The Double Pincer of Migration: Revisiting the Migration and Development Nexus through a Spatial Lens

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ABSTRACT: The paper examines contemporary conceptualisations of the migration and development nexus, using a spatial lens. It challenges mainstream conceptualisations based on static and bounded understandings of space and place; it incorporates Marxist and postcolonial understandings of migration and development; and it politicises the way in which this nexus can be conceptualised. The "double pincer of migration" is a metaphor that captures the "freedom" to follow capital, the "selection" performed by regulatory mechanisms that prevent such freedom from fully realising itself, and the agency of migrants treading the pincer, who, while being caught up by the structural forces shaping the double pincer, render it fluid and selectively enabling.

KEYWORDS: space (*Thesaurus*) • migration and development nexus • geographies of development • agency (*author's keywords*)

This article is part of a broader research agenda that attempts to define the *borders-migration-development nexus* in systematic ways. The concept is intended to function as an analytical tool that critically engages with policy-oriented theorisations found in the literature on the Migration-Development Nexus, by bringing it into a dialogue with the field of Border Studies.

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La doble tenaza de la migración. Reconsideración del nexo entre la migración y el desarrollo a través de un lente espacial

RESUMEN: El artículo examina las conceptualizaciones contemporáneas del nexo entre migración y desarrollo, utilizando un lente espacial. Desafía las conceptualizaciones convencionales fundadas en comprensiones estáticas y limitadas de espacio y tiempo; incorpora interpretaciones marxistas y poscoloniales de migración y desarrollo; y politiza la manera en que este nexo puede ser conceptualizado. La "doble tenaza de la migración" es una metáfora que capta la "libertad" de ir tras el capital, la "selección" realizada por los mecanismos reguladores que impiden que dicha libertad se realice plenamente, y la agencia de los migrantes que se mueven sobre la tenaza, quienes, mientras son arrastrados por la fuerzas estructurales que dan forma a la doble tenaza, la vuelven fluida y fuente de empoderamiento selectivo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: espacio (*Thesaurus*) • nexo entre migración y desarrollo • geografías de desarrollo • agencia (*palabras clave autor*)

"A dupla pinça"[1] da migração. Reconsideração do nexo entre a migração e o desenvolvimento através de uma lente espacial

RESUMO: Este artigo examina os conceitos contemporâneos do nexo entre migração e desenvolvimento utilizando uma lente espacial. Desafia os conceitos convencionais fundados em compreensões estáticas e limitadas de espaço e tempo; incorpora interpretações marxistas e pós-coloniais de migração e desenvolvimento; politiza a maneira em que esse nexo pode ser conceituado. "A faca de dois gumes" da migração é uma metáfora que capta a liberdade de ir atrás do capital, a seleção realizada pelos mecanismos reguladores que impedem que essa liberdade seja realizada plenamente, e a agência dos migrantes que se movem sobre esses dois lados, enquanto são arrastados por forças estruturais que dão forma à faca de dois gumes, tornam-na fluída e fonte de empoderamento seletivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: espaço (*Thesaurus*) • nexo entre migração e desenvolvimento geografias de desenvolvimento • agencia (*palabras-chave autor*)

1 Nota do tradutor: optou-se por uma tradução literal para concervar a intenção do autor com a metáfora.

Introduction

At the turn of the century, after a period of relative neglect, development policymakers re-conceptualised migration as an integral and positive dimension of development (see de Haas 2012, and below). Suddenly realising the crucial role of remittances both as a wage-transfer mechanism contributing to the amelioration of household livelihoods, and as significant financial inflow for developing countries both in absolute terms and relative to the total amount of Overseas Development Assistance (Gammeltoft 2002), migration has come to be seen today as a panacea for development. In fact, migration and development are seen as naturally complementing each other, the synergistic view of their relation being enshrined in several wide-ranging official documents and agendas.

The IOM (2015), for example, believes that migration can contribute to poverty reduction, growth and development, as well as to enhancing migrants' wellbeing. The World Bank has long insisted that unimpeded migration flows are necessary to unleash the potential of market-based development models (World Bank 2009, see also Pritchett 2006). The EU, in its recent "Agenda on Migration" (European Commission 2015), sees development as one of the four pillars contributing to a more efficient management of migration. Indeed, many suggest that the refugee crisis currently unfolding in the Middle East and Europe could best be solved by opening up labour markets to displaced populations (Betts and Collier 2015).

While correctly identifying and being concerned with the co-constitutive relation between migration and development, these analyses seem problematic in a number of ways. First of all, the novel awareness of the nexus between migration and development does not translate into a departure from the prescriptions that have characterised the development agenda over the last four decades, but rather functions as an addendum. In fact, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development reminds us that trade remains the only engine of development, as remittances cannot substitute foreign direct investment, but should rather be considered a source of private transfers which can have positive effects on household economies (United Nations 2009). Similarly, redistribution of resources remains firmly outside the purview of policy makers, with remittances confirming the notion that the poor should lift themselves out of poverty, rather than be supported by governmental policies. Indeed, the positive light shed on remittances as a poverty-alleviation tool confirm the idea that the market remains the best mechanism for allocating resources. Put differently, the conceptualisation of the migration and development nexus posited by the above documents does not represent a change in the overall aims and objectives

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of development interventions, but rather a "new" dimension of concern that is added to the range of policies that have been in place since the neoliberal turn of the 1980s. This waters down the progressive potential associated with the re-discovery of migration as a driving force of development. Secondly, functioning as a confirmation of a pre-existing agenda, any attempt at re-considering the latter's basic tenets is actually pre-empted. In the words of Matt Bakker, "viewing paltry sums of money from some of the world's least affluent people" as a public resource and a promising source of development lays "out a preferred set of market-based policies that have largely displaced alternative policy approaches" (Bakker 2015, 10-13).

