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Focus on

Title: Analysis of international migration and its impacts on the countries of origin – spotlight on three original approaches

The scientific community was studying migration well before the recent influx of refugees into Europe. Yet the migration studied long concerned mainly South-North flows with the studies driven solely by the economic effects of remittances. This focus reports on studies recently published by DIAL researchers who address rarely studied aspects. They shed interesting light on contemporary migration processes. For example, they show that migration in Africa is a collective decision on which both the choice of host country and the migrant's propensity to help the family back home depend. They also show that migrants' remittances contribute to the recipient countries' development, but that they can also generate unexpected effects especially in terms of the children's education.

Previous studies on South-North migration focused on understanding the historical, economic and social factors behind this mobility and on investigating how this migration generates economic and social change in the migrants' home areas. A quite striking example of this particular South-North lens is found in the sociological and geographic studies on Senegalese and Malian migrants from the Senegal River region into France.¹ Yet this South-North migration is far from representative of migratory phenomena from the Southern countries. A full 89% of African migration and 79% of Asian migration remains respectively within the African and Asian continents.²

1. For example, Quiminal, C., 1991, *Gens d'ici, gens d'ailleurs: migrations Soninké et transformations villageoises*, Paris: C. Bourgois.

2. Source: OECD, 2016, "International migration in a shifting world", the OECD Perspectives on Global Development report. OECD Development Center. forthcoming.



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Migration determinants and their effects on remittance behaviour

One of the reasons for this South-North focus aside from geopolitical factors and the proximity of the study subject (it is easier for researchers to interview migrants living in their country of residence than in other host countries) is, in Africa at least, a lack of data on the array of African migrant destinations. DIAL researchers have set up original data collection systems in recent years to partly fill this gap. Surveys have, for example, been taken of Senegalese migrants living in Italy, Mauritania and France along with their families of origin back home in Senegal ([MIDDAS](#) survey). These surveys have enabled the researchers to study the family decision-making mechanisms governing the choice of the person who will migrate and the destination country. In this [research](#), Isabelle Chort and Jean-Noël Senne show that selection into migration is a collective decision-making process conducted by the household of origin and not a choice for emancipation or maximisation of individual welfare. And it is not just the household individuals able to generate higher earnings in the destination countries who are chosen to migrate. It is also the individuals who the household expects to display a strong tendency to send back remittances. This research hence paints a clearer picture of migrant selection and the choice of destination country. In the Senegalese case, it is found to be those eldest in the family who attended Koranic school as children who migrate more than the others. This sheds new light on the profile of Senegalese migrants in France, for example, and better explains their high propensity to send remittances compared with other migrants living in France (40% of Senegalese migrants living in France send money to their family compared with 16% on average for all migrants living in France³).

Another [study](#) looks into the effects of South-South migration on remittance patterns. More particularly, Florence Arestoff, Mélanie Kuhn-Le Braz and El-Mouhoub Mouhoud show that African migrants who have moved to South Africa due to violent conflicts in their country of origin are less inclined to keep in contact with their home country. They have a lower probability of remitting to their families back home than individuals who have migrated to South Africa for economic reasons. This finding is not surprising given that economic migrants are probably better off economically and psychologically on their arrival than individuals who have fled their country for political reasons. However, the authors also show that, when migrants decide to remit, financial flow intensity does not differ according to whether the individual is a forced or economic migrant. Remittance amounts are therefore more dependent on the migrants' current conditions in the host country fostering their economic and social integration regardless of their origin and reasons for migrating.

Migrant remittances to families of origin and beneficial effects on the children's education depending on the situation and their gender

Although the factors behind a migrant's decision to remit money to the family of origin form a relatively new field in development economics research, the effects of remittances on the recipient countries is a more established field. However, one relatively rarely studied aspect has displayed some quite surprising findings: the effects of remittances on children's

³ Source: Vari-Lavoisier, I. 2015. "La circulation des significations sociales de l'argent, transferts économiques, sociaux et politiques entre le Sénégal et la France", thesis, Ecole Normale Supérieure, 466 p., based on the Trajectoires et Origine (TeO) survey of 21,761 migrants conducted by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and the French National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in 2009.

education. This additional income would normally be expected to lift the parents' financial constraints to fund education costs (supplies, transport, uniform, etc.). Where these remittances are not invested in a family business, they would also be expected to reduce the opportunity cost of the children working and encourage parents to let their children to go to school. Yet preliminary studies to identify these impacts find a negative effect, as pointed up in Mexico.⁴ In fact, other mechanisms correlated with migrants' remittances can block the positive effect expected from the increase in the household's resources. When an adult migrates, the household's structure changes. If it is a nuclear household, the remaining adult (man or woman) is left alone to manage the household and may have less time to supervise the children's school work. In some cases, the children might even drop out of school. For example, the eldest siblings might be forced to leave school to look after the youngest. Two other elements could also emerge: the psychological shock suffered by the children in the absence of a mentor and their subsequent diminished ability to concentrate at school; and the fact that the advantages of a better education may not be seen as evident especially in families with individuals who have migrated without any qualifications. The young people will seek to migrate with the idea that a better education is not necessarily a guarantee of economic gain.

However, other empirical studies show that migrants' remittances are beneficial to children's education. Such is the case with a [study](#) in rural Morocco.

Yet Jamal Bouoiyour, Amal Miftah and El Mouhoub Mouhoud show that the gains are much greater for boys than for girls. Migration therefore has an adverse effect by raising gender inequalities in access to education. So even if migrants' remittances are conducive to education, they cannot replace public education policies designed to improve girls' education.

Migrants also fund public goods with their collective remittances

Migrants in West Africa, Morocco and Mexico are all found to form associations to collectively send remittances to their home community. Although altruism is part of the reason for these collective remittances, the migrants also seek to invest in public goods with a view to their return to the country or to channel the monetary flows into a specific use, which is harder to do in the case of remittances of (fungible) funds to a household. This phenomenon was described by ethnographic studies in the 1980s-1990s,⁵ but has very rarely been studied by a quantitative economic analysis at country level.

A [study](#) conducted by Lisa Chauvet, Flore Gubert, Marion Mercier and Sandrine Mesplé-Somps examines the influence of migrants' Home Town Associations on the number of public goods in the home town. These associations are set up to finance schools, health centres and water amenities. Their impact on local development is therefore expected to be positive. Yet certain mechanisms can interfere and generate negative effects on the supply of public goods, to the extent that their influence is ultimately arguably ambiguous. Migrants' Home Town Associations are liable to replace public monies such that the recipient towns might not necessarily be better equipped with public goods than others.

To empirically study this question, the authors first took a census of Malian migrants' Home Town Associations registered with the prefecture of their town in France and declared in the French *Official Journal*. The authors used the French *Official Journal*'s electronic archives to

⁴ McKenzie, D. H. Rapoport (2011), Can Migration Reduce Educational Attainment? Evidence from Mexico, *Journal of Population Economics*, 24(4): 1331-1358, 2011.

⁵ For example, Daum C. 1998. *Les associations maliennes en France, Migration, Développement et Citoyenneté*, Paris: Karthala.

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