REFLECTIONS ON (IM)MOBILITIES AND / IN CRISIS

Anna Lindley, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London

Edward Elgar Companion on Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals

Editors: Kavita Datta & Nicola Piper

INTRODUCTION

Early in the pandemic scholars questioned whether it heralded an 'end to the age of migration' (Gamlen 2020, 1). This chapter reflects in broad terms on the relationship between human mobility, development and crisis, and explores global migratory dynamics through the pandemic. Both crisis and mobility, particularly international migration, are often seen somewhat separated from the realm of 'normal development' (interrupting its progress, or escaping its spatial fixes), something that Agenda 2030 tends to perpetuate. The first part of this chapter problematises this, emphasising that crisis and migration are deeply implicated in histories of development and change, and certainly in the contemporary unfolding of global neoliberal capitalism which has shaped Agenda 2030. It also provides insights from existing empirical explorations of the connections between migration and crisis.

The second part of the chapter reflects specifically on global migration during Covid-19. First, looking at evidence regarding changes in migration flows, reversals and immobilities have been particularly salient through this pandemic, nuancing our understanding of crisis-development-migration relationships. But second, looking at evidence regarding migrant populations, the pandemic also underlines the structural and social embeddedness of migration and patterns of differential inclusion. Circling back to the SDGs, offered now as a 'roadmap to survival' through the crises that the world faces (UN 2022), the conclusion questions their capacity to grapple with the fundamental structures underpinning global deprivation, inequality and injustice in a world of diverse (im)mobilities.

CONCEPTUALISING DEVELOPMENT, CRISIS AND MOBILITY/MIGRATION

Development, crisis and mobility/migration are thickly intertwined in social scientific and political debate, which is vital to informing discussion of the SDGs and migration. The term development is used to refer to historical processes of social change, as well as the normative visions and practical mechanisms that seek to propel these, incrementally, in particular directions (Kothari 2005). Crisis signals a rupture, typically associated with some form of threat and/or actual damage to important human needs and goals. It is very often understood as an external threat that interrupts and undermines 'normal' development pathways (Lindley 2014).

Mobility signifies people's capacity to move, but is also often used as an umbrella term to capture diverse acts of movement; migration, meanwhile, more specifically signifies people changing their place of residence (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013).[1] There is a long history of viewing mobility – and particularly international migration - as anomalous, within a mindset that naturalises people's connections to place, to make them 'legible' for policy intervention and control (Cresswell 2006). There persists a 'sedentary bias in much of the theory and practice of development... development

---

[1] It is worth noting that whereas commentators more often use the term mobility to refer to internal and/or less politically problematised movement of the highly skilled and well-off, and migration more often with international movement and/or the migration of the racialized poor (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013).

actors… have consistently framed both internal and international migration as a problem to be addressed, with the widespread expectation that development progress will reduce migration pressures… that development is about enabling people to stay at 'home'' (Bakewell 2008, 1342).

On first sight, the dominant neoliberal economic development paradigm of recent decades would appear to be more mobility-positive, envisaging freer flows of capital, goods and labour as leading ultimately to equilibrium, convergence and development (Friedman 1962; Williamson 1994; Harris and Todaro 1970). Cheap labour is seen as a comparative advantage of poorer countries, with circular temporary migration policies hailed as a 'triple-win' – yielding economic benefits for migrants in terms of income maximisation, for origin countries via diaspora remittances and investment, and for destination countries securing labour force flexibility (Castles and Ozkul 2014). But this quest for flexibility has notably *not* led to general liberalisation of immigration regulation (outwith some regional relaxations), but rather a 'managed migration' policy model, which selectively welcomes elites and 'highly skilled' workers; carefully rotates 'lower skilled' workers in key sectors; firmly marginalises and discourages those without legal authorisation; and tightly regulates the space for family migrants and people seeking protection (de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2016).

In contrast to the neoliberal narrative, Marxist-influenced readings of capitalist development highlight its crisis- and displacement-ridden nature (Saad Filho 2011). Displacement and mobility feature prominently in the processes of primitive accumulation and the production of a 'reserve army of labour', tending to serve the interests of capital, raising the challenge of building solidarity across the diverse groups subordinated within this system (Cohen 2006; Standing 2012). From this perspective, many of the world's crises are best understood not as an aberration but as 'actually existing development' under capitalism (Cramer 2006; Duffield 2007, 183). Rather than putting crisis *in* context, we need to recognise it *as* context, as a condition of life for many people around the world who experience the fragmentation of coherence and control as a daily reality (Vigh 2008). Thus the permanent temporariness and rights infringements experienced by many migrant workers, protracted displacement of many refugees, and multidimensional pressures driving much global migration (Chang 2014; Hanieh and Marfleet 2014; Piper, Rosewarne, and Withers 2017; Hammond and Lindley 2014).

