

2021



MIGRATION, BUSINESS & SOCIETY'S AGENDA FOR PRACTICE-INFORMED INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH



Contents

- 3 **Who we are**
- 5 **Key messages**
- 6 *Vital but overlooked context:*
How recent, current, and future changes in migration patterns
are reshaping the present and future of work
- 11 *Social-side of sustainability:*
What Covid-19, migrant workers' human rights, and the
microchip shortage have in common
- 15 *Working from anywhere and working alongside cobots:*
The profound impact of digitalization and Industry 4.0 on
migrant workforce management
- 17 *The lifeblood of economic development:*
Dynamics of migrant remittance practices
- 19 *History in the making:*
Opportunities for collaboration between business, policy
makers, intergovernmental organizations, and the civil society—
advancing SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals)
- 21 *Claiming a seat at the table:*
How we as business scholars can drive impact?
- 22 **Concluding thoughts**
- 23 **References**

Who we are

Migration, Business & Society is a new global initiative that seeks to enhance our understanding of the close relationship between business and migration by bringing together scholars, senior business practitioners, and human rights experts to exchange expertise and generate knowledge. Our advisory board members are Paul Baldassari, Executive Vice President US, Component Operations, Strategy and Excellence at Flex; Kevin Franklin, Chief Operating and Product Officer at ELEVATE; Dilip Ratha, Lead Economist and Head of KNOMAD, the World Bank's global knowledge partnership; Neill Wilkins, Head of the Migrant Workers Programme at the Institute for Human Rights and Business; and professors Alexander Betts at Oxford University; Mary Yoko Brannen at the Copenhagen Business School; Chris Brewster at the University of Reading; Cristina Gibson at Pepperdine University; William Kerr at Harvard University; and Philip McCann at Sheffield University. With their help, we seek to both conduct and inspire the practice-informed interdisciplinary research now lacking on the intersection of business and migration and derive from this research its teaching and service implications for business schools and the larger practitioner environment.

This document is a summary of the key points discussed in July 2021 during the first advisory

board meeting. It also includes quotations from the interviews with some of our cosigners as well as references to evidence from the scientific literature and investigative reports. Our hope is that these points will inspire our community of endorsers (80-plus scholars from 57 universities in 19 countries) to take action—whether via research, teaching, or public engagement. We will encourage these endorsers to share their progress with us so that we can begin to assess the impact of the initiative.

A well-funded research agenda inspired by the ideas derived from this initiative would signal a redirecting of research funding toward the intellectual exploration of urgent social issues of high relevance for society and business.

“

How much does it cost for the more than 800 AACSB-accredited schools to devote 40 percent of their faculty resources to research?

Based on the 2017–2018 AACSB Staff Compensation and Demographics Survey, roughly US\$3.8 billion annually. This figure is extrapolated from the information provided by reporting schools and assumes 50 percent in additional expenses for supplemental salaries, fringe

benefits, facilities, research
support, administrative
costs, and other overhead.

”



Bill Glick and Anne Tsui, and Gerald Davis,¹
*Cofounders of Responsible Research
in Business and Management;
Anne is also an MBS cosigner.*

Our plans include expanding and engaging
our cosigners group, which will deliberately
consist of 50% societal stakeholders (business
leaders, policy makers, and representatives
from intergovernmental organizations) and
50% leading scholars. With their help, our
goal is to have a direct impact on practice and
policy.

A DVISORY BOARD

generate practice-informed/
interdisciplinary in scope
research questions on
migration, business, and society
that will guide future efforts
at business schools

C OSIGNERS

strive for concrete impact
on practice

How We Work

E NDORSERS

include business school
scholars and fellow academics
from other disciplines,
who engage in knowledge
generation and exchange,
with the aim to advance
migration research and
teaching

¹ Glick, Tsui, & Davis, 2018.

