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Michel Laurent
Editors in chief :
Jean-Marc Siroën
Xavier Oudin
Layout :
Coryne Ajavon
DanielleDelmas
Design :
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Editorial

The changes sweeping through the southern and eastern Mediterranean have come as a surprise to all observers, especially since these countries had proved relatively more resilient to the crisis than the other world regions.

The World Bank and the IMF had pretty much given the region full marks for governance. Egypt was even held up as a model of good governance for its business environment.

Yet in the wings, behind the appearances and good macroeconomic scores (even per capita GDP had risen over the decade), the story was quite different. All the countries in the region suffer from the same affliction that prompted the sudden rash of revolutions and calls for democracy: economies concentrated on too few sectors, poor productive investment, some of the lowest employment rates in the world, glaring regional inequalities, purely profit-based resource management, and corruption by and for ruling oligarchic clans often with military support. Above all, the level of education has risen sharply since independence, bringing with it graduate underemployment and unusually high expatriation rates among skilled workers. Overcoming the problem of youth unemployment would call for real GDP growth rates to be higher than the rates that prevailed before the crisis. The region needs a steady high average rate of investment, but foreign direct investment and migrant remittances have slumped region-wide, especially in North Africa. Moreover, the bulk of this foreign investment goes into the energy sector, with few positive impacts on economic diversification.

In this environment, the democratic transitions could benefit from economic and social debate based on reliable, transparent statistics. There is a very strong social demand in the region for discussion of the impact of public policies on unemployment, inequalities and social mobility, and this thinking could help defuse an extremely tense situation. The region has good researchers who have been deprived of social statistics for years due to the blackout imposed by the dictatorships. Let's hope that the interim governments will release these statistics in a first step towards a full break with past practices.

El Mouhoub Mouhoud
Mohamed Ali Marouani

In This issue

4, rue d'Enghien • 75010 Paris (France) • Phone 00 33 (0)153 241 450 • Fax 00 33 (0) 153 241 451 • www.dial.prd.fr

Mobile banking an microfinance in the developing countries

Microfinance and mobile phones are on the rise in the developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Microcredit Summit's 2011 annual report states that over 128 million micro-loans have been granted to poor customers since the beginning of the campaign in 1997. This figure stood at just 66.5 million in 2004. At the same time, in 2009, DIAL researchers reported that 73 % of Miselini microfinance institution (MFI) customers in Bamako (Mali) owned a mobile phone (Arestoff *et al.*, 2009). In 2008, this was already the case for 78 % of customers with Niako micro-credit banks in Kayes (Mali) and the surrounding region. As these percentages have probably risen since, it is worth analysing the possible interactions between microfinance and mobile phone banking.

To date, mobile banking is still quite thin on the ground. There are two interesting examples worth mentioning. In South Africa, WIZZIT has been running since 2004, providing mobile financial services to 16 million people (48 % of the adult population). Its aim is to reach people without bank accounts and those who have problems accessing the traditional banking system. In Kenya, the leading mobile telephone operator, SAFARICOM (subsidiary of the international Vodafone group) launched M-PESA in March 2007 with the same aim. A full 20,000 users reportedly subscribed to the service in the first month of operation (Hughes and Lonie, 2007). Most of them were very small businesspeople. Given these early experiences, it is interesting to ask whether m-banking can effectively improve and extend the supply of financial services to the poor, and whether it is worth the mobile phone operators' while to develop these new services.

Microfinance consists of providing a set of financial services (loans, insurance, money transfers, etc.) to the "working" poor, i.e. to very small business owners who have little or no access to traditional sources of financing. The business financed (or insured) is generally a service activity and, more often than not, a commercial activity. As regards the microloans, studies have shown that the risk involved means that this type of loan generally finances business expansion rather than start-up. Moreover, although microloans were historically granted in the form of group loans[1] (in keeping with the initial line taken by the Grameen Bank founded by Muhammad Yunus, joint 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner), loans are increasingly granted individually. The absence of a collective liability clause and the individual association with the loan and the MFI mean that more time has to be spent supervising the other debtors to prevent freerider behaviour within the group. This "saves" customers time that they can then spend on their productive activity. Nevertheless, the social link remains via the system of guarantors (Jaunaux and Venet, 2007). From this point of view, microloans can be equated with traditional loans granted by the banking sector.

