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Review Article

Is Migration the New Development Mantra? An Examination of the Migration-Development Nexus

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Abstract: Migration and development are intricately linked. Migration has positive and negative impacts on development. The nature and magnitude of these impacts vary depending on a range of factors such as the type of migration, the destination and origin countries, as well as the prevailing social, economic, and political context. Drawing on existing literature and theoretical frameworks, this article examines the factors that influence migration patterns and the impact of migration on both sending and receiving countries. It also discusses the commercialization of migration and its effects on the migration-development nexus. The paper argues that the kind of perception of the migration-development nexus plays a critical role in shaping policy responses to migration as well as development in general. As such, the article's final section focuses on how migration's perceived impact on development influences policy decisions. In exploring the intersection between migration and development, the article makes no distinction between migrants and immigrants. Overall, the article provides a comprehensive overview of the migration-development nexus and highlights the need for policymakers to take a nuanced and evidence-based approach to addressing the complex migration and development issues.

Keywords: Migration, Mobility, Development mantra, Remittances, Brain drain.



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1. Introduction

Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon with significant social, economic, and political implications. Over the past few decades, the world has witnessed an unprecedented increase in human mobility, with an estimated 281 million international migrants and 70 million forcibly displaced persons in 2020 (United Nations, 2015). The movement of people across borders has been driven by a complex interplay of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Migration can significantly impact economic growth by filling labor market gaps in receiving countries while contributing to brain drain effects in sending countries (Drbohlav et al., 2017). Additionally, it can lead to social changes such as multiculturalism or strain on public services like healthcare or education systems (Pinkerton, 2019). Migration also influences political development by shaping policies related to citizenship rights, asylum seekers' protection measures, or immigration controls at national levels. This article draws on existing literature to examine the relationship between migration and political development. It describes the theoretical framework for studying the migration-development nexus, explains the link between migration and development, and explains why migration is regarded as the new

development mantra. After that, it discusses how the perception of the relationship between migration and development influences policy on development in the international system.

2. Key Concepts

In defining key concepts, the article does not go into an in-depth discussion of how they are conceptualized across various disciplines. It only aims to provide a clear definition based on how they are used in the article. The Oxford English Dictionary defines migration as the movement of a person or people from one country, locality or residence (Gilliver, 2016). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines it as the movement of persons away from their usual residence, either across an international border or within a state (Andrijasevic & Walters, 2010). Both definitions are similar. In this article, we shall use the definition by the IOM. On the other hand, Oltmans (2002) defines development as the process of growing or creating something over a while. According to this definition, development involves growth, which is realized over time. Over time and across disciplines, development has had different definitions. According to Zhuawu et al. (2021), the development of the capability approach is defined as a tool that enables people to reach the highest level of their ability. This formed the basis for measuring development using the Human Development Index (HDI) (Roser, 2014). On the other hand, the 'abilities approach' improved by emphasizing gender empowerment. Other definitions have focused on what hinders development to arrive at a holistic definition. All in all, in this article, the definition of development by the Society for International Development as a... process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components" will be used (Zhuawu et al., 2021). This definition encompasses improving quality of life, expanding income opportunities, and environmental protection. It is also important to note that, no matter the motivations, the displacement of people through space has been a feature of major societal transformation (Alejandro Portes, 1978). On the other hand, the terms host, receiving and destination country have been used interchangeably throughout this article. This is also the case with sending and country of origin.

3. Materials and Methods

This article is based on a comprehensive review of existing academic literature, policy documents, reports, and articles related to migration, political development, and their interconnections. These include literature published on the topic as early as 1984 and as recent as 2023. The source of the literature used in this article includes academic databases such as PubMed, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, as well as academic institutions and international organizations' repositories (Alejandro Portes, 1978; Ratha et al., 2016).

4. Results

Several theories provide a framework for studying the relationship between migration and development. In this article, a wide variety of theories are explored. These theories are classified into two broad categories based on their perspective on migration-development nexus and their perception of the relationship between migration and development. The first group of theories considers the migration-development nexus from the economic, social, and political perspectives. In contrast, the second focuses on the perception of migration as either a positive or negative force for development.

