MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: MIGRATION FRAMING, AN IMPEDIMENT TO WHOLESOME INCLUSION TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Abstract

The coincidental events of the SDGs 2030 Agenda; a universal action for people, planet, and prosperity, taking place in the same year 2015 of the great migrants' tsunami may not have favored the conceptualization of immigration in the SDGs 2030 Agenda. Actors comprising politicians, academics, civil societies, and agencies within the framework of the European Union gave their voices, framing the migrant influx. Most voices conceptualized migration as a one-way contributor to development benefitting only source countries. The transformational characteristics of immigrants as influencing development and growth are silent in the SDGs 2030 agenda. This skewed framing is a hindrance to harnessing the opportunities presented by immigration as an active agent of transformation both to receiving and sending countries. Europe in addressing her demographic challenges has moved to the admittance of skilled migrants either for study or work purposes. Through a cluster survey of immigrant students in Hungary conducted for this study, a deduction is made to the effect that migrants are settling in host countries, moving ahead to other destinations, and going back to their origin countries. The sooner the UN can understand this, and partner with the infantry on the move by way of enlightenment, the quicker it can harness the gains of immigration to the 2030 SDGs agenda.

Keywords: sustainable development, immigrant, immigration, framing, 2030 agenda

Introduction

The existing divide among scholars on migration both within and across disciplines about the best ways to study migration leaves a disciplinary parochialism about migration modeling, analysis, and conceptualization. This no doubt leaves a conceptual imbalance in research and migration policy action (Massey, 1990; Helbling, 2014). While this seems a genuine excuse for the conceptualization of migration in the 2030 SDGs, with several flawed interpretations of migration and its place in development. One of which is the generalizations in articles 23 and 25 on the categorization of vulnerable groups in which migrants are explicitly thus grouped. This grouping also discounts the many categories of migrants that exist who may not fall into the weak category of the vulnerable. Though categories of migrants may experience vulnerabilities before, during, and after migration, this is insufficient to categorize immigrants under vulnerable groups, this downplays the transformational attributes of immigrants and immigration as agents of development both at source and destination countries. Article 29 of the SDGs has come under scrutiny on the conceptualization of migration. Adger et al. (2019) explore the underrepresentation of migration in the SDGs 2030, they describe as inaccurate the planned management of migration as a problem. They aver that those social dynamics of migration should be addressed as the norm of social and demographic dynamics rather than as a discreet event. This framing deemphasizes the place of migrants as inherent and longstanding agents of social transformation, including innovation, economic growth, and cultural diversity, and the true demographic reality of migrants as healthy and economically active (Hunter & Simon, 2017). Another perspective error raised by the authors is the framing of SGDs 2030 agenda as action on sustainable cities and climate action, giving the sustainable development agenda away as a static concept of human populations, de-emphasizing permanent and temporary migration as a key aspect of sustainable development, climate resilience, and social transformation. This classification deviates from the early conceptualization of migration as life and progress by Ravenstein (1885) who sees a sedentary population as the true definition of stagnation. Unfortunately, the SGDs 2030 Agenda framing of migration is presented as "threatening to reverse much of the development progress." The major reason for this framing is connected to the migration challenge of human trafficking, a clog in the wheel of a

progressive instrument like migration. Using the human trafficking challenge to override the benefits of migration is synonymous with throwing away the baby with the bath water. Also, the emphasis on the temporalization of forcibly displaced persons disregards, Ratzel (1882), Wolpert (1966), and Huntington (1993) characterization of migration as a process aimed at adjusting to changes. Climate change is not altogether guiltless of the ecological provocations inspiring the causes of environmental changes that force people to flee from their place of habitation. Climate change is projected to cause a considerable increase in human migration in the coming decades, (Barnett & McMichael, 2018) where their movement is an adjustment to the sudden and unpredictable changes that have occurred in their lives.

