

New approaches for researching the determinants of migration processes: ESF strategic workshop on migration research

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This report¹ reviews the key conceptual and methodological questions and issues discussed at the ‘New approaches for researching the determinants of migration processes’ workshop, organised by the International Migration Institute at the invitation of the Standing Committee of the Social Sciences of the European Science Foundation (ESF), on 29–30 September 2011.

The workshop involved early/mid-career and senior migration scholars from varying disciplines from Europe and North America. Its aim was to advance migration research by identifying new approaches for studying the multi-level (micro-meso-macro) determinants or drivers of migration. Participants focused on key gaps in migration research, discussing strategies to bridge the concepts and methodological approaches used by different migration disciplines, and to make better use of existing data collected at various levels of aggregation. On the first day of the workshop participants explored conceptual challenges associated with studying migration determinants, particularly issues around agency, networks, and policy. On the second day they analysed methodological challenges, including conceptualising and measuring causality in migration processes, improving the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods, and designing multi-method and multi-level research methodologies.

The workshop was sponsored by the European Science Foundation and received additional support from the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford. The outcomes of this workshop are intended to play a role in the development of a European-level research agenda for international migration as well as advance the study of international migration more generally.

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Background

Migration is a form of social behaviour that both shapes and is shaped by broader social and economic structures and processes of transformation. Conceptualising and examining migration as an intrinsic part of change serves as a crucial conceptual step towards advancing this field of research, for it positions this process not as exceptional, problematic, and reactive, but as complex, patterned, multi-dimensional, and dynamic (Castles 2011a; de Haas 2011a).

In the past, migration scholarship has largely focused on migration impacts, particularly in receiving societies, rather than on the nature and drivers of migration processes. Moreover, within such scholarship there is insufficient acknowledgment that impacts can become drivers through feedback mechanisms (de Haas 2011a; Castles 2011b). Past migration research has also centred on migration-receiving countries and less on countries of origin or 'transit' (de Haas 2011b). The confinement of many migration studies to single geographies and time periods has produced one-dimensional views of complex migration processes (Skeldon 2011; Castagnone 2011).

To view migration as a broader process of social and economic development requires a firm embedding of migration theory into more general social scientific theory (de Haas 2011a). For instance, scholars might compare migration drivers, patterns, and trends through case study analysis; or analyse migration processes at different levels (e.g. from the individual to the state and the global), across time, and across space (Castles 2011b; Skeldon 2011; Kureková 2011; Cohen 2011; Castagnone 2011). Moreover, scholars may aggregate analytical and methodological tools from different social science disciplines, where relevant, to examine aspects of migration which may impact and be impacted by broader economic, political, and cultural processes, to name a few (Castagnone 2011; de Haas 2011a). This may require a more critical consideration of the internal, self-sustaining, and self-undermining dynamics *within* migration processes that have the potential to affect structural transformation processes (de Haas 2011a).

The study of nuanced processes of human behaviour, therefore, necessitates methods that have the capacity to capture complexity, and which do not treat complexity as a reason not to make generalisations. As Castles (2011b) states, 'a conceptual framework as a general guide for migration research should provide ways of analysing the interactions of socio-spatial levels and the relationships between structure and agency, facilitate interdisciplinarity and emphasise the need for multi-methods approaches' (see also Willekens 2011).

Recognising the need for migration processes to be reconceptualised and examined using more integrated social science methods, and for a stronger embedding of migration studies into general social scientific theory, approximately 40 early/mid-career and senior migration scholars from the fields of economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, development, geography, demography, and philosophy gathered for the ESF Strategic Workshop, convened by the International Migration Institute in September 2011 at the University of Oxford. The participation of scholars at different stages in their research careers brought a diversity of perspectives, concepts, and methodologies to the workshop and prompted stimulating exchanges throughout the two days. To engage participants in the development of a European-level research agenda, each scholar fulfilled one of three roles during the workshop: panellist, discussant, or chair. Panellists were asked to prepare research notes on one of seven assigned themes, addressing the current state of the art, key challenges and unresolved questions, and potential avenues for future research. Discussants were responsible for synthesising and interrogating the insights

presented by panellists, and laid the foundation for discussions among the wider workshop group. Finally, chairs were asked to moderate and prompt exchanges between workshop participants. Each participant was responsible for studying the research notes in advance of the workshop and arrived in Oxford prepared to analyse and debate features of existing migration research and to propose how we might further this field of study as a whole for the future.

