22

Overcoming and Reproducing Inequalities: Mediated Migration in the "Global South"

Katharine Jones, Heila Sha, and Mohammad Rashed Alam Bhuiyan

Introduction

Contemporary patterns of international migration would not happen without migration intermediaries. In Mexico, migrants seek help from *coyotes* to embark on the process of migration (Spener, 2009); in Eritrea, from *delaloch* (Ayalew, 2018); in West Africa, would-be migrants speak of lines, connections and *dokimen* (Alpes, 2017); in Asia, Syrians may refer to *muharrib* and *hajj* (Achilli, 2018); in Bangladesh and Nepal, to *dalals* (Rahman, 2012). In all these places, engaging with one or more intermediaries to assist with migration projects is a highly normalised and entirely legitimate practice. The dependence of migrants on them is not new. All over the world, friends and

K. Jones (✉) · M. R. A. Bhuiyan
Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Innovation Village, Cheetah Road, Coventry IV5CV1 2TL, UK
e-mail: katharine.jones@coventry.ac.uk

M. R. A. Bhuiyan
e-mail: bhuiyanm2@uni.coventry.ac.uk

H. Sha
Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET, UK
e-mail: saheira.haliel@gmail.com

M. R. A. Bhuiyan
Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

H. Crawley and J. K. Teye (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of South–South Migration and Inequality*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39814-8_22

kinship networks have long been recognised as pivotal to helping migrants organise their journeys, find jobs and homes, as well as to friendship and civic structures (Massey et al., 1987; also see Sha, 2021b for a review of this literature). Fee-charging recruiters have continued—since colonial times—to serve as an important mechanism by which employers move workers across national borders (Burawoy, 1976). "Smugglers" who help people escape from war, dictatorship and even genocides such as the Holocaust are often feted in books and films as heroic rescuers (Fogelman, 1995; Merriman, 2019).

However, from the late twentieth century onwards, there have been dramatic transformations in the scale, types and embeddedness of intermediaries engaged in facilitating migration, especially from the Global South (Ayalew et al., 2018; Lindquist et al., 2012). Scholars have increasingly attributed late twentieth-century increases in migration flows—as well as the directions and destinations involved—to intermediaries' activities (Goss & Lindquist, 1995). Today, intermediaries are significant actors in influencing how migration happens, in shaping developmental outcomes as well as individual migrants' experiences of migration. In certain parts of the world, what were once informal cultural practices have gradually transformed into marketised activities in the formal economy. Consequently, the costs to migrants of migrating have risen exponentially (Goh et al., 2017). However, the biggest impacts of intermediaries' involvement in migration, including the highest costs, have tended to fall disproportionately on the poorest whose migrations are the most regulated, usually those in the Global South. Moreover, intermediaries in the Global South are also increasingly problematised within international policy agendas. These (partially artificially) distinguish between those deemed to be smugglers (which facilitate irregular migration) and labour recruiters (regulated migration) (Jones, 2021), again with disproportionate consequences of international policy felt by those in the Global South.

This chapter poses the question: how are global inequalities in relation to migration mediated by intermediaries? Notably, few studies specifically address South–South migration, which as this introduction to this volume notes, constitutes a significant and growing proportion of all global movements (Crawley & Teye, in this volume). To date, research has primarily addressed the roles of intermediaries in facilitating migration from Global South countries to richer, more powerful states in the Global North. In the Americas, scholars have tended to focus on the movement of migrants from Mexico and southern Americas to the United States (Hernández-León, 2013; Massey et al., 1987; Sanchez & Natividad, 2017). In Africa, studies document the recruitment of female domestic workers from countries such as

Ghana and Ethiopia, to the Gulf region and Europe (Awumbila et al., 2019). In Asia, scholars have predominantly analysed recruitment from South Asia and Southeast Asia into North America, the Gulf and East Asia (Constable, 2003; Jones, 2021; Lan, 2018). In this chapter, we have opted to use the term "Global South" as an analytical category rather than a geographical container (Haug et al., 2021, see also Fiddian-Quismayeh, in this volume). The term provides, we believe, an entry point to conceptualise the contributions of intermediaries within the complex, messy realities and inequalities of international migration.

In what follows, we first undertake the task of defining what intermediaries do. Our attention is directed at the role of intermediaries in *enabling* migration rather than those which are deployed on behalf of the state to prevent migration, such as security firms (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). The remainder of the chapter is organised in three sections which review the relationships between intermediaries, mediated migration and inequalities associated with: (1) borders, (2) income and poverty and (3) living in new destinations.

Roles and Functions of Intermediaries

The term "intermediaries" includes individuals who might be current or former migrants, friends and kin or small-scale petty entrepreneurs, or all of these at the same time. It also includes formal recruitment businesses, visa consultancies and travel agencies. Migrants often engage concurrently with all these actors, which makes studying them complex. Unsurprisingly, intermediaries' actions can be both ambiguous and contradictory depending on one's perspective (Awumbila et al., 2019). Some are viewed by migrants as helpful service providers (Spener, 2009), others as violent extortionists (Vogt, 2016). In this section we focus on what intermediaries do rather than attempting to explain intermediaries' behaviours or motivations; a fruitless task as this is influenced by the context rather than being inherent to the act of intermediation itself (Spener, 2009).

First and foremost, intermediaries facilitate migrants' physical journeys. Travel agencies book transportation and accommodation for ordinary business and tourist travellers. Others—guides, drivers, boat pilots—assist migrants who need to travel through dangerous terrain (De León, 2015). However, only the latter are regarded as problematic by states because they also often help irregular migrants circumvent immigration policies in Global North countries (Crawley et al., 2018).

