The Migration-Development Nexus: Evidence and Policy Options

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ABSTRACT

Migration and development are linked in many ways – through the livelihood and survival strategies of individuals, households, and communities; through large and often well-targeted remittances; through investments and advocacy by migrants, refugees, diasporas and their transnational communities; and through international mobility associated with global integration, inequality, and insecurity.

Until now, migration and development have constituted separate policy fields. Differing policy approaches that hinder national coordination and international cooperation mark these fields. For migration authorities, the control of migration flows to the European Union and other OECD countries are a high priority issue, as is the integration of migrants into the labour market and wider society. On the other hand, development agencies may fear that the development policy objectives are jeopardized if migration is taken into consideration. Can long-term goals of global poverty reduction be achieved if short-term migration policy interests are to be met? Can partnership with developing countries be real if preventing further migration is the principal European migration policy goal?

While there may be good reasons to keep some policies separate, conflicting policies are costly and counter-productive. More importantly, there is unused potential in mutually supportive policies, that is, the constructive use of activities and interventions that are common to both fields and which may have positive effects on poverty reduction, development, prevention of violent conflicts, and international mobility.

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This paper focuses on positive dimensions and possibilities in the migration-development nexus. It highlights the links between migration, development, and conflict from the premise that to align policies on migration and development, migrant and refugee diasporas must be acknowledged as a development resource.

INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGING POLICY AGENDA

The migration-development nexus is a highly politicized area marked by differing policy approaches that hinder national coordination and international cooperation. Development authorities fear that the overriding goals of development policies are jeopardized if migration is taken into consideration. Can long-term goals of global poverty reduction be achieved if short-term migration policy interests are to be met? Can partnership with developing countries be real if tackling illegal migration is the principal European policy goal?

To migration authorities, the control of migration flows to Denmark, the European Union (EU), and other OECD countries remains a high priority issue, as does the integration of migrants into the labour market and wider society, together with the extension of cooperation with migrant-producing developing countries. The international mobility of highly skilled workers is currently an important policy issue and steps are being taken to formulate appropriate migration policies aimed at facilitating the mobility of skilled workers in ways that are beneficial to both receiving and sending countries. Co-development, selective migration, and temporary migration are among the policy instruments discussed.

While the proportion of people living in countries other than those in which they were born has basically stayed constant over the last three decades, violent conflict has changed globally. It has far greater implications for developing countries that must handle growing numbers of refugees, and problems connected to the protracted nature of conflicts and refugee situations. The effects of development in generating migration are multifaceted as are the effects of migration in enhancing or hindering local development. Because the migration-development nexus transcends national boundaries by its very nature, it demands cross-national analysis, cooperation between states, and, at times, cooperation between migrant groups and local governments. Considerations of existing and potential migration-development links involve posing fundamental questions about the migrants, the nature of their movement, and the effects of migration on the socio-economic and political structures of source areas and destinations.

The study explores conflicts of interest in the migration-development nexus, and considers how these can be reconciled. This, it is argued, is the key to avoiding
conflicting interests as well as conflicting effects between development cooperation and migration.

POVERTY, CONFLICT, AND MIGRATION

The popular conception that the poor are migrating from the South to the North is unfounded. Most migration is among developing countries, rather than from the developing to the developed world. This is the case for migration that is both primarily economic and induced by conflict. The poorest of the poor, that is the 1.2 billion people living on less than US$1 a day, do not have the connections and resources needed to engage in inter-continental migration. Even the nearly 3 billion people who live on less than US$2 a day and who constitute half of the world’s population, are unlikely to provide the bulk of migrants and international asylum seekers. If migrants originate from poor households, it is most often the most resourceful member of the household who is encouraged to migrate to the North. Nevertheless, there are important and complex links between poverty, conflict, and migration.

Causes of migration

The ratio of real income per head in the richest countries to the poorest rose from 10:1 in 1900 to 60:1 by 2000. Such disparities in living standards and the lack of development options in developing countries are at the root of much migration. These factors also contribute to the violent conflict and human rights abuse associated with poor governance that have become among the key factors impelling refugee movement. It is no coincidence that conflict-ridden countries are often those with severe economic difficulties.

Poverty underlies much current migration but is not the direct cause of it. The poorest of the poor lack the resources and network connections needed for mobility. International migrants usually come from countries or regions within countries that are undergoing rapid change as a consequence of their incorporation into global trade, information, and production networks. Rather than containing migration pressure, development can stimulate migration in the short term by raising expectations and enhancing the resources needed to move. In this way, migration does not only stem from a lack of economic development but also from development itself (see Widgren and Martin). Poor communities and poor countries in conflict may be the source of outflows of refugees, but these forced migrants often also need resources to migrate.

Effects of migration

Migration may have both positive and negative effects on development in areas of origin. Depending on the income-earning opportunities available to migrants
in destination countries, migrants’ contributions to development in the sending countries can be significant. At the family level, migration may improve household earnings, giving people better food, health, housing, and educational standards. Positive effects may spread to the wider community and society, preventing the decline of rural communities or collapse of national economies. At the community level, migrants’ hometown associations (HTAs) may serve as platforms resulting in significant development, such as improvements in local health, education, sanitation, and infrastructure conditions, benefiting migrant and non-migrant households. On the other hand, migration may have a negative effect on a sending community if the labour force is depleted by the departure of the most productive members abroad. The infusion of money from migrants may have an inflationary influence on the local economy, especially on land and real estate prices.

Forced displacement also has development implications. Like “economic” migration, refugee flight involves the loss of labour, skilled workers, and capital for the country of origin. Yet, while refugee flight deprives homelands of labour and skills, it also opens the possibility of remittances from refugees who manage to find employment, allowing surpluses to be sent home. Refugees hosted in developing countries will have less in the way of earning and therefore less remittance power than those in more prosperous asylum countries.

