

MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

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RESEARCH QUESTION

- **Main research question**
 - What is the relationship between migration and development?
 - In what ways does **migration affect development** in countries of origin and destination?
- **Sub-questions**
 - Does migration reduce or reproduce inequality?
 - Under what conditions does migration become beneficial or harmful to development?



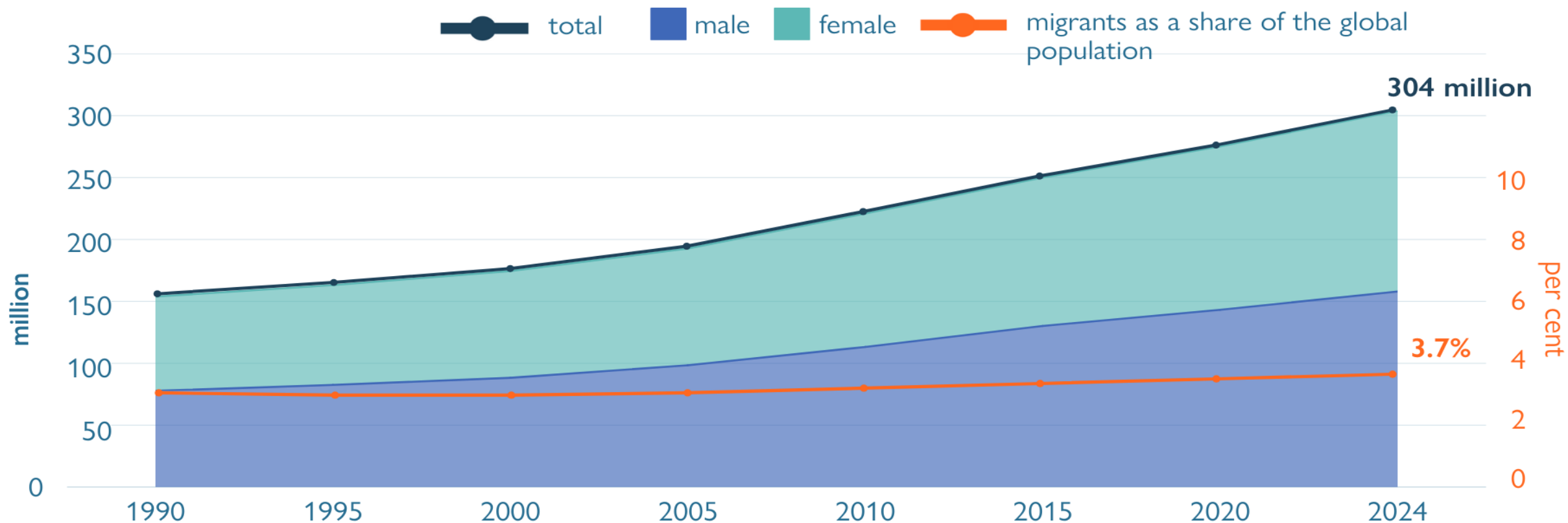
MIGRATION

- Migration
- Movement of people across borders or within states (Ambrosini 2025)
- International / internal
- Voluntary / forced
- Temporary / permanent
- Key dimensions
- Economic migration
- Forced migration (refugees, asylum seekers)
- Skilled vs. low-skilled migration
- Circular and return migration





International migrant population in numbers and as a share of the world's population 1990 - 2024



Source: UN DESA, 2025.

DEVELOPMENT (SEN 1999)

- NOT LIMITED TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT INCLUDING:

- Education and health
- Income and employment
- Political participation
- Social inclusion
- Quality on institutions



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE (MILLER 2008)