4.1. Theories Related To Perspectives On Migration-Development Nexus

In this section, the article approaches the theoretical discussions from the economic, social and political perspectives. The application of these theories in studying the relationship between migration and development and a brief critique of each of the theoretical approaches is provided.

4.1.1. Economic Perspectives

Economic theories focus on the link between migration and economic development. The New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory is the most prominent economic theory. The New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory, developed by Stark & Stark (1991), posits that migration is a rational economic decision made by individuals or households to maximize their income and well-being in the face of economic disparities between sending and receiving countries (Stark & Stark, 1991). This theory was built upon earlier economic models of migration by Borjas (1989) that focused on the role of labor market conditions and economic incentives in shaping migration decisions. Hence, the assumption is that migration is primarily driven by economic factors, such as income differentials and employment opportunities (Gupta, 1984; Massey et al., 1993). According to Mannan & Fredericks (2015), migration can positively impact development through remittances and transferring skills and knowledge. In sending countries, migration can provide a source of income and investment in human capital for households. It can also help to reduce poverty and inequality by increasing remittances and creating a more diversified economy. In receiving countries, migration can fill

labor shortages and bring skills and innovation to the economy (Schiller, 2020). However, NELM also highlights the potential negative consequences of migration, such as brain drain and social costs. The New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory has been a prominent framework for understanding the link between migration and development, particularly in the context of developing countries. However, this theory has faced several critiques over the years.

One of the main critiques of NELM is that it oversimplifies the complex motivations and decision-making processes behind migration (Abreu, 2012). The theory assumes that individuals make migration decisions based solely on economic factors such as income differentials and employment opportunities. However, this overlooks the social and cultural factors that can also play a significant role in migration decisions, such as family ties, social networks, and political factors. Moreover, NELM does not fully consider the structural factors that can create economic disparities and inequality, such as the historical legacies of colonialism and global economic structures. Another critique of NELM is that it emphasizes the potential positive impacts of migration, such as remittances and the transfer of skills and knowledge while neglecting the potential negative consequences. For example, the theory overlooks the potential negative impacts of brain drain, where highly skilled individuals leave their home country for better opportunities, leaving behind a shortage of skilled labor in their home country. Furthermore, NELM does not fully consider the social costs of migration, such as the impact of family separation and the erosion of social networks in the home community (Sensenbrenner & Portes, 2018).

Finally, NELM has been criticized for not fully acknowledging the power dynamics that underpin migration patterns and their impact on development. The theory does not fully consider the role of institutions and power relations in shaping migration policies and outcomes and how these can create inequalities and exploitation. For example, migrant workers may face exploitation and abuse in their destination countries, and their remittances may not always contribute to positive development outcomes in their home country. While the New Economics of Labor Migration theory has been a useful framework for understanding the link between migration and development, it has faced several critiques over the years. These critiques highlight the need for a more nuanced and complex understanding of migration decision-making and its impact on development, one that considers the social, cultural, and political dimensions of migration and the power dynamics that underpin it. Other economic theories include the Dual Labor Market Theory and the World Systems Theory, which emphasize the role of global economic structures and labor market segmentation in shaping migration patterns and their impact on development.

4.1.2. Social Perspectives

Social theories focus on the social dynamics that underpin migration and its relationship with development. The most prominent social theory is the Social Capital Theory. Social Capital Theory is a useful framework for understanding the relationship between migration and development, as it highlights the importance of social networks and relationships in fostering economic growth and development (Coleman, 2009; Massey et al., 1993; Portes, 2000). According to this theory, social capital refers to the resources and benefits individuals and groups can access through their social networks, such as trust, cooperation, and shared norms and values (Leonardi et al., 2001). In the context of migration, social capital can play an important role in facilitating the integration and economic success of migrants in their new communities. Studies have found that migrants with strong social networks and support systems are more likely to find employment, earn higher wages, and achieve greater levels of social and economic integration (Coleman, 2009; Kofman, 2004; Sensenbrenner & Portes, 2018).