As outlined in the introduction to this book, Agenda 2030 is part of a long line of liberal development visions and co-ordination efforts, emphasising the overarching aims of tackling material, educational and health deprivations, and promoting sustainable economic growth, with an emphasis on inclusion and equality and 'leaving no one behind' (UN 2015). There is strong evidence that progress towards many goals was considerably off-target even pre-pandemic (Hughes et al. 2021) and critics have pointed out that Agenda 2030 continues to emphasise market-based solutions to development issues, part of the neoliberal capitalist development paradigm that undermines efforts to secure fundamental entitlements and address structural injustices (Saad Filho 2011; Nijenhuis and Leung 2017). Thus, while the SDGs (in contrast to the MDGs) do embrace migration in ways described in the introduction, they arguably 'reproduce a vision of development that has long been implicated in the production of unequal and deleterious migrant mobilities'. Seeking to act on the drivers of migration – economic inequality, violent conflict and climate change - they continue to frame migration as a problem to be ordered and controlled via 'well-managed migration policies', noting the need to tackle extreme forms of abuse, and emphasising remittances as economically instrumental in origin country economies (Suliman 2017, 415). This framing tends to depoliticise migration as a matter for technical policy management (Suliman 2017; Nijenhuis and Leung 2017; Pécoud 2015).

Crises of various kinds (economic, political, environmental) unfolding at various scales (local, national, regional, global) have haunted shifting development paradigms, including the formulation and launch of the SDGs. The Covid-19 pandemic presented a new, dramatic and multi-faceted global challenge. The outbreak of a new virus with serious impacts spreading globally and changing over time, responded to by massive state intervention in society, interacting with multiple fields of people's life experiences in dramatic and differentiated ways, can be unambiguously understood as a crisis with far-reaching consequences. It has been widely framed as a health crisis disrupting Agenda 2030, causing setbacks in various SDGs with effects that 'will linger for decades' (Hughes et al. 2021, 8), causing a fresh crisis of development, generating calls to redouble policy focus and investments towards the SDGs, as the 'roadmap for survival' (UN 2022). In light of the critiques above, regarding the toothlessness of the Agenda 2030 to tackle structures underpinning global deprivation, inequality and injustice, one might view this as a politically pragmatic but rather limited approach.

In this turbulent global context, analysts have framed Covid-19 as a 'Great Disruptor' of migration (IOM 2021) – prompting questions about the future migration and development landscape, and a search for insights among past explorations of crisis and mobility. We know that political, economic and environmental crises are often associated with elevated levels of human movement (Lindley 2014). Violent conflict in particular disrupts people's lives and endangers them in ways that often prompt displacement on an unusually large scale. Economic crises in specific countries have also been shown to prompt increased movement as people dispossessed and lacking opportunities seek work further afield. Both acute and slow-onset environmental challenges can lead to displacement and other shifts in movement. At the same time, migrant presence, crisis-driven or otherwise, has varying impacts on public finances, economy and society. As destination contexts respond, there is often talk of a 'crisis of immigration control' or a 'migration crisis', sometimes reflecting genuine policy challenges, but also often using migrant presence as a scapegoat for wider societal ills (Collyer and King 2016; Hollifield, Martin, and Orrenius 2014).

These are the dominant associations of migration and crisis: that crisis in places of origin interrupts development and causes outwards migration through which people seek on a temporary or permanent basis to stabilise their lives; and that at destinations migration may cause crisis situations as administrations struggle with the consequences of migration on society. This overlooks, however, several other important angles. Economic crisis, violent conflict and environmental deterioration need to be understood in the context of particular histories and configurations of political and economic power. Crises and their migratory consequences are not isolated anomalies 'outside' the norm, but a deeply embedded, constitutive component of social transformation and change (Castles 2010; Raghuram 2009; Lindley 2014). These processes are globally networked - close analysis also challenges methodologically nationalist 'spatial fixes' of crises (Collyer and King 2016; Hanieh 2012). For instance, international recruitment is intended to *avert* the crises of labour supply and economic accumulation in destinations that arise in the course of capitalist development; meanwhile, when economic downturns trigger migrant layoffs these can transmit instabilities to places of origin (Castles and Vezzoli 2011; Chang 2014; Hanieh 2012). Migration can also act as a socio-political safety valve dispersing the unemployed and/or restive, or conversely contribute to disarticulation of families and communities, dispersal of and labour/skills shortages. Moreover, in contexts of violent conflict, environmental disaster or deterioration, stymied domestic development and economic collapse, there are also often large 'trapped' populations unable to use mobility to address the issues that they face (Lubkemann 2008; Carling 2002; Jónsson 2012; Black and Collyer 2014). There are also important questions of political framing: some migratory movements are hyped, others are downplayed: the construction and (de)politicisation of situations as crises are shaped by complex power relations (Lindley 2014).

The migratory ramifications of health crises, specifically, have not been subject to extensive study historically, possibly because they have tended not in recent history to cause mass migration, certainly by comparison with economic, political and humanitarian crises (Edelstein, Koser, and Heymann 2014). This has been examined most prominently in relation to HIV/AIDS, where worker mobility combined with unprotected sexual activity in key 'hot spots' has been recognised as fuelling virus transmission, triggering interventions targeting relevant populations and behaviours (Piper and Yeoh 2005). Movement directly associated with acute health crises has tended to be internal - limited 'panic mobility' away from densely populated urban centres in the early phases of the crisis (Edelstein, Koser, and Heymann 2014; Cohen 2020, no page). However, throughout the historical record, fear of contagion has prompted policy responses that tend to restrict mobility substantially (Edelstein, Koser, and Heymann 2014; Martin and Bergmann 2021; Onoma 2020). International travel restrictions have been recognised as being a blunt tool at best (given the fluidity of contemporary global movement, challenges of isolating early cases, varying incubation and detection periods, and the efficacy of alternative preventative practices), most likely to delay somewhat rather than stop the spread of disease, and having serious economic consequences (Jennings 2021; Martin and Bergmann 2021; Edelstein, Koser, and Heymann 2014). Indeed, recognition of this, alongside knowledge advances enabling local preventative behaviours, led the International Health Regulations agreed by member states of the WHO to emphasise 'maximum prevention of the spread of infectious diseases with minimal disruption of travel and trade', focusing on the need to develop of core public health capacities to ensure prevention via detection and containment at source (Edelstein, Koser, and Heymann 2014, 98). But fear of contagion combines potently, with fear of the other drawing on sedentary politics – something apparent, as we shall see further down, in the context of Covid-19.