Secondly, intermediaries commonly help migrants obtain the documents required by states to legitimate travel and residency. This includes passports and visas, as well as the documents required to procure these, including birth, marriage and qualification certificates. Through "document dispatch" intermediaries secure "legal" or 'official' statuses for migrants. The documents may be either counterfeit or legitimate depending on the context (Alpes, 2017). Intermediaries may also help irregular migrants regularise their status after their arrival in a new place through assisting with applications for new documents (Anderson, 2021). They also support highly paid migrants secure citizenship, and/or business and investment visas (Cranston, 2018).

Thirdly, intermediaries organise jobs for migrants, sometimes connecting people in one country with employers in another or after migrants' arrival in the new place. The former forms of intermediaries are most associated with the temporary labour migration schemes in place in Southeast and South Asia, and the Gulf region (Lindquist et al., 2012). They are also common in Europe and North America (Schling, 2022). As part of the process of arranging employment, intermediaries may assess migrants' skills and offer job-specific training (Jones, 2014) or 'cultural' training aimed at helping migrants adapt to their new workplace (Lan, 2018). Finally, intermediaries also help migrants settle and navigate life in their new homes whether these are short-term or more permanent (Wessendorf, 2022). This includes helping with finding places to live, accessing services such as healthcare, finding information or simply providing friendship (Boyd, 1989).

Whatever the role and the function, intermediaries are always deeply rooted in the local places where migrants live and work. Nevertheless, they are also transnational actors, integrated into global economic circuits (Jones, 2021) and facilitating links back to migrants' home countries (Sha, 2021a). From the 1990s, inspired by the "transnational turn" in migration studies, many scholars embarked on theorising the wider contexts to intermediaries' activities. Fawcett (1989) visualised intermediaries as connecting migrants, employers, and states, constituting an additional state-to-state "flow" alongside interconnecting flows of capital, goods, services and knowledge. A decade later, Findlay and Li (1998) emphasised that to fully understand intermediaries' actions necessitated analysis of state regulations, organisational practices and migrants' own decisions; each influenced the other and could not be understood alone. Castles and Miller (2003) depicted a 'meso-level' through which intermediaries connected the 'micro agency' of migrants' decision-making, practices and beliefs with global macroeconomic and political structures, including state regulations. For these scholars, the global and local contexts form more than mere backdrop to intermediaries' actions;

they are a fundamental part of the explanation. Nevertheless, these early explanations largely addressed migration as "state-to-state". They ignored its more relational and dynamic aspects and the attention of migration scholars turned once again away from the 'grand theory' explanations to more micro explorations of migration.

Subsequently, Lindquist et al. (2012) notably asserted that migration could be more clearly conceptualised through a focus on "infrastructure" rather than on state policies or migrant social networks alone. This signalled a shift away from state-centric approaches to the study of intermediary actors. Moreover, this approach allowed for more complex, nuanced, analyses of multiple actors with potentially competing or contradictory motivations, but which nevertheless all worked together to make it happen. Xiang and Lindquist (2018) categorised the migration infrastructure within the temporary labour migration schemes in Asia as (1) commercial (recruitment intermediaries), (2) regulatory (state apparatus and procedures for documentation, licensing, training and other purposes), (3) technological (communication and transport), (4) humanitarian (NGOs and international organisations) and (5) social (migrant) networks. However, in practice these infrastructural approaches have at times tended towards the heuristic, under-analysing or even ignoring underlying issues of power and materiality in international migration (Jones, 2021). Notably, intermediaries may additionally be closely intertwined with the state (Xiang, 2017) or they may be directly engaged in acting on behalf of the state (Jones et al., 2022). Consequently, as well as being subject to—and hence influenced by—state regulation, intermediaries are themselves regulatory actors (Goh et al., 2017).

Infrastructural and regulatory approaches derive primarily from research conducted on migration in particular geographies, namely, Southeast and East Asia and in Europe. Other scholars have drawn on post-colonial and decolonial development literatures to depict intermediary *practices*—rather than individual intermediary actions—as brokerage (Deshingkar, 2019; Spener, 2009). Scholars working in and from the Global South emphasise that intermediaries engage in cultural practices which are normalised in many geographical contexts, especially where burdensome requirements for documentation imposed by sluggish state bureaucracies require assistance (Deshingkar, 2019; Spener, 2009). In many places, having access to networks, connections and brokers is essential to navigating everyday lives (Alpes, 2017). In these contexts, migration brokerage is just one type of multiple varieties of brokerage that have long been documented by scholars of development. Brokers of all kinds strategically mediate knowledge, expertise and contacts (Koster & van Leynseele, 2018), functioning as an entirely

acceptable, legitimised and collective survival mechanism for people in the Global South (Majidi, 2018). Scholars of brokerage deliberately adopt a positionality drawn from migrants' own perspectives, rejecting state-centric categorisations and the politics of migration control. Consequently, the position and power of state actors to be the *only* legitimate arbiter of migration is challenged (Spener, 2009). The chapter turns now to outline intermediaries' roles in navigating the inequalities of states' bordering practices.