Yet regardless of whether loans are individual or granted on a joint surety basis, microloans rely heavily on the social link or the "human touch" as Kapoor, Morduch and Ravi (2007) call it. Loan agents play a decisive role in forging and consolidating this social link. They generally meet borrowers regularly, usually on a weekly basis. These meetings may be public, whereby all the debtors in the village are summoned to a meeting where eve-

1 *In this form of microloan, the loan is granted individually, but solely to a person who is a member of a freely formed group of borrowers. In the group, the allocation of loans is generally sequential. For example, the loan is only granted to a second member provided that the first recipient has a clean repayment slate. Each member also acts as guarantor for the others, i.e. s/he undertakes to repay all or part of the sum owed by the defaulting borrower. The famous Grameen Bank in Bangladesh operates on the basis of this principle.*

ryone can see the others making their repayments and therefore forge an opinion as to their neighbours' dependability. Or they may be private, where loan agents meet customers separately and in turn. In other words, whatever the type of loan, loan agents are more than just guardians of compliance with the rules of the game. They are also real social arbitrators between individuals (and between individuals and the MFI), playing a hand in their accumulation of social capital (i.e. building a reputation) or loss of social capital as repayment deadlines are met and missed. This human aspect takes the form of a direct relationship between the client and the loan agent, which is often put forward to explain why there are so few non-repayment problems in the MFIs. Late payments, however, remain frequent and give many institutions serious financial viability problems.

In general, therefore, economists put forward the social link to explain the success of microloans and microfinance. Yet this human aspect fades somewhat in the case of mobile phone banking, which gives it a limitation that should be largely offset by its advantages to both customers and the MFI.

The advantages of mobile banking services to customers

Mobile banking services simplify transactions by reducing the time-consuming aspect of dealing with people. So setting up loan repayments by mobile phone can mean fewer, if not an end to, public repayment meetings. This speeds things up for customers and, by the same token, reduces the associated opportunity cost. DIAL's researchers found that 55 % of Miselini MFI customers in Bamako used to make their repayments on a weekly basis, with 75 % of this number having to wait in long queues to do so (Arestoff *et al.*, 2009). When the possibility of repaying their microloans by mobile phone was put to them,[2] 77 % of them were interested in and prepared to pay for this service. It could be said that this type of microloan repayment procedure reduces the human presence to the point where the credibility of the social sanction could be partly or totally undermined in the event of default. Yet this is not the opinion of Kapoor, Morduch and Ravi (2007), who consider that the gains in terms of the quality and range of m-banking services offered to customers should more than offset any losses caused by a falloff in the human aspect of microfinance.

Mobile phone banking can also save customers time by smoothing the release of loan funds. In Bamako, DIAL's researchers found that 74 % of interviewed customers with Miselini MFI (and, more precisely, 80 % of the women) were interested in their microloan being disbursed by mobile phone.[3] It is important, however, not to overlook the application processing procedure. The loan agent should still be able to play a central role in presenting and defending the loan application. The m-banking services should simply save time: once the application has been processed by the loan committee, the customer could receive approval and the available sum more quickly. This would be all the easier where agents know the customers and the MFI has already been able to observe their reliability with previous loans.

Mobile microfinance services can also reduce an MFI's operational costs, hence bringing down interest rates. Mobile banking thereby generates direct benefits for borrowers who pay less for the financial services provided by the MFI. This phenomenon has been observed in the Philippines, with the introduction of G-Cash mobile banking services.

Likewise, the ability to check bank balances online can make it easier for small businesses to invest and for creditworthy MFI customers to obtain emergency loans (Kapoor, Morduch and Ravi, 2007). In general, m-banking can make the microcredit system more flexible. For example, repayments can be made at any time up to the deadline (in keeping with borrowers' wishes as found by Armendariz and Morduch, 2000), rather than on the imposed set date. A fruit seller with a daily income may therefore prefer to repay a small sum every day rather than a larger sum once a week. Yet MFIs are generally prevented from offering "à la carte" repayment schedules to their customers for technical reasons. The services provided by mobile phone banking could therefore inject more

2 *The principle is as follows. Customers create e-money by depositing cash with approved prepaid card sellers. They then use their mobile phones to quickly and easily transfer money from their account with the telephone operator to their MFI to make their microloan repayment.*

3 *In the same way as loan repayment, the MFI could transfer money to the customer's m-banking account. The customer, informed of this transfer by a text message, could then cash this money with any phone retailer.*

flexibility (Kapoor, Morduch and Ravi, 2007) into the procedure to give customers more control over their repayments so they can tie them in with their cash flow.