Key messages

Here are the six key messages that emerged from the July meeting:

- ▶ *Vital but overlooked context:*
How recent, current, and future changes in migration patterns are reshaping the present and future of work
- ▶ *The lifeblood of economic development:*
Dynamics of migrant remittance practices
- ▶ *History in the making:*
Opportunities for collaboration between business, policy makers, intergovernmental organizations, and the civil society—advancing SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals)
- ▶ *Social-side of sustainability:*
What Covid-19, migrant workers' human rights, and the microchip shortage have in common
- ▶ *Working from anywhere and working alongside cobots:*
The profound impact of digitalization and Industry 4.0 on migrant workforce management
- ▶ *Claiming a seat at the table:*
How we as business scholars can drive impact

Vital but overlooked context:

How recent, current, and future changes in migration patterns are reshaping the present and future of work

Over the past seven decades, global migration patterns have undergone significant, although often underestimated, transformations. The directionality, geographic spread, and skills involved have resulted in changes in demand and supply of the workforce. In turn, this has affected corporate human resource (HR) management and (social) sustainability practices as well as the diversity, inclusion, and internationalization strategies of firms. Migration, Business & Society advisory board members and cosigners provide their insights into these urgent topics, to inspire future research, teaching and practice.

Contrary to a current common myth, we do not live in a time of unprecedented global mass migration. Over the past 70 years, the relative number of international migrants has been 2.7%-3.5% of the world's population.² In the Migration, Business & Society's [Position Paper](#), we posit that rather than a global acceleration of migration, the recent migratory shifts have transformed the contemporary context in which companies operate. These key transformations up to the present date refer to changes in the directionality and geographic spread of migration, significant increases in high-skilled migration, urban migration (internal and international), and forced migration. And looming future trends include the unpredictable consequences of demographic change (e.g., Africa potentially becoming the world's second largest region in terms of population), climate migration,

and ongoing nationalist backlashes in migrant-receiving countries.

Directionality and geographic spread of migration

Under the influence of decolonization, demographic changes such as aging populations, and rapid economic growth, new regions have emerged as global migration magnets. The percentage of Europeans among intercontinental migrants shrank from 76 percent in 1960 to 22 percent in 2017. Now Africans, Latin Americans, and especially Asians increasingly account for intercontinental migration with Europe, the Gulf, and parts of East Asia emerging as their destinations. Latin America and Africa have become of lesser importance as destinations.³

These changes have affected both developed and emerging economies—with the latter now also facing shortages of lower-skilled labor. For example, labor shortages caused by emigration from Eastern to Western European states after the last two waves of EU expansion now pose a serious challenge for corporations with factories in Eastern Europe. Similarly, multinational corporations (MNCs) with offshore factories in Malaysia rely extensively on migrant workers from Nepal, in Pakistan from Myanmar, or in Mauritius from Bangladesh. (Hence, reshoring options, which are currently widely debated in the international business literature, are also not without their problems, because they would increase the demand for workers with migration

² Czaika & de Haas, 2014; de Haas et al., 2019; IOM, 2020

³ de Haas et al., 2019

backgrounds). These issues directly affect the roles of HRM officers, especially chief human resource officers, who guide strategic decisions.

“

When I started at Semperit in 2011, we would have never thought that we'd need to recruit migrant workers for factories in already low-cost locations. Today, we can't get enough workers in our factories in the Czech Republic, or in Poland, so we go further east. We do a lot of things to attract employees from Ukraine, and now there are also plans to bring migrant workers from Mongolia and Vietnam.

”



Berthold Stoeger,
*Chief Human Resource Officer, Semperit,
and an MBS cosigner*

A concrete case—a hot topic in the media in 2021—has been the global microchip shortage, brought on by the world's reliance on Taiwan as the dominant player in the global semiconductor industry. Factories in Taiwan rely almost exclusively on migrant workers from Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Unprecedented droughts and the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the inflow and productivity of these foreign workers and may well become the world's wake-up call for the fragility of supply chains because of the serious repercussions of these shortages for numerous industries.

Another major change in migration patterns concerns geographic spread. Although more countries

generate emigrant populations today than in the past, the number of countries in which migrant diasporas concentrate is shrinking. Between 1960 and 2000, the overall number of net immigration countries declined from 102 to 78, while the number of net emigration countries increased from 124 to 148, implying greater national and ethno-racial diversity in the composition of migrant populations in fewer core destination regions.⁴ This has resulted in much greater ethnic diversity, differences in social stratification, and more legal differentiation of migrant populations, which in turn has important implications for how firms pursue diversity and inclusion.⁵

“

Bicultural and multicultural immigrant employees are an important resource for today's global firms as well as for the sustainability and competitive growth of industries.