Third, and more broadly, the conceptualisation of the migration and development nexus posited by the above documents, remains within a non-critical paradigm that sees their relation as natural, rather than politically and scientifically constructed. This conceptualisation is devoid of any consideration for the imbalanced power relations within which the nexus is embedded. For this reason, critical development studies need to rethink the premises and prescriptions associated to the so-called "migration and development nexus" (Geiger and Pécoud 2013).

This, at its broadest, is the purpose of this paper, which builds upon and expands these critiques by critically engaging with various representations of the nexus. Conceiving of both migration and development as epistemological battlegrounds —i.e. as concepts that acquire different meanings and that are driven by different social forces depending on the epistemological perspective adopted—, the paper is concerned with dis-entangling from one another various conceptualisations of the relation between migration and development. Through this discussion, the paper offers two contributions. First, it offers an overview of the main analytical perspectives characterising the field of study concerned with the relation between migration and development as a way of highlighting the different position taken by each approach. Second, it offers a novel analytical perspective that attempts to overcome some of their limitations, building upon their respective strengths. This analytical perspective is framed around the metaphor of the *double pincer of migration*.

The pincer movement is a military tactic that consists of encircling the enemy as it moves forward, rather than facing it head on. Some military strategists suggest that flanking the enemy on both sides, and then "pinching" it, can facilitate the surrender and/or destruction of the enemy. Deploying this metaphor to think about migration and development seems appropriate in at least three ways. First, in relation to migration, this seems appropriate given the militarisation of contemporary borders (Jones and Johnson 2016), in places like

the USA, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, India, South Africa and Brazil. It seems that a war is being waged on migrants attempting to escape conflict, poverty and destitution, or simply seeking a better life elsewhere: a war that entails flanking them from all sides and progressively (attempting to) annihilate any hope of achieving those goals and aspirations.

Second, in relation to development, this seems appropriate because it emphasises the violent aspects associated to a second pincer that works in combination with the first one: the movement of capital. Over the last four decades, the hyper- mobility of capital has been facilitated by the relentless opening up of markets, the privatisation of land, and the reduction of agricultural and other subsidies, all of which, by flanking populations across the world and then "pinching" them, have progressively annihilated livelihoods and disrupted socio-economic prospects for the overwhelming majority of them. Thus, the war-like metaphor of the double pincer of migration seeks to emphasise the desperate conditions of vast segments of the world population, as it attempts to capture the simultaneity of these two dynamics. Third, conceiving of these simultaneous dynamics as an integrated system also facilitates accounting for a third dimension: the differential ways in which migrants are caught up in, cross over, or move through and beyond the double pincer. In fact, migrants engage, disrupt, co-opt, and transgress these pincers in a number of ways, although it is clear that not all of them are equally able to do so.

Deploying this metaphor thus evokes the synchronous violence of capitalism and of borders, and yet it also accounts for the socially differentiated, subjective experience and interpretation of the pincer, as well as for the selective benefits it offers. The double pincer metaphor is an attempt to bridge accounts that correctly emphasise the place-specific and embodied outcomes and experiences of the migration and development nexus, with those that, equally convincingly, point to the structural forces shaping said nexus. Finding ways of capturing the "structural" (i.e. the historical and material) and the fluid (i.e. the unpredictable and the contingent) dimensions of the nexus, it will be argued, is important both analytically and in relation to the definition of political platforms able to address the complex, diffuse and dispersed ways in which contemporary capitalism manifests itself, as it better identifies social inequalities amongst and across those who manage, those who benefit from, and those who tread the double pincer.

The following sections construct this metaphor using a spatial lens. The next section develops the theoretical approach with which the migration and development nexus literature is analysed. It defines migration and development as epistemological battlegrounds, and conceives of migration at its most abstract level —i.e. as a movement from a place A to a place B. This perspective, the

section suggests, distinguishes various conceptualisations based on their different understandings of which social processes define A and B, and thus facilitates capturing assumptions, similarities and differences across various understandings of the nexus. Using different understandings of A and B as an analytical prism, the subsequent sections present an overview of the main epistemological approaches in the field. The first of these sections is concerned with mainstream approaches, which consider A and B as separate and bounded places. The following one is concerned with political economy approaches, which see A and B as part of the uneven and combined geographies defined by capitalist development, which define the first pincer. Subsequently, institutional approaches concerned with the laws and regulations constraining or facilitating the movement from A to B will be used to define the second pincer. Finally, approaches that look at A and B from the embodied and subjective perspective of migrants will be used to think about the actual movement of people across the pincers. The last section builds upon this discussion and draws certain conclusions.

1. Migration, development and their contested coordinates

Migration and development are two fundamental drivers of transformation in modern society. Their meaning and implications have long been at the centre of analytical and political debates in national contexts and at the global level. Yet their relation is as elusive as it is complex, and it remains subject to immense controversies. Capturing the channels and directions through which their relation unfolds is not (only) an empirical problem. Rather, it is an epistemological battleground: different understandings of what development is about, and of what drives migration, lead to profoundly different understandings of the relation between them.

This is the case, first of all, in considering the development process. In fact, depending on the methodological perspective adopted, the understanding of the drivers, intended objectives and actual outcomes and effects of development acquires very different connotations. For example, while many organisations, such as the World Bank (1997), conceive of development as an all-encompassing range of policies, programmes and activities geared towards increasing economic growth and eliminating poverty, post-development scholars would conceive of these activities as top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic impositions, which abstract from and destroy people and cultures in the Third World (Escobar 2008). Similarly, while for Marxist scholars such policies and programmes are functional for the reproduction of the conditions for capitalist development and for asserting the imperial projects of powerful states (Harvey 2004), for some economists the commitment of such states to development policies and

programmes is instead ever more needed to overcome economic disparities around the world (Sachs Mellinger and Galup 2008). Is development about national poverty and economic growth, or is it about societal inequalities? Is it about ameliorating livelihood opportunities and capabilities (JMDI 2011) or about the empowerment of individuals and communities (Hill 2003)? Different understandings of "what development is about" (Booth 1985) will necessarily lead to different interpretations of its relation to migration.

