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## **GLOBAL MIGRATION PERSPECTIVES**

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**Governing international migration in the city of the south**

**Marcello Balbo and Giovanna Marconi**

Planning Department  
Università Iuav di Venezia,  
Santa Croce 1935  
Italy

[marcello.balbo@iuav.it](mailto:marcello.balbo@iuav.it)

[marconi@iuav.it](mailto:marconi@iuav.it)

Global Commission on International Migration  
1, Rue Richard Wagner  
CH:1202 Geneva  
Switzerland

Phone: +41:22:748:48:50  
E:mail: [info@gcim.org](mailto:info@gcim.org)  
Web: <http://www.gcim.org>

## **Global Commission on International Migration**

In his report on the 'Strengthening of the United Nations - an agenda for further change', UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan identified migration as a priority issue for the international community.

Wishing to provide the framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to migration issues, and acting on the encouragement of the UN Secretary-General, Sweden and Switzerland, together with the governments of Brazil, Morocco, and the Philippines, decided to establish a Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Many additional countries subsequently supported this initiative and an open-ended Core Group of Governments established itself to support and follow the work of the Commission.

The Global Commission on International Migration was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General and a number of governments on December 9, 2003 in Geneva. It is comprised of 19 Commissioners.

The mandate of the Commission is to place the issue of international migration on the global policy agenda, to analyze gaps in current approaches to migration, to examine the inter-linkages between migration and other global issues, and to present appropriate recommendations to the Secretary-General and other stakeholders.

The research paper series 'Global Migration Perspectives' is published by the GCIM Secretariat, and is intended to contribute to the current discourse on issues related to international migration. The opinions expressed in these papers are strictly those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Commission or its Secretariat. The series is edited by Dr Jeff Crisp and Dr Khalid Koser and managed by Nina Allen.

Potential contributors to this series of research papers are invited to contact the GCIM Secretariat. Guidelines for authors can be found on the GCIM website.

## Introduction

That globalisation has made migration increasingly possible and necessary at the same time is well known.<sup>1</sup> Much less acknowledged is that cross-border migration is also rapidly on the rise in the developing world. Yet, of the approximately 158 million<sup>2</sup> officially estimated legal international migrants (United Nations, 2002), plus the 15 to 30 million undocumented ones, nearly 40 per cent are in developing countries (World Commission, 2004). These probably underestimated figures not only question the common belief that international migration has an almost exclusively South-North direction, they also highlight the growing complexity of migration patterns as well as the deepening disparities within the so-called developing world itself.

People also move towards developing countries because the movement of capital, goods and skilled professionals is an integral part of present-day open economies, including the middle and low-income ones. Moreover, as a result of increasing economic and social inequalities, migrating is becoming an integral component of family and community strategies to improve the living conditions of those who migrate as well as of those who remain.

International migration is also necessary. With globalisation, cities that are or want to become part of the financial and technological flows need to rely on international migrants and their contribution to urban productivity. Migrants, in fact, are becoming important actors in maintaining or creating the economic dynamism of cities both by filling sectors of the labour market eschewed by the local population and bringing innovation with them. Moreover, the presence of transnational migrants also makes cities cosmopolitan, hence more attractive to the forces of globalisation (Duany, 2002).

Cross-border movements of people are occurring and growing despite a widespread strengthening of control measures, in contrast with the worldwide liberalization of the movement of goods, services and capital. Notwithstanding the introduction of restrictive admission policies in nearly all countries (World Commission, 2004), international migration is a self-sustaining process destined to grow in the future, unless major changes in the distribution of wealth between rich and poor countries are implemented (so far a highly unlikely perspective). Thus, the question is no longer whether international migration should exist, but rather how to manage it effectively to enhance its positive effects and reduce the negative ones.

Based on a comparative analysis of case studies, this paper discusses the complexity of international migration in a selected range of cities in developing countries,

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the results of the research project carried out by UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, and Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy, on “Urban policies and practices addressing international migration”. The seven case studies undertaken within the framework of this research project include: Bangkok (Thailand), Dakar (Senegal), Johannesburg (South Africa), Karachi (Pakistan), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Tijuana (Mexico), Vladivostok (Russia). From here forward, any reference to these cities and the related data has to be considered as supported by the research’s results.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding refugees, who are estimated to be almost 17 million. Although both voluntary (e.g. migrant workers) and involuntary (e.g. refugees) movements of people are generally included under the heading of “international migration”, this paper focuses exclusively on the former.

presenting the emerging issues it raises in different urban contexts, and exploring how the phenomenon is perceived and managed at the urban level. Understanding the mobility of population and the social and cultural changes that accompany it is essential for designing effective strategies to deal with the problems and opportunities offered by current and future international migration flows.