Mobile banking services give customers cheaper access to other financial services too. In South Africa, WIZZIT offers a money transfer service by mobile phone. DIAL's researchers found that, in the case of Togo and Mali, the vast majority of these transfers were being made by individuals themselves carrying large sums of cash on their person or sending them through carriers such as Western Union and Money Gram, more particularly for international transfers. In the first case, the individuals transferring the funds have a cost associated with their own transport, but also with the fact that the funds are not protected. In the second case, in addition to the financial cost, there is the cost of getting to the agency branches largely concentrated in the cities. All of this points to a large potential demand for a financial transfer service by mobile phone. DIAL's researchers have found that there is much more demand in Kayes than in Bamako, where only one-third of the population interviewed (as opposed to two-thirds in Kayes) said they were interested in a money transfer service. This relative lack of interest in transfer services in Bamako could be due to the fact that the city's inhabitants make many transfers via bodies such as Western Union. Although these services are expensive, they are both secure and easily available. Hence the lesser appeal of transfers by mobile phone. The relatively large amount of interest in these services in Kayes, however, is probably due to the fact that the people in this regional cradle of Malian migration receive and send many large remittances, making massive use of cheap, but relatively insecure informal remittance systems. DIAL's researchers found that the poor in Kayes particularly appreciated these mobile phone financial transfer services for being cheaper compared with Western Union type services. These money transfers and especially remittances from family members who have emigrated to developed countries can form a considerable proportion of income for poor families back home. They are therefore of considerable importance from the point of view of poverty reduction (access to healthcare in particular) and economic growth (human and physical capital accumulation). Logically then, any initiative that makes them easier is conducive to growth.

Lastly, m-banking services also secure transactions between agents themselves. Merchants going to or coming back from the market, for example, have to carry a certain amount of cash on them. Mobile banking can reduce the inherent risks in physically carrying money. Once at the market, merchants can withdraw cash from their "e-money" accounts at their operator agency or partner retailer. Their mobile phone account is then debited the amount withdrawn plus commission. At the end of the working day, merchants can then deposit the proceeds from their sales with the same distributor.

The advantages of mobile banking services to MFIs

Mobile phone banking services can cut microfinance institutions' operating costs by reducing the frequency of meetings between loan agents and customers. The principle is that part of the customer monitoring can now be conducted via m-banking, thereby reducing rural travel costs. However, this reduction in costs cannot be allowed to jeopardise the social link that guarantees the high level of repayment rates. One possible solution is to introduce mobile banking gradually, reserving these sorts of services for the best customers, i.e. those who have scrupulously respected their repayment deadlines in the past. This minimises the risk of an easing of social pressure while generating an additional incentive to be a "good customer".

The mobile phone connection can also be an efficient way for loan agents to transmit information to the microfinance institution in real time. Where loan applications are concerned, mobile phones can improve the quality of the information transmitted by standardising it, simplifying its storage in an electronic format[4] and protecting it (data encryption). Mobile phones can also immediately report a non-repayment or late repayment problem with an existing loan. The scenario here is that loan agents can call up customers' repayment records on their mobile phones, and that the MFI can send text messages to customers with a reminder of the payment deadline or to tell them that payment is overdue as soon as this is reported.

Last but by no means least, as this is a very important point, m-banking can offer customers new

4 Some mobile phones can transfer Excel and Word files directly to the MFI's computer system without any further data entry work required.

services, providing a wider range of more flexible products. DIAL's researchers found from their interviews in Mali and Togo that MFI managers were particularly keen about this aspect. Broadening the range of services offered is therefore equated with the development of the activity and increasing the use of banking by poor customers.