This section has made the case for situating Covid-19, the SDGs and migration, against the backdrop of longer debates about development, crisis and mobility. Analysis of crises and mobility have highlighted how these do not occur outside the realm of 'normal' development, but are a central, constitutive element in longer term processes of global social transformation. Agenda 2030 seeks to act on recognised drivers of migration – economic inequality, conflict and environmental change – and focuses on managing migration, addressing extreme abuse and mobilising remittances - but it is questionable whether the process is adequate to tackle the structures underpinning the injustices that surround around migration and development. The relationship between crisis and mobility is typically approached through a focus on 'crisis migration', or 'migration crises', which risks eclipsing complexities that deserve greater attention, including wider embeddedness, spatial interconnectedness, and immobility. Health crises are interesting in that empirically they do not seem to cause widespread movement, although they are often associated with concerns about movement as a vector of disease. While acknowledging that the world is experiencing 'cascading and intersecting crises' (UN 2022, 3), the next two sections will focus on the fresh mobility implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

SALIENCE OF IMMOBILITIES AND REVERSALS IN COVID-19

The new virus caused severe illness and death in some sufferers, and when initial attempts to contain it failed, the outbreak spread rapidly within a short period and on a global scale. The resulting pandemic has had ramifications far beyond those it makes sick, having pervasive effects throughout the world and in different spheres of people's lives. It has been described as a biosocial crisis due to the critical strain that disease spread and radical response measures to contain the spread put on government finances, health and education systems, labour markets and livelihoods, and people's wider well-being, pervading many different fields of people's lives (Singer and Rylko-Bauer 2021).

The aspirations-capability framework provides a useful and nuanced way to consider the mobility implications of the pandemic. People's migration aspirations can be understood as 'a conviction that migration is preferable to non-migration; it can vary in degree and in the balance between choice and coercion' (Carling and Schewel 2018, 946). Migration aspirations are 'a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived geographical opportunity structures' (de Haas 2021, 17). People's migration capabilities, can be understood as 'the ability to decide where to live, including the option to stay at home.' (de Haas 2021, 20). Migration capabilities are shaped by context-specific obstacles and opportunities, and may be latent, or actualised through movement (Carling and Schewel 2018). Lower or higher aspirations to move intersect with lower or higher capabilities, to produce various types of (im)mobility. The framework thus helps counter the 'mobility bias' in migration research, which tends to dissect the drivers of migration in great detail, but fails to give adequate recognition to the forces that constrain or encourage people to stay put and the degrees of agency involved in that (Schewel 2019). International migration is often explained with reference to the income and human security disparities between countries, yet despite these often sharp disparities, only a very small percentage of world population is an international migrant, suggesting that causes of *im*mobility warrant greater attention (Castles and Miller 2009; de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2016; Schewel 2019).

The response to the pandemic involved limiting very basic forms of human mobility. A key tool adopted to avoid its spread was to minimise inter-household contact, problematising everyday micro-mobilities like going for a walk, visiting neighbours, shopping, taking public transport, and going to work. A combination of factors - including people's natural caution, public health advisories and stay-at-home regulations, concomitant closure of the places where people move and mix (including workplaces and shopping/leisure facilities) and reduction of public transport - dampened people's aspirations and capabilities to move around. Some populations have experienced prolonged and/or repeated bouts of unusual stasis, while others for whom mobility was necessary to survival found it now came at the cost of exposure to illness as well as regulatory enforcement.

Beyond these micro-mobilities, people's aspirations and capabilities to change their place for residence, within their country or abroad, have also been affected by Covid-19 and accompanying policy responses. On-going income and security disparities ensure that many people still aspire to seek work elsewhere. Income loss as a result of the pandemic-related economic contraction may well have sharpened that aspiration. But at the same time factors discouraging mobility – such as location-specific economic investments, opportunities and advantages, attachment to place, family and community togetherness, gendered expectations, aversion to risk – are also susceptible to being sharpened amidst the uncertainty of a pandemic (Schewel 2019; Gamlen 2020; Simon, Schwartz, and Hudson 2022). Thus while the pandemic may have impacted migration aspirations and capabilities of some, the process is complex, with other and deeper drivers of (im)mobility also at play.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 broadly speaking made the act of migration an (even) more challenging affair. As a global recession deteriorated the resources many people have from which to finance migration, international travel restrictions related to Covid surged (IOM counted some 108,000 in 2020 around the world, including pre-travel/arrival screenings, quarantine, bans - in due course vaccination requirements were added), overlaying an already complex entanglement of visa and immigration regulations, increasing the cost of complying with – or circumventing - border controls and bureaucracy (Gamlen 2020; IOM 2021; Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021). Deteriorations in the health situation in major destinations also seems likely to have discouraged or delayed the moves of many would-be migrants (Simon, Schwartz, and Hudson 2022). Economic contractions and recruitment stoppages meant that obtaining a job abroad may require increased time, energy and

money, again curbing both aspiration and capability to move (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021). The progressive reopening moved in fits and starts.

