

# Tribute to the Life and Legacy of Demetrios G. Papademetriou



— 1946–2022 —

Washington, DC

March 28, 2022

# Program

## Welcome

**Andrew Selee**, President, Migration Policy Institute

## Video

## Speakers

**Sir Trevor Phillips, OBE**, Co-Founder, Webber Phillips Ltd.; former Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission, England, Scotland, and Wales; Founding Member, MPI Transatlantic Council on Migration

**Doris Meissner**, Senior Fellow and Director, U.S. Immigration Policy Program, MPI; former Commissioner, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

**Ulrich Weinbrenner**, Director-General for Migration, Refugees, and Return Policy, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Federal Republic of Germany

**Michael Fix**, Senior Fellow and former President, MPI

**Gustavo Mohar**, MPI Board Member; former Under Secretary for Migration, Population, and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Governance, Government of Mexico

**Brenda Dann Messier**, Senior Advisor, Education Strategy Group; former Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education

**Malcolm Brown**, MPI Board Member; former Deputy Minister of Public Safety; former Executive Vice President, Canada Border Services Agency, Government of Canada

**Frank Sharry**, Founder and Executive Director, America's Voice

## Closing Remarks

**Andrew Selee**

# Selected Writings of Demetrios G. Papademetriou

## A Mid-Course Review of Implementation of the 1986 IRCA Legalization

*February 1988*

We believe that the legalization program requires immediate, firm policy intervention. Otherwise, a unique opportunity to bring better order to the nation's complex immigration structure will be squandered. The chance for [the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service] and those who assist and advocate on behalf of immigrants to develop and nurture a cooperative relationship, i.e. one based on mutual respect and appreciation of each other's priorities, may be lost. The Service may also lose the benefit of a new image of efficiency, professionalism, energy, and serious commitment to its service responsibilities that has begun to take hold.

At the same time, the nongovernment immigrant-assistance community is in danger of missing vital opportunities. The most important is the failure to navigate effectively between the Scylla of being identified too closely with INS (thereby possibly compromising its longer-term credibility) and the Charybdis of failing to assist the largest number of eligible undocumented aliens legalize. The immigrant-assistance community has been unable to build a professional working relationship with the Service. If this does not change, clients' needs and interests will have been sacrificed to a broader political agenda by the failure to separate advocacy from assistance.

— *The Legalization Countdown: A Third-Quarter Assessment*

## Mexico-U.S. Migration: Towards a Grand Bargain

*February 2001*

The Mexico-U.S. migration relationship needs to be viewed through a different lens: as a phenomenon that simultaneously reflects and strengthens what are fundamentally ordinary and organic labor flows within an increasingly integrated free trade area.

The basis for a grand bargain is the shared belief that migration from Mexico to the United States should be (a) mutually beneficial; (b) safe, legal, orderly, and predictable; and (c) that, over the long term, it should naturally decrease and stabilize at moderate levels. In addition, the grand bargain calls for the reconceptualization of the common border and the border region as a line of convergence rather than separation.



The four components of a grand bargain should consist of: 1) improving the treatment of Mexican migrants by making legal visas and legal status more widely available; 2) helping to reduce unauthorized migration by cooperatively cracking down on criminal smuggling organizations and saving lives by preventing dangerous border crossings; 3) jointly building a viable border region; and 4) targeting development initiatives to areas of high out-migration and strengthening the Mexican economy—thus gradually reducing emigration pressures. All four of these components will need to be linked for the grand bargain to realize its promise.

Mexico-U.S. migration thus needs to be viewed through a different lens: as a phenomenon that simultaneously reflects and strengthens labor flows that are fundamentally ordinary and organic within an increasingly integrated free trade area. This is indeed a good starting point for an honest bilateral dialogue on migration as long as such an acknowledgment does not lead either party to expect the other to set its social and political responsibilities and priorities aside.

— *Mexico-U.S. Migration: A Shared Responsibility*

### A Look Ahead to Regional Cooperation

*January 2004*

Ten years ago, both U.S. and Mexican officials argued passionately that NAFTA, by encouraging job growth in Mexico, would reduce illegal immigration from Mexico to the United States. So far, these hopes seem dashed. Although Mexican job opportunities in the export sector increased (mostly in manufacturing), net job gains have been modest at best, and, depending on the timing of the measurement, even flat. Furthermore, average wages in the two countries have hardly begun to converge.

In part because of these factors, but also because of robust U.S. demand for low-wage labor and other structural forces, illegal immigration from Mexico has risen sharply since 1994 despite increasingly vigorous border enforcement efforts that commenced at roughly the same time as NAFTA.