On the first day of the workshop participants examined issues of conceptualisation and framing, with a focus on migration determinants. Key subjects under discussion included operationalising agency, with particular attention paid to the role of aspirations and capabilities in migration processes; migrant networks and migration system dynamics; and ways in which macro-structural factors, such as the roles of states and policies, can be integrated into migration determinants research. On the second day participants examined methodological approaches to studying migration. Topics included measuring and developing philosophical models of causality, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, and designing multi-method and multi-level research methodologies.

This workshop report serves two functions. First, it aims to summarise a number of state-of-the-art conceptual and methodological aspects of migration research. Second, it suggests how future research might be advanced by 1) developing new and enhancing current concepts, methods, and methodologies that grasp the complexities of migration and reflect potential future developments in migration processes and determinants; and by 2) exploring new research questions that may help in setting the agenda for future migration scholarship.

Key Concepts and Questions for Future Migration Research

Migration determinants

Migration determinants can be loosely defined as factors or forces existing at macro, meso, and micro levels, which affect decisions to migrate or not to migrate. The study of the nature and determinants of migration processes has been largely overshadowed by studies related to the impacts of migration – for instance, on integration and identity (de Haas 2011a). There is also a more general bias towards examining aspects of migration in migrant ‘receiving’ countries, as opposed to ‘sending’ countries (de Haas 2011a). Receiving countries tend to be associated with ‘developed’ countries of the ‘Global North’, while sending countries tend to be associated with ‘developing’ countries of the ‘Global South’. These generalisations oversimplify global migration patterns, for many countries in the Global South are countries of considerable immigration, and many countries across the world experience significant immigration, emigration, and internal migration. Furthermore, the lack of a comprehensive framework of migratory patterns, which incorporates complex step-wise and circular trajectories, represents a strong limitation to the full comprehension of the determinants of migration (Castagnone 2011).

The bias towards studying the impacts of migration in wealthy receiving countries may also result from (as well as contribute to) poor data availability and quality, and the greater visibility of ‘people who enter’ into a society from elsewhere, than ‘people who leave’ from a society and disappear from view (de Haas 2011b). Moreover, the fact that data is primarily available at the national level, and there is a tendency to examine and theorise migration at this level, has caused the (receiving) nation-state to be the dominant unit of analysis in migration studies.

Studies that do explore empirically why people move often focus on the micro-level (examining, for instance, migration selectivity by age, gender, education, and skills) and generally do not capture structural migration drivers. Micro-level, individual migration motivations can neither be derived from nor scaled up to represent macro or meso-level migration drivers. Thus, there is a lack of micro-level empirical studies that integrate macro-level migration determinants theory (de Haas 2011b). A reason for this gap may be that the various analytical levels tend to draw upon distinct conceptual approaches which are difficult to align. For instance, conflict theory describes migration as a response to global economic inequality and marginalisation, entrenched by dominant social and economic systems that serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful. A theory such as this would seem difficult to combine with neo-classical, micro-level concepts of migration drivers and patterns, which position migration as an income- or utility-maximising strategy pursued by rational, fully informed individuals making cost-benefit calculations.

On the other hand, the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) theory conceptualises migration as a collective household strategy to spread livelihood risks and overcome market constraints. NELM does not incorporate historical contextual factors because of its micro-level focus, nor does it establish an explicit connection between macro-structural factors and household decision-making. NELM also does not specify and develop hypotheses about the roles played by states, policies, labour markets, status hierarchies, and power inequalities, to name a few; rather, it assumes that these factors are 'out there'. Nevertheless, it is one of the more advanced micro-level theoretical models, as it acknowledges that macro-level factors, notably various (credit, insurance, and other) market failures, create incentives for people to migrate.

Functionalist theories, such as neoclassical theory, and historical-structural theories, such as conflict theory, conceive migration largely as a response to disequilibria and inequality, implying that a sedentary global society characterises a condition of equilibrium and equality. De Haas (2011b) argues that 'push-pull' explanations of migration are often not grounded in migration theory, and advance no theory of their own, as they describe the factors that play a role in the migration calculus without offering information on how the role functions, how factors interact, and why given factors are important. Many theoretical and empirical approaches also tend to focus on a singular category of migrant, such as 'refugees' or 'labour migrants'; do not describe how migration flows are structured and evolve over time; and often do not fully incorporate sending-country policies and non-economic factors in describing and exploring migration dynamics.

Workshop participants agreed that a more comprehensive examination of migration determinants should bridge different (micro-meso-macro) levels. At the micro-level, researchers can explore the agency of migrants and their capabilities and aspirations to migrate. At the meso-level, they can examine how networks and migration systems can function to create feedback mechanisms, which subsequently structure migration flows. At the macro-level, researchers can analyse how migration is connected to and embedded within broader processes of social, political, and economic transformation (Castles 2011a; Curran 2011; Czaika 2011; Skeldon 2011).