Moreover, social capital can also positively spillover effects on the broader community, contributing to social cohesion and collective action for community development (Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In this way, migration can potentially be a source of social and economic development for sending and receiving countries, creating new social connections and networks that foster cooperation and mutual support. However, applying Social Capital Theory in the context of migration and development has also faced several critiques. Some scholars have argued that the theory overlooks the power dynamics that underpin social relationships, such as gender, class, and ethnicity, which can create inequalities and exclusion (Claridge, 2021). Moreover, the theory can be criticized for assuming that social networks and relationships are inherently positive without fully considering the potential negative consequences of social capital, such as the reproduction of exclusion and discrimination (Portes, 2000). This can lead to social fragmentation and exclusion, hindering the development of inclusive and cohesive communities. Other social theories include the Human Capital Theory, which focuses on the role of education and skills in migration and development, and the Cultural Capital Theory, which emphasizes migration's cultural and symbolic dimensions.

4.1.3. Political Perspectives

Political theories focus on the role of power and institutions in shaping migration patterns and their impact on development. The most prominent political theory is the Transnationalism Theory. It provides a prominent framework for understanding the relationship between migration and development, highlighting how transnational social fields can

connect migrants and their communities across borders (Basch et al., 2020; Schiller et al., 1992). According to this perspective, migration is not a one-way process but a dynamic and ongoing set of social practices that can shape the identities, experiences, and opportunities of migrants and their communities. Transnationalism Theory argues that migrants maintain multiple social connections and relationships across national borders, including family ties, economic relationships, and political affiliations (Schiller et al., 1992). These connections can facilitate the flow of ideas, resources, and information and contribute to the development outcomes of both sending and receiving countries (Levitt, 1998). For example, remittances can help support the livelihoods of families and communities in sending countries while also contributing to investment and economic development (Ratha & Shaw, 2007). Moreover, transnational social networks can also facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills, and innovation, contributing to the cultural and social development of both sending and receiving countries (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

Furthermore, Transnationalism Theory also highlights the role of state policies and institutions in shaping migration and development outcomes. States can create policies and programs that support or hinder the transnational practices of migrants and their communities, which can significantly impact development outcomes (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). For example, states can facilitate the transfer of remittances through financial infrastructure and policies, or they can create barriers to transnational economic and political activity through restrictive migration policies and border controls. However, applying Transnationalism Theory in the context of migration and development has also faced criticism. Some scholars have argued that the theory can overlook the structural inequalities and power dynamics that underpin transnational social fields, such as class, gender, and ethnicity (Boccagni, 2012). Moreover, the theory can also be criticized for assuming transnationalism's uniform and positive impact on development outcomes without fully considering the potential negative consequences, such as brain drain and social fragmentation (Kivisto, 2001). All in all, Transnationalism Theory has been a valuable framework for understanding the complex and dynamic relationship between migration and development, and for highlighting the role of transnational social fields in shaping migration patterns and outcomes. However, the theory has also faced critiques, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and critical understanding of transnationalism in the context of migration and development. Other political theories include the State Theory, which emphasizes the role of states and governments in shaping migration policies and their impact on development, and the Postcolonial Theory, which highlights the historical and structural inequalities that underpin migration patterns and their impact on development.

4.2. Theories Related To Perception Of The Migration-Development Nexus

This section explores the theoretical underpinnings of two opposing sides to the migration-development debate, whether it spurs or hinders development. Three major theories are explored on the basis of their level of optimism or pessimism.

4.2.1. Optimistic Outlook - Neoclassical and Develop Mentalist Theory

Rooted in economics, this is an optimistic view of the link between migration and development. In a neo-classical perspective, migration is perceived as a "form of optimal allocation of production factors to the benefit of both the sending and receiving countries" (de Haas, 2010). The unrestricted movement of labor, according to this perspective, is expected to lead to increasing scarcity of labor, coupled with higher productivity of labor and increasing wage levels in sending countries, leading to a situation where migration ceases once the wage levels in both countries converge (de Haas, 2010). In addition, the sending country benefits from the in-flow of capital, balancing the outflow of labor. On the same note, the developmental perspective recognizes the significance of return migrants in the diffusion of modernization into their country of origin through the new ideas, skills and knowledge attained. Simply put, the outflow of labor from a country leads to the in-flow of capital in terms of remittances. These remittances provide a source of hard currency for the country and, help alleviate poverty and spur the improvement of life of families (Margolis et al., 2015). Studies have shown that remittances to home countries outweigh the amount of Official Development Assistance advanced to these countries (de Haas, 2010; Khoudour, 2015).