The precise consequences for fresh migration flows globally are hard to gauge with precision, but available evidence points to a relative *dampening* of fresh movement. At international level, air passenger numbers dropped some 60% in 2020 compared with 2019 (ICAO 2022). This includes people travelling for leisure and business as well as fresh and return migration, and separating out movement for these different purposes is not an easy task: 'Differences in concepts and definitions, as well as data collection methodologies between countries, hinder full comparability of national statistics on international migrants.' (IOM 2021, 23). Accurately capturing global migration flows is further complicated by the porous physical geography of many international borders and scale of informal movements (IOM 2021). There are significant time lags in global flow data, meaning that at the time of writing in early 2022, UN data is not available for 2020. The OECD dataset (OECD 2021), however, includes many major migration destinations, and estimates that 2020 saw permanent migration flows declined by 30-40%, reaching the lowest level since 2003[2] (with particularly noticeable decline in the family migration component, and also declines in permanent work moves, protection/humanitarian status acquisition, and free movement within regional frameworks) and that temporary labour migration decreased in all OECD countries in 2020 (e.g. 66% in Japan, 37% in USA). New asylum applications in OECD countries decreased by 31% in 2020 (OECD 2021- although still higher than any year 1993-2014) and UNHCR estimates suggest that globally 1.5 million fewer refugees and asylum-seekers arrived in other countries in 2020 than would have been expected without the pandemic (UNHCR 2020).

There were also some important migration reversals. People facing the interruption or loss of precarious livelihoods and illness in places of residence often fled impending lockdowns, preferring to cluster with family and in communities of origin during periods of uncertainty and restriction. India, which has the largest number of international migrants of any country in the world as well as substantial internal migration patterns, provides a good example. Following the March 2020 lockdown announcement in India, an estimated 7.5 million people – the largest internal movement since partition in 1947 – left urban centres for rural home areas, the majority being low-paid informal sector workers without social protection, fearing being stranded, destitute, far from family (Jesline et al. 2021; The Tribune 2020). At international scale too, fearing or facing loss of jobs and work permits, large numbers of workers in major international labour migration corridors also returned home: in response to Covid-related travel restrictions, India's Vande Bharat Mission had by end of April 2021 facilitated the repatriation of over 6 million Indian nationals stranded abroad (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021; Migration Data Portal 2022). Many of these return migrants aspired to remain but lacked the capabilities to weather the pandemic in their places of residence. Others had the capabilities to weather lockdown, but preferred the familiarity and security of being with family during uncertain times, and/or rural isolation from major centres of virus transmission. In families and communities where people were highly dependent on migrant workers' remittances, substantial return, particularly in the context of economic downturn, prompted serious hardship (Ratha et al. 2021).

There is also evidence of people being stranded, immobilised without choice and little support in places of residence as the economy contracted and travel restrictions came down. Here, people aspired to return but could not manage to make that a reality. With both countries of residence and origin restricting travel, often at short notice, for prolonged periods, some international migrant workers were stranded in their places of residence or even en route home (Martin and Bergmann

---

[2] Note that the permanent migration figure includes changes from temporary to permanent statuses, which are thought to have held relatively more steady, implying a greater decline for new permanent migration moves (OECD 2021).

2021). Institutional follow-through on responsibilities to international recruits in terms of support with healthcare, repatriation and employment, appears to have been extremely patchy (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021).

Using the aspirations-capabilities framework to consider (im)mobility patterns has highlighted some dynamics not often identified and discussed in other crisis situations: the *acquiescent immobility* of people who lack the resources but also the aspiration to move; the *voluntary immobility* of people who would have resources to move, but lack the aspiration; the *involuntary immobility* of people trapped at home, or stranded elsewhere; and the *return mobility* of migrants returning home, with varying degrees of willingness and to varying socioeconomic situations (de Haas 2021; Carling and Schewel 2018). The pandemic has put all this into sharp relief, illustrating how immobility and reversals can form part of and may exacerbate a crisis, and should encourage fresh examination of immobility dynamics and their implications for the unfolding of crises around the world. Analysis of (im)mobility dynamics in crisis situations also underscores how these overlay and intertwine with wider processes of development and change. To more fully grasp pandemic (im)mobilities, however, we need to consider not only movement events / migration flows, but also the contexts and conditions of migrants' stays.

COVID-19 UNDERSCORING MIGRANT EMBEDDENESS AND DIFFERENTIAL INCLUSION

It is important to contextualise observations about a dampening of fresh flows, reversals and immobilities, with information on the evolution of the size and situation of migrant populations. As with data for international migrant flows, aggregate data on migrant 'stocks' (as demographers term population numbers) has its issues. Most revealing is not numbers of international migrants but numbers as a proportion of the world's population. The most recent UN estimates for mid-year 2020 suggests that 3.6% of the world's population was an international migrant, compared with 3.4% in 2015, 3.2% in 2010, around 2.9% in the 1990s and 2000s, and around 2.3% in the 1970s and 80s (IOM 2021). OECD data for 2020 suggests that the foreign-born population accounted for 14% of the population in OECD countries, an increase from 12% in 2010 (OECD 2021). Globally aggregated data on the size of migrant populations since 2020 is forthcoming, and given the challenges many would-be migrants and migrants have faced, outlined above, may well show declines in migrant population numbers, and even conceivably in proportions of international migrants in relation to the global population (Ratha et al. 2021). However, in the face of these challenges, the *persistence of migrant presence* is notable, something also observed in the context of the Global Financial Crisis (Castles and Vezzoli 2011). Then, long residence, absence of viable alternatives, migrant adaptations and the evolution of demand meant that migrants persisted as an important feature of the global political and economic landscape, and these factors also seem to have shaped (im)mobilities through the upheavals caused by the pandemic (Castles and Vezzoli 2011; Chang 2014; Cornelius et al. 2010).

