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INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

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Although economic motivations of migration have long been recognized, the economic development effects of migration on countries of origin and destination are only recently coming into focus. The consensus has long been that emigration remains either neutral in balancing labor market supply and demand or results in loss to sending countries or a gain to receiving countries, particularly with regard to skills and labor power. But more recently, publicized calculations of remittances and competition for high skilled migrants have led commercial enterprises, international banks, and governments to identify and consider more broadly how migration's positive economic contributions to investment, growth, and income distribution might be enhanced. Determining the development implications not only of capital and labor flows but also of migrants' other financial and social capital requires consideration of their complicated social lives, which shape how these resources are employed. Placing a migrant family's income generating power, consumption needs, investment options, and career paths in the multi-sited social, political, and cultural matrices within which they earn their livelihoods is necessary in order understand and predict how migrants deploy skills and resources gained and distributed through migration. Despite some significant recent advances, substantial research and analysis is still necessary before efforts to enhance migration's development effects are likely to be successfully targeted.

One of complicating difficulties in developing new research assessments of the migration's economic outcomes or potential has been the division of migration studies into three separate spheres as if they were disconnected circuits: internal migration (usually rural-to-urban), forced migration (largely the international flight of refugees but increasingly including the internally displaced), and voluntary international migration (including economic migrants seeking employment and social migrants seeking family reunification). While such distinctions might be useful for governmental management and legal administration, they do not necessarily reflect the livelihoods of migrants. Not only can one person or different family members fit into each category, serially or simultaneously, but also movement in one sphere can affect that in another. For example, rural migrants are forced by persecution into urban poverty and conflict, which they feel compelled to leave behind and follow social networks abroad in search of protection better opportunities. Then forced and voluntary emigrants remit funds back home to relatives who invest in businesses that attract a surplus of rural migrants to seek work in the cities only to be discouraged and move on -- internal and international migration in a mutually reinforcing cycle.

In recent years the Social Science Research Council has sought to build upon its decade-long Program on International Migration, which at first focused largely on immigration to the United States, to support research and migration studies more broadly within a international framework. One of the Program's foci has become migration and development and currently we are convening migration scholars, practitioners, and policy makers in a number of fora to consider how they might guide future research and policy development. An upcoming conference, co-sponsored by the International Organization on Migration and the Center for Migration Policy and Society, will to consider how internal and international migration are related to economic development. We will compare the two processes as well as to look at their interrelationships through remittances of earnings back home, investments from afar, return home and entry into self-employment, high-skilled employment circulation, and the impact of social networks and knowledge exchange in sending and receiving areas. As described in greater detail below, the goal of this conference is to promote the formulation of new research that will bring social analysis to bear on migration's economic impacts.

Background

The realization that the amount remitted by migrants to developing countries far exceeds foreign assistance has fueled growing interest in the relationship between migration and development among both scholars and policy makers. In the last few years, a series of reports and review articles have summarized the links between migration and development (Amassari 1994; Lucas, 2005; Newland 2003, 2004;

Russell 2003; Skeldon 1997, 2003, 2004; Sörensen et al. 2002, etc.). Many focus on the impact of remittances (Carling, 2004; Orozco 2002, Gammeltoft 2002; Lowell and de la Garza 2000; Ratha 2003;), while others consider the impact of circular and return migration (Ammasari and Black 2001; Black 2001; Ghosh 2000; Hugo 2003; King, 1986), the role of diasporas (Kapur 2001; Koser, 2003; Newland and Patrick 2004; Van Hear et al. 2004) and policy (Carling 2004; Ellerman 2003; Koser 2003; Martin et al 2002). A much smaller literature considers the question of "social remittances" or the impact of migrants on ideas, behaviors and social capital in the sending country (Levitt 1999).

