8. The pull factors of high-skilled immigration and the role of policies

Julia Reinold and Mathias Czaika

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era characterised by increasing globalisation and technological advancement, the movement of highly skilled individuals across international borders has emerged as a critical phenomenon. Highly skilled migration has surged during past decades (Scapolo et al., 2023) and is expected to persist in the future, propelled by enhanced educational attainment worldwide and the growing demand for skills (Czaika, 2018a).

Numerous countries, spanning the spectrum from high-income to low-income, have implemented skill-selective policies to attract high-skilled individuals (Anju Paul's chapter (Chapter 5); Ewers et al., 2021; Czaika, 2018a; Fink & Miguelez, 2017). However, the effects and effectiveness of these policies remain unclear (Koslowski, 2018). This chapter endeavours to provide a nuanced understanding of the so-called pull factors influencing high-skilled immigration, illuminating the complex interplay of economic, social, and policy-related factors that attract and retain high-skilled professionals to specific destinations. This chapter focuses especially on *configurations of pull factors*, influenced by migration and non-migration policies at various levels, encompassing the national, regional, and local spheres.

Acknowledging the complexity of high-skilled migration and the multitude of determinants lying beyond the influence of policies, we recognise that policies alone cannot fully explain this phenomenon. The heterogeneity of high-skilled migrants further complicates this analysis (Reinold, 2023), with drivers affecting (potential) migrants differently based on their backgrounds and personal characteristics. In general, the influence of migration policies on migration outcomes is contested, and the impact of other policies in areas like trade, welfare, education, health, and housing is often underestimated (Czaika et al., 2021a; Van Hear et al., 2018).

This chapter proposes an analytical framework that integrates migration-relevant policy configurations and migration driver environments, which independently and conjointly attract and retain high-skilled migrants. The focus on 'pull factors' is especially pertinent, given the responsiveness of high-skilled migrants to pull factors and destination country policies' potential to mediate these (Arntz, 2010; Sridhar et al., 2012). We apply a multidisciplinary approach to enhance our understanding of high-skilled migration processes and outcomes.

High-skilled migration possesses distinctive features compared to other forms of migration. Skilled migrants enjoy a relatively advantageous position due to fewer migration barriers, e.g., migration policies are less restrictive for high-skilled migrants; high-skilled migrants are better endowed with human, financial and, often, social capital, and enhanced human agency in choosing where to live and work (Faggian et al., 2017; De Haas, 2014). A framework tailored to high-skilled migration is therefore essential, considering these unique characteristics.

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In addition to the characteristics of high-skilled migration mentioned above, policymaking in the area of high-skilled migration differs from governing other forms of migration because it is often perceived as less problematic, more desirable, and crucial to the functioning of destination countries' labour markets (Weinar & Klekowski Von Koppenfels, 2020). As a consequence, policies surrounding high-skilled migration are dominated by paradigms of selection, attraction and retention, whereas policies governing forms of 'less wanted' migration are characterised by notions of control, deterrence and security.

In this chapter, we adopt a broad definition of high-skilled migration, encompassing all individuals with tertiary education or high-skilled occupations,[1] while being aware of the potential limitations this definition entails (Parsons et al., 2020). We also include international students, who are increasingly targeted by countries wishing to attract and retain high-skilled migrants. This comprehensive definition ensures the inclusion of key empirical research on the pull factors of high-skilled migration and allows the broad applicability of the proposed framework.

Defining pull factors as those factors that attract and retain high-skilled migrants "into destination places" (Castles et al., 2014, p. 28), we highlight that these factors not only *motivate* migrants in selecting a specific destination but also play a pivotal role in their ongoing motivation to remain living and working in that destination country, even when alternative opportunities arise elsewhere. We acknowledge the dynamic nature of these factors, recognising that migrants' preferences and priorities may change over time (Hooijen et al., 2020) and that the factors that initially attract migrants may significantly differ from those factors that contribute to their sustained presence in the chosen destination (Reinold, 2023).

This chapter is structured as follows. We initiate with an exploration of recent trends in high-skilled migration policies. Following this, we summarise relevant migration theories and conduct a critical review of the empirical literature. Building upon insights from this review, we formulate a framework that integrates the identified pull factors, elucidating the potential role of policies in shaping high-skilled migration patterns and dynamics.

2. RECENT TRENDS IN HIGH-SKILLED MIGRATION POLICIES

Over the past three decades, Europe has witnessed a surge in legislative activity pertaining to migration policies, characterised by a notable emphasis on meticulous adjustments and refinements to existing frameworks rather than sweeping overhauls (Czaika et al. 2021a). This section provides an overview of high-skilled migration policy trends, exploring changes across 31 European countries – encompassing both European Union (EU) members and non-members – spanning the period from 1990 to 2020. The insights presented are derived from the DEMIG-QuantMig Migration Policy Database (Schreier et al., 2023). Within this comprehensive dataset covering several thousand migration policy changes in these 31 European countries over the past 30 years, we identify 535 policy changes specifically targeting high-skilled migrants and international students.[2] A nuanced analysis of these skill-specific policy

[1] According to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) as provided by the International Labour Organisation.

[2] We do not consider policy changes targeting investors and entrepreneurs because they do not necessarily fit our definition of high-skilled migrants.

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changes reveals intriguing patterns shedding light on the evolving landscape of high-skilled migration policies. For a detailed outline of the methodology used to create the database, see de Haas, Natter & Vezzoli (2015).

In terms of whether policies have become more or less restrictive for (high-)skilled migrants, we find a majority of 455 (out of 535) policy changes indicating a discernible shift towards reducing restrictions on high-skilled migration, reflecting a concerted effort to foster a more permissive policy environment for attracting and retaining high-skilled migrants. In a smaller yet noteworthy subset, 47 policy changes suggested instances where policies were tightened, signalling a nuanced interplay between openness and control. In 33 instances, the absence of discernible alterations in the level of restrictiveness underscored a degree of policy stability, wherein the status quo prevailed.

