



**Reframing the debate on migration,
development and human rights:
fundamental elements**



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INTRODUCTION

During the later part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, the relationship between migration and development has become a major academic and political issue encompassing the national, regional and global contexts. So far, the discussion agenda has been dictated by the governments of the major migrant-receiving northern countries—primarily the United States and the European Union—and implemented by some key international organizations like the World Bank (WB). These bodies define the topics that determine the course of international and regional forums, policy design, and research financing.

The governments of sending and transit countries, mostly located in the southern hemisphere as well as parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, tend to take a passive stance in the debate. Most merely validate the political position taken by receiving countries or discursively protest the treatment received by their emigrants, in order to justify the failure of their own development policies. Some progressive governments, however, are now taking an alternative approach in order to reassess the role played by their nations in the fields of development and migration.

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Academic research is also under the sway of the dominant agenda, but new voices have begun to question this perspective, highlighting the need to reframe the debate while introducing new theoretical and empirical tools with which to approach these complex problems and find alternative solutions. Some of these new think-tanks include the International Network on Migration and Development (RIMD), the Institutet för Forskning om Migration, Etnicitet och Samhälle (REMESO) in Sweden, Oxford's International Migration Institute (IMI), Princeton's Center for Migration and Development (CMD), and the Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN).

While civil society has not remained passive, its participation in policy making processes has so far been essentially marginal. Organizations, movements and networks that create alternative spaces for discussion and resistance have begun to emerge. Among them is the World Social Forum on Migration, which brings together thousands of delegates each year, including academics. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), a governmental forum derived from the

2006 United Nations (UN) High-Level Dialogue, provides some room for participation and includes spaces where civil society representatives can discuss governmental agendas and make suggestions. Discussions between civil society and governments and northern and southern nations have, however, been unfruitful during the past three GFMD meetings in Brussels, Manila, and Athens. The People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (PGA) has come into being alongside the aforementioned assemblies. It convenes civil society organizations and networks that follow an alternative agenda, seeking to change the terms of the debate and influence public policies. It is worth mentioning that civil society and migrant organizations and networks in particular have driven a wide range of local, regional and transnational development initiatives, in addition to being key participants in regional forums across the globe and weighing in on a wealth of issues.

Despite all of this, receiving countries still maintain a reductionist and exclusivist approach to migration and development, obscuring the root causes of the first and ignoring the contributions made by migrants to receiving societies. This discourse also masks the costs migration has for migrants themselves and for their societies of origin, despite the alleged benefits of remittances. Instead of a comprehensive approach, we have a distorted view of reality that encourages the perception of migrants as public enemies. Furthermore, agendas that emphasize national security promote xenophobic, anti-immigration policies. In these circumstances, actual development in countries of origin and respect for migrants' human rights remain unfulfilled goals.

Taking all of the above into account, the present document has three goals:

- a) to contribute to the reframing of the agenda on migration and development;
- b) to provide elements with which to strengthen the demands and projects of migrant organizations, movements and networks, and
- c) to craft a frame of reference that can lead to a new dialogue between governments in countries of origin, transit and destination, building an alternative agenda on development, human rights and migration.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

► *Basic features of neoliberal globalization*

The 1970s saw the beginning of a new world order now known as globalization. This has entailed a profound restructuring of the world's economy under the influence of large multinational corporations, the globe's most powerful governments, and a triad of international bodies: the World Bank

(WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002). The main features of this process include:

- 1) *The internationalization of capital.* The expansion strategy of the global economy involves a profound economic restructuring based on the establishment of subcontracting chains dominated by large multinational corporations, which have a global reach. This form of expansion seeks to economically reinsert peripheral countries that are rich in natural resources and ensure an abundant and cheap workforce. The new export platforms, in fact, operate as enclaves, that is production, commercial and services zones dominated by multinational corporations and often exempted from national taxation and regulation of working and environmental conditions. These types of plants currently employ between 55 million (Robinson, 2008) and 66 million Southern workers (Singa Boyenge, 2006) and the strategy is widely implemented by large manufacturing, financial, agricultural, commercial, and service-sector multinationals (Robinson, 2008).
- 2) *Financialization.* Financial capital generates speculative strategies that foster the channeling of investment funds, sovereign funds, pension funds and social savings toward new financial instruments that offer short-term high profit margins but can entail recurrent crises and massive fraud. These speculative strategies obstruct and affect the functioning of the so-called real economy (Foster and Magdof, 2009; Bello, 2006).
- 3) *Environmental degradation.* Biodiversity, natural resources, and communal and national wealth are privatized for the benefit of large corporations that favor profits while ignoring social and environmental costs. This leads to increased environmental degradation, pollution, famine, and disease, as well as climate changes (global warming and increasingly frequent extreme climatic events) that threaten the symbiotic relationship between humans and the environment (Foladori and Pierri, 2005).
- 4) *The restructuring of innovation systems.* Advances in IT, telecommunications, biotechnology, new materials and nanotechnology cater to the needs of large corporations looking for increased profits. Scientific and technological research have been restructured under mechanisms such as outsourcing and offshore-outsourcing, which allow corporations to employ southern scientists, transfer risk and responsibility, and capitalize on resultant benefits by amassing patents. This has led to unprecedented mercantilism in scientific research, short-term perspectives and a lack of social concern (Freeman, 2005b, Lester and Piore, 2004).
- 5) *Labor precariousness.* Cheapening labor is one of the main drivers behind the new capitalist machine. Massive labor supplies originating in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the former Soviet Union, along with the growing participation of women through

global networks of industrial and domestic labor (Salazar Parreñas, 2001), supports this dynamic and has led to the growing transnationalization, differentiation, and precariousness of labor markets. In addition, the incorporation of China and the former Soviet bloc into the global capitalist economy has more than doubled the volume of the available workforce (Freeman, 2005a). The result is a new hierarchical set of racial and cultural divisions at the heart of the working class, which allows large corporations to benefit from cheap and flexible workforce sources (Harvey, 2007; Schierup, Hansen and Castles, 2006).