Mobile phone banking can therefore balance a "social" objective (funding for the poor) with the opening up of new sources of income to consolidate the MFI's financial viability. In this way, m-banking services can make microfinance more inclusive in poor and emerging countries. What actually happens in practice? The CGAP[5] conducted a study (Ivatury & Pickens, 2006) of 215 WIZZIT service subscribers and 300 non-WIZZIT mobile phone users with the same characteristics (especially in terms of income). The WIZZIT customers said they were satisfied with the system's convenience (68 % of individuals surveyed), price (70 %), safety (69 %) and speed (68 %). However, the study also shows that WIZZIT users, although poor, are not among the poorest people in South Africa.

Given the speed at which these services have spread in Sub-Saharan Africa, led by Orange in the Central and West African countries, we look set to see many more impact studies of this kind in the very near future. In spring 2012, for example, DIAL will be behind an impact study on m-banking services launched by Orange in Cameroon in spring 2011. The mobile banking service called Orange Money will revolve around three customer services: paying bills, managing customers' bank accounts (especially bank transfers) and national transfers. The study will measure the effects of these services on efficiency gains in the business, on the incentive to save, invest and apply for credit, and on the frequency and volume of money transfers. A sample of Orange Money customers will be compared with a sample of non-subscribers, with both sub-populations identified upstream by a matching procedure.

The findings may well be less positive than mobile phone operators hope. As the services are paid and the phone addiction is already widespread, the share of telephone expenditure in poor households' budgets could put a brake on healthcare, education and investment expenditure. In addition, researchers and the industry itself generally attribute one of the keys to the success of microfinance (namely the high number of borrowers meeting the repayment schedule deadlines) to the frequency and quality of direct human relations, especially between loan agents and borrowers. Where the use of mobile phones could make significant inroads into combating financial exclusion, it is vital that its introduction does not take the human touch out of financial relations.

Florence Arestoff
Baptiste Venet

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5 CGAP = Consultative Group to Assist the Poor.

Focus

The informal sector in the Antananarivo conurbation Performance, integration and outlook

1-2-3 Survey Preliminary findings of Phase 2 2010

Phase 2 of the 2010 1-2-3 Survey *in Antananarivo was conducted in September 2010. We publish here the preliminary findings and a comparison with the data collected by the same survey ten years ago. Phase 2 of the* 1-2-3 Surveys *covers informal production units. It is a business survey of a sample of business heads and self-employed workers drawn from Phase 1.*

In 2010, **the conurbation of Antananarivo had 354,600 informal production units (IPUs)** working in the non-agricultural market sectors **employing 526,400 people**. Compared with the situation in 2001, the number of IPUs and the jobs they create point to a steadily growing sector. The 2001-2010 average annual growth rate is 6.2 % for the number of IPUs and 7.0 % for the number of jobs. These figures again mark the economic importance of informal work to the capital's population. **The proliferation of IPU start-ups in recent years reflects the rise of the informal sector as a major employer in times of recession**. However, the downside of this is growing job insecurity in the informal sector itself.

Steady informal sector growth

All the main economic aggregates show that the informal sector grew steadily in the conurbation of Antananarivo in the first decade of the third millennium, as the economy as a whole had its ups and downs, not least with the two crises in 2002 and 2009. **The capital's informal non-agricultural market sector produced 2,611 billion ariary worth of goods and services and created 1,422 billion in value-added over the 2009/2010 financial year.** The average annual rate of growth in volume for the period stood at 7.1 %, for both production and value-added.

The structure of activities in the informal sector has changed a great deal. Firstly, processing is losing speed.

Its weight fell from 2001 to 2010 in terms of both the number of production units in operation, the number of jobs created and the sector's contribution to production: -5 % for the number of units, -1 % for the number of jobs and -4 % for production. Note that, within the processing sector, food processing itself boomed while clothing plummeted.

Secondly, "services" posted sharp growth, unlike the traders. The proportion of services rose from 31 % of the number of operational production units in 2001 to 40 % in 2010, while the share of traders fell. Nevertheless, there was no major change in the number of jobs created. However, traders did post a marked increase in terms of their contribution to production: from 35 % of the informal sector's value-added in 2001 to 40 % in 2010.

