

The role of new arrivals in relation to migration-development

Altay Manço, Zahia Agsous, Pascale Charhon

Co-development projects are numerous and varied. They touch the lives of many migrants. However, actors and migration and development practices are still misunderstood. The contributions of these projects are often listed and described differently from one country to another. Co-development is aimed primarily at the sustainable improvement of living conditions and of living together, both in the regions of origin and host regions. It plays a role by means of exchanges and of the circulation of migration resources. Co-development refers to the need for a shared interest and reciprocity in the development and implementation of actions. In this context, migrants may not be simple operators or passive recipients, but rather initiators, actors and partners. For example, companies created by migrants foster innovation, and bring social and economic capital to both the North and the South. Co-development thus contributes to 'inclusive growth' and participates in the EU's efforts to achieve the MDGs. The migrant's experience of transnational citizenship enriches diversity in Europe.

The goal of this concept note is to question the various roles of newly arrived migrants and of 'new migration' in relation to co-development. We may add that the analysis of the migration-development relationship stands to benefit from taking into account current developments taking place both:

- in the characteristics of migration (feminisation, high education level, diversification of countries of origin,...)
- and in terms of immigrant practices (accent on economic projects, stronger links to the home country, use of new communication technologies, etc.).

Indeed, older immigrants are now looking to the 'new generation' and the recent arrivals from a Diaspora are scattered among several European countries. In a globalised world, migration routes are evolving, mutual assistance and solidarity as well, including economic production means. The abilities of migrants evolve too based on experience gained over the course of their migration journey. Issues raised by this topic include *inter alia*:

- Clarifying the evolution of co-development over the course of multiple migratory waves: have associations evolved? What of partnership arrangements? Leadership style? Areas and choice of investments? ...
- Clarifying the evolution of actors' motivations: do they rely more or less on family? Are they voicing their claims more than before? What of a global citizenship? A relationship to colonial past? Do links exist between the migration history (reasons for departing, how they are welcomed, situation in the host country, etc.) and practices?





How to define a new arrival?

Firstly, it is necessary to define the concepts of 'new arrival' and 'new migration'. From a sociological point of view, new arrivals are immigrants who have recently arrived in the territory of the host country. Some studies lay down a maximum threshold of two years from the date of arrival while others accept a period varying between 5, 6 and up to 10 years. Some reception initiatives define new arrivals as "people who arrive in the structure for the first time" (UNISOL, 2006), whilst administrative arrangements can be restrictive, only considering new arrivals as people from specific countries that have been present on the territory for less than 12 months. It is not an easy concept: newly arrived migrants may know the host country, speak the language, while established immigrants may continue to live in exclusion. In a family, some members may be established for a long time or are second generation, while others are not. Some new arrivals may rapidly access citizenship rights in their host country, while others live in precarious situations: asylum seekers, undocumented migrants...

To better understand the realities of new arrival families, a Belgian researcher (Manço *et al*, 2006) followed 24 asylum seeker families for two years (2003-2004). Half of these families were waiting for a decision about their residence application in Belgium where they had been residing for less than 5 years. The other half of the sample was composed of families established in the country for over 10 years, having been able to regularise their resident status. These observations in Liège allowed the assessment of facilities and adaptation problems for new arrival families. Several issues need to be raised:

- Administrative status and the right of residence. Stability in the host country is the first element of a good integration. This is a concern for every family and may be a source of anxiety.
- Psycho-social family situations. Family life gives meaning to immigration. People on their own encounter more difficulties. But all must manage their relations with relatives left behind.
- Integration into existing social, educational and medical systems etc. These vital basic services provide access to decent living standards. The roles of social workers and solidarity networks in host countries are important at this stage. We note the particular importance of housing adapted to family needs.
- Acquaintances in Belgium. Relations with individuals or networks of the same origin appear important. They enable access to relevant information to meet the needs of new arrivals.
- Language abilities and worship. Knowledge of the host country language is an important integration tool. Certain migrant groups have different experiences in this area. Preserving the native language is also a battle for families. A majority of immigrant families attach great importance to religion. The feeling of being able to practice their native culture without hindrance or judgment helps migrants to feel integrated.
- Access to work. Work is often the main reason for immigration as well as a source of legitimisation. It paves the way to material well-being for families and helps to support communities in the country of origin.



