

Political Dynamics of Migrating Workers: A Literature Review on Continuity and Change

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Abstract

This literature review explores the political dynamics surrounding migrating workers, focusing on the themes of continuity and change. Migration, driven by economic, social, and political factors, has become a global phenomenon reshaping societies and economies worldwide. The political context in which migrating workers operate significantly influences their experiences, rights, and opportunities in host countries. The review synthesizes existing literature to examine how political frameworks have evolved over time in response to migration trends. It analyzes policies, laws, and international agreements that shape the legal status, rights, and protections afforded to migrating workers. Additionally, the review investigates political discourse surrounding migration, including debates on labor market impacts, cultural integration, and national security concerns.

Key themes explored include the role of governments and international organizations in shaping migration policies, the impact of political ideologies and electoral cycles on migration governance, and the influence of civil society and advocacy groups in promoting migrant rights. The review also addresses the continuity of structural inequalities and systemic barriers that migrating workers face, despite policy reforms and international conventions aimed at protecting their rights. By critically examining the continuity and changes in political contexts surrounding migrating workers, this literature review contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges inherent in global migration governance. It underscores the importance of political dynamics in shaping the lived experiences and outcomes of migrating workers, highlighting implications for policy development, advocacy efforts, and future research directions.

Keywords – Migration, Migrant workers, Political context, Policy, Governance

Introduction

Migration of workers across borders has long been a pivotal aspect of global economic and social dynamics, profoundly influencing both sending and receiving countries. The movement of workers, driven by economic opportunities, geopolitical changes, and social factors, has reshaped labor markets and societies worldwide. In this context, understanding the political dynamics surrounding migrating workers is crucial. The political landscape significantly shapes the legal frameworks, rights protections, and socio-economic integration of migrating workers in host countries.

This introduction sets the stage for examining how political contexts influence the experiences and outcomes of migrating workers, with a focus on continuity and change. Over time, political ideologies, policies, and international agreements have evolved in response to shifting migration patterns and socio-economic demands. Governments, international organizations, and civil society play pivotal roles in shaping migration policies, addressing labor market needs, and navigating societal perceptions of migrants.

Moreover, the political discourse surrounding migration often intersects with issues of national security, cultural integration, and human rights. Debates and policy decisions on these fronts can impact the legal status, rights protections, and social inclusion of migrating workers. Despite efforts to enact comprehensive migration governance frameworks, structural inequalities and systemic barriers persist, influencing the lived experiences of migrating workers and their families.

This literature review aims to synthesize existing research to illuminate how political dynamics have shaped and continue to influence the landscape of migrating workers globally. By examining continuity and change in political contexts, this review seeks to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in global migration governance. It underscores the importance of political factors in shaping policy outcomes, advocating for migrant rights, and fostering inclusive societies in an increasingly interconnected world.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate the historical evolution of political frameworks and policies governing migrating workers, highlighting key milestones, shifts in political ideologies, and international agreements that have shaped migration governance.
- To assess current political contexts surrounding migrating workers, including policy responses to changing migration patterns, economic considerations, and geopolitical influences.
- To explore how political frameworks have evolved over time in response to migration trends, examining continuity in structural inequalities and systemic barriers that persist despite policy reforms and international conventions.

Research methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the political dynamics of migrating workers with a focus on continuity and change. The research methodology is structured to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods, leveraging their respective strengths to provide a holistic understanding of the topic.

Qualitatively, the study conducts a systematic literature review to examine historical and contemporary political frameworks governing migrating workers. This approach allows for the synthesis of existing knowledge, identification of key themes, and analysis of policy shifts and their implications over time. Additionally, qualitative data collection involves in-depth interviews with policymakers, government officials, and representatives from international organizations to capture nuanced perspectives on migration governance and policy development.

Moreover, the study employs a comparative analysis framework to juxtapose different political contexts and policy responses across regions and countries. This comparative approach enhances the understanding of how varying political ideologies, economic conditions, and societal factors influence migration policies and outcomes for migrating workers.