Is NAFTA, then, responsible for this increase in migration, as some of its critics had predicted? I do not believe so. The analysis points instead to a picture in which the financial crises and restructuring in Mexico that both preceded and followed the trade agreement's enactment, the continuing inability of

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Mexican job creation efforts to keep up with the million or more new workers entering the Mexican labor force annually, the booming U.S. economy, and the strong migration networks tying the two countries have had a far more powerful effect on migration than NAFTA.

The overarching lesson from the analysis is clear: NAFTA-like free trade and investment agreements neither neutralize nor cause the forces that drive people to migrate. NAFTA has neither rescued nor gutted the Mexican economy, and net changes in employment during a short but eventful ten years have not been significant enough to offset the pressures and incentives for migration. Policymakers, then, should not expect free-trade agreements to “solve” migration problems. The economic and social realities that drive migration will endure through and behave independently of such agreements. In the end, acknowledging these realities and engaging in the sensible and coordinated—even joint—management of migration may be the only viable option.

Migration management cannot be focused exclusively on controls, however. Managing the migration spigot more effectively implies recognition and regulation of the demand for more permanent immigration and temporary work visas in both countries—in other words, it requires the more thoughtful expansion of legal migration channels and taking joint responsibility for the immigration process itself. This is the only way to do better in the migration area at least until the economic growth that trade agreements and other policy initiatives can deliver in the longer run can modulate the demand on both sides of the migration divide.

— “The Shifting Expectations of Free Trade and Migration” in  
*NAFTA’s Promise and Reality: Lessons from Mexico for the Hemisphere*

### The “Law” of Migration

May 2006

Few social phenomena in recorded human history are as consequential for civilizations as migration. History is in fact dotted with “ages of migration”—from the establishment of the Greek colonies and the Roman conquests, through the Byzantine, Arabic, Ottoman, and the various Asian empires, and from the European colonizations to the great migrations of the 19th and early and late 20th centuries. Furthermore, few other large social phenomena are as entwined with human progress or have been as deeply implicated in the rise and decline of organized political entities as migration.



Remarkably, however, such longstanding human experience with migration does not seem to have translated into models of good management practices that can be readily adapted to and then applied effectively in different settings. A large part of the explanation for this anomaly lies with the fact that large-scale migration, by challenging the receiving society's sense of identity and exposing the weaknesses of its social and economic model of governance—as well as its capacity to enforce its laws—quickly leads to political contentiousness. Deeply fractured politics, in turn, interfere with the ability of governments to pursue domestic and foreign policies that deal with the phenomenon thoughtfully and, more importantly, to the systematic advantage of most of those involved in or affected by migration. Furthermore, when support for immigration collapses (something that occurs with pendulum-like regularity), the duration and depth of a society's engagement with the process does not seem to inoculate it against excessive reactions to it. This is as close to a "law" of migration as anyone might posit. And, as with most laws, it seems to hold independently of such factors as the size of organized immigration's imprint on a society's evolution and economic progress or the benefits and experience that a society has gained from immigration.

— *Europe and Its Immigrants in the 21st Century: A New Deal or a Continuing Dialogue of the Deaf?*

### **Intensifying Competition for Immigrants with Sought-After Talents**

*November 2008*

Talent—what it is, how to grow it, how to keep it, where it exists, and how to attract it—has become a preoccupation for all developed and emerging economies, as well as many developing ones, because it lies at the heart of economic growth and competitiveness. And although countries within each of these three universes look at the issue through different lenses, all are keenly interested in keeping their talent and attracting others'—and all struggle with how to produce more of the human capital needed for fueling growth.

At the core of this quest is the recognition that the now almost seamless global interdependence rewards knowledge-driven processes and products with little regard for ownership and location. And despite, some will argue because of, today's deepening economic woes, this tendency will only intensify.

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Several developments have made the search for foreign talent a policy priority for increasing numbers of governments and a fascinating subject for study. First and foremost among them is an increasing appreciation of the fact that relatively small differences in talent can lead to large differences in results and, eventually, economic outcomes. In a world where critical-mass levels of capital, knowledge, and talent pools are proliferating, the value of innovation and successful “first-to-market” results can be enormous. Second, many, if not most, wealthy countries have been producing less of the talent they need and are coming to rely more on foreign-born and/or foreign-educated talent. Third, countries such as India and China have made massive investments in expanding their human capital, which has increased the talent pool in ways inconceivable a few years ago. In turn, this expanded talent pool has encouraged more countries to enter the hunt for talent. Finally, the burgeoning talent needs of these fast-emerging economies means the picture will soon become more complex than in earlier days, when the talent pool was much more limited—as were the needs of those countries that “went fishing” in it. In this last regard, the talent needs of the most developed economies might not be the game-changing variable in the longer run. Instead, it is likely to be the needs of the fast-growing, emerging economies and of the many middle-income countries that are now net contributors to the pool that will complicate matters enormously—with an insatiable China and India in the lead.