Regarding the type of policy changes, only three policy changes were observed in the context of high-skilled migrants' exit and return, highlighting a relatively minor focus on regulations related to departure. A significant 61 policy changes were directed towards facilitating the integration of high-skilled migrants into the host societies and labour markets. Most policy adjustments, totalling 471 out of 535, centred around legal entry and residence, showcasing a concerted endeavour to streamline processes governing the entrance and sustained presence of high-skilled migrants and international students.

Table 8.1 provides a comprehensive overview of specific policy domains that have undergone discernible changes. Notably prominent are regulatory and administrative adjustments related to the issuance of work permits, alongside the refinement of regulations governing residence permits. Conversely, areas such as post-entry rights, access to permanent residence, and aspects pertaining to welfare state access and provisions exhibit comparatively lower levels of policy activity.

It is worth noting that only a limited number of countries within the dataset have implemented comprehensive or partial points-based systems. Additionally, there have been alterations in regulations concerning quotas, underscoring the diversified landscape of policy

Table 8.1 Frequency of high-skilled migration policy changes by policy area

Area of high-skilled migration policy change	No. of changes
Access to citizenship, justice and political rights	3
Access to permanent residency	7
Access to social benefits and socio-economic rights	21
Entry visa/stay permit	161
Free mobility rights/agreements	2
Points-based system	16
Quota/target	12
Work visa/permit	287
Other	26

Source: Data from DEMIG-QuantMig migration policy database (Schreier et al., 2023); authors' own elaboration.

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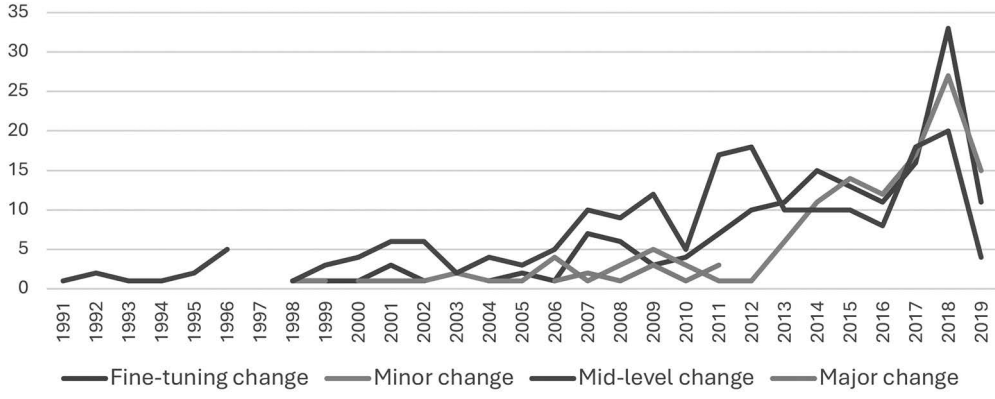
changes within distinct areas and reflecting a nuanced approach to addressing various facets of high-skilled migration across the 31 European countries.

We also analysed these policy data regarding the magnitude of the policy changes for broader trends, distinguishing rather small administrative fine-tuning changes, minor and mid-level regulatory adaptations, and major policy reforms. While major policy reforms are relatively rare, comprising only 18 (out of 535) recorded policy changes that have taken place in countries like the United Kingdom (UK), Sweden, Ireland, or France, their potential impact on a destination's level of attractiveness for high-skilled migrants and international students may still be substantial, particularly when countries implement more restrictive measures.

The dominant policy trend, however, illustrates a concerted effort to create more attractive policy environments for high-skilled migrants, a trend that has gained momentum since the early 2000s. Interestingly, policy activity in terms of the frequency of policy adaptations and the magnitude of these changes is inversely correlated, with the vast majority of policy changes constituting minor regulatory adjustments, or 'administrative fine-tuning'. This trend of incremental adjustments in high-skilled policymaking aligns with broader trends observed in migration policy dynamics to avoid major changes or future policy reversals in the face of increasing uncertainty (Czaika et al., 2023). Figure 8.1 illustrates these overarching trends over the past three decades aggregated for all 31 European countries in this dataset.

Figure 8.2 provides a comparison of policy trends among European countries aimed at creating more attractive policy environments during the period from 1990 to 2019. Each policy change is assigned a weight, ranging from 1 (indicating fine-tuning change adjustments) to 4 (representing major reform), according to the magnitude of the policy adjustment. Additionally, the direction of policy changes is factored in, assigning negative values to shifts towards more restrictive arrangements and positive values to those representing more liberal regulations. The cumulative outcome of these weighted policy changes over time reveals a compelling policy dynamic.



Source: Data from DEMIG-QuantMig migration policy database (Schreier et al., 2023); authors' own elaboration.

