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Chasing Modernities:  
On the Mobility-Development  
the Challenges of  
Harnessing Transformative  
Potential

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**CARIM Notes d'analyse et de synthèse 2010/52**

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**Série sur la migration hautement qualifiée**  
***Module Socio-Politique***



**CARIM**  
**Euro-Mediterranean Consortium**  
**for Applied Research on International Migration**

**Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Socio-Political Module**  
**CARIM-AS 2010/52**

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**On the Mobility-Development Nexus –**  
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[Full name of the author(s)], [title], CARIM AS [series number], Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, [year of publication].

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Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

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## Abstract

For several decades migration and the development nexus were central to both development and migration studies. Yet these studies, by and large, maintained rigid boundaries between different forms of migratory flows, between the origins and destinations, permanent or temporary, of these flows. But beyond the limited notion of brain drain and gain, new conceptual tools emerged so as to take into account non-financial remittances (ideational; entrepreneurs; social norms) and the loss of intellectuals or *organic intellectuals* à la Gramsci. While the need to transcend disciplinary boundaries was often emphasized, such a transition did not translate into an effective trans-disciplinary conceptual framework. This paper asserts that both development and migratory theories are, in fact, facing a paradigm shift in the synergies between various forms of population flows and development. This paper further asserts that there are very few meaningful conceptual differences between various forms of migratory flows: regular vs irregular; within the boundaries of the nation state or outside of it; conflict-driven or non-conflict flows...etc. Except for immediate forms and their impact, all different migratory flows produce new political and socio-economic terrains. It is within these new terrains that the transformative potential lies. The post migration political socio-economic terrains in post sending and receiving countries and the kind of transformative potential triggered by such migratory flows are regularly neglected. The paper also suggests that migration-development synergies are not readily available, and much depends on identifying, cultivating and harnessing such transformative potential. The paper concludes that such policy packages include a wide range of issues related to the reproduction of human capital, its skills and quality, and to maximising the potential of different forms of migratory flows.

## Résumé

Le lien entre la migration et le développement occupe une place centrale dans la littérature scientifique depuis plusieurs décennies. Toutefois, l'écrasante majorité des travaux existants ont maintenu des frontières difficilement pénétrables entre les différents types de flux migratoires, mais aussi entre les différents sites de départ comme de destination concernés par ces flux de façon temporaire ou permanente. Par ailleurs, au-delà des notions de *brain drain* et *brain gain*, à l'utilité limitée, de nouveaux outils conceptuels ont fait leur apparition afin de rendre compte de l'importance des transferts d'ordre non financier (idéationnels, de compétences entrepreneuriales, de normes sociales,) et des effets néfastes de la perte d'intellectuels – ce que Gramsci a appelé « l'intellectuel organique ». Le besoin sans cesse réitéré de transcender les frontières entre les disciplines n'a pas donné lieu à un cadre conceptuel permettant véritablement de naviguer entre les nombreux compartiments de la littérature. Cet article vise à montrer qu'un changement de paradigme est nécessaire afin de mieux rendre compte de la relation intime entre les différentes formes de flux de population et le développement. Cet article montre également que les différences conceptuelles entre les formes de flux migratoires sont moins importantes que ne le suggère la littérature existante. Qu'ils s'agissent de migrations irrégulières ou régulières, internes ou internationales, générées ou non par des conflits, etc., elles ont en commun de conduire à l'émergence de nouveaux terrains socio-économiques et politiques. Les questions portant sur la nature de ces terrains résultant de la migration dans les pays d'origine comme de destination, et sur leur potentiel transformatif, n'ont à ce jour pas été traitées de façon suffisamment approfondie. Toutefois, les nombreuses synergies envisageables entre la migration et le développement n'ont pas non plus été clairement identifiées. Il est donc indispensable dans un premier temps de mieux cerner leur potentiel transformatif. Cet article conclut que les politiques publiques doivent adresser plusieurs défis simultanément, et avoir pour objectifs la reproduction du capital humain, ainsi que la maximisation des bénéfices potentiels des différentes formes de flux migratoires.

## Introduction

The paper argues that the main challenge facing migration studies, and, in particular, any attempt to understand migration-development synergies, is a crisis in theory. Studies on migration have tended to focus on unfounded dichotomies between various forms of migratory flows: internal-external; conflict-non-conflict driven; and regular as opposed to irregular forms. Problems in theorization were compounded by biases in investigation: a focus on causes rather than outcomes; on receiving rather than sending communities, and on visible gains rather than less visible ascent processes. While the obvious interdisciplinary nature of migration was admitted by all, most studies failed to adopt a conceptually unified approach. This paper attempts to provide a comprehensive evidence-based conceptual framework for analyzing the mobility-development nexus in its multiple forms based on population flows. The paper will go on to suggest that boundaries between various forms of migratory flows are at best unfounded. Past studies on migratory flows have offered useful insights into the dynamics governing these processes, but only a more unified conceptual framework can give a proper understanding of the possible outcomes of the migratory process. All forms of migratory flows produce a number of irreversible features in the socio-economic structure and trigger new dynamics in societal change. These features are a direct outcome of changes affecting not only populations, but also their institutions, assets, skills, entrepreneurship and their means of reproduction. The present paper suggests that population flows produce new urbanities, ruralities and local to translocal and transnational experiences, experiences that pose serious challenges to any notion of getting back to the pre-migratory situation. The paper suggests that the nexus between development and migratory flows lies precisely in capturing such transformative potential. The latter is though not easily attainable and its direction (progressive or regressive) is not self evident. The paper further argues that all forms of migratory flows, different forms of mobility (external-internal, regular and irregular, war-conflict-driven and non-conflict migratory flows) are producing new multi-layered and irreversible changes in sending sites, transitional and ultimate sites. It is within these new terrains that a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of the mobility-development nexus is emerging.