Deterioration in operating conditions

The informal production units took the full brunt of the successive crises. This can be seen from the deterioration in working conditions from 2001 to 2010 following a marked improvement over the 1995-2001 period. In 2010, less than 27 % of IPUs had suitable premises from which to run their businesses in terms of access to the main public services (water, electricity and telephone). They were actually worse off than in 2001, when the percentage of IPUs with suitable premises stood at 31 %. From the point of view of capital, although the proportion of IPUs without capital shrank a couple of percentage points (from 12.8 % in 2001 to 10.7 % in 2010), the rate of investment fell 4 points (from 6.5 % to 2.7 %) and the capital coefficient lost more than 6 points (from 27.2 % to 21.0 %).

The informal sector is made up of very small units. In 2010, nearly 73.2 % of IPUs were one-person set-ups. Women account for over 46 % of informal sector employment and are concentrated in the most insecure jobs, working in particular as family workers. Wage labour is still very much in the minority, with no improvement to speak of in wage earner recruitment from 2001 to 2010. In 2010, a mere 13 % of IPUs employed wage earners (12 %

in 2001). The rate of wage employment rose just one percentage point in ten years (from 16 % to 17 %) and the weight of the wage bill in value-added even fell two points (from 9 % to 7 %). Although the informal sector cannot be equated with under-employment, it is one of its favourite havens. Jobs worked in the informal sector generally have no social security coverage. Yet despite all of this, the informal sector employs relatively skilled workers with an average level of education of close on eight years, although opportunities for a return on experience gained in the modern sector are particularly limited.

Informal sector members work an **average of 41 hours per week and earn 240,000 ariary per month**. Yet behind this figure lies **an array of different situations**. The predominance of low incomes weighs down **median remuneration, which stands at 71,000 ariary.** Average earnings in the informal sector posted real and not-inconsiderable growth with a 9 % increase over 2001. Yet the real increase in earnings is more to the advantage of own-account workers and employers to a lesser extent, at the expense of employees whose average earnings have nose-dived 34.1 %

Since the informal sector's businesspeople are excluded from the banking sector, over 95 % of them rely on personal savings to finance their capital. Informal financing systems (moneylenders, credit unions, etc.) are not capable of taking up the slack and are only marginally involved in financing investment in the informal sector. Although capital is a real production factor in the informal sector, totalling nearly 512 billion ariary in 2010, the rate of investment is pitifully low (2.6 %) and indicative of the sector's low accumulation capacity. Nevertheless, despite this low accumulation capacity, capital in the informal sector rose in volume over 2001. The real increase in capital from 2001 to 2010 is 43 %.

Increasingly cut off

The informal sector operates exclusively on the domestic market and its **main outlet is the satisfaction of households' needs**. In 2010, over 83 % of the sector's demand was for household final consumption. Hence the capital's informal sector has few direct links with the formal sector and subcontracting is almost non-existent. Contacts between the informal sector and the formal sector for inputs are increasingly rare. Supplies bought from formal traders accounted for a mere 31 % of all transactions in 2010 (the lowest rate posted since 1995), as opposed to over 46 % in 2001. Yet the informal sector remains dependent on the formal sector as a whole, which supplies it with 36 % of its inputs.

Lastly, although informal traders sell foreign products, especially products from China, the vast majority of their supplies are national products. In fact, one of the new informal sector supply trends compared with the situation in 1998 and 2001 is the spectacular growth in Asian and especially Chinese products.

Dog eat dog

Informal sector operators have changed tack in a competitive environment. This is particularly clear from the way IPU heads fix their product prices, setting their mark-up based increasingly on their competitors' prices. One-third of IPU heads fix their own profit margins, while over 15 % look at their competitors' prices before setting their own. Moreover, 87 % of them are in favour of the free play of supply and demand to set the right price level. This is the highest proportion recorded since 1995. A dog-eat-dog world is shaping up and the tendency for producer alliances and agreements on prices is starting to die out, which shows the little trust the informal operators have in these associations.

Competition remains primarily from within the informal sector itself and has grown over the years. In 2010, the main competitor for over 94 % of the IPUs was the informal sector itself. This proportion stood at just 90 % and 91 % in 2001 and 2004. Informal industrial activities are hardest hit. Competition has driven informal industrial businesses to battle it out on two fronts: with their informal industrial peers and with their informal trader counterparts.