Figure 8.1 *Number and types of high-skilled migration policy changes in 31 European countries, 1991–2019*

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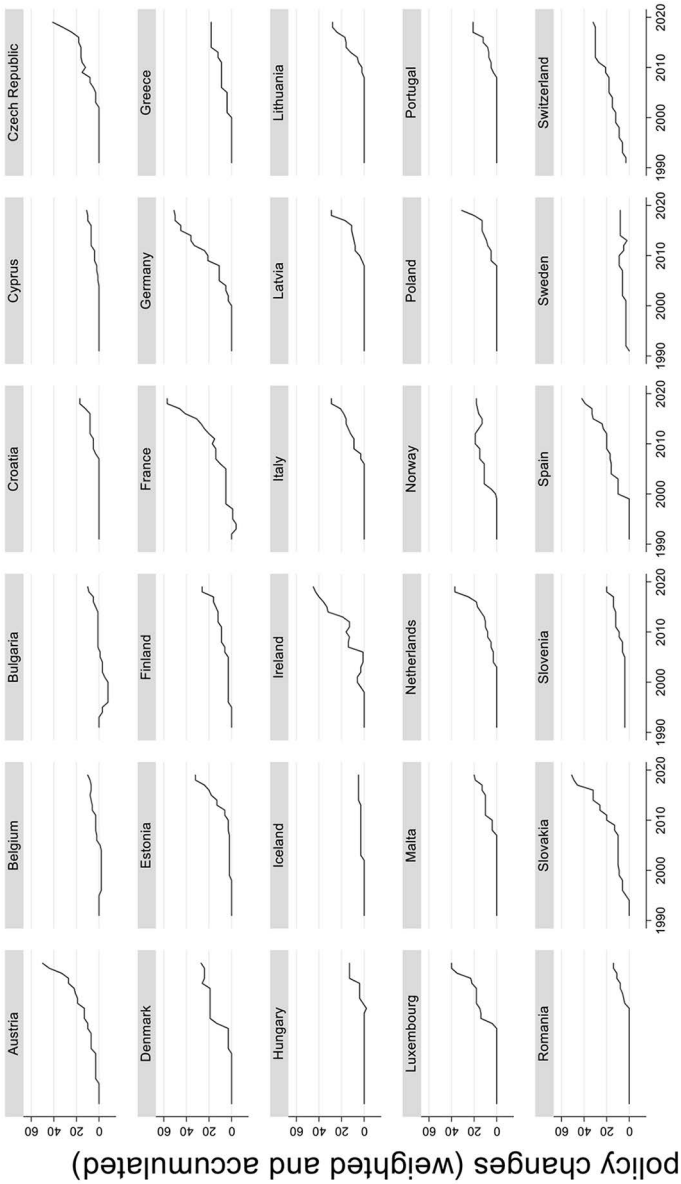

Source: Data from DEMIG-QuantMig migration policy database (2021); authors' own elaboration.

Figure 8.2 *European HSM policy trends in 31 countries, 1990–2019*

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The overarching trend underscores a significant shift towards fostering more skill-attracting policy environments. However, a more nuanced pattern emerges when distinguishing countries that have undertaken substantial policy readjustment, including Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, and Slovakia, in contrast to those that have pursued more modest enhancements to their regulatory frameworks. Moreover, the timeline of policy adjustments reveals that some countries embarked on opening up for high-skilled migrants relatively early in the late 1990s and early 2000s, while others joined this trend at later stages. This variability in the timing and intensity of policy adjustments reflects the intricate landscape of high-skilled migration policies across European countries.

These findings not only underscore the complex and dynamic nature of high-skilled migration policies in Europe but also reflect a strategic balancing act between fostering an environment conducive to skilled migration and addressing concerns related to control and societal integration. The nuanced interplay between less and more restrictive measures, coupled with a multifaceted approach to integration and legal frameworks, mirrors the nuanced evolution of policies aimed at maximising the benefits of high-skilled immigration while ensuring the coherence of the overall migration policy framework. Ewers et al. (2021) observed similar trends in emerging economies.

3. PULL FACTORS OF HIGH-SKILLED MIGRATION: STATE OF THE ART

3.1 Theoretical Background

A coherent theoretical framework explaining international high-skilled migration remains elusive. In the following, we synthesise relevant migration theories, models, and frameworks applicable to various forms of migration, including high-skilled migration. Given the focus on pull factors, we commence by introducing push-pull models, which are analytical frameworks that identify factors "which […] push people out of places of origin and pull them into destination places" (Castles et al., 2014, p. 28). Despite criticism for oversimplification, (de Haas, 2011; Castles et al., 2014), these models remain vital tools in current migration studies. Van Hear, Bakewell and Long (2018) revisited traditional push-pull models, introducing the 'push-pull *plus* framework', identifying key drivers of migration. Migration policies can play an important role in migration processes, particularly in precipitating and mediating fundamental drivers of migration. Precipitating drivers are events that trigger migration (e.g., relaxation of migration controls), while mediating drivers facilitate or constrain migration regimes, management, and procedures (Van Hear et al., 2018). The different drivers are to be understood as 'driver complexes', operating in combination. Czaika and Reinprecht (2022) extended this concept to complex driver environments, encompassing complex structures directly or indirectly influencing migration at the micro and macro levels (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022; Czaika et al., 2021a).

Czaika et al. (2021a) contributed a theoretical framework examining how migration-relevant policies may influence migration. This framework integrates concepts of migration driver environments, migration-relevant policy configurations, and migration processes. Migration-relevant policies encompass tailor-made migration policy interventions explicitly influencing migratory behaviour of a target population and other public policies that shape migration

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processes and outcomes (Czaika et al., 2021a). They are either implemented externally (i.e., affecting (potential) migrants outside the destination country) or internally (i.e., affecting migrants already in the destination country). Migration-relevant policies can independently impact migration and interact in configuration, potentially deviating from their original aims (Czaika et al., 2021a).

However, these structural driver configurations cannot fully explain migration due to the influence of migrants' agency shaped by personal characteristics and abilities (Van Hear et al., 2018; Carling, 2014), including skills and educational levels. Aspiration–ability models highlight the relationship between structure and agency, framing migration as a process wherein individuals develop migration aspirations, which are realised depending on their abilities (Carling, 2002; de Haas, 2011). Migration aspirations may evolve from a comparative assessment of different places, gauging the degree to which these places provide opportunities for individuals to realise their life goals or preferences – be it in terms of career advancement, family formation, or overall well-being (Carling, 2014; de Haas, 2014). Migration abilities represent the factors that influence migrants' agency and means to realise migration aspirations, encompassing human, economic, social, and cultural capital.