Past

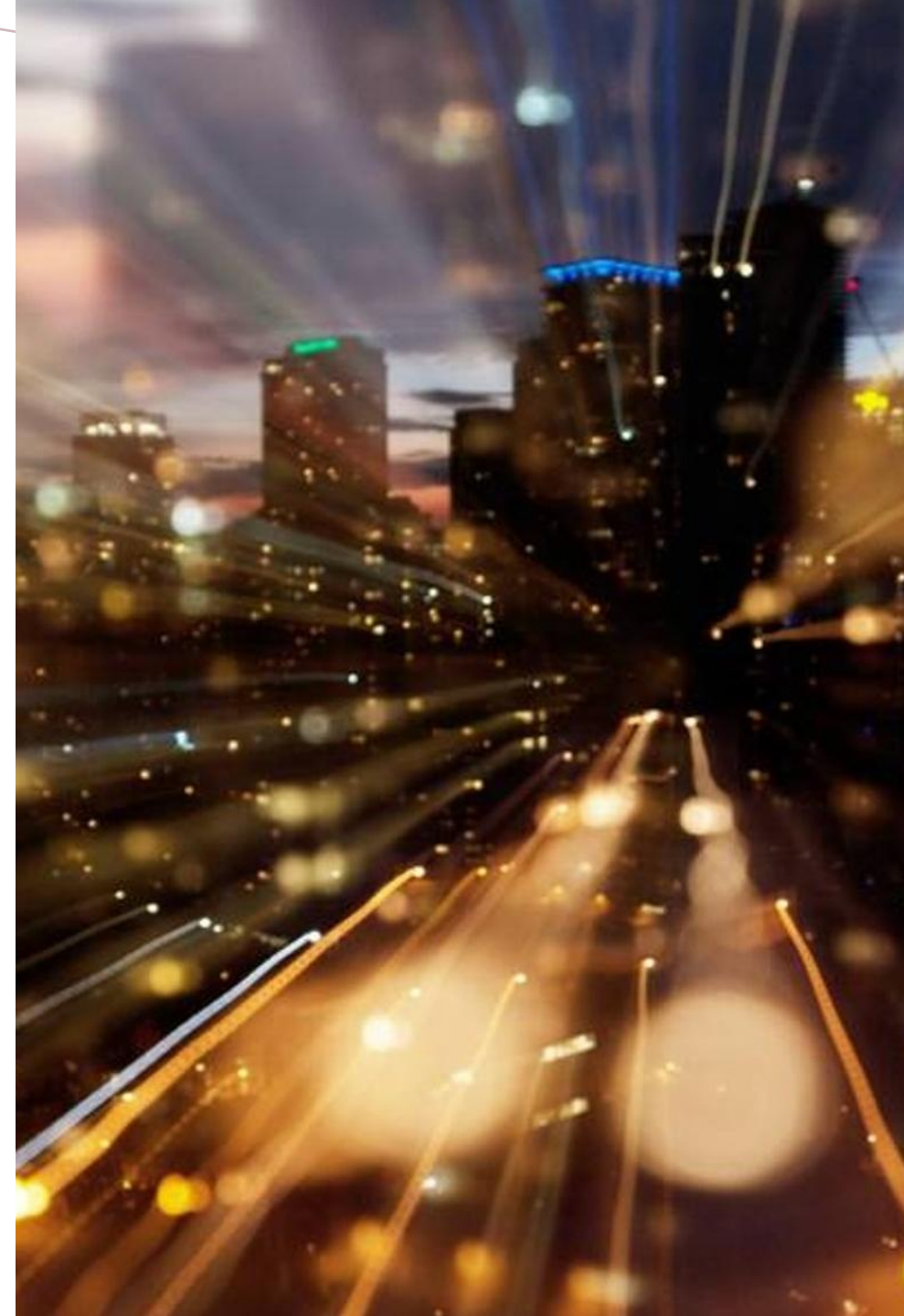
- Industrialization and colonial expansion
- Labor needs of receiving countries

Present

- Migration as a **global, permanent feature** of development
- Strong role of states in managing migration and its development effects

Future

- Demographic imbalances (aging societies vs. young populations)
- Economic globalization
- Environmental and climate pressures



A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT (DE HAAS, 2010)

Two major visions related to migration:

Migration Optimists (1950-60s)

- Remittances & skills lead to development
- Return migration expected

Migration Pessimists (1970s-80s)

- Brain drain & dependency
- Remittances seen as consumption

New Perspective

Pluralist Approach:

- New Economics of Labor Migration
- Livelihood approach
- Transnationalism

Conclusions on his perspective:

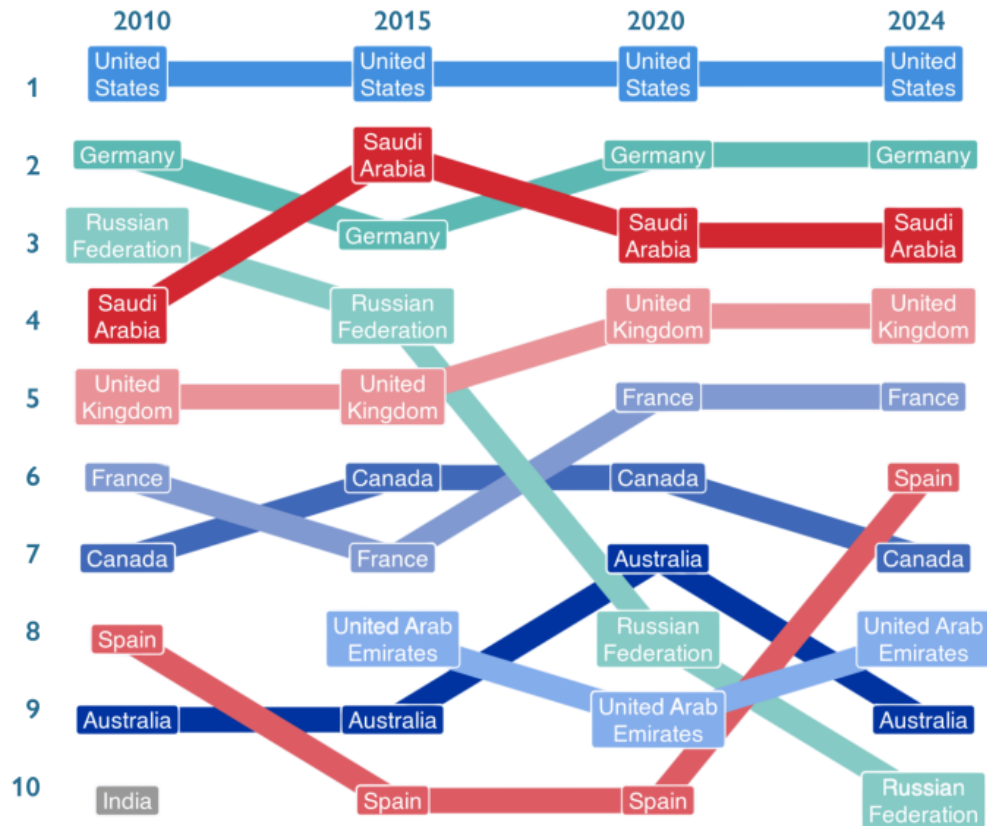
- Migration is not automatically good or bad
- Impact depends on policies, inequalities, economy
- Migration helps development only with supportive policies





Top 10 countries of destination of international migrants, 2010 - 2024

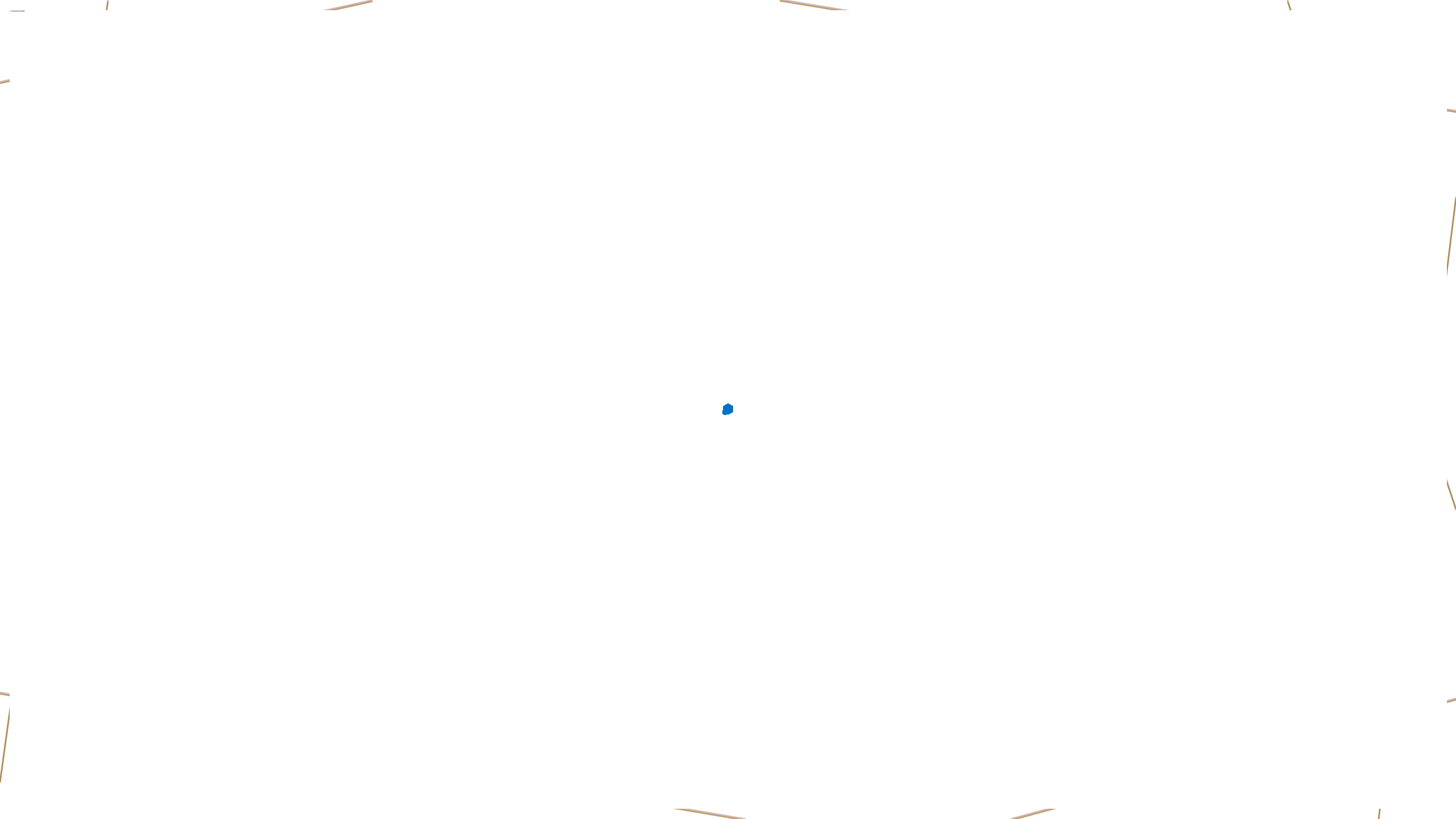
The United States remained the top destination country for migrants at mid-year 2024.