Secondly, to complicate things further, the most accurate and significant way to conceptualise migration and to explain its driving forces is also subject to controversies resembling the epistemological divisions sketched above. Neoclassical economics, for example, understands migration as an individual, rational, utilitarian response to push and pull factors (Dorigo and Tobler 1983). Challenging some of the assumptions characterising this approach, New Economics of Labour Migration models (see Abreu 2012, for an explanation and critique) maintain the idea of push and pull, but emphasise instead the household as the site of migration-related decisions, while Social Networks Analysis (Marin and Wellman 2011) broadens the spectrum of communities that shape migration decisions even further, as it takes the variety of social relations defining social networks as the starting point for the explanation of migration patterns. Marxist scholarship, on the contrary, privileges explanations that set migration in relation to capitalist development and to the combined and uneven geographies that it constitutes (Munck 2008), while post-structuralist approaches focus the analysis on the turbulent aspects of migration instead (Papastergiadis 2010) and are sceptical about the idea of reducing migrants' subjectivities to capitalism and to legal identities defined by the interstate system (Papadopolous, Stephenson and Tsianos 2008). In other words, as in relation to the conceptualisation of development, the study of migration is subject to fierce epistemological battles, a situation which complicates any understanding of the relation between them.

How, then, is the relation between development and migration to be understood, given the contested nature of these two terms? Who and/or what shapes this relation? The following pages enter this contested field of study in an agnostic way. Rather than defining *a priori* which of the above conceptualisations of development and of migration is to be preferred, this paper attempts to identify various understandings of their relation by distinguishing them on the basis of the spatial coordinates that they use to characterise that relation. The starting point for developing this perspective is the following question: *Who is a migrant*?

A generic conceptualisation of "the migrant" as someone who moves from one generic place A to another generic place B is in fact the only common thread running through the various conceptualisations of the relation between

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migration and development examined below. Nonetheless, a series of analytical contradictions seem to emerge out of the apparent banality of this question and answer. Indeed, the use of such a definition for analytical purposes is fraught with problematic issues, given the absence of spatio-temporal (from where to where? for how long? how often? when?) and social (who is moving? why? how?) coordinates. At this level of abstraction, the identification and differentiation of the figure of the migrant from that of the non-migrant based on the movement from A to B is analytically empty. Indeed, a categorisation of this sort encompasses such a vast and diverse number of people (e.g. military personnel and humanitarian workers deployed abroad, refugees, "golden retirees" in exotic locations, trafficked sex workers, gap-year "travellers," seasonal agricultural workers, and many others) that it fails to be significant in any way. In other words, while movement from A to B seems to be the defining characteristic of "the migrant," such a definition does not seem to provide a sufficiently homogeneous group of people for it to be conceived of as a group for analytical purposes.

Most studies of migration resolve this impasse by fixing some of these coordinates as a way of improving the accuracy of the above definition. It is possible, for instance, to use temporal coordinates, and to identify "short term," "long term" and "seasonal" migrants. Alternatively, using agglomeration-based coordinates and focusing on the direction of movement, the categories of "rural-urban," "urban-urban," "rural-rural" and "circular" migrants emerge. Similarly, using the coordinates set by the interstate system, it is possible to identify "international" and "internal" migrants. In relation to volition, the institutional frameworks of migration distinguish between "voluntary" and "forced" migration. On the other hand, some studies privilege a different terminology and re-frame the distinction in terms of "economic" or "labour" and "political" migration. In terms of composition, migrants can be classified based on gender, age, levels of education, skills, etc. These characterisations are most often used in combination with others, as in the case of a "long-term, international, urban-urban, economic, young, migrant woman."

These characterisations, however, identify a meaningful group of people only to a certain extent, as they seem to fall into similar taxonomic problems. The number of young migrant women covered by the "multi-dimensional" definition illustrated above is so vast (it could equally encompass a domestic worker, a nurse, a diplomat's spouse or a security consultant moving to or from any city in the world) that additional layers of contextualisation would be needed for such representation to acquire analytical relevance. More fundamentally, however, adding layer upon layer of specific data (which city, educational skills, social or legal status, etc.) still leaves unsolved two fundamental representational issues that are related to the actual fixing of social and spatio-temporal coordinates.

First of all, it is unclear how many layers are needed for such representation to become meaningful: while the above definition may be too generic, in fact, too many layers may render it meaningless in the opposite direction. Secondly, and following from this, it is unclear how to define *a priori* which combination of layers is more meaningful for answering the above question. Put differently, it is unclear how to define what is analytically meaningful, since any combination of these categorisations may acquire different meanings in different places (e.g. in London, Peshawar or Bogota), and as they may be experienced by, and thus have different meanings for, the person in question. Which socio-spatial coordinates should therefore be privileged in the definition of a migrant?

This question can only be answered by establishing epistemological and methodological hierarchies. As I have suggested elsewhere (Novak 2016a), the definition of the migrant in this abstract sense is in fact syllogistic. The conceptualisation of the (socio-spatial) phenomenon of migration is inseparable from the definition of (socio-spatial) coordinates that make movement from one place to another epistemologically significant. Any definition of the figure of "the migrant" is in itself a representation of the social; in other words, of the social forces and relations which drive, motivate and explain migration.

It is useful to think about migration in this way because it facilitates the identification of epistemological fault lines amongst and across various methodological perspectives. Indeed, the different understandings of the nexus between migration and development can be characterised as each having a different conceptualisation of such coordinates. Thus, the following sections discuss various understandings of the migration and development nexus, distinguishing them on the basis of their different conceptualisations of A and B. This approach confirms the existing critiques of the migration and development nexus literature, by showing how its de-contextualised understandings of the nexus do not consider the imbalanced social contexts within which migration and development unfold (Geiger and Pécoud 2013). It also facilitates harnessing the analytical potential that derives from simultaneous engagement with various epistemological traditions. The double pincer of migration metaphor is constructed by considering various social forces which simultaneously connect and separate A and B with/from one another.