International migration is now widely seen to have the potential to contribute to development and many governments and development agencies are seeking ways to maximize its benefits. Yet, while the focus of most scholars and policy makers has been on the relationship between international migration and development, for many developing countries, internal migration is a more important phenomenon in terms of both the potential benefits for development and the challenges it presents for governments. This is largely due to the numbers involved: China, for example, has as many as 140 million internal migrants, compared with the United Nations 2002 estimate of 175 million international migrants worldwide and a total flow of only about 450,000 annually from China (Huang and Zhan 2005).

Estimates of the impact of internal migration on development have produced impressive figures: Cai Fang asserts that migration has contributed 16% annually to the growth in China's Gross Domestic Product in recent years (Cai 2001). Although initially the government took a negative approach to internal migration, which has eroded the previous boundary between urban and rural populations and policy domains, since the late 1990s perceptions have changed. Largely as the result of research on the nature and impact of internal migration, the Chinese government has come to see migration as making a positive contribution to development by relieving pressure on the land and providing labor for manufacturing and urban growth. As a result, many government agencies are involved in projects that seek to maximize the benefits of migration by providing pre-migration training or assistance to return migrants.

The Chinese government is ahead of many others in the region in recognizing the relationship between internal migration and development. A Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia organized by the International Organization for Migration and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2005, found that data regarding internal migration in the region was patchy and that the level of attention to the issue by policy makers also varied widely despite the fact that internal migration is widespread throughout the region (Deshingkar 2005). Nonetheless, it is clear that migration scholars, policy makers and development agencies are starting to recognize the impact of internal migration on development. (For more information about the conference, see http://www.iom.int/chinaconference).

Linking International and Internal Migration

At least partly because they are studied by scholars from different backgrounds and with different concerns, internal and international migration are rarely considered together. When they are, it is generally in the context of internal migration leading to or presenting an alternative to, international migration, or when return migration or strong transnational ties prompt those studying international migration to follow their subjects back home (Skeldon 2003). Yet beyond these questions, internal and international migration have many things in common in terms of their causes and origins, the processes involved, and their impact and outcomes. As a result, they also present many similar challenges for research and policy making.

Both international and internal migration raise similar questions about the relationship of migration to development, including the ways in which both poverty and development can serve as stimuli for migration and shape the direction, volume and composition of migration flows. Equally, both call for a complex definition of "development" that takes into consideration not only the benefits of remittances and

return migration but also questions of brain drain from sending regions and the impact of migrants on receiving economies. Migrants who settle in the receiving place present similar issues regarding social and civic incorporation and the future of the "second generation."

Beyond the short term economic impact of migration, both internal and international flows also involve what have been termed social remittances. Some of these, including changes in gender norms and fertility patterns or in civic and political participation, may have a long-range impact on development while others may be neutral or even detrimental in their effects.

Many of the methodological challenges that confront scholars researching international and internal migration are also the same. Although one migration takes place across and the other within national borders, both create families that are "translocal," requiring multi-site research and the tracing of links between communities. In both cases, scholars must often work with undocumented, vulnerable, or hard to reach populations, attempt to understand the nature of decisions that are made within the privacy of households, and estimate flows of money and other resources in situations where many exchanges take place through informal channels.

Internal and international migration also raise similar management and policy challenges at several levels. In immediate terms, governments must decide how to address questions of residency and citizenship rights and access to public services both for temporary migrants and those who seek to settle permanently in the place of reception. In doing so they must often balance concern for migrants' rights with the interests and concerns of urban/receiving country residents. Over the long term, efforts to manage migration and maximize its benefits need to be based on a consideration of its relation both to broader development policies and to the many areas of economic and social policy that affect migrants, including not only to employment policy but also education, health, and housing.

Even in countries where migration is recognized as an important national policy issue, it is generally not the responsibility of any one government department and often falls outside the scope of policy planning and budget making. Policy development and implementation can be hampered by the lack of coordination between government agencies and by the different interests of sending and receiving communities. In many countries, social norms can also present a barrier to the implementation of programs that would increase the benefits of migration, as when gender norms lead women to be excluded or ethnic and religious differences cause tension between migrants and receiving communities.

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