Source: UN DESA, 2025.

WHERE DO PEOPLE MIGRATE TO?

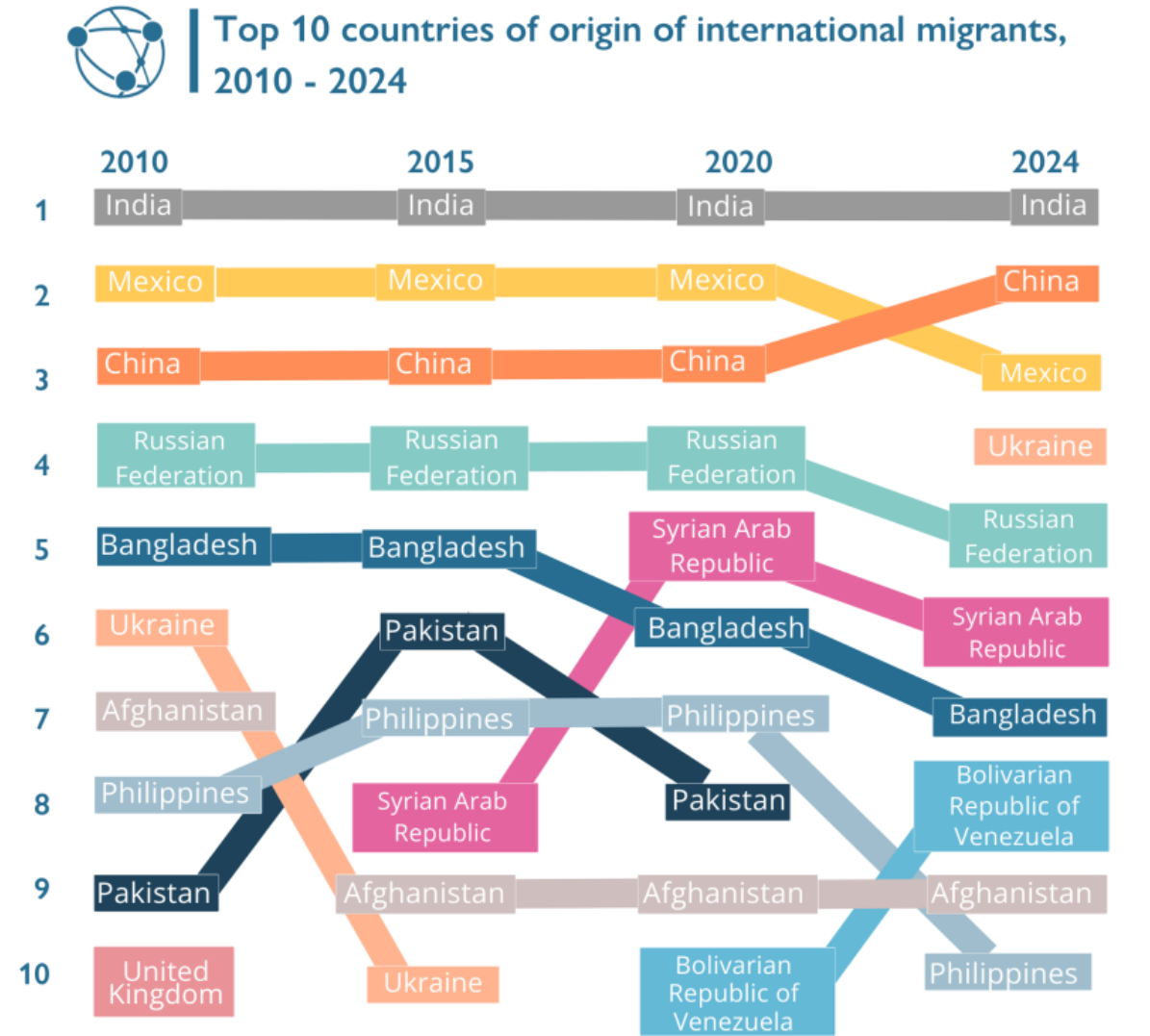
- Major destination countries largely coincide with the **world's most industrialized economies**
- These countries are characterized by **relatively stable political systems**
- **Strong economic structures and labor demand** attract migrants