Many migrants had reasons for staying put in places of residence, as the pandemic unfolded. A large proportion of migrants have been living in their country of residence for many years, and have significant place-specific economic investments (properties, businesses, permanent jobs), as well as social and emotional investments and connections (including mixed families, long-standing friendships, community involvements). Thus while some migrants have more temporary status and attachment in places of residence, others are strongly *socially* embedded within their places of residence – such that economic conditions there would have to deteriorate very significantly for them to relocate (Orozco and Klaas 2021; Lindley and et al. 2022).

Meanwhile, the global spread of the pandemic meant that the situation in many migrants' countries of origin was often no better, or even significantly worse, than in their country of residence, leading

to an element of 'bunkering down' through the crisis. Most starkly, refugees may be affected by livelihood deterioration, but lack the option of returning safely to their origin countries (UNHCR 2021). In a different way, many international students were also stranded, wanting to return to families but impeded by travel restrictions, and/or as a result of their heavy investment in their programmes of study requiring them to see through the pandemic in their country of residence (Ma and Miller 2021; Lindley et al. 2021; Martin and Bergmann 2021). The question of alternatives also arose for people who migrated for work. Certain sectors with high levels of migrant recruitment such as construction, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, security and domestic work were indeed hard-hit and many migrant workers employed in precarious low-wage jobs easier for employers to fire, with evidence of migrant unemployment rising ahead of citizen workers, while others were forced to accept reduced hours or income (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021; OECD 2021). Deteriorating labour market conditions certainly prompted the return of many workers, but other temporary migrants still deemed it better to remain in countries of residence, taking what work they could find. Many had migration debt still to pay off, had not reached their savings goals, had family 'back home' relying on them (often more than prior to the pandemic), and faced worse prospects in countries of origin (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021; Ratha et al. 2021). Thus global structural inequalities continued to filter down into individual migrants' calculations. They also seem to have played a role underpinning the maintenance of significant flows of remittances, despite initial expectations of a sharp decline (Ratha et al. 2021 Lindley et al. 2022).

Moreover, the pandemic also illustrates that much of the *demand f*or migrant labour in many countries is structural and does not simply disappear in an economic downturn. Employers and policy-makers have various options to address recruitment challenges, but often see migrants as a cheap and flexible solution, as many migrants' primary goal is to get ahead in their origin country, rather than build a life abroad; they have less access to alternative social support; and their residence depends on continued employment (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). Processes of labour market segmentation combined with demographic ageing have resulted in the normalization of heavy reliance on foreign labour in some sectors and jobs (Ruhs and Anderson 2010; ICMPD 2021). Economic crises in countries of destination often trigger nationalist citizen-first rhetoric and measures, but walking back structural dependence on migrant labour is far from straightforward (Chang 2014; ICMPD 2021). In Covid-19, many migrants were already employed - or found work - as essential workers in key sectors, supporting systems vital for the core functions of society, where labour demand was less affected by the pandemic, or even increased (Fernández-Reino and Vargas-Silva 2021). Indeed, crises of labour supply have become apparent in key sectors of the economy, as employers and states scrambled to recruit, leading to adjustments of migration controls to facilitate recruitment of foreign workers, from health and care workers to seasonal agricultural workers to truck drivers (ICMPD 2021; IOM 2021).

All this illustrates that rather than being separate from the rest of society, migration is structurally and socially embedded in important ways (Castles 2010). This, in turn, prompts consideration of the situation of migrants and forms of 'differential inclusion', i.e. 'how inclusion in a sphere or realm can be subject to varying degrees of subordination, rule, discrimination and segmentation' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012, 181). Covid-19 can be understood as a 'syndemic' (combining the sense of synergy and epidemic, recognising that disease occurs in ways that interact with socioenvironmental conditions and other diseases) hitting particular population groups, including many poorer migrants around the world, particularly hard (Singer and Rylko-Bauer 2021). This has put a spotlight on inequalities within and between countries and on the 'leave no one behind' challenge of the SDGs. Understanding the pandemic as crisis requires grappling with not only medical science and immediate public policy response but also the issue of structural violence: 'the often-hidden ways

that structures of inequality, such as poverty, racism, and discrimination, negatively impact the lives and well-being of affected populations' (Singer and Rylko-Bauer 2021, 8). To illustrate, racism and poverty amplify virus exposure among many migrant populations: via prevalence of low-paid jobs involving public contact; via poor facilities and over-crowded accommodation that created obstacles to preventative measures; by generating health issues in some migrant communities that increased vulnerability to Covid-19; and by impeding access to health services on paper and/or in practice (Singer and Rylko-Bauer 2021; Vearey and Gandar 2020). A stark example of this was the restriction of migrant workers in Singapore to crowded and inadequate hostel accommodation, resulting in soaring Covid rates – which ultimately posed a risk to the wider community (Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021). Thus the immobilising effects of lockdown measures, referred to in the previous section, have far from uniform effects on the people involved. The pandemic has brought the human suffering haunting the global migration landscape into sharp relief.