Intermediaries and Unequal Transnational Borders

> To facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the maintenance of planned implementation of migration policies. (Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reducing Inequality, Target 10.7)

In the Hollywood film, Elysium, Earth is overpopulated and polluted with its people enduring extreme poverty, disease and violence, while the rich and powerful live in Elysium, an orbiting space station (Mirrlees & Pederson, 2016). Spider, a hacker intermediary who organises shuttle flights to help people escape to Elysium and to steal essential medicine for those unable to access it on Earth, is portrayed to the audience as a hero, albeit a flawed one. We—the audience—root for Spider and the people he helps because we clearly see the injustice of the spatial "border" between the poverty and chaos on Earth and the riches of Elysium. Sustainable Development Goal 10 Reducing Inequality within and among countries depicts a world in which carefully planned and implemented migration policies (by 'Elysium') can contribute to reducing (income) inequalities (on 'Earth'). Yet, in so doing, the SDG drafters opted to ignore one of the most fundamental and racialised global inequalities: that of state-constructed borders (Sharma, 2006; Walia, 2021).

States construct militarised walls and fences as physical borders to deter or prevent freedom of mobility. This includes the securitisation of naturally dangerous environments on their doorsteps (De León, 2015). States also use bureaucracy and technology to regulate entry (Torpey, 1998). Yet, these practices are disproportionately experienced by citizens of poorer and less powerful states. The 2022 Global Ranking of World Passports visualises such inequalities in terms of freedom to easily access travel documents (Henley, 2022). States in East Asia, Western and Northern Europe, and

North America—often referred to as the global 'North'—rest comfortably at its top. Holders of passports from those countries can freely enter between 93% and 99% of the 195 countries in the world without applying for a visa in advance. In contrast, citizens of the states which endure the most conflict, sustained socio-economic marginalisation and susceptibility to natural disasters—those usually referred to as the "Global South"—enjoy the least freedom of mobility, including most African states as well as poorer states in Asia and South America. Citizens of these states are denied the right to freely access and participate in international circuits of work, business or leisurely travel in ways which those from Global North countries can (Jansen, 2009).

However, borders are not natural and fixed; they are an "ordering regime" which is produced by contemporary racialised capitalist rules and practices, and historic and contemporary colonial relations (Walia, 2020, 2). In practice, securitised bordering practices, including restrictive visa regimes, have increasingly been adopted by many richer Global South states. De Genova (2002) emphasises that "illegality" in migrants' statuses is produced by states' mediation of laws and policies. Its corollary is also true. Namely that the more securitised, militarised, and bureaucratised states' borders are, the more likely it is that people need to seek out—and pay for—assistance from one or more intermediaries to navigate them (Ayalew et al., 2018).

Intermediaries and the Bureaucracy of Migration

Nationals of richer, more powerful, states ordinarily need do no more than purchase a flight ticket and queue for a low-cost visa at the arrival airport. The experiences of citizens from poorer, less powerful states, are somewhat different. Many migrants often have friends or family members who either lived or who still live abroad and who play important advisory roles, inspiring migrants to migrate, connecting them to jobs and lives in the new place (Muanamoha et al., 2010). However, any travel abroad, including for tourist or family visits, often necessitates completing significant volumes of paperwork to access visas (Azad, 2019). Kern-Müller and Boker (2015), for example, describe in some detail the bureaucracy required to migrate legally out of Nepal for a job abroad. Individuals must first secure a valid passport and birth certificate, which for those who have not previously migrated or travelled abroad, can be a lengthy process via local officials. Thereafter, and once a job is secured, the individual must apply for an entry visa and work permit from the destination country consulate or embassy, sign a copy of the employment contract which should be certified by the relevant Nepali consul

in the country in which the employment will take place, obtain a medical certificate, certify qualifications (if required) and/or training certificates, and obtain health insurance. All these completed, signed and completed documents are then required to be submitted in person to the Ministry of Labour in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. For this reason, paying intermediaries is a popular choice for migrants; intermediaries make the process easier, including smoother and quicker.

Furthermore, intermediaries can increase migrants' chances of success in the migration process. Submitting all the required documents to the right places does not guarantee a successful outcome, as visa applications of all kinds can be unpredictable. Rules frequently change (Žabko et al., 2018) and decisions by immigration officials may in any case be entirely arbitrary regardless of what documentation is submitted (Alpes, 2017). In Cameroon, Alpes (2017) describes how fewer than one in ten of the young people she spoke to received positive visa outcomes despite multiple visits to the relevant Embassy or Consulate. Reasons for refusal which were provided by immigration officials in these places were often opaque and sometimes illogical. She writes that it was therefore unsurprising that people are therefore more likely to depend upon the services of a variety of intermediaries to help. For migrants, finding an intermediary who has the necessary connections and expertise lessens the risks of failure and makes the process more predictable. In other words, intermediaries are a necessity of life where ordinary official channels are not accessible or do not deliver what would-be migrants need (Alpes, 2017). As such, intermediaries and migrants are often united in a common strategic project to overcome state-officiated barriers to mobility (Spener, 2009).

Nevertheless, multiple studies on international labour recruitment in Asia highlight the propensity of intermediaries to "deceive" migrants through producing false documents, including false passports, contracts and visas. In practice, other scholars working within the brokerage epistemology explain that whether the paperwork is "legal" or not often matters less to the migrants than whether it "works" in securing a visa (Spener, 2009). This is partly because intermediaries are often deeply embedded in the same communities from which migrants originate (Ayalew et al., 2018). Migrants' trust lies in those within their communities rather than the distant government bureaucracies which are regarded as barriers to their desire to move (Kern-M*ü*ller & Boker, 2015). Moreover, from migrants' perspectives, officials *also* interpret, perform and *mediate* the migration rules for a fee payable for the visa and there is not necessarily a clear moral distinction between what intermediaries (from their communities) do and what the state does (Alpes, 2017). In other

words, for migrants in the Global South, the state is no more a legitimate arbiter of migration rules than intermediaries. Intermediaries simply form part of the human and social capital which migrants draw on as part of the social process of migration (Singer & Massey, 1998).