Discourses on the nexus between development and migration oscillate between pessimism and optimism, depending on selected indicators and or limited notions of space and flows. Any pessimism is rooted in the notion of 'over-urbanization' which to date echoes the security threat suggested by the early twentieth-century Chicago School of sociology. 'Over-urbanization', and its inevitable outcome, the slums, which include extreme anti-social elements, represents a threat to the social fabric of society (Pany, 1977, p.38) or lead to a new form of urbanity that lacks dynamism (1964, p. 1). As noted by Mair (1977, p.25) the concept of over-urbanization has been criticized on a number of grounds. Apart from its 'Euro-Western centric' bias the link between industrialization and urbanization was challenged on both statistical grounds and on its insistence on stasis ignoring the fact that urbanization, industrialization and development are all processes rather than states.

Thereafter and up until the 1970s, development and migration literature adopted a positive notion of the link between the two. This optimism faded during the 1970s as 'Brain Drain' became an issue. In the 1990s pessimism grew with the tightening of immigration policies, pessimism that lasted to the early 2000s when a new optimism was brought about by booming remittances and other Diaspora contributions. (Haas, 2008, p.2). The oscillation between pessimism and optimism relating to migratory flows is a reflection of a deeper crisis in the conceptualization of the links between development and the various forms of migratory flows. Neither the notion of 'Brain Drain', nor the notion of 'Brain Gain' have been absent from migration literature, in any particular period since the early 1950s. In Lewis<sup>1</sup>, in Turner<sup>2</sup> and in Todaro<sup>3</sup> the dynamics governing internal migratory processes

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, W. Arthur. (1954). "Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour," *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies* 22: (1) 39- 191. In *Development: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*, by Stuart Corbridge p. (133).

and the notions of gain and loss were predominant. In Lewis's celebrated 'surplus Labour' phrase, we have the crystallization of the idea of depleting rural areas of the able-bodied. As noted in Elnur (2009), Turner's (1968) work on the Latin American experience of urbanization (the earliest in LDCs) provides the benchmark for such predicted trajectories in rural to urban migration. Drawing primarily upon his experience in and surveys from Lima, Peru, Turner describes three stages in the life cycle of an urban migrant. Each stage involves specific housing conditions, economic status, and location across a city's three concentric zones. Although the linearity of Turner's work was strongly criticized, (Conway, 1985). His notion of the link between human mobility and social change remains an important contribution to migratory theory. Let us recall a much earlier theoretical contribution to this newly celebrated focus. As early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century John Stuart Mill registered in no uncertain terms the links between human mobility and development. Indeed, he wrote: 'It is hardly possible to overrate the value, in the present low state of human improvement, of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar... such communication has always been, and is peculiarly in the present age, one of the primary sources of progress.'<sup>4</sup>

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> Turner, J.C. (1968). "Housing priorities, settlement patterns, and urban development in modernizing countries". *Journal of the American Institute Planners*, 24, 354-63.

<sup>3</sup> Michael P. Todaro. "A Model for Migration and Urban Employment in Less Developed Countries". *The American Economic Review*, 1969, 13: 138-148, p.140.

<sup>4</sup> John Stuart Mill, 1899, Vol. 11, 99-100, Book III, Chapter 17, para 5

## The Assumed Differences/Boundaries

Over several decades migration studies maintained strict divisions between various forms of migratory flows. A brief look at the typologies of migratory flows will reveal the origin of the crisis in the theorization of migration: internal migration focusing on rural-urban flows; international migration with a focus on brain drain; international migration with a focus on remittances; economic driven migratory flows as opposed to conflict driven migratory flows at both internal and international levels; and, finally, Diaspora studies focusing on the impact of various forms of return migration. All these studies on migration contributed to our understanding of the dynamics of migration and there are numerous examples.