Macro- and micro-level neoclassical theory aligns with these models, suggesting individuals migrate to places with perceived better opportunities. On the macro level, migration results from wage differences across countries, stemming from differences in labour supply and demand (Massey et al., 1993; Castles et al., 2014). Micro-level neoclassical theory posits migration decisions as cost–benefit calculations, occurring only if benefits outweigh the costs (Massey et al., 1993). Human capital theory, a neoclassical strand, considers migration benefits as investments in human capital, potentially leading to increased career opportunities (Sjaastad, 1962; Chappell & Glennie, 2010).

Returns to migration are typically higher for the highly skilled due to greater employment opportunities, higher remuneration, and lower migration costs (Fink et al., 2017; Arntz, 2010). Beyond economic factors, the theory of the creative class emphasises that high-skilled individuals are not only attracted to jobs but also to places with higher levels of tolerance, technology, societal and professional diversity, and desirable amenities (Florida, 2002, 2003).

3.2 Empirical Literature

This section summarises the current state of empirical research on the role of policies as mediators of pull factors in high-skilled migration. The focus on pull factors is particularly intriguing, given the heightened responsiveness of high-skilled individuals to these factors (Arntz, 2010; Sridhar et al., 2012). Our review includes high-skilled policy evaluations, which are relatively scarce, and more common studies on the determinants of migration intentions and behaviour. For an in-depth account of how migration intentions and behaviour are measured in the literature, we recommend Carling (2019). While intentions often serve as robust predictors of behaviour, it is essential to acknowledge their potential for change and the challenges individuals face in realising them (Hooijen et al., 2020).

We categorise the identified pull factors into three distinct driver dimensions and discuss them accordingly: 1) politico-institutional drivers, 2) economic and human development drivers, and 3) socio-cultural and environmental drivers. This categorisation follows the framework established by Czaika and Reinprecht (2022), who, based on a meta-review of 463 studies

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on general migration drivers, identified nine main migration driver dimensions.[3] We focus on dimensions most relevant to high-skilled migration. Distinguishing between these dimensions can be challenging, as they often overlap and exhibit blurred boundaries, such as in the case of interconnected post-entry regulations and other public policies, specifically in the field of labour market regulation and taxation. Moreover, in the context of high-skilled migration, driver dimensions that are usually treated separately, such as economic and human development drivers, or socio-cultural and environmental drivers, can be meaningfully grouped together. It is important to note that the reviewed literature predominantly centres on Western countries, as research on other global contexts remains limited, despite the increasing participation of other countries (e.g., Singapore, Gulf countries) in the global competition for talent (refer to Anju Paul's chapter 5; Ewers et al., 2021). For a review of the literature on high-skilled migration to emerging economies, we recommend Ewers et al. (2021).

3.2.1 Politico-institutional drivers

Migration policies

To design effective high-skilled migration policies, it is imperative to understand the influence of policies and other drivers shaping high-skilled migration dynamics (Czaika, 2018b). While immigration policies in the host country inevitably condition migration (Kõu & Bailey, 2014, p. 116), empirical evidence on the role of immigration policies as pull factors of high-skilled migration presents a mixed picture (Czaika, 2018b). Parsons et al. (2020) identify discrepancies in the ways scholars and policies define high-skilled migrants, for example based on skill (i.e. focus on human capital), occupation (i.e. focus on labour market outcomes) or income. Data gaps, divergent definitions of policy effectiveness, and different measures of high skill being used within and across countries further complicate the matter and make it very difficult to conduct meaningful evaluations of migration policies.

Qualitative research on high-skilled Turkish migration to Canada and Germany, for instance, suggests that migrants are more inclined to consider a country as a destination if they perceive its immigration policies as more migrant-friendly (Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016). Visa waivers and the removal of visa requirements increase stocks and bilateral flows of high-skilled migrants between countries (Grogger & Hanson, 2011; Czaika & Orazbayev, 2018). On the contrary, some research contends that immigration policies exert a minor influence on migrants' active decision-making, with other factors playing more decisive roles (see Czaika & De Haas [2015] for a review of migration policy evaluations). Studying Indian scientists' migration decisions using mixed methods, Toma et al. (2018) confirm this. Such findings should not necessarily be construed as a failure of migration policies.

Immigration policies are divided into demand- and supply-driven systems (Parsons et al., 2020; Weinar & Klekowski Von Koppenfels, 2020; Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Di Bartolomeo & Fargues, 2015). Demand-driven systems (e.g., in EU countries and the United States [US]) are typically employer-led, relying on job offers, labour market tests, quotas, and shortage lists, prioritising labour market outcomes over the actual numbers of migrants recruited. Here, the

[3] These include a 1) demographic, 2) economic, 3) environmental, 4) human development, 5) individual, 6) politico-institutional, 7) security, 8) socio-cultural, and 9) supranational dimension (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022).

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focus is often more on selecting migrants with needed skills rather than high skills, which should not be conflated (Parsons et al., 2020). Supply-driven systems (e.g., in Canada and Australia), often points-based, aim to attract high-skilled migrants based on qualifications, age, work experience, language skills, etc., often without a specific job offer requirement. Hybrid systems, incorporating elements of both approaches, are also increasingly employed (Czaika & Parsons, 2017). Attracting international students and providing them with job-seeker visas is another popular strategy for luring high-skilled migrants (Ewers et al., 2021; Czaika & Parsons, 2018).