### **An increasingly urban issue**

As in the advanced economies, in developing countries the increase of international migration is primarily linked to income opportunities. The reduction of public expenditure and the drive towards services full cost recovery entailed by structural adjustment programmes have contributed significantly to the expansion of the informal sector that, in turn, has fostered irregular migration from poorer, sometimes distant, countries.

Since economic activities are increasingly concentrated in urban areas, legal as well as illegal international migration is moving towards the cities, especially the larger ones where migrants can not only access the already considerable and expanding informal sector, but also the many low-paid jobs created by the enhanced role many cities have acquired in the context of globalisation. Moreover, it is the cities which contain the social and community networks as well as ethnic enclaves that represent the principal support for the newcomers when looking for an house or a job and initiating their process of integration.

As a consequence, even in those cities where the number of migrants may still appear to be modest as against the total population, it is rapidly growing. With the end of the apartheid regime, the number of foreign workers arriving in Johannesburg, South Africa, has increased rapidly, to the point that international migrants represent 6.2 per cent of the total population. As the fastest growing and most dynamic city in Southeast Asia, Bangkok is attracting a large migration inflow from neighbouring countries and other regions, swelling the numerous international communities already living in the city. In São Paulo, the total number of foreigners living within the city is estimated to be in the realm of 400,000 persons, most of them unskilled workers from countries like Bolivia, Peru and Korea.

As the main pole of economic activity in the region as well as a transit point to the European countries and other overseas destinations, Dakar attracts migrants from all neighbouring countries, foreign residents now making up 4.3 per cent of the city's population. Similarly, thousands of migrants every year head to Karachi, Pakistan, from India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Myanmar, adding to the several hundred thousands who have moved since it became the main industrial and commercial centre of the country following the partition of India in 1947.

Since the fall of Soviet Union, Vladivostok, the capital of the Russian Far East, is increasingly attracting foreign workers, arriving principally from the neighbouring provinces of China, due to the shortage of Russian labour. Finally, Tijuana has always been a bridge to the US, turning out to be a melting pot where internal and

international migrants, initially arrived to the city with the intention of crossing the US border, continue to settle permanently.

While there is no doubt that cultural diversity enriches cities and societies with social, human and economic capital (Hamburger, 2003), current understanding and analysis of this phenomenon at the urban level is generally insufficient, especially in developing countries. Official surveys, censuses and registration instruments largely underestimate the dimension of international migration, and local governments often find it difficult to cope with the ad hoc policies needed to integrate people with different cultural, social and religious traditions into the urban society.

As mentioned, even though international migration is on the rise, in most of the cities examined it does not yet represent a major issue. International migrants add to the often significant current demographic growth, and the well-known and related urban issues it raises: the expansion of informal settlements, insecurity of tenure, limited or no access to basic services, environmental deterioration and high levels of crime and violence. Adding to such spatial exclusionary patterns is the growing economic and social marginalisation of the urban poor, the lack of citizenship rights recognition and insufficient representation in the decision making process.

Inadequate economic, financial and institutional, as well as human, resources, make it quite difficult for local governments to face the challenges imposed by such unequal and complex urban environments. Therefore, although international migrants may bring social and economic benefits both to migrants and the receiving city, they are seldom, if at all, given consideration within the political agenda.

### **International and transnational migration**

International migration has essentially been looked at as a one-way, individual and definitive move translating into permanent settlement, temporary settlement being envisaged as a possible but unlikely alternative. As a result, most governments have adopted policies geared towards hampering the possibility of individual migrants becoming permanent residents, with severe effects on those who had a long term migration strategy.

The Thai government believed that unskilled immigrants would remain only temporarily and return home when employment was terminated. Instead, a large share of migrants have been there for long periods of time, as shown by the estimated 40,000 babies born in Thailand to illegal immigrants, mainly from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. However, since their parents entered the country illegally, according to the Nationality Act, children born in Thailand do not qualify for Thai nationality, and are stateless.

Increasingly though, the assumption that people move on the basis of little or no information and will live their lives in one place, according to one set of national and cultural norms, in countries with impermeable national borders, no longer holds. When settling in a new city, migrants largely rely on mutual aid links and sustain

strong ethnic networks across borders, while establishing social and economic ties with the local community. Many, if not most, migrants end up belonging simultaneously to two societies and actually being “transnational migrants”. In fact, ethnic and community networks represent one of the most innovative and interesting features of present-day international migration patterns. Understanding this reality requires new methodological and conceptual tools. It also requires new policy responses (Levitt, 2004). Transnational problems demand transnational solutions, but traditional institutions and policymaking tools are not up to the task.

