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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ENSSEA	Ecôle Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
GNP	Gross national product
LSMS	Living Standards Measurements Study
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Preface

This paper is the first in a series to be written as part of a research project on 'Transnational Migration, Return and Development in West Africa', funded by the Department for International Development and carried out by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research in collaboration with the Ecôle Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSSEA), Abidjan, the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Legon, Ghana.

This long-standing debate is yet to be terminated. In the case of the 'brain drain', for instance, while certain scholars and policy makers have emphasised its negative effects, others have argued that the problem is being overstated or have stressed the positive effects of the redistribution of human capital for the economy of both the receiving and sending country (Glaser, 1978). There also has been little consensus regarding the effects of emigration on labour markets in sending countries. Liberal economic theory considers it as a beneficial development enhancing mechanism that helps easing un- and underemployment. But it also has been argued that emigration can produce harmful labour shortages. Similarly, the discussion regarding the transfer and use of remittances remains unresolved. Although the importance of the volume of remittances is generally acknowledged, their unproductive use is often emphasised.

Return is another part of the migration process that has been studied with the aim to determine its consequences for the development of the emigration country. Attention focused on return migration so far has been limited, but here too there is little agreement regarding its impact. Emphasis has been set on the positive consequences of financial capital and human capital transferred back home by returning migrants. The first is brought back in the form of savings, whereas the second materialises through the training and work experience that migrants acquire in the host country. On the other hand, it has been argued that many migrants gain very little human capital, because they mainly do unskilled work, which does not teach them anything. It is moreover claimed that even if migrants were to acquire new skills abroad, it is unlikely that these can easily be used productively back home.

The existing body of theoretical and empirical evidence shows that the impact of international migration and return on development varies considerably, depending among other things on the volume, type, and timing of migration flows. The characteristics of migrants, degree and direction of selectivity, and situation of the countries involved in migration are also critical factors, which need to be taken into consideration. The consequences of migration also vary according to the level of analysis that is selected. There can be very different implications for individual migrants, their families, communities, and home countries. The short-term effects of international migration may moreover differ significantly from its long-term effects.

Empirical evidence concerning migration and return gathered so far is too fragmentary and contradictory to allow us to draw clear conclusions and devise concrete policy measures. It is therefore crucial to examine the implications of migration for the meeting of international development targets in specific country settings, possibly allowing for regional comparisons, to gain a clearer and more comprehensive picture. While empirical evidence from southern Europe, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and the Caribbean is accumulating, less is known about the developmental impact of international migration and return in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the urgent need to alleviate poverty and foster sustainable development in this part of the world.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a state-of-the-art literature review and to stimulate discussions around some of the most salient issues concerning the relationship between migration, return, and development. It outlines

2. Contemporary trends in

economic, social, political, and even cultural factors determine the volume and the composition of intercontinental migration flows. A rapid growth in the population and labour force, sharp rises in un- and underemployment, decreasing real incomes and growing costs of living, low agricultural production and ecological disasters determining food shortages, and political instability and crises are only a few of the more generally accepted causes of out-migration.

The decision to migrate is rarely made by individuals acting on their own. Rather, migration decision-making often involves entire families as well as wider social structures and networks. Cordell *et al*. (1997: 15) have stressed that in West Africa migration results from a complex series of implicit and explicit 'negotiations' occurring within the household. This has also been confirmed by other studies emphasising the role of traditional hierarchies and gerontocracy in the decision on who should move, where, when, and the mode of behaviour at destination (Findley and Sow, 1998)[11]. Adepoju (1995a: 329) describes this decision-making process as follows:

> 'In maximizing household resource allocation and utilization, senior members of the family decide who should migrate just as they decide what piece of land should be cultivated and who should be sent to school. Households normally select and invest in a migrant who has the greatest potential for supporting the entire household in terms of remittances, especially where migration is the survival strategy type (as in the Sahel) rather than the mobility type. With economic distress in the region, a large portion of migration is of the former type.'

It is clear that usually migration does not only concern those who go, but also those who stay (Hammar *et al*., 1997). But social ties between emigrants and their families and relations back home are particularly strong in the African context (Russell *et al*., 1990)[12]. Migrant families and relations bear part or all the costs of migration. In return they expect migrants to send home remittances and gifts, to visit regularly, and to remain in contact by mail or phone. Migrants may also be encouraged to marry locally to guarantee that eventually they will return home (Findley and Sow, 1995).