6) *The new migration dynamics.* While migration is an historical process with a certain degree of continuity, it has undergone a dramatic transformation under neoliberal globalization. It is now characterized by i) strong pressure to emigrate given the lack of job opportunities in sending areas, and ii) the growing vulnerability and extreme exploitation of migrant workers in origin, transit, and destination countries. Most new migration waves comprise south-north (82 million) and south-south (74 million) flows; there is also a significant volume of internal migrants (750 million). Overall, migration has become an essential component of the process of capitalist restructuring (UN, 2004, 2006 and 2010; Delgado and Márquez, 2007 and 2009).

In short, the process of capitalist restructuring taking place under neoliberal globalization has very little to do with a “free market” ideology; rather, it entails the growing monopolization of global production, services and commerce along with increasing labor exploitation and environmental degradation. Overall, it embodies a plundering, parasitic, rentier and predatory phase of global capitalism.

► ***Scope and consequences of the crisis***

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a general crisis centered in the United States affected the global capitalist system on several levels (Márquez, 2009 and 2010). The consequences have been varied:

- 1) *Financial.* The overflowing of financial capital leads to speculative bubbles that affect the socioeconomic framework and result in global economic depressions. Speculative bubbles involve the bidding up of market prices of such commodities as real estate or electronic innovations far beyond their real value, leading inevitably to a subsequent slump (Foster and Magdof, 2009; Bello, 2006).
- 2) *Overproduction.* Overproduction crises emerge when the surplus capital in the global economy is not channeled into production processes due to a fall in profit margins and

a slump in effective demand, the latter mainly a consequence of wage containment across all sectors of the population (Bello, 2006).

- 3) *Environmental*. Environmental degradation, climate change and a predatory approach to natural resources contribute to the destruction of the latter, along with a fundamental undermining of the material bases for production and human reproduction (Foladori and Pierrri, 2005; Hinkelammert and Mora, 2008).
- 4) *Social*. Growing social inequalities, the dismantling of the welfare state and dwindling means of subsistence accentuate problems such as poverty, unemployment, violence, insecurity and labor precariousness, increasing the pressure to emigrate (Harvey, 2007; Schierup, Hansen and Castles, 2006).

The responses to the crisis by the governments of developed countries and international agencies promoting globalization have been short-sighted and exclusivist.

The crisis raises questions about the prevailing model of globalization and, in a deeper sense, the systemic global order, which currently undermines our main sources of wealth—labor and nature—and overexploits them to the extent that civilization itself is at risk.

The responses to the crisis by the governments of developed countries and international agencies promoting globalization have been short-sighted and exclusivist. Instead of addressing the root causes of the crisis, they have implemented limited strategies that seek to rescue financial and manufacturing corporations facing bankruptcy. In addition, government policies of labor flexibilization and fiscal adjustment have affected the living and working conditions of most of the population. These measures are desperate attempts to prolong the privileges of ruling elites at the risk of imminent and increasingly severe crises.

In these conditions, migrants have been made into scapegoats, leading to repressive anti-immigrant legislation and policies (Massey and Sánchez, 2006). A significant number of jobs have been lost while the conditions of remaining jobs deteriorate and deportations increase. Migrants' living standards have drastically deteriorated but, contrary to expectations, there have been neither massive return flows nor a collapse in remittances, though there is evidence that migrant worker flows have indeed diminished.

The scenario proposed here calls for a thorough transformation of development strategy based on a new approach to the relationship between migration and development. More proactive and strategic forms of participation by organized civil society are needed to drive this transformation.

THE DOMINANT APPROACH TO THE LINK BETWEEN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The view promoted by key migrant-receiving countries and aligned with that of some international organizations posits a positive link between international migration and development in countries of origin (World Bank, 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007; Inter-American Development Bank, 2000 and 2006). This vision is based on the idea that the growing flow of migrants' remittances can become an instrument, a lever, or a catalyst for development in the countries and communities of origin (Bate, 2001; Iglesias, 2001; Orozco, 2003; Chami, Fullenkamp and Jahjah, 2005; Terry and Pedrody, 2006; Ratha, 2007). Conceptually and as presented in Figure 1, this involves a one-way flow between two variables: migration (seen as an independent variable) and development (seen as a dependent variable).

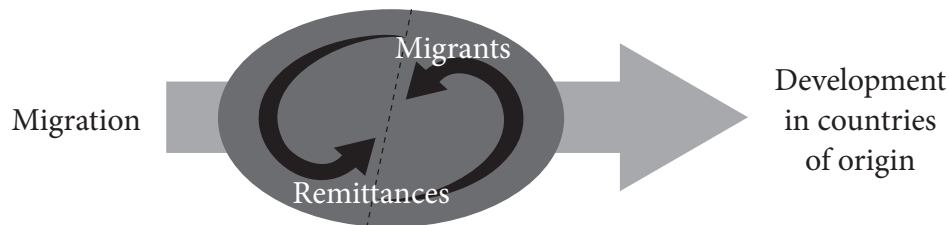


FIGURE 1

Dominant approach to the link between migration and development.