Most Latin American migrants make it to São Paulo through relatives or acquaintances working in the textile-apparel sector. In Bolivia, newspapers even publish advertisements calling for workers, with promises including high monthly wages, free housing and food, and good working conditions – a very attractive proposition for unemployed Bolivians, as well as Peruvians or Paraguayans.

Notwithstanding, the idea that international migrants come with the intention to stay remains most governments’ perceptions, leading to highly restrictive migration laws or, in the best case scenario, to inappropriate approaches when addressing migrants’ needs. In the case of Johannesburg, rigid migration policies adopted by the South African government clash with the short-term movements of the many informal traders crossing South Africa’s borders to trade, shop and buy-and-sell on a short-term basis.

In Dakar, the circular migration of West Africans dates back to the pre-colonial period, but the increasing liberalization of the Senegalese economy is rapidly consolidating migration networks that maintain and expand social links among a wide linguistic community, unifying populations physically divided by the colonial artificial borders. New communication technologies help to maintain these parental and ethnic networks, and enable unprecedented levels of trans-local flows of information, ideas, people, goods and money.

A large proportion of Chinese migrants, who represent by far the majority of foreign migrants to Primorye, the Russian Far East region, are thought to be using its capital, Vladivostok as a mere port of call before a bid to cross the Pacific to the USA or Canada. On the other hand, most of those who come to work in Vladivostok do so through a well-established trading organization and have little or no interest in settling permanently in the city.

Tijuana adds a yet different perspective. Like Vladivostok, the Mexican border city has always acted as a bridgehead to the USA for Mexican as well as many Latin American migrants. However, those who decide to stay or return there have added to the city’s population and economic growth, turning migrants into a common feature of city life.

There is much research to be done on the complex reasons driving the decision to remain in the host city, for how long, whether to move to more attractive destinations or to return to the country of origin, and after how long. Each migration flow and network exists for different reasons, has different needs and requires different

responses. For this reason there can be no single policy that can be tailored to suit all, making the role of institutions more complex.

### **National and local policies**

International migration affects and is affected differently by the political, social and institutional context of the host country, and represents an increasingly central element of the interactions between national policies and the socio-economic conditions at the urban level. However, since migration policies are generally set nationally - given that migration is looked at principally as a security issue - national and local priorities often differ, leading to contradictory policies, with local governments having very little capacity to control migration flows into their cities. Notwithstanding, they have to cope with the tangible consequences of migration and are entrusted with the responsibility of complying with the diversified demands arising from an increasingly multifaceted and dynamic urban society.

In most of the cities analysed, international migration takes place in the absence of explicit policies. In Senegal, although the central government has recently created a department to deal with Senegalese migrants abroad, immigration remains the responsibility of the Interior Ministry. It is all but evident that on one hand the economic gains accruing to the country from the Senegalese living abroad have been fully recognized together with the importance of directing remittances towards national economic objectives. On the other hand, however, the potential benefits that international migrants in Senegal represent for the local and national economies are still not fully understood nor recognized.

As mentioned, in South Africa the post-apartheid government has set itself an explicit objective of reducing the flow of international migrants. In Pakistan, the government's policy of regularisation provides for the eventual granting of full citizenship rights to migrants, particularly those who entered the country as refugees, for economic reasons; however, many Bengali and Burmese migrants see this as an implicit way to erode their claims to full citizenship rights.

In Brazil, immigration policy is still based upon a legal framework inherited from the military dictatorship that governed the country until the 1980s. In Mexico, anyone entering the country illegally is liable to up to two years' imprisonment. In Russia, the federal government is still unclear over which stance to take, since on the one hand, illegal migration is perceived as having reached "threatening proportions", while on the other, the country as a whole, and the Vladivostok region in particular, are confronted with a significant population decline and probably serious labour shortages in the years ahead.

However, inadequate resources make the implementation of controls and restricting measures extremely difficult. In most cases, the end result is twofold: increased illegal immigration and corruption. For instance, in Brazil, the sanitary controls on foreign migrants required by the recently adopted "Statute on Foreigners" have only managed to encourage illegal migration. As for corruption, its development can also

coincide with the rapid expansion of criminal migration-based organizations. The Russian Far East is a case in point, where large numbers of Chinese migrants bribe government officials for entry without visas, just as they pay the criminal organisations that control the labour market for undocumented migrants.