Migration is an integral component of many African families' survival and mobility strategies, which often culminate in return (Oucho, 1994). Decisions to stay, to leave, or indeed to return are closely related to the nature of the household economy and domestic and social power structures. But personal abilities and ambitions as well as structural and institutional factors operating at the local, regional, and global levels also play a highly critical role.

3. Consequences of international migration

The issue of the consequences of international migration is of course intimately related to that of the interrelations between international migration and development. Migration effects can be examined at three main levels: the individual level, the family or household and local community level, and the wider national level. Varying effects are generally registered at the micro, meso and macro levels. For example, emigration of the highly skilled may have direct

[11] See also Makinwa- Adebusoye (1995) and Oucho (1994).

[12] This is one of the most consistent findings of the extensive research conducted by Russell *et al*. (1990) on international migration in sub-Saharan Africa using secondary and primary sources of information.

Most important, however, the consequences of migration differ depending on its volume and type. The consequences are obviously quite different when only few persons migrate or in the case of mass migration. But migration effects also vary considerably according to different types of migration such as internal and international migration, temporary and permanent migration, regular and illegal migration[13].

The characteristics of migrants and the degree and direction of selectivity are also important

shortages have produced favourable changes in farming practices. Households with migrants in France had to take on outside labour to replace absent labour. This strategy has had positive effects because it has allowed them to extend their cultivation by using part of the production to pay the labourers in kind.

3.2 Migrant remittances

It is often emphasised that while emigration countries lose manpower – and particularly the 'best and brightest' in the words of Papademetriou and Martin (1991) – they also get something in return. Migrants who work abroad usually send part of their income to their family in

have a positive effect in the long run. For example, Taylor (1999) points out that building a house has an impact on family health and village construction activities, whilst Lowell and Findlay (2001) note the 'induced effect' of emigration on increasing demand for education, and private funds to support it, may have a highly beneficial developmental effect.

Other scholars have emphasised other problems. For example, Piore (1979) has argued that remittances cause inflation because they create a demand without concomitant production capacity[21], whilst Böhning (1984) emphasised that remittances increase the demand for imported goods, producing a negative effect on the balance of payments[22]. Social inequalities have been seen as another negative effect of remittances. Lipton (1980, 1982), for instance, has argued that remittances sharpen income inequality because the better-off parts of communities are more likely to send migrants abroad and thus are also more likely to draw greater benefits from migration (Ammassari, 1994).

On the other hand, it has been stressed that remittances have a positive impact on the balance of payments of sending countries as they help to narrow the trade gap, control external debt, facilitate debt servicing, and produce much needed foreign exchange (Appleyard, 1989). Empirical evidence from different countries also contradicts pessimistic views regarding the use of remittances. From their study on sub-Saharan Africa, Russell *et al*. (1990) concluded that 'once subsistence needs are met, migrants do use remittances for investment purposes including education, livestock, farming, and small scale enterprise'[23]. Findley and Sow (1998) report from Mali that remittances not only covered basic food and cash needs but also allowed to pay for irrigation in agriculture. Remittances have also been a significant source of financing for

[21] Thomas-Hope's (1999) findings from Jamaica confirm this view showing that migrants were charged higher prices for houses and services.

[22] Certain scholars set emphasis on the 'remittance multiplier effect' arguing that expenditures of remittance-receiving households may create a demonstration effect on households that do not receive any (Appleyard, 1989).

[23] It is important to notice that there are differences in the use of remittance by sex (Rpessir efmfns

The brain drain has also been the subject of highly controversial debates since the 1960s[24]. The divergence theory sets emphasis on the highly detrimental effects of these flows claiming that developing countries are losing their best people from key positions, and thereby weakening human capacity to harness modern agricultural and industrial technology[25]. The emigration country looses critical human capital in which it has invested through education and training and for which it is not compensated[26].

On the other hand, representatives of the convergence school argue that the problem of the brain drain is less critical than it is usually portrayed. They tend to emphasise the beneficial consequences of migration for the receiving and sending countries and especially the positive effects of emigration on (un)employment[27]. It is argued that if highly educated and skilled people were not to emigrate they would be under-utilised at home due to unemployment or poor working conditions which may suffocate their inventive and creative abilities that can better be used abroad (Keely, 1986). It is also stressed that human capital investments made in the high-level migrants are partly recovered through remittances.

