The Mobility Mandala: Conceptualizing Human Mobility in the Sustainable Development Framework[1]

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Abstract: Human mobility and sustainable development are linked in countless ways. This essay introduces the mobility mandala, a comprehensive framework to systematize the various links and to structure the language, research, and policy interventions on human mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To unpack such a multifaceted relationship, the mobility mandala conceptualizes four principal ways in which human mobility interacts with sustainable development: (1) *development affecting mobility* examines the impact of sustainable development on (prospective) migrants or mobility patterns; (2) *mobility as development* investigates movement as an enabler for migrants' development outcomes; (3) *mobile populations as vulnerable populations* highlights where mobility is associated with particular vulnerabilities for those on the move; and (4) *mobile populations impact development* emphasizes the impact of contributions of emigrants, diaspora actors, immigrants, refugees and IDPs on the development of communities of origin and destination. The mobility mandala closes existing gaps in available analytical frameworks, as it (1) incorporates all forms of mobility, including forced and voluntary, internal and international movements; (2) provides a unified analytical lens for in-migration, out-migration, transit and return migration contexts; (3) distinguishes between different groups of people that are or can be affected by migrants' impact on development and the policy interventions that address this link; (4) categorizes public policy and SDG interventions and supports a more varied, more specific, and human-rights based understanding of migration governance. Human mobility is relevant for all 17 SDGs and nearly all of their 169 targets and the essay discusses the possibilities and fallacies of public policies to intervene in the sphere of human mobility.

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Human mobility plays a fundamental role in sustainable development across the globe. Under the right circumstances, mobility can lead to enormous development gains for migrants. It can also generate significant benefits for the communities they leave and the communities they join. In other scenarios, it can threaten development gains in fragile host communities or impede sustainable development and put migrants in vulnerable situations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted by UN Member States in 2015 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize that human mobility plays an important role in implementing the global development agenda. Sustainable development goes beyond economic growth and balances three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. It aims to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives in a healthy environment so that the planet can support the needs of the present and future generations.[2] The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the first global development framework that explicitly mentions migration, acknowledging that "migration is a multi-dimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses" (United Nations 2015, para 29).[3] The SDGs form an action-oriented agenda that not only aims at understanding, defining, and measuring sustainable development but also structuring policy interventions to promote positive outcomes. The global goals have a direct impact on the actions of governments, international organizations, and development actors, including on the prioritization of policies and funding (Fukuda-Parr 2016).

Considering the SDGs' political 'traction' in different countries and in the multilateral system and their potential to promote coordination between multiple actors and enhanced coherence across policies (Foresti and Hagen-Zanker 2017), it is important that the SDGs contain a number of explicit references to migration.[4] This includes the necessity to protect migrant workers' labor rights, facilitate orderly,

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[2] In addition, there is a long history of alternative critical approaches to development, including (neo)Marxist-oriented dependency theory, world-systems theory, new developmentalism, and Amartya Sen's capability approach (Sen 1999; Veltmeyer and Bowles 2017).

[3] This echoes the recognition of migration as a development enabler and the need for a comprehensive policy response in the Outcome Document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in 2015, known as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (paragraph 111). Also, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants that was adopted unanimously by all 193 United Nations member states recognizes that our world is a better place for the contribution made by refugees and migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development. On the one hand, the declaration stresses that benefits and opportunities of safe, orderly and regular migration are substantial and are often underestimated. On the other hand, it also recognizes that forced displacement and irregular migration in large movements often present complex challenges (United Nations 2016a, para 1.4).

[4] The importance of migration for a broad range of areas of development is further illustrated by the inclusion of human mobility in all global agreements that were adopted in recent years. This includes a strong focus on the linkages between migration and sustainable urbanization and sustainable urban development in the 2016 New Urban Agenda that was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and

safe, regular and responsible migration, reduce the transaction costs of migrant remittances, as well as establish scholarships that can affect student mobility and eliminate trafficking in persons.[5] However, the links between the SDGs and human mobility extend far beyond these explicit mentions. Drawing on the literature on migration and development, development economics, development studies, diaspora studies, human rights, public policy, and critical migration studies, this essay proposes the *mobility mandala* as a comprehensive and globally applicable framework to understand the links between human mobility and sustainable development. The framework aims at systematizing the various links and structuring the language, research, and policy interventions on human mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in four framework domains. In this essay, I argue that human mobility is a key aspect of economic growth and employment, health, education, democratic governance, climate change and other sectors, linking it to all 17 SDGs and nearly all of their 169 targets—often in multiple ways.

Closing conceptual gaps

Distinct strands of the literature have highlighted different aspects of the mobility-development nexus. Research on migration and development has focused on the impact of emigration and diaspora contributions on migrants' countries of origin (Sørensen, van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; de Haas 2010; Kapur 2010; Naujoks 2013). In this line of research, Martin (2003) and Lowell (2002) develop frameworks to examine the impact of migration on home countries throughout the migration cycle through the '*three R's*', namely, recruitment (who goes), resourcing (how to benefit from the expatriate community), and return. Similarly, Kapur and McHale (2005) frame the discussions in terms of four channels associated with migration: prospect, absence, diaspora, and return. Scholarship has provided evidence on the impact of migration on migrants and their families. Literature on the economics of immigration has mostly focused on the impact of economic in-migration in the global North (Borjas 1995; 2014; Clemens 2013; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

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the outcome document of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Nansen Initiative's Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change, as well as the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction stress that climate and disaster-related human mobility are cross-cutting issues. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration recognizes that migration "is a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world, and that these positive impacts can be optimized by improving migration governance" (United Nations 2018, para 8).

[5] Table 3 below provides an overview. For an in-depth discussion of the SDGs' direct migration targets and indicators, see Naujoks (2018a).

2016),[6] while questions about targeted development interventions in the global South have been explored by grey literature of international organizations and NGOs (UNDP 2009; 2016; JMDI 2013; GMG 2017).[7] Thus, the existing body of literature has enlightened us with valuable conceptualizations on the link between mobility and development. However, to my knowledge, there is no framework that provides us with a comprehensive overview of said links.

The compartmentalization of the migration-and-development research and discourse is limiting for at least three reasons. First, the potential for cross-fertilization between these strands of research is reduced. Second, the silo-approach leads to reductionisms in addressing a variety of forms of mobility. Public, policy, and research discourses the world over have a tendency to reduce human mobility to one single aspect.[8] They are either interested in the scale and impacts of labor *emigration*, in economic and social development initiatives for *refugees* residing in the country and the communities hosting them, or the scale and composition of *immigration*, to name a few prominent examples. While a narrow focus may be warranted in some cases, it becomes increasingly clear that many countries are affected by human mobility in multiple ways. Erstwhile sending countries experience inflows of migrants, while simultaneously hosting significant populations of refugees. Of the 258 million international migrants in 2017, including 25 million refugees, developed regions hosted nearly 57% of the world's migrants, while 43% lived in countries in developing regions (United Nations 2017). Some countries are predominantly immigration or emigration countries. However, in 82 countries, both immigration and emigration rates are above 5%, and in 46 countries they are above 10%; see Figure 1 (Naujoks, forthcoming). The mobility mandala framework aims at providing guidance to classify and examine a range of linkages between migration and development, as well as for development and public policy experts to counter the reductionism of these relationships.

