

UNU-CRIS

WORKING PAPER SERIES

#03

May
2021

Circular Migration: Triple Win or Renewed Interests of Destination Countries?

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Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for the informative suggestions and comments. We would like to give special thanks to Andrew Dunn and Mini Dixit for coordinating the manuscript editing. We are also grateful to Robert Manchin and the Gallup Institute for Advanced Behavioural Studies for providing access to the data for the purpose of this project.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and may not represent the position of the UN, UNU or UNU-CRIS.

Abstract

Circular migration has been advocated in policy circles as a 'triple win' since it allows destination countries to fill labour shortages with flexible workforce; migrants to earn higher incomes and benefit from skills upgrading; and origin countries to benefit from remittances and the newly acquired skills of returning migrants. In this paper, we discuss the various definitions and understandings of circular migration. We present examples of circular migration schemes, distinguishing between the different skill categories, discuss the pros and cons of circular migration and identify deviations from the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration'. Our review indicates that benefits to origin countries and migrant workers are often exaggerated primarily due to the small-scale nature of contemporary scheme. We recommend upscaling circular migration schemes to boost their developmental impact in origin countries, meet labour demand in destination countries, and curb irregular migration. Additionally, we emphasise the need to align the schemes' design and implementation with the Global Compact objectives for orderly migration to circumscribe the flaws that accompany their implementation.

Keywords:

Circular Migration, Triple Win, Migration Compact, Skill differentiation.

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Introduction

In recent years, circular migration has become an important concept in the migration discourse and has elicited notable interest among policymakers and scholars alike. Circular migration, however, does not constitute a new form of migration and has existed for a long time in human history as a form of 'spontaneous' mode of population movement (Newland 2009; Schneider and Parusel 2011; Zapata-Barrero et al. 2012). Yet, ever since the establishment of 'guest worker' recruitment programs particularly in North America and post-war Western Europe (1942-1974), policymakers began placing more emphasis on regulated or institutionalised circular migration, and created migrant labourers programs that are circular in nature involving the same individual year after year (Castles 2006; Ruhs and Martin 2008; Constant et al. 2012).¹ Circular migration programs have been promoted as an innovative and viable mechanism for regulating the flow of labour migrants and are considered by policymakers as a migration policy instrument to address a number of challenges such as labour shortages in certain skills, brain drain in sending countries, and irregular migration. Most recently – and in pursuit of a solution to large irregular migration flows to OECD countries – the circular migration debate and schemes have reappeared on the policy agenda.

Circular migration is frequently advocated in policy circles as a 'triple win' providing gains to countries of both origin and destination, as well as to the migrants themselves (Wickramasekara 2011; Constant et al 2012; Castles and Ozkul 2014). Circular migration schemes, for instance, allow firms in the destination countries to efficiently recruit migrants from a known and reliable pool of workers to meet labour and skills shortage, keep wages low and reduce irregular migration (Vertovec 2008; Constant and Zimmermann 2011). Furthermore, circular migrants will not put pressure on destination country social infrastructure, as their integration in society is not necessary. Thus, destination countries will gain from a reduction in the fiscal costs associated with importing labour. Since these migrants are admitted only temporarily and are not allowed to establish themselves permanently in the host country, circular migration might also reduce the social and political costs normally attached to immigration. Sending countries allegedly gain from circular migration as they benefit from remittances while workers are abroad, and from enhanced human capital (brain-gain) resulting from the anticipation of emigration and the return of circular migrants. Additionally, individual migrants gain from increased income when working abroad, and international work experience gives them the opportunity to upgrade their skills and develop their human capital (Wickramasekara 2011; Castles and Ozkul 2014).

However, what is circular migration precisely and how can it be distinguished from temporary and return migration? What is the research evidence on the impact of circular migration on the destination countries, the economic development of sending countries, and the migrants themselves? In this paper, we discuss the various definitions and understandings of circular migration. We present examples

¹ Guest workers programs, however, are not unique to North America and West Europe as similar schemes has been applied in other parts of the globe such as the Gulf states. But in North America and West Europe in addition to temporary labour recruitment systems countries also have permanent migration schemes.

of circular migration schemes, in particular with regard to different skill categories; discuss the areas of concern and identify deviations from the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration' common benchmarks for orderly migration. Subsequently, we revisit the public debate on the 'triple win' argument, and discuss its criticisms, public concerns and empirical evidence on the pros and cons of circular migration, its effects on both destination and sending countries as well as the migrants themselves.

A key finding of the review paper concerns the discrepancy between circular migration schemes aimed to attract high-skilled migrants (who are offered permanent residency in destination countries and thus circulate *spontaneously* between destination and home countries), and those designed to recruit low-skilled migrants (in the form of regulated or managed circular migration schemes). Any discussion concerning circular migration should make this distinction as it implies different impacts and policy implications. In addition, our review indicates that in many cases, the benefits to origin countries and migrant workers appear to be exaggerated. The fact that the 'triple win' expectations are not met in practice has to do both with the design and implementation of existing circular migration schemes (which quite often deviate from the Global Compact common benchmarks for orderly migration). Moreover, among the main contributing factor to the limited impact of circular migration is the small-scale nature of contemporary schemes. Despite the recent ascent of anti-immigration sentiment, especially in the wake of the economic downturn due to COVID-19, temporary circular migration might still be more appealing and preferred to long-term immigration policy targets. We conclude by stressing the need to expand the scale of circular migration schemes in order to improve the development impact in origin countries, meet labour demand in destination countries, and curb irregular migration. Moreover, the upscaling of circular migration schemes should be accompanied with increased efforts to align the schemes' design and implementation with the Global Compact objectives for orderly migration.

Definition and Types of Circular Migration

While back and forth movements of people (both within and between countries) have been a reality for a long time, more recently, circular migration has gained prominence as a potential policy instrument (Fargues 2008; Wickramasekara 2011; Solè et al. 2016). In scientific research, the idea of circular migration confounds the linear space/time axes upon which early migration studies are based (Solè et al. 2016) i.e., migratory patterns are not necessarily linear and unidirectional. In 2005, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) noted, "*the old paradigm of permanent migrant settlement is progressively giving way to temporary and circular migration*" (GCIM 2005, p.31). Furthermore, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) emphasized the potential benefits of circular migration for developing countries and called upon receiving states to allow for more legal migration channels and facilitate temporary, repeated stays of migrant workers (IOM 2005). Among others, it recommended giving incentives of a future return to the same job and the provision of residence and dual citizenship to certain migrants (ibid). More recently, in 2018, The UN Resolution on Global Compact for Safe,

Orderly, and Regular Migration emphasised the need to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration in order to facilitate labour mobility and decent work (GCM 2018). Among the actions drawn by the Global Compact for Migration to achieve orderly pathways to regular migration is, the development of flexible labour mobility schemes for migrants in the form of 'circular migration' programs that provide flexible and convertible non-discriminatory visas and permits for work, study, business, and investment purposes (action d/objective 5).

Despite the increasing use of the concept of circular migration in immigration policy discussions and research, there is no agreed definition or common understanding of the concept. Circular migration as found in existing literature and policy documents refers to different migration patterns, ranging from spontaneous or forced repeated migration to government-led recruitment programs (Castles and Ozkul 2014; UNECE 2016). Different definitions have been used to describe the concept of circular migration but in general, it captures the idea of temporary, repeat migration. Newland (2009) draws four dimensions to characterise the circular migration phenomena: *spatial*, as it involves a geographical displacement between at least two countries; *temporal*, as circular migration involves short term moves or specific life-cycle ones (e.g. after retirement) - implying also a considerable variance in the time duration migrants spent in each country; *iterative or repetitive*, as it involves repetition of migration moves (i.e. more than one cycle), whereby migrants travel back and forth between home and destination countries. The iterative dimension distinguishes circular migration from *return* migration. The fourth and final feature is the *human* dimension, which refers to the potential benefits obtained from this movement.

The definition developed by Wickramasekara (2011) includes both '*formal and informal*' migration and describes circular migration as '*temporary movements of a repetitive character either formally or informally across borders, usually for work involving the same migrants.*' Further, Triandafyllidou (2011) defines circular migration '*as international, temporary, repeated migration for economic reasons*' and includes the reason and motive of migration as the four dimensions: space, time, repetition, and reason. The European Migration Policy Network (EMN 2018) defines circular migration as '*the repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries.*' According to the EMN, there are two main relevant forms of circular migration in the EU Context: (i) circular migration of third-country nationals with a main residence in the EU, but who often return for economic activities in the home country; and (ii) circular migration of third-country nationals who are granted temporary residence permits in a European Union (EU) Member State, or multiple entry visas that allow them to travel between home and destination countries. The first category of circular migration gives people the opportunity to engage in business, professional and voluntary economic activities in their country of origin while retaining their main residence in an EU Member State. The first category occurs spontaneously whereas the second category of circular migration is regulated and aims to create an opportunity for third-country nationals to come to the EU temporarily for work, study, training or a combination of these, on the condition that, at the end of the granted entry (residence), they return and re-establish themselves in the origin country. This particular category covers schemes of temporary and repetitive movement of migrant workers envisioned by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) enhancement of the

availability and flexibility of regular pathways for migration through the development of flexible labour mobility schemes for migrants.

Related to the preceding discussion, a basic distinction can be made between two types of circular migration: (i) *de facto* circular migration, i.e., the spontaneous or naturally occurring circular population movement happening outside any political scheme, and (ii) managed (regulated) circular migration, i.e., the one found under the umbrella of governmentally led programs. It is important to note that *de facto* circular migration can take place within a country or between two or more countries. Moreover, *de facto* international circular migration often takes place outside the realms of formal policy frameworks or restrictive immigration policies.² According to Cassarino (2008) *de facto* migration circularity also entails illegal migration, where people move back and forth without necessary documentation or work permits. Nevertheless, the aforementioned definitions of circular migration do not clearly determine specific criteria on the legal status, duration of stay, and character of repetition. For instance, Constant and Zimmerman (2003), point out that the extended definitions of circularity fail to consider issues such as the length of time spent in each country, the worker's legal status, and the type of work undertaken during this time.³ Moreover, as noted by Zapata-Barrero and colleagues (2012), current legal, political and social frameworks fail to recognize 'circular migrants' as a category by itself. In temporary circular migration schemes, workers are normally offered temporary residence permits, with limited time validity, but often renewable and in some cases, a switch to settlement status is facilitated (see section 3 overview of circular migration schemes).

Besides, in many instances when policymakers talk about circular migration it is not apparent whether they are referring to a spontaneously occurring phenomenon or to a controlled form of migration designed by policy (Newland 2009). Yet, there is a growing interest in institutionalised or managed circular migration within policy circles. For the purpose of this review, we adopt a simple generic definition of circular migration that views circular migration as the temporary, repetitive labour mobility of the same person between his or her country of origin and the same international destination. In the next section, we present selected circular migration schemes for low and high-skilled migrant workers and discuss the consonance and dissonance of the schemes in relation to the Global Compact for Orderly migration objectives.

Overview of Circular Migration Schemes (CMSs)

When talking about circular migration in a policy context, one needs to differentiate between regulated (managed) circular migration schemes on the one hand, and policies to promote spontaneous circular movement of people on the other. As

² In this review, we focus on international migration. Yet, obviously, circular migration can also take place within national borders. One example of internal circular migration takes place in China, where annually around 125-150 million migrant workers move back and forth between rural areas and major cities (Wickramasekara 2011).