Participants also agreed that a more comprehensive study of migration determinants would acknowledge that the impacts of migration in origin and destination societies reciprocally affect the conditions that drive migration. Through these feedback effects, impacts are, or can become, migration determinants in their own right. For instance, remittances or the communication of successful integration experiences in destination societies can create a positive view of migration in origin countries and help foster a culture of emigration. Additionally, public beliefs about the negative impact

of immigration on receiving societies might prompt the creation of restrictive migration laws (de Haas 2011a; Castles 2011b).

Possible questions for future research

1. What are the main determinants of international migration (de Haas 2011a)?
2. What are the theoretical and epistemological differences between ‘determinants’, ‘drivers’ and ‘causes’ of migration?
3. How can we connect research on determinants at the macro, meso, and micro levels to achieve a better understanding of migration processes?
4. What are relevant spatial contexts in which to analyse migration determinants? The state, region, bilateral migration corridor, city-to-city corridor, or trans/multinational network (Czaika 2011)?
5. What are relevant temporal contexts in which to analyse migration determinants? The present, the future, the recent past, the most recent period of globalisation, the colonial period, or the start of transcontinental transport technologies (Czaika 2011)?
6. To what extent would developing a comprehensive theory for migration be realistic, desirable and appropriate? Would a broader (or even single) theory mystify rather than clarify our understanding of migration processes? How can migration researchers maintain a balance between acknowledging the full complexity of migration processes and simplifying reality to make it suitable for analysis, comparison, and theoretical application?
7. What models can philosophy provide to serve analyses of migration determinants?

Migrant agency, capabilities, and aspirations

A conceptual framework at the level of the individual and household that is centred around ‘capabilities’ and ‘aspirations’ may advance our understanding of why some people move and others do not and contribute to the development of micro-level migration theories (de Haas 2011b). Such a framework would provide a conceptual link to meso- and macro-level forces to produce a more complete view of migration determinants, for researchers could analyse the extent to which meso- and macro-level factors affect migrants’ capabilities and aspirations. De Haas (2011b) defines capabilities broadly to include both economic and non-economic factors. He draws on Sen’s (1999) definition of human capabilities in the context of development to describe a range of factors that can expand people’s freedom to migrate, in particular education, health, social security and equality, as well as personal and political freedoms. Similarly, aspirations can be economic, socio-cultural, and political and can exist at various levels, such as the individual and the household or family. Aspirations describe a desired state of being or condition. The act of migration can itself be an aspiration (embodying the intrinsic developmental value of migration), and seen as a rite of passage, as observed in lifestyle migration, gap-year migration, adventure migration, and *au pair* migration (de Haas 2011b). Aspirations can also be endogenous to capabilities, as is evident in migratory human capital theory. For instance, the aspiration to work with the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland may have been initially dependent on exposure to a particle physics education – a capability. In fact, education often leads to greater aspirations to migrate to fulfil life ambitions. It remains to be explored how and whether researchers can conceptually distinguish capabilities and aspirations.

Crucially, a capabilities/aspirations theory of migration acknowledges human agency in migration processes, for it positions migration as an action towards realising individual livelihood goals, rather

than a passive, automatic, or predictable reaction to structural disequilibria and spatial opportunity differentials (de Haas 2011b). In forced migration scholarship, the agency of refugees is often overlooked, as their legal status is defined by their lack of choice to be displaced or lack of freedom to stay where they are. However, we often see evidence of a limited, but certain, degree of agency under highly constrained circumstances, when individuals and families retain some decision-making about where to move, when, and by what route (Lindley 2011).

A capabilities/aspirations approach can accommodate different and multi-faceted reasons for migration and does not require distinct and mutually exclusive categorisations of motivations to be made (de Haas 2011b). Lindley (2011) and Carling (2011) illustrate this point by arguing that displacement can be explained using a capabilities/aspirations approach. In situations of conflict-induced displacement, threats to lives and livelihoods are often inextricably linked and difficult to distinguish. Such threats severely constrain capabilities and aspirations, and yet some degree of capability is required to move. Moreover, scholars may find it conceptually useful to situate conflict-related mobility within broader processes of development and transformation, as conflict should be seen as an intrinsic – and not abnormal – part of national and international social, economic, and political change. This may generate a more nuanced view of displacement, for it gives conceptual room to analyse how structural repression, deprivation and violence interacts with migrants' agency (Lindley 2011; O'Reilly 2011).