”



Mary Yoko Brannen,
*Honorary Professor of International Business
at Copenhagen Business School,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

High-skilled migration

The benefits nations derive from attracting high-skilled migrants have been widely documented. This is also reflected in policy making: Since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, the

⁴ de Haas et al., 2019

⁵ Vertovec, 2007

number of countries that have officially affirmed their intention to offer financial incentives to attract high-skilled immigrants has doubled, accounting today for half of the 172 UN member states.⁶ These skilled workers are also one of the most mobile groups in a population.⁷

“

What are the incentives of employers when they use migrant labor? How can that either align or misalign with what policy makers intended when they set up various policy structures? What are the realms of sensitive immigration reforms?

”



William Kerr,
*Professor of Business Administration at
Harvard Business School,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

Urban migration

The process of people moving from rural to urban areas, whether domestic or international, has historically been a driving force in the growth of cities, bringing along with it opportunities and challenges.⁸ Key among these challenges is the strain placed on integrating new arrivals into local communities, in a way that preserves the unique cultural traditions they bring, and also enables the community to serve

as a resource for firms in the surrounding areas.⁹ Demographers predict that the largest inflow of migration to cities around the world is yet to come. Recent decades have already witnessed dramatic increases in internal rural-urban migration in countries such as China, India, and Indonesia. The documented effects include opportunities, such as migrant remittances back to their home villages (Philip McCann and colleagues' work in progress), but also significant challenges, such as the elderly being left behind in rural provinces without welfare provisions, and problems of pollution, congestion, security, and potable water shortages in the expanding cities themselves.¹⁰

“

When, for example, heavy industries, like mining, close their production sites in South Africa and other places, we're going to see large communities on the move. We're going to see workers on the move everywhere, and the majority of them will flock to towns. So, it's the impact of migration on cities that is going to become increasingly important and how cities are adapting, planning strategies, and what they might do to cope with and accommodate those migrants, many of whom will be internal migrants.

”



Neill Wilkins,
*Head of Migrant Workers Program at Institute
for Human Rights & Business,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

⁶ Czaika, 2018

⁷ Skeldon, 2018

⁸ Migration Data Portal, 2021

⁹ Gibson, Gibson and Webster, 2021

¹⁰ Guillén, 2020

Some of the same patterns also apply to international migration to metropolitan city hubs. Dubai's foreign-born population exceeds 80%, Toronto's is nearly 50%, while Sydney, London, and New York are all nearing 40%.¹¹ The phenomenon of urbanization is here to stay—by 2030, up to 60% of people worldwide may live in cities.¹²

Despite their challenges, cities create a critical mass of global networks of innovation and entrepreneurship. Migrants, well-documented as entrepreneurial and innovative, have such tremendous potential as contributors to these urban environments and scholars note their ever-evolving suitability for moving capital, knowledge, and ideas.¹³ The social and professional networks of migrants span borders. Their activities encompass involvements in host and home societies, and beyond, often creolizing meanings and identities. This new type of “mobility” and “interconnectedness” are additional aspects of the new demographic that are distinct from migration patterns of the past.

Increase in forced migration

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) database, at the end of 2020, almost 82.5 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced, 24.4 of whom were refugees. More than 85% of these refugees are hosted in developing (often neighboring) countries. Against all odds, refugees are known to be resilient, innovative, able, and very much willing to work. The success in the USA of Hamdi Ulukaya's company, Chobani, where refugees are a significant part of its workforce, is just one illustration of such a case. Inspired by his personal experiences as a migrant founder and CEO, Ulukaya also established the Tent Partnership for Refugees, with a goal of inspiring other firms to incorporate refugees as potential employees and entrepreneurs. In less than six

years, the Tent has partnered with more than 180 companies worldwide, including multinationals such as IBM, UPS, IKEA, Unilever, Starbucks, Mastercard, and CISCO.

Thus, undoubtedly, integrating refugees into the labor market alongside local populations merits immediate attention from business scholars.¹⁴

“

We need to find rational, realistic ways of managing this—not based on the old logics of humanitarian assistance, not based on logics of charity, but building on the opportunities offered by globalization, markets and mobility.

”



Alexander Betts,
*Professor of Forced Migration and International
Affairs at Oxford University,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

Preparing for an unpredictable future

In addition to the demographic changes that have already been unfolding, migration inevitably will continue to have unforeseen and unpredictable consequences that will require flexibility and adaptability. We are likely to soon see South Asia, including India, become the largest region in terms of population size, with Africa second, and East Asia, including China, third. Europe, which in the mid-twentieth century was the second most

¹¹ Pariona, 2018

¹² Guillén, 2020

¹³ Harnoss, Schwarz, Reeves, & Candelon, 2021; Venturini, Kalantaryan, & Fassio, 2018

¹⁴ Szkudlarek et al., 2019

populous, will fall to sixth place.¹⁵ All this will have enormous implications for labor markets across the world. International migration may be used by companies and states to partially mitigate labor shortages. However, we have already seen the other side of the coin: anti-immigration backlashes and the increased support for right-leaning political parties in migrant-receiving societies across the world.