³ In relation to the duration spent in destination countries, Fassmann (2008) suggests calling seasonal work with duration of stay less than three months 'circular mobility' rather than 'circular migration.'

mentioned earlier, while *de facto* circular migration has existed for a long time, the growing interest in institutionalised or managed circular migration schemes is a relatively new phenomenon (Fargues 2008; Wickramasekara 2011; Solè et al. 2016).⁴ Ever since the "guest workers" era, a large number of Circular Migration Schemes (CMSs) have been implemented. In this paper, we provide an illustrative overview of circular migration schemes implemented across the globe. Nonetheless, the review does not represent an exhaustive survey of all existing and past circular migration schemes. In order to investigate if a difference exists between historical and recent circular migration schemes, we include examples of early guest workers programs and recent schemes in the review.

In most destination countries, immigration policies are tilted more in favour of skilled individuals (Faini 2007). Accordingly, the impact and policy implications of CM schemes vary depending on whether they are designed to recruit low or high-skilled migrants. To exploit these differences, we grouped the reviewed schemes based on the skill level of the migrant population being targeted. Table (1) provides examples of circular migration schemes for low-skilled workers, whereas Table (2) lists CM schemes for high-skilled professionals and people with medium-level skills. The tables include information on the different schemes' implementation years and the corresponding number of total recruitments. In addition, the tables include the concerns associated with the project implementation as cited in literature. Based on the CM schemes presented in the tables and relevant literature review, in this section, we first summarise the main design features of CM schemes in terms of skill, sectoral focus, and recruitment contracts terms. Second, we compare the scale of recent schemes to the early schemes - i.e., the 'guest workers' programs. Third, we highlight the different measures adopted by host countries to guarantee circular migrants return. Fourth, we discuss the main aspects related to the CMSs' bilateral agreements, e.g., the objectives spelled out in the agreements and factors that condition the agreement's evolution. Finally, we debate upon the main flaws associated with the design and implementation of CMSs cited in the literature and - using the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration common benchmarks for orderly migration as a reference point - we assess whether the scheme deviated from or adhered to GCM objectives (as shown in the tables).

Concerning CMSs main design features, most existing models of regulated circular migration involve movements of migrant workers to destination countries for limited periods of time. Migrant workers may include low-skilled workers, trainees, and people with medium-level skills or highly skilled professionals. Nevertheless, the systematic review we conduct, as shown in the tables, suggests that CMSs targets primarily low-skilled workers, where the need for workers' education and training is limited. Moreover, CMSs are particularly designed for industries that are to some extent seasonal or cyclical such as agriculture, tourism, and construction. These features facilitate the management of temporary migration programs designed to satisfy employers' demand for cheap and flexible labour. The initial duration of recruitment contracts of CMSs included in Tables (1) and (2) ranges from a minimum of six weeks to a maximum of five years. Some workers are permitted to renew their visas year after year, up to obtaining permanent settlement, while others are

⁴ We use the terms 'de facto' and 'spontaneous', as well as the terms 'managed', 'regulated' and 'institutionalised' interchangeably.

expected or forced to return home upon the expiration of their contracts. Generally speaking, for low-skilled migrants, destination countries prefer circularity, while for high-skilled individuals the perspectives are reversed: origin countries have an interest in promoting circularity while destination countries encourage settlement (Newland et al. 2008). As an example, in the United States (US) H-1B visa for skilled migrants the initial visa duration is three years with renewal possibility and a pathway to green card settlement. Whereas in the US H-2B program for non-agricultural guest workers the maximum contract duration is 10 months that can be renewed year after year but there is no provision for permanent settlement. While the immigration of both high and low-skilled workers generates economic benefits, the immigration of high-skilled worker gains much wider political acceptance in destination countries compared to low-skilled workers' immigration (Docquier and Machado 2016). At the global level, there is competition to attract highly skilled professionals by offering them lucrative recruitment packages. The failure of the German Green Card programs to achieve its stated policy target of IT professional recruitments provides an illustration of this contention (see Table 2). The German Green Card was perceived as unattractive compared to its US counterpart, as it constituted a policy of temporary labour recruitment, not long-term settlement. Furthermore, while it allowed the migration of spouses and dependents, it only permitted recipients of Green Card to work in Germany for up to 5 years. Still, the Green Card catalysed German immigration reforms and in 2005 Germany drew up an immigration law, which granted highly qualified individuals from third countries a permanent settlement permit (Finotell and Kolb 2017).

In terms of the scale of CMSs, early guest workers schemes have been applied at a large scale: for example, in Germany, the total number of guest workers recruitments reached 2.6 million by mid-1973 (Castles 1986); while during the period 1942-1964, the US Bracero Program recruited a total of 4.5 million workers (Meissner 2004). The skills of guest workers were not of particular importance, as they were intended to fill low-skilled jobs in factories, mines, and farms. During the last few decades, the decline of manufacturing industries in advanced economies, the offshoring of mass production activities, coupled with technological progress and increased use of labour-replacing automation has predominantly affected the structural demand for low-skilled workers. Contemporary circular migration schemes are thus generally small-scale programs and the number of workers admitted is determined mostly through quotas: e.g., in Spain, the annual quota for the seasonal workers' program (SWP) does not exceed 40000 workers (Plewa 2007); and in 2016-17 the annual visa cap for the non-agricultural guest workers program in the US under H-2B was 85000 (Huennekens 2018). On the other hand, globalisation and the continued development of communication and transport technology create a more conducive environment for circular migration flows today as compared to the guestworker period.

Regarding migrants' return to home, and in order to ensure that low-skilled CMSs achieve their purpose, host countries pay due attention to measures that guarantee the return of circular migrants (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). These measures are generally based on a combination of coercion and incentives. Another possible way of ensuring a high return rate is to select candidates according to their probability of return (e.g., hiring married women with children for seasonal agriculture work in Spain pushed the return rate from 5% to 85%). Nonetheless, the most widely used

measure to encourage return in the case of seasonal workers programs is the assurance that migrants will be hired in subsequent years. In game theory terms, making temporary employment abroad a repeated rather than a one-shot game changes behaviour and aligns it with cooperation and the intended consequences (Sáez 2013). In such cases, the possibility of migrants returning in later years is conditioned not only by the continuity of labour demand but also by the migrant's performance and return discipline as well as the willingness of the employer to re-hire them (López-Sala 2016). When traveling back to the destination country, some migrants had a license to choose among employers or even industries, while others were bound to the particular employers who imported them in the first place. For example, in the case of the seasonal workers' program in Spain and the seasonal agricultural program in Canada, migrants who have already participated in the program are allowed entry at the request of their employer without going through a new selection process in their home country. After returning home they must present themselves to the recruiting country consulate to confirm their return. Another measure to encourage migrants' return is paying a portion of their wage earnings after returning to their home country. The latter measure has been practiced by the Bracero Program in the US which required that 10% of workers' wages be withheld until after they return to Mexico (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). These precautionary measures make CMSs a costly undertaking, often requiring highly coordinated administrative structures in both the sending and destination countries. Bilateral circular labour migration agreements often set specific quotas, and allow for more flexible return arrangements, sometimes regional organizations are involved in profiling migrants in the sending countries. The IOM, for example, administered the profiling and selection of Moroccan migrants for seasonal agricultural work in Spain (Solé et al. 2016).

Fourth, CMSs for low-skilled workers are usually governed by signing bilateral agreements, which regulate the general conditions of entering a particular sector of the labour market, time span, and overall conditions of the employment contract (Wickramasekara, 2015).⁵ Agreements on seasonal/circular migration can be superimposed on an existing *de facto* labour flow or designed to initiate new schemes. An example of the former is the Poland-Germany agreements (shown in Table 1); while the agreement between Mauritius and France signed in 2010, which was promoted by Mauritius as part of a broader economic reform strategy, forms an illustration of the latter. Further, bilateral agreements on CMSs can have multiple objectives (e.g., addressing labour shortages, curbing irregular migration, readmission, development of origin country), or have clear and limited objectives such as addressing specific labour market needs (e.g., the Poland-Germany agreement). Multiple objectives are common in North-South agreements in both Africa and Europe and the Americas, and typically include the development of origin countries as an important objective (Wickramasekara 2015). Yet, having multiple objectives in the agreement constraint the achievement of large impacts (*ibid*). The Netherlands' Blue Birds Circular Migration Pilot is a notable example of an unsuccessful scheme caused by having too many objectives and the lack of

⁵ One exception is the EU Mobility Partnerships in the case of Moldova, which was designed as part of a broader multilateral cooperation agenda, nevertheless, the implementation preference is given to bilateral agreements which allow for more flexible arrangements e.g., facilitating their returns (c.f. Nita 2016).

specific focus. In most cases, bilateral agreements were signed by countries in close geographic proximity to regularise or manage an already existing labour flow from developing (or relatively poorer) to developed (or relatively richer) countries. In such cases, the agreement often substitutes illegal migration for legal migration. The Poland-Germany seasonal migration model offers an example of a bilateral agreement instituted to guarantee the continuation of existing labour migration flows to Germany.⁶ Following the collapse of the communist regime in Poland in the late 1980s, unemployment level surged and – as a solution – the government relaxed the visa regime allowing its population to travel back and forth to Western Europe. This has led to a circular migration pattern with many Poles undertaking illegal work in Germany (Fiałkowska and Piechowska, 2016). In 1990, Poland and Germany signed a bilateral agreement to regularise the existing circular migration between the two countries. The agreement remained important in regulating labour migration to Germany for a long period even after Poland formally joined the EU free mobility agreement in 2004. The Poland-Germany agreement lost its significance only in 2011 after Germany removed the restriction for the Polish to access the German labour market.

Finally, concerning CMSs criticism and their alignments with the GCM benchmarks, despite the numerous advantages that circular migration schemes offer to migrants such as higher income, legal employment opportunities, and an alternative to high-risk irregular migration routes, these schemes often have serious flaws. Most of the surveyed programs in this paper deviate to some degree from the Global Compact for Migration common benchmarks for orderly migration (as shown in the tables below). In particular, past and existing CMSs deviate from **objective 5-action d** in the Global Compact cooperative framework, which states '*Develop flexible, rights-based and gender-responsive labour mobility schemes for migrants, in accordance with local and national labour market needs and skills supply at all skills levels, including temporary, seasonal, circular and fast-track programs in areas of labour shortages, by providing flexible, **convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options**, such as for permanent and temporary work, multiple-entry study, business, visit, investment and entrepreneurship*'; as well as **objective 6**, which focuses on facilitating fair and ethical recruitment and safeguarding conditions that ensure decent work.⁷ Moreover, temporary circular migration schemes that restrict migrant workers to certain employers for pre-defined periods, give employers excessive control over the workers' current, and future labour contracts (Hahamovitch 2003; Basok 2007; De Genova 2009; Castles and Ozkul 2014; Babar and Gardner 2016). Furthermore, the asymmetric power relations between employers and workers

⁶ Other examples include the circular migration between the US and Mexico, and between Spain and Morocco. Bilateral labour flows agreements are largely associated with power imbalance and inequalities between countries, which are reproduced on the actors' level, limiting the scope of aligning policies and practices.