Figure 1: Global immigration and emigration rates (2017)

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[6] Notable exceptions are, OECD and ILO (2018); Hovhannisyan *et al.* (2018).
[7] In addition, critical migration scholars question the underlying depoliticization of the migration-and-development debate and the challenges to include different populations (Raghuram 2009; Silvey 2009).
[8] In addition to a review of the relevant literature, this statement is based on the author's experiences of advising international organizations and governments for over 15 years.
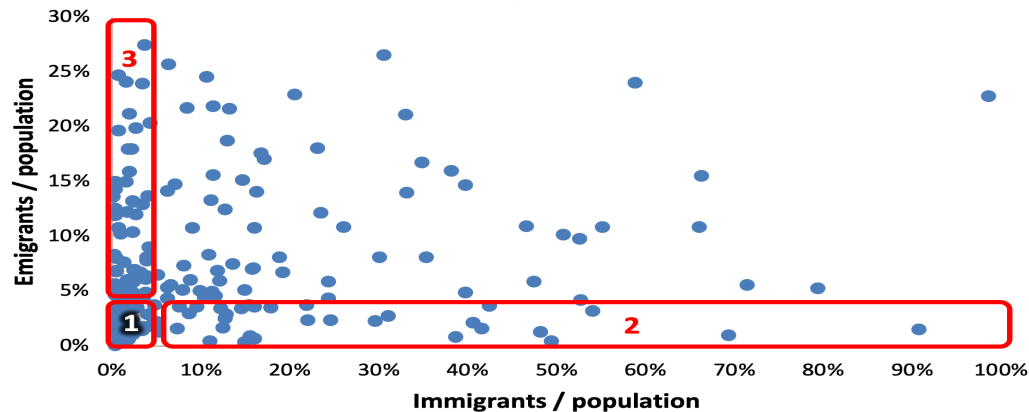
Source: Author's calculations based on United Nations Population Division data
Notes: Each dot represents both the immigration and emigration rate for a single country. The rates are calculated as the immigrant/emigrant share of the total population on the basis of 2017 migrant stock and 2015 population estimates. Cluster 1 indicates countries that do not have significant levels of migration. Cluster 2 includes countries with significant immigration but low levels of emigration. Cluster 3 encompasses countries that experience emigration but little immigration.

The multifaceted realities of migration

Human mobility is a multifaceted phenomenon. It includes movements across international borders and within countries;[9] movements between countries with different levels of development; movements involving different degrees of geographic or cultural distances; and movements of varying time periods, including temporary sojourns. Determinants, processes, and outcomes are impacted by migrants' sex, age, legal and socio-economic status, skills, social networks, and level of agency. Beyond each distinct characteristic, research on intersectionality shows that markers such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity often compound inequalities and vulnerabilities, posing particular challenges for the understanding of needs and potentials (Bastia 2014).[10] Low-intensity movements of men and women may be different from sudden large-scale inflows and outflows. While migration motives may in reality be a mix of several objectives, we can differentiate persons who relocate primarily in order to work, study, join their family or seek protection from environmental degradation, disasters, war, violence, and persecution. As Wickramage *et al.* (2018, 4) point out,

> We must be careful not to cluster migrants and their associated lived experiences, to simple, reductionist categories such as internal versus cross-border or documented versus undocumented, or even refugee versus economic migrant. However, […] we need to

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[9] While studies on internal migration and internal displacement are key to a comprehensive understanding of the links between sustainable development and human mobility, this paper focuses predominantly on international movements. However, the conceptualizations are in many ways equally applicable to domestic mobility.

[10] For the link between migration, gender equality and the SDGs, see O'Neil, Fleury and Foresti (2016); Holliday, Hennebry and Gammage (2018).

develop a set of nuanced yet flexible typologies that are able to capture the contextually relevant factors affecting migrant experiences, at both the individual and population levels.

This is not to say that these categories are never useful. However, the common conflation of many differences in such overarching types creates challenges for adopting adequate analytical and policy tools. The proposed framework urges those applying it to consider differences in migratory scenarios. Terms and labels matter, but so does the readability of the text. In this essay, I will use three labeling strategies. First, I use *mobile populations* as an umbrella term for all categories.[11] Second, from time to time, I will employ a linguistically bulky enumeration of emigrants, immigrants, refugees, or returnees as a reminder to readers that they have to apply this concept to these different (yet still broad) categories. Lastly, I will sometimes use *migrant* as the overarching category even though the term is often restricted to voluntary or economic migrants. I will do so as there are no viable or readable alternative, and because it corresponds to international statistical definitions.[12]

The mobility mandala

I represent the various links between development and human mobility as a mobility mandala. The mandala illustrates the relationship between sustainable development outcomes by focusing on different entities whose development outcomes are in the spotlight of the analysis. Such a conceptualization allows for the discussion of specific mechanisms in each of the four domains related public policies and trade-offs. In Hindu and Buddhist symbolism, a mandala (Sanskrit मण्डल), which literally means "circle," is a symbolic representation of the universe. It is a square structure with four gates that is often described as a four-sided palace or temple with a deity at the center (Tucci 1973). My use of the mandala schematic is not meant to invoke religious or spiritual connotations. In line with

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[11] There is a trend toward conceptualizing movements of people beyond the restricted categories of migration or displacement, as shown by the Model International Mobility Convention (Doyle 2018) or UNDP's (2009) human development report on human mobility. Carling (2017) stresses that "There's no specific, correct meaning of 'migrants'" and argues that an "inclusivist definition" that encompasses refugees "is the best foundation for analyses, debate and policy that safeguard the rights of all migrants".

[12] FitzGerald and Ara (2018) discuss constructivist and realist approaches towards labeling refugees and the challenges that arise from the fact that these labels blend categories of everyday usage, law, and social science.

other (thematically unrelated) scholarship,[13] I employ the mandala as a graphic and conceptual heuristic to discuss the four domains.[14]

At the center of the mobility mandala are sustainable development outcomes.[15] These comprise the broad range of outcomes that are included in the SDGs, including access to healthcare and quality education, higher incomes and decent working conditions, better human-rights protections, protected environments, and less of poverty, hunger, crime, and war. The four gates[16] open to the four framework domains that focus on different dependent variables whose development outcomes are measured (Table 1). Many discussions on aspects of the migration-and-development nexus have different groups of persons in mind whose development is in the focus of the inquiry. Employing the language of quantitative analysis, we can ask what the units of analysis for the independent and dependent variables of a certain relationship are.