To connect the capabilities and aspirations of individual migrants to more structural, macro-level determinants of migration, Willekens (2011) proposes a conceptual framework derived from complexity science. Complexity science shows how the interactions between agents (who have attributes and aspirations that change over the course of a lifetime), and between agents and structures, and the feedback mechanisms they generate, give rise to migration patterns and systems (Willekens 2011). A structural theory of praxis may also serve to connect macro-structural with micro-individual migration determinants to produce a more comprehensive view of migration processes. Such a theory considers the interaction between structural forces and agency by examining external structures, internal structures, and practices. External factors such as employment structures, laws, and war create opportunities and constraints for action, while internal factors such as migrants' knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking are more micro-level and can be linked to agency. Practices describe the way in which potential migrants act out their daily, social lives; they describe more meso-level community features that connect internal and external factors (O'Reilly 2011).

Possible questions for future research

1. What are the primary structural determinants of international migration? How do macro-level determinants shape (i.e., simultaneously constrain and enable) micro-level capabilities and aspirations to migrate?
2. How are (migration) aspirations formed? What are migration aspirations? To what extent do capabilities shape aspirations? Are migration aspirations a means to an end (Bjarnesen 2011)?
3. How do prospective migrants view the world of destination options available to them (Paul 2011)?
4. How can we effectively examine and understand migrant aspirations? Do aspirations differ in 'quality' based on ambition and potential to be realised? Do aspirations differ in 'quality' based on whether they represent an ideal condition or the least sub-optimal condition where no alternative is present? Do these different 'qualities' impact the extent to which aspirations (in combination with capabilities) determine migration (Carling 2011)?

5. How do migrant networks affect prospective migrants' aspirations, capabilities, and opportunity structures (Paul 2011)?
6. Does violence generate specific migration characteristics which are different from other forms of migration? How do violence and other structural forces interact with the capabilities of affected individuals to generate distinct patterns of movement? How can research capture agency and livelihood strategies within patterns of mobility under circumstances of conflict (Lindley 2011)?
7. How can the interaction between capabilities, aspirations, and environmental resources be modelled conceptually (De Haas and Marmodoro, work in progress)?

Migration and migrant networks

Much of the migration literature accepts that networks can play a key role in the process of migration (Paul 2011). They can reduce the costs and risks of migration by offering financial assistance, employment and housing, and travel and immigration advice. At the same time, they can increase migration costs, for instance by communicating misinformation. Scholars typically define a 'migration network' as the aggregate social relations which 'may be useful in the process of migration' of potential migrants who form part of a 'specific group of people, such as members of a particular community' (Toma 2011 citing Elrick and Ciobanu 2009). A migration network is generally positioned at the meso-level of analysis.

A 'migration network' differs from a 'migrant network', which is the personal network or social relations of a potential migrant and which is situated at the micro-level of analysis. Researchers often do not distinguish between migration and migrant networks, which causes considerable conceptual confusion. Migration scholarship examines both micro- and meso-levels of networks, with quantitative approaches traditionally studying the former and qualitative approaches the latter, in part because the structural properties of migration networks appear difficult to grasp quantitatively.

Little is empirically known about the geographic and social boundaries of networks and the diffusion of networks through space and time, as network studies tend to confine their analyses to migrations between two locations, that is, the origin and the destination (Paul 2011). Additionally, few studies explore the extent to which networks constrain or shape migration processes. For instance, there is a lack of scholarship about the relationships that migrants form after they have arrived in destination countries; 'weak', non-kin ties between migrants and employers or co-workers may provide migrants with better economic opportunities than 'strong' kin ties. The range of non-migrant actors involved in networks is also understudied, particularly 'demand-side' actors such as state agents, employers, or moneylenders (Krissman 2011; Toma 2011). Lastly, there is a relative lack of empirical studies on how migration networks may obstruct migration. In other words, migrants are not necessarily migration-facilitating 'bridgeheads'; they may also be 'gatekeepers' who refuse to help community or family members migrate, or who actively prevent their migration (Paul 2011). Understanding why some networks enable migration while others do not may shed a more critical light on how networks can function in migration processes (Toma 2011).

Most quantitative research on migrant networks has focused on positioning networks as explanatory 'external' variables, precluding an examination of how networks work, evolve and are structured (Toma 2011). For example, studies have taken the absolute size of migrant communities as a proxy for network strength, assuming that size equals strength and not considering the nature of ties and the resources

that can be accessed through such ties. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have insufficiently interrogated how macro-level factors, such as labour markets and regulations, impact the structures and functions of migrant (micro) and migration (meso) networks (Paul 2001; Krissman 2011).

