Article

Does Migration Lead to Development? Or is it Contributing to a Global Divide?

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Abstract: This article aims to show that the benefits of international migration (often presented as a 'global flow') very much depend on the *positionality* of the areas involved, as well as the regional particularities. It is argued that countries producing south-north migration or diasporic states are in a more favorable position to benefit from international migration than countries that are mainly involved in south-south migration. In addition, the opportunity to benefit from international migration very much depends on geographical particularities. For example, international migration in the context of Latin America/USA is in many respects not comparable to what is happening in Africa, Asia, the EU and the Gulf States. Even though international migration is often described in terms of a growing connectedness in the age of globalization, it progresses also hand in hand with new gaps and regional divides.

Keywords: international migration; development; south-north migration; south-south migration; diasporic states; migration flows; regional differences

Introduction

For a long time, policy makers paid little attention to migration. This attitude has recently changed and international migration is now considered an important topic on the policy agenda, especially in 'northern' countries considering themselves important destination areas for migrants from the south.

There are various reasons why more attention is given to migration. On the one hand, it is a result of the increasing problems surrounding the multicultural society in the host countries, combined with a

fear of invasion: *Today immigrants appear as threatening outsiders, knocking at the gates, or crashing the gates, or sneaking through the gates into societies richer than those from which the immigrants came* [1]. This fear is fed, for example, by the reporting in European newspapers which speak about 'the explosion of migrants from Africa' and much attention is given to people arriving in places such as the Canary Islands and/or Lampedusa, creating the image that globalization has widened the differences between rich and poor, and that the poor force themselves aspiring to be rich.

Another reason why more attention has recently been devoted to migration is more related to 'development policies' and the involvement of 'northern' countries in contributing to poverty alleviation in the south. It is since the United Nations (UN) High Level Dialogue on International Migration in 2006, and the start of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2007, that more attention has been paid to the potential positive link between migration and development. This has to do with the discovery that enormous sums are transferred worldwide by international migrants to the 'home front' and that these remittances can contribute to poverty alleviation. According to estimates by the World Bank a sum of no less than 372 billion dollars was involved in 2011 [2]. These remittances are estimated to benefit some 500 million people, or 8% of the world population. The amount is larger than the official development aid. It is understandable therefore that policy makers started to see in these transfers an additional financing source for development.

With regard to the question of whether international migration can contribute to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, there are two opposite views [3,4]. On the one hand, we find people who stress the potential benefits: migration impacts positively upon all stakeholders, evidenced by the fact that sending sites and the migrants themselves benefit because migrants get jobs, develop their skills, earn some money and remit part of it to their places of origin while destination sites benefit from the skills and labor they get from migrants. Migration is viewed as a positive factor, because it leads to an equilibrium on the labor market [5] and because international labor migration is expected to contribute to the banishment of inequality and to lead to a better sharing of the advantages of globalization. According to Adams and Page [6], migration has a direct effect through remittances on the reduction of poverty: an increase of 10% in a country's share of international migrants leads to a 2% decline in 1$ a day poverty. Besides the financial remittances, a positive value is also attributed to the social 'transfers' (the flow of information and ideas): countries of origin can benefit from brain gain, quite apart from the positive effects of return and/or circular migration.

On the other hand, however, we find people who place the emphasis particularly on the problematical aspects of international migration and the threatening dangers. They not only point out that international migration can lead to conflicts in the receiving countries, but also emphasize the negative consequences for the countries of origin, particularly the loss of man and woman power and intellect. They point out that generally the best and the brightest—the young, able-bodied people—leave first. Where migrants do decide to return to their home countries this is generally regarded as a result of failure. Return migrants are likely to be the old, sick and unsuccessful and skills brought back are unlikely to be of much help [4]. The poorest people with the least education and the invalids without networks stay behind and those who failed are the first to return. This has unavoidable adverse effects in the country of origin. To the extent that these are compensated by money transfers, a high measure of dependency is created, while conflicts can easily arise between migrants and non-migrants.

Despite the opposing views, a growing consensus is now emerging that, although international migration does not automatically lead to beneficial effects, it can contribute to development and poverty reduction, provided an appropriate and consistent policy is pursued [7].