In 2010, barely 6 % of IPUs competed essentially with large formal sector businesses in the formal sector (trade or otherwise). Where formal/informal competition is found, the IPUs generally set prices below or the same as the large businesses. Low customer purchasing power is given as the number one reason for the price differential compared with competitors in the formal sector.

Market outlet constraints

Today, as in previous years, the informal sector's problems have to do essentially with the difficulty of selling production, constrained mainly on the demand side (*"lack of markets"*), but also on the supply side (*"too much competition"*). A full 78 % of IPUs suffer from one or other of these problems. The main factor holding back the informal sector would therefore seem to be the deterioration in the macroeconomic environment more than localised dysfunctions on certain markets (shortages, unsuitable institutional framework, etc.). As an upshot, **the main assistance that IPU heads want is access to large orders**. The largest call for this aid comes from the industries (82 %), which are in more of a position to land large orders.

In the hierarchy of problems facing informal producers, the recurring problem of credit is in sixth place. Yet it is access to credit, rather than its cost, that appears to hamper IPU development. This finding highlights the Malagasy financial system's lack of interest in very small businesses. In the list of assistance IPU heads would like, access to credit is mentioned in just fifth place by 22 % of them. However, as in previous years, the development of informal activities did not suffer greatly from regulatory overkill in 2010.

Brakes on growth in informal prices compared with the consumer prices index

Producer prices in the informal sector have not kept up with consumer prices in general (CPI), although the gap is relatively narrow. From 2001 to 2010, the CPI rose a mere 145.8 % while the informal sector's producer prices grew just 143.0 %. In general, informal businesses' unit profits fell as raw material prices climbed nearly 157 % over the same period. This was caused primarily by the difficulty of selling products, customers' low purchasing power and producer atomisation.

In industry, the highest value-added price rise was in "clothing" with a fivefold increase in value over 2001. Raw material purchase prices rose less, proportionally, than producer selling prices. However, in the food sector, selling prices rose, but not as much as raw material prices.

The story is quite different for traders. Although unit profits fell for those selling unprocessed commodities, there was a marked increase in processed product traders' profit margins from 2001 to 2010. The big losers are the informal "service" operators: producer prices rose 218 %, way below the 257 % price increase in inputs. Hauliers were only able to raise their rates by half the price rise they themselves had to endure: over 180 % as opposed to 359 %.

Has the government become lackadaisical again?

In this area, although the administration looked to be catching up with the informal sector in terms of regulations in the previous periods, the government went back to its laissez-faire ways in 2001. Mutual ignorance once again became the rule. Business registrations decreased. The rate of unregistered IPUs rose from 2001 to 2010: -10 points for the statistical register and +7 points for the trader's card.

In 2010, less than 6 % of IPUs said they had had problems with public officials. In general, disputes have to do with a breach of regulations for hauliers and business location for street traders. IPUs have just as many problems with the administration as before in terms of frequency. However, the situation is changing for the better. Disputes are increasingly settled by standard legal procedures: payments of fines rose 5 percentage points (from 22 % in 2001 to 27 % in 2010). **Corruption was less frequent, but the sums involved were much higher**. The proportion of "gifts" paid fell to 12 %, but the median sum paid increased fivefold from 2001 to 2010 (from 7,400 ariary in 2001 to 40,000 ariary in 2010). Even in hard times, the IPUs are more than willing to cooperate with the administration (readiness to register, to pay taxes, etc.), even though this willingness fell off between 2001 and 2010.

Lastly, **despite the problems, informal producers remain largely optimistic** to say the least. In 2010, 63 % of IPU heads felt their establishment had a future and 38 % said they would like to see their children take over the business one day. The informal sector therefore remains associated with a type of social and economic integration that still pays off today in the capital. However, this rosy view of the future is closely correlated with the status and gender of the informal unit heads in that employers and proprietors are much more optimistic about the future of their establishment and much keener to see their children take over their business and stay in the informal sector than own-account workers. This finding also holds for the comparison of male and female unit heads.

