*Review of International Studies, Vol. 42, part 4, pp. 702–723.* doi:10.1017/S0260210516000048

First published online 12 February 2016

RIS

# Mobility and the kinetic politics of migration and development

Samid Suliman*

*Lecturer in Migration and Security, Griffith University*

## Abstract

The basic claim of this article is that when the 'migration-development nexus' is conceived through a 'mobilities' lens, a different account of politics is possible. I refer to this different account of politics as 'kinetic politics', to denote that polity formations and political relations are not spatially determined (that is, by processes of boundary formation and relations that travel across these boundaries), but are constituted through movement as people come and go. I argue for a methodological reorientation towards understanding the kinetic politics of development, in order to apprehend the ways in which migrants and migrancy are implicated in the constitution of the polities through which 'development' is organised. The recognition of movement as a transversal political relation that cuts across territorial boundaries has implications for the ways in which development is analysed and pursued. I propose that this line of inquiry opens up space to think critically about whether or not formal political membership will remain tethered to problematic territorial and technocratic approaches to 'sustainable' development. Might there be space for thinking about migrancy as the basis for rights, and political community as inherently kinetic?

## Keywords

Migration; Development; Mobility; Borders; Methods; Political Theory

'If the right policies are in place', wrote Peter Sutherland shortly before the second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 'we can ensure that migrants move, work, and live with greater dignity and security, and that our neglect of migration does not enable political extremists'.[1] Sutherland, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, is representative of a broad coalition of policymakers, rights organisations, and scholars committed to rethinking the role of migration in development. Squarely in his sights were the goals of removing barriers to productive labour migration, the facilitation of migrant remittances, the protection of migrants' rights and, in turn, the creation of a more stable, equitable, and prosperous world. This 'migration for development' discourse *appears* to overturn some commonplace assumptions about the relationship between migration and development. Indeed, the advocacy of a policy agenda that seeks to open borders, facilitate migration, and protect migrants sits at odds with prevailing views that migration is an outcome of the failure of development in sending countries, and a potential threat to the security and social cohesion of receiving countries. However, as we shall see, appearances can be deceiving.

*Correspondence to: Samid Suliman, School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, Level 2, Macrossan (N16), Griffith University, Nathan Campus, Nathan, Queensland, 4111. Author's email: s.suliman@griffith.edu.au

[1] Peter D. Sutherland, 'Migration 2.0: a time for action at the UN Summit on migration and development', *Migration Policy Practice*, 3:3 (2013), p. 4.

The emerging 'migration for development' discourse has arisen in a context when development policies based on principles of market liberalisation, public sector austerity, and free trade have had deleterious and contradictory outcomes. The collapse of social structures and livelihoods in the so-called 'developing world' has been coterminous with the increasingly visible adoption of migration as a livelihood strategy, which in turn has led to an intensifying focus on migration by development agencies (as well as other state and nongovernmental agencies). The key reason for this was described by Castles and Delgado Wise as an 'emerging dilemma':

> On the one hand migration is seen as the result of powerful economic and demographic factors in both the South and the North, which are an inevitable consequence of globalization. On the other hand migrants from the South (especially low-skilled workers and asylum seekers) are perceived as a problem – even a threat – to security, stability and living standards in the North. If migration cannot be prevented, policymakers want to introduce 'migration management' to control movements and maximize migration's benefit for the receiving countries. However, successful migration management cannot take place without the cooperation of the governments of countries of origin and transit. This will only be forthcoming if migration also appears to bring benefits for them. Linking migration to development seems to be a way of achieving this, and securing the cooperation of southern states.[2]

To resolve this dilemma, a great deal of political capital and scholarly energy has been expended on working out how migration might best be managed in service of development, and how development might serve to stabilise and reduce migration pressures in the future. Two key strands of 'migration-development' thinking have emerged over the past two decades. The first is a policy discourse that situates migration centrally within national policy frameworks and international cooperation for development (along the lines posed by Sutherland). The second is a burgeoning set of scholarly literatures that challenge the methodological nationalism of 'development thinking', in order to understand how migration and development (and attendant inequalities) are organised transnationally. Both of these strands of thought diverge from previous orthodoxies in important ways. For instance, it is clear that focusing upon the transnational economic relations established through international migration (such as the sending and receiving of financial remittances) draws into question the exclusively nationalist framing of development, and the role of migration therein. Both of these policy and scholarly approaches see migration as an important part of the development process, and argue that it should be regarded as such.

However, as compelling as they are, I contend that neither of these approaches have sufficiently accounted for the constitutive nature of migration in the *political* organisation of development globally. Both of these accounts often rest upon a sociological account of migration that tends to leave intact a particular set of understandings about the formation and boundaries of the polities according to which national development is mobilised and pursued. While migration is recognised as a part of development processes (thus refuting the idea that political and economic development is organised in exclusively national terms), the attendant processes of polity formation – and thereby politics – remain conceived with the nation-state as the primary referent. The corollary is that migrant mobilities (be they infelicitous or otherwise) are understood as a function of development processes, rather than as being integral to the 'social and political relations that constitute the global

[2] Stephen Castles and Rául Delgado Wise, 'Introduction', in Stephen Castles and Rául Delgado Wise (eds), *Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2008), p. 3.

political economy'.[3] In this formulation, migration is not sufficiently appreciated *as a political relation*. The implication here is that both the 'policy' and 'scholarly' understandings of the 'migration-development nexus', which I outlined above, tend to reinforce each other in crucial, but highly problematic, ways.

Underneath the second-order questions, which ask how to (re)calibrate the relationship between migration and development, are a number of first-order questions about the way that this relationship is conceived in the first place that remain unanswered. If 'development' is a 'process' by which, at least in part, rights and protections are to be distributed, then how do we account for a global political and economic system that systematically denies rights and protections to migrants on the basis that these policies will be good for development in the long run? What does this contradiction reveal about the political organisation of development, and about the role of migration in these global relations? Is it enough to recognise mobilities in relation to the state, or do we need to mobilise our understanding of politics so as to move it beyond the state?

In this article, I argue that a different approach is necessary to answer such questions. In doing so, I propose a further conceptual challenge to the study of migration and development that demands an alternative set of methodological principles to those that are already on offer. By arguing for a reconceptualisation of the substantive political relations associated with migration, I suggest that the epistemological landscape in which analysis and policy is formulated can be navigated in very different ways.

The basic claim of this article is that when the 'migration-development nexus' is conceived through a 'mobilities' lens, a different account of politics is possible. I refer to this different account of politics as 'kinetic politics', to denote that polity formations and political relations are not spatially determined (that is, by processes of boundary formation and relations that travel across these boundaries), but are constituted through *movement* as people come and go. The importance of this manoeuvre is that it shifts the focus of political analysis away from the nation-state, and instead considers how migration features in political constellations that extend beyond the 'territorial trap' of the nation-state.

Thus, I argue that, by accounting for the ways in which movement has been, and is, central to the formation of political communities, a different way of conceiving migrants' rights as *political entitlements* is possible. This has important implications for the ways in which migrants' rights, entitlements, and sufferings are conceived, and for the ways in which political institutions might change in order to act upon these. I also argue that conceiving of development from a 'mobilities' perspective challenges the dominant account of how 'national development' is framed and pursued *in relation to migration*. In effect, by pursuing this line of inquiry, I seek to collapse the hyphen: migration should not be conceived as related to development; it ought be conceived as a constitutive aspect of development.