Supply-led systems tend to increase both the absolute numbers of high-skilled migrants and the skill composition of international labour flows, whereas demand-driven systems may have little effect, or potentially even a negative one (Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Di Bartolomeo & Fargues, 2015). In demand-driven systems, attracting migrants often relies on the ability and willingness of employers, who may lack the necessary resources to navigate complex immigration policy regulations (Reinold, 2023). Constantly changing migration policies, which happen quite frequently in the context of high-skilled migration (Weinar & Klekowski Von Koppenfels, 2020), can increase uncertainty for migrants, serving as a deterrent factor according to qualitative research on Indian high-skilled migration to the Netherlands (Kõu & Bailey, 2014). An assessment of high-skilled migration policies using indicators of gender sensitivity concludes that these are not usually aligned with the realities of female labour force engagement, which may result in fewer women migrating through these channels due to non-continuous/part-time work experiences related to childbearing and rearing (Boucher, 2018).

In general, existing research often measures policy effects or effectiveness solely in terms of migration numbers, without sufficiently acknowledging potential contradictions between policy conceptualisations of high-skilled migration and quantitative measures of high-skilled migration that are typically applied in evaluations due to a lack of other data (Parsons et al., 2020). This may oversimplify the complex impact policies have on societies, emphasising the need for more comprehensive approaches to understand policy impact (Czaika et al., 2021a).

Post-entry regulations

Post-entry rights for high-skilled migrants, expanded in most countries between 2000 and 2012, can function as potential pull factors (Czaika & Parsons, 2018). The regulatory attractiveness of a destination is significantly influenced by the following elements: 1) permanency rights (see Anju Paul's chapter 5; Ewers et al., 2021), 2) family reunion, 3) spousal work rights, 4) employer portability, and 5) financial incentives. In line with neoclassical theory, these regulations contribute to decreasing the costs and increasing the benefits of migration for high-skilled migrants. The prospect of permanent residency or naturalisation in the host country is essential in high-skilled individuals' migration decisions. Temporary visas without prospects of permanency may instil uncertainty, potentially encouraging re-migration or return (Jacobs, 2022). Spousal employment rights have proven to contribute to the retention of high-skilled migrants (Sapeha, 2016; Berkhout et al., 2015). Furthermore, financial incentives, such as tax exemptions, have been introduced by various countries[4] to attract high-skilled migrants,

[4] Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden are examples of European countries with preferential tax schemes for migrants (Kleven et al., 2020).

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with evidence suggesting their effectiveness in attracting and retaining individuals of different earning levels (Giarola et al., 2023; Timm et al., 2022; Kleven et al., 2020).

Other migration-relevant policies

Beyond explicit migration policies, other non-migration public policies – those not specifically designed to govern migration outcomes – encompassing areas such as labour, education, housing, health, and social security, can significantly influence high-skilled migration (Czaika et al., 2021a; de Haas et al., 2019; Czaika & Parsons, 2018; Skeldon, 2018).[5] It is sometimes even argued that these policies have a more substantive impact on migration outcomes than immigration policies alone. Some countries, including emerging economies (e.g., Dubai and Singapore), focus on these areas to indirectly attract high-skilled migrants, for example, through investments in higher education and trade (Ewers et al., 2021). To understand the intricate relationship between migration and other relevant policies comprehensively, it is essential to "move beyond specific and narrow understandings of 'migration policy'" (Czaika et al., 2021a, p. 5). These policies, in some cases, are interconnected with post-entry regulations for migrants, such as income taxation. Collectively, migration and other public (non-migration) policies form comprehensive migration policy packages (Czaika, 2018b), designed to "create an attractive physical and cultural environment for the skilled" (Skeldon, 2018, p. 62). Robust education and health systems, for example, explain general migration to France, Germany, the UK, and the US (Geis et al., 2013). In addition, a study on internal migration in Germany identified the availability of childcare facilities as a crucial pull factor for tertiary-educated individuals (Arntz, 2010). The subsequent sections delve into the potential impact of other public policies on high-skilled migration.

3.2.2 Economic and human development drivers

Economic conditions

In line with neoclassical theory, income maximisation is a significant driving force behind high-skilled migration, both within and across countries (Geis et al., 2013; Sridhar et al., 2012; Grogger & Hanson, 2011; Arntz, 2010; Verwiebe et al., 2010). Wealthier countries that offer higher wages, translating into higher returns to education and skills, are more successful in attracting high-skilled migrants (Fink et al., 2017; Gould & Moav, 2016; Belot & Hatton, 2012; Grogger & Hanson, 2011; Borjas, 1987). Fink et al. (2017) similarly find that inventors are less likely to be attracted to countries with higher taxation, making tax breaks for high-skilled migrants, as discussed earlier, effective pull factors by enhancing the economic benefits of migration.

Financial considerations, more broadly, determine international mobility intentions of various groups, including Indian students (Hercog & van de Laar, 2013) and potential (highly educated) migrants from Spain to Germany (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015). However, instances exist where high-skilled individuals opt for migration *despite* the absence of immediate financial benefits, anticipating long-term gains in "human, social and cultural capital" (Kõu & Bailey, 2014, p. 118). Access to finance serves as a facilitator of high-skilled migration, while

[5] For a more detailed overview of relevant migration policies and non-migration policies that could influence migration outcomes, see Czaika et al. (2021b).

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its absence can constrain migration, as observed among Indian researchers (Toma et al., 2018). Funding opportunities such as scholarships and academic exchange programmes emerge, therefore, as important pull factors for certain types of high-skilled migration.

Labour market and employment conditions

The location decisions of high-skilled migrants hinge on their access to the labour market, which often depends on the migrant's country of origin (Burkert et al., 2008). Labour market and career opportunities, along with employment satisfaction, play pivotal roles as pull factors of high-skilled migration (Oğuzhan Okumuş, 2020; Sapeha, 2016; Bartolini et al., 2017; Tabor et al., 2015). Migrants tend to gravitate towards regions with greater labour shortages and higher employment rates for migrants in highly skilled positions (Burkert et al., 2008). Furthermore, employment opportunities for migrants' partners contribute to the retention of high-skilled migrants (Sapeha, 2016; Berkhout et al., 2015), underscoring the potentially important role of labour market integration policies in attracting high-skilled migrants and their partners (see post-entry regulations).