The UN framing is an offshoot of the global political tensions around migration at that time. Europe experiencing a migrant influx emanating from the Syrian war and other conflict regions near Europe (Adger et al., 2019). Nijenhuis and Leung (2017) posit that donors in Western Europe saw the 2015 influx as a development issue and stressed the need to bring about 'development' in the regions of origin, to halt the inflow of people to Europe. This gives development away as a place-bound process that focuses on enabling people to achieve a better quality of life at home, implicitly presenting migration as an indicator of development failure. This brings the UN 2030 framing on migration under what Helbling (2014) describes as actors' understanding of immigration as not being restricted to a single specific meaning but rather susceptible to various changes depending on the actors involved and the circumstances governing such involvement with social and political circumstances as having core influences on frames. Nijenhuis and Leung (2017) espoused that while the mobility of some is celebrated, that of lower-skilled migrants is framed as problematic. This framing of migrants from troubled zones by the duo as lower-skilled is also problematic Weiss et al. (2003) an on-the-job research model on migrants from the Soviet Union to Israel in the 1990s yielded results showing that due to the large-scale immigration, the stock of physicians and engineers in Israel almost doubled during the period and because they could not all find jobs in their area of specializations many highly skilled immigrants were forced into low-skill occupations. Cantat et al. (2020) emphasize that the construction of migration as a crisis as regularly used by the media, political actors, civil society, and academics gives structure to the social worldview of migration and presents ways in which it should be responded to and governed. That immigration is an agent of transformation is undisputable across power structures. The only areas of dispute among different power structures are with regards to negative or positive transformation and between sending-origin countries and the receiving-destination countries, whose transformation is negative and for whom is it beneficial? However, according to Adger et al. (2019), migration is transformative both for those who move and for the places and economies of source and destination. It must therefore be incorporated into planning for sustainable development. A recent indication of European action on immigration reflects her demographic realities of an aging population and attendant low fertility rates inducing vacancies across sectors. Actions are geared towards skillful migrants for study and work purposes. A survey targeting a group of migrants in Hungary whose admittance criteria is for study purposes shows that immigrants depending on their country of origin are settling in destination countries, re-migrating to more suitable destinations or returning home after their studies depending on the terms of their admission into Europe and legal opportunities available to them to choose their next move. The SDGs' goals need to take advantage of this mobile-educated population to help spread the gospel of active and intentional participation in the promotion of sustainable development.

Methodology

This study is a combination of quantitative research and literature analysis. The literature research began with an exploration of the SDGs 2030 agenda since the agenda signals a global compass for the possible future action plan and intended achievements for an environmentally safe and sustainable global community. However, the alarm raised by migration scholars through the study of the SDGs 2030 agenda about the underrepresentation of migration and immigrants in the SDGs 2030 goals, gave conceptualization to the problems to be researched and the objective of the study. This paved the way for the hypothetical prediction that much of the contribution of the mobile population to a sustainable future may not be harnessed. Since several groups of immigrants cannot be covered within the purview of this research, I opted for a select group of the immigrant population via quantitative research: a

sample population. The survey targeted immigrant students who are more a product of Europe's scheme to ensure a thriving skilled workforce within its continent. A questionnaire was designed and circulated across a network of immigrant students in Hungary and the response was voluntary. The questionnaire aims primarily to know how aware this mobile population is about sustainable development concerning how their countries have given it importance and how they perceive their role in its success. The research also revealed the role of actors and how their framing of the migration challenges has the power to impact the final draft of the SDGs 2030 goals. Below are the results of the questionnaire, which are collated, and the findings are analyzed.

Table 1. Profile of experts interviewed in each of the four professional perspectives

Countries	Percentage (%)
Angola	1.4
Belarus	1.4
China	32.2
France	1.4
Ghana	4.2
Japan	1.4
Jordan	2.8
Kazakhstan	2.8
Kosovo	1.4
Kyrgyzstan	2.8
Lao	9.8
Lebanon	2.8
Mongolia	2.8
Montenegro	1.4
Morocco	1.4
Nigeria	14.0
Pakistan	2.8
Russia	1.4
Syria	4.2
Tunisia	4.2
Turkey	4.2
Total	100.4

China topped the chart of the highest percentage of respondents with Nigeria following behind. The total number of respondents is 720. This a non-representative figure but a sample amount to give a bird's eye view of international students' awareness of the topic of a sustainable future.