The article proceeds by critically unpacking some common claims about migration and development, as they have emerged in recent discourses that propose migration as a 'tool' for development. In this section, I show that while there is an attempt to locate migration in the same *process*, these interventions are preconditioned by the implicit acceptance of the political coordinates proposed in the 'development episteme'. Policy proposals to reconfigure the 'migration-development nexus' are

[3] Heloise Weber, 'Politics of global social relations: Organising "everyday lived experiences" of development and destitution', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 64:1 (2010), p. 110.

shown to be methodologically limited for the purposes of political analysis, and this diagnosis is substantiated by an examination of the tendency to view (international) migration and (national) development as two separate (if interrelated) processes. I will also demonstrate that critical accounts of the 'migration-development nexus' have yet to fully come to terms with these methodological limitations, and while migration is correctly recognised as playing an integral role in the economic systems that we can recognise as being central to the global organisation of development, they discount the political salience of migration by adhering to the spatial and temporal framework proposed in the 'development episteme'.

Through this critique of prevailing accounts of the 'migration-development nexus', I develop an outline of an alternative methodological approach that enables a more substantive political analysis of migration as a constitutive part of development constellations. By developing this approach – which I refer to as a kinetic analysis – I demonstrate that migration and development are not separate processes that can be managed in concert (to whichever end), but always unfold in relation. Migration *qua* movement is understood as *constitutive* of the politics of development, by which social relations are organised through world historical processes.[4]

This is an important conceptual advancement on the mobilities approach in social theory because it locates substantive inequalities within kinetic relations, and thus opens up avenues for further critical analysis of the contradictions of development. A kinetic analysis not only reveals that migration is a constitutive feature of social and political change, but also a force that renders problematic the nationalist account of *political community* that is at the heart of development, even if that political community is explicitly circumscribed as 'national', along with attendant rights and entitlements.[5] This has important implications for the way in which we think about the future of relations between migrants and citizens in cosmopolitical terms, and about the possibilities for achieving and entrenching the rights of migrants in a global economy that demands and depends upon their marginalisation and dispossession.

## The question of 'international migration' and 'national development'

It does not take a massive leap of imagination to recognise that, globally, we are in the midst of a migration crisis. Or, more accurately, that we are in the midst of a crisis of migrant mobility. Today, innumerable people are compelled or coerced to leave their homes and travel to new lands, but both transit and residence abroad is being rendered extremely difficult, if not impossible. The International Organization for Migration has estimated that between January and September 2014, there were 4,077 'migrant related border deaths' around the world. This is a conservative estimate.[6]

[4] In this regard, my approach is inspired by, and extends upon, an alternative method of comparative analysis developed by Philip McMichael. See Philip McMichael, 'Incorporated comparison within a world historical perspective: an alternative comparative method', *American Sociological Review*, 55:3 (1990), pp. 385–97; see also Radhika V. Mongia, 'Historicizing state sovereignty: Inequality and the form of equivalence', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 49:2 (2007), pp. 384–411; Heloise Weber, 'A political analysis of the formal comparative method: Historicizing the globalization and development debate', *Globalizations*, 4:4 (2007), pp. 559–72.

[5] There have been some important interventions in the critical reframing of the analysis of migration *vis-à-vis* social change. An exemplar of these is Stephen Castles, 'Understanding global migration: a social transformation perspective', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36:10 (2010), pp. 1565–86. However, his analysis does not specifically countenance political theories of migration and development.

[6] International Organization for Migration, *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost During Migration* (Geneva: IOM, 2014), p. 18.

Thousands more languish in mandatory detention facilities, prison cells, refugee and IDP camps, and face the prospect of expulsion, repatriation, and *refoulement*. Moreover, countless numbers of 'irregular' migrants face political, legal, and administrative barriers to full participation in the 'formal' economy, and are thus denied important rights and entitlements in the places where they live and work. Alarmingly, many migrant workers who enter into formal migration schemes are routinely denied safe and dignified working conditions, and labour in exploitative and repressive conditions. And this is not a 'Third World problem': migrant workers in many economic sectors – such as construction, domestic labour, and agriculture – are denied safe, fair, and dignified living and working conditions in many 'rich' and 'developed' countries.

The backdrop of this contemporary crisis of mobility is a long-standing financial and economic crisis that has beset countless people in both the Global North and the Global South. This crisis – which predates, but includes, the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 – has been brought about through the rollout of neoliberal development models in almost all parts of the world. The effects of these policies have been widespread and diverse, but there are many contexts in which a turn towards the 'free market' has been matched with the decimation of public sector capacity and the collapse of livelihoods in both rural and urban settings. These extensive and deep forms of neoliberal restructuring have been linked to the rise in so-called 'mixed' migrations, attenuating the commonplace distinction between recognised 'legitimate' refugees and 'economic migrants'.[7]

Despite the long-standing recognition that migration is intrinsically bound up with complex forms of social and political transformations on a world scale (such as global economic integration, political upheavals and civil conflicts, the emergence of powerful nonstate actors, and the intensely uneven distribution of material resources and financial risk),[8] an underlying trend in migration research is to presume relatively stable *political* reference points. This tendency is shared by many 'mainstream' perspectives on the political organisation of development, which buy into the spatio-temporal terms set out in the 'development episteme'.[9]

As Thomas Faist has shown, the major theoretical turns in development studies have approached migration as though it could be understood through an account of the ways national development trajectories are organised and unfold.[10] Modernisation theory, for example, approaches the analysis of international migration as though migrants are rational decision makers, weighing up of costs and benefits that were determined by differences in different countries' levels of development. For modernisation scholars, migration is predominantly an outcome of (under)development. Dependency and world-systems approaches, in contrast, understood migration to be a function of a structurally unequal world economic system, in which migration has served as a way of redistributing surplus value from peripheries to the centres of the global economy. For dependency and world systems theories, migration is a vector for (under)development.[11] Both of these

[7] Nicholas Van Hear, Rebecca Brubaker, and Thais Bessa, *Managing Mobility for Human Development: The Growing Salience of Mixed Migration*, Human Development Research Paper 2009/20 (Rome: UNDP, 2009).

[8] Stephen Castles, 'The forces driving global migration', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 34:2 (2013), pp. 122–40.

[9] The 'development episteme' will be discussed in some detail in the sections below.

[10] Thomas Faist, 'Migrants as transnational development agents: an inquiry into the newest round of the migration-development nexus', *Population, Space and Place*, 14:1 (2008), pp. 21–42.

[11] See Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser, and Peter Kivisto (eds), *The Migration-Development Nexus: a Transnational Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), *passim*; Michael Samers, *Migration* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), ch. 2.

approaches are remarkable for three reasons. Firstly, they clearly indicate the ways in which thinking about migration has been prefigured by an overriding set of assumptions about the spatial and political organisation of economic development. Secondly, they both assume that migrants and migrations are prefigured by existing political arrangements, and therefore play no part in broader processes of political transformation. Thirdly, their respective analyses render migration as a *problem* to be resolved in order for national development to take place.

While these grand 'modernist' narratives of development have largely fallen by the wayside, their methodological and analytical legacies remain influential. This is certainly the case for the political project that aims to utilise migration as a tool for development, in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for sending countries, receiving countries, and migrants themselves. Many scholars, policymakers, development agencies, and migration activists have enthusiastically endorsed the idea that migration can facilitate economic growth, especially in poorer parts of the world. The idea is that careful planning, management and coordination of temporary labour migration can help to overcome some of the failures of so-called developing countries to eradicate poverty and increase the prospects of prosperity for their citizens.

This enthusiasm has come about, in part, through the observation that people are now living and working abroad in much greater numbers than ever before.[12] This increase in international migration has been matched with the rapid increase in migrant remittances being sent to their homelands by people living and working abroad. These remittances are seen to offer an important stream of capital for investment in those areas that have been overlooked by other forms of development financing, and it is therefore assumed that through these informal, nonstate, and private international money transfers, poorer regions in the global South can get on to a sustainable economic growth trajectory. Thus, remittances are often referred to as 'rivers of gold'.[13] In this context, it is believed that migration can be harnessed to bring about a 'win-win-win' scenario, and benefit sending countries, receiving countries and migrants themselves. When portrayed in this light, migrant workers are lauded as the new 'heroes of development'.[14] More recently, pro-migration advocates have been calling on governments, businesses, and communities to invest in migration as a supplement to existing economic growth strategies, and to invest in migrants as genuine drivers of social change and national development. To their credit, advocates of migrant-centric development policies have also begun to move beyond the singular focus on financial remittances in conceiving

[12] According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in 2013 the estimated number of international migrants worldwide was 232 million (or roughly 3.2 per cent of the global population). This was up from 175 million in 2000, and 154 million in 1990. See United Nations, 'Number of international migrants rises above 232 million, UN reports', UN News Centre (11 September 2013), available at: {http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45819} accessed 31 July 2014. For an overview of current global migration trends, see Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[13] The Economist, 'New rivers of gold', *The Economist*, available at: {http://www.economist.com/node/21553458} accessed 2 July 2013.