Intermediaries as "Protection from Below"

People fleeing conflict and persecution are usually not able to apply for visas in advance. In these cases, different types of intermediaries—guides, drivers, pilots as well as document dispatchers—are engaged to help people reach places of safety that they would not otherwise be able to get to (Ayalew, 2018). Viewed through this light, intermediaries provide alternative sources of knowledge to migrants (Sanchez & Natividad, 2017). In addition to guiding and driving, intermediaries often also help migrants secure work along the way so they can pay for onward travel as well as arrange housing whilst in transit. This may include helping—and charging—other migrants to travel (Achilli, 2018). Others may also help in other ways such as providing food and water, shelter and clothing to migrants on their journeys or selling lifejackets if the journey is via sea (Crawley et al., 2018).

Intermediaries who organise and facilitate irregular migration are often labelled by journalists, researchers and policymakers in the 'Global North' as "smugglers" or "human traffickers" (Achilli, 2018). In contrast, migrants in the Global South themselves often view such intermediaries as a form of protection from the violence they face at home, repressive border regimes, criminality and violence they face on their journeys. Intermediaries can be, as Sanchez and Zhang (2018, 45) describe it, "a primal attempt to preserve life" and a "passport" to a better life (Majidi, 2018). Intermediaries may also be deeply vested in the survival of their charges (Ayalew, 2018). Yet, intermediaries are neither wholly good nor wholly bad, since their motivations are not discernible nor inherent to the act of intermediation (Spener, 2009). Vogt (2016) reflects on the duality of the 'protector' and 'perpetrator' roles. Intermediary guides on the, sometimes dangerous, migrant trails in the Americas often risk their own lives to do what they do, whilst being responsible for peoples' care. At the same time, migrants also endure gendered forms of violence from these guides, including physical and sexual assaults and kidnapping. However, she notes—as do others—that such incidents cannot be explained by merely the bad and 'criminal' smuggler, but instead derive from the wider structural violence generated by state policies, including border regimes (see also De León, 2015). Structural violence and inequalities caused by state-bordering practices need not only involve direct and indirect acts of

physical harm experienced by migrants. It can also constitute the poverty and hunger experienced by people in the Global South in the context of global 'economic apartheid' inequalities (Sharma, 2006). The next section turns to explore the role and function of intermediaries in relation to global income inequalities.

Intermediaries and Income Inequalities

> At a time when the world faces an extremely challenging outlook, remittances are a vital lifeline for households in developing countries, especially the poorest… (Malpass, World Bank Blog, 2022)
>
> Global inequality has exploded, and there is no better way to tackle inequality than by redistributing wealth. (Oxfam, 2023, 6)

The activities of intermediaries in enabling migration from low-income countries to richer countries can alleviate poverty through remittances (Sha, 2021a). To follow this point, remittances also improve nutritional outcomes and birth weights, lead to higher enrolment rates in schooling migration and facilitate skills and knowledge transfer to Global South countries whilst providing a buffer against economic shocks and environmental disasters (Malpass, 2022). Therefore, in making it possible for people in low-income countries to migrate, intermediaries can be conceived of as "development agents" (Agunias, 2009). Together, social networks and fee-charging intermediaries reduce the risks and costs of migration, help migrants access overseas employment and generate income which they are unable to make at home (Sha, 2021a). Through advising people when and where to migrate, brokering employment and offering or organising job-specific training, it can therefore be argued that intermediaries perform a critical function in helping migrants redress global income inequalities.

Historically, only those with savings, who have something to sell or who can leverage cash contributions from family have been able to migrate (De Haas, 2007). Cash, and often significant amounts, is needed to pay for the migration documentation and to travel and settle in the new location(s). However, in addition to facilitating travel and providing advice, intermediaries also commonly provide or organise access to credit to enable would-be migrants to pay for their journeys (Zack et al., 2019). Through extending lines of credit, intermediaries make migration feasible for even the poorest migrants (Goh et al., 2017). This is especially important for women who lack

access to mainstream credit sources. This consequently helps women overcome gender inequality at home that may otherwise be further entrenched by being "left behind" as husbands, brothers and fathers migrate (Torres & Carte, 2016).

Furthermore, intermediaries also indirectly enable migrants to contribute to their families' schooling, housing, and general welfare through remittances (for a review see Sha, 2021b). Informal fund transfer systems and underground banking systems established by intermediaries are especially important for those unable to access formal money transfer services (Zhao, 2013). In these cases, high levels of trust between underground bank proprietors and migrants derive from ethnic solidarity. In a further, albeit tangential way, intermediaries contribute to the ability of migrants to start businesses upon their return home. This facilitates the transfer of human capital, knowledge, ideas and practices (Sørensen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2012). In other words, intermediaries which facilitate migration are therefore key actors in the development project since they enable movement to happen in the first place, whilst also facilitating financial and other transnational connections (Sha, 2021a). Put simply, intermediaries serve to expand the life-choices and economic opportunities of people living in poverty and situations of income inequality at home (Kern-M*ü*ller-Boker, 2015).