Although the brain drain dilemma remains largely unresolved, some suggestions to solve the problem have been put forward (Obia, 1993)[28]. Concrete policy initiatives have also been devised to foster the return of highly educated and skilled migrants and to encourage their support in the development of their home country (Ghosh, 2000b)[29]. 'Return of talent' programmes have been implemented in various countries in Asia, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean. Some have been sponsored directly by Governments, others through multilateral organisations[30].

4. The study of return and transnational migration: methodological issues

The return of migrants with its human capital implications is one of the most commonly cited benefits of migration for the sending country, along with remittance and labour market effects (Todaro, 1976). But this is not the only form of capital transfer involved with return migration. Financial and social capital can also be mobilised through migrants' return. Migrants may accumulate savings while living and working abroad and bring them back once they return. They may also make professional and personal contacts, which prove useful and productive for their endeavours back home. It is argued that these implications of return migration vary significantly according to the level of analysis that is chosen and based on several critical factors. These include the volume of return migration, characteristics of migrants, degree and direction of selectivity, types of migration, reasons for return, and situations existing in the countries involved in the migration.

Regardless of its importance for the understanding of the migration-development linkage, return migration has always been heavily

[24] See Bennell and Godfrey (1980), Chukunta (1979), Das (1979) and Gardiner (1968) for a special focus on Africa; Glaser (1978) and Bhagwati (1976) for more general overviews.

[25] It is implicitly assumed that the highly skilled have a greater propensity to move, because for them the benefits of migration tend to be higher due to a higher demand and smaller costs of mobility (Fischer *et al.*, 1997; Skeldon, 1997).

[26] A major aspect of the brain drain controversy is whether high-level skills are drawn off unfairly.

[27] A survey conducted in 1985 in Côte d'Ivoire shows that 37.5% of people with a university diploma in Abidjan, and more than 50% of such people in other cities, were economically inactive or unemployed (Russell *et al.*, 1992). More than half of these people had been in that situation continually for the year preceding the survey. Among those people with vocational and technical diplomas, 33% were lacking employment in Abidjan, and 26% in other cities. The results also showed that about 10% of graduates had started working in the informal sector as self-employed entrepreneurs.

[28] See also Ghosh (1992), Dumon (1984) and Condé (1989) for policy measures concerning return migration more generally.

[29] Not only has the support of highly skilled migrants been sought but also that of unskilled migrants who can act as 'partners in development co-operation' (Libercier and Schneider, 1996).

[30] See also Koser (2000) on different types of policy frameworks and operational programmes, Logan (1990) and Ardittis (1985) on UNDP-sponsored TOKTEN Programme; Pires (1992) and Ardittis (1991) on IOM's Return of Qualified Nationals Programme, and Strachnan (1980) and Abraham (1968) for examples of return supported by government.

abroad and the intended length of stay back home need to be determined. Yet there is a tension between adopting a broad timeframe including also very short stays abroad to adequately capture transnational migration, and still being able to distinguish between simple visits and migration. There are also other key aspects that call for clarification. The reasons of departure and return need to be clarified not only to keep 'visitors' separate, but also to avoid confusion between people who go abroad to work and those who leave to accompany or join these persons. Another category that may be considered separately is the one comprising persons who go abroad to study.

Two other criteria that seem of particulnt

negative selectivity of migration. He has argued that ‘if we ranked villagers into ten - sized groups by income-per-person, migrants would probably be likeliest to come from the second-poorest and third-poorest - and from the second-richest and third-richest groups’. The reason is that the poorest do not have the choice to migrate as they lack resources, and the richest are already in such a good position that migration may become superfluous.

It is generally recognised that migration selectivity deserves a central focus in studies concerned with the impact of migration both in the areas of

Another classification that is important to discern the consequences of return is the one conceived by Bovenkerk (1974) and later refined by Gmelch (1980) and King *et al*. (1983, 2000). This is based on two main criteria: the lengths of time that migrants intended to stay abroad and their return orientation. It encompasses four categories: (1) intended temporary migration with return; (2) intended temporary migration without return; (3) intended permanent emigration with return; and (4) intended permanent emigration without return[36]. This classification is useful as empirical studies have shown that capital transfers in the form of remittances, for example, are more significant when migrants intend to return home.

However, typologies using the intentions of migrants as criteria for classification usually present some problems. Firstly, migrants do not necessarily have definite plans at the time of their departure to go abroad or to return (Gmelch, 1980). Secondly, migrants' intentions may change over time depending also on opportunities and constraints arising abroad and back home, their own and their family members' lifecycle stage, and various professional or personal motives. Indeed, it has been argued that the intentions of migrants are a poor indicator of actual migration behaviour[37].