“

Think about some of the issues raised by Brexit. Migration is the central issue in Brexit. That's what many people voted for. Whatever all the other issues around sovereignty or trade policy were involved, people fundamentally voted based on their attitude toward immigration.

And now the institutions are struggling enormously to work out precisely what they want to do and how they're going to do anything in relation to migration. There are suddenly serious shortages appearing in certain parts of the labor market. Businesses are struggling and running very quickly to try to work this out.

”



Philip McCann,
*Professor in Urban and Regional Economics
at Sheffield University,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

Furthermore, climate-related migration is on the rise and could lead to large numbers of people fleeing regions that become almost impossible to live in.¹⁶ Although there is no consensus among migration scholars regarding the potential specter of mass migration induced by climate change, there are clear indications of new climate policies' affecting certain industries that strongly rely on migrant workers.¹⁷ In other words, there is little doubt that the migration, business, and climate change nexus will become a highly relevant issue in coming years.

¹⁵ Guillén, 2020

¹⁶ KNOMAD, 2021

¹⁷ See for example, de Haas, 2020

Social-side of sustainability:

What Covid-19, migrant workers' human rights, and the microchip shortages have in common

The Covid-19 pandemic focused attention on occupations deemed essential such as health care, food supply, cleaning, and maintenance. It also confirmed that migrant workers disproportionately fill these jobs and are essential to global value chains (GVCs). Nevertheless, such workers remain largely invisible, reflecting their geographically remote work locations in warehouses, factories and farms on urban fringes, or aboard the freighters that move 90% of the world's commerce by sea.¹⁸

The lack of clarity in governments' regulations during the pandemic also forced hard choices on companies' managements. Continued production in their factories risked the spread of the virus among workers, including migrants, but stopping production jeopardized competitiveness. Moreover, managers had to choose between repatriating their foreign workers—which meant they would be difficult to return quickly—or quarantining them in dormitories and risking clusters of infection as well as incurring higher costs. And firm-supplier relationships were at risk either way.

“Due to a confluence of challenges, now more than ever, workers across the globe face threats to their experience of human dignity. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable. Workplaces must be designed to instill respect for all people, replete with opportunities for workers to become embedded within a community at work.”



Cristina Gibson,
Dean's Distinguished Professor of Management,
Pepperdine University,
and an MBS Advisory Board member

Even without the complications of Covid-19, it has been widely documented that lower-status migrant workers in GVCs across the world face disturbingly common patterns of recruitment abuse, workplace discrimination, and retaliation

¹⁸ House, 2020

for asserting their legal rights.¹⁹ In most of the migrant-receiving countries, visa programs require companies to hire workers while they are still in their places of origin. For high-skilled migrants, this is simply an administrative burden, but for low-skilled migrant workers, the recruitment processes and employment abroad can easily devolve into a human rights issue. Because few companies dispatch recruiters directly to migrants' countries of origin, employers are forced to rely on recruitment intermediaries. These agencies have long been infamous for unethical business practices, corrupt ties to local governments, for making false promises to potential migrants and for charging migrant workers excessively high and opaque fees, leading to instances of forced labor.²⁰ According to the International Labour Office (ILO), conservative estimates indicate that about 25 million people globally are trapped into forced labor in the private sector.²¹

This is an issue in many countries. For example, Taiwan, in its attempt to sustain its position as an electronics manufacturing powerhouse, has been entangled in scandals involving migrant labor and human rights' violations. The monthly minimum wage in Taiwan is more than twice the average monthly salary in many other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, so the country attracts many migrant workers. However, in Taiwan, the average debt of migrant factory workers for their recruitment fees amounts to almost a full year of their income, and the competition for visas continues to drive their recruitment costs even higher.²² Discrimination against, and exploitation of, migrant workers in such countries is systemic and is likely to have worsened during the pandemic.

Five MBS Advisory Board members have extensive expertise on these topics. Here are two of their observations from the field.

