



International Migration Institute
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Engaging diasporas

How governments and development agencies in
receiving countries can support Diaspora
involvement in the development of origin countries

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Migration as the new development mantra

- Increasing recognition of the development potential of international migration
- Migration as the new development mantra (Kapur)
- But, is it really a new issue?



The migration and development pendulum

| <i>Period</i> | <i>Research community</i> | <i>Policy field</i> |
|---------------|--|---|
| until 1973 | Development and migration optimism | Developmentalist optimism; capital and knowledge transfers by migrants would help developing countries in development take-off. |
| 1973-1990 | Development and migration pessimism (dependency, brain drain) | Growing scepticism; concerns on brain drain; after experiments with return migration policies focused on integration in receiving countries. Migration largely out of sight in development field. |
| 1990-2001 | Readjustment to more subtle views under influence of increasing empirical work | Persistent scepticism and neglect; tightening of immigration policies. |
| > 2001 | Boom in studies: mixed, but generally positive views. | Resurgence of migration and development optimism and a sudden turnaround of views: brain gain, remittances and diaspora involvement; further tightening of immigration policies but greater tolerance for high-skilled immigration. |

The danger of amnesia

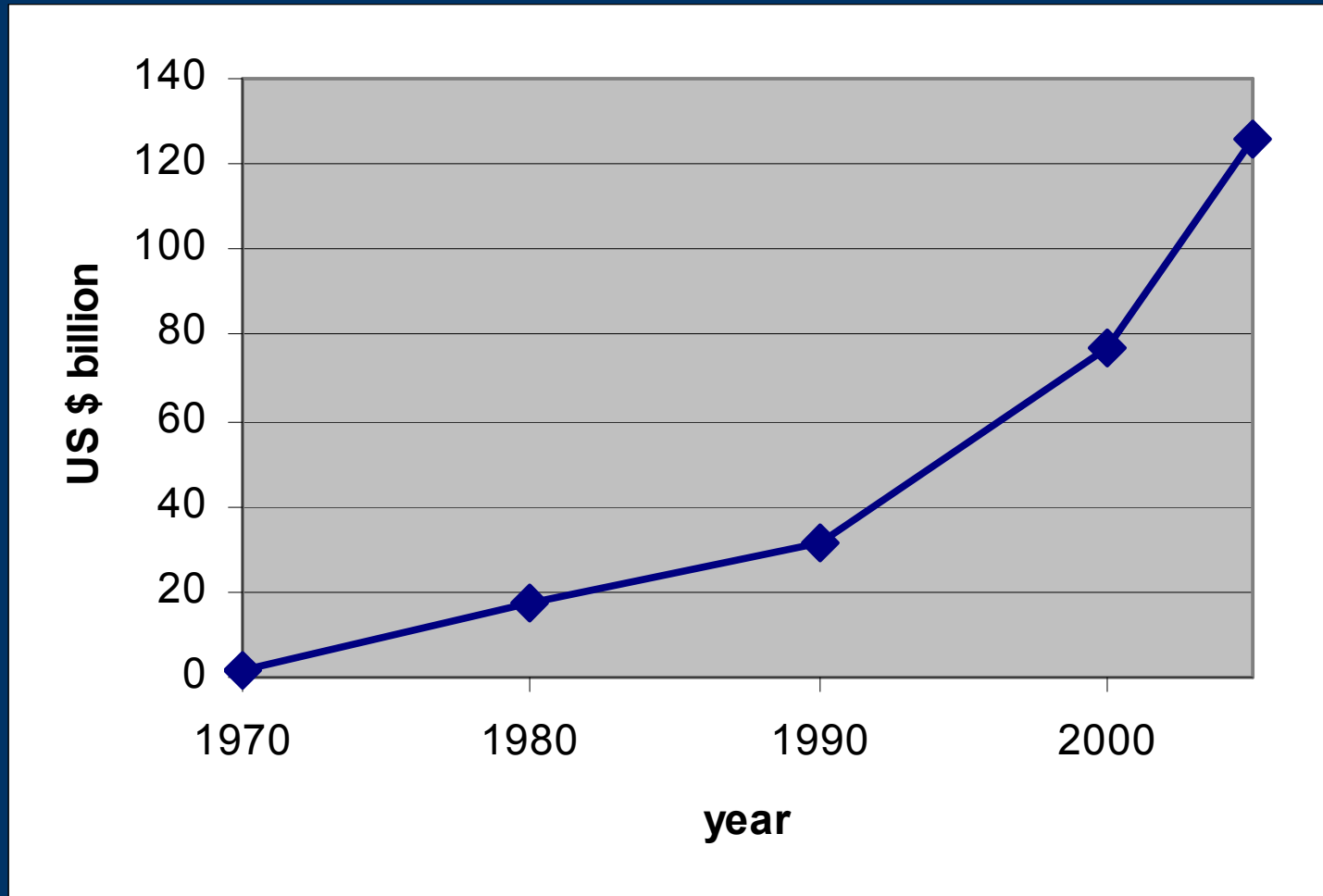
- Amnesia regarding previous experiences can lead to naïve optimism
- Now that the pendulum has swung from sheer optimism to sheer pessimism and back again, it is time to nudge it steadily toward the middle.
- No automatic migration-development mechanism, but *a potential*