2. A and B as separate places: push and pull

Mainstream understandings of the migration and development nexus are premised on Cartesian coordinates. These coordinates assume that every place can readily be identified by using a pair of numerical coordinates that locates its

unique position on a plane. Each place is thus defined as a bounded, separate, readily identifiable unit that possesses peculiar characteristics.

Conceiving of one place A and another place B in such manner, these models "explain" migration by referring to the imbalances that exist between them, imbalances that, in turn, create push and pull factors motivating migration flows (Lee 1966). The range of possible push and pull factors is wide. They can be of an economic nature: e.g. wages are higher in B; expected income is higher in B; more jobs are available in B. They can also be of a political nature: e.g. human rights are not respected in A; there is conflict in A; government A persecutes particular social groups. They may also be premised on (modelled) migrants' utility curves: e.g. I would have better access to social provisions if I moved to B; my children would have a better education; health services are of a higher standard. In all these cases, migration is seen as a rational response to the imbalances characterising A and B.

The idea that economic, political or other imbalances among (separate and bounded) places are the fundamental driving force of migration is, and has been, highly influential for theorising the relation between migration and development. This is so if we consider early development models, which are premised on such conceptualisation. The Lewis (1954) model, for example, "explains" labour transfers in a dual economy as a transition to industrialisation fed by agricultural surplus labour. Rural labour would *naturally* migrate from the countryside to the city, in search of jobs, better wages, and "modern" life. The analytical apparatus is broadly similar even if we consider models that are more explicitly concerned with modelling migration. The Harris-Todaro model (Todaro 1976), for example, explains rural to urban migration on the basis of migrants' rational expectations. In very schematic terms, the model conceives of migration primarily as an economic phenomenon, which responds, much like in Lewis' theorisation, to urban-rural wage differentials. These differentials, however, are mediated by the expectations of getting a job, rather than static wage differentials. Rural to urban migration will take place if rural wages are lower than the *expected* urban wage rate, which is measured as the urban wage multiplied by the probability of getting a job. Conversely, urban to rural migration will occur if the opposite relation holds.

These models, however simplistic, proved to be important tools for policy-makers during the modernisation period. In particular, the Harris-Todaro model produced key policy recommendations in relation to balancing economic opportunities in urban and rural settings, skills-enhancement (human capital), etc., that continue to be relevant even today (see later). Indeed, the presumption that imbalances and wage differentials between places A and B determine migration

flows remained influential even after two or three decades following World War II, the so-called "golden age of development" (Payne and Phillips 2010).

However, the changed context and the advent of neoliberal economic doctrines expanded these models to incorporate (and justify) the movement of capital as well as that of labour, somewhat changing the parameters of earlier formulations. In these models, the relative abundance of capital or of labour in A and B explains the movement of people and of capital between them. In places where capital is abundant and labour is scarce, wages will be higher and migratory flows towards those destinations will emerge. Places where labour is abundant and capital is scarce are characterised instead by a higher return on capital, and investment will therefore be directed towards them. According to the model, these dynamics will point towards equilibrium in the long term.

It should be noted that these models transcend analytical scales. They work at the macro level, since they point to disequilibrium, wage differentials and structural imbalances across countries and regions. Yet they also work at the micro level, since they account for individual motivations, at least as long as the individuals, be they migrants or investors, conform to the rational utility-maximising assumptions embedded in the model. They are thus able to reconcile various contradictions through one simple formulation. Furthermore, they may be equally applicable to regions, countries, cities and rural areas.

Given such a conceptualisation of the migratory process, migration and development policy debates are concerned with the best way to address such imbalances. Two extreme positions can be identified. First of all, those who consider (excessive) migration to be negative (e.g. Collier 2013) will suggest that A and B be *balanced* through increased economic cooperation and investment. The reduction of imbalances will then result in a reduction of migration. This is most easily seen *vis-à-vis* international migration, as de Haan (2002) suggests: more trade and more aid will create sufficient opportunities at home for migrants to decrease their willingness to move abroad. Similarly, more democracy and respect for human rights will eliminate political motivations behind migration (Bussman and Schneider 2007). Put differently, the neoliberal aspiration (illusion) of creating a "flat world" (Friedmann 2005) implies that the more and the better neoliberal policies are implemented, the lower the incentives for people to migrate. These positions are generally accompanied by calls for increased restrictions on the flow of migrants (e.g. Fortress Europe, harsher border controls, detentions and deportations), and may be used as justifications for "humanitarian interventions" that supposedly foster transitions to democracy. Similar ideas, however, are also applied to national contexts: in many countries, governments are committed to balancing inequalities through Rural Employment Schemes

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(Disa and Farrington 2008), while restricting entry into urban perimeters and promoting anti-slum programs (Deshingkar 2006).

Secondly, those who consider migration to be a positive force propose instead to decrease, if not to eliminate restrictions on migration altogether. This position may originate from two very different concerns. Free market advocates (Pritchett 2006) would consider any distortion in the free flow of *labour* as inefficient: in the "perfect" world of free markets, in which labour will supposedly find its most advantageous location (in relation to both geography and economic sector), and will price itself into the labour market, in turn reducing imbalances and steering towards equilibrium. Others are more concerned with issues of social justice and consider restrictions on the movement of *people* as inherently unjust, with respect to the mobility of capital or that of transnational elites and privileged passport-holders, or framing the issue of the movement of persons in relation to human rights, or the need to escape from economic and political oppression. In the world of policy-making, positions are often more nuanced and, in fact, most policy documents talk about *managing* migration (IOM 2010), while maintaining an underlying notion of imbalances and separation between A and B as the main explanatory framework for understanding the relation between migration and development.

These postulations seem problematic in a number of ways. For the purposes of this article, they are marked by two significant flaws. First, in relation to their conceptualisation of place, this framework reifies A and B as bounded and separate entities and fails to explain *why* such places are characterised by inequalities. Second, and following from this, these postulations consider, measure and attribute inequalities to *places* (A and B) or *sectors* of the economy (agriculture, industry, services), rather than to people and *social* classes. By conceiving of inequalities as an attribute of place, as opposed to the outcome of a particular set of social relations, an understanding of inequalities between people and *social* classes is completely absent.