[14] While the 'win-win-win' discourse is gaining traction in development policy circles, it has been met with greater scepticism by many researchers on the 'migration-development nexus'. For some introductory remarks, see Ronald Skeldon, 'International migration as a tool in development policy: a passing phase?', *Population and Development Review*, 34:1 (2008), pp. 1–18; Hein de Haas, 'Turning the tide? Why development will not stop migration', *Development and Change*, 38:5 (2007), pp. 819–41; Devesh Kapur, 'Remittances: the New Development Mantra?', Paper presented for the G-24 Technical Group Meeting, available at: {http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTOPCONF3/Resources/1588024-1152543209834/VI_D.Kapur_Remittances_the_new_development_mantra.pdf} accessed 21 August 2011; Castles and Delgado Wise, 'Introduction'.

development gains, and have to some extent moved towards thinking about a broader set of social, economic, and political concerns to encourage safe and productive migration.

These sentiments have steadily gained traction at the highest levels of international politics. In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly convened the Second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The 2013 High-Level Dialogue, the second such meeting in the past decade, was convened as part of an ongoing commitment by the UN and its agencies (and some member-states) to reduce the barriers, costs, and harms associated with international migration, particularly those faced by migrant workers. Speaking to the meeting, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked, 'Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family.' He continued to say, 'It is our collective responsibility to make migration work for the benefit of migrants and countries alike. We owe this to the millions of migrants who, through their courage, vitality and dreams, help make our societies more prosperous, resilient and diverse.'[15] The Secretary-General's remarks reflect the concerted efforts of many international institutions to transform perceptions of international migration as a negative and destabilising force, sentiments persisting even in those countries that boast of open and liberal migration policies.

Given the scope, scale, and diversity of international migrations, Secretary-General Ban implored participants of the forum to focus on improving livelihoods, prospects, and experiences of migrants. This injunction that mobility is a fundamental resource for human development and freedom was echoed clearly in statements made in support of greater international cooperation.[16] Such sentiments reflect a clearly identifiable trend in institutional thinking regarding migration and development; over the past two decades, a number of prominent international institutions have developed political forums and research agendas to explore the potential for migration to play a part in meeting the development challenges of the future.[17]

That migration features heavily in discussions about the future of global development is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it signals a clear change in the focus of global development policy. For example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) paid no heed to the role of migration in the political economy of poverty reduction.[18] But the recent High-Level Discussion on Migration and

[15] United Nations, 'Latest Statements, 3 October 2013 – Secretary General's remarks to High-Level on International Migration and Development', available at: {http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7175} accessed 14 February 2014.

[16] For a list of statements, reports and submissions to the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, see Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, 'High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 3–4 October 2013', available at: {http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/HLD2013.aspx} accessed 1 July 2014.

[17] See International Organization for Migration, *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2005); Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action: report of the Global Commission on International Migration* (Geneva, Global Commission on International Migration, 2005); World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2006: Economic Implications of Remittances and Migration* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006); Department for International Development, *Moving out of Poverty – Making Migration Work Better for Poor People* (London: Department for International Development, 2007); United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2009 – Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[18] Erica Usher, *Millennium Development Goals and Migration*, IOM Migration research series, Volume XX (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2005); cf. Kathleen Sexsmith and Philip McMichael,

Development made clear that the transformative and generative economic impacts of migration are becoming too visible to ignore; as more people throughout the world migrate for work, more 'national' economies are becoming dependent upon working migrants, either for the labour they generate or for the remittances they send home.[19] The long-held view – that international migration and national development could be understood as mutually distinctive processes – is being explicitly questioned. The acknowledgment of the importance of migrant labour to certain national industries, and the benefits that accrue from so-called 'migradollars', has provoked more nuanced discussions of how migration can be facilitated to maximise these mutual benefits.[20] Furthermore, the orientation towards migration in the contemporary global political economy has also provoked questions about rights, duties, equities, and justice.[21] Migration advocates are demanding greater forms of global cooperation and collaboration to 'make migration work' for all, especially for migrants who have fared poorly, historically and in the present.[22] This agenda has picked up momentum of late: migration issues are being incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda (which will be briefly discussed below).

However, while this orientation towards a migrant-centric development agenda is praiseworthy, we must exercise caution in accepting the underlying premises of the claims being made. We must also be mindful that attempts at debunking migration myths can inadvertently lead to the reproduction of 'development myths' or, more substantively, unreflected assumptions about the politics of development that, if ultimately found to be problematic, make the project of managing 'migration for development' part of the problem in of itself.

When the understanding of the politics of migration and development remains fixated on the nation-state, an account of how nation-states can manage migration to reach the overarching goal of 'national development' is thus demanded. But, as Philip McMichael has argued, 'development is not just a goal; it is a method of rule'.[23] This indictment comes from his analysis of the substantive relations through which 'national development' projects have been organised. While these development projects were partly premised on the idea that 'national development' would be the pathway towards prosperity and world order, McMichael also reveals that the pursuit of development depended upon unequal social relations that were organised on a world scale. Conventional theories of development (which were conceived in terms of individual nation-states

'Formulating the SDGs: Reproducing or reimagining state-centred development?', *Globalizations*, 12:4 (2015), pp. 581–96.

[19] Paul Knox, John Agnew, and Linda McCarthy, *Geography of the World Economy* (6th edn, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 43.

[20] See Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Karen A. Pren, 'Migradollars in Latin America: a comparative analysis', in Alfredo Cuecuecha and Carla Pederzini (eds), *Migration and Remittances from Mexico: Trends, Impacts and New Challenges* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012), pp. 243–64.

[21] For a critical engagement on the question of rights in the 'migration-development nexus', see: Raúl Delgado Wise, Humberto Márquez Covarrubias, and Ruben Puentes, 'Reframing the debate on migration, development and human rights', *Population, Space and Place*, 19:4 (2013), pp. 430–3.

[22] See Peter Sutherland, 'Migration is development', Project Syndicate, available at: {https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/migrants-and-the-post-2015-global-development-agenda-by-peter-sutherland} accessed 15 March 2013; Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud, 'Migration, development and the migration and development nexus', *Population, Space and Place*, 19:4 (2013), pp. 369–74; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Policy Coherence for Development 2007: Migration and Developing Countries* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2007); UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009*.

[23] Philip McMichael, *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective* (5th edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012), p. 50.

pursuing a linear path of development) could not account for these relations, and therefore concealed them from view in terms of political analysis. Moreover, this 'development episteme' depends, in no small part, upon, in the words of Heloise Weber, the 'representation of abject inequalities (including absolute poverty) as part of an evolutionary logic disconnected from unequal relations of development'.[24] 'Problematically', continues Weber, 'such inequalities are presented as disconnected stages … and not substantive expressions of *unequal relations* of development produced and reproduced through development processes'.[25]

Importantly, within the progressive 'migration for development' policy discourse, these core (and problematic) premises remain more or less intact. While migrants' engagements with foreign labour markets and the potentials for their remittances to stimulate economic activity back home are exalted, the inequalities through which migrations are actually constituted are elided from the development calculus. Thus, despite being acknowledged as important, migration is rendered as apolitical, and disconnected from the unequal relations through which development is organised. In the next section, I engage with key scholarly contributions that attempt to redress this problem, but fall short in relation to a very important aspect of the political analysis of migration and development.