Urbanization driven by rural-urban migration is evidently the earliest, most massive and sustained form of human mobility in modern times. Pioneering works on rural-urban migration (notably Todaro, 1997) provided a breakthrough in our understanding of the continuity in rural-urban migration despite the unattractive conditions in receiving urban sites (lack of job opportunities) or even at later stages when easy access to social services lessens. Furthermore, rural-urban studies, with very few exceptions, focused on the dynamics created at the receiving end of the migratory flows. With the implicit assumption based on Lewis's notion of 'surplus labour', early studies on rural urban studies hardly visited the sending communities – either post-departure, or in the long term – to examine the new political, social and economic terrains created by migration. The focus was essentially on the receiving end. It was only at a later stage that the focus shifted as serious attention was directed to the implications brought about by the departure of the most educated to the urban centers. It is hence argued that 'the loss of the most educated members of any village may undermine community-based organizations and erode that population's capacity to respond to development programmes implemented at the local level. Hence, in dealing with poverty alleviation, it is the internal brain drain that is likely to be of more importance than the international movement of the skilled from the larger urban centres of a country' (Skeldon, 2005, p.7). The implications of this discourse for the migration-development nexus is self evident. But equally important is the blurring of differences between rural-urban migration and international 'Brain Drain' migration.

The link between internal (rural-urban migration) and external migration is too often underestimated. In many of the labour-export economies and in particular that with sizable rural sectors external migration, particularly of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, was in itself rural-urban migration, albeit beyond national boundaries. This was evident in the case of countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Sudan where migrants moved either directly from rural areas or from a short transitional stay in urban centres. The Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey<sup>5</sup> provided strong support for rural-urban migration across national boundaries. The survey suggests that both current and return migrants are more likely to come from rural areas (almost 68 percent) compared to 57 percent of returnees (Wahba, 2007, p.7). Moroccan immigration was no exception. Largely based on unskilled labor, Moroccan migrants were overwhelmingly from three rural areas, reflecting a district pattern of spatial clustering and specialization in migration (De Haas, 2007, p.4). Sudan experienced a similar pattern of spatial clustering and specialization in migration among the unskilled and among semi-skilled migrants heading for oil-producing countries particularly Saudi Arabia. Migration from both Morocco and Sudan was, by and large, a rural-urban flow. Labour migration to these countries was entirely male as laws in the host communities did not allow the unskilled and semi-skilled to bring their families with them. Remittances to families back home, invariably accelerated rural urban migration from these two areas (Elnur, 2002, p7). By 2008 the population of the northern region which used to represent 8

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<sup>5</sup> ELMPS, 2006 cited in Wahba, Jackline (2007). "An Overview of Internal and External Migration in Egypt", working paper NO. 0703, Economic Research Forum, p. 7.



percent of the Sudanese population, had shrunk to 4 percent.<sup>6</sup> The evident overlaps between external and internal migratory flows highlighted the limitations in the theorization of links between migration and development.

In the last two decades and in the aftermath of the Cold War and with intrastate wars in LDCs and violent transitions in formerly centrally-planned regimes, massive conflict-driven and exodus-like population flows have become a dominant feature of migratory flows. The direction of such migration was both internal (IDPs) and external (refugees and asylum seekers). Internally such exoduses were predominantly in the form of rural-urban migration and thereafter external. In many cases both internal and external Diaspora population flows became networks working to finance conflicts.<sup>7</sup> Another important dimension in migration studies is the alleged differentiation between forced and non-forced internal rural-urban migration (Internally Displaced Persons labeled as IDPs as opposed to normal Rural-Urban Migrants). The question that merits serious consideration is the following: are there conceptually meaningful differences between non-conflict-driven mobility as opposed to war-conflict-driven experiences of displacement? The similarities in spatial characteristics are evident and the dominance of the urban destination whether inside the country or abroad, whether as a transition or final destination is evident. If both spatial and destination characteristics are almost identical, little is left except for the initial conditions of flows and survival in the early stages. This is admittedly markedly different from the linear and cumulative process of urbanization that marked the early post-independence urbanization trajectory as in Turner's 'bridgeheader'. In Turner's narrative (Turner, 1968) the new migrants are mostly young, single males who seek better job opportunities in the city and are, therefore, most concerned with easy access to the low-status, informal work most readily available there. Proximity to employment and a desire for minimal transport time and cost take precedence over other factors such as the quality or ownership of housing. Bridgeheaders' limited familial responsibilities mean that they are better able to put up with the crowded and deteriorating rental tenements of the inner city. If and when bridgeheaders obtain better employment, accumulate some savings, marry, and have children, they shift priorities toward securing the stable and more spacious living environment that comes with owning a single-family dwelling. When bridgeheaders reach this stage they become 'consolidators' by moving to the city edges where land is available for 'self-help housing' (life cycle stage two). They build shanties using cheap, makeshift materials. As consolidators accumulate enough savings to replace low-quality building materials with better ones, they slowly transform their shanties into houses (life cycle stage three). As the city expands, the former peripheral self-help housing areas are surrounded and enclosed by new and more distant squatter settlements. What was once a peripheral shanty town eventually becomes a zone of more solid and serviced low-income houses situated between zones of rental and self-help shanties. A comparison is needed with these kinds of predicted trajectories.

This happy story is markedly different in the case of conflict-driven migrants who are mostly female heading households with disproportionate numbers of children and elderly and, because of assets-losses, significantly much more deprived (Elnur et al, 1993). The initially different conditions and characteristics of conflict-driven rural-urban migration result in significantly different survival strategies. But, in the longer term, such differences matter less, with the convergence of both normal R-U migrants and conflict driven R-U migrants.

