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Letter from the Co-Presidents

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As we entered the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found ourselves facing some of the same challenges and uncertainties of the past two years with the explosive surge of the Omicron variant and record-breaking hospitalizations. Across the globe, states had enacted sweeping immigration restrictions that not only served as temporary measures to curb the spread of the virus, but that also contravened decades of international pacts aimed at safeguarding migrants’ human rights. Responses to the pandemic have exacerbated existing racial disparities for already vulnerable populations and brought to stark relief the vast inequalities between the Global North and South. The pandemic has also added fuel to long-standing racist, xenophobic ideas and movements that have gained momentum in the last few decades through populist leaders and ideologies.

While COVID infections and hospitalizations have declined globally and many countries have lifted restrictions, there is no end in sight to the partisan divides, structural poverty, democratic retrenchment, and racist violence plaguing our local, national, and global communities. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February also created what the UNHCR has described as the largest human displacement crisis in the world today, with over 6.7 million people fleeing Ukraine as of May 26.

To be sure, the events of the past few years have magnified the questions, dilemmas, and areas of study with which many of us have grappled for years. They have also opened up opportunities to rethink the core concepts and methodological approaches in our discipline.
Migration and citizenship studies have long provided the tools needed to be attentive to emergent forms of politics: cross-field synergies, interdisciplinary collaboration, and methodological pluralism are critical to identifying new modes of political activity, actors, and institutions that do not conform to the boundaries of the national state, formal organizations, and established policies and practices. Our section members—in the fields of comparative politics, IR, American politics, political theory, public law, and public policy as well as sociology and history—engage in innovative research that pushes us to question our assumptions about what it is that we are studying and where we mark the boundaries of our research.

This year will mark the tenth anniversary of our vibrant section. The establishment of this section has provided opportunities for migration and citizenship scholars to share their research, create new partnerships, promote teaching and research in migration and citizenship studies, shape public debate, and mentor the next generation of scholars in the field. Our engaging panels, business meetings, and receptions—as well as our lively listserv—demonstrate that our section has provided not only an important institutional home within APSA but also a vital international community for faculty, students, and practitioners.

Despite the numerous challenges that the last few years have presented, our section members continue to contribute their time and energy to the multiple efforts that make our section vibrant. We thank our 2022 Program Co-Chairs, Kelsey Norman and Allan Colbern, for their work planning the annual program. We’re also grateful to our elected officers—Rebecca Hamlin (Secretary), Beth Elise Whitaker (Treasurer), and Executive Council members (Osman Balkan, Victoria Finn, Ahmed Khattab, Noora Lori, Rahsaan Maxwell, and Clarisa Perez-Amendariz)—for their work preparing for our tenth-anniversary reception, launching new mentoring initiatives, and maintaining a syllabus bank; and Els de Graauw and Willem Maas for their contributions to a special committee focused on honoring the section’s tenth-anniversary and encouraging its future development. We especially want to acknowledge our newsletter editors, Laura Cleton and Annika Hinze, for their work on this superb newsletter. And we appreciate our colleagues who have generously agreed to serve on the awards committees this year: Fiona Adamson, Sener Aktürk, Anna Boucher, Rafaela Dancygier, Els de Graauw, Lauren Duquette-Rury, Jeannette Money, Rachel Navarre, Deborah Schildkraut, Michael Sharpe, Lahra Smith, and Hélène Thiollet.

As we prepare to celebrate our tenth anniversary, we encourage all of you to help us to grow our membership—which remains slightly over 360—by inviting your colleagues and students to join and by keeping your membership active. We are grateful for your resilience and generosity over the past few years and very much look forward to the prospect of seeing you in person in Montreal!

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A year has passed since the publication of the last newsletter. A year during which we had hoped to return to a normal of sorts, perhaps even a normal resembling the normal we knew from before the COVID-19 pandemic. In many ways, that wish was granted to people like us, who live in rich, industrialized countries. We became double-, then triple-vaccinated against the virus. Many of us returned to our places of work, saw our children return to school and were able to travel and socialize once again. Yet, the pandemic is not over. And its effects, which have always been more deeply and devastatingly felt by those who live in poorer, more vulnerable communities with less access to vaccines, medical care, healthy food choices, and stable jobs, and more exposure to pollution, climate insecurity, food insecurity, housing insecurity, crime, and poverty, to name just a few, persist. These uneven effects of the pandemic can be observed within countries and nation-states, but also on a global scale.

COVID-19 vaccines, now widely available in the rich countries of the world, are still scarce in the world’s poorest countries. According to a recent UN report, of more than 10 billion vaccine doses administered around the world, only 1 percent were available to people in low-income countries. This is a shameful reality that we do not talk or think about enough when we are discussing a “return to normal.”

Rich countries, among them the United States, have also used (and abused) the pandemic as an excuse to close their borders and expel migrants in the name of public health. In March 2020, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump administration had invoked Title 42, a law dating back to 1944. This law allows immigration officers and border patrol agents to expel or prevent from entering migrants crossing the border with the intention of seeking asylum. Title 42 is specifically intended to prevent contagious diseases from spreading in the United States, and the official justification for its implementation was that COVID-19
would spread like wildfire in crowded immigrant detention centers. However, based on the Trump administration’s track record of attempting to decrease immigration wherever possible (and belittling the threat of COVID-19), it is safe to assume that Title 42 was primarily used to justify a further restriction of immigration rather than serve as a public health measure.

The Biden administration, which had initially announced one of the most ambitious pro-immigration agendas after entering office in early 2021, kept Title 42 in place throughout 2021. It did so in part because of lack of public support (especially in the border states), as well as among the Democrats’ own ranks for ending it. Arizona Senators Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema famously wrote an open letter to the Biden administration pleading for Title 42 to remain in place. Nevertheless, earlier this year, Biden announced that Title 42 would end on May 23, 2022. This month, on Friday, May 20, just three days before the anticipated end of Title 42, a federal judge blocked the administration from ending it. Despite the fact that the Justice Department announced on the same day that it would appeal the ruling, Politico reported relief among some Biden aides. Like all of its predecessors stretching back thirty years, the Biden administration has been unable to advance major immigration reform in the face of in-party resistance, Republican fearmongering about open borders, and a potentially devastating midterm election season.

Beyond the United States’ domestic debates about immigration, the world has been grappling with devastating conflicts and, as a consequence, the displacement of millions of people over the course of the last year. Among the many clashes that are playing out around the world, the situation in Afghanistan returned to the headlines amid the Biden administration’s hasty withdrawal from the country after 20 years of occupation last August. Many Afghans had helped the American military as translators or aides over the course of those 20 years but were still not seeing their Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) processed by the Department of Homeland Security. (A recent report by the National Immigration Forum put the processing times for SIVs between 658 and 996 days – so, between 2-3 years – and that timeframe does not take into consideration the amount of time it takes to gather all required documents!) Those Afghan translators and interpreters who remain in Afghanistan waiting for their visas now have to fear for their lives as the Taliban leadership is likely to prosecute and punish anyone who helped the American war effort. The Americans’ hasty departure from Kabul was neither preceded nor followed by an equally hasty effort to process visas for those Afghan allies now in fear for their lives. A New York Times report last August documented the desperation of the situation – one that may ring familiar for refugees from Iraq, where many Iraqis are still waiting for their SIVs to be processed.

The situation in Afghanistan in the context of the departure of the final American troops demonstrates the complexity of migration – and the insufficiency of the legal categories that many countries use to address it. Not only those Afghans who had helped support the American war against the Taliban, and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan, were put in jeopardy after the American departure last August. Women, and girls in particular, who had grown of age
during the occupation, had gotten used to being able to attend schools and universities and receive an education. Under Taliban rule, they were robbed of such access – many for the first time in their young lives. The devastating story of a young woman, N, who faced the prospect of a forced marriage with a member of the Taliban to prevent the death of her own father and ran away was reported by the New York Times in the fall of 2021. It is a heartwrenching testament to the terrible choices many Afghans, and especially women and girls, are left with under renewed Taliban rule.

Beyond the horror of stories like N’s, there are also those of people who simply do not want to live and raise families under the threat of violence. This is true for families who escape gang violence in the Northern Triangle countries in Central America, and it is true for ordinary Afghans, Syrians and so many others, who are looking for a safer life. Many of these people will never qualify as refugees or asylum seekers under the strict criteria most receiving countries implement to “vet” such immigrants. Yet, they are, in a majority cases, facing desperate choices anyway, about whether their children will grow up in safety, with access to education, medical care, and perhaps, if they’re lucky, some social upward mobility. Who decides what should count as “well-founded fear,” the benchmark for asylum?

The year 2022 will likely be remembered as the year during which the world witnessed yet another conflict which resulted in the displacement of millions of people: The Russian invasion of Ukraine. By early May 2022, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, a total of 12.8 million people had been displaced by the senseless conflict. Of those, 7.7 million are estimated to be displaced internally inside Ukraine, while the remaining 5 million have become refugees outside the country. EU countries like Poland and Hungary, which had been reluctant to welcome any Syrian refugees during the Civil War just a few years earlier, took in record numbers of Ukrainian refugees. While it is important to emphasize that any refugee should be welcomed by any country, the conflict has also laid bare the differential treatment experienced by white refugees compared to those from other parts of the world. In many European countries, Ukrainian refugees have been granted access to social benefits and immediate legal status and work permits – rights and freedoms that all refugees should have access to, but entitlements that Syrian or Afghan refugees in those same countries could only dream of. Countries should make no legal differentiations among refugees based on the color of their skin, their culture, or their religion. Yet, they do, and we, as researchers, need to ask tougher questions about that, so as to push for policy change.

In the light of all these developments around the world, the current issue of this newsletter introduces a Symposium on International Human Mobility, guest-edited by Rut Bermejo-Casado and Miryam Hazán. Contributors to the symposium include senior and junior scholars in the field, who question old conceptual frameworks for analyzing IHM in the light of the most recent developments around the world. In addition to the Symposium, Sarah Lockhart’s Policy Brief specifically addresses the situation (and challenges) at the U.S.-Mexico-border. In the Methods’ corner, Adriano Udani and his colleagues at the
Interfaith Committee on Latin America and the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project discuss the variety of ways in which they – as academics, activists and asylum seekers – partner to co-produce knowledge with the goal of ultimately abolishing migrant detention. Finally, the Research Center Profile includes an introduction by our colleagues at the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at Osnabrück University in Germany.

This newsletter also marks the end of our tenure as newsletter editors. It has been a challenging two years. Laura finished a dissertation and secured a post-doc fellowship, while Annika finished a book – all in the midst of a global pandemic and all the specific challenges that presented to us in different ways. Despite all the challenges, we really enjoyed our time as editors (and our collaboration!), and we’re excited what the next editor(s) will bring to the newsletter!

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Introduction to the Symposium on International Human Mobility

Rut Bermejo-Casado and Miryam Hazán

International human mobility (IHM), ranging from voluntary economic migration in search of a better life to the movement of forcibly displaced populations, can be characterized as an old but constantly evolving reality that has motivated the interest of scholars. In recent decades, the topic migration has acquired greater prominence in political and economic debates in both developed countries, and countries of the Global South, and we have witnessed an increase in the number of major research projects, debates and reflections on the subject, covering many aspects and dimensions of this issue. The topics covered include, for instance, the causes and effects of migration, migration dynamics and policies, international displacement and the advantages and limitations of legal frameworks that protect internationally displaced populations, the variety of links between migration and development, and many others.

Yet, despite this large production of studies, there is plenty to be learned and understood as IHM is in constant evolution. Likewise, the state and societal responses to the flow of international migrants and those who are forcibly displaced for a variety of reasons (economic, political, environmental or security...
related among others) are also evolving. This situation not only opens up the opportunity for new research projects and agendas but also for the reconsideration of previous studies and perspectives.

Taking this into consideration, this symposium is intended as a brief pause in our daily research, teaching and scholarly work on IHM to ask: What is still there to be done? To this end, we invited established and mid-career academics to reflect on their engagement with IHM and asked talented early-career researchers in the field of IHM to reflect on new topics and under-researched issues, especially those that incorporate perspectives from the Global South. In the symposium, we also wanted to highlight alternative theories that shed light on current developments and promising paradigms to help us understand this evolving reality, as well as explore methodologies and research techniques that might help us tackle the puzzles ahead.

The co-editors of this symposium proposed some questions for reflection, including: How do we understand IHM realities? What are the major causalities of human mobility today? Can we still draw a clear line between economic migration, and international movement that has resulted from displacement and forced migration? Do we have adequate international frameworks to respond to the different causalities of international human mobility and its consequences? And are current dynamics similar in nature to the dynamics we identified, for example, in the late nineteen century and early twentieth century, when large numbers of Europeans emigrated to the Americas, primarily to the U.S; or the ones we observed in the 1950s and 1960s when large numbers of Southern Europeans and Turks emigrated to Northern and Western Europe; or the ones we became familiar with in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s from Mexico and Central American countries to the U.S to mention just a few examples? Furthermore, how do we understand migration interdependence and current South-South migration, as well as the flow of internationally displaced populations? Have the causes and dynamics and characteristics of the flows changed, or do they display similar realities to the ones observed at other moments in time? Finally, how can we explain state and societal responses to the presence of migrants, refugees, and other people seeking international protection? The distinction of these populations is increasingly less evident, as most migration flows today are mixed flows. In that same regard, how do different states manage migration and the flow of internationally displaced populations? Are countries of the Global North still trapped in the same paradoxes that they were facing a few decades ago, trying to balance between those who argue for open and liberalizing reforms and those demanding for stricter controls and limitations to migration? Are migration states in the Global South trapped in those same paradoxes vis-a-vis international migration? And how do we explain state responses to other forms of international human mobility, especially the flows of refugees and other displaced populations that seek international protection?

The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed significant efforts to try to frame and understand international human mobility realities, by proposing different theoretical and methodological approaches that helped to understand
the different dynamics of that time. Those theories evolved mostly from economics, sociology and other adjacent disciplines such as demography and were well reflected in various state-of-the-art publications (e.g Borjas 1996, Portes 1999, Massey et al. 1993; Massey 1999; Harris and Todaro 1970; Faist 2000; Hollifield 1992; Skeldon 1997; Straubhaar 1988; Martin and Widgren, 1996).

The extant body of research, however, was focused primarily on one specific reality: South–North human mobility, which mostly envisioned as being driven by economic push and pull factors between countries of “origin” and “destination”. Moreover, many theories were developed in isolation, separated by disciplinary boundaries, despite the fact that many of them complemented each other.

Today, international human mobility is again presenting us with new realities that require us to reflect on the effectiveness of existing theoretical and methodological approaches to understand it. Apart from South–North economic migration, we also observe a large number of mixed flows, that is, of people that may migrate for strictly economic reasons but also of others who are forced to leave their places of origin for a variety of reasons. These reasons may be economic, political, environmental, or security oriented. The strict categorization of migrants by current international legal frameworks do not make it possible for many migrants to be acknowledged as refugees or as people in need of another form of international protection. Furthermore, in addition to South-North migration, researchers have started to pay more detailed attention to South-South flows, which were always present but severely understudied by researchers in the Global North.

In view of these developments, this symposium aims to understand international migration in a more holistic way, with a focus on what remains the same and what is new. We intend to identify the realities of international human mobility today and the extent to which they resemble prior dynamics or reflect new realities that require new frameworks of analysis.

We invited symposium contributors to examine new ways of understanding IHM dynamics in order to advance the state of art and point to new pathways for future work on international human mobility research. We compiled contributions from researchers and scholars located in North America, Asia and Europe who delved into

1) Important thematic areas in need of new or deep research that allow to capture the multiplicity of cases and situations. Among those areas, Correa-Cabrera explores human smuggling and trafficking and how they take different forms throughout the world, in some cases facilitating migration that would otherwise be impossible, and in other cases exploiting migrants’ vulnerabilities. Another relevant new topic is tackled in Ang’s contribution. He analyses the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in post-pandemic human capital needs and trends.
2) Paradigms and under-researched perspectives and approaches are also included, such as migration interdependence (MI), presented in Hollifield’s analysis. MI is an under-explored concept in the area of migration and in his text, Hollifield develops a measure of MI and explains its implications for migration governance and the broader fields of migration studies and international relations. In the same vein, Cornelius and Salehyan revisit a classic theme, that of population decline and aging in many western developed countries, to refocus on the role that migration can play in the management of population decline and ageing, and as a solution by linking receiving-countries internal population dynamics with policy recommendations for new policy approaches towards IHM.

3) Conceptual problems, such as the migrant/refugee binary are problematized in Carrasco’s contribution to highlight the power structures that underlie that binary, as well as the consequences of this assumption for migration policy development and legitimization.

4) On methodologies and data, Mahoney, Le Louvier and Lawson present the possibilities offered by social media analysis in migration research, while also taking into account the limitations and ethical concerns raised by the use of social networks data.

We hope that the essays published here will generate insights that will spur fresh research on these new topics and use promising and innovative methodologies that may inspire new in-depth research to further disentangle the complex realities of international human mobility today.

References


Please direct inquiries about this piece to Rut Bermejo-Casado at rut.bermejo@urjc.es or Miryam Hazán at hazanmiryam@gmail.com. Miryam’s contribution reflects her personal views and does not represent the views of the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights or its Executive Secretariat or that of the Organization of American States or its General Secretariat.
1. New Studies and Trends in Human Mobility in the Americas: Assessing Migrant Smuggling Networks

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International human mobility trends have been experiencing a momentous transformation in the most recent times. This phenomenon is quite noticeable in the Americas. In the past few years, an increasing number of migrants and people seeking international protection from different parts of the continent and other regions of the world (including Africa, Southeast Asia and Eurasia)—most of which have had to follow irregular or illegal migration pathways due to a lack of legal ones—have been undertaking a long, tortuous, and many times perilous journey to the United States. Human mobility along irregular migration routes in the Americas has been facilitated by extremely sophisticated and well-organized human smuggling networks/organizations.