The impact of the pandemic on migration politics is complex and still unfolding. There is a common perception that as Carland puts it, 'racism and recessions go together' – and that a complex crisis like Covid-19 can be expected to trigger psychological predispositions valuing security, personal safety, authority and group loyalty, which have been associated with anti-immigration sentiment and scapegoating (Dennison and Geddes 2020). Indeed, as in previous health crises, a discourse of medical risk has been mobilised by politicians in relation to 'others', and racialised migrants appear to have been subject to heightened disinformation, discrimination and xenophobic attack (Jennings 2021; IOM 2021; Jones, Mudaliar, and Piper 2021). Moreover, the pre-existing policy emphasis on 'orderly' movement indicates a regulatory bent that was arguably turbocharged with the proliferation of pandemic travel, as well as the gearing up of digital monitoring (UN 2020; Gamlen 2020; IOM 2021; Pécoud 2021). However, there are also other dynamics at play and spaces of possibility. The dangers of forgetting the 'public' in public health has been made very apparent, triggering a range of health outreach and inclusion efforts targeting migrant communities (Vearey 2020). The concept of 'essential work' has focused public attention on the labour essential for the core functioning of societies in ways that cut across usual categorisations of low vs. high skill, and in many contexts migrants have been recognised has having an 'outsized role on the frontlines of responding to the crisis' (UN 2020, 3; Fernández-Reino and Vargas-Silva 2021). Analysis of pan-European surveys between 2002 and 2018 suggested that attitudes to immigration prior to the pandemic in fact became progressively more positive,[3] leading to the suggestion that in the context of the pandemic, immigration politics may even become 'quieter' as governments and publics prioritise economic reconstruction, state finances, healthcare and education (Dennison and Geddes 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided some reflections on the relationships between development, crisis and mobility with particular focus on Agenda 2030 and migration through the Covid-19 pandemic. It highlighted that crises are often viewed as exceptional interruptions to development, and the idea that migration should be approached as a cause or effect – something separate from - development. Rather, it suggested that crisis and migration are central and constitutive elements in patterns of global social transformation and change. It also highlighted some often overlooked dimensions of the crisis-migration nexus.

---

[3] In a way that would seem to be out-pacing the generational shifts that often account for shifting attitudes, possibly due to new information or effective pro-migration communication.

Against this background, global migratory dynamics during Covid-19 were considered. The salience of immobilities and reversals during the pandemic, and the issues this prompts around the world, makes a contrast with the surge in fresh movement commonly associated with many political, economic and humanitarian crises, highlighting the relevance of a mobility perspective. At the same time, the persistence of migrant populations through the upheavals of the pandemic highlights the social and structural embeddedness of migration, alongside complex processes of differential inclusion. Stepping back, the analysis calls into question whether Agenda 2030 will be able to adequately address the structures that underpin those negative aspects of the global migration landscape which have caused concern, lending weight to calls for deeper transformation.

REFERENCES

Bakewell, Oliver. 2008. '"Keeping Them in Their Place": The Ambivalent Relationship between Development and Migration in Africa'. *Third World Quarterly* 29 (7): 1341–58.

Black, Richard, and Michael Collyer. 2014. '"Trapped" Populations: Limits on Mobility at Times of Crisis'. In *Humanitarian Crisis and Migration: Causes, Consequences and Responses*, edited by Susan. F. Martin, Sanjula Weerasinghe, and Abbie Taylor, 287–305. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Carling, Jørgen. 2002. 'Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility: Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28 (1): 5–42.

Carling, Jørgen, and Kerliyn Schewel. 2018. 'Revisiting Aspiration and Ability in International Migration'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44 (6): 945–63. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384146.

Castles, Stephen. 2010. 'Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (10): 1565–86. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2010.489381.

Castles, Stephen, and Mark J. Miller. 2009. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Castles, Stephen, and Derya Ozkul. 2014. 'Circular Migration: Triple Win or a New Label for Temporary Migration?' In *Global and Asian Perspectives on International Migraiton*, edited by G Battistella. Vol. 4. Global Migration Issues. Cham.: Springer.

Castles, Stephen, and Simona Vezzoli. 2011. 'Migration, Crisis and the Global Labour Market'. *Globalizations* 8 (3): 311–24.

Chang, Dae-Oup. 2014. 'The Global Economic Crisis and East Asian Labour Migration: A Crisis of Migration or Struggles of Labour?' In *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Anna Lindley, 93–114. Abingdon: Routledge.

Cohen, Robin. 2006. *Migration and Its Enemies: Global Capital, Migrant Labour and the Nation-State*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

———. 2020. '"Take Me Home": The Coronavirus Virus and Panic Mobility'. *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Blog* (blog). 20 March 2020. https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2020/take-me-home-the-coronavirus-virus-and-panic-mobility/.

Collyer, Michael, and Russell King. 2016. 'Narrating Europe's Migration and Refugee 'crisis''. *Human Geography: A New Radical Journal* 9 (2): 1–12.

Cornelius, Wayne A., David Fitzgerald, Pedro Lewin Fisher, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff, eds. 2010. *Mexican Migration and the U.S. Economic Crisis: A Transnational Perspective*. San Diego: Centre for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego.