In contrast, King (2000: 9-10) has suggested another typology of return migration, which is based on the level of development of the countries involved in the migration. Three forms of return are contemplated in this respect: (1) return from developing to industrial countries that were linked by colonial ties (e.g., the British from India or Kenya, the French from Algeria); (2) return from countries who have achieved a relatively similar economic development level (e.g., Belgians from France); and (3) return from developing to industrial countries whether linked by colonial ties or not (e.g., the Ghanaians from Britain or the US, the Ivorians from France or Canada). It is the absence of this last type of return of the highly skilled which is the subject of much concern and controversy.

The most elaborate typology of return migration is the one that has been developed by Cerase (1974) who studied the return of migrants from the United States to rural areas in southern Italy[38]. Focussing on the length of time the emigrants spent abroad and the degree of their

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advanced countries or between these latter and developing countries. Later work by Findlay and Salt (1989) and Findlay (1990) has helped elaborating this typology and analysing migration implications by the type of movement.

[36] Anwar (1979) has introduced the discussion about 'the myth of return', a term that describes the contradictory feelings that migrants nurture *via-à-vis* their home country and the country where they live. A return remains always envisaged, no matter how settled migrants are in the host country. But the return is constantly postponed although remittances are sent regularly and tight contacts are maintained with home.

[37] See also Bovenkerk (1974: 18) who argues that 'migrants do not always have a clear idea about their intentions and, moreover, tend to rationalize their reasons into motives that are accepted by the community as legitimate *standard-motives*'.

their actions can affect the economic structure and power relations of the home communities.

4.4 Return motives and readjustment problems

The influence of return migration on socio-economic change in the emigration country also varies depending on the motives for return and the problems that returnees encounter. Return motives include a variety of economic, social and family-related, as well as political reasons (King, 2000)[39]. Existing empirical evidence shows that social and family-related reasons are of particular importance. Strong family ties, the wish to rejoin family and friends, homesickness, problems of adjustment in the host country, racial harassment, and the aim to enjoy an improved social status back home are significant reasons for return. Other factors are related to migrants' stage in the life-cycle, as age brings changing needs and preferences. Migrants may for instance wish to raise their children back in their home country. They may return to get married, to care for elderly parents, or to take on particular family-related responsibilities.

Some migration scholars have examined the relationship between integration and assimilation and return (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1973; Esser, 1980). They have claimed that return occurred because migrants were unable to integrate or assimilate into the host society. Rogers (1984: 233) has argued that 'Returns may indeed indicate failure to become integrated and assimilated into the host country, but they may not do so. For some migrants they may be 'new' decisions, arrived at on a basis of changed personal and societal circumstances.'[40] Indeed, Al-Ali *et al.* (2001) show how increased engagement of Bosnian and Eritrean refugees in their home countries – including a willingness to

context of globalisation and transnationalism for migrants to contribute to such development without settling there for good. Indeed, some studies suggest that circulatory migration even at a sub-regional level can have a positive impact on investment, as Williams (1999) reports for improvements in livestock management in West Africa.

For Ghosh (2000b) two major factors determine the impact of return on personal success and development: (a) the aptitude of the returning migrant, and the degree of preparation of return, and (b) the socio-economic and institutional situation existing in the home country. However, to this we can add a number of other factors: the magnitude of migration flows, migrant selectivity, migration types and motives, and the characteristics of emigration and immigration countries.

The inconclusive nature of empirical findings on the developmental impacts of migration and return results in part from the fact that few studies distinguish impacts according to these critical variables (King 2000). This had already been emphasised by scholars in the mid-1970s. In his bibliographical essay, Bovenkerk (1974: 46) has stressed that empirical evidence concerning the relationship between return and innovation was ‘too little, too unreliable, too unspecific, too fragmentary and as said too partial, to make possible comparisons of the conditions under which innovation by return migrants succeeded and in which attempted innovation became failure’. He has set emphasis on the difficulties associated with weighing up the relative importance of various factors, and suggested nine factors that may influence the potential of migration and return as a development force (see section 6.2).