Mass arrivals of refugees, usually in countries neighbouring those from which refugees have fled, may have short-term damaging effects. In the longer term, however, the impacts of such mass arrivals may be more beneficial, particularly in terms of the economic, human, and social capital newcomers bring with them (see Jacobsen).

Some of the positive and negative effects the presence of migrants and refugees can have include: changes in local markets for food, housing, land, transport, and other goods, services, and resources; changes in local labour markets; changes in the local economy and society brought by the introduction of humanitarian assistance; demands on health care, education, and other services; demographic changes, and related influences on health, mortality, and morbidity; influences on infrastructure; and ecological and environmental changes. These influences are felt on the communities the migrants and refugees leave, on the communities that receive them, and on the communities to which they return.

**Remittances and return**

Migrants influence the development of their home countries by the resources and assets they send or bring back with them. These resources are not evenly distributed, however, and there is a tension between the remittances migrants and refugees send and the return or repatriation of migrants and refugees. Remittances are an important resource for many households in developing
countries, and because they move directly from person to person, they may have a more direct impact than other resource flows. But the benefits of remittances are selective. Though not exclusively, they tend to go to the better-off households within the better-off communities in the better-off countries of the developing world since these households, communities, and countries tend to be the source of migrants.

In societies in conflict or emerging from conflict the picture is more complex. Remittances from abroad help families survive during conflict and sustain communities in crisis—both in countries of origin and in neighbouring countries of first asylum. After conflict, remittances are potentially a powerful resource for rehabilitation and reconstruction. But again there is selectivity: these transfers reach relatively few households. At the same time, remittances and other transfers, as well as international lobbying by diasporas, may help perpetuate the conflicts or crises that beset such families and communities by providing support for armed conflict.

Return of migrants and refugees can also be a substantial force for development and reconstruction of the home country, not least in terms of the financial, human, and social capital migrants and refugees may bring home with them. There is the dilemma, however, that the return of migrants will reduce the flow of remittances to the home country. Similarly, if the resolution of conflict or crisis is accompanied by large-scale repatriation, the source of remittances will obviously diminish, raising potential for instability and further conflict. There may even be an argument against repatriation on these grounds.

**Mobility and livelihood strategies**

The search for a better and more secure livelihood drives most migratory movements. When survival is at stake, a common strategy is to move elsewhere. The notion of “livelihoods” encompasses the means and strategies used to maintain and sustain life. “Means” refers to assets and resources in cash and kind that people can access. “Strategies” are connected to social institutions, such as kin, family, village, and other social networks facilitating and sustaining diversified livelihoods. Pursuing mobile livelihoods can thus be seen as a poverty-reducing strategy involving refashioning resources dispersed in space into family livelihoods.

People living in conflict environments pursue livelihoods differently than those living in more stable and peaceful environments. Refugees and internally displaced persons in conflict areas are subject to risks that hinder the pursuit of livelihoods. Immediate goals of displaced people include: physical safety from violence, threat of violence or intimidation, reducing economic vulnerability and food insecurity, finding a place to settle, and locating lost family members (see Jacobsen).
If mobile populations have proven to be beneficial to local development in times of conflict as well as in times of deteriorating economic conditions, restrictive migration policies may hinder such gains. Development policies targeting sedentary populations or policies that have containment as a goal may also hinder such gains. It needs to be more firmly acknowledged that mobility is an important part of livelihood diversification strategies.

**MIGRANTS AS A DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE**

Recognition of a number of factors has prompted reassessment of the developmental role of migrants. First, the remittances by migrants and refugees are likely to be double the size of aid and may be at least as well targeted at the poor in both conflict-ridden and stable developing countries. Second, migrant diasporas are engaged in a variety of transnational practices (such as relief, investments, cultural exchange, and political advocacy) with direct effects on international development cooperation. Third, both private and public sectors in developed countries recognize their immediate and long-term dependence on immigrant labour with an ever more complex skills mixture. Fourth, an increasing number of migrant-sending states recognize that migrant diasporas can advance national development from abroad and endow their migrants with special rights, protections, and recognitions. Viewing migrant diasporas as a development resource and seeking links between aid and migrants’ transnational practices could address some of these trends and concerns.

**Migrant diasporas and transnational practices**

Broadly, diasporas are defined as being constituted by people dispersed among diverse destinations outside their home country, and transnational activities as practices carried out by such populations. Several factors determine whether migrants integrate in their destination country or return to their country of origin. Evidence suggests that integration and return are not mutually exclusive but rather two kinds of transnational practices. Integration often may lead to a higher degree of involvement in home countries, along with the home countries’ governments attitudes and policies toward expatriates.

Various policies, controls, and sanctions may mediate the flow of transnational investments, political participation, and in other ways shape transnational activities. Attention must therefore be focused on interventions involving: diasporas themselves and their organizations; the governments of countries hosting diasporas; the governments of diasporas’ countries of origin; and bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Differences of wealth, power, class, gender, and generation within diasporas are of importance in shaping the form and scope of transnational activities and their
Influence. Migrant groups are heterogeneous and in terms of “belonging” they
do not come from “countries”, but rather from specific localities. Many of their
practices are therefore “trans-local”, connecting migrant groups or HTAs with
specific rural or urban areas in their countries of origin.

Some international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the Inter-
American Bank, along with migrant sending governments in developing
countries, are showing growing interest in the impact of diasporas, and in
particular the contribution of remittances to development and/or post-conflict
reconstruction. The challenge for the development community is to consider
which transnational activities might be susceptible to policy interventions, and
what the entry points for such interventions may be. In addition, such
considerations must take the social embeddedness of transnational activities into
account. For example, the fact that remittances are not simply transfers of
money, but carry with them social, cultural, and other dimensions. Finally, since
addressing poverty and issues of equity are prominent policy concerns so is the
exploration of ways in which the benefits of transnational activities may be
equitably distributed.