These policies should not only ensure that migrants can find employment, but that they can work at their skill or educational level to prevent dissatisfaction with the labour market and other aspects of integration, potentially encouraging re-migration (Farivar et al., 2021). Policies related to the recognition of foreign qualifications are significant enablers or barriers to employment opportunities and migration (OECD, 2019). The type of employment, such as having a permanent contract, also contributes to migrant retention (Berkhout et al., 2015). Support for entrepreneurship and a perceived favourable business climate further enhance migrant retention, as seen in the case of high-skilled Mexican migration to the US (Salamanca & Alcaraz, 2019).

Factors related to research and innovation ecosystems also act as pull factors of high-skilled migrants. An increase in a country's innovative performance and associated factors, such as advanced technological infrastructures, high labour demand in knowledge-intensive industries, and high-quality R&D activities, contributes to attracting more high-skilled migrants (Labrianidis et al., 2023).

Prospects for personal and professional development are essential drivers of high-skilled migration in different geographical contexts, echoing the main arguments of human capital theory. Factors like career advancement, employability, better working and research conditions, employment at prestigious institutions, and international experience play key roles in the migration intentions and decisions of high-skilled migrants and international students (Bartolini et al., 2017; Labrianidis & Vogiatzis, 2013; Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Toma et al., 2018; Hercog & van de Laar, 2013; Kõu & Bailey, 2014; Gesing & Glass, 2019; Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015). These factors can even be more important than earning higher wages, as qualitative research suggests (Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Kõu & Bailey, 2014). Temporary visas can hamper the professional development of migrants, as employers may invest less in them due to the expectation of a shorter stay. This can then affect migrants' employment satisfaction and strengthen onward migration intentions (Jacobs, 2022).

Education policies and opportunities for migrants and their children are also important drivers of high-skilled migration (Czaika, 2018b; Skeldon, 2018; Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Geis et al., 2013). High-skilled migrants in Germany, for example, are more likely to reside in regions that host universities, especially if the share of international students is higher (Burkert et al., 2008).

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3.2.3 Socio-cultural and environmental drivers

Given the discerning nature of high-skilled migrants in choosing their place of residence, socio-cultural and environmental factors can also play significant roles in driving high-skilled migration. For instance, in Australia, a substantial number of high-skilled migrants cited lifestyle and family, rather than economic or employment reasons, as their primary migration motivations (Khoo, 2014). Quality of life stands out as a crucial pull factor for high-skilled migrants (Oğuzhan Okumuş, 2020; Hooijen et al., 2017; Bartolini et al., 2017; Tabor et al., 2015) as does the availability of cultural amenities (Fink et al., 2017). For instance, high-skilled migrants are attracted to younger neighbourhoods with high incomes, numerous restaurants and cafes, and proximity to workplaces and (international) schools (Beckers & Boschman, 2019). A good work–life balance, enhancing migrants' quality of life, proves to be another pull factor (Törngren & Holbrow, 2017). These empirical findings lend support to the theory of the creative class (Florida 2002, 2003).

Societal attitudes towards migrants influence migration trajectories. Feelings of being 'welcome' have been identified as a pull factor for high-skilled migration to New Zealand (Tabor et al., 2015), while anti-immigrant rhetoric in politics can discourage high-skilled migration (Duch et al., 2019). Perceptions of high levels of racial discrimination in the host country may lead to re-migration intentions (Sapeha, 2016), whereas feeling a sense of welcome and acceptance leads to establishing a lasting residence in the destination (Reinold & Siegel, 2024). The perception of being welcome is intricately influenced by institutional and societal factors operating at the local level (Reinold et al., 2024). In general, high-skilled migrants remain in the host country longer if they are socially well connected. However, social integration often poses challenges for high-skilled migrants (Reinold et al., 2024; Törngren & Holbrow, 2017). The workplace serves as a bridge between professional and private lives (Plöger & Becker, 2015), and social connectedness can be facilitated by employers, offering assistance during the migration and settling-in process and opportunities for social networking between international and native employees (Reinold et al., 2024; Reinold, 2023; Plöger & Becker, 2015; Wulff & Dharmalingam, 2008).

Language policies and skills, including at public institutions, also hold important implications for high-skilled migration. First, high-skilled migrants are more likely to be attracted to a country with a common official language (Fink et al., 2017; Belot & Hatton, 2012), or a firm where the working language is English (Plöger & Becker, 2015). English-speaking countries particularly attract higher-skilled migrants due to increased returns to skill when working in a familiar language (Grogger & Hanson, 2011). This suggests that countries where a common lingua franca like English is widely accepted may be more appealing to high-skilled migrants compared to those requiring the learning of a new language. Furthermore, migrants who invest more in learning the official language of the host country are more likely to settle there (Ette et al., 2016). Language proficiency is crucial for economic and social integration, shaping general experiences in the host country. This includes both the migrants' language skills and the willingness of locals and service providers to communicate in foreign languages (Reinold et al., 2024). In sum, high-skilled migration is subject to a myriad of drivers, including politico-institutional, economic and human development, and socio-cultural. Based on the number of times pull factors related to personal and professional development have been mentioned in the reviewed literature, these seem most important in shaping high-skilled migration (see also Bartolini et al., 2017; Hercog & van de Laar, 2013). Links between the pull factors of high-skilled migration and migration policy are few and are mostly acknowledged

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in post-entry regulations. In general, policies on high-skilled migration frame individuals as workers who complement the domestic labour pool and are valuable to the host country's economy (Parsons et al., 2020), overlooking the human face of high-skilled migration. The focus on the economic value of high-skilled migrants for the receiving country is not surprising given the political sensitivity of migration issues.