These flaws are actually two sides of the same coin. Mainstream frameworks for conceptualising the relation between migration and development lack any sort of social contextualisation because their explanation of social change is premised on the model's assumption about individual economic rationality. This is problematic, as suggested by Billy Freund, since

> "Taken in isolation and reified as a social form, the study of migration can lead to vacuous conclusions. Only when the analysis of migration is contextualised along various dimensions is it possible to transcend push-pull debates or good-evil characterisations" (Freund 1981).

The following sections, on the contrary, are precisely concerned with setting A and B in relation to the various social contexts that provide them with analytical significance. They disrupt the Cartesian coordinates of the above-mentioned mainstream models, since they connect A and B using different sets of socio-spatial relations: respectively, those created by capitalist development, by institutional regulatory frameworks, and by migrants themselves.

3. A and B as connected places: the first pincer

A good starting point for thinking about the connections between A and B (i.e. for considering them as part of one combined and uneven system) is to consider the spread of market relations, patterns of foreign investment, and the internationalisation of production (and extraction) sites —as well as their effects on the mobilisation and mobility of labour. These dynamics have had disruptive effects on "traditional" forms of subsistence from colonial times to this day, functioning as *both* "push" and "pull" factors across places. The incorporation of geographical areas and populations into a world economy, and the disruption of subsistence forms of livelihoods, may in fact go a long way in explaining structural conditions for (at least potentially) mobile masses of labour that are *free* to roam around in search of a job, i.e. they are *free to follow capital* (compare this with the notions of footloose labour [Breman 1996] and surplus humanity [Davis 2004], or from a different angle, accumulation by dispossession [Harvey 2004]).

Colonial encounters are an appropriate historical moment for capturing the relation between migration and development in its historical trajectory. Indeed, while migratory flows clearly pre-date the colonial encounter, it is during said encounter that the nexus between borders, migration and development was constituted in its modern form (Novak 2016b). Three fundamental spatial transformations took on a concrete form in that historical moment, transformations which continue to be relevant for today's migration and development dynamics.

First, the colonial encounter profoundly re-configured the spatial organisation of social relations by establishing new sites of trading, production and extraction, and by establishing new lines of connectivity and bounding between and across them, all of which affected migration routes, composition and patterns. Some of these locations, such as the labour-intensive tin mines in Nigeria, already existed in pre-colonial times, but were taken over and greatly expanded in the years prior to World War I (Freund 1981). In other instances, the expropriation of land and its transformation into plantations transformed these locations into crucial nodes in the system of migrant labour (Stichter 1982).

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Throughout the colonial world, new agricultural enterprises were established, such as plantations of sugar, copra and sisal on the coasts and inland along the great river valleys; highland tea estates; or settler farms producing food for domestic markets (O'Laughlin 2002), and all of them requiring the recruitment of field labour. Similarly, what had previously been relatively marginal agglomerates became flourishing trading and administrative centres, as in the case of Cape Town (Ward 2009), and these in turn required (migrant) administrators, cleaners, janitors, traders, doctors, etc. Furthermore, these emerging production locations, urban agglomerations and extraction centres all engendered development interventions, such as the construction of roads and railways, housing and storage facilities, which profoundly re-configured pre-existing lines of bounding and connectivity across the colonial world, and required and engendered further labour migration.

Secondly, and following from this, the colonial enterprise established new scales of thought and action that profoundly altered circulatory regimes, whether we think of the latter in relation to commodities, ideas, or people. These regimes were framed by extraction and accumulation imperatives; they were shaped by geopolitical and inter-imperial competition; they were defined in their operational mechanisms by the administrative and governance imperatives of colonial masters in their dealings with subject populations. Thirdly, these socio-spatial transformations were by no means neutral. Rather, they established hierarchies and subordinations that have shaped relations between the Global North and the Global South to this day (Novak 2016b). The socio-spatial transformations originated during the colonial encounter constituted a single integrated and uneven system: they produced centres and peripheries, they enriched some people and places and impoverished others; they produced the "imbalances" that characterise any A or B place today.

As mines, cities and plantations, extraction and trading sites, as well as colonial administrative machineries all needed labour, it had to be mobilised. This is to say that various mechanisms, practices and operations through which labour could be made available where capital needed it, had to be created. These included, first of all, practices of forced recruitment (e.g. slavery), and indentures (see for example Tayyab 2012). Albeit largely, though not completely (see Jain and Oommen 2016) absent in today's world, it is clear that their legacies continue to reverberate in present times (Bertocchia and Dimicob 2014). Secondly, and more directly relevant for contemporary migrations, colonial populations were subjected to a series of "inducements" providing forms of non-coercive labour mobilisation. More crudely, the disruption of traditional livelihoods and the introduction of a money economy forced colonial subjects to enter the wage economy.

This can be seen, *in primis*, in relation to the expropriation of land and its progressive commodification. Not only did these processes provoke a forced outflow of the people inhabiting these lands, but also, by progressively restricting access to fertile land, forests and lakes (Adduci 2009), they effectively forced these populations to seek alternative sources of livelihood; a process that most often involved migration. In more indirect ways, the taxation that colonial populations were subjected to can also be considered as a form of labour mobilisation (Forstater 2005). The obligation to pay taxes in cash, as opposed as to in kind, forced large segments of the colonial population to seek wage employment or to produce cash crops in order to obtain the cash required. Indeed, the forced conversion of agricultural production into cash crops disrupted traditional agricultural patterns and established patterns of interdependence and subordination to agricultural markets, regulations and prices set elsewhere.

In sum, colonial development constituted an integrated global system, subordinated to the interests and imperatives of imperial powers, which *produced* unevenness across places: a system that simultaneously functioned as a push and pull "factor." This encounter "freed" labour from subsistence, through a process of progressive proletarisation, whereby the sudden loss of traditional subsistence livelihoods transformed large segments of the population into permanent or seasonal wage (or forced) labour. It thus established the conditions for large segments of the world population to embark on migratory circuits between A- and B-type places.