**Remittances**

Overall, remittances seem to be a more constant source of income than other
private flows and foreign direct investments (FDI). Apart from benefiting
migrant families, remittances also benefit unrelated non-migrants by fostering
trade and services between emigrants and non-migrants. The effects on income
distribution depend on factors such as the degree migration opportunities are
diffused across households, communities, and regions; the magnitude of
remittances to income from other sources; and the distribution of potentially
remittance enhancing skills and education.

Remittances to developing countries go first and foremost to lower middle-
icome countries and low-income countries. Lower middle-income countries
receive the largest amounts, but remittances constitute a much higher share of
total international flows to low-income countries. Refugees also remit a share
of their income, although refugee-producing countries are not the main
beneficiaries of remittances. Still, remittances constitute a powerful resource
for reconstruction once conflict abates. That migrants’ and refugees’
remittances are spread unevenly can be seen by the fact that remittances to
sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have declined, while Eastern Europe,
Central Asia, South and Central America, and the Caribbean have increased.
This suggests that remittances cannot “replace” foreign aid, which increasingly
is going to the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. It is
rather a question of aid and remittances supplementing each other in different
regions (see Gammeltoft).
Apart from a positive effect on diverse types of countries, remittance flows have taken on significant new features. New actors and practices have emerged and it is now clear that senders, recipients, HTAs, businesses, migrant-sending governments, and international organizations have various influences on remittance patterns and their developmental effects. Migrants send money to their families to sustain livelihoods and social relations. Remittance recipients allocate the funds for various social and economic purposes. Recipients become agents of development when the money received creates new markets or improves the welfare of the household through education and welfare. The transfer of remittances attracts new businesses such as money transmission companies. The competition in remittance transfer markets has resulted in decreased transaction costs and the channelling of more remittances through formal institutional mechanisms, eventually leading to more money available for migrant sending communities, and, correspondingly, increasing the multiplier effect of remittances on the migrant-sending economy.

Sending governments are increasingly developing new practices for leveraging remittances. These practices include setting aside a portion of each remittance into development funds; creating formal financial instruments to capture a share of individual remittances; capitalizing on migrant remittances or investments and enterprise of return migrants through investment breaks or training; and establishing joint ventures with migrant and HTAs geared toward community development.

The formation of migrant diasporas and the development of formal HTAs have importance beyond the stimulation of collective remittances. Along with their growing numbers has come greater institutional outreach. HTA members are often involved in socio-cultural, political, and economic/entrepreneurial activities in both sending and receiving countries, using their institutional base to effect domestic change. Thus, they constitute an important partner for co-development in the broader meaning of the concept.

The concept of co-development was launched by France in the late 1990s and is currently promoted by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) as a means to enhance the links between migration and development. Co-development is usually conceived in connection with programmes of voluntary assisted return. In this respect the strategy of co-development focuses on migrants’ return or the “return potential” as a development factor. In a broader sense, co-development could refer to all the possible ways that migration potentially reinforces development cooperation policies. So far, the broader sense of the concept is not on the EU’s policy agenda. Current tensions between actors and policymakers concerned with development and migration respectively may have determined the narrow definition of co-development.
Transnational investments and entrepreneurship

A second set of practices of concern to policy makers includes migrants’ investments and entrepreneurship. Migrants undertake an array of transnational economic activities. For example, three important sub-sectors of the Colombian economy are strongly connected to transnational migration, namely, housing, small and micro-enterprises, and family subsistence. An important line of transnational activity is the promotion and sale of housing in cities like Pereira and Cali to migrants living abroad. In a contracted local market, migrants’ relatively high purchasing power has become a significant market for developers in these cities. A more common transnational activity is the creation, maintenance, and expansion of small commercial and service ventures (grocery stores, restaurants, light manufacturing) by migrants who have either returned or are sending remittances to support their businesses from abroad. These numerous enterprises dot the areas where migrants and their families live, providing services and economic activities that did not exist before mass migration took off.

While this example shows a positive effect of transnational migration on local development, a note of caution is appropriate. Transnational entrepreneurship is not necessarily open to everyone since it depends on individual skills (human capital), access to economic resources (financial capital), and the size, reach, and access to social networks (social capital). Evidence suggests that transnational entrepreneurship generally reproduces social asymmetries along class, gender, and racial/ethnic lines. A central migration-development policy challenge is therefore to determine which development structures and sectors transnational entrepreneurship affect, how this in turn affects migration pressures, and what potentials this kind of economic endeavour entails.

Advocacy and political lobbying

Transnational political networks, advocacy, and lobbying practices may not be a new phenomenon, but such practices are growing and slowly receiving attention within policy making circles. Among the reasons for this are sending countries’ particular politico-economic incentives to mobilize citizens (and former citizens) abroad, the development of competitive (democratic) party politics in sending countries, the rise in intra-state conflicts in sending countries, and the increased focus on principles of human rights, democratization, and “good governance” in the foreign policy and donor agenda of major Western states.

Transnational political practices are as complex as the multilevel processes, structures, and actors involved, and may include:

- **Immigrant politics**: political activities undertaken by migrants and refugees to better their situation in receiving countries. Such politics
become transnational when the sending states become involved in supporting its citizens abroad in their struggle to improve their legal and socio-economic status.

- **Homeland politics**: political activities directed toward the domestic or foreign policy of the country of origin; such activities can be both supportive and oppositional.

- **Hometown politics**: initiatives from abroad to participate in the development of the local community of origin; or initiatives from homeland municipal or county politicians to capture migrant resources. Such policies are trans-local.

- **Diaspora politics**: political practices confined to groups barred from direct participation in the homelands political system, or among stateless people who do not have a homeland regime to support/oppose. Sensitive political issues such as national sovereignty and security are often at stake.

- **Transnational politics**: political activities of international human and indigenous rights organizations. For example, when state authorities are identified as abusive by agencies such as UNHCR or IWGIA, the relationship between the state and the citizen becomes transnationalized. This is often the case with IDPs and indigenous people.