These illicit actors operate sometimes in tandem with criminal groups and corrupt officials, who capitalize on the vulnerabilities of people on the move—living in fear due to different forms of violence or experiencing extreme poverty or even hunger in their countries of origin. There are some scholars who justify these actors and refer to them as “facilitators of human mobility” centering essentially on what they consider to be State failures. This perspective advances a one-sided critique on restrictive immigration policies and seems to advocate for more open borders and less immigration enforcement. It also considers smugglers as needed resources for migrants and refugees and refers to the phenomenon in which they are involved in as “clandestine migration facilitation” or “assisted migration” (Sanchez, 2017; Van Liempt, 2011).
Most recent studies on human mobility in this region of the world have been focused on the push factors of irregular migrations, and few of them have analyzed the complex dynamics of modern human smuggling networks or illicit, irregular (and sometimes criminal) facilitators of human mobility (Van Liempt, 2011; Sanchez, 2017; Zhang, Sanchez and Achilli, eds., 2018 L. Campana, 2020). Further studies are needed in order to better understand these networks, their key organizations and members, as well as the most recent dynamics of international human mobility in the Americas. Since human smuggling networks operate at the transnational level, additional exchange of information and international collaboration are needed in order to assess these new phenomena, and to identify major players and basic characteristics. The present commentary identifies the main issues related to this subject and suggest the further exploration of these ideas.

Changing Patterns of International Human Mobility Trends

The evolution of human mobility trends in the Americas and the routes for migrants and people seeking international protection have very rapidly changed in the most recent years. For example, the number of people on the move who start their journey in Central America or different parts of South America has increased significantly (IOM, 2021, p. 4), as well as the number of families and unaccompanied migrant children who arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border in search for international protection. In 2018, migrant caravans—which consist of large groups of people traveling together towards the United States—became a relevant option for a number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, starting their journey mainly from Central America.¹

It is worth noting that there is some controversy around the formation of these mass migration movements that have been referred to (by the media, scholars and advocates) as migrant caravans. Some people consider them as a safer and less costly mechanisms that facilitate international human mobility, while others consider them as political tools organized for electoral or even geopolitical purposes (Correa-Cabrera, 2020). Some have identified within these movements the involvement of migrant smugglers and other criminal actors, who often put migrants at risk (Correa-Cabrera and Koizumi, 2021). Migrant caravans facilitate essentially South-North migrations—involving both refugees and economic migrants. This phenomenon became at some point an essential instrument for those in search of a better life or international protection, but at the same time attracted human smugglers and became more subject to law enforcement agencies’ scrutiny. Migrant caravans have involved adults, families and unaccompanied migrant children, essentially from Central America.

In the most recent years, “the range of nationalities of migrants” desiring to arrive to the United States as part of the South-North migrations “has become much more diverse and includes nationals from Caribbean countries and from other continents, such as Asia and Africa” (IOM, 2021, p. 3). More recently, an

¹ On the definition of migrant caravans see Central America and Mexico Policy Initiative, Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law (2020).
important number of Eastern European migrants and asylum seekers have been detected at different sections of the U.S.-Mexico border (Spagat, 2022a). The war in Ukraine and potential conflict in some parts of Eurasia have certainly added to this phenomenon, and have elevated tensions at the border (Spagat, 2022b). Due to the lack of sufficient legal migration pathways for people displaced from different countries experiencing economic, social or political crises, human mobility from these zones to the United States tends to occur in an irregular or illicit manner (IOM, 2021, p. 4), particularly with the involvement of sophisticated human smuggling organizations.

Explaining Irregular Migrations in the Americas

Understanding human mobility trends worldwide and in the Americas, and assessing their size, evolution and routes is key for implementing more appropriate immigration policies and for resolving related issues. As recognized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), these phenomena are “based on a set of factors and a diversity of migrants, and also on recent socioeconomic, health and political changes and measures in their previous countries of destination in South America, as well as in the countries of origin and transit of this migrant population [including Eastern Europe]. Understanding these factors that explain human mobility trends allows a proper analysis to be carried out for developing public policies and measures that can ensure orderly, safe and regular migration while protecting the human rights of migrants” (IOM, 2021, p. 5).

In fact, irregular migration movements in our continent have multifactorial explanations. There are “pull” and “push factors that together explain human mobility. The “push” factors of irregular migrations are related to economic or political crises, limited access to basic services, violence or insecurity of different kinds, environmental considerations, among others. On the other hand, “pull” factors—the ones that attract irregular migrants to the United States and other developed countries—have mainly to do with access to jobs, availability of economic opportunities, family reunification and a series of human mobility facilitators (including migrant smugglers and their networks).

The “pull” factors of irregular migrations in the Americas are extremely relevant but have been less studied than the "push" factors, which have attracted substantial media attention in the past few years—particularly during the Trump years. The phenomenon of human smuggling might be considered a key “pull” factor that deserves special attention considering its critical influence, recent development and expanded capacity to attract vulnerable populations willing to leave their homes in search for a better life or international protection. There is a need to study these illicit activities that frequently put migrants at risk and to better understand the networks and actors involved in them.
New Networks of Smugglers in the Americas

Enhanced security along the U.S.-Mexico border and greater immigration enforcement in the whole continent, driven mainly by U.S. interests, have had unintended consequences and have transformed the phenomenon of human smuggling (also called coyotaje, in Spanish) into a much more relevant and lucrative illicit business (Gathmann, 2008; Fuentes and García, 2009). At the same time, migration routes have multiplied and expanded, and have become much more dangerous (Slack and Whiteford, 2013; Vogt, 2013) due to the involvement of criminal groups of different types (including the so-called “drug cartels”), as well as the presence of corrupt authorities, who extract rents from people on the move.

In the current context, human smuggling networks play a greater role than ever before. The role of the traditional smugglers (coyotes) that was essentially an individual or family business, has been transformed and we can now talk about smuggling “networks or organizations.” The new migrant smuggling networks and the actors that integrate them have demonstrated to be extremely well-organized, sophisticated, and adept at exploiting weaknesses in U.S. migration management policies and loopholes in immigration legislation overall. Such networks have developed sophisticated communication strategies, as well as intelligence, financial, transportation and recruitment capacities with the aim of facilitating—through illicit means—human mobility in exchange for a fee. They have also improved their methods, implemented new smuggling strategies, and have built stronger alliances with corrupt authorities and organized crime, including drug trafficking organizations, human trafficking rings, kidnapping rings and other criminal groups.

The significant amount of money involved in human smuggling operations “has attracted the attention and involvement of transnational criminal organizations that control the land or maritime approach corridors (or plazas) on the borders of destination countries” (Bersin, 2021, p. 4). Some of these organizations charge a fee to smugglers who wish to cross (with their “clients”) through the territories they control. Other criminal groups collaborate with migrant smugglers to recruit for their illegal enterprises (e.g., drug distribution, sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, among others). Smugglers frequently facilitate encounters of migrants with corrupt authorities and other crime groups.

Analyzing the networks of actors that facilitate human mobility in illicit forms is crucial to understanding contemporary irregular migration trends; confronting and resolving recurrent migrant and humanitarian “crises;” and protecting human rights along the migration routes in and toward the Americas. Recently, the formation and use of migrant caravans have apparently opened new avenues for human smuggling (Correa-Cabrera and Bersin, 2018). Technology and new communication modes and networks have facilitated and contributed to the expansion of such caravan activities, although they remain largely unknown both to law enforcement authorities and migration analysts. The business model of migrant smuggling organizations seem to have changed considerably in the context of mass migrations, more advanced technology (including more
sophisticated social media platforms) and greater access to financial services or cryptocurrency.

Final Comments

It is worth noting that there are still many questions regarding the formation and integration of migrant smuggling networks that remain unanswered. The judicial cases related to smuggling activities do not seem to have facilitated the access to enough information for understanding well the configuration of the relevant human smuggling networks with the final aim of dismantling them. Migrant smuggling organizations seem to have become much stronger, more capable and better organized in the past few years for the reasons expressed above, and no actions have been apparently sufficient for dismantling them or diminishing their capacity and scope. The have effectively contributed to facilitate human mobility, but at the same time they have contributed to the serious violation of human rights along the irregular migration routes.

Human smuggling has taken different shapes in the most recent years. Migrant caravans, for example, seem to have incorporated some migrant smuggling components, but further research should be conducted in this regard. At times, civil society organizations or immigrant advocacy organizations seem to have collaborated with migrant smuggling networks—many times without a clear understanding of their actual role in these illicit activities. Hence, there is an important question that is still unanswered: What is the role, if any, of immigration lawyers, advocacy groups, and religious actors in migrant smuggling networks and activities? (Bersin, 2021, p. 4).

According to Alan Bersin—former Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Chief Diplomatic Officer for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and former Vice President of INTERPOL for the Americas Region—there is an “unspoken and unacknowledged cooperation between migrant rights organizations (often including religious groups) and smuggling networks.” For him, the formation of migrant caravans “has also highlighted the role of migrants’ family members already in the United States who may subsidize smuggling fees and operational (i.e., transport) costs along with crowd-funding campaigns sponsored by migrant rights organizations.” These are serious statements which draw relationships that would be worth to further investigate considering the harm migrant smugglers could cause in the end to vulnerable migrants. However, it is also worth to acknowledge that migrant advocates do not seem to understand some unintended consequences of their altruistic actions and humanitarian mission.

Overall, illicit and criminal networks that facilitate human mobility and contribute to migrant smuggling into the United States are complex and involve multiple actors operating on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and beyond (including South East Asia, Africa and Eurasia). Their activities involve corruption, impunity, violation of human rights and border security risks that need to be identified and addressed appropriately. Notwithstanding much rhetoric to the contrary, investigation and prosecution of
human smuggling networks and organizations remains a low priority matter for law enforcement and national security agencies. Migration scholars need to do much more work on this subject as well, since there is not enough information on new migrant smuggling networks, which nowadays seem to be key when explaining current trends of international human mobility and well as explaining the violation of human rights along the migration routes.

Finally, it is worth noting that the present text identifies a phenomenon that comes together with other illicit activities and is widespread in different parts of the world. It causes enormous concern, but its discussion does not come without controversy. The debate and diversity of opinions about this subject show that this is a research area where we need to redouble our efforts and develop extensive empirical work to better understand the role of smugglers. In other words, we should try to determine whether they are facilitators of dignified mobility and assist migrants to find a way to their destination, or if they abuse/exploit their “clients” and maybe act as criminal networks. The present proposal calls for research to determine how the human smuggling business model works and how migrant smuggling networks operate.

In fact, there is a need to systematically study this phenomenon, in order to overcome one-sided views based on isolated examples of “facilitation of human mobility” vs. “exploitation of human beings.” From a theoretical perspective, we also need to overcome the “push” and “pull” factors model and develop other approaches that see migrants as agents of their migratory processes and that clarify the relationship between agency and victimization. Theoretical approaches such as network analysis and further field research can help in this endeavor.

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Introduction

The future of work amidst the Covid-19 pandemic is shaping up to be considerably complex. Prior to the pandemic, literature has already provided the most likely implications of digitalization, including possible displacement of lower skilled workers (World Bank, 2019). However, the combined impacts of digitalization and the pandemic considerably changed the patterns that were initially expected. The fast-evolving nature of the virus also limits the potential of people to immediately go back to pre-pandemic living.

The complexity brought about by the pandemic also highlights the need to underscore other existing global trends that are being magnified. Among these are climate change, global inequality, ageing in the developed economies, and the depth of globalization. The pandemic’s impact to these trends creates positive and negative undercurrents that can further muddle how the future of work will eventually look like particularly to lower skilled workers. These workers are mostly in the high-contact service sectors such as construction, cleaning, accommodations, and food and retail which form part of the migrant labor force in developed countries (NCCR, 2017). Without a clear understanding of how these interplaying impacts affect each other, developing countries will either be pushed or pulled by developed economies’ financial capacities to dictate prices in the factor markets — especially labor. These complexities are heightening the role of migration of human capital as a core outcome. As the world adapts to the pandemic economy, the demand of developed countries for workers is creating significant pulls from origin countries, as developed countries are also facing human resource gaps worsened by the pandemic.
The pandemic impact on labor puts pressure on individual countries, regardless of economic status, to process how they are responding and adapting to changes in the global economy through migration regulation. By process, I imply that there are country-level, regional-level and global impacts of the pandemic on migration. For instance, the implementation of COVID-specific health protocols can increase the cost of migrant mobility raising the possibility of informal movement that could lead to irregular work. In terms of migration, cooperation of different levels of government in assessing such protocols may result in national, regional and global cooperation mechanisms that can create or strengthen existing labor migration agreements, so as not to contribute to further imbalances in global factors of production, especially labor. This is to underscore that origin countries also are experiencing internal human capital imbalances between relatively richer regions over poorer regions.

These imbalances have made international and intergovernmental cooperation crucial for the future of human capital movement because they will help answer the question – for whom do you preserve human capital in the future?

The differing approaches to COVID-related immigration regulations, as well as the differing impacts of the pandemic on national economies necessitate a careful evaluation of how countries can work together leading to cooperation rather than competition for factor components, especially human capital. Addressing them needs a time-based response and substantial support mechanisms —to be developed internally from the firm level to governance from the local to the national level, and externally from the transnational firms to governance at the regional and global levels.

This article provides a framework on how migration processes can be steered by nations and regions —based on a realistic timeframe— to come up with a cooperative and sustainable human capital development approach that manages migration expectations and responds to the scars wrought by the pandemic and new issues that are developing as the pandemic continues and interacts with other global trends. It should help come up with a better human resource management in destination countries than pre-pandemic conditions.

Responses to Human Capital Preservation

I introduce here a process framework (see Figure 1) that certain countries have already adopted directly or indirectly. Based on the proposal of the World Bank (2020) on an integrated policy response, this framework recommends an approach of preserving and preparing human capital for the future of work regardless of whether it remains in its country of origin or to move into another. This framework covers short-, medium- to long-term time frames; each time frame has three key components. The process begins with managing the pandemic by lessening its impact, followed by protecting human capital from pandemic-related shocks, and ends with identifying the proper economic calibration mechanisms to preserve human capital and steer migration processes. I added in the stages the aspects of recovery, rebalancing and relaunching.
As of this writing, most countries remain stuck in the first two stages of containment and recovery, more than two years into the pandemic. The pandemic followed a common set of playbook policy responses, i.e., lockdowns, business and school closures, border closures, and social distancing (including wearing face masks). Countries have limited options of containment and most implemented an approach that would essentially prevent people from congregating for work, school and social functions. These different responses were implemented either completely, selectively in different times, or in varying intensities across countries.

In Southeast Asia, for instance, responses to the pandemic were implemented independently of one another and were used primarily to “buy time” to expand health capacities before they were relaxed gradually, as outbreaks waned, and other precautionary measures, such as vaccines and medications, became available. Policies to support individual households were often implemented in the form of direct money transfers, wage subsidies and skills and entrepreneurial training for displaced workers (ADBI, 2021). In OECD countries, the same policy playbook of containing the pandemic and protecting the general population from infection became a top policy priority. With better resource capacities, OECD countries embarked on an immediate employment of social policy responses. Besides, the work environment contexts are different in OECD countries, with a significant and immediate care demand for children and the elderly. Hence, apart from reinforcing health systems and medical research, fast and effective solutions were desired to lessen the economic and social impact of the pandemic on workers and companies.

What was missing in most of these responses, however, is that they tended to ignore the impact of the pandemic on migrant workers in destination countries and the undue pressures that (out-) migration created for origin countries in the aftermath of the pandemic. For destination countries such as those in the Middle
East, the weight of social protection imperatives in the light the pandemic, and their governments’ refusal to address them, forced many migrant workers with contracts to be repatriated back to their origin countries as experienced by the Philippines, India, Nepal, among others. (ILO, 2020). This also exacerbated extant issues pre-pandemic, such as the fact that migrant work arrangements remain informal, irregular or lacking in extending equal social rights and benefits to non-citizens.

The experiences of these different countries and geographic contexts reveal to us that getting out of the pandemic is not an option without huge costs. It is clear, however, that some countries have more flexibility than others in addressing the containment challenge. Developing countries will not have enough resources for providing a prolonged short-term income and social support. As the Asian Development Bank (ADB) found in its analysis of countries’ pandemic responses, the key explanatory variable in explaining the amount of any country’s pandemic response package is income per capita. Rich countries were able to dedicate significantly more resources to combat the pandemic compared to developing countries.

**Processes to move countries to the Future of Work**

Table 1 below outlined the different policy options at each stage of the pandemic. In each policy option outlined therein, resources need to be identified and provided. In the containment stage, national governments will be the ones to shoulder these expenditures. It is critical to note that provisions for social inclusion should also be made available to those migrant workers within each country and for those that will leave or enter the country.