This article aims to show that the benefits of international migration (often presented as a 'global flow') very much depend on the *positionality* of the areas involved, as well as the regional particularities. We argue that countries producing south-north migration or diasporic states are in a more favorable position to benefit from international migration than countries that are mainly involved in south-south migration. In addition, the opportunity to benefit from international migration very much depends on geographical particularities. For example, international migration in the context of Latin America/USA is in many respects not comparable to what is happening in Africa, Asia/ the EU and the Gulf States. Even though international migration is often described in terms of a growing connectedness in the age of globalization, it is also going hand in hand with new gaps and regional divides.

Explaining Migration: A Concise Overview of Migration Theories

Although in policy debates much attention is given to the many benefits that migration could bring, theoretical knowledge about the 'new mantra' is still limited. Most of the migration theory is directed towards explaining the origin of migration, or is concerned with questions such as why migration— once it has started—has the tendency to maintain or even to reinforce itself.

The best known theory aimed at explaining the origin of migration is the neoclassical Harris-Todaro model. According to this view migrants behave rationally and they will decide to leave A for B as soon as they expect to be able to increase their income and/or to improve their livelihood by doing so [8–13]. In other words: the cause of labor migration lies in the way in which individuals react rationally to geographical differences in labor supply and demand. Labor moves towards areas where the wages are higher, labor is more secure, *etc.* Individuals search for places of higher potential advantage, and if any known place offers such advantage compared to the present locality, then the individual may take the decision to migrate [5,14]. According to dual labor market theory international migration cannot be explained by the rational choice of the migrant, but much more by the demand for labor of modern industrial economies, by pull factors in the migrant-receiving countries [15]. In line with this approach, the world systems theory also sees international migration as a response to macro-level processes, as the natural response to (economic) globalization, evolving trade patterns and stagnation in weaker economies [16].

It is becoming increasingly recognized that, for a proper understanding of migration, sufficient attention must also be paid to the importance of the non-economic dimensions, the 'subjective' and the 'disruptive' role of institutions [17–19].

In line with this approach, a new tendency has recently arisen which is referred to as 'the new economics of labor migration'. According to this approach, migration should not be seen as the result of individual behavior, but as the result of the interaction of persons within wider contexts (families and households). Migration is not aimed at the maximization of expected income; it is a matter of income spreading and the minimization of risk [19–23]. In other words, migration is viewed as a household decision taken to minimize risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on

family production activities [4]. On the one hand, migrants perform an insurance role: in the event that local economic conditions deteriorate and activities there fail to bring in sufficient income, the household can rely on migrant remittances for support [19]. On the other hand,—from the households' perspective—they form a source of investment. They are prepared to invest or continue to invest in their area of origin because they will ultimately jointly profit from it in the form of an inheritance [4,19].

Insofar as migration theory is concerned with the continuation of migration and its tendency to reinforce itself, it places particular emphasis on the importance of migrant networks. These networks can best be described as sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in areas of origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship and community origin [19,23–26]. Once networks exist, migration becomes an autonomous process that can scarcely be halted. Part of the explanation for this is that migrant networks contribute to a reduction in the costs and risks, thereby lowering the migration threshold. On the other hand, the networks will become increasingly institutionalized once they are created because of the creation of migrant support institutions, such as services for remitting money. A business will increasingly arise around migration. In the course of time, emigration may reinforce itself through processes of cumulative causation. Non-migrants who were previously satisfied with their existence see their income position deteriorate, relative to that of the migrants, so that they start to feel relatively less content and, ultimately, will also leave. Another example concerns a situation in which remittances are used for the acquisition of land. Increasing concentration of ownership and price increases may then lead to further emigration. In addition, a 'migration culture'—a *rite de passage*—can arise in the course of time. Young people who do not migrate are seen as lazy, lacking enterprise and undesirable and not leaving means loss of prestige [27]. It is generally assumed that migration flows—after a period of growth and consolidation—will spontaneously come to a halt. Reference is made in this connection to a migration life cycle. Historically, waves of international moving and staying usually had a clearly discernible beginning, a climax and an end—with dynamics somewhat independent even from economic and political conditions in the receiving and sending countries once migration started [28].