For instance, in 2017, remittances to developing countries were estimated to be almost three times the volume of global Official Development Assistance while it reached a record high of \$714 billion, with remittances to low- and middle-income countries accounting for \$540 billion of this amount (Latek, 2019; Ullah, 2022). Moreover, part of the remittances may be invested in business. According to the above theoretical perspective, this would also be enhanced by the in-flow of new ideas, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. On the other hand, this view disregards the presence of other motivations for migration besides those for economic reasons. It also trivializes the social disruptions and instabilities caused by migration. In addition, the evolutionary view on development that all countries follow the same path in achieving economic growth and modernization powers the perception that developing countries need large capital transfer to achieve development and modernization may not hold true for all countries. On the same note, without the right political and economic environment and planning, remittances and migrant returns may deliver insignificant change in developing the country of origin. In addition, the wage levels in the receiving and origin countries never converge due to the free labor movement and migration.

4.2.2. Pessimistic Outlook - Cumulative Causation and the Migrant Syndrome

“Although positive “spread effects” also occur – such as increased demand for agricultural products and raw materials trade from the periphery (or remittances) – these do not match the negative “backwash effects.” (de Haas, 2010). Unlike the neoclassical and developmentalist perspectives on migration, this theoretical perspective views migration as worsening the problems of underdevelopment in the countries of origin. Papademetriou in de Haas (2010) argues that migration perpetuates the depletion of the meager human resources in the origin countries. In addition, countries spend a lot of resources in developing this skilled labor that is lost, which translates not only to loss of labor but also to loss in investment. According to de Haas (2010), out-migration, rather than helping achieve balanced growth worldwide, would perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty in the periphery and growth in the core region. This emanates from differential growth achieved worldwide based on the global capitalist development system. On the same note, the proponents of this perspective contend that international migration, for instance, undermines the regional and national economies of the sending countries as the receiving countries continue to develop with the exploitation of cheap migrant labor. This leads to dependence of the sending on the receiving countries. In this way, de Haas (2010) argues migration leads to more underdevelopment, hence more migration and deepening inequalities.

This theoretical perspective has a significant influence on policy. It enunciates the perception that migration is a product of poverty and a development undermining enterprise. As a result, it generates policies that aim to restrict immigration and promote development aid to developing countries. For instance, France encouraged Malian and Senegalese migrants to return home in exchange for financial packages to set up businesses as part of its co-development policy (Raghuram, 2009). The assumptions in this theoretical perspective make sense regarding deepening inequalities between the global North and the global South despite the benefits of migration in terms of remittances and migrants returns. However, poverty may not solely be a motivation or a result of more migration. Poverty denies people the ability to possess the resources needed to undertake migration. Thus, the assumption that more underdevelopment and poverty will lead to more migration is not plausible. In addition, migration still occurs even from middle-income and developed countries. On the same note, studies have shown that migration positively impacts development under favorable economic and political conditions (de Haas, 2010).

4.2.3. Pluralist Views on Migration-Development Nexus

The previous two theoretical approaches are deterministic. The neo-classical, developmental, and cumulative causation perspectives seem to predict development or lack thereof as an outcome of migration. However, de Haas (2010) states that the interaction heterogeneity between migration and development is too high to fit into a deterministic theoretical perspective. The pluralist perspectives, which bring together such approaches as; the new economics of labor, livelihood and transnational perspectives, attempt to capture this heterogeneity. According to these approaches, the household plays a key decision-making role in migration as a key strategy for minimizing and spreading risk and overcoming market constraints (de Haas, 2010). Hence, the focus shifts from individuals to households. In addition, de Haas (2010) argues it encompasses the household’s ability to deliberately choose a combination of activities ranging from access to assets and perception of opportunities to aspiration of actors to maintain, secure and improve their livelihoods. Thus, this perspective recognizes the existence of structure and agency. The migrants and households are deliberate and active participants in the migration process, not mere puppets of circumstances.

