Specific Drivers: Aspirations and Capability***

Material and non-material [personal and household resources](#), or lack thereof, can facilitate or constrain migration. Such resources include financial assets and property (Kley, 2011; Zijlstra & van Liempt, 2017) but also information and access to information and communication technologies (Dekker et al., 2016; Farré & Fasani, 2013; Muto, 2012). These resources not only affect whether individuals migrate and which channel they choose but also are particularly important during the migration journey. The lack of financial resources constrains the poorest who might not be able to afford relocation costs (De Jong et al., 2005), paying for visas, or if necessary, to hire smuggling services (Düvell, 2018). At the same time, wealth can also be associated with smaller emigration rates from more developed countries compared to less developed middle-income countries (Clemens, 2014, Dustmann & Okatenko, 2014). Thus, the nexus between economic resources and migration propensity follows a non-linear, often inverse U-shaped relationship. For instance, small but growing landholdings increase migration inclinations but only until they are large enough to sustain a regular income from farming (Oda, 2007).

Aside economic resources, non-tangible resources such as [migration experience](#) of either oneself or other family members are an important (psychological) factor, which has widely been found to be formative in developing migration aspirations and in the decision-making process itself (Richter & Taylor, 2008; Tsegai, 2007). Aspirations such as the immanent “desire for a better life” (Özden et al., 2018) and for the fulfilment of individual or collective needs (Cai et al., 2014) are an important personal resource and important prerequisite for considering and realising a migration project. To better life circumstances, people require a “capacity to aspire” (Appadurai, 2004), which refers to the capacity to imagine a better life better and it is nurtured by a person’s economic, social, emotional, and cognitive resources (Sell & De Jong, 1978). However, aspirations are not static but individuals who migrate to fulfil their (life) aspirations might actually see their aspirations increase rather than decrease after migration, as they become exposed to new opportunities and lifestyles (Czaika & Vothknecht, 2014). However, migration can also decrease aspirations, as migrants are unable to realise their aspired lives at the new destination (Boccagni 2017).

[Attitudes](#), views, and perceptions about one’s own country and the desire to live in another country influence whether and where individuals migrate (Schapendonk, 2012). Some specific individual characteristics and personality traits may reason this inner drive for migration (Canache et al., 2013; Frieze et al., 2006; Jokela, 2009). Open mindedness, longing for personal experience, and an adventurous personality are consistently found to drive migration intentions and behaviour. Emotions and feelings, often in conjunction with more tangible drivers, also affect migration (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). Overall, however, non-tangible attitudes and perceptions seem to be rather subordinate to more tangible socio-economic resources or demographic factors, including a person’s age or marital status.

### 3.3.3 *Group-Specific and Internal Migration Drivers*

As already indicated in the theoretical part, and in accordance with the new economics of labour migration (Stark & Levhari, 1982), several studies find evidence for the effect of [household size and family structure](#) on migration patterns as well as the influential role the family can play in migration decision-making (Meyer, 2018). Household size is found to affect (internal) migration of family members to other rural or urban locations, aiming to work in different economic sectors than other family members to diversify risk and smooth household income (Gubhaju & De Jong, 2009; VanWey, 2003). International migration is often driven by similar goals (Constant & Massey, 2002), but often with a gender-specific effect on the migration propensity. The presence of children or elderly dependents generally increases male migration but decreases female migration, highlighting the gendered division of the work-care nexus (De Jong, 2000). In contrast, the presence of elderly non-dependent family members increases female migration, as they are enabled to participate in the labour market (Danzer & Dietz, 2014). Life course events, such as retirement and

one's children leaving the house spur migration, as spouses are not constrained by employment or educational responsibilities (Stockdale, 2014). In contrast, being in marriage and in a dual breadwinning household decreases the likelihood of migration (Etling et al., 2018).

**Gender** affects migration at the macro-level (differential labour demand, e.g. domestic work vs. construction), meso-level (work-care nexus), and micro-level (family roles) (Lutz, 2010). Gender roles and norms, such as caregiving and breadwinning, affect men and women's propensities to migrate (Danzer & Dietz, 2014) as well as the types of migration networks and channels that are available and migrants' use thereof (Heering et al., 2004; Hoang, 2011). People may both migrate to conform to gendered cultural norms (Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012; Kandel & Massey, 2002), but also to escape these norms (Rutten & Verstappen, 2014). Gender-based discrimination might hence be both an incentive and obstacle to migrate (Ruysen & Salomone, 2018). In this context, marriage is an important factor in explaining migration patterns. While it has mostly been confined to women to look for or join their spouses (Czaika, 2012), in some contexts it is increasingly also men who migrate to urban areas or abroad to look for wives due to distorted sex ratios. Marriage is often used to circumvent other barriers to migration, such as poverty (Rao & Finnoff, 2015) or migration policies, and of the only opportunity to realise international migration (Böcker, 1994). At the same time, in families that are more egalitarian it is also the employment opportunities status of wives that drives migration decisions (Cooke, 2008).

Moreover, **migrant networks and transnational communities** have long been recognised as important drivers of migration, as they facilitate and sustain migration by providing information and hands-on assistance (Boyd, 1989). Migrant networks are often measured as the number (or, stock) of previous migrants from the same family, town, region, or country at the destination. The importance of networks and social ties has repeatedly been empirically confirmed for explaining alternative migration forms and patterns (Bertoli & Ruysen, 2018; Düvell, 2018; Haug, 2008; Havinga & Böcker, 1999). However, people also migrate in the absence of networks, highlighting the importance of other migration drivers (Gilbert & Koser, 2006; Sue et al., 2018). The importance of networks increases with restrictive migration policies, as settled migrants may act as gatekeepers and bridgeheads (Carling, 2004). However, networks may be irrelevant if migration is deemed too difficult (Collyer, 2005). As already mentioned, networks do not necessarily increase migration, as new migrants may compete for jobs and other resources with already established migrants (Heitmueller, 2006). The relation between migration flows and stocks might hence follow an inverse U-shape (Bauer et al., 2009). Flows of migrants also affect subsequent migration, as potential migrants get inspired to follow prior migrant though a 'herd effect' (Epstein & Gang, 2006). Networks also affect the gender and skill composition of migration flows (Hoang, 2011; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2010).

With growing numbers of migrants worldwide, **migrant networks** also grow in prevalence. Migration often becomes self-perpetuating and a cultural norm (Alpes, 2012; Castle & Diarra, 2003), in particular when migration becomes ingrained in the

local culture and a rite of passage (Massey et al., 1993). Emigrants are social role models and individuals migrate due to the inability to fill a social role (Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012). Because of social norms and pressure, people may migrate even if they would have greater economic opportunities at the place origin (Ali, 2007). However, those who stay put are often seen as lazy, losers, failed, undesirable as potential mates, and experience feelings of shame and embarrassment (Heering et al., 2004; Kandel & Massey, 2002). Men are disproportionately affected by this cultural shame, as migration is often linked to masculinity (Marouf & Kouki, 2017).

### 3.3.4 *Macro-structural and External Migration Drivers*

**The Economy** Historically, economic hardship and downturns in rural and semi-urban areas have led to internal migration to urban areas but has also resulted in international migration, for instance from Europe to the North America in the nineteenth century (Massey, 1988). Deteriorating economic conditions tend to push people to migrate (Kunuroglu et al., 2018). Short to medium-term changes and fluctuations in macroeconomic conditions, particularly growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and a country's business cycle, are robust drivers of migration (Beine et al., 2019; Docquier et al., 2014). By trend, GDP growth in sending countries decreases migration while GDP growth in receiving countries increases migration. For instance, the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath caused considerable but diverse macroeconomic changes and fluctuations in European Union countries. Its impact on migration varied with both a potential migrant's main reason for migration and employment status (Beets, 2009). For instance, students preferred to study in countries less affected by the crisis and the wish to emigrate was stronger in countries that suffered more (Van Mol & Timmerman, 2014). However, the effect of negative economic shocks on migration is not necessarily the inverse of positive shocks. Their magnitudes might differ considerably, in line with a "migration prospect theory" by which potential migrants value losses more than equal-sized gains and respond accordingly in their migration propensity (Czaika, 2015).

Neoclassical migration theory suggests that individuals migrate due to economic opportunities at the destination and/or lack thereof at the origin in order to maximise expected income (or utility). Macro-level quantitative studies consistently find that bilateral migration flows respond to unemployment rates and differentials (Migali et al., 2018; Geis et al., 2013), job opportunities (Baizán & González-Ferrer, 2016), and wages (Beine et al., 2014; Grogger & Hanson, 2011). The magnitudes differ across individuals and countries. For instance, high-skilled migrants respond more strongly to wage differentials than low-skilled ones (Grossa & Schmitt, 2012) and higher origin wages decrease emigration from developed countries but not from developing countries (Ruyssen et al., 2014). Micro-level studies add that individual unemployment, employment satisfaction, and anticipated career opportunities drive

migration (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008). However, when the effect on income dominates the spatial substitution effect, unemployment may also decrease emigration due to poverty constraints (DeWaard et al., 2012). A number of qualitative studies confirm the explanatory power of the economic factors in migration processes a variety of contexts (Afifi, 2011; Bal, 2014). While employment opportunities are per se primary drivers for economic migrants, they have also been found to affect migration decisions of other migrant groups including asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants (Dimitriadi, 2017; Van Hear et al., 2018). For these groups, however, economic factors are often of secondary importance compared to other factors.

The migration-development nexus has been widely studied with a majority of studies concluding that development will not stop migration, at least not in the short term (Castles, 2009; de Haas, 2007). In fact, development - generally proxied by GDP per capita—might initially increase internal migration from rural to urban areas or across international borders, as immobile potential migrants overcome poverty constraints (Czaika & de Haas, 2012; Clemens, 2014). According to this so-called migration hump –an inverse U-shaped relation between migration and development—rising income levels lead an increase in emigration from developing countries, that is in particular from Asia and Africa, while the opposite is true from more developed countries (Czaika & de Haas, 2014; Hatton & Williamson, 2005; Sanderson & Kentor, 2009; Migali et al., 2018). Wage differentials and higher income levels at destination attract migrants (Ortega & Peri, 2013; Palmer & Pytlíková, 2015). This effect seems to be particularly strong for migrants from developing countries (Ruysen et al., 2014), but the same logic applies to internal migration (Guriev & Vakulenko, 2015). Discrepancies in living costs and conditions, housing standards, as well as broader in the quality of life and lifestyles drive migration in a variety of forms, including both internal and international migrants, regular and irregular migration, of low-skilled as well as highly skilled migrants (Baizán & González-Ferrer, 2016; de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; Péridy, 2006).

While there is rather mixed evidence on the exact relation between migration and poverty (Black et al., 2006; Skeldon, 2002), consensus emerged regarding the fact that it is generally not the poorest who migrate. Similar to the migration-development nexus, poverty and migration might follow an inverse U-shape (Du et al., 2005). Material and non-material relocation costs are the reason why the poor are constrained to migrate, even in times of severe crisis (Danzer & Dietz, 2014). However, not just absolute deprivation and poverty shape migration patterns, but also relative deprivation and the feeling of being deprived in comparison to an internal or international peer or reference group (Czaika, 2013; Stark & Taylor, 1989). The relation between internal relative deprivation, or within-country inequality, and migration is ambiguous with studies suggesting that it is positive (Stark et al., 2009), negative (Czaika & de Haas, 2012), or, mirroring the migration-development nexus, following an inverse U-shape (Péridy, 2006). Relative inequality between sending and receiving countries has been found to affect the self-selection of migrants according to Borjas' (1989) theoretical propositions (Mayda, 2010). Higher inequality in receiving countries may hereby attract

migrants, as it signals social mobility (Czaika & de Haas, 2012) but might deter those who favour social justice and are averse to the risk of income losses. While neoclassical theory predicts that people migrate to places where returns to skills and education is highest, empirical evidence often finds that people migrate to places and countries with lower expected returns, suggesting that other drivers are also at play (Belot & Hatton, 2012; Brücker & Defoort, 2009).

**Public Policies** The claim that the welfare state affects the scale and composition of migration flows (Borjas, 1999) has been at the heart of many political and academic debates. The ‘welfare magnet effect’ assumes to attract low-skilled migrants—due to generous social benefits of a well-established welfare state—but to deter high-skilled migrants—due to high income and wealth taxation for funding public spending. There is some evidence for such a selection and attraction effect (Belot & Hatton, 2012; De Jong et al., 2005; Fafchamps & Shilpi, 2013). However, while higher welfare spending at both origin and destination increases migration from developing to developed countries, as they relax financial constraints and provide a safety net, they rather decrease migration between affluent countries due to high tax rates (Palmer & Pytliková, 2015; Ruysen et al., 2014; Yoo & Koo, 2014). Other studies rather question the centrality of the welfare state and highlight the importance of other economic and socio-cultural drivers (Giulietti, 2014; Nannestad, 2007). Labour market protection and social insurance systems may for instance rather deter immigration as they create insiders and outsiders (Geis et al., 2013). Overall, the effects of welfare systems differ across countries as it depends much on the type and structure of those systems.

The effect of public infrastructure on migration is also rather ambiguous. A well-developed and functioning public infrastructure might increase migration (and mobility) by decreasing the cost of transportation but may also decrease migration propensities by providing more and better economic opportunities (Gachassin, 2013). Contentment with local public services has been found to explain variations in migration intentions in developing countries (Dustmann & Okatenko, 2014).

The educational infrastructure, in particular the quality of higher education, is a primary but not the only driver of **student mobility**. Students migrate internally or internationally due to the quality and reputation of universities but also due to available scholarship and costs of living (Beine et al., 2014; Findlay et al., 2011). Cities and regions with good universities attract students and retain graduates, potentially due to available jobs and employer-university interactions (Ciriaci, 2014). Educational opportunities for oneself or one’s children in receiving countries, and lack thereof in sending countries, drive international migration of students (Timmerman et al., 2016), unaccompanied migrant minors (Vervliet et al., 2015), and asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants (Day & White, 2001; McAuliffe, 2017). However, study opportunities are often secondary to other factors, including security or labour market considerations, or prospects for residency and citizenship (Dimitriadi, 2017). Professional training and professional education to advance one’s career are the main driving factors for high-skilled migrants, such as health professionals (Awases et al., 2004), academics (Czaika & Toma, 2017) and



consistently rank among the top reasons mentioned for emigration (Bartolini et al., 2017).

We have not identified a study that mentions the [healthcare system](#) as the sole or main driver of migration. However, there is ample evidence that the situation of the healthcare system acts as a push factor for healthcare professionals from developing countries plagued by HIV/AIDS (Aiken et al., 2004). Health risks, such as malaria and dengue, drive emigration from developing countries (Marchiori et al., 2012). Health considerations, often associated with a better climate and the availability of quality healthcare, are central to retirement migration for residents of developed countries, such as North-South migration in Europe or retirement in Mexico for US Americans (Rodriguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007). Well-developed healthcare systems can act as attracting factors for different forms of migration (Narayan & Smyth, 2006).

***Migration Policies and Human Rights*** Migration scholars often argue that social transformations, [globalisation](#), and transnationalism, as well as [political regime transitions](#) drive migration processes and are therefore rather sceptical about the ability of more specific migration policies to affect the volume and composition of migration flows (Castles, 2004a, 2004b). Empirical studies find rather mixed evidence in favour or against this proposition, partly due to difficulties measuring migration policies (Migali et al., 2018; De Haas & Czaika, 2013). Restrictive migration policy is generally associated with fewer asylum applications (Hatton & Moloney, 2017; Thielemann, 2006) and less international migrants (Fitzgerald et al., 2014). Migration policies may also deflect some migrants to alternative destinations (Barthel & Neumayer, 2015; Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019) or merely change their migration route while they are not important for other migrants (Gilbert & Koser, 2006). Migration restrictions seem to reduce emigration and circular migration and promote permanent settlement of migrants, which may even result in the unintended consequence of even higher net migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2017). The deterrence effect of migration policies varies with specific policy instruments: visa restrictions, for instance, may simultaneously deter regular entries while increasing attempts for irregular entry (Czaika & Hobolth, 2016).

Besides policies that aim to deter unwanted immigration, many countries have implemented policies that target certain types of migrants including skilled workers or students (Czaika & Parsons, 2017). Despite the continuous proliferation of such skill-selective migration policies, the degree to which such policies are effective remains contested (Bhagwati & Hanson, 2009). Czaika and Parsons (2017) find that supply-driven systems (points-based systems) increase both the absolute numbers of high-skill migrants and the skill composition of international labour flows. Conversely, demand-driven systems—usually based on the principle of job contingency—are shown to have a rather small, even negative effect. Doornik et al. (2009) suggest that the potential of attracting high-skilled migrants largely depends on broader socio-economic and professional factors rather than immigration policies per se. More generally, a generous and welcoming treatment of migrants and lenient migration policies attracts migrants (McAuliffe & Jayasuriya, 2016). Other

migration-facilitating policies such as free movement areas (Beine et al., 2019), or prospects for (dual) citizenship (Fitzgerald et al., 2014) affect migration propensities positively, even though such policies may disproportionately affect low-skilled migrants (Grossa & Schmitt, 2012). In addition, emigration policies may affect migration propensity, but seem equally secondary to more fundamental economic and socio-cultural drivers (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011).

Entitlements for **civil and political rights** or lack thereof, in origin, transit, and destination countries play a significant role in migration and destination choices. Concerns with their legal status drive asylum seekers and refugees from host and transit countries in expectation of (easier) access to refugee status or citizenship (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019; Düvell, 2018). Discrimination and a lack of civil and political rights in origin countries increases the number of individuals who seek asylum in developed countries (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Hatton & Moloney, 2017). Migrants' rights in receiving countries also encourage labour migration (Ruhs, 2013) while gender-based discrimination, as we have discussed before, can both constrain and encourage migration (Ruyssen & Salomone, 2018). Racism, anti-immigrant attitudes, discrimination and other integration obstacles in potential destination countries deter migrants, and in particular, highly skilled migrants who are often privileged by having alternative migration opportunities (Duch et al., 2019; Gorinas & Pytliková, 2017).

The so-called '**migration industry**'—agents that mediate migration processes—is closely connected to but separate from migration policies and migrant networks. Such agents facilitate migration and **smugglers** frequently decide both route and destination (Crawley, 2010; Hugo et al., 2017; Koser, 1997). While there is little empirical evidence on the effect of smugglers on migration (Sanchez, 2017), states have increasingly tried to deter the use of smugglers to curb irregular migration (Watkins, 2017). Recruitment agencies are other actors that facilitate migration. Historically, they attracted guest workers post-WWII and nowadays they focus on both high-skilled individuals, such as nurses, and low-skilled ones, such as domestic workers and seasonal agricultural workers, mostly from developing countries or poorer countries within the European Union (Massey, 1988; Labonté et al., 2015). Multinational and transnational corporations have been recognised as other actors that drive migration, particularly of high-skilled labour migrants (Beaverstock, 1994).

**Conflict and Security** Civil, ethnic, and religious conflict, war, torture, and human rights violations are drivers of migration, particularly of asylum seekers, refugees, irregular migrants, unaccompanied migrant minors, and internal displacement. Safety and security concerns might initially decrease migration, as it is unsafe to prepare for exit and individuals often hope for an improving security situation. However, migration might increase once insecurity or crime levels exceed a certain threshold (Bohra-Mishra & Massey, 2011). Individuals migrate both due to personal experience of threat and violence but also as a consequence of broader feeling of insecurity (Lundquist & Massey, 2005) and there is ample evidence for the link between insecurity in sending countries and large-scale emigration (Castles et al.,

2003; Davenport et al., 2003; Migali et al., 2018; Moore & Shellman, 2007). However, war and conflict also drive migration indirectly through its effect on infrastructure, economic opportunities, and ultimately livelihoods (Khavarian-Garmsir et al., 2019). While conflict might trigger migration, environmental or political drivers might cause conflict itself (Moore & Shellman, 2004; Naudé, 2010). Most studies in this area have focused on sending countries in Africa and the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, with a substantial number also examining European destinations.

Political factors in sending and receiving countries that drive migration include repression, persecution, political terror, and political freedom (Hatton & Moloney, 2017; Narayan & Smyth, 2006), military conscription (Mallett et al., 2017), political instability (Naudé, 2010), democracy differentials and satisfaction with democracy (Moore & Shellman, 2004), corruption (Lapshyna, 2014), and regime transitions, political protests, and dissidents (Davenport et al., 2003). Individuals migrate because they are directly affected (e.g. through conscription), fear that they might be affected in the future, or due to the insecurity created by the general political situation. Factors more closely linked with conflict and with implications for physical security, such as political terror, and forced military conscription seem to better explain migration intentions and behaviour than lack of democratic rights. The latter have been linked to non-conflict induced migration and might be particularly relevant for the young and high-skilled migrants who face fewer barriers to emigration (Etling et al., 2018). Political factors in receiving countries that have been looked at are right-wing populism and electoral outcomes, which result in fewer asylum applications (Neumayer, 2004) and smaller bilateral migration flows (Fitzgerald et al., 2014).

***Environmental Change*** Climate change and environmental degradation as a fundamental predisposing driver of internal and international migration has been studied extensively at the macro- and micro-levels by qualitative and quantitative research, although almost exclusively for countries in the global South (Migali et al., 2018). The majority of quantitative studies find that slow-onset changes in temperatures and precipitation are associated with emigration, particularly from more agricultural countries and rural areas (Berlemann & Steinhardt, 2017; Neumann & Hermans, 2017). However, if climatic factors are evaluated alongside economic factors, the latter affect migration in a stronger and more direct way (Joseph & Wodon, 2013). Those most adversely affected by environmental degradation are also those most financially constrained and therefore unable to move (Veronis & McLeman, 2014). That is, migration as an adaptation strategy is not available to this deprived and therefore trapped group (Cattaneo et al., 2019). Some studies conclude that climatic factors do not directly explain migration intentions and behaviour (Beine & Parsons, 2015; Mortreux & Barnett, 2009). Climate change affects migration mostly indirectly through multiple transmission channels including its impact on economic factors, such as incomes, livelihood opportunities, and food security (Black et al., 2014; Khavarian-Garmsir et al., 2019), health-related risks, such as malaria and dengue (Marchiori et al., 2012), or conflict (Abel et al., 2019). While climatic factors

are often analysed merely as detrimental factor potentially uprooting larger populations, but a favourable climate in certain countries or regions is often attracting immigrants, and in particular, retirees (Gottlieb & Joseph, 2006; Sunil et al., 2007; Van der Geest, 2011).

**Natural disasters and environmental shocks**, such as floods, storms, droughts, or earthquakes, but also human-made disasters and accidents, trigger mostly immediate and often large-scale population displacements. Natural disasters lead to an increase in internal, particularly rural-to-urban, and also international emigration (Beine & Parsons, 2015). At the same time, incidence of natural disasters discourages immigration (Ruysen & Rayp, 2014). However, again, these factors may be secondary to more fundamental economic drivers, such as employment prospects in cities (Warner et al., 2010). Some studies do not find a significant effect of disasters on internal migration (Bohra-Mishra et al., 2014) or on the number of asylum seekers (Neumayer, 2005). However, natural disasters might lead to temporary displacement and indirectly affect migration through increasing the likelihood of conflict (Naudé, 2010). Whether disasters really trigger migration depends on a number of factors, such as adaptability and the presence or absence of broader socio-economic opportunities elsewhere. As for climate change, the overwhelming majority of studies examining the effects of natural disasters focus on developing countries.

**International Connections and Relations** Transnational connections between countries and societies are often rooted in a common history and expressed by linguistic, cultural, geographic, and religious ties that transcend national or societal boundaries connecting two or more countries. A common or similar official language increases bilateral migration flows (Kim & Cohen, 2010). Other studies find evidence of English as the main spoken language in migrants' destination choice (Adserà & Pytliková, 2015), while other studies rather discount the importance of language (Ruysen & Rayp, 2014). Geographical distance generally decreases migration flows, as with distance, monetary and non-monetary migration costs increase, while proximity, proxied by a shared border, does rather increase migration (Wang et al., 2016). Distance is also associated with 'positive' skill selection, indicating that high-skilled migrants are able to travel farther than low-skilled migrants, asylum seekers, or refugees, who mostly migrate to neighbouring or near-by countries (Belot & Hatton, 2012; Grogger & Hanson, 2011; Yoo & Koo, 2014; Özden et al., 2018). Cultural factors often have more explanatory power than traditional economic factors when it comes to migration between developed countries (Belot & Ederveen, 2012). However, the effect of culture does change over time as moving towards greater cultural proximity is usually associated with larger migration flows (Lanati & Venturini, 2018).

Major geopolitical shifts have historically affected the direction and magnitude of migration flows (Czaika & de Haas, 2014). Such events include, for instance, the end of World War II, the Cold War, the dissolution of the USSR, the end of communism and the fall of the Berlin wall, or the breakup of Yugoslavia, to name a few. Geopolitical shocks and shifts have been widely acknowledged as central to major

changes in international migration patterns. At the same time, it is argued that international relations drive migration rather indirectly if deteriorating inter-state relations might result in war or the breakup of colonial empires or multi-ethnic states that may end up with larger displacements (Weiner, 1996). International relations may also affect migration through its influence on immigration and emigration policymaking (Massey, 1999). For instance, the lifting of the Iron Curtain removed emigration restrictions, which resulted in increased emigration (Salt & Clarke, 2000). International relations also affect aid, trade, and investment policies, all of which are shown above to drive migration (Berthélemy et al., 2009; Parsons & Winters, 2014). Economic integration and postcolonial ties are linkages between countries that make migration more likely and migration flows are up to three times higher between former colonies (Fitzgerald et al., 2014; Kim & Cohen, 2010; Robinson & Carey, 2000). Emigrants from former colonised to former colonial powers are often less skilled compared to the origin population, potentially reflecting the ease of migration and less stringent migration policies (Grogger & Hanson, 2011). The effects of globalisation on migration manifest themselves via trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), exchange rates, and aid or official development assistance. Against neoclassical propositions, trade and migration are rather complements than substitutes as increasing trade volumes seem to be associated with larger migration (Campaniello, 2014). This is mostly due to the dominance of the income effect and pre-existing cultural linkages between countries. Evidence on the effect of foreign investment on emigration is rather mixed and can have a negative effect, in particular in the secondary sector (e.g. manufacturing), whereas FDI in the primary sector (e.g. mining, farming) is rather accelerating emigration (Sanderson & Kentor, 2009). Aid, through its effects on incomes and transnational ties, increases found to increase rather than to deter emigration (Berthélemy et al., 2009). However, aid targeted at rural development, the health sector or educational services might actually decrease emigration, as improvements in public services may outweigh the migration-inducing income effect (Gamso & Yuldashev, 2018; Lanati & Thiele, 2018a, 2018b).

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has set out to give an overview of the conceptual understanding of migration drivers as well as the state of knowledge in the empirical assessment of migration drivers based on a comprehensive evidence assessment of the drivers of migration. We propose a migration typology based on 9 driver dimensions and 24 driving factors of migration and emphasise the fundamental importance of studying migration driver environments as complex configurations of drivers. Scholarship on complex driver configurations is still in its infancy as most studies—although, as we have seen, they assess on average 2.5 drivers per study—hardly consider complex interaction, nor cascading and feedback effects between multiple drivers. Thematically, besides rising research output on environmental drivers,

research exploring individual-level factors such as migration aspirations, experience, and decision-making have gained increasing prominence in the literature. However, economic and social-cultural drivers are still the dominant focus in a large part of the literature. Some more specific areas are still relatively understudied, such as the role of family ties in migration, or constraining and facilitating effects of various technologies. The meta-analysis has revealed current research trends and several research gaps in the migration drivers literature. The focus on drivers at the origin and destinations and the relative neglect of those operating in transit, i.e. on the migration journey, as well as their shifting significance over time and space has recently received more attention but remains an understudied area (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018).

Different migration drivers affect distinct societal groups in different ways. To advance our understanding of the relative importance of different migration drivers in specific contexts, future research on migration drivers should further disaggregate and specify driver analyses along more complex intersections of age, gender, geography, sector of employment, and socio-economic status. The migration driver literature is also relatively silent with regard to the transitory character of drivers during migration. Migration drivers are not static but may change dynamically; while some drivers rapidly change ('shocks'), other drivers may change only gradually over time. However, even when drivers are slow changing, they may still be perceived very differently during a migration journey or a life cycle. In addition, individual perceptions of migration drivers have hardly been explored so far. Future research on 'migration driver complexes' should further refine conceptualisation and empirical validation regarding the changing nature of migration drivers as predisposing, mediating, enabling, and triggering factors that may change dynamically over time and over the course of a migration journey.

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## Chapter 4

# Migration Infrastructures: How Do People Migrate?



Franck Düvell and Carlotta Preiss

Migration research primarily studies who migrates and the processes after their arrival. Less attention is paid to the processes between departure and arrival and the infrastructures used during migratory journeys (see Crawley et al., 2018). This is further reinforced by the fact that most migration is wanted and regular, and that there is little social and political interest in the actual physical dimension of regular migration processes. Comparatively few studies are seeking to answer the question of *how people migrate*. The main exception is the research of unwanted and irregular migration with a focus on migrants and refugees traveling by boat and those actors facilitating unlawful practices, denoted as human smugglers or traffickers. In short, migration infrastructure is probably the least well defined, researched and published theme, whilst it is also heavily biased.

This is all the more surprising if we consider the conditions which individuals face who aspire to migrate. On the one hand, there are the natural features, such as distance, and in particular natural obstacles such as rivers, mountains, deserts, and the sea. On the other hand, there are political obstacles, notably borders and the many bureaucratic requirements and organisations which delineate the modern nation-state.

Neither of these are easily navigated, but require specific resources, as, for instance, a bus or legal advisor, as well as specific expertise like how to navigate a boat or how to apply for a visa. The expertise and many of the resources required to

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migrate are often provided by more-or-less professional service providers, ranging from recruitment and travel agencies, digital platforms and airlines, to human smugglers. Other resources are readily available, and must only be utilised, such as roads, ports and hotels.

Thus, this chapter does not primarily consider why people migrate or who migrates, but rather addresses the questions of: *How do people migrate? Who and what facilitates (encourages, advises, and enables) individuals to realise their migration aspirations? Which material and immaterial resources do they use? What do facilitators do? and how do migrants interact with and experience migration infrastructures?* Hence, broadly speaking, it addresses some specific meso-level factors linking macro-level determinants with micro-level processes.

This chapter seeks to give a broad overview on the academic field of [migration infrastructures](#). Section 4.1 conceptualises ‘migration infrastructures’ as a research subject, analysing its emergence and its relation to other strands of literature. Section 4.2 explores the state of knowledge on migration infrastructures, including research on actors, material, and digital migration infrastructures. Subsequently, Section 4.3 identifies research gaps in the migration infrastructures literature, whilst Sect. 4.4 sums up the key points in a conclusion.

## 4.1 Theorisation and Conceptualisation

Most if not all international travellers and migrants will have obtained some information about migration from one source or another, many will have sought some kind of professional advice on migration, employment or visa applications and will have used digital resources such as websites, many will have used a travel company and some means of transportation of one kind or another, they will have passed roads, paths, rivers or seas, bus stations, train stations, ports or airports or even beaches as well as hotels or safe houses. These intermediary actors, structures, and geographies between the country of departure (country or origin, country of transit or country of current residence) and the country of destination and between the drivers of migration and the individual migrants are the subject of this chapter.

The roots of academic interest in migration infrastructures lie in the *mobility turn* in social sciences identified by Sheller and Urry (2006). They argue that until the early 2000s, social sciences including migration studies have not paid enough attention to the “importance of the systematic movements of people” (ibid.). Hannam et al. (2006, p. 3) emphasise that “mobilities cannot be described without attention to the necessary spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings that configure and enable”.

In the following, Xiang and Lindquist (2014) developed the concept of *migration infrastructures* based on their long-term studies on labour migration in China and Indonesia. They suggest five dimensions of migration infrastructures: the commercial (recruitment intermediaries), the regulatory (state apparatus and procedures for documentation, licensing, training, and other purposes), the technological (communication and transport), the humanitarian (NGOs and international organisations) and the social (migrant networks). A related concept refers to [migration industries](#),

which is broader in that it encompasses all factors facilitating as well as restricting migration (Hernández-León, 2013; Gammeltoft–Hansen & Nyberg Sørensen, 2013; Schapendonk, 2018; Cranston et al., 2018). The key denominator for the actors and activities to be included under this concept is that they act for commercial purposes. Another set of literature conceptualises the enablers of migration as *facilitators*, notably in EU policy documents (e.g. EU Commission, n.d.). However, this concept is politically loaded and only refers to irregular or illegal activities, notably human or migrant smuggling (e.g. Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). Another related concept is Walters' (2015) *viapolitics*, a concept that looks at the political aspects of infrastructures of mobility. He focuses on “the infrastructures, authorities and norms of transportation”, the “vehicles, roads and routes” and thus the “materiality of transportation”. “Vehicles matter”, he insists, because they “mediate the public understanding of migration and border crossing [and] become objects and settings of political action” (ibid.).

Partly in contrast and partly in addition to these approaches, we suggest conceptualising migration infrastructures, first, as only those infrastructures which facilitate migration and thus not those which prevent migration. Here, the concept differs from migration industries. However, we acknowledge that migration infrastructures may also occasionally impede migration (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). Second, we suggest to only consider physical, organised, or institutionalised features as migration infrastructures, but not mere interpersonal processes, as for instance, migration networks. In so far, our definition differs from Lindquist and Xiang's. Thus, we include in the concept (a) *regular and irregular actors and structure*; (b) *state, quasi-state and non-state actors*; (c) *commercial and non-commercial actors and structures*; and (d) *material, architectural, technical and digital infrastructures*. Our approach is inspired by the anthropology of the nexus between spatiality and materiality as well as the interaction of human beings with materiality (Gibson, 1977; Schiffer, 1999). Finally, the concept covers (e) *practices of and experiences with these infrastructures*, including issues such as exploitation or crime.

This implies that migration infrastructures are multidimensional as they *consist of nature and technology, structure and agency, and knowledge*. These are the natural and architectural features utilised for traveling; the material resources and knowledge required to navigate these; and the organised structures (administrations, businesses, NGOs) that hold such resources and provide information or services with regards to migration and the individuals (individual actors) who populate nature, structures, and organisations. This results in a complex and dynamic interplay between all five dimensions. An important delineation is to be made between migration infrastructures and other meso-level structures, notably migration networks. This delineation shall facilitate to collate and analyse all research that can help understand the facilitating actors and structures of migration.

Migration infrastructures emerge due to physical barriers, in response to supply and demand structures as well as in response to state mobility and migration regulations and restrictions. They are thus an important element of the opportunity/constrains structure that shapes peoples' capability to migrate. Insofar, migration infrastructures can contribute to explaining why people migrate and who

migrates and who doesn't. Thereby, the concept links migration drivers to actual migration flows.

## 4.2 State of Knowledge

Research on migration infrastructures is comparably new. So far, the literature is rather inconsistent and the phenomenon not yet adequately conceptualised and explored. Lindquist et al. (2012) suggest that the study of the organisation of migration is a "black box", Hernández-León (2013), too, argues that there is a "gaping theoretical hole" with regards to the study of profit-driven actors in migration infrastructures and Cranston et al. in 2017 maintain that the study of migration infrastructures remains a research gap. This overview on the state of knowledge is divided in three parts (1) actors in migration infrastructures, including private actors, governmental actors, and civil society actors; (2) material migration infrastructures, including the infrastructures in transit migration hubs and means of transportation; and (3) digital migration infrastructures.

### 4.2.1 Actors in Migration Infrastructures

This section is concerned with three types of service providers or actors: commercial actors including the sub-category of irregular actors, governmental actors, and civil society actors.

Notably, *brokers* play a crucial role in migration, as for instance, in low and high skilled labour or marriage migration. Van den Broek et al. (2016) note that "there is either a complete neglect or a very fragmented acknowledgement of how migration intermediaries influence migrants' access to labour markets". McKeown (2012) shows that with the establishment of laws which increasingly demonised migration intermediaries on the one hand, and the celebration in public discourses of self-motivated migrants on the other hand, brokers in labour migration were more and more characterised as those violating migrants' freedom. McKeown acknowledges that the majority of brokers utilises a mix of personal ties, assistance, coercion and exploitation but criticises the lack of attention on working conditions, laws and public attitudes which are equally responsible for migrant suffering. Xiang and Lindquist's (2014) research on low-skilled work migration in China and Indonesia suggests that the impact of migration service providers is mixed. On the one hand, travel became faster and cheaper, on the other hand, intermediaries, because they do this for making a profit add costs making migration more expensive and thus impeding mobility. Hence, migration service providers are simultaneously gate-openers and gate-keepers. In their article from 2014, Xiang and Lindquist problematise the distinction between altruistic social networks and profit-oriented brokers, arguing that in fact, in broker-migrant relationships, profit, trust and

empathy run hand in hand. Untrustworthy actors can in practice often not sustain. In another case though, Nyberg Sørensen (2013) found that in Honduras for professional actors it is not necessary to satisfy customers as long as the wish to migrate remains high.

Some authors look at the mediation of high skilled migration. Cranston (2018) explores the functioning of service providers which support the migration of intra-company transferees, she analyses how the so-called Global Mobility Industry not only fulfils the need of international companies but in turn also produces this need through different strategies. Similarly, McCollum and Findlay (2018) analyse the work of labour migration intermediaries recruiting cheap workforce for the UK. They argue that intermediaries need to satisfy employers and migrants likewise and remain relevant and reliable actors that employers will continuously decide to rely on.

In her article on [lifestyle migration](#), Cranston (2016) examines how service providers prepare British ‘expatriates’ for their lives in Singapore and illustrates how migrants’ experience of cultural differences and encounters abroad is heavily influenced by these services. Koh and Wissink (2018) explore the functioning of intermediary services for the super-rich, such as the acquisition and management of real estate property. The authors argue that the transnational lifestyle of this financial elite is actually dependent on an invisible skilled labour force of intermediaries based around the globe. This research serves as a reminder that migration infrastructures aid rather different purposed depending on the social class of the client.

Another strand of the literature on private actors is concerned with migrant selection processes. Deshingkar et al. (2018) look at the mediation of Bangladeshi construction workers to the Gulf and analyse how “perfect migrants” namely “pliant and obedient workforce” are reproduced by migration brokers and how migrants are made precarious through this practice. Findlay et al. (2013) explore migration intermediaries’ selection of migrants from Latvia to the UK. They describe how perceptions of migrant workers influence the recruitment of workers and how they define “bodily goodness”. They argue that the recruitment agencies’ selection processes generate an ideal type of migrant in both sending and destination countries which can be regarded as a part of the commodification of the migrant body.

Molland (2012) explores the migration of sex workers from Laos to Thailand and differentiates between professional brokers and brokerage taking place within personal networks. He shows that non-consensual recruitment often takes place within intimate relationships. Instead of reducing exploitation, official regulations rather force migrants to rely on personal contacts which are more likely to be abusive. Awumbila et al. (2018) explore the different kinds of brokers involved in the selection and placement of female domestic workers from Ghana. They find that brokers play multiple and often contradictory roles that shift between subjugation and empowerment, some helping women to negotiate better contracts, some reproducing patriarchal values and female subordination. In line with this, Wee et al. (2018) suggest, that security or precarity are not static outcomes of the migration process of domestic migrant workers in Singapore. Instead, a migrant’s

experience of precarity depends on the actions of employment agents who actively produce, shore up or mitigate situations of precarity for workers.

Another body of literature is concerned with [students' mobility](#). For instance, Thieme's work (2017) on educational intermediaries for students in Nepal finds that intermediaries are both social and profit oriented – a feature that can also be found in other fields – and develop specific strategies to make themselves irreplaceable in order to stay on the market. Tuxen and Robertson (2018), by exploring the education brokerage market in Mumbai, found that it contributes to reproducing existing social differences of the urban Indian society. The authors argue that brokers' potentially biased recommendations based on class-specific assumptions about the students have a significant influence their study destinations and trajectories. Shanshan (2018) looks at the state-mediated brokerage system in China which facilitates education migration for those students who struggle to be accepted at Chinese elite universities. Collins (2012) explores students' mobility from South Korea to New Zealand and shows how educational intermediaries successfully bridge the divide between the education industry and the social lives of students and their families making themselves indispensable for both groups.

With regards to marriage migration, Chee et al. (2012) study the mediation between Chinese Malaysian men and Vietnamese women. While commercial match-making is often perceived as a relatively easy business, the authors show that it requires a considerable amount of social capital to enter the market. Yeoh et al. (2017) show the strategies of marriage intermediaries matching Vietnamese female clients with Singaporean male clients which include a highly gendered system of "quality control" and affective strategies of persuasion to mitigate the commercial side of matchmaking. Tyldum and Tveit (2008) examine marriage migration of Thai and Russian women and Western men. They found that internet-based matching mostly is reserved for the educated or resourceful women. However, some agencies also offer access to computers, assistance in typing and writing or translating profile contents.

Various authors criticise the often one-sided characterisation of intermediaries as smugglers and as exploitative and immoral (van Liempt, 2007; Alpes, 2017). Many, as for example, Campana and Varese (2016), advocate for a clear distinction between [human smuggling](#) and [trafficking](#) taking into account migrants' agency in smuggling. Seeking to break up the somewhat populist narrative on brokerage and smuggling, Alpes (2017) gives a detailed analysis of a counter-intuitive and rather positive perception of such intermediaries in Cameroon. A lack of success of the migration process is rather seen as bad luck and does not necessarily prevent families from trying to migrate again with the help of the very same intermediary. Achilli (2018a), by taking a closer look at Syrian refugees and smugglers on the Balkan route, finds that the relationship between the two is simply exploitative but rather rich in solidarity and reciprocity as well as grounded in local notions of morality.

Some authors explore the impact of legal regulations on the smuggling industry. Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012) analyse migrant smuggling from Asia and Africa to Europe. They argue that border controls and migration policies cannot stop irregular migration because the motivation to migrate prevails and the number of

players involved in migration facilitation is high. They illustrate how the intensification of border controls rather increases fees paid to the smuggling network until a new route is found than reducing the number of migrants and refugees travelling to Europe. Kyle and Koslowski (2011) analyse underlying reasons for smuggling and find that it partly exists because there is a demand for smuggled labour in the receiving countries while it is nourished by problems such as social inequality, state corruption and discrimination in the sending context.

Some publications are dedicated to the structures of smuggling networks and their functioning. Campana (2018) argues that smuggling activities are rather segmented and the organisation takes place on the local level rather than on the transnational. Achilli (2018b) explores human smuggling networks in the Mediterranean and at the US-Mexican border and finds that the industry is highly adaptive and flexible. According to him, stricter regulations have led to an adaption of smugglers' modus operandi, they have rather raised the demand and increased the risk for migrants.

On the other end of the scale there are [statutory actors facilitating migration](#). Harvey et al. (2018) and Groutsis et al. (2015) claim that although governments have increasingly commercialised their migration services and created a rise of intermediary services, there is still relatively little academic literature on this practice. Several studies reveal that governmental actors and [private migration service providers](#) are sometimes closely interconnected. Shrestha (2018) explores the functioning of officially licensed labour migration agencies in Nepal arguing that they can be interpreted as part of the narrative of a developing state. She argues that official agencies serve as a constant reminder of the state's effort to enable migration for its citizens, compensating the lack of livelihood opportunities in their home country. Rodriguez (2010), too, underlines how the Philippine state is actively marketing its citizens to companies and labour-receiving governments around the world for low-wage temporary jobs. The author argues that Philippine citizens have become reduced to mere commodities while the state seeks to veil this exploitative practice by characterising migrants as national heroes. Rosales (2013) explores the brokerage system in Guatemala where human trafficking and smuggling are facilitated through corrupt state institutions. This results in private benefits for public officials as well as migrants. On the downside, it strengthens criminal networks and leads to an enhanced social acceptance of corruption.

Some studies focus on the role of governmental visa consulates and the partly informal activities in their environment. Notably, Zampagni (2016) shows how the visa process at the Italian consulate in Senegal functions, taking into account the environment around the institution with its regular, semi-regular and irregular actors. She argues that the complexity of visa processes and the lack of resources have led to the outsourcing of tasks to official intermediaries and as well as the development of large informal zones around the few embassies and consulates in sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, based on ethnographic research in visa application centres in Morocco, Infantino (2017) analyses the political effects of private actors involved in visa processes and identifies the outsourcing of these processes as highly problematic. She concludes that outsourcing visa services is not merely a neutral means



to address the state's poor handling of the visa application process but a strategy to re-establish control by decentralising responsibility and putting policy recipients at distance. In her subsequent work she argues that on street-level EU's bureaucrats aim stemming potential lawful migration, not only irregular migration as suggested by other scholars (Infantino 2019). Alpes and Spire (2014) too investigate the power of street-level bureaucrats at French consulates in Cameroon and Tunisia, they argue that like other officials these have a certain margin of discretion when deciding on visa applications. However, their widely held belief that they are acting to defend the national interests of their countries attaches their actions an inherently political dimension. Alpes (2013) challenges the perception of brokers focusing on financial profits and state actors representing notions of law and transparency. Revealing the tight connections between travel permits and money, she argues that the supposed boundaries between state and market actors are sometimes blurred. While the consulate as an official actor is able to take visa fees often without even providing actual visa, brokers are called exploitative if they take money even though their promise to facilitate migration is often more reliable.

Finally, several studies analyse how [civil society, notably NGOs, activists and volunteers facilitate migration](#), as for instance, during the so-called migration crisis 2015 in Europe when they provided shelter, clothes, medical treatment or legal support. Kiddey (2019) and Mitchell and Sparke (2018) explore alternative refugee shelters in Greece provided by volunteers and activists which seek to create safe spaces for refugees. Della Porta's edited collection shows different forms of solidarity mobilisations for refugees in Turkey (Çelik, 2018), Greece (Oikonomakis, 2018), Italy (Zamponi, 2018) and along the Balkan route (Milan & Pirro, 2018). Most of the initiatives aim at facilitating refugees' journey to Europe and supporting their passage through the respective country. Many movements are simultaneously engaged in humanitarian work offering concrete help for refugees and political actions of protest. Chtouris and Miller (2017) conclude that while European institutions reacted slowly and had relatively little impact on refugees' protection, the actions and resources of volunteers and activists turned out to be extremely efficient.

Some publications are specifically concerned with search and rescue (SAR) missions of civil society organisations on the Mediterranean. Stierl (2018) analyses the functioning of the WatchTheMed Alarm Phone, a hotline for refugees in emergency situations on the Mediterranean developed and run by activists. Cusumano gives an overview over different non-governmental SAR organisations (2017). In another article (2019), he analyses their different strategies and shows how younger organisations adopted most but not all of the rescue policies developed by their predecessors due to the lack of financial means or differing moral values. Similarly, Cuttita (2018) examines how different NGOs decide to show political commitment or stay politically neutral when rescuing people from drowning. He problematises that in any case, SAR missions contribute to a depoliticisation because they provide operational support for governments and a humanitarian legitimisation to their exclusionary policies. Carrera et al. (2018) explore the consequences of EU anti-smuggling policies on humanitarian actors. They find that such policies lead to the criminalisation of the "mobility society", i.e. civil society actors who assist

irregular immigrants and asylum seekers. Finally, Cusumano and Pattison (2018) argue that non-governmental SAR missions in the Mediterranean have notable limitations and need to be replaced by solid humanitarian operations that are directed by governments.

## 4.2.2 *Material Migration Infrastructures*

Research on the [means of transportation](#) in mostly regular migration processes is so far rather limited. Burrell (2011) explores the use of low-cost flights and notes that they “opened up travel, and most significantly migration opportunities” to provincial locations across Europe. Since the 2004 expansion of the EU, newly built airports have transformed many regionally focused towns and cities into international points of arrival and departure. Burrell argues that Ryanair and other low-cost carriers have accompanied and maybe even fuelled the migratory movements, for instance, from Poland to the UK. Similarly, Bojczuk (2006) analyses the impact of low-budget flights on the coach travel market between Poland and the UK. He shows how the EU enlargement to Poland in 2004 was accompanied by the liberalisation of the airline market which transformed air travel into more affordable service attracting Polish labour migrants. He argues that although the market for coaches also expanded, the intense competition with low-budget airlines put smaller coach operators at risk forcing them to expand their operations to smaller towns in Poland and the UK. Hirsh (2017) explores the aviation industry in Southeast Asia and shows that low-cost carriers are used by tourists, retirees, migrant workers and students alike. He describes how infrastructures of low-tech transportation significantly shape patterns of mobility in Asia, including those of work migration. In his book on the role of airports on mobility in Asia (Hirsh, 2016), he explores those infrastructures serving less-privileged populations who are constrained due to their income or nationality. Hirsh argues that in the past, the aviation industry was designated to cater for the wealthy but that meanwhile a less visible and more accessible kind of aviation infrastructure has emerged including shopping mall kiosks where flight tickets can be bought with cash or cheap shuttle busses transferring labour migrants from their homes to the airport. Finally, Teunissen (2018) explores how migrants use long-distance coaches for travels within the EU. He shows how irregular migrants manage to cross borders sometimes without the necessary documents taking advantage of distracted Flixbus drivers or the lack of passport controls due to delays.

With regards to irregular migration, much has been written about transit migration in general, though less literature focuses specifically on migration infrastructures in what has been identified as transit migration hubs. In his study on transit migration in Turkey, Düvell (2018) describes the transit hubs in Izmir and Istanbul as “buzzing neighbourhoods full of regular and irregular businesses and service providers offering regular and irregular services”. On the one hand, there are shops, cafes and numerous accommodation opportunities including small hotels where people not only hang out or stay but also obtain information or get in touch with

smugglers. On the other hand, there are local or international non-governmental organisations, public bodies and local administrations providing food and non-food items, counselling, health care, legal advice, language classes or interpreting services. Wissink et al. (2013) show that smugglers and “connectors”, i.e. middlemen between smugglers and migrants, are providing services in the hub whereas there are only a few non-governmental organisations including religious and humanitarian organisations providing meals, clothing, furniture as well as legal aid. Crawley et al. (2018) argue that a variety of services is offered to migrants and refugees in transit hubs such as commercial services provided by private actors including hostels, budget hotels, banks, telecommunication providers, (internet) cafes, barbers, shops selling inflatable dinghies, outboard engines, life-vests or waterproof document bags. Humanitarian actors like local mosques, non-governmental organisations and volunteers provide shelter, meals, clothes, non-food items and services such as legal and psychological counselling or medical treatments.

### 4.2.3 *Digital Migration Infrastructures*

A new and growing strand of explorations is concerned with the use of [digital technologies](#) by migrants and refugees during their journey and their influence on migration. Alencar et al. (2018) speak of mobile phones as “lifelines” during flight while Gillespie et al. (2018) argue that smartphones can be “as important as water and food” for refugees. However, digital technologies also play a crucial role for the mediation of regular migration including marriage migration (see Zabyelina, 2009; Tyldum and Tveit, 2008), work migration (see Low, 2020; Janta & Ladkin, 2013) and student mobility (see Zinn & Johannsson, 2015; Papagiannidis, 2013). The following chapter will explore the Digital Migration Infrastructures in more detail.

## 4.3 Research Gaps

The above sketch as shown that, so far, research on the field of migration infrastructures is fragmented and rather imbalanced in that some issues have received considerable scholarly attention whereas others are widely overlooked. We promote overcoming these imbalances and filling the knowledge gaps in order to gain a holistic understanding of migration processes.

First, in terms of geographic focus areas, research on migration infrastructures in Asia is comparably more advanced than research in other regions. Besides this, several studies address migration industries, meaning the commercial aspects of migration facilitation. However, this research does not specifically take into account non-commercial types of migration facilitation.

Second, overt attention is paid to irregular migration and its infrastructures. Literature is often morally loaded or even biased, sometimes blurring the distinctions between the two categories of trafficking and smuggling. Compared to this, there is much less research on regular agents such as work recruitment agencies, student

mobility consultants or marriage agents which is surprising when taking into account how many regular migrants use their services.

Third, the infrastructures of specific migration processes, such as refugee admission including humanitarian resettlement or voluntary return programmes remain to be investigated more in-depth. Refugee admission or returns are forms of state facilitation of (return) migration, often [realised through international organisations](#), notably IOM and UNHCR. However, there are also other forms of humanitarian admissions like private sponsorships and scholarship programmes (Welfens et al. 2019). While admission programmes are often well documented, little is known about the processes, i.e. the infrastructure of refugee admission.

Fourth, while digital migration studies are an emerging field of interest, unequal access to resources and the so-called digital divide as determined by class, gender, age, and country of origin remain under-researched areas. While relatively many studies are focusing on the use of digital technologies by refugees travelling from the Middle East to Europe, less literature is concerned with other world regions such as Africa or Latin America.

Fifth, the regulation of migration infrastructures and actors and its implementation and enforcement seems to be almost entirely absent from the research agenda, so far. The main focus of research lies on regulations on human smuggling, human trafficking, the responsibilities of carriers whereas other areas are overlooked.

Finally, there is little research on the interface of [migration and tourism](#) or [migration and travel logistics](#). Notably, means of transportation, such as carriers, air (ports) or bus and train stations are so far widely neglected in migration research yet they play a role in terms of mobility patterns of people migrating to the European Union or elsewhere. Besides this, there is a lack of an analysis of migrants' use of infrastructures that were initially set up to serve mainly tourists, such as travel agencies, airlines and hotels. A key obstacle is the predominantly containerised thinking in the different fields related to mobility. Transport economics, tourism studies, logistics or legal studies concerned with mobility regulations are disciplines that could complement research on migration infrastructures.

## 4.4 Summary and Conclusion

Although migration infrastructures are key for migrants' capability to move, research is still surprisingly fragmented. This chapter has sought to give an introduction to the concept of migration infrastructures and the state-of-the-art of research on this theme. It refers to a couple of domains in which infrastructures have been researched, such as travel, regular and irregular, transit migration, labour migration, marriage migration, transit migration hubs, or the airport economy. From the literature a range of features emerge which could guide future research. These are, for example, the service dimension, exploitative practices, ethical issues, class dimension, filtering function, connectedness of diverse actors, public-private interplay, and the compliant vs deviant character. Issues such as the linkages between macro-/meso-/micro-level processes, like, for example, the extent to which actors at the infrastructure level generate migration, are open questions.

To conclude, we argue that migration studies should acknowledge migration infrastructures as a new field of research mediating between macro-level determinants and micro-level processes. We argue that the concept is pertinent in order to acknowledge the mediating role of a vast range of regular and irregular, commercial and non-commercial, state and non-state actors and structures as well as digital spaces and travel logistics which often only render migration possible in the first place. Without infrastructures, individuals would only have limited access to information, meaning migratory journeys would in fact hardly be possible for many. Further studies of the migration infrastructures, notably in the European context, is therefore crucial for gaining a more complete understanding of migration processes.

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# Chapter 5

## Digital Migration Infrastructures



Carlotta Preiss

### 5.1 Introduction

Digitalisation has fundamentally [shaped the way people migrate](#) over the last years. On the one hand, refugees use their mobile phones for navigation, to contact smugglers and other refugees, for communication with their loved ones back home or in countries of destination. Facebook groups provide invaluable information for people on the move, while mobile money transfers from relatives abroad are often crucial to finance journeys. Sometimes, mobile phones even serve as lifelines between boats and rescue vessels in the Mediterranean, thereby preventing people from drowning. Thus, Gillespie et al. (2016) argue that for refugees seeking to reach Europe, digital infrastructures are as important as physical ones.

On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has influenced regular migration processes. Dating platforms facilitate [marriage migration](#), [companies and work agencies](#) recruit workers online, and student mobility is often advertised and mediated through social media and online platforms.

Today, a whole digital ensemble of smaller and bigger actors, services and objects facilitates and supports migration processes. In this chapter, this digital ensemble will be conceptualised as *Digital Migration Infrastructures*, related to the [Migration Infrastructures](#) presented in the previous chapter. This chapter first introduces the concept of Digital Migration Infrastructures while exploring related approaches. Second, it provides an overview over the existing literature. Third, it identifies the remaining research gaps with regards to Digital Migration Infrastructures, before drawing a conclusion.

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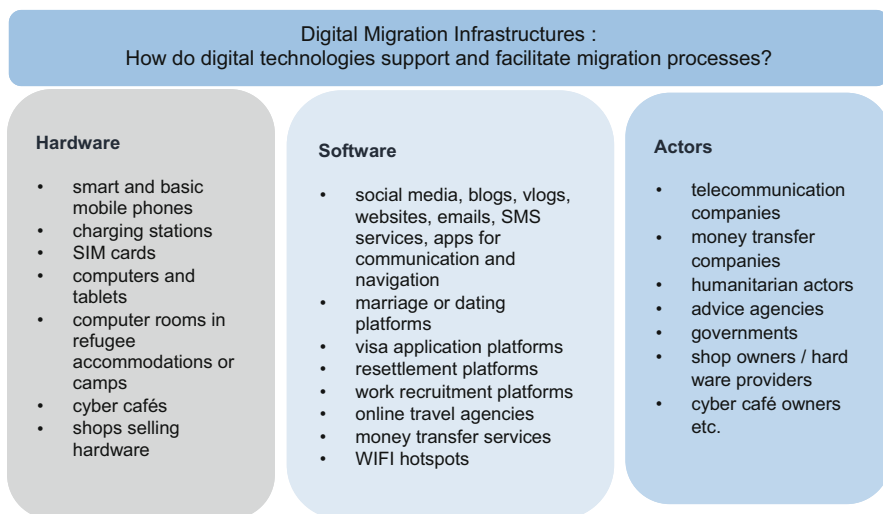
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## 5.2 Conceptualisation

As elaborated in the previous chapter, studies in Migration Infrastructures in general seek to shed light on the often-overlooked processes between migrants' departure and their arrival asking *how* people migrate. **Migration Infrastructures** are defined as the physical, digital, commercial, governmental, and humanitarian infrastructures which support and mediate migration on a meso-level, sometimes provided by macro-level actors and influencing migration trajectories of individuals on the micro-level (also see Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). These include regular and irregular *actors* (such as agencies, smugglers, intermediaries and brokers) or *material infrastructures* (including airplanes, roads, trains, transit hubs and routes). One crucial part of the Migration Infrastructures are the Digital Migration Infrastructures. Digital Migration Infrastructures are the ensemble of digital technologies including the underlying support structures which facilitate migration processes. The key research question is: *How do digital technologies support and facilitate migration processes?*

This digital ensemble includes **actors, hardware, and software** that facilitate or mediate migration. The list entails but is not limited to smart and basic mobile phones, battery charging stations, cyber cafés, shops that sell SIM cards along migration routes, social media, communication and navigation apps, informative webpages, blogs and vlogs, online information campaigns, telecommunication and money transfer companies, online travel agencies or online portals for flight, train and bus tickets as well as marriage migration platforms, online mediation of workers by recruitment agencies and online facilitation of student mobility. In short, Digital Migration Infrastructures play a crucial role in mediating regular and irregular forms of migration and facilitating forced displacement.



Migration infrastructures are understood as infrastructures facilitating migration and enabling persons to move. It does not take those structures into account that prevent migration. Thus, digital surveillance and digitalised [border control](#) are not considered in this concept (see [Dijstelbloem et al., 2011](#); [Leurs, 2019](#)). However, those apps and advertisements facilitating the return to one's home country can be part of the Migration Infrastructures. In this case, repatriation is understood as one form of (return) migration, although [returning](#) might not be voluntary or initially planned. As Migration Infrastructures are defined as organised structures, Digital Migration Infrastructures primarily encompass the overarching structure which enables virtual communication, and not the personal networks within these.

## 5.3 Related Concepts

### 5.3.1 *Digital Migration Studies*

Digital Migration Infrastructures are related to the Digital Migration Studies which seek to “understand the relation between migration and digital media technologies” ([Leurs & Smets, 2018](#)). Some authors have criticised that migration related issues are often not thought together with discourses on digital technologies although migrants and refugees are “‘digital natives’, early adopters and heavy users of digital technologies, not unlike their peers if not more as a result of their transnational connections” ([Pozanesi & Leurs 2014](#), p. 4). Related to the Digital Migration Studies is [Diminescu's](#) concept of the Connected Migrant ([2008](#)), defined as “a migrant on the move who relies on alliances outside his own group of belonging without cutting his ties with the social network at home”, using digital technologies to do so (*ibid.*, p. 567). On the one hand, Digital Migration Studies analyse digitalisation related to governmental border control and migration management ([Broeders, 2007](#); [Dijstelbloem & Broeders, 2015](#); [Vukov & Sheller, 2013](#)). On the other hand, they explore the use of online information campaigns warning people not to leave their countries of origin ([Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2017](#); [Oeppen, 2016](#); [Schans & Optekamp, 2016](#)). However, they also look at the use of digital technologies by refugees. While some of the literature is about the use of technologies after the arrival at the country of destination (see [Alam & Imram, 2015](#); [Gordano Peile 2014](#); [Hiller & Franz, 2004](#); [Kaufmann, 2018](#); [Komito, 2011](#); [Kutcher & Kress, 2018](#); [Witteborn, 2015](#)), another strand is concerned with what is here defined as Digital Migration Infrastructures, i.e. the use of digital technologies *during* migration processes, mostly en route or in transit. This branch of literature will be explored below.

### 5.3.2 *Digital Passages*

Another related concept is that of “digital passages” (Latonero & Kift, 2018) which focuses on digital technologies in forced migration. Digital passages consist of “infrastructures” (digital technologies used by corporations and governments) and “artefacts” (digital technologies used by refugees, human traffickers, and smugglers). Latonero and Kift argue that “the reliance on both infrastructure and artefacts affects the interplay of some of the major protagonists in this sociotechnical space: refugees, smugglers, corporations, and governments.” (ibid., p. 3). Latonero and Kift’s digital passages consist of social media services, free Wi-Fi spots in transit, SIM Cards, SIM card contractors, charging stations, GPS etc. The authors show how “accessing crucial information on the Internet depends on an entire infrastructure and economy of Wi-Fi hotspots, shops that sell SIM cards, or the physical offices of wire transfer services” (ibid., p. 3).

### 5.3.3 *Critical Approaches*

Leurs and Smets (2018) add some warnings to the discourse and argue that digital “technologies can never be considered as inseparable from offline material, historical, socio-political contextual dynamics; there is a need to avoid the sensationalist exceptionalism surrounding the technological fetishisation of the smartphone carrying and selfie-taking refugees” (ibid., p. 8). Furthermore, they opt to move “beyond technophilia”, for a “non-digital-media-centricness”, arguing that researchers should still focus on social problems first before turning to digital technologies (ibid., p. 8). Twigt (2018) argues that digital technologies can help refugees in precarious situations to not give up—however, they cannot be the answer to prolonged legal and social insecurity (ibid, p. 9).

Besides this, some scholars stress the risks inherent to the use of digital technologies in relation to migration (see Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014). On the one hand, digital divides play an important role, i.e. some migrants and refugees are unable to use ICT due to a lack of access and digital literacy. On the other hand, governments and private companies use digital technologies in order to control and track migrants and refugees. As Ponzanesi and Leurs (2014) argue “digital connectedness does not come as a utopian alternative to histories of dislocation, rejection and expulsion”. Thus, its advantages and disadvantages need to be thoroughly analysed without romanticising it.

## 5.4 State of Knowledge

So far, literature related to Digital Migration Infrastructures remains rather fragmented. However, especially with regards to forced displacement it is rapidly growing. In the following, an overview of the state-of-the-art of research on Digital

Migration Infrastructures in forced displacement and some forms of regular migration will be given.

### ***5.4.1 Digital Migration Infrastructures and Forced Displacement***

The use of digital technologies during forced displacement has received relatively much attention with regards to movements from the Middle East to Europe. Studies reveal that the vast majority of people fleeing from the Middle East rely on digital technologies and that ICT fundamentally shape their trajectories (Alencar et al., 2018; Borkert et al., 2018; Dekker et al., 2018; Frouws et al., 2016; Gillespie et al., 2018). These publications show how digital technologies fulfil various needs during the journey, for instance, staying in touch with fellow travellers, with relatives and friends in countries of destination or with family and friends back home. Many contact smugglers or receive information on countries of [destination, routes, and border crossings](#) via smartphones. Generally, the smartphone represents an important device for planning and navigation, but also for documenting the journey or storing important documents. Sometimes, it is a useful tool for entertainment which relieves boredom and anxieties in the camps or during waiting periods during the journey. Some authors underline that ICT potentially give refugees more autonomy in organising their journeys and enable them to travel without depending on smugglers (Zijlstra & Liempt, 2017).

Relatively few researchers are concerned with the use of mobile phone by displaced persons on the African continent. Schaub (2011) explores refugees' use of mobile phones in the trans-Saharan space and argues that, among other factors, the rise in connectivity has made the region more "transitable". On the one hand, the mobile phone helps to make better use of existing infrastructures such as urban transit spaces. On the other hand, it is a way to receive support and information from geographically distant contacts. Relying on Collyer (2007), Schaub argues that fragmented journeys in the trans-Saharan space would not be possible without mobile phone communication.

Other studies specifically highlight the digital divide and the risk of receiving false information. Merisalo and Jauhiainen (2019) explore the digital divide among refugees travelling from different world regions to Europe and find that country of origin, age, and level of education influence if a person uses ICT. Borkert et al. (2018) find that most individuals using ICT on the way have a high level of digital literacy. However, they underline, that during their journeys, one main difficulty is to differentiate between true and false information. Dekker et al. (2018) distinguish different strategies of refugees to verify online information including checking the respective source, validating online information with trusted social ties, triangulating online sources, and comparing information with their personal experience. Wall et al. (2017) explore the situation of Syrian refugees in the Zaatari refugee camp in

Jordan where refugees have to cope with what they refer to as “information precarity” defined not only as the lack of access to relevant information and the prevalence of irrelevant or false information, but also the inability to control one’s own images and potential surveillance through the government of one’s home country. Similarly, Latonero and Kift (2018) show how ICT are used not only by refugees but also by traffickers, corporations, and governments. They underline that it is difficult to say if digital technologies benefit or harm refugees as it exposes them to surveillance and control.

### ***5.4.2 Digital Migration Infrastructures and Regular Forms of Migration***

Comparatively less research has been conducted on Digital Migration Infrastructures and forms of regular migration such as labour migration and student mobility. The only noticeable exception is the role of digital technologies facilitating marriage migration, this has received at least some attention.

#### **Marriage Migration**

Some authors analyse the impact and functioning of online marriage agencies. Zabyelina (2009) provides an overview over different types of online marriage agencies advertising women from Eastern Europe, their level of professionalisation and their (lack of) efforts to prevent exploitation. She also analyses the pictures of the women and concludes that most agencies objectify women and turn the matchmaking into an online shopping experience (ibid., p. 97). The author argues that “without the technological means to make the industry globally reachable, easily accessible for payments, fast in the rendering of services, and confidential and highly visualised, there could never have been such a grand-scale business as international matchmaking” (ibid., pp. 90–1). Luehrmann’s (2004) anthropological approach focuses on an online marriage agency in provincial Russia, which not only provides matchmaking but also services such as language classes and visa procedures. Similar to Zabyelina, she explores the ways the agency functions, e.g. that men mostly pay for being able to see further pictures, contacting the women, or making use of translation services. Tyldum and Tveit (2008) examine marriage migration of Thai and Russian women and Western men, mostly in the US and Norway. They demonstrate that, mostly, internet-based matching is reserved for educated or resourceful women. However, some agencies also offer access to computers, assistance in typing and writing or translating profile contents. Constable (2003) argues that online matchmaking is different to the former matchmaking through printed catalogues and letters sent by mail in that it is much faster and forces many women to go to specific places to access computers, including cyber cafés or friends’ places.

Other authors focus on the representation of women on online platforms. Dai (2019) analyses the representation of women on an Asian online marriage migration platform. She problematises the idea of the “Asian exotic other”, depicts the vulnerability of women on this platform but also stresses that they have agency and pursue their own interests as well as those of their families. Sahib et al. (2006) analyse “successful” profiles on a Russian online platform. Their findings suggest that the age of women does not play a role, however those living in bigger cities where significantly more successful in finding a husband as the agency organised trips to these places. This finding underlines the importance of physical encounters in matchmaking and shows the limits of online tools.

Three papers focus on the use of internet forums and email correspondence by women in Senegal, Cameroon, or the Philippines to find a future husband which gives them the possibility to migrate to Europe or the US. Johnson-Hanks’ ethnography (2007) focuses on Cameroonian women spending their time in internet cafés where they receive and send emails, sometimes dictating the content to a typist as they lack the ability to use a computer themselves. Similarly, Venable’s (2008) study on Senegalese women analyses the hope to find a partner online in order to be able to leave the Casamance region through online platforms. This hope stands in contrast to the fact that most women do not know any couple which resulted from online matchmaking. Finally, del Rosario’s (2005) study portrays Filipino women searching for foreign spouses in cyber cafés. She shows that the ability to choose between different spouses online promotes the agency of women and reduces their dependency on offline social networks when searching for a spouse.

### **Labour Migration and Student Mobility**

Only few publications focus on the role of digitalisation during migration processes related to labour migration and student mobility. Low (2020) analyses the Malaysian government’s approach to phase out intermediaries and de-commercialise the recruitment of migrant workers. Part of their strategy is a digitalisation of the whole process including application, permit renewal and repatriation which avoids costs and reduces the risk of corruption. They thus imply the potential for tension between commercial and non-commercial services. Janta and Ladkin (2013) explore the role of the internet as a transnational platform for job searching and job advertising among Poles seeking to work in the UK’s hospitality sector. Internet fora provide knowledge exchange where Polish employees act as recruitment agents for their employers. However, employees can also post their experiences regarding employers’ failures to pay wages or cases of abuse. Thus, depending on how they are used, internet platforms can both attract or warn aspiring labour migrants working in favour or against the respective employer.

Relatively few authors look at the use of ICT for [student mobility](#). Often, universities use the internet to give information, attract students, and help them organise their stay abroad. Gomes and Murphy (2003) and Bélanger et al. (2014) look at the online marketing of universities through websites, email, and social



media. Zinn and Johannsson (2015) explore different stages of mobile marketing for Higher Education including the introduction of an admitted student app with information about immigration, residence permits etc. during the applicant stage. Finally, Papagiannidis (2013) explores online taster courses for international students and argues that it can establish strong relationships between universities and applicants already during the recruitment process.

## 5.5 Research Gaps and Conclusion

While much of the literature on Digital Migration Infrastructures and forced displacement focuses on movements from the Middle East to Europe, less is concerned with Latin America, Africa and Asia. Besides this, there are only few studies on ICT use in regular migration such as online recruitment of workers, spouses, or international students. Further research could explore how regular and irregular migration and forced displacement have actually changed in form and number due to the use of digital technologies. Another interesting question is if migration has become easier or more cumbersome with the increased digitalisation of migration processes, digitised border control, and the individual use of mobile phones and computers.

Migration processes are already today strongly influenced by digitalisation. Most likely, the impact will increase in coming years, as connectivity and hardware are becoming more affordable and widespread, and there are more and more potential clients being part of a growing middle class in many regions of the world. To keep pace with current developments of a digitised world and genuinely understand migration in the twenty-first century, it is crucial to explore the role digital connectivity plays in migration. This chapter has introduced Digital Migration Infrastructures and provided an overview over existing literature. By doing so, it sought to raise awareness for the strong impact of digital technologies on migration giving a point of departure for further research in the field.

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# Chapter 6

## Migration Forms: What Forms of Migration Can Be Distinguished?



Cathrine Talleraas

This chapter addresses the question: *what forms of migration can be distinguished?* This topic is closely tied to the issues addressed in the previous chapters, concerning why and how people migrate. Central to the discourse on migration forms—also called categories, types, or flows—lies another important question: *who are migrants?* This chapter dives into these questions. While the topic of migrant typologies itself would merit its own full-fledged analysis, this is beyond the scope of this chapter. The reflections herein rather seek to summarise some of the main arguments and questions pertaining to the debates on categorisation in migration studies.

After a brief introduction of how the word ‘migrants’ is used, the chapter moves on to discuss how different migrants and journeys are categorised into specific forms of migration. By briefly discussing the use of categories and recent discourses on categorisation in migration studies, this chapter sets the stage for the next three chapters of this book, as these delve into the subjects of labour migration, family migration, and humanitarian migration more specifically. Finally, the chapter offers a few reflections on the logic behind the choice of migration forms in focus both in this book and in the [taxonomy](#) of the Migration Research Hub.

### 6.1 To Be (Labelled) a Migrant

Tazzioli (2019) notes that “some people are labelled and governed as ‘migrants’”. This is an important remark, as it sheds light on the difference between migrant as a category of self-identity, and migrant as a label which others apply when referring to

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people who move or have moved. This chapter primarily focuses on the latter of the two understandings, though the interrelation between the two is not to be ignored. While most acknowledge the need for human categories for the purposes of analysis and governance, such categorisation also raises ethical concerns (see e.g. Bakewell, 2011; Raghuram, 2021). Is it morally correct to define people by only one aspect of their character, identity, or life? The migrant label, or any sub-category or migration form, only refers to a specific—current or past—activity. The act of moving or crossing an international border may indeed be a crucial aspect or turning point in a person's life, yet it remains one sole activity, and not necessarily an identifying or key characteristic.

The study of migration has nonetheless **become a field on its own**. So, too, have the fields of politics, policies and jurisdictions concerning people who migrate. It is impossible to do justice to the heterogeneity of people and their lives through any migrant category. Yet, in order to analyse, govern, and even understand the phenomenon of migration, we need to reify the abstract process of human mobility into set categories. To rephrase the quote above, this chapter holds that some people are, and need to be, labelled, governed, *and studied* as migrants. Central to this understanding stands the constant acknowledgement that the word 'migrant' remains a crude simplification of any person who migrates.

## 6.2 The Multitude of Migration Forms

Building on the premise that people usefully may be categorised as migrants, the next central question is: which different forms of migration can be identified? The different words used to distinguish one form of migration from another are regularly the objects of academic scrutiny, and most migration scholars would agree that we cannot capture the fluidity and complexity of any migration through these specific tags (see e.g. Crawley & Skleparis, 2017; Castles et al., 2014; Dahinden, 2016; Fussell, 2012; Talleraas, 2020). Nevertheless, to study migration in its various shapes and modalities, we need to understand the differences between flows. The factors used to distinguish one type of migration from another comprise a range of parameters, including—but not limited to—the geography of the migration, the **reasons or drivers of migration**, the characteristics of the migrants, the migrants' aims, and the **infrastructures and mechanisms shaping the journeys**. Moreover, the migrants' legal status at the outset of, during, and after their journey place them into specific categories (Kubal, 2013), which also provide them with different legal rights and duties. This implies that the group, or migration form, migrants belong to, and thus how they are analysed or governed, can shift over time and *en route*.

A leading understanding in migration studies highlights the political geography of migration journeys by differentiating between two key forms: internal migration and international migration. The former refers to migration within a country and the latter to migration across state borders. Within each of these, migration drivers are often used to distinguish between two sub-groups: those who are forced to move and

those who migrate voluntarily. A central line of criticism in migration studies refers to the impossibility of stringently dividing between forced and voluntary migration. This often-used dichotomy risks undermining the potential ‘spectrum’ of drivers and experiences inherent in any migration journey (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018, p. 981). A related discussion concerns whether refugees are—or should be—understood as migrants. While one side of the dispute sees all who have changed their country of residence as migrants, the other *categorises those who have moved to seek international protection* as a separate group, holding that refugees should never be included in the migrant category (see e.g. Carling, 2017). These discussions underscore the potentially grave consequences—both analytically and politically—of how we distinguish between different sub-forms of migration. As the international legal frameworks concerning refugees provide them with a distinct set of rights, it is especially important to apply these labels with particular care.

The categorisation of particular migration forms can be undertaken by different actors with various purposes, such as border control agencies, human rights activists and political parties. Such categorisation into different forms often involves defining migrant groups on the basis of a specific variable. Illustrative examples include: ‘unskilled migrants’ or ‘unaccompanied minors’, which draw on the migrants’ characteristics; ‘labour migrants’ or ‘lifestyle migrants’, which highlight the drivers or motivations of the migration; or the term ‘boat migrant’, which refers to the means of travel. While categorisation is a useful tool for states and researchers alike, many have argued that any “cookie cutter approach” to migration involves overgeneralisation (Gupte & Mehta, 2007; Talleraas, 2020). The line of criticism concerning “methodological nationalism” in migration studies also highlights the need to critically assess how nation-state logics and categories are reiterated in research (Brubaker, 2013; Dahinden, 2016; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). State structures serve to manage migration while also producing exclusionary understandings of ‘unwanted’ (see e.g. Anderson, 2013) or victimised (see e.g. Schenk, 2021) migrant groups. Lack of reflection concerning migration form labelling may risk reproducing hegemonic power relations and “essentialised ideas” (Dahinden et al., 2021, p. 538). When deciding which label to apply, or when distinguishing one migration form from another, it is necessary to evaluate the dominant categories applied, and avoid conflating categories of analysis with categories of practice (see e.g. Van Hear, 2012). This is particularly important as the migration form labels applied impact how people are understood, encountered, and treated (see e.g. Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Ottonelli & Torresi, 2013).

### 6.3 A Systematic Literature Review of Migration Forms

This chapter has sought to reflect on the categories of migration forms and the practices of using them in migration studies. Based on brief examination of the questions of *who are the migrants?* and *what forms of migration can be distinguished?*, two key lessons may be drawn. First, when studying people as ‘migrants’,

we need to remember that they may have ‘little else in common’ (Carling, 2017). While it is useful to distinguish migrants from non-migrants – for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers alike – the label itself does not reflect who people are, how they identify and what they do. Second, the categorisation of migrants into sub-groups is a valuable tool, both for analytical purposes and for the provision of rights. Yet, we must acknowledge the broad spectrum of experiences inherent in any migration journey, and continually consider the social, political, and analytical repercussions of the labels we use to distinguish some people from others.

The ensuing chapters of this book provide extensive literature reviews of a specific collection of migration forms, including labour migration (Chap. 6), family migration (Chap. 7), humanitarian migration (Chap. 8), lifestyle migration (Chap. 9), student mobilities (Chap. 10), and irregular migration (Chap. 11). The chapters offer insights into the development of these research fields, and include overviews of key findings, research approaches and methodologies. The selection of the specific forms included in this book is based on recent work with the establishment of the Migration Research Hub. To create a typology of migration forms for this online tool, for the purpose of categorising and systematising research on migration, a range of experts and scholars have been consulted. Through discussions, a typology of migration forms has been developed where three existing and widely used migration forms are found to - theoretically - encapsulate many of the other categories that are widely applied in analytical and policy work. These three migration category labels are based on the driving force behind that particular migration. Migration drivers is understood as key lines of division between migration flows, and we differentiate between labour, family, and humanitarian migration in the effort to systematise the Migration Research Hub taxonomy, and the ensuing literature reviews.

In line with this aim, the three next chapters include discussions on a variety of ‘sub-forms’ of migration. In particular ‘labour migration’ is understood to include ‘high-skilled migration’ and ‘low-skilled migration’; ‘family migration’ includes ‘transnational families’ and ‘marriage migration’, and; ‘humanitarian migration’ encapsulates ‘refugees’, asylum seekers’, ‘internally displaced people’, ‘victims of trafficking’ and ‘unaccompanied minors’. The following three chapters reviewing literature on migration forms thus include types that cannot be captured within the categories of labour, family or humanitarian migration. These forms were nevertheless included here as it is possible to distinguish a distinct discourse on each form, consisting of elaborate bodies of theoretical and empirical research (i.e. Chaps. 9, 10 and 11 on lifestyle, student and irregular migration). The broad array of literature included in the three first chapters nevertheless illustrate how these three key forms, the sub-forms they encapsulate and other name-given forms, are more complex than their labels might suggest. The range of research referred to reflects the multiple factors that influence the spectrum of migration processes and showcases that any act of migration can be called by different names, depending on the reasons underlying the need for categorisation.

The reviews in the ensuing chapters primarily draw on literature available through the [Migration Research Hub database](#). An important aim of these chapters, as with the database itself, is to enable researchers and practitioners to grasp the complexities



of knowledge on types of migration. To this end, the Migration Research Hub taxonomy system systematises knowledge on a greater range of specific migration forms than is included here, and presents this in an accessible way. The migration forms that are included in the taxonomy are: [environmental migration](#), [family and marriage migration](#), [health-related migration](#), [high-skilled migration](#), [internal displacement migration](#), [internal migration](#), [irregular migration](#), [LGBTQ migration](#), [labour migration](#), [lifestyle and retirement migration](#), [low-skilled migration](#), [multiple migration](#), [refugee migration](#), [asylum seeker migration](#), [return migration](#), [roots migration](#), [short-term and circular migration](#), [transnational migration](#), [unaccompanied minor migration](#), [student mobility](#) and [trafficking](#). While the taxonomy system is not designed to capture the plurality of, or flexibility in, migration experiences, the aim is for it to be used as a research and policy tool to discover knowledge on different migration forms. In line with the ever-evolving nature of migration and migration research, the migration forms included in the taxonomy is likely to be updated and change with time. The current full list of migration forms and definitions are available through the [Migration Research Hub taxonomy](#).

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# Chapter 7

## Labour Migration



Laura Oso, Paweł Kaczmarczyk, and Justyna Salamońska

This chapter will focus on **labour migration**, that is the movement of persons with the aim of employment or income-bringing activities (e.g., entrepreneurship), developing the topic which was also touched upon in Chap. 3 on conceptual understanding of migration drivers. Research on labour migration has developed across various disciplines (e.g., sociology, anthropology, and geography), but most prominently in economics. It has resulted in a range of theoretical frameworks, starting with neoclassical economic theories and advancing through the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM), dual labour market theory, and social network theory, to more recent transnational approaches or theories dedicated to particular forms of labour migration. These diverse approaches offer insights into labour migration on macro-, meso- and micro-levels. Although a dichotomy based on skills (high-skilled vs. low-skilled workers) can be seen as controversial or misleading as a division between workers representing these two types of skills is often vague or difficult to determine, the distinction does reflect recent debates on labour migration. Thus, a high-/low-skills dichotomy serves as a guide to the structure of this chapter.

This chapter outlines the development of the field of scholarship on labour migration and the key trends of thinking in this field. The section on high-skilled migration outlines three major research strands: (1) the effects of high-skilled migration, (2) policies related to this migration, and (3) the mobility of health professionals. In the section on low-skilled migration, the discussion is organised around key sectors of employment (construction, agriculture, domestic service/care, and sex work). This selection is arbitrary, but reflects the main strands emerging in the literature while focusing directly on the labour market rather than on the characteristics of migration itself.

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## 7.1 Overview of Key Concepts and Theories, Methodologies and Disciplines

Originally emerging in the field of economics in the second half of the twentieth century, theories on labour migration have come to dominate current understandings and interpretation of classical theories on international migration (Arango, 2000).

The neoclassical approach considered migration in macro terms, as a development factor that allowed for the redistribution of the workforce from areas of low productivity to high productivity ones (Lewis, 1954). Migration is perceived in purely instrumental terms as a means towards equalising economic imbalances on regional, national, and global scales. In micro terms, neoclassical theory defines migration as the consequence of a sum of individual decisions that stem from a rational appraisal of the costs and benefits of displacement (or of expected gains, as in Harris & Todaro's, 1970 revised version) intending to reap higher returns. This view presents migration as, essentially, a form of investment in human capital (Sjaadstad, 1962) and closely linked to [labour market conditions](#). Another framework, based on push factors in the regions of origin (unemployment, low incomes, etc.) and pull factors in the host destinations (opportunities for access the labour market, higher wages, etc.), spotlights the rational individual approach as well (Lee, 1966). The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) opens the classical perspective, considering migration with regard to [family and household strategies](#) that aim to minimise the impact of market imperfections and the associated risks for employment and income (Stark, 1991).

The structural approaches, rooted in the Dependence and World System theories, also focused on labour migration (Wallerstein, 1974). Castles and Kosack (1972) considered migratory flows to Western Europe from 1945 onwards as a consequence of capital accumulation, caused by inequalities between central and peripheral areas in the world capitalist system. In Piore's Dual Labour Market theory (1979) migrant workers fill jobs in low productivity and low-skilled sectors that the autochthonous workforce is unwilling to take on (due to low wages, poor working conditions, or hierarchical constraints). Other authors consider labour migration in terms of mobilising capital, structural changes to world markets, the interdependence of economies, and new forms of production (Portes & Walton, 1981; Sassen, 1988).

While traditional theories tended to focus on the causes of migration, the network approach (coming from sociology and anthropology) has spotlighted reasons why migratory flows continue, even though wage differentials have disappeared, and underlined the importance of meso-level analysis (Massey et al., 1993). [Social networks](#) are a form of social capital that provides migrants with access to the labour market and other forms of help and support. The work of Wilson and Portes (1980) on the "ethnic enclave" has shown how the inclusion of the ethnic economy is an opportunity for migrants to address the segregation of ethnic minorities in the mainstream labour market. Finally, Transnational Migration theory shed light on how labour migrants constructed and maintained their socio-economic and cultural relationships across borders (Basch et al., 1994; Vertovec, 1999). This theory,

**Table 7.1** Published journal articles by topic (N and % growth rate over the years)

Topics	Labour migration	High-skilled migration	Low-skilled migration
Journal articles published until 1999	1293	216	226
Journal articles published until 2018	5602	1753	1454
<b>Total growth rate</b>	<b>333%</b>	<b>712%</b>	<b>543%</b>
<b>Average annual percentage growth rate</b>	<b>8.02%</b>	<b>11.65%</b>	<b>10.29%</b>

Source: [migrationresearch.com](http://migrationresearch.com)

together with gender and intersectional perspectives, developed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Boyd, 1989; Morokvasic, 1984; Anthias, 1992; Kofman et al., 2000), enabled new approaches within labour migration, by shifting the focus from the rational economic actor to the analysis of the productive and reproductive strategies adopted by [transnational households](#) (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Kofman, 2014).