This is a very limited approach. On the one hand, it ignores the context of neoliberal globalization. On the other, it fails to consider critical aspects of the relationship between migration and development: it disregards the root causes of migration, it ignores the human rights of migrants and migrants' contribution to receiving societies, and it overlooks the risks and adversities faced by migrants in countries of transit. It also fails to address the living and working conditions of migrants in receiving countries and the high socioeconomic costs migration has on sending countries. Finally, the model fails to provide enough evidence with which to corroborate the existence of a positive, net contribution of remittances to development.

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The analytical framework that supports this restrictive model compounds a mixture of neo-classical and neoliberal elements (Glick Schiller, 2009; De Haas, 2010; Kapur, 2004) that portray the free market as the culmination of capitalist modernity, an inevitable process with no alternatives. Development concerns are overlooked, since it is assumed a free market economy will operate as an endless source of economic growth and social welfare. Importantly, most of these theoretical approaches have been crafted in developed, northern countries and have been assimilated without critical examination by many southern researchers who have failed to acknowledge the rich and creative legacy of development studies from Latin America and other hemispheres.

The dominant discourse on the link between migration and development is based on the following precepts:

- *Remittances as an instrument for development.* In the absence of effective development policies in peripheral countries, which provide the largest source of migrants, migrants themselves are portrayed as agents and catalysts of development in their places of origin; remittances are their tools.
- *Financial democratization.* The vast flow of remittances across the globe (316 billion dollars in 2009—Ratha, Mohapatra and Silwal, 2010) constitutes an attractive market for financial enterprises offering banking services to marginalized population groups. Remittance-based savings and credit are seen as an adequate backdrop for fostering development under microfinance schemes.
- *The economic power of the poor.* Remittances provide migrants and their dependents with access to resources that can bring them out of poverty, transforming them into agents of development.
- *The formation of human capital.* Remittances contribute to investments in health, food and education, all of which benefit migrants and their families. In addition, it is suggested that governments should reform their education systems so that migrants can acquire the kind of technical abilities that will facilitate their employment abroad.
- *Temporary and return migration.* Migration policies in receiving nations privilege temporary worker programs as a tool for regulating labor markets; allegedly, this benefits all stakeholders. At the same time, return policies assume places of origin will benefit from the abilities, skills and values acquired by migrants in receiving societies.
- *Migration management.* From a geostrategic standpoint, developed receiving countries seek to control undocumented migration on the basis of national security and the articulation of regional economic blocs, but fail to address or even consider the root causes of the phenomenon.

Paradoxically, this positive approach to the link between migration and development generates divergent views of migrants in origin and destination countries. For the former, migrants have become the new face of development; once a forgotten population, they are now portrayed as national heroes. This view has a political, exploitative *raison d'être*: cordial relations with the diaspora ensure the flow of remittances. Conversely, receiving governments discursively paint migrants as a burden and, at times, a negative and polluting cultural and racial influence on the receiving society (Huntington, 1997).

Despite the claims made by certain international bodies and governments, there is no empirical evidence of the alleged positive effects of migration and remittances as catalysts of development in countries of origin.

The worst stigmas attached to foreigners are those of illegality and criminality. In extreme cases, migrants are linked to terrorism and drug trafficking. Furthermore, in periods of economic depression, migrants are often made responsible for the economic decline. On the one hand, a type of extractivism identifies migrants as heroes; on the other, a punitive approach paints them as criminals. These, however, are two sides of the same coin: migrants are cheap labor merchandise, disposable population that contributes to the dynamics of accumulation. Extractivism is therefore also present in the stance taken by receiving nations: the more vulnerable migrants are, the more their employers benefit; their social exclusion leads to increased profits and fiscal gains for both employers and host governments. Both of these portrayals demean migrants with a specific political intent. They also nullify them as social, rights-bearing subjects.

Despite the claims made by certain international bodies and governments, there is no empirical evidence of the alleged positive effects of migration and remittances as catalysts of development in countries of origin. While “successful case studies” are proffered in an attempt to maintain these claims, these usually involve self-help micro-projects that hardly contribute to sustainable local development initiatives, let alone national ones. In fact, the dominant discourse has been forced to take an increasingly cautious stance. Hopes that the flow of remittances would propel much desired development have now diminished, to the point that statements now limit themselves to such claims as that migration can be a pathway out of poverty (WB, 2007).

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MIGRATION

Given the dominant view of the link between migration and development, it is necessary to craft an alternative conceptual framework that focuses on and attempts to explain the problems underlying unequal development (Figure 2). From this viewpoint, neither migration nor development should be approached as independent variables; they are, after all, inscribed within the broader historical context of neoliberal globalization. At the same time, the relationship between migration and development must be approached from a multidimensional perspective that comprises economic, political, social, environmental, cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, geographical, and demographic factors (CCMI, 2005; Glick Schiller, 2009, Faist 2009; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008; Portes, 2009; Delgado Wise and Márquez, 2009).