Cramer, Christopher. 2006. *Civil War Is Not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*.

Cresswell, Timothy. 2006. *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*. New York: Routledge.

Dennison, James, and Andrew Geddes. 2020. 'Why COVID-19 Does Not Necessarily Mean That Attitudes towards Immigration Will Become More Negative'. Covid-19 and the Transformation of Migration and Mobility Globally. Geneva: IOM.

Duffield, Mark. 2007. *Development, Security and Unending War*. Bristol: Polity Press.

Edelstein, Michael, Khalid Koser, and David L. Heymann. 2014. 'Health Crises and Migration'. In *Humanitarian Crises and Migration: Causes, Consequences and Responses*, edited by Susan. F. Martin, Sanjula Weerasinghe, and Abbie Taylor, 97–112. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Fernández-Reino, Mariña, and Carlos Vargas-Silva. 2021. 'Has the Pandemic Shifted Public Opinion towards Migrant Workers in Essential, but Low-Skilled, Jobs?' *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Blog* (blog). 2021. https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2021/has-the-pandemic-shifted-public-opinion-towards-migrant-workers-in-essential-but-low-skilled-jobs/.

Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gamlen, Alan. 2020. 'Migration and Mobility after the 2020 Pandemic: The End of an Age?' Covid-19 and the Transformation of Migration and Mobility Globally. Geneva: IOM.

Glick Schiller, Nina, and Noel B. Salazar. 2013. 'Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39 (2): 183–200. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2013.723253.

Haas, Hein de. 2021. 'A Theory of Migration: The Aspirations-Capabilities Framework'. *Comparative Migration Studies* 9 (8). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00210-4.

Haas, Hein de, Katharina Natter, and Simona Vezzoli. 2016. 'Growing Restrictiveness or Changing Selection? The Nature and Evolution of Migration Policies'. *International Migration Review* 52 (2): 1–44.

Hammond, Laura, and Anna Lindley. 2014. 'Histories and Contemporary Challenges of Crisis and Mobility in Somalia'. In *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Anna Lindley, 46–72. Abingdon: Routledge.

Hanieh, Adam. 2012. 'Rethinking Class in the Gulf Arab States: The Spatial Structuring of Temporary Migrant Labour'. Unpublished paper.

Hanieh, Adam, and Philip Marfleet. 2014. 'Migration and "Crisis" in the Middle East and North Africa Region'. In *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Anna Lindley, 24–45. Abingdon: Routledge.

Harris, John R., and Michael P. Todaro. 1970. 'Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis'. *American Economic Review* 60 (1): 126–42.

Hollifield, James F., Philip L. Martin, and Pia M. Orrenius. 2014. 'The Dilemmas of Immigration Control'. In *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, edited by James F. Hollifield, Philip L. Martin, and Pia M. Orrenius, 3rd ed., 3–34. Stanford, CA: Standford University Press.

Hughes, BB, T Hanna, K McNeil, D K Bohl, and J D Moyer. 2021. 'Pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals in a World Reshaped by COVID-19'. Denver, CO and New York, NY: Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures and United Nations Development Programme. https://sdgintegration.undp.org/sites/default/files/Foundational_research_report.pdf.

ICAO. 2022. 'Effects of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Civil Aviation: Economic Impact Analysis'. Montréal: International Civil Aviation Organisation. https://www.icao.int/sustainability/Documents/Covid-19/ICAO_coronavirus_Econ_Impact.pdf.

ICMPD. 2021. 'Migration Outlook 2022'. ICMPD: Geneva.

IOM. 2021. 'World Migration Report 2022'. Geneva: IOM.

Jennings, Michael. 2021. 'COVID-19 and Facemask Diplomacy'. History Workshop. *HIstories of the Present* (blog). 23 July 2021. https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/covid-19-and-facemask-diplomacy/.

Jesline, Joshy, John Romate, Eslavath Rajkumar, and Allen Joshua George. 2021. 'The Plight of Migrants during COVID-19 and the Impact of Circular Migration in India: A Systematic Review'. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8: 231. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00915-6.

Jones, Katharine, Sanushka Mudaliar, and Nicola Piper. 2021. 'Locked down and in Limbo: The Global Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Worker Rights'. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Jónsson, Gunvor. 2012. 'Migration, Identity and Immobility in a Malian Soninke Village'. In *The Global Horizon: Migratory Expectations in Africa and the Middle East*, edited by Knut Graw and Samuli Schielke. Leuven University Press.

Kothari, Uma, ed. 2005. *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*. London: Zed Books.

Lindley, Anna. 2014. 'Crisis and Migration: Concepts and Issues'. In *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Lindley, Anna, and et al. 2022. 'Migrants Remittances in a Context of Mobile Global Crisis/Crises: Interrogating Resilience'. *In Draft*.

Lindley, Anna, Saliha Majeed-Hajaj, Gabriela Silva Loureiro, Kavita Datta, Elaine Chase, and Laura Hammond. 2021. 'Connecting during Covid-19: Practices of Care, Remittance Sending and Digitisation among UK's Migrant Communities'. Community Spotlight Workshop Report. London: QMUL. https://www.qmul.ac.uk/geog/media/geography/docs/research/cdc/CSW-Report.pdf.

Lubkemann, Stephen C. 2008. 'Involuntary Immobility: On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21 (4): 454–75.