Migrants themselves often view intermediaries as critical to their bids to improve their socio-economic status (Awumbila et al., 2019). Alpes (2017) notes that young Cameroonians recognise that the high unemployment, poverty and even starvation, which they and their families face is produced by colonialism and structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and other international institutions. Seen through this lens, seeking out intermediaries that can help them connect to opportunities outside Cameroon, even if the process will be risky and uncertain, is a legitimate and even rational decision. In this context, migrating can be viewed as much as a collective political action as well as an economic one. Thus, Spener (2009) situates the actions of migrants in migrating—and the intermediaries who make it happen—as political acts of working-class, decolonial, resistance to global economic apartheid.

Intermediaries as Drivers of Inequalities

Nevertheless, intermediaries also contribute to and reproduce inequalities. As noted above, their actions, motivations and the differences they make can be contradictory (Awumbila et al., 2019). For instance, migrants may view—and accept—being in debt to intermediaries who help finance their migration as a

legitimate cost (Lainez, 2020). On the other hand, such loans are notorious in many regions, especially Southeast and South Asia for being a source through which migrants are extorted by intermediaries. In Bangladesh, interest rates on the loans taken from the informal money lenders for paying "recruitment fees"—can be as high as 120% per annum (Bangladesh Bank, 2019). It can take migrants up to 18 months of working in the destination country to repay the fees due to these extreme interest rates. This generates what Moniruzzaman and Walton-Roberts (2018) refer to as 'resource backwash', the idea that migrants do not work to economically advance their families' wellbeing or future lives. Instead, they work primarily to pay back the credit they received that enabled them to migrate in the first place. This means they continue to live in poverty or in the worst cases find themselves in even worse economic situations because of the debt generated by the migration project. High levels of debt to intermediaries have more than only financial implications for families. To service extreme interest rates, migrants feel desperate to work whatever the conditions are (Rahman, 2012). In addition to adding quite extreme pressure on migrants, this also creates an opportunity for employers to exploit their desperation as to complain or leave would mean not servicing the debt.

Intermediaries also contribute to other forms of inequalities experienced by migrants, especially in relation to employment. In Asia, recruiting intermediaries often teach departing migrants to be "docile", to accept any working conditions whilst abroad no matter how bad these are and to not complain (Guevarra, 2010). In research conducted with Bangladeshi migrant domestic workers in Jordan and Lebanon, Jones et al. (2022) elaborate how intermediaries, in addition to teaching migrants to be compliant, coach employers to discipline and control workers to prevent them "running away". Where migrants did complain or opt to leave, intermediaries stepped in a more direct way, threatening women financially and physically. However, this was because intermediaries were financially penalised by state officials and risked being denied state permission to operate if their recruits "ran away". In other words, it was driven by the wider context of governmental rules.

Scholars of labour migration have emphasised that intermediaries often reproduce and can even amplify gendered and racial inequalities. Studies show how intermediaries which operate within state-regulated temporary labour migration schemes engage in sex-based discrimination, specifically hiring only women or only men for specific jobs even where this may be illegal under national legal frameworks (Parrenas, 2012). Intermediaries may also discriminate by nationality, channelling specific nationality—or

ethnicity—groups to specific jobs (Jones, 2021). This can lead to discriminatory pay structures in countries of employment whereby migrants of one nationality may be paid significantly less than those of another. Through their discourse as well as their actions, intermediaries can influence migrants' "value" to employers and hence the wages they are paid (Jones, 2021; Sha & Bhuiyan, 2021). However, ultimately, migrants are made vulnerable by state policies which do not allow them access to the same rights and freedom of movement as citizens. The chapter turns now to outline how intermediaries mediate the inequalities faced by migrants in their new homes, including through lack of access to citizenship.

Intermediaries and the Inequalities in Their New Destinations

In the Undocumented Americans, the journalist Karla Cornejo Villavicencio relates her visit to a community pharmacy in Miami in which those who lack an official immigration status and therefore access to formal healthcare can purchase prescription medication at low cost. Corenjo Villavicencio, herself lacking an official status in the United States, quotes Julieta, a fellow "undocumented" South American who accompanies her to the pharmacy: "They know they're doing something they shouldn't, but they understand the human necessity. I have gone to them with my face swollen because of molar pain and they have given me something for the pain. I have gone to Walgreens and they won't give me something even if I'm dying in front of them" (Villavicencio, 2020, 63–64). This example emphasises the importance of already arrived migrant communities in helping others in less settled circumstances.

Many migrants face discrimination and marginalisation in their new homes. When entering a new country, even with an official status, migrants experience unequal access to the rights and protections due to citizens. In effect, migrants, especially those who lack an official status in their new home, find themselves in an extremely unequal relationship with the state and with citizens. When migrants move somewhere new, whether they stay for days, months or years, and no matter what the intention in being there is, a series of intermediaries are likely to assist (Garapich, 2008; Groutsis et al., 2015). More settled migrants may offer new arrivals advice in the job market, negotiate working conditions or assist migrants to find new, better jobs (Awumbila et al., 2019, for a review of this literature also see Sha, 2021b). Urban studies researchers and sociologists working in European and North American settings have increasingly adopted a relational, infrastructural, approach

to analyse the "from the below" constellation of actors and institutions which help migrants navigate life 'after arrival' (Meeus et al., 2019; Wessendorf, 2022). This literature emphasises the significance of informal, non-state activities, including the socio-material practices of the previously arrived migrants in assisting newcomers. Arrival infrastructures comprise a variety of (non-state) housing, shops as information hubs, religious sites, facilities for language classes, hairdressers, restaurants, libraries, international shipping and call centres. They also include local and international NGOs.