While the advocacy and political lobbying activities of diasporas may constitute an important development resource, they may also help perpetuate local conflicts or crises by providing, for example, economic support for armed conflict. Diasporas are, as we have seen, crucial in the flow of money and resources on which conflicting parties depend. Transnational political practices may therefore also be a powerful risk factor, predisposing a country to civil war. The policy challenge is to discover how interventions can encourage the deployment of transnational political activities in a positive direction, such as toward development, conflict resolution, or post-conflict reconstruction.

**Migrant women as a development resource**

Women play an important role in international migration both as family members and as autonomous economic migrants. A growing proportion of migrant women have high standards of education and skills, and take part in transnational economic practices and entrepreneurship. Women also make up a growing share of refugees and asylum seekers, especially in less developed areas devastated by warfare. In general, remittances are an important aspect of women’s roles within social networks, as is female participation in migrant associations, both as organizers and fundraisers. Evidence suggests that high levels of female participation in voluntary associations are most noticeable when the organizations combine the social welfare concerns of both home and host communities.

Nevertheless, migration and development policies often ignore migrants’ gendered identities and practices. When women are targeted as a special group,
their transnational engagements in both sending and receiving societies are often overlooked. It is important that policies are designed according to the opportunities and constraints specific to different groups, as well as according to specific groups’ transnational spheres of action. Migrants not only contribute remittances while abroad, they also contribute new skills and life views regardless of whether they return. Their abilities to do so depend on whether they have equitable access to services and training. International agencies should therefore approach migrants’ gender specific concerns and make sure to follow up effectively on gender awareness campaigns and programmes when women return. Unless properly assisted, women may lose newly gained gender rights to men, who seem to regain their traditional gender privileges upon return.

POLICY REGIMES IN THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

The previous sections have reviewed prevailing assumptions about the relationship between poverty, conflict, development, and migration, and highlighted ways in which migrants constitute a development resource. The study now turns to the intersection of the migration and development policy fields by setting out the different strains of thinking that are currently emerging in the debate on migration and development (see Chimni).

Three “policy logics” and “migration-development regimes” that would result from them can be identified in the current discourse on migration and development. “Policy logic” refers to the assumptions underlying sets of interrelated interventions by migrant-sending countries, migrant-receiving countries, and international organizations, which together may be designated a “migration-development regime”. The three migration-development regimes and related policy logics are: (1) closure and containment, aimed at control of migrants and refugees; (2) selectivity towards immigration and development support; and (3) liberalization and transnationalism in the fields of labour mobility, diaspora activities, and refugee protection.

The emerging policy regimes challenge the still existing separation of policies and lack of policy coherence. Policy makers recognize that migration and development are linked, but maintain the separation between migration policy and development policy. There is recognition that aid polices and migration policies are directed toward different ends and toward different constituencies. Development policies are directed toward poverty reduction among the poorest people and toward the poorest countries, which are generally not the source of migrants, though some such communities and countries may be the source of refugees. Under this logic, aid is and should be directed only to the explicit objectives of poverty reduction, democratization, sustainable development, and gender equality. Interventions toward these goals take no account of the impacts
on migration, whether positive or negative. At the same time, migration policy takes minimal account of the development needs of migrant-sending countries, though there might be some recognition of the impact of brain drain and needs related to repatriation, for example. Interaction between development and migration policy is therefore limited to where the interventions associated with them overlap, as in the case of highly skilled migration and refugee outflows from poor countries in conflict.

The characteristics of the three emerging logics and regimes are below.

1. Closure and containment

Under this logic, control of migration takes precedence and development policy is seen as an adjunct toward that end. Developed countries are, as much as possible, closed to new immigration, and, where possible, migration pressures deriving both from economic motivation and conflict are contained within the developing world. The closure-containment regime comprises an array of measures within migrant-receiving states and regions, and is directed toward transit and migrant-sending countries. Aid policies are subsidiary to migration management, and international dialogue between North and South is minimal. Such a regime includes the following elements:

In migrant-receiving countries and transit countries

The regime of immigration closure involves interdiction and interception of migrants en route; the imposition and extension of visas on nationals from migrant-producing states; the imposition of carrier sanctions to devolve migration policing to transport companies; the nomination of “safe third countries”, usually on the periphery of core developed regions, as a buffer to absorb unwanted asylum seekers; and similar measures developed at both the national and regional level within migrant receiving regions. Associated measures within developed countries to deter would-be migrants include the detention of asylum seekers, restrictions on working, and withdrawal or reduction of social security, education, health, housing, and other entitlements for new entrants. Other measures include readmission agreements to pass back unwanted arrivals to intermediate or transit countries (who in turn may push back would-be migrants to prior transit countries until they are effectively repatriated); stringent border controls to check smuggling and trafficking; strict and discretionary procedures for permanent residence, naturalization, and citizenship; and a temporary protection regime to deal with mass influx should crises arise, involving short-term admission until such crises are resolved.

In developing, migrant-sending countries and regions

Aid to developing countries is made conditional on those countries taking back rejected asylum seekers and other unwanted migrants. Humanitarian inter-
vention is carried out in countries and regions of migrant origin, including the establishment of safe havens, peace enforcement through military intervention, and related measures to contain refugees in regions of origin. Policies seek involuntary return of refugees to the countries of origin. Repatriation is favoured above the other two conventional durable solutions – local settlement and third country resettlement. There is some bilateral and multilateral aid for conflict resolution, reconciliation, and reconstruction of post-conflict societies to ensure return.