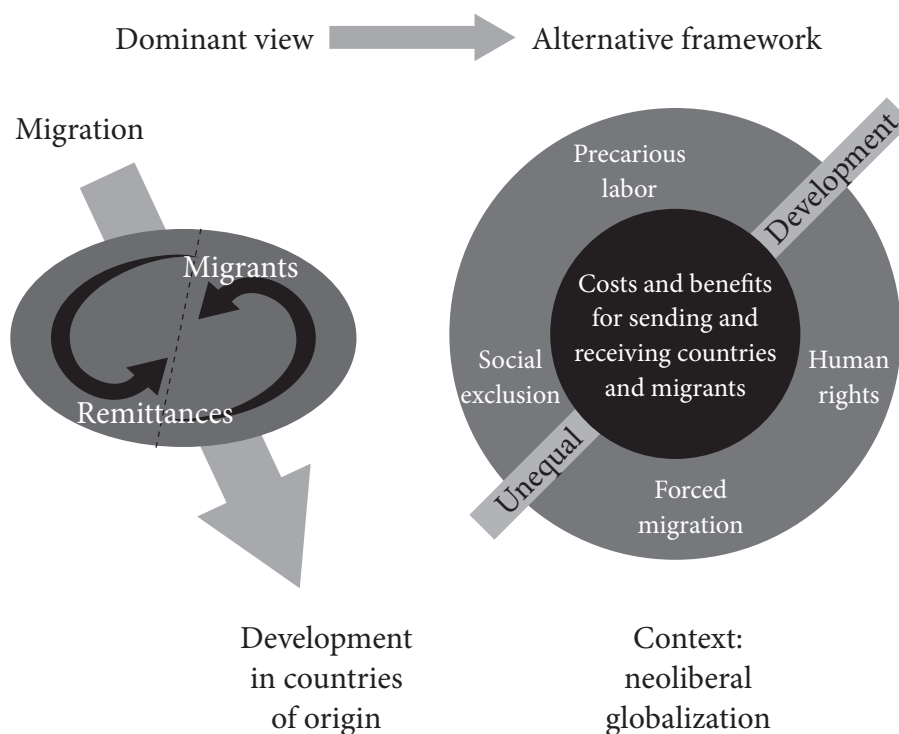


FIGURE 2
Two contrasting models representing the relationship
between development and migration.

► ***Unequal development***

The architecture of neoliberal globalization is based on the implementation of structural adjustment programs in southern nations. These programs are centered on the precepts of privatization, deregulation, and liberalization, and have been a tool with which to insert less developed economies into the dynamics of globalization. As a result, production systems have been dismantled, facilitating the influx of foreign capital and generating a massive oversupply of labor (Delgado and Márquez, 2007).

Generally speaking, these processes have resulted in the entrenchment of two particularly relevant phenomena:

- 1) *Deepening asymmetries within countries and between countries and regions.* From a geostrategic standpoint, we can observe a deepening differentiation between developed and peripheral countries, their national territories and regional areas; this leads to increasing social and economic (financial, technological and productive) gaps that reflect a complex system of asymmetric power relations between regions, countries, and localities.
- 2) *Increase in social inequalities.* Social inequality is one of the most distressing aspects of our times. It is expressed in the unprecedented concentration of capital, power, and wealth in a few hands while a growing segment of the population suffers poverty, exploitation and exclusion. Increasing disparities are also expressed in: a) growing racial, ethnic and gender discrimination; b) reduced access to production and employment; c) a sharp decline in living and working conditions, and d) the progressive dismantling and segmentation of social security systems (CEPAL, 2010).

The concept of unequal development encapsulates this dominant trend and refers to the historical, economic, social and political processes of polarization (among regions, countries and social classes) derived from the dynamics of capital accumulation, the international division of labor, the new geopolitical atlas, and class conflict across space and hierarchies.

A key underlying aspect is the emergence of a new international division of labor where the exploitation of the workforce—via labor migration and export platforms established in peripheral nations—has become a central factor. This is, in turn, related to the emergence of new forms of unequal exchange (Delgado Wise and Márquez, 2007).

► ***Forced migration***

Unequal development in the neoliberal context generates a new type of migration that can be characterized as forced.

Although the concept of forced migration does not apply to all migrants, it does characterize, to a great extent, current migration flows. In the field of human rights, the term refers specifically to asylum seekers, refugees or displaced persons. From a dominant perspective, most migrants cannot be grouped under this category since these population movements are supposedly carried out voluntarily and freely. However, it is a fact that the dynamics of unequal development have led to structural conditions that foster the massive migration of dispossessed, marginalized, and excluded populations. People are literally expelled from their places of origin as they search for better livelihoods and social mobility opportunities. Migration entails substantial risks and danger (especially for more vulnerable groups), as well as permanent exposure to labor precariousness and social exclusion in destination countries. Moreover and as previously pointed out, international migrants are subjected to criminalization and racist and discriminatory practices and policies that not only render them vulnerable and marginal but can also imperil their lives (Delgado and Márquez, 2009).

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The above factors outline the reasons why the concept of forced migration should be used to characterize the majority of contemporary population movements, including at least the following categories (Delgado Wise and Márquez, 2009, Castles, 2003; Gzesh, 2008, European Commission, 2004):

- 1) *Migration due to violence, conflict and catastrophe.* Social, political, and community conflicts, natural disasters, major infrastructure developments and urbanization can severely affect communities, social groups, families, and individuals, to the point of forcing them to abandon their place of origin and sometimes their country. This category includes refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons. These modalities, which tend to affect populations in developing nations, have been acknowledged in international law and there are protection instruments in place. The number of refugees and asylum seekers is currently estimated at 15 million (UN, 2009). Climate change and environmental degradation are a source of forced migration that falls outside asylum and refugee-seeking categories (Castles, 2002). Its adequate understanding requires an analytical approach that, on the one hand, avoids numerical speculation (Myers and Kent, 1995, Shuaizhang *et al.*, 2010; Lonergan and Swain, 1999; Black, 2001) and, on the other, does not trivialize the negative impact of environmental