The process continues to this day. Indeed, and briefly put, in the post-independence era, development models and interventions usually implied an emphasis on industrialisation and the allocation of resources to urban areas and to "modern" sectors of the economy —with dramatic consequences in terms of urbanisation, informalisation and urban poverty. Large infrastructural projects such as the construction of dams and irrigation canals, roads and railways, which were typical during those times, often entailed forced relocations of entire communities.

Similarly, the past four decades have witnessed a continuation of the informalisation and urbanisation patterns that were often further compounded during the period, further exacerbating these processes and dynamics. This is so whether we consider the widespread phenomenon of land grabbing (Borras and Franco 2012) or environmental degradation, both of which inhibit and disrupt consolidated subsistence mechanisms and access to resources, in places like Orissa (Adduci 2009) or Thailand (Marks *et al.* 2015), to name just two. Furthermore, new centres, nodes and locations have emerged as a consequence

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of the transnational restructuring of industrial production, outsourcing and subcontracting, and the export-oriented nature of contemporary industrialisation trajectories (Hunt 1989). Tribal and frontier lands, forests and mountains, as well as Special Economic Zones, Growth Corridors, and Regional Integration Agreements, all define emerging and declining A and B places.

Thus, albeit in a radically different context and through profoundly different mechanisms, the disruption of traditional livelihoods, the spread of market relations across all domains of social life, and the transformation of places and spaces at the service of capital, all continue unabated. The dynamics and effects of these processes can only by assessed in place-specific embodied settings (Novak 2016b). The point made in this section is that frameworks which explain migration based only on “imbalances” between *separate* places and on the economically rational responses to them do not provide great insights *vis-à-vis* the *all-encompassing* structural forces shaping those places and, in turn, migration. On the contrary, this section has suggested considering migrant labour in relation to capitalist development and its ever-increasing pervasiveness on a world scale.

4. A and B as connected places: the second pincer

Neither the movement from A to B, nor the incorporation of migrants into labour markets is smooth. Labour —in its *embodied* connotation— has to move physically from A to B, and this implies costs, opportunities, and more broadly the possibility of doing so. Another way in which A and B can be seen as (selectively) connected places is by focusing on the regulation of movement from these two places. The second pincer of migration consists of the legal and extra-legal mechanisms that regulate such movement and that selectively open up the pincer for particular kinds of migrants, while ferociously pinching the rest in its grip.

Much like in the previous section, the colonial context is a good starting point for thinking about the historical trajectories that explain contemporary border controls (Banerjee 2009). It was during colonial times, in fact, that borders between today’s postcolonial countries were first drawn. More broadly, colonial rule was characterised by a series of institutional innovations specifically or indirectly concerned with the movement and residence of populations. The range of institutions that are relevant for this point, comprise land rights and private property regimes, which determined the expulsion, relocation and/or establishment of segregated areas for populations to live in, such as the Bantustans in Southern Africa (see Adepoju 2003).

The instruments adopted to control the movement of native populations also included Vagrancy Acts, which established strict rules about the kind of residents that urban areas were willing to accept. Indeed, as can be inferred from Cooper (1983) in relation to African cities, having introduced measures that contributed to building a society where colonial populations were induced or forced to move to cities, the colonial state simultaneously established strict rules as to the way in which they could do so, through these Vagrancy Acts. Other regulations included those related to workplaces and wage employment, to the institutions that distinguished populations based on their tribal or religious affiliations, etc., all of which selectively foreclosed migration opportunities.

Similar dynamics could be observed across imperial regions. Kaur (2004), for example, explains changing patterns of migration in South East Asia through the lens of border controls. While the movement of people had always taken place across the region, she emphasises the consolidation of states as a significant break in the way in which regional migration patterns came to be consolidated or disrupted. States in the region, she argues, were classified into labour abundant and labour scarce, and colonial administrators devised ways of sourcing labour and directing it to the "appropriate" destinations.

Thinking about contemporary migration controls from this perspective makes it possible, first of all, to historicise migration patterns. In colonial times, as much as now, the management of migration had been driven by the dual imperative of meeting the needs of capital by fostering *labour migration* towards centres of production and extraction; and of (attempting to) enforce ideas about "social order" through the imposition of strict rules discriminating particular categories of *labour migrants*. This confirms, secondly, the idea that A and B are not, and never have been separate places, but rather integrated parts of one economic system unfolding between and across territorially defined administrative units (Novak 2016b).

This is especially evident in contemporary settings, as migration controls have become territorially all-pervasive. Two different processes are relevant in this respect. First, border functions are increasingly activated both outside and inside the border. In fact, far from identity checks being conducted only upon arrival, the verification of migrants' credentials for entering and being present in a particular country is now performed before departure from the place of origin (i.e. in places A), rather than on arrival at the place of destination (in B). Through the introduction of so-called "smart borders" (Amoore, Marmura and Salter 2008), the verification of credentials is done directly by border agencies who match migrants' identities to digitally constructed "risk profiles" (Hall 2012) before departure. Indirectly, and on the back of legislative

changes that have been introduced since the 1990s, this externalisation of border controls has been fostered by changes in legislation, and identity and visa-requirement checks are now done before departure by airlines or ferry companies (Lahav 1998). Similar dynamics are now normal inside borders and throughout the national territory, as the criminalisation of irregular entry has transformed migrants' bodies into a portable mobile border (Amoore 2006). Thus, in the UK, hospitals and doctors, universities and property owners are now compelled to conduct immigration-paper checks before delivering their respective provisions, as a routine procedure. The permanent threat of deportation (de Genova 2002) produces sites of institutional enforcement and subjective experiences of the border that extend well inside the country (B).