This kind of urbanization has been dismissed as being significantly different from both colonial and early post-colonial urbanization. The dismissal of over-urbanization because of slums, poverty, and massive growth in informal economies does not seem to represent a serious departure from industrialization-led urbanization. Let us recall the description that earlier forms of urbanization

<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Sudan Population Census, 2008: Population Distribution by State Enumeration, State of Birth and State of Usual Residence.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Balentine, Karen and Sherman, Jake (eds.) (2003). *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*, particularly case studies on Columbia (pp. 73-106); and Sri Lanka (pp. 197-224).

brought with it. Booth's seminal work<sup>8</sup> 'Conditions and occupations of the people in East London and Hackney, 1887' divided the data between eight sub-groups, the first four of which he divided according to degrees of poverty. My immediate interest is in these four poorest categories, A to D in Booth's classification:

- Class A: covered the lowest class of the so-called 'occasional loafers and semi-criminals';
- Class B referred to the very poor, who were casual laborers, leading a hand-to-mouth existence and suffering from chronic want;
- Classes C and D included those whose earnings were small, either because their work was irregular or ill-paid.

The four categories of the poor constituted 30% of the population of London and were followed by classes E and F who were also working class but who were better paid and who maintained regular employment. The final two categories (G and H) were the lower, the upper-middle classes and those above. The map of urban social division drawn by Booth by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century might easily be used to describe the new multi-layered urbanities in LDCs. Indeed, it could easily be a description of Bombay, Cairo or Nairobi shanty towns, leaving very little of credence to the assumed structural differences between industrial-led urbanization and 'over-urbanization'.

Immediately above classes A-D, which constituted the poor and 30% of the population of London, were classes E and F which were also working class but better paid and in regular employment. Classes G and H comprised the lower- and upper-middle class and all above. By combining a variety of sources of mainly subjective information, Booth was able to establish categories that were sufficiently distinct in lifestyle to constitute social classes. His next task was to transfer this data to a map (see Illustration 1). As they accounted for no more than 1.25% of the population, Booth concluded that '[t]he hordes of barbarians of whom we have heard who, coming forth from their slums, will some day overwhelm modern civilization, do not exist'<sup>9</sup>

In the context of LDCs the changes in the characteristics of the urbanization process between the colonial and the immediate post colonial era as opposed to the massive urbanization typical of the post independence era needs some explaining. The colonial and immediate post-colonial era were characterized by gradual, manageable; change with well defined linearities. (Main concern: Urban Planning and Combating Informality)

Post independence urbanization though was in large part linked to failed development or was conflict-driven and was largely defined by massive exodus-like R-U: multi layered urbanities and ruralities and informality became the norm. In this context industrialization was driven by or could eventually be driven by urbanization and not *vice versa*. Thus urbanization is booming with wealth and growth and without them. The two extreme cases of the urbanization of oil-rich economies and those of Sub-Saharan Africa experiencing negative growth rates but massive urbanization are two examples of conflicting extremes<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See Booth, Charles (1888). "Conditions and occupations of the people in East London and Hackney", 1887. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 51, 227-245 and Booth, Charles (1889). *Life and Labour of the people* (Vols. 1 and 2). London: Macmillan (republished 1969).

<sup>9</sup> In *ibid* Booth 1888, p.305.

<sup>10</sup> The contrasting images of speedy urbanization in the oil-rich countries experiencing massive inflows of financial resources and poverty stricken SSA with negative growth rates is well illustrated in this quote: "The average African country's urban population grew by 5.2% per annum over the 1970-95 period, while GDP per capita was falling at an annual rate of 0.66%" cited in Fay, Marianne and Opal, Charlotte (2000). "Urbanization without growth: A Not-SO-Uncommon Phenomenon", World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 2412, August 2000, p. 2.

The same logic applies to externally-oriented population flows, whether regular or irregular.<sup>11</sup> Once the irregular migrants overcome certain initial hazardous conditions related to illegality and once they are no longer at risk of forced return, the long-term trajectories of both regular and irregular migrants do not diverge except in relation to individual qualifications (skills, education .etc).