The strengths of such a regime are that it has appeal among populations of receiving countries, and that it brings some short-term financial savings by passing responsibility for migration control to others. The weaknesses are that it encourages unwelcome trends among host country populations and fails to deal with root causes of migration and refugee flows. Indeed, it exacerbates migration pressure in migration-sending countries, both in terms of failing to tackle poverty and inequality, and the causes of conflict. It thus increases premiums in the migration smuggling and trafficking industry, necessitating further expensive migration policing measures in a self-perpetuating spiral. Migration problems are displaced rather than resolved. Strife-torn regions are seen as intractable trouble spots that are only amenable to reactive intervention. The fact that most migration is between developing countries, rather than from developing to developed countries, is ignored.

2. Selectivity

A more liberal version of the closure-containment logic takes greater account of the principle of international responsibility-sharing for refugees, and recognizes the need for a more balanced strategy that combines migration control measures with meeting the human rights concerns of asylum seekers and other migrants. Greater account is taken of global inequalities as the sources of both poverty-related and conflict-related migration pressure, and of the security threats that these pose. Both development and humanitarian aid are seen as instruments that can help alleviate migration pressure, while some migration is seen as beneficial to countries both sending and receiving migrants. To these ends, this logic involves selectivity in both the application of aid and in the incorporation of migrants.

In migrant-receiving countries

More opportunities are introduced for legal migration, including openings for skilled workers and for unskilled labour in specific labour-short sectors. Citizenship or secure residence is granted on the basis of qualifications and assets. A more generous asylum regime is introduced, partly to encourage countries within refugee-producing regions to reciprocate by continuing to accept new arrivals from countries in crisis. This is coupled with larger resettlement quotas. Integration measures in education and training are instituted for those
migrants who are accepted. Education and training is geared for return of those who are unwanted.

**In developing, migrant-sending countries and regions**

Greater emphasis is placed on the plight of the internally displaced, and on the merits of the “internal flight alternative”. Aid to developing countries is made conditional on those countries taking back rejected asylum seekers and other unwanted migrants, but this is negotiated rather than imposed. Humanitarian assistance is allocated to the trouble spots through UNHCR and NGOs, while development assistance is allocated through multilateral and bilateral channels to the good performers and strategically important countries, as well as to migration-prone populations within developing countries. Humanitarian intervention is carried out when there is gross violation of human rights. Greater relief and development aid is allocated to first asylum developing countries to encourage local settlement/integration, and thereby absorb migration pressure. Reconstruction aid is targeted toward post-conflict societies to encourage return. There is a greater role for regional organizations in encouraging development, and in preventing and containing conflicts.

**At the international level**

Cooperation is pursued in preventative measures to reduce irregular migration. International measures are taken against human traffickers and smugglers, with some protection for victims. Support and funding are boosted for multilateral institutions, such as UNHCR, and for NGOs to provide assistance in strife-torn countries and regions.

The strengths of such a regime are that it has appeal among host country populations, and some appeal among certain developing and migrant-sending countries (allowing some access for migrants and some increase in assistance). The weaknesses of such a regime are that it remains essentially palliative and fails to address the root causes of migration pressure. It is essentially determined unilaterally by developed countries and shaped by their self-interest. It also places unwarranted faith in existing institutions – there are only minor concessions to the notion of partnership with developing countries. The benefits to people in developing countries are uneven, given the selective nature of interventions. The fact that most migration is between developing countries, rather than from developing to developed countries, remains largely ignored. The regime alleviates some of the restrictive features of the closure-containment regime, without challenging its underlying premises.

3. Liberalization and transnationalism

A third policy logic would involve opening up labour flows in conjunction with the liberalization of trade, in line with recognition of the inherent inequalities in the
global order. This logic recognizes and seeks to mobilize the potential of migrants and diasporas in respect of development, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction in their homelands. It would seek to balance the aspiration for freedom of mobility – that people should be able to move by choice and not of necessity – with the need for people to live in communities that are economically, politically, socially, culturally, and ecologically sustainable. Among other things, this means that communities should be able to determine to a reasonable extent who to admit, in line with their resources and the nature of their society.

The logic of an approach embracing liberalization and transnationalism would incorporate some of the more liberal constituents of the selectivity logic, recognizing that the roots of betterment- and conflict-induced migration lie in global inequalities, and addressing them through measures designed to mitigate migration pressure and to encourage domestic development. This includes increasing development and humanitarian aid and applying them consistently; encouraging sustainable livelihoods, including those that involve mobility; instituting debt relief to obviate the diversion of valuable development resources; and allowing greater market access for developing country products. In addition, this policy logic includes the following elements:

**In the developed, migrant-receiving countries**

The regime involves a gradual relaxation of immigration closure and deterrence measures, and a concomitant gradual liberalization of the global labour market, such as issuing temporary work permits. Other elements include increased resettlement quotas for refugees currently hosted in developing countries, and the provision of dual citizenship and other forms of flexible secure residence to encourage positive intervention in the homeland by migrants and diasporas. In particular, policies for countries reconstructing after conflict would recognize that some refugees will wish to return on a long-term basis, some will wish to come and go between the homeland and country of refuge, and others will not want to return, but may be willing to contribute to reconstruction in other ways, such as by sending money and lobbying. There is, therefore, a need to facilitate the flow of remittances to developing countries and to encourage diasporas to contribute to collective and community development and reconstruction projects in home countries. Finally, measures could be taken to tailor education, training, and integration toward portable human capital development that can be used if migrants decide to return.

**In developing, migrant-sending countries**

Policies would address the connections between refugees, and relief and development, while making development and humanitarian assistance consistent by minimizing “selectivity” among aid recipients on grounds of performance and economic or strategic importance. Policies would encourage mobile livelihood strategies among refugees in neighbouring countries and
among IDPs if return were possible and desired. Other elements include facilitating voluntary return, and facilitating the inflow of remittances while making sure that a reasonable proportion of such flows benefit poor communities within such countries. In particular, remittance inflows would be facilitated for the purposes of post-conflict reconstruction, ensuring that inflows of resources and people do not antagonize those who have stayed. The “securitization” of remittance “futures” could be investigated as a way for developing countries to raise money on capital markets for development and reconstruction on a national basis.