- Links to the country of origin. These links are a facilitating factor or an 'organiser' of the integration process. To develop satisfactory links with the country of origin, one must be 'successful' in the host country. All families stay in touch with people back home. This contact sometimes allows migrants to meet the needs of certain groups in these countries.

This research, as well as other analyses completed across various countries¹, confirm differences in these areas between long established immigrants and new arrivals. New arrivals face numerous adaptation problems. These can be of different types. In the case of refugee families, some have lost family members or have loved ones under threat in the country of origin. A difficult grieving process is necessary. In this context the community of origin may be an important remedy. But this help may also attract new arrivals into circles non-conducive to integration. Moreover, integration assistance services are often unaware of contributions from ethnic support networks: there is often a lack of coordination between these two sources for newly arrived migrants. As to getting involved in solidarity actions with the country of origin, visits home to see relatives, these remain distant wishes for new arrivals in difficult situations in the host country. However, there are many who show solidarity with their country of origin, despite having little means.

New migration flows to Europe

Many observations² illustrate that migration to Western Europe, after experiencing a lull during the 70s and 80s resumed in the mid-2000s, reaching historical highs. For example, Belgium receives 100 000 people annually. For countries such as France, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany, half these immigrants originate from another EU country. The remaining migrants come from third countries, often developing countries. A recent phenomenon in Benelux is the arrival of immigrant populations previously settled in the South of the continent. Meanwhile countries in southern Europe continue to receive increasingly large waves of migrants, primarily from Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Remember that some of these migrations take place in extremely precarious conditions showing how economic despair can drive people to take risks. As for Central European countries, they mainly take in migrants from former ex-Communist bloc countries. Their growing diverse population is increasingly visible in cities. The phenomenon of community networks and chain migration leads to an increased concentration of immigrants. The difficult management of flows of asylum seekers adds to this new geography of immigration in Europe. New waves concern more and more families and women, as well as skilled individuals, sometimes able to invest in small businesses.

Philosophies of solidarity and new migrants

Most public or private actions that aim to improve the integration of new arrivals appear to be part of similar representations in the Western world and are primarily intended to assist the individual to attain personal emancipation and personal development and thus accelerate their integration in the host country. We see that these 'integrations' are more like imposed programs aimed at new arrivals, such as in the Netherlands and Flanders. However, this perception of

¹ For example work by Gerstnerová (2011) in the Czech Republic.

² Jaffrelot et al. (2009), Reports from "l'Observatoire des migrations du Centre de l'égalité des chances et de la lutte contre le racisme" (Brussels), etc.



integration work is often adapted to newly immigrant audiences, rarely in touch with the concepts highlighted here. Indeed, new arrivals whether refugees or not, often have another concept of solidarity. They are often resourceful people, able to cross borders to reach Europe and survive there on limited resources. These situations allow them to develop coping skills. Their solidarity is usually directed towards their country of origin, particularly through the sending of parcels or money to those who stayed behind. They are effectively 'donors'. In this broader vision, immigrants living in Europe are becoming mediators of a global solidarity.

For new arrivals whose degree of integration is regarded as problematic by authorities and public opinion in the host country, this process could be seen as negatively as a 'misuse of funds'. Several testimonies from social workers in Belgium for example (UNISOL, 2006), show that this situation is an issue as it interferes with the goal of migrant reception. However many immigrants consider it their duty to seek resources in the West to transfer to their family in their country of origin. Their testimonies as part of the same research suggest they are convinced that Europe is rich and that poverty in their country is not unrelated to the enrichment of Europe. In other words many immigrants, especially those from formerly colonized countries, think they are simply recovering their dues and could therefore become more vocal in their desire to access a series of services and aid for migrants.