Domain 1 on *development affecting mobility* examines the impact of development (independent variable) on (prospective) migrants or mobility patterns (dependent variable). Domain 2 on *mobility as development* treats the movement and its characteristics as the independent variable and migrants' development outcomes as dependent variables. Domain 2 emphasizes the inherent potential of mobility to increase development outcomes for those who move. The flipside of mobility as development is Domain 3, which focuses on scenarios where vulnerable mobile populations are excluded from development opportunities. In the language of the SDGs, this puts them at a risk of being 'left behind.' Domain 3 asks about the impact of mobility or of specific development impediments (independent variables) on the sustainable development outcomes of vulnerable mobile populations (dependent variable). Lastly, Domain 4 on *migration and mobile populations impact development* focuses on the effect of contributions of emigrants and diasporas (independent variable) on development of communities of origin (dependent variable) or immigrants, refugees, and IDPs' impact (independent

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[13] Between the 4th and 2nd century BCE, Indian philosopher Kautilya developed a doctrine of foreign policy called the *rajamandala* or the *Circle of Ruling Powers* (Adityakira 2015, 30-31). The founder of analytical psychology C.G. Jung adopted the mandala into his psychological theory as a universally applicable archetype of wholeness, while eschewing any interest in the historical contexts, doctrinal subtleties, and ritual applications of mandalas (Blair 2015). Furthermore, Onyura *et al.* (2017) develop a *mandala of faculty development* to depict contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes of faculty development programs. Brazil's National Confederation of Municipalities created a *Municipal Development Mandala* to illustrate the municipal sustainable development index.

[14] This use echoes the fact that, more broadly, a mandala is defined as a graphic and often symbolic pattern usually in the form of a circle divided into four separate sections (Merriam-Webster 2018).

[15] I acknowledge a certain ironic connotation of placing the SDGs in the position that, in the Tantric and Hindu usage of the mandala, is reserved for deities.

[16] Though in this case not conceptually significant, gates are closely linked to (im)mobility, thus fortuitously increasing the meaning of the mandala allegory for our questions.

variable) on the communities of destination (dependent variable). I will discuss each domain more in detail, following an introduction to the role of public policies and the SDGs.

Table 1: Key characteristics of mobility mandala framework domains

	Framework domain	"independent variable"	Unit of analysis "dependent variable"
1	Development affects mobility	Development outcomes in communities of origin or destination	Mobility pattern (levels, forms, and directions)
2	Mobility as development	Mobility	Migrants' development outcomes
3	Mobile populations as vulnerable populations	Mobility or specific barriers (e.g., lack of rights or access)	Migrants' development outcomes (or the lack their off)
4	Migration and mobile populations impact development	Migrants' actions and contributions	Development outcomes in communities of origin and/or destination

Source: Author's conceptualization

Public policies, SDGs, and the mobility mandala framework

Migration occurs with or without government policies. Higher border walls and restrictive legal and policy regimes do not stop migration or refugee movements. But they tend to make migration and forcible displacement less safe and less beneficial for everyone (Gammeltoft-Hansen 2014; Callamard 2017; FitzGerald 2019). Governance schemes can indeed play a pivotal role in enhancing the benefits of human mobility while decreasing the associated risks and costs.[17] Such policies create safe and meaningful pathways for people to migrate and to use their skills. They also reduce or eliminate recruitment costs for migrant workers which otherwise can lead to highly indebted households and fewer development gains (Martin 2017; Naujoks 2018a). The SDGs as an action- and outcome-oriented framework provide a meaningful tool to anchor public policies on migration.

Countering the underlying assumption of SDG discussions that portray the state as a willing agent of change and put the impetus on technical questions on the structure of SDG goals and targets, and implementation mechanisms, El-Zein *et al.* (2016, 209) stress that in some cases, states can be "complicit in the creation of policies that run counter to sustainable development." Sexsmith and McMichael (2015) criticize that the SDG visioning continues to assign principal responsibility to states for the post-2015 development agenda. Though I am sympathetic to El-Zein *et al.* (2016) and to Sexsmith and McMichael's (2015) criticism, it would go beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the pros and cons of the state-centered conceptualizations of global development and realistic expectations

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[17] Migration governance is often understood as the entirety of migration-related policies and programs of individual countries, inter-state discussions and agreements, multilateral forums and consultative processes, the activities of international organizations, as well as relevant laws and norms at the national and international level (Global Commission on International Migration 2005). For more discussions on migration governance, see the various contributions in Betts (2011).

for an overhaul of related international institutions and processes. The mobility mandala framework recognizes that the links between migration and sustainable development, as outlined in the four domains, occur largely with or without state interventions. However, regulations, institutions, and targeted interventions by states can be critical to foster the beneficial and mitigate the negative impacts of the migration-development nexus.[18] This should not detract from the fact that there is often a considerable implementation gap. Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius (2014) show that there are administrative, political, legal, and economic aspects that explain existing gaps between migration policy outputs and outcomes. Other sets of governance may have decidedly negative impacts on the development outcomes for mobile populations and communities of origin or destination. Beyond norm-setting activities that are generally reserved for states, many of the discussed programmatic actions are equally applicable to non-state actors.[19]

Throughout the four mandala domains, human mobility is directly and indirectly linked to the SDGs. Direct targets are those that explicitly mention migration. They include the protection of migrant workers' labor rights, promotion of safe and secure working environments, in particular for women migrants (target 8.8), facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration (target 10.7), and reduction of the transaction costs of migrant remittances (target 10.c) (Table 3).[20] In addition, the SDGs reference scholarships that can affect student mobility (target 4.b), as well as trafficking in persons, especially of women and children, and forced labor and exploitation (targets 5.2, 8.7, 16.2). Target 17.18 plays a special role in bridging direct and indirect migration targets. Development partners can build capacities to produce high quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated among others by gender, race, ethnicity, and migratory status. This information will be important to understand migrant-specific vulnerabilities and potentials with regard to general SDG targets.

SDG target 10.7 anchors a broad notion of migration governance in the 2030 Agenda. It urges all governments and stakeholders to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies." This acknowledges that we can increase migration's positive impacts on the development of

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[18] E.g., Clemens *et al.* (2018) discuss policy decisions that turned challenges into opportunities. The implementation of meaningful public policies on human mobility requires what Hollifield (2004) describes as the 'migration state,' which acknowledges the need of migration and creates a legal and regulatory environment that gives migrants rights and liberties to benefit themselves and the communities they live in.

[19] While the SDGs' primary addressees are states, the global goals also focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships, with civil society actors such as NGOs, academia, trade unions, and the private sector (Beisheim and Ellersiek 2017).

[20] See Naujoks (2018a), for an in-depth discussion of these targets and their indicators.