Workshop participants agreed that research on migrant/migration networks would greatly benefit from the methodological tools and theoretical frameworks provided by general social network theory. In particular, Krissman (2011) argues that social network theory can serve to integrate macro-level factors into micro and meso network analyses of migration. Drawing from the Manchester school of social network analysis, he holds that the principles of anchorage, reachability, and directedness can nuance the study of international migration networks. *Anchorage* provides a network with a point of orientation, as networks are not an assemblage of evenly diffused, equal relationships. Instead, networks are a group of unequal relations with concentrated areas of power, as seen in network hubs or gatekeepers.

Reachability describes the extent to which members of a network are accessible to one another. Reachability relates to the role a person plays in a network and therefore has important implications for researchers attempting to study networks, and policy makers attempting to impact migration networks. For instance, those who act as recruiters for migrant labour networks in the United States have direct links to Mexican hometowns and potential migrants. In contrast, recruiters often lack direct access to employers. Krissman (2011) argues that the un-reachability of employers is responsible for the lack of attention given to them in migration network research and policy implementation; un-reachability also enables employers to continue to drive demand within unauthorised migration networks.

Finally, *directedness* describes the type of reciprocal or unidirectional relations between members of a network. It reveals that different actors within a migration network are engaged in multiple, mutually beneficial relationships as well as relationships that carry asymmetric, socio-economic benefits that have the potential to be exploitative. In this way, the concept is vital to understand the complexity of migration networks.

Possible questions for future research

1. How do we measure and operationalise the concept of the migrant network (Toma 2011; Krissman 2011)?
2. How do social ties between migrants and non-migrants form or not form, persist and change (Toma 2011; Krissman 2011)?
3. To what extent and under which circumstances do networks encourage and discourage migration flows (Paul 2011)?
4. How do networks diffuse through space and time and what explains the differences in patterns of diffusion (Krissman 2011)?
5. How do we measure (the strength of) migratory social capital? How do we distinguish social capital (the resources accessed through social ties) from social networks themselves? How does a migration/migrant network provide or get converted into social capital?
6. To what extent do international networks affect destination decisions (Paul 2011; Krissman 2011)?
7. Who participates in migration networks (Curran 2011; Krissman 2011; Willekens 2011)? What specific (facilitating or obstructing) roles do these actors play?

The role of states and policies in migration processes

Policies can be migration determinants and primarily exist at the macro-level of analysis. There are two different types of policies that impact migration: 'migration policies' or policies that directly address and seek to control issues of migration, and 'non-migration policies' or policies that affect migration determinants such as labour markets, economic growth, welfare, and education. Non-migration policies can directly impact macro-structural drivers of migration. De Haas (2011b) argues that migration policies often play a greater role in shaping the *composition* of migration flows, constraining and enabling certain groups, than in controlling the volume and long-term trends of flows. Contextual factors, such as more general processes of social, economic and political change, and non-migration policies may have a greater effect on the volume of migration flows than migration policies.

Past migration research has focused on how both migration and non-migration policies in receiving countries affect migration inflows, while little attention has been paid to such policies in *sending* countries (Kureková 2011). The few studies that have explored the relationship between emigration and the policies of origin countries reveal that non-migration policies, especially welfare, social protection, and labour-market policies, significantly shape the decision-making and migration practices of potential and actual migrants. Holzmann *et al.* (2005) find that access to healthcare, and pensions and social security portability encourage temporary and circular migration (Kureková 2011). Participants agreed that the effects of non-migration policies in destination and origin countries on migration patterns and trends are an important area for future research.

Workshop participants also agreed that a key area for future research is the extent to which migration policies affect migration flows independently of and in interaction with contextual migration determinants and non-migration policies in origin and receiving countries. They discussed three potential approaches to identify whether and how migration policies can function in this way.

First, future migration research on policy impacts would benefit from the concepts and mechanisms used by other fields that examine the effects of policy on non-migratory phenomena. For instance, the sociology of law, criminology, economics, psychology, and globalisation studies points towards legal authority, persuasion, and deterrence to explain issues of policy conformity. Applying these mechanisms in the context of migration policies might generate an improved understanding of why certain types of migration are more responsive to certain policies (Leerkes 2011).

Second, research is needed on the extent to which migration policies are endogenously determined by migration, as many studies tend to position migration policy as an independent variable related to migration flows. Mayda (2011) suggests that a political-economy model may be best suited to unpack the interaction between migration flows and policies. She also suggests that future migration research should seek to identify better indicators to study migration policies, which reflect the complexity of the process.