Second, in relation to migrants' journeys, while the militarisation of borders (Jones and Johnson 2016) has multiplied the number of fences and walls constructed along borderlines as a spectacle (Cuttita 2014) and perceived reinforcement of the idea of border closure, it has also been complicit in the attempt to disrupt the journey of migrants from A to B. Indeed, agencies such as FRONTEX or border management operations like Seahorse (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2014), increasingly operate overseas and into foreign jurisdictions, pre-empting migrants' opportunities to reach Europe by intercepting and disrupting consolidated migration routes. Purportedly maintaining safe passage for asylum seekers, these operations also pre-empt the possibility of asylum claims being lodged, since these measures target irregular migration routes, thereby exacerbating the violence associated with these long journeys. Flanking migrants and then "pinching" them both before and after departure, as well as along their routes, border controls have become territorially all-pervasive.

Those "lucky" enough to make it through this pincer are likely to face further sets of regulatory mechanisms before entry into labour markets. These may refer to employment status. In the name of efficiency, the labour-unfriendly neoliberal regime (Silver 2003) has eroded wages, job security, and safety conditions for everybody, including migrants (cf. Hewison and Young 2006). Moreover, the intersection between the regulatory devices mentioned above and work conditions puts migrants, who often cannot avail themselves of existing protection mechanisms, at further disadvantage. Indeed, some scholars claim that such regulatory frameworks dispossess migrants a third time: freed from subsistence by the first pincer, and thus free to migrate in search of a job, the second pincer of migration regulations frees migrants from their rights as well (Anderson 2012).

Finally, and moving towards the content of the next section, the regulation of migration is not only performed by legal means. Race, gender and kinship

play an important role in terms of the mechanisms for the transnational social reproduction of household livelihoods (Ferguson and McNally 2015). They also hamper or facilitate the possibility of migrating, of finding a job and a decent wage. Employment opportunities are in fact most often enmeshed with kinship or personal and patron-client relations, which may also affect contractual arrangements and job guarantees. Indeed, in many places, labour markets are segmented by caste, gender, age and familiarity with employers (Carswell and De Neve 2013).

This fragmentation of the labouring force shapes opportunities of employment as well as wages, articulating with forms of legal fragmentation based on the multiplication of visa regimes that distinguish between types of workers (Surak 2013). Similarly, work obtained through contractors is often mediated by informal social networks. In turn, practices associated to the recruitment of workers and apprentices from among the ranks of kin, neighbours, and people from the same place of origin or ethnic group or religious sect, function in many countries as key informal mechanisms of control further mediating the possibilities of footloose labourers' access to jobs. This is in fact another continuity form colonial times, when ethnicity, caste, and various social networks were part of the process of labour mobilisation.

In sum, it also seems reductive from the perspective of regulation to talk about A and B as separate places, in light of their integration within (hierarchical) systems of governance and their historical trajectories. The same can be said if places A and B are considered from the embodied and subjective perspective of migrants, as described below.

5. Revisiting A and B: looking for jobs across the pincer

Labour migrants, considered as a collection of human beings that move from a generic place A to a generic place B, are thus caught up in a *double pincer*: the (historically induced and violent) "freedom" to follow capital, and the (historically and contemporarily violent) "selection" performed by regulatory mechanisms that prevent such freedom from fully being realised.

Nevertheless, this is not to be understood as a homogeneous process. Migrants move across the pincer for different reasons, with different expectations, and with highly diverse outcomes. In some cases, while being caught up in the first pincer, they are not even able to try to follow capital —the so-called poorest of the poor, for example, are often unable to even begin that process, which involves costs, risks, and for some, emotional implications. In other cases, such as those we are witnessing in the long journeys across the Sahara, through Central

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America, or from the Middle East to Europe, migrants are caught up in the loop of the second pincer. Without ever being able to reach B, the labour, the gendered violence, the encampments, the delays, the forced returns, the friendships, the hunger, and the cold that constitute their long journeys actually become their final destination. Others make it through. Indeed, for a tiny percentage of migrants, e.g. for national and local elites of various kinds, for border agents and humanitarian workers, for diplomats, for some traders and most academics, and for some others, the double pincer works just fine, as it enables, facilitates and values their journeys. Indeed, this is the first analytical benefit that can be obtained from deploying the double pincer metaphor: the possibility of capturing its differential effects on various categories of migrants as part of a single process.

The second analytical benefit that derives from the deploying this metaphor relates to its ability to incorporate migrant agency, as it unfolds through the structural forces that shape both pincers. Indeed, moving across the pincer is not to be understood as an act devoid of agency either. This can be seen from at least three different perspectives.

First of all, migrants possess their own sense of place and connectivity. Migrants' everyday life has often been portrayed as characterised by a dialectical interaction between the global and the local (Giddens 1991), a relation that is mediated by multi-scale networks (Swyngedouw 2004). Ever since Basch, Glick and Szanton's seminal text (1994), the idea that the nation should be conceptualised as "unbound" remains influential in migration scholarship. From this perspective, places A and B possess very different meanings if seen from the perspective of migrants, as they actively create local spaces and places of belonging (van Riemsdijk 2014). This is so at the level of social networks, as transnational practices constitute spaces across jurisdictions that seemingly defy any attempt at bordering them within linearly defined administrative jurisdictions (Swyngedouw and Swyngedouw 2009). This is so at the level of the community, as migrants actively participate in the economic and political life of their hometown (Stephen 2007). This is so at the level of the household, since family members, while being dispersed across continents, may continue to operate as a single socio-economic unit. And finally, this is also true at the level of individual identities, since hybridity and in-betweenness are, for some, the defining characteristic of the migrant (Anzaldua 1989).

Secondly, as migrants' social reproduction is often established across boundaries, their experiences, practices and understandings of place actually produce lines of connectivity and bounding across A and B, which interweave and may disrupt those established by the double pincer. Migrants, in other words, co-constitute both A and B, as they become place-making agents negotiating

their own existence and social reproduction with other competing, corrupting, co-opting and colluding place-making projects (Novak 2007).