The [Migration Research Hub database](#) documents remarkable growth in the number of journal articles published on topics of labour migration, both high-skilled and low-skilled (Table 7.1). The data indicate that, since 2000, the focus on high-skilled migration has outpaced the focus on low-skilled migration in terms of article publication. The average annual percentage growth rate reflects how much, on average, the output of scholarly literature has increased per year since the 2000s. Importantly, this shift is not only due to changes in the structure of international flows (see next section) but rather it is attributable to a growing overall interest in high-skilled labour, also - and perhaps especially - in the context of public policies, including migration ones.

In terms of methodology, various disciplines follow their own methodological traditions (e.g., economists use quantitative datasets to build models, while anthropologists tend to prefer qualitative data). Ethnosurveys, which bring together ethnography and survey methods, are a rare example of a successful mixed methods approach to studying migration (Massey, 1987, 1999; Kaczmarczyk & Salamońska, 2018). Research interest in more vulnerable groups of labour migrants has also drawn attention to various ethical challenges that need to be taken into account when making methodological choices, including, among others, privacy concerns, issue of informed consent, establishing trust relationship between the researcher and informants (van Liempt & Bilger, 2012).

### Key Data Sources

- [Eurostat data](#) (particularly data on residence permits, EU Blue Cards, and residence permits for intra-corporate transferees).
- [The European Union Labour Force Survey \(EU LFS\)](#)
- [The Database on Immigrants in OECD countries \(DIOC\)](#)
- [The OECD database of Indicators of Immigrant Integration.](#)

## 7.2 High-Skilled Migration

We turn now to one of the strands of literature on labour migration focusing on **high-skilled migration**, defined as the movement of persons who normally possess university education (ISCED 5-6), extensive professional experience, or a combination of the two. Additionally, public policy frameworks in selected cases can use the salary level to define high-skilled migration (e.g., Blue Card). Mobility of high-skilled individuals is at the forefront of public debates on migration, mostly due to narratives on migration that focus on labour market needs and the (assumed) integration potential of foreign professionals (Boeri et al., 2012; Czaika, 2018). The common interest in high-skilled migration also results from global trends. As shown by the OECD data (2018), the number of highly-educated people (i.e., people with university degrees) is over twice as high among migrants than the average for the whole local population, with a strong positive trend that has been only temporarily constrained by the global economic crisis (Czaika & Parsons, 2016). As a consequence, high-skilled migrants make up a significant share of the migrant population in highly developed countries, and, in the case of OECD nations, constituting approximately 30% of the total migrant population. Additionally, a common feature of modern, highly developed economies is that the educational level among migrants tends to be higher than that of the native population (OECD, 2018).

Recent trends in high-skilled migration are attributed to factors on both sides of the migration process. The outflow of highly skilled people is, however, an obvious consequence of **the spread of higher education and the growing aspirations among the highly educated** (in contrast to people with lower levels of education), as well as the relative lack of opportunities in the countries of origin. These factors coincide with structural conditions in the countries of destination, which aim to fill labour shortages in high-tech sectors (Czaika, 2018).

### 7.2.1 *The Effects of the Mobility of the High-Skilled – The Brain Drain/Gain Debate*

For many decades, scholarly and media debates on the effects of high-skilled migration have been dominated by the idea of ‘brain drain’ from the country of origin. This ‘traditional approach’ to the topic was developed in the 1960s and 1970s and focused on the negative effects of high-skilled emigration, such as the tax costs associated with the education of future migrants or the negative impact of labour flows on factor productivity and development prospects (Grubel & Scott, 1966; Bhagwati & Hamada, 1974). Since the mid-1990s, researchers began to challenge this one-sided perception of the impact of high-skilled migration (Mountford, 1997; Stark et al., 1997; Beine et al., 2001). The ‘modern approach’—or the new economics of brain drain—is based on the assumption that the decision to invest in education is driven by expected returns in human capital and the probability that migrating will

increase the returns of this investment (as compared to the no-migration situation). Thus, migration of the highly educated could, theoretically (i.e., if the probability of migrating is smaller than one), increase the level of human capital in the country of origin and foster economic progress, a situation referred to as ‘brain gain’ or ‘beneficial brain drain’. (Mountford, 1997; Beine et al., 2001; Stark, 2005).

In practice, an overall assessment of this issue should take into account additional, related incentives to acquire human capital (‘brain effect’) as well as the ‘classic’ drain effect, which consists in a loss of measurable human capital (Beine et al., 2001). The empirical results so far have been moderately satisfactory, which may result from the fact that theory-based effects are observed only in countries with a moderate outflow of high-skilled migrants. If the scale of this migration is high, the negative effects (i.e., the drain effects) dominate (Beine et al., 2001, 2008). However, smaller-scale studies show that migration opportunities influence not only the tendency to continue education but also to choose specific fields of study (Commander et al., 2004; Commander et al., 2008; Gibson & McKenzie, 2011; Batista et al., 2012). These effects can be strengthened by additional factors like remittances, return migration, or diaspora externalities (Mayr & Peri, 2012; Boeri et al., 2012).

Recent studies suggest that one of the key assumptions of the new economics of brain drain cannot be upheld and, consequently, that the scope for beneficial brain drain should be substantially reduced (Brücker et al., 2013; Egger & Felbermayr, 2009). There is a growing body of literature devoted to the ‘brain waste’ phenomenon (Mattoo et al., 2008), which explores mismatches between [the education/skills of migrants](#) and the professional position they can secure in the destination country. These mismatches are only partly due to the (poor) quality of education or the lack of transferability of skills. The available empirical studies point instead to the role of the structure of demand for foreign labour, which is strongly concentrated in the low-skills end of the occupational hierarchy. Over-education, as a common migration-related phenomenon, has also been studied among post-2004 and post-2007 migrants from the new EU Member States (Brücker, 2009; Fihel et al., 2009; Galgóczi et al., 2011; Tijdens & van Klaveren, 2011; Galgóczi & Leschke, 2014; Kaczmarczyk & Okólski, 2008; Kaczmarczyk & Tyrowicz, 2015).

### ***7.2.2 Policies Targeting High-Skilled Migrants***

There is a strong contrast between migration [policies focused on migrants who are recognised as professionals](#) and [policies focused on people with lower skill levels](#). The former have been developing with particular intensity since the 1990s and this trend can be linked to the general perception that high-skilled workers are contributing to receiving societies by promoting innovation, increasing competition in the economy, and supporting the destination country’s high position in the global technological race (Czaika & Parsons, 2015, 2016). High-skilled migrants are also seen as having relatively high employability and integration potential (OECD, 2008).

Czaika and de Haas (2013) and Czaika and Parsons (2017) have documented policies that aim to attract, select, and retain high-skilled migrants and showed a substantial increase in the scale of these types of instruments. Even if some policy measures can be shown to be more effective, the overall impact of migration policies on highly educated people is generally considered to be relatively low (as compared with massive recruitment programmes that target seasonal, low-skilled workers).

One reason is the complexity of migration decisions of professionals, which are motivated by wage gaps and depend on factors related to career opportunities, access to advanced technologies, and/or opportunities to cooperate with world-class laboratories. The high-skilled are often in a privileged position as they choose among many employment options, for example, the ‘mutual selection’ between destination countries and countries of origin (Czaika & Parsons, 2017). Generally, the effectiveness of certain policies can be constrained by other migration policies (e.g., family reunification) or factors related to the internal dynamics of migration (i.e., migrant networks). It is unlikely that any specific migration policy instrument will be responsible for the attractiveness of a country. Rather a wide range of factors, including the socio-political climate, living conditions and non-migration policies, play a significant role (Doomernik et al., 2009; Beine et al., 2008; Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Papademetriou & Sumption, 2013; Chaloff, 2016; Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Tuccio, 2019; Weisser, 2016).

This discrepancy between publicly presented expectations and the results of policies focused on the high-skilled is visible in the case of policy instruments dedicated to various professional groups and is well documented in case of the EU Blue Card and other EU directives (Chaloff, 2016; Colussi, 2016; Cerna, 2018) or policies targeting medical professionals (Wismar et al., 2011).

### ***7.2.3 Mobility of Health Professionals***

The migration of medical specialists is not a new phenomenon and has been growing since the 1950s and 1960s, partly as a result of the rapid development of welfare state institutions in highly industrialised countries. The important role of foreign labour in the health sector was demonstrated in a seminal study commissioned by the World Health Organization (Mejia et al., 1979), and, since the mid-1990s, the migration of medical personnel has increased dramatically (Docquier & Bhargava, 2006; Wismar et al., 2011). Besides, this migration is relatively more significant than the general mobility of high-skilled. For example, in most OECD countries, the share of foreign doctors in the total population of health professionals is significantly higher than the analogous rate of high-skilled migrants (OECD, 2018).

In terms of causal factors, the following are seen as the most important: demographic change, changes in family institutions, social changes and transformations in the educational sector, internationalisation of the profession, and migration policies (OECD, 2002, 2015; Bach, 2003; Alkire & Chen, 2004; Vujicic et al., 2004).



In structural terms, numerous empirical studies have documented that the movement of medical professionals is not one-way but multi-directional with inflow and outflow, or what has also been termed, the “migration carousel” (Martineau et al., 2002; Alkire & Chen, 2004). [Step-wise migrations](#) remain common, with migration from rural to urban areas within a sending country often preceding international migration (Martineau et al., 2002; Bach, 2003). There is also a growing body of literature on the [gendered aspect of medical professionals’ mobility](#) (Kofman, 2000; Kofman & Raghuram, 2005; Ribeiro, 2008) and the ethical aspects of health professionals’ recruitment (Jenkins, 2004; Buchan et al., 2008; Bertelsmann, 2015; Mendy, 2018). Comparative and large scale analyses are scarce (OECD, 2002; Bach, 2003; Wismar et al., 2011; Moullan, 2018); however, there is a large number of studies both on highly developed destination countries (Buchan, 2006a, b; Ribeiro, 2008; Chaloff, 2008; Dumont et al., 2008; Yamamura, 2009; Finotelli, 2014; Klein, 2016) and origin countries (Schrecker & Labonte, 2004; Chikanda, 2006; Mareckova, 2006; Leśniowska, 2007; Murdoch, 2011; Walton-Roberts, 2015).

### 7.3 Low-Skilled Migration

On the opposite of the skills continuum, we have [low-skilled migration literature](#) focusing on the movement of persons holding jobs that do not require necessarily high levels of education or extensive professional experience. Public policy frameworks in selected cases can use the salary level to define low-skilled migration. Analysing recent trends in low-skilled migration must be assessed concerning neoliberal [globalisation](#), which brought about restrictive migratory models for less-skilled workers that involve border controls and reinforce neoliberal market strategies (i.e., subcontracting, casual, flexible, contingent, and part-time work) within key low-skilled sectors of the market. The result is a new class hierarchy within the global labour market, not only in terms of human capital, but also in terms of legal status, origin, race, ethnicity, and gender (Castles, 2011).

#### 7.3.1 *The Construction Sector*

Despite being one of the sectors that employ the highest number of migrants around the world, construction work has attracted less academic interest than other unskilled works. Migration for the building industry contributes to the international trend towards urbanisation processes of capital (Harvey, 1985; Buckley, 2012; Torres et al., 2013) and rapid growth of global cities as urban economies (Sassen, 1991; Gama Gato & Salazar, 2018). Neoliberalism, combined with restrictive migratory policies, facilitate ‘precarious employment regimes’ in construction work (economic deregulation, capital mobility and surplus, corporate restructuring, labour

flexibilisation and subcontracting), which leads to a dependence on migrant labour within the sector. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, construction workers (and migrant construction workers, in particular) experienced the most severe job losses on an international scale (Buckley, 2012). Due to fluctuations in the demand for employment, that characterises this sector, workers are hired temporarily, which leads to circular migration. This is the case of ‘posted migrants’, who are sent by their employers to work on projects abroad [on a temporary basis](#). The fact that migrant workers usually live on the construction sites subordinates them for the duration of the building project on which they are employed. The strategy of housing migrants on the work site *de facto* channels all their efforts into the work of earning and saving money, thus isolating them from the broader society (Caro et al., 2015; Del Aguila, 2018). The construction sector uses indirect recruitment practices based on subcontracting or individual recruiters (Reza, 2016; Gama Gato & Salazar, 2018), often through ethnic networks based on bonds of trust and national affiliation (Vargas, 2005). Immigration and employment regimes exert considerable influence over the working conditions of migrant workers in the construction sector (Ida & Talit, 2015; Buckley, 2012; Friberg, 2012).

### 7.3.2 *The Agricultural Sector*

The literature on the migration of agricultural labour has been fundamentally concerned with the study of the Northern and Latin American contexts, and Southern Europe (Semprebon et al., 2017). In the context of a liberalised, global food economy, agri-food firms can improve their profit margins only through workforce control (Preibisch, 2010), thus employ migrant workers as a cost-saving measure. Changes to production objectives that target mainly export markets and, in some regions, specialisation in permanent crops, also drive the sector’s dependence on migrant labour (Avallone, 2013; Santos Gómez & Villagómez Velázquez, 2015; Kilkey & Urzi, 2017).

As in the construction sector, migrants employed in agriculture tend to live in accommodations provided by their employers in the fields, which forces them into flexible labour patterns and enables strict supervision by employers, thus leading to harsh living conditions, social isolation, and dependence on the employers (Perrota & Sacchetto, 2014; Gialis & Herod, 2014; Semprebon et al., 2017). Within the agricultural sector, intermediaries are commonly used for recruiting workers, which leads to ethnic stratification, as well as a system of organisation and [labour relations conditioned by colonial-style systems and racial hierarchies](#) (Avallone, 2013; Rotz, 2017; Semprebon et al., 2017). Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work, migrant workers are recruited on a temporary basis, leading to [circular migration](#). States draw on migration controls to supply workers to agriculture through several mechanisms, which facilitate an undocumented workforce, the relaxing of border movements between neighbouring states, and the implementation of [temporary migrant worker programmes](#) (Preibisch, 2010). Temporary migrant worker

programmes, especially, have attracted scholarly interest, notably in the US and Canada (Martin, 2017; Ruhs & Martin, 2008; Valarezo, 2015; Martin, 2017; Weiler et al., 2017; Consterdine & Samuk, 2018).

### 7.3.3 *Domestic and Care Work*

In the last 15 years, research into domestic and care work has dominated academic literature on unskilled migration. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, pioneering studies portrayed domestic and care work migration in the context of globalisation, the international division of reproductive labour (Parreñas, 2001), and the development of ‘global care chains’ (Hochschild, 2000). This migration is also explained within the framework of social reproduction crises (Zimmerman et al., 2005) and the ‘care deficit’ that northern countries experience (Bettio et al., 2006; Glenn, 2010). The care deficit is attributed to an ageing population and the rise in the number of autochthonous women joining the labour market.

Research has focused on the migration of women from the Global South to the USA and Western Europe (Dumitru, 2018), although in the last 15 years there has been an increased interest in Asia (*inter alia* Yeoh & Shirlena, 2005; Constable, 2019; Hertzman, 2019; Silvey & Parreñas, 2019). The scholarship has shed light on the specificity of the labour market sector for domestic and care work, much of which is carried out by undocumented foreign workers in the informal economy (Triandafyllidou, 2013). The research points to a range of characteristics that are common to migrant domestic and care work including, low wages, exploitation, and discrimination. The particular nature of this type of employment is worthy of note: as domestic and care work takes place in the private sphere, it is notoriously difficult to regulate working hours and holidays, as well as the paternalistic relationship forged between employer and employee. Thus, domestic and care workers are embedded at the interplay of gender, racial, ethnic, and class forms of oppression (Anderson, 2000; Andall, 2000; Lutz, 2008; Parreñas Salazar, 2014; Marchetti & Venturini, 2014; Christian & Namaganda, 2018).

The commodification of this type of work needs to be addressed in relation to existing policies and the reactions of welfare regimes in response to the demand for care, as they engage with migration and gender regimes (Kofman, 2005; Bettio et al., 2006; Näre, 2013). In comparison to construction work, domestic and care work were less affected by the 2008 economic recession; however, the degree of precariousness in the sector has increased (Babiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2014; Napierala & Wojtyńska, 2017; Maroukis, 2018). Finally, the most recent research also addresses the impact of domestic and care work migration on the family members and communities left behind (Graeme, 2009; Hoang et al., 2012; Siriwardhana et al., 2015; Fan & Parreñas, 2018). The scholarship has adopted an approach rooted in postcolonial feminism, which has spotlighted new and alternative voices on the topic (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010; Durin et al., 2014; Marchetti, 2014; Gatt et al., 2016).

### 7.3.4 *Prostitution/Sex Work*

A sharp rise in female migration in recent decades has been spurred by the globalisation of the sex industry, and commensurate levels of research on this topic reflect this rise. Although researchers, activists, government representatives, policymakers, and the media have all tended to focus on the issue in terms of **human trafficking** and portraying migrant women as the victims of **sexual exploitation** (Kempadoo, 2007), several authors have begun to challenge this particular framing. These authors question the reliability of the data that undergirds the trafficking approach and emphasise that such a focus relegates women to a passive role of victim, negating their agency and decision-making capacity when opting for sex work (Agustin, 2006; Kempadoo et al., 2005; Weitzer, 2007). Less attention has been paid to the conditions of migrants carrying out sex work, and most of this research has been produced by health scholars who are interested to analyse the health risks for migrant sex workers (Nigro et al., 2006; Tucker et al., 2011; Jie et al., 2012; Ojeda et al., 2012; Richter et al., 2014). The majority of studies in this vein show that migrant sex workers are exposed to the worst working conditions and highest degrees of stigmatisation and criminalisation due to their status as undocumented migrants, which limits their autonomy and pushes them to carry out unsafe sex acts. Policies targeting migration and prostitution affect the conditions for sex work, generating legal irregularities that, in turn, lead to indebtedness and greater exploitation of sex industry workers (Ruiz, 2008; Adriaenssens et al., 2016).

## 7.4 Conclusions

The above overview of labour migration literature would not be complete without noting the research gaps that require more fine-tuned studies. Existing research often applies the high-/low-skilled migration dichotomy, which has left the area in-between largely overlooked. Research gaps also include the effects of labour migration on the wages of native-born workers, as well as the social, political, and economic factors that are linked to unionisation of migrants (McGovern, 2007). Other under-researched areas include bogus self-employment and posted work among labour migrants in the EU (Galgóczi et al., 2009), and the over-education of migrants, including its causes and consequences (Piracha & Vadean, 2012). The gaps noted here are only some of the under-studied issues.

Moreover, research on labour migration needs to address the issue of ‘mixed migration flows’ (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2013), which complicate the clear-cut distinctions between the standard categories of labour, family, and humanitarian migration. The issue of ‘mixed migration flows’ is especially relevant in studies on labour market performance of non-labour migrants, such as recent refugees in destination countries worldwide.

Finally, in setting the agenda for future labour migration research, a broader political, social, and economic context of the contemporary world should be taken into account. Most importantly, new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are confounding the distinction between migration and mobility (King, 2002). New developments in the 'labour' element of labour migration will require studies to address the links between migration and changes in the world of work, such as automation of labour and structural changes in the economy.

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## Chapter 8

# Family Migration



Eleonore Kofman, Franz Buhr, and Maria Lucinda Fonseca

Family migration is the term used to categorise the international movement of people who migrate due to new or established family ties. People moving for family reasons constitute the largest group of migrants entering OECD countries, ahead of labour and humanitarian migration (OECD, 2017). To move for family reasons may encompass an array of different kinds of migration trajectories, from the adoption of a foreign child to family members accompanying migrant workers or refugees, as well as people forming new family units with host country residents. Yet, the primary form of family migration remains family reunification: when family members reunite with those who migrated previously.

Despite its ever-present relevance, family migration remains a dynamic and deeply political form of migration. Not only have migrants seen their rights to bring in family members fluctuate in the past decades, but the very meaning of ‘family’ has changed considerably, bringing legal implications for both nationals and migrants, and redefining what falls under the ‘family migration’ category. The question of who counts as family in family migration law owes a great deal to changing societal norms of family life and the quest for equal rights for all types of families.

Law often lags behind developments in society, and family migration law is no exception (Kofman & Kraler, 2006). Up until the past few years in Europe, **LGBT migrants** did not have the right to family reunification procedures for bringing their partners to their new place of residence. Not all countries included dependent ascendants in their family migration policies, nor are countries equally recognisant of domestic partnerships. Migrant families do add to the diversification of family structures and living arrangements already taking place in host countries’ societies, such as a relative decline in the traditional married couple nuclear family, and an

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increase in heterosexual and same-sex cohabiting couples, single-parent families, and blended families among other family forms.

The study of migrant families therefore cuts across the available legal definitions of family and brings to light emerging forms of living together, gender roles, sexualities, kinship ties, and caregiving practices. This chapter selectively synthesises recent scholarship on family migration, providing insights on the institutionalisation of the field, outlining its approaches and methodologies, and highlighting emerging topics for future research.

## 8.1 Development and Timeline of the Field

Starting in the late 1980s, theoretical and methodological research on family migration emerged as a subject of scholarly work (Boyd, 1989; Zlotnik, 1995). At the same time, the family and household emerged as a unit of analysis through the New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark & Bloom (1985) in which the household rather than the individual is conceptualised as the decision-making unit of migration for purposes of investment and diversification of its resources. However, this theory has been criticised for its failure to take into account intra-household inequalities, power and conflicts arising from gender, generation and age (de Haas & Fokkema, 2010). The role of family in internal migration (Mincer, 1978) and a number of country case studies of family reunification to the US were also published (see *International Migration Review*, 1977, 1986).

In Asia, too, family migrations, and especially marriages, gave rise to articles in the *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal* (1995, 1999). European research, however, lagged behind (Kofman, 2004); family migration drew less attention than **labour migration** as family migration was associated with dependency upon a primary migrant, and largely consisted of women and children. Even so, as labour migration grew in numbers, so too did family migration increase as a result of increasing family reunifications, a trend that also characterises southern European countries since the 1990s (Ambrosini et al., 2014; Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018; Fonseca & Ormond, 2008; Gonzalez-Ferrer, 2011). Hence, over the past two decades, we see consistent growth of publications about family migrations in relation to its different forms, the experiences of different family members, familial strategies, and the formation of transnational families.

Interest in family migration and how families operate across space and time was inspired by studies of **transnationalism** where the significance of family, friends and kin became evident in the maintenance of networks across international borders (Schiller et al., 1995). In the early 2000s, Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) drew attention to transnational families in Europe and countries of origin, leading to the consolidation of family migration as a field, which has burgeoned in the ensuing years. While international migration had traditionally been equated with the movement of men, the growth of female labour migrants was seen to impact family life, especially those persons left behind (Wall & Bolzman, 2013). In countries with large

numbers of migrant female workers in domestic work, care work, and nursing, women became the sponsor of husbands, children, and parents.

In countries of destination, especially in Northern Europe, migrant families also became central to debates about how to live in multicultural societies and how to integrate future incoming migrants, especially [Muslim women](#) (Grillo, 2008). The politicisation and stigmatisation of migrant families have posed such families as a threat to Western norms and values and a drain on welfare expenditure.

However, it was not only academic interest in family migration that contributed to the growth of publications and comparative European projects. The Europeanisation of migration policy from Tampere onwards gave rise to the adoption of the Family Reunification Directive 2003/86 EC in 2003 (adopted by all Member States except Denmark, Ireland, and the UK). The Directive outlines the minimum rights third-country nationals should have in reuniting with a family member living in an EU Member State but does not address the situations of third-country nationals who are family members of an EU citizen.

The Directive also provides more favourable rules for refugees. It has been progressively adopted over several years by old EU states as well as the new enlargement states. The Commission has monitored (2008; 2014; 2019) the implementation of the Directive while the European Migration Network (EMN, 2017) has produced reports on issues and problems regarding family reunification and related issues. In part, concerns about family migration are due to the fact that, for the past 30 years, family reunification has been one of the primary drivers of immigration to the EU. In 2017, 472,994 migrants were admitted to the EU-25 on [grounds of family reunification](#), or approximately 28% of all first permits issued to third-country nationals in the EU-25. It should be noted that, for the purposes of migration policy, ‘family’ was conceptualised as the traditional nuclear family comprised of a married couple and dependent children under 18 years of age.

Comparative projects on family migration explore the impact of family migration policies on the condition of entry and on integration into the receiving society. Some examples of these works include *Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies* (New Directions in Democracy, Austria, 2006–2009) (Kraler & Kofman, 2010); *PROSINT—Promoting Sustainable Policies for Integration* (Scholten et al., 2012); *IMPACIM—Impact of Admission Criteria on the Integration of Migrants* (Oliver & Jayaweera, 2013); *Family Reunification: a barrier or facilitator of integration?: a comparative study* (Strik et al., 2013). The impact of increasingly restrictive family migration policies has also been critically examined in Finland (Pellander, 2021) and Norway (Eggbø, 2013; Staver, 2015) as well as in North-western countries with long-standing patterns of family migration. Women, particularly those from Muslim countries, have been targeted through integration contracts and measures, such as knowledge of language and the receiving society (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015).

Studies of family migration dissect what constitutes ‘proper’ families ‘worthy’ of being granted admission and [incorporation](#) into national societies (Bonizzoni, 2018a, b; Bonjour & Kraler, 2015; Strasser et al., 2009). Stratification, especially by class (Kofman, 2018; Staver, 2015), determines the possibility of sponsoring



family members. Such inequality in the right to sponsor family members is particularly significant given that families underpin the circulation of care and maintain social reproduction (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Bonizzoni, 2018a, b; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). Additional migration-related topics that have gained attention over the past decade include cross-border and transnational marriages (and not simply marriages between co-ethnics) (Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017; Williams, 2010); migration and mobility theories (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020; Oso & Suarez-Grimalt, 2017); and methodological issues (Beauchemin, 2012; Beauchemin et al., 2015; Mazzucato & Dito, 2018). These topics will be explored in greater detail in the following sections.

## 8.2 Approaches and Theories

Many disciplines, ranging from anthropology, geography, politics, sociology, history, and law contribute to the study of family migrations. Most empirical studies have tended to be qualitative (Beauchemin, 2012), but more recent studies have generated large-scale data, enabling comparative analysis (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018). Approaches to family migration studies vary according to subtopics and disciplinary field. Policy and legal analysis examine the impact of policy (Block & Bonjour, 2013; Staver, 2015; Kofman, 2018) and legal changes on individuals and families, including their ability to live together (Wray et al., 2014). Comparative analyses of family migration policies have become more common, ranging from two-country to EU-wide and OECD-wide comparisons. The Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), for example, produced a comprehensive comparison of integration policies among 38 countries in the European Economic Area, and including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. The overall index assesses the impact of immigration and residence regulations and integration measures for immigrants. MIPEX's framework of four broad criteria can be applied as a benchmark to evaluate the extent to which immigration and associated policies complicate or facilitate the reunification of families. The four strands include: (1) eligibility of sponsors and those sponsored; (2) conditions of sponsorship; (3) security of status; and (4) the rights of family members, especially spouses.

Other developments in the [trajectory of migration studies](#) should be noted. While earlier studies focused on countries of destination and often assumed that migrants wished to bring their family members with them, more recent studies take a more nuanced and critical view of migratory processes and question the desire to complete family reunification. Theoretically, studies have adopted a migration systems approach in which all forms of migration (permanent, temporary, circular, return) occur simultaneously. Increasingly, studies are multi-sited and transnational, in which people, services, and cultural and social practices circulate between places, underscoring the interdependency between the mobile and immobile to ensure successful migration outcomes (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020; Bermudez & Oso, 2018; Oso & Suarez-Grimalt, 2017).

Although family-related needs play a significant role in [intra-European migration](#) (depending on the data source) (Strey et al., 2018), this perspective has been somewhat neglected among researchers. Some of the difficulties of identifying family-related movements arise from the fact that individuals are often not counted as such because they do not hold a residence permit under this category and because restrictions on movement for family reasons do not apply to the same extent for EU nationals. Yet, large-scale migration from Eastern Europe post-EU enlargement in 2004 drew attention to the family strategies deployed by Polish migrants in their migration to and settlement in western Europe and relationships with their homeland (Ryan et al., 2009).

## 8.3 Research Topics

### 8.3.1 *Transnational Families*

Because states do not collect information on family members living apart, we do not know the prevalence of transnational families (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) whose members live some or most of the time separate from each other across national borders. However, in more recent scholarship, transnational families are receiving more attention due to the general increase in the number of migrants, many of whom are temporary or do not have a sufficiently regular status or resources to bring other family members with them. Quantitative studies (see above) have questioned the commonly held idea that migrants want to reunify in the country of work and decide to do so based on familial structures and gender ideologies in the country of origin (Lenoel & David, 2019). Multi-sited and longitudinal studies have been able to capture the fluctuating and complex changes in the composition of the family in the destination country in response to economic crises (Oso & Suarez-Grimalt, 2017), the contextual factors in sending and receiving countries (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018), and the changing care demands in countries of origin and destination (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

### 8.3.2 *Staying in Touch*

Family members commonly use multimedia or [information communication technology \(ICTs\)](#) to stay in contact (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Although these media may help to overcome absence and create a degree of intimacy, they require considerable effort and time to be effective (Baldassar et al., 2016). In spite of these advances, a sense of intimacy with distant or Skype parents can be more difficult to achieve.

Of course, ICTs are not equally available to all. Women in low- and middle-income countries, for instance, are 10% less likely to own a phone than men

(Rowntree, 2018). In the United States, a study found that migrants with lower education and income levels were not able to access or afford the same types of ICTs as higher-skilled migrants and thus were in less contact with their [families back home](#) (Cuban, 2018).

Return visits are usually the more preferred and traditional means for maintaining relations and bringing family members to the country of destination for short periods. These visits are much easier for those with a regular status and for EU citizens who do not require visas and can benefit from cheap transport.

### ***8.3.3 Separated Families and Deportation***

Separation of transnational families—either voluntary or forced—is another key issue, particularly in cases where a family member is deported. There are conflicting views among academics and policymakers about the impact of separation on children whose parents have migrated (Lam & Yeoh, 2019) and on parents whose children migrate. Generally speaking, different outcomes are shaped by the wide variety of pre-migration structures and childcare traditions and variables that shape the experiences and outcomes for children and parents left behind (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012).

Separation and forced transnationalism of immigrant families can also occur when a family member is in immigration detention or has been deported. These immigration enforcement actions are important cornerstones of restrictive immigration policies as they can function as deterrent for prospective immigrants. The United States provide an important and current example in this aspect. The number of deportations from the US rose drastically over the last three decades, with more than 340,000 people having been deported in 2017 alone. Interestingly, these immigrants have been living in the US on average for more than a decade (APA, 2018). The number of children who have undocumented parents potentially facing deportation numbers are in the millions (APA, 2018). Many of these children are US citizens, often even from birth (e.g., when parents had been given lawful but temporary protection that was not renewed later). The detention of a parent or close family member has serious economic, physical, psychological, and developmental consequences on children, other family members, and entire communities (APA, 2018). Brabeck et al. (2011) found that the consequences of the forced separation linger even after the family unit has been restored.

### ***8.3.4 Impact of Family Migration Policies***

While earlier research focused on family reunification of migrants and co-ethnic marriages, more recent research has turned to how family migration policies define the acceptable family and permissible intimate relationships (Bonizzoni, 2018a, b),

which includes a range of family members and familial and kin relationships, but also other affective relationships (e.g., love and marriage, parenting of children, and parental care) (Groes & Fernandez, 2018; Mai & King, 2009). Migrants benefitting from family migration regulations are expected to demonstrate they have the capacity to be productive, comply with acceptable cultural practices, and not be a burden on the welfare state (for a review of family migration and integration see Eggbø & Brekke, 2019). Integration policies have tended to represent family migrants as relatively homogeneous and often ‘transferring’ traditional cultural and social practices, yet, in reality, they come from many different countries and reflect an increasing global mobility that has extended intimate relationships (Wagner, 2015). An intersectional approach analysing the dynamic interaction between nationality, gender, age, class, and race needs to be applied to acquire a better understanding of family migration and the impact of policies (Korteweg, 2017). For example, class and socio-economic resources, which vary within nationalities (Horst et al., 2016), make a difference in how migrants navigate regulations (Chauvin et al., 2021). Furthermore, the complexity of how family members contribute to the social reproduction of the family tends to be given little attention in the migration literature. Rather, attention is paid to the nuclear family in immigration legislation while the roles of parents and other kin are marginalised.

The MIPEX (see above) rates the degree of difficulty for family reunification in 38 countries, most of which are in Europe, but also include a few wealthier Asian nations. The right to family reunification and formation—income, other resources, such as housing, integration conditions—has generated inequalities. **Family reunification policies** are most restrictive in northern countries, as they align the conditions for sponsorship increasingly with economic conditions for labour migration, especially the high-income requirements in a number of countries, which has rendered class more significant in the stratification of access to family life (Kofman, 2018; Staver, 2015). The focus of academic studies had tended to be on spousal sponsorship, but in recent years the growing restrictions on parents (Bragg & Wong, 2016) has led to more studies of the difficulties parents face in re-joining their children (Bélanger & Candiz, 2019). Arising from the large inflow of refugees since 2015, a number of countries imposed a temporary halt on family reunification (as from March 2016) for those with subsidiary protection—a lower level of protection than refugee status—who had to wait for 2 years before benefitting from it in Germany. In August 2018, this was abolished altogether and replaced with a cap of 1000 persons per month allocated according to humanitarian reasons (AIDA/ECRE). Denmark put a stop for refugees in general (Rytter, 2019).

### 8.3.5 *Marriage Migration*

Binational marriages in Asia grew from the 1990s (Chung et al., 2016; Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008) and were conceptualised by Constable (2005) as global hypergamy where labour and marriages from poorer to richer countries paralleled each other. In

Europe, however, research tended to be focused, initially, on marriages between co-ethnics such as Turks, Moroccans, or Pakistanis marrying with someone from their homeland and seen as a problem for integration of the migrant in the receiving society. Cross-border marriages between a wider range of nationalities than co-ethnic as a means of migrating legally and acquiring citizenship have begun to receive more attention. Such migrations raise questions about [the regulation of who belongs and who deserves citizenship](#) (Bonizzoni, 2018a, b; Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017; Moret et al., 2021; Williams, 2010).

Intra-European binational couples have been surprisingly under-studied (Gaspar, 2012; De Valk & Medrano, 2014) due in part to the assumption that intra-European mobility is primarily driven by work reasons. However, Migali and Natale (2017) found that familial reasons are nearly as significant as work motivations. Other studies of intra-European mobility, as in the *Pioneur* research conducted between 2002 and 2006, showed that love migration came first by a slight margin over work reasons (Recchi, 2015). For many individuals, the movement for familial and intimate reasons represented a second mobility, following an initial move for education or work (Gaspar, 2012). Having the privilege of EU citizenship, couples do not have to marry, but may cohabit. However, same-sex marriages are only recognised in northern, western, and southern European states, which, from 2018, were able to benefit from free movement rights.

## 8.4 Conclusion

Family migration is a broad migration form, which encompasses various kinds of movements, living arrangements, geographies and rights. Its statistical importance attracts political attention, but its manifold empirical forms and practices extend its relevance beyond policy-oriented studies. The study of family migration owes its dynamism to the constant change of what is (or should be) understood by the word 'family'. The transformation of familial forms and the diversification of migration patterns encompassing both intra-European and third country nationals happen at a faster pace than scholarly enquiry, thus generating research gaps. Some of these gaps are emerging topics within the field and include: (1) understanding the effects of restrictions on family migration across Europe and identifying strategies developed by family members who are excluded by (new) family reunification provisions; (2) examining how the 'shrinking' of the family as a result of migration and impediments to family reunification may be distressing and producing emotional dependency, while, at the same time, may also be experienced as liberating by some migrants in terms of autonomy, self-expression, gender roles, and sexuality (Kofman et al., 2011); (3) including more diverse familial and intimate arrangements such as LGBT families in cross-border marriages (Chauvin et al., 2021) and intersectional approaches taking into account class, race, nationality and age in family migration and the impact of policies; and (4) further investigating how Europe's recent [refugee](#) intake will unfold as refugee families reunify.

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# Chapter 9

## Humanitarian Migration



Cathrine Talleraas, Jan-Paul Brekke, and Franz Buhr

Humanitarian migration relates to the movement of people who feel somehow forced to move. Yet, distinguishing which migration forms fall under the label of humanitarian migration is not straightforward. Migration research has a history of separating between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration flows, however, this distinction has been challenged since the 1990s (Richmond, 1994; Van Hear, 1998). Instead of treating this pair of concepts as binary opposites, both classic (Zolberg, 1989) and recent contributions see them as extremes on a continuum (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018). The concept of mixed flows (Van Hear, 2014; Sharpe, 2018) captures this complexity, as several motivations may be present for the individual at the time of migration (Carling & Talleraas, 2016).

In this chapter, we describe five forms of humanitarian migration: (1) refugees, (2) asylum seekers, (3) internally displaced people (IDPs), (4) victims of trafficking, and (5) unaccompanied migrant minors. We provide a systematic and cross-national knowledge review of humanitarian migration research. The main portion of the literature presented in this chapter stems from the Migration Research Hub database, which has been supplemented with additional publications, other research outputs, and relevant datasets.

In the following sections, we first provide an overview of the development of research on humanitarian migration. This includes a summary of research trends in terms of disciplines, methodologies, and analytical levels, and further provides a brief outline of the datasets and sources available in the field. Next, we summarise

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key research trends on the mentioned five humanitarian migration forms. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps and frontiers in the research field.

## 9.1 Development and Trends

Humanitarian migration has a long history. As a research area, humanitarian migration covers the movement of people who feel somehow forced to move. It is often stated that the two World Wars in the twentieth century established humanitarian migration as a distinctively modern phenomenon (Bessel & Haake, 2009). Despite an important number of works addressing refugees and IDPs in the post-War period, events in the 1980s, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, helped solidify humanitarian migration as a field of study, and prepared the ground for its growing institutionalisation as a discipline.

The study of humanitarian migration often relates to international humanitarian law, which defines, protects and regulates humanitarian flows, such as refugees. To a certain extent, these international protection regimes have structured the field, which is noticeable through the significant number of policy-oriented studies on the matter, and the growth of research concerning the governance and policies of humanitarian migration (see e.g. the recent growth in studies focusing on ‘governance’, ‘policy’ AND ‘refugees’ included in the [Migration Research Hub](#)). Contemporary studies on humanitarian migration also often gravitate toward the European asylum system and other “Western” receiving country governance systems concerning asylum seekers and refugees (Triandafyllidou, 2016). An apparent critique of this focus is that the policy-orientation limits the scope of research and analysis, seeing that humanitarian migration research only captures the categories with legal rights. Moreover, the separation between ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’ as distinct categories, not only in legal studies but also sociological and ethnographic research, limits the research as it not capture the more ambiguous and individual experiences or situation migrants with humanitarian needs may be in.

Another critique of the trends in humanitarian migration research is the asymmetry in geographic focus and the inevitable bias produced by funding schemes and geopolitical power dimensions. Indeed, the European refugee regime is ‘only one part of a larger picture’ (Holian & Cohen, 2012, p. 316). In fact, developing countries host 84% of the world’s refugees, not developed ones (UNHCR, 2017a). To counter a Western/Eurocentric bias in humanitarian research, scholars have also made a case for wider understandings of refugee issues, such as postcolonial and feminist refugee narratives (Hyndman, 2010). Yet, more reflectivity in this regard is needed to overcome the historical and policy-driven divisions between categories and geographic analytical scope.

Besides refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs, the field of humanitarian migration research also accounts for the study of unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking. An unaccompanied minor may be an asylum seeker, a refugee, an IDP, or a victim of trafficking. Yet, most countries grant them specific protection given

their specific vulnerabilities. In 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that minors (both accompanied and unaccompanied) accounted for 52% of the world's refugee population (UNHCR, 2018). Despite their statistical and humanitarian importance, researchers argue that studies unaccompanied minors have been done at an “overwhelmingly small scale” (Kulu-Glasgow et al., 2019).

Human trafficking is a transnational organised criminal activity and it is, by its nature, difficult to track. Global estimates in 2016 held that more than 40 million people worldwide had been victims of intra- and international trafficking as ‘modern slaves’ (25 million people in forced labour and 15 million people in forced marriage) (ILO, 2017). Most victims of human trafficking are forced to do sex work, which affects women and girls in particular. Academics and policymakers have voiced the need for more systematic and reliable data on human trafficking, especially on other labour-related forms trafficking, such as agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, and domestic servitude (WHO, 2012).

Refugees and asylum seekers remain the principal topics of enquiry in the field of humanitarian migration, easily noticeable by the number of publications, research projects, and research funding available for this topic. However, this research field is consolidating and widening its scope by covering more geographical areas, different scales, and methodological approaches.

### ***9.1.1 Disciplines, Methodologies, and Analytical Levels***

Law has had a strong influence on humanitarian migration studies since the outset. One can see this in the privileging of governmental, institutional, and international spheres within the field (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014, p. 5). Policy-oriented and policy analysis research have been a constant topic of researchers within the field. Besides law, history was also a precursor in refugee and IDP research. As part of the gradual institutionalisation of the field of humanitarian migration studies, postgraduate programmes, several journals, and yearly conferences were established. While migration studies were largely populated by social scientists, scholars in the humanities transformed the field of research by contributing to the diversification of theories, methodologies, approaches, and analytical levels.

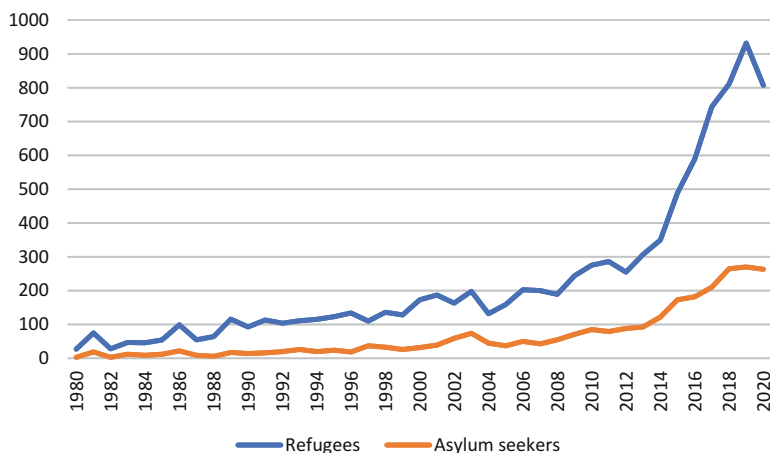
Anthropology and human geography promoted the ethnographic approach in the field, exploring the individual, familial, and collective (ethnic, religious, or national affiliations) underpinnings of forced migration. There is a perception within the field that qualitative methods dominate humanitarian migration studies, often privileging single-case studies. Forced migration studies have also attracted economists, political scientists, and sociologists, providing both individual data, qualitative research, and more large scale and systemic analysis. Perhaps as a reaction to a tradition of large-scale, national, or institutional level of analysis, researchers have voiced the need for a careful examination of the local sphere as an arena for implementing asylum and reception policies (Hinger et al., 2016).

### 9.1.2 Datasets and Sources

The main data sources in the field of humanitarian migration are organised by international or regional bodies: the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (annual reports and statistics); the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (Migration Data Portal); the Eurostat webpage (statistics); and national websites such as the one from the Department of Homeland Security in the US.

The graph (Fig. 9.1) below shows the number of journal articles published from 1980 to 2018 with reference to asylum seekers and refugees. The exponential increase in publications right after 2013 illustrates how scholarship responded rapidly to the conflict in Syria described by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, as “the most dramatic humanitarian crisis that [the UNHCR has] ever faced”.

For unaccompanied minors, the key data source is the United Nations Children’s Fund’s website (UNICEF). The Separated Children in Europe Programme also provides a summary of minors’ migration to Europe. Key data sources for victims of trafficking can be found on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) webpage and on the pages of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO produces yearly reports on forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking. A number of anti-slavery activist associations also gather up-to-date information on human trafficking.



**Fig. 9.1** Number of journal articles on humanitarian migration (1980–2020). (Source: [migrationresearch.com](http://migrationresearch.com))

## 9.2 Refugees

A refugee is a person who is forced to flee his or her country and unwilling or unable to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (UNHCR, 1951). Refugee studies predate the 1951 UN convention, but the number of institutions, journals, and publication on refugees have increased dramatically over the last few decades (Black, 2001). Recent trends in refugee research include refugee displacement as a global challenge, exploring the effects of technological development (e.g., social media platforms), the mechanisms of onward migration, and the processes of local integration. The ensuing sections each summarise the core focus in the more developed research topics pertaining the academic discourse on refugees, namely; refugee drivers, regional displacement and camp life, the international protection regime, refugee resettlement and durable solutions.

### 9.2.1 *Refugee Drivers*

What drives refugees to cross borders to seek protection in other countries? The classical drivers connected with refugee movements include conflict, violence, political oppression, and persecution (Zolberg et al., 1989). However, over the past 10 years, much research has examined other complex drivers of forced migration, including root causes, poverty and lack of life chances, failed states, environmental changes, and natural disasters (De Haas, 2010). The mixed set of drivers pushing refugees across borders has led researchers to revisit discussions on the distinction, or lack thereof, between forced and voluntary migration.

### 9.2.2 *Regional Displacement and Camp Life*

There is substantial literature on the topic of life (and protracted lives) in refugee-camps (Feldman, 2015). Researchers have highlighted the spatial and temporal aspects of camp life. While being spatially defined, camps frequently shift from being temporary constructions to a status of semi-permanence (Turner, 2016). The organisation and management of camps constitute one key area of research. Here we find questions about self-organisation (Corbet, 2016), in-camp democracy (LeCadet, 2016), participation in urban life (Santana de Andrade, 2020), and other challenges (Holzer, 2012). Other key questions include: How are we to understand the refugees' well-being in camps (Crea et al., 2015)? What are their links to networks in other parts of the world (Horst, 2006)? What management challenges do camps represent as they assume a state of permanency (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2007)?

### **9.2.3 *The International Protection Regime***

Since 1951, the UN Refugee Convention and later, its 1967 Protocol, have constituted the cornerstones of the international refugee protection regime. The UNHCR has since promoted accession to and compliance with these instruments. Following the record number of asylum arrivals to Europe in 2015, however, the focus of decision-makers and researchers turned again to the state level and to advancing the international protection regime. This research would inspire the UN to develop the Global Compacts on refugees (2018) and migrants (2018).

Traditionally, researchers in this field have studied the development of the UNHCR (Loescher, 2017), its operations, and its cooperation with global and local partners around the world (Betts et al., 2012). After 2015, researchers have pointed to what they see as a failed international protection regime. Suggested reforms include increased focus on local integration; on empowerment and re-establishing for normalcy; and stronger international support for neighboring countries that house refugees (Betts & Collier, 2018).

Recent research has also focused on normative aspects of regional solutions to refugee protection (Kneebone, 2016). While regional protection norms fall under the global normative regime, these regulations have necessarily adapted to regional political realities and cross-boundary cooperation (Scheel & Ratfisch, 2013). A Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Program, for instance, accompanied the development of the UN Global Compact on Refugees, which reflects trends in research and political sentiment (UNHCR, 2017b).

### **9.2.4 *Refugee Resettlement/UN Quota-Refugees***

Many refugees registered by the UNHCR cannot go home because of continuing conflict, wars and persecution (UNHCR, 2019a). Many of these persons live in perilous situations or have specific needs that they cannot address in the country where they have sought protection. In such circumstances, UNHCR helps resettle refugees to a third country. Following requests from the UNCHR, receiving states volunteer to admit and settle refugees.

Resettlement and resettled refugees have inspired substantive literature. Contributions often focus on the settlement, challenges, and integration process of one particular group of refugees in one specific country or region (Lenette, 2014; Betancourt et al., 2015; Garnier, 2014; Jones & Teytelboym, 2017). In Europe, the 2015 asylum reception crisis spurred renewed political interest in resettlement schemes (Hashimoto, 2018).



### ***9.2.5 Durable Solutions: Resettlement, Repatriation and Local Integration***

According to the UNHCR, there are three main durable solutions to protracted refugee situations: voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement (UNHCR, 2019c). The concept of durable solutions has traditionally been associated with permanent settlement, whether in the host country, a third country, or the country of origin. However, lately, there has been renewed focus on local integration, and regional solutions.

## **9.3 Asylum Seekers**

An asylum seeker is an individual who desires international protection in a host country, and whose request has yet to be processed (UNHCR, 2019b). Asylum seekers and the management of asylum arrivals have attracted increased academic and political attention over the past decades, and garnered increased notice following the 2015 refugee reception crisis in Europe. In contrast to the UN-organised quota refugee system, asylum seekers present their case at the border of, or after arrival in, a potential host country. If rejected, they may return voluntarily, be returned by force, may depart for a third country, or remain in the host country irregularly without a permit.

Variations in asylum flows over time and distribution across countries and regions have motivated separate strands of research. While political initiatives and institutions (e.g., European Asylum Support Office, EASO) have sought to predict such changes in asylum flows, researchers have explored a wide range of topics including regional and national asylum regulations (Peers et al., 2012), and migratory decision-making (Havinga & Böcker, 1999; Brekke & Aarset, 2009; Crawley, 2010). The ensuing sections aims to summarise some of the key topics that form part of the academic discourse on asylum seekers, namely: migration management, destination choices and secondary migration, and return and reintegration.

### ***9.3.1 Migration Management***

Migration management relates directly to managing the flows of migrants, and most commonly, asylum seekers. In Europe, both national governments and the EU Commission have embraced the concept (European Parliament, 2017). Migration management covers a range of phenomena, including the increased intervention of government bodies in the field of migration and their direct involvement in diverting migrant movements (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010; Brekke & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018; Hansen, 2014; Trauner, 2016; Boswell & Geddes, 2010). Despite tendencies to

re-nationalise asylum policies following the record number of asylum arrivals in 2015 (Brekke & Staver, 2018), researchers have found migration management regimes, particularly in Europe, to be converging (Eule, 2014; Chetail et al., 2016; Ashutosh & Mountz, 2011).

### **9.3.2 Destination Choices and Secondary Migration**

In the wake of the 2015 refugee reception crisis, politicians and bureaucrats across Europe revitalised the classic discussion within migration studies of what drives migrants' decisions to migrate, and why they go to a particular destination (De Haas, 2011; Koser & McAuliffe, 2013; McAuliffe, 2013; Kuschminder et al., 2015).

The question of destination choices for asylum seekers includes the wider topic of travel routes and transit migration. Many studies have shown that the structural constraints experienced by irregular migrants make them less able to reach their ideal final destination, and they therefore end up in other destinations permanently or 'in transit' (Hamood, 2006; Collyer, 2007; Schapendonk, 2012; Düvell, 2014; Brekke & Brochmann, 2015; Kuschminder et al., 2015).

### **9.3.3 Return and Reintegration**

Return migration is a field on its own and encompasses all categories of migrants (Cassarino, 2004; Constant & Massey, 2002). In the case of asylum seekers, some distinctions regarding return migration are particularly relevant, including the situations for rejected asylum seekers, options of assisted voluntary return (AVR) or forced return, and questions about the degree of actual voluntary action in AVR (Strand et al., 2011). Scholars have also pointed to the underexplored link between integration and return migration (de Haas & Fokkema, 2011).

## **9.4 Internally Displaced People (IDPs)**

An internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who has been forced to flee their home but has not crossed an international border. These individuals are not protected by international law because they are legally under the protection of their own government (UNHCR, 2019c). Indeed, people can be internally displaced due to a number of complex causes, including conflicts, natural disasters, environmental change, or development projects, and, sometimes, from a combination of these factors (*inter alia* Cernea & McDowell, 2000; Birkeland, 2003a, b; Haug, 2003; Lund, 2003; Muggah, 2003; Banerjee et al., 2005; Brun, 2005; Qadeem, 2005).

The issue of internal displacement has risen on the international agenda over the last three decades with a concomitant rise in the volume of research focusing on IDP issues – though the literature has been dominated by international and institutional agencies (Sørensen, 2003). In contrast to refugee status, IDP is not a legal status, and these persons remain under the jurisdiction of their own government, even as their governments often fail to protect them. One recurring debate within this field has focused on whether IDPs and refugees should be included in one category, and therefore also be managed by the same institution(s) (Brun, 2005; see also Barutciski, 1998, 1999; Bennett, 1999; Kingsley-Nyinah, 1999; Rutinwa, 1999; Holbrooke, 2000; Borton et al., 2005). Other prominent policy-oriented discussions have addressed the particularly complex political space of IDP protection (Maley, 2003; Raper, 2003), including the UN’s Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Kälin, 2000; Mooney, 2003; Borton et al. 2005).

## 9.5 Victims of Trafficking

Victims of trafficking are people who have been threatened or forced into transportation, recruitment or exploitation for purposes including sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude, or removal of organs (UNODC, 2019a). This definition is the result of the UNODC and other actors developing and refining their efforts to bring greater clarity to an internationally-agreed understanding of trafficking. Despite efforts to harmonise national laws with international legal terms, definitional questions still complicate policy and policy implementation (UNODC, 2019b). Similarly, numerous scholarly discussions centre around defining specific elements of human trafficking (Weitzer, 2015). Check human smugglers and human traffickers at the Migration Research Hub for more information.

Despite enhanced legal protections and public concern, research on human trafficking remains limited, skewed, and lacks a solid evidence base (Laczko & Goździak, 2005; Zhang, 2009; Goździak & Graveline, 2015). The academic literature on human trafficking is marked by diversity: it spreads across specific fields of research and practice beyond the field of migration studies, focusing on a range of types of trafficking (such as prostitution or forced labour).

While some scholars point to research showing that force and coercion also occur in so-called regular and/or voluntary migration (Anderson & Rogaly, 2005; Rogaly, 2008; O’Connell Davidson, 2010), others find that the trafficking rhetoric enables states to enforce control over migrants’ mobility and labour (Hubbard et al., 2008). Researchers have also argued that studies on trafficking have led to a strong focus on female stereotypes and victimhood (Bernstein, 2007; Jacobsen and Skilbrei, 2010).

## 9.6 Unaccompanied Minors

Unaccompanied migrant minors are foreign nationals below the age of 18 who have been separated from their parents and other relatives, and who are not cared for by an adult (UNHCR, 1997). This group includes minors who are left unaccompanied after entering a new country. The group is interchangeably defined as ‘unaccompanied children’ or ‘unaccompanied minors’, but other terms can be found in the literature, including: ‘minor asylum seekers’, ‘unaccompanied refugee minors’, ‘unaccompanied foreign minors’ and ‘refugee children’. Indeed, there are several debates on the definitions of this broad category (Seugling, 2004; Bhabha & Schmidt, 2006).

Research on unaccompanied minors moves through several different sub-topics, including, but not limited to, governance and policies, migration experiences, immigration status, settlement, health and care services, education, and return. The geographic differences in national legislation and dynamics are reflected in these sub-topics as parallel strands of research developed in the United States and Europe (Chavez & Menjívar, 2010).

The bulk of research on migrant minors still focuses on post-migration experiences, particularly in relation to processes of integration (Menjívar & Perreira, 2019). Here, research topics include educational careers (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019); social care structures; mental health issues such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (de Haan et al., 2019; Eide & Hjern, 2013); and the child as an active and social actor (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003; Boyle et al., 2007; Lo Bianco & Chondrou, 2019). Despite this diversity, research on unaccompanied minors is in general small-scale, as it focuses on a group that is particularly vulnerable and “difficult to reach” (Kulu-Glasgow et al., 2019).

## 9.7 Conclusions

Based on this review of humanitarian migration research, we can draw some conclusions concerning the general trends in the scholarly field, as well as some current and noteworthy research gaps. While the field originates from a juridical strand of inquiry, research on humanitarian migration now encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including human geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, ethnography, political science, and history. In line with the growth of multi-disciplinary studies, the field’s methods and methodologies have also changed: currently all variations of qualitative and quantitative research are applied in the study of humanitarian migration, and newer innovative methods have also been applied: big data, social media monitoring and machine learning. These latter three methods have been employed to study and predict the volume and direction of forced migration flows.

In terms of research gaps, under-researched topics include the latest forms of individual temporary protection; re-regularisation and revocation; receiving countries outsourcing control to transit countries or private actors; cooperation between receiving countries; and the roles of transit countries and sending countries in controlling irregular migration. There is also a need for more study of the possibilities and limitations of regional solutions for forced migrants, particularly as these concern refugee and IDP migration. As an alternative to protection in the region, more studies are needed on the possibility of scaling up the UN's resettlement program. In relation to displacement and risks among IDPs, more accurate data and measurements are needed for effective policy action. The geographical coverage of research and data on IDPs is scattered, and does not always differentiate between first or secondary displacements (IDMC, 2019).

In general, the development of humanitarian migration research has been closely related to the development in forced migration flows and types of displacement. Scholars have studied the development of flows, the corresponding regulation and management of these flows, and the individual experiences of migrants themselves. We therefore expect this broader field of research, and the specific discourses within, to further develop our understandings of the flows, policies, and experiences of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, trafficking victims, and unaccompanied minors. These fields in particular are in continual evolution that responds to conflicts, structural, and interpersonal dynamics. While the gap between research on humanitarian and 'non-humanitarian' migration is of key relevance to understand legal differences e.g. in terms of right provision and protection needs, new awareness on mixed-flows and mixed motivations among migrants may require more interconnection between these originally distinct research fields. Furthermore, with the securitisation agenda ever-more prominently influencing migration policy agendas, particularly in Europe and North America, research on humanitarian migration will continue to play an important role to counter and enlighten prejudicial discourses on migrants who – somehow – feel forced to move.

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# Chapter 10

## Lifestyle Migration



Jennifer McGarrigle

In the context of the growing global middle class, and the ageing of the baby boomer generation, an increasing number of migrants with accumulated wealth from advanced economies are relocating to economically less developed or more peripheral countries to improve their quality of life. Migration of the middle-classes and the relatively affluent is embedded in the same globalising processes and social transformations in production and processes of accumulation that have reshaped labour migration (Hayes, 2021; Castles, 2010). Privileged mobilities are part of wider migration systems, however, what distinguishes lifestyle migrants from other migrants, who are also in pursuit of a better quality of life, is the ease with which they can relocate due to relative privilege in terms of citizenship and financial or cultural capital.

Lifestyle migration has developed as a way of conceptualising these practices. It is a growing research field within migration studies focussing on “migrations where aesthetic qualities including quality of life are prioritised over economic factors like job advancement and income” (Knowles & Harper, 2009, p. 11). This form of leisure or tourism-led mobility receives much less attention than labour or refugee migration to advanced economies, which has been the traditional focus of migration research. Some scholars have argued that the overwhelming attention paid to labour, family, and humanitarian migration has construed a limited picture of who migrants actually are. In turn, the expanding literature on migrants who possess higher social, economic, and political capital is important for the contribution it makes to a more complex understanding of migration forms, the way it unsettles assumptions of marginality, and the insights it provides into inequalities in global migration regimes (Croucher, 2012). Indeed, in terms of migration governance, migration into the global North has become increasingly regulated and contested, while out migration

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has remained largely invisible, uncontroversial, and more lightly regulated (Knowles & Harper, 2009; Lundström, 2017). This chapter provides an overview of the debates on lifestyle and privilege in migration and maps the development of global research on lifestyle migration.

## 10.1 Lifestyle and Privilege in Migration

The almost ubiquitous definition presented by Benson and O'Reilly (2009, p. 609) sees lifestyle migrants as “relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life”. Lifestyle migration provides a conceptual framework to situate and examine different forms of privileged migration—such as amenity migration, International Retirement Migration, residential tourism, second homes, international counter urbanisation (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). As such, rather than identifying distinct categories of migrants it folds different forms of transnational privileged migration together. It is an analytical tool to understand the subjective meaning underpinning the relocation of relatively privileged migrants who are motivated by the search for the good life rather than by work opportunities or political rights (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Knowles & Harper, 2009). As Benson and O'Reilly (2016, p. 25) contend, lifestyle migration is more of “a lens rather than a box”.

### 10.1.1 Lifestyle and Social Identity

Lifestyle, in theoretical terms, is related to societal changes in the late modern social world where processes of social differentiation have become less regimented by fixed social hierarchies and increasingly shaped by consumption practices. According to Giddens (1991, p. 81), lifestyle is a “set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity”. Theorists like Giddens, Urry, or Beck, see social identities as self-constructed through—as Giddens puts it—“the reflexive project of the self” formed by practices of consumption rather than production. That is not to say that some have more choice than others in the fashioning of their lifestyle through consumption practices. In his earlier work, Bourdieu (1984) contests the flattening of social hierarchies and renders lifestyle as mediated by social position and consumption practices (for a more in-depth discussion see Cohen et al., 2015 or Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

Building on these theoretical links between lifestyle, identity, and consumption, lifestyle migration is an approach that seeks to understand the social imaginaries and subjective accounts that migrants narrate of their own migration desire and post migration practices. Many of whom do not self-identify as migrants but rather ex-pats or residential tourists. It is conceived as a project—a process—rather than

a decision or an event. Mobility choices are voluntary and motivated by the search for a better quality of life driven by consumption. As such, the freedom of choice inherent in lifestyle migration ties it to identity-making projects (Hoey, 2010). The search for a better way of life and self-realisation is anchored in the idea that mobility itself is transformative, providing a way of life that is more meaningful and the opportunity for reorientation hinged upon social imaginaries (O'Reilly, 2014). As Hoey (2005, p. 615) argues the choice of where to live is equally about how to live. The idealisations of mobility to more meaningful places and the search for a better quality of life can be applied to most migrants; however, its application here is related with the degree of autonomy, freedom, and choice with which it can be exercised.

### ***10.1.2 Migration Regimes and Relative Privilege***

Though often narrated as an individualised project, lifestyle migration is situated in wider migration systems (Croucher, 2012; Kunz, 2018) and the historical contexts that structure them. The negotiation of privilege in lifestyle migration is predicated on more than individual status and relates to migrants' citizenship and belonging to powerful nation-states within the international system (Knowles & Harper, 2009; Croucher, 2012; Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Janoschka & Haas, 2013). This reflects asymmetries and power geometries in mobility regimes and serves to reproduce structural inequalities (Benson, 2014). As lifestyle migrants are predominantly citizens of wealthy societies in the Western hemisphere their relocation to places at lower latitudes in the division of labour—whether to the European periphery or to the Global South—enables them to capitalise opportunities that different purchasing power and symbolic power relations facilitate (Zaban, 2015; Hayes, 2014). Therefore, their migration is often enabled by their relative wealth in relation to receiving communities, which in turn facilitates certain kinds of material and social practices (Benson, 2014). This process of “geoarbitrage” (Hayes, 2014), or downshifting (Hoey, 2009), as well as the symbolic capital of whiteness, impacts class status among local elites and processes of belonging and identity making (Lundström, 2017; Benson, 2013).

As such, central in this literature is the concept of relative privilege, as Benson (2014) argues privileges are often only manifest through the migration process and develop in specific socio-spatial contexts. In other words, privilege in migration is not synonymous with elite status or absolute economic wealth, nor is the latter the focus of lifestyle migration in analytical terms. As Kunz (2018, p. 110) puts it, privileged migration “includes migrants who are able to transport or translate privileges across contexts or even increase or gain them through migration”. Various authors have shown that vulnerabilities and precarity can be part of migration motivations and the post-migration experience questioning the “assumption that lifestyle mobility is solely the property of the privileged” (Botterill, 2017, p. 1).

## 10.2 Global Research on Lifestyle Migration: Development of the Field

### 10.2.1 *Approaches to Lifestyle Migration Across the Disciplines*

The literature on lifestyle migration is multi-disciplinary and various traditions contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon. Scholarship on lifestyle migration has its origins in ethnographic studies or interpretivist accounts of relatively privileged migrations from Northern to Southern Europe facilitated by political and economic integration (King et al., 2000; O'Reilly, 2000; Casado-Díaz, 2006; Oliver, 2008; Benson, 2011). These research approaches in the traditions of sociology and social geography have tended to be qualitative in nature based on migrants' own narratives of the migration process and post migration experiences. This builds on early empirical studies on International Retirement Migration (IRM), that is, Northern European retirees moving to warmer destinations, either as permanent or seasonal migrants (e.g. Rhoades, 1978; Gustafson, 2001; King et al., 2000; Warnes, 1991; Warnes et al., 1999; Williams & Hall, 2000). This research focused on Brits and later on other Northern Europeans, such as Germans or Swedes, who moved to the Mediterranean (King & Patterson, 1998; O'Reilly, 2000; King et al., 2000; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004) and gave rise to a growing literature on transnational ageing (Gustafson, 2001; Oliver, 2008; Sampaio, 2020). While this work is mostly within sociology, social anthropology, and social geography, it developed at the nexus of various literatures across different social science disciplines.

From the tradition of population geography and rural studies there is a body of work that has studied the phenomenon of counter urbanisation—both from an international (e.g. Buller & Hoggart, 1994) and internal perspective (Mitchell, 2004; Berry, 1976; Champion, 1989)—and its impact on identity and population distribution (Müller, 2021). Within tourism research, tourism geographies, and housing studies another related corpus of literature is that on second homes, residential tourism, multi-dwelling, and the nexus between tourism and lifestyle mobilities (Williams & Hall, 2000; Paris, 2009; Hall & Müller, 2004). Understanding geographies of meaning and perceptions and representations attached to places are central questions in lifestyle migration research (Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015). Such imaginaries of place are powerful structures involving the media, marketing, and international agents (Torkington, 2012; Benson & O'Reilly, 2016).

More recent work on lifestyle mobilities, in light of the mobilities turn, has interrogated the fluidity between different leisure practices, travel and migration questioning binaries between here and there, production and consumption rationales, and tourism and migration (Cohen et al., 2013). Through another strand of research, this approach to privileged mobility has recently engaged with debates in urban studies on the globalisation of the housing market and the surge in transnational investment since the global financial crisis in 2008, as global elites search for safe investment havens, first, in global cities such as London (DeVerteuil & Manley,

2017) or Vancouver (Ley, 2010), and later to second tier tourist cities such as Barcelona or Lisbon (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2019).

### ***10.2.2 Colonial Traces: North-South Lifestyle Migration***

Building on earlier scholarship on internal lifestyle migration in post-industrial contexts and intra-European flows, the geographical focus of the literature has expanded since the mid-2000s to contemplate lifestyle migration from the Global North to the Global South (Emard & Nelson, 2020). Similar tendencies are noted by scholars of both migration flows; not least the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the migrants—namely white, middle class baby boomers—and similar questions are explored around migration motivations, socio-spatial incorporation, and the negotiation of privilege. However, while there are parallels between north-north and north-south flows, researchers working on the latter have developed two additional aspects. First, questions around how racial as well as class privilege are experienced by migrants and shape relations with locals have added to understandings of whiteness and cultural capital—see Kunz’s (2018) work on expatriates in Cairo; Benson (2013, 2015) on North Americans in Panama; Kordel and Pohle (2018) on North Americans in Ecuador; or Scuzzarello (2020) on Western retirees in Thailand. Second, scholars have foregrounded the political economy of this flow. An increasing number of studies have shown that some north-south lifestyle migration is undertaken for economic reasons in response to declining pensions and the crisis of the welfare state under late capitalism (Hayes, 2015; Toyota & Thang, 2017; Bender et al., 2018). Precarity has permeated employment and retirement realities in the aftermath of successive economic crises, leaving many to face rising health and housing costs with a lower-than-expected income. Moving to lower latitudes in the international division of labour is a way to reduce living costs, but it does not necessarily preclude vulnerability (Green, 2014; Botterill, 2017). Oftentimes the destination state also has a role to play in attracting affluent migrants through migration and attractive fiscal policies—see, for example, Benson and O’Reilly’s work on Panama and Malaysia (2018) or Ono (2015) on the latter. Within a decolonial frame, understanding these dynamics moves far beyond ideas related to relative privilege to embed north-south lifestyle migration in the *longue durée* of histories bequeathed from the colonial world order and its continuities inherent in economic globalisation (Emard & Nelson, 2020; Hayes, 2021).

### ***10.2.3 Geographical Focus: Rural-Urban Divides***

Traditionally the idealisation of specific geographies and the meanings attached to different places have been used to typify different migrants. The oft cited paper of Benson and O’Reilly (2009) identified three types of lifestyle migrant based on their



locational choice: the residential tourist—heliotropic migration based on ideals of living the “Mediterranean lifestyle”; the rural idyll seeker—in search of a simpler lifestyle in connection with the land (Osboldiston, 2012; Benson & Osboldiston, 2014); and the bourgeois bohemian, motivated by spiritual or artistic ideals in the search for an alternative lifestyle—see Korpela’s (2010) work on Westerners in India. However, more recently urban manifestations of lifestyle migration have been given attention as transnationals of all ages are choosing the vibrancy of the city over the rural or costal landscapes. Griffiths and Maile (2014) explore the “city imaginaries” drawing intra-EU middle-class British migrants to Berlin; King (2018) also argues that an urban lifestyle “optic” can be applied to new European youth migrants as they are attracted to vibrant cities. Zaban (2015, 2017) examines the intersections between gentrification and urban lifestyle migration of Jewish immigrants from Western countries in Israel; and Cocola-Gant and Lopez-Gay (2020) the role of young lifestyle migrants in processes of transnational gentrification in the historic centre of Barcelona. Within more critical urban studies scholars are concerned with understanding the impact that this migration is having on local housing markets and the right to the city from a social justice perspective.

### 10.3 Conclusion

Lifestyle migration is a prism that encapsulates the subjective meaning of migration related to a better life quality—rather than work or political rights and objective privileges—in terms of citizenship, financial, or cultural capital, that allow some migrants to move with ease. Rather than sitting at the margins of migration studies, lifestyle migration is indicative of the underlying inequalities and racialising logics central to mobility regimes. Over time, scholarship has become increasingly concerned with theorising the structural conditions inherent to economic globalisation and longer histories related with colonial legacies. These legacies have conditioned and shaped such flows and experiences of the migrants themselves and destination societies that receive them. In this sense, the growing literature on relatively privileged migrants sheds light on the complexity of migration forms that have unfolded in the context of social transformations under late capitalism.

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# Chapter 11

## Student Mobilities



**Elisa Alves and Russell King**

Student mobility or student migration? The international (and internal) movement of students displays an equivocal terminology, although the editor of this volume, in presenting us with the title of our chapter, prefers the broader term ‘mobilities’ in contrast to the titles of the other chapters in this section, which are all forms of ‘migration’.

So why is it that, when students move—either internationally, or within their own countries—they are not usually seen as ‘migrants’, but as something else? This chapter aims to reflect further on the emergence of the twin concepts of migration and mobility as applied to the movement of students—how the concepts have been deployed in various situations and how they have been conditioned (or not) by different theoretical and methodological approaches to the subject of students’ spatial moves. Given that migration and mobility both connote geographical movement across space and over a range of periods of time, we ‘play’ with this notion of movement and propose the alternative term of *student movementation*.

The chapter is structured in three parts. The first develops the definitional, terminological, and conceptual discussion introduced above. In the second section we survey the various directions in past and ongoing research on international student movementation. The conclusion reflects on gaps in our knowledge in this field. Throughout our account we try to give evidence of the empirical richness of research on students’ international moves by referring to a wide body of literature.

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## 11.1 Terms, Concepts and Meanings

The movement of students to further their studies abroad is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, students and scholars have been drawn to important centres of learning and knowledge production (Jöns et al., 2017; Meusberger et al., 2018). What is new, in recent decades, is the scale of the phenomenon of what is now often abbreviated as ‘ISM’ (which, conveniently, can stand for international student mobility, migration, or movementation). Such student flows are an increasingly significant portion of global migration and of the global knowledge economy (Gürüz, 2008). The most recent data from UNESCO and OECD report a global “stock” of around 5.3 million students studying abroad, compared to 2 million in 2000. ISM increases much faster than aggregate global migration.

If you simply google the expression ‘international student mobility’, you have around 208 million results; for ‘international student migration’ the figure is 174 million. These numbers result from many individual and institutions’ actions, through blogs, posts, guides, advertisements, news, reports, scientific papers, and books. Such numbers and diverse communication channels are indicative of the importance of ISM as a geographic, social, cultural, economic, and political phenomenon. But what is the difference between ISM *qua* mobility and ISM *qua* migration? Although often used indiscriminately as alternatives, they are not synonyms but, rather, overlapping yet distinctive terms.

Distinctions between student migration or mobility turn around three aspects: the purpose of the move, its duration and the distance covered (King & Findlay, 2012). Regarding purpose, a key distinction is between, on the one hand, what is often called *credit mobility*, which is when a student moves abroad for a semester or an academic year (e.g., in the European context, an Erasmus exchange), and then returns to their ‘home’ institution and country to complete their qualification; and, on the other hand, studying abroad for *an entire degree*, which could be three or more years. Thus, the purpose of the move intersects with the length of the study abroad. Longer stays abroad often result in ‘status switching’ when, upon graduation, the student opts, or is encouraged, to stay on to enter the host-country skilled labour market; hence a student visa is swapped for a residence or work permit, and the student becomes akin to a conventional ‘immigrant’. Geography plays a role, too, as there is also a partial correlation with distance: mobility is often associated with students moving within Europe, while migration takes students further afield and for longer periods (King et al., 2016).

In addition to the vexed issue of migration vs mobility, and the extent to which this dilemma is resolved by our neologism of movementation, the terms ‘international’ and ‘student’ also need to be unpacked. A student abroad may be working for a wage part-time (to support their studies), or be a refugee, activist, or carer; or they could be a full-time worker and part-time student. Indeed, in our contemporary neoliberal world of individual initiative and the gig economy, the mixed figure of the ‘student-worker’ is increasingly common (Maury, 2019; Wilken & Dahlberg, 2017).

Meantime, an ‘international student’ may be somewhat distinct from a ‘foreign student’, dependent partly on the criteria for recording and measurement. A foreign student is recorded on the basis of citizenship; an international student on the basis of country of origin or prior residence. But this is only part of the story. There tends to be reference to international students when talking about students moving in and from the Global North, whereas those from the Global South are seen more as ‘foreign’ students, defined on the basis of their ‘othered’ citizenship. Whilst the former are portrayed as cosmopolitans and part of a privileged mobile elite, the latter are seen as an underprivileged and often racialised migrant category—as our research on African students in Portugal has demonstrated (Alves & King, 2021). Above all, it needs to be stressed that international or foreign students are not a homogenous category, far from it; although part of their heterogeneity is based on perceived and socially constructed subcategories (Madge et al., 2015).

## 11.2 Research Themes Under Discussion

Research on ISM approaches the topic from many different angles. Here we follow the typologies of research themes suggested by Riaño and Pigué (2016), blended with the more conceptual frameworks nominated by King and Findlay (2012). Riaño and Pigué identified six main topics: (i) theories; (ii) directions and patterns; (iii) reasons for moving and experiences abroad; (iv) policies for supranational bodies; national governments and universities; (v) effects and outcomes of ISM; and (vi) future plans for mobility, including experiences after return. For King and Findlay, there are four approaches to theorising and explaining ISM: (i) the globalisation and marketisation of higher education; (ii) students as part of high-skilled migration; (iii) ISM as a mechanism of social-class reproduction and elite formation; and (iv) study abroad as part of youth mobility culture. In what follows, we try to combine these research-topic typologies into a simplified and more generalised set of themes, recognising that the two typological schemas are deeply intertwined.

### 11.2.1 *The Drivers of ISM: Theories, Determinants, and Patterns*

Theoretical frames for ISM range from macro-structural forces (e.g. global inequalities in the provision of higher education) to the micro-individualistic motivations of students, with meso-level frameworks, such as the role of universities and social and peer networks, at an intermediate level. Human capital theory spans across these scales, taking on board also the supply and demand sides of ISM (Findlay, 2010). Rooted in neoclassical economic theories of migration, the human capital approach rationalises ISM as an investment in prestigious human and cultural capital whereby

the benefits exceed the costs over the medium to long term. From a supply perspective, knowledge-based societies push students to constantly improve their qualifications and skills, if necessary by ‘promising’ a professional career with higher rewards in terms of income and life satisfaction (Knight, 2011). Especially from less-developed countries, the lack of higher education infrastructures and opportunities at ‘home’ pushes ambitious students to move to countries endowed with better and more prestigious university systems (Rosenzweig, 2006). From the demand side, beside formal investments in international education and the expectation of better future rewards, students look for adventure, cultural experiences, and emancipation from their families. This latter set of motivations can apply equally to British students going on a short-term student exchange to nearby Europe (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003), and to transcontinental Sub-Saharan African students studying for their degrees in Portugal (Alves et al., 2022; António, 2013).

One wide-ranging theoretical typology which encompasses many macro-level factors and is designed to explain broad patterns of student movementation is advanced by Börjesson (2017), who sees the “global space” of ISM structured according to three main principles. The first is geographical proximity. Other things being equal, students will choose destination countries which are close at hand, yet still ‘different’, in order to minimise travel costs and time, and perhaps also to study in a culture which is not too far removed from their own. Student exchanges and movements within Europe are the best example of this, pioneered by the Erasmus scheme, in operation since the mid-1980s. Second, students move from lesser- to more-developed countries; rarely in the opposite direction. They do so to access higher quality and more prestigious universities. According to the OECD’s *Education at a Glance* (2019), in 2018, OECD countries hosted 85% of all foreign students (defined by citizenship), two-thirds of whom were from non-OECD countries, indicating a clear Global South-North (and East-West) patterning. This also reflects the fact that the USA and the UK are the two leading ‘importers’ of international students, and China and India the main ‘exporters’. Third, international students are exemplars of enduring postcolonial relations. Many of them move towards their former colonial metropolises, for cultural and linguistic reasons; whilst on the other side of the coin, the recruitment of these international students is an expression of postcolonial soft power exercised by former imperial centres such as the UK, France, Spain, and Portugal.

In a different context—that of the internationalisation and harmonisation of higher education curricula and academic research networks—ISM can be seen as a form of “knowledge migration” (Raghuram, 2013). Through their movements—outwards, returning, or onwards—students are bearers of this expansion, diffusion, and circulation of knowledge, carried forward in their subsequent lives as highly skilled professionals contributing to the labour markets of wherever they are working. This links directly to issues of class and social reproduction, noted and studied by many authors (King et al., 2011; Leung, 2017; Waters, 2012), who characterise ISM as a way of creating and reinforcing a cosmopolitan and elitist class, the members of which are often highly networked through alumni associations and professional bodies (Bilecen, 2016).



As in all forms of migration and mobility, gender is an important yet understudied dimension in the movement of students abroad and then back to their countries of origin (Geddie, 2013; Sondhi & King, 2017). The gender balance varies according to the country of origin. From the UK, females are the majority going abroad on Erasmus exchanges, largely because of the association of these schemes with language studies, where female students outnumber men (King et al., 2004). From less-developed countries where (for want of a better term) ‘traditional’ gender divisions and roles are in place, males are the majority in outward movementation. Sondhi and King’s (2017) study of Indian student moves to Canada and the UK shows the different gendering of outward and return moves. On the whole, males are more likely to be encouraged by their families to study abroad. Except among highly educated parents, there is a general reluctance amongst Indian families to let their daughters study abroad. But male students are pressurised to return to develop their careers, continue the family lineage, and ultimately be responsible for maintaining their ageing parents; whereas females, who will be ‘lost’ to another family upon marriage, are less pressured to return. In any case, for Indian female students, study abroad is often an emancipating experience which turns them away from the more conservative aspects of India’s patriarchal society. Hence, they are less keen to return.

### ***11.2.2 Policies and Outcomes***

Another important line of research has developed into the role of governmental and institutional policies and strategies, usually geared to facilitating, encouraging and managing ISM (Riaño et al., 2018). This covers the actions of national governments and their ministries of (higher) education, regional organisations (at both a sub- and supra-national level), higher education institutions themselves (either individually or in consortia), and a mixture of public and private sector institutional actors, including recruiting agencies for international students and foundations offering scholarships. The increasing marketisation of higher education sees a double competition: on the one hand between countries and between universities for the ‘brightest and best’ students from around the world—the “global race for talent” (Geddie, 2015); and on the other hand between students for coveted places and scholarships in the ‘world-leading’ universities according to reputation and global ranking lists (Findlay et al., 2012; Salmi & Saroyan, 2007).

For more specifics on the types and objectives of policies, there are studies on which actors are involved, including their roles and interests, and to what extent they have the capacity to achieve their goals and by what means (see Brooks and Waters (2011) for an overview). Others have investigated postcolonial links in the design and implementation of policies for cooperation (e.g. França et al., 2018); or how to combat the way that ISM can lead to brain drain or brain waste—for instance, policies aiming to improve the rate of return of graduates who have studied abroad (Gèdeshi & King, 2018; Gribble, 2008).

Another strand of literature focuses on the rhetorics and discourses which accompany policies, including persuasive text aimed at prospective international students. King (2003) analysed the discursive frames deployed by the EU and several universities to promote student exchanges and year-abroad mobility in the first phase of the Erasmus programme. He noted two prevalent discourses: an economic one and a cultural one, both pitched at two levels or scales. On the economic front, students were presented with the arguments that studying abroad for part of their degree would improve their chances of landing an interesting and well-paid job, and that employers would value applicants with study-abroad experience, including knowledge of languages and intercultural skills. At a macro-scale, national and European labour markets would likewise be made more competitive, particularly in fields like international business, by having an increased flow of people with linguistic and cultural capital who would readily move abroad and liaise with international clients. Culturally, too, students who had the advantage of a “mobility experience” would be enriched and empowered through their exposure to “another culture”. Moreover, for those who moved within Europe subsidised by Erasmus funds, a kind of “European identity” would be acquired, creating thereby a cadre of young graduates who would be loyal to the “European project”, and perhaps end up as members of the EU bureaucracy or in the diplomatic service.

Riaño et al. (2018) advance a more sophisticated typology of discourse surrounding ISM, which also incorporates the frames described above. First, international students are seen as channels of knowledge creation and transfer, and eventually of economic growth; part of the “global battle for talent”. Second, in another economic discourse, international students are promoted as sources of income for the higher education sector, often because, as in the UK, they are charged higher fees than ‘home’ students. Third, there is a more negative discourse around international students as “dubious” or “bogus” arrivals whose real aim is not study but entry into a host country’s labour market. Typically, they hold a student visa but work in the informal economy. This is the other side of the coin of the second discourse, and mainly regards students originating from high-emigration countries such as China, India, or African countries, who are racialised and somehow seen as less ‘desirable’ than students from the Global North. Finally, there is a narrative of international students as vehicles of soft power; a means through which a host country can expand its sphere of influence by, firstly, projecting a welcoming discourse towards international students, and second, by implicitly using those students as channels of influence when they return to their countries of origin, sometimes in a postcolonial context (e.g. Angolan, Cape Verdean, and Brazilian students in Portugal (França et al., 2018)), sometimes in a neo-colonial context (e.g. African students in China (Haugen, 2013)).

### 11.2.3 *Experiences Abroad and Plans for the Future*

Considering the experiential effects of ISM, some research has questioned whether the study-abroad experience actually does fulfil the students' 'dreams'; or whether it might lead to disappointment, exclusion (because of the language barrier, racism or 'culture shock') and, ultimately, from a human capital perspective, "brain waste" (Gêdeshi & King, 2018; Hawthorne, 2010; Robertson, 2011). Studies have pinpointed the role of initial motivations and expectations at the moment of departure; the first decision-making moment. These expectations can be carefully planned or deliberately open-ended. Students can be ambitious or very cautious; optimistic or pessimistic. Their moves may be pushed or decided upon by their family; or the reverse—study abroad as an 'escape' from the family environment (Alves et al., 2022; Soon, 2012). Moreover, the geopolitical and economic relationship between the student's country of origin and country of destination can also profoundly shape ISM outcomes: whether there is a postcolonial relationship, reinforced by marked contrasts in economic development and higher education standards, or a difference in religion, and ways of behaving in everyday life (see Alves et al., 2022; Kellogg, 2012; Marcu, 2015; Sondhi & King, 2017; Zijlstra, 2015). Other influences on post-study-abroad outcomes are the moral obligation or desire to contribute to the home country's development, and the way students' lives evolve and change during the study abroad, for instance through marriage, having children, or finding a job (Alves et al., 2022; Bijwaard & Wang, 2016; Geddie, 2013; Kim, 2015).

These are the factors that shape the second moment of decision-making—what to do after the completion of the study abroad and the award of a degree or other qualification. Alves (2022) has reviewed these possible outcomes in terms of several geographical and career pathways: stay abroad for further study and/or period of work; move on to another destination country, again either for further study or work; or return home. The return could be immediately upon graduation abroad or following a period of post-study work abroad; and the return could be to immediately enter the home country's skilled labour market, or initially for further study.

## 11.3 Gaps and Needs: By Way of Conclusion

The study of international student migration/mobility, which we have proposed to be termed *international student movementation*, suffers from some gaps in research, despite the burgeoning literature on ISM in recent years. We start at the beginning, with the very *meaning of the term*, and the way in which alternative framings of this kind of movement vary according to which geo-national vantage point the phenomenon is studied from—developing country, highly developed country, ex-colony, new geopolitical power (e.g. China), European 'core' country, or European 'peripheral' country. Different policy perspectives arise according to these varying global geographical contexts, and also different motivations and drivers on the part of

students. Hence, we call for the development of *comparative research* on ISM experiences, policies and outcomes. A third area of new research, more epistemological, concerns the need to combine disciplinary perspectives in an innovative kind of comparative, cooperative endeavour. ISM cries out for *interdisciplinary research*—from sociologists, especially those specialising in higher education and youth studies, geographers, economists, and others. Fourthly, as with all forms of migration and mobility, there could be much better and *more standardised statistics*. Efforts to harmonise the criteria on which ISM is recorded (citizenship, birthplace, country of habitual or prior residence), and to accommodate the varied temporalities of ISM (short visits, semester, a year, the length of a degree programme, and the transition from ‘student’ to ‘immigrant’), are challenges which are not easily overcome. Next, *gender* needs to be foregrounded more in studies of student movementation. Thus far, very few studies exist which expose an explicit gender dimension, bearing in mind that gender also needs to be intersectionally combined with other key axes of analysis such as class, ‘race’, and sexuality. Finally, it is worth noting that, behind the academic debate, *research knowledge needs to be fed into policies* which achieve better opportunities and better societies. This is not so simple, as different national contexts are not always aligned, and there is a tendency for ISM to exacerbate inequalities.