Lastly, further study is required to understand why migration policies can often shape migration in unintended ways, sometimes undermining the (stated or real) intention of policy makers. De Haas (2011b) outlines four potential reasons, or 'substitution effects', for such policy failures: spatial, categorical, inter-temporal, and reverse flow. *Spatial substitution* refers to the process of migration being diverted to other locations or countries, rather than being disrupted. *Categorical substitution* occurs when migrants shift to different legal or unauthorised channels of migration, after a particular channel is targeted by control policies. *Inter-temporal substitution* occurs when migrants anticipate a

real or perceived tightening of immigration rules or border controls, prompting them to migrate *en masse* to 'beat the ban'. Lastly, *reverse flow substitution* takes place when return migration flows decrease as a result of increasing migration restrictions, rendering the effect on *net* flows ambiguous.

Possible questions for future research

1. What has been the nature and evolution of migration policies (de Haas 2011b)? Have immigration policies really become more restrictive? Can we talk in terms of general 'policy restrictiveness', or does restrictiveness apply only to particular categories of migrants (de Haas 2011b)?
2. What factors affect the development of migration policies? Which actors and institutions are most influential? What are their constraints? How much control do states have in immigration policy making?
3. How do migration flows shape migration policies (i.e., to what extent is there policy endogeneity)?
4. To what extent do states and policies affect migration flows independently of and in interaction with other migration determinants, such as economic growth, demographic change, education, democratisation, and conflict in origin and destination countries'?
5. What are the constraints and relative margins within which migration policies can have an effect (de Haas 2011b; see also Leerkes 2011)? To what extent do migration control policies act as a deterrent to immigration or a promoter of return migration (Leerkes 2011)?
6. How can we understand and measure the (causal) effect of macro-structural factors on mobility and on the micro-level decisions of migrants and potential migrants (Kureková 2011)?
7. How do migration policies affect the volume, spatial orientation, composition (legal channel and migrant characteristics), and timing of migration flows (de Haas 2011b)?
8. What, if any, is the impact on migration of having no migration policies, or having migration policies that are not enforced versus having a sophisticated and regulated migration regime (Pastore 2011)?
9. Can involuntary immobility be reduced through policy (Carling 2011)?

Key Methodological Issues for Future Migration Research

Causality

Discussions of causality are pivotal to studies on migration determinants because causal forces are defined by their ability to affect a particular migration outcome. Causality may refer to the ability to exert power and bring about change in other entities and, on a more philosophical level, it may describe the activation of powers or the exercise of an activity or process (Bakewell 2011; Marmodoro 2011). Marmodoro further holds that causation embodies direction (and is therefore asymmetric) and agency. She argues that causal relationships are comprised of co-determining causal agents and patients; 'associating agency with what brings about change and patiency with what changes.' At present, migration scholars appear to have largely abandoned methods that attempt to draw out or isolate causal mechanisms. A reason for this may be that examining causality requires researchers to reduce, to an extent, the complexity of the migration processes they examine (Bakewell 2011). This may be particularly the case in view of the growing awareness that migration is a constituent part of broader processes of social and economic change, which make it philosophically difficult to disentangle 'cause'

and 'effect'. Additionally, identifying causal mechanisms may lead to the development of 'laws' on migration, which are inappropriate to different migration contexts (Cohen 2011).

The shift away from interrogating causality has had consequences for the analytical and methodological development of the field (Cohen 2011). For instance, many researchers have changed their focus to identify covariance as a way to *suggest* causation. However, covariance highlights significant relationships between variables and does not reveal whether such relationships are based on cause and effect, or whether the correlated variables exhibit effects prompted by the same underlying cause. Positivist quantitative approaches, which identify causality using sophisticated statistical methods to control for endogeneity, remain largely unchallenged because of the lack of alternative methods and concepts to approach causality (Bakewell 2011; Cohen 2011; Curran 2011).

Workshop participants agreed that future migration research should return to critically address the measurement as well as the conceptualisation of causality. Bakewell (2011) argues that literature from social theory and philosophy on causal mechanisms lends insight into how we might develop a more sophisticated understanding of migration determinants and processes. This literature suggests that any notion of causality be developed at several interconnected levels of analysis, as no one level can provide a comprehensive explanation (Bakewell 2011; Cohen 2011). The micro-level of analysis addresses individual behaviour and decision-making and explains the course of social action, while the meso-level investigates forms of social organisation and networks and shows how changes take place in social values and opportunities. The macro-level describes institutional processes and identifies shifts in ideologies and cultural norms (Bakewell 2011). We can conceive the higher levels of analysis having properties which partly arise from the lower levels, but they cannot be reduced to them because they take on autonomous forces and exert their own influence (Bakewell 2011).