Regardless of containment levels, countries will now need to move to the recovery and rebalancing stages for human capital for their policies to remain continually relevant, adaptive and consistent to the needs of the future workforce within and outside the country. The continuous impact of the pandemic underscores the importance of continued pandemic-related processes and policies that countries need to execute to go beyond containing the virus. Such policies must ensure that the social needs of all residents are met equally in a new “pandemic normal” of work and business, regardless of whether they work in receiving countries or decide to return to their countries of origin. Each of the policy elements should include and cover migrants and their families, regardless of their immigration status.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Containment and management of disease spread</th>
<th>Containment (Immediate term)</th>
<th>Recovery (Short-to-Medium term)</th>
<th>Rebalance (Medium term)</th>
<th>Relaunch (Long term)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Containment</strong> and management of disease spread</td>
<td>Effective and consistent surveillance system</td>
<td>Adaptive testing, tracing and isolating protocols uniformly implemented regardless of migrant work or tourism purposes</td>
<td>Population, households, firms’ behaviors fully adapted to calibrated containment process</td>
<td>Surveillance mechanism standardized and institutionalized to respond to any potential threat of pandemic</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protection of Human Capital</strong></td>
<td>Provision of social protection mechanisms for households and firms through subsidies and job retention mechanisms, including migrant workers and their families</td>
<td>Targeted and calibrated industry re-openings to sustain jobs that require less direct personal contact</td>
<td>Firms and workplaces set in place protocols to return to work safely</td>
<td>Sustained work flexibility through reskilling and retraining for local industry, including migrants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transition to offsite learning and work from home</td>
<td>Continue social protection mechanisms to those who cannot yet return to work, including migrants and their families</td>
<td>Implementation of calibrated social protection mechanisms, to include retraining and capacity rebuilding for all types of workers in a blended work- and study-environment including migrant workers and their families</td>
<td>Demand and supply gap of workforce domestically is addressed through effective pass through and shifting mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure continuation of basic services and utilities</td>
<td>Protocols for safe school reopening must be institutionalized</td>
<td>Learning capacity stabilization under a blended mode</td>
<td>Workforce appropriately allocated for offshore assignments in specific sectors and nations, regardless of skill type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Calibration</strong></td>
<td>Emergency financing to mitigate impacts on jobs and firms with migrant workers</td>
<td>Continue supporting firms, particularly small and medium enterprises, that remain unable to open, due to the nature of their sectors</td>
<td>Provide full support to industries and human capital needed by the new economy through improvement of productivity</td>
<td>Focus expenditures in ensuring education and training that is flexible and responsive to future labor market needs</td>
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More importantly, these stages are being proposed for countries not to think in “business-as-usual” terms. The pandemic is helping us rethink the different global processes which had already affected us prior to its coming. Besides, whether the pandemic ends sooner or later, the adjustment process of countries will differ depending on the availability of resources and capacities. The list above is not exhaustive but is meant to guide policy makers into assessing what can be done in a particular stage they are targeting to implement.

For instance, migrant workers, regardless of immigration and work status, were excluded from the social protection mechanism. Countries must start to include them in their emergency plans. In the containment stage, migrants and their families should be given equal access to social protection coverage. In the recovery stage, they should have access to reskilling, training and should not be burdened with additional health requirements for work. During the rebalancing
stage, origin and destination countries should once again allow the cross-border movement of workers under a clear process of equal protection if another health crisis were to appear. In the relaunching stage, global arrangements for migrant protection regardless of the reason for migration are to be institutionalized to prevent the jarring immigration experience forced on migrant workers around the world by different governments in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Rebalance and Relaunch**

The policy options identified in Table 1 singled out specific responses that must be implemented by countries through a collaborative approach. The processes outlined above ensure that policies are accurately, consistently and effectively identified and implemented, hopefully in a globally standardized manner. The objective of these policy options is not simply to get out of containment, but also to reconfigure the work force and their work arrangements regardless of whether citizens or migrant workers are concerned.

Rebalancing requires that countries fine-tune their responses for a broad-based productivity growth. We already know that presently this is not the case, therefore, to catch up with the high productivity winners, any government has to understand the existing skills gap within countries, labor market dynamics in the regions and globally. This information needs to be juxtaposed onto individual countries’ conceptions of their present and future needs of human capital at the local, regional, national, and international level. Hopefully, this could lead to a joint identification of skills needs and sources of human capital so that investments can be properly targeted beyond providing foundational skills, allowing for flexibility for movement within the countries, as well as international migration.

The case of healthcare workers in the Philippines is an example where the origin country is experiencing “shortages” as workers prefer to work overseas. In this case, as resources are limited, any cross-national cooperation can lead to joint development and financing of future human capital that will allow destination countries to invest in human capital development of origin countries, like the Philippines. The loss of human capital in origin country due to migration can be addressed bilaterally or internationally among origin and receiving countries, by jointly investing in future human capital and ensuring that those who have left will be receiving the same benefits of the citizens in the destination countries. Although this is primarily an arrangement to respond to common economic needs through migrant work, similar agreements could be used to ensure protection of migrants who moved due to climate, internal conflicts, political persecutions, among others.
**Expected Outcomes**

The challenge of the pandemic is that it is difficult to get out of the containment stage and move forward as mutations of the virus continue. However, being trapped in that cycle prevents countries, particularly developing countries, to plan for their recovery. With limited resources, developing countries might be forced to take the “easy way out,” by sending their workforce abroad, without commensurately working towards their own foundational recovery requirements. This is because differing rates of reopening, particularly in destination countries, are forcing many workers in origin countries to shun local work and move outside. Towards this end, developing countries must work along with developed countries in strengthening their base capacities.

The clear objective is global cooperation to stabilize first the containment stage and preserve and protect human capital for and within each country. This implies that migration should be a central target in policy planning and outcomes, as countries rebalance their human resources. This also implies that countries should not selectively use the market mechanism to attract human capital without first ensuring that all countries are aptly able to steer back their economies on track to recovery.

Applying the frameworks introduced above to developing countries and sending/origin countries of migrants could encourage more global cooperation, by ensuring individual country capacities to guarantee a baseline support mechanism. Beyond the global compacts and commitments signed by member-countries, international and regional organizations need to work more closely together to create a process of offering step-by-step approaches to countries on how they can organize and standardize human capital information and management. An imbalanced labor market will create continuing inequalities, worsened even more by the pandemic. Every country needs to come up with a list of essential human capital that it needs to have as it move through the stages of pandemic containment, management, and reopening. That data could trigger a process that will create a new arrangement of labor markets, social protection and international labor migration that is humane, fair and just for both sending/developing and receiving/developed countries.

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3. Migration Interdependence and Global Governance

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Migration interdependence (MI) has been growing throughout the post-World War II era, but little has been written about it in the field of migration studies, whether in the economics or the politics of migration (Brettell and Hollifield 2022). MI can be defined as the mutual dependence of populations in a migration system that leads to greater economic and socio-political integration. As with any form of interdependence, MI affects the international division of labor and can drive comparative advantage, altering factor prices and intensities à la Heckscher-Ohlin. But MI is not just an economic phenomenon. It involves social and political remittances (Lacroix et al. 2016) and can lead to the creation of diaspora. In this article, I develop a measure of MI and explain its implications for migration governance and the broader fields of migration studies and international relations (IR).

The concept of interdependence is well known in IR, going back to the classic work of Keohane and Nye (1977) and more recently works by Simmons (2003) and McDonald (2009). Derided by structural realists as overly idealistic (Grieco 1988) and celebrated by liberal institutionalists as a pathway to peace and prosperity (Ikenberry 2011), the theory of complex interdependence stresses the importance of commercial liberalism in IR. The theory predicts that international trade and investment lead to the diffusion of hard (or military) power and to the

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2 A simple google search reveals only a handful of references, mostly related to a research group that I started in 2017, which produced a new book, Understanding Global Migration (Hollifield and Foley 2022). One of the contributors, Gerasimos Tsourapas (2018), took up the challenge of investigating the link between MI and migration governance.
creation of international regimes and institutions that help to lock in openness of economies and societies and shift the focus of IR away from the classic balance of power. As early as Kant’s essay on *Perpetual Peace* (1957, originally published in 1795), liberals argued that open societies and economies could lead to a more peaceful and democratic world order. Migration scholars seem to understand this instinctively, and some have even argued that there is a causal relationship between liberal migration policies, remittances and democracy (see Escribà-Folch et al. 2022).

Like trade and investment, migration is a force driving interdependence between regions and states. One way to measure MI is to plot migration dependence on two axes: remittances as a percentage of GDP and migrant stock as a percentage of the population of states. This produces an ‘L-Curve’ (Figure 1 and Hollifield and Faruk 2017) and shows that states tend to array on one of two poles, either sending or receiving, with some states in the transition category. Like trade, MI is dynamic and the rate at which MI changes—as states shift from receiving to transition or transition to sending—varies significantly. MI is correlated with the rate of economic and political development and mirrors a state’s willingness and ability to manage migration for strategic gains (Hollifield 2004, 2012; Hollifield and Foley 2022). On the sending side, states like the Philippines and Nepal have used emigration as an explicit development strategy while others like Japan have limited the flow of immigrants and the rights given to small classes of migrants (low-skilled labor, university students, and temporary high-skilled workers and trainees) that are allowed into the country (Chung 2022). On the receiving side, a country like Canada, using its points system, promotes immigration as a strategy for national development, seeking to bring in highly skilled immigrants to boost the human capital stock (Reitz 2022).

In general, states cluster in terms of change in migrant stock and remittances, as a percentage of GDP, with quite a few states in transition, as immigrants and/or remittances have increased over time. This increase could be the result of a deliberate state policy (as the case of Lao PDR to increase its remittance flow, Figure 2) or it could be the result of the state’s inability to control migration flows, as in the case of a sudden influx of asylum seekers and refugees—something Europe is experiencing now with Ukrainians (Hollifield 2021b, 2022). Moreover, the movement of countries along these axes over time illustrates the degree of change in MI. While Mexico’s overall change in migrant stock has increased significantly, Guatemala’s has increased at a far lower rate, a consequence of the outflow of people from Guatemala and inflow of Central American immigrants into Mexico, making the two states highly interdependent. While some ‘developing states’ like the Philippines, Bangladesh and Morocco, are dependent on remittances as a source of capital, the ‘nations of immigrants,’ like the U.S., Canada, and Australia, along with countries of immigration, like Germany, France, and other West European states, are receiving societies dependent on immigration for economic and demographic growth (Héran 2022; Hollifield et al. 2022).
To maintain economic openness states are compelled to cooperate in the management of flows of goods, capital, people, and services (Keohane and Nye 1977; Milner 1988), and to pursue regional club goods and global public goods. Hence there is a close association between interdependence, cooperation, and global governance. Increasing international migration is one indicator of...
interdependence, and, until the pandemic of 2020, it showed few signs of abating (again Hollifield and Faruk 2017; Tsourapas 2018; Hollifield 2021a). Despite increasing MI, global governance of migration is weak (Hollifield 2000, 2012), and MI varies significantly from one region to another. North America and Europe are among the most migration interdependent regions in the world, with the Middle East not far behind (Thiollet 2022). Will Japan and Asia follow this international trend towards greater MI and regional integration (Okabe 2021; Chung 2022)? Will we see more MI and cooperation in managing migration or less in the wake of war and pandemic? The most prominent example of the first strategy for promoting MI at the regional level is in Europe where migration and mobility take the form of a club good—free movement for nationals of EU member states within the EU space. The EU and, to a lesser extent, the Schengen and Dublin agreements were built through processes of centralization and pooling of sovereignty. This was easier to do in the European context because of the symmetry (of interests and power) within the EU and the existence of an institutional framework (Geddes 2021).

It is more difficult to centralize migration management in the Americas or Asia, where the asymmetry (of interests and power) is much greater, and levels of political and economic development vary widely from one state to another. It is unlikely that regional trade regimes like the North American Free Trade Agreement, now US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), or the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP, now Comprehensive Agreement for TPP) will lead to regional migration governance as we have seen in Europe. On the other hand, Mercosur, like the EU, has promoted regional economic integration in South America, including provisions for free movement and rights of residence for nationals of member states (Gomes 2022). The regional option—multilateralism for a relevant group of states where migration governance can be defined as a club good—is one way to overcome collective-action problems and to begin a process of centralization of authority. Even so, international regimes have a long gestation period, often beginning as bilateral or regional agreements. It is unlikely that a multilateral migration regime could be built following the example of the GATT/WTO. It is too difficult to fulfill the prerequisites of multilateralism: indivisibility, generalized principles of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity (Ruggie 1993; Hollifield 2000). The norm of nondiscrimination (equivalent of MFN) does not exist for migration, and there are no mechanisms for punishing free riders and resolving disputes. In short, the basis for multilateral governance of migration is weak, and the institutional framework is fragmented, notwithstanding existing regimes for refugees and labor migrants (UNHCR, ILO, IOM) and the new Global Compact for Migration and Refugees (adopted in Marrakech in 2018), which is non-binding (see Figure 3).

3 Unlike public goods which are non-rivalrous and non-excludable, club goods are non-rivalrous and excludable (Buchanan 1965).
Structural changes in the international system with the end of the Cold War (moving from a bi- to multi-polar system) have altered the migration governance game in several ways. First, it has made defection easier. Since 1990, states have been more likely to pursue beggar-thy-neighbor policies by closing their borders and not cooperating with neighboring states in the making of migration and refugee policies. The EU Dublin process itself is a kind of beggar-thy-neighbor policy on a regional scale (Geddes 2021). Second, the new post-Cold War configurations of interests and power, both at the international and domestic levels, make it more difficult to pursue a multilateral strategy for managing international migration. Rights-markets coalitions have broken apart in the liberal states, especially in the U.S. (Hollifield, Hunt and Tichenor 2008) but also in Europe (Joppke 2021; Hollifield 2021a), increasing polarization and politicization over immigration and refugee issues.

Yet liberalization and democratization in the 1990s in formerly authoritarian states in the east and south reduced the transaction costs for emigration. Initially, this caused panic in Western Europe, where there was a fear of mass migrations from east to west (Fassmann and Münz 1994) and today from south to north, provoking a polemic about ‘The Great Replacement,’ the fear that immigration levels will rise to the point that the ethnic composition of societies is radically altered (Héran 2022). Even though such large flows did not materialize and are unlikely to arise in future—notwithstanding recent surges in asylum seekers: Syrians in 2015, the exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar to Bangladesh, and Venezuelans in Latin America in the late 2010s, and the ongoing flight of Ukrainians—Western states hunkered down and they began to search for ways to reduce or stop immigration and to deter asylum seeking. The time horizons of almost all liberal democracies became much shorter with the end of the cold war because of changes in domestic and international politics.
The terrorist attacks of the 2000s and 2010s in the U.S. and Western Europe exacerbated these fears, altering the tradeoffs in migration governance, especially in the post-9/11 strategic environment and now with the war in Ukraine, which has created an overarching security dynamic in migration and refugee policy in the EU (Hollifield 2021b, 2022). The increase in asylum seeking in Europe and the U.S. led to the externalization of migration control, thrusting migration squarely into the geopolitical arena. The delegation of migration control to third states has led Europe (and the U.S.) to entrust the protection of extremely vulnerable populations to authoritarian regimes such as Eritrea or Libya or to illiberal states such as Turkey. Pressed by xenophobic public opinion and reactionary populist parties, EU governments find themselves subjected to migration blackmail such as that exercised by former Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi in 2009, the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2020, and the government of Morocco, which in May 2021 allowed thousands of migrants to enter the Spanish enclave of Ceuta as retribution for Spanish policy in the western Sahara judged to be insufficiently supportive of Moroccan claims on the territory. Moreover, in December 2021, the government of Belarus brought thousands of asylum seekers from the Middle East, massing them at the Polish border in an attempt to manufacture a ‘migration crisis,’ like that of 2015, to divide and weaken the EU, using the threat of mass migration to pressure the EU over sanctions that target Belarus and Russia. The price of outsourcing migration control (in Europe, the U.S., and Australia) is high in terms of geopolitical independence and the protection of human rights and it transforms migrants and asylum seekers into pawns in a geopolitical struggle, turning them into ‘weapons of mass migration’ (Greenhill 2010). These are examples of how migration interdependence is a double-edged sword and can lead to conflict, validating the realist critique of the theory of interdependence.

If the U.S. or the EU defect from liberal refugee and migration ‘regimes,’ such as they are, it could mean the collapse of these regimes. During the Trump administration the U.S. already had defected from the international refugee regime, and during the surge in asylum seeking in Europe in 2015-16 the states of eastern Europe, the so-called Visegrad Group, led by Poland and Hungary, refused to take responsibility for the burden of caring for migrants in a humanitarian emergency. In game theoretic terms, such defections fundamentally alter the equilibrium outcome, which is often deadly for the migrants, costly for the receiving states, for the international community, and the EU (Hollifield and Takeuchi 2020). Moreover, with the pandemic of 2020, globalization of exchange (especially supply chains) and human mobility in general were quickly and dramatically reversed. To prevent the collapse of liberal migration and refugee regimes, the U.S., the EU, and other liberal states, like Australia, must pursue an aggressive strategy of multilateralism, taking the short-term political heat for long-term political stability and economic gain, much as Angela Merkel and Germany did in the face of the refugee crisis and humanitarian emergency of 2015-16, and as the EU is doing today with Ukrainians (Hollifield 2022). International regimes survived in the areas of finance (IMF) with the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s and the creation of the G-7 (Milner 1988), and in trade with the creation of WTO (1995), the adoption of the Single European Act (1986), and EMU (1993), which
in turn withstood the euro and sovereign debt crisis, and NAFTA (1994), which survived the peso crisis. Without the kind of leadership from powerful liberal states exhibited in international trade and finance more states are likely to close their borders, even though migration remains vital for economic growth and a key pillar in development strategies (Hollifield 2012, 2021a).