⁷ The Global Compact for Migration aims to enable the international community to determine common benchmarks for orderly migration and thereby also reduce irregular migration, however, it is politically but not legally binding. The Global Compact contains 23 objectives and a list of possible voluntary actions for implementing each objective (for further details visit https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195).

make migrants vulnerable to labour rights violations.⁸ For instance, in a few exceptional cases, seasonal workers (guest workers) have had their passports confiscated to keep them from returning home (Wickramasekar 2011). Another example of labour rights violation occurred in the US Bracero program where Mexican workers were given arbitrary wages and most employers ignored the wages predetermined in the contract; in addition, returning workers did not receive the wage deductions which were withheld to guarantee their returns (Leonard et al 2015). In general, the questions of fairness and migrant workers' rights will continue to be among the main concerns of temporary circular migration schemes. Ruhs (2005) argues that any temporary-workers' program will involve a trade-off between the economic gains and restrictions of migrant's individual rights while employed abroad. Box 1 summarises the main insights from the above assessment of circular migration schemes.

⁸ Temporary migrants cannot organise themselves in trade unions to lobby for their rights; moreover, to ensure being hired for the next round migrants might keep silent when their rights are violated.

Box 1. Key Insights: Circular Migration Schemes

- Circular migration as a form of temporary migration is not a new phenomenon. It has existed for a long time in history as a spontaneous population movement and also in the form of regulated guest workers schemes to manage mass immigration flows to the US and Europe ever since the World War II period.
- The term circular migration refers to different migration patterns but fundamentally captures the idea of temporary, repeated migration of workers whether in the form of spontaneous migration (formal or informal) or regulated (managed) migration in the form of government-sponsored labour recruitment schemes that allow legal mobility back and forth between two countries.
- Contemporary circular migration schemes differ from past guest worker programs with regard to scale and skills differentiation. Recent schemes are small-scale and focus mainly on the recruitment of low-skilled workers in sectors characterised by a strong element of temporality – seasonal or cyclical sectors like agriculture, tourism, and construction. Circular migration of high-skilled workers, on the other hand, mostly takes place in a spontaneous and voluntary way because they are usually offered permanent residency in the destination countries.
- Past and contemporary circular migration schemes, in general, share common features with regard to discrimination and denying migrant rights. Almost all of the reviewed schemes deviate from the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration benchmarks in particular Objective 5 (section d) and Objective 6.
- Bilateral agreements guide the recruitment process in circular migration schemes over time and regulate the overall conditions of employment contracts including migrants' rights, return, and re-entry requirements. North-South bilateral agreements typically have multiple objectives and, the development of origin countries is usually included among the objectives. Nevertheless, having too many objectives often constrain the success and impacts of the scheme.
- Different measures are used to guarantee the return of circular migrants including, among others, paying a portion of their wages after return, selecting candidates with a high probability of return and, assurance that migrants will be hired in subsequent years if they comply with return requirements. The latter is the most commonly used procedure in circular migration.
- The perspectives of destination and origin countries with regard to skill differentiation and circularity diverge: Destination countries prefer the circularity of lower-skilled migrants and origin countries prefer circularity of higher-skilled migrants.

Costs and Benefits of Circular Migration: The Tripe Win Synopsis

In many immigration countries, *uncontrolled (irregular)* migration has become one of the most contentious issue and viewed by a large segment of the public and policymakers as a threat to security and society cohesion (Bourbeau 2011; King and Lulle 2016). On the other hand, *controlled permanent migration* has led to the spatial concentration of certain immigrant groups and hampered their labour market and social integration – both of which are considered fundamental dimensions for upholding the social cohesion and consequently the welfare state in the host society (Uslaner 2012; Lyons et al 2015). In light of the above, circular migration had been advocated by policymakers not only as a mechanism to reap development benefits of labour migration but also as a legal alternative to irregular migration and permanent migration. More immigration will be publicly and politically acceptable in host countries if immigrants stay temporarily and are working to support themselves without relying on the welfare state. Against this backdrop, temporary/circular migration programs are seen as a rational strategy of meeting specific labour needs in the destination countries while addressing the aforementioned challenges of immigration. Moreover, in recent policy debates, circular migration has been promoted as a ‘triple win’ situation: destination countries fill a labour supply gap without the need to integrate the immigrants. Migrants earn higher incomes than they could earn at home and benefit from skills upgrading. The origin countries benefit from remittances and the newly acquired skills of returning migrants. While some of the benefits alluded to circular migration can be real, critics argue that the alleged benefits to origin countries and migrants are overrated, and that CMSs are very often associated with the violations of migrant’s rights (Wickramasekara 2011; Castles and Ozkul 2014; Solé et al. 2016).

In this section, we examine the triple win claims for circular migration, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of circular migration for the three migration actors (destination countries, origin countries, and migrants) and provide empirical evidence on its development impacts. It is worth mentioning here that empirical studies and quantitative evidence on the impact of circular migration is scarce. In part because the required data to measure and quantify its impact is difficult to obtain, since that would require tracking migrants across time and space, and in part presumably, because recent CMSs are small scale. Thus, for the purpose of writing this section we draw related evidence from migration literature in general, and temporary and return migration literature in particular because they have overlapping dimensions with circular migration.

Is Circular Migration a Win for Destination Countries?

For the destination countries, circular migration appears to be an optimum solution to reconcile the business demand for migrant workers on the one hand and the sovereignty and controlled borders of the state on the other hand (Castles and Ozkul 2014).⁹ Circular migration schemes are thus government-led compromises

⁹ A number of scholars have regarded temporary/circular migration schemes as a manifestation of the Hollifield’s ‘liberal paradox’: where international economic forces push states toward greater

designed to satisfy employers' labour needs while attempting to conciliate opponents of immigration. Circular migration schemes provide businesses with a flexible, dispensable, and less expensive workforce. The flexibility of hiring migrants in CMSs allows firms to timely respond to changing conditions in the market by making modifications to its immigrants' labour hiring plans. As mentioned earlier, most circular schemes focus on the recruitment of low-skilled workers in sectors characterised by a strong element of temporality to fill labour shortages at certain times of the year (for example seasonal work in agriculture or tourism). Moreover, temporary circular migrants make few demands on social infrastructure (e.g., health, long-term integration, social benefits) not only because they stay in the host country for short periods but also because they do not bring their families. Along these lines, CMSs constitute opportunities to admit workers for economic interests without transforming the society's social fabric through permanent settlement and formation of ethnic enclaves. The low social costs associated with hiring temporary migrants make CMSs politically attractive as well. They allow policymakers in the destination countries to overcome public hostility against the recruitment of migrant labour through the claims that migrants will not settle and will not bring about social and cultural changes (Castles and Ozkul 2014).

By expanding legal migration pathways and facilitating labour mobility via fast-track circular migration programs, destination countries reduce the likelihood of irregular migration and weaken employers' incentives to fill job shortages with undocumented immigrants. On the contrary, policies that restrict workers mobility backfire, with workers resorting to risky irregular means of migration or overstaying the visas and employers hiring undocumented immigrants (Zimmermann 2014). As an example, the immigration policies that restricted the circular flow of workers between Mexico and the US in the 1960-70s turned undocumented circular immigrants from Mexico into a population of largely undocumented settled immigrants, without significantly reducing the likelihood of a first trip to the US (Massey et al 2016). Nevertheless, the substitution between legal pathways and irregular migration will depend, inter alia, on the scale of legal pathways and the number of visas issued. There is evidence that a large-scale legal channel for migration between Mexico and the United States suppressed irregular migration. For example, investigating the effects of expanding and contracting legal access for Mexicans in the US during the period 1940-2016, Clemens and Gough (2018) show that apprehensions dropped when the number of visas for low-skilled workers peaked at more than 400,000. As shown in Table 1, the maximum annual visa cap for low-skilled workers under the US H-2B program in 2018 was 147592 visas, which corresponds to 37% of the annual apprehensions at the US Southwest borders in 2018.¹⁰ This suggests that policymakers might need to upscale low-skilled visa quotas in order to generate a significant substitution to the irregular border crossing

openness, but powerful domestic political forces push for greater closure (Hollifield 2004; Jurgens 2010; Castles and Ozkul 2014).

¹⁰ According to the DHS (2019), in 2018 the apprehensions at the Southwest US border reached 396579. For the case of the EU, there was considerable variation in the detections of the irregular border crossing at the green and blue external borders by Frontex, ranging from a minimum of 72437 in 2008 to a maximum of 1800000 in 2015. By excluding the exceptional year 2015 - during which the flow of irregular migrants entering the EU reached unprecedented levels - the decade average would be 183947 (See Frontex Annual Risk Analysis Reports for the Specified Years.).

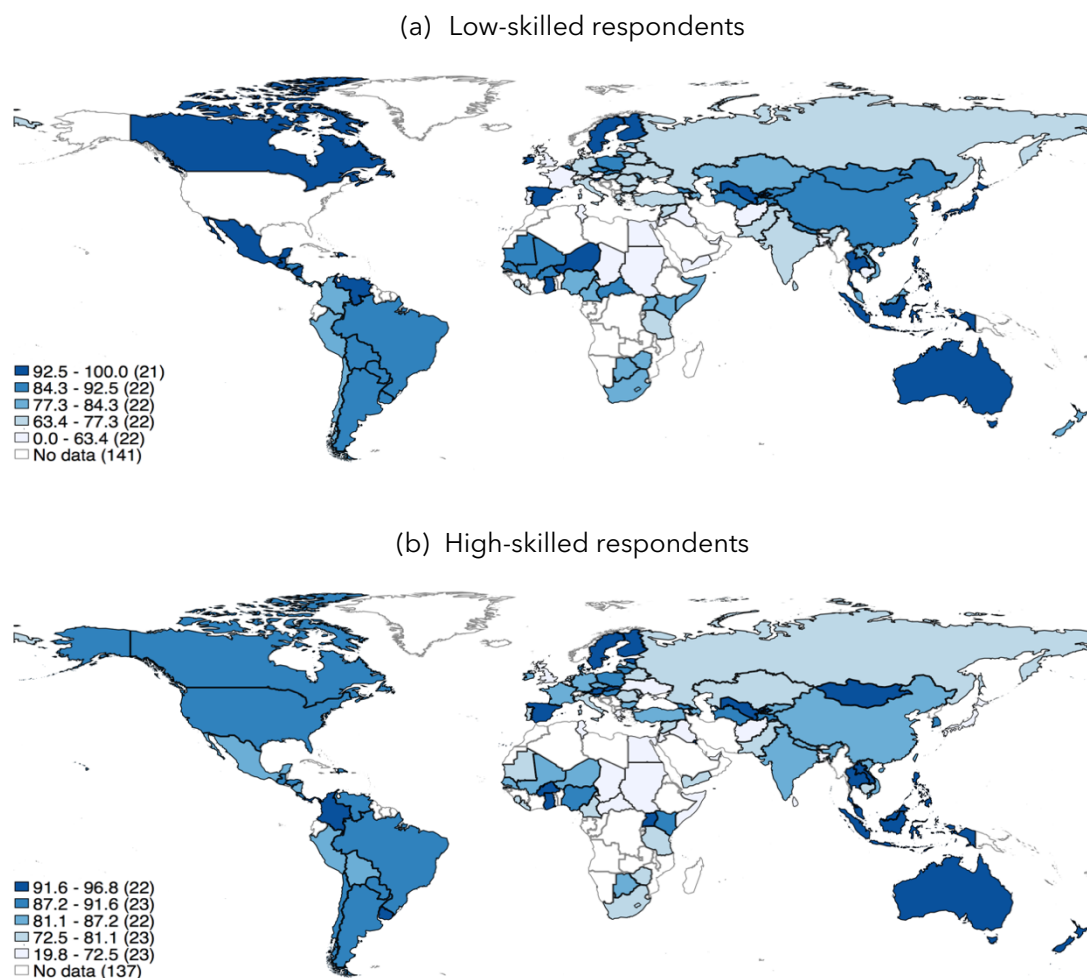
to the US. In addition, destination countries have previously used – and might still in the future – circular migration programs as a policy instrument to persuade origin countries toward cooperating in reducing irregular migration and accelerating readmission procedures (Kunz et al 2011). Nevertheless, generating a shift in the incentive of origin countries toward cooperation would depend on the scale of the circular migration scheme and opportunities offered for legal immigration.

