Addressing Irregular Migration through Coherent Migration and Development Strategies

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What makes the migration - development nexus successful?

- Migration out of choice rather than compulsion
- Security of residence in country of origin and country of residence
- Right to departure and re-entry
- Right to family life in country of origin and country of residence
- Equality of treatment with citizens in country of origin and country of residence

➤ Irregular migration only might meet first criterion
Irregular migration

- Different types of irregularity: From regular entry and overstaying to being born as a child of an irregular migrant
  - Irregular entry, irregular residence, and irregular labour market participation do not necessarily match
  - Trafficking and human smuggling is part of irregular migration, but they do not make the whole picture

- Regular migrants as well as migrants with an irregular status contribute to the development of the country of residence and the country of origin

- Irregular status limits contributions
Irregular migration

- In irregular migration, migration may be voluntary or involuntary.
- In irregular migration, irregularity is seldom chosen voluntarily.
  - If everyone had mobility rights, no irregular migration would exist.
  - If there were no state borders, no irregular migration would exist.
  - Safe to assume, that migrants would prefer regular status.
- Migration as a coping strategy to improve living conditions for the family.
Drivers for (irregular) migration

- Regular and irregular migration share common drivers and facilitators
- Are there specific drivers for *irregular* migration?
  - Demand for informal labour
  - Inadequate access to formal labour markets
  - National policy incoherence (regularisations, strict circular migration regimes)
- Are there specific facilitators for *irregular* migration?
  - Human smuggling industry
  - Urban diversity and support networks
  - Effects of international human rights treaties
Perceptions: Crisis

“People have no choice but to leave Senegal: a new saying by young people is “Barcelona or die”. Wealth is transferred from poor to rich countries and migrants follow.”

Perceptions: Structural effects

“…Another study (…..) has argued that “many of the existing (temporary / circular migration) program conditions intended to “enforce” circularity seem to encourage illegal migration. These include short contract periods and non-renewable visas tied to particular employers.”

(EMN – Synthesis report on circular migration, Brussels 2011)
The tyranny of the “or”

- Gross inequalities, impoverishment and gross inequality prepare ground for irregular migration
- Perceived lack of perspective may be more important than factual situation
- Inadequate channels for regular migration and inadequate visa conditions contribute to irregular migration
- Perceived improvement potentials abroad may be more important than structural effects
Effects of irregularity

- Ability of migrants to contribute to their own, their families’ and their country of residence’ welfare depends on their conditions of work and living
  - Irregular status reduces mobility (social remittances, skills transfer)
  - Irregular status reduces potential income (material remittances)
  - Irregular status increases material and immaterial costs of residence
  - Irregular migration contributes to „children without parents“ phenomenon
  - Irregular migration contributes to distorted perception of migration
Transnationalism, Irregular Migration and Integration

- Post-entry integration obligations as conditions for permanent residence status
  - Focus on permanent settlement and exclusive orientation on country of residence
  - Remittances and investments in country of origin regarded as sign of lack of integration and disloyalty to new country of residence
- Integration policies often neglect transnational realities
- Need to make room for transnational reality in integration policies
- Need to make room for integration in the migration – development debate
An “I – Tunes” Approach to Irregular Migration?

- Before Steve Jobs invented “I-Tunes”
  - No choice: To listen to one song, you had to buy the whole CD
  - Unfair costs: One song for the price of a CD
  - Irregularity: Declining CD sales, increasing number of illegal pirate copies

- “I – Tunes” revolutionized the way to sell music
  - Choice: Buy the song, not the CD
  - Fair costs: Get a song at a fair price, individualize your collection

- People do not want to act illegally: I-Tunes allowed people to satisfy their needs in a legal way
- Is an “I – Tunes” approach to irregular migration possible, desirable and feasible?
Thank you for your attention!