This emerging body of literature provides a counterbalance to the state-centric "integration" literature. It emphasises the informal, socio-material practices of a multitude of actors, including previously arrived migrants in assisting newcomers to navigate their new environment. Exploring the constitution of and relationships between infrastructures of arrival enables consideration of a wide constellation of actors in helping migrants settle. It also (re-) places the spotlight on the special role played by long-established migrants in helping new arrivals (Wessendorf, 2022). As with those who facilitate migrants' physical journeys, at times such intermediaries may be altruistic, in others, people and organisations from within the community may charge a fee for assistance. As in the example provided by Villavicencio, some operate 'underground', informally, out of sight of officialdom as a way of expressing solidarity to migrants who are unable to access state-provided services (Zhao, 2013). Local citizens of the new state may also offer support and assistance also in a spirit of solidarity (Bauder, 2021). However, other literatures identify that such solidarity practices are most evident where co-nationals are involved because the trust between co-nationals enables these practices (Portes, 1998). Co-nationals often offer practical assistance in migrants' new homes, such as access to informal banking and remittance services, which are otherwise denied to migrants through mainstream financial services. Businesses established by settled migrants are also sometimes more likely to hire co-nationals who are more newly arrived (Zhao, 2013). Prior generations of scholars in the United States therefore emphasised the significance of 'ethnic enclaves' in providing various types of support (Portes, 1998). This included start-up capital; information on setting up businesses, or tips about business opportunities, strategies, contacts and markets (Werbner, 1987). Such enclaves provided a secure context for arriving migrants, providing both employment and a familiar cultural environment (Massey et al., 1987). In this context, intermediaries, including migrants from within their own communities, provide a counterbalance. This may take the form of making up for a deficiency where the state does not provide services or other types of assistance to migrants. Their survival requires migrants to have knowledge, contacts

and networks. On the other hand, Bhimji and Wernet (2021) highlight how such practices can also be viewed as a subtle resistance to state power amidst migrants' struggle to rebuild and embed their lives in the new locale, in which the state fails to care for them, imposes internal border regimes and threatens them with deportation.

The assistance offered by intermediaries in new places does not, however, exist in a vacuum or derive from a surfeit of altruism in migrant communities. In studying recently arrived Polish communities in the United Kingdom, Garapich (2008) shows how the traditional agents of civil society which provided services for free—voluntary organisations, state policies, the Polish church or advocacy networks—were not especially prominent sources of help to the newly arrived. Instead, it was the fee-charging service providers from within the communities, including remittance services, immigration advisors, tax refund offices, 'ethnic' media, food economies, banks, travel agents, recruitment agencies, which quickly mobilised.

Conclusion

In the past half century, intermediaries of migration have become more directly and indirectly implicated in all aspects of international migration. Intermediaries perform numerous practical functions in making migration happen. They may inspire the decision to migrate and advise on where to live, how to live and how to earn money (Massey et al., 1987). They also facilitate the journey through acting as guides, drivers and pilots (Achilli, 2018) or through simply acting as a travel agency through booking transportation and accommodation *en route*. They help migrants of all backgrounds apply for visas, work permits and asylum (Alpes, 2017). They help migrants find jobs, either before leaving home or after arrival in a new place (Jones, 2014). They are transnational actors; deeply embedded in global economic circuits whilst also rooted in (migrants') places. They are also thoroughly implicated in global inequalities in relation to borders, income and citizenship. Most essentially, intermediaries (per)form the essential infrastructure which makes mobility happen in a world in which immobility is the norm (Lindquist et al., 2012). Intermediaries provide a potential alternative, a framework for resistance to inequalities generated by states whilst also sometimes reproducing, or even amplifying, them. Despite this, research on the role of intermediaries in South–South migration is as yet sadly lacking. To address—or even redress—the unbalanced content and epistemology of the existing volume of

studies on intermediaries, more research on their specific contributions within South–South migration is needed.

Acknowledgements This work has been undertaken as part of the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub. Funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (Grant Reference: ES/S007415/1), MIDEQ unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. More at www.mideq.org.

References

Achilli, L. (2018). The "good" smuggler: The ethics and morals of human smuggling among Syrians. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 676*(1), 77–96.

Agunias, D. R. (2009). *Guiding the invisible hand: Making migration intermediaries work for development*. Migration Policy Institute.

Alpes, M. J. (2017). *Brokering high-risk migration and illegality in West Africa: Abroad at any cost*. Routledge.

Anderson, J. T. (2021). Managing labour migration in Malaysia: Foreign workers and the challenges of 'control' beyond liberal democracies. *Third World Quarterly, 42*(1), 86–104.

Awumbila, M., Deshingkar, P., Kandilige, L., Teye, J. K., & Setrana, M. (2019). Please, thank you and sorry—Brokering migration and constructing identities for domestic work in Ghana. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45*(14), 2655–2671.

Ayalew, T. (2018). Refugee protections from below: Smuggling in the Eritrea-Ethiopia context. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 676*, 57–76.

Ayalew, T., Adugna, F., & Deshingkar, P. (2018). Social embeddedness of human smuggling in East Africa: Brokering Ethiopian migration to the Sudan. *African Human Mobility Review, 4*(3), 1333–1358.

Azad, A. (2019). Recruitment of migrant workers in Bangladesh: Elements of human trafficking for labor exploitation. *Journal of Human Trafficking, 5*(2), 130–150.