In addition, there is a wholly different category of theories in the field of diasporas and transnationality, which in a sense form an extension of network theory [29]. We refer to a diaspora when a considerable proportion of a country's population lives outside its own territory; it is dispersed, but still maintains intensive and cross-border contacts via social, economic and political networks [30,31]. Sheffer [32] makes a useful distinction between different types of diaspora, showing that some diasporas are state-less (such as that of the Gypsies) and others are state-linked; he also makes distinction between historical and modern diasporas; and some diasporas are concentrated and others dispersed [32]. He notes that the phenomenon has grown considerably worldwide. In many instances diasporas are associated with a high measure of transnationality. Increasingly, populations affiliate themselves translocally—in other places and time [33]. We can speak in this connection of many new forms of non-territorial affiliation and solidarity [34]. Transnationalist approaches look at ties between people in different countries. Many migrants maintain contacts with their countries of origin for at least a generation. Globalization and new communication and transport facilities make it easier for them to do so [35]. The social networks of migrants play an important role in their decision to move or stay, and to move to particular communities or places. These social networks thus consist of and stimulate various relationships (e.g., economic and social relationships) between people in the

countries of origin and those in the countries of settlement [36]. This is why many researchers refer to migrants as transnationalists: 'people at home abroad […] integrated in the society of settlement, but at the same time part of a wider community' [37]. A transnational system refers to 'sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms' [38]. A transnational system is characterized by a high density of ties between individuals, organizations and networks, ties that can be both material and symbolic [38]. It thus opposes the duality of an international system of states, since it emphasizes 'a sphere of multifaceted, polycentric social networks' [39].

Finally, there is the migration systems theory (which shows clear similarities with the world systems approach mentioned above). According to this theory, the origin of migration flows, but especially the expansion of networks [40] cannot be explained if we do not look at structural changes at the macro level. International migration is a reaction to the penetration of the world economy into peripheral regions, with the result that the inflow of capital and goods is matched by an outflow of labour, although all kinds of obstacles are thrown up on the borders. The penetration of capitalist economic relations into peripheral, non-capitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate abroad [41–44]. It is emphasized that the direction of international migration is largely determined by old colonial relationships: cultural, linguistic and administrative ties largely determine the course of migration and the intensity of the exchange relationships. It is also the case that international migration is largely determined by the active recruitment by potential employers from the receiving country [15,18,40,41,45].

In conclusion, many decades of research have shown that migration flows can be explained only by a combination of factors motivating individuals to move (micro-theories), social networks (meso-theories) and global structural factors (macro-theories); but until now little is known about the link between migration and development. Massey *et al.*, pointed to deficiencies in both theoretical understanding and gathering of data on the relationship between migration and development [46,47]. The evidence base for the links between migration and development is still very weak [48] and there is still much "unsettled and unresolved" [49]. Exploring international migration at the global level, what kind of linkages do we perceive?

International Migration: A Global Picture

The number of international labor migrants is currently estimated at approx 215 million [2,50], about 3% of the world population. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [50], in 2050, the global migrant population will amount to around 400 million (7% of the current world population).

If we try to obtain a picture of international migration, there appears at first sight to be a relatively comprehensible situation in which globalization has been translated into a worldwide migration system, with 'richer' regions (receiving countries), on the one side, and poorer sending countries (in Africa, Asia and Latin America) on the other side. We find that there is a limited number of dominant destinations, *i.e.*, the classical immigration countries (the United States and Canada), a number of countries on the Persian Gulf (such as Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates),

and, lastly, a number of European countries (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Italy) [2,51].

There are important differences between these three receiving areas not only in the origin of the migrants, but also in the type of migration and its dynamic. The migration flows to the United States and Canada mainly come—as one might expect—from Mexico and the Caribbean: over 30 million Mexicans and Cubans live and work in the US, [2], although there has recently also been a marked growth in the migration of highly skilled people from China and India. After they have been granted an H1-B visa, migrants can quite easily settle with their families and, as long they have work, there is a good possibility that the visa will be extended.

The flow of migration to the region of the Persian Gulf originates mainly from South and Southeast Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand), but also increasingly from North and East Africa. It is mainly temporary labor migration, particularly of unskilled men, although there is also increasing migration by female domestic workers from Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Despite nationalization policies, the share of foreign workers is very high, representing between 28 and 87% of the population in the Gulf states [2]. Their visas cannot be extended. Each time their contracts end they are obliged to leave the country. There are therefore no opportunities to settle permanently, migrants enjoy no right to family reunification, and they have limited membership in society [52].