These different interpretations lead to a misunderstanding between migrants and social services, which is destabilizing for such services. In return they make solidarity networks developed by immigrant communities more attractive: we would hope that new migrants or asylum-seeker adhere to the philosophy of offered assistance, while migrants would like to see their residence applications being dealt with quickly, since they make significant efforts while continuing to help their country of origin. However many new arrivals are assimilated into migration projects involving both established immigrants in Europe as well as relatives in the country of origin. These projects help transnational communities to survive in Europe and in the country of origin. Thus the ethnic network is not only the driving force behind migration, but also gives it meaning.

Solidarity practices of new arrivals with their region of origin

Research on solidarity practices of new arrivals with their regions of origin is rare in Europe while they are more common in North America (Le Gall, 2009; Vatz-Laaroussi, 2009). According to a recent study by Statistics Canada, in the two years following their arrival in the country, immigrants send more than CAN \$92 million to relatives in their country of origin. After four years, the amount of money sent rises to CAN \$134 million. Between 6 and 24 months after arrival, 23% of immigrants send funds with an average value of CAN \$2 500 to their parents. Between 25 and 48 months after arrival this proportion increases to 29% and amounts reach CAN \$2 900. It is estimated that each migrant sends an average amount equivalent to US \$1 750 or €1 250 per year to their country. This is an old phenomenon: it deserves to be researched not only to measure the economic impact but also the social and psychological consequences on the lives of families.

In the case of France migrants sent EUR 8 billion in 2004 to their country of origin. This is only an estimate since half this amount passed through informal channels. This represents an average of €2 000 per year per migrant. For example the Comorians of France (approx. 250 000 people) have funded 15% of their country's GDP. Sending an average of \$ 2 130 per Moroccan in



France (approx. one million people) has contributed to the Moroccan GNP to the tune of 5%. Finally the 300,000 Turks living in France sent an average amount of €1 711 per person in 2004 which is equal to only 0.20% of the Turkish GNP. We note that even though individual efforts are comparable, the impact in countries of origin diverge depending on the economic health of the countries concerned (Milhaud, 2006).

Foreign currency remittances are however not the only way to show solidarity. There are other means such as material transfers, transfers of knowledge, emigration assistance as well as more complex forms of cooperation by way of associative and commercial life. The truth be told, many immigrants have been practicing 'co-development' for a long time without giving it a name. Through making transfers of various forms to their country of origin, including transnational family relations, pursuing good offices, etc. for the purpose of solidarity and trade. According to Vatz Laaroussi (2009, 95), "these networks allow financial transfers that help the family that stayed behind to live and participate in local development." For S. Amoranitis, Director of IRFAM, immigrants "create a transnational citizenship of solidarity, inviting dialogue and exchange with the world".

Contacts with the country of origin and transnational networks

This part is based on the results of a research conducted in 2010, simultaneously in Belgium and Canada (Abozaid and Manço, 2011). The research allows to identify witnesses practicing solidarity transfers and to analyse their representations³. The research raises various questions:

- What are the consequences of these practices on both the 'donors' and the beneficiaries, as well as on the host and areas of origin?
- What do families think of these practices from one side and the other?
- What are the similarities and differences between Europe and North America?

All interviewees have kept in contact with their families and friends back in the country of origin. They all stressed the emotional nature of this relationship. For the majority of them, these relations are essential as a source of encouragement. All spoke of their role as informant and adviser to their compatriots intending to settle in Belgium or Canada, their role assisting the immigration process, accommodation or introduction to the host culture. Using new tools of communication, frequent contact has become commonplace for those able to provide these to their families. Friends travelling home carry messages, photos, money and gifts. It is through contact with the Diaspora that we learn that so-and-so is going in the DRC, Morocco or Argentina: "We then asked him if he would mind bringing this or that to our family."