To nuance conceptualisations of causality for the study of migration determinants, Marmodoro (2011) draws upon contemporary philosophy of mind debates to explore the relationship between causal and constitutive factors. She argues that one school of thought understands causal factors as indistinguishable from constitutive factors, which are factors that define the very state they bring about; while another holds that causality more accurately describes the effect that a factor might have on a state, without defining the state itself. In applying these conceptualisations of causality to the study of migration, Marmodoro (2011) argues that the former school of thought is the most fruitful for conceiving migration determinants, because processes of migration can be conceptualised as both a cause (among many) and a consequence (among many) of processes of socioeconomic transformation. In other words, migration can simultaneously be a *constitutive* factor of socioeconomic transformation *and* can (externally) affect socioeconomic transformation.

Lastly, Engbersen (2011) argues that Weber's 'elective affinity' might act as a useful methodological tool for researchers to examine the relationships between various levels of causality in migration processes. He describes elective affinities as the 'mutual interactions among cultural values, social practices and institutions, as well as [the] specific causal interactions in which two or more causal processes or factors (that are relatively *independent* of each other) can unintentionally give rise to new connections.' Elective affinity is particularly suited to the study of migration because it can illuminate the mutual interactions between migration culture, migration networks, and economic and political factors (especially state control measures); and it is a tool that is process-based and therefore integrates the richness of historical and qualitative data to capture complex causal interactions (Engbersen 2011).

Insights for future research

1. Migration researchers from varying disciplines should consider the utility of probabilistic analyses to make explicit, and to narrow, margins of error (Cohen 2011).
2. Migration researchers need to consider the extent to which causal mechanisms may be generalisable (Cohen 2011).
3. Migration researchers need to examine and understand how social values change and become embedded in and reproduced as norms, preferences, and conventional wisdoms (Cohen 2011).
4. Migration researchers should explore the extent to which comparative methods may be used to determine causation (Cohen 2011). A short-term research programme might identify comparable cases or sites in which it is possible to control for all the variables that typically explain migration patterns (Curran 2011).
5. Migration researchers should critically explore, identify and compare different, competing ways to conceptualise and operationalise causality, and should be more explicit about their conceptualisation of causality in empirical and theoretical work.

Integrated methods and multidimensional methodologies

A lack of collaboration between disciplines and methodologies and a lack of integration between methods remain two of the major challenges impeding a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of migration processes and determinants. Castles (2011a) makes a crucial distinction between methods and methodologies by defining *methods* as 'specific techniques used to collect and analyse information or data' and *methodologies* as 'the underlying logic of the research...It deals with the principles of the methods, concepts and procedural rules employed by a scientific discipline. Each discipline has its own methodology.'

Migration research that is situated within a single discipline's methodology tends to reinforce and reproduce partial views of migration processes (de Haas 2011a; Castagnone 2011; Kureková 2011). Castles (2011a) argues that a key challenge of methodological interdisciplinarity is 'the very different definitions of knowledge and the assumptions on how to obtain it that social scientists absorb during their specific training in the various disciplines.' Castagnone (2011) adds that migration methodologies tend to confine themselves to singular levels of analysis, with political science and economic methodologies often focusing on the macro-level, sociology on the meso-level (e.g., networks), and anthropology on the micro-level.

To improve the multi-dimensionality of migration research methodologies, studies should employ methods that span different time periods and geographies and work across and between multiple levels of analysis (Castagnone 2011; Castles 2011a; Skeldon 2011; Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2011). Beauchemin (2011) argues that event history surveys are a valuable method to study migration determinants because they reveal how forces affecting migration evolve over time and how dynamics change within origin and destination contexts. He suggests conducting surveys in both origin and destination sites to capture the experiences of migrants, returnees, and non-migrants. Alternatively, one might conduct surveys in one location and ask respondents about their friends and relatives abroad. To integrate meso- and macro-level data with predominantly micro-level survey data, one might try to obtain community datasets as well as data on historical structural factors.

Another strategy to improve future migration research is to integrate qualitative and quantitative methods. Workshop participants agreed that combining qualitative and quantitative methods into a single methodology to examine migration processes would 'produce results that are of greater value than could be attained by applying them separately' (Hatton 2011; Collyer 2011; Kureková 2011; de Haas 2011a; Castagnone 2011; Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2011). However, this is easier said than done.

To overcome some of the challenges of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, Collyer (2011) suggests that researchers develop a methodological framework that aligns the goals of the research with the methodology, maintains comparable units of analysis, and considers the sequencing of qualitative and quantitative methods (see also Curran 2011). As mentioned previously, different disciplines and methodologies conceptualise and analyse the various dimensions of migration differently.