### Beyond the merely visible

The second major underlying cause of a theorization crisis in migration studies is the focus on the most visible and quantifiable at the expense of the less visible, hard to quantify but equally – and in many cases – more important. Remittances are the most obvious example. Following the post 2000 upsurge in remittances, the development-migration nexus discourse surged. The spectacular growth in the volume of cross-border remittances in the last decade drew attention to the impact of migration on the development process. The World Bank (2003) estimated that in 2002 remittances amounted to US\$ 113.4 billion more than double aid-related flows (US\$ 49 billion) and second to FDI (US\$ 143 billions). By 2005 remittances (US\$ 194 billions) from workers in developing countries outstripped both FDI (US\$ 121 billions) and Official Development Aid ODA (US\$ 90 billions). In 2008, remittance flows were estimated at USD 444 billion worldwide, USD 338 billion of which went to developing countries.<sup>12</sup> There are roughly 20 to 30 million unauthorized migrants worldwide, comprising around 10 to 15 per cent of the world's immigrant stock.<sup>13</sup> In the same year the number of conflict-driven internally displaced persons was estimated at 26 million.<sup>14</sup> For the last two decades or more, migrants' remittances to North Africa have constituted the highest ratio to GDP: in 2002, they were 3.1% of GDP, compared with 1.6% for Latin America or 0.6% for sub-Saharan Africa – the last, the lowest ratio in the world (United Nations, 2004:106-7). Taking the MENA region as a whole, the ratio comes down to 2.2% for the last few years, compared with South Asia at 2.3-2.6% GDP (Hassan, 2009, p.7).<sup>15</sup>

The compression of time and space (using Held et al, 1999) as a defining characteristic of contemporary globalization, was a major driving force in the upsurge of remittances and to a great extent their outreach and impact. True, the initial wave of telecommunication developments in the post-Cold War period initially bypassed the developing world, particularly Africa and the Middle East. As noted by Ayish in 1992, a lack of financial resources, rigid economic legislation, and socio-political obstacles had seemingly inhibited the bridging of the telecommunication development gap.(see Ayish 1992) The following two decades witnessed, however, spectacular development in cyber communication transcending both income and level of development barriers. As *The Economist* (2005) rightly noted, over the past two decades, technological developments in telecommunication have catalyzed Diaspora-driven development across the globe including even countries devastated by war like Somalia.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Somalia was able to bridge this particular gap in spectacularly quick fashion. Within ten years of Ayish's observation, Somalia was in possession of the number one ranked cellular telephone network in all of Africa according to *The Economist*, ranking ahead of nations today

<sup>11</sup> This is the term that was adopted by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) as opposed to the term 'Illegal Migration' still widely used by the receiving countries

<sup>12</sup> See United Nations' Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/migration>

<sup>13</sup> See: International Labour Organization's Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy, [http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Labour\\_migration/lang-en/docName--KD00096/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Labour_migration/lang-en/docName--KD00096/index.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council – Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2008, <http://www.internal-displacement.org>

<sup>15</sup> See for example: United Nations (2004): "World Economic and Social Survey 2004", *International Migration*, New York, United Nations and Hassan, Khaled El Seyed (2009): Levels and Trends of International Migration in North Africa, a paper submitted to the XXVI International Population Conference, Marrakech, 27 September-2 October, 2009 (<http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=90625>)

<sup>16</sup> See "Somalia Calling: An Unlikely Success Story." *The Economist*, December 2005, 14.

considered to be telecommunication powerhouses such as Egypt, South Africa, and Tunisia<sup>17</sup>. The example of stateless Somalia shows how different communities capture or harness the potentials offered by mobility. Ironically, state absence may actually prove advantageous. According to Gundel (Gundel, 2003) around two thirds of remittances to Somalia during the 1970s and 1980s were invested in trade and other business endeavors, while only one third was given over to family assistance and support. Scheibel's study of the Somali Diaspora estimated that remittances contributed directly to Somalia's booming telecommunication sector, and other privately provided services such as electricity, transport and the provision of water.<sup>18</sup>

## Remittances and Poverty

A sense of optimism prevails on the work based on the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM). In the words of Taylor et al (1996, p.418), 'prior work has been unduly pessimistic about the prospects for development as a result of migration, largely because it has failed to take into account the complex, often indirect ways that migration and remittances influence the economic status of households and communities that contain them...'. As noted Stark and Bloom (Stark and Bloom, 1985, p. 174) the foundation of such optimism lies precisely on the shift away from the focus on individual independence to what Stark and Bloom call mutual interdependence; migration being a 'calculated strategy' and not an act of desperation or boundless optimism.

While the impact or at the least the potential impact of remittances is traceable at the macro level and to a great extent measurable, the impact of remittances on sending communities is problematic. Earlier studies and pioneering work<sup>19</sup> were skeptical about the 'trickle down' effect with regard to poverty and inequality. Such pessimism was essentially related to the pattern of consumption that absorbs almost all of the village's remittances, leaving little or hardly any room for investment that could strengthen the 'trickle down' effect. More recent studies, however, tend to support more positive outcomes through what Taylor termed the 'second round effect' (Taylor, 1996, p. 418) or the 'multiplier effect'. Examining the case of Morocco, De Haas (2007, p. 2) suggested that, 'Notwithstanding empirical gaps and methodological flaws, available evidence suggests that migration and remittances have considerably improved living conditions, income, education and spurred economic activity through agricultural, real estate and business investment, from which non-migrants indirectly profit.' Such optimism was, however, tempered by a wider definition of both 'remittances' and 'brain-drain'. In Skeldon (2005, p.7) 'the loss of the most educated members of any village may undermine community based organizations and erode that population's capacity to respond to development programmes implemented at the local level. Hence, in dealing with poverty alleviation, it is the internal brain drain that is likely be of more importance than the international movement of the skilled from the larger urban centres of a country.'