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# Chapter 12

## Irregular Migration



Sarah Spencer and Anna Triandafyllidou

Irregular migration is a multifaceted, dynamic phenomenon that has attracted disproportionate media and political attention since the early 2000s. It has been at the forefront of the political debate in most of the European Union's Member States since the outbreak of the so-called 'migration crisis' of 2015. Indeed, the political attention paid to irregular migration is disproportionate to its volume. Migrants are estimated to represent 3.3% of the world's population (IOM, 2017, from UNDESA, 2017) with migrants in an irregular situation between 15% and 20% of them. This is approximately 1% of the global population, some 30–40 million individuals worldwide (UN OHCHR, 2014; ILO, 2015). In the USA, the undocumented population was estimated in 2015 to be 11 million (Rosenblum & Ruiz Soto, 2015); while in Europe it was estimated to be 1.9–3.8 million in 2008 (Kovacheva & Vogel, 2009); and between 2.9 and 3.8 million in 2018 (Pew Research Centre, 2019).

This chapter starts with defining the variants of irregular status and the paths through which a migrant may become irregular, with a view to showing that this status is a continuum rather than a clear-cut distinction. We explore the links between irregular migration and irregular/informal work and how flows and stocks relate to segmented labour market dynamics. The chapter considers the lived realities of the daily lives of irregular migrants before turning to the universal human rights that migrants with irregular status should enjoy and reasons for their limitation in practice. We conclude by critically surveying recent policy trends on enforcement and criminalisation, as well as the counter trend of semi-inclusion at particularly local and regional levels.

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## 12.1 Definitions: What Is Irregular Migration Status?

Patterns of irregularity are diverse and can include people who crossed a border unlawfully as well as visa over-stayers, children born to undocumented parents, migrants who lost their regular status because of unemployment or non-compliance with certain requirements, and rejected asylum seekers.

Although the concept of irregular migration is often treated as self-evident by media and political discourses, it deserves careful reflection to avoid ambiguities and inconsistencies (Triandafyllidou, 2010). Several different terms are used for persons who enter a country illegally, overstay their terms of regular residence, live in a country without a residence permit, or break immigration rules in a way that makes them liable for expulsion. At the academic level—but also in the media and public discussion—terms like irregular, undocumented, or unauthorised have been preferred to the more discriminatory ‘clandestine’ or ‘illegal.’ Indeed, even though no human being is illegal (Ambrosini, 2013), specific practices and behaviours in breach of the law can be referred as ‘not legal’ (for example, illegal border crossing).

For a complete and dynamic picture (Kovacheva & Vogel, 2009), the distinction is made between irregular *residents*—foreigners without any legal residence status in the country and those who can be subject, if detected, to an order to leave (stocks)—and irregular *entrants* who cross an international border without the required valid documents (flows).

To clarify the various irregular statuses, below is a list (Triandafyllidou & Bartolini, 2020a, p. 16) of the forms of irregular stay that migrants may experience which serves the purpose of illustrating the complexity of intersecting entry, stay and work related status:

- Persons with forged papers or persons with real papers but assuming false identities;
- Persons with seemingly legal temporary residence status. The so-called working tourists (entered on a tourist visa and working irregularly) are assumed to be the majority of irregular migrants in some countries. Migrants with a temporary conditional permit such as seasonal and contract workers may likewise be liable for expulsion if they break their contract terms (e.g., if working for a longer period than permitted);
- Persons who lose their residence status because they no longer satisfy the conditions that initially granted the permit (unemployed, no longer able to demonstrate employment relationship to obtain a work permit, student whose course of study has ended, expiration of family permit for young adults coming of age, etc.);
- Persons who never had a regular status because they entered illegally and could not find a way of regularising their status;
- Persons who entered illegally but are registered with public authorities. E.g. they have been denied protection after lodging an asylum application;

- Tolerated persons without a regular status, with or without a document to prove the suspension of their removal and thus their semi-legal residence status: e.g. when return is not possible because there is no agreement with the country of origin or transit, or it is not possible to establish the nationality of the migrant;
- Children born to parents who are unlawfully residing and hence without fully-documented status.

Irregularity is not entirely of the migrant's making: it may result from delays and errors in the administration of red tape. It is moreover embedded in labour market dynamics that privilege irregular stay and irregular work. Irregularity is functional to labour market conditions in specific sectors such as construction, domestic work, agriculture and the food industry, irregular migrant workers providing a cheap and plentiful workforce (Jordan & Düvell, 2002; Van der Leun & Kloosterman, 2006; Cheliotis, 2017). By creating conditions of regular stay and work that are impossible to meet, states indirectly support the interests of unscrupulous employers and create ethnic segmentation and hierarchies in the labour market that are functional to the national economy.

Irregular migrants are often not completely deprived of formal papers. They may possess legal social security numbers, work contracts, certificates of school enrolment or identity cards issued by municipalities, while having no permit to stay (Vasta, 2008; Chauvin & Garcés-Masareñas, 2014). Such documents testify to *de facto* inclusion in the labour market and social life and illustrate the dynamism and complexity of the irregular migration phenomenon as well as the fragmentation of its governance.

## 12.2 The Relationship Between Irregular Stay and Irregular Work

Irregular migration status is to a large extent a function of labour market dynamics. This is an issue that is often neglected in political and policy discourses. The availability of jobs in agriculture or construction or the demand for live-in care workers can act as a pole of attraction for migrant workers who may decide to enter a country unlawfully, overstay their visa or violate its conditions because of the availability of work opportunities. Alternatively, people may enter lawfully under a temporary migration scheme and then be unable to extend or renew their status and hence fall into irregularity. Employers often support such moves, either in the impossibility of fulfilling the legal policy requirements or because the undocumented newcomers become a plentiful and inexpensive labour force who incur no additional costs of firing or of paying for welfare or unemployment benefits.

Legally residing foreigners should, in contrast, be able to have jobs with proper contracts which respect labour laws and include welfare insurance. However, it is often the case that these workers are also employed in irregular ways: without being declared, having a proper contract, or with a contract that specifies conditions of

work and salary that are not respected. This is because migrants are often concentrated in sectors where there is a high incidence of informal work such as construction for men or cleaning and caring work for women, or catering, tourism, and agriculture for either. Those recently arrived have less bargaining power than settled migrants or natives as they may have only partial information about their rights, may not yet speak the local language or may not know where to seek redress if they suffer an injustice. They may be in absolute need of a job and a livelihood—even if this does not come with all the required conditions—as they may have no other source of income or social support networks to rely on. The importance of trade unions and labour market inspectors for protecting all workers cannot be overestimated (see also Triandafyllidou & Bartolini, 2020b).

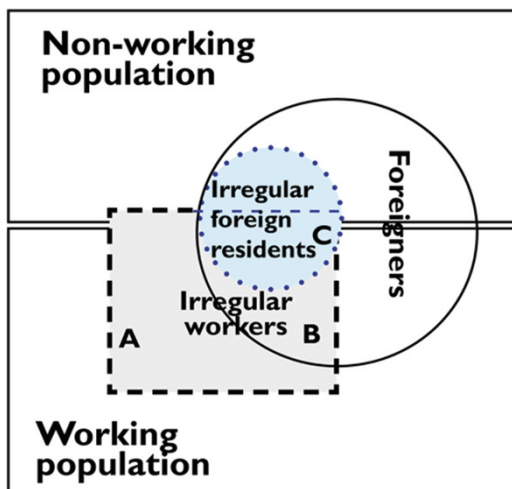
In addition to these socio-economic dynamics attracting unauthorised migrant workers to take up informal work or pushing legally staying migrants to accept irregular employment, it is important to consider how socio-economic exclusion interacts with symbolic inclusion/exclusion. As Ambrosini (2016) argues, we could conceptualise two levels of authorisation: one is that of regular versus irregular migration status, the other one of symbolic authorisation—in the sense of recognition that the migrant is filling a job vacancy and performing a job that is socially valuable. This distinction is gendered, as female care workers and cleaners are usually recognised as valuable and represented positively, while narratives of ‘clandestine’ migrant workers usually refer to male migrants. Asylum seekers, too, although temporarily authorised in the receiving country’s territory while their application is processed, are similarly stigmatised.

The realities of irregular residence and irregular work combine in multiple ways, preventing clear-cut definitions and requiring attention to single national practices and legal frameworks even within the European context. We should better speak of a continuum between regularity and irregularity, ranging from situations where one is a regular foreign resident allowed to work and with a formal employment contract, to cases in which one is an irregular foreign resident with an undeclared job.

Moreover, status is not fixed. Changes—of residence, of permission to work, and of employment conditions—are frequent and not necessarily in the direction of progressive improvement and stability (EMN, 2016). “Spaces of” and “pathways to” illegality (Ruhs & Anderson, 2006; Düvell, 2011) are thus found within the triangle of migration policies, labour market dynamics, and the individual choices of social actors. Different types and degrees of irregularity can be produced and negotiated among all actors involved and semi-compliance to (some) rules might be a frequent case (Ruhs & Anderson, 2006).

Figure 12.1 summarises the possible intersections of citizenship, residence, and work status: irregular employment can be found among (a) the native labour force; (b) foreigners with a regular residence status; and (c) foreigners who are irregularly residing in the country.

**Fig. 12.1** Total resident population by work status, citizenship, and residence status. (Source: Triandafyllidou & Bartolini, 2020a, p. 19)



### 12.3 Living with Irregular Status

People with irregular status may support themselves through work and be active agents in shaping their own lives within the constraints imposed by their status (Bloch & McKay, 2016). Many are nevertheless disproportionately exposed to discrimination, exclusion, abuse and exploitation; and to denial of access to health care, adequate accommodation and the documentation needed for daily life such as a driving licence (UN, 2014). They feel unable to inform the police if the victim of crime because of their fear of detection (Delvino, 2020): that ‘palpable sense of deportability’ which reproduces the physical borders of nation-states in everyday life (De Genova, 2002, p. 439). This can induce high levels of stress, with implications for self-esteem and mental health (Gonzales & Raphael, 2017). For young people in particular, living with irregular status can shape personal identity, social relations and all aspects of their lives and decision making (Bloch et al., 2014).

Where enforcement measures limit the scope for supporting themselves in legitimate ways and participating in the mainstream institutions of society, irregular migrants may adopt alternative strategies to survive: shifting from formal to informal work; from legitimate to criminal behaviour (such as subsistence theft); and avoiding being identified by concealing their status, using false documents, and destroying original ID papers to obstruct deportation (Engbersen & Broeders, 2009).

Exclusion from (authorised) work and services create a greater reliance on ‘intermediaries’ to access what they need. Their actions may be lawful, unlawful or, in stretching the rules, somewhere in between. They include friends and family; people sympathetic to their situation, such as lawyers, NGOs and service providers; and people who facilitate access to accommodation or jobs for profit: the “foggy structures” which enable irregular migrants to maintain a camouflaged existence and sustain the continuity of new arrivals (Bommes & Sciortino, 2011). The presence of

legal compatriots from whom resources such as work and information can be mobilised, and among whom they are inconspicuous, together with the availability of cheap accommodation, have been found to be among the structural determinants that make irregular migrants a permanent feature of some city neighbourhoods (Engbersen et al., 2006).

Intermediaries contribute in five ways: *connection* (providing information and recommendation); *provision of services* (from forged documentation to health care); immediate *help* (such as food); *tolerance* (overlooking rules); and *political pressure* (to change policies and practices). The governance of irregular migration will not be effective if it fails to take into account the role intermediaries are playing and their motivations (Ambrosini, 2018, pp. 19, 36–38).

Some irregular migrants are known to the immigration authorities but for legal, humanitarian, or practical reasons have not been removed. Others may be known to one or more public services. Some municipalities provide access to some services, as a matter of national or local policy; directly or through NGOs (Delvino & Spencer, 2019). Where they do not, individual service providers may nevertheless use their discretion to provide access (Van der Leun, 2006). Members of the public also contribute when they see the human costs of enforcement measures, providing practical assistance and solidarity to resist deportations (Ellermann, 2006).

## 12.4 Human Rights: Universality and Reality

International human rights standards are universal: “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex. . . national or social origin. . . birth of other status” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). That universality is the source of their normative power. “Irregular migrants are human beings”, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights confirms, “and as human beings they are protected by international human rights law” (UN, 2014, p. 1).

The universality principle is found in UN conventions and regional human rights law such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and is binding on states that have ratified them. The UN Committees on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and on the Rights of the Child, among others, have explicitly stated that the rights which they oversee apply to everyone regardless of legal status (UN, 2014, pp. 25–28).

Universal protection is, however, diluted: in the law itself, and in political reality. Few rights are absolute (such as freedom from slavery) but can be curtailed if objectively justifiable for a legitimate objective and proportional. Courts have regularly deemed restrictions on the rights of irregular migrants to be a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of controlling immigration. The law, moreover, is better developed in relation to civil and political rights than socio-economic rights. Thus, the extent to which a particular service should be provided is not always clear, or whether exclusion breaches international law. Third, few provisions specify that the rights must apply without discrimination on grounds of migrant status; while

some specify that they only apply to those who are lawfully resident. These limitations constrain the impact of the law and its “bite” as a tool for contesting exclusion (O’Cinneide, 2020).

Enforcement mechanisms can, moreover, be too weak for states to feel constrained. Some may nevertheless be sensitive to criticism on human rights grounds—“if rights are ignored or trampled upon, then the liberal state risks undermining its own legitimacy” (Hollifield, 2004, p. 901). They may also, however, be under political pressure to prioritise nationals and be tough on ‘illegal immigration’: hence Guiraudon’s finding on the high visibility, “sunshine politics” of enforcement measures relative to the low visibility, “shadow politics”, of migrants’ rights (2004).

National laws do not accord non-nationals equal rights. There is a hierarchy, with irregular migrants regularly accorded the fewest rights; especially economic and social rights such as the right to work, healthcare, and shelter. Mapping of national legal frameworks reveals a highly uneven geography of entitlements (FRA, 2011), not least in relation to healthcare and school education (Spencer & Hughes, 2015). Children with irregular status are considered to be more deserving of inclusion in services than adults (Spencer, 2016). Governments should justify the proportionality of restrictions on rights (Bosniak, 2006) but regularly fail to do so (Pobjoy & Spencer, 2012). Regardless of entitlements, services can only be accessed where there is a “firewall” preventing transfer of personal information on service users to immigration enforcers (Crépeau & Hastie, 2015, p. 158).

Human rights standards are, nevertheless, continually open to interpretation by the courts and thus provide scope to expand the extent of protection. They are regularly used in political argument and litigation as a means to challenge exclusionary practices, and to underpin soft law such as the Global Compact on Migration (United Nations, 2018). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have successfully challenged restrictive practices, e.g. under the European Charter for Social Rights. Municipalities have also invoked human rights to challenge national restrictions. This “legalisation from below” (Oomen & Baumgärtel, 2018), a “new frontier” in the development of a multi-layered system of rights protection, is particularly evident in the USA, protecting ‘undocumented’ migrants from federal immigration controls but increasingly also in Europe, leading to tensions in the multi-level governance on this issue (Spencer, 2018).

## 12.5 Policy Trends

National governments are responsible for enforcement of migration controls and set the legal framework governing access to services. Their mandate overlaps with that of state/regional and local authorities which (to differing degrees) have delegated responsibilities for service provision, and for policies impacted by migration such as local economic development, public health, and social cohesion. As the impact of exclusion is most keenly felt at the local level, some sub-state tiers take a more

inclusive approach, which can lead to tensions in multi-level governance relationships (Ambrosini, 2018; Spencer, 2018, 2020; Gen<sup>2</sup>, 2018).

Governments have reinforced enforcement measures in an effort to control irregular migration, and to be seen to do so: strengthening pre-entry, entry and internal controls. A review of 6500 migration policy changes in 45 countries since 1900 found “Irregular migrants are the only category for which policies have almost consistently moved into a more restrictive direction over the entire post-WWII period” (de Haas et al., 2018, p. 348). There is however a gap between declared policies and those that are implemented, leading to an over estimation of policy failure (Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Ataç & Schütze, 2020); and the law is enforced selectively: “migration is not always as ‘unwanted’ as is made out”, not least by employers who benefit from cheap workers (Castles et al., 2014, p. 324). Selective enforcement by the police in the USA and Europe has been found to be influenced by the interests and values of key actors: the police, local residents, and city governments (Leerkes et al., 2012).

Those enforcement measures that are implemented can be counterproductive, and are not notably effective (Engbersen & Broeders, 2009; Massey et al., 2016). Comparative studies reveal enforcement is beset by administrative, political, legal, and economic difficulties; routinely contested by competing interests (Hollifield et al., 2014, p. 4). Practical challenges include the embeddedness of irregular migrants within local communities; use of false identities and destruction of documents linking the individual to their country of origin; lack of cooperation by sending countries, the cost of forced removals, and human rights obligations and norms that limit the extent to which punitive measures can be used (Guiraudon & Lahav, 2000; Hollifield et al., 2014, p. 4; Andersson, 2016).

Governments have increasingly outsourced aspects of border enforcement to private actors, such as airlines (Guiraudon, 2006); while domestically relying on employers and service providers such as hospitals to check the immigration status of service users (Guiraudon & Lahav, 2000; Aliverti, 2015). The police are increasingly expected to work closely with immigration authorities, leading to resistance from those who prefer to prioritise “real criminality” and build trust with minority communities (Aliverti, 2019; Leerkes et al., 2012). Scholars refer to the intersection between crime control and migration control as “crimmigration” (Guia et al., 2013).

Under international law, irregular entry and stay are considered administrative rather than criminal offences, unless accompanied by other crimes (UN 2014, p. 13), but there has been a tendency to criminalise those offences, to penalise those who assist irregular migrants, and in some cases to require service providers to report them (Provera, 2015).

The limits of enforcement have led governments to adopt supplementary measures including regularisation, through time limited amnesties or pathways for individuals who fulfil certain criteria (Ambrosini, 2018; Baldwin-Edwards & Kraler, 2009) and voluntary return programmes, in some cases assisted by the International Organisation for Migration, with a level of support for re-integration (IOM, 2020).

While internal controls routinely exclude irregular migrants from most services, welfare support and documentation, there has been a simultaneous trend towards semi-inclusion, a paradox which scholars have sought to explain (Chauvin & Garcés-Masareñas, 2012). Providing access can provide a means to monitor and share data on migrants between agencies (Morris, 2001) and right of access can be conditional on a duty to cooperate with removal (Rosenberger & Koppes, 2018). Like the earlier poor-laws, provision of services alleviates the risks associated with poverty (Leerkes, 2016) and more broadly strengthens governability: the need to regulate and predict the behaviour of the actual population is greater than the need to deport (Chauvin & Garcés-Masareñas, 2020). For municipalities, inclusion in services addresses threats which exclusion poses to their capacity to fulfil their economic and social policy objectives (Spencer & Delvino, 2019). Pressure from civil society (in the US, ‘non-profits’) can be a factor in municipal adoption of inclusive policies (De Graauw, 2016).

## 12.6 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced key concepts and literature relating to the definition and terminology on migrants with irregular status; to the relationship between irregularity, the labour market and irregular work; the social embeddedness of these residents; the limits on the universality of human rights, and policy trends, including the paradox of semi-inclusion.

We have seen that perceiving immigration status as either ‘legal’ or ‘illegal’ is a false dichotomy: that there are multiple forms of irregularity, reached through differing paths, and that the status of individuals is often fluid along a regular-irregular continuum. The demands of sectors of labour markets for cheap, flexible, labour is a major factor leading individuals to enter, or remain, without authorisation, as is the need for sanctuary from persecution and conflict.

In everyday life, excluded from regular employment and most essential services, we see the reliance that irregular migrants can have on intermediaries: family and social networks, NGOs, service providers, and others motivated by profit; “foggy social structures” that enable these residents to maintain a camouflaged existence. Universal human rights should ensure greater protection but are diluted in form and political reality. Irregular migrants are at the bottom of a hierarchy of rights in national laws and vulnerable to exclusion and exploitation.

While there is a trend to reinforce pre-entry, entry, and internal controls, they are enforced selectively, are not notably effective in curtailing irregular migration, and can prove counterproductive. Alternative measures include regularisation and voluntary return. Paradoxically, there is a simultaneous trend towards limited access to services, formal inclusion alongside formal exclusion, particularly at the local level, for which various explanations were given.



In recent years there has been an increasing understanding that irregularity in migration is not a black and white status but rather a continuum and also that while migration stocks and flows are a domain regulated at the national level, cities have an important role to play as providers of basic services for shelter, food, health and education. There is scope for further research on the multi-level governance of irregular migration and the interaction among the local, national and transnational level in dealing with populations with irregular status. In addition, the current pandemic emergency has pointed to the extreme vulnerability of irregular migrants and at the same time the need to guarantee for those residents their fundamental rights such as access to health services or to vaccines. There is scope for understanding how such crisis situations can shape our understandings of irregular status particularly when it turns out that migrant residents with irregular status provide essential services whether in agriculture, food processing or the care industry.

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**Part III**  
**Conceptual Approaches: Migration**  
**Consequences**

# Chapter 13

## Migration and the Nation



Anna Triandafyllidou

During the last decade, we have witnessed two opposed social and political trends. On the one hand, there has been a comeback of *nationalism*. Examples abound from Trump’s “make America great again”, to Modi’s Hindu nationalism, to Bolsonaro’s Brazilian populist nationalism, to Orbán’s Hungary, and Le Pen’s or Salvini’s ‘patriotic’ overtones, only to name a few. These parties promote aggressive, nativist, and populist nationalism discourses which see the relations between nations and nation-states as a zero-sum game. They privilege erecting borders, both territorial and symbolic, against minorities, migrants or refugees, other nation-states and supra-national political formations like, in Europe, the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, we have also witnessed the emergence of powerful movements of transnational solidarity and connectedness. Through the power of information and communication technology people feel more related and are becoming better informed about what is happening in other regions of the world and on how this affects their own lives (whether through a refugee surge, a decrease in oil prices, the acceleration of climate change, or a global pandemic). During the last decade, we have witnessed various Indignados and Occupy movements across Europe and North America; youth mobilisation in support of the Arab Spring movements; transnational commemorations of the victims of terrorist attacks in Paris, France or in Christchurch, New Zealand; Extinction Rebellion in London and other European cities; as well as the transnational youth Fridays for Future rallies in the last couple of years. At the time of writing (June 2020) we are also in the middle of a rising transnational mobilisation against racial inequality that has spread from the USA across North America and into Europe.

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter draws particularly from my earlier works: Triandafyllidou (1998, 2001, 2013).

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It might be argued that such transnational mobilisations are more in tune with actual socio-economic and political realities on the ground, where global value chains, digital offshoring of work, and international political institutions appear to be more important than national policies or legislation. Multiple international flows not only of capitals, goods, and services, but also of people, play an important part in national societies and economies. National borders become more permeable despite the *efforts* of many national governments to erect fences and barriers. Despite the rise in a nationalist sentiment and discourses in politics, nation-states effectively see their sovereign powers eroding. As Zorn (1999, pp. 27–28) argues, they are transformed into post-national states as the political space they govern is no longer congruent with the socio-economic space which transcends the national borders; they thus have to increasingly seek to achieve their governance goals of “security, legal certainty, legitimacy and social welfare” through transnational forums and institutions rather than through the exercise of their sovereign power. The global COVID-19 pandemic in fact acts as a magnifying glass towards these opposed trends of, at times, strident nationalism and effective global interdependence. In this context, international migration becomes the epitome of this tension as it defies the economic and symbolic borders of nation-states.

Taking into account these contrasted trends, this chapter examines the relationship between nations and migration. The chapter starts with defining these terms and discusses the relationship between nations and ‘Others’, focusing more specifically on migrants as a special type of ‘Significant Other(s)’ for nations. Section four outlines the special challenges that globalisation and intensified migration bring to the nation in the twenty-first century and offers the notion of plural vs neo-tribal nationalism as a new analytical framework for making sense of the opposed trends of chauvinist, populist nationalism, and transnational solidarity movements. In conclusion, I offer some reflections for the future of nations in a world where the global pandemic has made our interconnectedness and mutual vulnerability more palpable than ever before.

### 13.1 Nations and Nationalism

Nationalism and national identity have a double-edged character: they define not only who is a member of the national community but also, and perhaps more importantly, who is not, who is an Other; a foreigner. The existence of the nation presupposes the existence of other nations. This basic assumption compels one to ask to what extent national identity is a form of inward-looking self-consciousness of a given political community? Or, to what extent is the self-conception of the unified, autonomous, and unique nation conditioned from the outside by defining who is *not* a national and by differentiating the in-group from Others? This double-edged nature does not only characterise national identity; any kind of social identity is constituted in social interaction. The outside (the Other) is constitutive of the inside (the in-group). The former contrasts with and limits the identity of the latter, but it is



also a prerequisite for the latter's development into a group. The notion of the Other is inherent in the doctrine of nationalism which argues that the world is divided into different national communities.

Most of the nations in existence today had to fight for their independence and for the formation of their own nation-state in line with the doctrine of nationalism that nations must be politically autonomous and sovereign. Most national communities have had, and probably still have, Significant Others; that is, other nations and/or states from which the community has tried to liberate and/or differentiate itself. Understanding national identity includes not only analysing its distinctive cultural or political features, but also studying the role that Others have played in the definition, development, consolidation, and also transformation of national identity (Triandafyllidou, 1998, 2001). *Ernest Gellner*—one of the most famous theorists of nationalism—notes that nationalism is a theory of political organisation that requires that ethnic and cultural boundaries coincide with political ones (Gellner, 1983, p. 1). Boundaries between political units are thus supposed to define the borders between different ethnic communities. However, the term 'nation-state' is, in the vast majority of cases, a misnomer. It usually refers to a multi-ethnic (or multinational) state in which a given national group is politically, culturally, and numerically dominant and thus tends to think of the state as a political extension of itself. This situation involves potential for conflict involving minority groups or migrant communities in this state which may seek for their recognition and inclusion in the definition of the nation. Ethnic and cultural diversity may exist in a nation-state from the historical time of its formation (and then we tend to use the term '*national minorities*' or historical minorities to refer to these groups that were part of the nation-state from the beginning) or such diversity and related ethnic minorities are a result of international migration. Migrant-receiving countries are faced with the necessity of dealing with international migrants as 'Others within' whose presence challenges the political and cultural order of the nation. According to the nationalist doctrine, "nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world" (Smith, 1991, p. 74). But reality requires a great deal of compromise and accommodation. Both from a social-psychological and a sociological perspective, the co-existence of different nations or ethnic groups within the same territory requires the identity of each group to be constantly reproduced and re-affirmed if the sense of belonging to the group is to survive. It requires the constant re-definition of the 'We' that must be distinguished from a 'They' that is geographically, and perhaps also culturally, close (Triandafyllidou, 1998, 2001).

Nationalism, and indeed the nation itself, appear in an ever greater diversity of forms and configurations, changing and constantly reinventing a phenomenon that scholars have meticulously tried to fit into neat analytical categories. A working definition is indeed necessary for constructing a theoretical framework, even though no definition appears completely satisfactory given the complexity and multidimensionality of national identity. There exist different theoretical schools that have sought to explain the origin of nations and define national identity, nations, and nationalism in the modern period. While a full discussion of these theoretical schools goes beyond the scope of this chapter (see Smith, 2009, 1998 for a fuller

analysis), I am proposing here an eclectic synthesis of elements from different theoretical approaches to analyse the relationship between migration and the nation, and more specifically with a view to analysing the relationship between the nation and its ethnic or immigrant communities, and the ways in which the nation can deal with cultural diversity within – where cultural diversity is understood in its wider sense as comprising ethnic, linguistic, religious, or racial diversity.

The *classical definition of the nation* proposed by Smith (1991, p. 14; 2009, p. 29)—“a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or “homelands”, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws”—provides a useful starting point in our discussion. A nation presupposes the notion of ‘national identity’ of a ‘feeling of belonging’ to the nation. Indeed, here it is necessary to point to Walker Connor’s early studies (1978, 1993) and emphasis on the essentially irrational, psychological bond that binds fellow nationals together and that constitutes the essence of national identity. This psychological bond is usually termed “a sense of belonging” (Connor, 1978) or “a fellow feeling” (Geertz, 1963). Such expressions point to the close link established between the individual and the nation.

To analyse national identity as a concept and/or as a social phenomenon, it is often necessary to study the movement that is linked to the ‘birth’ or ‘re-awakening’ (the term one prefers depends on a choice between a modernist or perennialist point of view) of nations. That is ‘nationalism’ and is defined as the “ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation” (Smith, 1991, p. 73).

In discussing further below the relationship between the nation and diversity or between the nation and Others, it is important to provide a definition of the nationalist doctrine (Smith, 1991, p. 74). This contains three fundamental propositions. (1) That the world is divided into nations in which each has its own culture, history and destiny that make it unique among other national communities. (2) Each individual belongs to a nation. Allegiance to the nation overrides all other loyalties. An individual who is nationless cannot fully realise her/himself and, in a world of nations, s/he is a social and political outcast. (3) Nations must be united, autonomous, and free to pursue their goals. The doctrine implies that the nation is the only legitimate source of social and political power.

The nationalist doctrine celebrates the universalism of the particular. Not only does each nation deem itself to be unique but the doctrine also asserts that the world is made up of nations; all of equal worth and value because they are all unique. Moreover, all nations have the inalienable right to self-determination. Of course, it often happens that the autonomy of one nation is put into question or indeed denied by another nation(–state). Hence, conflict may arise between two national communities with regard to the ‘ownership’ of territory, cultural traditions, myths, or heroes. However, the theoretical and political tenets of the nationalism doctrine are clear: the world is naturally divided into nations and each of them enjoys the same rights to autonomy and self-determination. This feature of the doctrine is important for the

discussion here because it highlights the fact that the existence of Others is an inherent component of national identity and, indeed, of nationalism itself. Nationalism does not only assert the existence of the specific national community. It also assigns it a position in a world of other separate and unique nations from which the in-group must be distinguished.

## 13.2 The Nation and the Other

The Self-Other dynamic inherent in nationalism is crucial for understanding the formation and development or change of the nation, the national identity and the national heritage.<sup>2</sup> However, arguing that national identity leads to a generalised divided perception of the world is not sufficient to demonstrate fully the role that the Other plays in its (trans)formation. The functional role that the notion of the Other plays in defining the nation becomes apparent already in the early works of nationalism theorists like *Karl Deutsch (1966)*. Deutsch argued that the nation can be defined in functional terms: membership of a national community consists of the ability to communicate more effectively with fellow nationals than with outsiders (Deutsch, 1966, p. 97): “peoples [in the sense of nations] are held together ‘from within’ by this communicative efficiency” (*ibid.*, p. 98). The more effective a system of social communication is, the more separate it becomes from those groups that it cannot incorporate: “unable to bear promiscuity, it must choose marriage or divorce” (*ibid.*, p. 175) argues Deutsch. He thus proposes a functional view of the nation: members of the national community are distinguished from non-members by their ability to communicate with one another *better than* they do with outsiders. From this functional perspective, nationality is not an absolute concept; it means that members share more with one another than they share with foreigners. This definition of the nation involves implicitly if not explicitly the concept of Otherness. The nation is not simply a group that is bound together by beliefs in a common genealogical descent, a common language, or shared cultural traditions. Neither is it merely a territorial community. It is a group of people that share more things in common with each other than they share with outsiders. Thus, for the nation to exist there must be some out-group against which the unity and homogeneity of the in-group is tested.

In political as well as scholarly debate, national identity is often construed as an absolute relationship; a clear set of features and beliefs that characterise a community and its members. Either a group of people share these specific features that make them a nation (regardless of whether these features are more civic or ethnic in character), or they do not. However, such a perspective for the study of national identity is misleading. National identity expresses a feeling of belonging that has a *relative* value; it makes sense only to the extent that it is contrasted with the feelings

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<sup>2</sup>This section draws specifically on Triandafyllidou, 2013.

that members of the nation have towards foreigners. Fellow nationals are not necessarily *very close* or *close enough* to one another—there is no ‘objective’ scale in which to measure their degree of similarity with one another—they are simply *closer* to one another than they are to outsiders.

It is my contention that national identity must be understood and analysed as a double-edged relationship. On one hand, it is inward looking; it involves a certain degree of similarity within the group and is based on a set of common features that bind the members of the nation together. These features cannot be summarised in the belief of a common descent (Connor, 1978, 1993.). Nor is the national bond equivalent to effective communication as suggested by Deutsch. In fact, it includes a set of elements that range from (presumed) ethnic ties to a shared public culture, common historical memories and links to a homeland, and also a common legal and economic system (Smith, 2009, p. 29). On the other hand, national identity implies difference. Its existence presupposes the existence of Others – other nations or other individuals – who do not belong to the in-group and from which the in-group must be distinguished. National consciousness renders both commonality and difference meaningful. It involves self-awareness of the group but also awareness of Others from which the nation seeks to differentiate itself. This means that national identity has no meaning *per se*, in the absence of other nations. It becomes meaningful through contrast with those. This argument is implicit in the nationalist doctrine, which asserts that there is a plurality of nations. If the entire world belonged to the same nation, national identity would have little meaning.

The interaction between nations and their Others can best be analysed through the notion of the Significant Other (Triandafyllidou, 2001, 2002). The history of nations is marked by the presence of Significant Others; other groups that have influenced the development of a nation by means of their inspiring or threatening presence. The notion of a Significant Other refers to another nation or ethnic group that is usually territorially close to, or indeed within, the national community. Significant Others are characterised by their peculiar relationship to the in-group: *they represent what the in-group is not*. They condition the national in-group, either because they are a source of inspiration for it, an example to follow for achieving national independence and national grandeur, or because they threaten (or are perceived to threaten) its presumed ethnic or cultural purity and/or its independence. A nation may develop its own identity features in ways that differentiate it and distance it from a specific Significant Other or it may seek to adopt some characteristics of an inspiring Other that are highly valued by the in-group too.

Because of their close relationship with the nation, Significant Others *pose a challenge* to it. This challenge may be of a positive and peaceful nature, when the out-group is perceived as an object of admiration and esteem, an exemplary case to be imitated, a higher ground to be reached by the nation, in brief, an *inspiring* Significant Other. This challenge, however, may also take the character of a threat; the Significant Other may be seen as an enemy to fight against, an out-group to be destroyed, in short a *threatening* Significant Other.

We may also distinguish between *internal* (those who belong to the same political entity as the in-group) and *external* Significant Others (those who form a separate

political unit). In line with this distinction, a nation which is in possession of its own state or which forms the dominant national majority within a nation-state might perceive an ethnic minority or immigrant community as an internal Significant Other. Similarly, a nation that forms part of a larger multinational political unit might perceive the internal Significant Other to be either the national majority, some other small nation within the state, or an immigrant community. In this chapter I am particularly interested in immigrant communities as *internal* Significant Others whose *different language, religion, or mores* may be perceived to threaten the cultural and/or ethnic purity of the nation. The nation is likely then to engage in a process of re-organisation of its identity. It is likely to seek to re-define the features that make it distinct and that lie at the core of the national identity, so as to differentiate the in-group from the newcomers. There is virtually no record of an immigrant population that is perceived as an inspiring Significant Other by the host nation. The negative and threatening representation of the immigrant seems to be an intrinsic feature of the host-immigrant relationship, and this derives, in part, from the fact that the immigrant's presence defies the social and political order of the nation (Sayad, 1991).

Othering an ethnic minority or immigrant community can be seen as functional to the development of national identity and to achieving or enhancing national cohesion. The immigrant is a potential threatening Other because s/he crosses the national boundaries, thus challenging the in-group identification with a specific culture, territory, or ethnic origin as well as the overall categorisation of people into nationals and Others. In other words, the immigrant poses a challenge to the in-group's presumed unity and authenticity, which it threatens to 'contaminate'.

### 13.3 Globalisation, Migration, and Nationalism

The relationship between the nation and migrants has been both obscured and become increasingly important in the context of globalisation where the borders of the nation become increasingly permeable. While some authors have seen in globalisation (Mann, 1997) and regional integration (Milward, 1992) the rescue of the nation-state and the nation, others (Papastergiadis, 2000) have announced the death of nations and their fall into irrelevance as globalisation and international migration intensify, leading to the de-territorialisation of identities and governance. However, these early arguments and predictions did not fully materialise as nations remain important as communities that underpin political and social rights and democracy even if a certain dose of cosmopolitanism is necessary too (Calhoun, 2007). It is important, however, to pay special attention to how nations and nationalism evolve under increased pressures of international migration, economic globalisation, and the multiple levels of diversity that nations are faced with. *Globalisation processes* are usually drivers of increased international migration whether in relation to the liberalisation and acceleration of international trade or because the mobility of labour and capital are deeply intertwined albeit moving in opposite directions (Solimano,

2010). Globalisation processes intensify grievances and opportunities that lead people to seek better living and working opportunities in distant lands while also facilitating transport and communication. The IOM World Migration Report (2019, ch. 1) shows that, today, people migrate more than before and most importantly in hitherto unexplored trajectories. Postcolonial relations and previously existing migration systems are less influential in shaping people's mobility projects.

As Castles and Miller (2009, pp. 11–12) have evocatively titled their often-quoted book, we live in “*the age of migration*”, characterised by globalisation, acceleration, differentiation, feminisation, politicisation, and a proliferation of migration trajectories. New countries of origin emerge, *mixed motivations* (both economic and humanitarian) have become pervasive, and migrant populations at destination countries are characterised by a formidable super diversity.

### **Evidence of Migration Pathways Multiplying and Intensifying**

A new migrant-receiving country like Italy registers migrant groups from over 70 nationalities (Idos, 2019), while the super-diverse London already exceeded 170 nationality groups in the 2000s (Vertovec, 2006). As early as the 1990s, Bangladeshis had settled in Rome (Knights, 1996) while there were no previous historical or economic relations between the countries. The first Pakistani labour migrants arrived in Greece in the 1970s to work in shipyards (Tonchev, 2007) even though, again, the two countries were not in any way previously connected. Turkey has become the top refugee-hosting country in the early 2010s where it had no experience of hosting refugees before, and the 2015–2016 Mediterranean refugee emergency has transformed several south-eastern European countries like Serbia or North Macedonia into reluctant hosts of transit migrants or asylum seekers.

This landscape of increased and multi-directional mobility affects not only migrants themselves but also those who are sedentary, those at destination who receive the newcomers, and those at origin who are left behind. Mobility thus becomes part of the reality of all people, both mobile and sedentary, through what Abdelmalek Sayad (1991) thirty years ago called the paradox of alterity: migrants are missing from where they should be (their country of origin) and are present where they should not be (at destination). They thus defy the fundamental principle of the national order notably that territorial and ethnic/cultural boundaries should coincide.

An interactive approach to nations and nationalism that puts to the centre the relationship between the national in-group and the immigrant communities is essential for understanding the complex realities of the twenty-first century and for making sense of the different trends of nationalism that emerge as a result. New waves and discourses of chauvinist, populist nationalism or of transnational, universalist solidarity and of mixed belonging can best be understood along a continuum that ranges from *plural nationalism* (an open form of nationalism that

acknowledges diversity, interacts with it, and eventually embraces and synthesises a new national configuration) to *neo-tribal nationalism* (a reactive form of nationalism that is exclusionary, based on the construction of an authenticity and homogeneity that is organic and does not change) (Triandafyllidou, 2020). Neo-tribal and plural nationalism are of course ideal types, not black and white distinctions. They make more sense as the two extreme points of a continuum along which we can position the re-emerging nationalisms of today.

Plural nationalism acknowledges that the nation is based in some commonality. Such commonality may invariably be based on cultural, ethnic, religious, or territorial and civic elements. What is important is that the in-group perceives such commonality and identifies with it, organises around it. Within this plural nationalism there is certainly a majority group that to a large extent has given its imprint on the national identity, through the historical process of nation formation which may have been smooth and gradual or traumatic and conflictual. However, this majority national, cultural, ethnic, or civic imprint does not monopolise the national identity definition and the relevant dominant discourse. By contrast, plural nationalism acknowledges openly a degree of diversity in the nation that may stem from the period of nation formation and the existence of minorities within the nation, or may have evolved later through the experience of immigration. Plural nationalism acknowledges the changing demographic or political circumstances of the nation and the nation-state and through a process of tension, even conflict, and change, it creates a new synthesis.

In contrast to plural nationalism's interactive and dialogical relationship with diversity and Others, neo-tribal nationalism is predicated on a rejection of diversity (Triandafyllidou, 2020). I use the term tribal to emphasise that this type of nationalism, regardless of whether the in-group is defined in territorial-civic or blood-and-belonging terms, is predicated on an organic, homogenous conception of the nation (see also Chua, 2018). The nation is represented as a compact unit that does not allow for variation or change. The only way to deal with challenges of mobility and diversity is to resist and reject it. I call this nationalism tribal, not in the sense of an ethnic, genealogical commonality but to emphasise that such a nationalism advocates for an organic type of national identity that is somehow amorphous, non-self-reflexive, and develops also beyond or in contrast to political institutions. This type of nationalism is new, notably neo-tribal, because it flourishes in a world that is ever more characterised by information technology and new forms of communication, and most importantly by the social media. While social media may be seen as the epitome of the modern, technological evolution, they bring within them the seed of a return to a tribal, closed understanding of the world. Social media and internet algorithms allow for people who are transnationally connected to the world (through videogames, YouTube channels, social media influencers, on demand television shows) to be confined within their own little echo-chamber, within their digital bubble of like-minded people. They create a transnational digital community that is neo-tribal.

### **Neo-Tribal Nationalism: The Case of Hungary and Poland**

Interesting examples of neo-tribal nationalism can be found in Europe today in both Hungary and Poland. Both countries share an ethno-religious concept of the nation, and a relatively recently acquired fully independent territorial statehood after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1989. Both countries' governments in the last decade have been dominated by aggressively nationalist parties that have advanced a strong ethno-religious and racist discourse (Buchowski, 2016). Indeed, the new Hungarian and Polish nationalism is neo-tribal in that it denies any variation and diversity within the nation which is conceived as homogenous and amorphous. In both countries incumbent governments have eroded democratic institutions, sought to silence the media, and attacked the independence of the judiciary. Visible minorities like the Roma have been vilified and fully racialised and (Jewish) conspiracy theories actively promoted. This neo-tribal nationalist discourse has also been addressed towards Others outside the nation-state: European institutions have been represented in this neo-tribal nationalism as a threat to the national autonomy and authenticity, while specific European countries, like for instance Sweden, have been represented as what Poland (or Hungary) does not want to become (Krzyżanowski, 2018). The refugee flows of 2015–2016 have offered an opportunity for this neo-tribal nationalist discourse to take up also territorial and civic undertones: Hungary hurried to secure its territorial borders through building a fence, and both countries represented Muslim asylum seekers as an enemy from which to protect the nation's women and gender equality. In either case human rights principles or international obligations emanating from EU law and international conventions have been ignored in the name of a chauvinistic patriotism. Both ethnic and civic/territorial elements of Hungarianness and Polishness have been mobilised in this neo-tribal nationalist discourse even if both nations define themselves predominantly ethnically.

## **13.4 Conclusion**

This chapter offers an analytical framework for (re-)thinking the relationship between migration and the nation, with a focus on the role of Others in defining the national community interactively. Pointing to the complex realities of mobility and difference today and the opposed trends of aggressive populist nationalism and of transnational solidarity movements, I suggest that we can better understand this relationship between nations and migration through the lens of plural vs. neo-tribal nationalism. Naturally neo-tribal and plural nationalism are analytical categories which seek to order the disorder and complexity of contemporary socio-political reality. However, reality always defies theoretical frameworks. During the last decade we have witnessed important events of political uprisings (like the Arab



Spring in 2011), international terrorism (whether Jihadist or of the White Supremacist matrix across the world), refugee emergencies in the Mediterranean (driven by the Syrian conflict), in Central and North America (as a result of political insecurity and gang violence), and in Southeast Asia (as the outcome of ethnic cleansing as in the case of the Rohingya refugees fleeing from Myanmar to Bangladesh). However, it seems that none would have predicted a global pandemic like that of COVID-19, or a massive transnational uprising against police violence and racial injustice as those we witnessed in spring and summer 2020. Unsurprisingly, the relationship between migration and the nation lies at the centre of responses to the pandemic. Not only have borders closed, leaving migrants stranded at their origin or destination, but the extent to which we are all interconnected and interdependent has become more apparent than ever. Nations and migration also matter when we think about systemic racism and how to undo it. It is my hope that this framework can help shed some clarity on these trends and lead to a more just and solidary world.

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# Chapter 14

## The Contested Concept of ‘Integration’



Sarah Spencer

A fundamental problem in the study of ‘integration’ has been a failure to separate the empirical *is* from the normative *ought*: that is, to study what is happening in society separately from implicit assumptions on a desired end-goal. A crucial question, Castles et al. (2014, p. 264) write, concerns how immigrants and their descendants “can become part of receiving societies and nations”. This process, they note, is most commonly referred to as *integration*, “but this can imply a specific idea of where the process should lead, so we prefer the more neutral term ‘incorporation’”.

This preference of some scholars to avoid ‘integration’ in favour of alternative terms has necessarily led to a lack of coherence in terminology across the literature. It is not clear, however, that alternative words have avoided the pitfalls that the critics of integration have identified. Some of those critics have argued that the concept is so flawed it should be abandoned (Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018). Yet, it is important that we do find both a common language and conceptual clarity. As Klarenbeek (2019) argues, a failure to find a way to conduct research in this area would leave the power inequalities and issues of membership that arise from migration unstudied and unresolved (see also Hadj Abdou, 2019).

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The author acknowledges with appreciation the collaboration of her colleague Katharine Charsley in developing ideas on which this chapter draws, including the analysis in Spencer & Charsley 2021 addressing critiques of the concept of ‘integration’ and presenting a definition and revised heuristic model of integration processes.

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## 14.1 Evolution of a Concept

Early twentieth-century sociologists used the concept of ‘*assimilation*’ to explain the evolving relationship between immigrants and other residents and institutions in the country in which they live. Some scholars continue to do so. Initially, assimilation was conceived as a uni-directional journey undertaken by immigrants—largely of cultural adaptation—into a culturally homogenous majority society. Responsibility for outcomes was, in effect, laid at the immigrants’ door. The process was measured by how similar the attitudes and behaviour of immigrants became to other residents (‘natives’) (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Park & Burgess, 1921).

In policy discourse, that process of becoming similar was—and continues to be—seen by some as a desirable end goal. The perpetuation of cultural difference is deemed a potential threat to the shared loyalties of the nation-state, so that assimilation is a necessary part of the nation-building process (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Policy measures such as ethnic monitoring or consultation with ‘community leaders,’ which can reinforce cultural diversity and the retention of minority identities, are then discouraged, albeit less rigidly in practice than policy rhetoric can suggest (Bertossi & Duyvendak, 2012; Simon, 2007).

Critics of assimilation theory argued that the processes in which immigrants are engaged equally engage the individuals and institutions of the ‘receiving’ society (a ‘two-way’ process). Society, moreover, is not homogenous but highly diverse. Far from being confined to a process of cultural change, this engagement occurs across multiple spheres of life—not least in the labour market. These are processes of interaction, furthermore, that do not take place in a level playing field, nor solely reflect the human and social capital that the immigrants bring to the table. Rather, structural economic and social inequalities shape the outcomes that emerge (Schneider & Crul, 2010). Scholars took these criticisms on board. Acknowledging the diversity of society, for instance, and the impact of socio-economic opportunity structures and discrimination, the theory of “*segmented assimilation*” was developed in the 1990s to take account of the varying trajectories of the children of immigrants into different socio-economic groups, with differing economic and cultural outcomes (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Stepick & Stepick, 2010).

Brubaker (2001, p. 544) argued that while the “old, analytically discredited and politically disreputable” understanding of assimilation had rightly been rejected, it remained valid to study a process of becoming similar as well as persistent differences, in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. We can do this, he argued, whether we “applaud or lament” the emerging similarities that are found. Bommes (2012, p. 111) agreed that studying the process of becoming similar is a legitimate focus, but in the context of a society which we now understand as diverse, characterised by structural inequality and by organisations which mediate opportunities for participation and access to resources. The concept of assimilation in its later forms is thus more nuanced than as first conceived, but the process of becoming similar remains too narrow for the study of the complex processes at play.

Moreover, as the critics would later say of 'integration', it is a concept which undoubtedly posits immigrants as 'other,' reinforcing the perceptual divide that, in policy discourse, assimilation was intended to overcome.

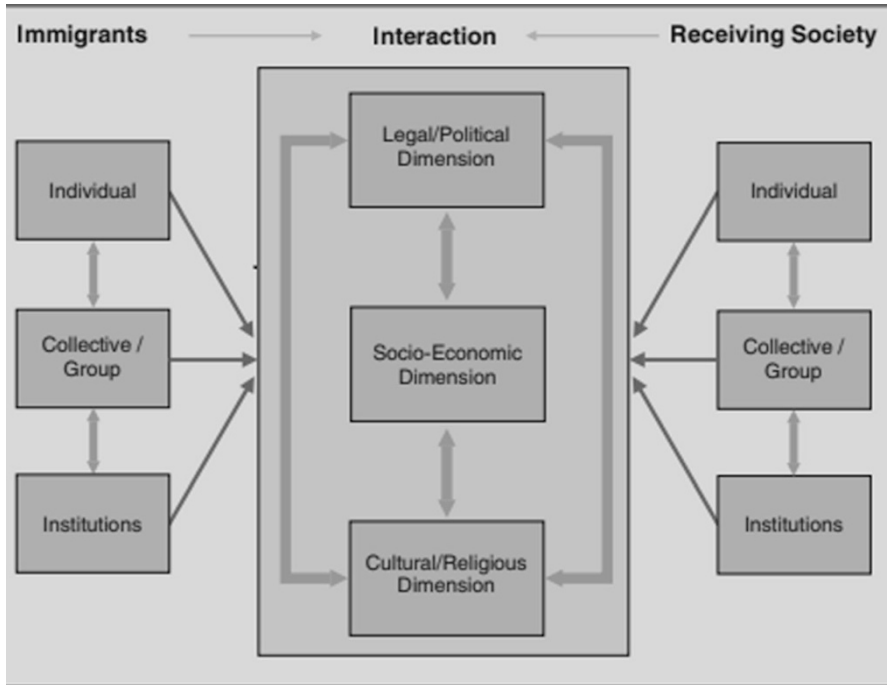
## 14.2 Integration: Recognition of Complexity But Conceptual Challenges Remain

Many scholars who moved away from assimilation developed a broader concept, integration; albeit "often used as a term, but rarely defined as a concept" (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003 p. 6). Common among authors is the recognition that this is not a single process but a series across different spheres of life ('dimensions'). Scholars group these differently: Maxwell (2012), for instance, posits social (including cultural), economic, and political dimensions; Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas (2016) suggest Legal/Political, Socio-economic and cultural/religious.

Heckmann (2006, p. 2), in contrast, identifies four dimensions: *structural* (as in relation to core institutions such as healthcare, housing, education and employment); *cultural* (attitudinal and behavioural change); *social* (relationships) and, a dimension not always highlighted separately, '*identificational*', relating to individuals' multiple senses of identity and belonging. While scholars of integration emphasise the two-way nature of integration processes in each dimension (so here, for instance, referring not only to migrants' sense of identity but also to that of other residents), there often remains an emphasis on the trajectory of the migrants in that process rather than on a more holistic process of societal change. Thus Heckmann refers to integration as "the inclusion of individual migrants into the core institutions of the receiving society", while Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas (2016, p. 14) would refer to it a decade later as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society".

Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas' (2016, p. 17) understanding of integration, illustrated in their heuristic model below (Fig. 14.1), nevertheless encapsulates much of what we now know about the processes of interaction which take place: the importance of recognising the impact that processes in one dimension may have on another (one could give as an example, racist attitudes in the cultural dimension impacting on opportunities to obtain employment); that these processes do not necessarily take place at the same time (social engagement may come before participation in the labour market); and may reverse (through redundancy, perhaps, or a sense of belonging diminish in face of repeated experiences of discrimination). They also argue that the participants in these processes are fundamentally unequal in terms of power and resources. The receiving society, especially its institutional structure and reaction to newcomers, is far more decisive for the outcome of integration processes than are the migrants themselves.

Alba and Foner's (2015) comparative work on integration in the United States and Europe shows with empirical data the extent to which integration processes can indeed take place at a different pace in different spheres of life, and how the



**Fig. 14.1** Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas' (2016, p. 16) heuristic model of integration processes

outcomes can vary between countries. While the United States is judged to be relatively inclusive of immigrants in terms of political representation and national identity, for instance, some European countries are judged to be more inclusive in indexes measuring economic inequality and residential segregation. Those differences cannot be understood without a close examination of the institutional structures which impact on them. Crul and Schneider (2010) also emphasise the ways in which institutional structures, such as those in the labour market and in education, shape integration outcomes; while others have looked at the impact of welfare state regimes (Sainsbury, 2012) and of spatial segregation (Phillips, 2015).

It was initially thought that engagement in one dimension would be mirrored by engagement elsewhere: labour market and social integration, for instance, going side by side. Evidence shows, however, that this is not necessarily the case. Working anti-social hours can limit opportunities to take language classes or develop social networks outside of work (Charsley et al., 2020). Portes et al. (2005, p. 1013) found that limited engagement in the cultural dimension can facilitate engagement elsewhere, such as access to jobs and housing: “the social capital grounded on ethnic networks provides a key resource in confronting obstacles to successful adaptation”. Such trade-offs run counter to the implicit assumption that retention of cultural or transnational connections impedes integration processes elsewhere. That finding

demonstrates the importance of taking a broad lens to the study of integration: outcomes are not consistent across cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions (Maxwell, 2012, p. 17).

### 14.3 Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

Some national and local policymakers similarly adopted the term integration, seeking to distance themselves from any suggestion that their goal was to require immigrants to assimilate. As long ago as 1966, a UK Home Secretary insisted that he saw integration

“not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (Rose et al., 1969, p. 25)

This was a concept of integration that required some adaptation by both minority and majority and one intended to achieve a multicultural society: a society which would value diverse traditions and give this some recognition in institutional form, but in which community and cultural boundaries would be permeable, not set in stone (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003).

In contrast to assimilationists, *multiculturalists* prioritised policy interventions to reduce discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, overcome barriers to participation in society, and foster acceptance of cultural pluralism and understanding (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000, p. xvii; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, p. 4). Critics of multiculturalism argue, however, that such interventions can overemphasise group differences, foster separateness, stifle debate, ossify cultural practices that would otherwise adapt over time, and create vested interests in ethnic and faith-based groupings, thus reinforcing divisions rather than what people have in common (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010).

The Common Basic Principles on Integration agreed by the European Union in 2004, reflecting long discussions to reconcile differing Member State approaches, state that “integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States”, but go on to assert that “integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union”, and to emphasise the importance of frequent interaction between immigrants and the citizens of Member States (EU, 2004).

‘*Interculturalism*’, in which there is an emphasis on dialogue and social mixing across communities as well as on valuing diversity and equality, has emerged as an alternative to both multiculturalism and assimilation. Arguably its advocates target popular misconceptions of multiculturalism, not the versions of those who advocate it; so that rather than offering an alternative approach to multiculturalism it actually emphasises aspects of it (Modood, 2017). Interculturalism has proved popular with policymakers, particularly among European cities (Zapata-Barrero, 2015), part of a growing divergence between national and municipal approaches and between those of municipalities themselves (Entzinger, 2019; Scholten & Penninx, 2016).

## 14.4 Critiques of ‘Integration’

The similarity between the *concepts used by academics and policymakers* has led to criticism that scholars have embraced their integration paradigm instead of interrogating it. In a hard-hitting critique in 2001, Favell argued that academics (whether wanting to be able to engage critically in policy debates or “chasing after ethnic relations policy consultancies”), had entered into the logic of mainstream, normative, integration discourse. Reading their work, it could be difficult to remember that they were not speaking from the same location as the policymakers (Favell, 2001, p. 354). He went on to argue that:

The reproduction of ideas of integration and citizenship in academic discourse, for all their progressive veneer, thus may be just reproducing a certain vision of a unitary modern nation-state or nation-society that corresponds closely to what those who speak from a powerful position in society most want to hear, but *not* how these societies really function. (ibid., 2001, p 358; see also Favell, 2016; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

Recent critiques of integration have returned to this concern, as part of a broader insistence on the need for greater reflexivity on the paradigms in which migration research is conducted (Dahinden, 2016). In essence, critiques “centre on ways in which normative underpinnings combine with conceptual fuzziness to produce migrant-blaming depictions of social processes within distorted notions of nation-states and homogenous majority populations within them” (Spencer & Charsley, 2021). While some critics call for rejection of the concept (Rytter, 2018; Schinkel, 2018) others argue that it is time to “renew” or reclaim it (Anthias & Pajnic, 2014).

Five core criticisms have been made. While some are couched in sweeping terms that do not do justice to the breadth and depth of scholarship in the field (Penninx, 2019), they undoubtedly identify pitfalls that need to be avoided: that integration research is pervaded by normativity and by an outdated imaginary of society; of methodological nationalism; negative objectification of migrants as ‘other’; and of a narrow focus on migrants when identifying the factors shaping the outcomes of integration processes (Spencer & Charsley, 2021).

### 14.4.1 Normativity

Normativity refers, first, to the ways in which implicit assumptions are made that certain actions or outcomes are desirable while others are not. The normativity that pervades academic writing on integration begins in the definitions of integration used, as here by Alba and Foner (2015, p. 5), for whom integration is:

the processes that increase the opportunities of immigrants and their descendants to obtain the valued ‘stuff’ of a society, as well as social acceptance [...] Full integration implies parity of life chances with members of the native majority group and being recognized as a legitimate part of the national community.



While many will find that goal laudable, it can be argued that the concept of integration used for academic research and analysis ought not to include any normative connotations on the desired end goal: rather, “the concept of an end goal is itself a normative construct” (Wieviorka, 2014, p. 637). The aim should be to study what *is* happening, the actual processes, not to prescribe what *ought* to happen, which is a matter for those in the policy field.

The challenge extends beyond the definition of integration used. As Crul and Schneider (2010, p. 1265) write:

normative ideas of preferred integration outcomes seem to slip most easily into academic integration models. Implicit normative connotations of terms and concepts frequently prevent us posing the right scientific questions and developing analytical models that address integration dynamics in order to understand and not to judge them.

A reflexive approach thus has to be taken in the design of research, selection of data, and analysis, to interrogate the implicit assumptions on which they are based. Race and class, for instance, must be built into the analysis, rather than simply taking ‘migrant’ as the key analytical category (Hadj Abdou, 2019).

#### ***14.4.2 Objectification of the Migrant as ‘Other’***

Anthias and Pajnic (2014) highlight the way in which discourse on integration serves to posit the immigrant as ‘other’, the outsider; separating the deserving, well-integrated (though still not one of us) from the undeserving who have failed to integrate. Thus, a discourse that is concerned with the inclusion of migrants contributes to their marginalisation. Engaged in this discourse, scholars of integration are providing the factual architecture in which problematisation of the migrant other takes shape (Schinkel, 2018).

If work on integration processes is to avoid reinforcing this sense of difference and separation, it has to contextualise individuals within—not apart from—society. It has to reorient the focus of study away from migrant populations to the population as a whole (whether at the neighbourhood level or at a larger scale); as a process of boundary change in which all individuals are engaged (Klarenbeek, 2019). Thus, as Dahinden (2016, p. 2218) writes, “the research question loses its migration-specific focus while remaining sensitive to the role of migration and ethnicity in the phenomenon being investigated”.

#### ***14.4.3 Outdated Imaginary of Society***

Criticism also focuses on the way in which the ‘receiving society’ is often portrayed: as culturally homogenous, bounded, and self-contained. It is Durkheim’s nineteenth-century notion of an “integrated society” unified by common values and replete with

constructions of members (citizens) who belong and those who do not (Favell, 2001; Rytter, 2018). It harks from an age before we understood the complexity of contemporary societies; a nostalgic concept evoked by those who long to return to former times (Wieviorka, 2014, p. 636).

Research on integration needs to recognise society as diverse, segmented (not least by class, faith, and ethnicity), fluid, and evolving, with porous internal and external boundaries (Urry, 2000). It has institutional structures which shape access to them and interactions within them. The opportunities society presents and the barriers it imposes are the context for the engagement of those who have newly arrived as well as for those who have never been away.

#### ***14.4.4 Methodological Nationalism***

A consequence of an outdated imaginary of society in integration research is *methodological nationalism*: that is, it often takes the nation-state as the natural social and political form of the modern world, focusing on the engagement of individuals within one country to the neglect of their simultaneous, continuing, economic, social, and cultural ties abroad (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 302). Yet integration is not a national project in a society bounded by the borders of the nation-state: the global and transnational must be built into our understanding of the processes in which migrants and other residents are engaged. The implications of *transnational connections* have indeed been a recent focus of study by integration scholars—with recognition that integration processes are not after all two-way but at least three-way with country of origin, and beyond (Fokkema & De Haas, 2011; Mügge, 2016).

#### ***14.4.5 Narrow Focus on Migrants in the Factors Shaping Integration Processes***

With the focus on immigrants as ‘other’ and a sanitised notion of society can come a narrow focus, in the factors shaping integration processes, on those relating to migrants to the neglect of the societal opportunities and barriers they can face. In turn that leads to the attribution of blame if integration ‘outcomes’ are poor.

Rather than focus solely on factors related to migrants, such as their human and social capital, research needs to capture the multiple and systemic factors which shape the processes of engagement over time.

## 14.5 Avoiding the Pitfalls

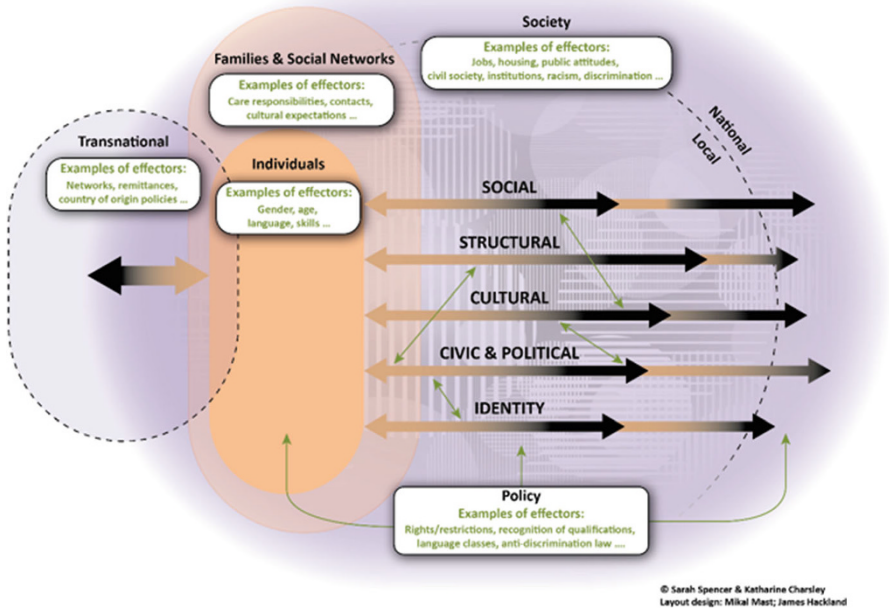
If it is accepted that these five criticisms are indeed pitfalls to be avoided, is it possible to carry out research which does so? It is certainly a methodological challenge. It is easier to secure data on individuals’ human and social capital, for instance, than to identify the opportunities and barriers that they faced at particular points in time, across the spheres of life in which they and fellow residents were engaged. What were the openings in the labour and housing markets in the parts of the country in which they lived? Were opportunities for civic engagement available? Were the individuals and institutions with whom they engaged, in country of residence and transnationally, welcoming or rejecting? How can we avoid objectifying the migrant as ‘other’ when securing data on these wider factors is much more difficult to obtain?

The starting point is a definition of integration which does not identify migrants separately from other individuals, nor makes reference to any normative end goal, such as:

Processes of interaction, personal and social change among individuals and institutions across structural, social, cultural and civic spheres and in relation to identity; processes which are multi-directional and have spacial, transnational and temporal dimensions (Charsley et al., 2020: Chapter 2; Spencer & Charsley, 2021)

Operationalising that definition can be facilitated, as in Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas’s work (2016), by a heuristic model of integration processes (Fig. 14.2)—in this case categorising those processes across five dimensions—and identifying from the research literature the groups of factors which are known to impact on the integration processes within them. In the model below, the dimensions are *Structural*—as in participation in the labour and housing markets, education, and health systems; *Social*—as in social interaction, relationships, and networks; *Cultural*—changing values, attitudes, behaviour, and lifestyle; *Civic and political participation*—in community life and the democratic process; and *Identity*—the processes through which individuals may develop a shared identity and sense of belonging with the place, nation, communities and people among whom they live. The model does not prioritise one dimension over another; the aim is to understand, not to judge.

This categorisation of dimensions is not a literal depiction of integration processes but a heuristic device; a tool to operationalise in research design and analysis. It enables us to visualise that the processes in one dimension could develop differently to those in another; and that interactions in one could impact on interactions in another (as depicted by the green arrows), including ‘trade-offs’ where less engagement in one dimension can facilitate engagement in another. Separation between dimensions is less evident in practice in some contexts, as where employment in a family business blurs the boundary between engagement in the structural and social spheres. In each case, any indexes measuring the processes of interaction, personal and social change are measuring those processes for all residents, wherever possible to do so. Outcomes derive not from one set of actors but from those interactions. The selection of indicators used is necessarily a normative choice.



**Fig. 14.2** Heuristic model of integration processes and effectors. (Source: Spencer and Charsley (2016), as revised in Spencer and Charsley (2021))

The diagram provides a framework for researchers to identify the factors (or ‘effectors’ as they may facilitate or limit engagement) which have been found to impact on integration processes in their area of study: relating (as shown in the white boxes) to individuals, such as gender and language skills; to families and social networks, such as care responsibilities; to opportunity structures in society, such as job vacancies; to transnational effectors, such as trading opportunities, or responsibility for remittances; and, finally, to policy interventions. Policy interventions may impact on integration processes (including restrictions on rights *to* participate), but the model does not assume that policies determine outcomes. As Charsley et al. (2020, ch. 2) point out:

Researching and writing about integration is rather like untangling a complicated knot – identifying the various strands and teasing apart their relationships to each other. Pulling one strand or another first will expose particular sets of inter-relationships in a different order.

The heuristic model facilitates that process.

It remains entirely legitimate to study the processes in a single dimension (or domain within it, such as voting practices within the *civic dimension*), but it is necessary to acknowledge the wider context, that individuals may simultaneously be engaged in integration processes in other dimensions which may be impacting on the focus of study. Likewise, where the focus of study is local, it is necessary to recognise that the integration processes under the microscope may be impacted upon by structures and processes at the national and transnational level.

## 14.6 Conclusion

Understanding processes of engagement is important, including the impacts of migration on them. Scholars of integration have contributed to a rich literature on these processes, but there is no consensus on the terminology and concepts used. Sharp criticisms have been made of the use of the concept of integration in research, citing the impacts on it of policy paradigms. This chapter has categorised these criticisms as: (1) focusing on normativity; (2) an outdated imaginary of society; (3) methodological nationalism; (4) a negative objectification of migrants as 'other'; and (5) a narrow focus on migrants in the factors shaping integration processes. While addressing these pitfalls brings significant methodological challenges beyond the intellectual challenge of changing the paradigm, the chapter argues that it is possible to do so, proposing a definition of integration and a heuristic model of integration processes capable of empirical application. Neither will end the debate on whether the concept of integration should be 'written against' or renewed but they could assist those who wish to study the processes of engagement to find a constructive way forward to do so.

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# Chapter 15

## Transnationalism



Ludger Pries

**Transnationalism** as a research program has emerged in the social sciences since the 1990s. It refers to studies concentrating on social relations and groups that extend across the borders of nation-states. Referring to the degree of density and durability of such social interactions, often transnational social relations, social fields, and social spaces, are distinguished. Transnational families and transnational organisations are of particular relevance. The global, and even increasing significance of economic, social, cultural, and political remittances reflect the societal reality of transnational life.

By its very nature, international migration as a cross-border movement of persons always includes the travelling of ideas, culture, and artifacts as social, political, cultural, and economic resources. As opposed to classic migration theories and the methodological nationalism often related to this, transnationalism assumes that social relations, fields, and spaces could span different places and locales across nation-states, and by this they could structure social life locally and transnationally.

Transnational social life and realities, as well as transnationalisation as a scientific concept, has had a substantial impact on how to approach migration and integration. If transnational social relations and transnational social spaces are of relevance and have momentum on their own, then migration theories and migration policies have to take into account that nation-state-based units of analysis and of political intervention are only of limited application. Cross-border migration dynamics can neither be explained, nor be managed or controlled without taking into account the drive of transnational social realities. Scientific migration research has to be organised transnationally, and migration policy measures have to be transnational as well. The understanding and approach to integration also has to shift from single and simple assimilation, to more complex multidimensional and multi-local **belongings**.

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## 15.1 Key Concepts and Theories

The term *transnationalism* first gained relevance in social sciences during the 1990s. It refers to social relations and groups that extend across the borders of nation-states. *Transnationality* is used to address a specific quality of social phenomena such as power or social inequality. While transnationality refers to characteristics of socially relevant objects of study (like families, organisations, infrastructures, social mechanisms, money flows), *transnationalisation* focuses on the process and the making of social relations and textures spanning across national borders. The focus on transnationalism, transnationality, and transnationalisation is not meant to imply that nation-states are less important, let alone dying out—as is assumed in some concepts of globalisation. On the contrary, the term transnational is actually based on the idea that nation-states still organise and structure major parts of social life, but that they are no longer the exclusive containers of the social.

In this chapter, we focus on transnationalisation as a process of increasing social, cultural, economic, and political relations and interactions between locales across the borders of nation-states and national societies. From a social science perspective, transnationalisation leads to and is sustained by pluri-local cross-border social spaces at the micro, meso, and macro level. At the micro level, transnationalisation refers to habitual and accountable patterns of transnational perception and action in *everyday life* (such as telecommunication, shipment of goods or sending of money, and information seeking across borders). At the macro level, it includes *social institutions* as complex programs of routines, rules, and norms that increasingly structure significant terrains of life and span different countries (such as transnational educational careers or labour markets). Finally, at the meso level, transnationalisation is linked to the growth of *organisations* as stable and dense loci of cooperation with rules of membership, given structures and processes, and stated goals; transnational organisations span over different countries without having a clear and unique headquarters of resources and power.

Concerning the strictness of the use and definition, there are three major understandings of the terms transnationalisation and transnational. In a broad sense, they are used to address all socially relevant phenomena and processes that extend across the borders of nations and nation-states. Here, the notion of transnational and transnationalisation is used in the same sense as the terms international and internationalisation or similar to the term cross national. Examples are speaking of the transnational structure of the internet and of fast-food chains (although their technical or power resources might be highly concentrated). A second understanding of transnational and transnationalisation takes a somewhat narrower social science perspective and refers to the strengthening of social relations in interaction itself. Here it is not the material infrastructure of fiber optic cables of the internet, but the social practice of cross-border interchange and mobility, as in transnational emailing, phoning, and traveling. Transnational relationships are distinguished from inter-state and inter-governmental ones in the sense of the sub-discipline of international relations in political science. Transnationalisation here means the

intensification of the social interaction not of states or big corporate actors, but of individual actors such as migrants, and of collective actors such as Greenpeace. In this broader sense, the terms transnational and cross-border are interchangeable. Transnationalisation here is used to distinguish social realities, and relations and movements “from below” as opposed to corporate and state “globalisation from above” (Smith & Guarnizo, 1999).

The third, and even narrower sense of transnationalisation refers to the extension and intensification of social relations and social entities that are nested pluri-locally in different nation-states and span across national societies without having a definite ‘headquarters’. Transnational families, transnational organisations, and transnational social institutions are examples of such transnational social units at micro, macro, and meso level. These social units are not just ephemeral encounters, events, or relations, but dense and durable social entanglements as social networks or social spaces. In a quite restricted sense the term transnationalisation is used to distinguish this specific concept from other forms of cross-border phenomena and processes like globalisation, mondialisation, cosmopolitanism, diasporisation, supranationalisation, and glocalisation (Pries, 2005).

The suitability of the terms transnational, transnationalisation, and transnationality, as well as of the research program of transnationalism, depends on the existence of nation-states and national societies - for anything transnational can exist only as long as there are nations which can serve as referents of the term. In this sense transnationalisation is used in deliberate contrast to the concepts of de-territorialisation, de-spatialisation, liquefaction, or virtualisation according to which geo-spatial boundaries are becoming less and less important. At the same time, the concept of transnationalisation is also used to counter “[methodological nationalism](#)” as the assumption that national societies, as defined by the boundaries of nation- states, are/or should be the main units of analysis in social science (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

## 15.2 Key Studies at Micro, Meso and Macro Level

Transnationalisation as a research program is neither related to a specific social theory nor is it such a theory in its own right. At its beginning there were mainly anthropological and sociological studies departing from “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of migration processes and its contexts. Transnationalism research first concentrated on the micro level of families and households. It then extended to analyse transnational organisations at a meso level and transnational societal institutions at a macro level.

### 15.2.1 *Transnationalism, Migration, and the Family*

Pioneering cross-border research found long-term family relations between places of migrants’ origin (like Mexico or Caribbean countries) and places of migrants’ arrival

like the USA. In the process of migration, the social relations of daily or weekly transnational communication, of sending money, tinned food and electronic devices, and of personally moving, did not decrease or thin out during the life course or from one generation to the next, but dense transnational communities stabilised based on families and social groups; in family and community chains tortillas, beans, and chilies were brought to the USA and money was sent to households in Mexico (Kearney & Nagengast, 1989). Between the Dominican Republic and the USA there existed long term [circular migration](#) movements according to the conditions of labour markets and family needs; gender and family roles shifted and led to constant renegotiation of power structures between different persons and groups of transnational families (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991).

Contrary to the classic model, migration did not lead to changing definitely from one national container (Mexico or Dominican Republic) to another national container (USA), but social life spanned for generations between and above nation-states. In a seminal reader, four basic assumptions of transnationalism were defined: (1) transnational migration is inextricably interwoven with global capitalism and the capital-labour-relations as reflected in transnational labour markets; (2) transnationalism is a process in which migrants produce their own transnational social fields in everyday life; (3) social science concepts of ethnicity, race or nation divert from transnational phenomena; (4) transnational migrant as transmigrants are confronted with related national concepts of race, ethnicity or citizenship (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994). Beyond transnational families, transnational communities could stabilise by collective transnational action like organising water or health infrastructure; migrants in the USA could buy a used ambulance vehicle and bring it to a local village in Mexico in order to establish a first aid chain (Smith, 2006). By long term transnational family relations, power and gender structures change at household and community level (Goldring, 1997).

Although transnational studies at the micro level of families flourished since the 1990s, much empirical evidence could be found for earlier periods. Smith (1997, 2001) analysed the durable transnational relations of Italian and Swedish Migrants to the USA that date back to the nineteenth century and included weekly letter interchanging or control of brides-to-be by regular correspondence with relatives of villages in the USA and Italy or Sweden. Already the groundbreaking study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, first published between 1918 and 1920, revealed the complex, intensive, and long lasting interrelations between Polish families and villages and the Polish migrant communities in US-American cities (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958). Transnational relations were also developed based on the massive forced migration of Jews, socialists, unionists, homosexuals and others, who were persecuted by the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria or after the Civil War in Spain (Pries & Yankelevitch, 2019). Including artists and other professionals and not counting their family members, “about 12,000 intellectuals lost their jobs and were eliminated from Germany’s social and cultural life” (Krohn, 1993, p. 11). In total, since 1933, around half a million persons directly affected had to flee the Nazi regime; many of them established transnational lives after World War II (Krohn, 2011).

## 15.2.2 *Transnationalism, Migration, and Organisations*

From the very beginning of transnationalism research, the meso level of organisations developed based on the study of transnational hometown associations as organisations whose members originate from the same region of origin and join as migrants in the country of arrival in order to provide support to their home localities. Originally set up mostly as cultural or social organisations to foster certain traditions from the homeland and to maintain close ties, these transnational organisations have grown in influence in recent decades, developing political agendas and engaging politically, for example, in their fight for political representation in their countries of origin *and* of arrival. In a large-scale study, Orozco and Lapointe (2004) examined over 100 of such Mexican hometown associations, focusing on their activities, organisational history, and their structure and partnerships with other organisations in order to develop further typologies and a more nuanced understanding of these organisations.

Portes et al. (2007) especially broadened the horizon of transnational research on migrant organisations by examining the interrelationship of transnational migrant organisations and the migrants' integration in the country of arrival. By comparing 90 Colombian, Dominican, and Mexican migrant organisations in the USA and their philanthropic projects in their corresponding countries of origin, they found a significant level of civic, philanthropic, cultural and political transnational activities among these organisations. Given their role in development projects in countries of origin, these organisations were also attracting the attention of sending states. In showing that "contexts of exit and reception determine the origin, strength, and character of transnational organisations" (Portes et al., 2007, p. 276), they analytically connect both the circumstances of leaving one's country of origin (like labour migration or forced migration) and the reception in the country of arrival, with the likelihood and design of collective engagement in transnational migrant organisations. They conclude that there is a higher likelihood of engagement among migrants who reside in the country of arrival over a longer period, as well as those with higher levels of education compared to those who do not fulfil these criteria.

Studies on transnational migrant organisations first focused on Latin American migration to the USA, especially under the focus of so-called hometown associations (more recently e.g. Strunk, 2014; Bada, 2014; Rivera-Salgado, 2015; Duquette-Rury & Bada, 2017), but also on transnational migrant organizations between African and European countries (Dumont, 2008; Lacroix, 2018) or Turkish migration in Europe (Caglar, 2006; Pries & Sezgin, 2012). In the European context, Ostergaard-Nielsen's (2003) study on Turkish organisations in Germany focuses on political engagement and lobbying rather than development work. She shows how these organisations address governments and institutions in the country of origin as well as in the country of arrival. She provides a typology of political practices of transnational migrant organisations by differentiating transnational immigration politics, homeland politics, diaspora politics, and translocal politics. In a similar vein, Koopmans and Statham (2003) study the political demands of migrant organisations in various

European countries and explain how European citizenship and models of integration may influence transnational claims-making. Using a case study of Turkish hometown associations in Germany, Caglar (2006) also highlights power structures in proposing a framework that takes into account specific relations of spaces and state policies.

Some studies on transnational organisations in the context of migration explicitly relate to the broader tradition of organisation studies in general. For profit organisations Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) differentiated four ideal types of organisations that are active across national borders. According to the degree of centralisation or decentralisation of power and resources and of strong or weak cross-border coordination of the organisational units, they distinguish global organisations (centralised and strong coordination), multinational organisations (decentralised and weak coordination), focal organisations (centralised and weak coordination) and transnational organisations (decentralised and strong coordination). In this more specific understanding of transnational organisations Pries (2008, 2012, with Sezgin) studied transnational migrant organisations between Germany and Turkey analysing (1) the mobilisation and distribution of resources (including membership, money, and infrastructure) between places and countries; (2) the main goals, themes, and demands (including subjects, target groups and allies); (3) the arrangement of external activities (including publication strategies, public activities, and events); and (4) the coordination and control of internal activities (including communication flows, meetings, internal elections, and decision-making).

More recently, greater efforts have been made to connect research on International Relations (IR) with migrant organisations. Dijkzeul and Fauser (2020) presented a variety of studies focusing on different roles of migrant organisations in lobbying for portable migrant labour rights (Bada & Gleeson, 2020), promoting faith and secularism (Carpi & Fiddian-Quasmiyeh, 2020), and in conflict management and peacebuilding (Zach, 2020). In stark contrast to methodological nationalism and realism in traditional IR theory, the authors underline that transnational organisations can leverage their influence and strength by building and maintaining organisational networks, and thus have to be considered as powerful players in lobbying for their interests in the political arena (Dijkzeul et al., 2020). However, in recent years, a great part of studies on transnational migrant organisations looking at other world-regions has also emerged (Okamura, 2014; Joseph et al., 2018).

### ***15.2.3 Transnationalism, Societies, and the Nation-State***

Transnationalisation is by no means a new phenomenon. Social relationships and social spaces that extend beyond the boundaries of the prevalent national forms of socialisation have always existed. Examples include traveling adventurers and itinerant traders in antiquity, religious networks, major organisations that have spanned the boundaries of principalities and feudal realms since the beginning of Catholicism, and economic service providers that connected large trading cities and

continents such as the Fugger family and the Hanseatic League. When, in the eighteenth century, ideas of national units in the form of modern nation-states and national societies began to take hold, many of the historical structures of social space which had come to extend beyond the territorial boundaries that then began to separate different social units, became transnational in a wider sense of the term. Consequently, the nationalisation of certain processes such as the emergence of social classes and the concept of public education has always been accompanied by the continued existence of social practices such as long-distance trade and trans-regional royal intermarriage.

Transnationalisation, when understood in this broader sense and at a macro level, depends on the emergence of modern national societies that are demarcated by nation-state boundaries. In Europe there has emerged the concept of nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006). This idea refers to the formation of collective identities which provide the structure for membership rights that are relevant to the lives of the members of these communities. These privileges include the rights to housing, education, work, freedom of movement, and social security. After centuries of religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, and, more, the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 established the binding principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, which required that all those who lived within the territorial boundaries of a sovereign state have the same religion—that of their ruler. This Westphalian order culminated in the twentieth-century concept of national societies as relatively culturally homogeneous units which are clearly separated in *nation-state containers*. There should be only one homogeneous social space within a given geo-graphical territory. All residents should have the same language, religion, culture, ethnic identity, and tradition, and every national society, in its role of an imagined social unit, should have one, and only one, geographic or territorial point of reference.

This idea of national societies as culturally homogeneous units has been the guiding principle, though not the reality, of social development in Europe in the modern age. The embedding of all central aspects and mechanisms of socialisation in national containers was one of the main pillars of modernisation—alongside individualisation, urbanisation, secularisation, rationalisation, and functional differentiation. In the twentieth century, modernisation was analysed mainly as the diffusion of social values, practices, and institutions from the ‘more developed’ nation-states to the ‘less developed’ ones—for example, as the dissemination of rationality, democracy, social welfare, and secularity from the West to the rest of the world. Such differentiating between modern and traditional, between advanced and less developed had legitimised colonialism and imperialism for centuries. It was against all empirical evidence of religious, cultural, political, and social diversity during all the history of mankind and against the fact that spatial mobility and migration are inextricable building elements of human history. This is why the critical reflection of methodological nationalism as “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 302) is so important in migration studies.

Ulrich Beck, drawing on the ideas of Wimmer and Glick Schiller, proposed to replace the previously dominant perspective of methodological nationalism by what he calls “methodological cosmopolitanism”, a new perspective which focuses on “the increasing interdependence of social actors across national boundaries” (Beck, 2004, p. 30). Even more radically, John Urry argued that the focus of sociological research should move away from “the ‘social as society’ to “the ‘social as mobility’” (2001, p. 2). *Cosmopolitanism* is here dealt with as a normative project of a human world society or as a universal and unilineal tendency. Therefore the alternatives of either globalism or methodological nationalism are not adequate. Global, transnational, and national social relations and entities are of increasing importance *at the same time*. Transnationalisation is only one, but a crucial component of a more complex multi-level model of relating systematically social spaces—such as family life, working space, religious practices, collective identities, claims making, and social movements—to their corresponding—local, national, regional, transnational, global—geographic configurations (Pries, 2008; Vertovec, 2004). During the last three decades, transnationalism as a research program in this sense has produced a wide range of empirical and conceptual studies (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999; Khagram & Levitt, 2007; book series like Routledge’s *Research in Transnationalism* and new journals like *Global Networks*).

Widening the focus of international migration research to transnationalization processes allows to better understand why during the last two centuries cross-border migration increased faster than world population and how this impacts social life all over the globe. The substantial role of economic remittances—received in one way or another almost by one out of eight inhabitants all over the world—could not be explained without referring to the dense transnational social networks of migrants. From 1990 to 2019 remittance inflows to Low-and-Middle-Income Countries increased worldwide from some 29 to more than 548 billion US-Dollars, that is, by some 1900% (KNOMAD, 2019, p. 3). During the same period, the world population grew by only 45% (from 5.3 to 7.7 billion) and international migrant stock by 84% (from some 153 to 281 million).<sup>1</sup> “No longer do those who emigrate separate themselves as thoroughly as they once did from the families and communities they leave behind. [...] We can no longer divide ourselves so easily into ‘countries of origin’ and ‘countries of destination’ since, to one degree or another, many countries are now both.” (UN, 2006, p. 6). Transnational activities could extend the scope of opportunities and options for work and living, at the same time they tear families and social groups apart. Such social disruption can be alleviated by transnational social practices of communication, of sending money and other goods and of occasional visits. By this, transnational activities in the context of migration lead not only to economic but to social remittances (for conceptual revision Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; for social remittances in Europe

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<sup>1</sup><https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>; <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>



Grabowska et al., 2017; for the transnational travelling of religions in Latin America Pries & Bohlen, 2019).

### 15.3 Desiderata of Transnationalism and Migration Research

In the twenty-first century, the transnationalism approach has been crucial for migration research for several reasons. First, it changes our scientific understanding of migration dynamics. Considered through a transnational lens, migration, once initiated, causes new migration through changed expectations in the regions of origin and new, migration-related demand structures in the regions of arrival. Through economic remittances and social, cultural, and political transmittances (Pries, 2020), regions of emigration and of immigration remain connected to each other. Migration processes essentially follow the logic of collective action of the migrants in their local, national, and transnational relations and social spaces. Measures of restrictive **border controls** often lead to less flexible labour market adjustment and to higher life risks for the migrants. Ecological problems, armed conflicts, and poverty are increasingly **blurring the boundaries** between labour migration and forced displacement, voluntary and forced migration, regular and irregular migration, to *mixed migration flows*. Modern communication and transport facilities can **promote** transnational migration with multiple locations of the migrants in the country of origin and the country of arrival. As a rule, migration is not a rational one-off decision, but a longer-term process of transnational “muddling through”, in which goals, schedules, identities, and historically developed transnational social network structures are iteratively and successively developed.