Initially, a considerable part of the migration flows to countries of the European Union (EU) originated from North Africa and Turkey and was a direct result of migrant worker programs (up to 1974) and the subsequent family reunification [30]. The flow also included refugees and asylum seekers. More recently, the EU has been confronted with migration flows from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. Most popular destinations—representing over 50% of the inflow—in 2009 were the UK, Spain and Italy, the last two themselves once emigration countries [53]. The influence of the colonial past appears clearly in the distribution of the migrants over the different countries of the EU: West African migrants go mainly to France; Latin Americans migrate relatively frequently to Italy and Spain; and Asians migrate proportionately rather more to the United Kingdom [53].

In other words, viewed from the *receiving countries*, globalization seems to have contributed to a worldwide migration system, including 'richer' regions (receiving countries), on the one side, and poorer sending countries (in Africa, Asia and Latin America) on the other side, linked together by unusual large flows of immigrants [54,55]. A similar, but reversed, picture emerges when we view the principal money flows.

If we look at international migration from the perspective of the *sending countries*, however, a quite different picture emerges. We then find that only a limited number of countries are oriented towards the *core receiving countries* in the North named above. South-South-migration appears to be much more important, official data shows that nearly half of the migrant from developing countries reside in developing countries [56,57], and there are also many *diasporic states*, *i.e.*, states with a large migrant population fanning out over many countries. Moreover, many migration flows are found to be much less consolidated than appears in the picture called up above. Many new trends are currently arising which affect the direction and form of migration.

If we look first at the group of *countries with South-South-migration*, we find that these are concentrated predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa and are mainly relatively poor countries. Examples

are Burkina Faso and Mali (with migration to Ivory Coast, but to also Nigeria and Senegal); Lesotho and Mozambique (migration mainly to South Africa and Botswana); and Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Congo, the population of which—through constant wars—has had to seek refuge in neighboring countries. In Latin America intraregional migration is quite common and determined by differences in production structures as well as in levels of social equity. Adding to these more structural processes, economic recession and expansion as well socio-political processes explain intraregional migratory movements [57–59]. The countries concerned include Paraguay and Bolivia, from where, until recently, people migrated in large numbers to Argentina; Nicaragua (with migration to Costa Rica); or Honduras (migration particularly to Mexico). In Asia, Burma can be cited as an example (with a population of one million in Thailand). From Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam there is a considerable migration to destinations within the region [30].

The second group—the migrants originating from *diasporic states*—is by far the most numerous. The numbers involved are very impressive, many times greater than the small flows of boat people arriving in Italy or Spain. The *Asian diaspora* is estimated at over 70 million. The largest is the Chinese diaspora—over 35 million. The figure for India is 20 million [60], that for the Philippines over 7 million and Korea has a diaspora of over 3.5 million. Other examples include Malaysia with a diaspora of 5 million, Vietnam with 1 million and Pakistan. The Latin American diaspora is estimated at over 25 million. If we exclude Mexico and the Caribbean (which are mainly oriented on the US) and Argentina and Ecuador (relatively strongly oriented on Italy and Spain), we find that the countries mainly concerned are Colombia (3.3 million), Brazil (1.5 million), Peru and Venezuela, from where a group of over 8 million has fanned out over a large number of countries, not only US, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Israel and Japan, but also over the neighboring countries [61]. African examples of *diasporic states* include Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa and, on a more modest scale, smaller countries such as Ghana, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gambia and Cape Verde [32].

Besides this diversity, the migration phenomenon is now also gaining in complexity as a result of a number of new trends. The *migration front* is shifting and there are many new forms of migration. The Burkinabé (inhabitants of Burkina Faso) are also migrating increasingly to Italy. The Bolivians, who were for a long time oriented towards Argentina in looking for work, migrated at the start of the new millennium in large numbers to Spain [62]. There is also increasing intercontinental migration, e.g., of Chinese who travel to Europe or the US via Kenya. Instead of having to deal with immigration or emigration, countries now increasingly have to deal with immigration and emigration at the same time (in addition, there is, of course, also internal migration). In many cases there has been a *reversal of migration*. Former emigration regions, such as Spain, Italy or Morocco, and also Botswana [63], now function both as immigration and transition areas.

As a direct result of restrictive policies in the *core regions* (e.g., the EU and US) new transition regions have arisen between the place of origin and place of destination (particularly in North Africa). Migrants find themselves confronted with rising costs and are forced to earn extra money en route (on the way to Europe or the US) in order to finance the final part of their journey. Many are stuck en route—they have shed their old identity and stay temporarily as quasi-migrants at an intermediate location. They are forced to break off the journey en route, but often cannot go back, because they are afraid of loss of face or cannot repay the sum that family members and friends once helped to

advance [64]. The migrants in the transition regions, in particular, often endure very poor conditions. These groups are extremely vulnerable to exploitation [65]. This applies especially to North Africa.