Thirdly, in doing so, migrants shape the meanings, mechanisms and outcomes of both pincers through their strategies, calculations, manipulations, and acts of resistance. These can be of various types and are theorised in various ways. Migrants can deploy the "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985), as they may, for instance, withdraw compliance with regulation, leave, or consciously decrease the productivity of agricultural production systems (Fan 2011). They may engage in forms of organised and unorganised protest, directly (Davis and Akers 2006), through migrants' organisations (Però 2014), or via trade union activities (Munck 2008). Perhaps the most systematic of such theorisations is that provided by MacGaffey and Bazenguissa (2000) who, in their study of Congolese transnational traders in the Congo and in Paris, distinguish four types of engagement with regulations. Migrants transgress the boundaries of law as, for example, they engage in unlicensed itinerant trade, street trading, irregular housing, and tax avoidance. They also transgress territorial boundaries and border regulations, using their own social networks or bribing border guards. They exceed the boundaries of institutional participation, as they use social capital (e.g. their own church) to pursue irregular activities, or they try to fit into the label "refugee" as a way of obtaining residency status. Finally, they transgress the limits of cooperative behaviour since their participation in those same social networks is often non-compliant and may deviate from the accepted norms.

Some authors emphasise migrants' agency to an even greater extent, as they assert that neither legal frameworks nor the structural force of capitalist development alone can account for the experience of place and space, and for the political subjectivities of migrants themselves. This perspective, recently popularised in the context of EU-bound migration (e.g. Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2015; Tazzioli 2015) posits migrants as political subjects that cannot be subsumed within the double pincer, however transgressed, manipulated or opposed it may be by them. Migration is turbulent (Papastergiadis 2010), since it cannot be mapped onto Cartesian coordinates. Its points of origins and destinations are multiple, ever-changing, and almost impossible to identify *a priori*. Contemporary migration patterns need new keywords (Casas-Cortes *et al.* 2015) or new institutions to account for such "superdiversity" (Vertovec 2007).

Indeed, many would suggest that migration possesses a force of its own, a constitutive force that cannot be translated; emigrants begin social transformation, rather than being a consequence of it (Papadopolous, Stephenson and Tsianos 2008). From this perspective, subjective conditions, experiences and claims are the key object of analysis and concern, and the analysis of migration

and development starts precisely from this point. Migration is not simply a response to political and economic necessities, since this conceptualisation fails to capture the "diversity of migrant mobilities, the dynamic power of migrants themselves, and the analytical value of taking mobility seriously as a starting point for understanding border policies" (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015, 3). Rather, migration is a constituent force in the formation of polity and social life. The impossibility of defining, indeed, of translating, the "identity" of migrants in relation to capitalism or border controls, is the *force* of migration. Migrants do not need translation; migration does not need mediation (Papadopolous, Stephenson and Tsianos 2008). This approach is distinctive as it de-centres the logic of command and control that explains contemporary border management practices, by taking into account the constituent power of migrants' journeys, their unpredictability and turbulence. Interpreted in this manner, border management practices become a way to make visible the routes and hubs of migrant movements (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015).

Concluding remarks

The double pincer of migration as much as the journeys, conditions and aspirations of those caught up in it need to be set in relation to evolving contexts. One of the key points that the above analysis suggests relates to the need to historicise and contextualise migration along several dimensions. The insertion of migration into the realm of "security" (note: not job security, nor worksite safety) has already "tightened up" regulatory regimes —further hampering the possibility of labour to follow capital; or that of migrants to see migration as a concrete livelihood strategy. The economic crisis reverberating around the world since 2008 has not only produced more "push" factors for people to leave places like A, but it has also engendered responses on the part of governments which are likely to heighten the pressures to leave, as they resort to the same old recipe of privatisation, liberalisation, and land dispossession. Furthermore, the wars in the Middle East have produced the largest movement of asylum seekers in decades, and it has been met with further militarisation, expulsion and discrimination, making it more difficult to reach places like B.

These dynamics are not to be considered as independent from each other. A second key point made through the previous discussion had been to reject mainstream understanding of A and B as separate geographical places, as this conceptualisation does not account for the degree of interconnectedness and interdependence between the two. Focusing on a series of given imbalances between places does not account for structural reasons that have created and

perpetuate those imbalances. On the contrary, if A and B are considered part of the same world economy and integrated into a (hierarchical) regulatory system, a better account of the reasons that create such imbalances becomes evident.

Furthermore, these dynamics are not to be considered only in an exclusionary sense. These dynamics seem to work well for a (very limited) number of people. This is not only, and not so much, in relation to the migration industry (Andersson 2014) that has sprung up on the back of the militarisation and privatisation of border controls. Perhaps more importantly, the various measures, policies, discourses and practices associated to the double pincer seem to be geared to enhancing and valuing the mobility of a particular kind of individuals as opposed to others. The third key point that emerges from the previous pages is the fact that a consideration of the imbalances and inequalities existing between and across *individuals* and *social groups* provides a better assessment of the outcomes of the migration and development nexus.

Indeed, and finally, the double pincer of migration metaphor should not only be seen as an analytical tool concerned with migration. Rather, by accounting for the untrammelled freedom enjoyed by capital as a crucial dimension for understanding contemporary development, it "puts vagrancy and dereliction where it belongs —on capitalism, that unsettled, dissolute, irresponsible stalker of the world" (Katz 2001, 709). By emphasising capital's lack of commitment to place, it highlights how its vagabondage around the world not only hurls some people into forms of vagabondage, but also leaves most people across the world struggling to secure the material goods and social practices associated to social reproduction (Katz 2001).

Thus, in the broadest sense, this metaphor suggests a relational analysis for grasping the link between migration and development. The nexus between the two should not be seen in a residual manner —i.e. exclusively concerned with *lack* of income, of opportunities to migrate or to secure a job (Bernstein 2007). Rather, it is concerned with relational processes: with the historical process of production of inequalities across places; with the contextual and fluid process of social reproduction of livelihoods; with the productive forces that define migration and development policies that seemingly perpetuate inequalities throughout the world. It is only by looking at migration and development in a relational sense that political platforms appropriate to the current conjuncture can be formulated.

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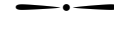

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