- *Nature and transfer modes.* Transfers are mainly in the North-South direction, they are financial in order to support the family. There are many similarities between the Canadian and Belgian samples⁴. Virtually all the witnesses interviewed both men and women, make transfers. These are essentially money transfers. The witnesses also send

³ The study focused on the case of 86 families of which half in Belgium and the other half in Canada over 8 years on average. They are from Africa and Latin America.

⁴ The main differences between Canada and Belgium are two-fold: distances due to issues of geography, remoteness and difficulty of direct contact with the country of origin for those located in Canada and time due to the question of colonial history, between Belgium and Central Africa. These two dimensions motivate and affect in various ways community involvement in solidarity actions, choice of partners, discourse etc.



consumer goods, cosmetics, medicine, health products, medical equipment, electronics, clothing, etc. Recipients are for the most case parents, close relatives, both the wife's family and the husband's family for couples, "one month we send money to my family, the other month, to my husband's family. If there are problems in my family, we skip sending money to his family one month." The amounts vary between a few dozen and a few hundred dollars or euros each month. Others prefer to send larger sums two or three times a year. For refugees and non-workers, they do so when they can. Sometimes they are close to broke, juggling often modest incomes with vital needs. Priority is given to financing healthcare, then education as well as other daily needs. All these gifts are made in a personal capacity. Exceptions are rare such as a collection made among the Senegalese Diaspora in Quebec for the rehabilitation of a school. Belgian witnesses refer to some attempts at economic development in the country of origin (opening a hairdresser's salon in the DRC or an agro-tourism project in Nigeria) that did not succeed or were discontinued. Everyone has a similar project in mind, but few become a reality. All interviewees used at one time or another formal channels for remittances, either private transfers via Western Union or banks, or by postal services. For certain destinations there is no real competition as all institutions use the same channel. Transaction costs can be high and difficulties receiving cash for recipients often encourage many to seek informal methods. It is often taken over by hand by someone going to the country. In some cases, Diasporas 'formalise' their method. Such a case was reported in the Senegalese community in Quebec who used a New York financial institution. Some of the people interviewed in Canada also highlighted links in transit countries that assisted fellow compatriots. These countries are often located in Europe. Thus solidarity takes on a transnational form.

- *Motivations.* There are as many reasons for keeping in contact with family or friends left behind as there are immigrants. From the various interviews, it emerged that all the interviewees came from 'collectivist' cultures where the key value is family of whom we take care 'unconditionally'. Interviewees preserve this spirit of solidarity the more they integrate so-called 'individualistic' societies. Solidarity and altruism are the main motivation of migrants. They know they have a role to play now that they live in a 'rich' country. If the assistance is being provided freely, refusal to help would be interpreted as an act of surrender that would not be well accepted within the community⁵. Some of these people have direct relatives in their country. They can hardly refuse to help them, as many helped them to emigrate. Mutual assistance is seen as a tribute to the original community offering immigration a sense of legitimacy. For some, being able to give money to their family is a source of prestige and pride.

- *Factors of solidarity.* The number of years spent in the host country does not seem to influence the frequency of transfers, neither does the size of households affect the number of transfers and the amounts sent. On the other hand, graduates seem to help proportionally less their countries of origin, though maybe they send larger amounts. Immigrants with higher levels of education are usually from more affluent families and

⁵ Almost all refer in one way or another to a sense of guilt, "living in a country where the government takes care of us when sometimes our own family can barely feed themselves...", "We are accomplices to their poverty!", "Some people will say that I have become stingy.", "It reassures them to know they have not been forgotten"...