Yet, circular migration is not without costs to destination countries and there are concerns that circular migration schemes may result in unintended consequences on natives' labour market outcomes. The negative effects of immigration whether in the form of temporary/circular or permanent migration on natives' wages and working conditions are generally believed to be concentrated in low-skilled sectors (c.f. Alsos 2013; and Dadush 2014). Prominent studies by Borjas et al (1997), Borjas (2003) and Borjas and Katz (2005) have reinforced the popular view that as a result of migration waves, wages of low-skilled natives in the US have been depressed by several percentage points. Nevertheless, the size of the effect of low-skilled immigration on natives' wages depends on the degree of substitutability between immigrants and native workers in the same skill class. Studies that assume perfect substitutability between the two tend to overestimate the wage dumping effect while, in fact, the empirical evidence points toward imperfect substitutability (c.f. Ottaviano and Peri 2012; and Dadush 2014). In addition to the wage dumping effect, circular migration schemes might reduce natives' employment, particularly when employers abuse the visa/quota category so as to reduce labour costs. Table 1 shows, for instance, that large-sized companies that are not necessarily seasonal employers replaced the domestic labour force with foreign workers under the US H-2B program. Likewise, as indicated in Table 2, some employers filled mid-level tech jobs using the H-1B visa for high-skilled migrant workers.

Like temporary migration programs in general, circular migration entails potential difficulties for destination countries with respect to return compliance problems, including illegal visa overstayers. Policymakers and advocates of circular migration justify circular migration schemes on the premise that people have a natural preference for temporary migration. Wickramasekara (2011) criticises the claim that people prefer to migrate temporarily and argue that there is a lack of empirical evidence to ascertain that a large part of intercontinental migrants opt for short-term migration. However, there is evidence at the level of '*migration intention*' and survey information on migration aspirations shows that not all potential migrants would like to migrate permanently (see for example Esipova et al., 2011). Using the Gallup World Polls (GWP) for 112 countries during the period 2009-2012, we examine the preference of respondents with a desire to migrate for either temporary or permanent migration by skill category, i.e., for low-skilled (those who have completed up to primary education) vs. high-skilled (those with secondary or tertiary education) respondents. The sample in both subgroups is restricted to respondents aged 15-50 years. Migration desires in the GWP are captured by the following questions for temporary (permanent) migration: *"If you had the opportunity, would you like to move temporarily (permanently) to another country or would you prefer staying in this one?"* Figure 1 shows the preference for temporary versus permanent migration among low-skilled (panel a) and high-skilled (panel b) respondents who express a desire to migrate. The latter is defined as the percentage of low-skilled (high-skilled) respondents who respond positively to the question about temporary

migration intentions over the total number of low-skilled (high-skilled) respondents who answered positively to either of the two questions, i.e., who stated either a desire to migrate temporarily or permanently, which are defined as mutually exclusive categories. The figures clearly show that temporary migration desires predominate, and particularly so among high-skilled individuals. The share of high-skilled individuals who prefer to migrate temporarily is over 72% in 23 surveyed countries whereas for the low-skilled, the share of those with a desire to migrate who want to do so only temporarily is over 63% in 22 surveyed countries.

Figure 1. Preference for temporary versus permanent migration by country



Note: Own elaboration based on the Gallup World Poll surveys (waves 2019-2012). The figure shows the estimated share of low-skilled (panel a) and high-skilled (panel b) individuals (in %) who desire to migrate temporarily among all respondents of the same skill category who expressed a desire to migrate - either temporarily or permanently). Low-skilled individuals are those who have completed primary education, whereas high-skilled individuals are those who have obtained more than primary education -including those who obtained secondary and higher education. The sample in both subgroups is restricted to respondents aged 15-50 years.

However, migration desires do not always materialise into actual migration outcomes, and migrants who initially intended to migrate temporarily might end up staying permanently and *vice versa*. For instance, individuals seeking to work for a limited period in the destination country to accumulate savings for a specific purpose before returning to their home country might stay longer than planned. This might be because they did not meet their savings target, or because the

conditions in the home country have changed, or simply because in the meantime they established a family in the destination country. Dustmann (2003) shows that migrants compensate for unanticipated wage fluctuations by adjusting their length of stay. Hence, all else equal, a wage cut (or increase) will weaken (strengthen) the resolve to return. Similarly, Ruhs (2005) noted that temporary schemes always lead to pressures for permanent settlements of at least some of the admitted migrants. Nevertheless, immigration policies in destination countries play a major role in shaping migration outcomes. Typically, permanent settlement outcomes can be minimised through enforcement measures designed to guarantee the return of migrants. Nevertheless, incentive measures to encourage return migration often proved unsuccessful (Zimmerman 2014; Rosenblum et al. 2014; Kreienbrink et al. 2016).¹¹ According to Levinson (2005), for instance, it is estimated that over half of the undocumented population in the US are visa overstayers and violators, whereas in Europe, the undocumented population consists mainly of temporary workers, *au pair*, and rejected asylum seekers.

Historically the experience of early 'guest worker' programs (e.g., the Bracero Program in the US and the Guest Workers in Germany) demonstrated that it was difficult to sustain a system of circular and temporarily planned migration. The Bracero Program generated immigrant networks that facilitated irregular migration from Mexico to the US for a long period (Rosenblum et al. 2012), and the Guest Workers led to permanent settlement in Western Europe (Castles and Ozkul 2014).¹² There are several reasons why the guest worker schemes did not work; *inter alia*, employers did not favour greater turnover in the workforce, especially if they invested in training migrant workers. In addition, jobs were not exclusively for temporary workers. According to Dustmann (1996) the main shortcoming of early Germany's immigration policy, and explanation of its failure to enforce a high rate of return stems from the attempt to fill permanent jobs with temporary migrant workers. As a result, destination countries sometimes decided to transfer certain circular migrants to permanent status (e.g., the regularisation program for Mexican workers in the US in 1986, and the various regularisation programs carried out in Western and Southern Europe). A third reason was related to the migrants' life cycle - migrants were generally fairly young when they first arrived and initially intended to return home after a short period (Castles and Ozkul 2014). But once they built social networks, established their families, and had children who went to destination-country schools, it became much harder to leave. Moreover, limited prospects of being able to re-enter the destination country and an increase in the migration costs and risks due to strict border control can cause a shift in migrants' temporary stay intentions and push them to overstay.¹³

¹¹ In the EU the return rate is about 46%, and 37% in 2016 and 2017 respectively (see COM, 2018) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-returning-illegally-staying-third-country-nationals-directive-634_en.pdf

¹² Bohning (1983) emphasized that the propensity of 'guest workers' to stay or return depends on the conditions in the sending countries, with Italians showing a higher rate of return compared to Turkish migrants.

¹³ See for example Massey et al. (2016).

Is Circular Migration a Win for Origin Countries?

In principle, origin countries benefit from circular migration through monetary and social remittances as well as the transfer of skills. Thus, circular migration presumably will reduce the negative impact of 'brain drain' - the emigration of highly educated and talented students and professionals (Agunias and Newland, 2007; Newland et al 2008; McLaughlin and Münz 2011). Nonetheless, supporters of this view generally do not distinguish between low and higher-skilled migrants: high-skilled migrants typically face fewer admission requirements and are given greater access to permanent settlement vis-à-vis low-skilled migrants. As a consequence, high-skilled migrants mostly remain permanently in rich destination countries, while low-skilled migrants - who are admitted via temporary circular migration schemes - are incentivised or forced to return. In relation to the earlier discussion, the repeated back and forth-migration of high-skilled migrants between destination and origin countries mostly take place *voluntarily* or *spontaneously*. In this subsection, we examine the benefits and costs of circular migration to origin countries while taking into account the existence of different circular migration modalities: *spontaneous* for high-skilled and *regulated* for low-skilled workers.

Spontaneous Circular Migration of High-Skilled Workers

Immigration policies in most destination countries are tilted in favour of skilled migrants, that is, policy packages are designed to attract high-skilled migrants by making it easy for such individuals to get permanent residence and citizenship (Faini 2007; Docquier et al 2007). Notably, circular migration of high-skilled professionals and the decision to travel back and forth between destination and origin countries is primarily spontaneous.¹⁴ As per the existing situation, a large number of high-skilled migrants in the OECD countries come from low and middle-income countries, resulting in a brain drain in origin countries (Docquier et al 2007; Collier 2013; Bailey and Mulder 2017; Betts and Collier 2018). Besides, the emigration of highly skilled workers (doctors, engineers, etc.) is steadily increasing (Docquier & Rapoport 2012; ILO-OECD-World Bank 2015). The net balance for origin countries between benefiting from migration through other channels emanating from the emigration of skilled workers like remittances, brain gain, brain circulation, and losing from brain drain is dubious. The most evident way through which some of the negative externalities of the brain drain can be to some extent offset is the transfer of remittances (Docquier and Rapoport 2012; Gibson and McKenzie 2012). There is established evidence on the economic importance of remittances: in terms of magnitude remittances to developing countries exceed the Official Development Assistance (ODA) by a factor of three (Rath et al 2016). In addition, existing evidence suggests that education has a positive effect on the amount of money sent, conditional on remitting i.e., high-skilled migrants remit more -conditional on remitting (c.f. Bollard et al 2011; Bredtmann et al 2019).

¹⁴ In support of this contention, there is little evidence of regulated circular migration programs and employers in the health sector will have little interest in time-limited recruitment, especially when they make a significant upfront investment in achieving the recognition of foreign qualifications and in integration measures (Weber and Frenzel 2014).

However, cross-national studies examining the relationship between remittances and economic performance are inconclusive. On the one hand, remittances are positively correlated with various types of household investment and have poverty-alleviating and consumption-smoothing effects for recipient households (c.f. Taylor et al 2003; Adams and Page 2005; Woodruff and Zenteno 2007). On the other hand, existing evidence on the impact of remittances on economic growth is mixed, with some studies finding a positive relationship (Giuliano and Ruiz-Arranz 2009), and others find no relationship or even a negative relationship (Gapen et al 2009). Additionally, remittances have been found to hurt exchange rates and the export sector through the so-called Dutch disease (Amuedo-Dorantes 2004; Lartey et al. 2012).

Brain gain argument is the second channel that theoretically can reduce the negative effect of brain drain in the origin countries. The brain gain argument presupposes that the prospect of migration increases the individual incentives to invest in human capital, and this eventually boosts the domestic average human capital level (Fan and Stark 2007). However, where the rate of graduation of skilled people is supply-constrained, and the rate of outmigration is high, as is likely the case in the poorest countries, brain gain is unlikely to offset the direct drain of skilled people (Collier 2013; Betts and Collier 2018). According to Docquier (2014) the brain-gain effect, among others, could depend on the extent of emigration (relative to the population left behind) e.g., for countries with a large population like China and India, the emigration rate is low, and the brain gain offsetting effect is expected to be significant.