On the same note, from a transnational perspective, there is recognition of the ability of migrants to adopt transnational identities and the fluidity of movement between their original and destination countries without losing ties to either of the two. This has also disrupted the way integration of immigrants in their host countries is understood as they simultaneously engage and commit to each of their countries of origin and destination (Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002). This fluidity has been facilitated to a large extent by developments in transport, communication, and technology. Tran’s nationality enables the migrants to participate in their origin countries' social, economic and political life despite their physical absence. This has rendered the idea of physical return redundant to transfer knowledge and skills. The development of e-commerce has also revolutionized investment by the diaspora community in their home countries. The pluralists, by far, capture more than the deterministic theoretical models do, the complexity and heterogeneity of migration-development nexus. It bestows agency on the migrants and reformulates our understanding of the integration of immigrants into their host countries. In addition, it disrupts our traditional understanding of brain drain when confronted with the notion of Tran’s nationality of migrants.

4.3. Factors Influencing Migration

Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by economic, social, political, environmental, and demographic factors. These factors are discussed below:

4.3.1. Economic Factors

Economic factors such as employment opportunities, wages, and cost of living play a significant role in migration. People tend to migrate to places where they can find better job opportunities and higher wages to support their families. For instance, a study conducted by [Ikuteyijo \(2020\)](#) found that economic factors were the main drivers of migration among Nigerian youths.

4.3.2. Social Factors

Social factors such as family ties, education, and quality of life influence migration. People tend to migrate to places where they have relatives or friends who can provide them with support and guidance. People also migrate to places where they can access better education and healthcare facilities. Several studies show social factors are important determinants of migration among international students ([Ahmad & Hussain, 2017](#); [Naidoo, 2007](#)).

4.3.3. Political Factors

Political factors such as conflict, persecution, and discrimination can also force people to migrate. For instance, refugees and asylum seekers are forced to leave their homes and seek safety in other countries due to political instability and violence in their home countries. Several studies reveal that political factors were the main drivers of migration among Afghan refugees ([Ames, 1992](#); [Naidoo, 2007](#)).

4.3.4. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors such as natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation can also influence migration. For instance, people may be forced to migrate due to floods, droughts, or other natural disasters that make their homes uninhabitable. For instance, studies have shown that environmental factors were important determinants of migration among Pacific Islanders ([Sensenbrenner & Portes, 2018](#)).

4.3.5. Demographic Factors

Demographic factors such as age, gender, and marital status can also influence migration. For instance, young adults may be more likely to migrate for better opportunities, while older adults may migrate to be closer to family members. In studies on determinants of migration among Pakistani households, demographic factors such as age, gender, and education level were found to play a significant role ([Fatima & Ahmad, 2012](#); [Sadaqat, 1992](#)).

4.4. Is Migration a New Development Mantra?

Migration has gained attention as a potential tool for development, with policymakers and development experts touting it as a new development mantra ([Koser, 2007](#)). In this section, the article examines the validity of this assumption. In addition, it offers a brief analysis of the limitations and challenges of migration as a development strategy. Although most of the discussion revolves around international migration, the effects are the same for local migrations, though at a smaller scale. In previous sections, development has been shown to entail growth or change. Generally, change may yield and negative results. Studies on the influence of migration on development show mixed results; as spurring or hindering development ([Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002](#)). To illustrate, a man with a young family and children moving from his rural town to a city and getting a job enhances a change in his livelihood and that of his entire household. However, his town is deprived of labor on the farms and his young family a source of emotional stability resulting in the disruption of their lives this is but an illustration at the village level. The same effect can be observed at higher levels.

The discussion on the relationship between migration and development is not new. It has peppered migration discourses as early as the first half of the twentieth century ([Raghuram, 2009](#)) identifies references to German emigrants in the US contributing to German economy by consuming German manufactured goods in 1906, inclusion of economic aspects as one of the key pillars to study in migration by a US Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration in 1926 as well as an academic examination of the role of remittances and improved knowledge of migrants in the economic development of Mexico in 1962. In addition, the perception on the relationship between migration and development has been shifting from the initial optimistic views that expressed a positive link between migration and development to more pessimistic views that blamed migration for under-development in developing countries, prompting restrictive migration policies and championing development aid and later on to more optimistic and pluralist views ([de Haas, 2010](#)). It has also been a subject of political and academic discourse, with various theories put forward

to explain the link between migration and development. An examination of several of these theories has been undertaken in the previous sections. The theories included neoclassical and developmental theories, cumulative causation theory, the new labor economics, transnationalism and livelihood approaches.

