International Organizations as Global Migration Governors: The World Bank in Central Asia

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*Numerous international organizations play a key role in generating and sustaining migration governance across the world in the absence of a global migration regime. However, global governance scholarship lacks grounded understanding of their role, which is often rejected or simply left unnoticed. In rare cases when IOs do get academic attention, light is shed on two referent "migration" IOs—the International Organization for Migration and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees—while other IOs remain in their shadow. Drawing on the case of the post-Soviet Central Asia, which is characterized by both significant migration dynamics and multilayered governance but has so far escaped attention of migration governance scholars, this article takes two steps for establishing a new research agenda. First, it deploys and applies to IOs the concept of global migration governors defined as authorities who exercise power across borders for the purpose of affecting migration policy. Second, it moves discussion beyond the referent IOs and demonstrates the role of often overlooked nonreferent IOs, such as the World Bank, active in the field of migration governance. This analysis is based on fieldwork in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia conducted in 2011–2015. **Keywords**: migration governance, global migration governors, international organizations, the World Bank, Central Asia.*

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990S, WE HAVE BEEN WITNESSING THE EMERgence and development of generic approaches to and schemes for migration governance in various corners of the world. Scarce existing empirical research seems to suggest that this is not just a matter of coincidence or independent policy learning on the part of states. Many of such popularized ways to "manage" migration have to do with growing involvement of international organizations (IOs) in the global migration politics.[1] Apart from some exceptions,[2] however, there is a clear lack of systematic studies of the role played by IOs in global migration governance. Instead, discussions of global migration governance focus on the lack of global consensus among states and mostly disregard global-local interactions related to the activities of IOs on the ground. There is clearly a need to account for the role of IOs in migration governance in the absence of a global migration regime[3] when states are considered to be the key locations for the regulation of migration.[4]

Unfortunately, emerging scholarship on the role of IOs in the field of migration governance tends to focus on the two referent IOs.[5] Analyses of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have flourished, ranging from case studies to comparative works and even critical theoretical endeavors.[6] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also often comes under academic scrutiny; it is undoubtedly the object of special attention of legal scholars and political scientists studying refugee issues.[7] However, there are other nonreferent IOs, such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS), that are involved in migration governance across the world and whose role is mostly left unnoticed. Even if the role of some nonreferent IOs in various global fora on international migration has been recognized,[8] we are still far from fully capturing their role on the ground.

This article aims to contribute to filling these gaps in the literature by looking beyond the usual suspects in the field of migration governance. It recognizes the key role of states in shaping migration dynamics, on which I have written elsewhere,[9] but here I focus on IOs and, in particular, on nonreferent IOs. More precisely, I explore the role that nonreferent IOs play in the local context. In this endeavor, I build on two closely related strands of literature: on the role of IOs in world politics and global governance,[10] and on different kinds of authorities in global governance and relations between them.[11]

Drawing on theoretical insights from these works, I develop the concept of *global migration governors* in relation to IOs and shift the focus from discussions of global migration governance as a constantly changing structure to global migration governors as sources of agency and, consequently, to the outcomes that flow from their interactions. Instead of assessing what IOs do in the upper layers of multilayered global migration governance,[12] I examine what they do in the field where they operate in constant interaction with one another and local stakeholders. The article demonstrates, in particular, how IOs bring global ideas about migration governance into communication with local conditions to affect governance outcomes.

To account for such dynamics empirically, I explore the role of the World Bank—a nonreferent IO in migration governance—in the post-Soviet Central Asia. This region has not been a major focus for migration governance scholars, despite evidence of both significant migration and multilayered governance. The Eurasian Migration System[13] composed of the post-Soviet states is the world's second-largest migration region, whereas Russia—its major destination country—is said to host from 4 to 5 million irregular labor migrants[14] mostly coming from Central Asia. Central Asia is particularly relevant for this study because only one country in

this region—Kazakhstan—is predominantly a country of destination whereas the others are countries of origin. Apart from shedding light on this largely unexplored case, I also attempt to fill another lacuna in the current scholarship, which overwhelmingly focuses on migration governance issues in countries of destination and disregards countries of origin.[15] The empirical analysis in the article builds mostly on my fieldwork in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia from 2011−2015. Data collection and analysis rely on theory-guided process tracing[16] to: (1) trace the origins of the involvement of various IOs in the migration governance field in Central Asia; and (2) analyze interactions between these various global migration governors as well as between them and local stakeholders.