Even where controls are more effective, policies restricting the entry of foreign migrants rarely achieve their objective. Thailand operates an explicit two-tier policy promoting the migration of skilled workers and wealthy retirees, while curbing the entry of unskilled migrants from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Nonetheless, the government had to declare amnesties in 2001 and 2004 in a bid to deal more effectively with the flow of illegal migrants being employed in jobs supposedly reserved for Thai workers.

Thus, despite deportations of irregular migrants by some of these countries (South Africa deports 150,000 to 200,000 migrants a year, the vast majority to neighbouring countries) and the reinforcement of controls and fences along borders, such as those between the United States and Mexico or between South Africa and Mozambique, migration is continuing, much of it outside the realm of government programmes.

Restrictive but inefficient national immigration policies lead to different outcomes at local levels. One of the most worrying is that the condition of residence and legal status of migrants living in the city often remains unclear, with the result that many foreigners are nearly deprived of any citizenship rights, becoming extremely vulnerable to discrimination when trying to access basic urban services.

Unskilled registered migrants in Bangkok are entitled to healthcare services, but not their dependents, who therefore suffer from ill health on a much broader scale than the general population. At the same time, the undocumented status of many workers bars them from access to health services such as family planning and child immunization. In São Paulo, the children of unregistered migrants can attend public schools, as the Constitution and education legislation guarantees individual rights to schooling regardless of nationality. However, until recently, legislation has prevented migrant children from receiving final certificates, making it impossible for them to prove their educational achievements.

Although all migrants to South Africa, by virtue of being on South African soil, are guaranteed the right to healthcare services under the Constitution, in Johannesburg many healthcare workers at clinics and hospitals either preclude or obstruct access to health services by migrants. Furthermore, since ‘undocumented migration’ is a crime, arresting people on the basis of their foreign origin alone is viewed as a crime prevention activity by local police. At Lindela, a privately-owned holding centre in Johannesburg, detainees are held until their identity is established and then they are either released or deported.

However, local reactions are not always so explicitly foreign-adverse. In Tijuana, the public sector is supporting migrants both directly and indirectly. In fact, while the city’s welfare schemes assist the more deprived segments of the population regardless of whether they are nationals or foreigners, the Federal and State government

regularly provide financial support to immigrant-oriented NGOs. In São Paulo, the decentralization process is bringing with it favourable outcomes for migrant communities, especially those areas densely populated by foreigners. Here, in fact, isolated welfare schemes specifically directed at international migrants start standing out, many arising from the need to face the challenges encountered on a daily basis by municipal healthcare or education professionals.

Nevertheless, until specific migrant-oriented policies and practices are clearly defined and generally adopted at the urban level, these initiatives will largely continue to rest upon the good will and humanitarian attitude of individual public officers. The fact of the matter is that in most cities two approaches to the migration issue coexist: one based on the government's official restriction and control policies; the other making use of policy inconsistencies and regulation loopholes to cater for illegal, mostly poor, migrants. Thus, it emerges clearly that there is an urgent need for greater coordination between immigration (national) and integration (local) policies. However, what is also evident is that inclusive practices can be experimented with much more easily at the local level and that local governments can play a key role as enablers for innovative actions.

Cities are therefore charged with a special challenge and a specific responsibility, different from, but interlinked with, that of national authorities. In this perspective, most cities of the South experiencing international migration need to foster the adjustments of existing migration policies and practices to respond to the multifaceted needs of the communities they host, drawing from successful local experience. Up until now, the lack of specific urban policies or programmes addressing international migration has certainly contributed to expanding the already large number of marginalized residents in many cities of developing countries.

### **Visibility of diversity**

Spatial concentration is often the most visible element that characterizes migrant settlement patterns in the host cities. The presence of ethnic enclaves within the city limits, or their absence, reflects the level of integration which foreign residents are able, or want, to achieve with the host society. On the other hand, the settlement patterns and the uses international migrants make of urban space contribute significantly to shaping the local population's perception of the phenomenon.

The spatial distribution of migrant communities results partly from overt segregationist drives operating locally, but also from autonomous decisions of the migrant communities themselves. Ethnic, cultural or religious differences often lead diverse groups to cluster in different areas of the city, further contributing to urban fragmentation and weakening social cohesion. In the cities of developing countries, however, social and spatial exclusion are driven mainly by economic factors, irrespective of whether the excluded are locals or foreigners.

The location patterns of international migrants appear to be quite different depending on their status and economic situation. Most highly-paid managers and skilled

technicians reside in the new city on a temporary basis, often accompanied by family members. These migration flows have significant consequences on the housing market, the types of services required and the organisation of the urban space itself. As this form of migration concentrates in specific parts of the city and creates highly exclusionary social and economic urban environments, it contributes significantly to increasing spatial fragmentation.