A policy tour around the world makes clear that for a growing number of countries, attracting the “right” talent is already at the top of the policy toolkit for increasing economic competitiveness.

— *Talent in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy*

### Creating the Conditions for Cohesive Societies

February 2012

Integration will have “succeeded” when immigrants and their children have equal opportunities to compete for the same economic outcomes and can participate in civic and political life on the same basis as their native counterparts. To achieve this, states must invest in both targeted and mainstream policies in the two most important loci of integration: workplaces and schools. But there is also an intangible factor in all this: the *feeling* of belonging. States, working closely with civil society, have the responsibility to lay the foundation for immigrants to be seen as important contributors to society and to consistently and systematically reinforce this message; to create level playing fields



in which everyone is treated equally and no one faces barriers to school or work; and to identify and reinforce shared values and norms. It is when immigrants generally identify themselves with the community of which they are now part and the majority population broadly recognizes them as an integral part of the society that the integration efforts are deemed to be succeeding.

In pursuing these ends, states must think and act strategically, using a surgeon's scalpel rather than a butcher's cleaver: efforts to legislate cultural practices or suppress objectionable views often backfire, further triggering the impulse to reject mainstream values. States should instead strive to be active facilitators, providing factual information and resources to create the virtuous cycles of desirable behavior. When tensions in society inevitably erupt, the state must protect free speech and encourage a robust debate: efforts to suppress people's ability to voice their real fears and anxieties will only foment extremism.

— *Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration*

### **Building Flexibility into the System**

*March 2013*

Most countries that focus on managing immigration well, and to their economic advantage, regularly re-engineer their systems to make them more responsive to changing economic conditions. Canada and Australia are leaders in this regard, but a number of other countries have learned from them and at times appear to be even better at adapting their systems.

At the heart of the best-managed systems is a simple idea: A smart immigration policy adjusts selection formulas to ensure that each major component of an immigration program meets the nation's strategic priorities. The United States doesn't do this, and the result is predictable: The parts of the overall system that are supposed to respond and contribute to economic growth are inadequate. Considering that we have proved incapable of revamping our education and workforce training systems to meet the challenges of international competition, the need for skilled and talented foreign workers will only grow stronger, while the international competition for such workers will become more intense.

— *The Fundamentals of Immigration Reform*



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### Thinking Regionally to Compete Globally

May 2013

Migration has profoundly affected—and continues to shape—the social and economic trajectories of the United States, Mexico, and Central America, as well as the ways in which these countries relate and interact with each other.

While U.S. immigration policy is a sovereign concern, the country does not function in a void. Major demographic, economic, and social changes are sweeping across Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that are altering the dynamics of the regional migration system and challenging the status quo. These developments require a re-examination not just of *how many* people from the region are choosing to migrate, but also *who* they are, *where* they are going, *why* they choose to migrate, and (in a too-often overlooked corollary) *what* then happens to them and the communities of which they are part: both the sending one and the receiving one.

These are important questions. But the bigger questions for policymakers in all of these countries begin with *how*. How can these nations collaborate to ensure safe, legal, orderly migration flows today? And how, ultimately, can they each work toward sustained, inclusive economic growth—fundamentally supported by people with the skills and qualifications demanded and recognized by the labor market?

— *Thinking Regionally to Compete Globally: Leveraging Migration & Human Capital in the U.S., Mexico, and Central America*

### Forging a New ‘Middle Ground’ in an Era of Rising Nationalism and Nativism

November 2018

While nationalism and nativism have long bubbled under the surface in many Western democracies, several factors have kept them in check—first and foremost, enormous gains in prosperity. These constraints have slowly broken down due to a confluence of internal and external factors. First, external crises have caught governments unprepared, and their responses have been slow and incomplete. The influx of migrants and asylum seekers into new parts of Europe and the United States in the past several years, combined with a spate of terrorist events *associated* with immigrants and refugees in public debate



(though many were in fact perpetrated by radicalized native-born individuals), has catapulted national identity and security issues ahead of economic concerns.

Second, a wedge has been growing between many voters and mainstream parties. Many established politicians have been slow to address voters' fears—legitimate or not—allowing them to fester and slowly metastasize. The tendency both by elites and the mainstream media to dismiss or whitewash concerns they consider ill-informed (or prejudiced) has in some cases emboldened these undercurrents of wariness and anger.

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Responding to the many disparate grievances that drive nativist populism may be outside the direct control of policymakers, but if mainstream actors are to restore public trust in immigration policy and forge a new “middle ground,” they will need to acknowledge the uneven distribution of the benefits and costs of immigration and globalization writ large and demonstrate that they are taking concrete steps to redress this inequality. Crucially, policymakers will need to combat the growing perception that they are unable or unwilling to manage immigration and minimize the disorder that fuels public skepticism of it. Responding to populism, in other words, hinges on communicating better with members of the public about the rapid changes in society over which they feel they have no control—and in particular, fashioning a new consensus around immigration.