Table 2. Psychographic data of respondents

Variable		Percentage (%)
Source of Funding		
Self-funded		33.3
Scholarship		66.7
	Total	**100**
Under obligation to return home		
Yes		52.4
No		42.9
Undecided		4.8
	Total	**100**
Post-graduation plan		
Return home		33.3
Find work in Hungary		26.2
Re-migrate		23.8
Undecided		16.7
	Total	**100**
Awareness of legal options to help stay back in Hungary after studies.		
Yes		56.9
No		43.1
	Total	**100**
Awareness of the term sustainable development		
Yes		61.9
No		38.1
	Total	**100**
Sustainable development is a serious issue		
Yes		69.6
No		29.1
	Total	**100**
Personnel that champion sustainable development in your country of origin, government or civil society		
Government		28.6
Civil society		22.9
Both		45.7
Others		-
	Total	**100**
Government is committed to sustainable development goal		
Strongly Disagree		10
Disagree		16.7
Neutral		16.7
Agree		46.7
Strongly Agree		10
	Total	**100**
Government is communicating the importance of sustainable development to citizens		
Strongly Disagree		0
Disagree		16.7
Neutral		26.7
Agree		43.3
Strongly Agree		0
	Total	**100**

With the pace of your country's commitment, we can achieve the global sustainable development goal!	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	16.7
Neutral	30
Agree	36.7
Strongly Agree	10
Total	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2022/202023

Data on table 2 reveal that 33.3% of the respondents were self-funded, while 66.7% received scholarships. The scholarship schemes mentioned were the Hungaricum Stipendicum, the Young Christian Scholarship Scheme, and Erasmus. It is noteworthy that 52.4% of the respondents stated that they are not obligated to return to their home country after completing their studies, whereas 42.9% indicated that they have such obligations. A small percentage of 4.8% were uncertain about any obligations. In terms of post-graduation plans, 33.3% expressed their intention to return home, 26.2% aimed to find employment in Hungary, 23.8% expressed a desire to re/migrate, and 16.7% remained undecided. Additionally, 45.2% of the respondents are currently exploring opportunities to legalize their stay in Europe.

Regarding awareness of sustainable development, it is noteworthy that only 61.9% of the total respondents were familiar with the term. This can be attributed to the respondents' perception that sustainable development is not a significant topic in their country of origin. Among those familiar with sustainable development, 28.6% attributed its promotion to the government, 22.9% to civil society, and 45.7% viewed it as a partnership between the two.

When asked about indications of their government's seriousness in addressing sustainable development, some respondents expressed skepticism, perceiving government efforts as mere displays aimed at convincing specific interest groups of their involvement. It is evident that there is room for improvement in effectively conveying the government's commitment to sustainable development.

In terms of knowledge about sustainable development, a significant majority of 65% of the respondents demonstrated an understanding of the concept. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the remaining 35% who indicated limited knowledge on the subject, highlighting the importance of educational initiatives to enhance awareness and comprehension.

Lastly, when asked about their role in promoting sustainable development, the responses were evenly divided between positive and negative perspectives. Positive responses from the respondents hold the potential for harnessing international students as advocates for sustainable development, serving as a foundation for future endeavors in this area.

An attribute that should be taken as part of the contribution of migration to sustainable development initiatives.

"My international study helps me to gain new knowledge and transfer this knowledge back to my country when I go back"

"As a citizen of this world, I feel that I am responsible for my actions. I should minimize the waste and use or buy those products which can be recycled or reused"

"Getting the technological knowledge and experience here and championing similar developments back home"

"Educating those around me about simple practices that could help nature since I can't do so much about the economy"

"Being aware of the effects my daily activities and decisions have on the planet and sustainable development, and ensuring that I make the right decisions to protect our planet"

"As a student studying abroad under a government scholarship, the mission of the scholarship is to allow students to bring their skills and knowledge from abroad back to their homes and develop their countries"