Literature review

There seems to be little variance in the capacity of immigrants to assist commerce, according to several research. Nonetheless, there are studies that operate on the assumption that some migrants possess greater abilities in this area. In many cases, higher levels of schooling are associated with this skill (e.g. Gould 1994). Occupations held by migrants have been the subject of more recent research. Occupational status, according to Aleksynska and Peri (2014), is a good indicator of migrants' ability to boost trade, but academic credentials aren't always transferable and migrants may not always find jobs that are a good fit for their level of education. Managers and other upper-level employees were anticipated to have the most impact on trade, followed by salespeople and others in a middle ground, and finally, everyone else. Research by Mundra (2012) and Blanes (2010) also used similar assumptions.

Age (because it is believed to be associated with better knowledge about the home country; Koenig 2009) and entrepreneurial spirit are two further migrant traits that are anticipated to effect commerce (Ivanov 2008; Faustino and Peixoto 2013). Entrepreneurial skills may be a good fit for migrants because of their familiarity with foreign advancements and technology. Conversely, migrants may be compelled to self-employment due to discrimination, challenges in skill transfer, and minimum wages. Ivanov (2008) further notes that many immigrant self-employed people work in non-tradable industries.

The degree to which migration affects commerce may also depend on how well people integrate into the job market. This issue has been specifically examined in few research. However, according to Hatzigeorgiou and Lodefalk (2015), male migrants and non-refugee migrants, who are more likely to be employed, are more likely to affect commerce in a significant way.

Beyond the information and connections that migrants bring to the table, it's probable that the workforce dynamics that result from companies recruiting migrants have an impact on internationalisation as a whole. In their 2016 study, Parrotta, Pozzoli, and Sala compared varied enterprises to a "cosmopolitan world in small scale," whereby all workers have the opportunity

to engage with people from different cultural backgrounds. This multicultural environment may enhance firms' capacity to trade worldwide.

Few studies have investigated the opposite potential impact of emigrants on trade, such as American immigrants in China and their influence on U.S. trade with China (Tadesse and White, 2011), while the majority of studies assume that immigrants primarily impact trade between their host and home countries. Felbermayr, Jung, and Toubal (2010), Artal-Tur, Ghoneim, and Peridy (2015), and Rausch and Trindade (2002) all found that domestic migration had a little contribution. Very few research even looked at the impact of specific ethnic networks. Felbermayr, Grossmann, and Kohler (2015) explain that diasporas may have two types of links: direct ones, between the host nation and the home country, and indirect ones, between the host countries of the diaspora itself.

There has been a shift in focus towards analysing emigrants' home nations or the foreign countries from where they emigrated. Migrants are often believed to increase commerce with developing nations with weaker institutions (e.g. Vézina 2012). Similar to how migrants are believed to improve commerce with nations that are culturally distant, migrants also boost trade overall (e.g. White 2007).

Research by Rauch and Trindade (2002) and Peri and Requena-Silvente (2010), among others, suggests that migrants play a crucial role in the trade of complex and varied goods by enterprises. Ivanov (2008) and Faustino and Peixoto (2013) are two examples of research that have made the assumption that migrants have a more significant role in facilitating trade in intermediate items. This is relevant to the work of Hatzigeorgiou et al. (2017), which relies on the works of Grossman and Rossi-Hansberg (2008) and (2012). Migrants are believed to play a crucial role in easing such imports because, according to the authors, offshore manufacturing exacerbates information frictions and principal-agent difficulties.

The margins of trade are the last aspect of the migration-trade interaction. Do migrants largely contribute to trade with new countries and new goods, or do they mostly intensify trade with current partners and items that have previously been traded?

The vast majority of research looks at the correlation between migratory stocks across countries and trade volumes, which is similar to the intense country margin of trade when looking at solely established commerce. On the other hand, research by White and Tadesse (2008), Koenig (2009), and Bastos and Silva (2012) highlights the fact that migrants may also help establish new international trading partners.