This leads to a second reason for strengthening transnational perspectives in migration research. As a general pattern, the field of migration studies and of integration studies are often separated from each other.<sup>2</sup> But distinguishing four ideal types of migrants could help to connect to different approaches of integration. Once migrants arrive in a country they are often treated either as immigrants that have to assimilate or as commuting, or return-migrants that don't need integration efforts. The ideal type of *immigrants* refers to those migrants who have resolutely decided to leave behind their former life and assimilate by beginning a new life with new social entanglements, new fully biographical experiences, and a second process of socialisation by redefining their preferences and expectations built on new resources. Millions of Europeans such as those who left their countries at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century as emigrants towards the Americas in search for better economic and socio-cultural conditions could be considered as such. But almost a third of them—even if not planned from the beginning—returned to their European homelands. They could be considered as ideal-typical *return*

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<sup>2</sup>For a critical discussion of integration policies in light of diversity see Scholten et al. 2017.

*migrants*. This qualification also holds for a great part of the so-called guestworkers in Europe. They are perceived—and often perceive themselves—as strongly willing to return to their country of origin and their former life. Return migrants maintain strong social entanglements to the places of their origin, they do not feel the necessities or are not expected to learn the languages and socio-cultural norms of the places of arrival. They maintain their former socialisation and are not willing and not invited to renegotiate their preferences and expectations.

Meanwhile, while in the case of immigrants and return-migrants there is a strong and clear orientation to either the country of arrival or the country of origin as a basic frame of reference, this is not the case for the two ideal-types of *Diaspora-migrants* and *transmigrants*. *Diaspora-migrants* define themselves in the frame of reference of a specific ‘land of promise’, but are open to accept or negotiate to live in other places.<sup>3</sup> They manage social entanglements and experiences and socialise in different places, they develop hybrid preferences and expectations and combine resources of different places. The classic example are religious communities like the Jewish or the Alevi Diasporas distributed all over the world. But we could also include diplomatic corps or business organisations maintaining strong social ties to their home country or headquarters as ‘land of promise’. Diaspora migrants experience the places they are living normally as spaces of suffering or of mission.

Finally, *transnational migrants* or *transmigrants* typically do not distinguish by this way between region of origin and of arrival, but develop an ambiguous and hybrid mixture of adherence and belonging. They sustain differences to the region (s) of origin and of arrival. Transmigrants live—mentally and often physically—between and across places in different countries. Maintaining their lifeworld, their stocks of knowledge, interpretative patterns, and biographical projects for the future are in some parts related to their countries of origin or the places of their ancestors, but in other parts their lives take new entanglements, experiences, socialisation, preferences, expectations and resources. Examples of such transmigrants could be found in social groups of artists, sportspersons, managers, or politicians, but also in transnational families of labour migrants and of forced migrants all over the world (as examples for the Americas see Levitt, 2001; Smith, 2006; for Europe see Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Mau, 2010; for Asia see Ong & Nonini, 1997; Westwood & Phizacklea, 2000; Jackson et al., 2004).

As the transnationalism approach leads to a better understanding and explanation of migration and of integration and the interrelations between both, it finally also helps to calculate opportunities and challenges for *migration policies*. Taking transnational social relations and transnational social spaces seriously offers some strong limitations but also some new leverages for policies and politics. On the one hand, migration processes can only be partially controlled and steered by direct political

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<sup>3</sup>This definition of Diaspora-migration is in line with the broader use of this term e.g. by Cohen (1997) and the IOM (2019, p. 49): “Migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity, or mutual experiences in the destination country.”

means. For instance, efforts to close or perform stricter controls on national borders of migrants often fails due to the momentum of migration dynamics that is based on the transnational social spaces. Stricter border control at the Mexican-USA border led to “caging effects” of transnational migration.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1990s, the transnationalisation approach introduced a fourth approach towards thinking about migration. According to this, migration is much more than container hopping from one national society to another—be it assimilationist or multicultural. Migration processes always create cross-border social ties between groups in different places and national societies. Transnational social relations and transnational social spaces include the interchange of resources like sending money or other goods, but also communications by regular phone calling, sending videos, or sharing social media spaces in Facebook or Instagram. By this, everyday life is not concentrated in just one place but spans multiple locales across national borders. To understand and explain the lifeworld of migrants, we have to relate to the places they or their ancestors lived before, to the places they are currently living, and the places they are including in their visions for their future life. This is especially true for forced migrants given that they normally begin to negotiate their social belonging after their flight.

The concept of **national societies**—of entities defined by the territorial boundaries of nation-states—might be regarded as an historical invention, a principle conveniently invoked to justify nationalism, racism, and violence. But under certain circumstances national societies have also proved to be reliable frameworks for individual and collective rights, for social welfare, political stability, and accountability. Transnationalisation began at the same time as and as a by-product of the national closure of the social. Besides economic relations and value chains, the cross-border dissemination of cultural products like movies, political movements, and non-profit organisations like Greenpeace, migration is a crucial driver of transnationalisation.

During the second decade of the twenty-first century, cross-border migration increased eight times faster than world population; forced migration even doubled from 40 to 80 million persons. More than 10% of the world population depend on **remittances** payments of migrants (IOM, 2020). Cross-border migration might lead to immigration or to return migration—sometimes it is a kind of Diaspora migration—but it always induces also transnational migration and the transnationalisation of social spaces in general. The ‘national’ in transnationalisation underlines that both nation-states and national societies continue to shape social reality. Nation-states and national societies shape the ways in which social collectives perceive themselves and others (collective identities), structure political groups (parliaments, governments, political parties), configure everyday life (families, leisure), work and employment

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<sup>4</sup>This means that legal and irregular resident migrant workers, who would move in and out in accordance with the employment opportunities under conditions of free mobility, remain in the countries of arrival because they fear not to be able to return, for the German so-called guest-workers see Schmuhl, 2003; for Mexico-USA migration cf. Massey et al., 2014.

(companies, unions), and organise social welfare (healthcare, pension funds). However, many of these aspects of social entanglements and socialisation processes transcend the borders of national societies.

Transnationalism and transnationalisation capture some aspects of these border-crossing phenomena. Labour market conditions and dynamics, socio-cultural belonging and identities, integration policies, and social welfare, and claims-making processes and political interest organisation are all aspects of social life that have a transnational dimension and show up elements of transnationalisation. Transnational social spaces raise questions of multiple membership rights, from social security to citizenship. Social integration can no longer be restricted to a single place but rather must be seen as an open and unpredictable social process of increasing interconnectedness of persons on local, regional, national, supranational, global, glocal, diasporic, and transnational levels. Transnationalisation also increases the risk that only actors who can articulate themselves appropriately or who have strong lobbying power will be able to make themselves heard on the various levels. Still, transnationalisation should not be regarded as a threat to social stability and nation-state control, even if transnational crime, from tax evasion to human and arms trafficking, are an increasing challenge. Above all, transnationalisation may bring about new forms of social diversity that extends across different places and social cohesion beyond fragmentations that are limited to one place.

Transnationalism as a research program is crucial for any kind of migration studies. It opens and connects migration research to the global questions of social sciences in the twenty-first century (Faist, 2019). As it is not a sociological theory in its own right, but has to be combined with and grounded in social science concepts according to the subject and objectives of study, it therefore invites multiscalar and multi-dimensional analysis. Transnationalism invites us to deepen our understanding of space in the dimensions of geographic and social spaces.

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# Chapter 16

## Cities of Migration



Asya Pisarevskaya and Peter Scholten

Cities are often the main hubs or portals for migration. They are the places where people leave from, and where they first arrive at, after their migration journey, either to settle or to move on. They are also the places where diversities and mobilities become the most manifest. Built into the cross-roads of ancient trade routes, cities have been the centres for encounters between many cultures since ancient times. In the past, cities attracted internal migrants from rural areas, while nowadays, many cities have been shaped by a long history of international migration. For instance, the development of cities such as New York or London cannot be understood without taking into account their long migration histories. Indeed, in developing countries like Russia, China, South Africa, and Nigeria, urbanisation is still ongoing; both internal rural-urban or periphery-centre migrants, together with international migrants, are attracted to capital city urban centres, and this magnetism in turn shapes diversity landscapes.

It is important to consider that migration is not only pertinent to our understanding of 'global cities' such as New York and London, but that all cities have been shaped by migration in one way or another. However, as we will discuss in this chapter, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to understanding cities of migration. Cities of migration vary both on a time dimension as well as on a geographical dimension; cities in different geographical regions, but also in different periods, may be involved in very different migration pathways and display very different kinds of migration-related diversities. For example, some cities that were once important points of departure, such as the European port cities of Hamburg and Rotterdam, later became some of Europe's most important points of arrival. Another example, the city of Davao in the

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south of the Philippines, used to attract a lot of Japanese migrants at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, in the 1970s, it turned into an emigration hub for Filipino labour migrants as the government initiated labour export policies. Moreover, the large urban centres of China—Beijing and Shanghai—have evolved over recent decades from being destinations of internal migration to being international centres of business, attracting expats and migrants from all over the world.

Some cities have now developed into truly super-diverse urban settings, such as New York City, where one can come across people from almost any country across the globe. Others have developed into cities with one or several large and distinct migrant communities, with Berlin, for instance, being home to very significant Turkish, Russian, Former-Yugoslav, and Syrian communities.

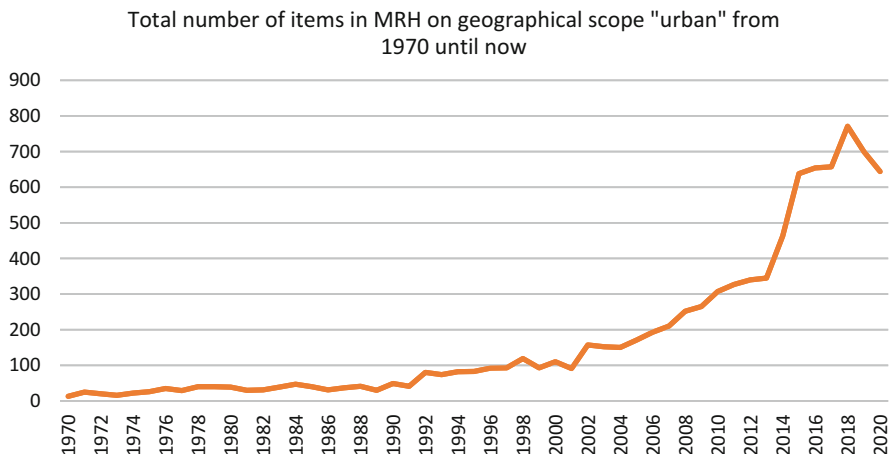
This chapter takes stock of the literature on cities of migration. With its pluralist approach to the topic, we aim to help the reader appreciate the diversity of perspectives offered in the literature. We hope to show that it is precisely because there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ when it comes to understanding cities of migration, that such a pluralist perspective is required to fully grasp the diversity of cities of migration.

## 16.1 The ‘Local Turn’ in Migration Studies

The development of migration studies was originally characterised by a strong focus on countries rather than cities. Various scholars have argued that a ‘national container view’ has obstructed a good understanding of the ‘diversity of diversities’ to be found within and beyond nation-states. For instance, Bertossi (2011) argues that the focus on nation-states has led to a reification of so-called “national models of integration”. Similarly, Favell (2003) speaks of “integrationism” as connected to nation-state views, and Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2003) even refer to “methodological nationalism” by scholars who inadvertently reproduce the idea of national models of integration.

The preceding chapter by Pries shows how this national container view fails to capture social dynamics beyond the nation-state, such as transnationalism. In this chapter, we will argue that this has also failed to capture the more local dynamics of mobilities and diversities. In this context, Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017) call for a ‘**local turn**’ in migration studies, so as to come to a more systematic understanding of the diversity of mobilities and diversities in a variety of urban settings. This involves, for instance, more systematic comparative research to show how mobilities and diversities take shape in different urban settings, and to explore the relation between local and national (and transnational) approaches to migration and diversities. Indeed, the literature of migration studies shows a remarkable increase in attention to the local level. Between 1975 and 2018, the global Migration Research Hub shows that the annual number of publications on **urban level** has **grown by 28 times**, while the field of migration studies as a whole has grown by 8 times (Fig. 16.1).

The growing number of studies examining migration and diversity on the urban level has been characterised by a clear geographical bias. Over 80% of the studies concern North American and European cities. Especially well-studied cities are



**Fig. 16.1** Total number of items in the Migration Research Hub focusing on urban areas or ‘cities’, 1970–2020

Source: Own calculations based on [Taxonomy > Geographies > Scope > Urban](#) collected on 15/01/21, incl. Journal articles, books, book chapters and PhD dissertations

**Table 16.1** Distribution of geographical focus of research on cities of migration

Regions	% of articles
North American cities	45%
European cities	36%
Asian cities	5%
Australian & New Zealand cities	5%
Latin American cities	4%
MENA cities	3%
African cities	2%
Total	539

those of New York, London, Los Angeles, Toronto, Chicago, Amsterdam, Sydney, Antwerp, Berlin, and Vancouver. In addition, the focus of studies on North America and Europe has primarily been on global cities and much less attention has been devoted to other types of cities, such as smaller and medium-sized cities (Table 16.1).

## 16.2 The Diversity of Cities of Migration

The local turn in migration studies has contributed to a wider appreciation of the diversity of cities of migration. It has acknowledged that the dynamics of cities of migration cannot simply be understood with reference to the broader so-called national models of integration in which a city is situated. At first, this became

manifest in particular for so-called “[global cities](#)” (Sassen, 2001) such as New York and London. For these cities, migration was inherently connected to their prominent position in global economic and political interactions.

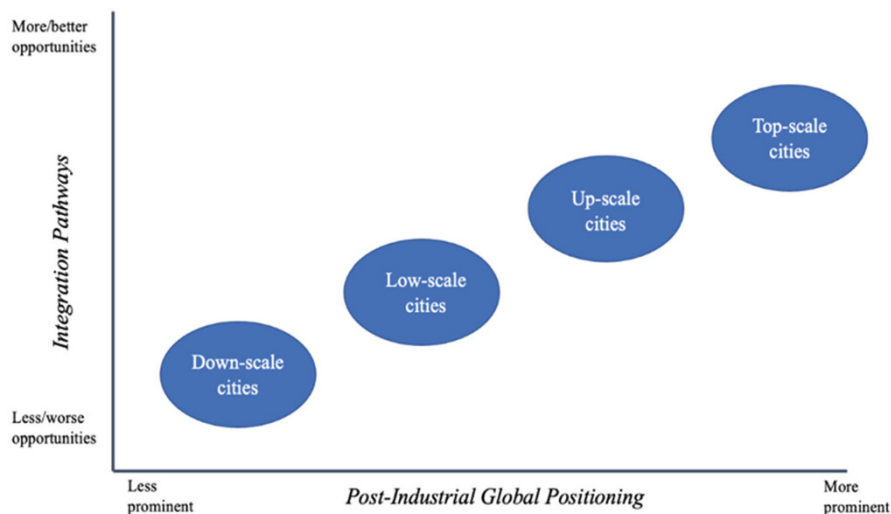
In his influential book *Arrival City*, Doug Saunders (2011) shows that in the context of globalisation, more and more cities have become cities of migration of global importance. This also includes cities like Warsaw, Istanbul, Toronto, Nairobi, or Shenzhen. He describes them as “arrival cities” because these cities have been shaped by the arrival of large numbers of migrants drawn to the economic opportunities offered by these cities, but also facing challenges of inequality, informal economies, and discrimination.

Moreover, in the context of the local turn in migration studies, there has been a burgeoning of studies since the 2000s that surfaced a wide variety in cities of migration. This has turned attention to cities of different sizes and also to cities with different diversity configurations (Flamant et al., 2020; Lacroix & Desille, 2019; Pisarevskaya et al., 2021). This has revealed a diversity of cities of migration beyond what can be captured by a concept like ‘global cities’ or ‘arrival cities.’ In this context, we will discuss two efforts to come to a more systematic comparison of different types of cities of migration.

### ***16.2.1 Comparative Theory of Locality***

One of the most influential attempts to conceptualise the diversity of urban settings and their entanglements in migratory processes is the “[comparative theory of locality](#)” proposed by Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2009). They propose that all cities internationally could be compared by the scale of their prominence in the global post-industrial economic, political, and cultural structures, and their position determines the integration pathways available for migrants in those cities. They developed a four-scale hierarchy of the cities: Top-scale, Up-scale, Low-scale, and Down-scale cities. Top-scale cities hold a powerful stance in global economic, political, and cultural exchanges. These cities share many characteristics with the so-called “global cities” (Sassen, 2001) as they are also characterised by highly diverse populations that are both attracted to and shape social, economic, and cultural landscapes of those global centres. At the opposing end of the scale, the down-scale cities are supposed to exhibit a lack of economic, political, and cultural significance in a globalised world. The authors refer to them as often old industrial cities at the ‘losing’ end of globalisation. The other two scales have a more ambiguous profile, with the low-scale cities relying on a “single type of industry” and thus contributing to the global economy in a very narrow sense of the term. In up-scale cities the process of neo-liberal restructuring has taken on a rapid pace, mainly due to new-economy industries and services. Nevertheless, their prominence has not (yet) achieved that of the top-scale cities.

In terms of integration pathways, top-scale cities offer a wide range of opportunities for migrant incorporation due to the prominence of both ethnic/diasporic



**Fig. 16.2** “Comparative theory of locality”—visual representation

institutions, tourist-oriented economies, and cosmopolitan global talent attraction. Up-scale cities offer multiple pathways for migrant incorporation, and these ethnic-based organisations (ethnic pathways) contribute to making these cities economically powerful and globally embedded. Low-scale cities do not have the capacity to invest in migrant transnational organisations like an up-scale city, and hence offer weak and selective opportunities for migrant incorporation. Down-scale cities are only able to offer weak opportunity structures for newcomers, such as ethnic small business niches (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2009).

A city’s positioning or ‘scale’ is not set once and for all. With time and under the influence of political and economic transformations in the world, cities could rise and fall along this continuum of positions, and consequently integration opportunities for migrants can change with time. This is the case for instance with various post-industrial cities all over the world that are going through rapid social and economic transitions, such as Hamburg and Rotterdam (Fig. 16.2).

## 16.2.2 A Differentiated Understanding of Urban Diversities

Besides looking at the macro-structures in which cities are embedded, it is also important to distinguish cities by their varieties of migration-related diversity configurations. Whereas the comparative theory of locality looks primarily at socio-economic structures, a broader view on the diversity of urban diversities also means looking at the demographic and social characteristics of their residents, as well as their spatial distribution and interaction in the city. Diversity of origins, religions,

cultures, residential and social segregation, inequalities, and mobility of population are intertwined to form unique social landscapes in cities. Based on a broader review of the literature on urban diversities, we suggest a more differentiated approach to urban diversities based on two dimensions: the level of diversity and the level of segregation.

This first dimension covers the very basic question of how diverse a city is. On the one hand, this has to do with the *volume* of the groups that are considered migrant in a particular urban setting, as well as the *variety* among them in terms of countries of origin, languages, religions, migration channels and immigration statuses, gender, age, space/place, and transnational practices (per Vertovec, 2007; Meissner & Vertovec, 2015; Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018). Cities with fewer migrants are referred to as non-diverse, or ethnically homogeneous (Leitner, 2012; Glorius & Domínguez-Mujica, 2017), whilst those localities where the migrant population and the ‘second-generation’ outnumber the non-migrants are conceptualised by Crul (2016) as “majority-minority cities”. On the one hand, it is important to pay attention to both the *volume* and *variety* of migration-related diversity because they are linked with the residents’ feeling of belonging (Wise, 2011); can trigger change in attitudes of ‘locals’ towards migrants (Weber, 2015); can influence the dynamics of conviviality in urban settings (Wessendorf, 2016); can lead to more innovativeness and development of creative economic sectors (Hahn, 2010); and result in cultural pluralism (Salzbrunn, 2014). On the other hand, it is also important to focus on “fading majority cultures” (van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013).

Previous literature studying the volume and variety of migration-related diversity in cities has largely focused on ethnic, racial, and country-of-origin diversity, and to a lesser extent on cultural diversity, diversity of identity and belonging among migrants. Other aspects like diversity of political participation among migrants, diversity of linguistic background, gender differences, intersectionality, religion, legal status, human capital, and diversity of migrant generations are considered in local-level studies less often. Our systematic review of over 500 studies on this topic revealed that most of the literature focuses on only one category of diversity. However, all these aspects are undeniably intertwined, and we need to know more about the overlapping aspects of diversities in modern cities in order to fully grasp their scale and implications for urban life.

The second dimension relates to how divided a city is. This involves a more relational dimension of urban diversities; how migrants and non-migrants relate to each other. This includes, on the one hand, considering various aspects of *inequality* between migrants and non-migrants, and, on the other, looking at *social segregation*—the existence or the lack of social relations between migrants and non-migrants in the city. Inequality and social segregation go hand in hand because various disparities lead to a lack of social interaction between groups, and the lack of social links aggravate these disparities by preventing social mobility, thus reinforcing inequality. Inequality is often discussed in terms of structural discrimination against migrants with a focus on their weaker position in housing and labour markets, and access to healthcare and social assistance. Considering inequalities between migrants and locals in terms of income, social class, and human and cultural

capital is also widely discussed in urban-level studies. Besides highlighting the social and institutional power of the majority over migrant minorities as a whole, scholars also examine aggravated inequality of specific racial or ethnic groups, i.e. Latino and Asian migrants in Los Angeles (Cort, 2011), or Moroccan, Surinamese, and Turkish versus Dutch in Amsterdam (van der Greft & Droogleever Fortuijn, 2017).

In terms of *social segregation*, previous literature mainly analyses the extent and the characteristics of *interactions* in public spaces such as street markets, squares, and shopping streets; intercultural, interethnic friendships and marriages (i.e. Barwick, 2017; Utomo, 2020), as well as conflicts, social distancing of city residents based on religious beliefs and the use of different languages (Vandenbroucke, 2015). The second most-studied aspect of social segregation concerns migrant and non-migrant *interaction at workplaces* (see Jaskulowski, 2018), as well as on the concentration of migrants and non-migrants in distinct types of occupation. It is known from previous studies on labour market inequality that migrants are overrepresented in “3D-jobs”—jobs that are dirty, demeaning (degrading), and dangerous (Bonatti & Gille, 2019)—while white-collar, qualified positions are usually occupied by non-migrants. This specific example illustrates the link between inequality and social segregation stated earlier. The inequality that is reflected in the lower positioning of migrants in labour market structures and precludes their interaction with non-migrants in the workspaces, thus leading to social segregation.

Social segregation is obviously also related to *residential segregation*, that is, the concentration or distribution of migrant groups in the cities when compared to residential patterns of non-migrants. The cities are called segregated when one or several areas are inhabited by a significantly larger share of migrant residents, while other areas are largely populated by non-migrants. Those urban areas where migrants and non-migrants are intermixed across city neighbourhoods and streets are considered to be not segregated. The actual level of segregation can be measured by an index of dissimilarity or another comparable index.

Often ethnically or racially segregated areas are socially deprived and are referred to as ghettos (Grzegorzczak, 2012), whereas gated communities are the segregated districts of wealthy (migrant) residents (Borsdorf et al., 2016). The pattern of spatial distribution of migrants across the cities could be a result of long-term, structural dynamics of urban settlement (Bolt et al., 2010), such as availability of housing and its cost, and could point at existing class inequalities (Ferreira, 2010; Massey & Denton, 2018). Besides, the municipal regulations related to gentrification and social-mixing, migrant integration policies may also shape the pattern of migrant settlement in cities (van Gent & Musterd, 2016). Residential segregation and economic inequality often go hand in hand. When the migrant population in a city is largely economically disadvantaged and ethnically or racially discriminated, they have limited options of renting accommodation, usually in the less popular neighbourhoods in the lower and more affordable end of the housing market (Table 16.2).

**Table 16.2** Types of cities of migration

		Segregation	
		Low	High
Diversity	High	Diverse and mixed cities (super-diverse cities)	Diverse but segregated cities (divided cities)
	Low	Mixed cities with low diversity	Divided cities with low diversity

The combination of the two dimensions leads to a space in which various cities can be positioned. For instance, many of the well-studied global cities such as New York, London, or Hong Kong can obviously be positioned in the category of diverse and mixed cities, or ‘super-diverse cities.’ However, that does not apply to all diverse cities. There are also many very diverse cities with relatively high levels of segregation. For instance, it is well known from studies of post-industrial cities and port cities that the industrial background of these cities often leaves a legacy of a segregated housing market with a clear division between working class and middle-class neighborhoods. Such structural features shape residential patterns as migrants often tend to find more affordable housing in such working-class neighborhoods to begin with.

Cities with low levels of diversity can also be more or less segregated. These are cities where migration is a rather recent phenomenon (for instance, the arrival of refugees) and where there are not many diverse origins or types of migrants; migrants are usually concentrated in one or two neighbourhoods where the housing is cheap, and where their co-ethnics live, or where the reception facilities are placed. For instance, Cosenza in the south of Italy is a transit city, where migrants arrive, stay for a time, and move on to a more economically attractive place in the north of the county or abroad. On the other hand, there are also cities where diversity is low but spread across the city. Those are cities that are also not very economically strong and face an exodus of local young people, although these cities could still be attractive for international students and immigrants working in the service sectors: tourism, domestic care, or catering. Relatively cheap housing available in many parts of these urban centres, and less pronounced inequalities with local population, make such cities less segregated. Dessau-Rosslau and Viareggio could be mentioned here as examples.

Furthermore, it is important to be aware that the positioning of cities in this space is by no means fixed. Cities can travel between these different types. For instance, many post-industrial cities that have been mixed cities with low diversity before industrialisation, have become divided cities with low diversity during industrialisation, and then moved to becoming diverse but divided cities when labour migrants came in, and are now approaching the type of super-diverse cities as segregation fades over time.

## 16.3 Urban Governance and Multi-level Governance

In this section we turn more specifically to governance issues in relation to cities of migration. A key question is whether cities have something in common when it comes to the governance of migration-related diversities: is there a local dimension of integration? Another question is in regard to how urban governance relates to and connects with other levels.

### 16.3.1 *A Local Dimension of Integration?*

Especially in the 2000s, there was a surge of studies that focused on “the local dimension” of migrant integration (Caponio & Borkert, 2010). Building on a rapidly increasing number of case studies of cities of migration, this raised the question of to what extent there was a local dimension or even a ‘local model’ of migrant integration.

Several theses have been raised in support of the idea of a local model of integration. Vermeulen & Stotijn (2010) and Schiller (2015) argue that local governments tend to follow a more pragmatic approach to migrant integration. For instance, because of their close proximity to the local situation, cities are more pragmatic in finding tailor-made solutions in collaboration with local groups and communities, and in providing opportunities for inclusion in local politics. Schiller (2015) refers in this regard to “pragmatic accommodationism”. Zapata-Barrero (2015) argues that local governments tend to be more inclined toward interculturalist approaches. *Interculturalism* focuses on the importance of cross-community interactions and the development of new local identities, which can offer new opportunities beyond those of the often more rigid national conceptions of national identity and citizenship.

Others have argued that at the local level there is also a wide variety of configurations of diversity that can be found, as well as a broad variety of approaches. For instance, Ambrosini and Boccagni (2015) and Mahnig (2004) show that migrant integration can also be highly contested in the arena of local politics, contributing to variation reflecting different local political preferences.

For some reason, there has been surprisingly little systematic comparative research on urban approaches to migration-related diversities. As the referenced studies above suggest, there has been evidence in favour of convergences as well as divergences between cities from various projects. In our recent study on types of cities of migration (Pisarevskaya et al., 2021), we tried to examine policy variation based on local variation in diversity configurations.

This research shows two important things. First, that indeed there is significant variation in how migration-related diversities manifest themselves across different cities. Some cities will be ‘old’ migration cities with relatively well-settled communities, whereas for others migration may be a more recent phenomenon. Also, some



cities have several major minority populations that are very recognisable in urban life, whereas for others there is more of a reality of super-diversity with many groups from many different backgrounds.

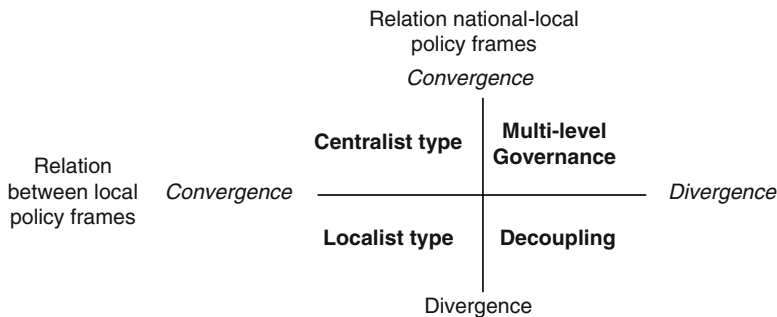
However, a second point that our research has shown is that although such objectifiable differences in diversity configurations are important to governance approaches, they nevertheless do not fully account for differences in governance approaches. Urban policies are driven by many more factors than the objective configuration of diversity in the city, such as urban discourses and political views on diversity, local institutional settings etc. For instance, even if a city can be described as 'super-diverse', this does not necessarily mean that the city will adopt policies to accommodate super-diversity; in fact, various post-industrial cities in Europe have been revealed as struggling with the reality of super-diversity.

### ***16.3.2 Multi-level Governance***

The question of local variation in the urban governance of migration-related diversity relates to another key question of how cities relate to other levels of governance, such as regional, national, and supranational levels; how cities approach migration-related diversities is situated in broader policy contexts. For instance, cities often do not have much influence on migration policies that are mostly situated at the national level. Also, how cities approach diversity is situated in a broader setting of how, for instance, countries perceive national identity and provide access to citizenship and to social and political rights.

The concept of 'multi-level governance' refers to how relations between levels of governance are coordinated. This can come in many different forms. The traditional centralist view on policies assumes a top-down coordination of relations. This is the model that comes with the perspective of national models of integration which require implementation at the city level. It also comes with most immigration policies that tend to be defined at the national level and require local implementation. For instance, although many cities at the US-Mexican border may profit from migration, they are also required to implement national policy decisions such as the building of the wall at the border. Another form of vertical interaction follows a bottom-up logic. This is the form that comes with the view that there is a local model in the governance of migration-related diversity and that this local model should determine national policies rather than the other way around. This is manifested in cases where cities lead the way in national policy developments, such as, for instance, in the Netherlands where the city of Rotterdam was the first to develop a coordinated approach to the integration of migrants at the end of the 1970s, well ahead of national policy developments that built on Rotterdam experiences in the early 1980s.

In its ideal-typical form, multi-level governance requires coordination across various levels without any of these levels being dominant over the others. That can take the form of joint policy formulation involving actors from across different



**Fig. 16.3** Theoretical perspectives on multi-level governance relations

levels. For instance, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel led the development of a joint integration approach in Germany by actively engaging with local administrations and NGOs from across the country. Also, in Europe, various organisations exist to connect cities not only amongst each other but also with the EU. A clear example of that is the EUROCITIES network.

Finally, it is also possible that policies on migration-related diversities are made at various levels but without any form of ‘multi-level governance’. In this case, one could speak of a **decoupling** of policy levels. Often this leads to a simple discrepancy of policies between various levels, but it can also lead to policy conflict. An example of this is the American network of welcoming cities that choose to actively discard national policies and provide a more open and sheltering approach to refugees. Similarly, in the Netherlands, local governments such as Amsterdam decided not to implement a national burqa ban, and thus defied national policies and chose decoupling instead (Fig. 16.3).

## 16.4 Conclusions

This chapter offers a differentiated approach to cities of migration. It strives to help understand the diversity of urban diversities. It outlines how the local turn in migration studies has successfully navigated its attention away from the focus on national models and towards a growing focus on local diversities and mobilities. Whereas studies still tend to focus on specific types of cities of migration (global cities) in specific parts of the world, our chapter calls for a broader understanding of how migration-related diversities can take different shapes in different cities. We believe that this broader view will also enrich our understanding of how and why the governance of migration-related diversities take shape differently in different settings, and what implications this has on its relations with and to other levels of governance.

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**Part IV**  
**Transversal Themes**

# Chapter 17

## Locating Race in Migration and Diversity Studies



**Kristine Aquino, Laavanya Kathiravelu, and Emma Mitchell**

Stuart Hall (2017a, b, pp. 32–33) views **race** as “one of those major or master concepts. . . that organise the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in human societies. Race, in this sense, is the centrepiece of a hierarchical system that produces differences.” Historically, ‘race’ emerged as a term in Europe to categorise different phenotypical (differences in skin colour, hair and bone) and cultural characteristics (‘ways of life’) across the human population encountered during Europe’s period of colonial expansion. Racial typologies became the basis of a natural and social science that established hierarchies between ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ groups, serving to justify some of the world’s most haunting atrocities. While race was scientifically invalidated in the aftermath of the Holocaust, with the advent of wars, decolonisation, and global migration, racialised ways of seeing human differences have become entangled in new ways with gender, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, among other categories of difference, to form complex hierarchies in societies characterised by diversity (Alexander & Knowles, 2005, p. 2). Older forms of migration, including forced movements of people in the transatlantic slave trade, through to indentured labour migrations, came to underlie racial divisions along a colour-line created by nation-states principally formed around racial logics (Goldberg, 2002). Meanwhile, newer forms of migration, forced and voluntary, have been influenced by changing global conditions of uneven economic growth, the destabilising of certain regions outside of the ‘West’, and

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the opening up of previously closed economies such as China (Liu, 2009; Perrons, 2009). These accelerated post-war migrations from the colonial periphery to the colonial centre, from the South to the North and increasingly from South to South, have made more complex the terms of difference in immigrant receiving societies. This chapter locates conceptualisations of race in migration and diversity studies, drawing from intersecting fields of scholarship such as studies of race and ethnicity, critical race theory, comparative migration studies and diversity research. In doing so, it aims to demonstrate the continued importance of considering race not just as a variable, but a key discursive framework in understandings of migration and diversity.

There has been extensive academic discussion about the significance of race in the ‘Global North’. Since the 1970s especially, scholars in English-speaking academies in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australia offered up alternative terms and concepts for classifying group differences and understanding forms of inequality in societies once structured explicitly by racial regimes. An alternative focus on ethnicity, culture, class, and nationality drew criticism from scholars who saw the abandonment of race discourse as only serving to gloss over enduring power structures that perpetuated racism. Today, debates about whether race is still a useful analytical category continue, now grappling with how different kinds of human mobility (and immobility) generate more complex relations of power and inequality in diverse societies. To locate conceptualisations of race in migration and diversity studies, this chapter begins by tracing the wider genealogical history of the term in the ‘Global North’ which is marked by debates around its definition and, importantly, its salience as an analytical and theoretical concept. It then discusses how race as a concept is applicable to the ‘Global South’ and non-Western settings where existing understandings about race are reaffirmed and unsettled. The latter discussion aims to shed light on contexts long marked by border crossings and increasingly dynamic mobilities but where race is less attached to European/Western colonisation and white supremacy. However, this does not preclude that race in such spaces has also proven to be a successfully violent “[technology for the management of human difference](#)” (Lentin, 2020, p. 5).

## 17.1 Race in the ‘Global North’

In the twentieth century, the invalidation by science of the biological certainty of racial difference, processes of decolonisation in the ‘Third World’, and the challenges posed to racial regimes in ‘the West’ by social movements made up of long-oppressed racial minorities, led to the theoretical interrogation of the basis of racism and domination. Race became understood as a ‘social construction’—a disclaimer that race is not real but instead has material effects in the structuring of privilege and disadvantage. This reference, however, still required scholars and activists to engage with the reifying tendencies of race discourse, leading some to call for abandoning the concept of race altogether (Gilroy, 2002). While debates outlined below are at



times protracted—these discussions have been essential to exploring and exposing the complex configurations of systems of inequality, and practices of domination and exclusion. As Lentin (2000, p. 101) argues, these contestations signal the profound difficulties in finding a language to analyse and understand racism without “tried and tested concepts”.

### *17.1.1 Ethnicity, Culture and Diversity*

The concept of ‘ethnicity’, derived from anthropology, emerged as an alternative mode of categorisation to race in the post-Second World War period, referring to a group’s shared ways of life, customs, traditions, language, and beliefs. It was espoused by some as the more apt marker of difference that departed from the idea that heredity shaped human behaviour and instead highlighted factors of culture and the environment. Moreover, ethnicity was understood as discarding the hierarchies of ‘superiority’ and ‘inferiority’ in racial logic. Rooted in a culturalist discourse, scholars like Levi-Strauss, posited ethnic differences as relative to each other and proposed that the term ‘racism’ should be replaced by “**ethnocentrism**” to describe intolerances between different ethnic groups (Lentin, 2005). The uptake of ethnicity as a substitute term was institutionalised across the West by governments dealing with the horrors produced by racial ideologies and the idea of ethnic difference soon came to be articulated in liberal **policies of integration and incorporation** in the US and parts of Europe and policies of multiculturalism in Britain, Canada and Australia, as a means to reconceive the determinants of group membership. Moreover, these policies placed importance on the notion of respecting ‘**cultural identity**’ and the co-existence of culturally distinct yet ‘equal’ groups. Notions of the cultural ‘melting pot’ or multicultural ‘together in difference’ became common political expressions in states which attempted to embrace ethnic and cultural diversity brought on by increased post-war international migration (Hall, 2017a, b). Further, the multiculturalist language of ‘cultural diversity’ was widely adopted in diversity management policies across institutions such as workplaces and educational settings. As observed by Nieswand (2019, p. 1), “diversity offered an alternative to frame heterogeneity that appeared to managers, politicians and policymakers to be more positive and optimistic”.

However, some scholars warned that ‘ethnicity and ‘culture’ could serve as a “**euphemistic substitute**” for race and work to mask the endurance of racial systems of oppression (Dubow, 1994, p. 356). Cultural dimensions of human differences have, after all, always been “part and parcel of racial logics” (Lentin & Karakayali, 2016, p. 142). Balibar (1991, p. 22), writing from the French context, for example, observed a problematising of immigrants that demonstrated old racial essentialisms persisting in the new culturalist discourse. He argued that “culture can also function like nature”, locking groups “into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin” much like race does. Terms such as “differentialist racism” (Taguieff, 1990) or “cultural racism” (Balibar, 1991) attempted to capture

racism based not on racial biological categories but cultural constructions around different ‘ways of life’. Critiques from Essed (1991) and Lentin (2005) in Europe also drew attention to anti-racism projects that celebrated cultural pluralism while perpetuating a racism rationalised around the insurmountability of cultural differences. In Australia, which opened its borders to non-White migration from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, the abandonment of race discourse for a culturalist one was taken up enthusiastically by a government hoping to erase its racist history, characterised by Indigenous dispossession and racialised immigration controls. In doing so, Ang and Stratton (1998) have argued that the state strategically displaced racism as an anomaly in the new multicultural “non-racist” norm. These shifts demonstrate the limitations of culturalist and diversity discourse, which according to Ahmed (2007, p. 235), “become detached from histories of struggle against equality”. It is critiqued for enabling the political denial of racism as institutions prefer to speak instead about “cultural diversity”, “harmony” and “tolerance” (Nelson, 2015).

In the US, studies of immigration and diversity have been led largely by demographic approaches that have overwhelmingly been configured around the overlapping census categorisations of ethnicity and nationality. Racialised divides in many ways, have been represented through discourses that have also attempted to decentre race in favour of cultural explanations. This has led to a thriving scholarship that highlights the particularities of immigrant groups through understanding ethnic enclaving and ethnicised social capital (Portes, 1987; Zhou, 1992). This, in part, has led to culturalist explanations of successful integration and mobility of immigrant groups. The model minority myth of the Asian-American community, as an example of this, has had to be debunked (Lee & Zhou, 2020). The focus on ethnicity and culture conceptualised in broad demographic terms, does also not sufficiently take into account waves of migration for example, and has resulted in the erasing of older histories of enslavement in the celebration of social mobility of Black communities in the US (Cottom, 2019). Goldberg (2015) thus cites the backlash against the cultural turn—particularly manifested in a backlash against multicultural policy—as propelling a “post-racial” ideology into North American politics, enabling subtle mechanisms of domination and exclusion underpinning discussions of cultural difference to operate under the guise of “racelessness”. He argues that the “post-racial” rhetoric empowered the vocalisation of anti-immigration sentiment and normalised exclusionary discourses around “cultural incompatibility”.

Despite the profound problems that the ‘cultural turn’ has produced for race theory and anti-racism praxis, it is significant to note that the reframing was not entirely about replacing the language of race. The culturalist approach fuelled efforts to refine race as an analytic category by drawing attention to the multiplicity and complexity of subjectivity, identity, and positionality, which have ultimately become important considerations in both critical race theory and migration and diversity studies. Works by black feminists like hooks (1981) in the American context challenged dominant representations of the racialised subject through examining the intersections of race, gender, and class. Hall’s (2002) exploration of “new ethnicities” in the UK, focusing on Black-Caribbean migrants, meanwhile, revealed

hybrid articulations of ethno-racial affiliations in the diasporic context. Gilroy's (1993) work on black cultural production in Black British and African-American culture also moved discussions beyond the binaries of essentialist/pluralist notions of racial identity towards analysis of the "syncretic complexity" of black culture. These approaches all encouraged the questioning of the meta-narratives, such as race, that organised the world in grand and generalist terms and transformed conceptualisations of identity in "different disciplines, places and arenas" (Alexander et al., 2012). However, the field was criticised for becoming too preoccupied with textual and representational matters. While highlighting the importance of ideology in racial regimes, ultimately, the elaboration of difference and "excavation of personal identity" has been seen as falling short in converting itself into a "[progressive politics](#)" for marginalised migrant and minority communities (St. Louis, 2002, p. 656).

### 17.1.2 *Class*

For those espousing economic theorisations to understanding the domination of some groups over others, the classificatory debate over race or ethnicity/culture was seen as a mere issue of terminology bearing little fruit in addressing inequality. Structuralists, in particular, persistently argued that a focus on 'soft' issues related to identity distracted from 'hard' systemic concerns around material access and allocation of resources such as housing, jobs and education. These differing positions have also been articulated in philosophical debates around the methods through which equality should be pursued in societies of migration-driven diversity that often pitted the politics of recognition and redistribution against each other (see Taylor, 1992; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). But there was a notable strand of structural analysis, one centred on class relations, which gained prominence in the 1980s and 1990s, to try to explain racialised inequality. In the UK, Miles (1989, 1996) argued against the autonomy of race and culture as analytical and theoretical categories as they obscured the economic relations that produce racism and racialised unequal outcomes across majority and minority groups. For Miles, it is "[class relations](#)" and not "[race relations](#)" that buttress social disparities especially those disadvantaging long time migrant groups and more recent immigrants to the UK like labour migrants or refugees. Race, ethnicity, and culture, he argued, should be seen as residual ideological categories to material class formations. In the US, [stratification theory](#) by Wilson (1978) also encouraged abandoning the racial lens for an economic one to capture the class distinctions in the experiences and consequences of racism, for example, among the varied experiences of African Americans and Asian Americans. In Australia, analysing the experience of low-skilled migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe recruited into Australia as "factory fodder" in the post-war period, Morrissey (1984) situated migrants' disadvantaged circumstances within a segmented labour market where the division of labour was taken to signify that capitalism, and not 'migrant-ness', was at play in structuring racialised disadvantage. Gilroy's

(1991) critique of such styles of class analysis points out, however, that a reductionist economic lens disconnects from histories marked by the intimate relationship between race and class especially in the experience of those who have migrated from old imperial peripheries to post-imperial metropolitan centres. Further, empirical research on the intersection between class and race in America (Lacy, 2007), Canada (Raj, 2003) and Australia (Aquino, 2016, 2017) have shown that socio-economic mobility does not act as a buffer against racism.

While this class/race debate was prominent in the genealogy of race and racism theory, it is located in structuralist approaches that encompass broader understandings of the relationship between race/class, culture/economics. For example the integral role of racism in capitalism in historical and contemporary contexts, centres on Marx's theory of 'primitive accumulation'. This theory holds that the use of direct coercion in the form of colonialism, dispossession and slavery—as distinct from class-based exploitation through the market—was a necessary condition of the emergence of modern capitalism in Western Europe. A range of contemporary structuralist scholars contend that racialised forms of extra-economic coercion cannot simply be consigned to a past phase of emerging capitalism which now fundamentally rests on economic exploitation of wage-labour. Rather, ongoing 'primitive accumulation' is also constitutive of contemporary capitalism and can explain the marriage of the class-based and racial imperatives that underpin the inequality and violence experienced by black, migrant and Indigenous populations (eg. Dawson, 2016; Fraser, 2016). Critical engagement with this literature focuses on the need to structurally locate contemporary experiences of race, without obscuring their specificities (Siddhant, 2021). While not entirely focused on the capitalism-racism link, Bonilla-Silva (1997), writing from North America, has also argued to see racism as a structural issue and asserted the primacy of race in modernity's historical and structural system, in particular, its racial domination projects like colonialism, slavery, capitalism, labour migrations and border controls. Aiming to collapse the dichotomy between ideology/structure, and race/class, Bonilla Silva (2003) contends that, racism and race should be seen in materialist terms as racism as practice and behaviour is a product of (and also reproduces) race as social structure, while race as ideology is also linked to this structuration as it interpellates people into action. Class, meanwhile, he saw as a potentially "uniting factor in progressive politics" so long as it is a "class solidarity through race and gender prisms" (Bonilla Silva, 2003, p. 195). The theorisation of 'racial formation' by American scholars Omi and Winant (2014, pp. 13, 48) also espoused this view—maintaining that race is "a fundamental axis of social organisation in the US" and thus an "autonomous field of social conflict, political organisation and cultural/ideological meaning". Omi and Winant argued to go beyond the simple disclaimer of race as a 'social construction' and urged for locating its formation through varying political projects, including capitalism, and examining struggles at the levels of both structure and identity. These North American authors were crucial in articulating a critical stance against proclamations of a 'post-racial' era in the US which cited shifting class relations like the middle-class mobility of some African Americans or Asian migrants, as evidence of the declining significance of race. Critiques of these approaches, however, have

centred around the charge of “race-centrism” and instead call for a focus on boundary-making and ethnicity as a way to avoid reifying categories of race (Brubaker, 2004; Loveman, 1999; Wimmer, 2015).

### 17.1.3 *Nation*

**National formations** have also been a prominent feature of the classificatory system of group difference in the West. Hall (2017a, b, p. 136) points out that “the allegiances and identifications that in premodern times were given to tribe, people, religion and region came gradually, in Western societies, to be transferred to the national culture”. Outside of some scholarly proclamations about the irrelevance of nation and nationalism in the late twentieth century as discourses of a “global community” and “borderless world” attempted to relegate nationalism as a sentiment of the past, many writers have insisted that nation and race remain central to “hierarchical conceptions of communitarian belonging” (Valluvan, 2020, p. 243). How the nation is constructed has in many ways relied on ideas of race and practices of racism. And so, while the heuristic value of the nation was abandoned by some theorists in the advent of globalisation-oriented analysis, others continued to engage with the idea of nation because of its persistent resonance with race. Hall (2001), for example, grappling with the violent intermingling of distinctions around race and national belonging in Britain, reminded us of the nation’s historical ties with colonisation and processes of racialised domination and **Othering** both in the spaces of conquest in the non-West and in the migratory spaces of the West itself. Hage’s (2002) work on Australian nationalism, meanwhile, examined how the uptake of culture or ethnicity as alternative discourse to race in a postcolonial, settler, immigrant-receiving society, underpinned nationalist logics of bounded “national cultures” which, ultimately, reinforced racial logics of whiteness as the hegemonic core of the nation. For Hage, the nation is a social field where non-White migrants such as Muslim-Arabic migrants and Asian migrants are located, managed, and ordered along a spectrum of otherness determining levels of belonging to the national community. Thus, as Valluvan (2020, p. 249) argues, “nationalist agitations are very seldom strictly ‘xenophobic’ in character—xenophobia as the ‘undiscriminating’ aversion to all outsiders”, but instead, “**nationalist alarms**” are “tightly knotted by the racial categories of non-belonging [...] It is namely the racialised outsider who acts as the Western nation’s most resonant and fetid constitutive outsider.”

The discourse of nation and practices of nationalism that intersect with racial formations have considerably risen back to prominence in the twenty-first century in an era marked by a ‘backlash against globalisation’. These have manifested in violent White nationalist protests in American cities such as Charlottesville and Washington that were anti-Semitic, anti-Black, and anti-Muslim and the decisive ‘Leave’ outcome of the Brexit vote which was also fuelled by anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism sentiment. While this racism is rooted in intersections between

racial and class divides outlined earlier, both contexts were inflamed by the state, reminding us that racial categories have been crucial for the nation-state to highlight collective identity and community (Valluvan, 2020). This nationalist resurgence might validate some scholarship positing that nationalism is a more useful explanatory concept than race, however, Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259) have proposed a synthesising of race and nationalism—a “**racial nationalism**”—to describe these articulations of power and order, wherein, racial nationalism “is a doctrine in which the nation, as an imagined community, is composed of a supposedly homogenous or pure racial or ethnic group” and “imagines and endeavours to realise an intensely racialised image of the national character”. According to Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259), “race interacts with nationalism in various forms and magnitude”. Race is entrenched ideologically in nation-state policies that utilise racial classifications to embolden both cohesion and division. Racial identities that determine us/them remain tied to histories of colonialism and empire and establish who is regarded as a national-racial subject. Racial interests are also pursued *qua* the national interest and so group mobilisations of nationalism often draw on racial distinctions. Institutions are as well racialised especially those that deal with national border security and immigration and the according of legal rights and status. Lastly, through racialised interactions, ordinary people engage in bordering and boundary-making practices that see nationalism play out in banal ways in everyday life. Hughey and Rosino (2020, p. 259), however, urge caution in conflating race and nationalism entirely and instead encourage carefully “illuminating what each term explains and under what contexts each term might be better fit for predicting or explaining the same phenomena”.

### ***17.1.4 Conviviality and Super-Diversity***

In the last two decades, a large body of work in migration and diversity studies have notably focused on two interrelated phenomena—how we ‘live together’ across difference and how we do this labour particularly in the context of newly complex social configurations arising from more varied patterns of migration. The first focus takes inspiration from Gilroy’s (2002) notion of “**conviviality**” that emphasises the “practice, effort, negotiation and achievement” required for “shared life” across difference (Wise & Noble, 2016, p. 425). It has underpinned a burgeoning field of research, particularly integrating urban and place studies with the sociology of everyday life, that investigate the significance of encounter and interactions across cultural and ethnic difference. This includes work on “everyday multiculturalism” (Wise & Velayutham, 2009), “lived multiculturalism” (Neal et al., 2017), “everyday cosmopolitanism” (Noble, 2009), and “rubbing along” (Watson, 2006) which spotlight how collective civic cultures are forged in shared spaces that require “prosaic negotiations” (Amin, 2008, p. 969) across difference. While highlighting the

important kinds of cooperation and connection that can occur amid social and cultural differences in societies marked by migrant-led diversity, these works have been criticised for displacing the focus on the reproduction of racism with its focus on diversity, mixity, and fluidity, concepts that at times do not grapple adequately with the weights of race (Back & Sinha, 2016).

Similarly, the second focus on the concept of “super-diversity”, coined by Vertovec (2007), has become a preoccupation in recent studies of migration and diversity, attempting to account for the increasingly complex and diversified character of migration-driven diversity, and moreover, trying to unsettle the primacy of race and ethnicity as an over-determining influence in the experience of migrants. Proponents of the super-diversity lens argue that racio-ethnic group affiliation no-longer holds the same explanatory power; experiences are differentiated by “the dynamic interplay of variables”, including migration channels and immigration status, language, gender, age, country of origin (see Berg and Sigona (2013, p. 348) for an overview). Super-diversity is distinguished from other concepts that foreground multiple variables—particularly intersectionality—in that, while intersectional theories are predominantly concerned with race, gender, and class as dominant social divisions, super-diversity “is concerned with different categories altogether, most importantly nationality/country of origin/ethnicity, migration channel/legal status and age as well as gender” (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015, p. 545). While speaking to realities of increasingly complex migrations and resultant variegated social divisions, work on super-diversity has been challenged for the way in which it focuses on the expansion of differences but not enough on the broader social, political, and economic contexts in which differences matter and the methods and means through which they are made to matter (Hall, 2017a; Back & Sinha, 2016; Alexander et al., 2012). Critiques of the sub-field point to the lack of focus on power and inequality even within the scale of the “everyday” and “fleeting” (Aptekar, 2019).

The debates in this area of migration and diversity studies signal attention to how new or emergent patterns of differentiation map onto more established social divisions and take root in earlier debates about the significance or insignificance of race as a theoretical and empirical tool in analysing inequalities in heterogeneous societies. But just as these earlier discussions, while protracted at times, have been essential to expanding knowledge about the contours of racism and racial systems, these recent arguments have further elaborated the ever-changing complexity of race as ideology, practice, and structure, and re-emphasise the enduring race-migration nexus (see Erel et al. (2016) for a review). They have further opened up the ways in which race needs to be conceptualised in terms of divergent levels of scope and scale and as well aspects of continuity and change.

## 17.2 Race Outside of the ‘West’

Studies of race and diversity have generally been dominated by scholarship from and about North American and Western European contexts. However, there is a large emerging literature on race and diversity outside the “West” that engages with notions of (super)diversity, cosmopolitanism, and conviviality in ways that acknowledge the intersectional and multi-dimensional aspects of migration-led diversity, utilising the frames of race together with other axes of difference to understand issues of [immigrant integration](#), [discrimination](#), and [xenophobia](#). With South-South migration now the largest strand of migration globally, and within that, migrations within Asia the most numerically significant, it is imperative to understand how race, diversity and migration interact in these spaces.

### 17.2.1 *Pre-colonial Mobilities and the (Re)configuration of Race and Ethnicity*

Particularly in postcolonial contexts in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, migration-led diversity cannot be disentangled from colonial influences, both in shaping mobilities of people as well as in how they were subsequently classified. However, notions of ethnic and racialised difference based on descent and ancestral occupation have long existed in non-Western societies prior to the advent of colonialism. While not explicitly utilising the language of race, pre-colonial hierarchies in North Asia, the Persian Gulf, and West Africa, for example, point to ways in which racial and ethnic discrimination had existed before the legitimisation of a racialised understanding of the world through missionary and colonial discourses (Takezawa, 2005). For example, in what is today Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the Persian Gulf, the transnational migration of Black African slaves created a tiered system of rights and entitlements, although they were also often seen as part of the larger familial structure.

With colonial expansion, new imported notions of race further legitimated older notions of superiority and inferiority. In particular, it prompted practices of establishing material difference as a means of cementing and simultaneously reinventing racial classifications. Japanese, who were formerly seen as “white”, became progressively “yellow” as the increasing refusal to participate in trade, and isolationism in the eighteenth century were read as indications of “backwardness” (Kowner, 2014). Colonial rule also instituted race in the form of census exercises in much of colonial South and Southeast Asia (Hirschman, 1987). These classifications did not just establish European dominance in terms of privileging Whiteness, but also served to augment native, “tribal” and indigenous communities as peripheral to the economy of the colony (Alatas, 1977). Many of these raced inflections still have implications for how ethnic minoritised communities are socially and economically marginalised today (Rahim, 2001). These historical continuities are also key in



understanding preferences for “White” migrants and expatriates in many cities outside Europe and North America. There is, however, a growing backlash against what is perceived as unearned privilege, fuelled by perceptions of structural discrimination in jobs, housing, and schools.

### ***17.2.2 Co-ethnic Migration, Xenophobia and Shifting Hierarchies***

Contemporary migration is generating new complex forms of differentiation that further diversify historically multiethnic societies outside the ‘West’. Socio-economic status, period of migration, and country of birth are emerging as increasingly salient in generating new divisions even within communities that are typically seen to be of the same ‘race’. New waves of migration that complicate existing diasporic formations point to the ways in which ethnicity is being reconfigured through migration, particularly for middle class, [highly skilled migrants](#) (Kathiravelu, 2020). This does not imply that race is no longer salient as a variable, but that the landscape of migrant-led diversity is complicated by other factors. Racial ideology then continues to exist in mutated and masked ways. The continued racism against [second-generation immigrants](#) in fact points to continued relevance of race (conceived in more biologically-deterministic terms), in engendering nationalistic exclusions. Migrants and children of migrants in Japan, for example, are perceived as not legitimate or full citizens. Hafus, or children of mixed race also face this form of discrimination, within a context where the myth of a homogeneous ethno-racial polity is widely believed.

Race also continues to be significant in conjuring stereotypes of the dirty dark-skinned Indian or loud and uncouth Chinese, in reference to low-waged [temporary migrants](#), shadowing older colonial racial stereotypes (Velayutham, 2017; Velayutham & Somaiah, 2021). These migrants who typically labour in dangerous and difficult conditions in construction, shipyard, and manufacturing industries are tainted by their class positions and concurrent lack of status as neither conspicuous consumers nor citizens. The powerful intersection of socio-economic status and nationality give rise to forms of racism and discrimination that are perpetuated and reinforced by bifurcated and temporary migration regimes in Asia and the Middle East. These regimes bestow differential rights in terms of residency and access to citizenship based on the ability to accumulate cultural, social and economic capital.

In highly diverse migrant-receiving cities like Singapore and South Africa, nationality and nationalised forms of racial differentiation become key vectors of difference and discrimination. In these contexts, perceived differences based on country of birth often generate bigger divides than racial affinities. In Singapore, where a large proportion of immigrants come from countries of India and China, they form a second wave of already existing diasporas. In a situation where locals and immigrants share the same language, religious practices, and phenotype

characteristics, hierarchies emerge based on place of birth and length of stay. These markers, in addition to a localised sense of cultural capital, shape boundaries between insider and outsider (Ho & Kathiravelu, 2021). Racism and xenophobia overlap, generating complex intersectionalities, where race is articulated through the nationalised belonging and through classed identities. In these reconfigurations, context-specific cultural—rather than biological—notions of superiority are salient.

In settler colonial contexts such as Israel or South Africa, material and structural violence and the ongoing failure to integrate define raced relations between indigenous and settler peoples. However, this bifurcation often makes latent intra-community divisions. In Israel, an assimilationist and essentialist nation-building discourse has augmented racism *within* settler communities, and fragmented ethno-national identities along racial and colour lines (Ben-Eliezer, 2008). In postcolonial migrant-receiving societies such as South Africa, xenophobia directed against co-ethnics is often downplayed, as acknowledging racism between people within a community that is considered a homogeneous ‘race’, is seen to destabilise solidarity against a White oppressor. This masks xenophobia against migrants, but also ways in which similarly “raced” communities are complicit in violence, oppression, and persecution (Landau, 2017). This points to the importance of intersectional perspectives and the fallacies of assuming innate similarities based on ideas of ‘race’, descent, or ancestry. Analytically, it points to the need to see these differences not in terms of diversity within a racial group, but as separate ethno-racial communities (Brubaker, 2004), informed by shifting boundaries between perceptions of local or foreign; of who belongs and who doesn’t. Viewing contemporary migration in *ethno-racial* terms acknowledges the continued salience of racism within contemporary societies where migration-led diversity is significant. It also understands discrimination and violence as products of opposition that is configured around complex social fields where race, ethnicity, nationality, and other vectors of difference coalesce.

### 17.3 Conclusion and Further Questions

We have demonstrated that race remains important to understanding the systems of inequality and domination in contemporary contexts of migration-led diversity. After a discussion of the genealogy of race discourse, we interrogated significant ways in which race is employed in understanding diversity in the ‘West’, pointing to the continued structures of racialised domination that exist and shape contemporary migration patterns. Balancing this with considerations of migration outside the ‘Global North’, we have shown how race is articulated in contexts outside of histories of European colonisation and regimes of white supremacy where it has also been used as a technology to manage difference. In certain ‘non-Western’ contexts, race is generative of cultural hierarchies within co-ethnic, similarly “raced” immigrant populations. Lentin reminds us that race is an “articulation” (Hall, 2002); “a series of linkages between different structures of dominance”

(Lentin, 2020, p. 6). In understanding migration flows, systems, and regimes as complicit within structures of dominance and in reproducing inequality, we should be cognisant of how “...capitalism, gender, sexuality, class, ability”, nationality, and citizenship status, among others, “work through race and vice versa” (Lentin, 2020, p. 6). With critical race theory and its proponents being attacked in many Western liberal democratic contexts, it is imperative in this moment to reinstate the significance of race to contemporary migration and diversity.

In tracing how race has been understood and applied (and as well erased) in migration and diversity studies, this chapter raises a few important questions that students in these fields of study will hopefully consider when grasping inequalities and forms of domination and exploitation related to immigrant diversity:

- How do we account for complex differences produced by migration that are attached to race but may also operate in relationally different ways?
- How do we do this without disconnecting from the struggle against racism and downplaying the reach of racial systems in producing varied forms of inequality?
- How do ideas and theories we use shape the ways we imagine and understand migration?
- Is it possible to talk about the reality of race in experiences and process of migration without perpetuating racial categories?
- In what ways does race intersect with other forms of difference in contexts of immigrant-led diversity?
- How do theoretical differences add value to understanding racial systems and inequalities but how might they also vacate the explanatory power of race?
- When does race consume other forms of difference and how can this obstruct achieving productive outcomes for integration and social justice?

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# Chapter 18

## Gender and Migration



Eleonore Kofman and Parvati Raghuram

In the past few decades, [gender](#) has become one of the most significant optics through which to view and analyse migration. Migration has moved up the political agenda and women and men have become differentially entangled within these discussions. In this chapter we review some of the ways in which gender appears in migration debates, the different arguments around gender and on the forms of migration through which these have been routed, and some questions for future research agendas. This chapter is therefore necessarily selective and unable to provide a comprehensive review of the rich literature on the topic.

### 18.1 Gender and Migration: Making It a Topic

Despite the fact that Ravenstein's theories of migration highlighted the significance of women in migration streams as early as 1885, most migration research, analysis, and theory remained fixated around the figure of a migrant man for almost a century afterwards, although as Donato and Gabaccia (2015) have shown, female migrants were dominant in the US by the 1930s. Focusing on women raised questions around how one distinguishes the autonomous migration of women from family migrants and how their economic contribution should be recognised (Office of Women in Development, 1979). A focus on [labour migration](#) as the primary modality for migration, both internal and international, on particular sectors of the economy in which men dominate, and the individualisation of migration as a solo enterprise all

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led to this empirical focus. However, [family migration](#) continues to be one of the most important sources of migrants in OECD countries.

Since the 1950s, most migration globally has been driven by male-led [urbanisation](#), very often overturning family-based pastoral migration and other forms of mobility. Although women migrated even during this period, the male selectivity of migration was largely overturned in subsequent decades. Circular migration, repeat migration and permanent outmigration were often a sign of rural deprivation but also of customary practices of land management that had been disrupted through colonisation. Migration was thus historically multi-layered with each layer having different gendered implications.

Latin America was the first region to note female dominated migration into domestic work, sex work and entrepreneurship (Bunster et al., [1985](#)). Both Latin American and African literatures showed how women juggle responsibilities for children and parents along with work (Izzard, [1985](#)). This early research pointed to several important challenges. First, it was difficult to distinguish the ‘autonomous’ migration of women from family migration and what the implications of this might be. Should female migration be analysed through the language of choice or was it a necessity? Moreover, was autonomy an appropriate way of analysing women’s mobility given their tethering in social reproduction and family life? Secondly, recognising women as solo migrants meant recognising their economic contributions to society but this raised a further question: should they be analysed in the same way that men’s contributions were? For instance, the role of the family was a dominant theme in existing research on women while men were treated primarily as economic actors. What difference did it make if women, especially women in cities were to be analysed as economic migrants (Office of Women in Development, [1979](#))? Did they require their own framework for analysis (Thadani & Todaro, [1978](#))? Finally, what exactly did autonomy mean? How far were women’s choices shaped by economic and familial reasons and how much was mobility a result of a bid for freedom and choice? Moreover, how far was data skewed by women’s and men’s responses to questions around why they migrate? Globally it appeared that men prioritised economic causes but women offered a mix of causes when asked [why they migrate](#) (Office of Women in Development, [1979](#)). These are questions that have continued to shape gendered migration research. Early research also explored the differential use of [migration networks](#) by women and men and the fact that women tended to depend on older networks while men forged new networks to facilitate migration. Women did not also appear to gain the economic gains that men had made through migration. Hence, the differential causes, consequences, and modalities of migration among men and women were analysed.

The presence of women in migration and the subsequent analytical opportunities and challenges were substantively picked up by Morokvasić ([1984](#)) in the context of Europe. Her research was the harbinger of many studies on women migrants. These studies have varied in foci but, especially in the last two decades, they have been dominated by themes and insights which we develop subsequently. However, since the 1990s, migration literature has become dominated by a global imaginary and is to a great extent losing sight of the long history of [internal migration](#) (Chant, [1992](#)).



<p><b>Migration Data Portal</b>  Gender and Migration  <a href="https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender-and-migration">https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender-and-migration</a></p> <p><b>UNDESA</b>  International Migration  <a href="https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp">https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp</a></p> <p><b>UNHCR</b>  Global Trends  Integrating Gender into UNHCR statistics  <a href="https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/UNHCR_ppt.pdf">https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/UNHCR_ppt.pdf</a></p>
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**Fig. 18.1** Key data sources

There was recognition that even if not everybody moves, migration still affects many people in many places, leading Castles and Miller (1993) to call this “the age of migration” in which the feminisation of migration, especially labour migration, was characterised as the fourth major trend in the contemporary world. Though widely used to characterise contemporary migration, several critiques of the concept of feminisation have noted that this phenomenon is not new (Donato & Gabaccia, 2015) and varies substantially between countries (Vause & Toma, 2015) and regions with men being dominant in the six GCC countries. It was not just female authors who highlighted the significance of gender and households and gender in migration studies but also a leading male migration scholar (Portes, 1997).

Male migrants remained a significant component of migration streams in sectors such as construction, sea-faring and agricultural work. During the same period there has also been an increase in highly skilled migration, especially in male dominated sectors such as information technology and finance. However, women play an important, albeit little acknowledged (Kofman, 2000), part in these skilled flows, especially in welfare sectors such as medicine, nursing and teaching, where migration continues to be seen through the lens of brain drain.

In terms of data on gender breakdown, for the first time in 1998, the UN published global data disaggregated by gender for the period 1960–1990, which it extended in 2002 for the period from 1990 to 2000 (Zlotnik, 2003). More recent sources of disaggregated data can be found in the Migration Data Portal section on gender and migration which reviews sources provided by the ILO and UNDESA (Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs). In the next section, we trace the growth of gender and migration as a field of study and a number of key topics and concepts concerning labour, family, and asylum as well as the development of intersectionality as an approach to understanding the heterogeneity and differential power relations applying to gendered migrations (Fig. 18.1).

## 18.2 Expansion of Gendered Migration

Publications on gendered migration, though increasing in the 1990s (Willis & Yeoh, 2000), grew rapidly in the 2000s in Asia, Europe, and North America, reflecting a growing preoccupation with receiving countries in the Global North and their demand for labour in feminised sectors. A review of publications in international migration noted gender and family as **the fastest growing cluster** at the turn of the twenty-first century (Pisarevskaya et al., 2020). This was accompanied by a series of theoretical developments within broader global and transnational paradigms connecting people and places which would begin to shape the research agenda and demonstrate how economies and societies were being affected by global and gendered migration flows of reproductive labour (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). Sassen (2000) conceptualised these South to North flows of domestic and sex workers as counter geographies pertaining to the narrative of globalisation and global cities.

Another major conceptual framework for the global transfer of labour was **global chains of care** (Hochschild, 2000). Drawing on fieldwork undertaken by Parreñas, Hochschild defined them as “a series of personal links between people across the globe, based on the paid or unpaid work of caring”. Their work suggested that women who moved into the paid labour market in countries of the global North were replacing their care work not through redistribution with men but through employing women migrants from the global South. These women, often from urban conurbations were, however, themselves leaving behind a care deficit as they had responsibilities for reproductive labour such that women from rural areas moved into their households to fill that care deficit. These chains of care were dependent on international and national inequalities in wages with each link in the chain representing a point where the value of labour was being realised in waged forms. These care chains have dominated debates on migrant care as similar patterns were seen to be occurring in many parts of the world. The concept rapidly became influential among female migration scholars (Herrera, 2013; Lutz, 2010) analysing recourse of Northern households to migrant labour from the South and poorer countries in Europe (Lutz & Palenga-Möllnbeck, 2012), to fill deficits of domestic and care work. As the chain moved downwards to countries of origin, and where care needs were filled by family members or urban migrants, the surplus value of this labour diminished.

The global chains of care framework was criticised for its narrow and limited application to transnational motherhood and care of children. It presumed an absence of men, heteronormativity, and failure to see women and men as sexual beings and was based on a narrow range of institutional sites through which care was provided (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Manalansan, 2006). Subsequently studies highlighted the significance of migrant men in the provision of care for the elderly (Gallo & Scrinzi, 2016) which has become the sector with the greatest shortage of labour (Peng, 2018). Men too have “gendered experiences marked by both masculine privilege and social marginality” (Davalos, 2020).

Generationally, grandmothers too participated as paid carers, for example to support younger Ukrainian women in Italy (Tyldum, 2015), who may leave families due to problematic marriages and the stigma of divorce. Older women may also migrate for varying durations as 'swallows' to assist their children as unpaid carers or for personal satisfaction and autonomy (Lulle & King, 2016). However, the extent of the latter is much circumscribed for many nationalities by visa and immigration policies unlike the relative ease of circulation for EU citizens. Finally, the care drain could have been conceptualised as a **brain drain** given that the evidence that education enables women from poorer countries to migrate: 20% of highly educated women from sub-Saharan African have emigrated but only 0.4% of the least educated (Dumitru & Marfouk, 2015, p. 40).

A political economy approach to this type of labour conceptualised care work as occurring across multiple sites and institutional architectures, i.e. a care diamond consisting of the state, voluntary organisations, the market, and the family (Razavi, 2007), each of which had both local and transnational elements (Williams, 2018) and was influenced by state, social policy and immigration regulations (Williams, 2018; Amelina & Lutz, 2019). Particularly in countries where the migrant in the family model prevails as in Southern Europe (Bettio et al., 2006) and East and South-East Asia (Peng, 2018), large numbers of migrant domestic workers are employed, often with precarious contracts and especially in East and South-East Asia in systems of temporary labour. In Europe, on the other hand, an increasing proportion of the care work force has been supplied by labour from Eastern European enlargement countries whilst the frequent regularisation programmes in Southern Europe have enabled domestic and care workers to acquire a residence permit. At the same time, the corporatisation of care highlights the fact that the provision of care for children and the elderly has become big business in households and in elderly care homes (Farris & Marchetti, 2017; Pazhoothundathil & Bailey, 2020). The recruitment of labour too is increasingly being undertaken through agencies and companies of different sizes. Thus, there are a number of actors and institutions at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels (Williams, 2018) which have to be understood intersectionally and with sensitivity to how care definitions, practices, ideologies, and labour have evolved over time in different parts of the world (Raghuram, 2012, 2016).

Others have emphasised the complex circulation of care among those who move and those who do not and across different classes (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Furthermore, the operation of the chain in the South initially paid scant attention or acknowledged the diversity of family forms and strategies families adopted for the care of children and older people, forgetting the long history of differential gendered formations and roles that have evolved locally (Hansen, 1984). In more recent years, researchers have explored the diverse responses to the departure of family members and return across different regions in the South (Mazzucato & Ditto, 2018). This has led to explorations of proximate, online and distance care circulations among transnational families and differential mobilities of family members to undertake care. Such research has shown the differential care needs of people over time and across space and how these require a transnational conceptual lens which embraces the diversity of material, social and symbolic exchanges between places.

Although domestic and care work are crucial employment sectors for migrant women, the strong focus by feminist researchers on these gendered labour markets is problematic; it reinforces stereotypes of migrant women (Catarino & Morokvasić, 2013) and fails to recognise the much broader gendered migrant division of labour extending across a diversity of skill levels and sites (private and public). Other sectors, both lesser skilled and more skilled, have also relied heavily on female migrant labour but have been much less studied. Certainly, the growth of global labour migrations has been accompanied by the intensification of non-standard employment relationships, contracting out of services, and deregulation of labour. Female-dominated sectors or those with substantial numbers beyond those employed by households (Amrith & Sahraoui, 2019) include hospitality, retail, contract cleaning in hospitals (von Bose, 2019), offices, public spaces, bodywork—such as beauty parlours, hairdresser, and manicurists (Wolkowitz, 2006)—and sex work to name a few. These become particularly apparent in Africa, where female cross-border enterprise in such sectors are particularly prevalent (Ojong, 2017). Moreover, what all these sectors show is that, as Ojong argues, sometimes migration comes first and gender later and that men take up work in feminised sectors where and when migration opportunities arise.

Furthermore, the dominant focus on less-skilled employment pushes into the background the circulation of skilled female migrants and endorses the paradigmatic separation of (male) skilled and (female) less-skilled understandings of migration. Women working in skilled sectors tend to dominate reproductive sectors, such as health, social work, and teaching, which often do not pay as much as male occupations, although many educated women work in mixed or male-dominated sectors (Raghuram, 2008). Yet the current global race for talent in which states seek to attract skilled migration, “is profoundly gendered, with significant implications for the skill accreditation, labour market outcomes, rights of stay, and gendered family dynamics” (Boucher, 2016, p. 30). So too is student international mobility. In 2017, there were nearly four million international students studying just within the OECD countries (OECD, 2019). Gender matters in [student migration](#) (see chap. 10 in this volume) before, during, and after migration but on the whole this is much less explored (Raghuram & Sondhi, 2021; Sondhi & King, 2017). The question this raises is whether skilled women are differentially empowered through migration (compared to non-migrants, lesser skilled women, and skilled men) (Raghuram, 2008) or have they simply reconstituted subordination (Ojong & Muthuki, 2010)? Moreover, when women move as nurses and teachers, what kinds of deskilling do accompanying spouses face, and how do they challenge, accommodate or subvert new gender orders (Pasura & Christou, 2018)?

Women not only move to continue their reproductive roles as waged work but also within families as [family migration](#) remains the largest source of permanent migration in OECD countries, ahead of labour and humanitarian migrations (OECD, 2017). Around 38% of all migrants entered through this route. The largest group are spouses entering as marriage migrants, followed by children and parents. In Asia, such migration has expanded massively (Chung et al., 2016) in countries such as South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, where it intertwines with labour flows from poorer

to richer countries in what Constable (2005) calls global hypergamy. Women marry men who have a weak position on the marriage market but are in a higher socio-economic location due to labour migration. Location in the global North or in richer countries makes men desirable partners. Moreover, marriage migration also articulates with **other forms of migration**, especially in other reproductive sectors (Lan, 2008).

Families are also increasingly stretched across locations, sharing finances and care work with different kinds of householding strategies through the life course (Douglass, 2012). Immigration regulations play a major role in how one is able to perform family (see Chap. 7, this volume), especially as countries have made the conditions of entry **stricter for family members**, particularly parents and non-dependent children, or have restricted family reunification to the skilled (Bonizzoni, 2018) or those who meet minimum income thresholds. Besides, countries define family in migration policy more narrowly than for non-migrants and are not cognisant of how families live in many countries of large-scale family migration. So while cohabiting and LGBTQI couples have acquired familial rights or rights akin to family—rights formerly reserved for heterosexual married couples—these rights have not always been extended to migrants. Moreover, they must demonstrate their intimate lives to bureaucrats (Groes and Fernandez 2018).

**Refugee flows and internal displacement** have increased massively with the proliferation of protracted conflicts and political instability including in the Middle East and Africa (Hyndman & Giles, 2017). By the end of 2019, 79.5 million people of concern (refugees and internally displaced) around the world have been forced from home. It represents over three times the number of people of concern compared to the figure at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Women comprise the majority of those escaping generalised conflict, but only a minority of those manage to seek asylum in the Global North because moving long distances requires considerable resources and frequently necessitates the use of smugglers (Damir-Geilsdorf & Sabra, 2018). For example, Syria, the largest refugee-producing country, had an estimated 6.5 million Syrian citizens internally displaced and more than 4.8 million in neighbouring countries by the end of 2016. Women form the majority of the internally displaced in Syria itself and about half in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (Freedman et al., 2017) but fewer further afield.

Not all asylum seekers are escaping from generalised conflict; they may be seeking to get away from gender-related forms of persecution, such as domestic violence, forced and early marriage, genital mutilation as well as experiencing difficulties in openly expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity (Freedman et al., 2017). Feminist scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the 1951 Refugee Convention failed to incorporate gender-related persecution and suggested ways in which such considerations could be incorporated within the limits of the Convention (Macklin, 1999).

The issue of **asylum seekers** and refugees in Europe became more visible as a result of the sudden increase in 2015. It also brought out the need for more disaggregated data, not just by gender but also in relation to other social divisions, and greater knowledge about the gendered experiences of border crossings and

journeys. Initially men predominated in the flows across the Mediterranean and were depicted as threatening; their own vulnerability often going unrecognised (Turner, 2017). For a short period before the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, the proportion of women crossing the Eastern Mediterranean to Greece increased, as a result of which refugee women are now a sizeable and growing group in Europe. According to data from Eurostat, about half a million women obtained international protection in Europe since 2015, of whom 300,000 are in Germany. Furthermore, the share of women among those whose asylum claim is recognised is also larger than their share among asylum seekers; the share of women among those obtaining international protection status increased from 29% in 2015 to 38.1% in 2019. The presence of refugee women is expected to rise further through family reunification as most spouses concerned are women (OECD, 2017).

More studies on the gendered nature of journeys across international borders under inhospitable conditions, the harm, distress, and violence displaced people are subjected to and the agency they deploy needs further attention to avoid inserting women's stories into prevailing stereotypes of asylum seekers and migrants. For example, sex work is frequently coupled with sex trafficking, especially for certain nationalities, such as Nigerian women in Italy, who are closely associated with sex work and rendered as pure victims without any agency (Rigo, 2017). However, studies show their resilience while traversing Libya, a dangerous country where many individuals had experienced serious harm of sequestration, forced labour, kidnapping, and sexual violence from a variety of sources (Plambech, 2017). Moreover, it is not easy to distinguish sex trafficking from using sex to undertake a journey. Other aspects, such as age, disability, and sexuality also intersect with gender in shaping asylum seekers' and refugees' journeys and settlements.

One of the means of processing asylum seekers into those to be settled with rights, those left in limbo and those to be deported, is the application of vulnerability in conjunction with nationality, which has led to a listing approach of characteristics (single parents with children, pregnant women, unaccompanied minors) simplifying subjects in need of protection and serving to restrict access to protection and services. So, although in Europe women fall disproportionately into the vulnerable categories (Belloni et al., 2018; Kofman, 2019), such a classification may make it difficult to offer them appropriate support. As Butler (2016, p. 15) commented "once groups are marked as 'vulnerable' within human rights discourse or legal regimes, those groups become reified as definitionally 'vulnerable', fixed in a political position of powerlessness and lack of agency. All the power belongs to the state and international institutions that are now supposed to offer them protection and advocacy".

### 18.3 Intersectionality

Gendered migration research has often focused separately on women and men although the importance of understanding the relations between women and men in shaping the causes and consequences of migration are increasingly being realised. Gender, class, race, and the notion of nation (see Chap. 12 of this volume) are all constitutive in the migration process and are themselves being reconstituted globally through migration.

Some of these are captured through notions of intersectionality, said to be one of the most significant contributions of feminist theory to the social sciences. The ‘emancipated’ slave Sojourner Truth’s request to be included into the category ‘woman’ is one of the first claims to intersectionality and formed the title of bell hooks’ foundational text on intersectionality (hooks, 1981). Black women have been at the forefront of demands for recognition of the multifaceted and complex nature of women’s lives – as it sits at the intersection of multiple hierarchies and power relations. Combahee River Collective criticised white middle class feminists for speaking for all feminists. However, it is Crenshaw (1990), a black legal scholar’s work that really put these experiences on the conceptual map. The most important arenas of inequality in intersectional theory are gender, ethnicity/race/nation, class, sexuality, disability, and age/generation. Together and separately, they produce and reproduce unequal life chances—assigning traits to individuals and allocating them to particular social roles (Amelina & Lutz, 2019). Gender-specific allocation can be seen in household roles and labour processes. The interplay of axes of inequalities differ historically and spatially and therefore require empirical investigation to capture the structural/institutional contexts and subjective identity (Rathzel, 2010, cited in Amelina & Lutz, 2019, p. 12) in relation to discrimination and action. One may be subordinate along one axis and privileged along another.

These conceptual inheritances have become important in migration research too. For instance, the recognition that most women who migrate for work are young and in the reproductive ages has meant that both maternity (Constable, 2014) and mothering (Erel et al., 2018) have become important themes in migration research. Similarly, Nakano Glenn (1985) played a key role in drawing out the interaction between gender, race, and class in relation to different generations of black, Mexican-American, and Chinese-American women. Crucially what they point to is the overlapping and deepening effect of race on women migrants, whereby racialised women consistently have poorer opportunities to migrate, have difficulties during migration and have poor outcomes after migration.

Class, however, continues to work alongside these to enable some women to overcome other forms of discrimination, at least partially. Class is written into migration policy in multiple ways, but primarily through the proxy of skills (Boucher, 2020). Skilled migration schemes select for class. Qualifications and wages are often the basis for identifying skills but when they operate in gendered labour markets which discriminate against women, class operates alongside gender to produce intersectional outcomes. Moreover, some sectors which also require skills

are simply not recognised as skilled sectors, especially where the skills required are embodied rather than ‘embrained’. This too affects women from different classes differentially.

## 18.4 Conclusion

Gendered migration has grown in significance across the migration research and policy agendas of the last 30 years. This research has had key empirical foci, especially around women in gendered roles—as care workers, domestic workers, and as family members, but also as asylum-seekers. It has also made important theoretical contributions, especially to theories of intersectionality and transnational thought. Nevertheless, some of the early questions posed in the 1970s, with which this chapter began, continue to be pertinent.

Moreover, the contemporary conjuncture offers new challenges for gendered migration. COVID-19 has speeded up some mobilities, impeded others, and completely stalled others. Moreover, although certain sectors that have become important during the pandemic, such as health and cleaning, have been led by females and migrants, these workers are still, despite their significance, generally seen as disposable and replaceable. What COVID-19 does point to, however, is that such work is set within and articulates differentially with productive sectors. As such, the articulations between production and social reproduction need further attention. The shift to home working in some office-based sectors might herald long-term changes in migration as face-to-face and on-site delivery of work is eschewed. This too has important implications for future research. Although this review has focused overly on research which has been led by those in the global North, the global South has contributed vastly to understandings of migration (Asis et al., 2019; Kofman, 2020). While this is particularly apparent in the Asian case, a truly global gendered migration needs to learn from the empirical, theoretical, and analytical agendas arising from other parts of the world too. Finally, this chapter has highlighted that most migration research has established itself within the domain of migration theory rather than gender theory (Raghuram, 2020).

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# Chapter 19

## Migration and Development



Akm Ahsan Ullah

Academically speaking, migration has not been discussed intensely within a development framework until recently (Ullah & Haque, 2020). The seasonal flights of Siberian birds have long been associated with migration. When it comes to human mobility, however, migration has traditionally been viewed as a means of escaping unwanted situations in search of a more welcoming environment. Migration has existed since the dawn of time, but it has never occupied a substantial place in academe or policy spheres until today. Some countries formalised migration only recently. China, for example, did not allow people to move internally and internationally until 1979 (Xiang, 2016; Skeldon, 1996; Ullah & Hossain, 2014).

Over the past five decades, the impact of migration on ‘development’ in sending communities and receiving countries has been the subject of heated and contentious debate (Castles, 2015; Taylor, 1999; Ullah et al., 2019; Ullah et al., 2015). The link between migration and development has been viewed as a distant one. However, perspectives about migration began to change as *remittances*, international trade, labour market, development, and security issues associated with migration have taken the lead in the globalisation and development discourse (Ullah, 2013b, c).

Though the debate about the extent of the impact of migration on development is contentious, there is still an association between development and migration that must be acknowledged. Scholars have found that migration contributes robustly in both negative and positive ways to development in both origin and destination countries (Ullah & Haque, 2020). Evidence is mounting that, leveraged by appropriate policies, the support of migrants—whether through cash or in-kind—could be best used to change society in a myriad of ways. They could be the best vehicle for enculturation, acculturation, technology transfer, and skills and knowledge

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circulation (Ullah, 2013c, 2015a, d). The Member States of the United Nations (UN) have put forward an initiative to address migration-development dynamics through a range of actions of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) (UN, 2007), which was established at the gathering in the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLDMD) and the GFMD in 2006. The actions include the commitment to concrete arrangements for making sure that migration is efficacious for development.

As migration has become a significant phenomenon at the global stage, migration thinkers and analysts have been divided into three blocs (Ullah, 2013d, 2015c). One bloc has well-justified reasons for opposing migration, another bloc supports migration, and another takes a moderate position. One bloc argues that migration facilitates the most talented and gifted citizens leaving the country in search of rewarding opportunities, and sending ends apparently sound contended with the remittances received. This means migration works like a filter through which the talented pass through and the less talented stay behind (Ullah, 2010b, 2015b). The other bloc tends to counter-argue that migration has enabled many countries to increase in growth through migrant remittances. Migration facilitates a demographic balance (from high fertility countries to low fertility countries). Other liberal blocs argue that migration is not bad for developing economies. This bloc contends that developing countries gain diversity through migration, which is required to be an effective member of the global community.