- changes. In this sense, it is important to focus on the impact of unequal development and, consequently, on the adaptive capabilities of the poorest populations, who are the most vulnerable to environmental and anthropogenic contingencies (McAdam, 2010).
- 2) *Human trafficking and smuggling.* This has increased at an alarming rate in recent years, becoming a highly lucrative business due to the restrictive policies of receiving countries and increasing hardship in less developed ones. Human trafficking is associated with coercion, abduction and fraud and includes sexual exploitation and illicit adoptions among other serious violations of human rights. The global response to the sustained increase in this form of criminal activity includes the United Nations' *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, signed in Palermo in the year 2000, and the subsequent *Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children*. It is estimated that at least 2.45 million people are currently engaged in forced labor as a consequence of internal and international human trafficking (IOM, 2008).
 - 3) *Migration due to dispossession, exclusion, and unemployment.* Neoliberal globalization has led to structural changes that disarticulate and dismantle the production, financial, commercial and services systems, forcing large sectors of the population to emigrate in search of better livelihoods, both for themselves and their families. Most current labor migration falls under this category, which is characterized by extreme vulnerability and exploitation. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), there are some 100 million labor migrants across the world (Awad, 2009). While this type of migration is addressed by certain protection instruments—including those incorporated in the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which has yet to be ratified by any major receiving countries—these lack effective implementation. Instead of adequately categorizing the problems and risks to which these migrants are exposed, the category is generally subsumed by that of “economic migrants,” which assumes they travel in a context of freedom and social mobility.

In a less strict sense, migration due to over-qualification and lack of opportunities can be considered as a fourth type of forced migration. It ensues from structural imbalances in the labor market and limited institutional support, which results in many highly qualified workers being unable to find fitting occupational opportunities in their own country. While these migrants do not face serious problems when moving or seek to cover their basic needs, they migrate in order to fulfill their labor and intellectual capacities, even if they are often subjected to labor degradation and wage discrimination in destination countries.

In its diverse manifestations, forced migration constitutes a source of cheap labor and, subsequently, plays a key role in current dynamics of unequal development and the new global architecture.

► ***Human rights***

While the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights stipulates member states' commitment to upholding the fundamental rights of humankind, these are currently undermined by the economic and political dynamics of neoliberal globalization.

The official discourse of neoliberal globalization rests on the ideology of the free market, the end of history, representative democracy and, more recently, the war on terrorism. In practice, however, it promotes the interests of large corporations and a single, exclusive mode of thought, nullifying all alternatives.

While the prevalent discourse exalts the notion of citizenship and citizen rights and opportunities in a democracy with an open economy and full political participation, the latter is constrained to a limited electoral offer and often curtailed by an exclusionary political system. At the same time, fundamental human rights are systematically undermined and subverted by the doctrine of national security and the demands of a market economy at the service of multinational corporate interests, which turns the vast majority of the population into cheap means of production and objects of consumption. In addition, the so-called welfare state has been dismantled under the sway of mercantilism, and the satisfaction of most basic needs is conditioned by the market, where communal goods and public services are offered as new spaces for privatization. Labor flexibility, sustained by a massive workforce surplus and the systematic deprivation of labor rights, becomes a mechanism through which to increase business competitiveness and extraordinary profits. All of this, in turn, seriously undermines the social, economic, political and environmental fabric, leading to considerable damage. The advancement of structural reform in peripheral countries has led to increasing social debt, a fact that remains unacknowledged by governments and the entrenched powers.

Forced migration is a logical consequence of this process. Human rights violations multiply along migration paths and the victims include women, children, and entire families. The human drama underlying current dynamics threatens the integrity and the lives of migrants, exposing them to robbery, rape, extortion, kidnapping, detention, deportation, murder, labor and sexual exploitation, insecurity, and social exclusion. Despite the seriousness of the situation, migrants' human rights still occupy a marginal place.

Receiving, transit, and sending countries should all be held accountable. In most receiving countries there is a tacit disavowal of labor and human rights where migrants and their families are concerned. The right to legal residence and citizenship is also obstructed, either under the stigma of illegality, for reasons connected to racial prejudice or, more commonly, for reasons associated to economic interest. A double discourse prevails in both countries of origin and transit: sending

nations denounce violations of migrant rights in countries of destination while violating the rights of foreigners in their national territory. At the same time the fact that many migrants were literally forced to leave because of a lack of development policies and decent employment opportunities at home is routinely ignored.

It is important to note that, in the realm of forced migration, women are a particularly vulnerable group, especially when they are forced to cross borders using irregular means. Even though the scope of female migration and its members' vulnerability have received increasing attention, we still lack adequate gender-based approaches to migration policy (Jolly, 2005).

In sum, it is of paramount importance that human rights become an integral component of the relationship between migration and development (Gzesh, 2008; Castles, 2003; Sassen, 2008; López Poveda and Gonzáles, 200). Otherwise, the root causes of forced migration will remain in place.

From the standpoint of the relationship between development, migration and human rights, the following minimal set of rights should be considered:

- 1) *The right to development.* This includes the wellbeing and basic needs of all people; access to secure, decent, and fairly paid jobs (as outlined in the decent work agenda proposed by the International Labour Organization); individual opportunities to develop critical, creative and artistic capacities, and the creation of spaces that allow genuine participation in decision-making processes.
- 2) *The right to not migrate.* This entails the creation of the basic living conditions needed to keep people in their countries of origin, in those places where they want to stay. It includes fostering an environment of overall human development and public welfare while reversing the structural and political factors that potentiate forced migration.
- 3) *The right to freedom of movement.* Mobility should not be a necessity but a voluntary decision under a regime that allows freedom of human movement.
- 4) *The basic rights of migrants and their families.* The human rights of migrants in sending, transit, receiving and return communities must be upheld by all governments and international bodies. These include the right to permanence, which should extend to second generations.

With this in mind, the concept of forced migration should be rethought and expanded in order to counteract migration policies that, by appealing to sovereignty and national security, criminalize migrants and violate their rights. Many current guest worker programs exemplify apparently humane setups that, in reality, mask the continued exploitation of migrants and the violation of their human rights. Associated key topics include irregular migration; human trafficking and smuggling; discrimination (including racial and gender-based); the safety of human rights defend-

ers; labor standards and a decent labor agenda; international instruments that ensure the protection of human and working rights, and their progressivity and non-regressive implementation as part of any state's duty.