¹⁹ BSR, 2010; ILRWG, 2013; ICCR, 2017

²⁰ Gordon, 2017

²¹ ILO, 2017

²² ICCR, 2017

“ Malaysia is lagging behind on vaccinations, and so are many other countries in Southeast Asia and Mexico, as I know from our factories. So migrant workers are in a difficult situation in their host countries. I know from our efforts and from efforts from many other companies that we need to keep the migrants safe in the workers' dormitories. Even if in our dormitories there are only four people in a room (in many firms, there are eight to 12), that is still a high potential for Covid infection. On top of that, migrants have constant fear for their families back home.”



Paul Baldassari,
*Executive Vice President US, and Component
Operations, Strategy and Excellence at Flex,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

“ One of the top issues linked to migration and that we see on-the-ground in supply chains are recruitment fees, the use of recruitment agents and the risk that workers have paid a fee for a job and may be in a position of bonded labor. We see this finding / reality in a number of countries ... not just in Asia or the Middle East. We also see it in a number of sectors from agriculture, to apparel, electronics, food processing and others.”

More work is needed to (1) raise awareness with suppliers, vendors and companies on the expectations and standards, and (2) to support workers and business through the remediation process.

”



Kevin Franklin,
*Chief Operating and Product Officer, ELEVATE,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

As a response to the urgent issues in migrant workforce management, a corporate movement has emerged, especially in the electronics (e.g., Responsible Business Alliance) and consumer goods industries (e.g., The Consumer Goods Forum), that have established assessment frameworks for due diligence on migrant labor issues. Increased collaboration between leading nonprofit organizations and the private sector has also occurred in recent years. Our Advisory Board member Neill Wilkins, Head of the Migrant Workers Program at the Institute for Human Rights & Business, has worked alongside companies like The Coca Cola Company, HP, M&S, and Tesco, to oversee the development of the Employer Pays principle. But huge gaps remain in the global movement against unethical recruitment and employment, he notes. For instance, the World Employment Confederation (WEC), which represents the recruitment industry at the global level, includes national associations from 49 countries and global board members from the leading recruitment companies like ManpowerGroup, the Adecco Group, Kelly Services, and Randstad. The horizontal collaboration between WEC and the big recruitment companies has the potential to influence recruitment

practices through faster information exchanges, standard quality control measures, and collaborative efforts against corruption in certain national employment agencies. How best to achieve this represents a fruitful avenue for research.

In a nutshell, the social side of sustainability, as regards migrant workforce recruitment and management, raises numerous urgent questions for business scholars to tackle. Here are a few more questions selected from those that surfaced from our Advisory Board members.

“

We need more research into the ‘edge of’ or ‘outside of’ the legal forms of international mobility, including the details of the basic processes (recruitment, selection, socialization, etc.) of HRM, as they apply to internationally mobile workers at all skill levels.

”



Chris Brewster,
*Professor of International Human Resource
Management at Henley Business School,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

“

In addition to all the macro- and meso- issues, we need a better understanding of the psychology of those who are seeking jobs abroad. How much are different populations of migrants willing to pay to leave their countries? Imagine, I’m a

25-year-old, worried about my
life. I need a job so I can get
married and have children, or
maybe I'm already married, but I
need a job to support my family.
Would I be willing to sacrifice
three years of my disposable
income to pay a bribe to get a
job abroad for the next 8, 15,
30 years? What is the 'magic
number'? Is it 10% of my lifelong
income? Is it more?

”



Dilip Ratha,
*Lead Economist, Migration and Remittances Unit,
and Head of KNOMAD at the World Bank,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

Working from anywhere and working alongside cobots:

The profound impact of digitalization and Industry 4.0 on migrant workforce management

The most recent (and ongoing) technological revolution, often referred to as the Industry 4.0 transformation, refers to digitalization, the increasing adoption of automation and robotics, AI-enhanced systems, augmented reality, simulation, and real-time data exchange in manufacturing and distribution. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, it had already altered the internationalization patterns in place since 1980s, and the pandemic pushed some companies to catalyze their investments in digital technologies even faster. Various scholars have observed the dark side of this: namely, widening inequalities because of disparities in digitalization speed and volume in high-versus low-income countries.²³

However, other aspects of Industry 4.0 haven't caught scholars' attention yet. According to our Advisory Board member Paul Baldassari, moving toward Industry 4.0 inevitably demands higher-skilled labor on the factory floor. Human operators have to work alongside 'cobots' (collaborative robots), which are complex and expensive. Consequently, even fresh hires must learn complex operational systems to avoid safety and quality problems or equipment damage. What this means for migrant workforce management is that companies will have to undertake training early in the recruitment process, including introductory courses to specific technologies in migrant workers' home countries, before they commit to employment abroad.