**At the international level**

The policy regime would institutionalize better dialogue and partnership between North and South over migration and development, and more generally recognize and build upon migrants and diasporas as development resources through integrated approaches to conflict prevention, poverty reduction, and democratization and human rights, involving a combination of judicious aid and encouragement of investment in the homeland by migrants and diasporas. This might take the form of “Marshall plans” for conflict-torn regions, involving not only conventional aid from the rich countries, but also finance from diasporas, including cross-fertilization of these and other resources.

Among the strengths of such a regime are that it takes a long-term view of migration and development trends and potential. However, herein lies one of the weaknesses of such a regime, because the benefits of investing in both migration and development are unlikely to become apparent in the four or five-year lifetime of a government, which will therefore be reluctant to attempt to sell this regime to its electorate if shorter-term outcomes are unpopular. However, since such a regime should be arrived at through dialogue and consensus between North and South, it is more likely than unilateral action by Northern countries individually or in concert to offer the prospect of durable benefits in terms of reduced migration pressure, poverty reduction, and better human security in both the developing and developed worlds.

4. Aid policies and the migration-development nexus

Underlying international thinking on aid and migration has been the question of the effectiveness of aid in reducing migration and refugee flows by enhancing local development, preventing and resolving local conflicts, and retaining refugees in neighbouring areas/first countries of asylum. These overlapping aid objectives affect the allocation of aid among developing countries, which is currently shaped by the “selectivity” thinking outlined previously. Figure 1 shows the major donors’ current aid allocation strategies. It distinguishes between developing countries in three different situations: (1) poor developing countries with stable economic policies and political institutions – the “good performers”; (2) poor developing countries facing occasional economic setbacks and political
The migration-development nexus: evidence and policy options

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Dilemmas in aid allocation

Figure 1 suggests three dilemmas for aid policies in relation to the migration-development nexus. First, development assistance increasingly goes to the relatively well-performing countries that – ceteris paribus – need it the least. Second, aid is reduced to the vast majority of developing countries that need international support to minimize the risk of setbacks turning into crises, that is, to reduce the risk of turning a strained situation into a trouble spot. Third, only humanitarian assistance (often coupled with military and humanitarian interventions) goes to the actual and potential trouble spots that may be breeding ground for violent conflict, displacement, and even terrorism. The dilemma is that humanitarian assistance is ex post and therefore cannot help to prevent such crises.

The official arguments behind this aid allocation strategy are that good performance (sound policies and good governance) is a prerequisite for effective poverty reduction, that performance improvements should be rewarded as an incentive for ill-performing countries, and that partnership-based aid forms (such as budget support) are only feasible when recipients perform well. In addition, this aid allocation strategy fits well in an international system, where the United States and other large donor countries use aid to support and reward allies and “friends”, for example, in the war on terrorism.
Performance-based aid allocation presents, however, significant challenges to international action on the migration-development nexus. Three challenges are discussed below.

1. Aid for conflict prevention and reconciliation?

Since the end of the cold war and the surge in internal conflicts in the developing world, bilateral and multilateral donors have attempted to use aid to prevent and/or reconcile violent conflicts. The European Community, for example, when preparing Country Strategy Papers for the countries to which it gives aid, now assesses the potential for conflicts, looking at such issues as the balance of political and economic power, the nature of the security forces, the ethnic composition of the government, the representation of women, and the extent of environmental degradation.

At the same time, donors have found themselves drawn into conflicts and their aid being used by warring parties. In response, donors have tried to circumvent the state and manage the conflict by relying either on civil society (often involving NGOs in both donor and recipient countries) or on peacemaking with the involvement of military and police forces. The experience with the former has been mixed – positive contributions, but too limited in scope to make a real difference on the development of conflicts. The experience with the latter has also been mixed, reflecting the extremely high economic and political costs of making and keeping peace.

A major problem for the international community is that development assistance should have greater potential than humanitarian assistance in terms of preventing violent conflict and the creation of refugees and other migration generated by conflict. The difference is that development cooperation implies long-term presence (by the donor and/or international NGOs) in the developing country, which enables insight into the causes and risks of conflict. If only humanitarian assistance is used in crisis countries, aid has a very limited role in conflict prevention because humanitarian assistance tends to be delivered after it might have had a conflict-preventing role.

Development assistance has always been space-bound and state-centred, based on the assumption that the poor develop within countries and that development equals growth in national economies and democratization of national institutions. This makes traditional development aid less useful as a flexible and powerful instrument in crisis situations. Conversely, humanitarian assistance has been used to address breakdowns (requiring relief and protection) in the underlying model of growth/state-building/nation-building. Recognizing that humanitarian relief cannot address the vulnerability of disaster victims and the root causes of conflicts, donors have attempted to link relief and development assistance through integrated interventions in the “grey zone” between emergencies and
development. These attempts have, however, been very costly and complex in institutional terms because of overlapping agency mandates and inadequate capacity to promote development in crisis contexts.

As a consequence, there is much doubt in the international community about the use of aid to prevent conflicts turning violent and hence to reduce the generation of refugees. Coupled with the political preference for selective aid allocation to good performers, conflict prevention in crisis-affected countries is increasingly left to humanitarian agencies, international NGOs, or security-oriented interventions. Despite the recent increase in aid commitments by the EU and the US, it is evident that the response of the Western world to the events of 11 September 2001 has been one of hard security politics, not one of soft development politics. This represents a critical under-utilization of the potential of development cooperation to create space and incentives for peaceful conflict resolution. In very complex situations, however, it will always be difficult to prove whether such interventions really do have a significant impact on conflicts and the production of refugees.

2. Aid in place of migration?

It is equally difficult to judge the impact that aid given to reduce poverty has on emigration. This issue was raised at several international conferences in the early 1990s, and still remains largely unresolved. As previously discussed, even when development aid reduces poverty it is questionable whether this will immediately stem emigration.