The premise of the migration-development debate is in fact based on the notion that the remittances sent by the migrants play a key role in contributing to development and to the macro economy i.e. the gross domestic products (GDP) of receiving countries. These assumptions are often made without keeping in mind how remittances at the micro level behave. Therefore, the notion of remittances and their contributions may lead to sweeping assumptions. What has been ignored is how financial management during the exposure to migration (Ullah, 2013a) generally rests on the spouses left behind; their responsibility doubles, and often triples, which pushes them to face severe challenges. In the developing world, spousal separation due to migration is a common phenomenon. Long-term spousal separation due to migration increases the household's obligation (such as helping the children in school homework, taking care of elderlies, rearing poultry and cattle). They eventually take over the agriculture sector's tasks. As this comes into the development debate, some scholars tend to say that this adds skill and power to those left behind, i.e. their new role empowers them. However, what is clearly unknown is whether the "left-behind" can make major decisions about using/investing their money. Moreover, while this contribution could not be undermined, the contribution is largely calculated by excluding certain associated factors such as the cost of migration (monetary, psychological costs, etc.). Some estimates show soaring remittances to developing countries that are triple the value of all foreign aid. In the way that migrants' families try to isolate themselves from non-migrants, remittances often function as a destroyer of social fabric; some families believe that their social

position is higher than others (Atkinson et al., 2016). Between migrant and non-migrant households, an unhealthy competition develops. This is also passed down to their offspring. There is evidence that these children's behavior changes as a result of their perception of being higher in the social hierarchy. A new level of inequality between migrants' and non-migrants' families is growing. At some time, children from migrant households begin to isolate themselves from their non-migrant peers, or vice versa. Many non-migrants are said to be envious of migrant households. Although migration brought happiness to some families, it also contributed to an unhappy scenario in many societies, according to certain stakeholders, with the division of non-migrant and migrant families being one example. Social cohesion deteriorates over time (Atkinson et al., 2016).

The vast body of literature on migration and development is predominantly occupied with its positive impression and short-term prospects and promises. In a random search conducted between mid-2018 and late 2018 of literature that deals with migration and development, we found 2745 items made up of articles, reports, and books. About 98% of them demonstrated positive associations between migration and development (Ullah & Haque, 2020). This underlies that simple generalisation of the impact of migration on development could largely be misleading. The remittances (both recorded and unrecorded) being sent across the globe may cause mayhem to small economies under the circumstances of failure in tackling or undermining associated risky factors. As a result, my point is that we should not only continue to glorify migration, but also look into it more deeply so that policymakers and stakeholders are aware of its long and short-term challenges.

The impact of migration on development varies across regions depending on a number of factors. They include: livelihood patterns and strategies; economic, political and environmental atmosphere; geographical location; relative wealth; security regimes; kinship structure and other informal institutions; the nature of local governance and social network; access to land, food, infrastructure, markets, water and other resources (Estevens, 2018). Many countries such as the Philippines have embedded migration policies (for promoting outmigration and in-migration) and some countries remain indifferent (deliberately or un-deliberately) to migration (such as Bangladesh, the Maldives, Afghanistan and some other countries in Africa). Migration, however, nevertheless persists. As migrants return to their home, do the skills they acquire overseas have any relevance to the market of their own country? Migration happens due to the difference between demanded labour (skilled and unskilled) and the supply of labour domestically, for example, in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC countries), especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the population size is about 33 million, 65% of which comprises working age population. This may suggest that they would not need nine million foreign workers should the Saudi working age population have necessary skills (IOM, 2016).

## 19.1 The Remittance and Development Conundrum

There has been a remarkable interest in private and public discourse concerning the interplay between migration and development (Rahman & Ullah, 2012; Jones, 1998). Remittance inflows have a variable impact depending on a country's capacity to efficiently use it, its technical orientation, and the level of its skilled population and the size of the country's economically active population. Many scholars have thoroughly documented the multiplier effect of remittance spending. Ullah and Haque (2020) found from Durand et al.' (1996) research that the addition of \$2 billion migradollars to the Mexican economy has generated 10% of Mexico's output and 3% of its GDP (Durand et al., 1996). Researchers came up with different estimations, calculating that each \$1 in remittance spending generates \$2 to \$3 in local economic activity, meaning that non-migrants can benefit indirectly from migration, especially if remittances are spent on local productions (Kuptsch & Martin, 2004). Fourn (2004) added that the impact of remittances on economic growth is probably close to double the actual amount sent. The fact that the infusion of \$1 of remittance generates \$2 of local economic activity has become a powerful point in the migration-development discourse. However, the re-discovery of the migration-development nexus tends to neglect the insights of research and policy experiences that emerged a decade back. The trend to study the cause and impacts of migration separately was one of the reasons why migration and development did not come to the fore. This implies that separate strands of migration literature have been generated which excluded development issues. More generally speaking, the scholarly debate on migration has tended to separate the developmental causes (determinants) and effects (impacts) of migration artificially from more general processes of social (including economic) change (Taylor, 1999).

After decades of concerns about some 'damaging effects' of migration, governments of sending countries have had a renewed hope that we could make migration work for development. Of course, remittances have been proven to be effective instruments for income redistribution, poverty reduction, and economic growth (Ullah, 2010a; Kapur, 2003; Ratha, 2003). Remittances, however, are not the only yardstick in measuring development (Table 19.1).

**Table 19.1** Regional trends in remittances flows, 2018

Regions	Estimated remittances (\$Billion)
Sub-Saharan Africa	46
East Asia and the Pacific	143
Europe and Central Asia	59
Latin America and the Caribbean	88
Middle East and North Africa	62
South Asia	131

Source: The World Bank (2019a, b)



Migration is an age-old **response** to variations in economic and opportunity differentials, as well as to security, social, and political factors. So far, an overwhelming majority of the body of literature exploring migrants' remittances and factors driving migration have demonstrated that economic factors are the most powerful for migration volition. Of course, economic aspiration is expressed in a variety of ways. And although remittance has been an issue insignificantly discussed for five decades, it has now reached around US\$686 billion, making migration one of today's most debated subjects (World Bank, 2019a, b) (Table 19.2).

In terms of remittance transactions between receiving and sending countries, interesting pictures appear. The World Bank expected a growth to reach to \$540 billion in developing countries by 2016 (World Bank, 2019a, b). Among the countries, the top remittance recipients were India with \$79 billion, followed by China (\$67 billion), Mexico (\$36 billion), the Philippines (\$34 billion), and Egypt (\$29 billion) (World Bank, 2019a, b; Pew Research, 2019). In 2019, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries were expected to reach \$550 billion, and so become the largest source of external financing. Amongst Asia and the Pacific, more than 40% of workers' remittances flow into the South Asian region, followed by East Asia (30%) and Southeast Asia (22%) (Jongwanich, 2007; European Parliament, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2019).

The South receives a higher amount than the North (Ullah & Haque, 2020). However, the truth is that between 30% and 45% of total remittances to developing countries originate in other developing countries. The impression is that the South receives the entire amount of remittance from the North, however, it is worth noting that if the outflows from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCCs) countries to labour-sending countries are considered as transfers within the developing world, then the total net inflow for the latter – even on the basis of the currently available (and underestimated) official outflow figures – amounts to no more than US\$102 billion for 2003 (World Bank, 2005).

**Table 19.2** Projections of remittance flows to low- and middle-income regions

	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018e	2019f	2020f
	(\$ billions)						
Low and Middle Income	343	449	442	477	528	549	573
East Asia and Pacific	96	127	127	133	142	148	155
Europe and Central Asia	38	43	43	52	63	65	68
Latin America and Caribbean	57	68	74	79	87	90	93
Middle-East and North Africa	39	51	51	54	59	61	63
South Asia	82	118	110	117	132	138	144
Sub-Saharan Africa	32	41	37	41	45	47	50
World	469	592	586	625	689	715	747
Developing countries (FY 2016 income classification <sup>a</sup> )	337	441	435	468	518	538	561

Source: World Bank. See appendix A in World Bank (2017) for data and forecast methods

Note: *e* estimate, *f* forecast

<sup>a</sup>This group excludes Equatorial Guinea, the Russian Federation, República Bolivarian de Venezuela, and Argentina, which were classified as high-income countries earlier. These countries are included in the group of low- and middle-income countries in the Table

## 19.2 Development and Dependency

The argument currently gaining prominence is the notion that migration may not and has not led to sustainable development in sending & developing countries in the long run, but rather has elevated the chances of being dependent on the rich industrialised economies of the developed world. Critics argue that remittances, as well being very unevenly spread between developing countries, tend not to flow to the poorest. Thus, the social and psychological costs of migration on sending families and communities must also be offset against remittance benefits, and although remittances can selectively relieve the poverty of recipients and enable household (and sometimes wider community) consumption and saving, they do not automatically generate development, and should not be regarded as a substitute for policies that do so (Haider et al., 2016; Ullah, 2010a).

Many countries in the world are increasingly becoming heavily dependent for their fiscal budget on remittances. Until today, these remittance dependent countries (such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic) deeply believe that remittances work as savior for them (Mahapatra, 2014). For example, remittances made up to 42% of Tajikistan's GDP, 32% of the Kyrgyz Republic's GDP, and 29% of Nepal's GDP in 2013 (World Bank, 2014). The following Table 19.3 shows the countries with the contribution of remittances to GDP (Ullah and Haque, 2020).

Heavy reliance on remittance for development may wreak havoc on the long-term development plans of countries because remittance flow is dependent on the condition of global and domestic economies, which is one of the most volatile variables in the world. Think, for example, of the issues associated with Dutch disease, where, under certain circumstances the domestic currency gets stronger to potentially discourage export and encourage import (Noh, 2013). As a result of real currency rate appreciation, remittance-receiving countries suffer from Dutch disease, which limits tradable sector expansion while enhancing non-tradable sector growth (Forhad, 2019). In the Netherlands in the 1960s, due to the discovery of oil and natural gas, the country relied highly on their oil and natural gas exportations for revenues while declining their activities in the manufacturing sector. Owing to the fact that natural resources like oil and gas are non-renewable (they may run out), it is best to diversify economic activities by not just concentrating solely on what is being seen as favorable at the given time (Demachi & Kinkyō, 2014). Likewise, remittance inflows are unpredictable given the fast-changing global political and economic landscape.

As migration has become a public and policy concern, it has become clear that interventions in development policy and assistance can have an impact on migration. The relationship between migration and development has been described as "unsettled" to put it mildly (Papademetriou & Martin, 1991). We've noticed a fresh consensus that, rather than reducing migration pressure, development can drive migration in the short term by boosting expectations and increasing the resources required for movement (Ascencio, 1990). The new economics of migration implies

**Table 19.3** Remittances as a share of GDP, 2009

Country	Region	Development status	Remittances as a share of GDP, 2009 (%)
Tajikistan	ECIS	Transition	35.1%
Tonga	A&P	Middle-income DC	27.7%
Lesotho	Africa	Low-income DC	24.8%
Moldova	ECIS	Transition	23.1%
Nepal	A&P	Low-income DC	22.9%
Lebanon	Arab States	Middle-income DC	22.4%
Samoa	A&P	Middle-income DC	22.3%
Honduras	LAC	Middle-income DC	19.3%
Guyana	LAC	Low-income DC	17.3%
El Salvador	LAC	Middle-income DC	15.7%
Jordan	Arab States	Middle-income DC	15.6%
Kyrgyzstan	ECIS	Transition	15.4%
Haiti	LAC	Low-income DC	15.4%
Jamaica	LAC	Middle-income DC	13.8%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	ECIS	Transition	12.7%
Serbia	ECIS	Transition	12.6%
Bangladesh	A&P	Low-income DC	11.8%
Philippines	A&P	Low-income DC	11.7%
Albania	ECIS	Transition	10.9%
Togo	Africa	Low-income DC	10.3%

Source: Calculated from World Bank data, Migration and Remittances Fact Book (2011)

that as development progresses, demand for remittances rises, as do investment opportunities and returns on investment: remittances may thus propel and prolong movement through boosting development (Martin, 1991; Martin & Taylor, 2001).

The policymakers, stakeholders, and migration regimes predict that the effect of a sudden slowdown of remittances may unleash chaos on the economies of many countries (Ullah & Haque, 2019; World Bank, 2017). The decline in the growth of remittances has affected most developing regions, where, in Central Asia in particular, flows declined by 12.7% in 2016 (World Bank, 2016). In line with the expected global economic recovery in 2016, the global flows of remittances accelerated by 4.1% to reach an estimated USD610 billion and then rising to USD636 billion in 2017. Indeed, remittance flows to developing countries were expected to recover in

**Table 19.4** Countries most dependent on remittances (2016)

Country	Remittances flow (In Billion US\$)	GDP (in Billion US\$)	% of GDP contributed by remittances
Tajikistan	3.58	8.51	42.1
Kirgiz Republic	2.28	7.23	31.5
Nepal	5.55	19.29	28.8
Moldova	1.98	7.94	24.9
Lesotho	.543	2.23	24.4
Samoa	.165	.649	23.8
Haiti	1.78	8.46	21.1
Armenia	2.19	10.43	21
The Gambia	.181	.914	19.8
Liberia	.360	1.95	18.5

Source: World Bank (2017)

2016 to reach USD459 billion, and then rise to USD479 billion in 2017 (World Bank, 2015). As the remittances flow is huge, small fluctuations in the flow will have a huge effect on the economy of countries that are dependent on this flow. This signals that over dependence on remittances may bring about mayhem to small economies. Dependency on remittances is mostly measured as a contribution of remittances to gross domestic product (GDP). In 2013, the top recipients of remittances were Tajikistan (42%), Kyrgyz Republic (32%), Nepal (29%), Moldova (25%), Lesotho and Samoa (24% each), Armenia and Haiti (both 21%), the Gambia (20%) and Liberia (18%) (World Bank, 2017) (Table 19.4).

While there is a lot of literature that claims remittances are mostly utilized in productive schemes, migration-driven income also causes consumerist, nonproductive, and remittance-dependent attitudes in origin communities. The exposure to remittances and the goods and ideas migrants bring with them, contributes to changing rural tastes that lower the demand for locally produced goods, increasing the demands for imported urban or foreign-products, and thereby increase the general costs of living in sending communities (Lipton, 1980, p. 12). Research also suggests that migration leads to the disruption of traditional **kinship systems and care structures** (King & Vullnetari, 2006), as well as the loss of community solidarity (Ullah, 2013a; Hayes, 1991; de Haas, 1998); rural young people become reluctant to live in the rural way of life, and get discouraged from working in traditional sectors causing the desire to move out to grow (Massey, 1988; Ullah & Huque, 2019). As a result, rural traditional farmlands suffer from labour insufficiency. Evidence suggests that agricultural products back home have been substantially decreasing in many countries due to lack of labour and interest in traditional work. In the long run, for many countries in North America (Mexico, in particular), Africa, Latin America and Asia, farmlands are going to be given into the hands of powerful (politically, monetarily) people who buy lands from those people who fail to cultivate their lands (Benjamin & Mbaye, 2014).

### 19.3 Development and Its Cost

A growing number of parents (of whom a high proportion is mothers) leave their families and children behind to take up “temporary” employment providing domestic and care services. A transnational family is thus formed where children are geographically separated from one or both parents over an extended period. Millions of children are currently growing up in the absence of their mother or father, or both. This implies that the social cost of migration is very high, particularly due to the lack of parental care. In the absence of parental care, the social cost to societies may potentially be very high. For children, the loss of parental care can be a serious deprivation, as it affects their development, socialization, relationships, and autonomy owing to a lack of supervision, support, encouragement, and role models. When children are given to new caregivers (relatives or professionals), they frequently struggle to adjust to the new family structure. Many youngsters have problems relating to their caregivers. When their parents return, many children have a tough time rebuilding relationship with them. These anxieties are linked to the absence of one’s parents (UNICEF, 2008).

To a large extent, the impacts of family separation on the well-being of children who are left behind demands a deeper understanding. Owing to the long-term absence of a parent, negative effects may be exacerbated, leading to a permanent disruption of family unity. Evidence shows that lonely migrants start having dual or multiple relationships in destination countries as they migrate unaccompanied: one in the country of origin and one or more in the country of destination resulting in a reduced amount of remittances sent home (Ullah, 2010a). In this way, the negative impact of migration on children may outweigh the positive effect of remittance and could end up having biological remittances (for more, see Ullah & Alkaff, 2018).

Moreover, migrants who take up domestic work are mostly females. A research study conducted on female domestic workers in Hong Kong in 2013 (Ullah, 2013a) shows that almost all the women migrated unaccompanied. Interestingly, at one point during their stint some of them decided to return, some failed to renew contracts, and some of them got tired of staying away from their homeland. Regardless of the reasons for return, subconsciously they calculated the costs and benefits of the migration. This cost-benefit analysis was not only calculated in relation to monetary factors but involved the social cost and benefit. The study shows that the mean stint of the migrants abroad was 11.14 years. The average age when they moved was 21 years of age, which means they moved during their prime period of life. Of the total respondents in the study, 78% were singles. Many of them returned home when they reached 50 years of age (Ullah, 2013a).

It is unknown, however, how many children and adolescents have been left behind globally by their parents (IOM, 2009; Gracia et al., 2018). However, the figure could be in the hundreds or millions. More than a third of all children residing in rural China (61 million) are left behind by one or both migrant parents (Yuan & Wang, 2016). About 27% of children in the Philippines (Reyes, 2008), 36% in

Ecuador, and more than 40% in rural South Africa are estimated to be left behind (Gracia et al., 2018). However, Garcia et al. (2018) found conflicting findings in their research. They found that remittance helps improve material benefits and income security, which then has an impact on gaining access to health care and education. On the one hand, some studies suggest left-behind children (mobility orphans) have poorer health than others. Overall, studies confirm left-behind children in China have poorer than average nutritional, developmental, and mental health outcomes (Gracia et al., 2018).

In Moldova alone, an estimated 177,000 children under the age of 18 were left-behind by parents working abroad (IOM, 2009). Approximately 37.1% of these children are between 10 and 15 years old. Moldova falls into the category of countries that have the highest proportion of children left behind in the CIS region (IOM, 2009). As an estimate, there are at least five million children in Bangladesh; 11 million in India, two million in Nepal and 4.5 million children in Pakistan that are left behind (Ullah & Haque, 2020).

Migration and its effects on development depend on the social structure of the society as well as on its cultural values, traditions, and the amount and sustainability of the remittances they receive. Migration stakeholders have devised ideas about how public and private sectors, as well as civil society can build partnerships around migration policies that eliminate discrimination against migrants and protect their rights (IOM, 2008). These include lowering the human, social, and economic costs of migration (Ullah, 2014), and expanding the opportunities for migrants to more productively invest their earnings and share their knowledge.

## 19.4 Conclusions

Migration scholar Stephen Castle was requested to assess what is generally known about relations between migration and development, and to consider what issues ought to orient future research to improve an understanding of those relations (DeWind, 2008). The questions involved different perspectives: that of a sociologist who had specialised in the study of international migration, and that of an economist with a specialisation in *development studies*. While each sees migration and development as “part of the same process and therefore constantly interactive” – rather than as one predominantly causing the other – their analytical approaches to building theoretical understandings of the process were distinct (DeWind, 2008).

There has been a boom in research that connects migration and development over the last decade. However, the associations projected in that research have all been affirmative. Hence, the dissociation between development and migration or the negativities that have been side-lined. This has resulted in some extremely unidirectional research that does not capture the potential negative impact migration may have on economies in the long run. Consequently, academic debate has been largely

skewed to reflect on only the positive. Migration has always been seen as a response to poverty, and hence migration is poverty-led. The notion that poverty could be reduced through migration has swept the literature, rendering migration a development mantra.

Taking all this into account, it is important to consider these critical questions in future research regarding the claim that development is dependent on migration: To what extent can remittances contribute to promoting sustainable livelihoods for the poorest people and how are they integrated in the overall national economy? To what extent might remittances' shortcomings and the constraints of international money regulations limit remittances' capacities to sustain development? What are the implications of the private nature of remittances on their hypothetical financing role? How could remittances possibly be combined with other financing mechanisms to ensure the achievement of the post-2015 development goals? What are the practices and policies that may enhance the development potential of remittances without deterring migrants' motivation to remit? What happens to remittance-dependent fiscal budgets when remittances decline abruptly?

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**Part V**  
**Studies of Migration Policies, Governance,**  
**and Politics**

# Chapter 20

## Migration Governance



Andrew Geddes

There are perhaps few terms that are used so frequently in the study of migration yet have as little definitional clarity as ‘governance’. This is perhaps not surprising, for, as the political scientist Claus Offe (2009) has observed, governance might best be understood as an ‘empty signifier’. What he meant by this was that governance acquires meaning through the ideas, processes, and practices that become associated with it rather than through a prior independent meaning that it possesses. For example, if migration governance is described as ‘multilevel’, as it often is, then this tells us that it occurs in lots of different places across ‘levels’ (local, national, international), whilst the actual meaning of governance remains unclear. This is a useful observation to take forward for the analysis that follows.

This chapter shows that a key aspect of ‘[migration governance](#)’ is that it acquires meaning precisely because of what various kinds of actors, such as local authorities, national governments, and international organisations actually do, i.e. how they try to regulate and manage migration as well as the ideas that inform these actions. This then leads to the main argument developed by this chapter, which is that migration governance is not simply an *ex post* or after-the-fact reaction to migration patterns and flows, but is much more closely involved in shaping migration. In turn, this means that the meaning of governance can be elusive, but the effects of governance are very real.

This then raises the obvious question of how do these governance effects occur? As this chapter shows, one of the most important ways in which they happen is as a result of the classifications and categorisations that are central to migration governance. Put in more concrete terms, when a person moves internationally and seeks to enter the territory of another country, then they must seek admission to that state for a particular reason and for a stated duration. By creating categories and putting people

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into them, governance processes impose meaning on international migration with decisive effects on their possibilities to migrate. Migration governance is about inclusion, but also, powerfully, about exclusion. These processes of inclusion and exclusion typically occur at state borders, but it is also clear that the meaning of borders and of the practices associated with borders can differ very markedly between states.

Using the word ‘governance’ can seem quite technical and could be seen to act as a disguise for an intensely political process and therefore a stark manifestation of the power of states (typically) over people. Terms such as ‘good governance’ might appear neutral but can be loaded with the ideological preferences of powerful states and a way to impose these preferences on less powerful states.

While the context for governance differs very markedly across the world, there are also some common elements that are linked to the core dilemmas that face all governing organisations as they try to make sense of the environment in which they operate, and then, through their actions, have effects on that environment. The reference to organisations is highly relevant to the analysis in this chapter because governance is always everywhere and necessarily an organisational process. It is about how governing organisations of various types understand the challenges that they face and then decide what to do, or not to do because inaction is also an option. These organisations might be **public** (such as local and national governments) or **private** (such as businesses and recruitment agencies), but they are all present in migration governance.

This chapter looks more closely at the term ‘governance’ to trace its origins and also to understand more about how it has become so central to the study of migration policy and politics. The main argument that is developed throughout the chapter is that it is a mistake to think of governance as simply a reaction to migration, i.e. a response to **migration flows** that have already happened. Instead, governance systems—through their organisation, their effects, and the ideas that animate them—play a crucially important role in defining the challenges that they face. This is because migration governance is always an organisational process and these organisations do not simply respond to the environment in which they operate, they also actively shape it. As such, migration governance is entirely dependent on the organisational contexts in which decisions are made, and, of course, by whom these decisions are made. All these organisations—of whatever type—must ask themselves, ‘what’s going on out there?’ (how do we make sense of the environment in which we operate?) and, based on this understanding, ‘what should we do next?’. Migration governance as an organisational process always involves addressing these two questions, which means it is necessarily centred on an understanding of the causes and effects of migration in the past, now, and in the future. These understandings, accurate or not, have powerful effects that can be understood as governance effects, which, in turn, have powerful effects on human mobility because they form the basis by which this mobility is organised and categorised by governance systems (Geddes, 2021). This chapter first extends its analysis of governance and draws from empirical examples from Europe. It then extends its analysis to think about migration governance in Africa, before also looking at South America. This

allows us to see how governance processes are based on some underlying conceptualisation of the issues or challenges; how these can spread from one region to another (from Europe to Africa); but also that alternative approaches are possible that involve different ways of thinking about international migration.

## 20.1 The Meaning of Migration Governance

The use of the words ‘migration governance’ has become ubiquitous when any analysis occurs of what various kinds of actors—such as [local governments](#), [national governments](#), [private companies](#), [regional organisations](#), and [international organisations](#)—are doing when they try to manage or regulate migration in its various forms (Geddes, 2021). These actors must try to make sense of the structural factors that can cause international migration. These structural factors are predominantly the effects of economic and political change on international migration in its various forms. A key point is that these underlying structural changes that can cause people to move are highly uncertain in their causes and effects. This helps us also to see that international migration is epiphenomenal; or, put more straightforwardly: it happens because other things change. So, economic inequalities or conflict could lead people to cross international borders. There is, however, significant uncertainty about the effects of these [underlying drivers](#) on actual [migration flows](#), which means that migration governance is also plagued by uncertainty about patterns of migration both now and in the future. Just because a ‘driver’ is present does not mean that migration will happen. In fact, a neglected issue in migration research is immobility. Put simply, the presence of a driver is not a simple trigger mechanism. It is more relevant to ask whether a so-called driver actually leads to migration and then also to ask who moves (male or female? Older or younger people?); where they move to (shorter or longer distance?); and for what duration (temporarily or more permanently?). The result is that “migration governance occurs in the shadow of the past in the face of risk and uncertainty” because there is considerable ambiguity (Geddes, 2021, p. 1).

Governance is generally seen as “a signifier of change”, by which could be meant change in the meaning, processes, conditions, or methods of governing (Levi-Faur, 2012, p. 7). Typically, this is seen as movement away from state-centred modes of governance to less state-centric modes of governing that can be more network-based and more dependent upon “steering” than direct regulation (Levi-Faur, 2012; Pierre, 2000; Betts, 2011; Geddes et al., 2019). Governance is often seen as ‘multi-level’ meaning that it involves actors at local, national and international as well as non-governmental actors and the private sector (Lavenex, 2016). Focusing on this multi-levelness does not mean that the state is written out of the analysis. States remain central to migration governance because it is the borders of states that define international migration as a social and political concern and it is usually local authorities within those states that govern migration and its effects at the level of communities and neighbourhoods.

To capture the centrality of states, Levi-Faur (2012) discusses “[state-centred governance](#)” that, despite changes in the state (such as limits on capacity, interdependence with other states, and an increased role for private actors such as multinational businesses) also recognises their continued centrality. Similarly, Offe (2009) talks about the “resilience” of the state. While states are clearly key actors in migration governance, comparison at regional level of institutional settings can show how state and non-state actors potentially operate across multiple levels of governance. This creates the potential for institutionalised modes of coordination to produce decisions ‘above’ the state that can be both binding and implemented (Scharpf, 1999) or they can also have a more informal character. Governance can thus be formal or informal. It should also be added that there is very significant variation across the world in forms of state and in their power, authority, and capacity to perform governing tasks. It can also make sense for states to work together and cooperate on aspects of migration policy.

This tells us that governance is often understood as being about the changed role of the state, but this still leaves open the question of what is the ‘content’ of governance? To help address this question and apply it to migration governance, we can draw from Pierre (2000) who defined governance as possessing a “[dual meaning](#)”. The first element of this dual meaning is that governance requires some attempt at a conceptual level to understand change in underlying social systems. This means that governance necessarily requires some understanding of what is going on ‘out there’. The second element is that, on the basis of the understandings that develop, governing organisations seek to manage or steer the effects of these changes, as understood.

If we apply this idea then migration governance depends on the conceptual representation of change in underlying economic, political, social, demographic, and environmental systems that can potentially cause or ‘drive’ migration (Black et al., 2011). These factors are complex both in their effects and their interaction (see Chap. 3, this volume), which returns to the point made earlier that migration governance occurs in the shadow of uncertainty and risk. This is not to say that the conceptual representation that emerges is necessarily accurate. In fact, given complexity and uncertainty, it is likely to be partial and even inaccurate. More than this, it would be a mistake to imagine that migration governance is based on some kind of politically neutral appeal to ‘the facts’ and ‘the evidence’. Of course, facts and evidence matter, but they will always be filtered by values and beliefs. More particularly, they will be filtered by the values and beliefs of the more powerful actors in migration governance systems, which tends to be richer, high-income states.

A further consideration is the extent to which analysis of governance is Eurocentric. This is a highly relevant concern because the analysis of governance emerged from a European context where there are particular configurations of state and society and also of relations between public and private actors that might not apply outside of the European and EU context (Draude, 2007). Moreover, it is clearly the case in the international system that the views and policy preferences of more powerful states have tended to prevail to the effect that migration governance

could be seen as an attempt by more powerful states to impose their preferences on less powerful states (Frowd, 2018). Governance could also hide or conceal ideas about migration and migrants that can lead to the racialisation of certain migration flows that are viewed as problematic because of the supposed race or ethnic origin of those that move. This has been evident in Europe's fear of 'invasion' by migrants from Africa and the Middle East and in the actions of the US government towards Mexican migration, particularly the openly racist and nativist approach of the Trump administration (de Haas, 2007; Abramowitz, 2018).

By now it should be clear that [migration governance includes but is broader than migration policies](#). The latter refer to laws, regulations, decisions or other government directive related to the management of migration. Governance encompasses not only these elements, but also the factors related to the organisational contexts in which decisions are made and also within which implementation occurs. To sum up the discussion so far, analyses of governance typically focus on:

- norms, rules, policies, laws institutions that can be binding or non-binding norms and frameworks, at global, national or sub-national levels;
- actors, institutions and institutional mechanisms;
- processes or methods of decision-making and of governing processes from the local to the global.

But added to this is the way in which, to do these things, governing organisations have to make sense of the environment in which they operate and, by making sense of it, they also have effects on it. They do this by deciding what are the issues, challenges or problems that need to be addressed.

## 20.2 Governing Migration

### 20.2.1 *Europe*

We now develop the analysis by exploring actually-existing migration governance. We start with Europe, which is the best example of multi-level migration governance because of the distribution of power and authority across levels from the local to the regional, but also because the term multilevel emerged to describe the European context, particularly in the context of the development of European integration. Distinctive about Europe is the presence of the supranational European Union (EU), that is the world's most developed regional organisation with its own institutions and law-making powers. The EU guarantees free movement for its own citizens and has developed a common migration and asylum policy.

In Europe, as in other parts of the world, migration flows are organised by governance systems in ways that define issues, challenges and problems. Migration policy and politics in Europe has been powerfully shaped by the 'crisis' of 2015 when more than one million people arrived, mainly from Syria (Alpes et al., 2017). Although there is scholarly debate about the meaning and relevance of the term



crisis. There is widespread agreement that the crisis about the numbers was also a wider crisis of politics, institutions, and political leadership (and of solidarity) that predates 2015. With the large influx of arrivals across the Mediterranean, the EU's [free movement regime](#), the Schengen area, also reached a crisis point (Börzel & Risse, 2018). Temporary internal border controls were reinstalled by Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and France, crystallising a loss of trust in external border controls (Ceccorulli, 2019).

While seeming to confirm the need for reform, there were fundamental disagreements between EU Member States about what those reforms should entail. The 'crisis' exposed basic divisions between MS about the scope, purpose and operation of common rules on the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly the so-called Dublin regulation which provided that the first country of entry within the EU would be the country where an asylum application would be made (Guiraudon, 2018; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019). This Dublin system effectively collapsed after 2015 because most asylum seekers arrived in Greece and Italy while other Member States were reluctant to take on responsibility by showing solidarity to the Greek and Italian governments or to the asylum seekers and refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict.

Much of the literature on EU migration governance—either implicitly or explicitly—emphasises the failure of EU [asylum policies](#). This can mean failure to achieving the specified objectives of policy, such as effective [border controls](#) or an effective common system to ensure the sharing of responsibility for asylum seekers. The failure approach "focuses on the inability of states to achieve their stated migration policy objectives" (Boswell & Geddes, 2010: p. 39). The policy failure thesis in migration studies goes beyond the difficulties of securing implementation to also suggest wider deficiencies within the policy process. Researchers suggest that decision-makers may fail to understand the complexities of the issues that they deal with; fail to absorb the relevant research evidence; or subject themselves to "hidden agendas" (Castles, 2004). If failure is taken to mean the inability to achieve the stated objectives of policy, then failure' is actually a fairly standard feature in many policy fields (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1982).

In contrast, a "[securitisation](#)" approach emerged as migration became progressively—from the 1990s and reinforced by the 2001 terrorist attacks—perceived and approached as a security issue. Symbolising this was the commonly used phrase "[fortress Europe](#)". Securitarian rhetoric can mobilise support for exceptional measures to curb migration and justify restrictive policies, given the perceived threats. Since 2015, a securitarian perspective has been reasserted and made evident through the prevailing political priority to prevent 'irregular migration' through tougher border controls and the narratives—particularly from some Member States about migration that misleadingly portray recent migration by boat across the Mediterranean as an uncontrollable invasion (Kazharski, 2018; de Haas, 2007).

A key trend in recent work on migration governance has been insights into the complexity of policymaking of EU migration governance (Bonjour et al., 2018; Trauner & Servant, 2016). This enables work to go beyond the idea of multi-level governance to explore in closer detail the complexities of policy and decision-making. This approach can enable better understanding of the multiplicity of actors

involved in migration governance and the mechanisms of coordination and implementation, of formal and informal networks. EU migration governance can be understood as a complex network with intense interactions between the different Member States and between supranational institutions and various kinds of non-state actors. Researchers have also shown how local actors and sub-national authorities such as cities have become more important (Scholten & van Ostaijen, 2018). This has been further impelled by the effects of the 2015 crisis that led to heightened interest in the organisation, management and effects of reception and integration at sub-national levels. This builds upon existing work on the role of cities, notably concerning integration (Caponio, 2019).

Non-state actors also broadened their action and role during emergencies, or new actors stepped in, either [international organisations](#) or local and national [civil society actors](#): both regarding the reception of asylum seekers, the responses to the humanitarian emergency, the grassroots movements of solidarity towards migrants, and the role of humanitarian organisations in rescues at sea (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016). Actors have implemented different understandings of crisis and have justified their own interests in how to do or not do certain things in the area of migration, asylum, and border controls. While all can then seek to influence migration governance, both locally, nationally and at the EU level, it is clearly the case that some actors—particularly state and EU actors—are more powerful than others.

In terms of modes of governance, the crisis has revealed an increased informalisation of modes of governance (Oelgemöller, 2011; Cassarino, 2007). This means resorting to extra-treaty and extra-EU law instruments, to non-legal instruments outside of the EU framework, as well as to informal arrangements that occur outside of the EU. One example of this is the so-called EU-Turkey statement of 2016 that was an attempt to co-opt the Turkish government into exerting stronger controls on movement from its coast to Greek islands in return for up to €6 billion of financial assistance (Alpes et al., 2017).

To return to the earlier discussion, migration governance in Europe has been driven since the 1990s by concern about the potential for large-scale migration flows. Whether accurate or not, this understanding has informed the development of an approach that has sought stronger border controls—efforts to stop those flows defined as unwanted by state policies such as asylum-seekers and irregular migrants—plus efforts to co-opt surrounding states and regions into EU controls. Migration governance in Europe thus involves a conceptual representation of what's going on 'out there' (fear of large scale flows, whether accurate or not) and then attempts to manage migration based on this understanding.

There is another point that can be made here too. It could be that the study of migration governance is Eurocentric. This means that it [could reflect the interests and ideas of EU Member States](#) and their attempts to impose these on their neighbours to the east and south. Also, governance could be Eurocentric because, as a set of ideas and practices, it reflects European assumptions about the role of the state, about state-society relations, and about the relationship between public and private actors. At the least, we can see that the meaning and effects of migration governance can be very different in other parts of the world.

## 20.2.2 *European and EU Impacts in Africa*

Much existing work on migration relations between Africa and Europe has focused on the potential for migration, particularly from Africa to Europe (Mercandalli et al., 2017; de Haas, 2007; Flahaux & de Haas, 2016). In popular and media representations, this has also been represented as potentially uncontrollable migration, or, as de Haas (2007) put it, a “[myth of invasion](#)”. European and EU perspectives have been powerfully shaped by the idea that there is scope for large-scale migration from African countries towards the EU, which has also led to a focus on containment and, for those that do move, [return](#) (Landau, 2019; Dragsbaek et al., 2019; Collett & Ahad, 2017; Trauner & Deimel, 2013). In the Horn of Africa, the EU and some of its Member States have become critical players in migration governance with significant political effects in the region, including being used to the advantage of authoritarian governments (Koch et al., 2018).

Extending the analysis to migration governance in Africa sees two points emerge about the meaning and practice of governance. One is the role played by power in global migration governance. Since at least the early 2000s, the EU has actively sought to wield its power by [exporting its migration policy preferences and practices](#) to African countries. This has focused in particular on the issue of returning migrants from African countries defined as irregular to their countries of origin. Migration governance could then be seen as something that is imposed on African countries, or, at the very least, contains elements that match closely with the preferences of non-African countries.

Linked to this is a second point which is that an ‘external’ perspective can neglect the realities of migration in Africa and lead to policy responses that do not reflect on-the-ground realities. One reason for this is the powerful legacy of colonialism that is seen in many ways, including through the definition and location of borders. Borders were often colonial impositions that could defy, for example, long-established practices of interaction that were then separated by these imposed borders. Migration management can have powerful effects on traditional cross-border movements including by pastoralists and informal cross-border trade. This illustrates divergences in the conceptualisation of migration governance between African and European countries (Hammond, 2019). With a strong underlying EU impetus, there has been a focus on border restrictions with border towns and crossings increasingly being controlled and secured. This limits and even criminalises the traditional informal crossings that existed long before colonial borders were imposed. The implications of such divergent conceptualisations are far-reaching and can impact the livelihoods of millions of traditional communities in border areas (Ong’ayo, 2018). It also neglects the important role that cross-border movement plays in sustaining peoples’ livelihoods (Naish, 2017; Catley et al., 2013). Informal cross-border movements alleviate the danger of famine by enhancing access by communities in deficit areas to food items from surplus areas. The introduction of migration management—meaning a controlling, restrictive oversight of cross-border movement—has become the norm. The EU has sought controls that

can stifle the smooth flow of trade while increased requirements and empowerment of security officials at border posts means increased vulnerability of informal cross-border traders to harassment and bribes. Limitations on cross-border movement lowers the commercial benefits that communities can reap from collaborations and facilitates illicit trade and movement. Controls can undermine food security and conflict early warning systems, as well as weakening trust in border areas that can also be conflict-prone. Cross-border trade and mobility can also alleviate hunger by enhancing access to food items from surplus areas by communities in deficit areas. The introduction of controls can undermine efforts to build resilience and food security in borderlands in the Horn of Africa. This can be understood as an effect of migration governance that, as we discussed earlier, depends on some underlying conceptualisation of the issue or challenge and then attempts to manage or steer the issue, as defined. In this case, the EU has sought to impose tougher border controls in African countries and to return irregular migrants (Geddes & Maru, 2020).

### ***20.2.3 South American Alternatives?***

South America has since the 2000s been seen as offering a distinctively progressive and liberal counterpoint to prevailing global trends in migration governance. Elected in the early 2000s, left-wing governments across the region committed to a new approach to migration proclaimed a right to migrate and urged the non-criminalisation of migration (Acosta Arcarazo & Freier, 2015; Cantor et al., 2015; Acosta Arcarazo, 2018). This challenges the idea that migration governance must follow the kind of approach developed in Europe with a strong focus on border controls targeted at migrants from Africa and the Middle East. A “liberal tide” of progressive migration laws and policies in South America was a conscious attempt to position the region as separate and distinct from both the United States as the continental hegemon and from regional approaches to migration in the EU that were labelled as harsh and repressive (Acosta Arcarazo & Geddes, 2014). At the regional level, the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) relaunched itself in the early 2000s, including with the MERCOSUR Residence Agreement (MRA) agreed in 2004 and in force since 2009, which has been seen as a regional manifestation of the “liberal tide”. Analysing the distinctiveness of these developments in South America can help to dispel the myth “that worthy innovations are bound to happen in the West and only echo in the rest—or that normative advancement in migration issues drips naturally from North to South” (Pedroza, 2017, p. 141).

## 20.3 Conclusion

This chapter has made three points about migration governance. First, as an “empty signifier”, what matters most about migration governance is the meaning given to it by the ideas and practices associated with regulating and managing international migration. Second, governance cannot be understood as simply an *ex post* response to migration. Instead, migration governance, through the categories and classifications that are developed, plays a very powerful role in shaping the issues and challenges that are faced. Third, migration governance is an organisational process that focuses on two questions that all organisations must necessarily address: “what’s going on ‘out there’?” and, on the basis of an understanding of what’s going on out there, “what should we do next?”. This means that migration governance is powerfully driven by understandings of the causes and effects of migration. These may be more-or-less accurate or more-or-less partial but are always formed in the shadow of considerable uncertainty and shaped not only by facts and evidence but also by values and beliefs. Once established, however, ideas about the challenges and issues to be faced can have considerable effects that can be understood as governance effects. These governance effects were then illustrated by exploring the development of European and EU responses to migration and to the underlying understanding of the challenges that are faced that has led to a focus on borders and security. These have then spilled over to shape migration governance in Africa in ways that might not correspond with on-the-ground realities in African countries. It was also shown that alternatives are possible, as was seen in South America.

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# Chapter 21

## The Governance of Migration-Related Diversity



Thomas Huddleston and Peter Scholten

The governance of migration-related diversity encompasses a broad range of topics, such as [integration policies](#), [anti-discrimination and anti-racism strategies](#), diversity policies, and various others. In this chapter we will limit ourselves to governance by government bodies (local, national, other) and focus explicitly on migration-related diversities (ethnic, cultural, religious, racial, other). We will discuss various theoretical models for the governance of migration-related diversity, but will also discuss empirical material on how and why governments choose very different perspectives and approaches, for instance either focusing on integration, or inclusion, or anti-discrimination, or not having an explicitly focused policy on migration-related diversities at all.

In the field of migration studies, the literature on the governance of migration-related diversities (often framed as integration policies) not only comprises a very significant part of the body of publications, but also a part that has played a major role in the overall development of the field. On the one hand, this has led to a burgeoning of theoretical perspectives that build on insights from various disciplines and that have played a major role in broader public and political debate on migration-related diversities. For instance, concepts like multiculturalism and assimilationism continue to frame our public debates today.

On the other hand, as reflected upon in the previous chapter, this literature has also been criticised from a more critical perspective for its strong policy orientation and entanglement with policy interests, and then in particular with those of nation-states.

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This chapter will enable the reader to gain a general overview of key perspectives on and key concepts used in the study of the governance of migration-related diversity. We will not make a choice between any of the core perspectives, but allow for a better appreciation of the pluralism of perspectives needed to understand the many different facts of diversity governance. We will also bring in some more empirical material, reflecting on how key concepts and perspectives are applied in the practice of governance.

## 21.1 Theoretical Perspectives on the Governance of Migration-Related Diversity

Just as the social processes of migration and migrant incorporation has been theorised from various perspectives, the governance of migration-related diversity has also been theorised from a broad variety of perspectives. Such theoretical perspectives on governance often carry a strong relationship to such theories on migration and for instance ‘integration’ (see the preceding chapter). However, they also reflect broader theoretical concerns such as on the [role of the state](#), on [citizenship](#), on equality, and many other broader perspectives. This is why, echoing broader theoretical debates in political science, political philosophy and sociology, very different perspectives have evolved.

And this is not just theory; also in empirical practice we can witness a strong diversity in perspectives chosen and developed in different settings. For instance, key readings such as Brubaker’s (2009) work on the governance of citizenship in France and Germany shows how choices between different perspectives or ‘models’ are not just theoretical choices. Instead, they are often deeply rooted in specific (in this case national) histories, traditions, and institutions. The perspectives are often ‘implicit’, they are part of everyday discourses about migrants and diversities.

Taking stock of the most widely used theoretical perspectives on the governance of migration-related diversity will enable the reader to recognise and reflect upon the different perspectives and the choices made in different settings. Here one has to be mindful that this involves often pure or idealised theoretical perspectives, or even ‘ideal-type’ models. This means that one is unlikely to find one of the models in its pure form in empirical instances, which will often be more blurry and mixed. However, understanding the different perspectives will enable a better understanding of such empirical instances, however complex.

Understanding the perspectives will also help the reader to understand your own views or disposition concerning the governance of migration-related diversity. It will enable a process of introspection to identify where you stand and how you related to other perspectives, and perhaps also assist critical reflection upon one’s own views.

### ***21.1.1 Differentialism***

A widely used overview of early perspectives was made by Castles and Miller (1993). They distinguish between assimilationism, multiculturalism, and what they define as ‘ethnic segregationism’. The latter perspective has become more widely known in the literature as ‘differentialism’ (Koopmans & Statham, 2000). Following the historic mode of development of these perspectives, it is good to start with differentialism. This perspective involves a societal differentiation (such as social, spatial, political, economic or other) along specific migration-related diversities (such as ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, or other).

There are many examples of differentialism today and in the past. Obvious and rather radical forms of differentialism involve for instance the caste system in India, colour segregation in the US, pillarisation in the Netherlands, or the regime of Apartheid in South Africa. In these cases differentialism serves the preservation of broader political and societal structures and the inequalities that characterised these structures. For instance, in South Africa the differentialist Apartheid regime helped preserve the dominance of the white population, and in India the caste system helps preserve traditional religious structures in society.

There are many more moderate examples of differentialism. For instance, the guest labour regime for labour migrants to various European countries in the second half of the twentieth century can also be considered a form of differentialism. By defining [labour migrants](#) as guest labourers a structure was legitimated that defined them as temporary, pre-empting a discussion on the proper societal incorporation of these migrants. In various cases, this differentialism was also legitimated with reference to return aspirations of migrants themselves.

However, it is important to be aware of more implicit forms of differentialism as well. Institutional racism can be considered an important form of upholding differentialist structures that are often more tacit in spite of being very powerful. For instance, the ethnicisation of the debate on migration-related diversities can inadvertently contribute to a problematisation of ethnic differences and a legitimation of policies that treat ethnic minorities as different or even as problematic. Rath (1991) refers in this regard to the phenomenon of ‘minoritisation’ when policies targeted at specific groups inadvertently contribute to a further problematisation and caricaturing of these groups.

### ***21.1.2 Assimilationism***

Another ‘traditional’ perspective in the literature on governance of migration-related diversity is the assimilationist model. It has traditionally been developed as a uni-directional and transformative model of how a migrant becomes a full and equal member of the host society. Originating from the Chicago school of sociology, assimilation originally emerged as an empirical perspective on how groups gradually

assimilate to their host societies over times (Park & Burgess, 1921; the ‘[race relations cycle](#)’). This also echoes with other studies in this period, such as the famous work by Thomas and Znaniecki (1927) on the assimilation of Polish peasants in the US. In political theory, assimilationism gradually involved in a more normative political perspective on the governance of migration-related diversities. It became a model for how to make sure that migrants would transform into full citizens.

An often made distinction in the literature is between structural and cultural assimilation. Cultural assimilation (sometimes also described as [acculturation](#)) assumes a process of cultural transformation, where the migrant also associates and identifies with the host society’s culture, internalises core societal values and norms and feels part of the host society. [Structural assimilation](#) refers primarily to a process of participation and inclusion into societal structures, such as being able to work, to vote, to go to school, to be protected against discrimination, etc. Often assimilation also assumes a relation between these two; structural assimilation may promote cultural assimilation, as well as the other way around.

A widely cited case study of assimilationism is Brubaker’s work on the French Republicanist approach to migration-related diversity. The French Republicanist approach is based on a strong conception of French nationhood as based on secularism and on the core principles of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. Rather than recognising difference, the aim of the French approach has been to shape migrants into new French citizens.

Contemporary assimilationist thinking provides more nuanced perspectives on assimilation. In particular, assimilationist thinking has become less un-directional and less transformative. For instance, the literature on [segmented assimilationism](#) suggests that migrants can assimilate at different paces in different segments of society. So, high level of structural assimilation into the labour market may very well go together with processes of cultural distancing. For instance, Alba and Nee (1997) argue that assimilation can involve much more than only the crossing of boundaries from one side to another. It may also involve boundary blurring where over time the differentiation between groups becomes less clear, or boundary shifting as over time boundaries shift to include new groups (Alba, 2009).

### ***21.1.3 Multiculturalism***

Besides assimilationism, perhaps the most widely used perspective on the governance of migration and diversity is ‘[multiculturalism](#)’. It is important to be aware that the concept multiculturalism is often used with reference to a broader societal process of accommodating cultural diversity (as also discussed in the preceding chapter). However, it is also used in a more narrow sense as a model of how to govern cultural diversity. As a governance mode, multiculturalism involves the recognition of diversities (such as ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious groups), the development of targeted policies in order to achieve equality, and an active policy to

encourage the broader acceptance of diversity in society and the prevention of racism and discrimination.

Within multiculturalism there are many different traditions. Various multiculturalists have argued that multiculturalism primarily requires adjusting existing political and social structures to be able to accommodate diversities and include new groups and communities (Meer & Modood, 2012). This usually comes with group-specific policies to enable groups and communities to be incorporated and achieve equality within institutions as the labour market, education, political institutions, etc. Other multiculturalists have argued that multiculturalism also requires more structural differentiation in order to achieve equality and accommodate diversity to the full extent. For instance, Kymlicka (1995) and Parekh (2000) have argued in favour of differentiated forms of **multicultural citizenship**, bringing some extent of recognition of group specific rights and group structures. In such models the accommodation of diversity does not only change existing societal structures, but also the establishment of distinct or separate structure for the institutionalisation of differences.

There is a wide variety of applications of multiculturalism at various levels. For various cities, being multiculturalist became a key aspect of city branding; such as London, which clearly defines itself as a multiculturalist place. In practice, multiculturalism often seems to coincide with a strong role of the state that should warrant multiculturalist structures. For instance in Canada and the UK multiculturalism has been an important part of nation-building within diverse nations; it allowed for a conceptual frame for the shaping of one nation in the linguistically and culturally divided Canada.

#### **21.1.4 Universalism**

Koopmans and Statham (2000) add a fourth model besides differentialism, assimilationism and multiculturalism, which they describe as universalism. A core assumption in this model is that generic societal structures and institutions should be able to include various diversities without specifically accommodating these diversities. The neutrality of public institutions is an important premise of universalism. Diverse groups and communities are assumed to find their place by participation in general structures, such as socio-economic participation, political citizenship, etc. Although universalism implies that universal structures (such as the labour market, the welfare state, political institutions, etc.) should be open towards various diversities, universalism rejects the idea of group or culture-specific accommodation.

Although this is not one of the models that has been discussed as widely as the preceding ones, examples of universalism are widespread. For instance, throughout the world, migrants have been encouraged to enhance their position by participating on the labour market, accessing proper housing and achieving education. By far in most cases this has taken place without specific accommodation of diversity or support for migrants. In this sense, universalism not only asks much from

universalist structures that should be sufficiently open, but also from migrants themselves who are required to find their way into universalist structures largely by themselves.

The boundaries between universalism and other models are, however, not always clear. A widespread criticism on universalism is that its colourblind orientation assumes a more assimilationist orientation that takes tacit dominant cultural elements for granted. Another criticism is that accessing universalist structures often requires some form of help for vulnerable or new groups, as offered in a more multiculturalist approach.

### ***21.1.5 Interculturalism***

Besides the abovementioned four modes of governance of migration and diversity, several other models have emerged over the past decades. These models offer different governance perspective, but also often combine and recombine specific elements of the previously mentioned models. That is certainly the case for interculturalism, which has gained attention in migration rapidly over the past decades.

Interculturalism builds on but also distinguishes itself from multiculturalism in various ways (Levrau & Loobuyck, 2018; Meer, 2016; Zapata-Barrero, 2015). A core difference is that while multiculturalism assumes at least some recognition of difference, interculturalism rather focuses on contact and interaction. Rather than focusing on specific groups or communities, interculturalism focus on the creation of opportunities for intercultural interaction. This can involve conditions for interaction as well as the creation of specific spaces for interaction. In the latter sense interculturalism also carries some relation with universalism which assumes that universalist societal structures should at least be open for various diversities.

Migration studies features various debates on multiculturalism versus interculturalism. Besides an academic model, the concept has also become very important in specific policy and political debates. In Canada interculturalism has been positioned already from the 2000s by Bouchard & Taylor (2008) as an alternative to the more traditional Canadian multiculturalist model. In Europe the concept gained attention in the context of a network of cities united by the Council of Europe under the banner Intercultural Cities. Increasingly, interculturalism was thus developed as a policy model as well.

### ***21.1.6 Mainstreaming***

Whereas interculturalism descends from multiculturalism while adding universalist elements, mainstreaming descends from universalism while adding multiculturalist elements. Mainstreaming as a mode of governance of migration and diversity echoes

broader experiences with the mainstreaming of gender, disability, and the environment. Like universalism, it focuses on making migration and diversity part of the mainstream. It assumes that migration and diversity can best be accommodated when incorporated structurally in how generic societal institutions function, such as the welfare state, education, the state itself, etc. Unlike universalism, it assumes that this does require an explicit focus on migration and diversity within these institutions. Rather than a colourblind approach, mainstreaming assumes that awareness of mobilities and diversities should be actively encouraged and incorporated within such generic institutions (Scholten, 2018).

A core aspect of mainstreaming is that migration and diversity should not be set apart as stand-alone topics (Collett & Petrovic, 2014; Scholten, 2018, 2020). This would argue against having only specific minority policies or an integration policy as a policy area distinct from others. However, mainstreaming does require an active policy approach, but then oriented at transforming generic institutions (in a way similar to gender mainstreaming).

In addition, mainstreaming advocates a focus on the whole diverse population rather than on specific groups. Partially, this echoes the view from classical sociological labelling theory that focusing on specific groups risks reifying group differentiations rather than bringing groups together. It also echoes the belief that diversity reveals so much social complexity (not only different groups, but also intersections with class, colour, religion, status, etc.) that a specific focus is also not valid; a belief that has been developed further in the super-diversity literature. Furthermore, focusing on the whole diverse population also includes the non-migrant population as a target group.

There are many examples of mainstreaming in policy practices, such as in the de-institutionalisation of integration policies in many countries in Europe since the 2000s (Collett & Petrovic, 2014). Also, at a city level, many cities have mainstreamed diversity into the generic urban policies. However, there is also much criticism on practices of mainstreaming. One is that in practice often mainstreaming comes down to the deconstruction of specific diversity policies without adding an active strategy towards generic policies. In addition, in practice many proxies can be found that enable the targeting of specific groups without naming them explicitly, such as the use of needs-based proxies or area-based proxies (targeting the neighbourhood where specific groups live rather than the groups themselves).

### ***21.1.7 Integrationism***

Finally, the governance model that is perhaps most difficult to define is integrationism (Penninx, 2019; Saharso, 2019; Favell, 2016). The previous chapter already elaborated the contestation around the concept of integration. This essentially contested nature of integration also has consequences for it as a governance model. The term integration has been used with reference to various of the

abovementioned models. For some it is just another word for assimilationism. For others integration is an overarching term under which various models can be chosen, such as universalism or interculturalism. For others integrationism refers to a distinct mode of governance that should be clearly distinguished from the other modes discussed above.

Building on the conceptual analysis of integration from the preceding chapter, integrationism as a governance model would refer to an approach to promote participation and social interaction in order to have migrants integrate into their host societies. In contrast to assimilationism which assumes a linear and transformative process, integrationism involves a two-sided process where host society institutions also adapt in order to provide opportunities for the integration of migrants. However, in contrast to multiculturalism and interculturalism, the focus is much more on participation and encouraging migrants to integrate into the host society. And in contrast to mainstreaming, integrationism assumes that this can best be achieved by a distinct policy oriented specifically at migrant groups that need help in their integration process.

## 21.2 Dimensions of Diversity Governance

Integration policies are a response both to the perceived needs both of immigrants and the receiving society. The introduction of an integration policy by a new destination country, region or city can act symbolically as a recognition of its changing context and its new identity as a society of immigration. According to the UN's 2019 World Population Policies report, 85 of 195 countries self-reported that their national government had a national policy or strategy to promote immigrant integration or inclusion. Integration policies were reported in nearly all highly-developed countries and the Americas and around two-thirds of low- and medium-developed countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania.

Official government definitions most often describe integration as a 'two-way' process of mutual accommodation or interaction between immigrants and non-immigrants. The general aims of these policies are to improve participation, interaction and attitudes among immigrants and non-immigrants, in order to develop a common sense of belonging and citizenship. Non-discrimination is usually presented as the main way that non-immigrants contribute to this 'two-way' process. These aims are then pursued in various areas of public life, as integration is defined as a multi-dimensional process, where one area affects the other: from employment to education, health to housing, local communities to national politics. Integration policies pursue these aims along three distinct dimensions, according to the [Migrant Integration Policy Index \(MIPEX\)](#), which analysed 58 core indicators in 52 countries. Policies determine the extent to which immigrants and non-immigrants enjoy the same fundamental rights, secure future and equal opportunities.

Official definitions of integration as a 'two-way process' are near-universal but superficial, with the role of the receiving society reduced down to passive



non-discrimination, raising public awareness and the training of government and NGO staff. The effort falls on the migrant and the role and obligations for the receiving society is poorly defined. Only a minority of countries (mostly the inclusive integration policies in traditional and larger destination countries) make the entire society the target group for integration policy. These few countries link their integration policies to broader policies of non-discrimination, equality, social inclusion, or cohesion.

Debate regularly resurfaces around the immigrants who are made the target groups of integration policy. Even the most inclusive countries tend to exclude the [undocumented](#) and [asylum seekers](#) as target groups of their national integration policies and support, apart from the specific areas where all residents regardless of status have the right to participate (i.e. essential/emergency healthcare, education of children, access to justice). In contrast, most countries' integration policies focus only on foreign (i.e. non-naturalised) residents. Newer destinations tend to further restrict their target group to certain categories of newcomers or beneficiaries of international protection. Privileged immigration categories (i.e. highly-skilled migrant workers, EU citizens using EU free movement rights, co-ethnics in Central Asia) are not only [facilitated in terms of their immigration rights](#), but also [exempted and even excluded from integration approaches](#).

### ***21.2.1 Fundamental Rights***

Firstly, the rights framework influences the extent to which immigrants can participate in different areas of public life and, by extension, interact and identify positively with non-immigrants. This framework covers the basic, social, economic and civic rights enshrined in international human rights conventions. These rights may be extended to all legal residents over time, regardless of nationality, such as the rights to access the labour market, education, training and social protection. Whereas more universal human rights may apply to all residents regardless of legal status, such as the rights to non-discrimination, access to justice, health, decent working conditions and education of children. Among immigrant categories, a hierarchy of rights tends to appear across countries, in order from most-to-least socio-economic rights: permanent residents, refugees, highly-skilled workers, other forms of international protection, other temporary residents, forms of humanitarian protection or tolerated stay, asylum-seekers and foreign citizens in an irregular situation.

The presence and strength of anti-discrimination policies is highly relevant to immigrants' rights, but more related to countries' approach to diversity overall and to ethnic and religious minorities. Anti-discrimination laws and policies are not able or intended to eliminate discrimination, but rather, as with other crimes and areas of the law, to secure access to justice for victims and public awareness of the problem. Going beyond vague constitutional provisions, dedicated legislation and specific enforcement procedures must exist in criminal and civil law in conformity with the relevant international standards, such as the International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. These protections must explicitly apply to discrimination not only on the grounds of race, but also ethnicity, religion or belief, nationality/citizenship and multiple grounds. The protections must extend to all areas of life: employment, education and training, social protection, the police and the access to and supply of public goods and services, including housing and healthcare. Comparative studies of strong enforcement mechanisms are available from Europe and beyond. Strong enforcement procedures require:

- Protections against victimisation of the claimant;
- Wide range of evidence (i.e. situation testing or statistical data);
- Shift in the burden of proof (from claimant to accused in *prima facie* discrimination cases);
- Support of legal aid, interpreters and legal entities working in their support or on their behalf, including through class actions or *actio popularis*; and
- Ultimately, use of a range of financial, positive and negative sanctions with dissuasive effect.

**Independent equality bodies** must be able to assist, advise and represent potential victims, also in accordance with the UN ‘Paris Principles’ for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Outside the courts, equality policies can mandate and/or encourage dialogue and information provision, anti-discrimination plans and training, positive actions and equality duties (i.e. for hiring/staffing, procurement and funding), equality impact assessments and equality data collection.

### 21.2.2 *Security of Status*

Secondly, legal status influences the extent to which immigrants can settle long-term, and, by extension, feel the same sense of security and belonging as non-immigrants. Legal status not only determines immigrants’ levels of rights and responsibilities, but also influences their decision-making. Participation, interaction and belonging develop over the long-term, yet immigrants cannot be certain that they will enjoy these benefits or return on their long-term investment. Immigrants’ decisions about their life in their new country are influenced by their (un)certainly and agency over their future.

Questions of legal status begin with access to temporary residence. Regularisations, which exceptionally grant residence or work status to foreign citizens in an irregular situation, often involve *de facto* integration criteria, such as years of residence, work or family ties to attribute legal residence or work status to foreign citizens in an irregular situation. Family migration policies can be considered a **mixed migration-integration tool**: one-third migration (family reunification or formation with family members) and two-thirds integration (the right to family life for the sponsor and the rights and status for the family members). So-called ‘**civic integration**’ requirements, **tests** and criteria raise similar questions of conflicting logics between **promoting integration vs. migration control**.

Immigrants' ability to settle long-term are determined by the path to permanent residence and nationality. Permanent residence should be available as an option or (un)conditional right for most categories of temporary residents, while access to nationality may be restricted to permanent residents. Naturalised citizens enjoy equal rights and full security, except for cases of citizenship loss or withdrawal, while permanent residents should enjoy greater residence security (either unlimited or 5–10 years' permit validity and renewable), protections against expulsion, longer periods of absence abroad and largely equal socio-economic rights.

[Evidence from Europe](#) suggests that a country's ordinary naturalisation policy is the best predictor of its overall approach to integration (Huddleston & Vink, 2015). For countries of immigration, especially for more recent destinations, reforms to nationality laws are given significant weight as either public recognition or politicisation of the changing nature of society. Notwithstanding the heated political debates about the desired role of nationality acquisition as a tool or reward for integration, nationality acquisition is a key indicator of democratic and societal inclusion and the best guarantee of immigrants' citizenship rights and sense of belonging. Although ordinary naturalisation is allowed in all but five countries worldwide, the requirements vary significantly and the procedures are highly discretionary (see Global Citizenship Observatory). The most important requirement for immigrants is the renunciation of their foreign nationality, as access to dual nationality strongly determines most immigrants' interest in acquiring a new nationality.

In contrast, permanent residence may be facilitated as an alternative in countries with restrictive naturalisation policies. The benchmarks underlying the requirements for permanent residence vary significantly across categories and countries. Free movement or permanent migration channels facilitate permanent residence either immediately upon arrival or automatically after 5 years. The most restrictive regimes make permanent residence impossible (i.e. 'permanently temporary' migration), make the requirements as difficult as for naturalisation. (i.e. 'second-class' or [subsidiary](#) citizenship, Carrera (2009)) or make the status insecure and unequal (i.e. denizenship).

### ***21.2.3 Equal Opportunities: Support for Immigrants and Non-immigrants***

Thirdly, support for equal opportunities helps to close gaps and inequalities between immigrants and non-immigrants. State services and institutions address specific obstacles faced by immigrants as a disadvantaged or discriminated group by improving their information, skills or opportunities. Depending on the available social policies and services, this support may be provided through mainstream services, with targeted outreach, staff or monitoring to ensure equal access, or through targeted services available to the specific target group. Targeted support is often

understood narrowly as addressing immigrant-specific issues only: language, recognition of foreign qualifications, discrimination, issues related to specific migration channels. In fact, support may also be provided to non-immigrants, who may lack sufficient intercultural competences, information or opportunities for interaction with immigrants. Support for equal opportunities can be offered in all different areas of public life: support from employers and public employment services, schools and teachers, healthcare providers, cities and political parties and so on.

Support for equal opportunities aims to activate, develop and fully recognise the specific human capital that immigrants and/or non-immigrants need for a diverse society. These three pillars – activating, developing and using skills – were summarised from the labour market integration approach of the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#), the intergovernmental economic think-tank of developed democracies, but these can be applied whatever the area of life:

- *Skills activation* both informs and motivates inactive immigrants, non-immigrants and stakeholders to invest in their human capital, interact with one another and participate more in a specific area of life. Activation measures combine incentives, subsidies and sanctions, campaigns and information provision, and bonding through self-organisation, mentorship and networking.
- *Skill development* address skills mismatches by supplying missing context-specific human capital through various formal, informal or non-formal learning methods for adults and children. The key roles are played by the adult education sector, Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) [pedagogical experts](#), second language teachers and intercultural educators and mediators, especially from diverse backgrounds (a.o. Butschek & Walter, 2014).
- *Skill recognition* aims to avoid ‘brain waste’ by facilitating the rapid use of relevant human capital acquired domestically or abroad. Specific mechanisms and roles are created for assessment, validation, certification, communication or use of these skills within a specific area of life. Concepts developed for [the recognition of foreign qualifications](#) have been applied to various forms of employment and leisure: health, politics, sport, culture, local development, etc. A recurring concept in skill recognition is “bridging” (Putnam, 2007) which increases interaction and belonging among diverse groups by expanding shared experiences, networks and social capital around common interests and activities. Recognition schemes require intermediaries with significant capacity, visibility and networks, such as temporary employment agencies, professional bodies and civil society actors like immigrant-led and neighbourhood associations.

Overall, these target skills investments aim to enhance the contributions of immigration to current and future challenges to social mobility. This support for equal opportunities looks and sounds different in each area of life, with different terms, practices, stakeholders and policymakers involved:

- Labour market integration is largely the domain of the public employment services, adult education sector, social partners (employers and trade unions) and public-private partnerships (see the work of OECD).
- For children, an inclusive, intercultural and multilingual education requires the cooperation of multiple education stakeholders (i.e. government agencies, parents associations, student associations, local NGOs and, especially teachers, also see the work of [stakeholders](#), OECD's PISA and UN's UNESCO).
- Health is a traditionally overlooked area of integration policy. The migrant health agenda has advanced through research and standards for culturally competent healthcare, migrant-friendly healthcare providers, good practices on workforce diversification and intercultural interpreters, and comprehensive intercultural health strategies (see work of the UN World Health Organisation).
- For political integration, one of the most reliable indicators of a country's approach is the [expansion of voting rights beyond citizenship and residence](#) (see global overviews of voting rights, including for foreign residents). But beyond voting rights, immigrant leaders can be supported, while immigrants can be systematically informed (e.g. 'Get Out the Vote' GOTV), [organised](#) and consulted on both integration and mainstream policies. [Evidence from European cities](#) suggests that political participation requires inclusive general and targeted macro-level political opportunity structure and strong meso-level institutions. The key actors are political parties, civil society and governments at local, regional and national level (see the migrant and refugee work of IDEA, the intergovernmental democracy think-tank of developed democracies).

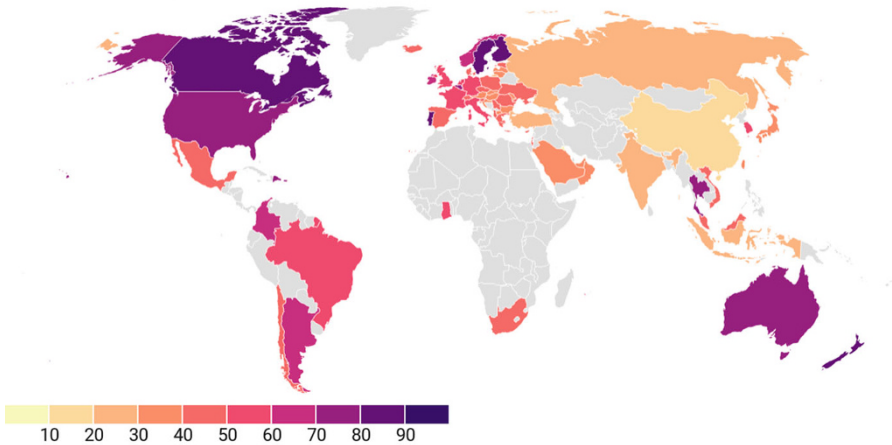
These four examples, with unrelated policy areas, actors and interventions, demonstrate the importance of a mainstreaming and comprehensive approach to secure attention to equal opportunities in all areas of life.

## 21.3 Empirical Trends and Patterns

### 21.3.1 *Overall Variation in National Approaches to Integration*

Internationally, integration policies differ significantly in terms of immigrants' rights, security and opportunities. The trends are most clear from [MIPLEX](#), which has been recognised by the EU and UN as one of the reliable and most comprehensive measures of integration policies in terms of the number of indicators, policy areas and years covered. The MIPLEX data on 52 countries is also comparable to other indexes covering additional countries ([ICRI](#), [IMPIC](#) and [Ruhs, 2018](#)). More national research teams should participate in MIPLEX to include more medium and low-developed countries in Africa and Asia.

## Integration policies in 66 countries



Map: Thomas Huddleston • Source: Author's own complication • Created with Datawrapper

**Fig. 21.1** Integration policies in 66 countries: Authors' own adaptation of MIPEX indicators (NOTE: Author's own adaptation of MIPEX indicators (2014: 52 countries), ICRI (2008: GH, KW, SG, VE, ZA) and Ruhs (2009: AE, CO, DO, HK, MY, OM, SA, TH, TW). MIPEX and ICRI scores are simple average of their common policy dimensions: family reunification, education, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination policies. The Ruhs score reflects the original overall index score)

### 21.3.2 State of Development of Governance of Migration-Related Diversity

A country's approach to integration is strongly related to its level of **economic and human development, democracy**, immigration and politicisation of immigration (Ruhs, 2018).<sup>1</sup> On one end of the scale, integration policies tend to grant equal rights, security, and opportunities in highly developed democracies, particularly countries with larger, longstanding immigrant populations and weaker anti-immigrant parties. On the other end, these policies are weaker in countries with weaker democracies and development, newer and smaller immigrant populations and more xenophobic politics (Fig. 21.1).

Over the past decade, MIPEX observes a slow global improvement but not necessarily convergence in integration policies. Although anti-immigrant pressure has increased on the most inclusive countries (i.e. in some Nordics, Benelux and English-speaking countries), policy reform and development continue in these countries and across all regions. Trends in integration policies are ambivalent and

<sup>1</sup>Interestingly, an often assumed bi-dimensionality between individual civic vs. cultural group rights has not materialised empirically. In other words, granting individual civic rights tend to go hand-in-hand with cultural group rights.

policies are very slow to change over time because of **contextual factors** like historical institutionalism, path dependency and national politics (Koopmans et al., 2012).

The policies of neighbouring countries also matter, as integration policies show significant international divergence but a certain regional convergence. Regional norm diffusion is a countervailing factor influencing changes in countries' integration approach and policies (Shachar et al., 2017). For example, integration policies are improving in similar ways across Europe, both in Western and in Eastern Europe. Similarly, birthright citizenship, **dual nationality**, integration requirements, and **targeted labour market support** are spreading across different regions, despite the absence of supra- or international standards in these areas. Despite this regional normative pressure, no single model or trend can be identified within these regions. There is no traditional destination or new destination model, Asian or Latin American model, Western or Eastern European model, Mediterranean model, or Nordic model. Inclusive countries can be found in all these respective regions: South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Portugal, Sweden, and Finland. Instead, certain patterns can be identified within the same region:

- Basic rights denied in recent destinations in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Mideast
- Lack of attention to equal opportunities in Eastern Europe and Latin America
- Tension between comprehensive vs. temporary integration in Western Europe
- Growing divergences with the politicisation of immigration among traditional destination countries.

While integration is a multidimensional policy where all areas are highly correlated together, the policy is systematically defined by certain international areas of strength and weakness.

### ***21.3.3 Fundamental Rights***

The major areas of strength are basic residence rights and anti-discrimination policies. Migrant workers, reunited families and permanent residents enjoy basic security, rights and protection from discrimination. For example, the 2019 UN World Population Policies report found that universal access, regardless of immigration status, is available in majority of countries for essential/emergency health care, access to justice, and, to some extent, public education, but only a minority of countries for equal working conditions or social security. Basic rights are weaker in recent destination countries and low- and medium-developed countries, particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

These policies improved significantly over the 20 years, partly thanks to supra- and international standards.

Anti-discrimination policies have become a major area of progress for integration policies worldwide. Protection, assistance and training on racism, xenophobia and hate crimes against migrants are provided by two-thirds of countries worldwide, with

weaker provisions in low-to-medium developed countries, particularly in Africa and Asia. Victims are best protected in traditional destination countries, several [Western European countries with longstanding legislation](#) and several Central European countries with EU-accession-related legislation. Gaps appear in nationality discrimination and areas like education and public good and services. However, the major gaps are, on the one hand, the relative newness and public ignorance of this legislation, jurisprudence and support bodies and, on the other hand, the weakness of the existing enforcement mechanisms, equality bodies and policies. Many equality bodies are weak or relatively new, and chronically under-staffed. For example, these bodies are not fully compliant with the UN 'Paris principles'. Equality policies are usually limited to voluntary initiatives, such as action plans and diversity charters, which do not set out obligations or monitoring mechanisms. As a result, limited state commitments and resources for equality bodies and policies mean that most victims are too poorly informed or supported to even report their complaint, which represents the first step in the long path to justice.

Labour market policies are one of the most developed and improving area of a country's integration policy. Policies are most extensive in the Americas and Western Europe and most restricted in recent destination countries. On average across the MIPEX countries, family and long-term residents can immediately access the private labour market, public employment services and training, but not necessarily public sector jobs, recognition procedures for foreign qualifications or [social security and assistance](#). These rights are weakest for [temporary residents and low-to-medium-skilled migrant workers](#).

### ***21.3.4 Security of Status***

Security of status emerges as an obstacle to integration in countries with restrictive integration policies. Recent destinations tend to restrict rights and long-term settlement to highly-skilled and/or co-ethnic immigrants. Whereas developed democracies with sizeable anti-immigrant parties tend to promote basic rights and opportunities, but restrict family reunification, permanent residence and citizenship.

Rarely reformed in law or practice, the path to permanent residence is a normal part of the integration process in only the most inclusive countries in the Americas, Nordic countries and several European countries. In most MIPEX countries, the majority of temporary residents can apply after 5 years to become permanent residents with equal socio-economic rights, but only after proving that they are economically self-sufficient. Half of MIPEX countries also impose a language requirement. In traditional destination countries, temporary residents can apply earlier, but without the right to permanent residence. In contrast, countries in the Mideast and Asia place significantly restrictions on immigrants' long-term rights, particularly for low- and medium-skilled ['temporary' worker programmes](#).

Access to nationality is a major area of divergence. Policies are facilitated in traditional destination countries, Western Europe and the Americas, uneven in



Africa and East Asia and restricted in Eastern and Southeast Europe, the Mideast and Asia. Birthright citizenship for the native-born children of immigrants is fully available in the Americas, restricted in Western Europe and unavailable in most countries in Africa, Mideast and Asia (see GLOBALCIT's Global Birthright Indicators). Even though countries are extending birthright citizenship and dual nationality, the politicisation of immigration regularly affects ordinary naturalisation requirements like language, integration and economic resource requirements. Dual nationality is now accepted for immigrants in two-thirds of countries worldwide (see [MACIMIDE Global Expatriate Dual Citizenship Dataset](#)). GLOBALCIT's Modes of Acquisition database demonstrates the wide variation in ordinary naturalisation requirements differ significantly across countries, even within the same regions. The residence requirement ranges from  $\leq 5$  years in half the world's countries to 10+ in one-third. Proof of income or employment is also required in half the countries. Although language requirements are widespread and integration requirements exist in half the MIPEX countries, most do not provide sufficient free courses and support for immigrants to obtain the levels required for naturalisation.

### 21.3.5 *Equal Opportunities*

Support for equal opportunities is the major international area of weakness in integration policies, especially in the areas of education and political participation. The greatest obstacles arise for mainstream services to guarantee equal access and opportunities and for foreign citizens to become politically active. Interestingly, these areas of weakness have started to improve over the past 5 years, even despite the absence of international standards in these areas.

In terms of education, most schools and teachers receive little targeted support to address the needs of immigrant pupils, multilingualism, social integration or intercultural education.

Language learning and multilingualism are more often addressed than issues of school segregation, teacher diversity or mainstreaming intercultural education throughout school. Support is critically weak in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. Education systems are one of the most conservative and difficult areas of integration policy. Among best practices, Nordic countries focus on inclusive education, with an individualised, needs-based approach for pupils with and without an immigrant background. The US focuses on the needs of racial minority and second-language students. Australia, Canada and New Zealand target both needs and opportunities through multiculturalism policies. Targeted support does expand with growing numbers of immigrant pupils, but reforms are slow and effective solutions are plagued by problems of scale and implementation gaps.

A country's [political participation](#) policies are generally a function of the health of their democracy and the sign of a confident destination country. In most countries, immigrants have few opportunities to inform and improve the policies that affect them daily. As of 2019, some form of voting rights to foreign residents has been

extended by 94 of 195 countries (48%), of whom half have sizeable foreign populations. Immigrant voting fits within different [voting rights regimes](#) and a long forgotten history in the US and British Commonwealth. Today, immigrant voting rights tend to be limited to the local right to vote (not the right to stand as a candidate). Four countries extend the national right to vote to foreign residents: Chile, Malawi, New Zealand and Uruguay. Voting rights are generally secure but hard to obtain, with [ongoing debates for decades](#). Beyond voting rights, most immigrants are not regularly informed, consulted or involved in local civil society and public life. Consultative bodies available in a dozen countries may be too weak, government-led and too poorly funded to engage immigrants, while information and funding for immigrant political participation is usually ad hoc and highly dependent on government interests.

Limited support for equal opportunities exists across all areas of integration policy. For instance, targeted support is the main weakness within labour market integration policies, mostly limited to traditional destination countries and Western Europe. Rarely are general services able to address the specific needs of the foreign-trained, very low-educated, or migrant women and youth. For example, few countries take a needs-based, individualised approach to language learning by opening courses to all residents with limited language proficiency, developing specific tracks based on language ability or orienting these courses towards practical activities, most importantly employment. More broadly, less than a dozen countries facilitate qualification recognition and bridging, target skill development beyond generic language courses, or activate skills through mentoring, employer incentives or entrepreneurship. As a result, relatively few immigrants access effective ALMPs or apply for qualification recognition.

## 21.4 Policy Gaps

Most scientific and applied studies of the governance of migration-related diversity focus on the gaps between integration discourses, policies and processes. Due to the often normative and politicised around immigration, researchers need a ‘good governance’ framework that challenges our assumptions about the effectiveness of immigration policies and the supposed ‘successes’ or ‘failures’ of policies and approaches. Integration outcomes are not necessarily the ‘outcomes’ of models or policies, as these approaches may not actually affect integration processes, at least not in the ways expected by policymakers or theorised by scholars. Similarly, this relatively new governance area needs to set ‘reasonable expectations’ for what policies can and do achieve, both for immigrant target groups and for the wider public.

Czaika and de Haas’ (2013) conceptual framework (see below) can be applied to studies of three types of gaps between integration debates and integration outcomes. Their “discursive gap” investigates potential discrepancies between public discourses or “integration models” and the actual policies on paper. Their

“implementation gap” investigates potential disparities between policies on paper and their implementation. Their “efficacy gap” measures the extent to which integration processes are affected by implemented policies compared to the major well-known micro-, meso- and macro-level drivers of integration. Evaluation of each of these gaps requires specific types of data, evidence and methodologies, which traditionally have been missing in the study of immigration (Fig. 21.2).

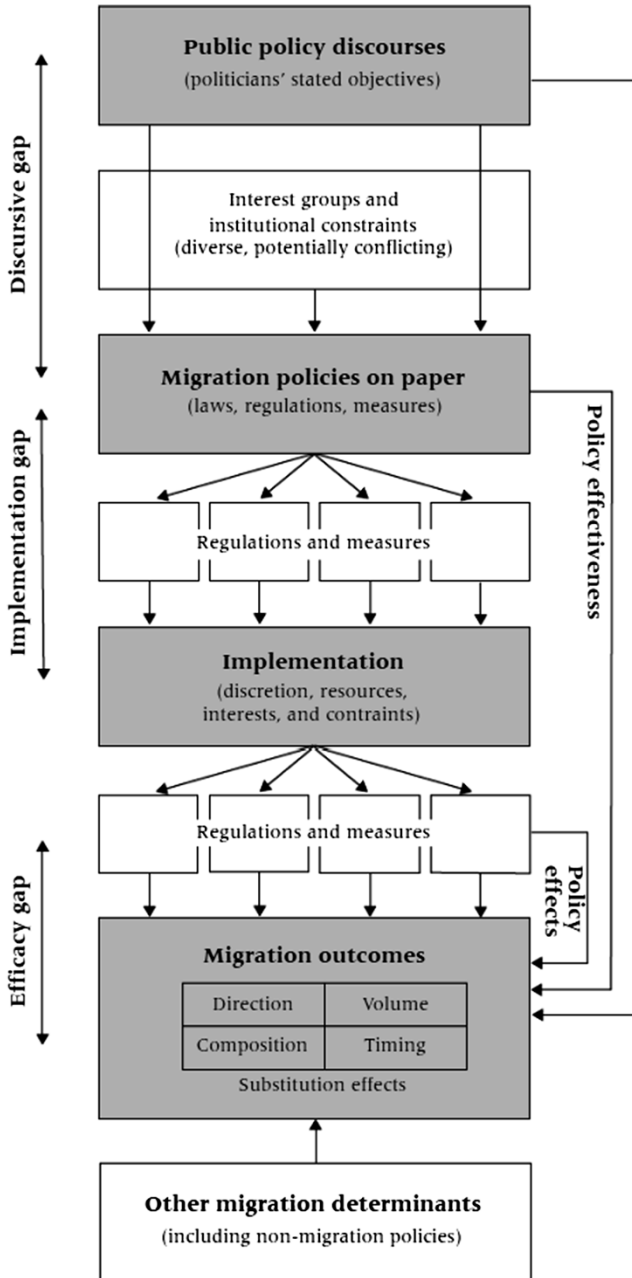
### 21.4.1 *The Discursive Gap*

One of the gaps identified in many studies is the discrepancy between policy discourses and policy practices. Discourses refer to narratives or stories that actors (policymakers as well as others) use to make sense of a problem situation and frame how a policy measure or program would address the problem situation. Amongst others due to their complex and contested nature, discourses on migration-related diversities tend to be sharply articulated in connected to broader societal beliefs, values and norms. One concrete example is the prevalence of sharply articulated ‘national models’ regarding migration-related diversities. Bertossi (2011) refers in this regard to nationally and historically embedded ways of talking about and coping with issues of migration and diversity. However, as many studies show, such national model discourses often deny the much more complex nature of actual policy practices.

Examples of such national models are widespread. For instance, the Australian model is often described in terms of being a multiculturalist settlement nation, the French model as a Republicanist country with a colourblind approach to the assimilation of newcomers, the Canadian model as a multiculturalist country, the US model as an economic approach that grants an American dream to all those who work hard, etc. Although these models can change and evolve over time, they tend to be rooted in broader beliefs about the nation-state that are often very path-dependent and resistant to change.

Policy discourses such as these national models are often reproduced in how politicians, policymakers and scholars talk about migration and diversity. In this sense they are not only used to make sense of specific situations but also to shape these situations. In accordance with the famous Thomas-theorema, discourses can become real in their consequences. For instance, public discourses that consistently refer to migrants as ‘the other’ may also contribute to the ‘othering’ of migrants. When migrants are consistently approached as foreigners or as in Germany ‘auslander’, they may also start to feel like foreigners and are more likely to be treated as such as well.

However, research reports a widespread discrepancy between such discourses and actual policies on migration and migration-related diversities. On the one hand, this seems due to the simplifying logic of such discourses, which does not do justice to the complexity and diversity of actual policy practices. Various studies that refer to the so-called ‘local turn’ argue that local policies on migration and diversity



**Fig. 21.2** Conceptual framework of migration policy effects and effectiveness (Czaika & De Haas, 2013)

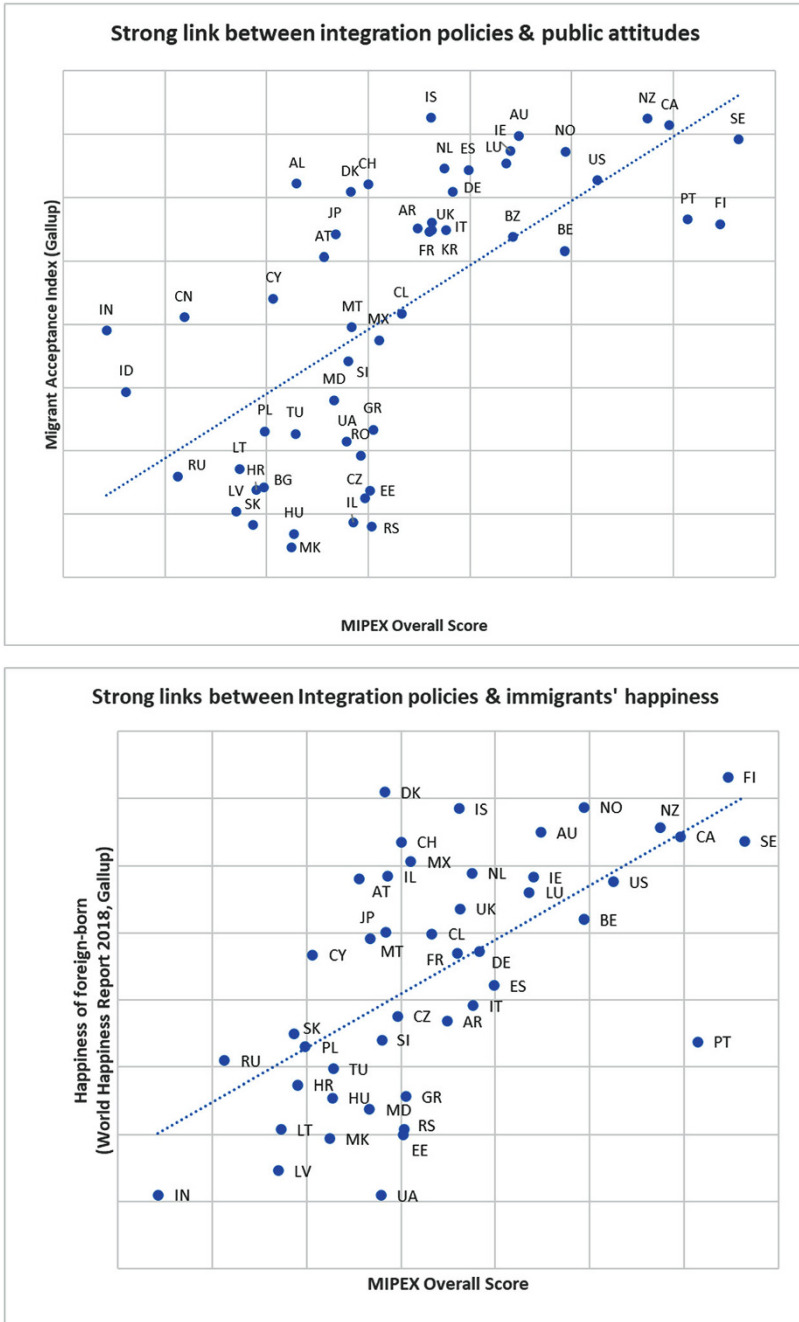
exhibit much more variation than assumed by national models (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). For instance, even within a rather centralised policy regime as France, studies have revealed sharp differences between national and local policies in France, such as between the colourblind republicanist philosophy of national government and the more pragmatic approach of the local policies of the ‘politique de la ville’ (Amiriaux & Simon, 2006; Scholten, 2016).