The third channel that might ameliorate the negative externalities caused by the emigration of high-skilled nationals is brain circulation or brain linkages; these types of beneficial ties between destination and origin countries are directly related to circular migration, whereby highly skilled professionals who gain footing in the destination countries engage with their home countries through business visits or short term stays, without returning permanently.¹⁵ In a globally connected world, the departure of skilled nationals is not necessarily a net drain to sending countries, as brain circulation and brain linkages generate positive gains and contribute to home countries' development. Thus, the emigration of high-skilled professional can generate positive network externalities (Docquier and Rapoport 2012), such as through facilitating trade links and capital flows between their destination and origin countries (Felbermayr and Jung, 2009; Shine and Moon 2018), or transferring technology and knowledge either directly through brain circulation or indirectly through networks (Choudhury, 2016; Filatatochev et al., 2011; Fackler et al., 2019).

The fourth channel through which sending countries could gain from the circular migration of high-skilled individuals concerns the so-called 'social remittances'. A relatively recent strand of economic literature has looked into migration-induced transfer of norms and values. Overall, the existing evidence points at a correlation between the values and norms characterizing host countries and those of the left-behind families of migrants abroad or those of the community after migrants' return.

¹⁵ Shine and Moon (2018) define brain circulation as a permanent return of those who travelled abroad to gain education or experience. Also, brain circulation or brain linkage is often referred to as Diaspora linkages.

The seminal work of Spilimbergo (2009) shows evidence that individuals educated abroad in democratic countries promote democracy in their home countries. Additionally, Batista and Vicente (2011) and Docquier et al. (2011) demonstrate that migration can improve the quality of domestic institutions, whereby the strength of the effect increases with the migrants' level of education and varies with their sorting across destinations (Beine and Sekkat 2013). Tuccio et al. (2019) controlling for potential selection effects, find that return migration, particularly from the West, has boosted the demand for political and social change in Morocco. Similarly, Barsbai et al. (2017) find that Moldovans who migrated in 1990s to Western Europe become less supportive to the communist party compared to those who migrated to Russia. Nevertheless, the emigration of pro-democratic change supporters can stall political reform, as this will decrease the political bargaining power of pro-liberal reformers - an example being the mass migration from Cuba in 1980.

Furthermore, Lodigiani and Salomone (2015) show that international migration increases female political empowerment in countries of origin conditional on the initial female parliamentary participation in both origin and destination countries. In terms of voting behaviour, Chauvet and Mercier (2014) show that localities with greater shares of returnees from non-African countries are more likely to have higher electoral participation rates in Mali. Several studies also show that emigration can be associated with a reduction in corruption back home (see e.g., Ivlevs and King, 2017; Höckel et al. 2018). In addition, this literature has also focused on migration-induced transfers of other types of norms and values like fertility decisions (Beine et al. 2013; Mountford and Rapoport 2011; Bertoli and Marchetta 2015), gender equality norms (Tuccio and Wahba 2018; Diabate and Mesplé-Somps 2019), civic engagement and pro-social behaviour (Nikolova et al. 2017). Finally, return migration has also been shown to boost entrepreneurial attitudes at home (Piracha and Vadean, 2010, Wahba and Zenou, 2012).

To reap the fruits of *spontaneous* circular migration of high-skilled nationals, origin countries provide (financial or other) incentives to persuade them to return home, either for short or long periods. For example, in Taiwan, the creation of IT research infrastructure and the opening of active recruitment opportunities have attracted a growing cohort of mobile Taiwan-born, US-educated engineers who commute regularly across the Pacific to work in the US and Taiwan (Saxenian 2002). Similarly, in China the creation of an Information Technology (IT) industry and a conducive environment for business encouraged the temporary return of Chinese-born engineers from the Silicon Valley. Initially, China targeted permanent return but the lack of state resources for incentivising permanent return led the government to offer temporary or part-time options for its skilled professionals, encouraging them to contribute while living abroad (Zweig et al. 2004). In India, the establishment of Bangalore Software and Technology Parks, coupled with the take-off of the Indian economy were instrumental in promoting brain circulation and linkages (Shine and Moon 2018).¹⁶

¹⁶ South Korea was able to recruit back many ethnic Korean scientists living in the US after creating government-endowed, public sector R&D institutions, and by offering skilled professionals additional incentives e.g., visa-free entry, longer stays, rights to work and to buy and sell properties (Yoon 1992). To attract back its skilled scientists the Belgian government created a special structural funding

Evidence from China, Taiwan, and South Korea shows that short-term programs can be more effective than permanent return programs. Not only because short-term programs require relatively fewer resources but also some migrants might be interested to engage in their home countries' development without necessarily returning permanently, for instance, in China, the permanent settlement IT recruitment offers resulted in undersubscribed programs (Shine and Moon 2018).¹⁷ Essentially, economic opportunities and incentives are vital in promoting circular migration of national talents who have upgraded their skills abroad.¹⁸ The literature identifies various measures that can promote circularity of high-skilled migrants and facilitate their engagement in the origin country development: allowing dual citizenship and more flexible visa regimes, granting political and private property rights tax exemptions and reducing transaction costs for businesses (Klapper et al 2007; Solé et al 2016). While these policies are to be promoted by origin countries, destination countries can adopt policies or implement programs that encourage high-skilled emigrants to engage with and contribute to their home countries' development on a temporary circulation basis. An example of such programs is the TRQN Project shown in Table 2.¹⁹ The TRQN Project aimed to match highly qualified migrants in the Netherlands or other EU countries, with public and private sector institutions in origin countries, for short-term assignments. An initial assessment of the project by Leith and Rivas (2015) suggests that better outcomes were found with technology transfer assignments compared to management or capacity building assignments.

Regulated Circular Migration of Low-Skilled Workers

Typically, the circular migration of low-skilled workers is *regulated* through bilateral agreements with legal provisions to guarantee their return after a temporary work period. The contribution of low-skilled circular migrants to origin countries' development result mainly from the financial resources they bring back either through remittances or directly when they return home as well as the transfer of norms and values necessary for promoting functional institutions. Low-skilled migrants might also transfer the skills learned abroad and foster the adoption of new technologies. Having been exposed to the way businesses work in other contexts, migrants may also help to disseminate the 'good practices' from their experience abroad (Black et al 2003). They might as well contribute to origin country development by investing the savings earned abroad in new businesses. However,

program for top researchers called the Methusalem Program
<https://www.fwo.be/nl/pers/persberichten/2006/methusalem-programma-structurele-financiering/>.

¹⁷ Permanent return is more likely to take place in countries that had robust economic growth coupled with an adequate scientific and business environment (Klapper et al 2007).

¹⁸ Besides, institutional conditions in the origin countries can encourage or hinder greater circular migration between home and origin countries. Studies show that returnees and Diaspora are more likely to invest in countries with a low level of corruption and have well-functioning public institutions (Westcott and Brinkerhoff 2006; Bratsberg et al 2007).

¹⁹ In the US, the Biden Return of Talent Act (S. 1684) enacted in 2007 allows immigrants to return temporarily to the country of origin if that country is engaged in post-conflict or natural disaster reconstruction, and for other purposes.

the potential development effect of low-skilled circular migrants will depend on the scale of CMSs; thus, the expected development impact of circular migration might be overestimated given the small-scale nature of recent schemes. Moreover, the new skills acquired by migrants while working overseas would be economically beneficial if there are employment opportunities to absorb the flow of labour - particularly, given the contemporary demographic trends in developing countries and the prevailing high unemployment rates.

Nonetheless, efforts to align CMSs design and implementation with the Global Compact common benchmarks for orderly migration - in particular Objective 21 and Objective 22 - might boost the expected development impact of low-skilled CMSs in origin countries. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, Objective 21 calls for *the sustainable reintegration of returnees or for the returning circular migrants*, whereas Objective 22 calls for *establishing mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits*. Low-skilled migrants might face reintegration challenges upon return and, in case they migrated to countries with access to the social security system, low-skilled migrants might run the risk of losing benefits and rights associated with mandatory contribution. Regarding the sustainable reintegration of returnees, returning migrants might be better placed in the home country labour market because of the experience gained overseas, but their successful reintegration will depend on keeping the home network alive as well as on the demand for their skills. Hence, in order to capitalise upon the skills that returnees have acquired abroad; origin countries need to make efforts to reintegrate returnees in the labour market. In the Philippines, the government prioritises the reintegration of returning migrants by giving them training and access to credit to establish a business (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). The portability of vested social benefits between host and origin countries (GC objective 22) is important not only for the migrant protection and welfare but also for boosting the scale of returnees' business investment and contribution to origin country development. As per the status quo, the portability of social security benefits - whether full or partial - depends on whether the origin and host countries have concluded bilateral or multilateral social security arrangements to pay (export) benefits overseas.²⁰ In most cases, poorer countries are not in a position to engage in bilateral or multilateral negotiations regarding the social security for their emigrants mainly because they have weak social security provisions and lack the needed administrative capacity (Sabates-Wheeler et al 2011). Work by Avato et al (2010) shows that it is predominately North-North migrants who enjoy access to and portability of social benefits where 98% of migrants are covered by social security agreements. Nevertheless, there are few exceptional cases like Morocco, Algeria and Turkey who managed to cover 89, 87, and 68% of their emigrants, respectively (*ibid*).

²⁰ The EU regulations on the coordination of social security systems constitute the most complete and extensive multilateral agreement in existence, applying to all 27 States Member of the EU as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (Vanhercke et al. 2017).

Is Circular Migration a Win for Migrant Workers?

Likewise, the impact of circular migration on immigrants depends on the circular migration model under consideration (regulated vs. spontaneous), which is in turn related to immigrants' skill category (low vs. high-skilled). In this subsection, we will review literature evidence and discuss the impact of circular migration on low-skilled workers who move as part of regulated temporary migration schemes. Nevertheless, some of the impacts might equally be related to high-skilled migrants, particularly in the early migration stages before naturalisation or citizenship acquisition.

On the one hand, the proponents of circularity claim that many migrants only want to work abroad for a limited time, in order to accumulate capital and improve their welfare upon return (Agunias and Newland, 2007). Therefore, the chance to migrate legally through CMSs for aspiring migrants is superior to irregular migration, as it reduces the costs and risks of migration. Additionally, temporary employment programs enable migrant labourers to earn wages, send remittances, and improve their welfare back home (e.g., by investing in children's education, medical treatment, or starting small businesses). Furthermore, the skills acquired in the host country allow migrants to increase the return on their human capital in the home country (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). Several empirical studies confirm that there is a wage premium for returning. For example, Barrett and O'Connell (2001) show that men who emigrated and returned to Ireland earned on average 10% more than those who never left. Controlling for the double selection to which returning migrants are subject; that is the selection from the non-random nature of migration, and the selection to participate in the labour market, Wahba (2007) shows that Egyptians with international migration experience will earn on average 38% more than those who never emigrated. However, these studies did not estimate the wage premium by skill levels as there is scarce evidence showing that CMSs offer training opportunities to facilitate upward occupational mobility for low-skill workers. Contrarily, Basok (2003) - examining seasonal migration programs between Mexico and Canada - found that returning year after year to the same employer had a stagnating effect on migrants' careers in the destination country, and that migrants were not offered training to upgrade their skills.