I start the article by reviewing existing views on global migration governance and the role of IOs in the absence of a global migration regime. Then I reflect on an appropriate theoretical framework for analysis of the role of IOs in generating and sustaining migration governance across the world. I outline the concept of global migration governors, apply it to IOs, and explain the importance of expert knowledge for IOs' influence. I also emphasize that the absence of a global migration regime is a favorable condition for IOs' role of global migration governors. Next, I briefly characterize the field of migration in the post-Soviet Central Asia and explain the particular relevance of IOs for this region. Finally, I focus on activities of one nonreferent IO—the World Bank—which through its knowledge production and dissemination activities, and through relations with other global governors and local stakeholders, has gradually carved its own niche in the Central Asian migration governance field. To conclude, I summarize the main arguments of the article and elaborate on the need to study both referent and nonreferent IOs as well as various constellations of global migration governors that contribute to proliferation of "a multitude of international norms and cooperation arrangements" around the world.[17]

Global Migration Governors in the Absence of a Global Migration Regime

Recent studies have shown with substantial ethnographic evidence that IOs involved in migration management provide ostensibly technocratic, neutral, apolitical, and expertise-based inputs that are actually highly political and sensitive.[18] Importantly, such concepts and paradigms as migration management, migration and development, and environmental refugees (or environmental migrants) have been brought to life—and, consequently, to the attention of states that have often willingly embraced them—by IOs.[19] Both referent and nonreferent IOs have played their roles in these processes. Emerging research addressing the impact of IOs has also provided robust

evidence that they play a significant role in the current fragmentation and regionalization of migration governance[20] where "international" norms and standards vary significantly depending on those IOs that introduce them to recipient governments.[21] Several major volumes on global migration governance have been produced by leading specialists in the past fifteen years. Academic interest in the issue of global migration governance has reflected a proliferation of global governance initiatives in this field.[22] It has been emphasized that a nascent global migration governance is "based on a range of different formal and informal institutions, operating at different levels of governance."[23] Similarly, others have argued that "islands of migration governance have evolved . . . trans-regionally between regions of immigration and regions of emigration and transit."[24]

Despite these new voices, policy and academic discussions on global migration governance are still dominated by sceptical views of those who see states in the driving seat and question the possibility of global migration governance of any kind. Such a state-centered perspective is reinforced by the absence of a global migration regime. Alexander Aleinikoff has famously claimed that, while there are disparate norms and rules, there is no international migration architecture.[25] In the same vein, Kathleen Newland argues that "it is difficult to see what would compel states to create a supranational authority to actually govern migration in the foreseeable future"[26] and has suggested that international migration governance would require at least "acknowledging that different states have different goals, compromising where possible, and building first on recognized common objectives."[27]

Such an equation of global migration governance with a singular state-centered global architecture, authority, or structure obscures governing activities and impact of diverse actors, including IOs and, in particular, nonreferent IOs in this field. An alternative way to look at things would be, as suggested by Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell, to focus not on global governance as a structure or process but on a multitude of global governors as agents of change who "create issues, set agendas, establish and implement rules or programmes, and evaluate and/or adjudicate outcomes."[28] This agent-centered theoretical framework does two important things. First, it helps to capture the role played by nonstate governors—IOs, transnational and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, and professional associations—in global governance. Second, it challenges a functionalist bias—inherent in much of the global governance scholarship—that assumes the activity of various governors to be cooperative and thus pays little, if any, attention to contentious politics when "multiple governors engaged in an issue can also work against one another."[29] Their interactions can take various shapes; they "may be cooperative and additive, leading to far-reaching effects, or tense, dysfunctional, and even conflictual . . . leading to failed action and potentially weakened authority."[30] Applying that perspective, I intentionally shift

the focus from structure to agents, thus attempting to unpack dynamics of global migration governance through the concept of global migration governors. Borrowing the definition of Avant, Finnemore, and Sell,[31] I conceptualize IOs as one particularly important category of *global migration governors*—authorities who exercise power across borders for the purpose of affecting migration policy. I anchor this view in Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore's famous argument that IOs as bureaucracies possess autonomy and the ability to change the world because of their own authority; for example, thanks to policy transfer.[32] IOs' ability to stimulate policy transfer is at the core of global governance.