A key challenge for migration scholars is to refine our measures of MI, to understand how states manage migration for strategic gains and how MI affects the distribution and the balance of power in the international system. We must strive to understand better how a change in the levels of migration flows and stocks affect labor markets, demography and population dynamics, economic growth, and human development. Much work has been done on these issues by economists and demographers (for a review see Martin 2022; Héran 2022), but this has not led to modeling MI to determine how mutual dependence of populations in a migration system can drive comparative advantage and change the balance and distribution of power. What are the implications of MI for conflict and cooperation in the international system? How do states use migration for leverage and what are the costs of exiting migration systems (Tsourapapas 2018)? Will MI increase in coming decades and what will be its impact on economic and human development? These questions will preoccupy scholars in migration studies across the social sciences for years to come. However, a larger question looms concerning the effect of MI on political development. Will MI lead to greater freedom and democracy and a more stable and peaceful world, as the theory of interdependence would predict, or will MI be destabilizing leading to social and political instability and greater conflict? As I have written elsewhere (Hollifield 2012, 2021b), much will depend on how states manage migration, whether they respect the rights of migrants, allowing for greater freedom and human mobility, and whether states can cooperate to create a global regime that will ensure orderly and legal migration.

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Introduction: the problem

There is a very strong economic case for significantly increasing the number of employment-based visas as well as refugee visas that the United States makes available each year. The supply of U.S.-born workers is shrinking in absolute terms and will continue to contract between now and 2050. As of April 2022, there were 1.8 job openings for every unemployed worker in the United States, with an unemployment rate of 3.6 percent. There is significant unmet employer demand for labor at all skill levels, from STEM workers to farmworkers, truck drivers, nurses, home care aides, and skilled construction workers. Labor shortages have spread to all parts of the country, creating bottlenecks to growth for businesses and local communities and contributing to spiraling price-wage inflation. The current tightness of the labor market is likely to persist long after pandemic-related disruptions fade, because not enough Americans were born in the 1990s and 2000s. Immigration and refugee policy can be part of the solution.

But moving from rigid, artificially low visa caps to a flexible, market-based system will require a major paradigm shift. The U.S. system for allocating employment-based visas, both temporary and permanent, is badly in need of modernization. Annual limits set decades ago reflect what the political traffic would bear when they were enacted rather than current labor market realities.
Similarly, the flow of refugees has become delinked from both humanitarian and labor market needs. On a per capita basis, the number of refugees resettled by the United States in 2020 was far below the intake of countries like France, Germany, and Sweden (Figure 1). Refugee admissions were essentially cut to zero under the Trump administration. While the U.S. was a world leader in refugee resettlement for decades, accepting more refugees than the rest of the world combined, it has fallen short in recent years, accepting just 11,814 in FY 2020, the fewest ever. The FY 2022 presidential cap on admissions is 125,000, plus 100,000 Ukrainian refugees that the Biden administration has pledged to accept. Far fewer are likely to be resettled, however, since the governmental and nonprofit agencies traditionally responsible for refugee resettlement were gutted during the Trump era. Legislation that would set an annual minimum for refugee admissions, the GRACE Act, is stalled in Congress.

This policy conundrum suggests a new frontier for international migration research. The internal population dynamics of migrant-receiving countries have rarely been integrated systematically into studies of transnational population movements. While a few demographers have explicitly linked population deficits in industrialized countries to immigration trends, immigration scholars in other disciplines have largely overlooked such connections. To the extent that public officials make the linkage, they tend to focus on potential steps to boost fertility rates among native-born residents, despite the universal failure of such policy experiments in OECD countries.

The demographic challenge is broader than counteracting absolute population decline and relieving tight labor markets. The U.S. population is changing in other ways, including a sharp increase in the ratio of economically active to retired workers, that imperil the sustainability of the Social Security system and public finances at the state and local level. Adding immigrants and refugees addresses these population-composition issues.

In this article we propose one approach to using immigration policy proactively to manage deficits in population and public finances. But there is ample opportunity for new policy design. The goal should be to shift the policy debate from fine-tuning immigration restriction measures to developing mechanisms that can bolster communities facing demographic stagnation.
The Changing U.S. Demographic Profile

For the last quarter century, anti-immigration organizations and politicians have justified their advocacy of a more restrictive U.S. immigration policy by claiming that “the country is full” (Irwin & Badger 2019). In fact, the U.S. has a population implosion problem. It has a steadily declining birth rate. The total fertility rate – the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime – has dropped to 1.73, the lowest number since the government began keeping records, nearly a century ago. This birthrate is far below the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman needed to keep the population stable. While this reflects a decades-long trend of lower total fertility rates, the Covid-19 pandemic deepened the decline.

A powerful factor in the declining birthrate is a sharp drop in fertility among Latina women, two-thirds of whom are U.S.-born. That component of fertility decline reflects major generational differences, with young Latinas being better educated and much more likely to delay childbearing to finish school and start careers than their parents and grandparents (Tavernise 2019). While the same generational factors have contributed to fertility decline in all demographic groups, they seem to have been particularly potent in the youngest cohorts of Latinas.

Combined with pandemic-related reductions in legal immigration (closed consular offices around the world were not issuing visas), the depressed birth rate, and a rising mortality rate made 2021 the year of the slowest population growth in U.S. history. Natural increase – the excess of births over deaths – was just 148,000 in

Source: Compiled from data in OECD, International Migration Outlook 2021.
2021 – about one-tenth of what it was a decade ago, while net immigration yielded only 244,000 new residents, compared with the one million or more people added annually through immigration in much of the previous decade (Jordan & Gebeloff 2022). While there are preliminary indications that immigration is rebounding from the pandemic slowdown, growth through natural increase is quite likely to remain depressed. Taken together, these data points and trends suggest that the U.S. has now entered the zone of population decline inhabited by countries like Italy and Japan, which have long struggled to stabilize their populations.

The U.S. population is also rapidly aging. As it does, the dependency ratio – the ratio of young people to older – will shift drastically. Seventy years ago, the U.S. had 150 active workers for every 20 retirees; by 2050 we will have just 56 workers for every 20 retirees (Karp & Nava 2019). Retirees pay less taxes, so it’s increasingly difficult to finance Social Security, Medicare, state pension plans, and local government services. Labor force growth fell from an average of 5% increase per year in the 1970s to under 1% from 2000-18. Between now and 2027, a shortfall of 8 million workers is projected. As a result, GDP growth will be 1.4 percent/year lower in the next decade – absent increases in immigration (Deloitte Insights 2018). Moreover, the U.S. has faced the challenge of replacing 76 million retiring baby boomers.

The geographic mobility of U.S. workers has also declined sharply. Census data show that the percentage of Americans changing residence in a given year has fallen to a post-World War II low – less than half the rates of interstate and inter-county mobility experienced in the 1950s, and significantly lower than in the 1990s (Frey 2018). This is another form of demographic stagnation that makes it more difficult for employers to fill jobs. Young workers are the most mobile, but because of population aging, there are fewer of them with each passing year.

The U.S. demographic implosion is not evenly distributed across the country. Rural areas, small towns, and smaller cities have been disproportionately impacted and will continue to be, absent policy interventions that help them replenish their employment base (Ozimek, et al. 2019). Over half of U.S. counties lost population from 2010 to 2020 (see Figure 2). Between 2008 and 2017, only 0.1 % of total U.S. population growth and 0.8% of job growth occurred outside metropolitan areas (Swenson 2017; Frey 2019), so small cities are not immune to the population implosion.
Using Immigration and Refugee Policy to Manage Demographic Stagnation

While the fundamental demographic trends discussed above cannot be reversed, a growing body of research suggests that they could be managed more effectively through evidence-based immigration policymaking that is fully responsive to changing labor market conditions. In fact, increasing the U.S. intake of immigrants and refugees is the most direct, efficient, and expeditious way to counteract the negative economic consequences of demographic stagnation.

Optimally, a more expansionary -- and flexible -- immigration policy would simultaneously increase inflows of permanent legal immigrants but also of legal temporary visa holders and refugees, at all skill levels. Such a policy would enable businesses to grow more rapidly, creating jobs for both native-born and immigrant workers, and giving declining cities and rural areas a chance to reboot economically.

How many more should we welcome? For decades, bipartisan progress on immigration policy has been mired in a sterile debate about achieving just the “right” level of immigration. Absent any scientific basis for this debate, the de
facto prescription favored by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress has been to settle for whatever the political traffic will bear, or as one analyst put it, choosing some point on “a sliding scale of restrictionism” (Misra 2021). Uncertainty about such political calculations has led Congress to cling to the arbitrary caps on various types of immigration set in the 1990s.

There is room to do much more. The proportion of foreign-born residents in the U.S. population -- 14.1 percent in December 2021 -- is about what it was a century ago (the record is 14.8 percent, set in 1890). The U.S. admits fewer immigrants on permanent, employment-based visas (capped at 140,000 per year) than Australia, despite having 14 times more population. U.S. temporary foreign worker programs (H-1B high-skill, H-2A agricultural, H-2B low-skill non-agricultural) are also capped far below actual demand. For example, there is little economic justification for limiting low-skilled service visas to 66,000 per year, in a $21.4 trillion economy. The U.S. child care industry – which has lost one-third of its labor force since the beginning of the pandemic -- alone could absorb many more than that number of foreign workers.

One thoughtful analysis, by economist Kimberly Clausing, concluded that a 30 percent increase in the total number of permanent legal immigrants plus refugees could be absorbed with few negative effects on U.S.-born workers (Clausing 2019: 213). Another analysis calculated that increasing net legal immigration by 37 percent – about 370,000 additional immigrants per year -- would stabilize the ratio of active workers to retirees for the next 40 years (Noorani & Zak 2021). These recommendations were based on pre-pandemic data. If anything, the need for foreign-born workers has been strengthened by a pandemic-related increase in early retirement, both forced and voluntary. The failure of older workers to return to the labor force is one of the key reasons why the U.S. labor force participation rate has not returned to its pre-pandemic level, despite strong employer demand.

Moreover, a robust, sustained increase in the U.S. intake of immigrants and refugees would boost entrepreneurial activity. Statistics show that immigrants are more likely to start their own businesses than U.S.-born Americans: 11.5 percent vs. 9 percent (Kosten 2018). Those admitted as refugees have an even higher entrepreneurship rate (13 percent). These immigrant- and refugee-owned businesses can potentially create millions of new jobs for both immigrant and U.S.-born workers.

A Strategy for Maximizing Economic Benefits of Future Immigrants and Refugees, While Enhancing Public Tolerance

Flexibility in setting limits on various types of foreign-born workers and refugees is a key principle. Caps on all types of visas – both permanent employment-based visas and temporary worker visas -- should be adjusted regularly to compensate for changes in labor market conditions and broader demographic trends. An annual cap between the floor and ceiling could be set in accordance with an Index that takes into account unemployment and job turnover rates, as well as the prior year’s employer demand for workers.
Canada, for example, has been using such a system for many years. It maintains a labor shortage list of specific occupations that is revised every six months, using freshly collected data. Variations on Canada’s system have been implemented in Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and the UK. Such “shortage analysis” has been criticized on methodological grounds, but, combined with frequent data collection and qualitative evidence (e.g., employers’ perceptions of the difficulty of recruiting U.S.-born workers to fill certain jobs) it can be a valuable tool for aligning visa caps with labor market realities.

But adjusting the number of employment-based visas must have broad public legitimacy. A rigorous, evidence-based system to justify numbers of visas and allocations by sector needs to be implemented. A standing commission of independent technical experts (demographers, statisticians, economists) whose recommendations would be advisory to Congress and the president could perform that function (Papademetriou et al. 2009). Policy choices not dictated by technical analysis would still have to be made, but the parameters of those choices can be quantified and the debate made less politically contentious through a standing commission-type mechanism.

Future immigrants and refugees should be distributed in a way that recognizes, and addresses, the geographic inequities of population decline. For example, a new, place-based visa could be created to steer newly arriving refugees to where they are needed most, like counties that have lost prime-working-age population over the last 10 years, and smaller cities in the U.S. interior that are struggling to keep pace economically with larger, coastal cities. Communities would apply to enter the program, demonstrating support from local officials and community partners available to assist with integration.

Place-based visa holders would commit to a minimum period of residency in their first destination, e.g., three years, to become eligible to transition to permanent U.S. residency (a green card). They would not be tied to a specific employer. Statistics from Canada’s Provincial Nominee Program, which allows provinces to sponsor as many immigrants as they want within a population-based quota assigned by the federal government, suggest that the retention rate would be quite high if there is granular matching between immigrants’ skills and local labor markets: Over 80 percent of immigrants admitted through the Canadian program remained in the province that sponsored them, over a five-year period (Dalmia 2021).

The advantages of such a program are manifold. First, it does not depend on rebuilding capacity in refugee resettlement agencies operating at the federal level which were decimated during the Trump administration’s assault on asylum and may take years to rebuild. Second, by accelerating the integration of new arrivals, it would enhance the economic (and cultural) benefits of their presence to host communities. Third, by demonstrating that refugees are active partners in revitalizing the economies and replenishing the public finances of places suffering from population decline, place-based visas can generate broader public support for both refugee resettlement and increases in legal immigration.
A growing number of success stories, from Willmar, Minn., to Dayton, Oh., Detroit, Mich., and Storm Lake, Iowa, demonstrate that economically depressed places can reap significant benefits from an infusion of immigrants and refugees, who shore up housing markets, save major local employers from bankruptcy, replace vacant storefronts with new restaurants and grocery stores, fill churches, and improve public finances (Cohen 2017; Huang 2021). And in rural areas, stabilizing populations is the key to creating more and better jobs and maintaining essential services, like health care.

Conclusion

Will there be enough political space for the paradigm shift in immigration and refugee policy that the United States’ changing demography demands? Much will depend on the federal government’s ability to ensure an orderly flow of immigrants and refugees through legal channels. Uncontrolled migrant surges of both asylum-seekers and economic migrants to the Southwest border generate huge stresses on the immigration system as well as great human misery. Greater capacity to process migrants arriving there in an expeditious, orderly, and humane manner must be built. The Biden administration’s recent decision to recruit hundreds of new Asylum Officers to adjudicate asylum claims at the border rather than push them into a massively backlogged immigration court system is a good first step.

Visa reform is essential to create more opportunities for legal entry and deprive people-smugglers of opportunities to engineer undocumented migration. But passing new legislation will be necessary to achieve that type of reform, which means breaking the Congressional stalemate on all things immigration-related. Effective “root causes” investments in migrant-sending countries are essential to reducing the push factors that driving emigration from places like Honduras and Haiti, but the results of such investment programs could take a decade or more to be visible.

There will always be political obstacles to expansionary immigration and refugee policies. But with the global pool of refugees expanding more rapidly now than at any time since the end of World War II, including more than four million refugees who have fled the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. has an opportunity both to reassert its international humanitarian leadership and to demonstrate that refugee admissions can be an engine of economic renewal in some of the country’s most depressed areas. There may never be a better moment to begin the paradigm shift.

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5. Reflections on the Methodological Implications for Empirical Studies with a Critical Approach to the Migrant/Refugee Binary

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“Labelling is usually considered objective, efficient, routine and indispensable and, perhaps as a consequence, it continues wantonly, without contemplation of the politics involved and the potential adverse outcomes”


Categories can help us see just as much as they can blind us; they can shed light on particular characteristics of a given element – or person – while deepening the shadows on others. While the use of categories is fundamental in allowing us to make sense of the world, it is crucial that we keep in mind that they are permanently inchoate, and that the process by which they take form is neither natural nor objective (Jones, 2009). And yet, the categories at hand in this contribution, ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’, are often portrayed exactly as such; as “objective, neutral and apolitical” (Hamlin, 2021, 5). Like all categories, these were constructed over a series of premises that are subjective in nature and indeed have been configured and reconfigured in different geographic locations and throughout history to serve political purposes (Zetter, 2007).

Questioning the meaning of these categories adds to the reflexive turn in migration studies which sheds light on the epistemological processes of the field, calling for reconfigurations that address the ethical implications of knowledge production and the need to move on from methodological androcentrism, nationalism, and the naturalisation of social processes that configure labels of
otherness. It led researchers to question “who is a migrant” in the first place (Amelina, 2020). In her article, Amelina (2020, 2) points to the paradoxical use of the term ‘migrants’ for those who have never moved from one country to another (i.e. migrant youths, second-generation migrants) and the use of alternative terms, such as expats, for some categories of movers. This last term is often used to refer to migrants from the Global North, mostly white. This can be seen as one consequence of what Dahinden (2016, 2) calls “the institutionalized nation-state migration apparatus” from which migration and integration research originates. This points to the intertwinement of migration research with a particular normalization of the nation-state and ethnicity-centred epistemology.

Regarding the migrant/refugee binary debate, it may be summarised - risking oversimplification- by stating that there are mainly two competing definitions of migrants: the inclusivist view, which holds that everyone who changes their place of residence is a migrant regardless of the causes and circumstances (an approach applied by the International Organization for Migration), and the residualist view, which holds that ‘migrants’ are only those who change their place of residence without being refugees, understood to be migrating for reasons not contemplated under the Geneva Convention and its Protocols and often assumed to be migrating for economic reasons (an approach followed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) (Carling, 2017). Those who uphold the inclusive definition, believe “anyone on the move may have a well-founded fear of persecution and be entitled to international protection” even if their circumstances do not fit within the legal definition of refugees (Ibid.). The inclusivist approach thus holds that there are ‘refugees and other migrants’, while the residualists rather speak of ‘refugees and migrants’. In her work dedicated precisely to analyzing these terms and their use, Rebecca Hamlin (2021) refers to ‘the migrant/refugee binary’ as she describes a process by which the dichotomy of the residualist view has crystallized socially and politically throughout history. She summarizes the binary with the following equations (Hamlin, 2021, 3):

\[
\text{refugees} = \text{forced} = \text{politically motivated} = \text{deserving} \\
\text{migrants} = \text{voluntary} = \text{economically motivated} = \text{underserving}
\]

There are three main assumptions underlying the binary: 1) the causes for any given person’s migration are easily discernible, 2) the infringement on political and civil rights is a more legitimate reason for migrating than infringement on economic and social rights (in Hamlin’s words, refugees are ‘the neediest of migrants’), and 3) destination states have obligations towards the first group.