Faly Rakotomanana
INSTAT Madagascar, DIAL

Patrick Randriankolona
INSTAT Madagascar

International Migration and Development

An analysis using data matched migrants-families of origin in Senegal (MIDDAS Project)

The increasing number of international migrants and the concomitant growing size of remittances have attracted a great deal of attention from international organisations and national governments of both Southern and Northern countries. However, one has to acknowledge that little is known about the factors responsible for the increasing size of migration flows from the South and Sub-Africa in particular, and about the role of human mobility as a factor of development. This knowledge gap is mainly due to a lack of data not only on the number of migrants but also on the financial or non-financial flows associated to migration. Moreover, existing data are generally truncated: they are indeed collected either through surveys conducted among migrants in their place of residence, and provide in this case only indirect and partial information on origin households or through surveys conducted among origin households which thus give very few insights on the characteristics of the migrants.

Providing original and non-truncated quantitative data on Senegalese migration and increasing the common knowledge on the relationship between migration, remittances and development using Senegal as a case-study are the two main objectives of the MIDDAS project. Since its start, at the end of year 2007, the project has thus been phased into two stages. Stage 1 has consisted in conducting surveys among Senegalese migrants in several destination countries; Stage 2 in tracking and interviewing the origin households of the surveyed migrants in Senegal. Four countries of destination have been selected for the migrant surveys, namely France, Italy, Mauritania and Cote d'Ivoire. These four countries have been chosen for the main reason that they are the main destination countries of Senegalese migrants. Overall, 300 Senegalese migrants have been interviewed in each country following a random selection and data collection process that is detailed in the remainder of the report. The tracking phase and household survey in Senegal took place afterwards, thanks to the contacts provided by the migrants themselves. Due to budgetary constraints, all origin households have been tracked, expect those whose contacts have been provided by the migrants interviewed in Cote d'Ivoire.

The resulting dataset, that we aim to give free access to in the near future, is by far the main strength of the project. It allows not only to investigate research topics that have been un- or under-explored so far due to a lack of appropriate data (on the nature and extent of informational asymmetries between the migrants and their origin households for e.g.), but also to bring new insights on some topics that may have been already explored by other scholars (through comparative analyses for e.g.).

Even though the phase of data analysis is far from being over, promising preliminary work on the data has been undertaken. Up to now, the attention of the team has mainly focused on migrant networks. The most accomplished paper explores to what extent migrant networks in the destination country influence the degree to which migrants meet their remittance obligations. A second ongoing research aims at investigating the roles of bonding versus bridging social capital in the economic integration of Senegalese migrants. A third ongoing research focuses on migrants' involvement in hometown associations. It first aims at identifying the main predictors for being a member of one (or several) hometown association. It then investigates whether and to what extent belonging to a hometown association impact the existing links between a migrant and his home country.

Even if the MIDDAS project is officially over, the project team will of course continue to spend most of its time to analyse the data in the forthcoming months in order to publish a significant number of papers. In the meantime, two doctoral theses using the data should be completed, one at the end of year 2011, the other in 2012.

As a by-product of the project, the team has managed to get additional funds from Agence Française de Développement and Ville de Paris. Thanks to this additional funding, two African destination countries have been included in the project (which will allow to invest the quasi unexplored topic of intra-African migration). The role of hometown associations in local development will also be explored.

Contact: Flore Gubert
gubert@dial.prd.fr.

Haiti :
The medium-term impact of the earthquake

On 14 May 2011, with the presidential palace still laying in ruins, Michel Martelly has officially succeeded René Préval as the new President of Haiti. The major challenge of his term in office is to achieve the reconstruction process in Haiti, which is still trailing behind over a year after the disaster. Despite immediate action by the international community, which sent in rescue teams and pledged financial assistance and support for the reconstruction process, things are far from back to normal. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates the human toll of the earthquake on 12 January 2010 at over 220,000 dead and 1.5 million displaced persons. Although 56 % of the makeshift camps have been cleared since July 2010, a full 680,000 Haitians were still living in tents at the end of March 2011. And those who have moved out have not necessarily found a permanent housing solution. The DIAL joint research unit is working on evaluating the impact of the earthquake in Haiti, in association with the Haitian Institute for Statistics and Information Technology (IHSI) and the World Bank, as part of the Evaluation of the Impact of the Earthquake in Haiti project (EISHA) financed by the French National Research Agency.