On the other hand, studies also relate the discrepancy to policy factors that inhibit the implementation of policy discourses such as national models of integration. The so-called client politics thesis argues that actors involved in policy practices may have interests that are not in line with policy discourses. There may be actors who have interests that conflict with national policies on integration or migration, and will not cooperate in a policy’s implementation. For instance, in countries with restrictive migration regimes, businesses may have interests in maintaining immigration to secure the supply of cheap labour. Besides interests, institutional constraints may establish path-dependent logics that are difficult to change by government policies.

### 21.4.2 *The Efficacy Gap*

As data sources improve, a substantial national and international literature is emerging on the links between integration policies and outcomes. While data gaps and methodological questions persist, the most studied areas of integration offer clear trends and lessons learned about the effectiveness of specific integration policies. This initial exploratory phase in integration policy evaluation is identifying what are the various intended and unintended outcomes of policy. These systematic studies allow for the measurement and interpretation of potential efficacy gaps, with contributions from diverse academic disciplines and practitioners. The findings from these studies are also providing more reasonable expectations for what integration policies can and cannot achieve. To explore the potential links and gaps between integration policies and outcomes, this chapter summarises the key findings from an international literature review of 130 multivariate analyses linking MIPEX to outcomes across dozens of mostly European countries.

A country’s approach to integration, as measured by MIPEX, may not only increase positive attitudes and interactions between the public and immigrants, but also create a more common sense of belonging, well-being and citizenship (Ariely, 2017; Hadjar & Backes, 2013). Dozens of studies confirm that integration policies are one of the strongest factors behind the public’s willingness to accept and interact with immigrants. This dynamic is illustrated by the global correlation between MIPEX and Gallup’s Migrant Acceptance Index. Second, a country’s approach to integration shapes how well immigrants think and feel about their new home country. Policies can improve immigrants’ (self)perceptions and close gaps in terms of immigrants’ **identity**, their health, their **satisfaction with life**, their **trust in society** and politics and their political participation in conventional and unconventional ways (Fig. 21.3).



In terms of the impact of fundamental rights, the slow expansion of anti-discrimination policies could have a long-term impact on reshaping public attitudes, awareness, trust and reporting on discrimination. While discrimination occurs in all societies, people in European countries with strong anti-discrimination policies are more likely to know their rights and see discrimination as a problem (Ziller, 2014). The fact that, in most immigrants and non-immigrants in inclusive countries perceive widespread racism is a sign that these policies are working to raise public awareness and expectations for justice. Under strong policies, immigrants also tend to develop greater trust in the police and legal system and a shared sense of [trust in society](#) and the country's democratic system. Over time, people well-informed of their rights are more likely to report discrimination and less likely to identify as a discriminated minority. Anti-discrimination policies could be linked to other integration outcomes, but better targeted research is needed.

Immigrants' security of status is predominantly determined by integration policies. Access to nationality is one of the best studied areas of integration policy. Naturalisation rates for first generation immigrants from developing countries are strongly influenced by the policies in place, especially on [dual nationality](#), birthright citizenship and the [legal and procedural requirements](#). Inclusive naturalisation policies can also boost the '[citizenship premium](#)' that improves some immigrants' public acceptance, [socio-economic status](#), political participation, [sense of belonging](#) and trust. More research is needed to measure how family reunification and permanent residence policies affect immigrants' security of status and other integration outcomes.

The impact of support for equal opportunities is harder to measure accurately. Although employment rates are the most used indicator of integration and measure of policy success or failure, whether or not immigrants find jobs actually depends most on their skills, immigration channel and the economic and social conditions at the time. Instead, targeted policies in this area raise the standards for labour market integration to address more long- than short-term challenges. These policies aim to secure a fairer labour market for everyone by securing equitable quality employment that improves immigrants' wider integration in society. Under these policies, immigrant men and women, over time, are able to develop context-specific professional and language skills demanded by non-immigrants. They can then use these skills to respond to new opportunities, secure [better quality jobs similar to non-immigrants](#) and gain [greater acceptance from non-immigrants](#). Further evidence from robust impact evaluations, meta-analyses and [international experts](#) suggest that immigrants are less likely to access but more likely to benefit from ALMPs providing early work experience (e.g. subsidised private sector for recent unemployed or arrivals), a domestic post-secondary degree, sector-specific and on-the-job language and vocational training, intensive individualised coaching and small business start-up funds. Given that most studies focus on short-term employment rather than skill development and use, their findings sometimes encounter problems of 'reverse causality', whereby more extensive support seem to lead to worse employment outcomes. Instead, countries may be responding to poorer employment rates by investing in

greater support, which delays labour market participation but may lead to better long-term careers.

Similar findings can be cited from the few studies on migrant education. Policies may not impact all educational outcomes for all children, but lead instead to long-term progress and belonging. Well-developed targeted policies can not only help [academically](#), for vulnerable groups, leading to [higher education](#) from one generation to the next. These policies may also help immigrant pupils develop a similar sense of pride, safety and belonging at school as their non-immigrant peers.

While these studies reveal efficacy gaps and links between policies and the intended and unintended outcomes for their target groups, integration and immigration policies do not appear to be the main factors influencing integration outcomes. The limited effects of policies improve – but do not fully determine – the outcomes of the entire 1st and 2nd generation and non-immigrant population. Instead, outcomes are mostly shaped by individual, group/community and destination/origin country contextual factors at micro-, meso- and macro-level respectively. For example, the main factors behind employment, education and political participation, for both immigrants and non-immigrants, are their levels of human capital, previous experiences and current opportunities (i.e. inclusiveness of the labour market, [education system](#), and [political opportunity structure](#)).

What therefore should we conclude from the growing literature on policy efficacy and the main drivers of integration? Do these findings provide reasonable expectations of what can be accomplished under well-developed inclusive policies? Comparing the countries with the most vs. the least inclusive policies on MIPEX, the difference between the two are significant: 30% vs. 3% for [immigrant discrimination reporting](#), 73% vs. 28% for [naturalisation uptake](#), 90% vs. 50% for voter turnout, 90% vs. 24% for [language fluency](#) and 20% vs. >60% for [anti-immigrant public sentiment](#). For the least inclusive countries, these studies help to quantify the impacts of weak integration policies and show the potential for improvement in outcomes. But for those most inclusive countries, is it sufficient and acceptable that two-thirds of immigrant victims do not report discrimination, a quarter do not naturalise, one in ten do not vote or master the language, while one in five non-immigrants are xenophobic? Do these efficacy gaps simply represent the ‘new normal’ of being a diverse country of immigration? Inclusive policies have not ‘failed’ and such a public narrative associating integration with problems may serve to feed anti-immigrant forces pushing restrictive policies. Rather, the real nagging question for policy actors and researchers alike is: what else can be done? These results can serve as the grounds for a more radical reimagining of what the governance of migration-related diversity can be, with new policy ideas and innovations. Alternatively, these findings often lead to discussions focused on what are the problems and solutions for more effective implementation of the current policy framework.



### 21.4.3 *The Implementation Gap*

Countries may have a national integration policy, but these policies are usually relatively new, time-limited and not comprehensive or locally-embedded. Fleischmann and Dronkers (2007) and Czaika and de Haas (2013) hypothesise that national policies may be poorly implemented in practice, inconsistent with their stated aims and incompatible with the reality of immigrant groups. Currently, most implementation studies of integration policies are descriptive, single-country studies in applied – rather than scientific – studies. The relatively [new and limited development of integration policies and resources](#) (Bilgili, 2015) may mean that policies are too new, too small-scale, or too generic to reach beneficiaries and affect aggregate outcomes at national or even local level.

Migration studies have only recently started to measure implementation. The [MIPEX indicators](#) and studies of [integration mainstreaming](#) and [refugee integration](#) draw attention to mechanisms for multi-stakeholder coordination and resource distribution. The study of naturalisation procedures (Huddleston, 2016) has identified five dimensions of implementation that may affect uptake among eligible immigrants: (1) Lack of information and promotion; (2) Complicated documentation; (3) Significant discretion for authorities; (4) Delays and difficulties due to bureaucratic decision-making; and (5) Weak judicial oversight of implementation. Implementation studies, combining quantitative measurements and qualitative process tracing, should be replicated across the various areas of discretionary decision-making and practice in the highly procedural fields of immigration and integration. Implementation measures could significantly influence immigrants' interests and ability to succeed in residence procedures, language and integration courses, discrimination cases and access to services like ALMPs and recognition procedures for foreign qualifications.

This nascent field of study points to systemic flaws in how countries answer the basic questions of what measures should be implemented when, how and by whom.

*What measures* are prioritised depends on more political cost-benefit analyses (Benton & Diegert, 2018) that prioritise [low-cost, immediate and visible gains](#). This approach to project-based funding and discrete services can lead to a lack of evidence-based investment in the most effective measures, where the upfront financial and operational costs are high and the benefits are often not immediate. As a result, relatively few immigrants in developed democracies benefit from these most effective ALMPs, such as vocation-specific or on-the-job language trainings, because these are often either absent or a small part of integration policies and courses on offer. This imbalance of demand and supply can lead to long waiting lists, backlogs and bureaucratic obstacles.

*When measures* are implemented can exclude large numbers of immigrants in need. A lack of [early intervention](#) (facilitating integration from day one for newcomers and from a young age for children and young adults) may limit both the uptake and effectiveness of available support. [Inappropriate targeting](#) can lead too inclusive or too restrictive target groups, often based on legal categories than on

assessments of needs. For example, asylum-seekers and the undocumented must wait to receive a secure legal status and access to integration support. Naturalised citizens and privileged immigrants like EU citizens may be excluded from support, despite their demonstrated needs.

*How measures* are implemented are shaped by ongoing decisions about inclusion and individualisation that affect the ultimate quality of the intervention. Concerns about mainstream services' accessibility and visibility for potential immigrant beneficiaries led to innovative service-delivery models, such as 'one-stop-shops', voluntary/citizens' initiatives and free digital learning and MOOCs. The wider literature on the delivery of public services by non-profit and for-profit providers raises alarms about implementation obstacles facing immigrants. **Creaming** might explain why the foreign-born are under-represented among beneficiaries of the most effective ALMPs. Service-providers are biased towards selecting the 'easy cases' (e.g. most employable candidates) and tend to side-line those most in need of the support, such as **foreign citizens** or specific vulnerable immigrant groups. Creaming occurs through informal and potentially discriminating selection mechanisms whether explicitly, through eligibility criteria or staff protocols, or implicitly, for example through the use of artificial intelligence. Similarly, pedagogical experts deplore the misuse of standardised tests and tools, like the CEFR for languages, as tools for selection and control, rather than as intended as diagnostic tools for needs assessments and service design (see European Languages Portfolio and EU Skills Profile). **'Lock-in' effects** mean that skill development or activation programmes are designed in ways that delay and discourage participants from exiting the programme and actually applying and using their skills. For example, participants may be required to pass a certain language test before accessing a vocational training or internship. More flexible tracking in programmes for adults should be individualised to participants' specific needs and previous education, skills and language portfolio.

Lastly, *who implements* these services generates critique of **'migration industries'**, from both a good governance and social justice perspective. Intercultural competence in service-provision is still relatively young and niche concept, outside of traditional destination countries. Integration services depend on countries' adult education and lifelong learning sectors, which differ significantly in size and strengths country-by-country. In most countries, service-providers with experience serving immigrants are growing. Most are humanitarian and religious NGOs in developed countries or INGOs in developing countries. Still, these service-providers are often limited in number and profile, under-recognised as a sector (i.e. organisation and certification of second-language teaching, diversity training, intercultural mediation, etc.) and under-valued in both financial and social terms.

Case studies also highlight the lack of diversity among not only policymakers and the **public sector**, but also the staff and leadership of non-profit service-providers and advocates.

The presence of non-immigrants is useful, particularly to expand community-based services and interaction, with volunteers, mentors and bridge-builders. The critique of non-immigrant organisations' staffing and privileged relationships with government argues that their approach is more government/donor dependent and

more humanitarian than empowerment-driven. The lack of diversity is indicative an endemic lack of direct accountability to immigrants, exemplified by the limited involvement of immigrant beneficiaries and communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and services. The [size and strength of immigrant-led organisations](#) are extremely important for reaching immigrants, particularly in countries with weak integration policies. Yet immigrant-led organisations in most countries are underfunded without self-funding strategies, understaffed without a volunteering base, co-opted as marginal partners in services and largely ignored by policymakers, donors and non-immigrant civil society.

## 21.5 Critical Approaches to Diversity Governance

### 21.5.1 *From Integration to Inequality Data and Reducing Inequalities*

Immigrant integration both requires and contributes to non-discrimination and equality for all, yet these links are often missing in research, policy and civil society. Building on calls for mainstreaming integration, the governance of migration-related diversity could shift from a separate policy ‘silo’ focused on immigrants only to become one – potentially leading – constituent of a broader agenda fighting discrimination and inequality. For example, in Europe, data collection on immigrants and ethnic minorities is far ahead of equality data collection and equality policies on many other protected grounds. Migration-related diversity is increasingly well captured, regulated and addressed in policymaking, as extensively as other major grounds like age and disability. Religion/belief, race, sexual orientation and gender identity lag behind. Gender mainstreaming remains the most extensive policy area. As a result, equality data and policies are weak and little used in practice.

Instead of a group-based approach with separate and uneven data and policies for each, a more intersectional approach could emerge from a common set of equality policies, duties and data that address people in all their diversity. For instance, an intersectional approach would fully represent and include immigrants as women, elderly, youth, people of colour, people of faith, ethnic minorities, LGBTI, people with disabilities and so on. With greater policy coordination, civil society coalitions and harmonised data, immigrants and other discriminated groups could better identify, compare, and work together on the specific and common obstacles they face in all key areas of public life: employment, education, health, housing, poverty and political participation and access to justice. This equality approach is still rare internationally, but emerging in a few developed democracies (e.g. among Nordic and English-speaking countries).

Going beyond equality for discriminated groups, the governance of migration-related diversity should explore the complex links between immigrant integration and socio-economic (in)equality. While countries’ level of human development

**Table 21.1** Typology of integration policies and inequalities

		Integration policy (MIPEX)	
		Weak	Inclusive
Inequality (GINI)	High	Asia, Mideast & Eastern Europe	Traditional destination countries, Americas & Western Mediterranean
	Low	Central & Southeast Europe	Northwest Europe

(measured as HDI or GDP) is strongly related to their integration policies, attitudes and outcomes, countries' level of inequality (measured as the GINI coefficient) seem to be a distinct, significant and overlooked factor confounding integration outcomes. A typology of integration policies and inequalities reveals four regional patterns (Table 21.1).

Emerging global studies suggest that higher development and equality are, more often than not, associated with pro-immigrant attitudes and [immigrant life satisfaction](#). Looking deeper, countries' level of inequality affects integration outcomes in different ways than their level of human development or integration policies. Immigrants in more equitable labour markets are more likely to be [inactive](#), but, when working, in [jobs that are different from non-immigrants and at or even below their skill level](#). Immigrants in more unequal labour markets seem more likely to be active and working in jobs similar to non-immigrants, but also more likely than non-immigrants to be over-qualified for their job. [Highly educated immigrants](#) also seem more satisfied with their life in more unequal than in equal societies. Similarly in the field of [child education](#), the gaps between immigrant and non-immigrant pupils are lower in more unequal than in equal developed countries, although these gaps can emerge in education systems with high socio-economic school segregation and limited redistribution of resources. Moreover, the overall level of education is generally lower in more unequal countries, while [school truancy](#) and [child poverty](#) are higher.

So where is integration best achieved? The societies where immigrants and non-immigrants participate more equally for poorer quality employment and education? Or the societies where immigrants are comparatively disadvantaged to non-immigrants to access higher quality employment and education? The conventional view of integration-as-gaps would choose the unequal countries, where the bar is lower for equal outcomes, over the equal countries, where integration is harder. This corresponds to the 'de Tocqueville paradox' whereby more equal societies are judged (and judge themselves) more harshly for inequalities than unequal societies. Indeed, ethnic minorities in Europe have less social trust in [countries with greater institutional fairness](#), unless strong anti-discrimination policies are implemented. This paradox indicates how policy priorities should differ for migration-related diversity in more equal vs. unequal societies. More equal countries may focus more on implementing integration policies and closing gaps, while more unequal countries with inclusive integration policies may focus on reform of social, educational and labour market policies to reduce socio-economic inequalities for all.

### ***21.5.2 In Favour of Complexity Governance***

Another critical perspective on the governance of migration-related diversity has emerged from complexity theory. Complexity theory stems from a broader development in the social sciences towards the recognition of the uncertainties and fragmentation that come with an increase of social complexity and a recognition of the limitations of traditional policy perspectives based on the belief that governments can predict and control problem situations (Byrne, 1998).

On the one hand, complexity theory has had a significant impact on the understanding of migration and diversity. This is manifest for instance in studies of complex intersectionalities of various forms of diversity (origin, gender, race, religion, class, status, etc.), in the work on social complexity and super-diversity, and in the work on ‘liquid’ mobilities that often defy traditional demarcations of labour, family and humanitarian migration (Vertovec, 2007; Engbersen, 2012). This has challenged various conventional ways of thinking about migration and diversity. The traditional focus on specific groups, such as ethnic groups or cultural or racial minorities, has been challenged as a reduction of the complexity of diversities. Complexity theory has also helped expose and deconstruct the traditional linear image of migration as migrants leaving one place to move to and settle permanently in a new host society.

On the other hand, there has been very little recognition of complexity in the governance of migration-related diversities (Scholten, 2018, 2020). Complexity governance literature offers a perspective on governance that is networked, responsive and evidence-based. The governance of migration-related diversity is often not networked but characterised by a strong belief in state-centric steering. For instance, the belief in integration comes with a strong belief in the role that state policies can play in facilitating or even enforcing such integration with coordinated policies, often at the level of the nation-state (national models of integration). Migration regulation and integration promotion would be primarily national prerogatives. A more networked approach calls for a more modest perception of the role that states and policies can play; integration is largely an autonomous social process. It also calls for more appreciation of the interaction with other societal stakeholders, such as businesses, schools, NGOs and a broad variety of other organisations.

Also, the governance of migration-related diversity is often not responsive but driven by a strong urge to find ‘quick fixes’ for problems. Being responsive means that policies constantly adapt to new needs and issues that arise in the context of migration-related diversity. This, however, seems to conflict with a strong urge towards quick fixes and problem resolution in actual policy practices. This appears one of the causes for the frequent discarding of migration and integration policies as ‘failures’, as happened in Europe in the early 2000s when multiculturalist policies were discarded a failure.

## 21.6 Conclusions

This chapter has provided a broad overview of key issues in the literature on the governance of migration-related diversities. It has provided an effort to open-up the black box of this concept and appreciate the variety of core models, concepts, and theories. This has revealed a variety of governance models associated with the governance of migration-related diversity, from assimilationism and differentialism to interculturalism. It has also revealed a broad variety of dimensions covered, from economic dimensions of participation to cultural dimensions of equality and anti-discrimination. Finally, the chapter has also offered a critical perspective on the governance of migration and diversity, exposing a variety of policy gaps (discursive gap, implementation gap, efficacy gap) as well as discussing two more recent critical perspectives on how to take the discussion on the governance of migration-related diversities forward.

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## Chapter 22

# Citizenship & Migration



Jelena Džankić and Maarten Vink

Historically, citizenship has been a gatekeeper to political and social rights within communities, as entitlements of membership were closely connected to gender, race, and class. Nowadays, citizenship is a *symbol of equality within states* as much as a *marker of inequality among states*. It is (1) a defining feature of the international state system, which both reflects and reinforces inequalities of wealth and opportunity around the world, and (2) a tool for social closure, through which states determine who belongs to the group that can share common entitlements and who, by contrast, are excluded from them. These two characteristics of citizenship are central to understanding the citizenship-migration nexus: whereas the promise of equality represents a strong driver for migrants to acquire citizenship in their destination states, the different opportunities attached to citizenship of different countries encourage *migration* of individuals from less privileged parts of the world and enable *mobility* for those with a citizenship status in the more advantageous countries.

This chapter aims to unpack the linkages between citizenship and migration by exploring the various ways in which citizenship status is crucial to migration opportunities, as well as how, in turn, the acquisition and loss of citizenship have been affected by modern migratory flows. After clarifying the key concept of citizenship and reviewing relevant theories, we highlight conflicting trends that have contributed to both the devaluation and the revaluation of citizenship, including (a) the resilience of national sovereignty in the context of regional and international norms; (b) the tension between the preservation of cultural identities of states and economic benefits of migration; and (c) the diversification of migration and dual citizenship acceptance. We then introduce some key studies and end with pointers for further study.

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## 22.1 Concepts and Theories

### 22.1.1 *What Is Citizenship?*

Citizenship is a central concept in the practice and study of politics, ever since the times when Aristotle spoke of self-rule as the key element of participating in democratic governance and thus of “being a citizen” (Morrison, 1999). Yet as a result of a plethora of different views on what “being a citizen” precisely is (and what it is not), citizenship is often viewed as one of those “essentially contested concepts” (Cohen & Ghosh, 2019). For some, citizenship is simply a legal status that comes together with a set of rights; for others, citizenship goes much beyond a ‘mere’ status and is only realised in practice by active participation in the polity or requires a form of shared identity.

In the literature on citizenship and migration, most scholars align their understanding of the concept with the way in which citizenship is typically used in international law, i.e. as [a legal status](#) that entitles a person to a set of rights and comes with set of obligations, such as taxation or jury duty, while recognising that both the access to the status and the mix of rights and obligations have historically varied within and between polities.

Citizenship is a legal status, which articulates the relationship between an individual and a state and designates legal entitlements and obligations to parties in that relationship.

In this relational understanding, ‘citizenship’ is synonymous with ‘nationality’ and denotes either of the two uses of the concept in domestic legislation, e.g., citizenship in the US or *nationalité* in France. To make things more complicated, while these two terms are synonymous in some countries, they denote different things in others. For instance, the British Nationality Act defines, among other things, British citizenship. In Latin America, ‘nationality’ commonly refers to a legal status, and ‘citizenship’ to political membership entailing rights and duties (e.g., voting rights, military duty) that can be exercised only upon reaching the age of majority and may be lost upon emigration.

### 22.1.2 *Citizenship and Migration: How Do They Relate?*

In this chapter, we refer to migration as *international* migration. Following [the definition of the IOM](#), the International Organization for Migration, we understand migration as the movement of a person away from their place of usual residence

across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. This definition refers both to immigration (which takes a destination country perspective) and to emigration (taking an origin country perspective).

Citizenship and migration have a mutually constitutive relationship in two crucial ways. On the one hand, citizenship status is crucial to migration opportunities, both as a status that can facilitate and restrict individual mobility, as well as a driver of mobility aspirations. On the other hand, political and economic contestation over migration—be it immigration or emigration—affect the regulation of citizenship.

### How Citizenship Affects Migration

Until the end of the Second World War, citizenship did not entail an across-the-board equality status, but was rather a contrivance for membership hierarchies within polities. With the modern understanding of the pivotal role of citizenship within the international state system where each person should be a citizen of at least one state, i.e. everyone should have “the right to have rights” (Arendt, 1951, p. 294), the notion became—at least discursively—associated with a guarantee of equality of civic, political and social rights inside the states’ borders. Even so, there is great variation in how states allocate membership entitlements; what opportunities they provide to those holding the legal status of citizenship; and how they constitute identities, ideas and actions engrained in it. In other words, while all citizens of a state are (presumably) equal, some citizenships are less equal than others. This global inequality of citizenship is a key driver of migration—in the form of economic migration, or population flows caused by conflict or environmental disaster.

### How Migration Affects Citizenship

Migration has an impact on how states regulate the access to and loss of citizenship, as well as the associated privileges of citizens. This is best illustrated by the rules that govern citizenship at birth, as well as in rules for residence-based naturalisation, special naturalisation or conditions under which citizenship can be lost.

Most of the world’s population automatically receive citizenship at birth (attribution), on the basis of descent or birth within a country’s territory. The granting of citizenship on the basis of citizenship of a person’s parents reflects the *ius sanguinis* (the right of the blood) principle for citizenship acquisition. By contrast, the granting of citizenship as a result of having been born in a particular country indicates the *ius soli* (the right of the soil) principle for obtaining citizenship. The territorial principle is typically found in classic settler states, such as those in North and South America, where *ius soli* was seen as the best way to assert independence vis-à-vis former colonial powers by ensuring that all newly born where citizens of the new republics rather than colonial subjects (Acosta, 2016). By contrast, in European ‘sending’

countries, the prevalence of descent-based transmission of citizenship reflects -at least partly- a political will to 'hold on' to the diaspora. This, for instance, is why Argentinians of Italian descent still have access to Italian citizenship, even after many generations.

We should, however, avoid two common misunderstandings. First, while the attribution of citizenship at birth through *ius soli* is typically referred to as 'birthright citizenship' in the North American context, both descent-based and territory-based principles are founded on birthright (Honohan & Rougier, 2018). Second, whereas countries are often categorised (including by scholars) as either *ius soli* or *ius sanguinis* countries, in practice, most countries operate a mixture of both principles. For example, children born abroad to US citizens can, under certain conditions, also acquire US citizenship through descent (but—although this interpretation is controversial and not fully settled—are no longer considered 'natural born' citizens and thus are not eligible to be President). Furthermore, in most countries where descent is the main basis for citizenship attribution, children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless (such as foundlings) are also considered citizens and, in some cases, children born to non-citizens can also have a claim to citizenship.

Other than by birth, citizenship can result from naturalisation upon migrating and settling in another country (Bloemraad, 2006; Yang, 1994), or through a real or presumed entitlement without relocating to a destination state (Harpaz, 2019). In the first case, the acquisition of an alternative or additional citizenship, is a consequence of migration, and is subject to the establishment of a connection with the destination state through multiannual residence, but also other conditions, such as language knowledge, socialisation, good character, etc. In the second, it often takes place without migration, and instead reflects a strategic decision of an individual to enhance her lifetime opportunities by holding the legal status of citizenship in more than a single state.

Finally, migration can result in loss of citizenship, either by voluntary renunciation (such as by US citizens residing abroad who no longer wish to be taxed under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA) or involuntarily as a result of the acquisition of another citizenship, residing abroad, or due to security or other concerns about allegiance or ties to another nation.

## 22.2 Theories of Citizenship

Theories of citizenship can be normative or empirical. The normative ones address questions about who *should be* a citizen and thus should have the related rights; the empirical ones ask *why* states regulate citizenship in certain ways and *why* individual migrants take up citizenship or not.

### 22.2.1 *Normative Theories*

Normative theories of citizenship deal with two key questions: (1) whom should polities include and exclude as members, and (2) what the substance of citizenship should be. While the core controversies related to these questions are likely to persist in theory and in practice, understanding the different elements of this debate helps us to grasp the key dilemmas that policymakers face when deciding about migration control and access to citizenship.

Normative political theorists address the first question by looking at the outer rims of the demos, and discuss the so-called “boundary problem” (see Bauböck, 2017 for an overview of this discussion). This problem, in its essence, is that when deciding on who can be a citizen (and thus participate in decision-making), democracies do not include those who do not, at that time, take part in the deliberative process. For example, a country may hold a referendum on whether to attribute citizenship by *ius soli* to children of immigrants born in the country, but neither of those affected by this decision—immigrants and their children—will take part in this referendum. Theoretical positions on how to deal with this problem are manifold. Robert Dahl (1989, p. 120) argues that the demos should be constituted by “all adults subject to the binding collective decisions of the association”. Robert Goodin (2007) embraces a far more inclusive approach, pointing out that if immigration rules affect potential migrants they should have a say as well, while Rainer Bauböck (2017) would equalise the demos to “stakeholders”, including “those and only those whose autonomy and well-being depend on the collective self-government and flourishing of a particular polity”.

Normative debates on the substance and meaning of citizenship are equally diverse. They presume alternative conceptions of citizenship-as-desirable-activity and citizenship-as-a-legal-status (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). Whereas in the first (republican) ‘thick’ conception citizenship is a function of one’s participation in the polity, in the ‘thin’ conception (liberal), no such active role is required from the citizen in order to be considered a full member of the political community. Further to this, Will Kymlicka’s (1995) notion of “multicultural citizenship” includes group-differentiated rights for cultural minorities, such as language or education.

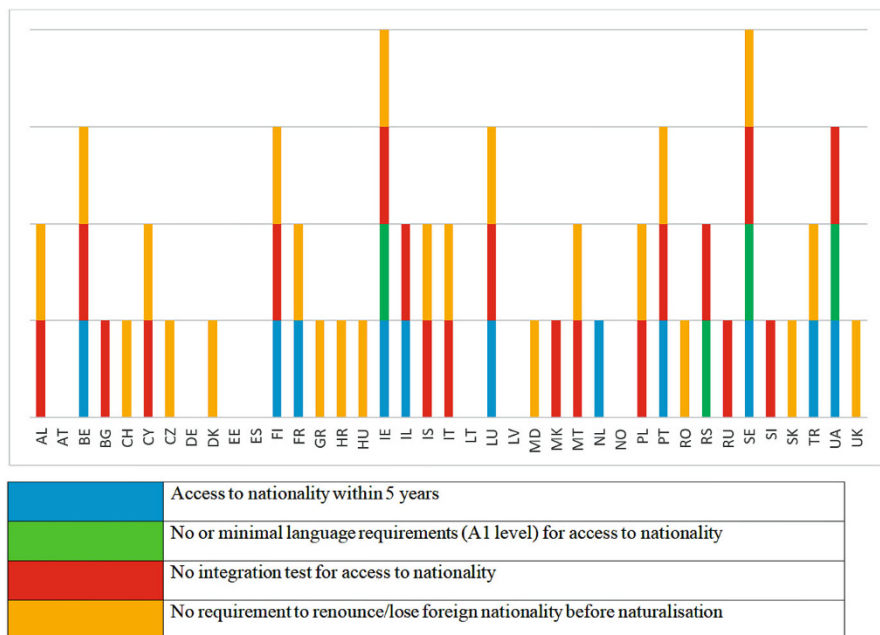
The different conceptions of citizenship offer a different response to the question of whether there should be special group rights for immigrants. From the perspective of liberalism, Christian Joppke (2001) claims that immigrants have “waived” their societal culture and thus should not be granted special rights. A more participatory normative stand would argue that when a receiving country voluntarily admits immigrants, it should acknowledge their cultural specificities and not deny special rights *ex ante* (Parekh, 1997). Kymlicka (1995) emphasised that through the lenses of his “multicultural citizenship”, voluntary migrants cannot be granted the same rights as cultural minorities, but that this normative stance is less clear in cases of forced migration.

## 22.2.2 Empirical Theories

### Citizenship Regime Theory

There is longstanding multidisciplinary tradition of studying [citizenship regimes](#), both comparatively and in case-oriented area studies. Citizenship regimes may be understood as institutionalised systems of formal and informal norms that define access to legal status, as well as rights and duties associated with that status, within a polity (Vink, 2017). Research in this field is focused on both descriptive and explanatory research questions.

Descriptive research questions such as, what differentiates one citizenship regime from another and how to classify the different models for governing citizenship, produce typologies of citizenship regimes. For instance, we often talk about ‘inclusive’ or ‘restrictive’ citizenship policies, suggesting that there is a single dimension of ‘inclusiveness’ underlying citizenship policies. These are typically measured, for example in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) indicator on ‘Access to Nationality’, by residence requirements for naturalisation, dual citizenship acceptance, as well as the presence of civic knowledge and language requirements, as visualised in Fig. 22.1 (Schmid, 2021 for an alternative Citizenship Regime Inclusiveness Index). However, we should keep in mind that citizenship policies serve not



Caption: Higher scores indicate more inclusive policies.

**Fig. 22.1** The relative inclusiveness of policies on access to citizenship in Europe (Source: <https://migrationresearch.com/migration-policy-indicators>). Higher scores indicate more inclusive policies

only to include (or exclude) of immigrant populations resident on the territory, but also to maintain a legal link with citizens and their descendants who have left the territory of a state. Using GLOBALCIT's [Citizenship Law Indicators](#), Vink & Bauböck (2013) demonstrate that citizenship policies in Europe vary: they can prioritise ethnocultural inclusiveness over the territorial one, or, vice versa, be inclusive towards immigrants and emigrants ('expansive' regimes), or restrictive towards both ('insular' regimes).

Explanatory research focuses on the determinants of variation in regimes: why are some regimes more inclusive, at some point in time, towards specific groups, and why are other regimes (or the same regime, at a different point in time) more exclusive, towards specific groups? Much of the work in this field is rooted in historical institutionalism, a social science approach that emphasises the path-dependent nature of institutions, such as citizenship. This is a logical approach given that citizenship is closely related to political self-determination and inherently linked to the political development of states. In his seminal work, Brubaker (1992) compared the development of citizenship regimes in France and Germany and linked these to different conceptions of nationhood in both countries. Comparative social scientists such as Howard (2009), Janoski (2010), and Joppke (2003) have also drawn on explanatory factors such as colonial history, the relative size of the immigrant population, political composition of the government, and the relative strength of right-wing populist parties. Finally, scholars of international diffusion (Checkel, 1999; Vink et al., 2019) have pointed out that we should be careful in explaining trends within countries by only looking at country-specific factors. After all, even if citizenship is nationally regulated, policies may still be affected by non-binding regional or even global norms that push developments in many countries in a similar direction (see also related work on diaspora institutions by Gamlen (2014) and Turcu & Urbatsch (2015)).

### Theories of Citizenship and (Im)mobility

The international state system is divided into populations and territories disparate in terms of resources and wealth, whereas individuals are on the lookout for opportunities and environments where they can make the best use of their abilities and skills. Discussing how income inequalities depend on circumstances beyond individual control, Branko Milanović (2011, p. 142) highlighted that

[o]ne's income thus crucially depends on citizenship, which in turn means (in a world of rather low international migration) place of birth. All people born in rich countries thus receive a location premium or a location rent; all those born in poor countries get a location penalty.

Economic migration takes place when individuals leave their countries of origin to settle in countries or regions that can offer them a more prosperous life course. While there are different kinds of economic migrants, their decision to relocate has commonly been a reflection of wealth inequalities existing across and within

countries (de Haas, 2010; Hagen-Zanker, 2008). The former determine the direction of migration (where from—where to), while the latter influence its size and character (who will migrate and why). Equally, for those fleeing wars, instability or environmental disasters, citizenship of origin, received through the fact of birth is the most likely determinant of opportunities, and thus a push factor for migration.

### Theories of Citizenship Acquisition

Why do some immigrants, in some destination countries, acquire citizenship, whereas others do not? The dominant theoretical perspective in this strand of literature is an economic one, viewing the acquisition of destination country citizenship by migrants as the result of a cost-benefit calculation (Yang, 1994; DeVoretz & Irastorza, 2017). In other words, immigrants weigh up the benefits of naturalisation against the costs of acquiring citizenship, such as having to give up one's origin citizenship or having to pay what amounts to a substantial fee in some countries (e.g. in the UK this costs nearly 1500 euro for a single naturalisation application, whereas in Sweden it costs only around 150 euro and stateless persons and refugees are exempted). From an economic perspective, the marginal 'added value' of destination country citizenship vis-à-vis origin country citizenship plays a large part in migrants' utility calculations. Hence, using the human development of countries as a proxy for the value of citizenship, scholars have observed that migrants from less developed and unstable parts of the world are more likely to naturalise in highly developed countries (Vink et al., 2013). Migrants who can retain citizenship of their country of origin are also more likely to naturalize, since they do not need to make a trade-off at all (Jones-Correa, 2001). The high naturalisation rates of British nationals in countries of the European Union (EU) in the context of Brexit (the UK's exit from the EU) also fits in this economic perspective, as British nationals aim to ensure their free movement rights within the EU by naturalising abroad (Auer & Tetlow, 2020).

Alternative theoretical perspectives point for example to the importance of political promotion of citizenship and bureaucratic practice (Bloemraad, 2006; Huddleston, 2020) or the relevance of the family context (Street, 2014; Helgertz & Bevelander, 2017; Peters et al., 2016). These studies demonstrate that utility calculations certainly matter for immigrant naturalisation but need to be understood in a broader political and sociological context.

## 22.3 Trends and Patterns

Three conflicting trends have contributed to both the devaluation and the revaluation of citizenship in the context of global mobility: (a) the resilience of national sovereignty in the context of regional and international norms; (b) the tension between the preservation of cultural identities of states and economic benefits of migration; and (c) the diversification of migration and dual citizenship acceptance.



### 22.3.1 *National Sovereignty, Regional and Global Norms*

The basic premise of the current international system is that controlling borders and access to citizenship is a national competence. However, this competence is exercised within an ever-denser system of regional and global norms (e.g., non-discrimination, gender equality, prevention of statelessness), which inevitably question the core conception of citizenship as an ‘exclusive domain’ of the state. An example would be the 1957 Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, which marked a significant step towards eliminating gender discrimination in nationality law with provisions preventing the automatic loss and acquisition of the husband’s citizenship upon marriage (Bredbenner, 2018). A further example are the [regional integration processes](#), including the EU, the Nordic Council, and the Southern Common Market in Latin America (Mercosur). In addition to offering free movement and residence rights to citizens of the respective Member States thus enabling migration, these regional organisations have also had an impact on citizenship regulation. While the rules of acquisition and loss of citizenship are ultimately decided by individual Member States of the EU, judgments of the Court of Justice (CJEU) related to EU Citizenship (a status that offers additional rights to Member States’ citizens, but does not substitute their national citizenship), such as [Rottmann](#) and [Tjebbes](#), resulted in safeguards from automatic loss of nationality. The effects of regional processes on citizenship are also reflected in legal provisions that facilitate acquisition of citizenship for individuals holding a nationality of one of the members of a regional organisation. This is the case, for instance, in the Nordic countries whose citizens can naturalise after 2 years in another Nordic state, while other immigrants remain subject to residence periods between 5 (in Finland and Sweden) and 9 (in Denmark) years.

### 22.3.2 *Economic Opening, Political Closing*

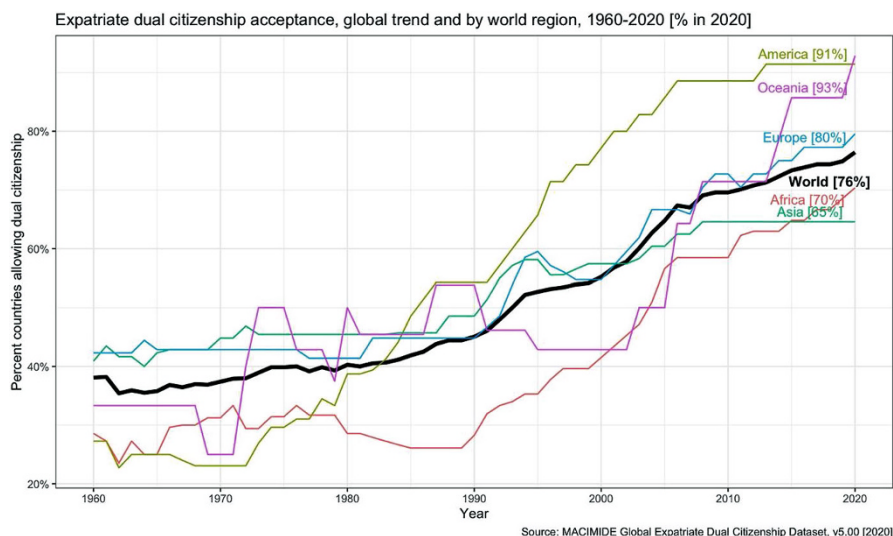
International migration is driven to a large extent by push-pull factors. On the destination side: strong ‘pull’ by business for labour inflow, both [unskilled](#) and [skilled](#). On the origin side: this leads to concerns about [brain drain](#). Generally, it is recognised that in order to optimise payoffs from migration at a global level we need not only migration systems that provide opportunities for migrants to settle in destination countries (i.e. citizenship), but also flexible migration schemes that allow for [circular migration](#). However, there are also counterforces from labour unions and electoral pressures that lead to stricter [migration controls](#) and restrictive access to citizenship (Freeman, 1995).

As a result, democracies are trapped in a “[liberal paradox](#)” that manifests itself in a tension between open borders and inclusive citizenship (Hollifield, 1992, 2004; but see Schmid, 2020 for a critique). To maximise material welfare in a globalising world, transnational economic forces propel liberal states toward greater openness

for migrants (Hollifield, 2004). At the same time, political forces push for greater territorial closure in order to ensure security, preserve the democratic social contract, and to protect the cultural cohesion of the national community. So-called civic integration programmes representing a cultural turn reflect a tension between the socio-economic needs of states and their attempts to preserve the dominant culture.

### 22.3.3 Diversified Migration, Multiple Citizenship

International migration has changed and diversified over the last century, mostly as a result of a shift in the directionality of human movement. A handful of “prime destination countries” host migrants from a broad range of developing states (Czaika & De Haas, 2014) a trend that has transformed some traditionally ‘sending’ countries such as Italy or Ireland, into ‘receiving’ countries for migrants. The new states of origin thus face pressures from remittance-sending emigrants to tolerate dual citizenship (Vink et al., 2019; Leblang, 2017). The traditional ‘sending’ states that have become countries of immigration seek out strategies to balance between increased diversity inside their borders and preservation of national and cultural identities beyond them. As a result of these developments and human rights norms discussed above, an increasing number of states have become tolerant of dual nationality for emigrants since the 1960s (Vink et al., 2015) (Fig. 22.2).



**Fig. 22.2** Expatriate dual citizenship acceptance around the world, 1960-2020 (Source: <https://macimide.maastrichtuniversity.nl/dual-cit-database/>)

This particular trend has, in turn, reconstituted the function and value of citizenship for individuals as the ‘holders’ of this status and associated rights as well as for states as the sole ‘givers’ of it. For individuals, citizenship of the country of origin no longer represents the primary mechanism of ensuring political participation and social rights; this function is now performed by the legal status they possess in the destination state. The latter determines the extent of their political membership in the country where they have settled and where they, and presumably, their descendants hold stakes. Thus, holding on to the citizenship of the country of emigration has gained a largely symbolic function as a link to family, culture, or as representative of ethno-national identity (Lindholm, 2020). For states of emigration, the reciprocal function of citizenship has diminished as political and social rights are increasingly dependent on the combination of citizenship and residence (Spiro, 2012). For states of immigration, tolerance of dual citizenship is a mechanism for fostering integration and cultural pluralism. The costs of tolerating such dual citizenship are low, while benefits may come in the form of loyalty and integration in receiving states, or in the form of reinforcing kinship and economic gains from the diaspora in the states of origin (Leblang, 2017; Naujoks, 2013). Hence there is a gradual shift from the idea of citizenship as a singular relationship between individuals and states to an acceptance of “plural allegiance” (Aleinikoff & Klusmeyer, 2011; Sejersen, 2008; Spiro, 1997).

## 22.4 Key Topics

### 22.4.1 *Strategic Citizenship*

While it is true that citizenship both provides and constrains migration opportunities, it can equally be an enabling factor for non-migration mobilities, and strategic and instrumental acquisition of passports (Harpaz, 2019; Joppke, 2019). This practice has become widespread in view of the pervasive globalisation and the growth in dual citizenship tolerance. Strategic citizenship refers to an additional legal status of citizenship, which serves an instrumental function for the individual in that it compensates for the shortcomings of legal status in the country of origin, commonly in terms of travel and settlement. Harpaz (2019, pp. 11–12) identifies six strategies for acquiring a compensatory second citizenship, including ancestry, kinship, strategic cross-border birth, investment, marriage, and residence. These will have different outcomes as enabling factors for migration. In cases of citizenship acquisition on the basis of residence, marriage, or cross-border birth, the person will normally have already moved to another country. By contrast, in instances of citizenship acquisitions through real or presumed ancestry or kinship, or on the basis of investment, migration and settlement in the destination country need not have taken place and may as well never happen. Acquisitions of passport through

ancestry characteristic of emigrant countries (Italy, Spain), those based on remedial rights for descendants (Germany, Portugal Spain), or presumed co-ethnicity in view of broader nation-building projects or foreign policy objectives (Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Russia) are commonly used as an entry ticket to broader opportunities that they provide. For example, a descendant of a Sephardic Jew expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteen century may acquire a Spanish or Portuguese passport not exclusively to migrate to Spain or Portugal. Rather, they may use such passport to gain access to the rights of EU citizenship and thus the possibility to settle in any of the other 26 Member States. A wealthy person, who obtains a passport on the basis of investment will commonly remain a “long-distance citizen” (Džankić, 2019) and capitalise on the mobility and tax benefits of the second passport, rather than settling in the country of their strategic nationality. In other words, strategic citizenship acquisitions can be an outcome of migration (e.g., in cases of marriage), pull factors for some migrants (e.g., ancestry) or enablers of global mobility rather than settlement (e.g., investors).

#### ***22.4.2 Citizenship: Crown or Catalyst?***

Does citizenship matter for the life experiences of immigrants? Few would contest that it does, because citizenship provides residence security and protection from expulsion (Bloemraad, 2017). But does citizenship still have an added value for immigrants who have secured permanent residence rights in a country or is it a hollow promise of integration in the destination country?

The research agenda on this question is both inspired by and aims to inform debates among politicians who decide about the conditions under which citizenship should be accessible to immigrants. Those on the ideological right of the political spectrum argue that citizenship should be available only under strict conditions and only for immigrants who have demonstrated—by residing in a country a very long period, by actively participating in social life, by being economically successful—that they are ‘well integrated’ in society. From this viewpoint, citizenship becomes a reward for good [integration](#). By contrast, those on the ideological left maintain that citizenship is a necessary condition for good integration and therefore should be accessible to immigrants under reasonable conditions—after a short residence period and with few additional requirements. In this view, naturalisation is seen as a catalyst for integration, something that encourages and spurs on increased participation in society.

Due to the ideological controversy, naturalization policies frequently reflect electoral trends within countries (Howard, 2009). Scholars inform these debates by looking at whether assumptions of one or the other position are more likely to happen in practice. For instance, to test the empirical assumption underlying the ‘catalyst’ perspective, researchers would look at whether there is causal effect of citizenship acquisition on immigrant integration outcomes, such as having paid employment, higher income, participating in social life, being well-informed about current developments, and having a sense of belonging to the country.

However, there is a chicken-and-egg problem here: if naturalised immigrants are better integrated (measured according to some of the indicators listed above) is this because citizenship acquisition was a catalyst for their integration, or were they already better integrated and therefore more likely to naturalise? In the quantitative literature on the so-called “citizenship premium”, two strategies have been developed to deal with this problem: a longitudinal approach and a quasi-experimental approach.

The longitudinal approach (building on the work by Bratsberg et al., 2002) follows integration outcomes (e.g., wages) over time for *individual* migrants and assesses whether outcomes are better after naturalisation, compared to before (i.e. whether there is wage growth). The findings from studies that apply this method indicate that, overall, migrants’ wages increase after they acquire citizenship, especially among migrants who have the highest risk to face difficulties on the labour market (Liebig & Von Haaren, 2011; Steinhardt, 2012; Peters et al., 2018, 2019).

The quasi-experimental approach has been developed especially in the context of the Swiss case, where until some years ago Swiss municipalities used referendums to decide on naturalisation applications of immigrants. By comparing otherwise similar immigrants who all applied for Swiss citizenship but either narrowly won or lost their naturalisation referendums, scholars demonstrated that receiving Swiss citizenship strongly improved long-term social integration (i.e. plan to stay in Switzerland, be an active member of clubs or associations), and led to substantial annual income increases, again, especially among more marginalised immigrant groups (Hainmueller et al., 2017).

Overall, while it is difficult to measure whether citizenship matters, creative approaches have been developed in the literature and most findings support the policy paradigm arguing that naturalisation is a catalyst for improving the social integration of immigrants rather than merely the crown on a completed integration process (Fig. 22.3).

*Data sources:*

- Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT)
  - A complete overview of the varying regulations on the acquisition and loss of citizenship around the world can be consulted on the Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT). This online platform also provides updates on recent developments, reports about citizenship laws in many countries, comparative studies, online debates, blogs and announcements on recent publications.
- NCCR on-the-move
  - The nccr – on the move is the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) for migration and mobility studies. It consists of 17 research projects based at 11 Swiss Higher Education Institutions. Publishes indicators on mobility and migration-related issues in Switzerland and Europe, as well as working papers, blogs and interactive materials.
- Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI)
  - The Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI) is a human rights NGO dedicated to issues related to statelessness worldwide. Resources include statistics, reports, podcasts, as well a monthly bulletin.
- IOM GMDAC
  - IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre is the global hub for data related to migration and mobility. It includes an interactive migration data portal, as well as publications, such as reports and policy papers.
- Eurostat
  - Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU, provides yearly updated aggregate statistics on the number of persons acquiring the citizenship of EU and associated states, specified by country of origin.

*Further readings:*

Recent general introductions by Cohen & Ghosh (2019), Kochenov (2019), Spiro (2020), explain (from very different perspectives) the concept, history, law and theory of citizenship.

Oxford Handbook of Citizenship (2017) offers a comprehensive state-of-the-art review of scholarly debates on citizenship from a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Joppke (2010), Goodman (2012), Pedroza (2019) discuss the citizenship-migration nexus from the lens of immigration, while authors such as Alonso (2018), Gamlen (2019), and Leblang (2015) zoom into diaspora rights and engagement.

Authors including Bauböck (2019), Džankić (2019) Harpaz (2019), Hoon et al (2020) and explore how citizenship affects one's mobility prospects.

**Fig. 22.3** Suggestions for further reading and online sources

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## Chapter 23

# Public Opinion and the Politics of Migration



James Dennison and Alina Vrânceanu

### 23.1 What Are Public Attitudes Towards and the Politics of Immigration?

Identifying and describing [attitudes to immigration](#), let alone explaining them, is not a simple matter. First, human attitudes in general are abstract and so any measurement of them is bound to be highly qualified and contingent on theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches. Second, immigration is a broad topic. Attitudes to immigration alone can be divided into attitudes towards immigrants, towards immigration policy, the perceived effects of immigration, or towards how important immigration is as an issue. Each of these can be divided by immigrant group as the most obvious qualifier. In this chapter we follow the political science literature in conceptualising attitudes as “people’s orientations toward objects” (Druckman & Lupia, 2000, p. 4). Below, we outline the major scholarly works explaining attitudes to immigration. We also sketch out existing research on the politics of immigration and the effects of attitudes to immigration on democratic politics.

### 23.2 Key Theories Explaining Attitudes to Immigration

A vast literature has been devoted to explaining variation in attitudes to immigration, particularly between individuals in host populations in developed western countries. Here we outline six strands: economics, socialisation, psychology, attitudinal

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embeddedness, cueing, and context and contact (for other useful reviews see Berg, 2015; Dennison & Dražanová, 2018; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

### 23.2.1 *Economic Interests*

Reflecting broader trends in scholarly work on political attitudes and behaviour, the use of economic factors to explain variation in attitudes to immigration is one of the longest standing, most developed and—currently—increasingly contested theoretical strands. In particular, evidence of the causal effect of actual economic indicators, such as income or employment, at the individual level is mixed; for example, Espenshade and Calhoun (1993) find no evidence to support this hypothesis, though recent studies have found evidence that labour market competition does affect attitudes (Huber & Oberdabernig, 2015; Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019; Polavieja, 2016). The effect of psychological perceptions of economic threat has received greater support; Burns and Gimpel (2000) and Espenshade and Hempstead (1996) find that a pessimistic personal economic outlook leads to greater negativity.

At the national level, however, it has been shown repeatedly that economic downturns and rising unemployment rates increase anti-immigration sentiment (Ruist, 2016). Furthermore, Magni (2020) shows that inequality leads to decreasing support for access to welfare for immigrants. It seems that any negative effect of economic downturns on attitudes to immigration is primarily in sociotropic rather than pocketbook terms, i.e. individuals are more concerned about the potential effect on their fellow citizens than themselves, and when they are concerned about themselves it is in terms of perceived economics rather than actual economics. Somewhat tautologically, many works have shown that belief that immigration is bad for the economy or that immigrants take finite resources lead to opposition to immigration, though this may simply be a *post facto* justification (Fussell, 2014). However, there is evidence that some immigrant groups are seen as likely to contribute and are thus more likely to receive public support (Alba et al., 2005).

### 23.2.2 *Socialisation*

Other studies have suggested that attitudes to immigration are the result of one's socialising experiences early in life. Importantly, McLaren et al. (2020; see also García-Faroldi, 2017; Kauff et al., 2013) show that being socialised in a more heterogeneous society creates more pro-immigration attitudes. Individuals socialised in countries with strong ethnic, rather than civic or multicultural, identities have been shown to be less supportive of immigration (Van Assche et al., 2017; Levanon & Lewin-Epstein, 2010; Hiers et al., 2017; at the individual level, see McAllister, 2018), as have those in which there is a strong collective rather than individualist culture (Meeusen & Kern, 2016; Shin & Dovidio, 2016).

Education has been repeatedly shown to be positively associated with attitudes to immigration, particularly tertiary education, and to explain shifts in generational patterns (McLaren & Paterson, 2020). Jackman and Muha (1984) and Janus (2010) argue that education has an indoctrinating effect which leads individuals to support certain normative ideologies, in this case leading to pro-immigration views while attending university, with its focus on a ‘universal’, rather than national, outlook. Inversely, Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007) and Mayda (2006) argue that less education leads to less tolerance for diversity which leads to anti-immigration attitudes.

Other important socialising experiences include living or being born abroad, white collar-work or belonging to an ethnic minority, which lead to a cosmopolitan worldview and, thus, pro-immigration attitudes (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). Interestingly, less integrated Latinos have been shown to be more pro-immigration (Branton, 2007). Finally, being religious and taking part in religious activities have been argued to increase empathy or induce universalistic values and thus lead to support for immigration (Knoll, 2009; however, see Helbling & Traummüller, 2016).

### 23.2.3 *Psychological*

Other studies have suggested that attitudes to immigration result from fundamental psychological predispositions, such as personality types, values and identities. The “Big Five Personality Types” have been shown to predict different types of attitudes to immigration (Dinesen et al., 2016). Individuals that value (defined as their long-term and deep-seated motivational goals) tradition, conformity, and security oppose immigration whereas those who value universalism are supportive (e.g. Davidov et al., 2008). Values shared by conservatives and progressives—such as benevolence—are not likely to divide individuals. Similarly, so-called “right wing authoritarian” predispositions—valuing order and unambiguity above all—have been shown to increase anti-immigration attitudes (Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010). Consciousness of *in-group and out-group social identities* are often shown to be associated with immigration attitudes (Fussell, 2014). Brewer (1999) showed that in-group favouritism was more important than out-group prejudice, with the former leading to a desire to see one’s group’s interests furthered. Lower societal trust is associated with anti-immigration attitudes (MacDonald, 2020).

### 23.2.4 *Cueing*

A common finding in the public opinion research is that individuals tend to take cues from trusted sources of information, such as political elites, in order to form opinions on a wide range of issues (e.g. Zaller, 1992). While individuals’ views may to some extent be influenced by cues from the overall elite stance (Sanders & Toka, 2013),

much of the literature explores the extent to which individuals take cues from the party they identify most closely with (e.g. Brader & Tucker, 2012). Several studies find this to be the case with respect to the immigration issue too, the impact of party cues being larger among the more highly educated individuals (Hellwig & Kweon, 2016; Vranceanu & Lachat, 2021). There is, however, variation in the strength of cueing effects. Hartevelde et al. (2017) suggest that political parties at the extremes of the political spectrum have a higher capacity to cue their supporters. Since parties at the extremes are likely to adopt very distant positions from one another, the authors suggest that the cueing effect may contribute to mass polarisation. Along similar lines, Arndt (2016) corroborates that the Danish public opinion polarisation on cultural issues, including immigration, occurred in response to elite polarisation.

### 23.2.5 *Contact and Context*

Both contact theory and group threat theory predict that greater interaction with immigrants will affect attitudes to immigration, but with opposite theorised effects. Similarly, both, though particularly the former, have been studied extensively (Gravelle, 2016; Wilson-Daily et al., 2018). [Contact theory](#) theorises that individuals hold misconceptions about immigrants and that contact lessens those misconceptions and thus makes individuals more pro-immigration, as first outlined by Allport (1954; see also, e.g. Ha, 2010; Berg, 2009). Nevertheless, these findings suffer from two methodological weaknesses: contact tends to be either measured through the ethnic composition of the individual's neighbourhood, which fails to actually measure contact and more pro-immigration individuals are likely to be more willing to have contact with immigrants to start with. These weaknesses have to some extent been overcome by experimental studies (Hewstone et al., 2005), which support contact theory's supposed mechanisms of improved knowledge, greater empathy, and especially, a reduction in intergroup anxiety (Barlow et al., 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

By contrast, [group threat theory](#) expects contact with immigrants to increase the sense of threat felt by non-immigrants, who then become more opposed to immigration, with the effect sometimes contingent on the size of the majority group (e.g. Berg, 2014; McLaren, 2003). Two syntheses have been put forward, first, regarding the level of intimacy of the contact (Fetzer, 2000; Kaufmann, 2014) and, second, regarding who the immigrants are (Ha, 2010). Moreover, despite the vast literature, the effect sizes in either direction are usually considerably smaller than those related to socialisation and psychology and, theoretically, should be less persistent.

In policy terms, Schlueter and Davidov (2013) show that European countries that actively pursue immigrant [integration policies](#) foster lower levels of feelings of group threat amongst their citizens. Messing and Sagvari (2018) argue that perceptions of state capacity *in general* affect attitudes to immigration. Terrorist attacks had been shown to affect attitudes to immigration (Legewie, 2013), but more recent

evidence suggests that attitudes to immigration have become sufficiently embedded in Europe that short term events and attacks are unlikely to affect them further (Brouard et al., 2018).

At the personal level, Jackson et al. (2001) show that having a family and children leads to greater anti-immigration views, as individuals become more concerned and cautious about major societal changes. A lack of feeling of safety in one's neighbourhood has also been shown to lead to anti-immigration views (Chandler & Tsai, 2001).

### ***23.2.6 Attitudinal Embeddedness***

One of the reasons for the high interest in contact theory and group threat theory is that they are intuitively only applicable to attitudes to immigration. However, attitudes to immigration are to a large extent formed by similar forces that determine attitudes to other prevalent political issues, which, as a result, they correlate strongly with and together determine placements within broader attitudinal sets such as 'left-right' or 'authoritarian-libertarian' (de Vries et al., 2013). Owing to cognitive dissonance, this embeddedness limits the flexibility that individuals might have over such attitudes. Indeed, the correlation between immigration attitudes and broader political attitudes has increased over time (Semyonov et al., 2006).

## **23.3 Politics of Immigration**

Having reviewed various theoretical accounts for attitudes to immigration, it is relevant to ask to what extent political parties articulate and respond to public preferences. Moreover, which political entrepreneurs mobilise public views on immigration and what are the main patterns of party competition around this issue? We review below several findings from research focusing mostly on European countries.

### ***23.3.1 Responsiveness***

Political representation is the cornerstone of democratic functioning and political parties have a key role in this process (e.g. Dalton, 2017, p. 610). The immigration issue has gained growing political attention in European countries in recent decades (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019) and it has been highly salient in recent national elections and referenda (e.g. Aardal & Bergh, 2018; Hobolt, 2016). There is thus increasing scholarly attention to how responsive political parties are to voters' preferences on this issue. O'Grady and Abou-Chadi (2019) find at best limited

evidence of party responsiveness to short-term changes in the general public opinion. By contrast, Dalton (2017) suggests that political parties tend to be responsive to their own supporters' views on cultural issues (including immigration), although he identifies a representation gap illustrated by lower congruence between parties' and citizens' policy positions, notably among leftist parties (see also Brady et al., 2020; Costello et al., 2012). In a recent study covering 17 European countries, Vranceanu (2019) finds that mainstream parties tend to be more responsive to the average voter when they face competition from strong radical right competitors. This highlights the role of 'issue entrepreneurs' (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012) in enhancing the responsiveness of mainstream parties to the general electorate.

### ***23.3.2 Support for Radical Right and Other Party Families***

Radical right parties (RRPs hereafter) represent the party family that has arguably benefitted most from mobilising public anti-immigrant sentiment (Kriesi et al., 2006). As Ivarsflaten (2008, p. 3) argues, "only the appeal on the immigration issue unites all successful populist right parties". Research consistently shows that holding anti-immigration views increases the likelihood of voting for an RRP (Kriesi & Schulte-Cloos, 2020; Lubbers et al., 2002; Rydgren, 2008). This is especially so when anti-immigrant parties are evaluated by voters on policy considerations (van der Brug et al., 2005). A string of recent studies focusing on single countries confirm the importance of anti-immigration attitudes for the success of RRP and extreme-right parties. Focusing on Greece, Dinas et al. (2019) document that exposure to refugees in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis increased the support for the extreme right party Golden Dawn. Similarly, in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) shifted radically in an anti-immigration direction by 2017, increasingly attracting voters with strong anti-immigrant views (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019). With reference to the same country, Neuner and Wratil (2020) suggest that the combination of anti-immigration and people-centric appeals is particularly attractive to voters. Dennison and Geddes (2019; see also Dennison, 2019; Mendes & Dennison, 2020) also show that the vote share of RRP in Western Europe increases as the public issue salience of immigration rises.

However, several studies dispute the idea that immigration is mobilised by RRP alone (e.g. Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011). There is cross-country variation in the extent to which centre-right and centre-left parties used the immigration issue for purposes of electoral competition (Odmalm & Super, 2014). Pardos-Pardo (2015) suggests that centre-parties can benefit from mobilising anti-immigrant sentiment when party competition occurs in a unidimensional space, i.e. when the economic and cultural dimensions of party competition overlap. Moreover, Downes and Loveless (2018) show that in the period following the 2008 economic crisis non-incumbent centre-right parties gained electorally from emphasising the immigration issue. By contrast, more recent studies suggest that Social Democratic parties fail to attract votes when they adopt tough positions on immigration, as this strategy

is especially likely to alienate highly educated voters and socio-cultural and self-employed professionals (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2020). Instead, mainstream left parties may win votes by combining liberal sociocultural positions (on immigration, among other issues) with investment-oriented economic positions (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019).

In line with the issue voting literature, which examines how voting decisions are based on voters' issue preferences (e.g. Hobolt & Rodon, 2020, p. 228), the empirical evidence indicates that proximity between voters' positions on immigration and parties' stances on this issue matters for vote choice, including when examining mainstream parties only or countries without RRP at the time of the study (Pardos-Pardo, 2012; Brady et al., 2020). The effect of issue proximity on party support seems to be moderated by voter polarisation (Han, 2018), or by issue constraint and how immigration fits underlying cleavages (Pardos-Pardo, 2012). Note that perceptions of proximity may be endogenous to party affect (Dinas et al., 2016). Finally, the political supply may be scarce for voters who are economically left-wing but hold anti-immigration attitudes (Van der Brug & van Spanje, 2009). The vote choice of citizens in this group should thus be influenced by the relative personal importance of the two issues, economy and immigration (Lefkofridi et al., 2014).

### 23.3.3 Party Competition

Research on party competition documents how RRP can benefit from the strategies that mainstream parties adopt on their main issue dimension, immigration (e.g. Meguid, 2005). On the one hand, studies exploring how the adoption by mainstream parties of accommodative strategies, that is, convergence toward the hard-line policy positions of RRP, affects the electoral success of RRP come with mixed findings. Arzheimer (2009) finds no effect, although RRP do benefit when their competitors talk more about immigration. By contrast, Arzheimer and Carter (2006) find that the probability to vote for an RRP increases when the mainstream right competitor adopts tough positions on RRP's core issues, which is in line with a legitimisation effect. Down and Han (2019) find a similar effect, but only among voters that did not consider RRP to be the most competent on immigration. On the other hand, Meguid (2005) suggests that niche parties, such as RRP, lose electoral support when both mainstream-left and right competitors ignore the immigration issue or converge toward the position of the RRP (see also Dahlström and Sundell (2012) who also show that the behaviour of the mainstream left matters to a higher extent), and win votes when at least one of their competitors adopts an adversarial strategy.

There is also vast research on the extent to which mainstream parties adopt accommodative strategies *in response to* RRP's electoral success, which would be indicative of a contagion effect. Van Spanje (2010) finds that electoral pressures exerted by anti-immigration parties generate incentives for other parties to adopt restrictive positions on immigration (see also Abou-Chadi, 2016; Abou-Chadi &



Krause, 2018). Han (2015) documents that, while contagion affects mainstream right parties unconditionally, mainstream left parties are affected only when their supporters become more negative about multiculturalism or immigration, or when they had suffered electoral losses in the previous election. RRPs' welfare chauvinistic stances may impact as well, although differentially, the positions of mainstream competitors on multiculturalism and welfare (Schumacher & van Kersbergen, 2016). Finally, large parties tend to adopt more restrictive stances also when issue saliency at the party-system level increases (Abou-Chadi et al., 2020). Interestingly, whereas issue attention tends to increase in countries with stronger RRPs and higher shares of foreign-born population, the potential to become a top issue on the political agenda depends on the coalition incentives facing centre-right parties (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019).

However, other studies suggest that the effect of RRPs on mainstream parties' issue saliency and position-taking may have been exaggerated (e.g. Dancygier & Margalit, 2019). In terms of position-taking, these parties have at times adopted restrictive immigration stances before being challenged by radical right competitors (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011; see also Mudde, 2013). Furthermore, according to Bale et al. (2010), the response of centre-left (social democratic) parties to the RRP challenge depends on additional factors such as the strategic behaviour of centre-right and left-wing parties. Moreover, parties' strategies can also be affected by the extent to which the immigration issue aligns with the dominant societal fault line in a given country (Odmalm & Super, 2014). Finally, political parties may actually decide to blur their issue stances, particularly when it comes to issues that they do not primarily mobilise on and in a context of voter polarisation or divided partisan base (Han, 2018).

### 23.3.4 *Politicisation*

Grande et al. (2019) define issue politicisation as a combination of issue salience and polarisation. Focusing on six Western European countries, the authors document growing politicisation of the immigration issue after the 2000s, mostly due to growing party polarisation and issue entrepreneurial strategies on the part of RRPs. This resonates with Dancygier and Margalit's (2019, p. 28) claim that "if polarisation around immigration has occurred, it has likely been driven by parties located on the farther ends of the ideological spectrum" (but see Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011, p. 880). Researchers have also analysed contexts where party polarisation is driven by the first-time entry into Parliament of RRPs, to assess how this affects voter polarisation. Bischof and Wagner (2019) employ a range of methods to show that the first-time entry into Parliament of a RRP generates voter polarisation on the left-right dimension (see also Castanho Silva, 2018). The mechanisms responsible for this effect are legitimisation among supporters of radical right parties and backlash among citizens considering that RRPs violate social norms. Issue politicisation may also depend on the coalition incentives of mainstream right parties (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup, 2008).

## 23.4 Future Avenues for Research

As already made clear in this review, there remain considerable debates and shortcomings in the literature related to attitudes to immigration. In terms of explanations for attitudes, there are relatively few comprehensive models that seek to explain variation *in toto*, with a strong preference instead for the testing of singular causal mechanisms. As such, we know relatively little about the respective importance of factors, their causal relationships to each other, or their respective positions in the ‘funnel of causality’. The vast majority of studies consider ‘western advanced democracies’ despite immigration being an important political issue in every region of the world. Also typical, though decreasingly so, is the reliance on relatively naïve methods. Moreover, while existing research sheds some light on the political representation of the average voter’s, or of partisan constituencies’ preferences, future research should explore in greater detail the potential contextual influences such as the dimensionality of the political space or the degree of public polarisation (e.g. Ezrow et al., 2014). Future studies should also seek to explore potential drivers and political consequences of mass polarisation specifically on the immigration issue.

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# Chapter 24

## Migration Policy Indicators



Giacomo Solano and Thomas Huddleston

Over the last 20 years, researchers have undertaken systematic comparisons of migration policies—mainly at the national level—by creating **indicators and indexes**. These indicators and indexes have been used to analyse differences and trends in migration policy (de Haas et al., 2015; Helbling & Kalkum, 2018) and to assess the determinants and effects of policy (Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Helbling & Michalowski, 2017; Helbling & Leblang, 2019).

The proliferation of projects in the last 10 years has resulted in dozens of indicator datasets that measure components such as the degree of restrictiveness of these policies, the extent of equal treatment between migrants and non-migrants, and other dimensions of policy regimes and models (see Helbling & Michalowski, 2017; Helbling & Solano, 2021; Scipioni & Urso, 2018). From these datasets, researchers have often created aggregations and indexes in order to provide a summary score—a snapshot of the migration policy framework in a given country at a specific period of time.

Analysing the character of migration policies over time and space is important to understand policy trends and differences between countries and to explore the causes and effects of international migration (Gest et al., 2014). However, this chapter does not address the effect of migration policies on migration and integration outcomes (Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Helbling & Michalowski, 2017; Helbling & Leblang, 2019; Solano, 2021). Although an increasing number of papers has analysed this link, a consensus about the influence of migration policies is far from being reached (Czaika & de Haas, 2013). On the one hand, many scholars have argued that efforts by states to regulate and restrict immigration have often failed (e.g., Bhagwati, 2003; Castles, 2004; Cornelius et al., 2004; Düvell, 2006). The argument is that international migration is mainly **driven** by structural factors such as labour market

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imbalances, inequalities in wealth, and political conflicts in origin countries, factors on which migration policies have little or no influence. On the other hand, this sceptical view is contrasted by other researchers that have demonstrated that migration policies have been increasingly effective in influencing the magnitude and composition of migration flows (Hatton, 2005; Mayda, 2010; Ortega & Peri, 2013).

This chapter provides an overview of the existing indexes and indicators, and compares the methodology employed as well as their temporal, geographical, and thematic coverage. This analysis is based on a [review](#) of previous projects and literature on this topic that have been carried out in the frame of the Horizon 2020 project [CrossMigration](#), which aimed at mapping research in the different areas of migration studies and produced the Migration Research Hub ([www.migrationresearch.com](http://www.migrationresearch.com)), which indexes more than 100,000 items of research including journal articles, books, chapters, working papers, projects, and datasets.

This chapter proceeds as follows: we first introduce the analysis of migration policy frameworks through indicators by illustrating the main concepts and approaches in the field. We then provide an overview of what has been done in the field of migration policy indicators so far; we illustrate the different areas of migration policies and their coverage by existing indexes. We also address the characteristics of these indexes in terms of geographical and temporal scope. We conclude with some reflections on the remaining gaps in the field and possible future developments.

## **24.1 An Introduction to the Field of Migration Policy Indicators**

### ***24.1.1 Indicators, Indexes, and Aggregation Methods***

An indicator is an observable entity that captures a specific concept and provides a measure of that concept. Indicators can be aggregated into an index. An index is a set of indicators that are aggregated to provide a concise measure of the nature of a given phenomenon. Typically, an index is a single score that combines several other scores. The index should measure complex multidimensional concepts which cannot be captured by a single indicator, e.g. migrant integration, competitiveness, sustainability (JRC & OECD, 2008). Although indexes aim at summarising multidimensional concepts, it is important that the indicators that compose the index can be reduced to the same empirical dimension. In other words, an index should capture unidimensional trends; it should be composed by indicators that go in the same direction (e.g., increased restrictiveness). Several statistical techniques can be used to test this unidimensionality, such as Cronbach's alpha and Principal Component Analysis (see, Helbling, 2013; Ruedin, 2011, 2015; Schmid & Helbling, 2016).

In reference to measurement of migration policies, Gest et al. (2014, p. 274) underline that indexes “are understood as highly aggregated, composite measures of immigration policy, while indicators are understood as more specific, disaggregated elements that are individually coded”. For example, an index of admission policy for labour migrants can be composed by indicators that capture different elements of this policy, such as quota limits, language requirements, financial requirements, and age limits.

Sets of indicators are, therefore, aggregated into indexes. Typically, researchers have used the arithmetic mean. For example, **MIPEX**—the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Huddleston et al., 2015; Solano & Huddleston, 2020)—is composed of indicators that are sorted in eight policy areas. The indicators in each sub-area are aggregated by means of an arithmetic mean. The final overall score for each country is the arithmetic mean of the sub-areas scores (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). However, other different aggregation methods in index construction are available. The application of different aggregation methods often affects the resulting rank order of the countries. Therefore, researchers need to pay special attention to the aggregation method (Bjerre et al., 2019).

When they calculate the average of the indicators, researchers can opt for weighting. Weighting “is a way of attributing higher or lower relative importance to indicators within the index” (Scipioni & Urso, 2018, p. 12). This means that indicators on topics that are considered more important (e.g. by experts) are weighed more than indicators on topics that are considered less important. Weighting can also be based on the data; in this case, weights are based on the results of statistical analysis (JRC & OECD, 2008). It is worth noting that equal weighting does not guarantee equal importance and equal contribution of the indicators to the index, as this is based on the data (ibid.).

The decision on which method to employ and whether apply weights should be based on the kind and distribution of data that composes the index. For example, geometric mean requires data to be measured on a ration scale as the minimum values must be >0 and it not very sensitive to large value outliers but very sensitive to low value (Bjerre et al., 2019).

As underlined by the Joint Research Centre and the OECD (2008), aggregating several indicators is beneficial as an index provides an easy-to-interpret summary of a phenomenon. An index summarises complex and multidimensional phenomena and it is easier to interpret than separate indicators. However, indexes can also send misleading policy messages as they can disguise serious failings in some dimensions. For example, a country which perform very well on one indicator and very poor on another is likely to have the same score of another one that have average performances on both indicators.

### ***24.1.2 Outputs and Outcomes***

Key in the analysis of migration policy is the distinction between outputs and outcomes (Gest et al., 2014). Policy outputs refer to the formulation of **laws and**

policies, while outcomes are—at least in part—the result of the implementation of those laws and policies (Solano, 2021). Both are different from the implementation, which stands in-between and refers to the concrete application of the on-paper policy outputs. ‘Implementation’ indicators measure whether these laws and policies are properly interpreted and delivered as practices. Immigration and citizenship studies have only recently started to move beyond outcome and policy indicators to measure implementation. Currently, most implementation studies in the field of immigration and integration are descriptive, single-country studies that fall into the category of ‘grey’ literature. Therefore, the effect of similar outputs (policies and laws) on outcomes may vary according to the implementation of those outputs. While many researchers and policy actors contest the effectiveness of immigration and integration policies (Goodman, 2010; Koopmans et al., 2012; Czaika & de Haas, 2013), few have attempted to measure the different dimensions of implementation and their importance for migration and integration outcomes.

Policy outputs are policy measures, such as the adoption of a law/policy by government entities on topics related to migration. Policy outcomes refer to the impact that such policy might have (e.g., immigration stock and flows). For example, on integration of refugees in the labour market, a possible policy output is a law granting refugees immediate access to self-employment, and the number of self-employed refugees represents the policy outcome.

In this chapter, we consider indicators/indexes that consider policy outputs only, for two main reasons (Bilgili et al., 2015; Niessen & Huddleston, 2009; Gest et al., 2014). First, policy outcomes are influenced by other factors as well, such as individual agency and other contextual conditions. Second, although policies (outputs) may influence outcomes, the opposite is also true. Therefore, it would be confusing to address both outputs and outcomes at the same time when the aim is to understand the nature of migration policy. Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind that indicators on policy outputs do only catch the *de jure* country situation, whereas the *de facto* reality can be different.

### 24.1.3 Approach: Policy Change vs. Overall Assessment

Previous projects have analysed the nature of migration policies by using two main methodological approaches. The majority of previous projects carried out an overall assessment of migration policies in one or more areas (e.g., integration policies; admission policies). For example, IMPIC (Immigration Policies in Comparison: Helbling et al., 2017) focuses on admission policies of a given country and a given year, by analysing the state of admission policies for different kinds of admission (labour migration, family reunification and refugees and asylum). Similarly, MIPEX (Huddleston et al., 2015; Solano & Huddleston, 2020) benchmarks current laws and policies against the highest standards on one topic (e.g., access to compulsory education).

In this case, the unit of analysis is the set of policies on a given topic in a defined space (e.g., a country) and timeframe (typically a year) and the produced scores allow for cross-country, across time comparisons. This approach allows for answering to the questions whether Germany or Italy had a *de jure* more “open” admission policy framework for asylum seekers in 2017, or whether integration policies in Austria have become more inclusive between 2015 and 2018.

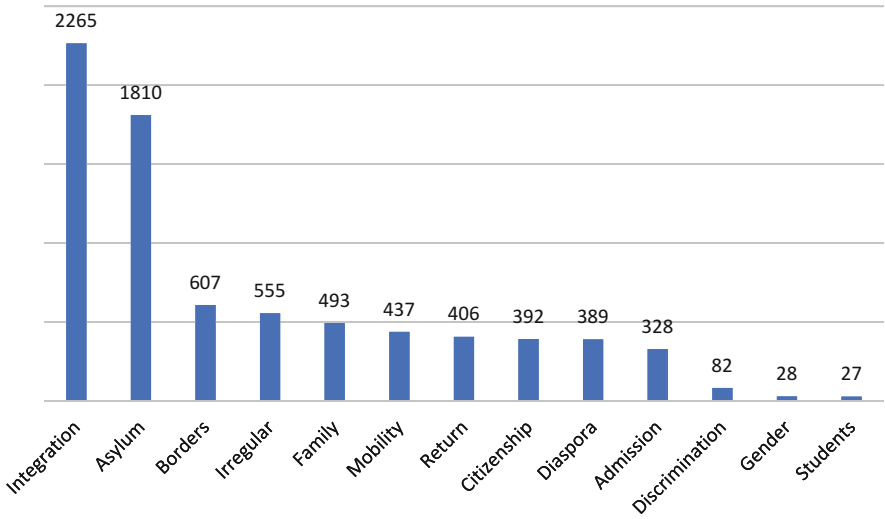
Other projects focused on tracking policy changes in a specific country. They addressed the changes occurred in the policy framework over time and they assessed the nature of each change (e.g., introduction of a new law). In this case, the unit of analysis is the single law/policy and the nature of the introduction of this law/policy. For example, DEMIG (Determinants of International Migration) focuses on the change in restrictiveness introduced by a policy measure on migration (de Haas et al., 2015). Similarly, Ortega and Peri’s index of tightness of immigration reforms over time measures policy change, by classifying laws based on whether they tighten the requirements of entry or stay in the country (Ortega & Peri, 2013). This approach makes it possible to understand the change in migration policies over time, but it does not allow for cross-country analysis (Scipioni & Urso, 2018). Indeed, the score produced for a country each year does not reflect the state of the policy in the year but the change between the current year and the starting year. For example, this approach allows for comparing the policy frameworks of Spain in 2005 and 2015, and whether Spain and Italy have followed the same “path” (e.g., making admission policy more restrictive) from 2008 to 2014. However, it does not allow researchers to understand whether Spanish policies in 2008 were more restrictive than Italian policies in the same year.

## 24.2 Migration Policy Areas and Existing Indexes

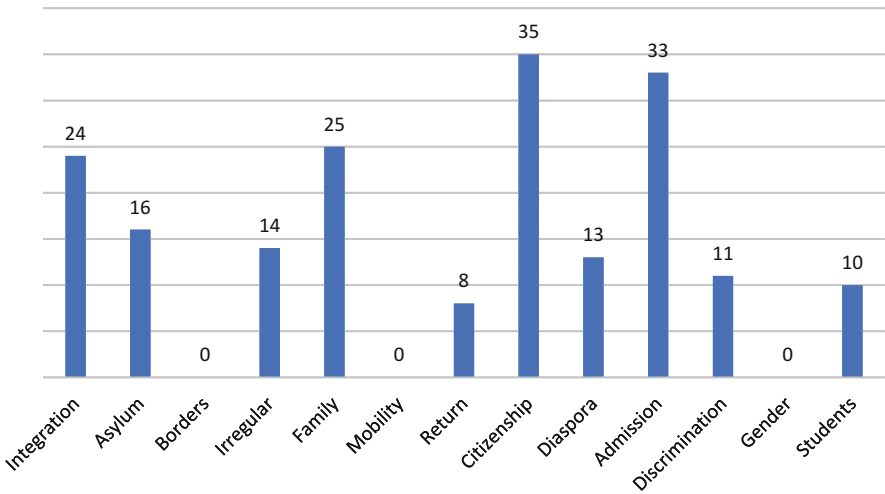
### 24.2.1 Overview

Migration policy indicators and indexes have addressed many topics under the umbrella of migration policy field. The development of migration policy indicators is only weakly linked to the expansion of migration policy research (Fig. 24.1), as most of these indexes and indicators have been driven by decades-long academic debates about integration and admission policies (Fig. 24.2). Since the mid-2010s, global debates about migration policy have sparked new efforts at policy indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the UN Global Compacts on Migration (CDM) and Refugees (CDR).

These drivers of migration policy explain why the diverse areas covered by research on migration policy are only partially covered by existing migration policy indicators and indexes. The main areas of migration policy research— asylum and integration policies—are well-covered by policy indicators, although integration has been less frequently analysed by projects on policy indicators in comparison to the overall existing literature on the topic.



**Fig. 24.1** Areas covered by existing literature on migration policy. (Source: Migration Research Hub ([www.migrationresearch.com](http://www.migrationresearch.com)))



**Fig. 24.2** Areas covered by existing indicator datasets on migration policy. (Source: Migration Research Hub ([www.migrationresearch.com](http://www.migrationresearch.com)))

Furthermore, policy indicators and indexes are disproportionately concentrated in a few areas of migration policy research (Solano & Huddleston, 2021). The majority of policy indicators relate to admission and citizenship policies, which are a minor part of migration policy research. Family reunification, student admission and discrimination policies are also over-represented among migration policy indicators. Other significant areas of research—irregular migration, return and diaspora policies—are covered by a small number of policy indicators, while areas such as gender, borders and mobility policies are largely absent from systematic efforts to measure and compare policies (ibid.).

A few migration policy indexes aim to provide a comprehensive of migration policies, while most cover only specific areas and/or sub-areas. For example, IMPALA (International Migration Policy and Law Analysis: Beine et al., 2016) focuses on both admission policies for different kinds of migrants and acquisition of citizenship, which relates more to integration than admission. NIEM (National Integration Evaluation Mechanism) covers many areas related to integration and settlement of refugees and beneficiaries of international protection (Wolffhardt et al., 2019; Pasetti & Conte, 2021).

Other indexes have chosen to in-depth focus on one specific sub-areas. For example, Leblang's dual citizenship database (Leblang, 2017) and the MACIMIDE Global Expatriate Dual Citizenship Database (Vink et al., 2015) exclusively address the loss or renunciation of citizenship after the voluntary acquisition of the citizenship of one state by a citizen of another state. Vikhrov's visa index (Vikhrov, 2017) focuses on visa restrictions for country pairs. The index is based on three types of entry visa restrictions: visa required, visa not required for short stays and visa not required. The author identifies country pairs which changed their visa regime during 1998–2010.

Other indexes take into consideration only particular categories of migrants. For example, Lowell (2005) created an index to analyse policies for high-skilled immigrant workers. Similarly, Czaika and Parsons (2017) assessed policies aimed to attract and select high-skilled workers. IMMEX (Immigration for employment index) compared admission programmes for immigrant workers in general and high-skilled migrant workers (Migration Policy Group, 2012).

Overall, researchers have most often focused on immigration policies, which refers to policies for people that enter in a country of which they are not citizens (immigrants), rather than emigration policies, which address people of a country of which they are citizens that move to another countries (Palop Garcia & Pedroza, 2019).

Although mixing immigration and emigration policies would not be correct, as they refer to two different policy frameworks, it would be interesting to have a comprehensive overview of both for one country or for pairs of countries that are linked by migration flows—e.g., for Chinese migrants in the US, China and US. This comprehensive information would allow researchers to understand the policies that migrants are subject to and the—possibly, different—attitudes that a country has towards immigrants and emigrants. For example, in some countries, it is more difficult to acquire the citizenship for a person born in the country from foreign

parents than for people born in a foreign country from national parents. Only a few indexes focus on emigration and diaspora policies (e.g., EMIX, IMISEM, Diaspora Engagement Policies; Diaspora policies—see section below).

In conclusion, [admission policies](#), and policy on residence and [citizenship acquisition](#) have been widely addressed, while migration governance and policies on [illegal migration, return, and expulsion](#) have been less frequently analysed (Bjerre et al., 2015; Scipioni & Urso, 2018; Palop Garcia & Pedroza, 2019; Solano & Huddleston, 2021), it emerges that. We are going to focus more in detail on the topics and areas covered by existing indexes in the following section.