However, the majority of international migrants add to the urban poor and challenge urban management and governance on three critical counts: land and housing, infrastructure and services, and employment. The attitude of most local governments is essentially *laissez-faire*: city authorities absolve themselves from the responsibility of any proactive supply of housing and infrastructure, obliging these migrants to rely heavily upon the private sector and self-provision.

Nevertheless, the research results show that there is no single model. Regardless of the massive migratory inflow that Tijuana continues to experience, the city has no actual ethnic nor country-specific enclave. Apart from a small group of second-home owners from Southern (US) California and retirees from the USA, who hardly speak Spanish and live in self-imposed exclusionary conditions in compounds by the sea, the majority of international migrants to Tijuana settle irregularly within the widespread informal settlements in which a great share of the local population also live. In fact, formal land and housing markets keep the poor away, regardless of native or immigrant status. If, on the one hand, local government does not have the resources to control the expansion of these settlements, on the other, Tijuana residents, who are used to urban land invasion for housing purposes, do not prevent others from doing the same even if they are foreigners. For lack of any means to do so, individuals acting informally cannot exclude others. Hence, in an apparent paradox, social exclusion among Mexicans goes some way towards facilitating the integration of immigrants into the local community.

Similarly, in Dakar, no specific spatial concentration of international migrants can be observed. Even if the majority of foreigners adds to the large low-income local population living in informal settlements, there is no such thing as a Guinean, Burkinabé or Malian neighbourhood in the city. As in Tijuana, where residents share cultural, racial and linguistic similarities with most international migrants, there is a definite cultural proximity between the Senegalese and the major foreign communities. The bulk of the foreign population originates from neighbouring or other West African countries that share with Senegal a certain cultural and historical background as well as legal frameworks for cooperation and economic integration.

The situation is quite the opposite in Karachi, where Bengali, Burmese and Afghan migrants tend to reside in distinct clusters within the irregular settlements, segregating from the segregated. A strong, group-based identity on the one side, and ethnic intolerance on the other, play a key role in clustering migrants' distribution patterns. Even if their housing conditions are not very different from those of many other communities of Karachi natives or internal migrants, these groups are particularly marginalized, socially excluded, and economically underprivileged. This is also due to the fact that the Pakistani government's geo-political strategy has often openly

demonstrated ethnically-based discriminatory attitudes against specific groups of migrants.

In Johannesburg, the impossibility of the government providing affordable housing to low-income international migrants has resulted in the concentration of Francophone and West African migrants in different inner city areas, such as Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and Melville, while the better-off skilled international migrants go to the gated housing developments in the northern part of the city.

Most well-paid international migrants working in metropolitan Bangkok live in Chinese, British, American and Indian “ethnic” housing or apartment clusters with shops and restaurants catering to the needs of each community. Similarly, low-income migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia, Nepal, and Bangladesh tend to reside in specific, suburban, ethnically distinct neighbourhoods, with many living in dormitories or factory compounds.

Although it is unclear to what extent the concentration of immigrants is the result of spatial and social discrimination or the outcome of a strategy of adaptation that takes advantage of ethnic resources (United Nations, 2004a), it certainly contributes to the fragmentation and multiplication of identities that have come about as a result of globalisation, and reinforces marginalisation and segregation patterns already existing in many cities of the South.

Essential as ethnic enclaves may prove to be for the survival of international migrants, and despite their potential to reduce inequalities, their development may also effectively bar access to economic opportunities for some migrants, particularly those more recently arrived. Furthermore, the clustering of migrants in deprived urban neighbourhoods must surely reduce the frequency and intensity of social interactions with native communities, weakening the migrants’ willingness to integrate fully. Thus, ethnic enclaves may have exclusionary effects, rather than strengthening inclusion in the urban social and spatial fabric. In fact, the lack of government resources may facilitate the settling of international migrants in different neighbourhoods, resulting in a greater spatial inclusion or at least in a lower level of segregation.

### **Social integration**

Integration is a process lasting several years, in many cases into second and third generations. Commitment supports this process when on the one side receiving societies undertake to welcome migrants and provide them with the opportunities to become familiar with the language, basic values and behaviour and, on the other, immigrants themselves show determination to become part of the receiving society (Niessen, Schibel, 2004). This process is facilitated by good information about the causes of international migration, the costs and advantages for the urban society of receiving foreign migrants, as well as the rights and duties of both migrants and the receiving society.