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4 For an explanation on the institution’s viewpoint see UNHCR 2016.
5 For the legal definition see the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol.
Findings of empirical research on the causes of migration increasingly challenge the first assumption, by questioning the alleged clear line between the categories ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’. They instead shed light on the multi-causal and changing nature of migratory journeys (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). The second assumption rests on the notion of a hierarchy of human rights that undermines their interdependent and interrelated nature, which is contested by Article 9 in the Declaration of the Right to Development (1986), in the Geneva Action Plan of the Congress of Vienna (1996), as well as by scholars in the field of human rights (Cortina, 2017), marxist theory (Harvey, 2003) and decolonial thought (Sousa, 2010). The third assumption is the result of a belief that causes for migration not contemplated in legal instruments like the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols, legitimately absolves destination states from obligations towards ‘non-refugee migrants’, even if they are facing tangible threats to their livelihoods. This has been contested by scholars in the field of migration and human rights (De Lucas, 2015; Oberman, 2016; Solanes, 2016; Velasco 2016; Velasco, 2018).

The following paragraphs briefly review the findings of five recent empirical research projects that highlight the multi-causal nature of migratory projects, followed by the ways in which this relates to the interdependent nature of human rights. Finally, I conclude by listing four strategies for methodological research designs and our reporting of empirical studies that allow us not to reproduce the negative ethical implications of the migrant/refugee binary, and in turn, aligns with the Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Recent empirical studies revealing the multi-causal nature of migration and a blurry line between voluntary and involuntary journeys

The research conducted for the MEDMIG, 4Mi, EVIMED, and IOM’s 2016 study on migrants’ profile, drivers of migration and migratory trends all highlight the interconnectedness of political and economic factors (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Horwood & Frows, 2021; D’Angelo, 2020; Achilli et. al, 2016). Furthermore, the still on-going PERCEPTIONS Project has revealed how migrants’ expectations and desires concerning their travel to Europe overlap among those who had not applied for asylum and those who had not. Both aspired to improve their living conditions (higher wages and standards of working conditions), to access healthcare and education (particularly for their children), to exercise their political rights and freedoms, and to be safe. Safety and tranquillity were stressed by both groups, those who had sought for asylum and those that had not (Bermejo et. al, 2021).

For Crawley & Skeparis (2018, 59), the findings from the MEDMIG research project they conducted with those who crossed the Mediterranean to Europe in 2015, “challenges the construction of policy categories based on binary, static and linear understandings of migration processes and experiences”. They point to the multi-causal nature of migratory movements, where economic and political
motivations are intertwined, and underdevelopment, conflict and poverty are closely linked.

The study conducted by the Mixed Migration Centre that builds up on the 4Mi research project reported that 56% of the migrants they interviewed stated more than one reason as the cause for their migration, with economic factors often being a reason for migrating, “even among people leaving countries affected by armed conflict and insecurity” (Horwood & Frows, 2021, 92). Furthermore, several of those who had not initially listed environmental factors as a reason for migrating, did answer affirmatively when asked directly if environmental factors had influenced their decision to migrate (Horwood & Frows, 2021, 96).

IOM’s 2016 study offers another example of factors which may be initially obscured in migrants’ reporting, but that become apparent when taking a closer look. The research initially revealed “a high percentage of migrants mentioning economic or work reasons for leaving East Africa” yet this was found to be due to a “large percentage of Eritreans lamenting the indefinite duration of national service and its low remuneration” (Achilli et al., 2016, 29). In international law, compulsory military service constitutes a violation of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as it is understood to be a violation of freedom of expression. Thus, while these migrants reported ‘economic motivations’ for leaving their country, international law would categorize their migration under ‘political motivations’ contemplated under the Geneva Convention.

Lastly, in describing the results from the EVI-MED Project, D’Angelo (2020, 491-492) highlights “what, as researchers, we would have considered taken-for-granted and mutually exclusive concepts such as friend or relative, smuggler or trafficker... being captive or being free, quickly appeared as much more blurred” with some of the participants manifesting “a clear urge to distance themselves from perceived stereotypes on ‘refugees’ and particularly from the idea of having intentionally and ‘rationally’ pursued a journey toward Europe”. D’Angelo goes on to share a quote where a migrant interviewed in Sicily states how “whether it be a refugee or an economic migrant, 95% of us are stuck against our own will” (D’Angelo, 2020, 492).

These findings all show that the line between economic and political factors is not a clear-cut, and thus, the line between ‘refugees’ and ‘other migrants’ is indeed “exceedingly difficult to draw”, to an extent that refugee law may very well be “ill-suited to migration realities” (Motomura, 2020, 23).

How the multi-casual nature of migratory journeys sheds light on the interdependence of human rights

One of the problematic aspects of the binary is how it plays into the hierarchization of political and civil rights over economic, cultural and social rights; a practice which works against the interdependent nature of human rights. Adela Cortina summarizes this interdependence bluntly when stating: “poverty is lack of freedom” (Cortina, 2017, 128, emphasis added).
Almost thirty years ago, the international community in the World Conference on Human Rights of Vienna (1993), highlighted the importance of this interdependence, yet hierarchization has remained very present in international law, and economic migrants are increasingly seen as underserving. Their migration, in the public’s mind, is not a question of human rights. In contrast, for Sousa (2010, 66), it is precisely the fact that millions of people are “condemned to hunger and malnutrition, to pandemics and the ecological degradation of their lives” which constitutes “the most violent violations of human rights”. “The Global North, with its imperial domination of the South” is the primary source, thereby putting in jeopardy the credibility of the human rights framework. Current globalisation trends, heavily marked by the proliferation of neoliberal policies, may very well be “incompatible with the basic standards of recognition and guarantee of fundamental human rights” (De Lucas, 2015, 17).

Globalisation, as well as the modernization project that preceded it, is not a natural process, and the persistence of poverty should thus not be understood as an inevitable development. Rather, it is the result of a conglomerate of structural forces that have greatly disparate consequences across the globe, accentuating inequality and aggravating its effects. In relation to this, Chimni argued that the formulation of the ‘refugee’, as it stands in international law, obscures the structural factors that lay behind the development of conflicts within a country (i.e. the external forces affecting the entire population of such a country) by taking into account individual and internal factors (i.e. economic or political motivation for crossing international borders) (Chimni, 1998).

We see this play out in arguments against the creation of the legal figure of ‘climate refugees’. The creation of such a legal figure obscures the fact that “the causes of climate change lie in the production systems and the consumer-oriented lifestyles of rich countries of the global North” and that “weak states are not a fact of nature, but a result of the inequality arising historically from colonialism and continued today through neoliberal globalization”, thus, missing “the point that such migration is a consequence of the human insecurity imposed on the South in the current global order” (Castles, 2011, 424). In the words of Vanyoro, it is “not a matter of sublime coincidence that today the mortal cost of international mobility is largely a non-white problem” (Vanyoro, 2021, 125). Indeed, the hierarchization of rights is an imprint of coloniality in the human rights regime, which must be overcome.

**Concluding remarks on the implications for qualitative empirical studies**

Empirical qualitative studies on the drivers of migration, the motivations for migrating and the decision to migrate all must take into account the power structures that lay behind conceiving ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’ as mutually exclusive categories and the consequences of this assumption for migration policy development and legitimization. From the research projects described above, four clear ways of doing so are: i) allowing for multiple reasons and causes to be identified by interviewees, such as was done in IOM’s 2016 study, ii) incorporating follow up questions on specific factors that may not at first be
mentioned yet considered to have had an impact on the decision (such as was
done in the 4Mi project), iii) highlighting the common aspirations and fears of
those seeking asylum and those who do not and iv) reporting the findings in
ways that acknowledge that those migrating for reasons not contemplated in the
Geneva Convention may very well have a claim to international protection.

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6. Social Media Analysis in Migration Research

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The ubiquity of social media platforms makes them appealing options for observing and investigating social interactions and phenomena. This includes the case of International Human Mobility, a complex and dynamic phenomenon that requires access to rich and up to date data that is not easily accessible via traditional sources. Hence, researchers and policymakers are increasingly using social media platforms as data sources to investigate various aspects of International Human Mobility. Such data can be collected and analysed through qualitative methods, using ethnography and discourse analysis, or through automated techniques, which can identify and analyse the very large amount of data available through these platforms. Thanks to their global reach, social media data can inform policies by providing opportunities to measure, monitor and forecast International Human Mobility, to analyse public attitudes and detect hate speech towards migrant populations, and to estimate levels of integration. As they enable people to create and share their own content, social media platforms also facilitate a better understanding of the ways in which individuals express, document and communicate their own migration experiences, including for people who often lack representation in research studies.

Social media platforms thus provide convenient and rich data to researchers that can potentially enable us to understand international migration in a more holistic way. However, they also raise multiple concerns and limitations that need to be acknowledged and carefully addressed to ensure the development of innovative and ethical research.

The first area of limitation relates to the type of data that is made available to researchers. Social media platforms have different technicalities, with different affordances, which make them more suitable for use as data sources in different contexts. The type and amount of data made available through their respective APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) also differs from platform to platform.
and can change through time. This has an impact on how researchers can access this data, sometimes opening up new data, and other times restricting access - sometimes with little or no warning.

The second area of concern relates to the various ethical and legal aspects that need to be considered when conducting such social media studies, especially in highly sensitive contexts such as migration (see Mahoney et al. 2022a, 2022b). Key considerations include potential ‘profiling’ of individuals, informed consent, anonymity, legal requirements such as GDPR, and how representative social media data is of the wider population, as representation of human mobility through social media is partial, over representing individuals who have the means and capacity to access and use this type of technology.

Here we compare the data availability and ethical concerns related to the use of three major social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. While social media research has also been conducted other social media (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, etc), we focus on these three major platforms to explore the different opportunities and challenges provided by each and highlight key points to consider when planning to use their data for research purposes.

**Facebook**

With around 2.9 billion monthly active users, Facebook is the most popular social media worldwide. This makes it a source of very rich and diverse data that is particularly useful when studying a global phenomenon such as migration. Indeed, Facebook is widely used by people on the move to maintain communication with friends and family at home, access the news, and engage in conversations with strangers (Bermejo *et al.*, 2021). Research on Facebook is often (though not entirely) limited to posts made on public groups and pages, which are often seen as being akin to public forums. These provide interesting insight into how people on the move seek advice and share information with each other. They can also facilitate the identification of misinformation and inform policies and actions to counter it.

However, using Facebook as a data source raises important questions regarding consent and privacy. Due to the limited audience of the majority of individuals posts, Facebook is sometimes perceived as a more ‘closed’ or ‘private’ platform (Burkell *et al* 2014). This means that most users would not expect the data they publish to their own profile to be used for research purposes. Informed consent is a key element of academic research, one which does not always translate easily across to ‘big data’ social media research studies. While there are legal provisions for not requiring informed consent from individuals where the data is considered public, and the logistics of retrieving consent from each individual (e.g., due to the number of individuals involved) is not practical, it is an ongoing debate as to whether this affords sufficient consideration and protection to the individuals who are essentially research participants without their knowledge (Fiesler and Proferes 2018).
The absence of informed consent makes maintaining the anonymity of research participants particularly crucial, especially in highly sensitive contexts such as migration studies. The profiling of personal data without explicit consent from the individual, including special category data such as racial or ethnic origin, can expose individuals to outcomes that can lead to social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination (Mitrou et al. 2014). The “Taste, Ties, and Time” project (Zimmer, 2010) is often cited as one example of a study which, despite the best intentions of the research team, compromised the privacy and anonymity of the participants involved. While the data was seemingly sufficiently anonymised to protect the participants, publication data which included the region in which the university being studied was based, along with cohort sizes, and the various courses available to students, meant that it was possible to identify the university, and therefore the group of individuals being studied. A similar situation in a migration-related study could have serious implications and potentially expose individuals to harm such as hate speech, detention or, in the case of refugees, pressures from authorities on family members who remained in the country of origin (Bloemraad and Menjivar 2021). The use of profiling by law enforcement agencies to identify and deter or prevent migration arrivals may also have further disruptive effects that may force such individuals into alternative and more dangerous migration routes (Dimitriadi 2021).

Since the launch of its Graph API in 2010, Facebook has provided various levels of access to data for researchers, app developers, and businesses. However, after the Cambridge Analytica ‘scandal’, which raised global concerned around the ethical risks of social media research, access to this API was significantly reduced, leading to a drop in research using Facebook as a data source. More recently, Facebook has begun to develop and release APIs to provide very specific metrics and data to researchers, with various verification processes required in order to prove identity and the purposes for access to such data. This new Researcher API, which should be made available in late 2022, may open up Facebook as a viable means of academic research, with appropriate access restrictions and mechanisms in place. However, what will be made available through this API is for now not entirely clear.

**Instagram**

Instagram, which is predominantly a visual-led platform, has led to different areas of research, compared to the predominantly text-based research on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The possibility to share pictures makes Instagram a relevant channel shaping people’s idea of migration and of countries of transit and destination, since it allows users to create, share and consume photo and video content, Instagram makes it possible to identify how people on the move communicate with their peers and other people visually, opening a window on self-representations of migration that contrast with the dominant media and political narratives. With initial versions of its API providing easy

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6 [https://research.facebook.com/blog/2021/03/new-analytics-api-for-researchers-studying-facebook-page-data/](https://research.facebook.com/blog/2021/03/new-analytics-api-for-researchers-studying-facebook-page-data/)
access to public content shared through the platform, researchers often used Instagram to consider how visual content was being formed, shared, and used in a range of contexts. For example, research has explored how Instagram shapes the crisis’ imagery at the refugee camp in Idomeni (Radojevic et al., 2020).

However, in early April 2018 access to many parts of the API was rescinded abruptly\(^7\), with no warning from the platform. Instagram indeed entails ethical concerns similar to those highlighted in relation to Facebook, with additional risks associated with the possibilities of visual identification, which mediatisation forced the platform owners to rethink their accessibility policy. If this was ethically important, it caused issues for researchers, who had been relying on continued access to the API while planning for future changes. This highlights the need to consider potential impacts to research studies or projects that rely heavily on continued access to social media data, and plan accordingly.

**Twitter**

Twitter is widely used as a data source for social media research projects, as it has continued to provide access to the platform through APIs since 2006. While much of the public data is made available through the various search APIs, access to private information is restricted, requiring individual explicit consent from users. This makes Twitter a useful and more ethical means to investigate public narratives. Its system of hashtags, which allows users to label their own content, structures data around multiple topics and communities of interest and opinion. Features such as following, retweets and mentions also link users together into large, sometimes global, networks. Twitter therefore offers broad opportunities to investigate public narratives, including those reflecting and influencing the migration imaginaries of various social groups.

Released in 2021, the Academic Research access level to version 2 of the Twitter API provides verified researchers with up to 10 million tweets per month, dating back to the first tweets published on the platform in 2006, with the only exceptions being those tweets sent from accounts marked as private, or those which have been deleted. This opens up new avenues of research, with access to historical data provided with ease. Prior to this, researchers would often have to collect data in near real-time, using limited APIs that only provided access to content posted (at most) within the past seven days. In research contexts that cover a prolonged period of time, such as migration studies, and where relevant social media data will often be historical, these new APIs offer the ability to easily collect and construct historical and longitudinal datasets. Researchers can now carefully design meaningful data collection and analysis strategies, without the time pressures of having to collect data ‘now’, or risk losing access to such data. While this only relates to Twitter, it may be indicative of the direction that other platforms may take, opening up meaningful access to researchers, providing data sources for meaningful academic research on substantial, and relevant, datasets covering historical events and longitudinal studies.

Although Twitter offers new and more ethical opportunities to investigate migration-related phenomena, it also entails limitations with regards to the demographics of the users whose tweets are retrieved, who in many countries, tend to be predominantly younger, wealthier, and better educated than other Internet users (Blank, 2017). Hence, while social media platforms make large amounts of data available to researchers, and thus are seen as a straightforward means of collecting potentially large datasets for study, it does not mean that they are free of bias or are particularly representative of a larger population. Data from the Twitter API is collected based on a set of keywords or other criteria. The very process of deciding criteria and which languages to use when searching for data, can introduce bias into the data collection process, and therefore the wider study. For example, combining the user demographics of Twitter with the languages most often used to post content to the platform can lead to an anglo-centric or euro-centric skew or bias within the dataset. In the context of migration research, such bias can lead to reinforce existing power imbalances and stigmatisation.

**Conclusion**

While social media platforms often offer access to significant amounts of data for researchers, there are many elements that need to be considered carefully, particularly when working in, or studying, contexts that are sensitive and with vulnerable populations. First, to what extent is it possible to identify migrants on social media? Further, is it ethical to do so? For individuals who may, for example, publicise their migration journey on social media, any implications and findings are not generalisable for the wider migrant population, but rather only for those individuals included in the dataset being analysed. While such limitations on the representative nature of social media analyses are true in any context, it is of particular importance when considering research that includes populations that are vulnerable and marginalised.

Regulations such as GDPR (the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation), and other national legal frameworks impose various restrictions on researchers when collecting, storing, analysing, and publishing data such as that collected from social media platforms. Where relevant and applicable, such regulations must be followed, and will impact how researchers collect, store, and analyse data. This is the case for researchers based in the European Union (EU), but also for anyone involved in a research project where personal data will be exchanged or transferred into, or out of, the EU. If the GDPR’s restrictions on data use for social media are particularly strict in comparison to other countries and regions, it shows the direction that these could take in the future. In contexts such as migration, and when working with other vulnerable populations or particularly sensitive topics, these regulations should be seen as the minimum required, and additional protections and considerations made to further protect the individuals and groups being studied.