On top of that, it is often believed that migrants encourage new commerce by lowering the fixed cost of trade. The product level is the most recent use of this. It is believed that migrants will lower both the fixed and variable costs of beginning international commerce in a new product. According to Hiller (2013) and Hatzigeorgiou and Lodefalk (2019), the former is anticipated to generate additional trade, whereas the latter's predicted influence on commerce is less clear.

Research gap

Identifying research gaps in the study of political dynamics surrounding migrating workers involves recognizing areas where existing literature may be incomplete or insufficient. Several potential research gaps can be highlighted:

- **Comparative Analysis Across Regions:** There may be a lack of comprehensive comparative studies that examine how political frameworks differ across regions and their impact on migrating workers. Comparative research could shed light on variations in policy responses, legal protections, and socio-economic outcomes for migrants in different political contexts.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Many studies may focus on current political dynamics without tracing the evolution of migration policies over time. Longitudinal studies could explore how political ideologies, economic fluctuations, and societal changes have shaped migration governance and impacted migrating workers across decades.
- **Intersectional Perspectives:** There might be a gap in research that examines the intersectionality of political dynamics with other factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, and legal status among migrating workers. Understanding how these intersecting

identities influence policy outcomes and migrant experiences could provide a more nuanced understanding of migration governance.

- Policy Implementation and Enforcement: Research may lack in-depth analysis of the implementation and enforcement of migration policies at national and international levels. Exploring discrepancies between policy intent and practical outcomes could identify gaps in policy effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- Impact of Political Rhetoric: There could be limited research on the influence of political rhetoric and public discourse on migration policies and public perceptions of migrating workers. Studying the impact of political narratives on policy formulation and societal attitudes could provide insights into the drivers of policy change.
- Human Rights Perspectives: Research may overlook comprehensive assessments of the human rights implications of migration policies. Investigating how political frameworks uphold or undermine migrant rights, including labor rights, access to healthcare, and freedom from discrimination, could highlight gaps in rights protections.

Addressing these research gaps could contribute to a more robust understanding of the political dynamics surrounding migrating workers, inform policy development, and support advocacy efforts aimed at promoting the rights and well-being of migrants globally.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review has explored the multifaceted political dynamics surrounding migrating workers, emphasizing the themes of continuity and change within migration governance frameworks. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, several key insights have emerged.

Firstly, the historical evolution of migration policies reflects shifting political ideologies, economic imperatives, and societal attitudes towards migrants. From restrictive policies aimed at labor control to more inclusive approaches recognizing migrant contributions, political frameworks have adapted to changing global dynamics.

Secondly, contemporary political contexts continue to shape the experiences and outcomes of migrating workers. Policy responses vary widely across regions, influenced by factors such as national security concerns, economic pressures, and cultural perceptions of migration. These contexts significantly impact the legal protections, socio-economic integration, and human rights of migrating workers in host countries.

Moreover, while there have been strides towards inclusive migration policies and international agreements, persistent gaps and challenges remain. Structural inequalities, systemic barriers, and inconsistencies in policy implementation often undermine the rights and well-being of migrating workers, highlighting the need for more effective governance frameworks and enforcement mechanisms.

Furthermore, the study has identified several research gaps that warrant further exploration, including comparative analyses across regions, longitudinal studies tracing policy evolution, and intersectional perspectives on migration governance. Addressing these gaps could provide deeper insights into the complexities of migration politics and inform evidence-based policy interventions.

Ultimately, understanding and addressing the political dynamics surrounding migrating workers are critical for advancing global migration governance, promoting social inclusion, and upholding migrant rights. By fostering collaborative efforts among policymakers, civil society, and international organizations, meaningful progress can be achieved towards creating equitable and humane migration policies that benefit both migrating workers and host societies. This review underscores the importance of continued research, advocacy, and policy innovation in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by global migration, ensuring that migrating workers are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness in an increasingly interconnected world.

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