



History and Future of Migration in International Business: From River to Tidal Flows

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Migrants are individuals who move across international borders, such as refugees, economic immigrants, temporary foreign workers, and expatriates (IOM, 2020). They are an increasingly prevalent portion of the global workforce. Worldwide, the stock of international migrants increased steadily from 173 million in 2000 to an estimated 281 million in 2020 (United Nations, 2020), representing an increasing share of the global population, from 2.8 to 3.6% (IOM, 2020). The growing size of migrant populations matter for IB research, as international organizations are more likely than domestic organizations to engage migrants within their supply chains, markets, workforces, or as venture capital investors (Hajro et al., 2021). For example, migrants influence innovation (Laursen et al., 2020), entrepreneurship (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021), and facilitate global flows of both knowledge and capital (Choudhury & Kim, 2019).

We argue that migrants ought to be central to both the research and practice of international business (IB), as IB is fundamentally interested in firms' cross-border activities. Migrants at all skill levels play a significant role in their home and home countries' economies, facilitate cross-border activities ranging from entrepreneurial (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021) to subsidiary location choice and survival (Hernandez, 2014), and are said to contribute an estimated 9.4% of the global GDP (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016). The contributions of low-skilled migrants, who are overrepresented in frontline service positions, have become salient in the past 2 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Hajro et al., 2021).

Despite the centrality of migration to IB, recent reviews indicate that migration research is more commonly the domain of other disciplines, such as economics, psychology, sociology, and political science (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Schewel, 2020). For example, foundational research from psychology commonly uses a developmental lens to find that immigrant youth who maintain links to both

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cultures improve psychological well-being, especially compared to those who do not maintain strong links to either one (Berry et al., 2006). Heavily cited economics research found that immigration has economic benefits (Coppel et al., 2001) and lowers poverty rates globally, though it also lowers host country wages in the short run (Borjas, 2003). Research from sociology found that migration can harm welfare programs by reducing public support for them (Brady & Finnigan, 2014). These disciplines shed light respectively on migration policy and psychological and economic outcomes. Yet they are not commonly leveraged to advise international managers or migrant employees about the best ways to leverage migrants' experiences at work or how to take migration flows into consideration when developing MNE strategy.

We argue that IB's limited contributions to migration research so far may be partly due to a limited metaphor for understanding migration, which we attempt to update with a richer metaphor in this chapter. IB's historical approach to migration was like studying river, which includes the two characteristics of being relatively small flows of water with a unidirectional flow. Akin to the unidirectional flow of rivers, IB's foundational migration-related research was about expatriates' acculturation while away from home (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). This was an important foundation, as expatriation was largely ignored by fields outside of IB. Distinct from other forms of migration, research on expatriation tends to focus on how organizations support international migrants (Andersen, 2019). Yet this foundation has unnecessarily limited subsequent IB research on migration, beyond expatriation. The "small river" of mobility within MNEs ignores the much bigger flows of migrants and refugees, limiting IB's relevance in recommending practical solutions to current challenges related to immigrant employment. Instead, we argue that the future of migration research is studying how IB is affected by migration at large, including refugees, low-skilled migrants, and those with and without documentation.

Although the metaphor of unidirectional river flows has generated lively research conversations, such as those within the *Journal of Global Mobility*, it may also limit fuller, more multidirectional theorizing about migrant flows in the future. McNulty and Brewster (2020) go so far as to argue that research on relatively elite expatriates has been so productive to date that further research on them, to the detriment of research on the much larger group of other migrants, has "limited additional value" (p.334). Before proposing a solution in the form of a more inclusive metaphor, we first address contentious definitional issues around who is considered a migrant. Despite the working definition we offered at the beginning of this chapter from the International Organization for Migration, debate remains in the research literature around the boundary conditions between a series of interrelated constructs.

1 Who Is a Migrant?

The term migrant is politically charged and fluid, with different stakeholders using definitions that align with their goals or purpose. For instance, popular media often conflates it with asylum seekers (Baker et al., 2008). Cerdin and Selmer's (2014)

article remains a popular source for differentiating migrants from self-initiated expatriates. They encode status and value judgments in their four criteria for distinguishing these groups: relative to self-initiated expatriates, they claim that migrants are more likely to originate from less developed countries, migrate involuntarily (e.g., refugees), are referred to with negative connotations, and are less likely to return. Two other foundational articles offered a decision tree (Andresen et al., 2014) and a Venn diagram (McNulty & Brewster, 2017) to distinguish among different types of internationally mobile employees, such as migrants, self-initiated expatriates, and assigned expatriates. Both continue to be popular sources for defining and distinguishing these groups. We agree with their inclusion criteria of geographic relocation across a national border, paired with a change in primary residence. Yet we take issue with both articles' subsequent distinction of migrants from self-initiated expatriates, such that migrants are those who either work without legal documentation, or who do not work, while self-initiated expatriates work legally in the destination country (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017; Shao & Ariss, 2020).

There is little theoretical rationale for this distinction. Research about work outcomes following migration are essential to understanding different levels of career success, such as tracking careers among skilled female migrants (Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). However, defining migrants by their career outcomes embeds an outcome into the definition itself. Further, our impression of the literature is that the intent behind distinguishing migrants from self-initiated expatriates is often to categorize based on status without naming it as such. Finally, it introduces unnecessary complications, such as categorizing an individual as a migrant until they secure employment, at which time they may be recategorized as a self-initiated expatriate. McNulty and Brewster (2017) explain that these categories are fungible, with individuals frequently moving between categorizations. Yet, we go further to conclude that these categorizations may not be as meaningful as they seem.