This ability is facilitated by an important structural condition of migration governance, probably its most stable characteristic—uncertainty about international migration arising from the absence of solid scientific foundations for migration policies at national and global levels.[33] Uncertainty provides IOs with the possibility to produce and disseminate two types of expert knowledge particularly valued by stakeholders. I call the first type "analytical-predictive knowledge." Knowledge about current or potential demographic fluctuations, changes in migratory flows, routes, patterns, and so forth needs to be produced regularly to keep up with changes in the globalized world that increase the perceptions of risk.[34] Another type of expert knowledge relevant to migration politics and policymaking is what I call "normative knowledge." It encompasses knowledge claims about the best ways in which particular policies—such as migration control, integration and rights, labor markets, and regional cooperation—should be changed and is usually, although not always, linked to the specific expertise of IOs. Knowledge of this type seems to form the core of what Antoine Pécoud calls "international migration narratives,"[35] conveying certainty to an otherwise uncertain migration world. Expert authority[36] or authoritativeness[37]—authority based on expertise—has become an important mechanism of IOs' influence. Consequently, expert knowledge of both types has been massively produced by referent and nonreferent IOs. In conditions of uncertainty, IOs strive to be identified as the most suitable providers of solutions to various international challenges. They contribute to the construction of reality, often discovering problems to be solved, and they bring other actors' attention to issues that demand intervention before positioning themselves as the most suitable problem solvers.[38] IOs' influence is often difficult to detect because it is subtle, often projected through ideas, concepts, schemes, and notions with references to specific expert knowledge through which they frame migration governance priorities for target countries.

According to Avant, Finnemore, and Sell, the ability to govern—to have impact in particular governance fields—also significantly depends on the relations that global governors build with one another and other governors. This inherently relational nature of authority, the need for recognition of an actor's authority by other actors,[39] is key to understanding governance

outcomes—norms, policies, and practices—at local, regional, and global levels. Underlining the intersubjective nature of power, Avant, Finnemore, and Sell argue that "governors' relationships with constituencies and with one another shape how and whether governors become authorities in the first place and how they affect governing outcomes."[40] This means that not only the type of governors and their individual activities are key for governance outcomes in the field, but also their interactions. Relationships among governors are important as governors divide labor, delegate, compete, and cooperate with one another. In other words, "almost all governing in contemporary global politics seems to be the result of governor interactions of various kinds" and that is why "the character of relationships . . . among governors . . . is key to understanding global politics."[41]

Therefore, it is important to discuss one more structural condition that facilitates the role of IOs as global migration governors—the above-mentioned absence of a global migration regime. Songying Fang and Randall Stone argue that "far from being an obstacle to international cooperation, polarized domestic politics may be a necessary condition for IOs to exert effective influence."[42] Similarly polarized, contentious, and lacking not only global normative architecture but also global consensus, the field of global migration politics provides favorable conditions for multiple IOs to affect migration governance across the world. This is similar to the emerging regime complexity that Alexander Betts describes in relation to the international refugee protection regime and its long-standing referent organization—the UNHCR.[43] These two cases might seem opposite since the international refugee protection regime is based on elaborated legal architecture enshrined in the Geneva Convention that is guarded by the UNHCR. Migration as a broader field does not have such a single coherent regulatory regime. It is, thus, a naturally competitive terrain hosting interactions between established and emerging global migration governors, between referent and nonreferent IOs. To advance our understanding of the impact that IOs produce in such a complex and vastly contested area of global governance, we need to observe the role that they as ostensibly knowledgeable global migration governors play in local context.[44]

Central Asia as a Migration Governance Terrain

The post-Soviet Central Asia has not been a major focus for migration governance scholars, despite evidence of both significant migration[45] and multilayered governance in the region.[46] Central Asia is characterized by relatively high (in comparison to the rest of the post-Soviet region) fertility rates, high unemployment, lower wages, visible decline of the agricultural sector (in particular, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), uneven and spontaneous urbanization (in particular, in Kazakhstan), and a volatile sociopolitical environment.[47] Migration plays an important role in the region's social and

economic development, most notably through remittances. Flows within Central Asia and the larger Eurasian Migration System are highly diverse and include permanent and temporary labor migration flows, asylum seeking, and irregular migration as well as transit and circular migration.