Furthermore, in the absence of an appropriate policy package that could maximize the synergies between remittances inflow and local economic development, remittances may encourage a negative level of dependency or even a quasi-*rentier* economy. The EU study of an Albanian-remittance-dependent village gives an insightful narrative for remittance-dependency: 'There are 18-4 shops crammed into the Albanian end of Aleksandar Makedonski Street, selling carpets, furniture, jewelry and wedding gowns. The shops make most of their annual turnover during the summer months, when thousands of Albanian migrants return to get married or build houses in their villages. In this period, the Albanian quarter bustles with activity, and Cadillacs and other impressive cars with Chicago and Alaska license plates are parked along the sidewalks. Many of Kicevo's 300 private taxi drivers make

<sup>17</sup> As noted in Scheibel, Joseph Alan (2009)..*Diaspora-Driven Development In Stateless Somalia: All Relationships Are Local Relationships*, MA thesis, AUC, Cairo

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Most prominent is Micheal Lipton work on India: Lipton, Michael. (1980). "Migration from rural areas of poor countries: The impact on rural productivity and income distribution". *World Development* 8(1), pp. 1-24.

a living shuttling the Diaspora to and from Skopje airport. The heart of the Albanian economy is made up of traders, restaurateurs, construction workers, money changers, trades men and a few lawyers and private doctors.<sup>20</sup>

## The Brain Drain

Skeldon's notion is extremely important in understanding the limitation of the present definition or notion of 'brain-drain'. In most cases the term 'brain-drain' is confined to the most visible, 'the highly skilled and educated', ignoring the social ramifications of the departure of the elites of a particular community, a region or the country as a whole. In fact, the visibility of the brain drain is highly questionable even in sending communities. Baldwin-Edwards (2005, p.4) suggested that over the last two decades the emigration of highly -skilled professionals from Morocco and Algeria has become a great concern for these countries. While there are no reliable statistics in the sending countries, the phenomenon can be measured or estimated by looking at the receiving countries. Thus, Maghari (2004, p.77) noted that in just one scientific institution in France there were over 1,600 researchers from the Maghreb, of whom nearly half were Moroccan. Surveys showed that 'Brain Waste' is particularly acute in the case of migration to the EU, a fact that had already been suggested in earlier surveys.<sup>21</sup> Baldwin-Edwards, citing UNDP report, further noted that the reasons for the exodus of professionals are not only pay-related, but also reflect general labour-market and social conditions, such as lack of career opportunities and job satisfaction.<sup>22</sup> The dearth of statistics on highly -skilled migrants in sending countries and yet parallel visibility in the receiving countries is true for most LDCs.

## The elusive visibility

Reliable statistics about the numbers of highly-skilled migrants are hard to come by. Yet, even when available, there is the danger that they give the illusion of brain drain. An alternative approach based on sending units, professions or similar data sources has proved to be the most reliable approach to such data. Studies based on home units of the highly-skilled in Sudan (colleges, universities and professions) have revealed far more drastic losses than those reported by overall surveys and statistics. In some extreme cases (School of Mathematics of the University of Khartoum), the unit level data showed an 88% loss from their Western-educated faculty (22 out of 25). Another significant example was Sudanese anatomy teachers. During the Sudanese conference on higher education,<sup>23</sup> it was estimated that of twelve holders of PhDs in anatomy only three remained in Sudan leaving 15 newly-established medical schools with no doctoral level anatomy teachers. Short of making Bill Gates' prophecy<sup>24</sup> of cyber teaching come true, there is no possible remedy for such a situation. Furthermore, the data reveals further facts concerning the replacement of lost skills with lower skills. Studies among Sudanese academic migrants in Saudi Arabia showed that the majority (80%), stayed more than 15 years in their new home rendering their return, if it were to take place, irrelevant<sup>25</sup>. Counting heads

<sup>20</sup> See the full narrative in: European Stability Initiative. 2002. *Ahmeti's Village: the Political Economy of Interethnic Relations in Macedonia*. Berlin: European Stability Initiative. [http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_document\\_id\\_36.pdf](http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_36.pdf)., p.4.

<sup>21</sup> See e. g. Fargues, P., (2004): "Arab Migration to Europe: Trends and Policies," *International Migration Review* 38(4), 2004, pp. 135-153.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP (2003). Arab Human Development Report 2003, NY: United Nations Development Program, p. 144.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics revealed during the 1998 Sudan higher education conference. See M. H. Eltom (ed.) (1999). *Present and Future of Higher Education in the Sudan*, SEUC, Cairo, Feb. 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Bill Gates speaking about the potential of cyber-communications suggested that if we have a good anatomy teacher in Rhodes Island, the rest of the world can enjoy his services irrespective of distance and number. (see Elnur, 2004). "Differentiation in the educational systems, diasporas and reproduction of educated elites" in Ben Hafaiedh, A. and El Jaziri, M. (eds.) , (2004). "Social Science in the Arab World, Turkey and Iran: Determinants, State and Potentials", *Cahiers du C.E.R.E.S.*, Hors No. 2, CERES, Tunis, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Elnur, (1999). "Higher Education in Sudan: From Elite to Mass Education: Some Aspects of Sustainability and Relevance"; in M.H.Eltom (ed.): *Present and Future of Higher Education in the Sudan*, SEUC, Cairo, Feb. 1999.