Do European countries in practice try to direct aid to reduce migration pressures? One indication would be if European aid flows were concentrated on migrant-sending countries. The data are scarce, but if there is a correlation, it is because both immigration and aid flows reflect colonial ties. In the UK, for example, India is the leading destination of aid primarily because of a long historical association rather than from an attempt to dampen emigration. The lack of any clear connection between aid policies and migration is also implied from the published policies of donors. The DAC guidelines on poverty reduction, for example, mention migration but only in the broader context of the ways in which development assistance could contribute to poverty reduction with the implication that this in turn might reduce emigration pressures (see Stalker). In sum, there is little evidence that an “aid in place of migration” strategy works.

3. Mobilizing migrants to complement aid?

In contrast to the previous two challenges, this is a new policy field. Given the magnitude of remittances relative to aid, making these two flows complement each other seems an attractive proposition. There is very little evidence, however, of the relations between aid and remittances that could help in the
development of this new policy field. Even so, four situations may be distinguished:

1. **Aid and remittances to relatively peaceful, low-income countries (LICs).** Remittances provide income, foreign exchange, and ideas for human and economic development. Aid donors could facilitate the involvement of diasporas in community and private sector development at all levels of society and in support of “poor people on the move”, including local and international migrants.

2. **Aid and remittances to relatively peaceful, middle-income countries (MICs).** Remittances provide livelihood support, but they are also likely to be part of overall foreign direct investments to MICs. If aid is increasingly allocated to the poorest countries, where it is most effective in reducing poverty, remittances will increase in importance, perhaps more for their entrepreneurship and technology than for their financial resources.

3. **Aid and remittances to present and potential trouble spots, including conflict-affected countries and failed states.** This is the greatest new challenge. Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies could seek ways to combine their different aid types with the activities of transnational communities aimed at ensuring that remittances, advocacy, and other activities provide resources, security, and political space to the poor and other conflict victims, rather than fuelling violent conflicts. This calls for a case-specific approach, where donors, possibly under UN leadership, invite international NGOs and diaspora organizations for transparent dialogues on the overall resource flows to the country, including to possible conflicting parties.

4. **Aid and remittances to “post-conflict” countries and regions.** While in some ways a sub-set of number three above, the possibilities and techniques are somewhat different in post-conflict states and regions attempting the three “R’s” of repatriation, reintegration, and reconstruction. Here the focus should be on mobilizing diaspora resources for reconstruction as part of wider international peace-building, reconciliation, and reconstruction efforts, with special emphasis on avoiding the generation of new tensions that might lead to new conflict and displacement.

Developing international collaboration to cast aid and migration in complementary roles, and aid in support of mobile livelihoods requires greater interaction between diasporas and development agencies. The international community could follow the lead of some developing country governments, which have reached out to their diasporas. For example, diaspora participation in international fora, such as donors’ conferences and the formulation of consolidated
appeals overseen by the UN or the EU could be encouraged. This would allow resource flows from donors and from diasporas to be openly discussed, and coherently planned and coordinated for both development and reconstruction purposes. NGOs are well placed to act as interlocutors in promoting such diaspora participation since they have become increasingly involved in both advocacy and in the delivery of aid, and often have direct lines of communication with diaspora groups (for a contrasting argument, see Chimni).

CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS COHERENCE IN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The challenges to international action on the migration-development nexus call for initiatives by donors such as the EU that have the resources, instruments, government and non-government partners, and presence to make coherent interventions in developing countries facing all types of poverty, conflict, and migration-related problems. From an EU perspective, the following responses to the challenges posed in the previous section could help to operationalize practices:

1. *Can aid prevent violent conflicts and reduce the number of international asylum seekers?* An affirmative answer requires use of the presence, instruments, and resources of development cooperation in the actual and potential trouble spots and in the developing countries facing adverse economic conditions and political turmoil. Aid strategies need to be regional in order to incorporate support to neighbouring countries that carry the bulk of the burden of local conflicts, displacement, and migration. Aid to neighbouring countries may reduce the risk of spreading conflicts, but it is unlikely in itself to reduce the number of inter-regional asylum seekers. Hence, there is no effective alternative to comprehensive development cooperation aimed at both poverty reduction and conflict prevention and resolution.

2. *Can – and should – aid prevent migration by promoting local development?* The short answer is *No*. The scope and intensity of the developmental impact of aid vary considerably, but evidence suggests that production of more migration is the most likely short-term outcome. Instead, EU policies on international development cooperation should recognize migration of labour and human capital as a constructive force of economic integration on par with international commodity trade and capital flows within the liberalization and transnationalism policy regime.

3. *Can migrants be mobilized to complement aid for the purposes of development and conflict prevention/reduction?* Accumulated over the 1990s, remittances were some 20 per cent higher than aid to
developing countries. For these, remittances are a more constant source of income than other private flows and foreign direct investments. Remittances benefit migrant families as well as un-related non-migrants by fostering trade and services. However, to maximize the contributions of remittances toward poverty reduction, the EU should recognize that the distribution of remittances is skewed, related not least to where the migrants originate from; allocate more aid to the poorest countries that fail to benefit from remittances; and engage in dialogue with diasporas to encourage investments in human development and labour-intensive, equitable growth, and facilitate the transfer of skills and technology.

More broadly, with poverty reduction as the overriding objective, donors such as both the EU and bilateral agencies can and should update their development strategies to incorporate mobile livelihoods, and similarly expand their partnerships to include representatives of diasporic communities that are part of international civil society. This includes providing space and voice to diasporas in country-specific peace-building and reconciliation efforts and in international, norm-setting conferences.