Migration experiences of the post-Soviet Central Asian countries— Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—are diverse. Uzbekistan is the most populous (circa 30 million people) and one of the biggest emigration countries of the region[48] whereas the official discourse tends to downplay this dynamic.[49] Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are major emigration sources in the region as well as the countries heavily dependent on migrants' remittances. According to some estimates, just before the global economic crisis approximately one-third of the employable population of Kyrgyzstan was working abroad.[50] The World Bank has indicated that Tajikistan is the world's largest recipient of migrants' remittances in proportion to gross domestic product (GDP); in 2012, remittances as a share of GDP were 52 percent in Tajikistan and 31 percent in Kyrgyzstan.[51] As estimated in 2010, labor migration from Tajikistan was at 800,000, or 11 percent of the entire population, although some experts note that due to partial documentation and statistics this figure could be higher.[52] Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan have land borders with Afghanistan, and this creates additional migration challenges in these countries as well as particular difficulties for their incorporation in regional refugee protection, migration, and border management schemes.[53] Kazakhstan, having experienced the role of a predominantly emigration country after the breakup of the Soviet Union when significant numbers of ethnic Russian, German, Jewish, and other Russian-speaking populations were leaving the country,[54] has gradually become the second-largest destination country in the Eurasian migration system, also attracting migrants from neighboring China.[55]

Beyond these differences, none of the Central Asian states can boast stable migration-related normative frameworks and institutions. Their migration policies are mostly reactive and lacking strategic vision, just like in the case of the Southeast Asia.[56] In his study of monetary reforms in Central Asia, André Broome points out that

> prior to 1992 the Central Asian republics . . . had no previous experience of independent statehood and were tightly integrated during the Soviet era as a single economic unit, which makes them particularly useful cases for studying the impact that the IMF has had in "new" states that lack a track record of previous interactions with external actors, and where new monetary policy frameworks have to be developed from scratch.[57]

A similar description is valid for migration policies in the region after the breakup of the Soviet Union, which enforced one of the most restrictive migration regimes in the world. In the conditions of sudden independence

and almost immediate migration fluctuations, Central Asian states, just like the other former Soviet republics, faced the challenge of designing and implementing their own migration policies—in relation to both immigration and emigration. This task was complicated by a complex character of migrations happening within the Central Asian space, in and between the newly independent states.[58]

This regional context has provided particularly favorable conditions for IO activities. Various IOs have played a role in the establishment and further development not only of migration policies, but also of the institutional structures responsible for these policies and their implementation in the post-Soviet Central Asian countries. At the inception phase, right after the breakup of the Soviet Union when Central Asia was still a virgin land for IOs, their involvement was mostly linked to designing migration policies and relevant institutions as well as fostering governmental capacities, creating and reforming agencies, and so forth—much like in the case of Russia and other post-Soviet states.[59] These processes started in the region quickly after the independence, with Tajikistan being a latecomer due to the civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1997. Some sort of rediscovering of Central Asia by IOs happened when the US intervention in Afghanistan triggered new migration processes and the growing interest of various international donors to the region. This eventually led to the multiplication of migration-related projects implemented by a variety of IOs, which has stirred up contentious politics of migration governance in Central Asia. Yet it would be an exaggeration to say that competition is the only apparent trend of governors' interaction in this field. Parallel to competition, various IOs also exhibit viable cooperation dynamics.

The World Bank and Migration Governance in Central Asia

The case of the World Bank is indicative. The Bank is becoming a major, yet still largely neglected, global migration governor. Rare existing studies focusing on the role of the World Bank in global migration governance have mainly evaluated its role in various global settings such as the Global Commission on International Migration or Global Forum on Migration and Development.[60] Surprisingly, while IOM has received a great deal of attention from scholars involved in anthropological research on migration governance and thus has been an object of long-term ethnographic observations,[61] the World Bank has escaped such kinds of attention. This is unfortunate; beyond its strategic actions at the global level that are highly relevant for the development of global migration governance, the World Bank has been very much involved in governance work on the ground.