Bovenkerk (1974: 45) has also stressed the importance of defining what is meant by the terms innovation, change, and development. He reveals his disappointment with regards to the fact that

> ‘In almost all the literature in which the influence of returned migrants on the social and economic development has been studied, development and the various innovative stages that lead to it, is implicitly defined in terms of the model presented by the rich Western countries of the world. This is supposedly the viewpoint of most returnees

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themselves because they bring back regards

From their reviews of empirical studies on the use of migrant savings, Gmelch (1980) and King (1986) conclude that a fairly small portion of savings is spent for productive investments. Savings are largely spent on 'conspicuous consumption' to raise the status and comfort of return migrants and their family. A considerable proportion of savings goes for constructing a house or to purchase a plot of land. Migration scholars have often condemned this type of expenditure, arguing that migrants' savings and remittances could be invested elsewhere in a more productive way. Emphasis is also placed on the possibility that this form of spending may cause structural distortions such as inflation (Böhning, 1975).

Russell (1992), who has examined the uses and consequences of remittances, has argued that the distinction between consumption and production/investment expenditures is rather blurred. In fact, it can be argued that spending on housing, consumption, and services (e.g., education and health) may create employment and produce positive multiplier effects as well as reduce the need for government expenditure on infrastructure, subsidies, and services. Expenditures on housing may moreover serve not only to raise the status of return migrants and their family, but also provide them with a better access to other local resources.

5.2 Human capital

One of the most debated issues has been that of human capital gains for emigration countries through the return of migrants. It has often been claimed that migrants acquire valuable training and work experience when they study and/or work in more industrialised countries. New skills, ideas, and attitudes of returned migrants are expected to have a positive impact on the development of their home country. Much empirical evidence has however contradicted this optimistic view. Various studies from southern Europe, especially from the 1970s, have found that only a minority of migrants had gained new skills while working abroad (Gmelch, 1980; King, 1986). The majority did not learn anything new because they only got unskilled work to do. Work on migration to Europe from Africa and the Middle East has also identified deskilling of migrants as a major problem (Brydon, 1992; Al-Rasheed, 1992).

But even among those migrants' who are able to acquire new skills and experiences, few may be able to apply them in practice back home. It is obviously difficult for migrants who have acquired technical or industrial skills to apply them in rural settings lacking the infrastructure needed to make an effective use of their new skills (Castles and Kosack, 1973; Gmelch, 1980)[42]. Also, many migrants are unskilled and get to do unskilled work whilst abroad, which does not teach them anything new. Labour migrants often get very little training.

Böhning (1972), for example, studied the social and occupational apprenticeship of Mediterranean workers in West Germany and found very little evidence in support of the hypothesis that migrants return home equipped with new skills and the desire to operate change. Migrants had been largely engaged in low-grade positions in the industry and worked mainly on mass-production lines. They were often frustrated and this has hampered their learning. Abadan-Unat (1976) stressed that labour migrants with real industrial know-how tended to stay on in West Germany. Their expertise can hardly be used back home. Migrants who returned were those with very limited skills who tended to avoid industrial jobs back home. These migrants have learned very little beyond, for example, how to empty dustbins in Munich, turn a screw at Renault's, and wash dishes in Zürich.

But there also is empirical evidence gathered in other regions, which contradicts the conventional view of human capital theory considering labour market experience in industrial countries as an asset. Muschkin (1993), for example, has researched the consequences of return migrant status for employment in Puerto Rico. When she compared return migrants with non-migrants, she found that the former had higher unemployment rates and lower mean earnings. A longer duration of stay was moreover associated with negative employment outcomes. These findings have led

been produced in the 1960s and 1970s. See for instance Dahya (1973); Gmelch (1979); Hernandez-Alvarez (1967; 1968); Krane (1973; 1976).

[42] See also Piore (1979) who takes a critical standpoint stressing

her to postulate that the longer migrants were

In comparison with the other two approaches, the meso-level approach to migration has emerged more recently, in two strands of literature. Firstly, the processes of immigrant incorporation have been studied in economic sociology (Portes, 1995). Immigrants are not seen simply as isolated individuals, but rather as members of groups and participants in broader social structures that affect their mobility in various ways. Secondly, migrant networks have been studied where these are conceived as 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin' (Massey *et al.*, 1993: 448)[47].

A focus on meso-level processes stresses the

The migrants' experience abroad.