WHERE DO MIGRANTS COME FROM?

- Two main migration patterns emerge:

- 1) Stable, long-term outflows (eg., India, China, Mexico)
 - 2) Sudden peaks linked to conflict (e.g., Syria 2015, Ukraine 2024)
- Migration drivers are diverse and context-specific

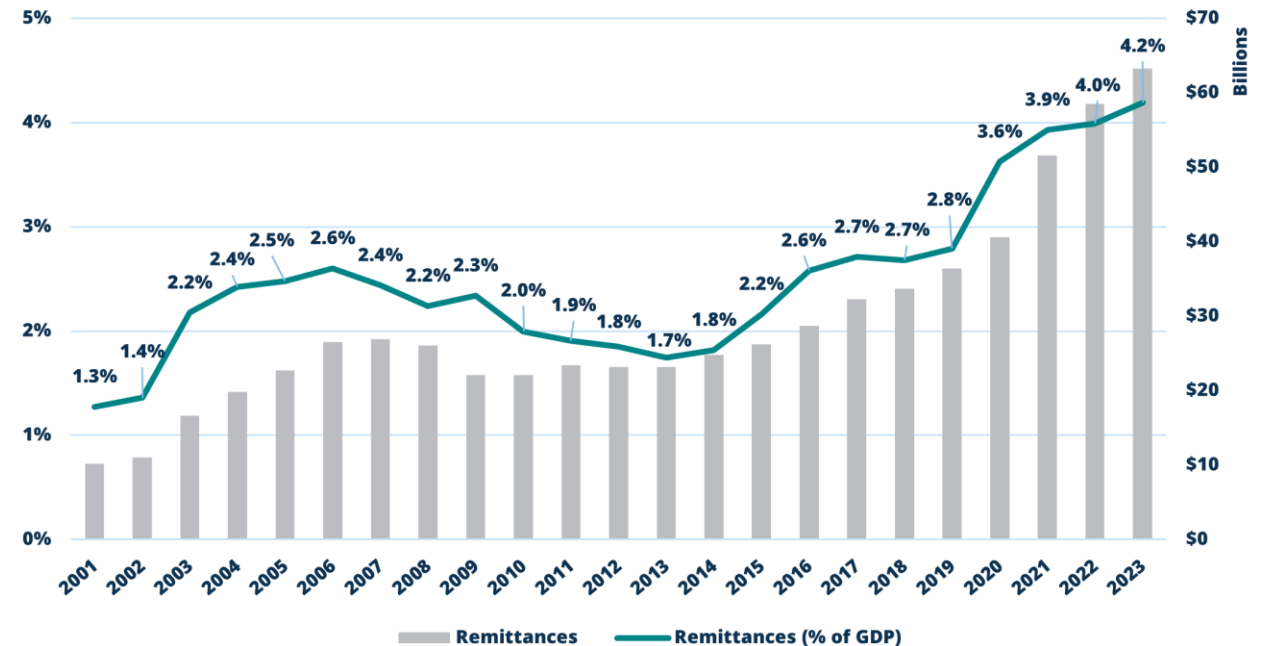


Source: UN DESA, 2025.