Explaining the scarceness of research on the World Bank, Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud note that the Bank and other IOs, such as UNDP, are potentially very influential but still rather new players.[62] The World Bank is, indeed, not a referent IO for the field of migration governance, but a powerful one in a broader global economic governance field. As I noted in the introduction, the World Bank is one of several IOs that have been under academic scrutiny more than other international institutions. Research examining various aspects of the World Bank's activities is abundant,[63] and there is simply no space in this article to list all related major themes, questions, and arguments. What is worthy of attention is that the World Bank has been positioning itself as a "knowledge agency,"[64] a "conveyor and broker of knowledge" or a "knowledge bank."[65] This important characteristic of the World Bank is key for the role it plays in the development of migration governance in various regions of the world. Scholars have already paid attention to this knowledge-generating function of the Bank, noting that "through the growing number of discussions over the link between migration and development, organizations traditionally in charge of development issues are also joining in the debate. In recent years, the World Bank has financed a number of studies on the differentiated impact of remittances on the economies of countries of origin."[66] However, despite a popularized image of the World Bank as a knowledge-based international institution, little is known about its knowledge-generating and -disseminating strategies and practices with regard to migration governance.

In Central Asia, the World Bank has mostly focused on promotion of a *migration and development* agenda, in particular with the view of increasing national capacities to channel migrants' remittances for purposes of development. The latter implies improving national systems of collecting information about migration dynamics and remittance flows as well as proposing ways to better manage remittances. Such a program is a reflection of the overall approach to migration governance promoted by the World Bank in various global fora.[67] Deserving special interest are the mechanisms through which the Bank has been promoting this global agenda and specific migration governance ideas among local stakeholders. Two mechanisms are notably important. The first one builds on relations of strategic partnership with other global migration governors. This partnership has developed in the framework of the Central Asian Regional Migration Programme (CARMP) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), cofunded and implemented by IOM, the World Bank, and UN Women[68] in 2010−2015. Over time, CARMP has become the major platform for the promotion of organized recruitment schemes and predeparture migrant orientation in the post-Soviet region. On this aspect, the World Bank has closely cooperated with IOM, which has heralded organized recruitment involving cooperation between sending and receiving states as well as private recruitment agencies

as the single most important instrument in the fight against irregular migration and for the development of stable temporary labor migration schemes. The Bank has also engaged in cooperation with IOM and UN Women on issues linking migration with the socioeconomic situation of women in the region. The gendered approach to migration has been one of the key features of this tripartite program, successfully mainstreaming gender issues into migration policies of Central Asian states. Unlike its program partners—IOM and UN Women—the Bank has rarely developed formal relations with various local NGOs. Instead, it has focused on policy and engagement with governmental stakeholders, making use of its well-suited role of a major development donor and a knowledge hub on development issues.[69]

CARMP reviews produced for its core donor, DFID, in 2012 and 2015 show that the program scored high on initially planned outputs in which the World Bank was involved.[70] Among the concrete program results, the following figure prominently: migration modules are being mainstreamed into household surveys of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; trained high-level officials report that they are using the training knowledge in their daily jobs three months later; and changes to existing policies and legislative framework have developed in line with evidence and gender responsive recommendations.[71] The program scored "A+" ("outputs moderately exceeded expectation") on the final adjusted Output 1, "improved capacity of government and other stakeholders to make policy and implement services in sending and receiving countries," for which the World Bank was co-responsible with IOM. The evaluation emphasizes that CARMP "facilitated an organized recruitment scheme, predeparture orientation and postarrival integration, set-up of Migrants Support Centres (MSCs), which linked state structures with civil society organizations."[72] One of the most important and publicized outputs of this involvement was the adoption of the National Strategy on Labor Migration for 2011−2015 in Tajikistan, where the World Bank successfully lobbied the government.[73]