Migration and Development: Different Flows, Different Opportunities

As far as migration is concerned, it is not sufficient to divide the world into sending and receiving regions and to connect the two groups with arrows to denote the migrant and capital flows. As we have seen, there is a great variety of ways in which countries have been incorporated into the migration system and these directly affect their possibilities for profiting from migration.

Countries with directed South-North-migration, such as Mexico (to the US) or Senegal (to France or Spain), enjoy the advantage of being in the picture thanks to the migration. Their migration has resulted in a strengthening of their negotiating position; it forms a basis for establishing ties. Compared with other countries, they hug the fire and are able to profit from new, as yet modest, employment opportunities in the *core regions* (the EU, the US *etc.*). Moreover, they often also enjoy the advantage of having historical relations.

Many of these sending countries, incidentally, play a role within their own regions as receiving areas for South-South migration. In order to satisfy the requirements imposed by the northern countries (admission and deportation policies), these countries are often forced to act more stringently against the inflow from their neighbors. Mexico, for example, is obliged by the US to seal its southern border and to take action against illegals, which has direct negative consequences for intraregional relations and runs counter to the present aim of achieving 'free mobility' within the region. A similar situation occurs in Senegal. In order to qualify for 'legal migrant places' within EU this country is obliged to keep its borders hermetically sealed and to deal more strictly with illegals from the neighboring countries.

The position of the *diasporic states* is also relatively favorable. These countries already have a considerable population outside their borders which they can use as development potential. These migrants relatively often constitute a well-off elite, including a considerable number of transnational entrepreneurs [66]. They do not have to suffer under a restrictive policy, the majority of the migrants are already living for a shorter or longer period in the reception region and they are, moreover, successfully integrated, so that they have relatively good possibilities for investment. In a growing number of countries (including China, the Philippines and India) the national government is pursuing an active policy to involve the diaspora in the national development [67,68]. In many countries, however, policy in this field has not yet crystallized out so clearly.

This is in contrast to the countries with predominantly South-South migration, which are largely at the mercy of the policies of receiving areas in their own region (often neighboring countries). A high proportion of the migrants being discussed here often fare relatively badly in the receiving countries. Compared with the *core countries*, the possibilities for earning remittances as a south-south migrant are often limited. According to Ratha and Shaw [56], south-south remittances correspond with 18.2% of all recorded remittances to developing countries [69]. South-south migrants must generally be satisfied with low-paid work, sometimes filling vacancies created by emigration of the local population. The migrants' own governments offer very little protection or support. Examples of hidden slavery are regularly discovered (as happened recently in Argentina when it was discovered how a company treated Bolivian migrants [70]). Migrants are often the victims of discrimination and

xenophobia, even in their own region, as recently in Ivory Coast, and also in Botswana, Argentina and South Africa [71]. The migrant population is sent back to the country of origin with great regularity, as happened with the Burkinabé from Ivory Coast and the Ghanaians from Nigeria [72,73]. Conflicts are relatively quickly translated into inter-state problems; problems of discrimination and/or xenophobia (which also arise in the north), however, remain relatively invisible there, because the media pay attention mainly to tensions in the northern countries. Many Bolivians and Paraguayans have also returned to their own country from Argentina as a result of the economic crisis [62].

The Regional Divide: Importance of Geographical Particularities

In addition to making a distinction between south-north, south-south, or dispersed migration, it is also relevant to acknowledge that development opportunities will also depend on the geographical context. Although migration is often presented as a global issue, there are substantial regional differences between migration in Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Migration flows are difficult to compare and the opportunities to benefit (or not) are highly variable (see also Table 1).

Table 1. The main features of migration in Latin America, Asia and Africa [74].