Therefore, a way forward could be to investigate the extent to which certain quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary and could be combined to form a methodology that would address the different ways various disciplines frame migration. In terms of methods sequencing, researchers might determine whether their quantitative methods should precede their qualitative methods, so that in-depth data can be used to explain any patterns identified by quantitative analyses and to understand the mechanisms behind peoples' behaviours; or whether qualitative methods should precede quantitative methods, so that in-depth data can inform the questions and response categories used in a survey. Methods sequencing may achieve greater complexity and more nuanced results when reiterated, for instance when employing qualitative, quantitative, and then qualitative methods again.

In her research, Curran (2011) finds that the central characteristic of a multi-dimensional methodology is the iteration of qualitative and quantitative methods and the triangulation of their results to identify points of convergence or divergence. She builds upon Collyer (2011) by arguing that first, quantitative methods can highlight the existence of a puzzling phenomenon (or counterintuitive regularities) that qualitative methods may not detect; second, qualitative methods can examine how the phenomenon emerged over time, revise the initial hypotheses, and then identify key mechanisms that allow the new hypotheses to be tested; and third, quantitative methods can investigate the prevalence of the identified mechanisms.

Castagnone (2011) attempts to overcome challenges with comparability and methods sequencing by offering a methodological framework whereby researchers use qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously in the collection of life course data. Qualitative analyses of life course data reconstruct the lives of migrants in terms of their different phases and movements and contextualise mobility trajectories alongside socio-cultural (e.g. educational, familial, and professional) trajectories. Quantitative analyses trace the life courses of individuals by mapping the interaction of specific events and processes and employing statistical analyses (Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2011). The simultaneous use of complementary qualitative and quantitative biographic methods demonstrates how these methods can draw inspiration from each other, innovate methodologies, and provide new heuristic devices, rather than oppose each other or engage with different phases and aims of the research process (Castagnone 2011). Although this framework faces challenges with regard to representative sampling and external validity, participants agreed that because of its capacity to generate rich analytical detail at the micro-level, such a framework should be explored further as a step towards improved methodological integration and towards achieving multi-dimensionality.

Insights for future research

Interdisciplinarity

1. Future migration research must focus its energy on developing synergies between disciplines, their methodologies, and their methods (Castagnone 2011; Collyer 2011).
2. Future migration studies should craft research questions which require methodologies that integrate various disciplines and methods.

Qualitative and quantitative integration

3. Future migration scholarship should assess the extent to which the outcomes and recommendations of migration research would differ by using either qualitative or quantitative methods (Hatton 2011).
4. Future research should consider the extent to which the sequencing of qualitative and quantitative methods would impact the outcome (Collyer 2011; Castagnone 2011). Moreover, studies should adopt methodologies that use qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously during data collection to overcome boundaries between disciplines and research paradigms and to innovate migration research instruments (Castagnone 2011).
5. When using mixed method methodologies, researchers should ensure they use comparable units of analysis (Collyer 2011).
6. To abate some of the costs associated with methodologies that integrate qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers should seek out existing quantitative data to complement qualitative data, or scale down the number and spread of their surveys in favour of adding depth to each survey (Collyer 2011).

Multidimensionality

7. Methodologies which focus on micro-level migration determinants and theories should embed their research in an understanding of the past and present social, economic, and political contexts surrounding the people and places under examination. For instance, it is important to be aware of links between origin and destination societies arising from colonialism, slavery, military intervention, cultural relationships, labour recruitment, incentives for skilled migration, or present-day neoliberal globalisation as these help situate migration dynamics observed at the micro-level (Castles 2011a).
8. Methodologies which focus on macro-structural migration issues should identify behavioural links to the micro-level, to communicate the implications of macro-level changes for migrant agency, aspirations, and capabilities and to avoid ambiguous or overly general, deterministic statements about the relationships between macro-level structures and migration decision-making (de Haas 2011a, 2011b).
9. The representative nature of sampling frames should be further interrogated in migration studies, and researchers should consider targeted over random sampling to better capture structural factors (Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2011).
10. Studies and methodologies which focus on individual and household behaviours should reflect upon the meso- and macro-level contextual factors that affect the costs, benefits, and perceptions weighed in migration decision-making. This will serve to bridge theories on the

causes and continuation of migration, maintaining a critical analytical distinction between individual migrants' *motivations* and macro- and meso-level migration *determinants*.

11. Researchers should develop new units of analysis for migration research, for instance, the 'migration corridor', which can better accommodate multi-dimensional methodologies. The most prevalent unit of analysis in migration research, 'the state', is often insufficient in examining migration phenomena beyond the macro-level.

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