On the other hand, the increasing ethnic diversity in the cities of developing countries experiencing international migration, some of them with little or no multicultural tradition, tends to produce, as a first reaction, anxiety and fear among local residents. The capacity of local governments to promote integration is often limited by a lack of financial resources and technical skills. Public perceptions may reflect real issues and real problems, but they also reflect existing ignorance and prejudices based on legal grounds, physical appearance or race, perceived cultural and religious differences, class characteristics, and the positions that international migrants fill in the local economy (United Nations, 2004b).

In Bangkok, while skilled and wealthy retiree migrants are very well accepted, the unskilled migrants from neighbouring countries are much less so. In fact, despite many nationals recognizing their contribution to the country's economic health in light of the labour shortages they fill in labour-intensive, poorly-paid, uninviting industrial sectors, unskilled foreigners are generally perceived as disease-carriers, job-stealers and criminals. The media plays a central role in fuelling this xenophobic attitude among the public, focussing on uncontrolled flows of people looking for jobs, on undocumented migration and on the implication of foreigners in illegal activities.

“Concern” is widespread in Vladivostok too, where many Russian residents perceive the migration of a fraction of the 70 million Chinese from the neighbouring Heilongjiang province as the first step in a potential invasion – the “yellow peril”. Efforts by the Russian authorities to create an environment more welcoming to international migrants and the benefits they bring to the city's economy remain inadequate, due to a lack of resources to deal with the issue as well as an inadequate regulatory framework at federal level.

The environmental, economic and social problems São Paulo has to cope with are such that international migration only compounds an already complex situation. Migrants from other Latin American countries are perceived largely as adding to those already working under highly exploitative conditions in the informal sector or the drug trafficking organisations. The city authorities' reluctance to promote social inclusion for poor foreign migrants is also related to with the notion that São Paulo is certainly a city of migrants, but not from Latin America. The fact of the matter is that Latin American migrants are perceived as being of rural and Indian origins, and as such they only add to the inflows of poor migrants from Brazil's Northeast State, rather than to the city's cultural diversity.

In South Africa, the magnitude of the post-apartheid challenges confronting local government is such that international migration does not rank highly on the scale of current priorities, including in Johannesburg. Nonetheless, most local residents view the relatively small number of unskilled foreign migrants as a threat to South Africans' interests.

## **The contribution to the urban economy**

The consequences of migration are always complex. Few reputable analysts dispute that the overall outcomes of regulated immigration are positive, since migrants typically create opportunities both for themselves and for most members of the communities in which they settle (Papademetriou, 2003). Migrants generally provide a net economic benefit to a receiving city as an important input of human, social and physical capital. In the economic realm, they help to fill skills and labour gaps, bringing innovation, entrepreneurship and diversity, thereby enhancing possibilities for creating flexible, multicultural teams that are productive and competitive in the global marketplace. All of these potentialities risk being, and frequently are, wasted if the local governments are not prepared to manage incoming flows.

In recent years, host country governments have become increasingly aware that national and local economies 'need' migrants, primarily, though not exclusively, in more advanced countries. Greater policy attention has been devoted to the movement of highly skilled professionals, up to the point that more and more governments are adopting strategies to attract them. However, even though many countries claim that they do not need unskilled foreign workers, low-paid positions that are no longer taken up by nationals are being filled by migrants while governments' privatisation and deregulation policies over the past several years have led to rapid growth in the informal sector, which is effectively absorbing great shares of foreign workforce.

Demand for international migrant labour has been emerging in cities like Bangkok and Johannesburg, where managers and technicians hired by both the public and private sectors have become a prominent category of migrant. Similarly, the headquarters and offices of regional and sub-regional organisations located in Dakar bring to the Senegalese capital highly skilled professionals from several African countries in comparatively significant numbers, although fewer than to Johannesburg.

The rapid economic growth experienced by many developing countries also boosts the demand for unskilled labour. In Bangkok, many migrants moved in from neighbouring countries to fill the gaps resulting from the high rate of Thai emigration in the 1970s. Similarly, the rapid and unabated growth occurring in Tijuana since the 1980s has consistently kept the unemployment rate below one per cent, with migrants from various Latin American countries working side by side, mainly in the labour-intensive, unskilled commerce and service sectors. Here this absorption capacity has greatly reduced the risk of social conflicts, since local workers do not perceive migrants as competitors in the labour market, and as a result most migrants do not end up being socially excluded.

Such demand for unskilled labour, and the parallel institutional refusal to recognize it, obliges the large majority of migrant workers to concentrate in the lowest socio-occupational categories, off the wage scale and in the harshest working conditions, often on an illegal basis and subject to organized crime pressures (United Nations, 2004b).