From a broader perspective, this is likely to affect labor migration policies in migrant-receiving

countries because companies will seek to retain the upskilled migrant workers on extended work permits or multi-entry visas. For example, today, most migrant workers from Bangladesh employed at the factories of multinational textile companies in Mauritius have a four-year visa that can only be renewed once for up to eight years. If the employing companies invest in developing and providing training for the Bangladeshi workers to operate more complex machinery—which may take up to several years per person—they will want these workers to stay in Mauritius for 10 years and longer. So, the choice of reskilling a migrant workforce for Industry 4.0 transformation implies new staffing challenges that until recently were only applicable to highly skilled talent.

Pertinent to the high-skilled migrant workforce, such as knowledge workers, Covid-19 lockdowns and digitalization have raised different questions, including the best means of ensuring 'care in connecting' to combat the ill effects of 'social distancing'.²⁴ As more companies adopt work-from-anywhere practices and more employees benefit from geographic flexibility, what opportunities and challenges are involved? Will we see a decrease in high-skilled migration (which had been rapidly increasing) and an increase in the number of 'global domestics' (defined as employees who remain in their home country while using technology to perform their job responsibilities in other countries)?²⁵ Research on this group is limited but quickly gaining in importance. For example, according to the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), before

²³ Srinivasan & Eden, 2021

²⁴ Gibson, 2020

²⁵ Schaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012

the Covid-19 lockdowns in Europe, the skilled labor supply was increasing by approximately 0.3% annually, whereas the demand for skilled labor was increasing by an average of 1%. To achieve the Industry 4.0 transformation, the EU will need to draw on international talent to remain competitive globally.²⁶ Does this mean that European companies will be pressured to increase their reliance on global domestics, or in the post-pandemic years will they continue bringing in skilled talent?

Another fruitful avenue for research concerns the so-called brain circulation—migration and development. Some scholars have suggested that work-from-anywhere may reverse the brain drain in lower income countries.²⁷ Our Advisory Board member Philip McCann has raised the opposite but equally fascinating question: What implications will these new trends have for high-income economies?

²⁶ Frelak, Chirita, & Mananashvili, 2020

²⁷ Choudhury, 2020

The lifeblood of economic development:

Dynamics of migrant remittance practices

Migrants' remittances are a widely researched subject in economics. According to World Bank data, in 2019, before the COVID outbreak, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries were the largest single source of direct money inflow, amounting to USD548bn. Although it was projected that the pandemic—because of lost jobs, lowered incomes, and mass repatriations of migrant workers—would cause a dramatic decline in remittances, officially recorded numbers dropped in 2020 by only 1.6%, to USD 540bn.²⁸ This confirmed Dilip Ratha's earlier observation that unlike private investments, remittances act more like insurance: during crises, migrants tend to send even more money to their families back home by drawing on savings or reducing their own consumption.

An urgent issue is the high transaction costs of sending remittances through official channels. Depending on the country and service provider, these costs vary from around 6% to 20%, or even higher. Given that many migrants are low-wage workers, the high costs of remittance transfers effectively costs these individuals significant portions of their earnings, having serious implications for migrants' ability to serve as agents of development. As Dilip Ratha and Neill Wilkins both pointed out, an additional problem is that this forces migrants to turn to unofficial, informal money transfer channels in which they can end up being betrayed and deprived of their earnings. In this sense, remittances and migrant recruitment share a common issue of corruption and involvement of organizations that function within the informal economy. Given all this, the Global Compact for Migration asks states and companies

to work toward faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances.²⁹ It endorses SDG10.c, which stipulates that by 2030, transaction costs of remittances should be reduced to less than 3%.³⁰ Business scholars are well-positioned to look in more depth into the following questions: What are the bottlenecks within multinationals like Western Union and MoneyGram that continue to keep remittance costs at twice the SDG10 target level? What type of competition are new players like fintech firms able to offer in this industry? What is the impact of securitization measures—such as anti-money laundering and combatting the financing of terrorism—upon remittance service providers?