## Why movement? Migration and the enduring stasis of development thinking

The recent 'migration turn' in critical development thinking appeals to those concerned about the rights and welfare of the migrants, both in transit and residence. By focusing on migration in the analysis of development, it is possible to render very clearly the 'presence' of migrants in national development processes.[26] These approaches also appeal to the literature on 'transnational' and 'post-national' social formations, which have looked to the transformative role of migration in terms of shifting the 'national' political coordinates of rights, justice, citizenship, and development.[27] However, despite disrupting some established coordinates in the study of the 'migration-development nexus', many of these recent interventions persist in understanding the political dimensions of migration and development in state-centric terms. As a consequence they miss, or fail to sufficiently account for, migration as constituting political relations of development. In other words, many critical takes on the 'migration-development nexus' treat the linkages between migration and development as cumulative socioeconomic events, rather than politically formative processes. In this sense, the seemingly progressive moves towards a pro-migration stance inadvertently reproduce the analytical biases (with all their implications) of orthodox development thinking (which are evident in the 'migration for development' policy perspectives outlined earlier): '[m]ainstream development theory and analysis has been constrained by the political imagination engendered by formal rather than substantive social and political relations.'[28]

In her outstanding critical review of the literature, Parvarti Raghuram observes that many contributions to the 'migration-development literature' are scripted by unreflected assumptions

[24] Heloise Weber, 'Reproducing inequalities through development: the MDGs and the politics of method', *Globalizations*, 12:4 (2015), p. 669.
[25] Weber, 'Reproducing inequalities', p. 669.
[26] Nicola Phillips (ed.), *Migration in the Global Political Economy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011).
[27] Some prominent examples are Yasemin Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), and Engin Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (eds), *Acts of Citizenship* (London: Zed Books, 2008).
[28] Weber, 'A political analysis of the formal comparative method', p. 569.

about the spatiality and temporality of development, and the role of migration therein. She writes that

> much migration-development literature leaves in place any substantive restructuring of social orders as it refuses to acknowledge how migration unsettles certain scalar politics and temporal frames, while buttressing others.[29]

In this section, I suggest that critical scholarship on the 'migration-development nexus' has not yet sufficiently recognised the centrality of migration *qua* movement to the political constitution of development. For this reason, critical takes on migration may implicitly accept the terms set out by the 'development episteme', which minimises their overall efficacy in understanding the political relations through which migration and development are coproduced. Of greatest salience to the argument posed in this article is the fact that the spatial and temporal coordinates of the development episteme remain fairly intact, or are at least not subject to scrutiny.

Indeed, some important critical analyses of the political economy in which 'development migrations' occur have revealed that migration *is* a central feature of development processes, and attempts to manage migrations into submission will likely be unsuccessful. For example, Hein de Haas has argued that

> migration tends to reinforce the very processes of global integration of which it is an outflow. So, migration is both cause and effect of broader development processes with which it is intertwined. Assuming continued globalization and global economic integration, there is little cause to expect a general decrease in mobility and migration. Migration will, in all likelihood, remain an intrinsic feature of our world.[30]

However, in this analysis, migration is viewed in contradictory registers. On the one hand, migration is understood as 'intertwined' with national development trajectories that are shaped through increasingly global processes. But, on the other hand, migration is externalised in development processes insofar as the political coordinates of development are viewed as though migration is an analytically separable process that interacts with the process of development. While de Haas points to important economic and noneconomic roles played by migrants in the political economy of development, he still reinforces the territorial and static conception of 'national development': migration is conceived in relation to a prior intellectual commitment to an understanding of development in terms of discrete national units which progress up a 'development ladder'.[31] In other words, the political relations that constitute development remain conceived *analytically* through methodologically territorial premises.

This is not a trifling quibble; I suggest that while de Haas' account of the political economy within which migration features renders migration as a salient feature of development, the assumption that development is – and can be understood as – spatially bounded and temporally linear is problematic. This is problematic because it leads to an account of the *politics* of migration and development that is prefigured by the exigencies of a global(ising) market economy, on the one hand, and the

[29] Parvarti Raghuram, 'Which migration, what development? Unsettling the edifice of migration and development', *Population, Space and Place*, 15:2 (2009), pp. 103–17 (p. 114).
[30] Hein de Haas, 'Turning the tide?', p. 838.
[31] Hein de Haas, 'Migration and development: a theoretical perspective', *International Migration Review*, 44:1 (2010), pp. 227–64. For an exemplary account of development conceived in such terms, see Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).

'development progress' of the nation-state, on the other. In other words, migration will persist as long as development is unfolding, and development inequalities persist between countries.

The key point here is that the recognition of migrants and migrations in the transnational political economy of 'development' have not necessarily led to a substantial reframing of the political analysis of development that this demands; this is even the case with some of the most penetrating critical scholarship on the 'migration-development nexus'. Oliver Bakewell, for instance, examines the attempt to fix (developing) populations in to place through the yoking of development assistance and migration control through the EU's assistance programmes in Africa.[32] Here Bakewell critically analyses the 'sedentary bias' in contemporary development thinking, and suggests that immobility of populations has been imposed through external interventions, historically and in the present. Importantly, Bakewell suggests that 'migration raises challenging questions about the nature of the good life, the focus on the nation-state and the inherent paternalism found in the current notions of development'.[33] In this line of inquiry, Bakewell brings into focus the ways that development planning (oftentimes imposed by powerful states and agencies) has long been at odds with mobility practices that eschewed the long-standing assumption that certain peoples *belong* in particular places, and that these approaches insist that migration can only play a part in the history and future of development if people are encouraged to stay or return home.

Ronald Skeldon echoes this line of critique. He views the current enthusiasm for the 'migration for development' programme with some scepticism, and suggests that the novelty of this governance strategy actually conceals the integral nature of migration in development:

> Migration can best be addressed, paradoxical as though this may seem, if the current preoccupation with international migration as a tool to promote development becomes a passing phase in the debate on development. Migration should not be eliminated from the equation, but it should be recognized as an integral part of the development process itself and planned accordingly.[34]

These are important conclusions, to be sure. But, from the perspective being developed in the present article, there remains an unresolved tension: while migration is recognised as a part of development, an account of the politics of migration wherein the coordinates of development are assumed to be relatively stable is retained. Thus, migration features as a salient *process*, but is not countenanced as a salient *relation* that effectively undoes the notion that development-as-process is organised territorially. While the process is acknowledged as central to the organisation of development, the relation is not. Such a tendency, I would argue, does not immediately discount the importance of these empirical findings and analytical conclusions. However, it does set the *political* terms of reference too narrowly: migration – conceived as a general process of cross-border movement, and as a constellation of specific mobility arrangements – is thought of in terms of governance, or control, or management, and not in terms of constitutive political relations. This has important implications for thinking about the inequalities evident in contemporary global migrations.

The conceptual point of departure provided by the 'development episteme' concentrates the mind on investigating how *international migration* affects *national development*. The general reliance on

[32] Oliver Bakewell, '"Keeping them in their place": the ambivalent relationship between migration and development in Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 29:7 (2008), pp. 1341–58.
[33] Ibid., p. 1342.
[34] Skeldon, 'International migration', p. 16.

these master concepts constrains the ability to undertake a political analysis of migration, because the possibilities of a political analysis of the 'migration-development nexus' are already scripted, as I have argued elsewhere.[35] Thus, in this light, the very concept of the 'migration-development nexus' can be thought of as being problematic because the framing of migration and development as a nexus elides the complex dynamics of human mobility within different systems of political economy throughout modern history. While the phrase 'migration-development nexus' tacitly acknowledges a relationship between the two, it denies that human movement and political economy occur *in relation*; that they are constitutive of the same global field of relations.

