

The Globalization of Migration

Has the world really become more migratory?

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1. Introduction

It is commonly assumed that international migration has accelerated of the past half century, and that migrants travel over increasingly large distances, and that migration has therefore become much more diverse in terms of origins and destinations of migrants (Arango 2000: 291). A related argument is that more and more countries are now experiencing significant volumes of immigration and emigration than before – in other words, countries are increasingly integrated in international and global migration systems (cf. Skeldon 1997). All these trends combined would have made global migration patterns more complex in terms of the assumed neater structuring and more clear-cut division between immigration and emigration countries of the past. This is also linked to the ideas that, in the past, migration flows often concentrated in a few bilateral corridors, and often followed colonial links (cf. Vertovec 2007). For instance, until the early 1970s, the vast majority of Moroccan migrants moved to the France, the former colonizer. In recent decades Moroccan migrants have fanned out to a wide array of European and North American destinations.

This assumed increase in the *intensity*, *diversity*, *distance* and overall *complexity* of international migration is commonly linked to globalization and associated processes such as rapid advances in transport and communication technology. It is commonly assumed that technological progress has facilitated migration by lowering resource constraints on mobility (the threshold levels of wealth necessary to migrate, particularly internationally), but also because it has become easier for migrants to stay in touch with family and community members, to remit money and to travel back and forth between host and origin countries. Increasing transnational ties and transnational identities (cf. Vertovec 2001) are also thought to have fortified migrant networks and to have stimulated migration along increasingly diverse geographical pathways. Improved access to ‘global’ information through satellite television, mobile phones and internet along with improved education has increased the awareness of people around the world about new opportunities in previously unknown places and countries and has exposed them to new, ‘modern’ and attractive lifestyles, which can change notions of the “good life” (Mabogunje 1970). Such awareness may increase people’s life aspirations and feelings of relative deprivation, independent from absolute incomes and living standards. Combined, these processes seem to have increased people’s capabilities and aspirations to migrate (de Haas 2009).

While many governments have tightened entry rules for low-skilled workers and asylum seekers, they have generally loosened entry rules for other categories such as family migrants, skilled workers, students and entrepreneurs. At the same time, in the 1960s and 1970s classical immigration countries such as the US, Canada and Australia have shifted from immigration policies favouring White immigrants towards non-racial admission criteria. While this has made immigration rules more restrictive from a European point of view it has made immigration less restrictive from an Asian, Latin American and African point of view. Because immigration rules are often simultaneously constraining and facilitating migration of

different national, occupational or family groups, it becomes questionable whether it is useful to talk in terms of general policy restrictiveness.

We can expect that the spatially unequal impacts of globalization should also be reflected in spatial shifts in global migration patterns. However, we should thus not expect that this is necessarily reflected in an increase in the relative number of migrants. This shows the need to look below the radar of a rather abstract measure of a global migration rate. A focus on *global* numbers and averages is likely to conceal significant differences in the extent to which these presumed processes of an increased *intensity, diversity, geographical scope* and overall *complexity* (directionality) of migration have occurred in countries and individual regions, including that migration has become less instead of more 'global' in particular countries and regions. It is very unlikely that 'globalization' has affected countries and world regions in a uniform way. An analysis of regional and sub-regional trends underlying global pattern is crucial, since this may shed some more light on the factors explaining these differential trends and, hence, increase our understanding of migration determinants.

Although there is broad consensus that the fractionalisation, distance and directionality of migration have increased under the influence of broader globalization processes, these assumptions have not been subjected to systematic empirical assessment and have therefore remained largely unchallenged. However, casual observation already gives reason to challenge some of these assumptions. For instance, European countries seem to host an increasingly diverse array of immigrants from increasingly distant countries. However, we cannot automatically extrapolate this Eurocentric observation to the global level. For instance, has migration from and to Latin America or Asia also become more diverse and distant? While Latin American countries used to attract large numbers of migrants from a remarkably diverse array of countries beyond Europe (including Japan, India, China and Lebanon), this diversity seems to have decreased in recent decades.