From a comprehensive viewpoint and with the intention of finding alternative development options centered on human rights, it is imperative that we restore international law and affirm states' obligation to follow it. This is a crucial step toward the dismantling of labor flexibilization and precarization processes via the vindication of working rights, including access to fair employment, the restitution of social security systems, and the promotion of human development in both sending and receiving nations (Wihtol de Wenden, 2000; Gzesh, 2008; Castles, 2003; Munck, 2010).

► ***The dialectics of unequal development, forced migration, and human rights***

The following four postulates illustrate the dynamics of neoliberal globalization in relation to migration, human rights and development (Delgado Wise and Márquez, 2009):

- 1) *Unequal development generates forced migration.* In the current context, large corporations deploy a restructuring strategy that, on the one hand, internationalizes processes of production, commercialization and finance, and, on the other, appropriates the natural resources, economic surplus, and cheap labor of developing countries. Conditions of underdevelopment are exacerbated by the implementation of the structural adjustment policies prescribed by international bodies, and this entails the dismantling of the economic apparatus; major cuts in the expenditure of the public sector (for instance for health, welfare and education), the introduction of financial/speculative capital; the creation of new enclaves at the service of large multinational corporations; the privatization of natural resources; the flexibilization and precarization of formal employment; increased unemployment, and growing labor informality, all of which trigger forced migration. This, in turn, has led to significant population losses in countries of origin, sometimes resulting in a net transference of the demographic dividend, that is the positive relationship of the size of working age population to the number child and elder dependents.
- 2) *Immigrants contribute to development in receiving countries in a context of increasing labor precariousness and social exclusion.* Developed nations demand vast amounts of cheap, qualified and unqualified labor, including undocumented workers. This places migrants under conditions of increased vulnerability and high exploitation. Less qualified migrants (the vast majority) contribute to diminishing labor costs across the board because they work in sectors essential to the reproduction of the labor of the receiving population, such as through the contribution of migrant women to freeing receiving-country

women from domestic labor or the participation of migrant workers in activities related to the set of basic consumer products and services. And despite being considered an elite labor segment, qualified migrant workers also constitute a relatively cheap source of labor: they often earn less than their equally qualified native peers. In both cases, the receiving country not only fulfills its labor needs but benefits greatly from the fact that it did not invest in the formation and reproduction costs of these workers. Domestic and health workers are good examples (Ehreineich and Hochschild, 2002). In sum, migration constitutes a double transference from the sending to the receiving country: cheap workforce along with its formation and social reproduction costs.

- 3) *Emigrants contribute to their home country's precarious socioeconomic stability.* A fraction of migrants' salaries is destined for remittances, which ensure the subsistence of family members in places of origin. To a lesser extent, remittances are used to finance small businesses in a subsistence economy. Migrant organizations use collective remittances to finance public works and social projects in places of origin. The larger portion of remittances, however, is used for family consumption and has a limited multiplier effect, which means that these resources can hardly promote development processes. Furthermore, remittances create an incentive for imports and modify consumption patterns. From a macroeconomic point of view, remittances benefit neoliberal governments that, unwilling to generate development alternatives, use them as a source of foreign currency that contributes to the nation's frail "macroeconomic stability." This situation has led to some countries using remittances as equity to warrant foreign debt. Given the absence of a real development strategy, migrants are now lauded as the "heroes of development" and made responsible for a task that should belong to the government but, under the neo-conservative precept of a minimal state, remains unfulfilled.
- 4) *The promotion of alternative development as social transformation can prevent forced migration.* Ideologically speaking, neoliberal globalization posits itself as inevitable. It is therefore crucial that we theoretically and practically endorse the feasibility of alternative development strategies. Rejecting the asymmetrical power relationships between sending and receiving countries is of paramount importance. This will allow us to identify and counter practices that have plunged vast regions of the world into quagmires of inequality, marginalization, poverty, social exclusion and forced migration. A project of genuine social transformation must focus on the root causes of forced migration and fight them by creating decent, secure, and well-paid employment opportunities. This will make migration an option rather than a necessity.

TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE AGENDA

The concept of human development coined by Sen (2000) and adopted by the United Nations Development Program (UN, 2009) represents a positive step in the furthering of the development debate; it cannot, however, adequately address the complex dynamics of unequal development, forced migration and human rights infringements under neoliberal globalization. There is a need for further contextualization; a clear identification of the competing social projects; the creation of viable pathways that lead to the organizational, political and institutional strengthening of social organizations, movements and networks, and the definition of alternative and transformative agendas. This underlines the need to rethink human development not in terms of individual freedom and free market but around the crucial concept of equality (ECLAC, 2010). At the same time and in contrast to the regressive model employed by neoliberal globalization, which deepens underdevelopment and dependence, we must rethink development from a post-neoliberal perspective.

In order to advance in this direction, we propose three basic principles through which to reframe the debate on development, human rights and migration:

- 1) *Comprehensiveness*. This entails approaching forced migration as an inherent component of neoliberal globalization and its distinctive dynamics of unequal development. The following are some of the most relevant issues to be addressed by this comprehensive perspective: the asymmetrical relationship between sending and receiving countries; the social, economic, political, environmental and cultural factors that inhibit development and cause forced migration; the risks and dangers faced by migrants during their travels; migrants' role in receiving economies; the consistent violation of migrants' human and labor rights, and the cost paid by countries and local governments with high emigration rates. Additionally, a comprehensive perspective demands careful consideration of alternative policies to promote development and the agents responsible for steering them.
- 2) *Inclusion*. The construction of an alternative agenda on development, human rights and migration demands the participation of the various affected actors and agents while keeping in mind the diverse and distinct perspectives of sending, transit, and destination countries, along with their differing interests. Constructing an agenda along these lines requires the implementation of some postulates underlying substantive democracy: an open and free debate about ideas, access to information and its dissemination, social organization, and the existence of spaces in which to express alternative views, among others. In this context, efforts and initiatives deployed on all levels of government—local, national and regional—must be considered.