migrants, and on communities of origin, transit, and destination alike. Well-managed migration policies can empower migrant women and men, protect their rights, give them decent working conditions and provide them with choices and liberties. As per SDG indicators, this is measured by the recruitment cost of international migrant workers, as well as the number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies. So far, no agreed-upon definitions exist of what constitutes "orderly," "safe," "regular," and "responsible" migration and how to define "planned and well-managed migration policies." Critical voices have expressed concern that terms such as *orderly* and *regular* suggest that this goal is concerned with migration that is sanctioned and controlled by the state (Bakewell 2015; Piper 2017).[21] However, I argue that well-managed migration policies are not primarily about control, but about addressing the risks of migration and helping migrants, as well as their communities of origin, transit, and destination, to harness the positive development potential that human mobility offers.[22] The next sections establish and explain the four domains of the mobility mandala framework and show how the SDGs relate to all four mandala domains.
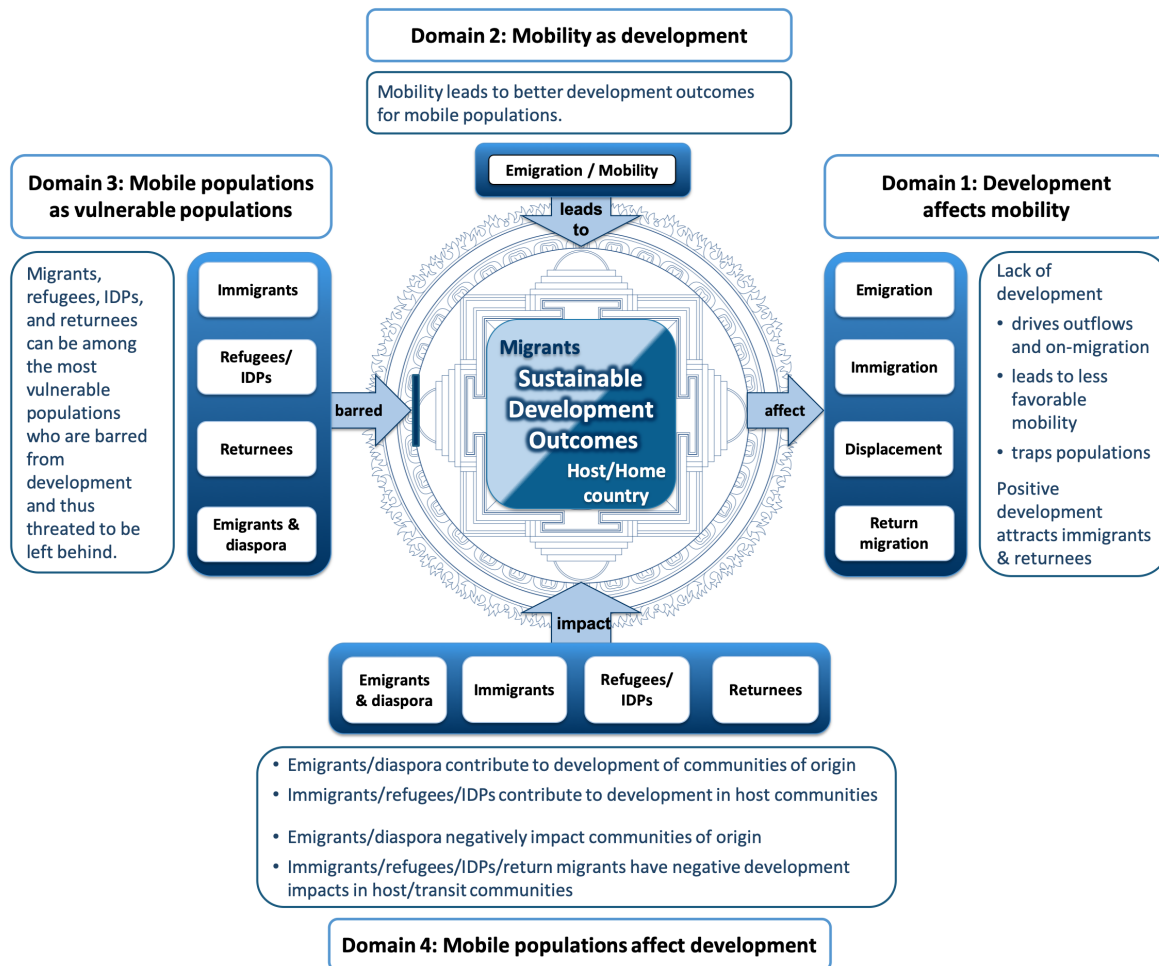
[Add Table 2]

Domain 1: Development affects mobility

The level of development in countries of origin and destination can influence the mobility of people. In the language of econometric models, the first domain treats development as the independent variable, and levels, forms, and directions of human mobility as the dependent variable. The impact of sustainable development on mobility manifests in four scenarios. The lack of development (1) drives outflows and on-migration; (2) leads to less favorable mobility; and (3) traps populations. And (4) positive development attracts immigrants and returnees. I will discuss each in turn and how they relate to the SDGs.

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[21] In this regard, it needs to be recognized that there is a certain trend to securitize migration and refugee issues, and some states show a tendency to expand deterrence policies, establish non-arrival measures that hinder international mobility, and prioritize the "fight" against irregular migration over other aspects of migration policies. Delgado-Wise (2018, 2) points to the tendency to regard irregular migration as "a problem generated outside the migrant-receiving country, ignoring its internal motivations (corporate demand for cheap and flexible labor) and the role of the State in spawning 'illegality' through limiting channels for 'legal' entrance far beyond actual labor and demographic needs."
[22] Also United Nations (2016b) stresses that target 10.7 acknowledges the significance of well-managed migration policies for the *quality* of migration. Similar broad conceptions are advocated in IOM's Migration Governance Framework, the Migration Governance Index (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2016) and the dashboard of indicators for measuring policy coherence for migration and development (OECD and UNDP, forthcoming). For a brief comparison of these frameworks, see Naujoks (2018a, 82-86).

Figure 2: Mobility mandala linking human mobility and sustainable development: domains and key manifestations

Domain 2: Mobility as development

Mobility leads to better development outcomes for mobile populations.

Domain 3: Mobile populations as vulnerable populations

Migrants, refugees, IDPs, and returnees can be among the most vulnerable populations who are barred from development and thus threated to be left behind.

Immigrants

Refugees/ IDPs

Returnees

Emigrants & diaspora

barred

Emigration / Mobility

leads to

Migrants
Sustainable Development Outcomes
Host/Home country

affect

Domain 1: Development affects mobility

Emigration

Immigration

Displacement

Return migration

Lack of development
- drives outflows and on-migration
- leads to less favorable mobility
- traps populations

Positive development attracts immigrants & returnees

impact

Emigrants & diaspora

Immigrants

Refugees/ IDPs

Returnees

- Emigrants/diaspora contribute to development of communities of origin
- Immigrants/refugees/IDPs contribute to development in host communities

- Emigrants/diaspora negatively impact communities of origin
- Immigrants/refugees/IDPs/return migrants have negative development impacts in host/transit communities

Domain 4: Mobile populations affect development

Source: Author; the underlying Kalachakra Mandala by Thoth Adan, as licensed by iStock

Based on the idea that youth unemployment, poverty, low economic development and the lack of quality health services and education induce out-migration and onward migration for those in transit, an increasing level of official development assistance (ODA) is devoted to addressing the root causes of certain forms of human mobility. For this reason, the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration aims to "minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin" by creating "conducive political, economic, social and environmental conditions for people to lead peaceful, productive and sustainable lives in their own country" (para 18). While it is hard to object to "ensure timely and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for

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Sustainable Development" (*ibid.*), simplistic conceptualizations of the development-migration nexus are problematic because they lend themselves to simplistic policy interventions. In spite of decades of work on migration theories and related empirical analyses, our knowledge about what prompts migration decisions and actions is still underdeveloped. So-called push-pull factor frameworks assume that development factors in origin countries, such as high population density, lack of job/livelihood opportunities, political repression, lack of governance, war, crime, violence, environmental degradation and disasters, induce people to leave, while factors in countries of destination act as magnets, including higher income, available jobs, available land, and socio-political freedom. While these frameworks have served as heuristics, they are too deterministic, lack an explanatory framework and do not explain several types of movement (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014, 29). In most cases, a variety of factors at the level of the individual, household, community, and society at large are at work (Crawley and Hagen-Zanker 2019; de Haas *et al.* 2018). Importantly, decisions to migrate are shaped both by the intention to leave and the means to act on it. This is at the heart of the aspiration/ability model that explains migration outcomes by the aspiration to move and the ability to turn one's migration aspirations into actual migration (Carling 2012; Carling and Schewel 2018).[23] In fact, increasing levels of economic production and income generally lead to an increase in emigration, as more people can afford to pay the costs that are associated with international movements (Bakewell 2008; Clemens and Postel 2018; de Haas 2007; Clemens 2014). The same holds true for improved education, health, and other development outcomes. Thus, while sustainable development may act as an incentive to stay at home, it may also increase the desire and capacity of people to migrate, and increase the expected returns from such migration.[24]

Whereas much of the discussion on the link between underdevelopment as a driver of migration focuses on the scale of mobility, it is important to shift the focus on patterns and different populations affected by changing development outcomes. The poorest segments of society are often excluded from migration, especially international migration, as migration can be costly. Carling (2002) stresses the extent of involuntary immobility of those who have aspirations to migrate but lack the ability to

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[23] For a discussion on what drives refugee movements, see FitzGerald and Ara (2018).