across national boundaries gives an illusive feasibility and measure of brain-drain. What matters is the extent of the depletion in some crucial specializations and the sending country's capacity to replace the lost skills. In this regard neither statistics about the numbers of the highly-skilled leaving sending countries nor the numbers of these entering receiving ones are enough to establish the level and impact of brain-drain. What is crucial in measuring brain drain is the stock of particular skills in the sending countries and their capacity to reproduce such stock skills. Even if no brain gain can be detected in the host communities, brain-waste is evident. As noted in Sabadie<sup>26</sup> brain waste is the result of many factors including the nature of demand in the host communities, mismatch between academic qualifications, the extent of illegal migration resulting in weaker bargaining positions and the inefficient implementation of bilateral agreements.<sup>27</sup> In the immediate post-colonial decades, the phenomenon of brain waste was barely a factor because of the similarity between educational systems at both ends of the colonial system. Post independence the shift from elitist education to mass education brought serious divergences in quality, creating brain waste.

Massive elite migration in some conflict-ridden regions may have a drastic impact, an impact transcending the simple notions of head counting across national barriers with implications far beyond brain loss, brain gain and brain waste. As noted in Elnur, (2009) in countries like Iraq, Sudan, Algeria where conflict is a reality, a phenomenal degree of migration among the educated and middle-class has taken place. Such massive migration means the reshaping of these social classes. The reproduction trajectories of elites were radically altered and reshaped with significant loss of the inter/intra-generational transmission of knowledge beyond the limited notion of brain drain, this massive involuntary migration of educated elites and social actors deprived the political and social arena of what Gramsci called the 'organic intellectual'.<sup>28</sup> Years of savage political suppression and purges of the state apparatus and trade union movements had led to the emigration of significant number of active social organizers (trade unionist, activist and 'social entrepreneurs' with an irreparable loss in inter- and intra-generational knowledge and experience transmission).

The discourse on the less-visible and hardly visible focused on the impact of non-financial remittances. Levitt (1998, p. 926) defined social remittances as 'ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities. The role that these resources play in promoting immigrant entrepreneurship, community and family formation, and political integration is widely acknowledged'.

The emphasis on non-financial remittances, social and ideational as with Kapur, (2004) certainly transcends the limited notion of what is readily measurable. Reverse remittances are hardly discussed in the literature on migration-development linkages. This is particularly relevant when we consider the changing political terrain resulting from massive emigration and limited but selective return migration. There are some central questions that need to be answered in order to read future trends beyond speculations. Thus, it is important to see these interactions as networks reshaping the political terrain; reshaping how political elites are reproduced; and how inter-intra generational transmission of knowledge and traditions are maintained or lost; and how the closely and interactive Diaspora/local communities are compensating for the loss of what Gramsci termed the 'the organic intellectual'. Additionally, there is also the question of how Diasporas contribute to the reproduction of an educated elite and how the over-diversified educational experience is marking the social reproduction of educated elites in particular. Such broader assessment of the impact of migration goes far beyond limited notions of brain-drain and gain, based, as they are, on the most visible, countable and measurable.

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<sup>26</sup> See Sabadie, J.A.; Avato, J., Bardak, U., Panzica, F. and Popova, N. et al (2010). "Migration and Skills: The Experience of Migrant Workers from Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia", The World Bank and ETF.

<sup>27</sup> Idem.

<sup>28</sup> Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

## The Increasing Feminization of Migratory Flows

Studies on the increasing feminization of migratory flows (see Table 1 below) can transcend both the unreliable boundaries between various types of migration (internal-external) while going beyond the visible to capture the potential for transformation triggered by mobility at both sending and receiving ends.

**Table 1: Migrants, Refugees and Gender: 1990-2010**

Year	International Migrants	% Female	Refugees
1990	155 518 065	49.1	18 481 171
1995	165 968 778	49.3	18 497 567
2000	178 498 563	49.4	15 645 933
2005	195 245 404	49.2	13 852 349
2010	213 943 812	49.0	16 345 740

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008).

As with all other forms of mobility, the main challenge is to harness the transformative potential of the increasing feminization of mobility. Some studies<sup>29</sup> have stressed the double burden resulting from this and also the repressive nature of such a dual role. Again the emphasis on immediacy seems to curtail more positive insights about the long term dynamics of such participation and its potential. A departure from such a trend appears in recent works on women's roles in post-conflict contexts. According to Manchanda (2001, p.99) writing about South Asia, 'Conflict opens up intended and unintended spaces for empowering women, effecting structural social transformations and producing new social, economic and political transformations and producing new social, economic and political realities that redefine gender and cast hierarchies.' However, such gains, concludes Manchanda<sup>30</sup> when '...generated from the trauma of loss are particularly ambivalent, and enabling cultural frameworks and solidarity networks are needed to legitimize them.' Such a need for enabling conditions is particularly crucial because of reversed pressure. As Hale (2001, p. 139) noted in her study of Eritrean women, 'The pressure on former fighters to revert to traditional norms is a familiar pattern in liberation struggles. In post-war situations the men need the labour of women, but they need to channel into 'appropriate' tasks for the common good, such as reconstruction, economic recovery and replenishing the population lost in war'.