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As platforms continue to develop reliable means of providing researchers with access to their data, it is important to maintain a balance between the data made available through these platforms, and the rights and protections that should be afforded to the individuals included within the analysed datasets.

References


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On April 1, 2022, the Biden Administration announced that it was ending Title 42, a controversial policy of migrant expulsions in place since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Purportedly imposed to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus by migrants without required documentation who might otherwise be housed in detention facilities or shelters, the policy has led to over 1.7 million migrant expulsions and denied countless asylum-seekers their internationally protected right to claim asylum in the United States; 1.2 million of these expulsions occurred under the Biden Administration.

While migrant rights advocates cheered the April 1 announcement, the change will not take effect immediately. The Biden Administration has set a target date of May 23 for ending the policy, asserting that it needs time to prepare for an expected surge in asylum claims and border crossings from Mexico. In the meantime, the President is facing pushback from some Congressional Democrats, especially from Senators facing elections in November and Representatives in vulnerable House districts. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) said he thought it would be a “huge mistake” to do something that “might invite a doubling, tripling, or quadrupling of the numbers at the border.” "The politics are pretty simple," said Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX), "The Republicans are going to hit Democrats with those videos of people streaming into the United States." While the Biden Administration likely would have not implemented Title 42 in the first place, it is now in the unenviable position of trying to repeal it without creating a perceived surge in asylum cases at the border, and thus a political backlash that could cost the Democrats the House, the Senate, or both in November.

Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ), facing reelection in November after winning his seat in a special election just two years ago, expressed concern that the
Administration does not have a plan to adequately address the potential humanitarian crisis that might arise when Title 42 restrictions are lifted. On April 7, Kelly joined a bipartisan group of ten other Senators to introduce a bill to extend Title 42 for at least 60 days and require the government to have a comprehensive plan in place before ending it. This group included four Democrats in addition to Kelly, including the Arizona delegation’s senior Senator, Kyrsten Sinema, Joe Manchin (D-WV), Jon Tester (D-MT), and Maggie Hassan (D-NH). Other Democrats, particularly in the progressive wing of the party and within the Hispanic Caucus, are pushing the Administration to hold firm on the May 23 date. “Asylum is a human right, and ending Title 42 is the right thing to do,” said Representative Jesús García (D-IL), “Now that mask mandates are ending across our country, it is even harder for those who support Title 42 to say this policy is a matter of public health.”

Republican objections to ending Title 42 have been more uniform. Immediately following the Biden Administration’s announcement, Senate Republicans moved to block a bipartisan $10 billion COVID-19 spending bill, and Arizona, Missouri, and Louisiana filed suit to stop the federal government from lifting it, although they are unlikely to prevail. As of this writing (April 22), 18 additional states have joined the lawsuit, all of which are Republican-led or leaning. On April 5, Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI) sent a letter to President Biden, cosigned by 52 of his Republican colleagues, calling for the continuation of Title 42.

Whether the Biden Administration remains committed to terminating Title 42 restrictions or it reverses course, managing its impacts and aftermath will be a key migration policy issue in the U.S. for foreseeable future.

The History of Title 42

A little-known part of the US Code that deals with public health, Title 42 § 265 states, “Whenever the Surgeon General determines that by reason of the existence of any communicable disease in a foreign country there is serious danger of the introduction of such disease into the United States... the Surgeon General in accordance with regulations approved by the President, shall have the power to prohibit, in whole or in part, the introduction of persons and property from such countries or places as he shall designate in order to avert such danger, and for such period of time as he may deem necessary for such purpose.”

Title 42 was codified as part of the 1944 Public Health Service Act, as soldiers returned home from World War II, bringing communicable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. The law was intended to provide more federal funding for public health, facilitating infectious disease screening at the border, not migrant expulsions. Nevertheless, President Trump considered invoking the law to restrict access to asylum in multiple instances before the COVID-19 pandemic. The President’s advisor, Stephen Miller, advocated using the law after ten migrants died in federal custody in 2018; during a mumps outbreak in detention facilities in 2019; and after a flu outbreak at Border Patrol stations later that year, but
White House lawyers opposed the move each time. The COVID-19 pandemic finally provided a credible reason to proceed. These concerted attempts to justify immigration restrictions through health built on a long history of eugenic thinking masquerading as a concern for public health, which has shaped immigration policy in the US since the nineteenth century.

After the Department of Health and Human Services invoked the law on March 20, 2020, the Director of the CDC, Robert Redfield, immediately issued a directive to deny entry to people entering the US from “Coronavirus impacted areas” for 30 days, over the opposition of many experts within the CDC. The directive was extended for another 30 days in April, and then indefinitely in May.

**The Impact of Title 42**

This March, I visited the Kino Border Initiative, a humanitarian and immigrant advocacy organization in Nogales, Sonora, where I met with migrants waiting to cross into the United States to claim asylum. Some people had been waiting at the border for over seven months; many of the newest arrivals I met were women and children fleeing drug cartel violence in the Mexican states of Guerrero and Michoacán. The stories they shared with me were harrowing. The number one question that every individual asked me, to which I had no answer, was, “When will Title 42 end?”

Under an agreement reached with the Mexican Government in March 2020, Mexico began accepting Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran families and single adults expelled from the US, along with Mexican citizens; this (and financial support from the US) has incentivized greater enforcement along Mexico’s southern border. At the time of my visit, there were very few newly arrived Central Americans. Migrants attempting to cross into the United States without documentation at official border crossings are told that the US is not hearing asylum claims; those apprehended after trying to cross illicitly are briefly detained and expelled, without the opportunity to claim asylum. Citizens of countries not accepted by Mexico have been flown directly to their countries of origin, without consideration for their physical safety there. Because the expulsions are conducted under public health law and not migration law, they are not classified as deportations. Migrants can conceivably attempt illicit border crossings multiple times without fear of criminal prosecution, a fact lamented by the Customs and Border Patrol agents with whom I spoke at the Nogales Station. Before the pandemic, just 7% of people arrested crossing the border had crossed previously that year; by October 2020, the number was 40%. In practice, though, crossing the border illicitly is not only a physically risky endeavor but an expensive one as well; multiple sources in Nogales confirmed that the Sinaloa Cartel demands payment from anyone attempting to illicitly cross the border there.

The public health justifications for Title 42 have never been strong. At no point since March 2020 have more than a third of those apprehended at the border been immediately expelled. At the same time, roughly 11 million people legally cross the US-Mexico border every month; the US has hardly created a
quarantine zone. For those expelled and denied their right to claim asylum, the consequences are severe. There have been 6,300 reports of violence against migrants expelled to Mexico; 7,000 Haitian asylum-seekers sent directly back to Haiti; and over 130,000 families expelled. There is a story behind each of the 1.7 million expulsions since 2020.

The logistics and short-term political consequences of ending Title 42 are daunting, but its continuation is unjustifiable. There is surely to be an increase in the numbers seeking asylum, if only from the backlog from two years of unheard claims; many more will likely start their journeys once Title 42 is lifted, although there is no way to know how great those numbers will be. The next step is to ensure that the government provides asylum seekers with due process as it seeks to deal with claims in an orderly, timely fashion. It’s time to do this now.

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Methods corner: ‘Untraditional’ Spaces of Knowledge
*Migrantes Unidos* as Movement Leaders and Abolitionists

*Background*

In a recent symposium on Freedom Dreaming in *Social Sciences Quarterly*, María Torres Wedding and Adriano Udani discuss the concerning growth of asylum seekers being enrolled into its Alternative to Detention (ATD) Programs, particularly the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP). ISAP enrollees are shackled with ankle monitors with GPS capabilities (Gómez Cervantes et al., 2017). They are also subjected to a “cocktail” of different ATD methods, including mandatory home visits from ISAP staff, telephonic monitoring, check-ins at ISAP offices, voice recognition software, and radio frequency monitoring. ATD is part of a larger system that profits through invasive surveillance to other community members, extending digital and mobile jails that restrict free movement of people who are disproportionately Black and Brown (Alexander, 2020).
While scholars bring attention to the violent systems that coerce human movement, asylum seekers are unable to live their lives completely free of stigma as well as perpetual surveillance and fear. The question then becomes, how can we build strategies that focus on abolishing systems that coerce the freedom of movement while at the same time build new systems that uplift not only asylum seekers but all people with lived experiences of coerced mobility?

One way to answer this question is through knowledge co-production. Our work builds upon a literature on the theory of knowledge co-production, which was conceptualized and coined by Elinor Ostrom in the 1970s. Ostrom (1996) and others have described the co-production of knowledge as a mix of efforts from paid and unpaid labor; producers and consumers (Parks et al., 1981); providers and recipients (Brudney & England, 1983; Parks et al., 1981; Sharp, 1980). Ostrom (1996) has also argued that both groups assist each other to create effective services that are needed by the public. Further, service delivery is difficult without the active participation of recipients. The theory of knowledge co-production has influenced scholarship in public administration, community development, sustainability, and information communication technologies.

Scholars have yet to bring literatures on co-production of knowledge and migration into conversation with each other. The few studies that have applied knowledge co-production framework to asylum seekers (Strokosch and Osborne 2016) still focus on creating services that are needed in migrant communities. This exclusive attention on service creation overlooks the politicization of migration and freedom of movement. A social services sector within a growing non-profit industrial complex has emerged to comply with rather than dismantle the U.S. carceral state. Indeed, it is important to improve access to social services and educate the public about the atrocities that immigrants confront. However, few mechanisms exist for asylum seekers to assert their agency to improve the quality of social services and repair harm at all systemic levels.

As a consequence, we find that service providers can have conflicting understandings of what legal rights and services asylum seekers are entitled. They can also perpetuate a common misperception: immigrants and migrants should just be grateful that they receive any assistance at all. To this end, when asylum seekers are positioned only as service consumers, they can be retraumatized, limited in untethering themselves from violent systems, and prevented from using their own creativity to problem solve. In addition, few studies have adopted processes that correct power imbalances between asylum seekers and researchers. While prior studies have led to “practical knowledge” of improving service, positioning asylum seekers as intellectuals who produce academic knowledge is rare.

**Partnering with Asylum Seekers To Co-Produce Knowledge**

We see the potential of a co-production knowledge framework to extend beyond the creation of social services to also involve advocacy, organization, and mutual assistance to abolish state-sanctioned violence, reject white supremacy, and decolonize policy spaces that isolate asylum seekers. Over the last two years, the
Interfaith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA), the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project (MICA), and Adriano Udani partnered with asylum seekers from Mexico and Central America in a process that positions asylum seekers as leaders who set the strategies for the rest of the community. Our asylum seeker colleagues also set the pace of escalation to implement their ideas for immediate relief and the long-term goal of abolishing detention.

We use a mutual assistance framework in which people with lived experiences of oppression organize to help each other – facilitate solidarity as a form of resistance (Medina, 2013) and help them to survive the present and build a future without any forms of detention (Davis and Fayter, 2021). Since January 2019, we have recruited and partnered with asylum seekers who expressed interest in abolishing the use of ankle monitors. In November 2020, we held our first meeting with 8 people; as of December 2021, our group has grown to 54 people. The average meeting attendance is 25 people. Recent recruitment is currently led by the asylum seekers themselves.

All meetings are conducted in Spanish; the meetings are led by a MICA or IFCLA representative. Another IFCLA community organizer transcribes notes into English. All notes are saved on a shared drive that is accessible to all group members, if needed. Attendees are free to choose whether they want to stay in the meeting or leave at any time. We structure the meetings such that it helps asylum seekers connect with other asylum seekers. We also reiterate that it is okay to try out the group and leave if you think this is not useful; attend once in a while; or, attend, but just listen. No matter what form of engagement in the meeting, we make sure that attendees are paid for the time and presence they give. We are able to pay asylum seekers $20 per hour for participation in monthly meetings, research tasks, advocacy, media interviews, and public speaking opportunities.

**Asylum Seekers as Co-Producers of Knowledge**

The literature distinguishes co-producing knowledge for individuals and a larger community. “Individual co-production” occurs when a person participates in the production of services they use but receive benefits that are largely personal. In contrast, “collective co-production” offers benefits for the entire community beyond just a specific individual.

We navigate and intentionally address these tensions between the individual and collective levels. In each monthly meeting, we offer the first hour for asylum seekers to share and discuss firsthand experiences, fears, and anger in dealing with immigration agents. Asylum seekers have shared endless examples of invasive questions and imperatives that are given. As one organizer has observed when dealing with ICE and ISAP, “only they [asylum seekers] know what happens behind those doors with the agents. We can only stand with them and understand what they go through only so far.” Asylum seeker knowledge helps shape the effectiveness of non-state actors such as organizers, service providers, and attorneys to better understand the clandestine tactics of ICE and its private contractors as well as improve the quality of services needed by
asylum seekers. In this form, asylum seekers are generating knowledge as clients. Actions taken by service providers and organizers were stylized to the individual, due to highly discretionary decision-making of ISAP agents.

Treating asylum seekers exclusively as clients pigeonholes them as service consumers. In turn, a false narrative that non-state actors “have the answers” is perpetuated. Researchers are also susceptible to subjugating asylum seekers as observations for study. In these phases of the project, the academic researcher felt he was writing more about asylum seekers, and missing opportunities to write with them as well as withholding options to control their own narratives.

To prevent seeing asylum seekers as clients only, we adopted some practices that aimed for more collective co-production. First, we were intentional in choosing language that describes our relationships with asylum seekers. For example, we avoided using subgroup descriptors such as the “planning” and “action” group. While an action team of asylum seekers does reposition them to advocate for themselves, we felt that it also excludes them from being strategic thinkers and leaders who dictate the overall direction of work. We settled on describing the asylum seekers as the “core group” while MICA, IFLCA, and UMSL served as the “support group.” The support group members have also thought of themselves as “stagehands,” while the core group members were the central actors. The asylum seekers brainstormed several names for the core group and then voted for their preference. The core team collectively decided to name themselves Migrantes Unidos Jamas Seran Vencidos, or Migrantes Unidos (MU) for short. The process of voting fostered a group identity tied to a common mission to end ankle monitoring and other forms of detention.

Second, we also intentionally provided the core group more agency in producing knowledge for wider audiences as well as more power and authority over the words chosen to describe proposed solutions to their problems and the direction taken. We adopted a new strategy of “affidavit writing and note-taking,” a strategy used in legal and social work, which provides a structured process to help people articulate their message and represent themselves in court or to social service providers. Asylum seekers are centered in all conversations. The tool provides an open-ended script that permits asylum seekers to decide how much information they would like to share and that is structured to prevent attorneys and service providers from invading a person’s privacy or asking potentially traumatic lines of questioning.

Third, providing a structured process to help asylum seekers articulate their message extended to our research methods. The academic researcher initiated a community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework called concept mapping. Many meetings were dedicated to explaining what concept mapping is and how it might help the group articulate its goals. Concept mapping helped to facilitate a collective strategy in the asylum seekers’ own words to end all forms of detention, including electronic surveillance.

Academic research that writes “with asylum seekers” certainly does not exist without consequences. Mutual assistance provides academic researchers a constructive way to express their solidarity with people with lived experiences of
oppression. It also helps researchers gain insider access to groups that otherwise might distrust them. Yet, scholars have noted the importance of being an outsider to the community for the sake of research and the community itself (Labaree 2002; Orsini 2015).

In an attempt to manage the tradeoffs of an insider/outsider dual status, the academic researcher periodically presented preliminary results from concept mapping surveys. Concept mapping provides another useful way to investigate the reach and relevance of asylum seeker ideas. The map is currently being used to further articulate and validate MU’s goals.

Even in intentionally designing and sustaining a research framework that is community-driven and participatory, researchers must still be held accountable by others and by one’s own self-reflection. The ways in which academic researchers engage partnerships also presents consequences for asylum seekers as authors. For example, while asylum seekers found the concept mapping tasks interesting, many felt constrained by this approach. We initially uncovered these sentiments after receiving a high non-response rate to a survey we administered. The support team reached out to specific members to further understand their non-responses. MU and the support team both agreed to set aside time to discuss the survey results and space to disagree, express concern, and ask questions.

Timing and COVID-19 were not surprising reasons for non-responses. Some were also confused about what was being asked of them. More tellingly, a common theme involved a preference to have more discussion about each survey question rather than answering them right after one another. They preferred to hear other members’ interpretations and reflections of each question. They had a lot more to say about abolition and their freedom, but were hindered by the concept mapping framework itself, in spite of its community-based and participatory design. Our experiences with concept mapping highlight the challenge of participatory research. While concept mapping provided asylum seekers agency and ownership over the tools to produce knowledge, the chosen research framework gave the academic researcher more power in dictating how conversations about abolition and freedom should transpire.

We find that the last practice that was used in this project is both new and complimentary to current practices of knowledge co-production. This is when asylum seekers act as compañero/as or compas (i.e. friends) to others who experiencing difficulties with ankle monitors. Indeed, facilitating group support meetings with asylum seekers who can discussed their fears and hopes as well as stand with others is itself a form of resistance and fills a need in the community. In this form of knowledge production, it is the asylum seekers themselves co-producing knowledge amongst themselves, for themselves, with minimal support from non-state actors. Our group meetings also became a safe place to provided spaces to discuss fears, concerns, and adverse effects of COVID-19 as well. For many in the group, this is their first time meeting other asylum seekers who either has worn or currently have an ankle monitor. Asylum seekers reported feeling less anxious, hopeful, and affirmed among people who are dealing with similar forms of oppression. During this project, 19 people have
self-advocated in front of an ICE officer to remove their ankle monitors. On multiple occasions, asylum seekers decided to accompany each other to ICE and ISAP to advocate for their ankle monitor removals.