Instead, we recommend adopting an inclusive approach to the term migrant, as defined by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at the beginning of this chapter. IB research about expatriates (Takeuchi, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2021), self-initiated expatriates (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010), highly skilled migrants (Hajro et al., 2019), refugees (Lee et al., 2020), and undocumented workers (Chand & Tung, 2019) would thus all fall under the umbrella term of migrant employees. Our rationale for including such a wide range of employee migration under the same umbrella term is that it allows researchers to be more purposeful about studying relevant mechanisms related to each project, rather than using definitions that embed theoretical mechanisms like status and power into the group's boundary conditions. For example, we argue it is preferable to study migrants as a large group but explicitly distinguish based on status, power, or agency, if those constructs are relevant to the research question (McNulty & Brewster, 2020). In effect, this approach could result in similar groupings as in current research, with the added benefit of making the theoretical constructs explicit. A good illustration is a study that explicitly modeled status changes among Chinese movie actors who migrated to work in Hong Kong's film industry (Shipilov et al., 2020). Instead of making hidden

status assumptions about the sample of actors by defining them as self-initiated expatriates, they measured status changes before and after migration.

One further note on terminology. Migrants' countries of birth are commonly referred to as their countries of origin (COO) and their current countries called countries of residence (COR). This is in contrast to the expatriation literature, which assumes individuals stay temporarily in their host countries, and therefore refers to countries of origin as "home" countries. We adopt the COO/COR terminology, as it makes no assumption about return flows or determining which country is the migrant's "home." It is therefore more consistent with our inclusive definition of migrants. Finally, the term immigrant refers to migrants from the destination country's perspective. We will primarily use the term migrant but substitute immigrant when describing a claim from the perspective of migrants' current countries of residence.

This chapter comes at an auspicious time as public discussions regarding migrants often skew toward negative portrayals and protectionism. For example, Brexit was predicated on concerns about immigrant flows into the UK, Turkey, and other Mediterranean countries are concerned about the size of incoming refugee flows, and there are global concerns about how to handle the possibility of future forced migration as a result of rising ocean levels (Reade et al., 2019). Thus, the world is simultaneously experiencing increasing numbers of migrants, along with increasing backlash against them. Both trends are relevant for international organizations, as they attempt to balance both sides. That is, many international organizations encourage new immigration by facilitating employment-based visas, while also appeasing domestic politicians and citizens who view immigration suspiciously. We agree with Ozkazanc-Pan (2019: 477), who argues that "Migration has become a lightning rod for conversations about the value of diversity and inclusion in liberal democracies."

2 Current Theoretical Approach to Migration in IB

Expatriates will continue to be an important part of future IB research, in part because company-sponsored expatriation is the only form of migration that exists solely within MNEs (Vaiman et al., 2021). The focus on expatriates harks back to the type of migrant visible in MNEs which are unavoidable actors when discussing the impact of IB on a global scale. The move toward including the broader migrant population within IB is of how we study migrants is fueled by gaps in knowledge and recent inclusion of categories such as migrant entrepreneurs (cite) and migrant farm workers (cite). Due to the growing migrant population, IB's historical focus on expatriates over other migrants is shifting, as highlighted by two special issues dedicated to migration in IB (Barnard et al., 2019; Hajro et al., 2021). Both special issue introductions exhort IB researchers to draw a more inclusive boundary around who matters for IB migration research. For example, as we discuss in more detail ahead, both admit that IB has emphasized migrants' influence on MNE strategic decisions such as FDI flows and subsidiary placements (Chung & Enderwick, 2001;

Chung & Tung, 2013). This focus unnecessarily limits research to migrants within top management teams or diaspora communities as relevant for entrepreneurial or MNE subsidiary location decisions.

A productive legacy of IB's foundational expatriation research is that the field has some authority when explaining integration and acculturation challenges experienced by migrants (Stahl & Tung, 2015). It less commonly addresses local employees' reactions to immigrants, such as their potential stress responses to societal changes as a result of immigration (Lau & Shaffer, 2021). Indeed, domestic employees—those who did not migrate—are necessary for any explanation of migrant employees' contributions (Caprar, 2011). When domestic employees feel like they are under threat from immigrant employees, migrants' contributions are constrained (Lau & Shaffer, 2021). It is possible that IB's reluctance to study the backlash against migrants is due partly to its limited range of migrants considered. As described in our earlier clarification around who is a migrant and elaborated by McNulty and Brewster (2019), IB focuses far more attention on high-status, highly skilled migrants than on low-status, low-skilled migrants. The former are rarely the focus of public backlash.

3 Tidal Flows: A New Metaphor

Our chapter attempts to synthesize migration research in IB by arguing that it is time to reconceptualize migration from river flows to tidal flows. Tidal flows more accurately represent migration with respect to both directionality and scale (see Table 1). In terms of directionality, most people assume the tide flows back and forth with the moon's pull, compared to rivers that always flow in one direction. Even more accurately, the tide flows in multiple directions at once, such as rising on shores to both the East and South while ebbing on shores to the North and West. In the same way, migration in IB needs to move from an assumption of unidirectional flows from home to host countries, to multidirectional flows, such as migrating through intermediary countries and returning to home countries. This has already started, such as with research on repatriation (Burmeister et al., 2018), Chinese "sea turtle" returnees (Han et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2018), and other bidirectional flows (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). Ahead, we propose taking this research a step further into multidirectional flows. Migrants sometimes take an indirect path to their final destination country, accumulating social network connections, knowledge, and cultural capital along the way.