The recent heightened attention to the relationship between migration and development, according to [Raghuram \(2009\)](#), can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the limited success of much of global development practice and the focus on the magnitude of overseas remittances which far outweighed development aid. This led to realization of the role migrants play in redistributing wealth and as agents of development. Secondly, the relationship between migration and terrorism has found itself on the political agenda of the Global North. This motivated migration control through provision of aid packages as a form of investment in development at home for the migrants' countries of origin. Thirdly, there has been increasing political anxieties in the Global North with the rise of anti-immigration lobbying groups and rise of popular nationalism. Advancement in communication and technology has facilitated this increasing awareness. Thus, it may not be fully accurate to conclude that migration-development discussion is new. However, it has only attained heightened attention.

On the other hand, while migration has the potential to bring about positive changes in the lives of migrants and their families it is not a silver bullet for development. There are several challenges associated with migration as a development strategy. Firstly, migration does not solve the structural issues that cause poverty and underdevelopment in sending countries. In many cases, people migrate because of a lack of opportunities, poor governance, and conflict in their home countries. While migration may temporarily relieve individuals and families, it does not address the root causes of underdevelopment ([Klugman, 2009](#)). Secondly, migration can create significant social and economic costs for sending countries. Brain drain is common in many developing countries, with highly skilled individuals leaving to seek better opportunities in developed countries. This can result in a loss of human capital and talent that is crucial for development ([Plaza et al., 2019](#)).

Thirdly, migration policies in many developed countries are restrictive, making it difficult for migrants to enter and settle. This can lead to irregular migration and exploitation, with migrants being forced to work in precarious and unsafe conditions ([Bradley, 2017](#)). Furthermore, the focus on migration as a development strategy can detract attention and resources from other crucial development areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. A comprehensive approach to development that includes investment in these areas is necessary for sustained and equitable development. All in all, the discourse on the migration-development nexus is neither new nor is migration a panacea for development. While migration can bring about positive changes for individuals and families, the limitations and challenges of migration as a development strategy must be recognized. Hence, a more comprehensive approach to development that addresses the root causes of underdevelopment is necessary.

4.5. Migration and Development

The literature on migration and development covers a wide range of topics, including the economic, social, and political impacts, the drivers of migration, and the policy implications for development. "We are only beginning to learn how to make migration work more consistently for development... Each of us holds a piece of the migration puzzle, but none has the whole picture. It is time to start putting it together." ([Micinski, 2021](#)). In this section, the article offers a brief examination of the impact of migration on development and identifies some of the factors influencing migration. In addition, it also briefly explores how the perception of the migration-development nexus influences policy on development in the international system. According to [De Haas et al. \(2019\)](#), there has been a significant increase in international migration over the past few decades due to various factors such as globalization, regional conflicts, and economic disparities. Migration and development are two interconnected phenomena that have been the subject of extensive research in the social sciences. The significance of identifying this interconnectedness is best captured by the UN Secretary-General's report on International Migration and Development for the UN High Level Dialogue in 2006.

4.6. Impact Of Migration On Development

4.6.1. Economic Impacts of Migration

One of the most extensively studied areas of migration and development is the economic impact of migration. The literature on this topic suggests that migration can have positive economic impacts on both sending and receiving countries. In particular, migration can help reduce poverty, increase incomes, and stimulate economic growth in sending countries, while contributing to labor market flexibility and filling skill shortages in receiving countries ([Docquier & Marfouk, 2006](#); [Lucas & Stark, 1985](#)). However, the economic impact of migration is complex. It varies depending on factors such as the characteristics of the migrants, the policies of the sending and receiving countries, and the nature of the economic systems in these countries.

4.6.2. Social Impacts of Migration

Migration may have significant social impacts on both sending and receiving countries. Migration can affect social cohesion and community relations in sending and receiving countries. The literature suggests that migration can form transnational communities and networks that span national borders, thereby promoting cultural exchange and cross-border cooperation (Crul & Schneider, 2010; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). However, migration can also lead to tensions and conflicts within communities, particularly if migrants are competing for jobs, housing, or social services. In particular, integrating immigrants and their descendants into the social, economic, and political fabric of society can be a challenging process, especially in contexts of ethnic and cultural diversity (Vertovec, 2007).