Feature	Latin America	Asia	Africa
Dominant flows	Inter-regional (South North migration (US) in addition to South-South migration and limited flows to Europe	Intra-regional (South-South) in addition to South-North migration (US and Europe) and migration to the Middle East	Intra-regional (South-South) in addition to South-North migration (Europe, US) and migration to the Middle East
Main destinations within the region	Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, from neighboring countries	Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong (NICs), from neighboring countries. India and China as new destinations	South Africa, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, from neighboring countries
Main destinations outside the region	US and Canada (mainly from Mexico and Central America). From other destinations also to Europe (Spain and Italy)	Middle East, US and EU (UK)	EU (France, Italy, Spain, the UK), Middle East and US China as a new destination
Root causes/ migration-inducing factors	Active labor recruitment, combined with push factors (economic crises) Regional integration processes (NAFTA, *etc.*) US investments in Mexico and Central America (*maquiladoras*)	Labor demand—economic growth in neighboring countries Active labor recruitment (pull, combined with push factors (poverty) Path dependency (colonial and trade relations)	Poverty and economic crisis (push, combined with pull factors) Labor demand—economic growth in neighboring countries, combined with push factors (poverty) Path dependency (transhumance/ colonial and trade relations)

Table 1. *Cont.*

Institutional setting (area of destination)	(within US) Assimilation/ integration (melting pot) Pan-identity of immigrants in US	(within Asia) Temporary labor contracts; no possibilities for permanent stay and/or family reunification	(within Africa) Circular migration in a context of regional integration (ECOWAS, SADC, *etc*).
Social problems	Undocumented migrants Lack of labor rights Xenophobia in the US (minute men)	Undocumented migrants Lack of labor rights Human trafficking/ smuggling HIV-AIDS Discrimination Dispersed families	Undocumented migrants Lack of labor rights Human trafficking/people smuggling HIV/AIDS Brain drain Discrimination and xenophobia (South Africa, Botswana, C ôte d'Ivoire) Vulnerable transit migrants (in North Africa)
Role of diasporas/ home town associations	Strong (through HTA federations)—direct contact with Mexican government and strong lobbying capacity (US). 3X1 program (public– private partnerships) Direct investment in home areas	Dispersed, part of well organized (transnational) entrepreneurs Government programs for diasporas overseas Discussions about how to attract investment	Dispersed (often not well organized) Government programs for diasporas overseas; Discussions about how to increase remittances and making better use of diaspora resources
Role of governments in managing migration	Border controls Negotiations between diaspora and government 3X1 program (public– private partnerships)	Border control, Keeping migration temporary Data collection	Border controls Mobility partnerships/ migration management 'Co-development' (with Europe)

Almost 75% of all *Latino* migrants are to be found in the US [57], with the largest flow of migrants the Mexico—US corridor, a flow which has many unique features, and so is difficult to compare with other migration systems. It is also relatively recent (and does not originate in colonial ties) and the distances involved are relatively short. Integration of the Mexicans in the US is relatively easy in comparison to Asia and Africa. Being a classic immigration country—possibilities for permanent settlement and integration (as well as family reunion) are relatively favorable in the US—immigrants can build up a normal life, although the situation is deteriorating as a consequence of rising anti-immigrant sentiments. Mexicans immigrants now form a majority in many US cities, they enter the Hispanic community without language problems, and are offered help by home-town associations [75]. To the extent that remittances are sent from the US to Mexico, these are told to subsidize Mexican agriculture. Home town associations play an important role, not only in political lobbying in the US, but also in the multiplication of the money flowing back into Mexico, via the 3-por-1-programme. To the extent that attention is paid to social problems, it tends to focus on the problems of undocumented labor and discrimination [57].

Migration within and from Asia is complex, with numerous flows in different directions. In contrast with the cultural homogeneity in Latin America, Asian migration is taking place in a context of different languages and cultural diversity. Important destinations include the US, Europe and the Middle East, but migrants from South Asia in particular move within the region, in particular to the newly industrializing countries [56]. In Asia, the governments of receiving countries have introduced policies to keep migration temporary, and there are few opportunities for permanent settlement (including family reunification) and integration [76]. Most intra-regional migrants are temporary workers in contrast with Mexican immigrants to the US, most of whom intend to 'stay'. A relatively large proportion of emigrants are women (e.g., from the Philippines) who work in temporary and 'invisible' jobs such as domestic services in Asia, Europe, US and the Middle East [77]. These migrants leave their families behind, with far-reaching implications for their families and inter-generation relations. In addition to social fragmentation, other migration-related problems include discrimination, smuggling and human trafficking, and HIV/AIDS. In many Asian countries migration is seen as a politically sensitive issue. Whereas in Mexico the home town associations and local governments are important agents of change, in Asia it is mainly central governments and transnational entrepreneurs who set the stage. Rather than focusing on social problems, much attention is given to how migration has contributed to economic development. Rather than encouraging migrants to send back remittances, the governments of China and India have developed successful strategies to encourage people to make direct investments in and/or to return to their home countries [67].