MEXICO-UNITED STATES: THE WORLD'S LARGEST MIGRATION CORRIDOR



- **Largest country of origin** for immigrants in the US (~11M)
- **Geographic concentration:** California, Texas, Illinois, Arizona (close to 70% of all Mexican immigrants in the US)
- **Forms of migration:** labor migration, family reunification, undocumented (~5M)
- **Remittances to Mexico:** \$66.2 billion in 2023, in constant growth over the past decades



DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS AND INTERDEPENDENCE

EFFECTS ON THE UNITED STATES

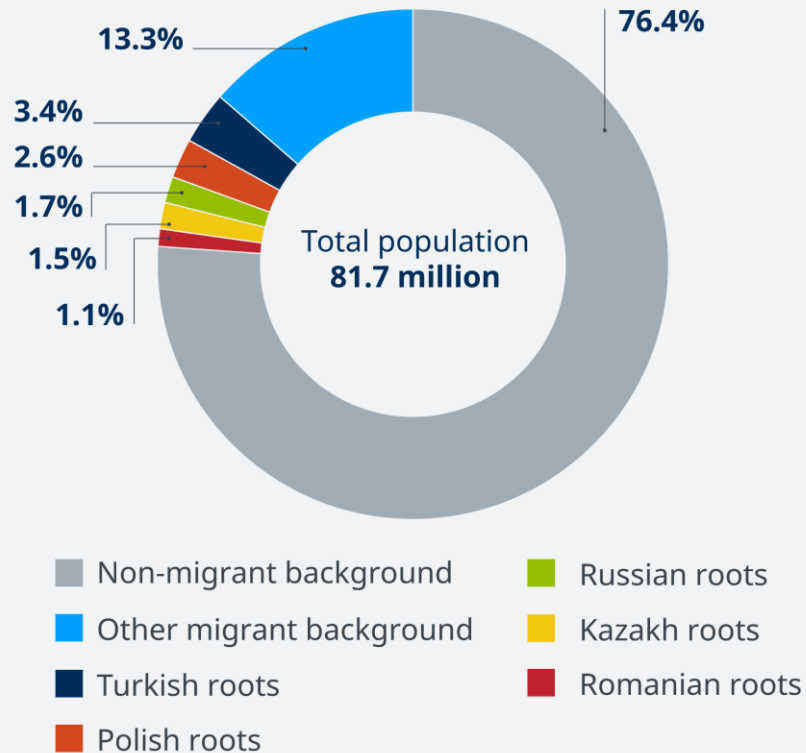
- Key role in **low-wage** and **essential sectors** (agriculture, construction, services)
- **Entrepreneurial contribution** (small businesses)
- Social and legal **challenges** for **undocumented migrants**

EFFECTS ON MEXICO

- **Remittances**
- Household consumption, education, local investment
- **Brain drain vs. labor market relief**
- **Skill transfer** through return migration

Population with migrant background* in Germany in 2017

23.6% (19.3 million)



* Germans who weren't born German citizens or have at least one parent who wasn't born a German citizen

Source: Destatis

©DW

GERMANY: A LONG TERM IMMIGRATION COUNTRY

- Close to **20M** people with **migrant background** ($\approx 20\%$ of population)
- Migrants make up **over 20% of total workforce** (healthcare, industry, services, construction)
- **Guest worker agreements** between 1955 and 1973 with Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia (~ 14 million workers recruited)
- 2015–2016: **~ 1 million refugees**, mainly from **Syria**
- Since 2022: **>1 million refugees** from **Ukraine**
- **Main drivers:** labor shortages, demographic aging, and geopolitical crises



MAIN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- **Positive Effects**
 - Fills **labor shortages** (healthcare, construction, industry)
 - Supports **pension** and **welfare system**
 - Contributes to **economic growth** and **productivity**
- **Challenges**
 - **Integration gaps** (language, labor market access)
 - **Pressure** on **housing** and **local services**
 - **Social tensions, xenophobia, and discrimination**

MIGRATION, POLITICS, AND RISING POLARIZATION

- Migration increasingly central in electoral politics
- Rise of **anti-immigration rhetoric** in multiple democracies
- Policy shifts toward **restriction** and **border control**
- Public opinion divided between **economic need** and **cultural concerns**



MIGRATION IN AFRICA

Most African migration is intra-African

70–80% stays on the continent

Major routes:

- Southern Africa
- West Africa → ECOWAS (Free Movement)
- East Africa → Kenya/Ethiopia

Main drivers:

- Jobs & labour demand
- Conflict & instability
- Climate change & disasters
- Education



Data sources: UNHCR, IOM, MMC

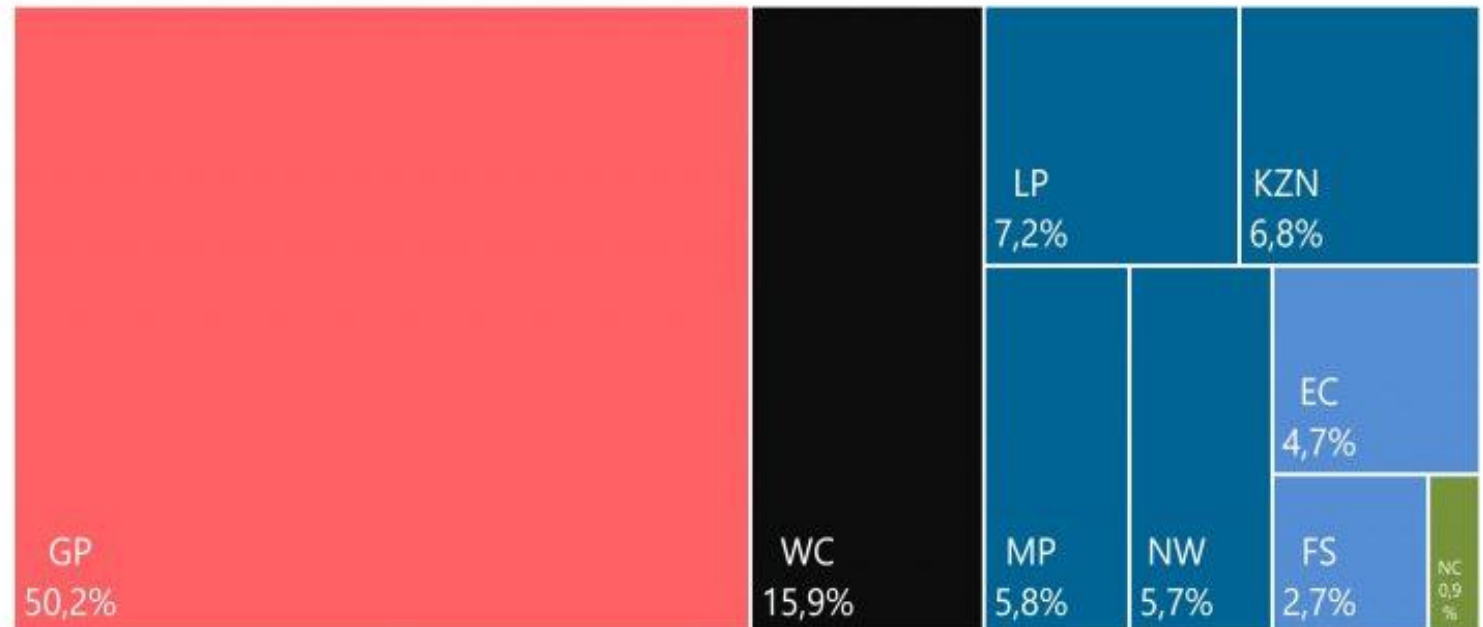
SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is the main destination in Africa and Southern Africa.

- With around 2,4 million immigrants, and largest groups from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Somalia.
- Work in mining, agriculture, construction, services.

The majority of the immigrant population indicated **Gauteng** as their preferred province of usual residence **accounting for 50,2% of all immigrants**

Percentage distribution of province of usual residence by migratory status, Census 2022



THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA: XENOPHOBIA

What is Xenophobia?

Xenophobia Issues

Violent attacks on migrants (2008, 2015, 2019).

Causes:

- Unemployment & inequality
- Political scapegoating
- Fear of job competition

Consequences:

- Violence & displacement.
- Weak regional cooperation.
- Migrants pushed into informal economy.