4.6.3. Human Capital Development

Another area of research on migration and development is human capital development. Current literature suggests that migration can contribute to the development of human capital by enabling migrants to acquire new skills and knowledge by providing opportunities for education and training (Cooper et al., 2006). However, the impact of migration on human capital development is complex and varies depending on factors such as the education levels and skills of the migrants, the policies of the sending and receiving countries, and the nature of the labor markets in these countries. For instance, emigration can lead to a loss of skilled workers, which can have negative consequences for the provision of essential services, such as healthcare and education, as well as for economic growth and development (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012).

4.6.4. Political Stability and Governance

Migration has important political stability and governance implications in sending and receiving countries. Existing literature suggests that migration can help to promote democracy and political stability in sending countries by reducing pressure on the labor market, providing remittances that can support political and social organizations, and promoting political engagement among transnational communities (Kapur, 2014; Su, 2023). However, migration can also negatively impact political stability and governance, particularly if migrants are subjected to discrimination or social exclusion in receiving countries. Overall, the literature on migration and development suggests that migration can significantly impact various dimensions of development, including labor markets, social cohesion, human capital, and political stability. However, the impact of migration is complex. It varies depending on a range of factors, including the policies of the sending and receiving countries, the characteristics of the migrants, and the nature of these countries' economic, social, and political systems. Therefore, Policymakers need to adopt a holistic approach to migration governance that considers the multiple dimensions of the impact of migration on development outcomes.

4.6.5. Commercialization of Migration

Migration, as shown in previous sections, has a potential for development. As a result, Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sørensen (2013) argue that migration has become a lucrative business capitalizing on the need of the migrants to move as well as state's perceived need to control migration across borders. This has, in turn, led to the commercialization of migration. The commercialization of migration refers to the monetization of various aspects of migration. It involves the evolution of specialized transport systems, the rise of recruitment companies, the emergence of organized criminal networks engaged in human trafficking, and multi-national companies contracted to coordinate border security and run detention centers (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sørensen, 2013). Commercialization of migration has become increasingly prevalent in recent years and has significant implications for both migrants and the countries involved in the migration process. This is reflected in the attempts to regulate migrant recruitment through national policies as well as in bilateral agreements between various governments (Delgado Wise & Marquez, 2007; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sørensen, 2013). For instance, other than individuals and organizations, states are also involved as they are motivated by the need to exploit yet control migrant inflow for receiving countries. For the sending countries, there is also a drive to protect and reap development returns from their emigrants and diaspora communities.

One of the main issues related to the commercialization of migration is the impact it has on the rights and well-being of migrants. In many cases, migrants are forced to pay exorbitant fees to recruitment agencies and smugglers to facilitate their migration. Often, this leads to debt bondage and exploitation, as well as making migrants more vulnerable to abuse and human trafficking (Abreera-Mangahas, 1989; Marie-Bénédicte Dembour & Kelly, 2011). Another issue is the impact of commercialization on the countries involved in the migration process. For example, some countries have implemented policies that effectively turn migration into a commodity, such as selling visas or offering citizenship in exchange for investment. While these policies can generate revenue for the host country, they can also exacerbate inequality and create a two-tiered system that benefits only the wealthy (Beladi et al., 2019). In addition, the commercialization of migration has implications for border control and security. As countries increasingly rely on private companies to manage their borders and control migration, there is a risk of privatizing what should be a public responsibility. This can lead to a lack of transparency and accountability and create conflicts of interest (Infantino, 2023).

Despite these concerns, some argue that commercialization of migration can also have positive impacts. For example, some migrant workers benefit from the services provided by recruitment agencies, such as pre-departure training and assistance with visa applications (Agunias, 2013). In addition, some argue that offering citizenship or residency in exchange for investment can help stimulate economic growth and provide a source of revenue for the host country (Grassi, 2022; Olejárová & Čajka, 2016). All in all, the commercialization of migration is a complex issue that not only has significant implications for migrants and the countries involved in the migration process but is also intricately related to the migration-development debate. While there are potential benefits to commercialization, such as generating revenue and providing services to migrants, there are also significant risks, including exploitation and the privatization of public responsibilities. Policymakers, therefore, need to carefully consider the holistic implication of commercialization when developing migration policies and programs.