The age of remittances

- Increasing need is felt to integrate migration into development policies
- But there is a one-sided focus on *remittances*
- Since 2003: Remittance Euphoria
- Subsequently, most ‘migration and development’ policies focus on measures to facilitate and channel remittances into formal channels (e.g., World Bank, DfID).

Remittances to developing countries



Beyond remittances

- Focus on remittances neglects other ways in which migrants affect ‘development’ in origin countries:
 - Civil society, political debate and democratisation
 - Entrepreneurial climate
 - Education
 - Socio-cultural effects
 - Position of women and minority groups
 - Forms of ‘development aid’
- Migrants’ transnational economic, social and civic engagement can be both individual and collective.

‘Diaspora’ associations

- Forms of transnational engagement increasingly acquire a collective dimension
- Establishment of home town or ‘diaspora’ associations’ aiming at providing small-scale aid or to set up development projects.



Migration and development policies

- How can states, development agencies and multilateral organisations support the contribution of migrants and their organisations to the development of origin countries ('co-development').
- Policy options for migrant sending countries: e.g., *tres-por-uno* (Mexico), Diaspora outreach policies (e.g., Morocco, Philippines, India)
- Policy options for migrant receiving countries, development agencies and multilateral organisations (e.g., IOM, UN): 'co-development', brain circulation, circular migration.

“Engaging Diasporas”

- Study commissioned by Oxfam Novib (the Netherlands).
- Rationale of the study:
 - It is difficult to turn the stated priority for supporting migrants’ involvement in origin country development into *concrete action*.
 - Lessons can be drawn from *past* experiences with the implementation of similar policies (in particular in France and the Netherlands).
 - Moreover, there is relatively cross-country comparison of such policies

“Engaging Diasporas”

- A comparative study of past and present policies to enhance Diaspora involvement in the development of origin countries.
 - multilateral organisations (World Bank, IOM, UNDP, etc.)
 - governments and development agencies in the UK, the Netherlands and France and a range of other countries
- Completed in June 2006; full report available at www.imi.ox.ac.uk

Four broad areas of ‘migration and development’ policy intervention

1. Facilitating and reducing costs of remittances (e.g., DfID, www.sendmoneyhome.com; World Bank).
2. Supporting migrants to set up small enterprises in countries of origin and facilitating transfer of knowledge (e.g., TOKTEN/UNDP since 1977; IntEnt Netherlands)
3. Supporting collective development projects initiated or implemented by diaspora organisations or individual migrants (e.g., French/Moroccan “*Migrations et développement*”, Dutch co-financing model)
4. Supporting diaspora networks and capacity building of diaspora organisations involved in development of countries of origin (e.g., AFFORD in the UK).

Necessary points of departure

1. Mobilising states and development actors, not diasporas.
2. The danger of patronising: the delicate balance between strengthening and patronising migrants.
3. Setting realistic expectations: migration is no panacea for development
4. Avoid setting double agendas of ‘curbing migration through development’ or justifying return migration by playing the development card.
5. Increasing coherence between development cooperation and migration policies cannot be achieved by subordinating the first policy area to the second.

Circular migration: old wine in new bottles?

- Recent invention of circular migration as a win-win-win strategy which will also benefit origin countries
- Proponents of such policies wrongly tend to equate circular with temporary migration.
- Danger of renewed guest worker-illusions
 - creates false hope by ignoring past experiences showing that enforcement of “revolving door” policies is extremely difficult and that settlement of a significant proportion of migrants is likely
 - Doubts on central assumption: Are temporary migrants better development actors (for host and origin countries)?

Finally

- All too often, the stated development intentions of ‘co-development’ policies have camouflaged a hidden agenda of stimulating return migration and justifying restrictive immigration policies.
- Paradoxically, restrictive immigration policies tend to force migrants into permanent settlement and *impede* circular movement, with potentially *negative* consequences for the engagement of migrants with origin country development.





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