In Vladivostok, Chinese illegal migration is more than twice as high as legal migration, according to estimates. In Johannesburg, where reduced issuing of work permits since 1990 has brought about a consistent decline in legal immigration, undocumented migration has been growing regardless and to a significant extent, experts believe. Although Brazil's 2000 census figures estimate the number of international migrants in São Paulo at around 200,000, illegal Hispanic-Americans are believed to number almost 170,000, thousands of Koreans not included. In practice, illegal migrants from Latin America, especially Bolivians, contribute a significant share of the workforce in the *paulista* textile-apparel industry.

In all the cities analysed, illegal migrants feature higher rates of employment compared to the local population. They work in the building sector, in domestic employment, in the service sector and in informal activities, including those bordering on illegality or beyond, where their unstable conditions are all too likely to lead them.

### **Citizenship and participation**

Probably the most important requirement for the integration of migrants is receiving immediate residence status and having quick access to citizenship or at least citizen-like legal status. Both are essential to accessing health and education services, adequate housing, labour and civic rights (and duties), making migrants fully acknowledged members of the urban society. However, in the city of the South, characterized by a high number of people living with weak "rights to the city"<sup>3</sup>, even regularized migrants are usually far from being represented or even consulted in decision-making.

In São Paulo, where innovative inclusive instruments - such as participatory budgets and popular councils for the monitoring and management of policies - have been introduced in order to promote the democratic participation of all citizens, international migrants are essentially excluded from the forums and advocacy mechanisms, principally because 'participation' was never conceived with the goal of addressing the migrant community's needs.

Conspicuous<sup>4</sup> international migrants living in Karachi are politically marginalized, socially excluded and economically underprivileged, even when their presence in the city is entirely regular and legal, their discrimination being purely based on ethnicity. Moreover, there are differences even between conspicuous international migrants themselves, with the ethnic Bengalis and Burmese being the most vulnerable,

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<sup>3</sup> The right for everyone, including international migrants, to have access to the benefits the city offers based on the principles of solidarity, freedom, equity, dignity and social justice, irrespective of nationality, race, gender and religion.

<sup>4</sup> The notion of 'conspicuous', as opposed to 'assimilated', international migrants, has to do with social prejudice, and thus non-acceptance, regarding specific ethnic groups. Conspicuous international migrants are those with weak prior ethnic affiliation with the city's natives. Among immigrants from Bangladesh, for example, those belonging to Biharis are generally assumed to have full citizenship rights and are well integrated even if undocumented, while Bengalis are extremely vulnerable to social and political exclusion, even when legally registered.

relegated to the margins of the city's economy and society, and with almost no means of civic participation. In Bangkok, the rights to which migrants are entitled greatly depend on their economic status: unlike wealthy skilled professionals, unskilled regular migrants are denied any right to own a piece of land or a house, as well as to make any investment in the country. Most of all, both skilled and unskilled international migrants have no civic rights at all and their participation in national and local policy is not foreseen.

Senegalese legislation requires an identity card which foreigners have to renew every year. Moreover, it requires a formal authorisation by the government for any foreigner who wants to set up a professional, commercial or manufacturing activity, along with guarantees regarding repatriation costs. In this legal set-up, conceived to provide a strict political control on migrants, foreigners are not granted any voting rights in the national or local elections.

The situation is considerably different in Tijuana, where naturalised foreigners are formally granted most civic rights enjoyed by native Mexicans, such as the right to vote (though not the right to be elected), to be organised politically or to own properties in the coastal areas and along the borders. However, the lack of full civic rights prevents documented migrants from having elected local representatives to defend their collective interests in parliament. Recently arrived or temporary migrants may not feel that they are entitled to full (or near-full) civic rights; but those immigrants who have settled down in Mexico and are there to stay can feel frustrated at their inability to participate in decisions that affect their overall conditions. Mexican lawmakers are reluctant to represent foreign migrants, both because they fear being considered as traitors to their country and because they obtain no direct benefits since the majority of foreign residents cannot vote.

In today's urban societies, guaranteeing full civic participation and effective forms of representation to all residents is crucial to enhancing social cohesion and equality. In multicultural cities, designing effective ways of working and communicating with diverse communities is crucial to good urban governance. Great attention has to be paid to identifying appropriate ways for promoting community participation and to understanding multicultural/diversity issues as well as community experiences in accessing city services and institutions.