A very different set of questions concerns gender and generational differences. Policy and research have often implicitly assumed the sending of remittances is gender-neutral. However, reports by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) challenge this assumption, suggesting that gender may in fact influence the amount and frequency of remittances that migrants send home as well as how that money is used. Several reports have shown that female migrants send home a higher proportion of their income; they also usually send remittances more regularly.³¹ Similarly, although most research on remittances centers on first-generation migrants, the remitting behavior of second and third generations—who may or may not have strong transnational ties to the home countries of their parents—could provide additional interesting insights into this phenomenon.

²⁸ Ratha, 2021

²⁹ GCM, 2018, p. 6

³⁰ UN, 2015

³¹ IOM, 2010

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Now an interesting question is what happens with
intergenerational diasporas?

So, think about the migration lifecycle of a family. First, a person, whether high- or low- skilled, leaves their country for a job abroad. Depending on the costs they incurred during the recruitment and moving processes, initially they may not be able to send a lot of money home. Years go by, and if everything is well, they start sending more money, while they also may be raising children in the host society. Even as they get older, the first generation never loses connections back home—the ties never go away. Their close relatives may no longer be alive, but they still continue sending money. The second generation may also keep the transnational ties. There's a soft spot, and so they might also want to do some charity, perhaps even do some investing.

But what happens to the third generation?

Do remittance practices disappear?

And is there such thing as a fourth generation?

”



Dilip Ratha,

*Lead Economist, Migration and Remittances Unit,
and Head of KNOMAD, the World Bank,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

History in the making:

Opportunities for collaboration between business, policy makers, intergovernmental organizations, and the civil society – advancing SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

The relationship(s) between businesses, intergovernmental organizations, and the nonprofit sector as concerns migration has been increasingly symbiotic and mutually constructive. In 2007, the UN established the consultative Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which remains the largest global initiative of its kind. One of its core activities is to get the private sector involved in shaping migration mobility policies. Another significant step was the 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights that set the global standard for human rights diligence in businesses' activities. The vital role of the private sector is also recognized in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants as well as in the 2019 Global Compact for Migration. Likewise, the UN Global Compact business guidelines include explicit suggestions regarding migration-related SDG targets (included in 8.7., 8.8., 10.7, 10.c, and others).

An illustrative example of multisectoral cooperation is the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment. Its founders include corporate giants such as The Coca-Cola Company; HP Inc.; Hewlett Packard Enterprise; IKEA; and Unilever. Others are the IOM; Verité; and a global shareholder advocacy group, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. Neill Wilkins at the Institute for Human Rights & Business is responsible for the strategy and day-to-day management of this initiative. Other public sector organizations are also seeking closer involvement of businesses. For instance, the ICMPD highlights that the “[p]rivate sector investment and know-how will be crucial factors for making a real difference.”³²

Within an Australian context, truly innovative collaborations have occurred between large multinational organizations, such as Woodside, Westpac and Qantas, local indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations. Communities determined priorities, corporations provided expertise, and non-profits bridged these contributions. Programs of community development have addressed family income management, education, and health. These have resulted in upskilling, integration, and self-determination among formally disenfranchised members of the population, reports Professor Cristina Gibson, whose research in these corporate-community collaborations was recognized by the American Psychological Association with an Award for Humanitarian Impact.³³ Similar approach could also be an inspiration for engaging with migrant communities.

Furthermore, individual business leaders have taken a proactive stance. For example, Alan Jope, the CEO of Unilever was among the first speakers (together with the UN deputy Amina J. Mohammed) at the UNGC-led live online sessions on the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jope publicly pledged to continue paying salaries to the company's most vulnerable workforce—migrant cleaning staff, packers, and drivers—while their services were not needed during the lockdowns.³⁴

There are important reasons why business schools—which until now have been largely absent from such collaborations—should get

³² ICMPD, 2017

³³ Gibson, 2021

³⁴ UNGC, 2017

more involved. Paul Baldassari and Berthold Stoeger both told us, from their experience as chief human resource officers at leading manufacturing multinationals, that they could not imagine an HR manager in their industries who has not dealt with migrant workers. Both also expressed concern that many business school students who want to become HRM professionals do not gain even a basic knowledge of migration management from their studies. Nevertheless, much of the HRM work in manufacturing companies is to meet the social standards that their B2B customers (for example, HP Inc. for Flex) want them to apply. So migrant worker recruitment, their responsible management, and their retention are the big issues that keep HRM specialists busy. In the absence of adequately trained HRM new hires, companies often turn to nonprofit organizations for advice.