4. EMBEDDEDNESS OF POLICIES IN WIDER INCENTIVE STRUCTURES

In this section, we develop a conceptual framework designed to elucidate the embeddedness of policies within broader incentive structures and their role in shaping pull factors of high-skilled migration. This conceptual model draws on Czaika, Erdal and Talleraas's (2021b) analytical framework, synthesising three key elements (migration driver environments, migration-relevant policy configurations, and migration processes [see section 3.1]). Given the primary focus of this chapter on pull factors and how they can be mediated by policies, attention is directed towards understanding migration driver environments in potential destination countries and how both external and internal migration-relevant policies, along with their configurations, contribute to the effective attraction and retention of high-skilled migrants. We propose that the influence of explicit migration policies on high-skilled migration is limited, with non-migration policies exerting a more substantial pull effect on high-skilled migrants. Emphasising the interconnected nature of various migration-relevant policies, the framework underscores the importance of considering interactions and dynamics among them. Changes in one policy area can have intended and unintended consequences for the overall attractiveness of destinations.

Figure 8.3 categorises the policy-relevant pull factors of high-skilled migration identified in the literature review into two dimensions: internal versus external policies (policy implementation) and migration versus non-migration policies (policy target). This classification aims to provide nuance to the multifaceted influence of broader policy packages shaping migration patterns of high-skilled individuals.

Within the context of high-skilled migration, the literature review identified a limited number of external policies that influence pull factors, primarily centred around visa policies for short-term (business) mobility and recruitment. In demand-driven systems, a crucial role is hereby assigned to employers in the international recruitment process. Migration-relevant policies that act as external factors include the capacity building and human capital enhancing development assistance as well as bi- and multilateral arrangements for facilitating research collaborations and deployment of high-skilled professionals.

Internal (i.e. domestically implemented) policies cover both traditional migration and broader (non-migration) public policies. While their formulation and application hinge on the national level, there exists the potential for implementation at the regional or even municipal levels (e.g., integration and socio-cultural policies). The variance in the implementation of these policies across different localities stems from divergent experiences, needs, and capacities of actors involved. This suggests an opportunity for multi-level governance structures to develop and implement effective policies (Riemsdijk & Basford, 2021).

Internal migration-relevant policies play a dual role, both in attracting and retaining migrants. Their impact on attracting individuals is arguably more pronounced compared

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		POLICY TARGET	
		Migration	**Non-Migration**
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	**External**	Visa policy	Development aid and assistance
		Recruitment policy and mobility partnerships	Research and trade agreements
	Internal	Admission policies[1]	Labour market policy
		Post-entry regulations	Finance and tax policy
		Integration policy	Research and innovation policy
		Citizenship policy	Education policy
			Social and cultural policy

Note: [1] High-skilled migrants may also migrate through other labour migration channels, family migration channels, and student migration channels.
Source: Authors' own.

Figure 8.3 External and internal policies relevant to high-skilled migration

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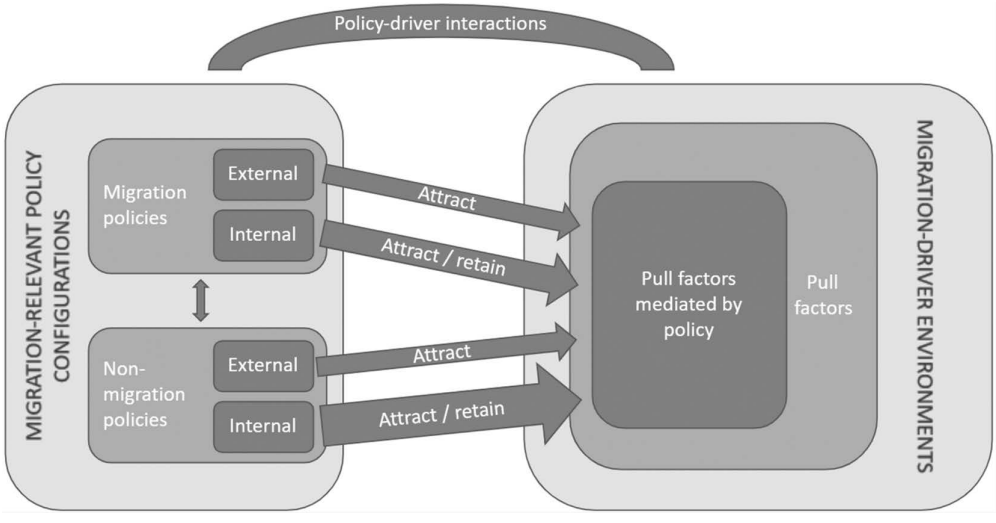
to external policies. Furthermore, the literature review suggests that a significant portion of pull factors influencing high-skilled migration falls into the realm of non-migration policies. These non-migration policies, characterised by a broader scope, afford greater opportunities for policy interventions aimed at enhancing a country's attractiveness for high-skilled migrants, surpassing explicit migration policies in this regard. Consequently, non-migration policies emerge as notably more important in the efforts to attract and retain high-skilled migrants.

Figure 8.4 visually represents this perspective, where the size of arrows between policies and pull factors signifies the relative importance of different policy dimensions. It is imperative to note that the factors attracting migrants to a destination country may differ from those that encourage them to stay. For instance, an individual may migrate to a destination country for higher education (a pull factor to attract) but choose to remain there due to career prospects (a pull factor to retain). Policies designed to attract migrants may not guarantee retention and can even yield adverse consequences, as evidenced by the example of US temporary visa policies (Jacobs, 2022). Given that migration decisions are typically shaped by a multitude of factors, the primary reasons for migration may intersect with other drivers.