4.7. Perception of the Migration-Development Nexus and Policy Implication

Migration has been a topic of interest for policymakers and scholars alike due to its potential impact on development. The relationship between migration and development is complex, and perceptions of the nature of this relationship can significantly impact international development policy. Two main schools of thought regarding the relationship between migration and development exist. One school of thought posits that migration can be a positive force for development, while the other argues that it has negative consequences for development. A policymaker or development organization's choice of school of thought influences their perception of the relationship between migration and development. On the same note, their perception of the migration-development nexus also influences the school of thought they align with. Subsequently, their perception impacts on migration and development policy. For instance, policymakers who believe migration is a positive force for development would prioritize policies that facilitate migration and support migrant integration in receiving countries. On the other hand, those who perceive migration as a negative force for development may prioritize policies that restrict migration and focus on addressing the root causes of migration, such as poverty and unemployment, in sending countries.

Moreover, the perception of the migration-development nexus also affects the allocation of development assistance. For instance, development organizations may focus on programs that promote remittances and facilitate migration to promote economic development in sending countries (Ratha & Shaw, 2007). However, other development organizations may prioritize programs that address the negative consequences of migration, such as brain drain, and focus on building human capital in sending countries (Hemmi, 2005). On the same note, when migration is viewed as motivated by underdevelopment in the origin countries, there is a tendency to focus on policies aimed at developing the places of origin to control migration. In this case, the focus would be mainly on migration control rather than development per se. Hence, there is a push to ensure the places of origin do not lose the skilled labor crucial to their development (Faist & Fauser, 2011). Policies emanating from this perspective saw, for instance, the setting up of a High-Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration by the European Union in 1998. The working group was to prepare action plans to address areas such as border controls and coordination of development aid to migrant-producing countries (Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002). The same could be attributed to the French policy of co-development. This view has some credibility since migration may deprive the sending countries of the much-needed labor and expertise critical for development. In a rural village setup, this may be manifested in the loss of labor meant to engage in agriculture or other forms of craft industry; however, in the case of international migration, it usually results in the loss of a highly skilled workforce.

However, the above view ignores that migration has been a part of human history (McNeill, 1984). In addition, reducing the motivation for migration to simply underdevelopment in the place of origin may be an oversimplification that could be misleading. The discussion on the transnationality of migrants also showed how they could still actively participate in their countries' political and economic life. On the same note, studies have also shown that direct attempts to link migration to poverty and underdevelopment are problematic (de Haas, 2010; Faist & Fauser, 2011; Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002). On the other hand, there is a tendency to view the effect of migration on development from the perspective of the destination countries, which may obscure a meaningful discussion on the migration-development nexus. By focusing on the exploitation of highly skilled labor by destination countries for their development, we ignore the agency on the part of the migrants as well as the role of migration as a livelihood strategy by the household. The difference and shift in perspectives have influenced migration and development policies in various states, specifically in the global North. Overall, the perception of the migration-development nexus has a significant impact on international development policy as well as development assistance and programs. It is, therefore, essential to have a nuanced understanding of the relationship between migration and development to develop policies and programs that promote sustainable development and address the challenges associated with migration.

5. Conclusion

Migration-development nexus is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. A clear understanding of the interplay between the two is crucial. This article has discussed several theoretical frameworks that can provide a lens through which the relationship between migration and development can be analyzed. We have also explored the various factors that influence migration, including economic, social, and political factors, as well as the impact of migration on development. In addition, the article has examined the assumption that migration has become a new development mantra in recent years, with governments and international organizations recognizing the potential of migration to contribute to economic growth and development. However, the article has also emphasized the need for policies based on a more nuanced understanding of the migration-development nexus rather than simplistic views of migration as a panacea for development challenges. Finally, by exploring the link between perception and policy regarding migration and development, emphasis is placed on the significance of moving beyond stereotypes. By recognizing the complex interplay between migration and development and developing policies that consider this, policymakers can promote more equitable and sustainable development that benefits migrants and their communities of origin and destination. By continuing to explore and deepen our understanding of this relationship, we can develop policies and practices that promote more equitable and sustainable development for all.

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