3) *Humanism*. Unequal development is characterized by increasingly dehumanizing social relations, which degrade people and threaten the pillars of civilization. Migrants are often treated as degradable, segregated and disposable human resources, even criminals. An alternative agenda requires a reassessment of the value of labor and its transformative capacity, which is at the core of the generation of wealth. We must ensure decent, secure and well remunerated employment under conditions of gender and ethnic equality (Piper, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). The new agenda must retrieve the humanistic thrust of social development and guarantee not only the fundamental human rights of migrants and their families, but also seek to eliminate all forms of exploitation while enabling the full realization of human individual and collective freedom, regardless of race, gender or social condition.

► ***Development and human rights
as a central concern***

It is crucial that development and human rights be placed at the very center of this comprehensive, inclusive, and humanistic alternative agenda. This entails two different things: first, understanding the problems associated with unequal development through a critical diagnosis of the realities that characterize neoliberal globalization; and second, a constant search for development alternatives that respond to contemporary crises and address structural problems related to social inequalities and asymmetries within countries and between countries and regions. What is needed, then, are development alternatives that can lead to a substantive process of social transformation while improving living and working conditions and ensuring the fulfillment of the basic needs of all population groups.

It is crucial that development and human rights be placed at the very center of this comprehensive, inclusive, and humanistic alternative agenda.

For these reasons, we must begin by defining, however generally, our intended type of development. Theories that reduce development to economic growth or per capita income are not only inappropriate but also reductionist and prone to mystification. Those that conceive it as a linear and ahistorical process where all nations are meant to achieve an “ideal” development phase after going through several more or less defined “stages” are equally unsustainable. We do not intend to establish a single paradigm of development or an exclusively normative definition based on unattainable utopias. Below are a series of precepts that shape an alternative notion of development

and where this process is conceived as one of social transformation. These precepts aim to counteract the unequal development dynamics fostered by neoliberal globalization:

- *An ethics of development.* Turning our backs on the blind appetite for profit that characterizes contemporary capitalism and has led to the overexploitation of labor and natural resources without considering potential consequences, we must advance towards a humane, equitable and sustainable type of development that allows for the fulfillment of social, individual and human potentialities.
- *Human development.* Rejecting super-exploitation of labor and the increasing human rights infringements that affect the majority of the global population, we must construct an essentially humane type of development that favors the common good and social sustainability over a minority's lust for profit. This requires a fundamental emphasis on the upholding of human rights as a key element in the process of social transformation.
- *Equitable development.* Development and underdevelopment are not separate processes, but rather two sides of a single phenomenon that has gained considerable momentum under neoliberal globalization: unequal development. Given the increase in intra-national, international and regional asymmetries and the expansion and deepening of social inequalities, processes of social transformation capable of counteracting these trends are much needed. One of the great challenges of our times is to achieve equality or, as stated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, it is "Time for Equality: closing gaps, opening trails" (ECLAC, 2010). This requires, among other things, creative ways of countering the unequal exchange and surplus transference mechanisms that characterize contemporary capitalism. Limits and effective regulations must be imposed on both the overt and covert monopolization of production, consumption and service provision. The gaps fostered by the structural heterogeneity that characterizes peripheral economies must be closed and the building of endogenous development foundations across national economies, encapsulating innovation, production and consumption, must be encouraged. Finally, we must reject current patterns of unequal wealth distribution and promote modes of social redistribution that revitalize the weakened—and, in some cases, vanquished—welfare state.
- *Sustainable development.* Far from degrading the environment, development must be based on a balanced symbiotic interaction between society and nature, one that guarantees the fulfillment of social needs and the progressive improvement in the quality of life of current and future generations. To achieve this, development must be sustainable across all spheres (economic, environmental, social, cultural and scientific).
- *An agent of social transformation.* An alternative agenda also requires the articulation

of a collective agent that enables the strategic participation of a broad diversity of civil society sectors in processes of social transformation (Gordon, 2009; Fox, 2005; Munck, 2010; Milkman, 2006). Unlike what neoliberal doctrine posits, the active participation of the state is crucial to the promotion of development and the creation of support institutions, including those that regulate domestic and foreign investment and promote social welfare. An organized civil society must act as guardian and guarantor of the development process as a whole.

Development and underdevelopment are not separate processes, but rather two sides of a single phenomenon that has gained considerable momentum under neoliberal globalization: unequal development.

► **First steps**

In order to endorse an alternative agenda on development, human rights and migration, we must take two complementary actions:

I. Construct an information system that demystifies the link between migration and development. The alternative approach here proposed seeks to transcend the dyad of migration and development and focus on the triad of unequal development, human rights and forced migration. The examination of these issues must be critical and multidimensional in perspective. This requires an expansion of the analytical horizon that has so far encompassed this debate; only then can we understand the context of contemporary migration, its dialectical relationship with human rights and unequal development, and unveil its causes, costs and contributions to sending, transit and receiving nations as well as migrants and their families.

This analytical perspective requires an information system with new categories and indicators and new and improved databases that unequivocally reflect the realities behind this phenomenon. This is a fundamental task in a field overflowing with myths that distort public opinion and support dominant policy.