[24] Crawley and Hagen-Zanker (2019) find that deterrence policies often do not have their intended or assumed effects and de Haas *et al.* (2018, 2) show the importance of accounting for the "complex and often counterintuitive ways in which structural social, economic, and political factors affect migration in mostly indirect, but powerful ways that largely lie beyond the reach of migration policies." Such attempts may equally re-direct development funds and efforts to populations, countries, and areas for reasons other than development needs. Landau (2019) highlights several strategies by the European Union that, under the portmanteau of development cooperation, attempt to sedentarize the SDGs and use development funds to contain migrants.

overcome the associated barriers and constraints. Or where not excluded from mobility, such populations are forced to migrate irregularly, as they do not have the resources to use regular migration channels. The lack of economic alternatives and other 'push factors' also decrease the bargaining power and induce prospective workers to accept dangerous working conditions and restrictions on their rights and freedoms. Low levels of development can increase the likelihood of mobile populations getting stranded in places that they find undesirable and that provide them with fewer opportunities and protections. Thus, better development opportunities for certain populations may reduce precarious and exploitative outcomes of migratory decisions.

In the worst cases, the lack of development can trap people in their locales – that is, immobilize them by exacerbating their vulnerabilities – as has been observed for disadvantaged communities affected by climate change (UK Government Office for Science 2011). In these and similar cases, "leaving no one behind" literally[25] means not leaving them where they are, but facilitating their movements and supporting planned relocation to safe places where they can enjoy development opportunities.[26] Policy options in this regard are to activate Domain 2 of mobility as development for those who are unable to do so on their own.

However, this domain is not only characterized by the lack of development but also by high sustainable development outcomes that affect (read, attract) mobility. Higher levels of development can make countries attractive for immigration, be it for high-skilled immigration in the global competition for talent (Cerna 2016; Czaika 2018; Kolbe and Kayran 2019), or for lower-skilled labor migration that is needed to fill labor shortages, or to address the countries' demographic deficit. In the same line, significant levels of return migration are often contingent on countries of origin attaining a higher level of development (Wahba 2014).[27]

Domain 2: Mobility as development

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[25] As discussed in Domain 3 below, in the context of the SDGs, leaving no one behind is generally meant figuratively, as an "endeavour to reach the furthest behind first" (United Nations 2015, para 4). Galdorisi and Phillips (2009) provide an overview of the military concept of 'leave no man behind' since the beginning of warfare, including its Latin version *nemo resideo*.

[26] UNHCR, Brookings Institution, and Georgetown University (2015, 3) warn that the relocation of at-risk populations often "carries serious risks for those it is intended to benefit, including the disruption of livelihoods and loss of cultural practices."

[27] Naujoks (2013, 340) concludes that it is unlikely that any significant return migration to India would have taken place without India's economic growth, the establishment of a sector in which returnees can use their know-how, and the improvements in housing and standard of living until it was comparable to the standards in the US.

Mobility often leads to immediate and substantial development gains for the people who move. Thus, migration per se can constitute a development strategy. It is a critical omission of many conceptualizations of the migration-development nexus that the principal actor—the migrant—is only considered as the independent variable that has an impact on communities of origin or destination. This is rooted in the sedentary bias of mainstream conceptualizations of development that focus on people as long as they remain within geopolitical units.

Given the vast differences in wages and working conditions, international labor mobility can reduce household poverty significantly more than any known socio-economic intervention in migrants' communities of origin. For example, studies show that moderately skilled workers from a developing country could increase their income substantially if they were to move to high-wage economies, such as the US or Europe (Clemens, Montenegro and Pritchett 2019). This suggests that easing cross-border labor mobility policies could potentially double the per capita income in the developing world. Internal and international migration is often used by households to increase or diversify their possibilities to improve livelihood strategies. The potential benefits of migration are not limited to the economic sector. Generally, migrants choose destination countries that provide them with better access to quality healthcare, education, social protection, personal, and climate safety. Notwithstanding, migrants, refugees, and displaced persons are often not able to maximize their potential since they are not provided with the possibility of migrating to countries of destination through regular channels, and many of them are excluded from the formal economy (Piper 2008; Bloch, Sigona, and Zetter 2014, Ch.5). It bears mention that certain types of distress migration and forced displacements may not necessarily lead to an improvement in development outcomes for the involved individuals, as will be discussed in Domain 3 below. In addition, in spite of better economic earning opportunities, human mobility can also be associated with personal development losses, e.g., due to discrimination and xenophobia, social isolation, unsafe working conditions, and violence, including gender-based violence. However, being a quintessential adaptation strategy, human mobility has the potential to produce better outcomes and from a normative angle. It is important to stress that migration itself generally leads to better development outcomes for the movers. The next domain includes scenarios where this is not the case.

Recognizing that most forms of immigration and emigration can lead to significant development outcomes for migrants, efforts to promote the SDGs can aim at facilitating international mobility by opening legal migration channels and pathways, empowering individuals so that they can reap the advantages of human mobility without suffering the often-significant risks, reducing the cost

associated with migration and easing international or internal mobility for those who are unable to benefit from access to it.[28]

In addition to target 10.7 on well-managed migration policies and the importance of decent labor conditions for migrant workers (target 8.8), target 4.b aims to expand the number of scholarships available to students in developing countries, in particular in least developed countries, small islands, developing states, and African countries, for enrolment in higher education in developed countries and other developing countries. Nearly five million university students are enrolled outside their country of origin, which has important implications for these individuals and for host and home countries in how they benefit from the knowledge gains of these mobile populations (Piguet and Riaño 2016).

While human mobility is generally associated with clear development gains, some forms have negative impacts and public policies need to address them. As such, targets 5.2, 8.7, and 16.2 promote measures against human trafficking and forced labor in order to prevent the disastrous consequences for those involved, especially for women and children. However, even beyond these extreme forms of vulnerabilities and abuses, mobility can lead to exploitation or to endangering migrants' health and wellbeing.