Table 1 Defining characteristics of each metaphor

	River flows	Tidal flows
Directionality	Unidirectional	Multidirectional
Scale	Relatively small flows	Relatively large flows

*Table compiled by authors

In terms of scale, IB has historically focused on the small river of expatriates, relative to the vast ocean of migrants. More recent research has started to consider a broader range of migrants but still tends to focus on the most highly skilled, highest-status migrants. Among all 250 million individuals classified as international workers, only a few millions are company-sponsored expatriates (IOM, 2020; OECD, 2017). We argue that the future of migration research is studying how IB is affected by this broader group of migrants, including refugees, low-skilled migrants, and those with and without documentation. This larger conceptualization merits a broader theoretical base, such as considerations around status and power conveyed by migrants' countries of origin. A new metaphor could spur new directions for migration research in IB to address future challenges, such as responding to societal backlash around employing migrants, treating migrant employees equitably across countries, designing effective human resource practices for a wider range of migrants, and advocating for or responding to regulatory changes related to work visas.

In the rest of this chapter, we illustrate how the new metaphor generates new research questions by applying our proposed metaphor shift to four foundational theoretical concepts common within migration research: flows of social ties, flows of capital, flows of innovation, and flows of knowledge. Within each of these areas, we review and critique the current state of research as a basis for proposing future directions. But first, we explain how we reviewed the literature as a basis for drawing our conclusions.

4 How We Reviewed the Literature

We followed a three-step process to evaluate the literature on how IB addresses migration (Gaur & Kumar, 2018). First, we created a list of relevant search terms "immigrant," "migrant," "immigration," "diaspora," "expatriate," "migration," and "ethnic communities." Second, we followed Meyer et al. (2020) to define articles within IB. That is, we assumed everything published in these seven IB journals was within the IB domain: Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM), International Business Review (IBR), Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS), Journal of International Management (JIM), Journal of World Business (JWB), Management International Review (MIR), and Management and Organization Review (MOR). We then reviewed titles and abstracts to include IB-related articles in the same set of strategy and management journals used by Meyer and colleagues (2020). Strategy journals included the Global Strategy Journal (GSJ) and Strategic Management Journal (SMJ), while management journals included the Academy of Management Journal (AMJ), Academy of Management Review (AMR), Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ), Journal of Management (JoM), Management Science (MS), Organization Science (OS), and Organization Studies (OSt). Across all 16 journals, we included articles in our corpus for review as long as they were both IB-focused and related to long-term migration consistent with our inclusive definition. That is, research on short-term international travel (expatriate research) was outside the

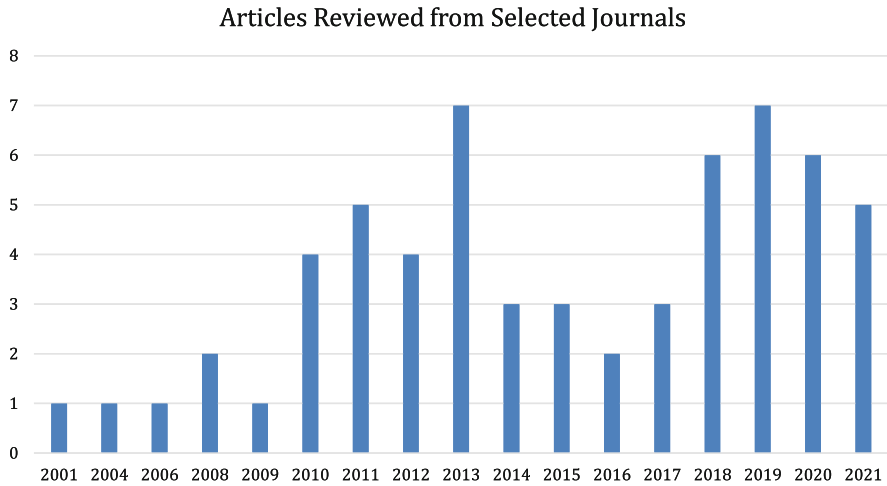


Fig. 1 Histogram of articles reviewed by year published. *Authors' own figure

scope of this review. While this sample is not comprehensive, it allowed us to draw a reasonable picture of migration-related research within IB.

This process yielded 62 articles, with significant contributions from journals such as *JWB* (12), *JIBS* (7), *JIM* (7), and *IBR* (8). Our database contains 57 empirical articles, 3 review articles, and 2 conceptual articles. We also categorized the articles across the various journals by number of articles published per give a visual representation of the amount of research being conducted on immigration in IB. (See Fig. 1 for more details.) Of the empirical papers, 82% were quantitative papers, with 32% of those using survey data and 51% using archival data. The share of primary data in our sample was far higher than that within IB more broadly, which has been progressively decreasing over time as it becomes easier to access archival data (Cerar et al., 2021). Within our sample, studies using archival data commonly used government data or that from world governing bodies to examine immigrant flows and their impact on exports, new ventures, and internationalization strategies. Out of the 18% that were qualitative studies, case studies involving interviews were the most common approach.

Finally, we catalogued theories and findings from each paper to identify trends. We coded the papers for research domains and primary theories, in order to highlight popular theoretical concepts, assumptions, and potential blind spots within IB research that explains migration-related effects.

5 Findings

We selected four flows that illustrate how IB approaches migrant scholarship. Each of these flows is commonly studied in IB but occur at different levels and using different theories from the others. Our description and critique of this exemplary set

of flows forms the basis for our proposed new “tidal flows” direction for future research, as illustrated in Table 2. Consistent with our proposed metaphor shift, we propose new research that widens the scope of who is studied in IB migration research and examines flows as multidirectional.