To this point, I have shown that both emergent policy discourses about *and* critical accounts of the 'migration-development nexus' construe the political organisation of development in a way that leaves in place the analytical premises of the 'development episteme', specifically the account of polity-formation that stems from this. While there is much to gain from these contributions, my concern is that they limit the scope of political analysis in a way that elides – rather than illuminates – the full gamut of political relations through which development is organised. There is clearly a need to refocus political analysis of development towards a substantive account of movement, a task I undertake in the next section.

## Reorienting political analysis towards movement: the need for a kinetic approach

In this section, my intention is to draw on a range of ideas gaining traction in other disciplinary contexts, and bring these to bear on critical interventions in the study of the politics of development. I am explicitly interested in the methodological resources provided by the 'mobilities' literature, insofar as this body of emergent thought on the question of the politics of movement and mobility enables a way of apprehending migrations as kinetic elements of the politics of development. Thus, I propose that a different analytical lens is required in order to think concretely about the constitutive role of migration *qua* movement in the politics of development in the present historical conjuncture.[36] To consider migrations and development as part and parcel of the same global field of relations in which nation-states are organised (and their ostensibly 'national' development trajectories pursued) will hence lead to a very different set of conclusions about the global politics of migration.[37] Importantly, this also

[35] Samid Suliman, 'The politics of migration and the North American Free Trade Agreement', in Heloise Weber (ed.), *The Politics of Development: A Survey* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 195.

[36] By suggesting that an account of the political constitution of migration requires analytical refocusing based on the concept of kinetic politics, I am not suggesting that this represents a fully-fledged theory. Indeed, the task of theory-building is a project that I am undertaking elsewhere. Suffice it to say that such a theorisation of movement within broader political constellations is a complex, interdisciplinary undertaking. This undertaking includes (but is not limited to) a consideration of the sociopolitical constitution of political spaces, identities, and institutions in ways that resist the autopoetics of territorial politics, and of the transitory and ephemeral circuits of movement, points of contact, and lines of flight that connect the 'here' and the 'there', geographically and politically. Contrary to cognate projects, such as Thomas Nail's, that 'provide a social kinetic interpretation of [those] important migrant social formations in Western history that have been buried by the history of states and citizens', my own conception of kinetic politics draws on a range of social-theoretic resources to mobilise political analysis to account for polities-in-motion, rather than exclusively focus on disclosing the expulsive logic of the territorial state system. See Thomas Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 5.

[37] Cf. Castles, 'Understanding global migration' and Nina Glick Schiller, 'A global perspective on migration and development', *Social Analysis*, 53:3 (2009), pp. 14–37.

has implications for rethinking the basis upon which migration might be organised to ensure the rights, welfare, and dignity of migrants.

While the critique of methodological nationalism has been well developed, and well heeded, as I have explicated above, the influence of the 'territorial trap' still lingers in contemporary accounts of the *politics* of migration and development.[38] For this reason, it is worth rehearsing this methodological critique briefly here. Agnew identifies three assumptions that lure students of politics into this trap:

> The first assumption … is the reification of state territorial spaces as fixed units of sovereign space. The second is the division of the domestic from the foreign. The third geographical assumption is of the territorial state as existing prior to and as a container of society.[39]

The *a priori* assumption of national territoriality as a fixed determinant of world politics is problematic for Agnew, not least because '[s]ocial, economic and political life cannot be contained within territorial boundaries of states through the methodological assumption of "timeless space".'[40] The implication of Agnew's critique is that the territorial imagination prefigures the conventional analysis of world politics, and that this prefiguration necessitates the spatial fixing of polities and societies as though they were already constituted by some extra-social, prepolitical force. As a corollary of this analytical construct, boundaries and borders are assumed to serve only to accentuate and delimit the inherent features of political territories and territorial polities.[41]

Thus, despite being widely recognised as the 'great fiction' of contemporary political life,[42] borders have become entrenched in the epistemological landscape of development. This is a problem because thinking about polities, and the constitution of polities, only in terms of contributions of only those who count as formally belonging as citizens, or recognised 'guests', is to deny the *substantive contribution of migrants to the social and political formation of polities*.[43] The maintenance of this

[38] John Agnew coined the term 'territorial trap'. See John Agnew, 'The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory', *Review of International Political Economy*, 1:1 (1994), pp. 53–80. While this trap ensnares many political researchers, there are notable exceptions. See, for example, Anthony McGrew, 'The globalisation debate: Putting the advanced capitalist state in its place', *Global Society*, 12:3 (1998), pp. 299–321; David Held and Anthony McGrew, 'The end of the old order? Globalization and the prospects for world order', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998), pp. 219–45; Jan Aart Scholte, 'Defining globalisation', *World Economy*, 31:11 (2008), pp. 1471–502, Richard K. Ashley, 'Untying the sovereign state: a double reading of the anarchy problematique', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 17:2 (1988), pp. 227–62; R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Julian Saurin, 'Globalisation, poverty and the promises of modernity', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 25:3 (1996), pp. 657–80; Peter Mandaville, 'Territory and translocality: Discrepant idioms of political identity', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 28:3 (1999), pp. 653–73; Nevzat Soguk and Geoffrey Whitehall, 'Wandering grounds: Transversality, identity, territoriality, and movement', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 28:3 (1999), pp. 675–98; and Heloise Weber, 'The imposition of a global development architecture: the example of microcredit', *Review of International Studies*, 28:3 (2002), pp. 537–55.

[39] John Agnew, 'The territorial trap', pp. 76–7.

[40] John Agnew, 'Mapping political power beyond state boundaries: Territory, identity, and movement in world politics', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 28:3 (1999), p. 77.

[41] John Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2009), p. 61.

[42] Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1999), p. 6.

[43] Some of these concerns are picked up with great insight in the so-called 'acts of citizenship' literatures, which explore some of these issues explicitly through the lens of citizenship, investigating such phenomena as

fiction through the reiteration of conventional narratives of politics serves to obscure the ways that processes of migration (and the political struggles of migrants) have always been present in the constitution (and reconstitution) of 'national' political communities.[44]

'To reject methodological nationalism', write Glick Schiller and Salazar, 'requires migration scholars to recover an approach that does not use nation-states as units of analysis but rather studies the movement of people across space in relation to forces that structure political economy.'[45] States, markets, and unequal relations should all certainly feature in such analysis, but while a broader analytical framework is required to accommodate these, this framework will be left wanting if *movement* is not accounted for in these terms, that is, as a constitutive relation within the political economy, and not just an *outcome* of political economy. Migration must be understood as a *kinetic* political relation.

In order to reframe the political analysis of migration and development, and make clear the limits of orthodox analysis of the 'migration-development nexus', I am building upon some important conceptual advancements in terms of 'mainstreaming' migration in understanding social and political change. Already, many cultural theorists and anthropologists have been attentive to migration as a vital dimension of social, cultural, and political change.[46] Some, such as James Clifford and Nikos Papastergiadis, have argued that forms of migration and displacement have radically transformed the substantive experience of established identities that coalesced around places and territories.[47] For cultural theorists like Iain Chambers, migrants and migrations offer a new framework to think about culture, history and politics, and the transformative potential of migration can be seen not only in the movement of peoples, but through the myriad hybridities that are manifest when migrating cultures

collective struggles over citizenship, transformations of citizenship through the participation of 'outsiders', and the formation of new forms of sociality and sodality through citizenship practices. For a comprehensive overview, see the contributions in Isin and Nielsen, *Acts of Citizenship*. However, I do not engage with this literature directly, largely because its sociological line of enquiry proceeds from a conception of political belonging embedded in the *problematique* explored in this present article. To put it briefly, the present exploration of kinetic politics will help to enrich these discussions about the struggles over, and transformations in, the institution(s) of citizenship.