Apart from targets that include a direct reference to migration, a wide range of targets is relevant for a comprehensive governance of human mobility. For example, a legal identity, including birth registration, as foreseen by target 16.9, is often the first condition for subsequently obtaining a passport and enjoying international mobility rights. As migration can increase the income level and access to services, countries of origin can also facilitate emigration to lower poverty and increase social protection (targets 1.1-1.3),[29] contribute to income growth of the bottom 40% (target 10.1), and provide migrants with access to healthcare options (target 3.8). However, the measurements of these targets do not sufficiently consider the potential role of human mobility. A sedentary bias only accounts for changes in the resident population. Thus, while offering labor emigration opportunities to poorer segments of the population may effectively increase their earnings, such income increase would not be counted for targets 1.1-1.3 or 10.1 unless they return or transfer resources to their households back

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[28] With regard to refugees, safe mobility includes the provision of safe, legal, and complementary pathways for refugees as alternatives to irregular movements with all the associated risks. UNHCR (2016) identified eight such pathways including: resettlement, family unity, humanitarian admission, private sponsorship, labor mobility schemes, medical or emergency evacuation, and academic scholarships.
[29] For the link between mobility, social protection, and the SDGs, see Hagen-Zanker and Mosler Vidal (2018).

home. Taking the development potential of migration seriously requires including those who emigrate into the count of national income – despite the methodological challenges.[30]

The abilities of countries of origin to unilaterally increase pathways to migration are generally limited, as countries of destination need to agree to the increased inflows. Because of the conceptualization of mobility as development, countries of destination can contribute to income growth of the bottom 40% and poverty eradication in home countries by admitting more migrants and thus complying with their obligations of international solidarity.

Migrants benefit generally more from international mobility if they have recognized and relevant skills (Clemens 2015), making SDG 4 on education relevant for good migration governance. The promotion of quality migration can thus be connected to devising technical, vocational, and tertiary education programs (target 4.3) that are recognized in destination countries. Maximizing the sustainable development outcomes of their citizens and of immigrants alike, concerned governments can design health policies and insurances that consider transnational livelihood strategies (target 3.8 on universal health coverage)[31] and they can promote access to banking and financial services (target 8.10). In the immigration context, it is important to provide equal opportunity and end discriminatory laws (target 10.3). Needless to say, this is not a comprehensive list of SDG targets that are, or can in certain contexts, be relevant for facilitating migration as a development strategy. The key objective of this brief discussion is to illustrate that migration is in fact a transversal element that cuts through a large number of SDGs and their targets.

Domain 3: Mobile populations as vulnerable populations

Whereas Domain 2 stresses the positive development potential of human mobility, Domain 3 recognizes that mobility can be associated with increased vulnerabilities. For a sub-set of those who leave their regions of origin, socio-economic and legal barriers turn migrants, refugees, IDPs, and returnees into particularly vulnerable groups. Thus, this domain corresponds with the Agenda 2030's declared goal to leave no one behind and to focus on the most vulnerable groups (Piper 2017; Fukuda-Parr and Smaavik Hegstad 2018). The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants reiterates the particular relevance that "no one will be left behind" and reaffirms all countries' commitments to the

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[30]Clemens and Pritchett (2008) suggest estimating income per natural – the mean annual income of all people born in a given country, regardless of where those people now reside in an attempt to measure development for people rather than places.

[31] For a discussion on health, migration, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, see Tulloch *et al.* (2016).

specific needs of migrants, refugees, and IDPs (para 1.16). "Migrants and displaced persons often lack shelter and access to other essentials, legal identity, the protection of the law and the ability to participate fully in the economy and society of host countries. They may also face discrimination and marginalization due to language, religion, culture or ethnicity, leaving them among the world's most vulnerable and furthest behind" (UNDP 2018, 17).[32]

Vulnerabilities are not limited to situations of large-scale forcible displacement, but also can extend to economic migrant women and men. Also, undocumented and other vulnerable migrants may work and live in exploitative and poor conditions. Some migrants transit through 'spaces of vulnerability,' in which they may suffer negative health and other development outcomes (Williams *et al.* 2002; Wickramage *et al.* 2018). In this regard, it is important to differentiate between accidental vulnerabilities and those that follow from systematic flaws in the design of migration regimes. For example, in some instances, kafala sponsorship systems that are used throughout the Gulf countries and elsewhere can create populations of vulnerable migrants who are at the whims of their *kafeels* (sponsors), brokers, or employers and who – unless effective remedies are implemented – may be prone to severe exploitation, with limits set on their rights and development opportunities (Ruhs2010; Thiollet2016).

Interventions on vulnerable mobile populations address their poverty and social protection needs (targets 1.1-1.3),[33] and create and facilitate decent employment opportunities (target 8.5-8.6). In fact, some states made the commitment to increase access for refugees to labor markets and social services, strengthening coping capacity and self-reliance. Sustainable development programming goes beyond the scope of humanitarian aid and addresses mobile populations' long-term needs and enhances the capabilities and productive potential of refugees, migrants, and IDPs (UNDP 2015).[34]

Addressing the needs of vulnerable mobile populations equally requires promoting their inclusion into universal health coverage (target 3.8) and primary, secondary, technical, vocational, and tertiary education (target 4.1-4.3), as well as addressing health and education challenges for all who are affected by displacement, including vulnerable non-migrants. These commitments are echoed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that emphasizes the need to deliver quality education to migrant and

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[32] This is also emphasized in UNDP's (2017, iii) 2016 Human Development Report that focuses on 'Leaving No One Behind'.

[33] Levitt *et al.* (2017) outline a comprehensive agenda on transnational social protection for migrants.

[34] Also Sørensen, van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen (2002) point to the limitations of humanitarian aid and favor development solutions. This is equally incorporated into the UN Global Compact on Refugees.

refugee children[35] and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, during which stakeholders highlighted the urgent need for access to quality education, particularly in displacement settings. Targeting these populations is also relevant to increasing social, economic, and political inclusion (target 10.2), and to ensure equal opportunity as well as end discriminatory laws (target 10.3). This is also connected to the focus on fighting xenophobia by underlining the benefits that migrants bring to their destination, as highlighted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (para 111). As human traffickers often target vulnerable people, endeavors on combating human trafficking (targets 5.2, 8.7, 16.2) are of particular relevance for displaced populations and vulnerable economic migrants (OHCHR 2016). At times, vulnerable migrants and refugees do not have access to a legal identity and birth registration (target 16.9), which renders them *de facto* or *de iure* stateless. Lastly, strategies to improve the rule of law and equal access to justice (target 16.3) can pay particular attention to barriers for mobile populations. This includes access to housing land and property, policing, and accessible transitional justice.

Often there are specific legal, procedural, or social challenges for migrants, refugees, returnees, and IDPs to access certain services and enjoy freedoms that are critical for human development. Thus, for Domain 3, it is paramount to ask how migration experiences and legal status intersect with sex, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, class, and socio-economic status.

Activities connected to Domain 3 generally take the fact that vulnerable mobile populations are present in a country as a starting point. They are generally less forward looking than the ones falling under Domain 2 on *mobility as development,* which recognize that migration is, or can be, a tool for development of the person migrating and aim at increasing pathways to migration and ensure that migration is safe and beneficial. Domain 3 has a stronger focus on the reception context, though countries of origin and actors in migrants' communities of origin can also influence these outcomes.