## 24.3 Migration Policy Areas

### 24.3.1 *Citizenship*

[Citizenship policies](#) are the most frequently indexed areas of migration policy. The most comprehensive and longitudinal dataset on the citizenship policies of countries of origin is the MACIMIDE Global Expatriate Dual Citizenship database (Vink et al., 2015), which currently covers policies in 200 countries since 1960. The most frequently indexed policies are the citizenship policies of countries of residence. Of these, the most comprehensive, in-depth, reliable and up-to-date indicators are the CITLAW indicators from the Global Citizenship Observatory (GlobalCit: Vink & Bauböck, 2013). These indicators cover the modes of acquisition (i.e. *ius sanguinis*, *ius soli*, ordinary naturalisation and special naturalisation) and loss (renunciation and involuntary loss) based on 45 basic indicators measuring the degrees of inclusion and freedom of choice for the target group of a legal provision. These policy indicators were developed in the European regional context and then adapted and expanded globally by national citizenship legal experts. These indicators allow for the design of citizenship regimes based on the respective purposes of these modes of citizenship acquisition and loss (Vink & Bauböck, 2013).

Several other indexes use a small number of core indicators to capture the ordinary naturalisation policies in approximately 40–50 countries of residence, mostly in the developed world. The most comprehensive and reliable set of indicators after GlobalCit's CITLAW are the MIPEX indicators on access to nationality (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). Among the smaller-scale indexes, the most common indicators are tolerance of dual nationality, the presence of birthright citizenship (*ius soli*) as well as the minimum residence duration and language/civic integration requirements for ordinary naturalisation. Recurring indicators are the level of entitlement vs. discretion for ordinary naturalisation, the costs/economic resource requirements, the existence of other civic integration measures and the provisions for specific groups, such as spouses of nationals and beneficiaries of international protection. In this area, CITIMP (Citizenship Implementation indicators) provides a contribution by moving from law to practice and capturing the opportunities and obstacles within the ordinary naturalisation procedure (Bauböck et al., 2013). Few of

these indexes offer longitudinal datasets, with policies dating back to the post-war era and, in the case of Peters' and Shin's, back to the late eighteenth century (Peters, 2015; Shin, 2017).

### 24.3.2 Admission

Like citizenship policies, **admission policies** are significantly over-represented among migration policy indicators and indexes. These indexes reflect more recent academic debates over the supposed trade-off between the number vs. rights of immigrants and the determinants and effects of legal channels on migration flows and integration outcomes. Admission policies indexes are relatively new and fragmented. The most covered channels are labour migration and family reunification as opposed to asylum/refugees and international students. All four channels are included in the most comprehensive admission policies indexes, such as DEMIG (Determinants of International Migration: de Haas et al., 2015), IMPALA (International Migration Policy and Law Analysis: Beine et al., 2016), IMPIC (Immigration Policies in Comparison: Helbling et al., 2017) and MGI (Migration Governance Index). Among these, IMPIC offers the greatest thematic, geographical, and temporal scope as well as reliable data collection through national experts. The United Nations' Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development gathers information from governments of 206 countries on the existence of policies concerning the annual level of regular channels, highly-skilled workers and **family reunification**. In addition to these comprehensive indexes, specific channels are also well-covered by more sectoral indexes: family reunification and permanent residence by MIPEX and **low- and high-skilled labour migration** by CERNA (Cerna, 2014), IMMEX (Migration Policy Group, 2012), Klugman and Pereira's (2009) index, and Ruhs (2018). Few of these indexes (e.g. IMPIC, Klugman and Pereira, Ruhs) expand their geographical scope to cover both developed and developing countries of destination.

In terms of the design of the indicators, channels are rarely measured in the same way. Small-scale indexes tend to only capture the presence or absence of a specific admission channel. Among the more in-depth indexes, the most common indicators are eligibility criteria (i.e. definition of labour shortage, family, protection), quotas/limits, costs/economic resource requirements, language/civic requirements, and provisions on rights and equal treatment with nationals. Labour migration channels and family reunification channels are measured with similar indicators in IMPIC, IMMEX and MIPEX. Asylum admission channels are consistently measured based on policies specific to the international protection regime. Asylum indicators attempt to measure key aspects of the asylum procedure and the scope of different protection statuses.



### 24.3.3 *Integration*

The number of [integration policy](#) indexes and indicators reflects the long-standing academic debate about the supposed centrality of integration and citizenship ‘models’ and their determinants and effects on integration outcomes. Several of these indexes attempt to conceptualise different models and dimensions of integration: multiculturalism by the Multicultural Policy Index (Banting & Kymlicka, [2013](#)), individual vs. cultural rights by the Index of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants (ICRI: Koopmans et al., [2012](#)), civic integration by CIVIX (Goodman, [2010](#)), social protection by MiTSoPro (Lafleur & Vintila, [2021](#)) or emigrant vs. immigrant integration policies by IMISEM. These indexes are some of the most in-depth sets of indicators. While these indexes use different indicators and research teams, their results seem to be relatively robust and reliable as high correlations emerge between them. Differences nevertheless emerge in terms of their thematic, geographic, and temporal scope.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX: Huddleston et al., [2015](#); Solano & Huddleston, [2020](#)) lays claim to being “the most comprehensive, reliable and used tool to compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants”. MIPEX includes one of the largest number of areas of integration policy, indicators and a large network of national experts and peer reviewers. The current scope of MIPEX are policies in eight key areas of integration: labour market mobility, family reunification, education, health, permanent residence, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination. MIPEX’s recent companion tool on the specific situation for beneficiaries of international protection is the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM). Developed with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) based on their normative standards, NIEM uses a similar number of indicators, areas, and experts to compare the laws, policies, and implementation for refugees and for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

These integration policy indexes tend to use several dozen indicators to capture the main areas of integration in approximately 40–50 countries of residence, mostly in the Global North. A few comprehensive indexes, such as the UN Inquiry and MGI, superficially touch on key integration areas with one-or-two indicators. Among the specific integration policy indexes, the most common areas covered are employment rights, family reunification, voting and political rights, citizenship, and anti-discrimination. A few indexes also explicitly cover civic integration and cultural/religious rights (e.g., ICRI, Koopmans et al., [2012](#)). Rarer are policy indicators on social protection, housing, health, education, training, language learning or social cohesion. The benchmark for comparison is often equal treatment with nationals or a broader framework of opportunities/obstacles or liberal/restrictive.

### 24.3.4 *Governance*

The topic of migration governance has received scant attention in the field of migration policy indicators. The majority of existing indexes has focused on the

laws and policies produced rather than on the decision-making process. Although the concept of governance is rather blurred (see Chap. 19 of this volume; Pierre & Peters, 2000), governance encompasses both the “manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources” (World Bank, 1992, p. 66), and “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)” (United Nations, 2009, p. 1). Migration governance refers to these spheres concerning migration and migrant integration.

Two sets of indicators have addressed governance regulating international migration in depth: the Migration Governance Index (MGI) from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development from the United Nations (UN). The MGI represents one of the most important references when it comes to migration governance. Since 2015, it has assessed the policy framework of 50 countries. It is composed of 90+ indicators sorted in six dimensions of the Migration Governance Framework (i.e., migrant rights, whole of government approach, well-being of migrants, partnerships, mobility dimension of crises, and safe, orderly and regular migration). Each indicator refers to absence, partial or complete presence of a policy or framework. On governance, MGI focus on the presence of an institutional framework and structure, a migration strategy, a certain degree of Institutional transparency and coherence, and a process of gathering of data and information.

The Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development gathers information on migration governance, migrant integration, migration, and development and forced migration in 206 countries. On migration governance, the Inquiry addresses government strategies and a dedicated ministry/department/unit on migration and integration as well as monitoring mechanisms on these topics. Furthermore, the Inquiry has a set of indicators on the direction of the implemented policies, e.g., whether they aim at raising or reducing the number of migrants.

### ***24.3.5 Irregular Migration, Expulsion and Return Policies***

Policies on [irregular migration](#), [expulsion](#), and [return](#) concern both expulsion of and voluntary return of migrants. These policies have been addressed less frequently than others by researchers. To our knowledge, no previous project has exclusively focused on these kinds of policy.

On *irregular migration and expulsion of migrants*, indexes have normally focused on the following three aspects: sanctions for irregular migrants (imprisonment and/or expulsion); grounds for expulsion (e.g., criminal conviction); and formal mechanisms for regularisation of irregular migrants.

The Index of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants (ICRI: Koopmans et al., 2012), which analyses the factors shaping the granting of rights and the recognition of cultural differences to migrants in EU and non-EU countries, has one of the most complete sets of indicators on the topic. The index has a strand on expulsion, which

combines grounds for expulsion (years of criminal conviction and welfare dependence) and the different categories of migrants (short-term residents, long-term residents, second-generation migrants). The Nationalist Immigration and Integration Policy (NIIP: Akkerman, 2012) measures legislative changes regarding immigration and integration policies in 9 European countries. The author addresses several aspects linked to irregular migrants and expulsion, including grounds for expulsion, detention measures, regularisation procedures, and access to basic goods for irregular migrants and rights for their children. Finally, Peters' (2015) set of indicators provide a contribution to the study of expulsion policies by addressing the administrative/judicial process, including safeguard criteria and checks.

On *voluntary return* of legal migrants, existing indexes address policies to promote and facilitate the return of migrants in the countries of origin. For example, the Dashboard of indicators for measuring policy and institutional coherence for migration and development (PICMD: Hong & Knoll, 2016), which measures the extent to which policies and institutional arrangements are coherent with international best practices in the field of migration and development, addresses policies to promote reintegration of emigrants (programmes, funding, benefits). The above-mentioned Emigrant Policies Index (Pedroza & Palop-García, 2017) analyses the presence of return programmes—including benefits for returnees (e.g., recognition of academic qualifications, tax exemption)—and integration programmes for them. The Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development interestingly adopts the perspective of both the country of origin and of destination, as it includes indicators on return policies for citizens living abroad and for migrants in the country of destination that want to come back to their countries of origin.

### 24.3.6 *Emigration/Diaspora Policies*

Another understudied migration policy area is the one on emigration and *diaspora engagement policies*, which relate to the country of origin rather than the country of destination. Countries of origin have developed policies to regulate economic, political, or social links with their emigrants. These policies “vary in scope and nature between different countries and include measures as diverse as dual citizenship policies, programs to stimulate remittances, the right to vote in the home country from abroad, and the creation of government agencies to administer emigrant issues” (Pedroza & Palop-García, 2017, p. 165).

One of the most comprehensive sets of indicators in terms of topics covered and indicators is the Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX: Pedroza & Palop-García, 2017; Palop Garcia & Pedroza, 2021). EMIX focuses on emigration policies in developing countries and it analyses the policies of 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries. It is composed of ten policy areas related to emigrants: citizenship policies, electoral rights, institutional consultation, external obligations, economic policies, social policies, political competition abroad, symbolic policies, cultural policies and exit

and transit policies. Beside these areas, EMIX considers the administrative structures created to design and implement policies abroad (consular services and structures).

Two other projects stand out, the Diaspora Engagement Policies and the Diaspora policies sets of indicators (Gamlen, 2008; Ragazzi, 2014). The Diaspora Engagement Policies dataset (Gamlen, 2008) reviews how a large number of both developing and developed countries relate to their diasporas. It includes three types of diaspora engagement policy: policies to cultivate diasporic identities and community structures (e.g., diaspora programs or offices); rights for emigrants (e.g., recognition of dual citizenship; voting rights; bilateral agreements); obligations from emigrants (taxation rules; facilitating remittances). The Diaspora policies dataset (Ragazzi, 2014) includes 35 developed and developing countries from all around the world. The author employs indicators that cover the following areas: symbolic, religious, and cultural policies (e.g., cultural centres abroad); social and economic policies (e.g., welfare provision and investment schemes); citizenship policies (e.g., citizenship acquisition and loss); government and bureaucratic control (e.g., mobility restrictions for citizens who want to go abroad).

## 24.4 Characteristics of Existing Indexes

Indicators and indexes have the purpose of understanding the nature of migration policy and of allowing for cross-country comparison over time and monitoring of the evolution of policy frameworks. Therefore, the indexes' geographical and temporal coverage is particularly relevant.

A recent review of migration indexes shows that most of them do not cover more than 25 countries, most frequently less than 20 (Solano & Huddleston, 2021). However, existing indexes widely vary in the number of countries covered—from one to 200+ countries covered. The UN Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development has the widest geographical coverage, as it covers 206 countries, both developed and developing countries. Focusing on a more limited topic, the MACIMIDE Global Expatriate Dual Citizenship Database (Vink et al., 2015) covers dual citizenship for migrants in 200 countries.

Many indexes analyse European countries—often EU Member States—or, at best, OECD/developed countries. Countries such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are among the ones that are almost always included in the analyses. Some exceptions to this tendency are represented by sets of indicators that address emigration and diaspora policies, such as EMIX (Emigrant Policies Index: Pedroza & Palop-García, 2017; Palop Garcia & Pedroza, 2021) and IMISEM (Every Immigrant Is an Emigrant) from the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Klugman and Pereira's index (Klugman & Pereira, 2009), the Diaspora Policies (Ragazzi, 2014) and the Diaspora Engagement Policies (Gamlen, 2008), which focus on both developing and developed countries.

The temporal coverage of existing indexes is limited, as most of them focus on a limited number of years. Most frequently, indexes cover one or 2 years. However,

there are indexes that encompass more years such as CITRIX (Citizenship Regime Inclusiveness Index, Schmid, 2021), Commitment to Development Index (Centre for Global Development, 2018), ECN index (Index of fees and economic requirements for naturalisation: Stadlmair, 2018), IMPIC (Helbling et al., 2017), Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development, Multiculturalism Policy Index (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013), and MIPEX (Huddleston et al., 2015; Solano & Huddleston, 2020). This is sometimes done by assessing policies for either a number of continuous years or every  $n$  years. IMPIC, which covers four decades (1980–2018), and MIPEX, which spans 12 years (2007–2019), are examples of the former, while the Multiculturalism Policy Index (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013) is an example of the latter, as it covers 1980, 2000 and 2010.

Furthermore, as indexes have been developed by sociologists and political scientists. The majority of indexes focuses on contemporary age, while a historic perspective is missing. One of the noteworthy exceptions to this trend is the set of indicators developed by Timmer and Williams (1998), who analysed the development of migration policies for the period 1860–1930 in five countries that were relevant immigration countries at that time (Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and the United States). Other exceptions are Peters' set of indicators (2015) and the Authoritarian Immigration Policy index (Shin, 2017), which cover immigration policies from the late eighteenth century through the early twenty-first century.

## 24.5 Conclusions

This chapter summarises the existing literature on migration policy indicators and indexes, which have been used over the last decades to measure the nature of migration policy frameworks and to compare them across different countries and periods of time.

Although high in number, previous projects have mainly focused on OECD/developed countries and immigration policies. Developing countries and emigration policies have been largely neglected. Underlined by Palop Garcia and Pedroza (2019), this is linked to three main factors: first, scholars and researchers working on this topic are mainly from organisations and institutions from the developed world, and the debate in these countries mainly focuses on immigration policies; second, availability of funding is higher in developed countries and this leads researchers to focus on those countries; and third, conducting research in countries with relatively harmonised legal and policy systems, as EU Member States are, is easier and more feasible.

As indexes are often the product of one-off projects (Scipioni & Urso, 2018), they normally cover the years of the project and, sometimes, some years back (through back-scoring). Researchers have difficulties in updating the indexes after the end of the projects and therefore fail to regularly update them. This poses some limits to the monitoring purpose of these indexes and to the analysis of the evolution of the nature of migration policy frameworks (Helbling & Solano, 2021). Furthermore, previous

projects have addressed some topics and policy areas, while others remain rather unexplored. Admission, residence and citizenship acquisition policies have been the focus of many indexes. By contrast, emigration policies, migration governance, and irregular migration, expulsion and return policies have been addressed less frequently (Solano & Huddleston, 2021).

The field also lacks a gender perspective. While indicators account for the different kinds of migrants by status or skills (see Scipioni & Urso, 2018),—e.g., distinguishing between labour migrants and refugees or between high-skilled and low-skilled migrants—a gender perspective has rarely been introduced. Some indices on integration indeed include questions on gender, but such focus is always very marginal and there is no index that systematically compares differences in policies for migrant men and women (Solano, 2021).

To tackle these gaps, future research should focus on widening the geographical scope of the analysis—including, for example, developing countries—and adding a gender perspective to the study of migration policy. Furthermore, future projects need to address understudied migration policy areas such as emigration policies and migration governance.

In conclusion, the chapter provides an overview of the field of migration policy indicators as a tool to undertake systematic comparisons of migration policies at the national level (Fig. 24.3).

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**Fig. 24.3** Recommended readings

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**Part VI**  
**Methods in Migration Studies**

## Chapter 25

# Qualitative Methods in Migration Research



Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Evren Yalaz

The unprecedented demographic transformations due to global human mobility and its multifaceted social, political, and economic consequences in both countries of reception and origin, have motivated an increase of interest in having reliable information and deeper knowledge about migratory patterns and the subsequent accommodation of diversity issues both by policymakers and scholars. This is especially true considering that there is a general consensus that this phenomenon is a long-term trend of our more recent history, and it is featured by being complex and unpredictable while giving rise to a permanent atmosphere of uncertainty. We need methodological tools for increasing the understanding of our basic questions on why people move, why they move to certain countries rather than others, what we can do about forced migrants' vulnerable situations, and how we can link cohesion and diversity, human rights, and security, and a long list of issues and frameworks that shape migration studies today. To have a universal toolkit for producing knowledge is almost a naive request. What we have learned after several decades of research is that migration research needs to be sited and contextualised (King, 2018), and always placed within a given process (Zapata-Barrero, 2018). Most migration-related problems have to do with how people perceive them and behave accordingly, rather than having objective value-free understandings. In other words, **migration research is mostly about interpretations rather than facts**. Hence, there is an importance to digging into a methodological technique that has a particular role in producing knowledge by analysing how people, institutions, and governments interpret human mobility and diversity dynamics.

The use of qualitative research (QR) is one of the key imprints of how migration research has been developed over recent decades (Yalaz & Zapata-Barrero, 2018). The prominence of qualitative research in the research database of the [Migration](#)

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**Research Hub** makes this trend clear. This interpretative turn is currently providing a growing set of studies based on fieldwork, case, and multi-sited studies, that provides us with mainstreaming patterns and evidence that are driving the development of the migration research field and inform policy and social decision makers.

But what are QR's main pillars? First, it provides us with a series of techniques to explore in detail how people, organisations, and structures shape the reality where they exist and how far all the reality is conceptually mediated. This approach is often labelled as constructivist, because it focuses on understanding how people/organisations/structures construct the environment and how, at the same time, the environment shapes their perceptions. The premise is always that the migration environment, policies, narratives, and practices, cannot be viewed as external value-free facts, but always as a reality that has been politically and socially constructed. Hence the importance of having a set of methods to deconstruct these cognitive processes and take for granted that migration-related challenges and conflicts are outcomes of a multiplicity of interpretations that often enter into tension and are viewed as irreconcilable. To understand a conflict is to assume that behind a conflict there is always a web of interpretations, a web of concepts, and a web of particular contextual circumstances which need to be inferred through the use of qualitative techniques (Zapata-Barrero, 2018). This heuristic process of "interpreting interpretations", of understanding the reality, rather than only explaining it, pose several epistemological challenges that the research needs to raise for the sake of producing reliable information and knowledge. We also need to identify the distinctive features and ethical issues that the researcher may encounter in drawing the research design and implementing it. Given the brevity of this chapter, our aim is to provide what we consider to be the nuts and bolts of carrying out QR in migration studies.

## **25.1 Raising Epistemological Awareness in Qualitative Research and Its Relevance for Migration Studies**

Raising awareness of epistemological questions is key before and during the process of QR. The way we deal with these questions will have an impact on the quality of information and knowledge that the researcher will collect and produce, the potential to convince the large public in general, and the academic community in particular. If we roughly define epistemology as the second-order reflection on the different ways one generates knowledge, including questions of who produces it and how we communicate it, as well as how we ensure the impact of this knowledge, and also who can benefit from it, become straightforward questions one needs to answer from the very beginning. Given that qualitative research deals with subjectivities and perceptions of people/organisations/structures, pre-conceptions, and assumptions behind most of individual behaviors, institutional practices and policies, these epistemological questions become even more consubstantial to filter the fluidity of

information one has to deal with, and discriminate its meaningfulness given the research question guiding his/her research.

The first key epistemological challenges are related to objectivity of information collected and knowledge produced, and how to ensure that the same researcher takes a necessary distance from its object of study and prevents the potential influence he/she can have when selecting and categorising information. These are the key issues behind the required self-positionality and self-reflectivity. The way one is related to sources of information is also a key epistemological issue, as well as the way the same researcher views migration studies as a research area capable of influencing reality.

As QR deals with perceptions, interpretations, subjectivities, and opinions, how to ensure the *objectivity* of findings in carrying out QR in migration studies is one of the key epistemological challenges. QR works then with a different understanding of objectivity in comparison with quantitative analysis. Objectivity in qualitative research is a great challenge, since instead of following the routes of quantity of collecting information, it combines this with quality of differentiated information required. Iosifides (2018) insists, for instance, that objectivity must always be seen in intersubjective terms, that is, it contains the plurality of differentiated subjective views of a given fact. Technically speaking, objectivity is linked with saturation of information, or the fact that we ensure that we have identified the differentiated variety of information on a given perception of a fact or a process. In other words, for more application to the same technique to different persons/institutions, we will not produce new and differentiated information. When we assume this circle is closed, then we have not only saturated the information, but we can say that the information collected is objective. This saturation technique is one distinctive feature of sampling in qualitative research (Barglowski, 2018) and it is used by researchers not only as an indicator of quality (Guest et al., 2006), but also as a technique that hampers content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Once collected, a process of categorisation and content analysis takes place, namely a process of knowledge production. At this second stage, objectivity requires here the techniques of research that will be introduced in the next section.

The current migratory scenario also stimulates humanitarian engagements and heightens the need to consider your own positionality and reflexivity. The concept of *self-positionality* helps us to directly address questions about the place of the migration researcher and their relations with the object of study. It invites the researcher, as a social scientist, to view him/her-self in the immediate external and internal surroundings of the object being researched. The neutrality, impartiality and/or involvement in the future of the participants are directly addressed. Self-positionality is a researcher's attitude inviting researchers to analyse its own system of assumptions and pre-judgements, cultural and ideological assets, convention and norms framework that may interfere in the research process. Even if it is assumed that a complete abstraction of oneself is difficult, even humanly impossible, since the decision to interpret or not to interpret is not open to human beings (Ball, 1995, p. 7), an effort is required to ensure distance from the values and web of knowledge surrounding the same participant. Self-positionality requires social, political, and

cultural distancing and it is always preferable that the research does not belong to the same micro-environment as the participant. In this self-positionality process, migration researchers face various dilemmas about how to position themselves during their fieldwork. This includes questions of social class, but also, depending on the topic under research, can raise questions related to ethnicity, religion, ideology, gender, and so forth. For instance, can a researcher work on its same ethnic background? This highly debated insider/outsider dilemma raises elastic questions of how much disconnection is necessary for a scientific observation and how much participation is needed to approach the phenomenon under study (Iosifides, 2018; Carling et al., 2014; Pustulka et al., 2019). The dividing line between separation and participation and engagement is not a universal matter, but always depends on the contextual needs of the same researcher, given their guiding question. These positionality questions lead us towards reflexivity. Therefore, it is important that researchers develop a critical self-reflexivity and be aware of how their own positionality may take complex and contradictory forms.

*Self-Reflexivity* is a complementary angle that qualitative migration research needs to address. It helps to ensure we have a holistic perception of the object under our analytical scrutiny and even it allows us to broaden zoom of the same methodological process (these epistemological issues can be viewed as reflexivity thinking). It is sometimes better expressed as a mirror effect to how the researcher is conducting his/her study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Lofland et al., 2006; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2012). It is often viewed as a “check point” in the research, involving that neither the role of the researcher nor that of the participants can be assumed (Fedyuk & Zentai, 2018, p. 181).

One of the assets of these second-order thinking requirements is that during all the stages of the research process it generates critical-thinking towards the information being collected, the conditions under which this information was collected and it may include the same influence of the researcher. For articulating self-reflexivity, it is often advisable to keep a research diary, where one take notes of all the circumstances when applying QR techniques. This can be a valuable reference framework to later interpret this information. Self-reflexivity helps the researcher avoid pre-judgements and influences of cultural and conventional systems on the same interpretative process. It also always help to keep an epistemological radar alert on how the same collection and interpretation of information can be socially and political influenced by the researchers own environment.

Combining self-positionality and self-reflexivity carry on necessarily a critical conscience (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012) and have a situational stance and connect the research towards perspectivism, which necessarily invites the researcher towards a permanent self-criticism about how oneself conducts the research. It also produces reflections on the same social-class and power positions of the same researcher, which may influence the hermeneutic task of “interpreting the interpretations of others”.

This same combination of self-positionality and self-reflexivity can be made to the same way scholars in general are conducting research and producing knowledge on migration. Exploring questions on how knowledge is produced, who benefits

from this knowledge,<sup>1</sup> and why the same facts may have differentiated centres of knowledge production. Further, we can even also wonder why some knowledge is hidden or why it circulates through parallel routes from the mainstream.<sup>2</sup> Issues such as the gap between knowledge and politics/policies, or the fact that there may be a “political use of knowledge” (Boswell, 2009), may also belong to these two second-order thoughts but made on behalf of migration studies. Following this path, eurocentrism and postcolonialism may nurture a debate, but also contested discussions about what is true information and fake migration related news. How migration-related knowledge circulates and influences perceptions and interpretations of the realities of migration is also a necessary epistemological exercise for migrant scholars. Finally, but not least substantial, this epistemological awareness applied to the same migration studies may allow us to enter in current evidence-based policy debates (Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019) or the claim that we need to close the gap between **knowledge and policies**. In the last resort, struggling against these epistemological challenges may also help the researcher to avoid generalisations and oversimplifications on migration issues, so often followed by citizens and politicians.

## 25.2 Designing Qualitative Migration Research (QMR)

Designing qualitative research is best understood through a “process-oriented perspective” (Flick, 2009, p. 4). While traditional quantitative designs tend to have a linear logic, where stages of research questions, hypotheses, theoretical frameworks, empirical data collection, verification, interpretation, and conclusion can follow each other consecutively and relatively independent of each other, this is rarely the case in qualitative research. The stages of qualitative research often move in a circular way, which makes the researchers reflect on the whole process at each stage. This circular logic can be frustrating since none of the research steps are truly complete until the end of the research process. The circular research process has another dimension for migration researchers. Migration is a dynamic phenomenon. Forms and volumes of mobility, socio-political context of sending and receiving countries, public debates around migration, perceived problems, and reactions change rapidly. Countries like Ireland, Spain and Italy that were once sending are now countries of immigration. Diverse and fragmented flows pose real challenges to academics that strive to explore contemporary migration (Borkert et al., 2006). Considering how time-intensive most qualitative research is, it is often the case that what is being studied changes along with the research process. Therefore, migration researchers, not only

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<sup>1</sup>The question of who may potentially benefit from the knowledge produced is an important ethical enquiry (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020).

<sup>2</sup>The role knowledge plays at the level of migration politics, policies and actors involved is well addressed by Boswell (2009).



revise their initial ideas and assumptions during the circular research process, but also reflect on the very dynamic nature of the phenomenon under study.

Qualitative research process involves active decision making at all stages. Starting with deciding the main purpose of the study, it keeps on with formulating the research questions that serve best to the main research objective, choosing the theoretical framework that defines the main assumptions and concepts, defining the empirical data collection strategy, deciding how to access the field, which specific data collection methods to use, whom/what to include in the sample, and when to stop the data collection process and start with the analysis. As the research progresses, revising and refining keep on in a back-and-forth manner. For example, discovery of some new and unexpected findings can make researchers revise, re-formulate, or in some cases change their main questions. Again, it will be the researchers themselves who decide about whether and the extent of which the newly discovered information is relevant to their study and whether and what kind of revisions need to take place in their research design.

There is no magical formula to design good qualitative migration research. However, there are three key questions that must be asked throughout the entire research process:

- *What* is this research about?
- *Why* is it important?
- *How* will it be carried out?

The first question clarifies what you are working on and develops a clear focus. The same migration phenomenon -for example, think about the topics of mobility, integration, or migration policies- can be studied through many different angles focusing on different questions. Therefore, a good qualitative research design starts with a clear purpose, which is focused but not too narrow; flexible enough to accommodate the modifications during the research process; socially, politically, or theoretically relevant that produces useful knowledge; and methodologically feasible that can be studied empirically considering the available resources (Lewis, 2003). Research questions that are designed too broadly provide no guidance for the empirical study. On the other hand, too narrow questions hardly contribute to the overall scholarship and can even “block rather than promote new discoveries” (Flick, 2009, p. 129). For instance, let’s think about the question of whether immigration leads to social conflict. If it is not specified and clarified further, the way it is framed provides little empirical guidance and produces many more questions—such as what type of immigration, in what type of settlement, and what type of conflict—than answers. Moreover, it does not help the research design to flesh out the complex causal mechanism of the migration-conflict nexus. The social reality is often much more tangled than “yes, it does” or “no, it does not” type of answers. So instead of “whether or not” type of questions, asking “when”, “how”, and “why” would provide better guidance for empirical inquiry. Dancygier (2010, p. 3) studies this topic through the questions of: “Why do we observe clashes between immigrants and natives in some locations, but not in others?” and “Why are some immigrant groups likely to become targets of native opposition, while

others are more often engaged in conflicts with the state?”. These questions enable the researcher to design a clear empirical strategy that consists of cross-location and cross-group comparisons.

Qualitative research can carry various purposes. Marshall and Rossman (2010) conceptualise four types of qualitative research purposes: *Description* to document the researched phenomenon (e.g. what are the characteristics of migratory flows in a specific context? What are the social reactions they provoke? What are the policy responses?); *Exploration* to discover main categories and generate hypotheses (e.g. what are the salient patterns or categories of migratory flows? How are these flows linked to each other?), *Explanation* to explain the patterns and to identify plausible relationships (e.g. what is the role of economic scarcity on immigrant/native conflict? In what ways migrants’ economic integration affect their social and political integration?), and *Emancipatory* purposes to engage in social action (e.g. what are the best practices to minimise social conflict and promote peaceful co-existence?). Multiple purposes can be carried out through the same research. For example, researchers often start with a description before engaging in exploration and explanation. A good research design is the one that clearly identifies the main purposes upfront.

The second question—*why* is this research important?—makes you to think about the specific contribution that you are making through your research. It asks why others must care about your study. There are various potential ways of contributing. Claiming that your topic is under-explored, or your case study has never been studied before does not by itself justify the importance of your research. Qualitative studies are often well equipped to make contributions by challenging “conventional generalizations and social stereotypes” (Yin, 2010, p. 221). For instance, qualitative migration research is good at unpacking the category of migrants and examining the crosscutting and intersecting identities. Some examples include King et al. (2017) that unpack the aging-migration nexus; Runfors (2016) that empirically shows the problems of the use of “ethnic lens” and brings in the perspectives of racialisation and transnationalism; or Kunz (2020) that explores the everyday socio-cultural production of the categories of “migrant” and “expatriate”.

Qualitative research is not only good for scrutinising the existing conceptions and theories, it also has a great potential for generating new hypotheses, coining new terms and concepts, and developing new theories. While quantitative research has the comparative advantage for theory testing and verification; the discovery of theory grounded in systematically collected empirical data can be considered as one of the distinctive aspects of qualitative research. In qualitative research, innovative thinking and discovery does not stem from so-called armchair contemplation but takes place in a bottom-up way as researchers collect and work through their data. As Glaser and Strauss (2006, p. 6) put it: “Generating a theory involves a process of research”. Migration Studies is one of the richest fields in terms of generating new theories and concepts. This is mainly because of the close tie of migration research with the research context. For example, Favell (2008), through his in-depth ethnographic study, coins the terms “Eurostars” and “Eurocities” and explores highly skilled and educated migration in an integrating Europe.

Qualitative research can also make a contribution by calling for action i.e. calling for public policy changes, social justice, and participatory knowledge production. The use of participatory methodologies is quite new in the field of migration studies (Mata-Codesal et al., 2020). Through participatory methodologies, researchers take the ethical stance that aims to eliminate hierarchical relations between researchers and participants and recognises the participants as co-producers of knowledge. Participatory research strategies are particularly important when conducting research with vulnerable migrants, where the power discrepancies are starkly pronounced, and the research ethics needs careful considerations.

The third question—*how* will the research be carried out?—makes researchers conscious of their methodological choices that provide the tools to carry out their research. Research objectives and questions determine which methodological tools are needed to answer them, not the other way around. As Creswell (2007, p. 101) puts it: “(t)he design of a qualitative study begins before the researcher chooses a qualitative approach. It begins by the researcher stating the problem . . . , formulating the central purpose of the study, and providing the research questions”. That is why the choice of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs cannot be the starting point of a research process but must be followed by the choice of research objectives and questions.

Migration researchers need to be conscious of how different methodological approaches and tools produce varied understandings of the same phenomenon. For example, Harries et al. (2019) demonstrates how bringing different methodological tools together (Census statistics, qualitative interviews, document analysis, and historical analysis) enabled them to challenge the ways in which diversity assumes an objective reality and reveal multiple representations of diversity in Cheetham Hill. The Census data provided them with the ethnic composition details of the research site. They could explore the lived experience of different ethnic groups as well as how diversity categories are perceived through the qualitative interviews.

Qualitative research tools are diverse and serve different purposes. One of the key distinctions is made between naturally occurring and generated data (Lewis, 2003, p. 56). Researchers choose naturally occurring data -such as observation, document analysis, discourse and conversational analysis- when they are interested in exploring the researched phenomenon in its natural context with a minimum intervention. On the other hand, generated data -such as interviews, focus groups, photo elicitation, mental mapping- are produced out of the natural setting for research purposes. While naturally occurring data mainly rely on researchers’ interpretation of what is being studied, participants have a direct opportunity to explain themselves and convey their own interpretation in generated data (Lewis, 2003, p. 57). Two main types of generated data—individual interviews and focus groups—also play different roles. Individual interviews are good for in-depth exploration of individual accounts. Focus groups, in addition to revealing individual opinions, generate group discussion and provide information on group consensus, conflicts, and interaction (Cyr, 2015). While a research design can use multiple data collection tools, it is important to have a good justification for each added method.

Starting a qualitative migration research fieldwork study brings up many questions such as how to gain access to the field e.g. individuals, groups, institutions, organisations under the study; whom to include in the study; how to negotiate researcher's position in the field; how to build rapport and gain trust while ensuring the ethical conduct. Below, we will address some key issues that migration researchers face while conducting their qualitative fieldwork and discuss their research ethics implications.

**Entering the field:** Gaining access to the research site and participants can be particularly challenging for migration scholars, because they might be working on a group of people who are mobile and hard to track down; undocumented and not visible in local registries; and/or are vulnerable in different ways that their research participation needs to be supported rather than assumed. It is a common practice to gain access through gatekeepers (like community leaders) and key participants. Yet, migration researchers need to be aware of potential consequences of gaining access in such ways e.g. disabling the participation of certain groups or receiving biased answers influenced by the gatekeepers.

**Sampling:** One of the key differences between qualitative and quantitative research designs lies on their logic of sampling. Statistical research aims to make inferences about a larger population through a smaller sample. Therefore, having a sample as representative as possible is a key issue in statistics. Drawing a larger sample and using random sampling strategies when possible are useful practices in this sense. However, qualitative research has quite a different sampling logic. In qualitative research, relevant questions are “which cases?” rather than “how many?” (Flick, 2009, p. 31) and what these cases represent i.e. what they are “a case of” (Gerring, 2007). Therefore, qualitative research includes sampling strategies such as theoretical sampling where emerging theory determines what cases to select (Glaser & Strauss, 2006) or purposive sampling where certain cases are selected because of their specific qualities such as extreme, deviant, typical cases (Patton, 2002). Many young researchers and students ask the question of “how many cases do I need for my qualitative study to be scientific?” (see Small, 2009). There is often a common belief that the more cases we study the more representative our research is. However, as Bloemraad (2013) rightly points out that interviewing 50 immigrants instead of 40 is not inherently good, unless these 10 additional participants represent a particular category or experience that is not already covered by the first 40 interviews. In qualitative research, it is a common practice to stop adding new cases once the “theoretical saturation” is achieved i.e. nothing new emerges with additional cases (Flick, 2009, p. 138).

**Research ethics:** As institutional ethical regulations expand in social science research, there is an increasing call for field-specific and method-sensitive ethical considerations that address particular ethical issues faced by qualitative migration researchers (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020; Ullah et al., 2020). The ethical guidelines that every research must follow include respect for participants' *autonomy* i.e. ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity; responsibility to identifiable benefits (*beneficence*); responsibility to avoid harm (*nonmaleficence*); and equal treatment of participants (*justice*) (Murphy &

Dingwall, 2001). Yet, these abstract principles are too general to address the emerging ethical issues in day-to-day research practices especially in the field of migration. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers often suffer from varied sources of vulnerability and need particular ethical safeguards that are sensitive to the research context. Blindly following the formal codes may not provide real protection to these vulnerable participants and may even increase the risk of harm.

**Dissemination of research findings:** Qualitative research poses specific challenges in presenting their findings, since their data often includes narratives of the participants (Yin, 2010). Researchers need to decide what to quote, how long, when to include direct and indirect quotes, and how to include non-verbal cues. In-depth and detailed analysis of small number of cases brings up the issue of how to protect confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. While using pseudonyms is one option, it does not fully guarantee anonymity. Some findings, despite their importance and relevance, might need to be left out, if they include sensitive information that can be traced back to the participants and put them in risk. Migration research directly shapes public debates, controversies, and policymaking. Therefore, each decision at the dissemination stage -what and how to disseminate- needs to consider that it will have important and real consequences on migrants' lives.

### 25.3 Conclusion

QR has always been at the heart of migration studies. Yet, the systematic attention to methodological issues in migration studies is relatively new (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018). Studying migrants and migration-related phenomena has its own methodological challenges. While not all migrants are vulnerable, QR has an important role in exploring the lived experiences of migrants who live at the margins of their societies, informing the policymakers and stakeholders about the causes and consequences of such vulnerabilities and calling for action to change. The multi-faceted and unbounded nature of the migration phenomenon, challenges traditional research practices and requires cross-national, transnational, and inter-disciplinary methodological perspectives. Qualitative migration researchers have a key role in demonstrating the constructed nature of the categories such as 'migrant', 'undocumented', 'citizen', 'border' and so on. Even though these categories are socially and politically produced, they have real material effects on how states and societies are organised. QR, through a bottom-up knowledge production process, has a distinctive advantage in exploring how these constructed migration categories are perceived and experienced in the everyday life of individuals, organisations, and institutions. Last but not least, qualitative migration researchers must pay attention to recent calls for democratising qualitative research methods (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017). Inclusive, participatory, and emancipatory research practices not only aim to ensure research ethics, but also fundamentally transform the nature of knowledge-production in terms of "what counts as knowledge and who produces, owns, uses and benefits from it, with implications beyond that for wider social relations" (Edwards &

Brannelly, 2017, p. 272). Avoiding traditional hierarchies between researchers and participants and recognising migrants as co-producers of migration knowledge will be an important step toward democratising migration research and its methodological tools.

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# Chapter 26

## Quantitative Methods in Migration Research



Justyna Salamońska

This chapter turns to quantitative methods, conventionally seen as opposed to the qualitative ones, even if this dichotomous distinction is seen as ambiguous. In this chapter, quantitative research will be seen as an ‘umbrella’ term (Bryman, 2012), a departing point to present and discuss a range of methodological issues relevant for migration studies.

Methodology and methods differ between and within disciplines and this is also the case for migration research. On the one extreme, [economics](#) relies largely on quantitative approaches. On the other, [anthropology](#) relies largely on qualitative fieldwork, with other disciplines placing themselves in between (e.g. for a variety of methods used in population geography, see Findlay and Li (1999)). Additionally, disciplines in various regions often follow different traditions regarding the methods they use. For example, quantitative methods are prevalent in sociology and political sciences in the USA (Castles, 2012), and less popular in the UK (Payne, 2014). Recently researchers have more often resorted to mixed-method approaches (defined as combining qualitative and quantitative research, see Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) or proposed interdisciplinary research in areas such as migration and development. This adds a new level of complexity and allows uncovering the multiple facets of migration (Castles, 2012). In the last years, big data and computational social science have opened up a new and promising avenue for studying migration and mobility, raising new issues and ethical challenges (Spyratos et al., 2018; Zagheni & Weber, 2015).

This chapter engages with social surveys and experimental research as examples of quantitative approaches to studying migration. Surveys have been a much more popular choice among migration researchers than experiments, but it is the juxtaposition of the two types of research that highlights their specificities, advantages, and

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limitations. Further, the chapter discusses in more detail two topics: cross-national designs and longitudinal data. Cross-national and longitudinal studies are not the most prevalent, but they are perhaps the most challenging in quantitative research on migration and important because of the particular insights they can offer. Necessarily, quantitative methods in migration research cover a broader range of issues than this chapter will address. However—with non-specialist language for non-quantitative researchers—this chapter will aim to gently introduce the described topics whilst pointing to literature for further exploration.

## **26.1 What Is So Specific About the Survey and Experimental Research on Migration?**

### ***26.1.1 Survey Research on Migration***

More generally, in social research surveys are designed to produce systematic and structured data, to describe, in a quantitative way, selected aspects of the population under study (e.g. De Vaus, 2002; Fowler, 2014; Gideon, 2012). Over the years, surveys have also extensively been used to address the demand for [data](#) (or more [data](#)) on migration (Font & Méndez, 2013a), to provide statistics and quantitative descriptions on a wide range of topics, including, among others, the first and [second generation](#), and the process of economic, social, and political [integration](#). In general, the focus of existing studies has been more on substantive issues and less so on specific methodological challenges related to this kind of research, even if a general survey methodology applied to migration research usually requires adaptations and new strategies, in particular related to sampling and data-collection (Font & Méndez, 2013a).

Surveys, as opposed to censuses, collect information from a sample to make inferences to the whole population, when studying the whole population would be more time-, energy-, and cost-intensive. However, one of the first issues in migration research may be an operational definition of the population under study. For instance, in the context of surveying ethnic minorities in the UK, Erens (2013) highlights the very different ways in which ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ have been defined, with reference to country of birth, nationality, language, religion, skin colour, culture, and ancestry. Even if the target population is well defined, the sampling frame (a list of individuals in the population from which a sample is drawn) may be missing or it is inadequate to study selected groups of migrants, as it is a case of migrants without a legal residence status or highly mobile expats. In the face of a lack of good sampling frames, some non-random sampling strategies have been used, which do not use probability methods but other criteria for sample selection. These include, among others, Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS, originally proposed by Heckathorn (1997) to study hidden and stigmatised populations), a version of snowball sampling, which starts with an initial set of respondents, called ‘seeds’,

who initiate chain recruitment within their networks. In the RDS, unlike in snowball sampling, the recruitment process is tracked by researchers via the transfer of individualised coupons (for examples of RDS in migration research, see Johnston & Malekinejad, 2014; Tyldum & Johnston, 2014). In turn, Adaptive Cluster Sampling (ACS) can be used in case of rare populations with tendencies to cluster, like migrants of a particular ethnic origin in a city. The ACS relies on a two-step strategy, combining probability sampling and, after identifying households from the ethnic group of interest, including neighbouring addresses in the sample (Lavallée, 2014). This said, to be successful, both the RDS and ACS strategies usually require some exploratory research to gain knowledge about the population under study before the survey is carried out.

Apart from sampling, migration surveys also face specific data collection issues. In survey research where interviewers administer questionnaires, interviewers are typically trained to collect information, to persuade reluctant respondents to take part and to probe (if the respondents did not give complete answers) to ensure high data quality (de Leeuw, 2008). Nevertheless, interviewers can also become a source of bias (Groves et al., 2009), when the characteristics of the interviewer are related to the contents of the question. In migration surveys, the ethnic background of an interviewer can be, more generally, one among a set of similar characteristics shared by interviewer and respondent, and as such, it may be related to higher cooperation rates (Durrant et al., 2010). Studies that addressed the question if the interviewers from different ethnic backgrounds receive systematically different answers to the same survey questions, brought mixed results (for an overview, see Van Heelsum (2013) about different populations' surveys, research topics, and possible explanations of interviewer effect in case of interviewers from different ethnic backgrounds than respondents).

Apart from standardised interviews (administered by the interviewer), recent years also saw the development of online surveys (self-administered by respondents when it is convenient to them). While there is a general concern about bias in online research (Askitas & Zimmermann, 2015; Bethlehem, 2010), online surveys can provide new sampling strategies for migrant populations (e.g. Pötzschke & Braun, 2017). Online surveys also solve some data collection issues, in that they allow the researcher to reach a geographically dispersed population and to do so relatively fast and relatively cheap, especially compared to face-to-face interviews (for one example, see Kaša and Mieriņa's (2019) large-scale [Emigrant Communities of Latvia survey](#) describing in detail transnational and national belonging).

These difficulties related to sampling and data collection can be summed up by describing migrants as a "difficult to survey population" (Tourangeau et al., 2014). Depending on the studied group, these challenges may be multiple: migrants can be highly mobile, they can be difficult to access because of their unauthorised residence status, they can lack trust towards the destination society, they can be stigmatised, or not speak the survey language (for a more comprehensive overview of issues see Massey (2014)).

Survey research can be used on its own or in combination with other methods. Ethnosurvey is one example of a mixed-methods approach in the migration field.

Ethnosurvey is a combination of a survey using probability sampling, which is informed by and informs ethnographic fieldwork. The [Mexican Migration Project](#) utilised ethnosurvey in studying communities on both sides of the Mexico-US border. This allowed recording the richness of migration patterns (temporary and circular, return), changes in settlement status, shifts in forms of economic and social activity and recording migration without authorised status (see original articles by Massey (1987, 1999), which inspired research in other parts of the world using similar methodology).

### ***26.1.2 Experimental Research on Migration***

Social surveys are used to provide quantitative descriptions and explain patterns of association in the data, but they are limited regarding cause-effect associations, which are studied using experiments. Conventional definitions describe how the experiments usually consist of two measurements made at the beginning and the end of the experiment (that is, after the experimental treatment is administered) for the treatment group (which undergoes intervention) and the control group (which does not receive any treatment). A statistically significant difference in the amount of change between the two measurements for treatment and control groups is interpreted as the causal impact of the treatment (see handbooks by Davis (2003); Friedman & Sunder, 1994).

Unlike survey research, experimental methods have been used to a much lesser degree in migration studies and are also missing in major broad overviews of migration (as noted by Baláž and Williams (2017)). Among experimental research, quasi-experiments or natural experiments are most common. Natural experiments focus on real-life behaviour and its changes with external events, such as exchange rate shocks or natural disasters. In natural experiments, as opposed to field and laboratory ones, the researchers cannot control the sample or the change that occurs, but on the advantages side, the sample sizes are large and external validity high (Baláž & Williams, 2017). Examples of natural experiments cover research on how origin households responded to changes in exchange rates (related to the 1997 Asian financial crisis), such as Philippine overseas migrants in several destinations (Yang, 2008; Yang & Martinez, 2006); on famine and seasonal migration in Bangladesh (Bryan et al., 2013); on political shocks and skilled migration (Chand & Clemens, 2008).

Natural experiments evaluating policy interventions are sometimes referred to as “policy experiments” (McKenzie, 2012), examining the impact of migration, for instance, on income (McKenzie et al., 2010) and health (Stillman et al., 2009). This strand of research examines data coming from visa lotteries employed in some destination countries. McKenzie (2012) enlists sampling strategies, which include use of administrative data (on applicants to the lottery, both winners and losers), combined with migrant tracking (McKenzie et al., 2010); personnel records from a technology company, since many of its employees applied to the lottery (Clemens’

(2010) research on H1-B visa channel for highly skilled migrants to the US) or surveying households in the migrant-sending country for lottery winner and loser household members (Gibson et al., 2013).

In turn, field experiments or “researcher-designed experiments” are more focused on studying migration processes rather than policy interventions (McKenzie & Yang, 2010). Sampling is more often reliant on convenience sampling strategies, which bears implications for the external validity of this type of research. Some topics covered in this strand of experimental methods are savings and [remittances](#) (Ashraf et al., 2011; Chin et al., 2011); studies of [discrimination](#) faced on the labour market by job applicants with foreign experience or foreign-sounding names (Oreopoulos, 2011); or discrimination on the housing market (Bosch et al., 2010).

Laboratory experiments in migration research are rare, and they are usually conducted on small and selective samples, making external validity problematic. The focus of enquiry in laboratory experiments in experimental economics, behavioural economics, and experimental psychology differs, ranging from examining the impact of economic institutions on individual behaviour (experimental economics) to impact of individual characteristics (experimental psychology) (see Baláž and Williams (2017) also for an overview of the studies and topics).

A study by Bah and Batista (2020) exemplifies an application of an incentivised lab-in-the field game (moving the experiment from a laboratory to a more natural setting, making it closer to real-life behaviour), studying [irregular migration](#) from West Africa to Europe using hypothetical scenarios referring to the probability of death on the way to Europe and possibility of securing legal residency status in the destination.

One particular advantage of experimental research in the migration field is that it holds the potential to overcome selection challenges in studying migration. McKenzie (2012) explains that experiments allow comparisons where the reason why household members who engage in migration and those who do not engage in it, are just pure chance. Other advantages are more related to characteristics of experimental research in general, including more control to identify relationships by design; more variation, with the treatments designed by the researcher, regardless of the fact if they occur in the real world; and selectivity, with cases allocated randomly into the experimental and control groups (Baláž & Williams, 2017).

## **26.2 Selected Issues: Cross-National Designs and Longitudinal Studies**

### ***26.2.1 Cross-National Designs***

While surveys in the migration context face specific challenges, comparative cross-country designs add a new layer of complexity to a single-country study (Lynn et al., 2006). In this section, the focus will mostly be on cross-national survey research in

the context of multilingual and multicultural studies (Harkness et al., 2010a). International survey programmes and smaller-scale comparative surveys on migration draw comparable samples and prepare comparable sets of questions. Once the data is collected, the datasets from the countries involved are pooled together, and researchers seek to identify patterns and assess how these patterns differ by country. The purpose of such cross-country research, as with surveys, can be descriptive in aim or explanatory, with comparative logic used to explain similarity and variation across countries. Importantly, the challenge of comparative research is to uncover the 'real' differences between studied contexts rather than differences that can be attributed back to the methodological differences (referring to sampling, data collection process, coding frames, see De Vaus, 2008). Cross-national surveys require special methodological considerations which allow studying and comparing results on two or more populations of interest, including issues at the different stages of the survey process, design of questions and pretests, translation and adaptation, data collection, documentation, harmonisation, quality frameworks, and analysis (Harkness et al., 2010b).

Crucially, cross-national surveys can vary in a way in which they are deliberately designed comparatively, with regards to sampling strategies, data collection, documentation of the process and data harmonisation (Harkness et al., 2010b). The two main approaches to harmonisation of the survey data (to ensure comparability across countries) are *ex-ante* and *ex-post* harmonisation. *Ex-ante* harmonisation is a part of survey design ("surveys comparative by design", see Lynn et al. (2006)) and occurs before data collection. The European Social Survey (ESS) is an example of a large-scale survey programme, academically driven and cross-national, paying particular attention to develop standards of rigour in cross-national research. It is a general population survey that enquires, among others, about attitudes towards migration. In turn, *ex-post* harmonisation only harmonises output, so it makes comparable already existing datasets (for migration example, see the International File of Immigrant Surveys by van Tubergen, quoted in Wolf et al. (2016)).

In cross-national research, indicators provide the basis for comparisons, and functional equivalence of the indicators can be assessed using several analytic techniques (Braun & Johnson, 2010). Scheuch (1968) describes difficulties in achieving functional equivalence, using as an example a question from the Bogardus social distance scale, asking about the extent to which one would accept certain ethnic and religious groups as a neighbour living in the same street. The question asked in the German context altered the wording, asking about having a 'greeting acquaintance' instead, as this category worked well in the German context to describe the social distance scale of respondents. This example shows that knowledge about cultural contexts is valuable when developing such indicators. Ideally, the indicators are developed before reaching the final version of the questionnaire in the process of pretesting and instrument refinement, but due to time and financial constraints, this is not always practice followed in the multiple survey locations (Mohler & Johnson, 2010).

Cross-national research often requires specific translation strategies and assessment procedures. Harkness et al. (2010c) highlight the rule of thumb according to

which the translated text of the target questionnaire is supposed to ‘stay close’ to the source/master text, and questions should have semantically similar contents and format. Word-for-word translations are often neither possible nor acceptable. The need for translation may reflect that the population for which the translation is carried out operates in the context of different social and cultural norms; hence close relation between design translation and adaptation is necessary. However, current theoretical debates are missing context when developing questionnaires and translating them in comparative research (Harkness et al., 2010c).

With regards to sampling, often uniform sampling designs across all countries are not possible in cross-country research (Heeringa & O’Muircheartaigh, 2010). For instance, when researching newly arrived migrants in Germany and the Netherlands, researchers can use local population registers as a sampling frame, but countries like Ireland and the UK lack comparable sources of information, which is a great challenge for comparative research (Diehl et al., 2016).

Finally, cross-national research experience also includes challenges related to organisational demands and survey traditions across countries, communication channels in multinational settings and documentation (Harkness et al., 2010b).

### **26.2.2 Longitudinal Studies**

Longitudinal designs, as opposed to cross-sectional ones, involve data collection across time, usually from individuals. We can distinguish between prospective longitudinal research designs (panels) and retrospective data. In the latter case, biographic data is collected just once, reconstructing individual biography in time, but not entailing a longitudinal research design (Beauchemin & Schoumaker, 2016; Elliott et al., 2008).

Quantitative retrospective research on migration has mainly referred to internal migrations and focused on themes of residential mobility, family formation (including marriages and births) and socio-economic trajectories (including education and employment spells). It allowed reconstructing migration trajectories from the life course perspective, analysing links between spatial mobility and other life spheres, such as family, education, employment (Beauchemin & Schoumaker, 2016). In research on international migration, retrospective data allowed uncovering processual character of migrations, including documenting phenomena such as seasonal and circular migrations (such as an ethnosurvey, mentioned earlier). What is more, retrospective research can involve sampling in destination and origin (both-ways or bi-national research, see Rallu (2008); Guendelman (2014) to understand better the consequences of migration (sampling in the destination only captures migrant stayers, excluding the out-migrants who re-migrated, and how their integration trajectories may differ). To facilitate respondents’ recollection of the past, researchers have developed various instruments and techniques to aid respondents with the recollection of events, among these life history calendars, sequential questionnaires and matrices (Beauchemin & Schoumaker, 2016). One example of

retrospective research is the **MAFE** survey, examining migration between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe and collecting data about individual life histories of migrants, non-migrants and returnees (Beauchemin & González-Ferrier, 2011).

Prospective surveys (panels) follow the same individuals over time, with several measurements made in time (Jasso, 2014). We can distinguish between panels focused on migrants like in case of studies as Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia or Canadian Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants (for a more comprehensive list, see Font and Méndez (2013a)) and general population panels oversampling migrants (like the German Socio-Economic Panel). The focus of panel studies has been on the socio-economic outcomes in the destinations, and particularly important have been studies of recent migrants to track the inclusion and exclusion in different social spheres in the destination (Jacobs, 2010). Panel studies tend not to focus on migration because of challenges to repeated measurement in the case of mobile respondents. Not finding the respondent at the following measurement may mean that the person has moved (**internally** or internationally), but other reasons for attrition are possible. Comparisons between the absentees to the panel (among whom some will be migrants) and the rest of the sample seek to answer sets of questions about the scale of out-migration in the area covered by the survey; about determinants of this out-migration and, finally, about the consequences of out-migration on the origin (however keeping in mind possible other sources of attrition, see Beauchemin & Schoumaker, 2016). Analytically, using longitudinal data of several cohorts of migrants allows distinguishing between cohort and duration effects, that is, conditions at the time of migration in origin and destination versus conditions related to experiences in the destination (Jasso, 2014).

Still, longitudinal research is rare; in particular, panel studies take time to carry out and entail higher financial costs and face panel attrition risk. In turn, retrospective studies deal with data quality issues, including memory biases, as normally recollecting the events from the past entails mistakes, memory lapses and distortions. Also, the duration of an interview recording life histories can become lengthy. Regarding ethics, the particular challenges raised in longitudinal research are confidentiality, where more information is amassed about each individual, raising concerns about the risk of identification. Researchers need to obtain repeatedly informed consent from participants (Elliott et al., 2008).

## 26.3 Conclusion

This chapter offers an overview of selected topics within a broad literature on quantitative methods in the migration field, describing survey and experimental research along with cross-national and longitudinal approaches. This overview guides the reader through some of the key advantages and challenges of doing quantitative research on migration.

While surveys and experiments bring us a better understanding of migration, they do so from different angles. Surveys provide quantitative descriptions and patterns



of relationships between the variables. Perhaps the notion of ‘hard-to-survey’ populations best highlights the challenges that are involved at various stages of research on migrants (with questions of access, trust and linguistic issues, among others). The experiments, ideally, aim for studying cause-effect associations. Adding a cross-national perspective in migration research usually provides a valuable comparative angle, where various contexts matter for understanding studied phenomena. However, research in various countries multiplies methodological choices and issues faced by research in a single country study. Finally, longitudinal approaches allow us to see migration as a process over time, but migrants who remain on the move are particularly hard to research as time passes by.

While full of challenges, quantitative methods are also fascinating, with the space for open, flexible and creative approaches for studying migrations. More traditional survey and experimental approaches will continue to provide knowledge on migration processes, but we also observe the emergence of big data analyses in the migration field, which is likely to continue in the years to come and provide new insights into the migration phenomena.

### **Suggested Readings**

To position quantitative research on migration against other methodological choices, readers should refer to the qualitative research chapter by Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz. Kraler and Reich in their chapter write about migration statistics. The [Migration Research Hub](#) contains resources on descriptive research and classification, correlation and causal analysis, longitudinal, network analysis, quantitative text analysis, big data analysis, and other methods.

#### ***Quantitative methods in migration research***

Vargas-Silva, C. (Ed.). (2012). [Handbook of research methods in migration](#). Edward Elgar.

This handbook will provide a comprehensive introduction for readers exploring methodology and methods in migration studies as well as specific techniques and approaches, providing useful examples from empirical research.

Schenker, M., Castañeda, X., & Rodriguez-Lainz, A. (Eds.). (2014). [Migration and health: A research methods handbook](#). University of California Press.

Although focused on the specific topic of migration and health, this handbook has much more general appeal, providing examples of quantitative methods and covering a range of important cross-cutting issues.

#### ***Survey research on migration***

Font, J., & Méndez, M. (Eds.). (2013b). [Surveying ethnic minorities and immigrant populations: Methodological challenges and research strategies](#). Amsterdam University Press.

(continued)

A much-needed edited volume which focuses on selected methodological challenges in immigrant and ethnic minorities surveys and provides a range of solutions based on more than a dozen studies.

Tourangeau, R., Edwards, B., Johnson, T. P., Wolter, K. M., & Bates, N. (Eds.). (2014). *Hard-to-Survey Populations*. Cambridge University Press. Migration researchers can use this volume as a guide to learn from experiences from conducting surveys on various hard-to-survey populations

#### ***Experimental research on migration***

Baláž, V., & Williams, A. M. (2017). Experimental Research Methods in Migration: From Natural to True Experiments: *Experimental Methods in Migration Research*. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(1), e1974.

This article provides a broad overview of experimental research on migration and its types, offering an agenda for future experimental research on migration

McKenzie, D., & Yang, D. (2012). Experimental approaches in migration studies. In C. Vargas-Silva (Ed.) *Handbook of research methods in migration* (pp. 249–269). Edward Elgar.

A guide to types of experimental research and examples from empirical research, highlighting the potential of experimental designs in researching various aspects of migration.

#### ***Cross-national designs***

Harkness, J. A. et al. (Ed.). (2010a). *Survey methods in multinational, multiregional, and multicultural contexts*. John Wiley & Sons.

The book covers cross-national research in general, but it is highly relevant for migration researchers wishing to carry out or understand the logic of research comparative by design.

#### ***Longitudinal studies***

Beauchemin, C., & Schoumaker, B. (2016). *Micro Methods: Longitudinal Surveys and Analyses*. In M. J. White (Ed.) *International Handbook of Migration and Population Distribution* (pp. 175–204). Springer.

The authors describe the extraordinary opportunities presented by longitudinal design and longitudinal data to migration researchers, also outlining the possible methods of data analyses.

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# Chapter 27

## Migration Statistics



Albert Kraler and David Reichel

As a first point of reference, migration statistics—that is, general indicators on the size, composition, and characteristics of the migrant population and of migration flows—are ubiquitous and a standard element of both official population statistics and academic accounts of migration dynamics. What is more, statistical indicators on migration have become part of the “steady diet of statistics” (Starr & William, 1987) that the public is served through the [media](#) and other channels by a variety of actors, including [public institutions](#), [intergovernmental organisations](#), [NGOs](#), politicians, and activists.

Numbers have thus become an ever more integral part of academic, political, and broader societal discourses on migration and thus also of its construction as a societal ‘problem’. Indeed, as Bill Gates has reportedly advised Australian billionaire Andrew Forrest, founder and funder of the Global Slavery Index, “if you can’t measure [a problem], it doesn’t exist” (Behrmann, 2013). Yet, statistics not only serve as neutral evidence of the existence of a phenomenon and its quantity, but they also have the power to push specific dimensions of a phenomenon into the limelight and so the potential to change both public perceptions and policies. In this context, statistical indicators often turn into benchmarks of the success or failure of particular policies in a given area (see more broadly Boswell, 2018).

Statistics on border apprehensions or migrant fatalities—largely absent from the public realm 20 years ago—are a case in point. Now delivered on an almost daily basis, such statistics are—depending on one’s political position—used to decry the

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deadly consequences of European border politics, or conversely to denounce the failure of these policies to protect European borders—or migrants from criminal smugglers (Heller & Pécou, 2020). The creation of integration monitoring systems is similarly deeply intertwined with the emergence of integration policy as a separate policy field (see Bijl & Verweij, 2012). In the context of integration policy, the regular production of indicators on migrant integration has been argued to be a precondition for effective policymaking, both on the national and the EU level. At the global level, most policy initiatives of the past two decades in the area of migration and beyond—the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals of which 11 make reference to migration and mobility, and more specifically, the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees—follow a similar line of reasoning and contain specific provisions on data and evidence needed to monitor ‘progress’ (Ahmad-Yar & Bircan, 2021). As Anne Gallagher has observed in the context of data on trafficking and ‘modern slavery’, “[t]his is part of a much broader trend [of presuming] quantification of a practice or phenomenon identified as problematic [as] an essential pre-requisite to any kind of meaningful action.” (Gallagher, 2017; see more broadly Andreas & Greenhill, 2010).

At the same time, statistical indicators on migration and the underlying categories they refer to are not self-evident and are, at times, contested. Moreover, they are subject to change over time, both in terms of the categories used for measurement (e.g. ‘migrant’, ‘foreigner’, ‘foreign worker’, etc.) and in terms of the specific definitions used to measure those categories.

This chapter provides a critical appraisal of data collection and statistical data production on migrants and migration, indicators used to identify migrants, and the different uses of migration statistics for political and scientific purposes. The chapter proceeds as follows: We will first review the history of data collection on migration and consider international efforts to harmonise migration statistics on the international level. We will then provide an overview of different ways to measure migration, core concepts, and definitions used to measure migration. In the subsequent section, we will describe different data collection methods and sources used to produce statistics on migration, including possible ‘new’ data sources for measuring migration, often referred to as ‘big data’. In the last section, we will briefly demonstrate different ways of analysing aggregate migration data.

## 27.1 A Brief History of Migration Statistics<sup>1</sup>

### 27.1.1 *Migration Statistics*

Statistical data collection on migration has emerged simultaneously with the emergence of other modern practices of registration and counting developed to render societies ‘legible’ (Scott, 1998; Torpey, 2000). These in turn were embedded in

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<sup>1</sup>This section is adapted from Kraler et al. (2015).



broader dynamics of standardisation and measurement linked to the expansion of capitalism in the modern era from about the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. As Schrover (Chap. 2 in this volume) shows, there are thus—for non-historians perhaps surprisingly—extensive historical statistical data sources on migration, even if these are patchy and geographically biased, in terms of who was measured and what categories were used to describe migrants.

Efforts to harmonise international data collection on migration go back to the nineteenth century. The first major international discussions on migration statistics were held at the 1891 congress of the International Statistical Institute in Vienna, and subsequent conferences in 1901 and 1903 (United Nations Department for Social Affairs, 1949). The first attempts to standardise definitions in migration statistics followed 30 years later at the International Conference on Emigration and Immigration held in Rome in 1924. When the International Labour Organization (ILO) was created in 1919, it was also mandated to support the international movement of people. It started its own international data collection on international migration in the early 1920s (see Schrover (Chap. 2), this volume), and subsequently became the main actor in regard to promoting efforts to improve international data collection on migration during the interwar period.

An ILO-sponsored conference on migration statistics in 1932 adopted the first more systematic set of recommendations for the improvement of migration statistics (United Nations Department for Social Affairs, 1949, p. 1). From the outset, achieving comparable international migration statistics was considered important not only for statistical, or for that matter, scientific, purposes; it was also seen as a precondition for “the regulation of migration by international convention [and a tool to] facilitate cooperation of the administrative authorities of different countries” (International Labour Office, 1932, p. 86, quoted in Kraly & Gnanasekaran, 1987, p. 968). The 1932 recommendations were revised in 1953 and 1976, but both times not widely implemented. The latest revision dates from 1998 (Herm, 2006; United Nations, 1998). It was preceded by several conferences and studies, also [drawing on expertise](#) from outside the UN system such as the Council of Europe, the OECD, IOM, and Eurostat, all of which had become key players in policies on statistical data collection by the time of the 1997 revision (Herm, 2006). At the time of writing, a further revision is in preparation to: (1) address new patterns of migration presenting challenges to statistical measurement, and (2) to better align data collection with policy needs (UN Statistics Division, 2018).

### 27.1.2 *Refugee Statistics*

Statistics on [refugees](#) and other humanitarian migrants have largely been excluded from these efforts to develop harmonised concepts and definitions, even if there was a recognition that refugees were—at times—an important component of population movements across borders. Ultimately, refugees were thus defined by the legal or institutional regime they fell under and their counting was left to the respective

institutions in charge of a particular legal or institutional regime. In the context of migration statistics, however, statistics on refugees tended to be ignored. Reflecting an absence of a shared understanding about the essence of the concept of refugees at the eve of UNHCR's creation, the UN Population Commission, reporting in 1949, noted the importance of refugees. However, it refrained from providing a definition, only referring by way of example to "persons seeking entry without having the papers normally required for admission" as one category that could fall under a statistical refugee definition (quoted after United Nations Department for Social Affairs of November, 1949, p. 14). Today, of course, such persons would squarely be regarded as *irregular migrants*. Subsequently, the refugee definition of the Geneva Refugee Convention became the main basis for statistical reporting on refugees (UNHCR, 2020), and UNHCR the main body collecting data on refugees.

However, before the 1990s, UNHCR collected data only on a country basis and without any guidelines on how to collect them. Although collating such data occasionally for internal purposes, these data were rarely published. This changed only in the mid-1990s when the organisation as a whole took a more knowledge-oriented turn. From 1994 onwards, it started publishing statistical data more systematically and invested in improving its data collection. Already before that time, the US Committee for Refugees (USCR) regularly published an annual statistical report ("World Refugee Survey") on refugees in need of assistance and lacking opportunities for permanent settlement. This definition excluded most refugees in Europe, North America and Australasia, anticipating the concept of protracted refugee situations coined by UNHCR in the early 2000s (Crisp, 1999; Czaika & Kraler, 2020). Controversially at the time, the USCR also included Palestinian refugees under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in their refugee definition. The organisation was also the first to regularly report on Internally Displaced Persons. On a more systematic basis the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998 in the context of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, took up the task of data collection on internal displacement and continues to be the key data source in this area.<sup>2</sup>

UNHCR too had started to report on IDPs (although more selectively) in the mid-1990s, subsuming it under the newly coined category "population of concern", alongside *asylum seekers*, returned refugees and returned IDPs and various other groups. In its 2009 *Global Trends* report (UNHCR, 2010), UNHCR reframed populations of concern to "forcibly displaced", adding Palestinian refugees under UNRWA to the categories counted. By the 2014 edition, UNHCR's report was published under the new title *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2014* (UNHCR, 2015), completing a journey of conceptual expansion that started off from statistical reporting driven by a purely administrative-institutional logic catering for specific categories that UNHCR was mandated to care for, and ending that journey with the implicit claim to present an authoritative account of all global

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<sup>2</sup>See <https://www.internal-displacement.org/about-us>.

forced displacement. At the same time, UNHCR was well-aware of the flaws of international refugee statistics, and together with Statistics Norway proposed the organisation of a conference on refugee statistics and the development of recommendations on refugee statistics to the UN Statistical Commission in 2014. At the conference held in October 2015 in Turkey, an Expert Group on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons was appointed, whose recommendations were released in 2018 (Eurostat/Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons, 2018). In parallel, it also oversaw a report on statistics on internally displaced persons (Eurostat, 2018).

### ***27.1.3 Migration Statistics in the European Union***

In the European Union context, efforts at collecting data on migration at a European level extend back to the mid-1970s, but it was only in the 1990s and in the context of ascendance of migration and asylum policy as a genuine EU policy field that a more systematic collection and dissemination of statistical data on migration was promoted. Thus, a programme for the collection of statistics on international migration was launched in 1992, and, in the mid-1990s linked to a joint data collection programme run in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), later also joined by the UN Statistical Division (UNSD), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the International Labour Office (ILO). In parallel, renewed efforts were undertaken to harmonise statistics on migration. Overall, data collection was undertaken largely on the basis of a “gentlemen’s agreement” lacking in timeliness, coverage and common definitions and a competence of the EU’s statistical agency to enforce standards. The adoption of the ‘Regulation on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection’ (Regulation 862/2007) in July 2007 (since amended by Regulation (EU) 2020/851) was a major turning point in EU data collection on migration and asylum improving both availability and comparability of statistics and covering both administrative and demographic indicators. In regard to demographic statistics, the EU Regulation basically adopts the definitions of the 1998 UN recommendations and related census recommendations (see on concepts in more detail below).

## **27.2 Concepts and Definitions**

In this section, we discuss concepts and definitions used for measuring migration and migrants and provide a heuristic classification of different conceptual approaches.

Migration can be broadly defined as *a specific form of spatial mobility, aimed at a certain minimum duration of residence in the destination and a similar minimum duration of residence in the place of origin*, thereby distinguishing it from other

**Table 27.1** Concepts, indicators and categorisations used in migration-related statistics in European countries

Concept	Indicators/proxies	Examples of breakdowns/aggregations/ categorisations
Legal status	Citizenship	National/non-national
		EU-citizens/third country nationals
		Western/non-Western
	Residence permit/Work permit	Residence permit/no residence permit (irregular residence)
		Duration of validity
Purpose of residence permit (e.g. employment, education, family, international protection, . . .)		
Geographical origin	Country of birth/country of previous or next residence	Native/foreign
		EU/non-EU
		Western/non-Western
		Duration of residence in country
	Parents' country of birth	National/non-national
		EU-citizens/third country nationals
		Western / non-Western
Identity, culture, vulnerabilities	Parents' country of birth	National/non-national
		EU-citizens/third country nationals
		Western/non-Western
	Ethnicity/race	Autochthone/allochthone
		White/Black/Asian/ . . .
	Language (first language or language spoken at home)	Native/non-native
Religion	Muslim/Christian/ . . .	

Source: authors' elaboration based on Kraler et al. (2015), p. 51

forms of spatial mobility such as commuting or tourism. Political geography, reasons of migration, **forms**, and broader **drivers** of migration can be used as further differentiations.

According to the most recent UN definition of migration, migrants are defined as individuals who change their place of usual residence across international borders (United Nations, 1998) for at least 3 months. The definitions further distinguish between long-term migrants of an actual or intended duration of residence above 12 months and short-term migrants, with an intended or actual residence of between three and 12 months. Individuals changing their residence for less than 3 months are not counted as migrants.

There are many different ways in which migrants and related concepts are measured and counted across countries and even within countries. These practices are influenced by different historical experiences and political contexts (Fassmann et al., 2009). Table 27.1 provides an overview of different categorisations potentially used to measure migrants, migration and related concepts. These can be summarised very broadly, and not exclusively, as (1) individuals' legal status, including

citizenship or residence status, (2) individuals' geographical origin, including the country of birth or parents' country of birth, as well as (3) individuals' identity and/or culture, including ethnicity or language.

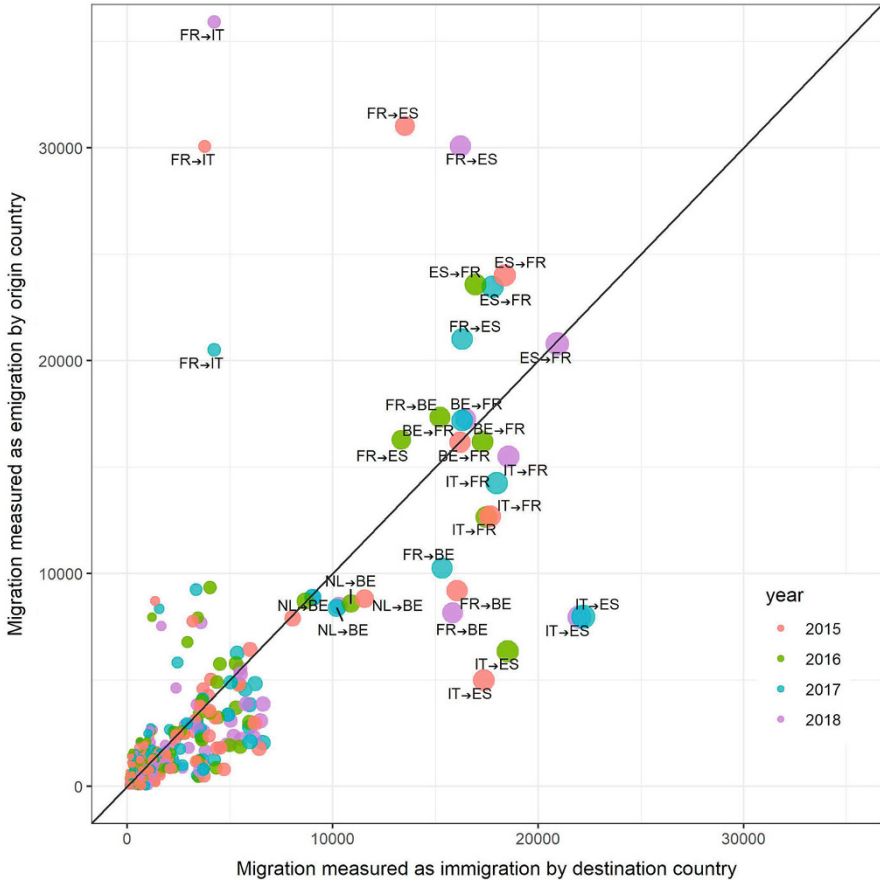
The concepts linked to identity and culture are challenging for at least two reasons. First, they might reflect racialised categories and thus unwittingly reinforce racism and discrimination. Secondly, they foreground specific categories and suggest that these are important in explaining particular outcomes, for example when presenting employment outcomes for persons with a "migration background" (see Simon et al. (2015) on controversies regarding such concepts). Following the recommendations of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, statistical measurements of ethnicity should be based on self-identification. In addition, the production of data about ethnic groups should use a participatory approach through involving affected groups in the process of producing such data (Office of the High Commissioner Human Rights, 2018). In the past decades, several countries moved away from measuring the ethnicity of people, often not based on self-identification, to more objective concepts such as country of birth. However, other countries introduced the collection of data based on race or ethnicity for the very purpose of measuring inequality and discrimination (e.g. Ireland or the United Kingdom). While there are concerns about the racialisation of society through the collection and dissemination of statistics on ethnicity, these statistics can serve the purpose to detect vulnerabilities and highlight the situation of vulnerable groups, which would otherwise be invisible to policymakers. The collection of ethnic statistics can be advantageous for the production of "equality data", which are needed for policies to detect and counter-act, discrimination and inequality across protected and vulnerable groups (European Commission, 2018).

The opportunities to collect statistics on the concepts described above, depends on the availability of the indicators and breakdowns used to measure those concepts. Various data sources can be used, which all have their advantages and disadvantages, as outlined in the next section.

### 27.3 Measurement and Data Sources

How can we measure migration? Basically, there are two different ways to look at migration and migrants: stocks and flows. Migration stocks refers to the number of migrants in a defined place at a given time point. Flows refer to events (i.e. migration movements) that take place within a given period of time. Stocks of migrants change over time due to in- and out-flows of migrants. Generally, stocks can be measured much more easily than flows, because migration dynamics are more difficult to capture.

A classic, vivid example of challenges linked to measuring migration flows is comparing so-called 'mirror statistics'. They compare the outflows from one country [COUNTRY A] to another country [COUNTRY B] with the inflows from that other



**Fig. 27.1** Migration flows, as measured by origin and destination countries in selected European countries, 2014–2018. (Source: Authors’ analysis and presentation based on data from Eurostat, tables migr\_imm5prv and migr\_emi3nxt, data extracted on 24 October 2020)

country [COUNTRY B] from the one country [COUNTRY A]. Migration flows are usually measured based on citizenship or country of birth of those migrating. This information is only a proxy for the actual migration movement and does not directly indicate if a person moved from COUNTRY A to COUNTRY B. This means it can be assumed that most people born in Belgium moving to France are actual movements from Belgium to France. However, secondary movements are not captured this way. The European statistical office (Eurostat) provides two tables, which should capture direct migration flows for each EU Member State by country of previous and country of next residence.

Figure 27.1 shows migration flows from selected European countries and compares the numbers from 2014 to 2018 as measured by the emigration country (i.e. emigrants by country of next residence) against the numbers measured by the immigration country (i.e. immigrants by country of previous residence). If emigration and immigration were measured perfectly on both sides, sending and receiving country, the points in Fig. 27.1 would all be on the diagonal line from the bottom left to the top right. Between 2014 and 2018, Eurostat provides complete migration flows statistics including sending and receiving data for 15 sending and 15 receiving countries and altogether 200 flows, measured by both sides (400 numbers). The average emigration for each bilateral flow (averaged over the years 2014–2018) range from zero (SK to EE) to 24,560 (FR to ES) with an average number of about 1473. The average immigration numbers (i.e. which should be the same as the emigration numbers, but measured from the receiving country) range from three (EE to SK) to about 20,000 (IT to ES) with an average number of 1487. As emigration is more difficult to measure, usually immigration numbers are more reliable. For this set of bilateral flows, the immigration numbers are on average only slightly higher. There is an average difference of 14 and the number correlate at about 0.8. However, there are large differences observable in both directions. The largest average differences can be observed between France and Italy. Italy sees an average of 4058 immigrants from France between 2014 and 2018, but France counts on average 23,968 emigrants to Italy. This is an average difference of almost 20,000 people. On the other side, in terms of under-estimating emigration, which is more common, the most extreme case is the measurement of flows from Italy to Spain. Italy sees an average of 6818 people moving to Spain, but Spain registers an average of 20,000 people coming from Italy. Generally, there is good consistency in these numbers in these 15 countries. Since 2014 the numbers correlate at 0.78. However, countries with less reliable data most likely did not provide them to Eurostat if they did not meet the quality criteria.

Why is this so different? Much of the differences in migration flow statistics—but not everything—are linked to the ways data are collected. The main two sources for migration statistics are questionnaire-based data collections for the purposes of producing statistics, such as surveys, and administrative data sources, such as population registers.

Generally, the majority of EU countries use registers as the basis for producing migration flow statistics. Looking at all EU Member States, EFTA countries and the United Kingdom, only five use surveys (CY, IE, FR, PT and UK). Romania and Greece use other data sources including mirror statistics from other countries. The remaining countries use population registers, partly including registers for foreign citizens (e.g. DE).<sup>3</sup> The remainder of this section discusses these data sources.

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<sup>3</sup>See Eurostat metadata, Immigration (migr\_imm), available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr\\_imm\\_esms.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_imm_esms.htm), accessed 1 November 2020.

### ***27.3.1 Questionnaire-Based Data Collection: Sample Survey and Traditional Census***

One of the most important sources for population and social statistics—not only on migration—are questionnaire-based surveys (see also Salamońska (Chap. 26), this volume). Either a part of the population (sample surveys) or the entire population of interest receives a questionnaire including questions linked to their migration experiences and intentions. Usually, sample surveys are conducted because it is simply too expensive—and burdensome—for respondents to ask everyone of concern. To be able to make statements about the total population of interest, a random sample needs to be drawn, meaning a statistically controlled way of selecting respondents. This way the sampling error can be calculated, which provides an indication of the level of uncertainty in the statistics produced based on the samples.

However, statistical variation, due to the random selection from a list of all potential respondents, is not the only source of error in the production of statistics from sample surveys, as there are also issues linked non-response, question wording and categorisations (see Groves et al., 2009). Despite the many challenges, sample surveys have proved to be a reliable and much-used form of data collection for social statistics and research. The two largest EU-wide sample surveys are used for measuring employment and unemployment, the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), and for income and living conditions, the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC). However, the use of general population sample surveys remains challenging when it comes to measuring migration flows and stocks. This is mainly because migrants usually only make up a small share of the total population and are only captured in a limited way. Consequently, the sample sizes of migrants within general population surveys are often too low for statistically meaningful analysis. In addition, the sample of migrants might be biased, whereby certain groups of migrants cannot be captured well with methodologies used for general population surveys.<sup>4</sup>

To mitigate the lack of data about migrants from general population surveys, a variety of targeted surveys among migrant populations were carried out. This is sometimes complicated because in many countries, no sampling frames for migrants exist. This means that there are no lists of migrants, which are needed for a controlled way of selecting a representative sample. As a result, oftentimes alternative sampling methodologies need to be employed (see Reichel & Morales, 2017).

Traditionally, countries conduct a population census every 10 years. In a ‘traditional population census’ all with their usual residence in a country receive a questionnaire including questions about them. The majority of censuses in Europe contain questions on the country of birth and **citizenship** of people, which can good proxies for migrant stocks.

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<sup>4</sup>For an analysis of availability of data for measuring migrant integration indicators see Huddleston et al. (2013).



Censuses are reliable sources for measuring migration stocks. However, a census can also leave out important groups of migrants due to difficulties in capturing migrants and varying or unclear definitions, for example [asylum seekers](#). The main disadvantage of traditional censuses is the infrequent availability of data because censuses are usually carried out every 10 years—due to their high cost. Costs are the main reason for many countries moving towards register-based censuses. This means that the information collected every 10 years about the population in a country is not obtained from questionnaires, but from information available in population and other administrative registers, sometimes used in combination with (linked) sample surveys. The use of registers is discussed in the next section.

### **27.3.2 Administrative Data Sources**

Many statistics are produced based on administrative data, although the production of statistics is not necessarily the original purpose of data collection. For measuring migration, population registers are the most important source of statistics. The use of population registers is necessary to determine the place of residence of an individual, which is linked to several administrative and bureaucratic procedures, for example, which municipality is responsible for administering social welfare applications or voter registrations. However, the production of statistics is also one of the purposes of keeping population registers and hence some of the information collected and stored might only serve the purpose of producing statistics and not the administration of individuals. Thus, population figures are often needed for the allocation of resources within polities. Population statistics or specific subpopulations (such as third-country nationals) also are used for the distribution of financial resources in the EU, sometimes in combination with other indicators.

Apart from population registers, countries use data from registers containing information on residence permits and sometimes other registers, such as health or social security registers. Population registers are often maintained at municipal level.

Once in place, it is much cheaper for public administration to produce statistics based on administrative registers, as compared to separate questionnaire-based data collection. Challenges linked to the use of registers for migration statistics are:

- the lack of comparability across countries due to differences in administrative procedures, which do not necessarily follow any harmonised definition on migration, and
- the potential systematic undercounting of certain groups not captured in administrative registers (e.g. undocumented or unregistered migrants, groups not captured by certain administrative procedures).

### 27.3.3 *Big Data*

At the 2008 annual conference of the IMISCOE research network in Bilbao (Spain), demographer Michel Poulain gave a keynote speech on the general challenges of measuring migration stocks and flows. Asked about future developments in regard to measuring migration, he rather jokingly remarked that in the near future everybody will have a chip implanted that would allow following the exact movement of people in real time. Now, slightly more than 10 years later, this is almost true. Not that people have chips implanted, but the vast majority of people (in developed countries) carry a device with them, almost everywhere, that tracks their movement—a smart phone. What is more, people use new ways of communication over the internet and through social media, which also provides a source of information about migration movements (see also [ICT facilitating travel & migration](#)). Such data sources are often referred to as ‘big data’—data which are produced over the internet, including via smart phones and social media. Big data are usually characterised by increased velocity, volume, and variety compared to ‘traditional data’. This means data are quicker available, there are more observations (e.g. compared to sample surveys) and more information contained from a variety of different sources. This has the potential to add to traditional data collection and potentially mitigate challenges of measuring migration, as discussed above.

In the aftermaths of the large migration flows to Europe during 2015 and 2016 due to the war in Syria, efforts to better manage migration led to new initiatives to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate migration data. Most notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM) created the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).<sup>5</sup> At the level of the EU, the European Commission set up the Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) within the Commission’s Joint Research Centre.<sup>6</sup> Apart from collecting, analysing and disseminating a variety of migration related data and statistics, the two centres initiated the Big Data for Migration Alliance (BD4M). This initiative brings together different stakeholders to investigate “*the potential of big data sources for migration analysis and policymaking, while addressing issues of confidentiality, security and ethical use of data*” (GMDAC & KCMD, 2018). The Migration Data Portal includes a good overview of potential use of and initiatives related to big data for migration statistics, including potential sources of data and related challenges. Data sources for migration measurement from new data sources include data from mobile phones, the internet, and sensor (e.g. satellite imagery).<sup>7</sup> Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking can be used via smart phones, as well as other location information provided by individuals for example via social media.