5.1 Flows of Social Ties

Social network research encompasses concepts like social ties, personal connections, relational networks, and network of relationships. Historically, migration literature within IB has explored how immigrants influence their firms’ internationalization strategies through social networks in their countries of origin (Chung, 2004; Chung & Tung, 2013; Tung & Chung, 2010). The strategic value of social networks occurs through mechanisms such as knowledge exchange, advising on cross-border activities, referral trust, and interpersonal relationship linkages (Zhou et al., 2007). A good example is Rana and Elo’s (2017) work on immigrants as distinct social actors who facilitate the creation of international joint ventures in their COO.

Migrants’ social networks benefit firms by allowing firms to bypass traditional barriers to internationalization (Coviello & Martin, 1999). Immigrants’ social networks act as webs of personal connections and relationships for the purpose of securing favors (Zhou et al., 2007) and reducing the likelihood of contractual breaches. Useche et al. (2020) took a detailed approach by examining how migrant inventors in MNEs that actively engage in R&D influence cross-border mergers and acquisitions through network connections in their COO. They argued migrant inventors belong to three social groups (worldwide migrant population, highly skilled migrant population, and a professional group of scientists and engineers), and they can use these three social networks to provide knowledge that will directly influence long-term investments with strategic objectives (Useche et al., 2020). This was a departure from prior studies on immigrants’ effect on FDI strategies, in that it explicitly examined the boundary conditions under which a positive relationship exists. Using Useche et al. (2020) as an illustrative example, it’s possible to see how migrant inventors are a privileged subset of highly skilled migrants, whose positions give them some degree of influence over their firms’ strategic choices. Prior studies have also examined what happens when immigrants are the direct decision-makers of FDI objectives for firms (Chung, 2004). Migrant employees in strategic positions do indeed make more globally oriented strategic choices than nonmigrants (Szymanski et al., 2019). Yet the majority of migrant employees are in positions that have no influence on strategic decision-making.

Looking beyond the traditional MNE structure, scholars have also advanced the resource-based view by theorizing that immigrants in founding teams possess a special resource bundle (human and social capital) which is difficult to substitute (Barney, 2001) and helps the new venture develop an international orientation (Drechsler et al., 2019). The reasoning behind this is that immigrant membership in founding teams helps to attract international attention through the use of their social capital. Thus, the combination of an international strategic orientation and

Table 2 Illustrating a shift from river to tidal flows

Type of flow	<i>River flows</i> Illustrative research questions	Selected common theories and exemplary papers	Benefits and limitations of prior research	<i>Tidal flows</i> Proposed future research questions
Social ties	How do migrants use their networks to facilitate activities between their COO and COR? What is the strategic value of migrants' COO networks?	Social network theory (Chung, 2004; Chung & Tung, 2013; Tung & Chung, 2010) Resource-based view (Drechsler et al., 2019). Social embeddedness perspective (Morgan et al., 2021; Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011)	When migrants are in strategic or high-level positions that involve cross-border activities, their social network ties across countries benefits firm-level activities like innovation and internationalization strategies Yet, it is not yet known whether or how migrants outside of those positions draw on social networks to influence firm activities	How do migrants working in nonstrategic positions (e.g., anywhere within the global supply chain) use social network connections within their work? How do social identity threats or identity groupings influence migrants' social network interactions? How do refugee employees use social network resources during the integration process or to influence firm activities?
Capital—remittances	Until the launch of JIBP, remittances research was primarily done outside of IB journals. For more, see Barnard et al. (2019); Hajro et al. (2021)	TCE (Vaaler, 2011) Social knowledge perspective (Piteli et al., 2021) Institutional theory (Martinez et al., 2015)	Remittances are important drivers of new venture creation Yet, earlier research assumed remittances were primarily altruistic, to support friends and family with living expenses, and therefore were outside the purview of IB research	Do remittances influence competition for established international organizations? Do remittances affect workforce skill levels (do they diminish or enhance skill levels)? How do egoistic versus altruistic remittances differentially influence international entrepreneurial ventures?
Capital—trade	How does the “immigrant effect” influence trade between COR and COO?	Immigrant effect (Chung & Enderwick, 2001)	Migrants can act as conduits for increased trade between their COO and COR or through entrepreneurial activities in COR But, unidirectional in terms of how immigrant managers influence trade Also, overly restrictive in terms of whose social networks matter; namely, high-skilled migrants in strategically proximal positions	How does international trade influence the flow of low-skilled migrants? How can contextualized knowledge from low-skilled migrant employees be used to create new trade opportunities?