The second mechanism is an innovation of the World Bank staff, reflecting its long-standing image as a knowledge agency and based on cooperation not with global governors, but with local actors. In 2010, with the launch of the Migration and Remittances Peer-Assisted Learning (MIRPAL) network, the Bank became the first IO with a network of local migration experts in the post-Soviet region and, eventually, extrapolated its positive experience to the global level. In 2005, the World Bank had already developed close contacts with some senior staff members of the Russian Federal Migration Service (FMS) and discussed with them the idea to launch a project with the aim to stimulate network building and knowledge exchange among migration practitioners in the post-Soviet region.[74] The first informal reactions of Russian civil servants were positive; by that time, many in the FMS were deeply dissatisfied with the intergovernmental Council of the Heads of State Migration Bodies within the Commonwealth

of Independent States (CIS)—"a purely formal structure that did not aim for any genuine discussions or exchange of experience."[75] However, it was only in 2009, in the midst of the financial and economic crisis widely discussed in relation to migration processes and policies in the post-Soviet space, that the World Bank first started this project as an informal collaboration involving experts from several states in the region. Later, in 2010, the Bank provided four-year funding for a program creating the MIRPAL network. Formally speaking, it was mostly funded in the framework of the CARMP, but unlike other CARMP activities, many of which were implemented in partnership, the World Bank positioned MIRPAL as its own flagship migration governance initiative. Between 2009 and 2010, it was financed by the Bank in the amount of $300,000. Further work of MIRPAL was funded by the DFID ($650,000). Direct beneficiaries of the network are policymakers in member countries, and some of them also take part in MIRPAL events. The World Bank staff from the Washington, DC, office were responsible for the overall coordination of network development and activities. However, the functions of its operational secretariat were given to the Moscow-based think tank Fund "Migration—XXI Century," founded and headed by Vyacheslav Postavnin, a former deputy director of the FMS.[76]

MIRPAL brings together various migration practitioners, such as civil servants from various relevant state bodies at all levels, migration experts from academia and think tanks, and staff from local NGOs. Much in line with the "migration and development" agenda promoted by the World Bank,[77] this network was supposed to focus on the role of migration and remittances for development in the post-Soviet region, including Central Asia. As emphasized by Postavnin, "MIRPAL is a very different network [in comparison to CIS structures]. The World Bank has allowed us to look at everything from a global perspective, to see that very similar processes develop everywhere. And that very similar networks already exist in Latin America, in OECD countries."[78] A high-ranking official at the FMS explains the importance of the MIRPAL events organized by the World Bank: "Although I am an expert myself, a lot of my knowledge about this issue comes from these seminars. The team members come from all over the world. I would say that this is one of the major advantages of these meetings. It is very important to communicate and to find a common language."[79]

The summary of MIRPAL's achievements provided by the program head, World Bank lead economist Sudharshan Canagarajah, at the end of the first funding cycle in 2013 is impressive:

> In its first four years, MIRPAL has achieved a lot in terms of knowledge design and delivery. Each year, MIRPAL has held about 10 knowledge sharing video conferences for 300 plus members from the nine countries. MIRPAL has also brought more than 20 global experts to share their knowledge through video conferences and by field visits to advise policy makers in client countries. Starting small with limited resources, today MIRPAL has a

million dollar annual program, with continued funding from World Bank in-
ternal resources and from the DFID Trust Fund for Central Asian Regional
Migration Program (CARMP). In addition, MIRPAL actively collaborates
and contributes to migration work of international and regional organizations
(IOM, United Nations, Eurasian Economic Community, etc.), civil society
organizations and national governments.[80]

Indeed, MIRPAL has quickly gained popularity among civil servants
and migration experts from the countries of the region. It has provided a
regular forum for discussions of various migration issues, problems, and
solutions, and for exchanges of experiences among representatives of those
countries as well as with external experts from EU member states, IOs,
think tanks, and academia.[81] The World Bank has also used MIRPAL to
promote specific best practices and expertise of other migration governors.
MIRPAL has functioned as an environment for learning about: reports on
migration and best practices on data collection on migration and remit-
tances[82] within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Develop-
ment (OECD); Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) country profiles
initiated by the EU; the Philippines' mechanism of organized labor migrant
recruitment jointly advocated by the World Bank and IOM; and benefits of
private recruitment agencies. All of these examples invoke important cases
of cooperation among various IOs. The MIPEX instrument initially devel-
oped to evaluate migrant integration policies in EU member states is now
being promoted to a much wider region by the Organization for Security
and Co-operation in Europe that has formally endorsed this instrument on
many occasions. The World Bank has regularly provided the OSCE and the
Migration Policy Group (who developed MIPEX)[83] with the opportunity to
present and discuss MIPEX as well as its applications to the MIRPAL net-
work,[84] emphasizing that MIPEX is a good way to obtain locally produced
and locally owned knowledge about migration policies. Eventually, MIPEX
studies were done for Armenia and Kazakhstan.[85]