[44] These 'border practices' reflect, but also extend upon, some of the concerns raised in 'border studies' literature surrounding the discursive and ideological elements of practices of exclusion that necessitate encounters with others from the outside. Bonnie Honig, for example, explores the issue of the symbolic '(re)founding' role played by foreigners in the history of democratic polities, whereas Roxanne Lynn Doty considers the constitutive role outsiders play in legitimising practices of statecraft. See Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies: Statecraft, Desire, and the Politics of Exclusion* (London: Routledge, 2003). Cf. Anne McNevin, *Contesting Citizenship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[45] Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, 'Regimes of mobility across the globe', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39:2 (2013), pp. 183–200.

[46] See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 'Beyond "culture": Space, identity, and the politics of difference', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7:1 (1992), pp. 6–23; Liisa Malkki, 'National geographic: the rooting of peoples and the territorialisation of national identity among scholars and refugees', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7:1 (1992), pp. 24–44; David Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000); Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Nikos Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

[47] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 7; Nikos Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and ambivalence: Places and flows in contemporary art and culture', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 22:4 (2005), pp. 36–64.

collide.[48] Some also point to the ways that migrants can be extremely resourceful in resisting the imposition of identities and negotiating new ones, even to the point where migrants create novel, if temporary and/or contingent, identities that emerge from their experiences of migrancy.[49] With these qualities, migrants make the world through which they move, just as the world is imprinted upon them. This is a point also made by sociologists such as Stephen Castles; however, while this approach implicitly refers to political transformations that arise through migration (especially those forms of community formation that unfold *in situ* upon arrival), and although such transformations are explicitly located in a broader context of global transformations, these two strands are not reconciled in terms of a *political* analysis of the role of migration *qua* movement in the organisation of development.[50]

The political relations surrounding movement have, however, been engaged with in other ways. Specifically, the political nature of mobility has long been recognised by scholars working within the 'new mobilities paradigm'. This approach offers is a way of considering and conceptualising mobility not only in terms of the physical fact of movement, but also with regard to the ways that mobilities and immobilities are embedded within a broader constellation of social and political relations. According to Monika Büscher and John Urry:

> Through investigations of movement, blocked movement, potential movement, and studies of immobility, dwelling and placemaking, analysts are showing how 'moves' make social and material realities. Attention to the fluid, fleeting, yet powerful performativity of everyday, (im) mobilities transforms conceptions of sociological inquiry, explanation and critique.[51]

This literature provides some important resources for explaining and understanding the ways in which movement is embedded within a broader constellation of social and political relations, and thus implicated when these constellations change. The mobilities literature has made some extremely useful contributions towards understanding the ways that embodied experiences of movement, representations of movement, and the sheer physicality of movement are implicated in, and contingent upon, broader social dynamics.[52]

Tim Cresswell argues that '[m]obility has a wide theoretical purchase because of its centrality to what it is to be in the world. This fact connects forms of movement across research scales and within research fields that have often been held apart.'[53] According to Cresswell, a focus on mobility

[48] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994); Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings: the Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). See also Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[49] See Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Loren Landau and Iriann Freemantle, 'Tactical cosmopolitanism and idioms of belonging: Insertion and self-exclusion in Johannesburg', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36:3 (2010), pp. 375–90; AbdouMaliq Simone, 'The urbanity of movement: Dynamic frontiers in contemporary Africa', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31:4 (2011), pp. 379–91; John Mack, *The Sea: a Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), pp. 136–64; McNevin, *Contesting Citizenship*.

[50] In particular, see Stephen Castles, 'International migration at a crossroads', *Citizenship Studies*, 18:2 (2014), pp. 190–207; Stephen Castles, 'The forces driving global migration'; Castles, 'Understanding global migration', and Stephen Castles, 'Migration and community formation under conditions of globalization', *International Migration Review*, 36:4 (2002), pp. 1143–68.

[51] Monika Büscher and John Urry, 'Mobile methods and the empirical', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12:1 (2009), p. 99.

[52] Tim Cresswell, 'Towards a politics of mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28:1 (2010), pp. 17–31.

[53] Tim Cresswell, 'Mobilities I: Catching up', *Progress in Human Geography*, 35:4 (2011), p. 2.

necessarily problematises the fidelity to analytical abstractions and static assumptions about political spaces and relations:

> Mobility … is as much about meaning as it is about mappable and calculable movement. It is an ethical and political issue as much as a utilitarian and practical one … work on mobilities tends to link across different scales of moving. While long-standing sub-disciplines such as migration research or transport geography tend to be quite focused on a particular form of moving, a mobilities approach considers all forms of movement from small-scale bodily movements, such as dance or walking, through infrastructural and transport aided movements to global flows of finance and labour … mobilities research thinks about a variety of things that move including humans, ideas and objects. It is particularly interested in how these things move in interconnected ways and how one may enable or hinder another.[54]

On one level, this perspective shift inherent in a political geography account of mobility already enriches the existing critical approaches to understanding globalisation by foregrounding movement and its multiscalar and multisited determinants and effects. In other words, it connects changing relations through movement.[55] But in terms of political analysis, Cresswell also offers a set of useful markers with which to engage with the politics of mobility that are enacted through social relations:

> By politics I mean social relations that involve the production and distribution of power. By a politics of mobility I mean the ways in which mobilities are productive of social relations and produced by them. Social relations are of course complicated and diverse. They include relations between classes, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, and religious groups as well as a host of other forms of group identity. Mobility, as well as other geographical phenomena, lies at the heart of all of these.[56]

Understanding all of these dimensions, according to Cresswell, allows us to understand constellations of social and political relations as being coproduced with 'historical constellations of mobility'.[57] Taking a 'mobility approach' to understanding social and political questions, for example, we can build up a 'picture of the physics of power that may push, pull, enable or constrain political relations'.[58] Mobility is a concept that can reveal the complex distributions of power, and highlight the bordering practices that have become increasingly fragmented and pluralised in the contemporary political conjuncture.[59] However, it should be noted that neither Cresswell nor other notable contributors to the 'new mobilities paradigm' provide *all* the methodological resources

[54] Cresswell, 'Mobilities I', p. 3.

[55] See Hilary Cunningham, 'Mobilities and enclosures after Seattle: Politicizing borders in a "borderless" world', *Dialectical Anthropology*, 33:2 (2009), pp. 143–56; Hilary Cunningham and Josiah Heyman, 'Introduction', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 11:3 (2004), pp. 289–302; Heyman, 'Capitalism and US policy at the Mexican border', *Dialectical Anthropology*, 36:3–4 (2012), pp. 263–77; Vicki Squire, 'The contested politics of mobility: Politicizing mobility, mobilizing politics', in Vicki Squire (ed.), *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 1–24; Jennifer Hyndman, 'Towards feminist geopolitics', *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 45:2 (2001), pp. 210–22; and Jennifer Hyndman, 'The geopolitics of migration and mobility', *Geopolitics*, 17:2 (2012), pp. 243–55. While all of these approaches engage with mobility in relation to broader, transnational/global political transformations, mobility tends to be employed as an analytic of the exercise of power, rather than as an analytic of *political relations*.

[56] Cresswell, 'Towards a politics of mobility, p. 21.

[57] Cresswell, 'Mobilities I', p. 29.

[58] Peter Adey, *Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 119.

[59] Cf. Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method: Or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

needed for the form of analysis advocated in this article. Indeed, the key task outlined here is to train this methodological lens on the political organisation of development, in order to understand how polities are constituted through *kinetic* political relations in ways that render established analytical categories untenable. This has yet to be done in mobilities-focused political research.