Because teaching and research are closely connected, business scholars should be looking more into private-public sector partnerships. The program of research instigated by Professor Gibson is a promising way forward, but to the best of our knowledge, questions that have not been addressed yet in business and management include: How do MNCs adapt to new normative migration due diligence pressures from states, intergovernmental organizations, and human rights activists? How do multisector initiatives like the Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment impact market priorities and the nonmarket activities of the MNCs involved? And which firm-level characteristics would enable companies to make the best use of these partnerships in advancing SDG17?

“

I would love to have in our HR team people who come in already knowing about migrant workforce management, instead of finding out everything through trial and error.

This would help us a lot. I hire so many graduates from business schools in different countries. But they don't know much about migration. So, we as a company go to NGOs that know what's going on on the ground.

If not for our collaboration with them, this would still remain a black box.”

”



Paul Baldassari,
*Executive Vice President US, Component Operations,
Strategy and Excellence at Flex,
and an MBS Advisory Board member*

Claiming a seat at the table:

How we as business scholars can drive impact?

Throughout this document, we have presented potential research implications and unaddressed questions, based on the Advisory Board members' insights. We also asked them for additional thoughts on how business scholars can drive impact. Here are some of their suggestions.

Kevin Franklin pointed to the lack of case studies on migration-related topics in business and management disciplines. Our previous research confirms this. We could find only three case studies that touch upon this: two on immigration policy in Germany, published at Harvard, and one on corporate responses to Syrian immigration, published at Ivey (the three are listed on the MBS website). The other ideas that Kevin mentioned included: Looking at the supply chains of rubber, palm oil, and fishery industries; exploring different local contexts; looking at different angles of the migrant workers' experiences; and drawing on the existing expertise of the people on the ground. For example, at ELEVATE, Kevin and his team conduct up to 20,000 audits per year, collecting data on migrant workforce demographics (age, gender, country and increasingly, even province, of origin), as well as recruitment fees, wages, working hours, and more. The company generates its own analytics, but Kevin would be interested in exploring how academics could further leverage this data.

We know that case studies can serve as a fertile ground for building theory, especially when they offer rich empirical descriptions of real-life phenomena. They are also well-suited for bridging qualitative evidence and mainstream deductive research.³⁵

Philip McCann mentioned that a lot could be learned from Brexit as a natural experiment. Exploring connections between mobility, human rights, and legal safeguards that firms and individuals are now experiencing could lead to novel insights, with important policy implications.

Dilip Ratha asked us how we could leverage our students' interest in research to get first insights into the above-described topics of intergenerational remittances and paying (bribes) for jobs abroad. For the former, he suggested giving groups of students the task of conducting interviews with different generations of immigrants about their motivations, willingness, and actual practices of sending remittances back home. Professor Gibson emphasizes the need to understand the psychological and social challenges immigrants face. And for the latter, Alexander Betts' work gave us the idea to appoint research groups (e.g., doctoral students) to conduct interviews with people in refugee camps on how much of their future income (e.g., one, two, and five years, etc.) they would be willing to sacrifice to secure an opportunity for a job abroad.

In addition to the perspectives raised by our Advisory Board members, we have insights from our talks with potential MBS collaborators, such as the Tent Partnership for Refugees. In a meeting with their senior manager for research and communications, Daniela Guzmán, she asked us whether some of the research findings posted on the MBS website could be "translated" into practical language to be used by the foundation in the context of its corporate training, what additional state-of-the-art research insights we have on refugees and business related topics, and if we could connect their foundation with our endorsers from certain countries.

³⁵ Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007

Concluding thoughts

It is a good sign that business and management scholars have begun to pay attention to migration. Integrating this topic into business school teaching and research will doubtless add to a positive societal impact, which has been actively called for. We agree with the vision of the Responsible Research in Business and Management network, led by Anna Tsui, who is also among the MBS cosigners: “Contributing to a better world is the ultimate goal of science.”

We are delighted with the enthusiastic initial response from our endorsers’ communities and other affiliates. There is definitely an enormous potential in the multitude of skills and experiences that we collectively bring on board. But it is also realistic to note there is still a long way to go. In this document, we have highlighted many unanswered questions and avenues for collaboration. It is our hope that this will inspire readers to embark on active roles in developing ways forward based on our insights.

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Cite as: Žilinskaitė, M., & Hajro, A. (2021). Migration, Business & Society's agenda for
practice-informed interdisciplinary research. (Authors contributed equally)

Graphic Design by [Sokolovic Creative](#)

Cover image by D. Zocco

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