The main message behind this sketchy portrait of MIRPAL and its
activities is that the World Bank has significantly contributed to building a
field of migration experts in Central Asia and in the wider post-Soviet
region encompassing the Eurasian migration system. The World Bank—not
IOM—has managed to set up a genuine regular migration expert forum that
lends legitimacy to its activities in Central Asia and, perhaps, not only in
the field of migration. Nowadays, any migration expert or practitioner in
the region knows about MIRPAL and is aware of its key messages linked to
migration and development. Its importance has been repeatedly emphasized
in ambitious statements like this one:

As MIRPAL matures, its next phase will be to deepen country and regional
engagements. It should move to effective global knowledge "curation" and

influencing reforms, which means strengthening its relationship with Gov-
ernment agencies and strategies. . . . As MIRPAL continues to grow, it needs
to prepare a clear demand-driven work program and create a stable and for-
mal global knowledge sharing platform. The MIRPAL knowledge platform
should continue to be a market place for sharing good practices both inside
and outside the Bank. The possibilities are endless.[86]

It is then no surprise that, after this apparently successful regional pilot, a
similar strategy has been used to promote World Bank's migration gover-
nance ideas globally. In 2011, one of those who was instrumental in the
creation of MIRPAL—Dilip Ratha, a World Bank lead economist—
launched the "Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Develop-
ment (KNOMAD)" that is "envisaged to be a global hub of knowledge and
policy expertise on migration and development issues."[87] This initiative,
with which the World Bank seems to claim the lead in the global agenda
for migration and development, is financially supported by Switzerland,
Germany, and Sweden; they have provided contributions to the World
Bank established multidonor trust fund for the first five years of project
implementation (2013−2018). Its assessment could shed more light on the
scale and depth of the Bank's involvement in migration governance in var-
ious corners of the world.

Conclusion

Numerous IOs play a key role in generating and sustaining migration gover-
nance across the world. Current academic and policy discussions of global
migration governance, however, mainly focus on the phenomenon of gover-
nance as a structure and pay little attention to agents of authority and change.
Issues of agency, if they are taken into account, are approached through
analysis of migration management efforts of IOM and the UNHCR—two ref-
erent IOs in the field of migration governance. IOM, in particular, is popu-
larly perceived as the only powerful IO in this field. Despite IOM's continu-
ing domination, however, other nonreferent IOs are taking on migration
portfolio. Their role is largely unexplored. To address this gap, I have shifted
the focus of discussion from global migration governance to global migration
governors. I have specifically applied this concept to IOs to better account for
their impact in this field.

   In exploring the role of global migration governors, I emphasized the
importance of knowledge production and dissemination as a mechanism
of IOs' influence. To understand how global ideas about migration gov-
ernance are brought into communication with local conditions, I focused
on Central Asia, a region where multiple IOs engage in activities and
interactions generating migration governance outputs and outcomes.
Using the case of one prominent nonreferent IO—the World Bank—I

explored how global migration governors act in the field and how they interact with one another as well as with local governmental and non-governmental actors.

The article has, I hope, paved the way for similar empirically grounded and actor-centered research on the role of IOs in migration governance by providing several avenues for future research. I have argued for the need to advance our understanding of the role played by nonreferent IOs in the field of migration governance. Attention should be given to cases such as the IFRCRCS, which has continuously received EU financial support for its migrant health care projects in Central Asia since 2010. The growing role of the IFRCRCS potentially undermines the position of IOM in this sub-field of migration governance in the post-Soviet region and, possibly, across the world. More case studies and comparative studies need to be undertaken to advance our theoretical understanding of these issues. More-over, I have not addressed the position and role of civil society actors, including migrants themselves, in the field of migration governance,[88] which was beyond the scope of this article. However, my agent-centered approach acknowledges the need to carefully study opportunities and challenges that arise for civil society actors in this field under the increasing influence of IOs.

By closely examining the local activities of IOs and comparing them with IOs' global initiatives, we can understand how IOs affect global migration governance bottom-up through their contribution to convergence of migration governance in various regions of the world. ⊕

Notes

1. Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud, eds., *The Politics of International Migration Management* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

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