A nationwide Survey on Post-Earthquake Housing Living Conditions (ECVMAS) will be conducted before the end of the year, based on a sample of some 10,000 representative households. The survey will include panel data for the Port-au-Prince region, hardest hit by the earthquake. It will draw on a previous IHSI survey conducted with DIAL's assistance in 2007. The data collected will be used to analyse post-earthquake living conditions and to isolate the earthquake's impact on households' circumstances, their labour market situation and their coping strategies. This diagnosis will be used to improve public policy – including preventive measures – and to improve the aid system whose effectiveness is now seriously in question. Research in this area is still rudimentary in view of the surge in disasters over the last decade, wherein the eastern Caribbean is the region the most exposed to natural disasters in the world.

Contacts : Javier Herrera
herrera@dial.prd.fr
Claire Zanuso
zanuso@dial.prd.fr

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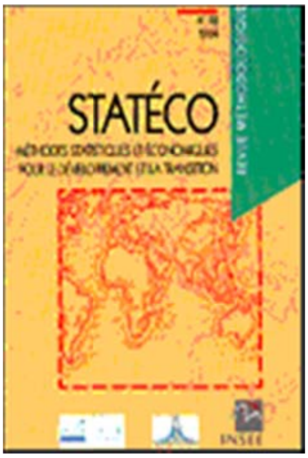

Stopping stroke Doha

The Doha Development Round, launched in 2002 with a completion date of 2004, is still deadlocked and could drag on unless the round is officially declared a failure. Despite pressure from the WTO and its Director-General, any illusions about the possibility of concluding the round before the ministerial conference in December 2011 have been swept away (see the latest statements by P. Lamy).

There are many reasons for this failure. But one insurmountable reason, only ever touched upon in hushed tones, is that the US Congress will not ratify a trade treaty produced by the Doha Round. A two-thirds majority is needed from the Senate, without the benefit of the fast-track procedure that expired in 2007. Labour provisions are absent, in breach of the Trade Act of 2002. The Democrats are employing protectionism in response to the recession and the brazen good health of the emerging countries and China. And the Republicans are hostile to the WTO's so-called supranationality, to a reduction in farm subsidies and ... to President Obama who, despite promises at the G20 in Seoul (November 2010), is hardly likely to take on the suicide mission of a new run-in with Congress right in the middle of an electoral year!

Does this matter to the developing countries? In fact, those with the most to gain from a success would have been a few major emerging countries exporting agricultural produce, such as Brazil. These emerging countries also stand the most to lose from a failure, especially if they lose the benefit of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). And like Brazil, India and Tunisia, these countries' tariffs are currently well below the maximum ("bound") tariffs they are allowed to apply, which leaves a sword hanging over the entire world economy. But don't panic! These countries' competitiveness is not based solely on low labour costs and undervalued currencies, but also on freely imported intermediate goods made possible by the proliferation of free trade zones (such as the export processing zones in China).

For the least developed countries, the benefits of a success are less obvious. As net importers of food products, they would lose out on the price rise prompted by liberalisation, even though winners (such as farmers) might emerge from domestic redistribution. Multilateral liberalisation would also expose these countries to an erosion of the preferences secured by the Lomé-Cotonou agreements. At the same time, they would gain from the withdrawal of the preferences granted the emerging countries under the GSP.

Let's face it, the Doha agenda is obsolete. Negotiated in the late 1990s, it fails to take into account the global economic turnaround in favour of the emerging countries (hence the reason for the failure of the Cancun Conference in 2003), greater price and business instability, and a more vertical international division of labour that makes most of the tools used to analyse trade redundant. We have gone from a state of structural agricultural overproduction, aggravated by the developed countries' trade policies, which drove prices down at the expense of producers in the developing countries, to a situation of underproduction aggravated by export restrictions on surplus countries, causing prices to skyrocket. Now this may well be to the advantage of producers in poor countries, but only at the risk of starving consumers in urban areas.

So although failure for Doha would be a terrible shame for the institution, it would probably not be disastrous for the world economy and the developing countries, especially if it provided an opportunity to reflect on past and future developments.

Jean-Marc Siroën

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