<sup>5</sup><https://migrationdataportal.org/about>.

<sup>6</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/migration-demography\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/migration-demography_en).

<sup>7</sup>Migration Data Portal (2020), Big Data, migration and human mobility, last update 10 November 2020, available at: <https://migrationdataportal.org/themen/big-data-migration-and-human-mobility>.

One study looked into the use of Facebook data to measure international migration. This study used information about Facebook users' profile, provided by Facebook's advertising platform, concerning the countries a user used to live in. The study found that for selected groups of migrants in some countries, migration trends could be successfully and relatively accurately captured (Spyratos et al., 2019). Another study used data from the short messaging service Twitter, by looking into changes in the location information provided by its users' messages ('Tweets'). This is particularly challenging because users do not always provide information about their location on Twitter and the group of users is, as with other social media users, not representative of the total population. The study could still extract some information about migration trends (Zagheni et al., 2014).

These are just two examples. Several other studies have looked into the potential use of new data sources for migration measurement. For example, using big data to complement and improve mobility within the EU (Gendronneau et al., 2019), using Google search data for migration flows (Wanner, 2020b) or forced migration (Connor, 2017). Most recently, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, data on mobility patterns were published by large companies running smart phone operating systems, Apple<sup>8</sup> and Google,<sup>9</sup> and also some cases for internal migration. While these data do not include information on origin and destination of movements, it shows people's behaviour in terms of general movement and mobility, and gives a sense about how fine-grained some data collections from these large companies are.

While many of the studies show promising result in terms of a potential added value using new data sources, such data collections are still in experimental phases or provide insight only for selected cases. The advantages, as mentioned above, are obviously additional information about migration flows, which cannot be gathered from traditional data sources, the ability to collect information much faster, particularly in comparison with questionnaire-based data collection, and the potential to better measure internal migration patterns at the same time as international migration. Yet, there are also challenging drawbacks. These are mainly the biased nature of big data and legal and ethical problems linked to privacy and data protection.

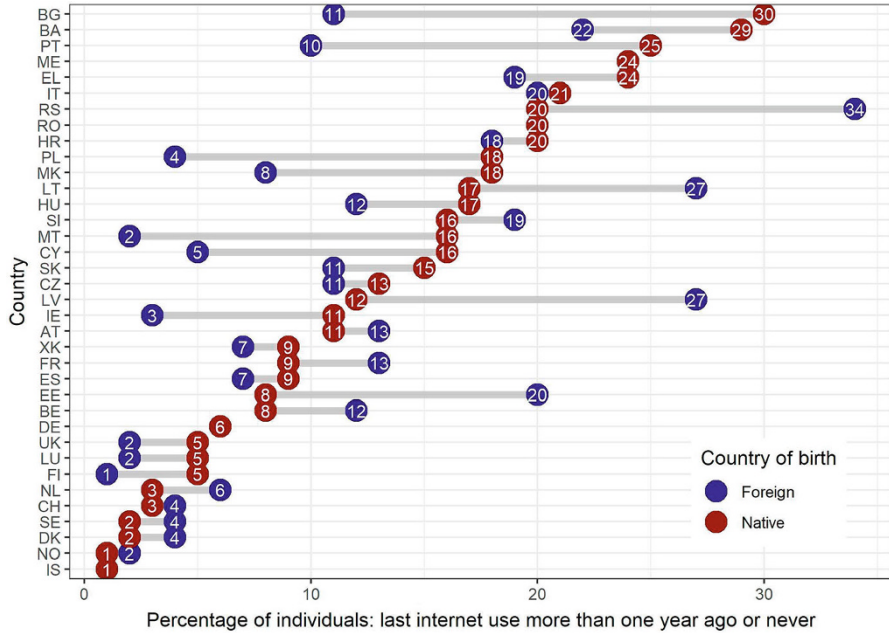
## **Bias**

Bias means that the data do not measure exactly what they should measure—the data are not representative of the target population and consistently miss their target in specific direction. While most data collections are biased to some degree, big data sources are particularly prone to bias, because particular population groups are over-represented among users of different online services. Most notably, not all people in the world have access to the internet and even fewer own smart phones. According to the International Telecommunication Union, the percentage of individuals in a

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<sup>8</sup><https://covid19.apple.com/mobility>.

<sup>9</sup>[https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/..](https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/)



**Fig. 27.2** Individuals not using the internet in the past year or never using the internet in European countries, by country of birth (in %). (Source: authors’ analysis and presentation based on data from Eurostat, table isoc\_ci\_ifp\_iu, data extracted on 16 November 2020)

country who used the internet in the last 3 months ranges from 1.3% (Eritrea, in 2017) up to 99.7% (in Bahrain, in 2019). The median rate of internet access across the globe (using the most recent data from 2017 to 2019) was 60%.<sup>10</sup> For many European countries data on internet use by country of birth area available. The data show that in some countries a considerably higher percentage among migrants does not have access to the internet compared to the native-born population. However, in other countries the share among migrants not using the internet is much lower compared to native born (see Fig. 27.2 for an overview of those without internet access by country of birth). This means that there is a different selection into access to the internet and hence different levels of representativity of data drawn from the internet. On top of that, the share of users of different web services and social media platforms, and the share of those also sharing certain data (e.g. location data) cannot be assumed to be equal across migrant groups. It is this bias that needs to be analysed and taken into account when considering the use of big data for producing migration statistics.

<sup>10</sup>Own calculations based on data from the World Development Indicators database, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>. See computer code supplemented to the chapter, lines 180–209.

### ***27.3.4 Privacy and Data Protection***

Statistics drawn from big data sources are often based on personal data. Data are personal if they relate to an identified or identifiable individual person. People might think about data as anonymised if basic identifiers, such as names, social security identifiers, addresses, date of birth, are removed. However, studies have shown that with a certain amount of data relating to individuals, they can still be identified (Rocher et al., 2019). European Union (EU) and Council of Europe laws provide a strict framework for processing personal data. Accordingly, data are personal if they include information that can lead to re-identification considering someone applies reasonable means that are likely to be used for de-anonymisation (or re-identification) of the data. Thus, re-identification needs to be reasonably likely and not just theoretically possible. In the EU, whenever data are not anonymised, and hence contain personal data, the processing needs to follow the principles laid out in the General Data Protection Regulation.<sup>11</sup> These principles include lawfulness, fairness and transparency of processing, purpose limitation, data minimisation, data accuracy, storage limitation, integrity and confidentiality. In order to be lawful, personal data may only be processed if it is based on consent of the data subject, or required by law, for vital interests, public interest or some other legitimate interest. Importantly, sensitive personal data are subject to stricter rules. Sensitive data include data revealing the racial or ethnic origin of people and are hence more relevant for migration statistics. Importantly, if collected legally, further processing of data for statistical purposes is generally accepted as a compatible purpose, if the processing puts in place measures to secure the anonymisation (for a full overview of European data protection laws, see European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) et al., 2018).

Big data sources include a variety of information, often linked to protected attributes and sensitive data, such as ethnic origin, political opinion and sexual orientation. Due care needs to be taken when using these data for the protection of privacy and personal data of individuals.

### ***27.3.5 Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence***

In addition to the general production of statistics, the increased availability of data in combination with increased computing power led to considerable progress in the area of machine learning. Machine learning is a branch of artificial intelligence and often simply referred to as artificial intelligence. Machine learning is mainly used for

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<sup>11</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>.

automating tasks based on statistical prediction rules. This use, referred to as supervised machine learning, works in a way that an existing data set that includes the desired outcomes is used to build prediction rules. A classic example is a spam filter. A data set with emails marked as spam or not spam ('ham'), where the machine learning algorithms searches for correlations among words and word combinations, as well as potentially other metadata attached to the emails, which are relevant for predicting if an email is spam.

There is considerable interest in using such technologies in the area of migration management. While the use of machine learning algorithms could also contribute to an improved production of migration statistics, it is currently tested to use migration statistics to predict migration inflows to the EU. For example, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) works on ways to predict asylum inflows through big data for an early warning system (European Asylum Support Office, 2019, p. 51). Automation of process through machine learning algorithms can be beneficial to certain processes. However, it may have considerable impact on fundamental rights in various ways (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020).

## **27.4 Analysing Aggregate Statistics on Migrants, Refugees and Non-nationals—Some Examples**

In this final section of the chapter, we briefly demonstrate the use of aggregate migration statistics by way of example. We first present a brief analysis of global migrant stock statistics from the United Nations. Second, we combine it with data on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the countries. Finally, we provide a short overview of refugee stocks data across the world and analyse of the share of refugees among migrants.

The analysis can be reproduced by using the free statistics software R (R Core Team, 2019) and all the code for the analysis is available.<sup>12</sup> The code can be used and adapted or further developed for any further analysis.

### ***27.4.1 Global Migrant Stocks: Main Countries of Origin and Destination***

In 2019, the United Nations estimated the number of migrants at around 272 million. By far, most migrants are living in the United States of America, with 50 million or 19% of all migrants. Other major destination countries include Germany and Saudi Arabia, each with around 13 million migrants (or 5% of all migrants), Russia, the

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<sup>12</sup><https://github.com/david-reichel/migration-statistics>.

United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, France, Canada, Australia and Italy (in descending order from 12 million to about 6 million migrants).

The most important countries of origin are India, with 17.5 million migrants or 6% of all migrants, Mexico (11.8 million and 4%), China, Russia, and Syria (8 to 11 million). When analysing the global migrant stocks over time, Czaika and de Haas (2014) find that the world has not necessarily become more migratory over the past decades (1960–2000), but more globalised in terms of destination countries, yet not from origin country point of view.

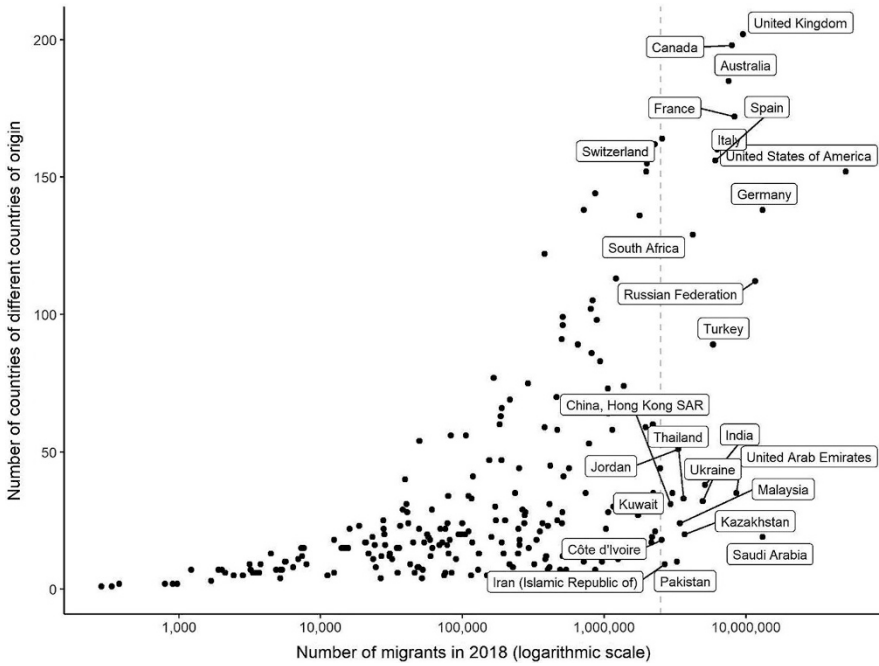
This is also the case when looking into migration stocks for 2019. While the ten most important destination countries host already over 50% of all migrants, the ten most important countries of origin account for slightly more than one third of all migrants (34.2%). It is particularly richer ‘Western’ countries that show more diverse countries of origin, whereas the main destination countries in the global South usually only count a few countries of origin. This is exemplified in Fig. 27.3, where the (logged) number of migrants in all countries is plotted against the number of origin countries in the destination countries. The names of those with more than 2.5 million migrants are highlighted.

The total number of migrants in a country is obviously linked to the size of a country with respect to the total population, because larger country might more easily host more migrants. Overall, there were about 272 million international migrants in 2019, which is a proportion of 3.5%. This indicates, in fact, that migration is rather the exception, than the rule, with less than three in 100 people living in another country. In some countries, the share of migrants is miniscule compared to the total population constituting less than 1%. However, this is not necessarily a small number of migrants, for example China and India host an estimated number of one and five million international migrants, respectively, but these still makes up less than 1% of the total population. The countries with the largest share of international migrants in 2019 was the United Arab Emirates where the 8.6 million migrants constitute 88% of the total population.

### ***27.4.2 Immigrant and Emigrant Rates by Productivity***

On a macro-level, the level of economic productivity of a country has long been linked to migration rates (see Czaika & Reinprecht (Chap. 3), this volume). The higher a country’s productivity the higher the rate of immigrants among its total population. Interestingly, this does not apply vice versa to the rate of emigrants. Here the emigration rate is very low among low productivity (i.e. poorer) countries, is higher among medium productivity countries and then decreases again. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the ‘migration hump’ because of the shape of the statistical development of the average emigrant rate by GDP (see Fig. 27.4).

Importantly, this pattern describes a cross-sectional phenomenon and must not be mistaken with a causal relationship. This means that if a country moves from a low to a medium GDP country, the number of emigrants does not necessarily increase, and



**Fig. 27.3** Number of migrants and number of countries of origin in destination countries, 2018. (Source: own calculation and presentation based on data from United Nations 2020. Countries with more than 2.5 million migrants are labelled. Number of origin countries are for countries with more than 100)

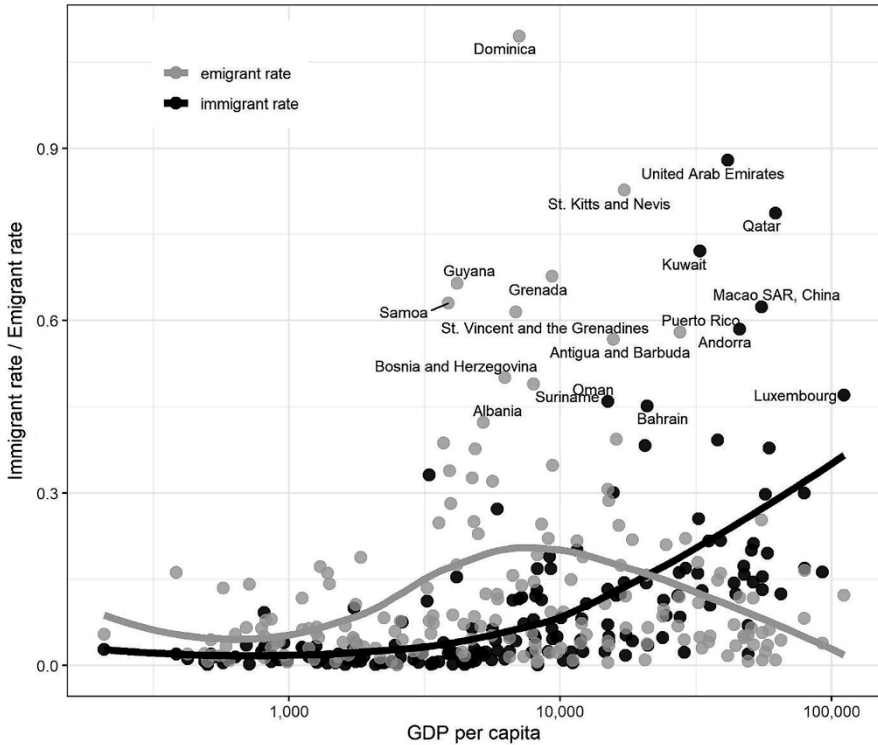
the other way round. It is, however, a good reminder that the economy is an important driver of migration, and that people in the poorest countries not necessarily send many migrants around the globe (Benček & Schneiderheinze, 2019).

**The Role of Forced Displacement in International Migration**

Overall, there were around 3.5% migrants across the globe in 2019. However, the percentage of migrants varies considerably across countries, ranging from close to 0% up to about 88% in the United Arab Emirates. While discussions about migration often focus on issues linked to refugees, at around 20.3 million refugees in 2019 they only make up a relatively small share of the global population (just under 0.3%) and some 7.5% of the total global migrant population.<sup>13</sup> However, refugee stocks are

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note, and as discussed in section, that refugee data are separately collected from migrant data, and hence, there can be some differences.

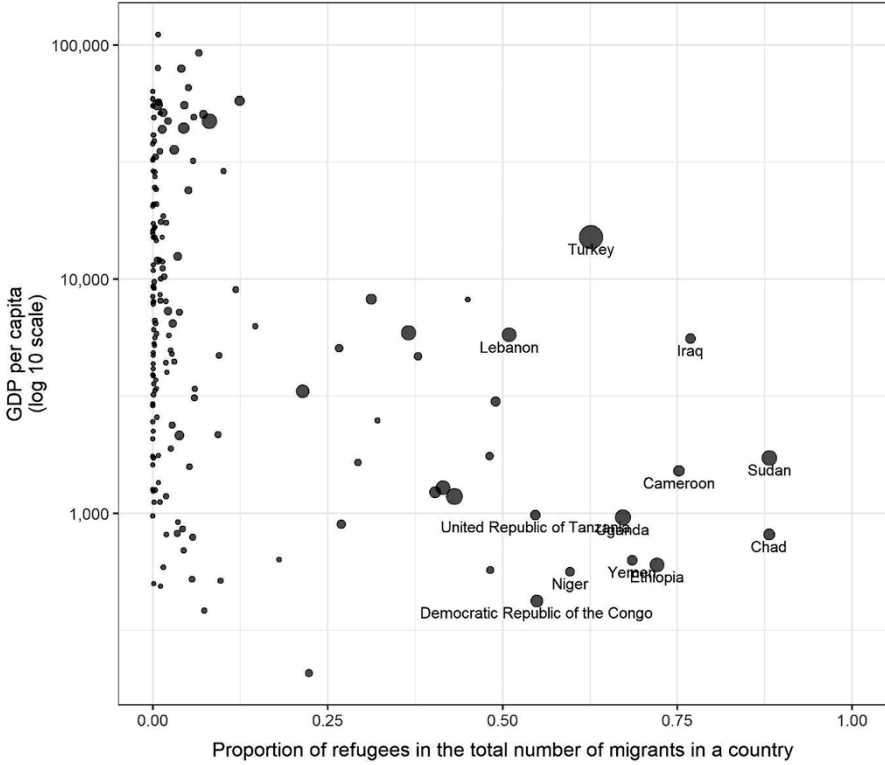




**Fig. 27.4** Immigrant and emigrant rates by GDP, 2019. (Source: own calculation and presentation based on data United Nations, 2020 and World Bank Indicators (NY.GDP.PCAP.KD) via Vincent, 2021)

distributed highly unequally and in some countries—usually poorer countries—forced displacement dominates migration dynamics.

Globally, the percentage of refugees in the total population ranges from virtually zero up to 14% in Lebanon. In a similar vein, share of refugees in the total number of international migrants ranges from close to zero to up to 88% in Sudan and Chad. There are 12 countries where the share of refugees makes up at least half of the total migrant population of the country. The total number of refugees in these 12 countries, accounts for about half of all refugees worldwide. These are countries with considerably lower levels of production and income, as measured through GDP per capita and shown in Fig. 27.5.



**Fig. 27.5** Share of refugees among migrants and GDP, 2019. (Source: authors’ calculations based on data from UNHCR, 2020, United Nations, 2020 and World Bank Indicators (NY.GDP.PCAP.KD) via Arel-Bundock, 2021)

## 27.5 Conclusions

As this chapter has shown, (aggregate) migration statistics play an important role in academic and policy debates on migration and they remain a central tool for analysing, understanding, and debating migration and related issues. The increasing availability of a growing range of migration indicators that can be accessed through different databases and in different formats and disaggregations, provides ample opportunities for analysing migration dynamics and relate them to a wide range of other macro-level indicators (including policy indicators, see Solano and Huddleston (Chap. 24), this volume).

Importantly, aggregate indicators are never sufficient and meaningful in themselves, as they always require interpretation and are often of uncertain quality that has to be critically assessed. Refugee statistics that are briefly analysed above are a case on point, for which only recently global standards have been defined. But also,

in regard to core migration indicators for which standards have first been defined in the 1930s, many issues remain, especially on the global level (see Ahmad-Yar & Bircan, 2021). The user thus needs to be aware of both what and how data is collected, in order to understand what information they can provide. Despite deficiencies of migration statistics, they are however an indispensable prerequisite and indeed a powerful tool for broader macro-level generalisations<sup>14</sup>. Ernest Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration* (Ravenstein, 1885)—one of the foundational studies of Migration Studies—is a vivid example of the potential of the analysis of aggregate statistics—to derive hypotheses from empirical observations and prepare the ground for further empirical and theoretical studies (See also Carling et al., 2020).

While the ICT revolution means that each individual leaves millions of data traces in using modern communication devices, the potential of 'big data' and other new data sources for analysing macro-level migration dynamics remains unclear and subject to further research. While there are indeed a growing number of studies providing specific insights and demonstrating the potential of new data sources, a wider application of big data that would provide regular, comparable, and reliable indicators is currently still out of reach. In addition, there are also important privacy and data protection issues that need to be addressed. Yet, if handled properly, such data sources will become an increasingly useful source to complement and enrich traditional data collection on migration.

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<sup>14</sup>Wanner (2020a) has first made this point in his recent analysis of statistical data collection on migration.

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# Chapter 28

## How to Predict Future Migration: Different Methods Explained and Compared



**Helga A. G. de Valk, Eduardo Acostamadiedo, Qing Guan, Susanne Melde, Jarl Mooyaart, Rhea Ravenna Sohst, and Jasper Tjaden**

How many people will likely move in the decades to come? And where will they come from and move to? Policymakers worldwide have a keen interest in these questions. While long-term developments in international migration patterns are relevant for the demography and economy of a country, sudden flows—for example, in the case of humanitarian emergencies—pose institutional challenges regarding reception capacities, health systems, housing, education, and training programs amongst others. This chapter reviews key concepts related to migration scenarios and forecasting. It outlines different qualitative and quantitative approaches,

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compares different studies, and discusses the potential use of various techniques for academic and policy audiences.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is a general call to foresee and anticipate migration in order to develop adequate policy responses, migration patterns are notoriously difficult to predict. Not the least because of the range of different drivers of migration (at the individual and household level) as well as societal events (from war to climate disasters) that make people move across borders (see Chaps. 3 to 11 in this textbook). These often unforeseen global and local developments in socio-economic, environmental, and political terms can have a large impact on migration flows between and within countries and continents. Some events, such as conflicts and environmental disasters, may come as sudden ‘shocks’ that are hard to anticipate. Other geopolitical events like the extension of the European Union in the mid-2000s, were expected to affect migration, although the predictions of how it would do this were not always correct (see De Haas, 2011). Lastly, although some seemingly predictable, slow-onset developments such as climate change or digitalisation will increase, yet their likely effects on future migration are difficult to unpack. Despite the fact that, compared to other elements of population change (fertility and mortality), migration is hard to predict, several methods have been developed to help—at least to some extent—increase our understanding of different potential patterns of migration. These methods aim to describe potential volumes of people moving, but increasingly also include characteristics of those on the move. To understand the effectiveness of policy and the impact on societies, it is essential to also have estimates on the composition of flows, like, for example, by sex, education, or age.

In order to understand possible [migration flows rooted in events or change](#) that one does not yet know will occur, the method of [scenarios](#) has been developed. Rather than forecasting, the aim of scenarios is to represent a ‘*what if...*’ plausible vision of the future and, as such, are thought experiments along different dimensions (Sohst et al., 2020). Migration scenarios are qualitative narratives about the future of migration that emphasise possible structural changes and their consequences for migration. In addition to scenarios, migration forecasts continue to serve as an important tool to estimate future migration flows. Even though one may not always be able to predict the unforeseeable causes of sudden migration flows, this does not mean that forecast models have no merit. These models are usually built on measurable causes of migration. The models are based on a reasonable assumption that migration flows generally follow certain rules: migrants have to come from somewhere in the world (origin countries) which means any predicted numbers should be constrained by population likely to migrate; migrants are often young and mostly driven by economic incentives to improve their lives and that of their family; instead of looking for new destinations, migrants tend to follow existing

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is based on and part of collaborative work that was conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) as part of the EU Horizon 2020 funded project ‘Cross-Migration’. This chapter uses and adds to earlier publications/deliverables of this project: Sohst et al. (2020) and Acostamadiedo et al. (2020).



[migration corridors](#), for instance by going to destinations where the same languages are spoken. Thus, among others, historical trends could be informative in forecasting models. What is less predictable, however, is how long migrants will stay, when and who returns, and to what extent are these decisions also influenced by new policies, economic conditions, or political changes among other factors. In fact, over the past decades forecast models have been developed that increasingly take into account the uncertainty in migration flow predictions (Bijak, 2011; Raymer & Wiśniowski, 2018).

In this chapter we describe, discuss, and illustrate different methods that have been developed to understand and predict future migration. We build on [work conducted within the CrossMigration project](#)—the project that established the Migration Research Hub ([migrationresearch.com](http://migrationresearch.com))—which had its primary focus on Europe. Although we acknowledge the work that has been done around the globe, we mainly use the European case for our examples here. We focus our review in this chapter on two different methods of providing information on future migration flows: scenarios and forecasts. Again, although we are aware that early warning systems have received ample (policy) attention in the past decade, it is beyond the scope of this work (for some essential reading on this, see OECD, 2016; Sardoschau, 2020). Below we will describe key concepts and underlying assumptions of scenarios and forecasts. We then proceed to explain the methodology in more detail and give examples of each method. Finally, we compare both methods, indicate how they complement each other, and then evaluate their use for predicting migration.

## 28.1 Scenarios

Scenario studies have a history in a range of other areas and disciplines before they were used and implemented for the study of migration. Its history in different practical work domains, shows that this method has been developed by practitioners and is now still dominantly used by practitioners and policymakers (Bradfield et al., 2005). When it comes to migration, policymakers are eager to know how flows develop as this may have implications on the future composition of the population in a country and the related impact on a range of policy domains from housing to education and health care. International organisations such as the International Organization for Migration, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) but also supranational unions, such as the European Union, are among those that develop migration scenarios for policy (see Sohst et al., 2020 for a list of studies). Also in the academic research on migration, scenario studies are more and more common (for an overview of types of scenario methods used in migration literature and reports, see Boissonneault et al. (2020)).

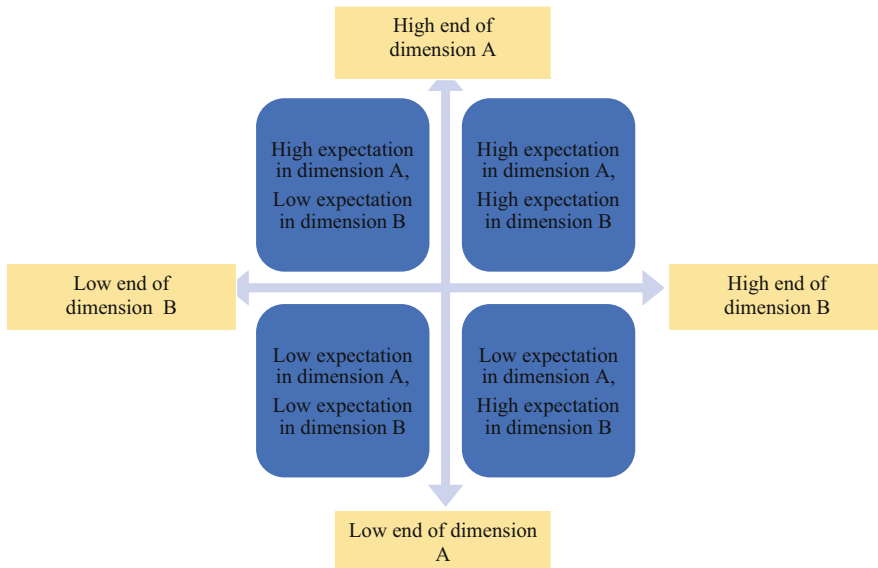
The word ‘scenario’ as it is used in the analyses of migration refers to story line (s), which can be developed based on different input. The main goal of the scenario method is to obtain a probable future view (scenario) along different dimensions that provides indications of the potential migration that may take place if that scenario

would occur. A scenario study *does not* predict the actual migration flows but compares different versions of a possible future. It is not a failure if the scenario (s) never occur(s) as it serves to think through different versions of potential futures. A scenario should thus not be judged on whether it becomes a reality or not, but rather on whether it sufficiently takes into account potentially different future lines, their drivers, and their relation with the outcome variable (in our case, migration). They should cover different versions of a future to also set the extreme boundaries in which migrations develop (from low to high migration flows, for instance). Also, scenarios that seem rather unlikely when they are developed are interesting to be included in a study, as we have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic; scenarios that seemed improbable became reality in a very short period of time across the globe.

### ***28.1.1 Methodological Approach***

While there are different ways in which scenarios are developed, generally they follow a similar structure. The scenario method is a qualitative method in which storylines are developed through discourse (Sohst et al., 2020). This means that through conversations between people, often practitioners and/or experts, the scenarios are developed and refined further. The process is often participatory, meaning that a [group of experts](#) and/or practitioners come together to discuss scenarios. One comprehensive methodological foundation for the development of a participatory methodology comes from the Global Migration Futures project (Paoletti et al., 2010; International Migration Institute & University of Waikato, 2013; Vezzoli et al., 2017). It involves multiple steps and several iterations that alternate between desk research of the research team and participatory elements (workshops, online surveys, interviews). During these meetings the different stakeholders in the process share their views and expectations on the likelihood of a particular scenario to occur and the associated migration flows they would expect. Knowledge is exchanged and the participants update their expectations along the way. Although different scenarios can be developed side by side without an evaluation of which scenario is the most likely, often a final aim is to reach some consensus on the likelihood of the different scenarios and rank them as such. In this case, the purpose of the scenario study is to sensitise policymakers to different futures and the potentially different impacts that policy may have on migration.

Most scenario studies construct a number of macro-perspective scenarios to approach the future of migration. This means that, for instance, anticipated changes on the societal or global level in terms of economic, environmental, or political stability are influencing changes in migration flows. The approach assumes that individual motivations for migration are shaped by these macro-level changes. Scenarios do not necessarily only include current developments, but can also describe potential developments in the future. For example, if countries in the European Union would not see any relevant economic growth after 2025, while Asian countries like China and India maintain high and sustainable growth rates,



**Fig. 28.1** Typical scenario matrix building

then these Asian destinations may become more attractive for migrant workers due to better economic opportunities and geographic proximity in the future after 2025 (Acostamadiedo et al., 2020).

Often scenario studies make use of a scenario matrix that represents different dimensions expected to influence migration flows. Often the dimensions are based on what are considered the most uncertain and most impactful drivers of future migration. This results in a selection of two intersecting macro-level axes which create four quadrants that each correspond to one scenario (Fig. 28.1).<sup>2</sup> To give an example, the Global Migration Future project for the Pacific region built two main scenario matrices to envision future migration in the Pacific countries (International Migration Institute and University of Waikato, 2013). One scenario matrix chose (a) level of human development and (b) regional integration and cooperation as the axes. The other one built on (c) economic growth and (d) political stability. These four dimensions are on the one hand uncertain yet at the same time very important for the future of migration. Thus, structuring the narratives according to different versions of these dimensions will result in the most useful scenarios.

Scenario studies are usually applied to develop views on the more distant future. They often seek alignment with time horizons of broader political processes, such as the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (see Sohst et al., 2020). As a result,

<sup>2</sup>Note that A and B are not explanatory variables as in econometric models (e.g. GDP and population size) but critical macro-level developments that facilitate the grouping of the four scenarios (e.g. international corporation, economic development, and environmental change).

most migration scenario studies cover time spans of 10 to 30 years into the future. Typical outputs of scenario studies include narratives of future migration patterns and the development of associated factors. For example, the OECD (2016) uses participatory methods to explore future patterns of international migration between 2017 and 2030. One of their scenarios is “Slower shifting wealth” which foresees business continuing as usual, economic convergence between OECD and non-OECD countries continuing but at a slower pace than in the last 15 years, and global co-operation and coordinated action becoming more difficult.

While scenario studies often follow the participatory method explained earlier, there are a few other approaches used in migration scenario research as well. We distinguish five which we list in Table 28.1 summarising the main methods, their features, strengths, and weaknesses (see also Sohst et al., 2020). First, in addition to starting from self-defined axes for the development of migration scenarios these can also be based on existing well-developed scenarios in related domains. Two such existing scenarios are for example the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on Emission Scenarios and the Global Environmental Outlook of the UN Environment Programme. Both scenarios provide comprehensive narratives about the future state of the world considering a range of environmental and structural factors such as the degree of international cooperation, cultural shifts, population growth and technological advances (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2000; United Nations Environment Programme, 2007). These factors can also potentially easily be translated in and used for migration scenarios.

Second, scenarios can also be developed using and mixing both qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g. Sohst et al. (forthcoming); Acostamadiedo et al., 2020). For instance, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) and Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) report (2010) *Demographic and Migratory Flows affecting European Regions* first provides conventional demographic projections of the European population up to the year 2050. Then, in a second step, it applies a scenario framework to four individual components of their projections: mortality, fertility, migration, and labour force participation. This method provides a more comprehensive picture of possible future migration but requires a greater amount of resource and capacity to perform both scenario and other research.

Third, instead of generating scenarios from participatory activities, scenarios that were developed by Frontex (2016) combine information from experts with the use of computer software to generate all possible combination of scenarios. After this they selected the most consistent ones for their further exploration. Although this process stresses to be more objective considering different elements (and therefore may result in less bias), it still relies on a review and validation from experts. Fourth, another method is actor analysis, where the scenarios were developed by combining an analysis of the influencing factors with an analysis of shaping actors (European Asylum Support Office, 2019). This approach is based on the Causal Layered Analysis method used in futures research (Inayatullah, 1998).

Finally, scenario studies often use the Delphi method to either develop scenarios but also to evaluate scenarios. This method is similar to the participatory method (see

**Table 28.1** Methods used in migration scenarios (building on Sohst et al., 2020)

Method	Feature	Strength	Weakness	Examples
Participatory method	* one or more iteration including participatory workshops, surveys, and interviews	* account for uncertain elements that are difficult to quantify and/or project	* difficult to communicate lengthy storylines to non-participants	De Haas et al. (2010)
			* need a great amount of resource and capacity	Vezzoli et al. (2017)
Adapting existing scenarios	* draw on existing well-developed scenarios	* no need to start from scratch	* relatively small numbers of existing scenario studies	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2000)
		* integrates a focus on migration with a focus from other fields like environmental change		United Nations Environment Programme (2007)
				Brown (2008)
				Vag (2009)
				Frühmann and Jäger (2010)
Large-scale mixed studies	* combine scenario approach with other forms of qualitative / quantitative evidence	* a combination of scenario and forecast which provides a more comprehensive picture of possible futures	* high resource requirement, difficult to conduct on smaller scale basis	ESPON and NIDI (2010)
				UK Government Office for Science (2011)
				Acostamadiedo et al. (2020)
Delphi method	* multiple iterative	* flexibility: can be used to produce both qualitative and quantitative insights	* a risk of producing conservative assessments of the future, due to convergence in respondents' answers	Lachmanova and Drbohlav (2004)
	* potential consensus among experts regarding estimates of future migration	* anonymity * Provides possibility to estimate magnitude and likelihood of migration flows in different scenarios	* not a tool to derive statistically representative data	Findlay et al. (2012)
Computer assisted full scenario generation	* use software in scenario generation process	* compute all possible combinations and select the most consistent ones	* relatively small numbers of computer-assisted studies	Frontex (2016)
		* (meant to be) less biased		

**Table 28.1** (continued)

Method	Feature	Strength	Weakness	Examples
Actor analysis	* combine an analysis of influencing factors with an analysis of shaping actors	* acknowledges the impact that stakeholder can have	* relatively small numbers of actor analysis studies	European Asylum Support Office (2019)

Note: see also Sohst et al. (2020) for a detailed review of these methods

above) but aims to reduce (cognitive) biases as much as possible (see Acostamadiedo et al., 2020). It focuses on iteratively improving one single estimate or understanding of future migration. Instead of having experts freely discuss, the participating experts are asked to fill in a survey on future migration patterns anonymously. After the experts have filled in the survey, the participants then receive feedback on each other's answers after which the involved experts have the option to revise their initial responses to the survey taking the feedback they received into account (or not). This whole process can be repeated several times. The Delphi method became popular to understand potential migration from Eastern European countries to Western Europe (Lachmanova & Drbohlav, 2004; OECD, 2001, p. 26; Drbohlav, 1996, 1997). The Delphi method has been used in both migration scenario and in forecast studies, which will be discussed in the next section. At the same time, the reliability of expert views, also, or especially, in the field of migration, has been debated in the literature (for a further overview and discussion on this, see Acostamadiedo et al., 2020).

## 28.2 Forecasts

Migration forecasts, as opposed to scenarios, are quantitative assessments of future migration trends (Sohst et al., 2020). When speaking of forecasts many may think about weather forecasts, but population researchers have also used forecast methods for quite some time (Zipf, 1946). However, up until the 1990s, these were not so much geared towards migration specifically. This started to change with the policy discussions surrounding the EU enlargement (Booth, 2006) and other population dynamics including declining fertility and improved life expectancy in many OECD countries (OECD, 2019).

Forecast methods are used to produce numerical estimates of future migration. With the need to produce more accurate numbers, forecast models become increasingly sophisticated to cope with an unstable and non-linear future. As a result, academics are among those who lead the development and application of migration forecasting, with experts from international bodies (e.g. Eurostat, UN Population Division, the World Bank, and the OECD), national statistical offices, think tanks, and research institutes actively engaged (Sohst et al., 2020).

While there are many different types of forecast modelling, all of them share some common characteristics. First, any forecast model requires data input. Forecasts often use large data sources, such as administrative data, population census data, large scale surveys, and recently also cellphone and online data (e.g. Alexander et al., 2020; Tjaden et al., 2021). The majority of forecast models are building on past migration data and previous patterns, including annual migration flow or migrant stocks, to predict future migration levels. Second, each forecast requires some type of statistical modelling, although the kind of modelling is diverse across the different types of forecast methods (see below). Third, forecast models usually make a set of quantifiable assumptions on how past data can be applied and extrapolated to the future. For example, economic models often assume that individuals primarily base their migration decision on costs and benefits of migration (Bauer & Zimmermann, 1999). Gravity models assume other factors, such as geographical distances and network size of migrant group in destination country, shape migrants' moves (Zipf, 1946; Arranz, 2019). Migration intention surveys assume that intention to migrate is a strong predictor for actual migration and thus can shed light on future migration (e.g. Tjaden et al., 2018).

In Table 28.2, we list seven types of methods used in migration forecast research. First, argument-based models are believed to be the most widely spread method for migration forecasts in official statistics and are usually treated as a component of population projections (Bijak, 2010). There are no strict rules about how to arrive at these assumptions but to illustrate a range of possible future outcomes. In most cases, these assumptions are produced in three or more variants labelled as “low”, “middle” and “high” scenarios. Even though these variants are often also described as ‘scenarios’ by these studies (Boissonneault et al., 2020), they do not provide a storyline and are a different method than what we described as the scenario method in the previous section. Argument-based models are easy to implement, but the uncertainty about future migration is obviously large. As a result, most often the “middle” variant is taken as the most likely projection, even though this is not necessarily the most likely given that the variants are not equipped with probabilities.

A second forecast method that is used are migration intention surveys, in which emigration intentions of the population are asked. It can be a valuable source for migration estimation in the absence of [migration flow data](#) (International Organization for Migration, 1998; Krieger, 2004; Tjaden et al., 2018). However, intentions do not necessarily materialise to future emigration flows and those who have already left a country are obviously not represented. Furthermore, surveys like these cannot do justice to the demand side of migration that may change over time and may make people move even when they originally did not express migration intentions.

Third, explanatory econometric models were originally used to verify economic theories about migration but have increasingly gained popularity for forecasting too (Sohst et al., 2020). It is characterised by the inclusion of drivers that researchers believe are related to migration. Frequently used variables include GDP or GDP per capita, income differentials, and labour market performance.

**Table 28.2** Methods used in migration forecasts, (building on Sohst et al., 2020)

Method	Feature	Strength	Weakness	Examples
Argument-based forecast	* assumptions on future development of migration	* easy implementation	* uncertainty is masked in the simplistic assumptions	Vespa (2018)
				Buettner and Muenz (2018)
				Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018)
Migration intention survey	* emigration intention	* valuable in the absence of migration flow data	* intention not necessarily materialises to future migration flow	IOM (1998)
		* potential comparability	* bias from non-standardised question design	Krieger (2004), Tjaden et al., 2018
			* focus on (intentions) in origin country not including destination country reception willingness/openness	
Explanatory econometric model	* inclusion of covariates	* built on theories	* parameters are estimated from historical data/different context	Bauer and Zimmermann (1999)
			* rely almost entirely on economic drivers	Sinn (2000)
				Dustmann et al. (2003) Arranz (2019)
Spatial interaction model	* interactions between origins and destinations	* estimate bilateral migration flows	* bilateral data may not always be available	Raymer et al. (2006)
				Cohen et al. (2008)
				Arranz (2019)
Time-series extrapolation	* data-driven model	* account for forecast uncertainty	* sole reliance on past migration data	Abel et al. (2013)
		* possibility to use a Bayesian framework	* bias introduced by the imperfection in data reliability, coverage & definitions (see e.g. Raymer et al., 2013)	
Bayesian model	* combine expert opinion with time-series model	* account for forecast uncertainty	* extreme views of experts add to uncertainty levels	Bijak and Winiowski (2009)
		* incorporate experts' knowledge about future migration		Bell et al. (2011)
				Raymer et al. (2013)



**Table 28.2** (continued)

Method	Feature	Strength	Weakness	Examples
Machine learning	* data-driven model	* better model performance in out-of-sample forecasts	* sole-reliance on past migration data	Robinson and Dilkina (2018)

Note: see also Sohst et al. (2020) for a detailed review of these methods

The fourth type of forecasting are those that are built around the spatial interaction model. The difference between spatial and econometric models is that spatial models see migration happening in a bilateral or multiregional system so that origins are connected with destinations (Zipf, 1946; Arranz, 2019). Depending on the type of spatial model, origin-destination interactions may refer to distances between origins and destinations (gravity model), shares of emigrants by destinations (generation-distribution model), and difference between expected and observed bilateral flows (multiplicative component model). Spatial interaction models always produce bilateral migration flow (or stock) estimates.

Fifth, time-series extrapolations are used and are solely reliant on past migration data to produce future estimates of migration. The Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model and its many variants are most frequently used (e.g. de Beer, 1993, 1997; Calian, 2013). This data-driven model is often used by statisticians and distinguishes from previous deterministic models by providing forecast uncertainty (i.e. predictive intervals) and has the possibility to be combined with other quantitative or qualitative data under a Bayesian framework (Bijak, 2011; Raymer & Wiśniowski, 2018). It, however, needs extensive and complete migration data which are often not at hand.

The sixth approach is a Bayesian framework in which expert opinions are incorporated with time-series models. Over the past decade this has been developed further building on time-series extrapolations but dealing with imperfect data by adding experts' knowledge and expectations. Bayesian statistics understand probability as the degree of belief in an event. Bayesian studies do not use an experimental setting to establish the probability of a given event, instead, this method allows researchers to insert prior beliefs into their calculations. For example, Wiśniowski et al. (2013) documented how experts' knowledge gathered in Delphi surveys can be translated into Bayesian priors to improve estimations of international migration in Europe. However, while it is a strong point that these models include uncertainty, questions remain on how to select experts and how meaningful the input of experts is when opinions between experts vary to a large degree. Bayesian approaches have gained popularity in migration forecasts because they offer innovate ways to deal with the large amount of uncertainty connected to forecasting, while also making use of different sources of information (i.e. expert opinion and migration data analysis). Bijak and Winowski (2009) combined a time-series model with expert opinion solicited from a two-round Delphi survey in a Bayesian framework to predict 2010–2015 annual immigration flow to seven European countries. Their forecast model is one of the methodologically most advanced approaches currently available.

It addresses and quantifies uncertainty, applies a statistical model with relatively few restrictions, and enhances the limited data with expert knowledge.

Lastly, we mention machine-learning models which have recently been applied to migration flows. To test the predictive power of this novel approach, Robinson and Dilkina (2018) use machine learning models to estimate 2004–2014 inter-county migration flows in the United States and 1960–2000 international migration flows. This method is still very much in development and has not yet been widely applied in migration forecasts.

To summarise, typical outputs of migration forecast are concrete numbers. These can be the expected future stock of immigrants in a given country, the expected migration flow from and to a country, or the expected flow of migrants from one country to another in a given year. Depending on who produces the numbers, the focus of forecast is either on migration as a component of population projections (in general more demographers' interest) or on the size and impact of future migration flows on labour markets and welfare (often more economists' interest). Different from scenarios, the time span of forecasts depends more on temporal coverage of available data and the aim of the work. The time frame for specific flows can vary between 1 year to more than 100 years. For instance, migration forecasts produced as a component of population projection usually stretch a few decades to 100 years into the future, whereas econometric models are usually (but not always) designed to predict migration futures for shorter time periods, such as 1 to 5 years in the future.

### **28.3 Summary and Evaluation of the Scenario and Forecast Approaches**

Migration scenarios and forecasts are two approaches that equip researchers and policymakers with scientific tools to predict and understand the future of migration. In Table 28.3, we briefly summarise and compare the two approaches. First and foremost, scenarios approach the future of migration qualitatively while forecasts do so more quantitatively. Therefore, what we can get out of the two approaches is quite different: scenarios produce narrative storylines; forecasts produce numbers. The future is full of uncertainty and both approaches try to address that in different ways. The scenario approach produces “what if. . .” scenarios to better prepare for migration resulted from unexpected events: environmental changes, conflicts, and other types of crises. The goal is not to provide accurate predictions but sensitise participants as well as readers about future possibilities. Forecast studies, on the other hand, aim at producing numbers about future migration levels. The only certainty about the future, however, is uncertainty (Acostamiedo & Tjaden, 2020). Many forecast studies do not address uncertainty (in detail), because the models used were not designed to quantify uncertainty. Recent developments see more sophisticated models (e.g. time-series model, Bayesian approach) being used in migration research

**Table 28.3** Comparison of scenario and forecast approaches in migration studies along different dimensions

	Scenarios	Forecasts
Approach	Qualitative-narrative	Quantitative
Methods	A participatory, iterative process	Methodological diverse models
	Relatively less methodological foundation	Need data and assumptions
Typical output	Storyline about the future state of migration and which developments led to that situation	Number of migrants in a given year and country
Uncertainty	Integral part of scenarios	Possibility to incorporate measures of uncertainty
	But no quantification of uncertainty	But most models are still deterministic
Accuracy of prediction	Low	Middle to low
Time horizon	Approximately 10–20 years	Population projections: up to 100 years (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018)
	Time horizon is often connected to key dates such as 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals	Political forecasts (e.g. EU enlargement): up to 20 years Specific flows (e.g. asylum applicants): up to 1 year
Type of migration	All types	Bound by data limitations
Bias	From participants' opinion	From imperfect data
	Researchers' assumptions	Limited theories
Main advantage	Sensitise decision-makers towards plausible long-term futures	Aim at an accurate prediction of the future given stable trends
Main disadvantage	Unwieldy to communicate because of the narrative structure	Rely on structural continuity
	Highly abstract	Give false impression of precision Reflect data limitations
Best usage	Long-term strategic planning with uncertainties	Short-term operational planning
Producers	Mainly practitioners from international organisations, the EU or national governments	Demographers
		Economists
		National statistical offices

Note: see also Sohst et al. (2020), Sohst and Tjaden (2020), Acostamadiedo and Tjaden (2020) for an overview

on forecasts, to incorporate uncertainty measurements (see for example Bijak, 2011; Azose & Raftery, 2015; Disney et al., 2015).

Both methodological approaches have their advantaged and disadvantages. The scenario approach sensitises participants for various directions of potential long-term futures. To communicate lengthy and often highly abstract narrative outputs from scenario studies to non-participants, however, is rather difficult. The strength of forecast studies, lies in its aim to provide a probable prediction on future migration

levels. Though the accuracy of forecasting relies on continuity of past migration trends, which may be unrealistic, the exercise provides a quantifiable base for users to understand future migration.

Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches reveals their potential usefulness in different situations. The choice of methods depends on the purpose of research and the (data) resources. If one wants to get a most accurate number for future migration and has access to comprehensive, high-quality data on past migration trends, forecasting models are the potentially better option. If the goal is to engage an institution in an open discussion and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, or to examine hard-to-measure factors like political stability, migration scenarios might be the right tool.

Reflecting on the purpose of the exercise, time coverage of the different methods usually varies. Due to its preparedness goal, scenario studies often align time horizons with key dates in broader political process, for instance UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Forecasts on the number of asylum applicants can be shorter than a year as the flow of asylum seekers is particularly volatile and thus unpredictable. Migration forecasts as an integral part of population projections can go up to 100 years. However, errors of forecast models increase with forecast duration. To obtain a reasonable prediction, one should be conscious about limitations of the chosen forecast model we discussed in Sect. 28.2. For instance, to make the best use of an econometric model, the forecasts should be applied to short time horizons (around 5 years) and be interpreted with careful attention to changing contexts that might diminish validity of the chosen migration drivers. Overall scenarios are more useful when a long-term perspective is taken whereas forecast serve more short-term future visions and planning (see also Acostamadiedo et al., 2020).

While applying these tools, researchers need to be aware of the constraints and limitations of the methods. In current practice, the scenario method does not necessarily require (big) data input (even though it can use statistical input) and thus is suitable to produce and include different types of migration futures. The forecast model, however, is bounded by available data. As a result, seasonal or irregular migrants are usually not counted in forecasting models because they are not captured in most data sources.

On the other side, the scenario method relies heavily on participants and therefore potentially reflects bias from them (see Acostamadiedo & Tjaden, 2020, p. 22). [Experts](#) are subject to their own cognitive biases and are often not better at predicting the future than the average population as some research has suggested (Tetlock, 2017). The bias in forecast models more likely comes from imperfect data (e.g. undercount and different definitions of migrants). Scenario studies heavily depend on researchers' assumptions on uncertainties (e.g. how to define the scenario matrix), while forecasts results are sensitive to the choice of data, assumptions and models. Thus, a transparent and detailed documentation is essential for both approaches.

While it is useful to learn from past examples on the usage of scenario and forecast methods, it is important for the researcher to realise in what context these

methods were used. The scenario methods on migration we review and included here were limited to those developed mainly by practitioners in the European Union. Scenario studies are often used to understand the factors that drive migrants to move to Europe. However, realities on the impact of immigration and roles of migrants vary depending on the context of migration. Migration realities are very different across the globe and thus, it is important for researchers to be aware of the surrounding political, societal, environmental, health, and economic factors that shape migration. This should inform the decision-making process for choosing a certain method, but also on how these methods are applied and matched with local realities.

## 28.4 Conclusion and Future Developments

To understand and shed light on potential future migration, there needs to be an understanding of the different methods that can be used but also of what the limitations of the diverse methods are. We have discussed different approaches to understand future migration by describing scenario and forecast methods in more detail and evaluating the two. Depending on the goal of the study and the questions on the table, combined with the available resources and data, the appropriate method should be selected.

When using scenario and/or forecast methods, one should always be aware of the surrounding political, societal, environmental, health, and economic factors, the role and bias of the researcher, as well as how each of these factors may affect the results. Researchers may not be able to address all these influences, but it is good practice to raise awareness on these issues and make them explicit in the study design and findings.

As we have shown, both scenario and forecast methods have their unique strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, there are several likely avenues for the field to make advances in the coming years (see also Chap. 29). First, a possible development in studying future migration is to integrate these two methods further than has been done so far. Recently some steps were taken to indeed achieve this. A clear example is the Bayesian framework, where forecast models are improved by inserting expert knowledge solicited from Delphi surveys to assess the reliability of migration data and incorporate expectations on future migration trends. Instead of aiming for a more uniform prediction on migration, one could embrace the diversity of assessments on future migration. Then, potentially, a next step can be achieved in creating multiple forecast predictions which are based on different future migration scenarios that have been proposed in scenario discussions. This could serve as a way to incorporate uncertainty. Machine-learning techniques may then be used to further improve the accuracy of the predictions. Triangulating and cross-checking predictions from various studies is crucial to identify a convergence in the general tendency of results which can then be interpreted with more confidence.

Second, another development that is expected to develop further in the future is the continuous improvement of longitudinal migration data. Limited data availability and quality has often been lamented in the field of migration (Willekens et al., 2016; Raymer et al., 2019), however, recent advances in making harmonised migration data available at the regional level (e.g. Eurostat and ASEAN) provides the opportunity for time series forecasting on migration to become more accurate and reliable over time.

Third, the increasing accessibility of large-scale digital trace data (Cesare et al., 2018), such as Facebook and Google searches, provide great potential for the forecasting community, especially when innovative data sources can be combined with traditional ones (Carammia et al., 2022, Hsiao et al., 2020; Rampazzo et al., 2021; Tjaden et al., 2021).

In conclusion, combinations of scenario and forecast methods appear to be a promising avenue for research on future migration predictions. While these methods may never be able to accurately predict migration patterns, the insights that can be derived from the migration projections can still be valuable for practitioners and policymakers, helping them understand population change and design more accurate policies. Even though there are shortcomings to each method, forecasts and scenarios (or the combination of both) can provide valuable, though not complete insights into future migration. Even when we cannot fully cope with the uncertainties in future events, each method prepares us to at least partially understand future migration.

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# Chapter 29

## A Future Agenda for Migration Studies



**Riccardo Pozzo, Ekrame Boubtane, Hippolyte D'Albis,  
Raffaella Greco Tonegutti, and Claudio Paravati**

Migration and migration-related diversity are likely to remain key topics of the European policy agenda for the foreseeable future. This asks for a rethinking of the agenda on migration, from a strategic perspective as well as from a research perspective. The objective of this chapter is to suggest applications that are useful in shaping the next funding opportunities for migration research, to provide roadmaps for the optimisation of research efforts in order to avoid overlapping, and, where possible, to close the gaps in the global spectrum and national initiatives on migration. Questions such as *How to benefit from and get access to available knowledge and expertise?* *How to promote the accumulation of knowledge and expertise?* and *How to address gaps in knowledge?* have been at the heart of the Horizon 2020 CrossMigration research project and have led to the definition of [its strategic research agenda](#). This chapter considers the need for a future agenda on migration studies, addressing methodological issues such as: what funding to focus on; how funding might be organised; who should be involved in funding (and procedures); and what prospects there are for the future. We will also propose three strategies to consider how an agenda might help provide towards: (1) keeping the road safe for achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in

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2030, (2) contrasting current and future pandemic/epidemic disease, and (3) establishing a fruitful dialogue with the African scientific community.

## 29.1 Methodology

Let us start with the general definition of a *political agenda*, namely “the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time”, Kingdon (1995, p. 3). It is within a political agenda that a *research agenda*—a process consisting of exploration, engagement and prioritisation, integration, programming, implementation—is laid out in order to make explicit what are the requirements set out by the state for researchers to relate their studies to real-world issues in order to validate their research and access *research funding* allocated by a government. A research agenda is about assessing various research options, which in turn leads “to recommendations for a re-orientation of political decision-making” (Fischer et al., 2007, p. 501).

This chapter reflects on the [methodological, conceptual, and epistemological challenges](#) of engaging in cross-disciplinary research on migration with a long-term future agenda.<sup>1</sup> It elaborates on definitions (Sects. 29.1, 29.2, 29.3, 29.4 and 29.5) and concrete examples (Boxes 29.1, 29.2 and 29.3) with regard to tackling migration as a domain that ignites a dialogue between very diverse disciplines such as sociology, narratology, media-studies, ICT, political science, social psychology, religious studies, economics, human rights, cultural heritage, museum studies, and civil society organisations while using data available through research infrastructures, computational social science and digital humanities (Pozzo, 2021).

The ambition of this chapter is to map, synthesize, and make accessible academic literature on how to program research funding on migration studies, how to use them and to whom to address them (King & Lulle, 2016). The primary focus is on theories, concepts and methodological approaches concerning various facets of migration, including the [drivers of migration](#), [migration infrastructures](#), different [migration flows](#), [policies](#) and migration-related diversity. Furthermore, the ambition is to guide the reader towards interaction with the other chapters of the handbook as well as with external sources. In fact, while bringing together literature in a coherent way, this chapter is linked to the [Migration Research Hub](#), in order to provide suggestions for further reading (original articles and books) as well as for more empirical material on migration and diversity (datasets, graphs, algorithms).

Migration accompanies the whole history of civilisations, involving continuous relations and exchanges among cultures, hence translations through different linguistic, economic, political, and cultural contexts. The methodological approach we

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<sup>1</sup>These comprise a series of short reports by migration scholars, edited by Fiona-Katharina Seiger and Albert Kraler in the context of WP3 of the CrossMigration project.

are looking into, however, is different from those of the studies which are all defined by disciplinary methodologies (see Salamońska (Chap. 26); Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz (Chap. 25); Kraler & Reichel (Chap. 27), all this volume). The idea is that research on migration ought not to be reduced to the emigration or immigration processes of populations or ethnic groups. Migration encompasses the whole history of civilisation, while considering continuous relations and reciprocal exchanges among diverse cultures, and thus translations (in their widest sense) of texts and modules from one to another context, be [it linguistic, economic, political, or cultural](#).

## 29.2 What to Focus Research Funding On

Systematic mapping and synthesis of studies on migration shows that a lot of research has been done over the last decades. Funding programs and instruments from the past have played a key role in this. There are important opportunities to develop knowledge on migration further, by focusing on topics that are understudied as well as by promoting systematic knowledge accumulation of existing research. In the framework of [CrossMigration](#), we proposed joint actions for the preparation of a [Strategic Research Agenda](#) based on a set of [Key Knowledge Questions](#) defined in a dialogue between researchers and policymakers, which have been considered, discussed, and integrated into the various drafts of the growing research agenda. Last but not least, the [taxonomy](#) of the Migration Research Hub proves to be useful for both funding agencies and researchers applying for funding in the area of migration and diversity. By focusing on the “[Projects](#)” button within the database, one can [explore the topics which are most popular among funding organisations](#), and those which have not yet received much attention. Thus, this classification system could help scholars to propose innovative research avenues when applying for research grants, while it can help research funders avoid repeatedly funding projects on the same topics, making them more aware of the research knowledge gaps and where there is need for financial support to initiate or expand research.

## 29.3 Mainstreaming Research on Migration into a Focus Area

Migration is not a stand-alone topic. It connects to broader themes such as climate change, economics, international relations, gender, social policies, and many more. This is why it is preferable to speak of research on migration rather than of migration research. There is a strong connection with and embedding of research on migration in research on other themes and areas in which migration plays a role. Looking at the experiences with *Circular Economy*, a Focus Area on migration would be an interesting model to look into. Focus areas cut across thematic boundaries and

bring together contributions from various program parts to pursue a common objective and create sustained impact; they are endowed with a substantial budget to allow for work of sufficient scale, depth, and breadth. At issue is the phenomenon of migration in the sense of epochal mobility in its complex and articulated shape that embraces a series of aspects that are first and foremost socio-economic and cultural but have a substantial bearing on security, health-care, environmental, and nutritional issues.

### **Box 29.1: Tackling the Pandemics**

How can we build multi-ethnic communities that are peaceful, supportive, free from racial tensions, religiously tolerant, and above all bioethically fair? The dynamics aimed at building and consolidating a right to health-care open to a full integration of immigrants, even the most enlightened and the most generous, are proving difficult. The reality is that ethnic integration, if it is difficult at the societal level, is infinitely more difficult at the ethical and bioethical level. It builds, in fact, a multifactorial process, which no one has yet been able to fully explore and which has the Gordian knot of identity at its centre.

A public debate on lessons learned from the first phases of COVID-19 management in connection to migration is currently taking place because the perception of a lack of coordination has emerged between political and scientific levels, institutional claim-makers and the media. The story of the spread of COVID-19 is instructive. If it is an absolute bioethical principle that of guaranteeing all patients the appropriate treatments, then the identification of the most appropriate treatment for each patient, of each ethnic group, opens lacerating and at present non-modular debates. This is why the countless projects, the endless debates, the noble wishes that have migratory dynamics at their core ring the ears of most of us, almost always empty. Which, of course, does not entail nor justify surrender attitudes towards what is now clearly the most complex problem of the first decades of the third millennium. A node that no algorithm will ever be able to control, because antagonistic, spiritual and material needs, individual and collective, are intertwined, rooted in history, which can no longer be proposed, and projected into illusory, ambiguous and problematic future paradigms. The pandemic invites to rethink Research and Innovation for a re-determination of the effectiveness of the exchange between the knowledge of scientists and the experiential knowledge of communities. Taking territories as reference, it is evident that local administrations must have management infrastructures (unimaginable before Covid-19) for the respect of the precautions of social distance and the tracking of positive cases. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic makes it urgent to work on participatory approaches that can boost community readiness for local COVID-19 management. As the emergency increases, so does the need for transparency. Today, local administrations must equip themselves with the

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**Box 29.1** (continued)

management of infrastructures (unimaginable before COVID-19) for enforcing social distance and tracking positive cases.

Evidently, one of the tasks that migration researchers must take on is the determination of the *Societal Readiness Levels*, the levels of integration in society of new technologies, products and services (NewHORRIZon, 2020). In the case of natural disasters, and such is the pandemic, it is a question of activating social and cultural innovation processes that prepare communities to respond to catastrophic events in their territory (UNDRR, 2020) through access to data, participation in communities of practice, co-creation, reflection and inclusion (Pozzo et al., 2020). Keeping in mind the Syracuse Principles, it is necessary that the assessment of Technology Readiness Levels be integrated by the corresponding Societal Readiness Levels. Keeping in mind § 25 of the *Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation of Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1985) it is necessary that *Technology Readiness Levels* (ISO, 2019) be accompanied by the corresponding *Societal Readiness Levels* (NewHORRIZon, 2020).

## 29.4 Globalizing Research on Migration

It is crucial to study the broader socio-economic and political circumstances in the countries of origin that lead to migration in the first place, explore migration processes, including transit migration, and look at migrant-receiving countries in Europe, North America, as well as in Brazil and China, together with sending countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Sahel, the Sub Saharan Africa, as well as countries in South America and Asia. In order to do so, voices from the Global South, also those of migrants themselves, should be included in creating a rich and diverse field of research. A strengthening of collaboration in research on migration, with non-European partners should be more encouraged. This includes partners from across the Mediterranean, but also partners from across Africa and Asia.

### **Box 29.2: Keeping the Road Safe towards the Sustainable Development Goals**

It is becoming clear that COVID-19 ought not to undermine the work done so far to achieve SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 3 (Good Health), 4 (Education), 5 (Gender), 8 (Growth), 10 (Inequalities), and 16 (Peace). The challenges related to migration issues are based on the aim of contributing to a change in the mindset as regards a culture of inclusion and reflection in target groups active in social infrastructures such as education, life-long learning, healthcare, urban

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**Box 29.2** (continued)

development and regeneration (UNSDSN, 2020). Today, the biggest challenge is given by the lack of a shared conceptualisation that is preventing the development of indicators to measure it that are crucial to plan, monitor and evaluate policies. For migrants settling down in adopted home countries, lack of inclusion and recognition, together with discrimination and racism, make inclusion processes challenging. Striving toward an ideal of unity in diversity in democracies necessitates an approach in which those one disagrees with are seen as legitimate others, not as enemies. Culture cannot be but plural, changing, adaptable, constructed. Inclusion and reflection are constructed whenever we are in contact with other human beings, regardless of where they come from.

## 29.5 Research Infrastructures

A considerable challenge is represented by the passage from *data science* to *data humanities*. Research infrastructures are *common goods*. They are planned, built, and managed for serving vast research communities, which operate in diversified sectors on the principles of open access and competition. Research infrastructures are facilities that provide resources and services for research communities to conduct research and foster innovation; they can be used beyond research, e.g., for education or public services and they may be single-sited, distributed, or virtual. The main goal is to deal with every aspect of science and technology related to this field in order to offer innovative solutions to current and future societal challenges. As a matter of fact, researchers in the social sciences and humanities are confronted with increasingly complex and large amounts of data in highly interdisciplinary settings.

European research infrastructures today are of different kinds. In Europe, starting communities can apply for admission in the *European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures Roadmap*, which currently lists about 50 projects and landmarks and is updated every 2 years. Formed in 2002 at the behest of the European Council, ESFRI supports a coherent and strategy-led approach to policymaking on research infrastructures in Europe; it facilitates multilateral initiatives leading to the better use and development of research infrastructures, at EU and international level. Scientific communities can apply for substantial funding within Europe's framework programs for research and innovation. Launched 30 years ago to bring together expertise from across the European Community, the framework program has become a major part of research cooperation in Europe, growing progressively in size, scope and ambition; it has evolved from supporting cross-border collaboration in research and technology to now encouraging a truly European coordination of activities and policies. Their governance and legal status are structured in accordance with the provisions established for each multiannual financial period.



Currently, the European Union funds nine research infrastructures proposed by communities within the social sciences and humanities that are up and running, which are monitored by the ESFRI *Strategy Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation*:

- CESSDA ERIC (*Council of European Social Science Data Archives*) is an umbrella organisation for European Social Science data archives, which has been active since the 1970s to improve access to data for researchers and students, and to enhance the exchange of data and technologies among data organisations (link to: <https://www.clarin.eu/>).
- CLARIN ERIC (*Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure*) is a large- scale pan-European collaborative effort to create, coordinate and make language resources and technologies available and readily usable (link to: <https://www.cessda.eu/>).
- DARIAH ERIC (*Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities*) is the first permanent European digital infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (link to: <https://www.dariah.eu/>).
- EHRI (*European Holocaust Research Infrastructure*) listed as an ESFRI Project, supports the Holocaust research community by building a digital infrastructure and facilitating human networks (link to: <https://www.ehri-project.eu/>).
- E-RIHS (*European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science*) creates synergies for a multidisciplinary approach to heritage interpretation, preservation, documentation and management (link to: <http://www.e-rihs.eu/>).
- ESS ERIC (*European Social Survey*) aims not only at providing an academically robust way of knowing Europe, but also at contributing to the scientific community's endeavor to develop, test and implement methods of reliable social measurement (link to: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>).
- OPERAS (*Design for Open access Publications in European Research Area for Social Sciences and Humanities*) coordinates and pools university-led scholarly communication activities in Europe in the Social Sciences and Humanities to enable open science as standard practice. It is an H2020 funded project that operates in the ESFRI's high strategic potential area of intervention Digital Service for Open Science Research (link to: <https://operas.hypotheses.org/>).
- SHARE ERIC (*Survey on Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe*) aims at elaborating a statistical survey of lifestyle, health, economics and social life in over 50 European countries (link to: <http://www.share-project.org/home0.html>).
- RESILIENCE (*Religious Studies Research Infrastructure*) collects historical documents and current information on global theological-political issues while fostering interfaith dialogue. It is an H2020 funded project that operates in the ESFRI's high strategic potential area of intervention Religious Studies (link to: <https://reires.eu/>).

Migration researchers use research infrastructures to confer data, models, and scholarly outcomes to a number of communities—and receive data, models, and scholarly outcomes from the same as well as from other communities. In fact, besides the nine infrastructures we mentioned, the other ESFRI working groups

(Energy, Environment, Health and Food, and Physical Sciences & Engineering) embed six further infrastructures that might be involved in cross-disciplinary research on migration:

- SoBigData (*Social Mining and Big Data Ecosystem*) provides an integrated ecosystem for ethic-sensitive scientific discoveries and advanced applications of social data mining on the various dimensions of social life, as recorded by big data (link to: <https://kdd.isti.cnr.it/project/sobigdata-social-mining-and-big-data-ecosystem>).
- EMSO (*European Multidisciplinary Seafloor and Water Column Observatory*) ensures long-term monitoring of environmental processes related to the interaction between the geosphere, biosphere and hydrosphere, including natural hazards. It is composed of several deep-seafloor and water column observatories (link to: <http://emso.eu/>).
- IAGOS (*In-Service Aircraft for a Global Observing System*) conducts long-term observations of atmospheric composition, aerosol and cloud particles on a global scale from commercial aircraft of internationally operating airlines (link to: <http://iagos-data.fr/>).
- LifeWatch ERIC (*E-Science and Technology Infrastructure for Research on Biodiversity and Ecosystems*) connects biodiversity data, observatories and researchers from all over the continent (link to: <https://www.lifewatch.eu/>).
- BBMRI ERIC (*Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure*) biobanks are essential for the understanding of the diversity of human diseases, biological samples and corresponding data are required for the development of any new drug or diagnostic array and are critical for the advancement in health research (link to: <https://www.bbmri-eric.eu/>).
- EUBI ERIC (*European Research Infrastructure for Biomedical Imaging*) provides open physical user access to a broad range of state-of-the-art technologies in biological and bio- medical imaging for life scientists (link to: <https://www.eurobioimaging.eu/>).

Judging from the possible relevance of these infrastructures to research on migrations, it becomes evident that migration as a field of research ignites a holistic approach that embraces all four aspects of sustainability—cultural, social, environmental, and economic (Pozzo & Virgili, 2017).

## 29.6 Filling the Gaps in Research on Migration

The [mapping and synthesis of research on migration](#) (see Chap. 1 of this volume) has revealed that although much work has been done, specific urgent topics still remain understudied. It is useful to target funding instruments at different levels.

*Macro factors and micro-level migration decision-making.* Our understanding of how migratory decisions are made in the real world remains rather limited. More specifically, how do macro-level factors (e.g., development, conflict, climate

change) shape micro-level aspirations to migrate? Analysing how structural and individual factors interact is necessary to understand why people move. This is an area particularly interesting for development, foreign policy and humanitarian actors, as they try to better assess how their interventions impact migration and forced displacement. Amongst other disciplines, behavioral economics and social psychology could provide much insight on how actors take decisions; whether to migrate, where to go to (or from), how to migrate, when to migrate, etc.

*How do government interventions influence the drivers of migration?* Governments consider influencing the drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement as part of its strategic objectives but key questions remain on how a state can leverage its instruments and whether its objectives are realistic and coherent (see Chap. 3 (this volume) and *Key Knowledge Questions on Migration Drivers*). Besides, this questioning needs to extend to other migration flows (e.g., how European interventions influence students who wish to come to Europe).

*What are the profiles of migrants arriving, what categorisations are used, and what are the effects of policies on these categories?* Policies often distinguish between different types of migration flows, and policymakers need data and analysis on the profiles of newcomers to design adequate migration, asylum and integration policies (see Chap. 5 (this volume) and *Key Knowledge Questions on Migration Forms*). However, more research is required on how these categories work out in practice, to what extent they reflect the different profiles of migrants (i.e., mixed migration), and also what the effects of policies are on these categories or flows. It is important to study not only the effects of migration policies, but also the general social and economic policies (i.e., welfare) on both internal and external migration flows. Studying mobility would be beneficial for exploring policy implications more comprehensively. In Europe (see Chap. 6 (this volume) and *Key Knowledge Questions on the External Dimension of EU Migration Governance*). More specifically, a future agenda ought to examine what are the implications of the recent large scale refugee intake for the upcoming family mobility; the new geographies of labor migration; what role changes in wage differentials play in both; what are the factors affecting changes in migration temporalities (permanent, temporary, circular, seasonal, short-term, etc.). How these are affected by uncertainties and exclusion.

*Integration.* Migration is an important factor in increasing cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within receiving societies. Migration poses questions of social and cultural (not only economic) integration, raises tensions about dominant values or prevailing traditions, stresses the limits of the institutional make up of receiving countries with the quest of accommodating new populations with different cultures and needs.

*Migration infrastructures.* There is a comparably strong focus on human smugglers and traffickers in migration studies. Compared to this, there is less research on regular agents such as work recruitment agencies, student mobility consultants or marriage agents, which is surprising when taking into account how many (regular) migrants use their services. Also, digital migration studies are an emerging field of interest. Finally, there is little research on the interface of migration and tourism or migration and travel logistics. Notably, means of transportation, such as carriers, air

(ports) or bus and train stations are widely neglected in migration research (see Chap. 4 (this volume) and **Key Knowledge Questions on Migration Infrastructures**).

*Focusing on decision-making in migration governance.* There has been significant research on structure of migration and diversity policymaking, at the European, national, regional, and local level (see **Key Knowledge Questions on the future of the Schengen Area and the European Common Asylum System**). However, much less is known of how governance actors take decisions in real world settings. On top of focusing on evaluation of policy outcomes, it is interesting to focus on policy decision-making. This can lead to important contributions to the quality of migration governance, while covering topics such as evidence-based policymaking, how to cope with social complexity, how to cope with contestation and politicisation, how to cope with incident-driven politics, etc.

## 29.7 How to Focus Research Funding?

The following section looks into how to focus research funding in Europe and all over the world, including the use of funding instruments. Especially, it considers the community response to the way migration related calls for research and innovation actions as well as coordination and support actions will be posted within the Horizon Europe Global Challenge Cluster 2 “Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society”.

A survey within the European community of researchers on migration has shown that what has been proposed so far is not sufficient. What the community asks to the European Commission and the governments of Member States and Associated Countries is a new approach for a future agenda, which might well serve as a first step in the direction of new alignment schemes for streamlining research efforts among national/regional and international research activities on migration. Especially, it appears necessary to go beyond methodological nationalism and for defragmentation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

At issue is evaluating and mapping initiatives suitable for supporting coordinated research on migration at the European and international level. Public-to-public networks align national strategies helping to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public research efforts. Public-to-public networks include ERA-NETs, Article 185 initiatives as well as Joint Programming Initiatives. These instruments are essential for funding future research efforts, as indicated by CrossMigration, in as far as they allow the European Union, in implementing its multiannual framework programs, to make provision for participation in research and development programmes run by several Member States, in agreement with the Member States concerned, including participation in the structures created for the execution of those programs. They are actions designed to support coordinated national research and innovation programs that allow implementation of joint programs of activities, ranging from research and innovation projects to coordination and networking

activities, as well as training activities, demonstration and dissemination activities, support to third parties etc.

Organizing knowledge and using knowledge-based evidence for policy design and implementation requires (1) coordination with currently operative ERA-NETs (funding networks established towards topping-up funding of single joint-calls for transnational research and innovation. This is done in selected areas with high European added-value and Horizon 2020 relevance) related to migration: NORFACE-New Opportunities for Research Funding Agency Cooperation in Europe, HERA-Humanities in the European Research Area; (2) Joint Programming as an integrating mechanism across research initiatives and across research; (3) the European Joint Partnerships; (4) Long-term envisaging of including research on migration within the art. 185 TFE (which allows the EU to participate in research programs jointly undertaken by several EU countries) initiative PRIMA-Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area, the most ambitious joint program to be undertaken in the frame of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

*Joint Initiatives.* These years are witnessing the emergence of the European Partnership model, the novel and comprehensive EC funding instrument for EU R&I Partnerships, which is expected to replace in the next EU R&I Framework program 2021–2027 Horizon Europe the toolbox currently in use for funding public-public and public-private partnerships. In fact, the new European Partnerships can implement a logic of intervention similar to the JPIs, even if they are a financing tool and not a strategic approach. CrossMigration has followed closely the process started in November 2016 (ERAC, 2016) towards the establishment of a Joint Programming Research Initiative on Migrants, Migration and Integration by the High-Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC), which contributes to the preparation of the debates and decisions of the Competitiveness Council on joint programming. Completed in March 2017 (ERAC, 2017), the document issued by GPC *ad-hoc* Task Force puts the emphasis on the need of a Joint Programming Initiative for implementing the required strategic approach to EU research on migration (ERAC, 2017).

*Coordination and Support Actions.* CSAs that would engage specifically with bringing together research results, distilling them, and coming up with new findings that would have a direct relevance for policy development. **CSAs consist** primarily of accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructures and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programs in different countries. Two coordination and support actions have been set up for research on migration, namely a social platform such as RESOMA and the IMISCOE Migration Research Hub.

*More responsive funding structures.* The definition of funding programs currently takes a very significant amount of time. This makes it difficult to bring together experts and do research on more immediate topics on the agenda. In recent years, funding schemes have favoured either short technical assistance projects conducted

by small teams of experts or long large-scale research projects by large consortiums of institutions. This leaves a gap for medium-scale medium-duration projects by medium-size teams to produce more targeted and faster results. This suggests that further diversification of funding schemes would be beneficial. It is to be expected that funding structures could become more responsive by providing, besides longer and long-term oriented research projects, also shorter and smaller short-term oriented projects. This enables the use of knowledge and research for more immediate issues on the policy agenda, and it could be a stepping stone towards longer term projects.

*Enhancing findability and accessibility.* Funding programs are built on what is already there. This not only prevents overlaps in research, it also promotes systematic knowledge accumulation and it enables a focus on areas that really need more or new research. The Migration Research Hub provides a crucial instrument for taking stock of and reviewing existing work, before setting out and targeting new research.

*The Process of Defining Research Funding.* Stakeholders of a research agenda are Ministries, Research Funding Organisations, Research Performing Organisations, Universities, companies, SMEs, unions, NGOs. Stakeholders could be involved, in different capacities, in the definition of sustainable funding programs for the future.

*Cooperation with non-research stakeholders.* In order to gain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the multitude of aspects relevant for migration, it is important to foster collaboration with the civil society, policymakers and practitioners, and business at local, national and international level. These actors pose knowledge internal to their practical involvement with the issues of migration, which is not immediately accessible to the academic researchers. However, given that stakeholders do not always have time to reflect on the use of the knowledge beyond their immediate every day work aims, it is important to stress that collaboration between academic researchers and practitioners in a broader sense could be mutually beneficial to gain a more nuanced picture on how migration is played out in wider contexts of social reality.

*Cooperation with developing countries.* In order to grasp the global aspect of migration, cooperation with partners from developing countries is crucial. We can only understand migration better when we understand the root causes of this migration better. And we believe the best way to develop such knowledge is by collaborating with partners in countries of arrival of migrants, such as in Europe, North America, as well as Brazil and China, together with sending countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria), Sahel (Mali), Sub Saharan Africa (Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Congo), as well as countries in South America (Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela) and Asia (Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Philippines).

*Structural collaboration with the scholarly community.* Collaborations within the migration scholarly community can be of strong mutual benefice to enhance overview of and accessibility to available research, to promote opportunities for knowledge accumulation, and to foster the likelihood of research being used by stakeholders. Think of the role scholars play for the development of humanitarian corridors as a government practice mixed with private sponsorship, as bottom-up

actions that aim to create legal channels, in particular as regards highly vulnerable people, or think of the role they might play for interreligious dialogue, globally, as an identity element and bridge with the country of origin and in receiving societies through dynamics of resilience and possible integration for migrants.

### **Box 29.3: What Are African Researchers on Migration Asking?**

Taking into account intra-African migration and international cooperation on migration policies, there is a problem of taking into account the work of African scholars and their views on migration, hence the recommendation for establishing an African research centre on migration. Hence, the need to adopt open science for open innovation in order to obtain a new product, which brings about the invitation to researchers to face it and ask governments to facilitate freedom of mobility on the basis of research. On 26–27 February 2020 at Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar a meeting took place of experts from Brazil, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom with African scientists from Morocco, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Benin, and Congo. The question was posed of the *irrationality of migration*. There is a need of improving measures and management through the cultural re-contextualisation of the *migrating planet*. There is a need of contrasting the hegemony of migration studies which mainly engage the points of view and concepts of the countries of the north. Cultural migration mobilizes a plurality of factors, among other historical traditions, religious beliefs, imaginary or social models but also the normative and organisational structures, the media structures that inspire migration. The culture of migration is based on the *migration imaginary*, under which is meant the scene of the individual and collective representation of migration experience. Two factors come into play: (a) persuasive communication, linked to new media (social networks), highlighting the elements of migratory success and (b) dissuasive communication practiced by traditional media (television and radio), which focus on the elements of dangers and unsuccessful migration. This is why governments ought to define issues for cooperation on migration research around the digital economy and local development. Other elements that explain the connection of migrants with religions come into play, especially its resilience when other modes of integration are possible. Religious communities often develop programs that support and accompany migrants in their host countries such as education programs and food-banks.

Two types of actors appear: not-for-profit actors (return migrants, relatives, returnees) who are active in departure areas, and for-profit actors (transporters, smugglers, police, coaxers) who are active in places of transit and arrival. Third, the phenomenon of return migration from Europe and North America to Senegal calls for the acknowledgment of invisible migrations. They are Europeans and Americans who define themselves as expatriates, not as

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**Box 29.3** (continued)

migrants, and who Senegalese authorities do not consider as migrants. The attractiveness of Senegal is to be sought in the crisis in the West, the hardening of conditions in Morocco, the monetary differential, but also professional advantages. Finally, irregular migration flows to Europe over the past 5 years evoke the ineffectiveness of European migration policies. The awareness campaigns, the externalization of the border of the European Union and the bilateral agreements on migration are unable to stop migration flows in a context of globalization, as long as Europe remains a fortress.

The main question is: how do migrant remittances impact the living conditions of original households? Migrants' transfers and living conditions of original households can be considered in the case study of the city of Kinshasa. The data mobilized come from the 2007 MAFPE survey, which shows that 67% of Congolese migration goes mainly to South Africa, Angola, and Congo Brazzaville. Only 29% of migratory flows are directed to Europe (Belgium, France and Germany) and 3% to America. With regard to the drivers of migration, economic reasons, family reunification, higher education play a very important role. However, the analysis of socio-demographic characteristics shows that the average age of migration lies between 20 and 29 years. The likelihood of remittances depends on the continent of residence of the migrant. Migrants based in Europe transfer more funds but investments are rare. Women return more money than men. In any case, the effectiveness of migration on the living conditions of the family of origin seems to be confirmed.

Return and reintegration are currently major axes of migration policies, none of which have been effective yet, for the number of return migrants has not increased. Their ineffectiveness is linked to several elements: (a) no harmonization of the intervention packages proposed by the European States; (b) resources used vary from country to country; (c) each country has its own package compared to the return; (d) migration policies also show limits in the context of monitoring implementation actions. An interesting case study is national migration policies in Mali, for Mali is importantly marked by intra-African mobility. Economic crises and monetary policies affect migration and the settlement of Malians outside their country. The economic precariousness of the population creates the dependence of families on migration-related money transfers. Associative actors also intervene in the management of migration, by setting up dissuasive campaigns, of a think tank on migration with migrants or through the NGOisation of the fight against irregular migration. Mali's national migration policies testify the desire to improve knowledge, while strengthening the role of civil society in supporting the diaspora in order to derive economic benefits. The *Réseau Migration et Développement* reported on the difficulties of gaining access to funding experienced by

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**Box 29.3** (continued)

national NGOs, which are forced to turn to international NGOs. This condition is a challenge for researchers who are capable of combining research and fieldwork in which they are actors. Researchers can contribute to a paradigm-shift on migration in Senegal and in the world. The *Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et du Plan du Sénégal* (link to: <http://www.finances.gouv.sn/>) is coordinating the process of drawing up Senegal's national migration policy, pointed out that the Senegalese migration policy currently being validated is a key issue in as far as it is about to end 55 years of political vacuum. The *Maghreb Sahel Migrant Network* highlighted the fact that migration policies in sub-Saharan Africa are influenced by European policies that encourage the containment of migratory flows. This explains most of the problems of migration management in Africa. In this context, the European Union ought to review its development programs and projects in Africa, when it has become clear that they do not benefit at all the young people who continue to prefer leaving their homes.

## 29.8 Conclusion: What Prospects?

Overall, the future agenda on migration is coming about through different steps taken to address research gaps and ensure longitudinal perspective in areas that are of high interest for policymakers. Although crisis-oriented, the policy push for coherence is producing a shift towards a more systemic approach to migration studies, for more organic, wide-ranging and policy-relevant research results on migration. This effort coincides with strategic trends in research programming, such as the increased focus on multidisciplinary research, larger-scale projects with a higher number of partners and countries covered between participants and research areas, and a higher combination of research methods.

From 2014 to 2020, in Europe, through the framework program for research and innovation *Horizon 2020*, a wealth of research has been funded on migration. More than 40 projects on migration received funding, with an average budget of 2M€ (ranging from 1 to 5M€) for an average duration of 3.5 years. First, on average, 3 projects per topic have been funded; second, research institutions from third countries, including countries from the Global South have been involved; third, international organisations and NGOs have participated in project consortia, strongly encouraged by the nature of the topics; fourth, target groups have been included in the design of research methods and approaches; fifth, programs have been encouraged to combine social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

To these projects, one should add the variety of research projects funded under national schemes and/or other research bodies (public and private), which add on to the EU-funded migration research. While this certainly allows for a sound body of

evidence in the different research areas and policy fields, the lack of coordination among multi-level funding also generates incoherence and confusion. Stronger efforts to ensure coordination, at least among EU financing instruments on migration research and studies, and possibly with national funding schemes, would be advantageous for the research community and for policymakers.

Most importantly, beyond programming, there is now a need to ensure synergies and coordination among projects that are exploring the different dimensions of migration. It is imperative that findings and tools elaborated/developed by the different projects are discussed in a combined and thorough fashion.

Future funding instruments and schemes should make sure that innovation in research methods and approaches is further developed and supported. On the other hand, from a policy perspective, with impact as one of the main criteria to assess the proposals presented to the various financing instruments, a thorough assessment should be carried out with respect to the outcomes of government funded research, at least in terms of policy impact. This would allow an open discussion on what might be the criteria to assess such an impact, such as a mention of a piece of research in a policy/legislative document issued by an institution, or the invitation of a project to a policy workshop/discussion, or perhaps the use of a project/research finding as a basis for policy programming? This complex debate needs to be at the core of future programming, together with a transparent discussion on how to assess the potential impact of a project (or a proposal) as well as its actual outcomes in that sphere.

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