The mobilities literature provides a useful touchstone for analysing the 'migration-development nexus' in relational terms, but we must also be aware of its limitations. These approaches often prefer a micro-level focus and, thus, inadvertently disarticulate the production and resistance of mobilities from an understanding of the organisation of these relations within development. The desire to develop unique methodologies that involve 'detailed studies of embodied, material or politicized mobilities' leads to a tendency to ignore (or bracket) the ways that the mobilities are implicated in broader political arrangements.[60] Kalir also suggests that mobilities approaches run the risk of leaving methodological nationalism intact as they seek to understand how *transnational* mobilities are constituted.[61] Finally, and most importantly, an overemphasis on mobility runs the danger of either valorising movement as the preeminent political force,[62] treating migration as a homogenous category of transnational mobility,[63] or taking for granted the 'mobile' body as the object of study without critically reflecting upon this analytical choice.[64] Nevertheless, the mobilities approach is a relational analytic, with an emphasis on movement, that can reveal important political dynamics yet to be disclosed in the literature on the 'migration-development nexus', and negotiated in policy circles. This move, I suggest, will enable analyses of unequal forms and experiences of migration as integral to the political organisation of development, and allow for a reconsideration of how migrants and migrations are understood as implicated in (if not explicitly represented by) the polities for which 'national development' is apparently organised.

The mobilities literature allows us to concretely engage with the ways in which migrants' mobilities are coproduced with(in) the political economy of development, and this allows us to consider how 'kinetic hierarchies'[65] are systematically organised through the pursuit of development. In analytical terms, this collapses the dichotomous distinction between development's subject (the national citizen) and development's other (the migrant). This has implications for the study of the 'migration-development nexus': to ask whether migration is 'good' for development, or ask how to 'make migration work for development' are second order questions: rather, more fundamentally we need to first critically reflect upon how migration is conventionally conceived in relation to

[60] Alison Blunt, 'Cultural geographies of migration: Mobility, transnationality and diaspora', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31:5 (2007), p. 685.

[61] Barak Kalir, 'Moving subjects, stagnant paradigms: Can the "mobilities paradigm" transcend methodological nationalism?', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39:2 (2013), p. 325. See also Didier Bigo, 'Freedom and speed in enlarged borderzones', in Vicki Squire (ed.), *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 31–50; Jørgen O. Bærenholdt, 'Governmobility: the powers of mobility', *Mobilities*, 8:1 (2013), pp. 20–34; Hedrun Friese and Sandro Mezzadra, 'Introduction', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13:3 (2010), pp. 299–313; Mark B. Salter, 'The global visa regime and the political technologies of the international self: Borders, bodies, biopolitics', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 31:2 (2006), pp. 167–89.

[62] Peter Adey, '"Divided we move": the dromologies of security and surveillance', in Torin Monahan (ed.), *Surveillance and Society: Technological Politics and Everyday Life* (New York, Routledge, 2006), p. 91.

[63] Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

[64] Birgitta Frello, 'Towards a discourse analytics of movement: On the making and unmaking of movement as an object of knowledge', *Mobilities*, 3:1 (2008), pp. 25–50.

[65] Cresswell, 'Towards a politics of mobility', p. 29.

conventional accounts of development. Such an approach reveals that migration is not external to the political organisation of development, but is deeply implicated in forms of social, political, and economic change that occur under the banner of national development.[66]

## A kinetic understanding of the contemporary politics of development

The present shocks in the contemporary 'development climate',[67] spectacularly unmitigated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) project, have led the international development community to reinvest significant energies, resources, and political capital in developing a new set of progressive targets for the 15 years to 2030. On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that outlines the post-2015 development project. Entitled 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', the resolution provides a resounding and all-encompassing blueprint for coordinated action on development over the next decade-and-a-half.[68] This resolution goes some ways to redress the absence of migration issues in global development policy: it explicitly recognises migration as an important 'development issue', forcefully calls for migrants' rights to be respected, and advocates for greater cooperation on migration management. However, given that many migrants move and work in a global setting in which rights are organised and distributed in unequal ways, and given that the so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain largely state-centric, it is necessary to consider how the development aspirations outlined in the new UNGA resolution cohere with the substantive relations through which contemporary development processes are actually organised.[69]

Present forms of urban growth – particularly conspicuous urbanisms in Gulf States – are instructive. When it comes to migration to and from cities, we can see that executives and tourists enjoy a great deal of freedom in transit and residence, whilst 'low skilled workers' often move and work in straitened conditions. There is a long-standing assumption that 'forced labour is an aberration from the normal functioning of the global economy and its causes are largely exogenous to processes of contemporary global economic restructuring'.[70] However, while there remains a (tedious) definitional debate around the relationship between 'free' and 'forced' migration, there is an emerging view within critical political economy scholarship that the structures and forces that compel people to leave their homes are constituted by development processes, and that compulsion may come in the form of structural violence as much as it does in recognised forms of political violence.[71] Unequal forms of migration are integral to contemporary urbanisation processes, which themselves are at the centre of national development plans. The obvious, but under-recognised, corollary is that these unequal forms of migration are constituted by various forms of unequal mobility.

[66] See Suliman, 'The politics of migration'.

[67] Cf. Philip McMichael, 'Contemporary contradictions of the global development project: Geopolitics, global ecology and the "development climate"', *Third World Quarterly*, 30:1 (2009), pp. 247–62.

[68] UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', A/RES/70/1 (25 September 2015), available at: {http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1} accessed 18 January 2016

[69] Cf. Sexsmith and McMichael, 'Formulating the SDGs'.

[70] Nicola Phillips and Fabiola Mieres, 'The governance of forced labour in the global economy', *Globalizations*, 12:2 (2015), p. 245.

[71] See Linda Green, 'The nobodies: Neoliberalism, violence, and migration', *Medical Anthropology*, 30:4 (2011), pp. 366–85; Marianne H. Marchand, 'The violence of development and the migration/insecurities nexus: Labour migration in a North American context', *Third World Quarterly*, 29:7 (2008), pp. 1375–88; Suliman, 'The politics of migration'.

We can draw on one topical example to briefly illustrate the critical approach developed above: the *kafala* system in the Gulf States is an obvious – if egregious – example of how contemporary inequalities are produced kinetically though development. Workers enter into labour recruitment channels to compensate for dwindling economic opportunities at home. Poor regions in South Asia are responsible for a large proportion of the migrant labour 'stock' in the Gulf States, and many workers feel compelled to work abroad to support their families and communities. However, as is well documented, the *kafala* system effectively ensures bonded labour: migrant workers are contracted to a single employer, who confiscates their passport, and has *de facto* sovereignty over their participation in the local labour market and over their international mobility. Moreover, foreign construction workers are not allowed to 'mingle' with indigenous urban populations, but instead are bussed to remote residential facilities (effectively camps) after working 12 to 14 hours per day, in perilous conditions. This is often to mediate critical economic/livelihood problems back home, and in this context migrant workers can endure what Buckley refers to as 'crisis circumstances'.[72] This labour migration model – while attracting significant criticism from many quarters – makes possible the kinds of contemporary urbanism that is pursued and envied. Cutting-edge high-rise buildings and sports stadiums are lauded for their commitment to reducing the environmental footprint through cutting-edge design and sustainable systems; yet this construction boom has yielded a staggering number of workplace injuries and fatalities for migrant workers, not to mention egregious pay and conditions.[73]

These (re)new(ed) spaces of capital accumulation are also places where multiple mobilities intersect, themselves the products of complex, transversal histories of development. Many migrant workers in the Gulf states, men and women, hail from poorer regions such as Kerala, and back home migration is implicated in profound and contradictory forms of social change, encompassing economic, political, and gendered dimensions, not to mention a long history of 'negative' development outcomes by way of dispossession and discrimination in the name of development.[74] In this context, 'the migrant figure embodies a powerful influence that needs to be understood as the outcome of specific sets of relations, including global, regional and national discourses of modernity, development, neoliberalism and patriarchy'.[75] Meanwhile, for many migrant workers, 'entry' mobility is not matched by a substantive guarantee of 'exit' or 'circular' mobility: *de facto* indenture, withholding of pay, forms of debt bondage and passport confiscation have all been documented, and are indeed a core component of the *kafala* system. For many migrant workers in the Gulf States, access to the mobilities prescribed by international labour markets depends upon foreclosing access to labour rights and political entitlements. Indeed it is hard to envisage such explosive urban development without the disregard of migrants' rights and the denial of safe and secure mobilities.