Casual observation also gives reason to at least question the idea migration has become increasingly diverse and distant for European or other major destination countries. While several European countries have seen large-scale immigration from (often very distant) ex-colonies between 1950 and 1990, in more recent years there has been a surge in immigration from (less distant) Eastern European countries, which may have partly replaced inflows from (more distant) the Maghreb, Turkey or former colonies.. While Australia and New Zealand used to almost exclusively attract migrants from (extremely distant) Europe, they now attract increasing numbers of migrants from (less distant) Asian countries.

While North America used to attract Europeans, non-European immigration has been steadily increasing since the 1960s. Or is 'diversification' also based on a Eurocentric worldview, reflecting the end of the great age of Europeans emigration with the major shift in global directionality of migration? With Europe transforming from a continent of immigration to a continent of emigration, there has been an increased presence of phenotypically and culturally distinct immigrants in Europe as well as "White" European settler societies in North America, Australia and New Zealand. In other words, are we describing an increasing fractionalisation in the origin countries migrants are coming from or rather an increasing *ethnic* fractionalisation in the composition of the immigrant population away from European origins? ,

The problem is that common ideas of increasing diversity and geographical scope of global migration have remained largely unquestioned empirically. There is also a lack of studies that explore in detail how the global spatial patterning of migration has evolved. The best available studies analyse migration trends between and within the global 'South' and 'North' and the major migration poles (Özden et al. 2011). While such studies have provided valuable insights into the major shifts in inter-continental migration flows, there is a need to go beyond rather crude and problematic distinctions between 'South' and

'North' (cf. Bakewell 2009), and to achieve a more fine grained understanding of how the global migration map has changed over the past century.

Data and Methodology

Drawing on the recently published Global Migrant Origin database (Worldbank 2011) we are able to answer the key question of this article. The question whether international migration has become more global (or rather more regional) in recent decades is tightly linked to an operationalization of global migration. We utilise the previously developed concepts of migration *intensity*, *spread* and *distance* as key indicators to describe of the multi-dimensionality of the global migration pattern. Based on an operationalization of these concepts we then propose the methodology for a *Migration Globalisation Index* (MGI). The MGI is a composite index of two broader sub-indices, the *Emigration Dispersion Index* (EDI) and the *Immigration Diversification Index* (IDI). Both indices are composite indices themselves based on the key dimensions of global migration: spread, distance and intensity. We employ this methodology to quantify to what the extent emigration population has dispersed and immigration population have diversified across the 226 countries in our dataset between 1960 and 2000.

Preliminary results

By analysing the evolution of global migration patterns between 1960 and 2000 on national level by using the Migration Globalisation Index and its component, the paper generate new insights on the evolution of global migration patterns.

The first key insight is that small states and territories are much migratory than more populated countries. Across four decades between 1960 and 2000, about three quarters of the top 20 most "migration-globalised" countries were small, defined as having had a total population in 1960 of less than 500,000. According to this definition, about a third (76 out of 226) of all countries and overseas territories in our list were small in 1960. Small countries are similarly overrepresented in each category - emigration dispersion and immigration diversification, respectively. At the top of the mostly dispersed populations we find rather the developing small island states such as Cape Verde, Samoa or Suriname, whereas small countries with a highly diversified immigrant populations are rather the (now) more developed type of destinations such as the Gulf countries (Qatar, Kuwait) or spots known for luxurious lifestyles (Cayman Islands, Monaco, Bermuda). Thus, small countries are more migratory, but often for very different reasons.

Because these rankings are rather sensitive for this group of small countries, we consider the larger set of non-small countries (those with a population size of more than 0.5 mill. in 1960) separately. Figure Y1 displays EDI and IDI scores of the top 10 non-small countries, ranked by their average GMI score across 1960 and 2000. Unsurprisingly, we see some classical immigration countries (like Australia, Israel or Canada) and emigration countries (such as the UK, Portugal or Lebanon) at the top of this list. Aggregation of the EDI and IDI scores, which leads to the GMI scores shows that for all of these top 10 countries the degree of "migration-globalisation" has continuously increased over the last four to five decades.