This policy study has highlighted the potential of migrants as a development resource, and has drawn attention to the challenges and dilemmas from current development and migration policy regimes. The overall challenge is to balance a focus on poverty reduction with mitigating the conditions that produce refugees and other forced migrants, while at the same time engaging more constructively with migrant diasporas and their transnational practices. Achieving such a balance requires addressing conditions in three areas: migrants’ regions of origin in poor countries and communities; migrants’ transnational activities; and the migration and development policy regimes currently shaped largely by developed countries. These conclusions and the overall analysis in this policy study point to three fields in which there is scope for specific interventions by the EU:

1. support for neighbouring countries that receive and host migrants and refugees;
2. building on the development potential of migrants; and
3. making aid and migration regimes work for rather than against one another.

The selection of these three fields for intervention is consistent with two overarching principles: that the primary objective of development cooperation is poverty reduction; and that migration policies toward countries of origin should work toward creating the conditions that allow people to remain in their countries of origin, rather than toward preventing outflows. The study has argued that regions of migrant origin need both development and humanitarian aid to mitigate the conditions that impel people to migrate: neighbouring countries that host refugees, particularly over long periods, have tended to be neglected in this
connection. The underused development and conflict reduction potential of migrants, the second field, has been amply demonstrated. Similarly, there is unused potential in the third field, encouraging mutually supportive aid and migration policy regimes. Progress here would be greatly enhanced if steps were taken to “multilateralize” the discussion on migration to develop an international migration regime that is comparable to the multilateral arrangements on trade and investment. The field of international migration might then have a better-defined constituency with the possibility of developing greater consensus than is currently the case.
MIGRATIONS ET DÉVELOPPEMENT :
ELEMENTS PROBANTS ET OPTIONS POLITIQUES

Les rapports entre migration et développement expriment de nombreuses façons : par les stratégies de subsistance et de survie des individus, des ménages et des communautés ; par des envois d’argent importants et souvent bien ciblés ; par les investissements et l’action de persuasion des migrants, des réfugiés, des diasporas et des communautés transnationales ; par une mobilité internationale allant de pair avec l’intégration mondiale, l’inégalité et l’insécurité.

Jusqu’à présent, migration et développement ont fait l’objet de champs politiques distincts, caractérisés eux-mêmes par des approches différentes entravant la coordination à l’échelon national. Pour les organismes compétents, la maîtrise des flux migratoires à destination de l’Europe et d’autres pays de l’OCDE est hautement prioritaire, tout comme le sont l’insertion des migrants dans le marché du travail et, plus généralement, leur intégration sociale. Par ailleurs, les organismes de développement peuvent redouter que l’élaboration des moyens d’action soit remise en cause au cas où l’on tiendrait compte des migrations. Peut-on atteindre le but d’atténuation mondiale de la pauvreté si l’on entend satisfaire les visées d’une politique migratoire à court terme ? Est-on vraiment fondé à parler de partenariats avec les pays en développement dès lors que les politiques migratoires européennes tendent surtout à mettre un terme à l’afflux de migrants ?

En admettant que le cloisonnement de certaines politiques soit justifiable, les politiques contradictoires sont en tout cas coûteuses et improductives. Et il est encore plus vrai que le potentiel de politiques qui se renforcent réciproquement n’est pas entièrement transformé en activités et interventions communes susceptibles d’avoir des effets bienfaisants aux plans de l’atténuation de la pauvreté, du développement, de la prévention des conflits et de la mobilité internationale.

Cet article met en relief les aspects positifs des rapports entre les migrations et le développement ainsi que les possibilités correspondantes. Il insiste sur les rapports unissant migrations, développement et conflits, en prenant pour prémisse que l’alignement des politiques migratoires et des politiques de développement exige de comprendre que les migrants et les diasporas de réfugiés contribuent bel et bien au développement.
EL NEXO ENTRE MIGRACIÓN Y DESARROLLO:
INFORMACIÓN DISPONIBLE Y OPCIONES POLÍTICAS

Migración y desarrollo se vinculan de diversas maneras: a través de las estrategias de vida y supervivencia de los individuos, las familias y las comunidades; mediante las importantes y con frecuencia bien dirigidas remesas de fondos; en virtud de las inversiones y de actividades en favor de migrantes, refugiados, diásporas y sus comunidades transnacionales, y mediante la movilidad internacional que se asocia a la integración global, a las desigualdades y a la inseguridad.

Hasta el momento, migración y desarrollo han sido considerados como sectores políticos independientes. Estos sectores están marcados por unos criterios políticos diferentes que obstaculizan la coordinación nacional y la cooperación internacional. Para las autoridades migratorias el control de los flujos hacia la Unión Europea y otros países de la OCDE tiene gran prioridad, al igual que la integración de los migrantes en el mercado laboral y en la sociedad en general. Por otra parte, los organismos de desarrollo temen a veces que si se toma en consideración el problema de las migraciones se pongan en peligro los objetivos de la política de desarrollo. ¿Podrán alcanzarse las metas de reducción de la pobreza si se quiere dar satisfacción a los intereses a corto plazo de la política migratoria? ¿Podrá existir una verdadera asociación con los países en desarrollo si en Europa se adopta como principal meta política el prevenir nuevas migraciones?

Aunque pueden existir legítimas razones para mantener independientes ciertas políticas, los conflictos entre ellas son costosos y contraproducentes. Y, lo que es más importante, queda inutilizado un potencial de políticas de apoyo mutuo, es decir, la posibilidad de aprovechar constructivamente actividades e intervenciones comunes a ambos sectores y que podrían ejercer efectos positivos sobre la reducción de la pobreza, el desarrollo, la prevención de conflictos violentos y la movilidad internacional.

El presente documento se centra en las dimensiones y posibilidades positivas que ofrece el nexo entre migración y desarrollo. Pone de relieve los vínculos existentes entre migración, desarrollo y conflictos partiendo de la premisa de que la coordinación de las políticas en materia de migración y desarrollo, migrantes y diásporas de refugiados debe ser considerada como un recurso para el desarrollo.