Overall, it is a compas production of knowledge that is making a real-life difference and informing academic discourse. We are finding that our asylum seeker colleagues are not only building courage but are also more informed about how to self-advocate for themselves and others. At the most basic level, asylum seekers feel more equipped to face state actors after obtaining more information about ATD and seeing peers go through the same process. These are new outcomes that local grassroots advocacy groups and immigrant legal services organizations have consistently voiced. As compas, asylum seekers have offer ways to build courage with each other, created room to practice self-advocacy, and have freedom of critical thinking.

We find that this process helps to further inform academic research on the relationship between group membership, identity, and consciousness. The progress of MU implicates how many theories of change and group-centric frameworks are based on marginalization and oppression. People cannot want what they do not see. Current studies continue to identify reasons for which marginalized groups reproduce their own oppression. Yet, the discourse of MU can critically challenge these theories for not providing enough academic space to be more than just asylum seekers, people living in the shadows, or helpless individuals waiting to be saved. In thinking about the power imbalances between asylum seekers and academics, a quote from Stephen Jay Gould comes to our minds: “I am, somehow, less interested in the weight and convolutions of Einstein’s brain than in the near certainty that people of equal talent have lived and died in cotton fields and sweatshops.” Through a mutual assistance framework that provided accompaniment for political purposes, MU has allowed individuals the time and space to think critically and reflect on their own role in abolition. In our work, a variety of identities and roles emerged: leaders, record keepers, cheerleaders as well as providers of emotional support, validation, and information. These are all necessary for pursuing a future without any forms of detention.

References


Please direct inquiries about this piece to Adriano Udani at udania@umsl.edu. For more information on Migrantes Unidos, read the University of Missouri-St. Louis’ daily blog: https://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2022/05/24/migrantes-unidos-gives-voice-to-asylum-seekers-advocating-for-policy-changes/
The Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at Osnabrück University is the oldest research institution on this subject in the German academic landscape. Its genesis began in the 1980s, primarily focusing on historical-social migration research. IMIS was formally launched in 1991 and has since grown into an interdisciplinary, interfaculty research center at Osnabrück University. As of December 2021, it involves 65 researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines, including Education, Ethnology, Gender Studies, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Sociology. IMIS is a founding member of the European network IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe) as well as a founding member of the Deutsche Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (German Center for Integration and Migration Studies, DeZIM). Moreover, IMIS hosts the German Network for Forced Migration Studies (Netzwerk Fluchtforschung e.V.). At its core, IMIS focuses on (1) interdisciplinary research about migration, (2) postgraduate studies and training for PhD and postdoctoral researchers, and (3) editing journals and book series as well as facilitating exchange of and dialogues between academia, the public and practitioners.

Between 2015 and 2020, IMIS developed a support structure and platform for exchange and training for refugee students (“Coordination refugees”). Some IMIS members are researchers in exile and the threatened academic and political freedom is not only an issue of scholarly interest (such as in a research project about exile literature), but part of the Institute’s life itself.
Research areas

Scholars at IMIS broadly concentrate on the manifold aspects of spatial mobility and its consequences in the past and present as well as questions of knowledge production. This involves but is not limited to colonial and labor migration, migration regimes, educational and vocational mobility, intersectionality, forced migration and deportation along with questions about scale an urban politics, migration-related activism, climate and environmental change, racism and religious orientations.

Our research attention is detailed in four distinct focus areas in research:

1. Migration regimes: The individual and collective actions of (potential) migrants are produced in the past and present under various conditions of control—steering, categorization and regulatory undertakings—in the development and partial implementation of which various actors are involved. The contingent characteristics, contexts and developments of these attempted influences and their interactions with the actions and decisions of migrants are the subject of this research area, coined as ‘migration regimes.’

2. Forced migration: Forced migration (flight, expulsion, deportation, resettlement, etc.) occurs when a state, semi-state or quasi-state actors place far-reaching restrictions on the power to act and thus on the freedom and freedom of movement of individuals or collectives. The backgrounds, patterns of movement and consequences of forced migration are the subject of this IMIS research area, as are the global, regional, national and local protection regimes and the specific social negotiations, shaped by numerous actors, through which protection is offered, under what circumstances and with what scope.

3. Migration societies: A migration society can be understood as a society in which a) questions of migration are important for various areas of society and are linked to more general questions of social development; b) the (re-
production of migration and the associated negotiation processes determine social debates and (power-)political controversies to a large extent, which makes social lines of conflict visible, calls into question previous practices of political, legal and institutional control and (can) lead(s) to the (further) development of forms of governance; c) migration and mobility trigger self-reflexive effects that call into question traditional social self-awareness and raise fundamental questions of social coexistence or of belonging and identity, which (can) lead to processes and controversies of the normative self-awareness of a given society.

4. **Knowledge production**: Societies constantly produce ‘migration knowledge.’ This IMIS research field is concerned with the practices of producing and circulating knowledge about the spatial movement of people in the past and present, which is investigated at the intersection of science and politics, administration and society. The aim of this area of IMIS research is to develop reflexive perspectives for historical, sociological and cultural research on migration on an interdisciplinary basis.

**Study programs**

IMIS offers two Master programs: A German-language two-year program entitled “Internationale Migration und Interkulturelle Beziehungen” (international migration and intercultural relations, IMIB), and an English-language Double Degree Master program entitled “European Master in Migration Studies” (EuMIGS). The latter is part of the EuMIGS-Network that currently includes eight master programs in seven European countries, namely at Linköping and Malmö (Sweden), Copenhagen (Denmark), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Liège (Belgium), Neuchâtel (Switzerland), A Coruña (Spain) and Osnabrück (Germany). Both degrees represent interdisciplinary study programs that focus on the multifaceted phenomenon of migration. Annually 30 students are admitted.

Moreover, doctoral research projects are broadly promoted at IMIS. About 40 doctoral candidates are currently doing their PhD at IMIS. In addition to individual doctoral candidates, IMIS regularly carries out doctoral programs, such as ›The Production of Knowledge on Migration‹ or ›MiGG‹, a Graduate Program focusing on migration-society border formations in collaboration with Oldenburg University and Göttingen University (currently no new intakes for those two programs).

IMIS also hosts Summer Schools and other events for training and facilitating networking for junior scholars.
IMIS as a publisher

IMIS furthermore offers a range of publication formats, including:

- The German Journal of Migration Studies
- IMIS Working Papers
- The book series Migrationsgesellschaften
- The book series Studien zur Historischen Migrationsforschung (SHM)
- IMIS-Beiträge
- focus MIGRATION

In the past, the book series IMIS-Schriften was also edited, and individual IMIS members are furthermore involved in a range of other journals, including the German Journal of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies, Comparative Migration Studies, movements or PERIPHERIE.

Doing research under conditions of the pandemic at IMIS

At IMIS, research is largely relying on field work, interview data or archival resources. Recently, almost all research projects have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. We developed communicative spaces at IMIS for exchange on how to adapt field-work based projects and (also emotionally) deal with the
challenges. In many cases we managed to adapt in a fruitful manner. To give just three examples from projects that are situated in the two research areas of migration regimes and forced migration: In the project “Women, Forced Migration – and Peace?” (funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research) we aim to explore how displaced people in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya understand peace and engage in peacebuilding activities. Since travels have not been possible, we broadened our approach by initiating contact and debates with people in Kakuma online. This paved the way for us to carry out a range of interviews online. Moreover, we collaborated with colleagues to conduct a qualitative questionnaire online about the effects of the pandemic on refugees and their protection. While we still look forward to travelling to Kenya, the new approach helped us to gain insights. In the collaborative project TRANSMIT (Transnational Perspectives on Migration and Integration) within the framework of DeZIM network, we decided not to do fieldwork ourselves in Morocco and The Gambia as planned but collaborate with local researchers. Of course, we first had to find out whether fieldwork at all would be possible, because we did not want to create an additional risk for spreading the virus by having interviews or household surveys conducted. The third example is one PhD researcher who is interested in migrants’ social protection strategies in South Africa. He decided to adapt his question by using the Covid-19 crisis as a case study. However, while it might appear quite natural to do so, at the same time the research is of course affected by travel restrictions and uncertainty about his fieldwork.

Please direct inquiries about the institute to imis@uni-osnabrueck.de. You can find more information on IMIS’ activities online https://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/startpage.html, and on social media (Twitter: @IMIS_UOS, Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/IMIS.UOS)
Section Awards
Interviews with the winners of the 2021 APSA Migration & Citizenship Awards

Best Article Award Co-winners
Rafaela Dancygier & Yotam Margalit


What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?

We started this paper many years ago, in 2011! It took us a very long time to translate and code all the election manifestos. So, it felt particularly rewarding to receive this award and to know that other scholars appreciated the work.

What aspects of your paper on party politics and immigration in Europe would you like section members to know more about?

One goal in writing this paper was to provide a comprehensive overview of how major parties have positioned themselves on immigration over the long run. This is a topic that has become incredibly salient in recent years, and there’s a lot of fantastic research examining contemporary politics. We wanted to take a step back and gain some perspective about the dynamics of party positioning on the topic of immigration as they have unfolded over the decades. We think that two aspects that our approach reveals are especially noteworthy and perhaps contrary to expectations: 1) major center-left and center-right parties in Western Europe actually have not polarized around immigration, and 2) in terms of how parties talk about the issue, cultural concerns have not dominated economic ones.

Do you have any plans to take this research any further?

Our intention was to provide a publicly available dataset that others could use. So, we hope that other researchers will do so! We also hope that others will
apply our coding protocol to extend the research to other countries and time periods (our dataset ends in the early 2010s).

**Praise by the jury:**

Dancygier and Margalit make an important contribution to the study of party politics and immigration in Europe. Scholars have long faced obstacles to conducting cross-national research on how parties deploy the immigration issue in their electoral campaigns, as the Comparative Manifestos Project did not code immigration-related statements in party platforms. Dancygier and Margalit have filled that gap by not only coding immigration mentions, but also different facets of the issue. This article details the logic behind the coding and demonstrates its utility in adjudicating some debated questions in the field. The committee expects this article and its data will generate much fruitful research in the years ahead.
Best Article Award Co-winners

Vicky Fouka & Aala Abdelgadir


What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?

There is some amazing work being done by our colleagues on issues of migration and citizenship, so it was a pleasant surprise to hear that we had won. Equally, we think this topic of cultural/religious regulation of immigrants and immigrant-origin individuals has been understudied so we’re glad to see that the paper is being received positively.

What aspects of your paper on migrants’ responses to the headscarf ban in France would you like section members to know more about?

It is important to highlight the channels through which the law had negative effects on Muslim students. The effect on education we identify is arising from the discrimination school-aged Muslim girls faced during the implementation of the headscarf ban, as this transitional period generated differential scrutiny of Muslim schoolgirls. In line with this hypothesis, we find that Muslim schoolgirls were more likely to drop out of school in the immediate aftermath of the ban and were more likely to take longer to complete secondary education.

Do you have any plans to take this research any further?

We are pursuing two lines of work related to this paper. First, we are working on a set of projects examining the impact of historical state policies on long-run integration patterns of Muslim immigrants in Europe. Second, we are pursuing further work on veiling in Western European countries as it remains a highly contentious issue. In one project, we examine the social determinants of veiling in the French context.
Aala, after finishing your doctorate at Stanford University, what are your career plans? Vicky, what are your next career steps?

Aala: I’m currently doing a postdoc at Princeton and hoping to apply for the academic job market in Fall 2022.
Vicky: I am working on a book project laying down a framework of immigrant decision-making and using it to understand immigrant responses to state policies and societal assimilation pressures.

Praise by the jury:
Abdelgadir and Fouka address a central question in the study of migrant integration: how (Muslim) migrants respond to a host country policy that is perceived as discriminatory. Using the case of the Muslim headscarf ban in France, and a careful research design, the authors find that the law reduced the length of time Muslim girls remained in school and had lasting effects on their labor market trajectories. The committee was impressed with the carefulness and transparency of the empirical analysis, as well as with the innovative design that went into answering a question of great relevance to both theory and policy making.
What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?

I got the news that I won the award when I was just going through my usual e-mails in the morning. My first reaction was to read the message at least 50 more times to make sure that I understood it – and made my friends read it to double-check! I felt incredibly happy to get this recognition for my doctoral thesis, culminating everything that I learned and produced in the last 5-6 years. More than anything, it encouraged me to pursue and continue researching the kind of research questions that I am interested in studying in the politics of immigration.

What aspects of your paper on election campaigns in Europe on socioeconomic risk and immigration would you like section members to know more about?

In my paper on the electorate of the radical-right parties in Europe, I argued against thinking of the issue area of “immigration” solely as socio-cultural and that citizens’ positions towards stricter stances on immigration may have very real economic anxiety and insecurity related motivations. In this sense, I believe one of the more important arguments in that paper is that the electoral base of the radical-right should be studied as heterogeneous, i.e., composed of both culturally and economically motivated voters. Even though immigration in Europe
is mostly economically beneficial, the electoral campaigns of the radical-right parties have been remarkably successful in attributing the blame for economic downturns, job losses, social protection retention resulting from many other global and domestic changes in great part to immigration for their political gains.

**Do you have any plans to take this research any further?**

Linked to my research in my doctoral project, I would like to pursue the study of the precise discourses and party platforms that manage to present a “winning” combination for the radical-right in Europe in blame attribution to immigration in the economic domain, especially in job retention and social protection insecurities. I think it would be very interesting to look at both successful and unsuccessful cases of radical-right party electoral performance in the last two decades to better understand the messaging in this specific area – and what works under which conditions.

**After your current postdoctoral researcher position at Leiden, what are your plans?**

Now, I am working in the migration and social citizenship research programme at Leiden University. My role as a postdoctoral researcher is to pursue my research and develop new ideas and projects that can expand and strengthen the migration and citizenship research at Leiden. After my current position, I plan to develop and lead my own large-scale research project, focusing on migrant representation in the political sphere and civil society in Europe.

**Praise by the jury:**

Elif Kayran’s study of immigration politics in Europe sheds new light on an old debate about citizen support for parties with restrictionist agendas. Kayran’s research emphasizes the uneven exposure of native-born workers in different industries to unemployment risk, and probes a sense of declining material well-being, especially compared to other natives. Using a combination of surveys and economic indicators, Kayran crafts novel and sophisticated measures of socioeconomic risk, and deploys them for single-case analysis and multi-country analyses. She investigates growing support for radical right-wing parties across Europe during the 2000s and shows that people whose sense of economic security has eroded have turned a sympathetic ear to right wing parties’ anti-immigrant campaigns. Such sympathizers are, moreover, distinct from the radical right’s core anti-immigrant voters. The committee found Kayran’s novel take on the long-standing question of how labor market competition affects immigration attitudes impressive, and the findings noteworthy. The project reveals how attitudes are shaped by the unemployment risk within an individual’s field of employment—a finding that holds even after controlling for subjective perceptions of economic insecurity. Kayran’s policy findings are likewise important: strategies to offer job protections and extend income replacement, in turn moderate restrictionist attitudes.
What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?

Well, I was absolutely delighted and surprised! My research is interdisciplinary, which I personally think is of great value. But I wasn’t sure how the book would be received by a political science audience. I’m thrilled that my research has been recognized by the section and within the discipline that gave me my doctoral training. It’s additional confirmation to me that drawing on diverse literatures across the social sciences, reading far and wide, can inform theory and analysis in exciting, novel ways. Social science luminaries like Elinor Ostrom, Albert Hirschman, Peter Evans, Wayne Cornelius, John Gaventa, Sue Stokes, Melani Cammett, Lily Tsai, Robert Dahl, Judy Tendler, and Merilee Grindle (as you can see many political scientists) each left their imprint on the book along with so many giants in sociology and anthropology that made studies of transnational migration valuable and necessary. Having the book honored also brings me great joy because it affirms that the migration and citizenship section continues to care about comparative research in addition to the US case. How wonderful!

Which particular aspects of your fascinating book on how the characteristics of sending localities and states affect cross-border relations would you like section members to know more about?

I’ll note two aspects of the research that I think deserve more mention. First, the federal program that administered and matched migrants’ remittances for public
goods delivery (the 3 x 1 Program) has ended. This is a real test of the theory in my eyes. I made the case in the book that those migrants who remained socially embedded in their hometown or were able to renegotiate their political membership after exit would have both a) more successful projects, but also, that b) the civic and political engagement that the project partnerships scaled up would be more likely to continue. I made the case because I saw how citizens would draw on their relationships, interactions and deliberations with political officials on development projects, and then parlay those connections for other community needs, many times independent of migrant monies or the 3x1 Program altogether. At the close of the 3x1 Program, if there was evidence that places with more successful, community inclusive projects transferred their skills and political interest into other forms of political engagement, that would signal to me some evidence that the theory was robust. In follow up interviews with officials and locals in Mexico and migrants in the US, I’ve learned that synergetic partnerships, those characterized by more community inclusion and government engagement, have seen the continuation of coproduced public goods projects, even in the absence of the 3x1 matching funds. But perhaps more importantly, citizens who were part of the selection, implementation, and monitoring of projects have become community leaders who make more demands on the local government and corral others to help solve local problems when state interest and resources wither.