On the other hand, opponents of temporary (circular) migration express concerns over the extent to which the rights or the preferences of the migrant workers are protected and observed (Wickramasekara 2011; Cassarino 2013; Castles and Ozkul 2014; Babar and Gardner 2016). Circular migrants, particularly low-skilled, face substantial risks and vulnerabilities, and many of these vulnerabilities are directly tied to the temporariness and the circularity that characterises their migration cycle. The overview of CMSs for low-skilled workers (Table 1) in particular indicates several flaws and prevalence of abuse and exploitation in these schemes such as: lower wages compared to native workers, restricted access to public services and social protection, poor working conditions, confiscation of passports (e.g., GCC *Kafala* system), etc. Temporary migrants are often disadvantaged in destination countries due to information asymmetries and monopsony power of employers. In most CMSs, work permits, and visas are tied to a work contract with a specific employer, thus, migrants are not free to choose or switch employers. By its own nature, CMSs limit migrant's job choices and their option to change employer, hence tying them

to a structure of dependency and asymmetric power with the employer. As a result, migrants who are residing in the destination countries on the basis of a work permit may lose not only their work but also their right to stay, if they complain against the employers' exploitation. In addition, many of the circular migrants, who are recruited in origin countries to work in the destination countries, lack full information on host countries' labour market regulations like minimum wages, benefits, and other rights for workers. These information gaps make circular migrants vulnerable to exploitation by employers in terms of wages and observing favourable working conditions (Sabates-Wheeler et al 2011). Furthermore, the social and psychological costs of circular migration are high due to the frequent separation of migrants from their families at home. Finally, and as discussed earlier migrants might face a limited access to and portability of social benefits.

Box 2. Key Insights: Circular Migration Triple Win Claim

Impact on Destination

- Fill labour shortages in host countries and provide businesses with flexible and less expensive workforce while enabling policymakers to ease public hostility against immigration.
- If kept under control, circular migrants will come only for work purposes and will not overstay in the host country or free ride the welfare system.
- Restricting circular migration increases the likelihood of irregular immigration and overstaying the visas in destination countries.
- Legal immigration paths offered via circular migration schemes form an alternative to irregular immigration. Also, destination countries can use circular migration as a policy lever to persuade origin countries towards cooperating in controlling irregular immigration and readmission procedures.
- While destination countries seem to have great expectations and interests to foster circular migration, these expectations do not coincide with the scale of actual implementation. At present, the size of circular schemes is small compared to early guest-workers programs or compared to the number of irregular border crossings.
- Evidence from guest workers schemes has shown that temporary migrant recruitment programs run the risk of transformation into permanent settlement, particularly when measures to enforce return compliance are not effective.
- Circular migration schemes may lead to wage dumping effect and increase natives' unemployment particularly when employers abuse visa categories to reduce labour costs.

Impact on Origin

- Impact depends on immigrants' skills category: Low-skilled immigrants are normally admitted in the destination countries temporarily whereas high-skilled immigrants are mostly given access to permanent settlement.
- Reducing the brain drain is an important alleged win from circular migration. The claim, however, contradicts the fact that immigration countries are competing to attract talents and tend to offer skilled immigrants permanent residence status.
- The repeated back and forth migration of high-skilled immigrants between destination and origin countries take place spontaneously. Origin countries gains from brain circulation transfer of skills and trade links and knowledge inflows.
- Recruitment of low-skilled workers in circular migration schemes alleviated unemployment pressure in source countries. Yet, the potential development effect is overestimated given the small size of contemporary schemes.
- Financial Remittances sent home by migrants contribute crucially to household investment, alleviate poverty and have income smoothing effects on recipient households. However, there is mixed evidence on the impact of remittances on source countries' economic growth.
- Social remittances and the transfer of norms and values have positive impact on institutions quality.
- Evidence on the extent to which remittances, brain gain, and circulation offset the brain drain effect is dubious.

Impact on Migrants

- Legal migration path, temporary employment opportunities with higher wages compared to home country wage level.
- Skill and human capital enhancement (in case training opportunities are offered) and a wage premium for returning.
-
- Circular migrants may remain stuck in low-waged employment and face labour market re-integration difficulties when returning home.
- Exposed to exploitation and discrimination due to information asymmetries and employers' monopsony power (employment contracts are employers tied).

Discussion and Conclusion

Circular migration, both as a concept and as a policy tool, has recently been in the spotlight of the migration management debate. A number of international organizations and bodies appear to have high expectations about circular migration schemes (CMSs) and call for their promotion. For instance, in 2018, the GCM proposed actions to develop flexible labour mobility schemes in the form of 'circular migration'. In this review, we looked at the various definitions and conceptualisation of circular migration distinguishing between two modes of circularity, connected to migrants' skill category: *spontaneous* or '*de facto*' circular migration generally feasible for high-skilled immigrants who mostly have the option to obtain permanent residency in the destination countries; and *managed (regulated)* circular migration in the form of CMSs typically designed to recruit low-skilled and low wage migrant workers. This distinction is important given the circumstances surrounding these modes of circular migration and sets of migrants are different, and thus have correspondingly different impacts and policy implications. We then reviewed circular migration regimes focusing on low-skilled migrants' recruitment schemes based on a global mapping exercise, not only of historical '*guest workers programs*' but also of recent schemes. The overarching objective of the exercise is to identify CMSs with good or undesirable practices in reference to GCM common benchmarks for orderly migration as well as international norms in terms of migrant workers' protection (see Box 1 above). Next, we discussed the 'triple win' claims and the benefits from circular migration to all migration actors: destination countries, origin countries, and the migrants (see Box 2 above). In this section, we discuss the caveats concerning circular migration and the extent to which circular migration schemes are able to meet the 'triple win' expectations. We also debate the future prospects of circular migration and conclude with a number of recommendations to address the drawbacks of circular migration and to reduce the gap between circular migration 'triple win' optimism and its actual realisation.

Although the literature, as it stands now, does not provide conclusive evidence on the impact of circular migration on development, there are overly optimistic expectations among policymakers about its development potential – exemplified by the 'triple win' claim. This optimism stems partly from the premise that people have a preference for temporary migration and partly from the interest of the destination countries to meet business demand for flexible labour while simultaneously addressing domestic calls for strict control over immigration and external borders. Not surprisingly, the 'triple win' claim of circular migration schemes has been hotly debated in contemporary migration literature. Adherents argue that it is possible to design circular migration schemes that are mutually beneficial for migrants, sending, and destination countries. While some of the alluded benefits to circular migration can be real, critics argue that such schemes might not be compatible with the liberal democratic framework and are mainly tailored to satisfy the economic and political mandate of destination countries and not necessarily the rights of workers, or the developmental needs of sending countries. Based on the review in this paper, existing evidence suggests that benefits to origin countries and migrant workers indeed appear to be exaggerated.

It can be said that the reasons behind the disparity between circular schemes 'triple win' expectations and realisation are broadly related to schemes design or to the flaws and deviations that accompany the implementation process e.g., fraudulent recruitment practices, paying lower wages or not observing the minimum work conditions and workers' rights spelled out in the agreed contracts. Caveats pertaining to circular migration schemes design include: the violation of migrant workers' rights mostly due to employer-tied contracts, lack of social protection, and lack of mechanisms to export social security entitlements. These caveats can negatively affect migrant workers' earnings and the amounts of remittances sent, and consequently reduce the aggregate development impact in origin countries. However, a central contributing factor to the 'expectation-realisation' gap of circular migration schemes is the small-scale nature of contemporary schemes. Very few people are involved in recent schemes to have a tangible impact at the aggregate level in origin, as well as destination countries.

The foregoing discussion suggests a need to expand the scale of circular migration schemes in order to have a considerable developmental impact in origin countries, meet labour demand in destination countries, and curb irregular migration. Upscaling circular schemes, however, will depend not only on the political will, but also on the anticipated demand for the different skills. Yet, it might be difficult to confidently forecast how the demand for low-skilled migrant workers will evolve in the future. Although based on the ageing populations and potential structural labour shortages in the major destination countries, one would expect a structural increase in the demand of migrant workers. Still, the demand for low-skilled migrant workers is difficult to predict as they are affected by many factors such as technological progress, natives' unemployment level, and the general macroeconomic state in the destination and origin countries. Furthermore, the current COVID-19 pandemic creates exceptional circumstances bringing about a great deal of economic uncertainty affecting both the supply of and demand for immigration. On the one hand, people become more cautious and risk-averse, thus less inclined to emigrate. On the other hand, more people might be forced to leave their home country due to the economic consequences of the pandemic e.g., a rise in the unemployment level in the home country. Eventually, high unemployment in the destination countries will increase the political pressure to prioritize hiring the unemployed natives, which will in turn depress the demand for low-skilled immigrant workers. The net impact of COVID-19 on the demand for immigration will likely vary by sector, skill level, and over time. For instance, the COVID-19 will presumably cause an upward shift in the demand for doctors, nurses, and elderly care workers. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic (due to population ageing and longevity), the structural labour shortages for health-care occupations remained among the highest in developed countries. After all, the long-term effect of COVID-19 on mobility and immigration will depend on how the pandemic unfolds, the pace of economic recovery, and how immigration is managed. For instance, closing borders in the aftermath of the economic crisis of the 1970s has contributed to transforming guest-workers schemes to permanent immigration. On the other hand, the Great Recession of 2007-8 left the immigration rate almost unchanged.

Undoubtedly, with an economic crisis and the resulting unemployment insecurity in destination countries due to COVID-19, anti-immigration sentiments will increase.

Thus, circular migration schemes might gain more ground over permanent immigration policy targets. Under this scenario, policymakers might opt for the upscaling of circular migration schemes. Further, adopting certain improvements and measures - in light of the flaws noted - can improve the expected impact of circular migration schemes and make them more acceptable from a liberal point of view. These measures can include, *inter alia*, aligning the schemes design and implementation with the Global Compact common benchmarks for orderly migration - in particular, Objective 21 (sustainable reintegration of returnees) and Objective 22 (establishing a mechanism for the portability of social security entitlements), the possibility of changing employers, and provisions for skills training for low-skilled circular migration.

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Annex

Table (1) Overview of Circular Migration Schemes for low-skilled workers

Program description	Countries involved in the program	Period/and data on recruitments	Area of concern/undesirable outcome	Deviation from GC objective(s) for safe, orderly, and regular migration/policy instrument/best practice
<p>(1) Spain seasonal workers program (SWP): AKA Spanish Cartaya Model of Circulation. Seasonal workers enter Spain under the general program of foreign workers (Contingente de Trabajadores Extranjeros). The program is annually adjusted by province and sector according to need. Foreign workers are hired for 9 months and required to sign a binding commitment to return to their country of origin at the end of the season. Departed temporary workers had to register with Spanish consulates within 1 month after their return to origin country. After this, they were permitted to participate in the temporary program again without going through the original selection process (Newland et al. 2008). After four years of obeying the rules, the migrant gains access to permanent work authorization (European Migration Network 2010). At this point, circularity becomes migrant choice.</p>	Spain, Morocco, Colombia and Romania.	<p>1999-2008</p> <p>The province of Huelva in Spain had the largest implementation of SWP; the number of workers hired reached around 40000 by 2008. A relatively small number of temporary/circular migrants were recruited in other provinces, for example, in Lleida province between 2002 and 2008 the number of annual contracts did not exceed few thousands. A detailed descriptive analysis of this scheme can be</p>	<p>Initially, migrants' rate of return to their origin countries was very low (e.g., in 2005 only 5% of 1200 participants returned home). The selection process then changed only women less than 40 who had children were accepted in the program - and in 2007 85% of 4563 workers returned voluntarily (Newland et al. 2008).</p> <p>Temporary/circular migrants do not have to contribute to pension funds. They are not allowed to have sick leave (Zapata-Barrero et al. 2012)</p>	<p>Objective (6) Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.</p> <p>Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits.</p>

		found in Plewa (2007); Lopez-Sala (2016).		
<p>(2) Poland -Germany Seasonal Migration</p> <p>Migration from Poland to Germany in the late 1980s was mainly illegal circular migration (Morokvasic, 2004). Following the fall of Iron Curtain in Europe the spontaneous circular migration between Poland and Germany was institutionalized by signing a bilateral agreement in 1990 but adopted in July 1999 (Fiałkowska and Piechowska, 2016).</p> <p>The political transition in Poland entailed relatively high unemployment. The agreement with Germany has therefore been considered an instrument to fight structural unemployment. Further, the agreement regulated the historical temporary labour flows between the two countries until 2011 when the probationary period for the Poles to access the German labour market passed.²¹ The bilateral agreement allowed the legalization of Poles work in Germany and thus also became a tool to fight illegal migration.</p> <p>Migrant recruitment was designed to take place in two ways - via anonymous job offers and named job offers that target the residents of Polish regions with high unemployment rates. The job offers had to</p>	Poland, Germany	<p>1990-2011.</p> <p>The number of seasonal workers in agriculture grew steadily through the 1990s and reached 300,000 in the year of Polish accession to the EU (Kępińska and Stark, 2013).</p>	<p>According to Fiałkowska and Piechowska (2016), there are gaps between policy objectives design and outcomes with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal channels via migration networks predominated the recruitment process. • As a result, the Polish government did not have the upper hand in managing the migration flow and influencing the recruitment process. • Polish regions with higher numbers of seasonal workers were not necessarily those with the highest unemployment rate, rather, recruitments took place in regions with relatively lower unemployment rate but have strong migration networks and intense contacts with Germany. • Not all employers complied with the 	<p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p>

