



Migrant integration in the South: What does it mean and how can we measure it?

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Context

MacArthur Foundation

www.macfound.org

Effective Partnerships for Better Migration Management and Development

- Two main axes
 - The governance of international migration
 - The impact of emigration on origin countries' labour market

- Two geographical focuses
 - Central America
 - West Africa



Perspectives on Global Development 2011

Social cohesion



Migrant integration in the South

- Why should we care?
- What does it mean?
- How can we measure it?



I.

Why should we care?





South-South migration is on the rise

- Increasingly restrictive migration policies in the North
- Demographic boom in Africa
- Environmental changes (global warming)
- Rapid economic growth in converging economies



New countries of immigration risk problems of social cohesion

- Scapegoating and violence against immigrants
 - Cases of massive deportations
 - Civil unrest and long-term political instability
- ⇒ Measures of immigrant integration must be in place before it is too late



II.

**What does integration
mean in the South?**





What does “South” mean?

- The notion of “South” implies a diversity of situations
 - *Economic diversity*: very rich countries (petroleum exporters), but also very poor countries (financial constraint)
 - *Political diversity*: democracies vs. autocracies, political stability vs. civil unrest
- The notion of “integration” is affected by such diversity



Similarities between South-South and South-North migration

- Mostly economic in nature
- Social costs of leaving
- Ties with the household back home (transnationality)
- Restrictive migration policies
 - High-skilled rather than low-skilled migrants (*high-skilled integrate more easily*)
 - Temporary rather than permanent migrants
- Tendency to scapegoat migrants

But, migration in the South raises different integration issues than in the North



Differences between South-South and South-North migration (1)

A smoother integration process?

- **South-South migration is generally easier than South-North migration**
 - Less stringent formalities
 - Neighbouring effect: common border, lower costs of transportation, language and cultural proximity
 - Ethnicity might play a more significant role than nationality

⇒ Is integration less of an issue? { circular migration
smooth coexistence

- **Migrants in the South tend to face the same problems than locals**
 - High levels of informality (labour market)
 - Child labour
 - Lack of social protection, civil rights, freedom
 - Bad housing conditions (slums)
- ⇒ More a problem of country-wide social inclusion than of migrant integration?



Differences between South-South and South-North migration (2)

Or a tougher integration process?

- **Migrants may face more discrimination than in the North**

- Lack of legal and administrative protection against hidden discrimination (wages, business operations, access to services or housing)
- Official discrimination (*e.g.*, freedom to practice religion)
- What about second generations (access to nationality, education, jobs...)?

⇒ **Is integration in the South first of all a problem of discrimination?**

- **Some categories of migrants are especially vulnerable**

- Stranded migrants in transit countries
 - Subject to abuses and human rights violations
 - Unaccompanied children and women are the primary victims
- Refugees (around 70% of refugees are located in the South)
 - Refugees have access to health and education ⇒ risk of resentment from nationals
 - Organisation in camps ⇒ formation of enclaves

⇒ **Is it really a problem of “integration”? (probably not, but must be tackled)**



III.

**How can we measure integration
in the South?**





Measuring integration in the North

- **Normative approaches**
 - Legal framework benchmarking (e.g., Migration Integration Policy Index – MIPEX)
- **Positive approaches**
 - **Socio-economic indicators:** employment, income level, social security, level of education, housing and segregation
 - **Cultural:** attitude towards basic rules and norms of the host country, frequency of contacts with host country and country of origin, choice of spouse, language skills, delinquency
 - **Political:** numbers of migrants naturalised annually or who obtain a secure residence status, numbers of migrants with dual citizenship, participation in politics, participation in civil society
 - **Attitudes:** reported cases of discrimination, perceptions of migrants by the host society, incidence and effects of diversity policies, role of media



Such measures are hardly applicable in the South

- **Legal benchmarking less relevant than in the North**
 - Low administrative capacity, laws and regulations not always taken into account, corruption
 - Many aspects of legal framework have a smaller direct impact on welfare, due to temporary nature of flows
- **Conventional surveys**
 - Labour market surveys do not capture full extent of informality and labour activities in the economy
- **Outcomes measured are also less likely to be achieved by locals**
 - Home ownership, formal jobs, full pension, freedom of press



So how should we measure integration in the South?

- **Subjective surveys (for both immigrants and locals)**
 - Perceptions of immigration, multiculturalism
 - Perceptions of belonging and trust
 - Interactions with non-immigrants (trade, work colleagues, marriage)
- **Experimental testing**
 - Testing for discrimination, access to basic services and jobs
- **Spatial analysis**
 - Living conditions (slums vs. decent living quarters)
- **Surveys must capture informal activities**
 - Convergence of wages/income (formal and informal sectors) of first but also second generations
 - Look beyond conventional labour outcomes (type of work, sectors, benefits, level of safety, hours worked)



Case study: Ghana

- **Objective:** test whether what is legal and regulatory (normative) reflects what occurs in reality (positive)
- Step 1: Interviews with policy-makers, NGOs, HTAs and experts (Dec. 2010)
 - Workshop on “immigrant integration in Ghana”
 - Queries on laws, regulations and policies (but also perceptions of immigrant integration)
- Step 2: Field study (planned)
 - Immigrants and communities of immigrants
 - Putting into practice lessons learned on differences between integration in the South and in the North (subjective surveys)



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