## **Conclusion**

While in Europe and North America the consequence of international migration on urban societies has become a matter of intense debate, in developing countries it has received very limited or no attention at all. Yet, although 'official' international migrants may represent only a share of the urban population, in all the cities analysed their number is on the one hand underestimated, on the other rapidly growing. It is all but evident that international migration involves all dimensions of urban policy, from local economic development, namely the informal sector, to education, health, housing and urban safety.

Hence, governments have to learn how to deal with this complex issue through ad hoc programmes and measures. This is true in particular for local governments, increasingly entrusted with the responsibility of designing and implementing urban policy, including measures dealing with the consequences of international migration. On one hand they have to recognize the potential benefits accruing to the local society, as well as to the migrants. On the other hand, international migration can be and often is a source of overt or latent social conflict. Public opinion tends to change its views with the ups and downs of the economy, but is also sensitive and responsive to the information and messages coming from politicians and public authorities. Similarly, public authorities are watchful of trends in perceptions and public opinion, especially when seeking to gain or retain electoral support. As is also confirmed by the research, in a number of cities' studies migrants have been used as a scapegoat for existing or perceived social and economic problems ranging from unemployment to criminality.

In order to design appropriate policies, one of the very first needs local governments have to resolve is the lack of reliable and updated information on the flows, stocks, living and working conditions of migrants. This is central on at least two counts: first, having a quantitative knowledge of the phenomenon is necessary to positioning it among the government's priorities; second, and most important, migrants are not a homogeneous group of people; quite to the contrary, each group of migrants has specific needs and demands, based on its historical background, cultural practices, settlement patterns and mode of incorporation into the host society.

Migration flows are increasingly of a temporary and circulatory nature. A growing number of migrants considers the city simply a place to pass through, while waiting to return home or, in some cases, to move on to other destinations of greater economic opportunity, not a place to invest in for the longer term. Others put down roots in their new city, integrating and interacting with local communities but also maintaining family, commercial or other types of links with the home country, a sense of belonging and transnational attitudes being not necessary antithetical. Incorporation into a new city and enduring transnational attachments are not binary opposites, but local governments cannot succeed in governing growing migration flows without deeply understanding the dynamics of the two options, nor can they manage an increasingly heterogeneous urban population without negotiating suitable context-specific answers for their cities, in consultation with all of their citizens.

As a result, to deal effectively with international migration in urban areas, policies have to meet the diverse needs, capacity and potentials of the migrants, deriving mainly from their socio-economic conditions rather than the ethnic or regional group they belong to. This requires new methodological and conceptual tools emphasizing the need to distinguish between programmes targeted at international migrants rather than the urban poor in general, to which group migrants often belong.

However, given the conditions of large parts of the urban population, in many cities of the South governments are understandably primarily geared to 'territory-based' actions, addressing the general needs and potentials of specific parts of the city or of whole communities. This approach is necessary when dealing with issues of concern not only to the migrants but to the majority of the residents, such as provision of basic

infrastructure, access to health and education services, support to social networks and community organisations, or neighbourhood safety. Nevertheless, if pro-poor initiatives may often indirectly benefit migrant communities, there is a need to assess their impact on international migrants and to what extent they actually result in improving the migrants' living conditions, or need to be complemented with more targeted measures.

Local governments increasingly need policies to promote integration among all residents and manage diversity, but their capacity for action is often limited by a lack of financial resources and technical skills. Thus migrants' integration becomes a shared responsibility that requires the participation of many actors well beyond local authorities, primarily NGOs, religious organization and migrants' associations. Since such organizations are used to multicultural realities, diverse groups and communities, they have a crucial role to perform in promoting appropriate inclusive policies. Playing the role of cultural mediators between local institutions and the foreign communities, they can effectively provide or channel the available resources into the services migrants need most, such as legal advice, health and educational services.

Migrants' integration strategies should rest largely on empowering migrant communities and encouraging their partnerships with different actors of the local society. Mainstreaming and collaboration between government, local agencies and non-state actors are also essential to promote the migrants' inclusion. Although national policies often deal with international migration as a security issue, central governments play a crucial role in providing financial and technical support to local authorities, as well as the civil society, in their quest for effective and innovative initiatives to effectively address the different migration issues.

Although urban policies in most cities of the developing world have not yet acknowledged it, multicultural cities are likely to be the inevitable as well as desirable outcome of current economic and social changes on the international scene. In the future, cities will need to evolve from multicultural to cosmopolitan, from a situation in which multiple cultural forms are recognized and at times encouraged, to one in which residents of one cultural background are personally comfortable interacting with those of other cultures. What relationships exist between urban development and international migration, what policies and practices can and should be adopted to shape actual cosmopolitan cities in developing countries too are matters that require, as well as deserve, further investigation.

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