— *The Future of Migration Policy in a Volatile Political Landscape*

### **A New Age of Migration and the Need to Strike a New Social Contract**

*January 2020*

Countries on both sides of the Atlantic have entered a new age of migration—one characterized by large-scale spontaneous flows. From the on-going crisis at the U.S. southern border to the 2015–16 European refugee and migration crisis, spikes in migrants fleeing social unrest, violence, and economic insecurity have caused bottlenecks in asylum adjudication systems and placed enormous stress on reception, housing, and social services. The political landscape, too, has changed dramatically as members of the public have lost faith in government's ability to manage crises and nativist populists have capitalized on public disquiet to move into the political limelight.

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While the 2015–16 crisis shook Europe to its core, it now looks more like a tipping point than a singular occurrence. This intense period of arrivals, the policy changes that followed, and newcomers' closely watched integration outcomes can also be viewed as a large-scale natural migration experiment. Three years on, there is an important opportunity to take stock of what has been learned and consider the implications for states and regions continuing to face similar challenges. While some progress has been made, most newcomers are still struggling to find their place in Europe's highly organized labor markets and skill-intensive economies, many while living in a protracted limbo as they wait for relocation to another EU country or for their asylum applications to be adjudicated.

These challenges add up to more than the sum of their parts. A fear has taken root that the social contract—the shared principles that govern how people live together—is at a breaking point. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants, it is feared, has weakened the fundamental bonds of trust between governors and the governed. Particularly in Europe, the presence of swelling ranks of rejected asylum seekers who are not being returned to their origin countries has worn away at the legal and social order. And the fragile bedrock of social democracy, liberal democratic values, is under its own form of strain amid worries that many newcomers neither understand nor are willing to play by these established rules.

Viewing immigrant integration through the prism of the social contract makes clear what is at stake for societies and institutions—and the scale of the adaptations required. Although the process of embracing diversity is never an easy sprint, it is a race well underway for most countries across Europe and the broader Atlantic space.

— *Rebuilding Community after Crisis: Striking a New Social Contract for Diverse Societies*



### A New Phase of International Cooperation?

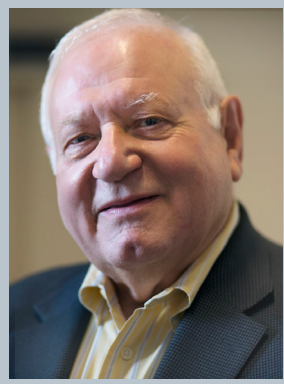
*January 2022*

The global context for cooperation on migration has shifted in unanticipated ways in the three years after the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) and in the midst of a historic pandemic. A ripple of new or intensified migration crises—from the exodus from Venezuela, to renewed intense pressure on U.S. and EU borders, to the swinging doors of border closures caused by COVID-19—has revealed the limitations of unilateral border controls and strengthened the case for coordinated action. At the same time, it has also exposed the shortcomings of existing global frameworks to govern mobility in times of systemic stress.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that many migration issues are beyond the ability of an individual state to solve on its own. As nations consider how to safely reopen borders and legal migration channels that were closed en masse in Spring 2020 (and whose cautious reopening was subsequently imperiled by new viral variants), cooperation is key to building the migration management and public-health infrastructure necessary to restart mobility while safeguarding public health. Yet the scale of this transnational challenge has triggered restrictionist impulses, leading countries to turn inward rather than work together to meet the challenge. To date, much of the cooperation on migration has been at the bilateral level and within certain regional or sectoral clusters, typically involving the movement of certain essential workers. Without broader multilateral cooperation, the goals of developing common standards for reopening borders and health-proofing mobility may be out of reach, including helping countries with less-robust capacity for health screening at borders handle this new normal.

— *Coming Together or Coming Apart? A New Phase of International Cooperation on Migration*

# Honoring an Exceptional Life and Legacy



## The Papademetriou Young Scholars Program

During MPI's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held in November 2021, President Andrew Selee announced that the institute's prestigious internship program was being renamed the Demetrios G. Papademetriou Young Scholars Program. This honor was in recognition of his career-long dedication to training, mentoring, and helping the careers of the next generation of migration thinkers around the world.

To learn more about the Papademetriou Young Scholars Program or ways to support it, visit: <https://bit.ly/PapademetriouScholars>

## Collection of Tributes

To read the collection of tributes made by key leaders and international organizations, please visit: <https://bit.ly/DemetriTributes>

For the video tribute, see: <https://bit.ly/DPtribute328>

## Family Remembrance

To read the obituary or leave remembrances for the family, please visit: <https://bit.ly/demetriobit>