²¹Poland became EU member in 2004 but some old member states like Germany put restrictions on labour market access for the 10 new candidates.

<p>be authorized by both German and Polish labour offices. The latter delivered the 'named offers to specific Polish workers or conducted recruitment in cases of anonymous offers. Authorized offers guaranteed access to special visas with work permits with an administration fee for a single or multiple entry visas (Kępińska and Stark, 2013). In practice, however, migrants' recruitments mostly happened through informal networks or with middlemen who facilitate these contracts.</p> <p>Seasonal migrants worked mostly in agriculture in the western parts of Germany for 3 - 6 months. The agreement did not specify the sectors for Pole workers but in 1993 the possibility to work in the construction sector had been excluded. (Fiałkowska and Piechowska, 2016). Migrants worked mainly on agriculture because of the high labour shortages in this sector, the short terms of employment contracts.</p>			<p>minimal conditions of accommodation spelled out in the contract between the seasonal workers and employers.</p>	
<p>(3) Switzerland Repeated seasonal employment: in 1969 Switzerland had 149000 seasonal workers (mainly from Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia).</p> <p>In the beginning, workers are granted permits for less than 1 year, with an option to reapply in the following years.</p> <p>At a later stage, workers apply for a 5-year annually renewable permit and are allowed</p>	<p>Switzerland, Italy, Spain and Yugoslavia</p>	<p>1960s-1970s</p> <p>In 1969 Switzerland had 149000 seasonal workers. Castles and Kosack 1973)</p>	<p>Circular migration program led to permanent settlement (social, cultural and political consequences for the receiving country).</p>	

to bring their families after 3 years; and to change to long-term permits after 10 years (Castles and Kosack 1973).				
<p>(4) Canada Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP): Migrants work between 6 weeks to 8 months and return in the following year provided their employers want to employ them (Newland et al. 2008). Employers are supposed to pay wages equivalent to Canadian nationals, provide health insurance and accommodation, and pay part of the transportation costs from origin countries. SWAP migrants are not allowed to bring family members or apply for permanent residency (Wickramasekara 2011). SWAP considered by many as a model for temporary migration programs due to its high degree of circularity (Basok 2007).</p> <p>- Low rates of non-return are one of the main reasons why the SAWP has earned an international reputation as a model of Temporary Migrant Workers Program (TMWP) (Basok 2007, and Preibisch 2010)</p>	Canada, Caribbean countries, Mexico	<p>1966 - (Caribbean countries) 1974 - (Mexico)</p> <p>This scheme is ongoing</p> <p>During the period 2002-2013 a total of 269960 workers entered Canada with permits under SAWP category (yearly average 22497). Source: Citizenship & Immigration Canada, RDM Preliminary 2013 Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers' restricted mobility, social and political rights, and excessive employer control, (Basok 2007). Cases of migrants' discrimination and exploitation have been reported (Preibisch 2010). 	Objective 5: Action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.
<p>(5) Canada Low-skilled Pilot Project (LSPP): The project issues work permits of up to 2 years for workers at skill level C and D (secondary school graduate or those have completed job-related training). Workers have been employed in the agribusiness industry, construction section and oil industry.</p>	Canada, developing countries	<p>2002 -2010.</p> <p>During the period 2002-2013 a total of 150506 workers entered Canada with permits under LSPP category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No flexibility to change employer makes migrants vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation, particularly as employers have the power to dismiss and 	Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.

<p>The project issues work permits of up to 2 years, for migrants to obtain subsequent authorization to work, they must return to their origin countries at the end of the contract.</p> <p>Work permits are employer-specific, and in order to prevent settlement visas are granted for single applicants (Preibisch 2010).</p> <p>In 2010, the authority extended the low-skilled pilot project (renamed to Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) expanded to include 200 'low-skilled' professions in-demand to meet employers' needs. As a result of these policies, the numbers of temporary foreign workers entering the Canada increased annually from 2002 to 2011, eventually leading to more temporary foreign workers entering the country than landed immigrants (Foster, 2012).</p>		<p>(yearly average 12542).</p> <p>Source: Citizenship & Immigration Canada, RDM Preliminary 2013 Data</p>	<p>deport workers (Preibisch 2010).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to SAWP, cases of discrimination and exploitation have been reported (Preibisch 2010). 	
<p>(6) South Korea Industrial Trainee System (ITS)</p> <p>- A recruitment scheme managed by a private interest group (Korean Federation of Small and Medium Business). The government created visa category D-3. Equal treatment to ethnic and non-ethnic Koreans.</p> <p>Foreign workers were considered as trainees, and thus denied important labour rights and often experience inhumane treatment (Kim 2008).</p> <p>Industrial trainees are low-skilled contracted</p>	<p>South Korea, China, Philippine (Chinese, Filipinos and ethnic Korean migrants)</p>	<p>1992 -2007</p>	<p>Incidents of human rights abuses.</p>	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.</p>

workers; they are allowed to stay for a maximum of 3 years. 'Industrial trainees' were paid less than existing irregular migrants and were not allowed to change their workplace. 'Industrial trainees' became irregular by leaving their designated jobs or by overstaying (Castles and Ozkul 2014) In 1995 the government enacted a new act for the protection and control of foreign industrial trainees (Kim 2008).				
(7) South Korea Employment Permit System (EPS) EPS is viewed as a liberal program compared to ITS or the foreign worker policies in other Asian countries (Kim 2008). The program recognizes the labour rights of migrants and migrants are offered the same wage as national workers (Castles and Ozkul 2014). South Korea Government and sending countries control the labour recruitment process. EPS are offered an initial permit of 3 years, that can renew once for additional one year and 10 months (so that migrants total stay period will be less than 5 years (the required period for citizenship acquisition)	South Korea, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam and Uzbekistan	2003-2010	After the program ended up to 40% of EPS workers stayed irregularly (Kyung 2013). Employer wanted to retain efficient workers who have learned the job (Castles and Ozkul 2014)	

<p>(8) South Korea Faithful Foreign Workers Program</p> <p>Designed to encourage illegally residing migrants (those who have overstayed after the end of EPS) to return and re-emigrate legally.</p> <p>The program allows them to return to origin country for at least 3 months, after this they will be entitled to work contract renewal. Job changing possibilities, however, remains restrictive - they have to work with the same employer (Castles and Ozkul 2014).</p>	<p>South Korea, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam and Uzbekistan</p>	<p>2012- to date</p>	<p>Migrants have to work with the same employer (thus, if they had experienced abuse from former employer migrants, they would have less incentive to return).</p>	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p>
<p>(9) Germany Guest-workers Program:</p> <p>Initially Guest Workers Program aimed to recruit workers for a limited period on rotation principle²², while restricting their labour rights and family reunion so that few would settle permanently. Labour source countries are Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. Though Guest workers program was meant to be temporary on rotational basis, but many migrant workers stayed especially from Turkey (Jurgens 2010).</p>	<p>Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia</p>	<p>1955-1973</p> <p>In Germany by mid 1973 the total number of guest workers recruitments reached 2.6 million (Castels 1986)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The circular migration program led to permanent settlement. • Restricting labour rights. • Trained workers had to leave after a certain period - when employers wanted to retain them (Castles and Ozkul 2014). • Guest workers are usually tied to one job and employer by contracts and visas. 	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.</p>

²² Like circular migration schemes, the guest worker system was based on the 'rotation principle,' whereby workers were to work for a limited time, and then return to their countries.

<p>(10) US Bracero Programme A major temporary worker programme – based on an agreement between the US and Mexico, it started as a war emergency measure but continued after the end of WW11, recruitment is mainly for agricultural sector.</p>	US, Mexico	<p>1942-1964</p> <p>Admissions under the Bracero Program ranged from annual levels over 450,000 in 1950s to 200,000 working at the closing years. During its 22 years total recruitment involved 4.5 million people (Meissner 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor enforcement resulted in widespread abuse of worker. A major issue was that the 10% of wages withheld to ensure return was never paid back to workers by the Mexican government (Wickramasekara 2011). • Bracero Program displaced local/native workers out of farm jobs by depressing their wages (Martin 2007). • Bracero Program served to sustain networks that have continued to facilitate irregular flows from Mexico to US (Meissner 2004). 	<p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration.</p> <p>Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits.</p>
<p>(11) US H-2B Program (non-agricultural guest workers) The H-2B visa program allows US employers to hire seasonal/temporary workers (non-agricultural work) with temporary foreign workers. The popularity of this guest workers program is shown by the rapid increased in number admitted (growing by an average of 12.4 % each year since 2013 (Huennekens 2018)). Guest workers in the top five categories (landscaping, forestry, housekeeping,</p>	US, (Most likely: Mexicans, Caribbeans and Latinos).	<p>1986 – to date. 66000 annual visa cap. A bill is passed to raise the cap to 85000 visas annually in 2016 and 2017 (Huennekens 2018). The total number of certified H-2B workers in 2018 was 147,592 (ibid)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by large-sized companies that are not necessarily seasonal employers. Replacing domestic labour forces with foreign workers. US employers often partner with foreign recruiters who resort to fraud and exploitation of guest workers e.g., holding them captive and confiscating visa 	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work. Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p>

<p>carnival workers and meat packing make up 69% of total admission (ibid). H-2B workers generally fill positions requiring little or no education or advanced skills. There is some element of circularity as workers are appointed for a max of 10 months and can return for work in the following year (Wickramasekar 2011).</p>			<p>documents (Wickramasekar 2011).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many workers get indebted –often the recruiter himself is the lender at interest rates of up to 15% (Bauer 2007). • Guest workers were paid less than the national average (0.7 – 3.19% less than national average (Huennekens 2018)) • If the employer fire H 2B worker, the workers cannot seek another employer and have limited time before losing their legal status (Wickramasekar 2011). 	<p>Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration.</p> <p>Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle.</p> <p>Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perception of migration.</p>
<p>(12) Gulf Cooperation Council GCC System</p> <p>Long-standing temporary labour migration regimes Started with oil discovery in 1970s and the associated increase demand for low-skilled workers. Migration to GCC countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman) is traditionally governed by the “<i>Kafala</i>” or sponsorship system, which is characterized by a highly unequal relationship between foreign workers and their sponsor (Babar and Gardner 2016).</p>	<p>Gulf countries, South East, and South Asia countries, and North African countries.</p>	<p>1970s – to date</p> <p>Migration to the GCC States comprises the third largest migratory destination (Babar and Gardner 2016)...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unequal power dynamics between the “Kafeel”/employer and migrant workers result in the exploitative labour relations common in the Gulf States (Frantz 2008; Babar and Gardner 2016). • Poor working conditions, frequently workers are denied basic human and labour rights, with private employers acting with impunity. 	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p>