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

<p>Type of flow</p>	<p><i>River flows</i> Illustrative research questions</p>	<p>Selected common theories and exemplary papers</p>	<p>Benefits and limitations of prior research</p>	<p><i>Tidal flows</i> Proposed future research questions</p>
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>How do migrants facilitate knowledge flows between their COO and COR? What boundary conditions restrict these knowledge flows?</p>	<p>Knowledge transfer process (Liu et al., 2015) Immigrant adaptation (Lin & Yang, 2017)</p>	<p>Migrants' knowledge can influence their firms' activities, including innovation. It can ultimately improve cross-border performance between their two countries Most prior research examined knowledge flows only between the COO and COR. But knowledge flows may also include knowledge beyond the COO-COR, especially for transit migrants Also, migrants' knowledge of the COO can become obsolescent over time Finally, prior research has just started to examine contextual influences such as anti-immigrant sentiment on knowledge flows</p>	<p>Do transit migration patterns facilitate different knowledge flows than traditional patterns? For example, are knowledge flows better, worse, more expansive, or shallower, when migrants transition through intermediary countries? How does time since migration—extending to include the children or even grandchildren of migrants—change knowledge flows? How does the inclusiveness of the new environment (city, region, or country) influence knowledge flows? For example, to what degree does the welcoming nature of a city to immigrants influence the direction and scale of knowledge flows?</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>How do migrants encourage innovation within their firms?</p>	<p>Multicultural social networks (Chua, 2018) Social identity theory (Cheng et al., 2008) Identity integration (Vora et al., 2019) Cultural brokerage (Jang, 2017)</p>	<p>There is a clear relationship between migration and innovation across levels, meaning individuals who cross borders reap innovation benefits, as do firms and teams that employ them But disparate streams of research on the same topic, from different theoretical perspectives (e.g., multicultural creativity and migrant innovation) are difficult to combine. Findings in one stream are not examined in others</p>	<p>To what degree are innovativeness outcomes dependent on the cultural relevance of the creative task? What are the boundary conditions under which migrant influence on innovation could dissipate?</p>

*Table compiled by authors

impact of international attention is said to positively influence new venture's internationalization efforts.

Using a social embeddedness perspective, immigrant owners' social connections across borders are at least one of the factors influencing SMEs' financial performance (Morgan et al., 2021). The premise is that immigrant-owned SME outcomes are influenced by the degree to which the immigrant owner is simultaneously integrated in their country-of-origin social network and the institutional and proximate distance between the countries of origin and residence. The social embeddedness framework has primarily been applied to immigrant firm survival in the early stages of internationalization. While other scholars have not been explicit in their use of this framework, the concurrent benefits of an immigrant's access to COO and COR advantages in an MNE leads us to numerous studies that have identified immigrants as a special resource used as part of a firm's internationalization strategy (Chung, 2004; Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011).

Conclusions and future research directions about the flow of social ties. By now, it is known that when migrants are employed in strategic or entrepreneurial positions, they can use their social connections to influence firm strategies, international investments, and internationalization strategies. Yet, most migrant employees are not in these positions. We encourage future researchers to widen the scope on the positions of migrant employees whose network matters. For example, examine whether—or how—migrants located in nonstrategic positions draw on social networks influential their firms' practices. Those employed anywhere in the international supply chain seem likely to draw on social network ties in the course of their work.

Some immigrant managers in Germany from either Eastern Europe or India helped their colleagues in their COO due to shared identities and perceived status, while others actively hindered colleagues in their COO due to identity threats related to perceived lower status (Kane & Levina, 2017). We encourage more research about how identities influence the way migrants interact with social network connections. At the other extreme from immigrants employed in strategic decision-making positions in MNEs are refugee employees, who must often take any work available. It is already known that refugees' social ties strongly influence their integration into their new COR (Lee et al., 2020). It is unknown whether refugees' employed in nonstrategic positions can also use their social ties to influence their firms' activities, such as by advertising jobs within social circles. Overall, we would like to see more research about the role of social ties for migrants outside of strategic decision-making positions.

5.2 Flows of Capital

Capital flows attributed to migrants generally refer to either remittances or trade. We address remittances first, followed by trade.

Remittances are money or its equivalent sent from migrants to their home countries. They can be individual-to-individual or household-to-household

transactions from host to home countries and are therefore an integral part of the migrant experience (Vaaler, 2011). Worldwide, remittances were estimated at 707 billion in 2019 with forecasts expected to reach 768 billion in 2021 (World Bank, 2019). This estimate pales in comparison to the true number and size of remittances when taking unreported flows of funds into account, such as those through informal and nonfinancial institutions. These include remittances sent through informal third parties, individuals acting as courier services, people who take physical cash over borders, and transfers disguised as bill payments (Brown, 2006). Since remittances themselves are so difficult to track, researchers' ability to assess migrants' influence on remittances is also limited.

Research has long assumed remittances are either driven by egoism or altruism (Lucas & Stark, 1985). The egoistic motive signals entrepreneurial considerations and investment through a network of potential business partners in a migrant's country of origin, while altruism refers to remittances meant to support friends or family members (Piteli et al., 2021). IB scholars were slow to view remittance beyond a household expense lens, largely ignoring the egoistic motive and therefore assuming remittances were not a topic of concern for IB research (Barnard et al., 2019; Hajro et al., 2021). IB research is starting to investigate remittance as a source of capital in the COO (Vaaler, 2011) and new business startups which ultimately leads to internationalization of the broader economy (Martinez et al., 2015).

Following the launch of the *Journal of International Business Policy*, we expect to see more studies on remittances in the future. For example, developing countries are able to influence remittance inflows through organizations designed to engage diasporas and enhance their feelings of identity and attachment to the COO (Cummings & Gamlen, 2019). Inward FDI increased the inflow of remittances received in that country (Piteli et al., 2021). Piteli and colleagues explain the effect using the egoistic narrative, by arguing that inward FDI encourages local entrepreneurs to create new small business ventures that support, complement, or compete with the MNE's activities. Those local entrepreneurs often rely on migrant friends and family for financial support through egoistic remittance investments.

Sudden events such as COVID-19 were expected to dramatically reduce remittance flows, particularly to low- and middle-income countries. Recent reports show there were only minor contractions from 2019 to 2020, with a 1.6% drop from \$548 billion in 2019 to \$540 billion in 2020 (World Bank, 2021). This is in line with past research which has highlighted the counter cyclical nature of remittances with economic recessions in host countries having little effect on the size or payment of these transfers (Brown, 2006). The pandemic acted as a situational context which affected all countries. Future research could examine how it changed the ratio of altruistic or egoistic remittances and how that affected new business ventures or the availability of capital in COOs.