Ma, Haijing, and Claude Miller. 2021. 'Trapped in a Double Bind: Chinese Overseas Student Anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Health Communication* 36 (13): 1598–1605. https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1775439.

Martin, Susan F., and Jonas Bergmann. 2021. '(Im)Obility in the Age of Covid-19'. *International Migration Review* 55 (3): 660–87. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/0197918320984104.

Mezzadra, Sandro, and Brett Neilson. 2012. 'Borderscapes of Differential Inclusion: Subjectivity and Struggles on the Threshold of Justice's Excess'. In *The Borders of Justice*, edited by Etienne Balibar, Sandro Mezzadra, and Ranabir Samaddar, 181–203. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Migration Data Portal. 2022. 'Migration Data Relevant for the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Migration Data Portal* (blog). 1 April 2022. https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic#key-migration-trends.

Nijenhuis, Gery, and Maggi Leung. 2017. 'Rethinking Migration in the 2030 Agenda: Towards a De-Territorialized Conceptualization of Development'. *Forum for Development Studies* 44 (1): 51–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2016.1276958.

OECD. 2021. 'International Migration Outlook 2021'. Paris: OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/29f23e9d-en and https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/29f23e9d-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/29f23e9d-en.

Onoma, Ato Kwamena. 2020. 'Xenophobia's Contours During an Ebola Epidemic: Proximity and the Targeting of Peul Migrants in Senegal'. *African Studies Review* 63 (2): 353–74. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.38.

Orozco, Manuel, and Kathryn Klaas. 2021. 'A Commitment to Family: Remittances and the Covid-19 Pandemic'. Washington DC: Inter-American Dialogue. https://143163-1013359-1-raikfcquaxqncofqfm.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Columns_Survey-of-LAC-Migrants-2020-Report.pdf.

Pécoud, Antoine. 2015. *Depoliticising Migration: Global Governance and International Migration Narratives.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2021. 'What Will Migration Look like after the Pandemic?' *Open Democracy* (blog). 2021. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/pandemic-border/what-will-migration-look-after-pandemic/.

Piper, Nicola, S Rosewarne, and M Withers. 2017. 'Migrant Precarity: "Networks of Labour" for a Rights-Based Governance of Migration'. *Development and Change* 48 (5): 1089–1110.

Piper, Nicola, and Brenda Yeoh. 2005. 'Introduction: Meeting the Challenges of HIV/AIDS in Southeast and East Asia'. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 46 (1): 1–5.

Raghuram, Parvati. 2009. 'What Migration, What Development? Unsettling the Edifice of Migration and Development'. *Geoforum* 15 (2): 103–17.

Ratha, Dilip, Eung Ju Kim, Sonia Plaza, Ganesh Seshan, Elliott J Riordan, and Vandana Chandra. 2021. 'Migration and Development Brief 35: Recovery: COVID-19 Crisis through a Migration Lens.' Washington, DC.: KNOMAD-World Bank. https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Migration_Brief%2035_1.pdf.

Ruhs, Martin, and Bridget Anderson, eds. 2010. *Who Needs Migrant Workers? Labour Shortages, Immigration, and Public Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saad Filho, Alfredo. 2011. 'Crisis in Neoliberalism or Crisis of Neoliberalism?' *Socialist Register* 47: 242–59.

Schewel, Kerliyn. 2019. 'Understanding Immobility: Moving Beyond the Mobility Bias in Migration Studies'. *International Migration Review* 54 (2): 328–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918319831952.

Simon, Miranda, Cassilde Schwartz, and David Hudson. 2022. 'Covid-19 Insecurities and Migration Aspirations'. *International Interactions* 48 (2): 309–26. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2022.1991919.

Singer, Merrill, and Barbara Rylko-Bauer. 2021. 'The Syndemics and Structural Violence of the COVID Pandemic: Anthropological Insights on a Crisis'. *Open Anthropological Research* 1: 7–32.

Standing, Guy. 2012. *The Precariat*. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Suliman, Samid. 2017. 'Migration and Development after 2015'. *Globalizations* 14 (3): 415–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2017.1281625.

The Tribune. 2020. '4 Crore Migrant Workers in India; 75 Lakh Return Home so Far: MHA'. *The Tribune*, 23 May 2020. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/4-crore-migrant-workers-in-india-75-lakh-return-home-so-far-mha-88940.

UN. 2015. 'Sustainable Development Goals'. New York: UN.

———. 2020. 'COVID-19 and People on the Move'. Policy Brief. Geneva: United Nations.

———. 2022. 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022'. New York: UN.

UNHCR. 2020. 'Global Trends 2020'. Geneva: UNHCR.

———. 2021. 'Global Trends 2021'. Geneva: UNHCR.

Vearey, Jo. 2020. 'Why Xenophobia Is Bad for the Health of All in South Africa'. *Africa Is a Country* (blog). 3 April 2020. https://africasacountry.com/2020/04/why-xenophobia-is-bad-for-the-health-of-all-in-south-africa.

Vearey, Jo, and Sally Gandar. 2020. 'Border Walls Don't Stop Viruses. But This Might.' *TBC* (blog). 31 March 2020. TBC.

Vigh, Henrik. 2008. 'Crisis and Chronicity: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline'. *Ethnos* 73 (1): 5–24.

Williamson, John, ed. 1994. *The Political Economy of Policy Reform*. Washington DC: Institute for International Economics.