We find a negative relationship between the degree of emigration dispersion and immigration diversification, i.e. the more diversified the immigrant population is the less dispersed is a country's emigrant population. This pattern, however, seems to be not representative and robust globally. In fact, emigration dispersion processes are rather positively related to immigration diversification. We can show that for depending on country size –small and non-small states- IDI scores relate positively to EDI scores

and even more for countries with larger populations and with a smaller variance. This implies that we can be even more confident for the group of non-small states that immigration diversification and emigrant dispersion processes are dynamically integrated and co-evolve over time.

On a global and (sub-) regional level focusing on changes in the *intensity, diversity, distance, directionality and connectivity* of international migration at a global, regional and national level, the paper generates the following key insights on the globalisation of migration:

1. While the total number of net emigration countries has increased continuously, the number of net receiving countries reduced by about 20 per cent between 1960 and 2000. Thus, over the past decades, the number of number of countries that experienced a transition from a net immigration to a net emigration country was significantly larger than transition in the opposite direction.
2. Global migration has only become more *intense* in terms of absolute numbers, but not in relative terms.
 - While African and Asian emigration rates have significantly declined over the decades, Americas and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and some smaller island states in the Pacific) have significantly increased emigration as percentage of their population.
 - Immigration rates for the Americas have slightly increased, a trend though that is mostly driven by the US and Canada. Immigration to Europe (all but non-Eastern Europe), has similarly increased and reaches about 8 per cent in 2000. All over Africa and Asia (except Western Asia) though see less immigration in 2000 than in 1960.
3. Globally, migrants have moved over increasingly large *distances*: while the ‘average’ global migrant migrated about 2900 km in 1960, the distance increased to more than 3600 km in 2000.
 - While for all African and Asian regions (except Western Asia) emigration distances have significantly increased, across all European regions emigration distances dropped significantly.
 - At the same time, immigration distances increased over all Europe and Northern America, it has reduced significantly for Central and South America.
4. The global migrant population has become more spread, or concentrated less, across countries.
 - On a regional level, the Americas has seen an increasing concentration of its emigrant population; however, further disaggregation shows that this trend is only driven by Central America and the Caribbean, while emigrants from North and South America increasingly spread across new destinations.
 - Decline in immigration concentration is almost a global phenomenon with only two out of 22 world sub-regions having had a less diversified (more concentration) immigration population in 2000 compared to 1960.
5. While the overall *connectivity* (absolute number of bilateral connections) between countries has increased over time, the average number of *significant* connections has remained remarkably stable. On average, countries receive a significant number of immigrants (more than one per cent of their immigrant stock) from about 12 origin countries) while countries find significant numbers of their emigrants (more than one per cent of their emigrant stock) only in about 9 destination countries.
6. In terms of migration *directionality*, while Europe had the highest ration of intra-regional migration in 1960 (83 per cent of all European migration was within Europe), in 2000 it has become Africa being the world region where intra-regional migration is highest (87 per cent). For the Americas, Europe has mostly been replaced as region of origin by Asian migrants or other intra-regional migrants.

Overall, the results challenge the idea that there has been an increase in the intensity, diversity and geographical scope of migration *per se*. Migration has globalized from an origin country perspective but not very much from a destination country perspective. While global migration rates have rather declined over the past 50 years, migrants from an increasingly diverse array of origin countries have concentrated in a decreasing pool of prime destination countries. Major shifts in the scope, direction and diversity of migration primarily manifest themselves on a (sub-) regional level. The main shifts in global migration have been directional are linked to and seem to be the result of major geopolitical and economic shifts. While the global migration map has changed, access to international migration remains unequally distributed and most migrations remain concentrated in a few large migration corridors. Rather than refuting the globalization of migration as such, this seems to reflect the asymmetric nature of globalization processes in general.