Trade. While remittances account for a significant portion of many countries' GDP (Hosny, 2020), it is just one conduit through which migrants influence the flow of money across borders. Migrants can also influence venture capital investments in their COO by virtue of residing in their COR (Leblang, 2010), accessing, and selling goods from their COO to diaspora networks in the COR (Lin & Yang, 2017),

facilitating trade between the COO and COR (Gould, 1994), and influencing resource commitments of MNEs in their COR (Chung & Enderwick, 2001; Chung & Tung, 2013). There is also a stream of research on the *immigrant effect*, referring to immigrant managers who create competitive advantages through characteristics that are rare, valuable, and unique (Chung et al., 2012).

By focusing almost exclusively on entrepreneurial founders or top managers, much of this research implicitly assumes formal education and highly ranked skills are the best—or only—conduits through which valuable information is translated into trade between COO and COR. Low-skilled migrants' influence on MNE decisions is a relatively unexplored area. Most research on low-skilled migrants has focused on their short-term effects on average income per capita and adoption of more labor-intensive opportunities in COR (Orefice, 2010). While this is a legitimate inquiry, there is an assumption that skill levels directly correlate with impact on a range of outcomes. Drawing on either the knowledge-based view, or social network theory, it is possible that low-skilled migrants employed in supply chain positions offer insider knowledge or social ties that translate into new trade opportunities (Grant & Phene, 2021).

Gould's (1994) work was one of the first to investigate how migrants connect their COO and COR by facilitating trade. Using panel data from 47 US trading partners, he showed that migrants influence bilateral trade by preferring home country products and by lowering MNE transaction and information costs by bringing foreign market information and contacts. Countering the tendency to focus primarily on high-skilled migrants, Lin and Yang (2017) found that low-skilled migrants were more likely to increase bilateral trade than high-skilled migrants. Their explanation is that lower-skilled migrants create new trade opportunities through entrepreneurial aspirations. These two studies indicate that further research might reveal other ways low-skilled migrants contribute to trade.

Conclusions and future research questions about the flow of capital. Recent work has started to highlight the importance of remittances for new venture creation (Vaaler, 2011) and understand how migrants can act as conduits for increased trade between their COO and COR or through entrepreneurial activities in COR. While this stream of research on trade is relatively well established, there are still opportunities that have not been explored in depth that will benefit scholarship on immigrants in IB.

IB research on migrant-driven capital flows has identified such a strong relationship between immigrant managers and trade that it has given this relationship a name, the immigrant effect. Yet this relationship is almost exclusively studied in terms of high-skilled immigrant managers influencing trade with the COO. An exception is a study of capital flows in the opposite direction. Shukla and Cantwell (2018) found that migrants from developing countries attract FDI into their COR from their COO by increasing institutional affinity. Remittance research was largely absent in IB until the past few years.

Our suggestion for transitioning both trade and remittances research involves studying multidirectional capital flows influenced by a more inclusive group of migrants. For example, expatriate doctors in Tanzania reduced out-migration

among some Tanzanian doctors by building local capacity, though the more important factor seems to have been Tanzanian doctors' sense of purpose in their work (Emmanuel et al., 2019). We would like to see more exploration of how international trade influences migration by changing push and pull factors. It's possible that inflows of international trade could encourage more outbound migration by enabling it through connections and infrastructure, or alternatively it could instead encourage potential migrants to stay home through favorable work opportunities. The relationship between trade and migration can be developed further by examining how contextualized knowledge from low-skilled migrant employees is used to create new trade opportunities. This would include first analyzing the specific knowledge low-skilled migrants possess. For instance, their knowledge could help firms serve customers at the base of the pyramid (Kolk et al., 2014).

We also suggest comparing remittances made for egoistic versus altruistic reasons, to see how each stream changes business activities. Following from Piteli and colleagues' (Piteli et al., 2021) findings that remittances increase following FDI, we propose research that investigates whether remittances influence competition for international organizations in migrants' COO and how it affects skill levels of the labor (does it diminish skill levels, indicating overreliance on handouts, or enhance skill levels, indicating investment in skill development).

5.3 Flows of Knowledge

We elaborate two of the most common ways migrants can influence flows of knowledge. First, they can use their knowledge of the COO to facilitate cross-border activities like investment and subsidiary activities. To date, most research that seeks to link international migration with economic consequences like FDI and MNE resource commitment in host countries has largely assumed that this is a result of the knowledge advantage a migrant brings to a specific firm. Many scholars use the term *immigrant effect* to refer to the knowledge-driven contribution of a firm's immigrant managers to strategic activities in the immigrant employee's COO or a proximate country (Chung et al., 2012; Chung & Enderwick, 2001).

Second, migrants can add value to global value chain activities through tacit or explicit knowledge that acts as a conduit of information and trust between their COO and COR (Chand & Tung, 2019). At a micro-behavioral level, this may be enacted when immigrants bridge cultural gaps between people across countries, facilitating knowledge flows (Backmann et al., 2020). This differs from the first pathway in part because of its bidirectionality. For instance, a study of highly skilled Chinese migrants living in the UK found that they facilitated knowledge flow between their two countries by identifying key contacts in each country, helping peers establish a relationship, and subsequently drawing on cultural and language skills to send and receive knowledge (Liu et al., 2015).