<sup>29</sup> See for example: Xiushi, Y. (1999), 'Gender differences in determinants of temporary labor migration in 17 China: A multilevel analysis'. *International Migration review*, 33; Green, D. (1999). *Gender violence in Africa: African women's responses*, St. Martin's press, New York.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 121,

## Transcending Disciplinary Boundaries: Towards a Conclusion:

There are four main concluding remarks that need to be emphasized:

- There are few meaningful conceptual differences between various forms of migratory flows: regular, irregular; within the boundaries of the nation state and outside it; conflict-driven or non-conflict flows...etc. Except for the immediate forms and impact all migratory flows produce new political socio-economic terrains;
- There is little to learn in terms of the migration-development nexus if we limit ourselves to the migratory process that typically means the destination. Even when sending countries/communities are incorporated the findings are limited to few (in fact two or three) factors related to financial remittances and skill loss, waste, or gain;
- What, instead, is too often left out are the post migration political socio-economic terrains in sending and receiving countries and the examination of the transformative potential that is triggered by such migratory flows.
- As noted earlier, the crisis in the theorization of migratory flows rests on a number of irrelevant existing and reconstructed barriers. These include: segregating various forms of migratory flows; spatial biases based on identifying the flows at a single point; a focus of the most visible and limitations posed by a single disciplinary approach. Such limitations were not completely absent from earlier discourses on migration theories. An early attempt at integrating the study of international and national migration was system analysis. In its early formulation in the works of Mabogunje (1970) the system analysis model attempted, as shown in Table 2, to incorporate the multiplicity of factors and dimensions conditioning the internal-external migratory process.

**Table 2: Mabogunje's System Approach to the Theory of rural-urban migration**

Components of the Model	Corresponding Dimensions
1. The Environment	Economic conditions, social conditions, transport, telecommunications and government policies
2. The migrants' response	Various push and pull factors
3. Control Systems	Calibrating the flows of migrants through system
4. The Adjustment Mechanisms	Coping mechanism to adjust to migrant loss in rural areas and incorporation in receiving urban areas
5. Feedback Loops	Positive or negative feedback that can either increase or decrease flows of migrants – return migration, flows of information, remittances and other demonstration effects

Mabogunje, A.L. (1970): System Approach to the Theory of rural-urban migration, *Geographical Analysis*, 2 (1), pp.1-18.

As Elnur (2009, p. 32) suggested 'Three major contributions seem to dominate current discourses on the migration-development nexus and to a great extent shaping the paradigm shift in this crucial development-related area. These are: the new economics of labour migration (NELM); the migration systems theory; and the transnational perspective. The starting premises of the NELM theorist is the critique of the basic foundation of the structuralists' pessimism based on a simplified remittance-use studies that disregarded the community-wide impact of migration'.

The previous three approaches highlight some important aspects and approaches to the understanding of the dynamics governing the interaction between migratory flows and development



broadly defined to include not only visible flows but also flows of ideas and information.<sup>31</sup> The compression of time and space and the explosive use of cyberspace communications rendered many boundaries based on distances and frequency of interactions irrelevant. The ease with which people, goods, services, information and ideas keep flowing across various spaces rendered the categorization of mobility irrelevant.

The direction of such transformation is shaped by a multiplicity of factors where both structures and agency matter within the spatial and historical specificity. The intensity and time-compressing nature of technical change tend to support the potential transformative thesis. The direction of such transformation is not readily deducible. In simple terms, migration-development nexuses are determined by the perspectives of both structures and actors. As noted in the UNDP 2009 Human Development Report, migration can expand human choices in terms of income, access to services and participation. 'This indicates that a 'win-win-win' situation is possible if the virtuous circle is created for the benefit of all (sending, and receiving countries as well as migrants themselves) through better management of labour migration and its skill dimension.'<sup>32</sup>

The capacity to harness such transformative potential triggered by various forms of population mobilities constitutes a central structural foundation of a possible alternative developmental path. The components of such policy packages include a wide range of issues related to the capacity to reproduce human capital, its skills and quality; labour migration including reducing brain waste and maximizing the potential and benefit of return migration.

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<sup>31</sup> See: Portes, A. and Borocz, J. (1987). "Contemporary immigration: Theoretical perspectives on its determinants and modes of incorporation", *International Migration Review*, 23: 606–30; and Kritiz, T. S., Lim, L.I., Zlotnik, H. (eds.) (1992). *International Migration System: A Global Approach*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>32</sup> In UNDP 2009 Human Development Report cited in INFORM, issue 05, ETF, May 2010, p.3

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