Bangladesh Bank. (2019). *A survey report on loans for expatriates: Its uses and impact.* Special Research Work 1902, Research Department, Bangladesh Bank, January 2019.

Bauder, H. (2021). Urban migrant and refugee solidarity beyond city limits. *Urban Studies, 58*(16), 3213–3229.

Bhimji, F., & Wernet, N. (2021). Supporting searchers' desire for emplacement in Berlin: Informal practices in defiance of an (im)mobility regime. *Migration Letters, 18*(2), 189–199.

Boyd, M. (1989). Family and personal networks in international migration: Recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review, 23*(3), 638–670.

Burawoy, M. (1976). The functions and reproduction of migrant labour: Comparative material from Southern Africa and the United States. *The American Journal of Sociology, 81*(5), 1050–1087.

Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2003). *The age of migration*. Guilford Press.

Constable, N. (2003). *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of migrant workers*. Cornell University Press.

Cranston, S. (2018). 'Calculating the migration industries: Knowing the successful expatriate in the global mobility industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44*(4), 626–643.

Crawley, H., Duvell, F., Jones, K., McMahon, S., & Sigona, N. (2018). *Unravelling Europe's 'Migration Crisis': Journeys over Land and Sea*. Policy Press.

De Genova, N. P. (2002). Migrant "illegality" and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 31*(1), 419–447.

De Haas, H. (2007). Turning the tide? Why development will not stop migration. *Development and Change, 38*(5), 819–841.

De León, J. (2015). *The land of open graves: Living and dying on the migrant trail*. University of California Press.

Deshingkar, P. (2019). The making and unmaking of precarious, ideal subjects—Migration brokerage in the Global South. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45*(14), 2638–2654.

Fawcett, J. T. (1989). Networks, linkages, and migration systems. *The International Migration Review, 23*(3), 671–680.

Findlay, A., & Li, E. L. N. (1998). A migration channels approach to the study of professionals moving to and from Hong Kong. *International Migration Review, 32*(3), 682–703.

Fogelman, E. (1995). *Conscience and courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*. Anchor Books.

Gammeltoft-Hansen, T., & Sorensen, N. N. (Eds.). (2013). *The migration industry and the commercialization of international migration*. Routledge.

Garapich, M. P. (2008). The migration industry and civil society: Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom before and after EU enlargement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34*(5), 735–752.

Goh, C., Wee, K., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2017). Migration governance and the migration industry in Asia: Moving domestic workers from Indonesia to Singapore. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific, 17*(2017), 401–433.

Goss, J., & Lindquist, B. (1995). Conceptualizing international labour migration: A structuration perspective. *International Migration Review, 29*(2), 317–351.

Groutsis, D., Broek, D. v. d., & Harvey, W. S. (2015). Transformations in network governance: The case of migration intermediaries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 41*(10), 1558–1576.

Guevarra, A. R. (2010). *Marketing dreams, manufacturing heroes: The Transnational labor brokering of Filipino workers*. Rutgers University Press.

Haug, S., Braveboy-Wagner, J., & Maihold, G. (2021). The 'Global South' in the study of world politics: Examining a meta category. *Third World Quarterly, 42*(9), 1923–1944.

Henley. (2022). *The official passport index ranking*. Available at: https://www.henleyglobal.com/passport-index/ranking. Accessed on 2 Mar 2023.

Hernández-León, R. (2013). Conceptualizing the migration industry. In T. Gammeltoft-Hansen & N. N. Sorensen (Eds.), *The migration industry and the commercialization of international migration* (pp. 42–62). Routledge.

Jansen, S. (2009). After the red passport: Towards an anthropology of the everyday geopolitics of entrapment in the EU's "immediate outside." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 15*, 815–832.

Jones, K. (2021). 'Brokered discrimination for a fee. The Incompatibility of Domestic Work Placement Agencies with Rights-Based Global Governance of Migration. *Global Public Policy and Governance, 1*, 300–320.

Jones, K., Ksaifi, L., & Clark, C. (2022). 'The biggest problem we are facing Is the running away problem': Recruitment and the paradox of facilitating the mobility of immobile workers. *Work, Employment and Society, 0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170221094764

Jones, K. (2014). 'It was a whirlwind. A lot of people made a lot of money': The role of agencies in facilitating migration from Poland into the UK between 2004 and 2008. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review, 3*(2), 105–125.

Kern, A., & Müller-Böker, U. (2015). The middle space of migration: A case study on brokerage and recruitment agencies in Nepal. *Geoforum, 65*, 158–169.

Koster, M., & van Leynseele, Y. (2018). Brokers as assemblers: Studying development through the lens of brokerage. *Ethnos, 83*(5), 803–813.

Lainez, N. (2020). Debt, trafficking and safe migration: The brokered mobility of Vietnamese sex workers to Singapore. *Geoforum, 137*, 164–173.

Lan, P. C. (2018). Bridging ethnic-differences for cultural intimacy: Production of migrant care workers in Japan. *Critical Sociology, 44*(7–8), 029–1043.

Lindquist, J., Xiang, B., & Yeoh, B. S. A. (2012). Opening the black box of migration: Brokers, the organisation of transnational mobility and the changing political economy in Asia. *Pacific Affairs, 85*(1), 7–19.

Majidi, N. (2018). Community dimensions of smuggling: The case of Afghanistan and Somalia. *The ANNALs of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 697–113.