Second, it is no surprise to those who study and follow Mexican politics that violence affects many locales including a few of the communities I focused on in the book. The arrival of violence and criminal organizations, some connected to cartels, certainly interrupted, corrupted, and ultimately halted migrant-led development initiatives. In some cases, migrants who sent money home to their families and communities became targets of violence and extortion. Furthermore, towards the tail end of the 3x1 program, political officials and project liaisons became a target of criminal organizations who required project budgets be inflated so they could skim resources off the top for personal and organizational gain. However, in many of those same locales some migrants and their social ties at home (family, friends, acquaintances, coproduction partners) fought back. They harnessed the social networks, organizational capacity, and resources previously mobilized for public goods like roads, schools, and electricity to provide public security and social order through vigilante self-defense forces called autodefensas. The organizational know-how and resources previously destined for health clinics and drainage were diverted to provide public security through armed collective resistance.

Do you have any plans to take this research any further?

Oh yes! With my brilliant colleague and friend, Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz (Bates), we are drafting a series of papers that examine how migrants, and the resources they wield, contribute to vigilantism and autodefensas. During the course of my fieldwork in Mexico and the US for Exit and Voice, I became friends with many key informants on both sides of the border. These are people who opened their homes to me and shared their stories, people whose welfare and security I’ve
come to care a great deal. I can’t let go of these friendships simply because I left the field and finished the book. But I also realize that my presence in some municipalities right now is not a good idea and could potentially endanger people and communities I care about. So, to continue studying places and processes of interest, I’m using quantitative methods and interviews in the US. There is still so much to understand about how transnational migration and remittances affect criminal governance and security and democratization processes, more generally. If I may, I’d also like to add that researching and writing with people who push you and your thinking in different directions is a great gift our profession offers us. Working with Clarisa reminds me how fulfilling academic collaboration is when you combine forces with scholars you admire and trust.

**Praise by the jury:**

Lauren Duquette-Rury’s *Exit and Voice* studies the politics of hometown development in several migrant-sending localities in Mexico. Duquette-Rury carefully traces how the nature and composition of migratory streams, social networks, and other factors that characterize origin and sending states affect the kinds of cross-border partnerships that prevail. Ethnolinguistic fractionalization, state capacity, sociodemographic characteristics of emigrants, and political regime dynamics, as well as civil liberties in destination countries all combine to explain the kind of politics that develop among diasporas, states, and locals. This book does a wonderful job of unpacking both “the state” and migrant transnational social network to better understand the roots and feedback effects and organizational dynamics of transnational public-private partnerships. *Exit and Voice* expands the emerging political science literature on sub-national regime politics and leverages variation at the level of town and in the process greatly illuminates the politics of diasporas, migration, and transnational public good provision.
Best Book Award Co-winners

Allan Colbern and S. Karthick Ramakrishnan


What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?

Allan: When first learning about the award, I felt a new sense of gratitude for the many opportunities that the section has opened up to me as a graduate student and junior faculty member. I am a quiet and reserved person, so I mostly reflected about how fortunate I have been to have mentors in my corner, like Daniel Tichenor, Elizabeth Cohen, Monica Varsanyi, Willem Maas, and so many others. Of course, I was even more grateful for the collaboration with my co-author, mentor and friend, Karthick. After sharing this news with my wife Shima, I quickly called Karthick with excitement that our work received the award. We put in a lot of time into this project, and both of us are so fortunate that our families gave us the time and grace to do it well.

Karthick: Winning the award in such an important field, and with so many amazing scholars and books up for consideration last year, felt humbling and amazing at the same time. This has been the most ambitious book that I’ve worked on so far, and I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to work on it with Allan.

Which particular aspects of your fascinating book on federalism frames of migration, race, and gender would you like section members to know more about?

We are especially proud that Citizenship Reimagined brings diverse methodologies and disciplinary scholarships together, and that it offers scholars focusing on other marginalized communities a framework for historical and
contemporary empirical research. Our federated and multidimensional right-based concept of citizenship lays a broad foundation for unpacking contests over race, gender, sexuality, and nativity throughout American history. Originally, we envisioned a book that would cover LGBTQ rights and women’s rights equally alongside immigrant rights and Black citizenship rights. When we realized the scale of what the work would entail, we decided to focus our historical work on immigrant rights and Black citizenship rights. Each of these could have been a book in itself! Hopefully others will pick up the mantle and examine sub-federal citizenship rights for other communities. In the United States, the pendulum is very clearly swinging towards greater state determination of the expansion and contraction of various types of rights, including reproductive rights and the right to identify and belong. And we need to devote a lot more attention to what is happening at the state level, so that communities can figure out a way to expand citizenship rights once again in the future.

Do you have any plans to take this research any further?

We certainly have future plans to build upon the trajectory of research that our book lays out - especially in its vision of building robust federated infrastructure and movements that take state and local levels seriously. Part of our future stream of work is aimed at practitioners in the immigrant rights movement, building on prior policy papers we have done, like The California Package (2015) and State Policies on Immigrant Integration: An Examination of Best Practices and Policy Diffusion (2016). These two reports and our partnership with immigrant rights organizations provided a crucial foundation for the book. Since publishing Citizenship Reimagined: A New Framework for State Rights in the United States (2021), we have continued to partner with organizations and promote the significance of state and local (alongside national) strategies. We recently co-authored a report, Immigrant Rights Everywhere: The Importance of California’s Regional Capacity and Coordination for Statewide Policy Impact (2021), where we go one step deeper in analyzing federalism dynamics within the state of California, by detailing the history, people, places, and activities that strengthened the ability of immigrant rights policy advocates to generate and pass new policies, and to ensure progress and accountability in their local implementation. We explain how the California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) built up a model of intrastate federated model of immigration policy reform.

Beyond our growing collaborative scholarship, we are building a database of state level immigration policy for use by scholars and practitioners. This will be housed at UC Riverside’s Center for Social Innovation and is in partnership with the National Immigration Law Center. We also plan to create a user-friendly way for scholars of political institutions, public policy, and political behavior to code state and national laws along our five dimensions of rights, so that this work can be useful in a variety of applications.

Additionally, Allan has taken on new roles, serving on the Board of Directors for the California Immigrant Policy Center and leading a multi-year survey of California’s undocumented population in partnership with USC’s Equity Research Institute in order to support CIPC’s state level leadership on immigrant equity. Karthick has also expanded into new areas of public scholarship and impact,
including strategic foresight work to collaboratively build a vision and roadmap for California’s next century.

**Praise by the jury:**
Allan Colbern and S. Karthick Ramakrishnan’s *Citizenship Re-Imagined. A New Framework for State Rights in the United States* challenges national accounts of citizenship and the framing of immigration politics as a bounded realm by examining particular state-level regimes of rights and understanding progressive and regressive transformations of these regimes toward both migrants, women’s rights, and Black citizens’ civil rights. Joining together the study of forms of exclusion organized alongside varied different markers, Colbern and Ramakrishnan give us a more capacious account of racial/patriarchal systems of domination and the modes of contestation that have targeted them. Through painstaking historical tracing of political activism, coalition-making, and institutional transformations, Colbern and Ramakrishnan put forward an account of California’s racial order and its evolution. The contribution is both theoretical, i.e., a sophisticated account of how federalism frames the politics of race, gender, and migration; and practical, because it shows that even in the midst of a hardening regime of mass detention and deportation, state-level political arenas remain as promising spaces of political advocacy and emancipation for marginalized groups.
What was your first reaction when you heard about winning this award?
I was very excited for our work to be recognized. This has been a particularly difficult research project to implement. Receiving the award by APSA's Migration and Citizenship felt like the wider community of migration scholars appreciated our work.

What aspects of your paper on Syrian refugees and their migration intentions would you like section members to know more about?
One of the surprising and important findings in the paper is that worse conditions in the host country are not associated with increased intentions to return. Many governments across the globe have been trying to make life difficult for refugees in order to push them to return. Our findings suggest that this strategy is likely ineffective at encouraging premature return and will only add to the hardships faced by refugees without achieving the policy goals of these governments.

Do you have any plans to take this research any further?
We are planning to expand this research project by looking into whether return plans change over time and what predicts those changes. We also hope to examine the predictors of the actual return of refugees.

After your current postdoctoral fellowship at ETH Zurich, what are your plans?
At the end of the fellowship, I plan to apply for tenure-track positions.

Praise by the jury:
Ala’ Alrababa’h’s very enlightening paper on the Syrian refugee crisis tackles the under-explored question of what drives refugee return. It is beautifully written.
and very carefully done. The original survey data from 3,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon addresses the challenge of constructing representative samples in complex political settings. The author(s) give voice to a population whose motivations and intentions are often given short shrift in the profession. The policy implications — for host and sending countries as well as host and refugee populations — are profound, and well-articulated by the author(s). The Dynamics of Refugee Return: Syrian Refugees and Their Migration Intentions, selected from among eight strong nominations, represents the most rigorous international professional standards and exemplifies the role of graduate students in creating new knowledge in the academy.
Member News and Achievements

Lamis Abdelaaty (Syracuse University)
- Appointed Associate Editor at *Journal of Refugee Studies*.
- Published with Liza G Steele “Explaining Attitudes Toward Refugees and Immigrants in Europe”, *Political Studies*, 70(1) 110–30 (2022). [https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720950217](https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720950217)

Sabella Abidde (Alabama State University)
- Appointed Series Editor for *Africa-East Asia International Relations Series*.

Erik Bleich (Middlebury College)
- Appointed Fulbright-Tocqueville Distinguished Chair and Fellow of the Collegium de Lyon, Spring 2022

Irene Bloemraad (University of California Berkeley)

Andy Scott Chang (Singapore Management University)

Erin Aeran Chung (Johns Hopkins University)
• Received the 2021 Research Excellence Award from the Korea Ministry of Education and the National Research Foundation of Korea & 2021 Most Outstanding Transnational Asia Book Award from the ASA Section on Asia and Asian America for Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies (Cambridge University Press, 2020)
• Received the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) Korean Studies Promotion Program Grant for “Local Agency and National Responses to Globalization: The South Korean Case in Comparative, Transnational, and Diasporic Perspective,” 2018-2023
• Received the SNF Agora Institute Faculty Grant for “Building Anti-Racist Coalitions and Intersectional Knowledge in the Face of Anti-Asian Violence,” 2021-2022

Laura Cleton (University of Antwerp)
• Appointed as Postdoctoral Researcher in return migration and development at UNU-MERIT & Maastricht University (the Netherlands), 2022-2024.
• Published “Assessing adequate homes and proper parenthood: how gendered and racialized family norms legitimize the deportation of


**Alexandra Filindra** (The University of Illinois at Chicago)


- Appointed Visiting Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Diversity and Democracy, Northwestern University, 2021-2022.


- Published with R. Nassar, and Beyza Büyüker “Give Us Your Huddled Masses? How Economic Threat Moderates the Effects of Anti-Muslim Prejudice on Whites’ Refugee Policy Preferences,” *Social Science Quarterly* (2022).
• Published with E.J. Fagan “Black, Immigrant, or Woman? The Implicit Influence of Kamala Harris' Vice Presidential Nomination on Support for Biden in 2020,” *Social Science Quarterly* (2022).

• Published with Melanie Kolbe "Are Latinos Becoming White? The Role of White Self-Categorization and White Identity in Shaping Contemporary Hispanics Political and Policy Preferences,” *Social Science Quarterly* (2022).


**Els de Graauw** (Baruch College City University New York)


**Justin Gest** (George Mason University)


Sara Wallace Goodman (University of California, Irvine)
- Appointed Chair, European Union Studies Association.
- Published with Shana Kushner Gadarian and Thomas B. Pepinsky "Partisanship, health behavior, and policy attitudes in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic", *PLOS One*, 16(4) (2021).
  [https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249596](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249596)

Guy Grossman (University of Pennsylvania)

Rebecca Hamlin (University of Massachusetts)

Marc Helbing (University of Mannheim)
- Honorable Mention 2021 Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award of the APSA Comparative Politics Section for the dataset Immigration Policies in Comparison (IMPIC) (www.impic-project.eu)

Annika Marlen Hinze (Fordham University)

Konrad Kalicki (National University of Singapore)

Willem Maas (York University)


• Together with Beth Whitaker, Willem will lead a Dissertation Workshop on Migration & Citizenship at the next in-person APSA conference in Montreal. Deadline 10/06, more information here: [https://apsa.wufoo.com/forms/zw7o4af0fo5svt/](https://apsa.wufoo.com/forms/zw7o4af0fo5svt/)

**Mary McThomas** (University of California, Irvine)


**Nicholas R. Micinski** (University of Maine)


• Published "Threats, Deportability and Aid: The politics of refugee rentier states and regional stability", *Security Dialogue* (2021). Advance online first: [https://doi.org/10.1017/S09670106211027464](https://doi.org/10.1017/S09670106211027464)

**Margaret Peters** (University of California, Los Angeles)

• Published with Leslie Johns and Máximo Langer “Migration and the Demand for Transnational Justice”, *American Political Science Review* (2022). Advance online first: [https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000302](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000302)

**Deborah Schildkraut** (Tufts University)


**Samuel D. Schmid** (University of Lucerne)


• Defended his dissertation *Do inclusive societies need closed borders? The association between immigration and citizenship regimes* at European University Institute, 8 December 2021.
Nando Sigona and Catherine Craven (University of Birmingham)

- Call for Papers and Panels for the IRiS 10-year Anniversary Conference. The conference will take place on 14-16 September 2022, and confirmed keynote speakers include Professor Cecilia Menjívar and Professor Steven Vertovec. The full CFP can be found here. Please send us your submissions by 16 May 2022.
- Published with Michaela Benson and Elena Zambelli “From the state of the art to new directions in researching what Brexit means for migration and migrants”, Migration Studies (2022). Advance online first: https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnac010

Beth Elise Whitaker (University of North Carolina at Charlotte)

- Appointed the first executive director of the new Office of Interdisciplinary Studies at UNC Charlotte. This office promotes collaboration across departments and colleges by supporting various interdisciplinary degree programs and research initiatives, including a recently-recognized area of excellence in Migration and Diaspora Studies.
- Organized a "conference within a conference" on Borders and Migration as part of the Southern Political Science Association annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on January 13-15, 2022. Participants included graduate students, post-docs, and junior and senior faculty, and many papers were based on newly available data and/or field research.

Catherine Xhardez (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

- Organizes a hybrid BIRMM Research Seminar with Dr. Catherine XHARDEZ: “Immigration Federalism: Conceptualizing the Role of Constituent Units”, Wednesday 27 April, 11.00-12.30. Registration & info: https://birmm.research.vub.be/birmm-research-seminar-with-catherine-xhardez
- Appointed Assistant Professor (Professeure adjointe) at Université de Montréal (Canada), Department of Political Science from June 2022.

Joseph Yi, Hanyang University

Recent articles across the discipline

The articles are drawn from a search of over 70 disciplinary and national/area studies journals - excluding those that focus primarily on migration, refugees or citizenship - to draw members’ attention to recent work that they might not otherwise see.

Acta Politica


African Affairs


American Behavioral Scientist


**American Journal of Political Science**


**Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science**


**Antipode**


**Asian Journal of Political Science**


**Australian Journal of International Affairs**

**British Journal of Political Science**


**British Journal of Politics and International Relations**


**Canadian Journal of Political Science**


**Comparative European Politics**


**Comparative Political Studies**


**Contemporary Italian Politics**


East European Politics and Societies


Ethics and Global Politics


Ethics and International Affairs


European Journal of International Relations


European Journal of Political Research


**European Journal of Political Theory**


**European Political Science Review**


**European Union Politics**


**Foreign Affairs**

- Eichengreen, B. (2022) The Border Within: The Economics of Immigration in an Age of Fear. *Foreign Affairs.*


**German Politics**


**Government and Opposition**


**International Affairs**


**International Organization**


**International Studies Quarterly**


**International Studies Review**


**Italian Political Science Review**


**JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies**


**Journal of European Public Policy**


**Journal of Modern African Studies**


**Journal of Peace Research**


**Latin American Perspectives**


**Law & Policy**


**Law and Society Review**


**Millennium: Journal of International Studies**


**Parliamentary Affairs**


**Party Politics**


**Perspectives on Politics**


**Policy & Society**


**Political Geography**


**Political Psychology**


**PS: Political Science & Politics**


**Political Studies**


**Politics, Groups and Identities**


**Politics and Society**


**Public Opinion Quarterly**

Regional and Federal Studies


Scandinavian Political Studies

- Hedegaard, T. F., & Larsen, C. A. (2022). Who can become a full member of the club?—Results from a conjoint survey experiment on public attitudes about the naturalisation of non-EU migrants in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, doi: 10.1111/1467-9477.12232

Security Dialogue


Social Politics

South European Society and Politics


Territory, Politics, Governance

- Hillmann, F. (2021). Becoming glocal bureaucrats: mayors, institutions and civil society in smaller cities in Brandenburg during the ‘migration


**West European Politics**


**World Politics**

## SECTION OFFICERS

### Co-presidents:

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### Secretary:

**Rebecca Hamlin (2020-2022)**
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### Treasurer:

**Beth Whitaker (2021-2023)**
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### Council:

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<th>2020-2022</th>
<th>2021-2023</th>
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<td>Ahmed Khattab, Georgetown University</td>
<td>Clarisa Perez-Armendariz, Bates College</td>
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<td>Noora Lori, Boston University</td>
<td>Osman Balkan, Swarthmore College</td>
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<td>Rahsaan Maxwell, University of North Carolina</td>
<td>Victoria Finn, European University Institute</td>
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### Newsletter Co-Editors:

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<th>Annika Hinze</th>
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### APSA 2022 Program Co-Chairs:

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<tr>
<th>Allan Colbern, Arizona State University</th>
<th>Kelsey Norman, Rice University</th>
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