This underscores the complexity of migration dynamics, highlighting the need to avoid isolating different migration and non-migration policies. Instead, a more nuanced approach to migration governance involves considering policy interactions within more intricate policy configurations. For instance, while liberal high-skilled migration policies may attract individuals with specific skills, unfavourable labour market conditions and limited opportunities for professional development could deter them from moving to a particular country. A comprehensive understanding and incorporation of these nuances are crucial for devising effective



Source: Adapted from Czaika et al. (2021a).

Figure 8.4 Impact of migration-relevant policy configurations on pull factors of high-skilled migration

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high-skilled migration policies. Simultaneously, recognising the heterogeneity of high-skilled migrants with diverse needs is crucial, necessitating policy diversification (Oğuzhan Okumuş, 2020) and sensitivity to aspects such as gender (Boucher, 2018). These findings are evocative of the notion of mainstreaming migration governance, which refers to reorientating migration-relevant policy processes by taking a more generic approach across policy domains and governance levels to meet the needs of increasingly diverse and complex societies (Scholten, 2020; Van Breugel & Scholten, 2017). While migration-relevant policy configurations can be impactful, it is essential to recognise that the pull factors mediated by policy constitute only a fraction of all determinants of high-skilled migration. Other factors, which are not discussed in this chapter but which we know also play an important role in understanding high-skilled migration include, for instance, pull factors beyond the purview of policy, such as proximity to significant others, push factors deterring migration (e.g., lack of opportunities), and migrants' characteristics and agency. Consequently, policies can only play a limited role in attracting and retaining high-skilled migrants.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of trends in high-skilled migration policy, elucidating how these policies, along with other drivers, shape high-skilled migration using a multi-disciplinary approach. Drawing upon an extensive literature review on the pull factors of high-skilled migration, we develop a comprehensive framework that integrates migration-related policy configurations and migration driver environments.

Between 1990 and 2019, our investigation of 31 European countries revealed a total of 535 policy changes related to high-skilled migration and international student mobility, mostly leading to more liberal migration regulations to create more attractive (policy) environments for international high-skilled workers. This trend, notably pronounced since the early 2000s, is characterised by incremental adjustments and 'administrative fine-tuning', aligning with broader trends in migration policymaking (Czaika et al., 2023). However, exceptions to this liberalisation trend include instances of restrictive policy reversals in the UK, Sweden, Ireland, and France. Overall, these findings underscore the balancing act of creating an attractive environment for high-skilled migrants and students while addressing societal and political concerns about controlling migration. This is comparable to developments in other parts of the world, for example, in the United Arab Emirates (see Anju Paul's chapter 5).

In reviewing relevant migration theories and frameworks, we find that there is no specific theory exclusively explaining high-skilled migration; instead, existing theories are assumed to apply equally to various forms of migration. While traditional push-pull models have their limitations, more recent frameworks, such as 'push-pull plus' (Van Hear et al., 2018), as well as the 'complex driver environments' (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022), offer a more nuanced understanding for disentangling the interplay between migration-relevant policy configurations and migration driver environments, which establish the wider incentive structures for potential and actual high-skilled migrants.

Our literature review identified numerous pull factors of high-skilled migration, divided into politico-institutional drivers, economic and human development drivers, and socio-cultural

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and environmental drivers.[6] Many of these drivers resonate with relevant migration theories, especially neoclassical theory, human capital theory, and the theory of the creative class. While migration policy is important in moulding high-skilled migration, other drivers and policy domains like labour, education, social and cultural policy emerge as stronger pull factors. The reviewed literature especially emphasises opportunities for personal and professional development in line with human capital theory as key pull factors of high-skilled migration.

This finding highlights the importance of migration and non-migration policy configurations to create an attractive environment for high-skilled migrants and international students to live, study and work. Policymakers seeking to enhance high-skilled migration are unlikely to achieve this goal solely through the liberalisation of migration policies or improvements in post-entry regulations. Instead, a more effective approach involves creating comprehensive policy packages that augment the overall allure of a destination for high-skilled migrants, integrating both migration and non-migration policies. One way of achieving this could be through mainstreaming migration across different policy domains and governance levels, allowing for more flexible and responsive policy approaches that account for ever-changing contexts of migration and society in the destination country and beyond. The sound design of effective high-skilled migration policy is based upon an understanding of how changes in non-migration policy domains affect a country's attractiveness to potential high-skilled migrants abroad and those already residing and working in the country of destination. Recognising the within-group heterogeneity of high-skilled migrants underscores the need for diversified policies, which also consider also the gendered and human aspects of high-skilled migration. Furthermore, the distinction between attracting and retaining high-skilled migrants requires separate policy approaches.

Different levels of governance may be better suited to address specific pull factors, necessitating a collaborative effort across national, regional, and municipal levels and the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including higher education institutions and employers. Simultaneously, we acknowledge that, beyond the pull factors explored in this chapter, high-skilled migration is influenced by many other (push-)pull factors beyond the reach of policy control. Consequently, the impact of policies on attracting and retaining high-skilled migrants is inherently constrained.

It will be interesting to see how the current electoral success of the nationalist right in many countries may impact migration-relevant policies and migration outcomes. The introduction of more restrictive policies for high-skilled migrants and international students may obviously decrease the attractiveness of potential destination countries. Even if migration-relevant policies remain unchanged, movements to the political right can serve as a deterrent factor by affecting the perceived welcoming environment and narratives about migration, thereby increasing uncertainty for migrants (Ahrens et al., 2016; Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Kõu & Bailey, 2014).

[6] It is important to note that we only reviewed literature on pull factors that can be influenced by migration or other policies and that individual-level factors, such as personal characteristics constituting the migrants' agency, were beyond the scope of this chapter.

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