Malpass, D. (2022). *Remittances are a critical economic stabilizer*. World Bank Blog 06 December 2022. Available at https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/remittances-are-critical-economic-stabilizer

Massey, D. S., Alarcón, R., Durand, J., & González, H. (1987). *Return to Aztlan: The social process of international migration from Western Mexico*. University of California Press.

Meeus, B., Arnaut, K., & Van Heur, B. (2019). *Arrival infrastructures*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Merriman, H. (2019). *Tunnel 29: The true story of an extraordinary escape beneath the Berlin Wall*. Hodder and Stoughton.

Mirrlees, T., & Pederson, I. (2016). Elysium as a critical dystopia. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics, 12*(3), 305–322.

Moniruzzaman, M., & Walton-Roberts, M. (2018). Migration, debt and resource backwash: How sustainable is Bangladesh-Gulf circular migration? *Migration and Development, 7*(1), 85–103.

Muanamoha, R. C., Maharaj, B., & Preston-Whyte, E. (2010). Social networks and undocumented Mozambican migration to South Africa. *Geoforum, 41*, 885–896.

Oxfam. (2023). *Survival of the rich: How we must tax the super-rich.* Oxfam.

Parrenas, R. S. (2012). The reproductive labour of migrant workers. *Global Networks, 12*(2), 269–275.

Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 24*(1998), 1–24.

Rahman, M. M. (2012). Bangladeshi labour migration to the Gulf states: Patterns of recruitment and processes. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies, 33*(2), 214–230.

Sanchez, G., & Natividad, N. (2017). Reframing migrant smuggling as a form of knowledge: A view from the US- Mexico border. In C. Günay & N. Witjes (Eds.), *Border politics: Defining spaces of governance and forms of transgression* (pp. 67–83). Springer International Publishing.

Sanchez, G. E., & Zhang, S. X. (2018). Rumors, encounters, collaborations, and survival: The migrant smuggling–drug trafficking nexus in the US Southwest. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 676*(1), 135–151.

Schling, H. (2022). 'Just-in-time' migrant workers in Czechia: Racialisation and dormitory labour regimes. In E. Balioni, L. Campling, N. M. Coe, & A. Smith (Eds.), *Labour regimes and global production* (pp. 301–316). Agenda Publishing.

Sha, H. (2021a). *Intermediaries and inequalities: A literature review.* MIDEQ Working Paper. Available at: https://www.mideq.org/en/resources-index-page/intermediaries-and-inequalities-literature-review/

Sha, H. (2021b). *Migrant networks as social capital: The social infrastructure of migration.* MIDEQ Working Paper. Available at: https://www.mideq.org/fr/resources-index-page/migrant-networks-social-capital-social-infrastructure-migration/

Sha, H., & Bhuiyan, M. R. A. (2021). "Amar beton khub e kom"—The role of commercial recruitment intermediaries in reinforcing gendered and racialised inequalities. *Zanj: The Journal of Critical Global South Studies, 5*(1/2), 164–192.

Sharma, N. (2006). Global apartheid and nation-statehood: instituting border regimes. In J. Goodman & P. James (Eds.), *Nationalism and global solidarities: Alternative projections to neoliberal globalisation* (pp. 81–100). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203085981

Singer, A., & Massey, D. S. (1998). The social process of undocumented border crossing among Mexican migrants. *International Migration Review, 32*(3), 561–592.

Sørensen, N. N., & Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. (2012). Introduction. In T. Gammeltoft-Hansen & N. N. Sorensen (Eds.), *The migration industry and the commercialization of international migration* (pp. 1–23). Routledge.

Spener, D. (2009). *Clandestine crossings: Migrants and Coyote on the Texas-Mexico Border*. Cornell University Press.

Torpey, J. (1998). Coming and going: On the state monopolization of the legitimate 'means of movement.' *Sociological Theory, 16*(3), 239–259.

Torres, R. M., & Carte, L. (2016). Migration and development? The gendered costs of migration on Mexico's rural 'left behind.' *Geographical Review, 106*(3), 399–420.

Villavicencio, K. C. (2020). *The undocumented Americans*. One World.

Vogt, W. (2016). Stuck in the middle with you: The intimate labours of mobility and smuggling along Mexico's migrant route. *Geopolitics, 21*, 366–386.

Walia, H. (2021). *Border and rule: Global migration, capitalism, and the rise of racist nationalism*. Haymarket Books.

Werbner, P. (1987). Enclave economies and family firms: Pakistani traders in a British city. In J. S. Eades (Ed.), *Migrants, workers and the social order* (pp. 213–233). Tavistock Publishers.

Wessendorf, S. (2022). 'The library is like a mother': Arrival infrastructures and migrant newcomers in East London. *Migration Studies, 10*(2), 172–189.

Xiang, B. (2017). The base: A case of infrastructural governance of labour outmigration in China. *Mobilities, 12*(2), 175–187.

Xiang, B., & Lindquist, J. (2018). Infrastructuralization: Evolving sociopolitical dynamics in labour migration from Asia. *Pacific Affairs, 91*(4), 759–773.

Žabko, O., Aasland, A., & Endresen, S. B. (2018). Facilitating labour migration from Latvia: Strategies of various categories of intermediaries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44*(4), 575–591.

Zack, T., Matshaka, S., Moyo, K., & Vanyoro, K. P. (2019). *My way? The circumstances and intermediaries that influence the migration decision-making of female Zimbabwean domestic workers in Johannesburg*. University of Sussex Migrating out of Poverty RPC Working Paper 57.

Zhao, L. S. (2013). Ethnic networks and illegal immigration. *Sociological Focus, 46*(3), 178–192.