Research has examined boundary conditions around both routes to knowledge flow. For example, migrants' knowledge of the COO becomes less valuable over time, as their experiences living in the COO recede further into the past (Kunczer

et al., 2019). Competitive and institutional environments evolve and change, but migrants' memories are not updated frequently once they move away from the COO. Our overview of the literature shows that IB research rarely acknowledges the obsolescence of immigrant knowledge due to changing policies in immigrants' COO or strong network ties becoming weak due to compounded distance. We encourage IB researchers to explore the potentially nonlinear relationship between migrants' knowledge flows and time from migration.

Another boundary condition is that firms are less likely to absorb migrants' knowledge of the COO when the COR exhibits high levels of anti-immigrant sentiment (Kunczer et al., 2019). Anti-immigrant sentiment occurs when nonmigrants (aka locals) feel threatened. This can feel comparably stressful to going through an acculturation process but with the added pressure that locals can feel like acculturation is imposed upon them, rather than choosing it for themselves (Lau & Shaffer, 2021). Locals may also feel threatened if they fear dropping wages. By and large, local wages may drop with an influx of immigrants with complementary skills to those of local employees (Ruhs, 2013). However, wage drops are usually negligible and may reverse when the influx of immigrants is stabilized (Ruhs, 2013).

One of our concerns with knowledge-based theorizing about migrants in IB is that as the world continues to open up and more people migrate, it can become surprisingly difficult to identify an individual's COO and COR (Czaika & de Haas, 2014). Past research relied heavily on an individual's country of birth and current country of residence to determine who qualifies as a migrant. The unspoken assumption is that migrants move between two countries such that a migrant's only two options are to either settle in the (new) country of residence or return to the country of origin. Instead, some migrants take a more circuitous route to their final destinations, sometimes spending many years in intermediary countries. This pattern is now called *transit migration* by human geographers, though it was referred to as the *new migration* in the 1990s (Collyer et al., 2012; King, 2012). For instance, some students who study for a degree in a foreign country are in transit, on their way to a third country for their first jobs. Over time the term has evolved to refer primarily to illegal migration patterns, such as refugees who land in a first safe country, and then migrate onward sometime later (Collyer et al., 2012).

Conclusions and future research about the flow of knowledge. Research on knowledge flows to date has benefited IB by showing how migrants' knowledge can influence their firms' activities and ultimately improve cross-border performance between their two countries (Choudhury & Kim, 2019). Research has also started to examine the boundary conditions for bidirectional flows among immigrant inventors (Miguelez & Temgoua, 2020). Future research will need to take into account how transit migration might affect the quantity, range, and quality of knowledge resources migrants bring into their organizations. For example, do the ties to the COO dematerialize the longer an immigrant spends in intervening countries, or are they maintained and supplemented with new ties in the transit country? Knowledge possessed by migrants at the time of the first move inevitably degrades over time and especially the longer migrants reside in intervening countries. COO environmental

conditions change and familiarity with potential customers or suppliers may weaken, calling into question the immigrant effect (IE) on resource commitment or entry market modes. Instead, we exhort future researchers to model these effects over time, especially for transit migrants who pass through intermediary countries. Finally, research has already started to examine how anti-immigrant sentiment is a contextual antecedent that influences migrant knowledge flows. Further research could examine whether this is most usefully measured at the city, region, or country level and what role MNEs and other international organizations have in reducing backlash against immigrant employees.

5.4 Flows of Innovation

There is evidence for a positive relationship between migration and innovation for individuals, teams, firms, and societies. Indeed, innovation and creativity are among the most common outcomes assessed with respect to migration in IB.

Migration and individual creativity. At the individual level, researchers more commonly predict creativity than innovation. Mere exposure to multiple cultures increases individuals' creativity, and creativity increases even more when exposure is more extensive (Leung et al., 2008). International mobility in all forms increases creativity, from international travel to permanent migration (Choudhury, 2021). Social networks, identity integration, and knowledge combination have all been used to explain this relationship.

Multicultural social networks enhance creativity through access to culturally embedded ideas, but this domain-specific relationship only held when the creative task was somehow relevant to societal cultures (Chua, 2018). That is, the cultural diversity in participants' social networks increased creativity when participants were trying to sell a new drink to an imaginary global audience, or propose a new global news service, but not when selling a drink to an imaginary local audience or proposing a new local newspaper. Explanations that draw on social identity theory and identity integration also found that creativity benefits of multiculturalism were often limited to creative outputs that had some relevance for culture (Cheng et al., 2008). For example, participants with high levels of identity integration—meaning they saw their social identities as compatible—created more creative fusion recipes when offered multicultural ingredients but did not create more creative recipes when offered only American ingredients (Cheng et al., 2008). Research on migrant inventors commonly explains creativity benefits through the combination of information from different cultural sources (Choudhury & Kim, 2019; Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021). Therefore, creativity benefits of migration may be limited to the cross-cultural domain.

Migration and team innovation. As already described, it is possible for innovation to emerge from transferring knowledge from migrants' COOs to their CORs. More importantly, research has revealed the combinatory process through which COO knowledge transforms into creative outcomes. For example, multicultural individuals who straddle two or more cultures engage in *cultural brokerage*,

where they facilitate others' interactions across cultures (Jang, 2017; Vora et al., 2019). In an experiment, teams of Indians and Americans were asked to propose ideas for an Indian-American wedding (Jang, 2017). When an Indian-American was placed on a team, they built innovation by combining information from both cultures together, such as a western wedding song remixed Bollywood style. In comparison, when someone from Canada or South Korea were placed on the teams, they built innovation by eliciting information from each side, such as asking about wedding music, food, or rituals. Migrants' innovativeness through combining information was also found in a study of migrant inventors (Choudhury & Kim, 2019). When migrant inventors were placed within teams composed of other migrants, they collectively recombined their knowledge to create something new. Therefore, at the team level, innovation emerges when migrants combine their own knowledge with knowledge from others.