therefore do not need as much support from abroad (Houle and Schellenberg, 2008; Tremblay, 2006). On the other hand more regular the contact with the family, the more money they transfer to the South. These remittances are also more regular if parents and siblings remained in the country of origin. The presence of children and spouse in the country of origin also affects the frequency and volume of remittances, as well as other types of contact with the country of origin. You can also establish a correlation between the length of residence and the intent to return to the country of origin and the importance and frequency of financial transfers, “... *the migration route translated by the length of residence in the host country and the intent to return to the country of origin, has an effect on the frequency and importance of remittances*” (Dustmann, 1997). There have been no large differences found in such behaviour depending on the nationality or religion. According to witnesses, religion encompasses values of mutual assistance, “although family tradition and culture have a greater influence”. Probably the most important factor promoting remittances is the economic stability of the host country which offers the immigrant a job within a legally recognized framework, according to the analysis of Sami Nair, “[...] *once these immigrants are legal residents, they can play a significant role in the development of their countries of origin [...] They can become a vector for development through co-development.*” We realise that support structures for the insertion of new immigrants do not have a clear vision of the scope and function of solidarity with the country of origin. They do not include this dimension in their actions..

Discussion based on observations: are transfers sustainable?

A better understanding of the transfer of funds, equipment or skills, a better appreciation of the content and means can help to improve them through a reduction of transfer costs, by securing communication lines and limiting informal means, etc.

Therefore the countries of origin and host countries should work together to facilitate and clarify administrative and banking formalities while respecting the private nature of these funds. It's a question of transitioning from aid for immediate consumption to a sustainable and wealth-generating activity whose benefits may be shared⁶. It is not forbidden to imagine links between transnational family solidarity and co-development practices.

The spirit of solidarity that migrants so readily evoke is actually sooner or later doomed to disappear because it is not only unsustainable for immigrant families over the long term but can also be potentially destructive for families remaining in the country of origin. Some witnesses speak of this vicious circle with dismay, “*We pay for cousins to study so that they can come over here and do the same in turn for their cousins and so on...*” Such a transfer is not strictly speaking co-development although it may become so! Therefore many migrants are seeking collective, mutually beneficial and sustainable solutions.

Research by Aqsous and Manço (2011) confirms the desire of recent migrants to contribute to the well-being of their countries of origin regardless of the objective conditions in which they

⁶ Example of a project implemented in Belgium, by the North-South Health Association (Santé Nord-Sud), in partnership with a private cooperative clinic in Kinshasa, this association developed a means of transferring funds with the goal to “*fund the care of relatives in Kinshasa.*” Hence participants had the guarantee that for a fixed annual or monthly fee, relatives would be cared for while also contributing to improving the local healthcare infrastructure.



find themselves in immigration. We may also note that solidarity is not only expressed by remittances. According to Orozco (2004), we can decline five key drivers to the transnational commitment of immigrants who make consistent contributions both to the economy of the country of origin and to that of their host country:

“-Transfers -Telecommunication, -Tourism -Trade –Transport”

In this set the means “fund transfers” (remittances) remains the most common behaviour. It is the most studied (Muteta, 2005). However the need for links between migrants and their reference groups in the country of origin or scattered across a vast Diaspora also call for a means of telecommunication which in turn drive technological service contracts. Migrants are among the frequent visitors to their country of origin. They promote their country among close friends in their host country. This generates a tourist economy, even if it is not as important from one emigration to another (Sarlet *et al*, 2008). Trade between the countries of origin and host country is amplified by the presence of migrants who can import in either direction, especially through their involvement in retail and second-hand trade, etc. (De Tapia *et al*, 2006). Finally this whole circular movement also strengthens the transport sector. One should also add to this list of economic activities those related to the use of languages (courses, training, translation services, book distribution), cults (circulation of religious and financial means, sales of objects, burial rituals, etc.) and arts (performances, exhibitions, art and craft sales etc.) which are also economic sectors between countries of origin and host countries through migrant activities. There is also a need to understand the contribution of migrants to the societies of origin and host societies not only as a factor of economic development, but also their contributions on a social, cultural and political level. However some observers join Gatugu *et al* (2001) in denouncing the risk of dependency on hand-outs that this system of remittances may have on the entire population of the country of origin.