Discussions, Framing: Actors Framing Narrative and its Influence

"If men define a situation as real, they are real in their consequences" W.I Thomas.
"This statement is true as it is taken but false as it reads" Goffman (p. 1)

Goffman (1974) in defining social reality pulls us in the direction of the deliberate twist given by William James' question: Under what circumstances do we think things are real? He responds to his question by saying that our sense of realness contrasts with our feelings and that some things lack this quality. The foregoing helps our understanding of the discussions that produce frames about migration. The actor's role in impacting this framing is examined to understand the direct influences of how the SDGs 2030 objective action on migration came to be thus framed. Helbling (2014) posits that the framing of immigration is dependent on the actors involved and the circumstances governing the dispute. In analyzing frames, Habermas (1993) provides three forms of arguments by actors as identity-related, moral-universal, and utilitarian, with a succinct breakdown of what categories framings belong to. Cantat et al. (2020) traces the origin of how migration came to be framed as a crisis. Beginning in the late 1980s when a group of prominent scientists led by political science migration scholar Aristide Zoldberg in their book *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World* (Zolberg et al., 1989) proposed a contemporary history of refugee crises. The authors search for crisis situations, with the intention of pushing for the protectionist regime. Cantat et al. (2020) noted the selective use of the term crisis by the authors, as descriptive of upheavals taking place in or towards Europe as worthy to be thus classified, however, such disturbances taking place elsewhere would not qualify for such classification. From their publication, several others have similarly tended to frame migration in the form of crisis, via multiple approaches (Weiner, 1995; Ryan, 2011; Guiraudon & Joppke, 2001; Sassen, 2016; Freeman, 1986; Wimmer & Schiller, 2003). The crisis rhetoric on migration also connects to perceptions of what constitutes a threat/crisis as not merely the product of irrationality and ignorance (in which case anti-immigration feelings could be addressed through the diffusion of sound information), but as a spin-off of the psychological and microsocial level, of broader trends affecting states and societies at large (Cantat et al., 2020).

Helbling (2014) defines frames in three phases, information construction, application of frames, and the impact of frames. Where construction is to political elites, application to the media, and impact is to policymaker's usage of the information and citizen's reaction to the information constructed and impacting in the application. Within the context of state-centered framings about migration Statham and Trenz (2012) discuss justification frames as frames that actors use in the justification of their actions for directing attention to certain causes and consequences (Helbling, 2014). A systemic linkage between immigration security and social problems such as unemployment frames as a crisis for state and sovereignty which in turn correlates with unease among citizens. Securitization of migration is anchored in the fears of politicians about losing their symbolic control over the territorial boundaries (Cantat et al., 2020). Also, a prevailing concern of member states political actors about Europe Union integration. A sui generis governance deviated from the norm of national governments' border control and yielded some new actors in the management of movement across the 27 member states of Europe. FRONTEXT manages exigencies of movement across the member states and operates more as an intelligence gathering, and security operations apparatus. Brubaker (2010) emphasizes that the role of a border operates beyond setting factual and figurative limits to national and cultural membership but serves as well as economic and political interests. Working hand in hand with member states to keep the external borders of the EU safe and secure. Sachseder et al. (2022) analyzed annual reports of FRONTEX between 2010 and 2020 where they identified four themes, that frame migration as a threat, and migrants as aliens of unknown origin, hierarchy creation, and humanitarian concerns over vulnerable migrants, more in line with the justification of their role in the European Union border management.

Vulnerability as a framing concept has different meanings and dimensions. An umbrella term for the description of people needing and seeking protection. Defined as a situation in which someone is more likely to be harmed and/or not have her interests justly considered, this is synonymous to how 'vulnerability' is used in research ethics (Levine et al., 2004). They query the way humanitarian policy and practice especially at international levels understand and operationalize the concepts of vulnerability/vulnerable groups. Done in reductionist ways, risk stereotyping, and over- and under-inclusivity. Though Gazi (2021) clarifies that vulnerability does not mean helplessness or weak, but