Whilst abroad, there are a number of features of the individual experiences of migrants and their families which will influence both their propensity to return, and the extent of any ongoing involvement they maintain with their country of origin. It is worth exploring the extent to which migrants of different types (skilled, unskilled, from certain countries, short vs. long term etc.) are more or less likely to return, and/or acquire the ability or desire to contribute towards poverty reduction and development initiatives in their home communities whilst overseas. It is also important to examine where the origin of such tendencies lie. Are particular groups of migrants more likely to develop innovative strategies to gain income, knowledge or valuable social networks, and what kinds of institutional and legislative contexts frame or enhance such strategies?

For example, given that there is known to be gender selectivity in the migration process, does that lead women and men to have different migratory experiences, with consequently different impacts on return and development? Given that unskilled migrants are more likely to have worked in unskilled jobs abroad, they may be less likely to bring back skills that help to boost local economies. In contrast, skilled migrants are perhaps more likely to acquire additional human, financial and social capital whilst they are abroad. Also, and stressing the inter-relationship of the micro, meso and macrolevels, it is worthwhile to consider evidence of migrants or their associations engaging with initiatives to promote micro-enterprises, employment, or community development projects; some notable examples are 'home town' associations in the Nigerian context, and the work of Muslim brotherhoods in Senegal (Riccio, 2000) – are such initiatives related to specific kinds of migrant experience, or specific sending contexts?

As was noted in section 4.4, Rogers (1984) developed a series of hypotheses about what influences propensity for migrants to return (Box 1). Although these factors reflect processes operating at macro, meso and micro level, they are conceptualised from the point of view of the micro decision-making process for individual migrants and their families, and in this sense are amenable to examination through individual interviews, questionnaires and discussions.

For Rogers (1984), there is not a clear distinction between events taking place at the aggregate and individual levels. Macro-level influences work themselves out through the perceptions and decisions of migrants acting at the micro-level. Migrants have varying degrees of awareness of changes occurring at the structural and systemic level. They also have quite different sets of motives for return which are influenced by differences in socio-economic and demographic characteristics such as age, sex, education, occupation, and socio-economic status. This acknowledgement makes Rogers (1984: 291) argue that 'observations about return populations being 'positively' or 'negatively' selected from among migrant populations or citizens of a home

home countries the greater the chance for innovation, the more they have reacted to push-factors the less the chance for innovation;

6. *Degree of difference between the country of emigration and the country of immigration*, because if this is too great the skills and experiences that migrants acquire abroad may not be useful back home;

7. *Nature of the acquired training and skills*, as it se;

of the home population. However, it is in the area of social capital transfers, via social networks, that there is least current information; whilst at the same time, a broader question remains as to whether permanent return is a prerequisite for transfers of human, social and financial capital to occur.

7. Linking micro and macro perspectives

Such questions need to be answered at different levels of analysis. In this sense, it is important to draw on a cross-sectional and a longitudinal perspective to allow comparison between countries and different migrant groups. This should help to examine migration processes and their local developmental implications and to explore the extent of involvement of migrants and returnees in poverty reduction and sustainable development initiatives.

7.1 Methods

Various methodologies are available to gain a longitudinal perspective. In particular, qualitative methodologies, include narratives to reconstruct family and personal life histories, interviews using open-ended questions regarding individual experiences and expectations for the future, and direct observation to deepen and enrich the understanding of the role of migration and return in each contextual setting. Analysis of information from LSMS data sets can also be used to derive time series information on migration and remittances. Meanwhile, from a cross-sectional perspective, quantitative methods are of wider use to obtain empirical data concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of particular populations of returned migrants and migrants who remain abroad.

In conducting a questionnaire survey of migrants, or return migrants, a number of pitfalls arise. Most obviously, a sample frame is lacking. One response to this has been the 'ethnosurvey' framework of Massey and Zenteno (1999: 766), which involves random sampling of households in known sending communities, carried out at a time when seasonal migrants are known to be back in Mexico, and supplemented by non-random samples of migrants in US destination areas contacted through connections established in

origin, represent important areas for emerging research.

As migrants become increasingly flexible and fluid in their movements and actions, there is growing recognition that both research and public policy need to adapt to cope with such changes. That there have been public policy shifts is undoubted – as countries such as the Philippines (Jones and Findlay, 1998) and Eritrea (Al-Ali et al., 2001) move to mobilize 'their' workforce overseas, and bring them into the development process. But how these processes play out for skilled and unskilled migrants; the extent to which return to country of origin – whether permanent or temporary – can or should play a role in such processes; and the attitude that should be taken by receiving countries and non-governmental organisations concerned with development, all remain issues in urgent need of further work.

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