As far as the vital task of demystifying the dominant vision and promoting alternative public policies is concerned, it is also important to take full account of the role of internal migrations and their link to international migration. We should also monitor indicators on the implementation of human rights and the evaluation of migration policy. This will require joint efforts and the implementation of coordination mechanisms between civil society, governments, and international organizations. The current crisis and new anti-immigrant movements reinforce the need to address

these issues (Delgado Wise, Márquez and Rodríguez, 2009; Canales, 2008; Munck 2009; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008).

Governments and civil societies must promote an agenda that addresses, at the very least, the following issues: i) compensatory regional integration based on solidarity and fair trade vs. asymmetric integration and free markets; ii) human security vs. national security and criminalization; iii) free and voluntary mobility vs. forced migration; iv) decent work principles vs. exploitative labor, and v) universal citizenship vs. social exclusion and racial or gender-based discrimination.

II. Formulate alternative public policies on development, human rights and migration. The greatest challenge to the construction and advancement of an alternative agenda involves shifting migration policy focus from national security concerns, which criminalize migrants and obscure the nature of the phenomenon, to bilateral and multilateral negotiations involving a development and international cooperation agenda. In this sense, both governments and civil societies must promote an agenda that addresses, at the very least, the following issues: i) compensatory regional integration based on solidarity and fair trade vs. asymmetric integration and free markets; ii) human security vs. national security and criminalization; iii) free and voluntary mobility vs. forced migration; iv) decent work principles vs. exploitative labor, and v) universal citizenship vs. social exclusion and racial or gender-based discrimination. This requires a critical assessment of the dominant public policies implemented by northern receiving nations: on the one hand, they place guest worker programs at the center of policy (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2007) and, on the other, offer few legal migration opportunities—well below the real demand for labor—and obstruct the regularization of undocumented resident workers. Policies regarding the incorporation of a highly qualified workforce provided by less developed nations into the restructuring of innovation systems in more developed countries (Xiang, 2007, Khadria, 2008, Lozano and Gandini, 2009) must also be reviewed. Finally, return policies linked to development policies in sending nations must be established via regional cooperation and guarantee the proper social and labor reinsertion of migrants and their families.

To conclude, Table 1 provides a comparative summary of the dominant and alternative agendas addressed in this document.

TABLE 1
Dominant and alternative perspectives on the relationship between
development, migration and human rights.

	Dominant	Alternative
Theoretical approach	Neoclassical and neoliberal perspective.	Historical, structural, and strategic perspective.
Analytical dimensions	Economic analysis of migration.	Multidimensional analysis focusing on the economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, demographic and spatial dimensions.
Context characterization	Neoliberal globalization: free markets, formal democracy and the “end of the history.”	Compensatory regional integration based on solidarity and fair trade.
Development	Economic growth is based on free markets and structural adjustments policies. There is no alternative.	Unequal development increases economic asymmetries and social inequalities. Development entails comprehensive processes of social transformation, and should be a comprehensive, inclusive and humanistic process based on decent labor, racial and gender equality, rational use of natural resources, fair distribution of wealth, endogenous and balanced development, and technological innovation.
Migration	Migration a decision taken by families and individuals with the purpose of maximizing benefits and engaging in social mobility.	Forced migration is a consequence of unequal development, which transfers human resources from sending into receiving countries while social reproduction costs are still paid by the sender. Migration should be voluntary, not a necessity.
Role of remittances	Remittances are a source of development for sending countries and can be used as a tool for poverty reduction.	Remittances are, in general, income transfers that ensure or merely aid in the subsistence of family dependents in places of origin.
Human rights	The rights of migrants are absent from the debate.	Migrants and their families are social, rights-bearing subjects and their rights must be defended in origin, transit and destination countries. A minimum set of rights includes: right to development, free mobility, decent work, and the choice to not migrate.

<p>Nexus between development, migration, and human rights</p>	<p>A unidirectional, de-contextualized nexus is favored, with remittances acting as a mechanism for development.</p> <p>Migration empowers poor people (economically) and generates human capital.</p>	<p>The given view of the nexus between development and migration is simplistic: development and human rights must be placed at the center of the analysis.</p> <p>There is a need for development alternatives that can not only curtail but prevent forced migration.</p>
<p>Costs, benefits and transfers of migration</p>	<p>Everybody wins: migrants (employment), their families (income), governments in places of origin (foreign currency and social security), and employers in receiving countries (cheap labor). The costs for sending countries are ignored, as well as those for migrants and their families.</p>	<p>A more comprehensive and balanced analysis of development, human rights and migration is needed. Special attention must be paid to the role of remittances and the causes of migration, as well as immigrant contributions to receiving countries, emigration costs for countries of origin, and the overall impact of these on migrants and their families.</p>
<p>Policies</p>	<p><i>In sending nations:</i> extractive policies portray migrants as “heroes of development.”</p> <p><i>In receiving nations:</i> dominant migration policies are attached to a national security agenda.</p> <p>In theory, migration flows can be managed through strategies such as guest worker programs, brain circulation, and productive use of remittances.</p>	<p>Dominant migration policies do not address the causes of migration and neglect human rights. We need policies focused on international cooperation, national development, decent work, human security and universal citizenship.</p> <p>The active participation of states and civil society in the design, implementation and evaluation of these policies is crucial.</p>
<p>Proponents</p>	<p>Sending and receiving neoliberal governments under the tutelage of large multinationals, some international agencies and conservative think tanks.</p>	<p>Civil society movements, networks and organizations, socially committed scholars, progressive governments and some international agencies.</p>

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