<https://www.xenowatch.ac.za/map/>

https://youtu.be/kdky8rTAhak?si=m2Q1hax0_NMvCTOf

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (SADC)

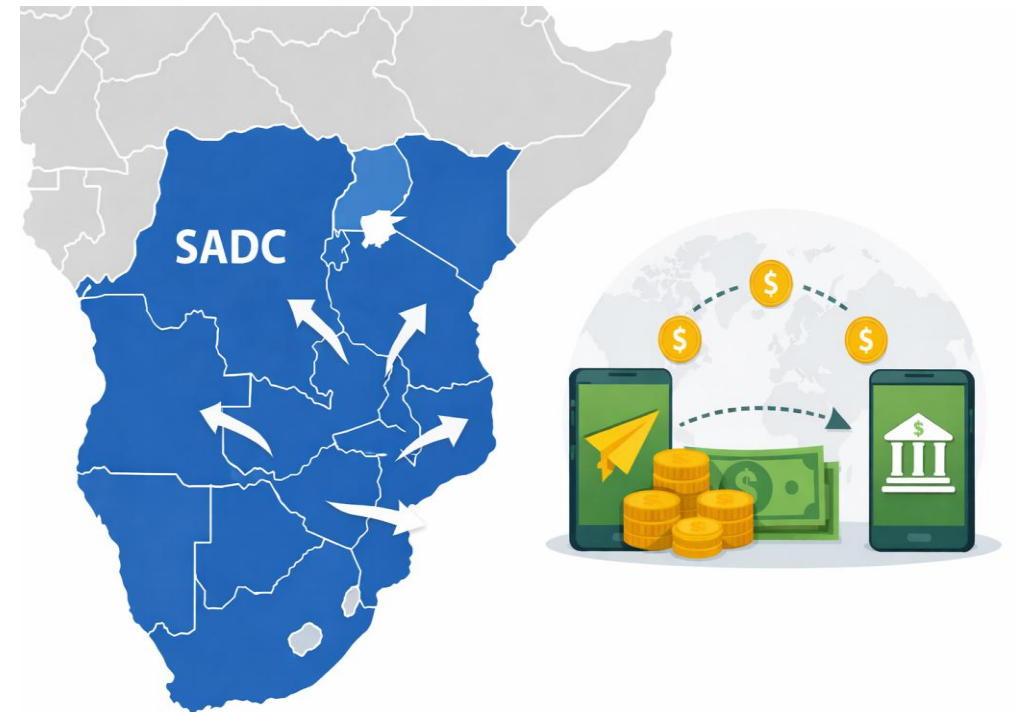
Regional Economic Impact

Positive Effects

- Remittances support families in Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe.
- Migrants fill labour shortages.
- Informal cross-border trade boosts local economies.
- Skill transfer between countries.

Negative Effects

- Brain drain from poorer states.
- Worker exploitation.
- Remittance dependency.



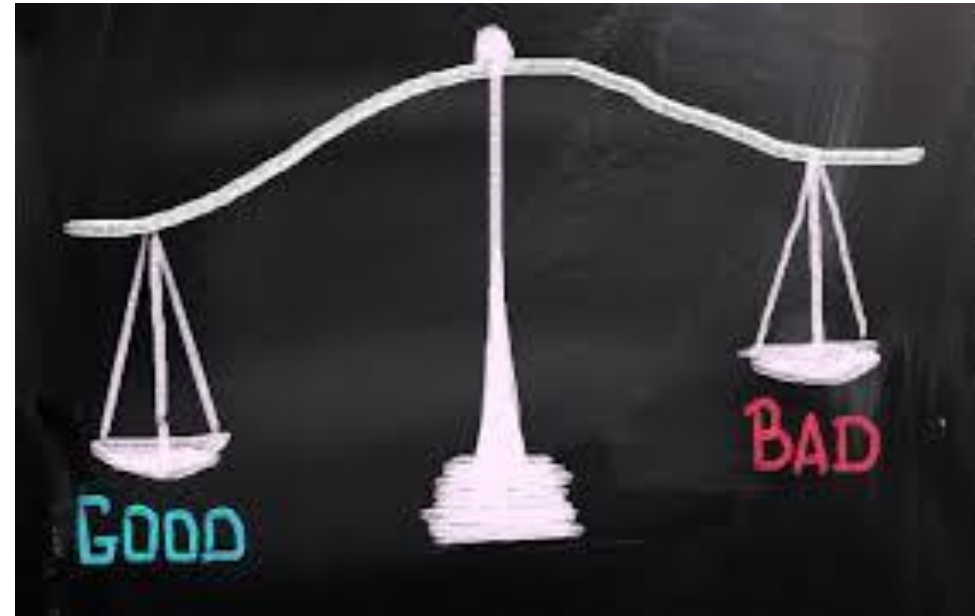
CONCLUSIONS

Does migration hinder or foster development?

De Haas shows the bilateral nature of this relation: optimistic vs critical point of view

Optimistic: role of remittance in redistributing income

Pessimistic: Brain drain and reproduction of global inequalities





THANK YOU

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