rather an indication of certain dangers for persons in dysfunctional environments. Nevertheless, this clarity may be obvious to persons in humanitarian agencies who use such definitions for identification and administrative purposes but to a percentage of the general public vulnerability especially as it relates to migrants will most often pass for persons who scrounge welfare systems based on the welfare chauvinism theory (Kros & Coenders, 2019), or the concept of politicized places (Hopkins, 2010). Public perception of frame interpretation discounts the variety of migration possibilities, only focusing on the political rhetoric of frames. which categorizes all non-citizens as either a refugee or economic migrants prowling for welfare or is out to steal jobs from citizens. With the existence of several types of migration, vulnerability cannot be an umbrella categorization for migrants. For example, the term economic migration as it is widely known as serving the need of the migrant looking to improve his economic circumstances is no longer tenable. Since open invitations are thrown out to possible migrants to fill up vacancies in developed economies who need manpower to keep their economies moving an acknowledgment of the two-way benefit. We are reminded of the challenges of the dilemma of migration theorization that has failed to produce a grand theory of migration (De Haas, 2021). He highlights the many reasons from scholarly research showing several divides that make achieving such a feat seem impossible. Castles and Miller (2009) too complex and diverse nature of migration phenomenon leads to the conclusion that a universal migration theory will never be visible. This justifies and leaves us tolerant of skewed conceptualizations of migration. We are therefore only reliant on case submissions that produce the conceptualizations. While these excuses seem tenable for the injustice done to migration in the 2030 Agenda a broader and more in-depth consultation for migration would have done more for the agenda.

Agenda and the 2030 SDGs

Cambridge's definition of an Agenda says it is a plan or list of matters to be discussed in a meeting, a *list of possible future actions or achievements*, and a secret aim or reason for doing something. The 2030 SDGs agenda fall under the second, possible future action or achievements. A roadmap to a list of actions for achieving the desired sustainable development goals. The conceptual challenges highlighted may hinder the appropriate realization of the intended goals. For instance, the pledge in article 4 of the agenda *to leave no one behind* may pass as another politically high-sounding phrase as the survey has shown that a sizable 35% of respondents are on the verge of being left out. If the mutual transformational qualities of both sending and destination countries are not properly understood, highlighted, and harnessed there will be many left behind. Despite inequalities among countries, people's actions on migration are mutually reinforcing. According to Adger et al. (2019), migration is transformative both for those who move and for the places and economies of source and destination. They warn of the danger of sidelining the activities of around 10% of the world population of approximately 750 million people stock of migrants on the move. They further emphasized that the world is not static, and migration should not be conceptualized as a problem to be managed. Migrants are typically a healthier group (Hunter & Simon, 2017) a major driving force of planetary and population health (Adger et al., 2019). Migration directly incorporated into planning for sustainable development goals is to incorporate the transformative reality of migration into development.

Conclusion

The migration theorization dilemma leaves a knowledge gap between the two sides' benefits of migration to sending and receiving countries. It often prevents the broader overview of the benefits of migration to be harnessed. This research has added voice to the alarm raised by migration scholars on the implication of narrowing development as a stagnant, place-bound process. Overlooking the place of migration in the goal of a sustainable planet, an oversight made by the custodians of the roadmap. The survey has also revealed that despite the application of migration to cushion the effects of an aging society with the invitation for skilled and active population to develop and possibly fill up vacancies in Europe. Without a broader view of the role of this infantry on the move, who could be educated on how to think sustainably and could help propagate and relive sustainable attitudes capable of educating populations. The comments above, extracted from the 65% of respondents who already know their role

as key players in educating others about best practices for a sustainable planet remind us of how impactful this group can be. It informs us that a structural, educational and enlightenment plan must be in place to ensure the other 35% who have had the opportunities to walk the shore of countries in Europe where sustainable development efforts are at top gear will be enlightened and become conscious propagators of it regardless of their destination after. Those returning to their countries where sustainable development initiatives are only for a particular audience without real commitment would at least have been better educated and may be persuaded to take up roles to support the goals. European countries must ensure the introduction of sustainable development in all courses and subjects in curriculums so that all will have the opportunity to understand what it is about, their role, and how to spread the culture of a better planet for all.

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