With regard to Africa, a distinction can be made between North Africa, which in the past provided large numbers of migrant workers for Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa, which has recently started to generate increased migration streams in various directions, including Europe, the US and the Middle East. In addition to reflecting traditional systems of 'transhumance' (or movements across ecological zones), colonial ties and economic relations are important factors in explaining migration patterns within and from the region. Of those African migrants who move 'overseas', many go to the former colonial powers such as France or the UK, although many others are now moving to other European countries such as Italy or Spain, North America and the Middle East.

North Africa, in particular Morocco, is better able to benefit from migration, due to the diasporic character of the migration flow—predominantly directed towards Europe (as discussed above)—in combination with the presence of historic relations, rooted in the guestworker programs of the 1960s and 1970s. Also, the Moroccon government recognizes the value of their diaspora and as such invested heavily in diaspora engagement policies [78].

For Sub-Saharan Africa, the conditions to benefit are less favorable. In comparison with Latin America and Asia, migration in sub-Saharan Africa is relatively unstable: Africans are displaced due to armed conflicts, economic distress and environmental degradation, factors that in many cases are interrelated [56,79,80]. Throughout Africa, the problems resulting from the brain drain are enormous, in particular the loss of doctors, nurses, teachers and entrepreneurs who have left in search of opportunities or better working conditions elsewhere. Compared with Latin America and Asia, the volume of remittances sent back to Africa is relatively small. Human trafficking, in particular of children [81] and HIV/AIDS are major problems (see also Asia). More than in the other continents, migration research in Africa is hindered by the lack of reliable data, and migration policies are relatively less developed [36,74,82].

In the case of South-North migration, some African countries participate in co-development programs: programs implemented by organizations in European destination countries aimed at linking immigrants and their organizations to development processes in their region of origin, often in the context of development cooperation. Development funds are for stimulating development 'at home', while aiming at stimulating return migration and bringing migration under control. Examples include Spanish programs targeting Morocco, Gambia and Senegal, and French programs directed towards Mali and Senegal, amongst others [83].

Conclusions

In trying to better understand the link between migration and development, it is important first to understand migration in terms of *positionality*: some countries show a dominant pattern of south-north migration, whereas others are characterized by dispersed or south-south migration. Mainly countries with considerable south-north migration (in the direction of the EU or the US) and/or diasporic countries (with a pool of affluent expats) are in a favorable position to benefit from international migration (*i.e.*, powerful position in negotiating bilateral agreements, attracting remittances and/or investments). In the case of south-south migration, however, the potential benefit of migration is rather restricted. Migrants are often dispersed and/or temporary (circular migration) and, given that migration between neighboring countries will often go hand in hand with social tensions, negotiations are more complicated than in the case of south-north migration, also because many of the destination areas also themselves have to deal with poverty problems.

In addition to this, it is extremely important also to make a distinction on the basis of *regional particularities*, *i.e.*, between countries where migrants are allowed to become full residents (such as US and Europe) and the countries where migrants are accepted only temporarily. In cases such as in the Gulf States, but also many other countries in Asia, the possibilities for 'integration' are very much limited due to the fact that migrant populations are not accepted to settle. Moreover, whether people can benefit from migration (or not) will very much depend on the distance between the area of origin and destination (relatively small in the case between Mexico/Central America and the US), which is an important determinant of transaction costs and the possibility of the migrants to keep contact. It also depends on whether migrant groups are the majority (or not) in their areas of destination (migrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America form a majority group in the US, as opposed to minority groups in Europe), and also whether they are seen as 'heroes' (or the enemy) from the perspective of their area of origin. Whether migrants and migrant organizations are accepted in their role of development agents or not will very much depend on the political situation, but also on the characteristics of state policies. The opportunities to benefit from international migration are very different between Asia, Latin America and Africa.

To sum up, exploring the link between international migration and development at the global level shows the importance of 'positionality' and regional particularities. We may therefore conclude that, even though in migration debates and theories much attention is given to 'the' potential development benefits of international migration, our analysis shows that there is no leveled playing field. This is also true because the majority of sending countries have as yet no clear view on how to deal with the *moving ins* and *moving outs*.

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