Migration and firm-level innovation. The relationship between migrant employees and firm-level innovation depends on a series of boundary conditions and moderators. The value of migrants' COO knowledge as a source for innovation depends on the degree to which individuals are embedded in their ethnic communities (Almeida et al., 2015). Socially embedded migrants accessed information from ethnic networks more easily than migrants who were less embedded, and this information drove innovation. A multi-year comparative ethnographic study of two French MNEs found that they did not increase innovation as a result of merely employing multicultural (migrant) employees (Hong & Minbaeva, 2021). Instead, firms benefited through increased innovation when they set up firm processes that enabled multicultural employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities to emerge. Examples include differentiating the HR architecture for multicultural employees, such that they primarily worked in the same departments together or creating a more flexible language policy that caters to multicultural employees. Therefore, the mere presence of migrant employees is unlikely to be enough to drive innovation. Instead, firms need to strategically manage migrant employees to set up the conditions that allow them to innovate.

Migration and societal-level innovation. Research at the societal level examines how migration policies and diaspora management influence societal innovation. For example, a study of the number of STEM migrants in a country found that they increase international knowledge diffusion, as represented by patent citations (Miguelez & Temgoua, 2020). Somewhat mitigating the common brain drain critique, migrants in this study benefited their COO the most when they originated from low-/middle-income countries, and the COR was a high-income country. A study of diaspora management found that returnees often became entrepreneurs, inadvertently boosting innovation in the COO (Lin, 2010).

Conclusions and future research directions about the flow of innovation. Research about migration and innovation has revealed clear relationships across levels, meaning individuals who cross borders reap innovation benefits, as do firms and teams that employ them. Research about the migrant-innovation relationship appears in isolated pockets that each examine very similar mechanisms but use different theoretical lenses. For example, research on multicultural individuals'

creativity (Vora et al., 2019) generally describes similar effects as research on migrant inventors or migrant entrepreneurs (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021). This is problematic when effects in one pocket don't appear in another. For example, the creativity outcomes were constrained to culture-relevant tasks when assessed at the micro level. The same is not assessed for migrant inventors or entrepreneurs. Future research would do well to incorporate findings from cross-cultural management which emphasize the relationship between creativity, as a precursor to innovation, and multicultural identity (e.g., Vora et al., 2019). Unsettled questions remain about the boundary conditions within which multicultural individuals are more creative, such as exploring which types of positions or roles benefit from migrants' creativity, or the extent to which any anti-immigrant sentiment in the COR affects migrants' creativity and innovation (see Sédès et al., 2022, for an example of identity shifts among migrants post-Brexit).

6 Conclusion: A New Metaphor Reveals What We Missed and How to Make Waves in the Future

Throughout this chapter, we have argued for a more inclusive definition of the term migrant, explained and critiqued four flows that emerge from migration, and made recommendations for the future. Across all flows, we make a few common recommendations. First, we recommend studying a wider, more inclusive range of migrants, especially moving beyond high-skilled migrants to also examine low-skilled migrants or refugees. This is especially pertinent to our metaphor of tidal flows, as there is so much attention on ocean-going refugees who travel by boat (Lee et al., 2020). For instance, unpredictable wave patterns in the ocean could illustrate the unpredictable identity work and sensemaking processes highly skilled refugees engage in together with inputs from newcomer support organizations, as the refugees construct new pathways for life and employment in the COR (Nardon et al., 2020).

Second, we recommend examining flows in multiple directions rather than the same directional flows as were studied in the past. Historically, IB research has been most interested in migrants as a strategic resource for the firm's international activities. We wonder about two oppositional flows: How do migrants draw on the resources of international organizations to support their own objectives? And how do international organizations influence migration flows in the first place? Illustrating both questions, it is possible for MNEs to benefit from treating underrepresented minorities better than they are treated domestically. MNEs that recruit women or lower-class employees in Latin America (Newburry et al., 2014) and women in South Korea (Siegel et al., 2019) have been rewarded with higher performance, in part driven by low turnover and high loyalty among talented employees who would have been overlooked by local employers. Migrants are often paid less than nonmigrants, and this effect is exacerbated by the intersectional effects of race, gender, or language (Fitzsimmons et al., 2020). International organizations engaging in HR practices that value overlooked local talent may

suppress out-migration, while practices that value overlooked migrant groups may allow individuals to exploit MNEs resources (like higher pay) in pursuit of their own individual goals.

Finally, we want to conclude with a recommendation that did not emerge in the rest of our analysis. Compared to research about migration outside of the international business field, we have an impression that our field's research is unusually transactional. Individuals are almost exclusively seen in terms of their potential resources that may be exploited to facilitate international firm activities. It would be akin to looking at a beautiful river and seeing only the energy production possibilities of building a dam.

As a field, changing our migration metaphor from river to tidal flows can—and perhaps should—change the way we think about migration. The ocean is a complex, fluctuating environment that is the world's most biodiverse environment. Similarly, international organizations employ people in a complex, fluctuating business environment that includes a wide diversity of individuals who flow from shore to shore. We see the tide shifting in IB research, toward research that is broader, more encompassing of all migrants' experiences, and therefore also more pragmatic for international organizations.

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