Furthermore, the figure of the migrant in many of the Gulf States is deeply ambivalent, as 'the denial of citizenship rights to migrants follows a more general pattern of political exclusion that official

[72] Michelle Buckley, 'From Kerala to Dubai and back again: Construction migrants and the global economic crisis', *Geoforum*, 43:2 (2012), p. 251.

[73] Amnesty International, *The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's Construction Sector Ahead of the World Cup* (London: Amnesty International, 2013); Human Rights Watch, *Building a Better World Cup: Protecting Migrant Workers in Qatar Ahead of FIFA 2022* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2012); Rooja Bairacharya and Bandita Sijapati, *The Kafala System and Its Implications for Nepali Domestic Workers*, Policy Brief No. 1 (Nepal: Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, 2012).

[74] Tania Murray Li, 'To make live or let die? Rural dispossession and the protection of surplus populations', *Antipode*, 41:s1 (2010), p. 85.

[75] Margaret Walton-Roberts, 'Contextualizing the global nursing care chain: International migration and the status of nursing in Kerala, India', *Global Networks*, 12:2 (2012), p. 190.

citizenship holders as well as migrants experience', whereas the so-called expatriate enjoys a relative degree of luxury and freedom as a member of the transnational hypermobile classes.[76] We can throw in to this mix the fact that Gulf's urban boom in the region is financed largely through oil revenues, which reveals further linkages with geographically dispersed and diverse mobilities such as private car travel, mass tourism, and climate change displacement.[77] The nationalist account of politics and political community that is assumed within orthodox perspectives on migration and development – in light of these complex mobilities – is clearly tenuous, at best.

As I have indicated through this brief example, a kinetic mode of analysis sheds light the substantive ways in which migrations and migrants feature in the political organisation of development. Importantly, this approach is distinctive because it can recognise 'development mobilities' as substantive political relations through which development is organised, and not just the outcome of substantive political relations. It can also show how the 'myth' of sustainable development is sustained producing and entrenching inequalities and injustices. That migrant workers in Dubai recently engaged in industrial action is certainly evidence that these political relations are contested and contestable.[78] From this perspective, it is not that migration is a challenge to development; nor is it a matter of migration challenges being overcome through development; rather we can see that *development* – as an organised project that, in its formal framing, depends upon the abstraction from the inequalities that it produces – *is a problem for migration*.

Given that migrant workers are put into constant motion – ostensibly to contribute to development – and given that the rights of migrants are so easily abrogated or discounted, we can see that the politics of migration and development revolves around the question of *how political relations travel*. Given the centrality of migration processes to development trajectories, questions of rights or entitlements or protections should not be posed in relation to 'here' or 'there'. Nor are they everywhere, as per the universal human rights discourse. Rather, the rights of migrants and citizens are constituted in particular historical contexts, and through certain relations. The movement of migrants, in no small part, constitutes these relations, not least because polities are *transformed* by the very fact of their movement. They are transformed through migrants' labour, their mobile relationships to home, their tenuous inclusion in their 'host' societies, and the broader political economy in which they move. As migrants move, so do the polities that shape their movements. This is why we need to understand migration *qua* movement as a political relation.

The recognition of movement as a transversal political relation that cuts across territorial boundaries has implications for the ways in which development is analysed and pursued.[79] It also has important implications for the institutionalisation of rights, protections, and entitlements: there is a big difference between the aspiration to protect the rights of migrants and conceiving of mobile people as bearers of rights. I propose that this line of inquiry opens up space to think critically about whether or not formal political membership will remain tethered to problematic territorial and technocratic

[76] James Sater, 'Citizenship and migration in Arab Gulf monarchies', *Citizenship Studies*, 18:3–4 (2014), pp. 292–302.

[77] Cf. Matthew Paterson, 'Governing mobilities, mobilising carbon', *Mobilities*, 9:4 (2014), pp. 570–84; Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011).

[78] The Associated Press, 'Dubai migrant workers hold rare strike to demand bonuses', *New York Times* (10 March 2015), available at: {http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/03/10/world/middleeast/ap-ml-dubai-workers-strike.html?_r=0} accessed 30 August 2015.

[79] Cf. Soguk and Whitehall, 'Wandering grounds'.

approaches to 'sustainable' development. Might there be space for thinking about migrancy as the basis for rights, and political community as inherently kinetic?

## Conclusion

The condition of international migrancy is becoming increasingly fraught for many people now celebrated by some as the new 'heroes of development'. While development agencies and national governments are becoming increasingly receptive to the idea that migrants can and do make substantive contributions to 'national development', there have been numerous reports and studies documenting the ways in which migrants are systematically marginalised and denied fundamental rights and protections through the organisation of international migration for national development. The ability and capacity to move safely across national borders, and establish dignified lives in new countries, is an entitlement available only to the vast minority of the global population. Many migrants endure gruelling conditions in transit and residence to pursue a better life, but it is only the financial contributions sent home that are being tabulated in national development econometrics. While it is true that working migrants are sending remittances in amounts never before seen, it is also true that conditions of migrancy are becoming less free and less just, and many migrants are being forced into a condition Matthew Sparke has called 'carceral cosmopolitanism'.[80]

To make sense of the profound inequalities inherent to the international migration system, we can take one of two paths. The first is to take for granted the political and institutional coordinates of migration and development as given, and use these as the basis with which to consider harmonising the demands of migrant-sending countries, migrant-receiving countries, and migrants themselves through existing and emerging global governance arrangements. This is the path taken by advocates of, and scholars concerned with, the 'migration for development' agenda. The second path requires an engagement with some more fundamental issues, such as the theories, forms of knowledge, and methods of analysis with which we approach the relationship between migration and development in the first place.

As a starting point for understanding migration as a constitutive feature of the global politics of development, this article has introduced the *problematique* of the 'migration-development nexus' to new perspectives that have emerged though the 'new mobilities paradigm'. From the perspective of movements and mobilities, I am advancing a relationally conceived analytic that is distinctive insofar as it is oriented towards apprehending migration *as a political relation of development*. In doing so, the conventional framing of development as a project that is constituted by 'national' subjects is brought into question. So too are predominant ideas of how 'national development' is itself constituted.

Through the lens of kinetic politics, we can see that migration *qua* movement is a political relation that can be penciled into a broader constellation of relations that are revealed through a political analysis of the transnational organisation of development. This approach incorporates movement and mobility into a relational account of the politics of global change, rather than seeing movement as merely a symptom or outcome of such transformations. This approach reveals – *contra* orthodox conceptions of migration as an object of politics – that migrants contribute towards political relations, and thus enact politics, in substantive terms. By developing an account of the kinetic

[80] Matthew Sparke, 'A neoliberal nexus: Economy, security and the biopolitics of citizenship on the border', *Political Geography*, 25:2 (2006), p. 20.

politics of development, we can apprehend how migrants and migrancy are implicated in the constitution of the polities through which 'development' is organised. Reframing the analysis of development this way has important consequences for understanding how the persistence of 'national thinking' in the study of development casts a pall over the fates and fortunes of many migrants whose presence is demanded, but whose rights are denied because their contributions are conceived in apolitical terms.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Dr Heloise Weber, Dr Martin Weber, and three anonymous reviewers for their critical engagement and constructive feedback.

## Biographical information

Dr Samid Suliman is Lecturer in Migration and Security in the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, at Griffith University. He is an interdisciplinary researcher interested in migration, postcolonial political theory, international relations and world politics, global development, climate change, and the politics of knowledge. He was recently awarded the Australian Political Studies Association's 2015 Thesis Prize for his doctoral thesis, entitled *Migration, Development, and Kinetic Politics* (this is currently being revised for publication as a monograph).