Domain 4: Mobile populations affect development

Immigrants, emigrants, refugees, and return migrants affect development outcomes in their host, transit, and home communities. On the one hand, they are agents of development who can actively contribute to development in their countries of origin and destination. On the other, their inflows and activities can also pose development challenges. As such, migration or migrants' activities are the independent variable, while development in the communities of origin, transit, and destination is taken as the dependent variable. Geigerand Pécoud (2013, 370) remind us that "[m]igration alone hardly

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[35] Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 2015, para 78.

removes structural development constraints, … it can therefore neither be blamed for underdevelopment nor be expected to substantially foster development in otherwise unattractive investment environments." While mobility cannot be viewed as a cure-all for achieving greater sustainable development, migrants, diaspora actors, and displaced persons can have important impacts on host and home communities. In this brief overview, I will provide select examples on the impact of emigration on source countries, diaspora effects on home countries, and lastly the impact of immigrants, refugees, and returnees in receiving countries.

Kapur and McHale (2005) frame the effects of migration for countries of origin in terms of four channels associated with migration: prospect, absence, diaspora, and return. The possibility of working at higher wages after migration can lead to investment in skills and education that would be useful for working abroad. But not all those investing in additional skills may later opt to migrate (or have the chance to do so), leading to a skill surplus (Mountford1997; Kapur and McHale 2005; Clemens 2015). Emigration per se can have impacts on the source economies. It can lead to less competition on tight labor markets and hence increase wages for those staying back (Straubhaar 1988; Grubel 1994). On the other hand, large-scale emigration of highly qualified workers has been linked to development losses that are not offset by remittances and other positive contributions (Docquier and Rapoport 2012). In addition to so-called brain drain scenarios, which are rare and generally limited to a few small countries (Johnson and Regets 1998; Docquier and Rapoport 2012), an exodus of working-age populations of any skill level can lead to development challenges where it constitutes depopulation in rural areas.

Emigrant and diaspora populations – be they generated by conflict or economic migration – can have direct, intermediary or indirect effects on sustainable development outcomes of their home countries (Naujoks2013, 82-83). Diaspora actors can directly affect their home country's development by remitting money, by investing, by getting involved in trade or philanthropic projects, by transferring knowledge, by raising the country's tax income, by spending as tourists, or by bringing social change to the country or its bureaucracy. Refugees can also promote peace-building and reconciliation, restoration of security, development of democratic institutions, and creation of conditions allowing for voluntary and sustainable return and reintegration in their countries of origin.[36] In addition, emigrants have intermediary effects when they act as agents for cooperation between third parties and actors in

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[36] Betts *et al.* (2017) highlight the role of refugees for development. See Koinova (2016) for an in-depth discussion of how different conflict-generated diasporas mobilize about issues in their host and home countries.

their home country, for example when they facilitate investments by companies they work for. Lastly, the collective representation of migrants can impact how actors in the country of residence perceive migrants' country of origin. In certain scenarios, this can improve the source country's appreciation with positive effects for economic cooperation and investment. While the positive contributions of diaspora actors have received widespread attention, in a few cases, such actors have contributed to civil wars and political turmoil and engaged in harming long-distance nationalism, which Kapur (2007) described as the 'Janus face of diasporas.'[37]

To increase migrants' contribution capabilities and to partner with them, facilitating migration – including through well-managed migration policies (target 10.7) – and upholding migrants' labor rights (target 8.8) are as important as making sure that their hard-earned money does not end up in the hands of banks and remittance-service providers (target 10.c). Conceptualizing emigrant populations as contributors to development, governments can seek to link diaspora contributions to poverty eradication and social protection (targets 1.1-1.3); food security (targets 2.1 – 2.3); health coverage (target 3.8); primary and secondary education (target 4.1); access to energy (target 7.1); economic growth and productivity (target 8.1-8.2); and employment and decent work (target 8.5). Diaspora foreign direct investment (FDI) can also be an important financial inflow (target 10.b) that provides additional financial resources (target 17.3).[38] Public policies in this domain include a plethora of initiatives to engage diaspora populations[39] and enable migrants to contribute fully to the economic and social spheres in their host communities.[40]

Immigrants and refugees affect their host countries' economies and societies, as do return migrants who come back to their countries of origin. Their labor force and productivity, their skills, and their social and financial capital can be critical for economic and social development in many countries of destination. This includes immigration to counter population aging with its social and economic consequences. While earlier research suggested that immigration can lower wages and increase

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[37] The Sri Lankan diaspora is often cited as an example of a conflict-prolonging role, but there are other examples too (Smith and Stares 2007; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006).

[38] However, most importantly, such flows can create employment and increase productivity, as highlighted for diaspora contributions more generally (Riddle, Hrivnak, and Nielsen 2010; Riddle and Nielsen 2011; Naujoks 2018b; Graham 2019).

[39] For Egypt's diaspora and emigrant policies, see Tsourapas (2015) and for India, see Naujoks (2013). Delano and Gamlen (2014) provide an overview of how to compare and theorize state diaspora relations.

[40] For the extensive literature on immigrant and refugee integration, see Strang and Ager (2010); Alba and Foner (2014); and Goodman (2014).

unemployment among natives (Borjas 1995), an overwhelming body of scholarship shows that moderate inflows of migrants and refugees have positive economic impacts in the short, medium, and long-term (Clemens 2013; Clemens and Hunt 2019; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016). However, large-scale inflows, especially in labor-rich and capital-scarce countries, where production may not easily adjust to a significant inflow of manual labor, such inflows can pose challenges to preserve development gains.[41] In addition to general economic aspects, Betts *et al.* (2016, Ch.3) posit that *refugee economies* are particularly characterized by the intersections of (1) state and international regulation, (2) formal and informal economies, and (3) national and transnational economies that affect their impacts and the opportunities of refugees in such economies. Thus, immigration and inflows can increase productivity and create employment. Programming activities under targets related to education, health, and others can empower immigrants and refugees so that they can fulfill their potential as contributors.

Policies and interventions that strengthen migrants' rights and wellbeing and that would fall under Domains 2 or 3, are equally important for interventions in Domain 3. However, in one case, the improved human development outcomes for migrants are an end in themselves (Domain 2 and 3), whereas they are conceptualized as being instrumental in empowering immigrants, refugees, or returnees to contribute to development in their host or home communities (Domain 4). While the commodification of migrant labor and the emphasis on migrants in the economic production process may sometimes be problematic (Delgado-Wise 2014; Suliman 2017), it is not objectionable per se to consider migrant labor as an element for strengthening the economy at large, as long as this approach upholds their rights and capabilities.[42]

In some scenarios, the inflow or outflow of people can have negative consequences. This is especially the case where the inflows are large compared to the host population, and where economic and development conditions cannot easily adjust. In an effort to safeguard local development gains, policies often limit the rights and opportunities for incoming populations. These situations tend to become

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[41] For an assessment of the impact of refugees on host communities, see IRC (n.d.); Verme *et al.* (2016); Betts *et al.* (2017).