<p>The “Kafala” system mandates an association between each labour migrant and a sponsor/resident in the Gulf.</p> <p>Typical contracts are 2 years in duration. Overall, the “Kafala” and the labour contracts that underlie it directly associate the individual migrant with a particular job and particular sponsor.</p> <p>There are no pathways to permanent settlement or citizenship rights.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female domestic workers are the most vulnerable migrant groups in this migration regime. • While migrants can stay for long period through periodic permits renewal, often there is no possibility of family reunification. • There are no pathways to permanent residence or citizenship in Gulf countries. • Competition often depresses wages; intermediaries at both ends further reduce labour migration benefits (Wickramasekar 2011). 	<p>Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration.</p> <p>Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle.</p> <p>Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perception of migration.</p>
<p>(13) Mauritius Small-Scale Circular Migration Schemes</p> <p>In 2008 Mauritius signed a tripartite agreement with the IOM and selected Canadian employers for Circular Migration Programs. In the same year a Bilateral agreement was signed with France and ratified in 2010 (Mansoor 2012). Mauritius circular migration program was part of a broader economic reforms strategy, following a restructuring program of the Mauritian economy that resulted in substantial layoffs of low-skilled workers (mainly female) in the textile and sugar</p>	<p>Mauritius, Canada, France</p>	<p>Mauritius-Canada: 2008 – In 2008, 85 Mauritians were recruited to work in food processing in Canada by 2012 300 workers took up employment in Canada mainly in the food and agribusiness industry (Mansoor 2012)</p>		

<p>sectors. One component of the Reform Program was to promote the development of circular migration schemes with interested receiving countries. The schemes aimed to enable unemployed low-skilled workers to find jobs abroad, build their skills and capital for saving and reinvest after the return. The practical elements of Mauritius pilot project included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Analysis of labour needs and supply, and an agreement between sending and receiving country to match supply and demand for labour and define training needs. 2) Bilateral agreement framework. 3) Mechanisms for Pre-departure and Post migration training, as well on the job training. 4) Incentives to return and/or to circulate. <p>The destination country could offer flexible entry, re-entry, and contractual agreements (e.g., longer contracts to enable appropriate accumulation of capital) and facilitate brain circulation through temporary returns.</p> <p>Mauritius Circular Migration with France included 1-5 year's visas for highly skilled migrants, visas for university students. The project included jointly financed training programs for returning migrants (Newland 2009).</p>		<p>Mauritius-France: 2010- ?</p> <p>The 2010 agreement with France offered an opportunity of 10000 visas for work or study (Newland 2009).</p>		
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The Circular Migration Program contemplated setting up a matching savings scheme to encourage overseas workers to channel their remittances into SMEs or other investments in Mauritius				
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Table (2) Overview of Circular Migration Schemes for high-skilled workers²³

Program description	Countries involved in the program	Period/and data on recruitments	Area of concern/undesirable outcome	Deviation from GC objective(s) for safe, orderly, and regular migration/policy instrument/best practice
<p>(1) US H-1B visa for skilled migrant workers</p> <p>H-1B visas – the most common visa for skilled foreign workers – are issued to foreigners who work temporarily in the United States in professional specialty such as medicine, architecture, engineering, IT technology, mathematics and education.</p> <p>The visa is limited to three years – up to a maximum period of six years, with extension and pathway to green cards.</p> <p>Minimum qualification is bachelor's degree or higher in the professional specialty.</p> <p>The program has served as important bridge to allow talented international students to stay and work in the US – about half of H-1B initial applicants transitions from another status, such as student or temporary workers (Pierce and Gelatt 2018).</p> <p>Indians represent the largest share of migrants admitted under this category, followed by Chinese (e.g., according to U.S. State Department data India and China accounted 82% of US H-1B visas in 2016). The share of H-1B workers in computer related occupations has grown from 47% annually in the period 2000-09 to 69% in 2016 (Pierce and Gelatt 2018).</p>	US, world-wide (but mostly India, China)	<p>1990 – to date.</p> <p>Annual cap limit of 85,000 H-1B visas are issued every year</p> <p>100,000 annual re-issuance and extension cap.</p> <p>Most visas are approved outside the cap – and average of 212,000 H-1B petitions approved annually outside the cap (Pierce and Gelatt 2018).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enormous power and discretion to employers – especially during the pathway to permanent residence (in particular with regard to the decision on whether and when to apply for permanent residence for workers (Hira 2010). • The uneven worker-employer relationship is heightened by the threat of deportation if fired and the inability of guest-workers to change employer if mistreated (Wickramasekar 2011). • Fostering over-dependence on foreign workers (Lowell 2005). Some employers are filling mid-level tech jobs – and are not using H-1B visa to hire the best and the brightest workers (Pierce and Gelatt 2018). 	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p> <p>Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and Diaspora to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.</p>

²³ High-skilled include middle-level trade professionals (e.g., nursing) as well as high-skilled professionals (e.g., IT engineers, medical doctors, university professors ..etc.).

			- Visa backlog Contributed to the growing pool of skilled workers waiting for green cards issuance (Pierce and Gelatt 2018).	
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<p>(2) Canada Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP): In this program after 2 years of employment, caregivers may be eligible to apply for permanent residence (Castles and Ozkul 2014)</p> <p>After the termination of the LCP in 2014, Canada introduced two new economic immigration pilots for caregivers as part of its permanent immigration programs: The Caring for Children and the Caring for People with High Medical Needs classes. In June 2019, the LCP is replaced by two new temporary worker programs: The Home Child Care Provider Pilot and Home Support Worker Pilot (OECD 2019).</p>	Canada, developing countries	<p>1992 – year closed 2014</p> <p>During the period 2002-2013 a total of 90278 workers entered Canada with permits under SAWP category (yearly average 7523).</p> <p>Source: Citizenship & Immigration Canada, RDM Preliminary 2013 Data</p>		
<p>(3) German Green Card Program</p> <p>The program was intended to address the shortage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) professionals.²⁴ Firms that were unable to find the needed ICT in the domestic labour market were permitted to bring ICT workers</p>	Germany, Third Country (mainly India)	<p>Period active 2000-2004.</p> <p>German Green Cards were limited to a quota of 20,000. However, a total of 17,931</p>	<p>The program did not achieve its stated policy target of recruiting 20000 ICT professionals.</p> <p>The reasons why the targeted recruitment was not reached included:</p>	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p>

²⁴ By the late 1990s, the computer industry association in Germany estimated that information technology companies needed at least 75000 additional specialists (Jurgens 2010).

<p>from third countries (Wrobel 2019). Applicants for the Green Cards are required either to hold a university degree in ICT or alternatively, present a contract of employment containing an agreed annual salary of at least 51000 Euro.</p> <p>The maximum validity of the Green Card is five years. However, the Green card does not lead to permanent settlement or naturalization.</p> <p>Green card holders were allowed to switch employers without going through a new assessment. The program allowed the migration of spouses and dependents; however, they were not allowed to work.</p> <p>To prevent wage discrimination (wage dumping) holders of Green Cards on the basis of ICT university degree were to be paid an annual salary equivalent to the upper earnings limit for contributions to the statutory health insurance scheme (Wrobel 2019).</p> <p>To speed up the ICT professionals' recruitment process the government reduced some of the red tapes regulations e.g., the labour market test for the Green Card holders was removed. As a result, the time required for the recruitment procedure fell from an average of 20 weeks to about 6 weeks (Kolb 2004).</p>	<p>Green Cards were issued during the entire program period (Wrobel 2004).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some IT firms hesitated to recruit non-EU professionals because there were not familiar with IT labour markers and educational systems in non-EU countries. Related to this, large IT companies addressed their high skill labour needs through internal personnel transfer than through Green Card (Kolb 2004). • Some IT firms required knowledge of the German language that newly arriving IT professionals did not have (Kolb et al 2004). • The recruitment package was not very attractive. The German Green Card does not lead to permanent settlement or naturalization. Green Card holders' spouses/dependents are not allowed to work. 	<p>Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p>
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<p>(4) Blue Birds Circular Migration Pilot Project - Netherlands</p> <p>The pilot project was designed to explore the feasibility and risks of implementing circular migration projects by recruiting workers from outside the EEA region to fill some labour shortages in the Dutch labour market.</p> <p>An additional goal of the project was to examine whether or not circular migration could be used as a tool for development cooperation. Because of this latter goal, the project design put emphasis on the re-integration of circular migrants when they return home, through supporting circular migrants in finding new employment or starting a business enterprise in their home country (Siegel et al. 2012). Thus, the pilot project was driven by development more than labour market considerations.</p> <p>The circular migrants were required to have followed at least middle-skilled related education. The maximum stay period was two years and there was no provision for family reunification, also, migrants were not allowed to take any job other than that stated in the work permits (Siegel et al. 2012).</p> <p>To facilitate recruitment of circular migrants the Ministry of social affairs and labour removed the labour market test.</p>	<p>Netherlands, Indonesia and South Africa.</p>	<p>2010 -2011</p> <p>The initial plan was to recruit 160 in regular vacancies within the Netherlands shortages sectors (migrants. After 15 months only 8 migrants were recruited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project lacked clear focus on objectives, sectors and countries. • Multiple objectives have resulted in the involvement of multiple government stakeholders with different views and objectives - this made the project implementation quiet challenging. • Because of Lack of flexibility in the time frame and skill level employers were reluctant to participate in the project (Siegel et al 2012): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of clarity about middle-skilled education in reference to the Dutch education system (MBO level). In addition to language barriers. ○ Employers were concerned about recruiting skilled migrants for a short duration - they considered 3-5 years optimal period of stay for highly skilled 	<p>Objective 5: action d: flexible, convertible and non-discriminatory visa and permit options.</p> <p>Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.</p> <p>Action g: develop and strengthen fair and ethical recruitment process that allows migrants to change employers and modify the conditions or length of their stay with minimal administrative burden.</p>
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			workers to ensure a return on investment.	
<p>(5) Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) Project - Netherlands</p> <p>The project is funded by the Netherlands and implemented by the IOM - with the main objective of linking Diaspora with development in their countries of origin. Overseas communities are given the opportunity to participate in various assignments related to improving the capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions in their home countries.</p> <p>Assignments were on average 3 months but could range from one week to nine months or more.</p>	<p>Netherlands, Afghanistan, Armenia, Cape Verde, Georgia, Ghana, Iraq, Morocco, Somalia, and Sudan.</p>	<p>2006-2016</p> <p>As of 2015, a total of 212 experts participated in the project, and 349 projects were completed</p>	<p>According to an initial evaluation of the project by Leith and Rivas (2015):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable origin countries received more subscribers. • More success is achieved in tech transfer related assignments compared to management, policy and capacity building assignments. 	<p>Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and Diaspora to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries</p>



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