Donations and the financing of collective needs such as ceremonies (weddings, various festivities and funeral) may be considered unreasonable seen from Europe. But they are also a significant social goal in maintaining the local social fabric, without which no development is possible. Through paying for ceremonies, immediate consumption helps to maintain ties of trust and identity. This solidarity is aimed at the polarity ‘*reproduction and strengthening of the system*’ of a continuum of which the other polarity is preoccupied with such things as ‘*production and socio-cultural change*’. This could contribute to create companies and citizen involvement initiatives, etc. It is impossible to move towards one of these goals while denying the others. The approach must be global, balanced and based on the principles of respect for local cultures, to enable the system to evolve as a whole, under local control. In the reverse scenario, one would be in a situation where the lifestyle is transferred from the North to the South. One cannot ignore the question: what kind of development?

Solidarity and migratory cycles?

With migratory cycles succeeding one another, we are probably witnessing a transformation from the immigrant’s ‘myth of return’ to his country of origin into his ‘myth of a project’ in their country of birth. Although nowadays few migrants express the desire to return, many of them are thinking of developing projects in their countries of origin, in particular in partnership with institutions in their host country.



This myth, like its predecessor, plays a formative role in the life of recent immigrant families, giving meaning to the migration process and representing the potential outcome of a search for recognition. Leading a development project or assist the country of origin are both possible routes to recognition in the South while also building a social role in the North. Note that the myth of the project is better than the myth of return for the migrant who aspires to an ideal position of double recognition, double presence and dual citizenship: the migrant becomes the transmitter, the intermediary, the mediator par excellence between these two worlds.

Approximately twenty projects were published by EUNOMAD in 2010⁷. In these actions, migrants, including some new arrivals,

- inform, raise awareness and inform other migrants about their needs and resources;
- strengthen the capacity of other actors and create links;
- guide them in implementing projects;
- communicate their know-how, ...
- 'secure' partners, including institutions in the host country.

Observations also show that the evolution of co-development initiatives can be represented in the form of a cycle (Manço, 2010). Cases indicate that the cycle of co-development could count up to eight steps. Many associations whose practices were analysed initially are the work of leaders among the new arrivals that respond to difficulties their community experience integrating the host country. This initial step aims to raise awareness and mobilise migrant and non-migrant groups. It leads to the establishment and formalisation of associations. Crime prevention and awareness actions about migrants' rights (to housing, employment, etc.) are the main means of action. These groups or associations in the North are precarious and struggle to operate but probably represent the transitional place between immediate one-to-one solidarity and enduring collective initiatives.

Recommendations

Governments of host countries should offer more support to migrant associations in order to identify and better manage these demonstrations of solidarity so that these actions truly benefit the development of countries of origin and so that such aid does not destabilise targeted regions or immigrant families. These include:

- considering cross-cutting issues such as foreign currency remittances,
- knowing expense structures of families in the South and migrant families in the North,
- a better understanding of the meaning of these economic structures,
- analysing diverse investments in terms of their impact on both reference societies.

⁷ www.eunomad.eu.



It is recommended that research practices and actions be adapted to relevant issues. Scientific strategies must thus be as participatory as possible to better understand how various acts of solidarity are necessary, useful and complement each other.

- It is necessary to approach migrants in their entire human and psychological dimension.
- The latter requires adequate support combining among other things, raising awareness, training, orientation, and especially intercultural mediation to better balance the 'reproduction' and 'production' poles from their commitment and make them feel less guilty about the support process.
- It is also necessary to sensitise, inform and train different social stakeholders and other political actors to these transnational migrant driven issues and how they can play a solidarity 'mediator' role.
- In an operational way, these findings illustrate how urgent it is put in place discussion groups comprising insertion and development professionals on the one hand, and new arrivals on the other.

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