[42] This is true for normative and practical reasons. Core human rights norms and the SDGs' rights-based approach demand that the rights of migrant workers, as of any workers and human beings, are upheld (Piper 2008). In addition, enabling migrants increases their possibilities to contribute to development. For this reason, protecting migrants' labor and social rights as envisioned in target 8.8 is not only paramount to make help migrants to reap the benefits of migration. Decent working conditions empower them to contribute to development. Furthermore, making sure that migrants and refugees are not economically exploited is an important strategy to avoid negative impacts on the labor market, such as incentives for unscrupulous employers to lower wages and working conditions.

protracted, which often leads to displaced persons being permanently excluded from economic and social development opportunities (Milner 2014). While stabilizing lives in the wake of mass displacement is often the first priority, policy options need to address the needs of displacement-affected communities holistically. This includes involving newcomers and resident populations. With additional support from the international community that bears responsibility for these scenarios (Carens 2013, Ch. 10), SDG-based interventions work on the ground to provide services to all, enable displaced persons to contribute to sustainable development, including through livelihoods,[43] and also address social cohesion and governance issues to avoid fueling resentments and xenophobia.

Conclusions

This essay presented the *mobility mandala* as an attempt to systematize the various links between human mobility and sustainable development. Leaning on the symbolic meaning of mandalas as representations of the universe, the mobility mandala aims at providing an all-encompassing framework to structure the language, research, and policy interventions on human mobility and the SDGs. The most significant value of this framework lies in its epistemological contribution, as well as in the practical implications. Epistemologically, the mobility mandala contributes to the political economy of knowledge, bringing together scholarship and concepts that have generated partial knowledge in a holistic framework. The partial views of the various links between human mobility and sustainable development have led to partial policy responses and to conceptualizations that disregard important aspects, which the mobility mandala aims to overcome. It aims to close existing gaps in the common conceptualization of the migration and development realms. The mobility mandala (1) incorporates all forms of mobility, including forced and voluntary movements; (2) provides a unified analytical lens for immigration, emigration, transit, and return migration contexts; (3) distinguishes between different groups of people that are or can be affected by migrants' impact on development and the policy interventions that address this link; and (4) categorizes public policy interventions and SDG interventions with regard to the above points and supports a more varied, as well as a more specific understanding of migration governance.

I have started outlining the interlinkages between the four framework domains, but more attention should be devoted to synergies and trade-offs. Whereas so-called multiple win scenarios (in which

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[43] See Jacobsen and Fratzke (2016) for discussion on livelihood strategies for refugees and displaced persons.

migrants and communities of origin and destination win) have been highlighted as the 'golden grail' (Angenendt 2014), it is important to recognize that in some cases trade-offs will be necessary.

Figure 3: The mobility mandala and SDG targets directly and indirectly relevant for human mobility
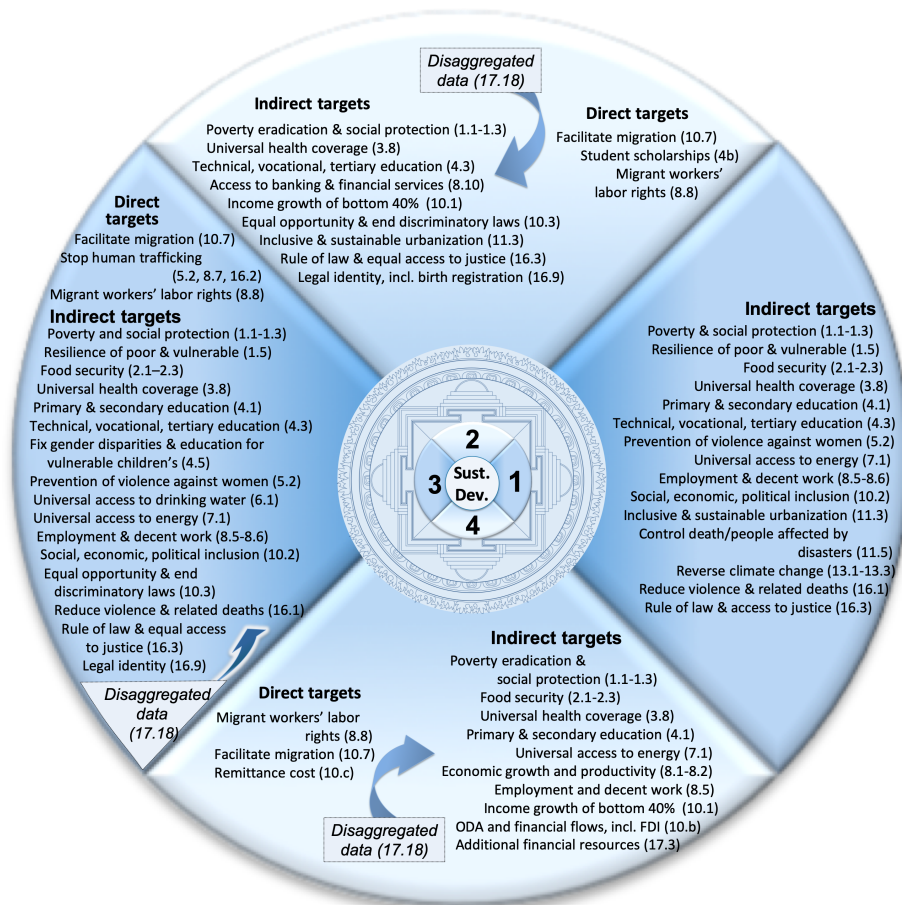
Source: Author.
Note: "Sust. Dev." denotes sustainable development. The domain numbers in the center represent 1: development affecting mobility; 2: mobility as development; 3: mobile populations as vulnerable populations; and 4: migration and mobile populations impact development. For details on the four domains of the mobility mandala, see Figure 2 above and the discussion in the text. The graph illustrates examples for SDG targets that are relevant for the four domains of the mobility mandala framework. Direct targets mention migration specifically in the text. Indirect targets do not explicitly focus on migrants or refugees but can, under specific conditions, be relevant for comprehensive migration governance under the SDGs.

The mobility mandala serves as both an analytical and interventionist framework. Analytically, it offers concepts and a language to differentiate between several linkages between human mobility and development. By design, the SDGs are an action-oriented agenda that not only aim at understanding, defining, and measuring sustainable development but also at structuring policy interventions to promote positive outcomes. Thus, Foresti and Hagen-Zanker (2017) highlight that SDG's multi-

disciplinary and cross-sectoral nature provides a useful platform to assess the impact of migration and human mobility on a range of development areas. Correspondingly, the mobility mandala focuses on possibilities and fallacies of public policies to intervene in the sphere of human mobility. Though state policies are by no means the only way to advance sustainable development, the essay discussed how good governance can make a difference. I argue that a broad understanding of migration governance encompasses a wide spectrum of interventions at the local, national, regional, and global level that go far beyond policies aimed at controlling, policing, and limiting international mobility. Considering the links between the SDGs and human mobility helps to address migration issues in a broad range of development and policy areas, such as healthcare, education, climate change, conflict, social welfare, economic growth and entrepreneurship, and agriculture. Such a mainstreaming approach is necessary to develop policies that adequately reflect the needs and potentials of mobile populations.

Figure 3 illustrates SDG targets that explicitly refer to migration, as well as a selection of SDG targets that do not mention migration but that are, or can be, relevant to human mobility. It shows that human mobility is related to all 17 global goals and nearly all their 169 targets – and often in multiple ways. The SDGs are a globally applicable and agreed-upon framework. They are based in human rights and include measurable indicators and institutional structures to follow-up, monitor, and review their progress the world over. As such, they are an important tool to foster human mobility's positive potential and to address its risks. In the end, human mobility will be key to achieving the SDGs.

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