

Working Paper
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**Livelihood Outcomes of
Migration for Poor People**

CLARE WADDINGTON
Sussex Centre for Migration Research

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Development Research Centre on
Migration, Globalisation and Poverty
Arts C-226, University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 9SJ

Website: <http://www.migrationdrc.org>
Email: migration@sussex.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1273 873394
Fax: +44 (0)1273 873158

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C O N T E N T S

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Migration and Inequality	8
	How Migration Increases Inequality	10
	How Migration Reduces Inequality	11
3.	Migration, Risk and Vulnerability	12
	How Migration Responds to Risk and Vulnerability	12
	Vulnerability of Migrants	15
	Vulnerability of Those Staying Put	16
	Outcomes	19
4.	Remittances and Savings	20
	Levels of Remittances and Motivation	20
	Coping or Accumulative Migration	21
5.	Social Identity and Networks	24
	Social Identity and Networks: Enabling or Excluding	25
6.	Migration, Education and Health	28
	Education	29
	Health	31
	<i>Migrant Health</i>	32
	<i>Access</i>	34
	<i>Health Outcomes and the Household</i>	35
7.	Conclusions	36
8.	Bibliography	43

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1. Introduction

Understanding poverty and poor people's livelihoods, sustainable or not, has become an important focus within international development literatures and policy debates. A livelihoods approach understands poverty as more than just insufficient income. The Sustainable Livelihoods approach favoured by DFID defines livelihoods as 'the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living' (Carney 1998: 213). Meanwhile, broader understandings of livelihoods stress the active seeking of livelihoods as 'the tactical and strategic behaviour of impoverished people' (Whitehead 2002: 576), such that livelihoods are 'the diverse ways in which people make a living and build their worlds' (Whitehead 2002: 577). In the absence of a fully developed cash economy or social contract, or where there is inadequate social protection provided by the state, this framework seeks above all to describe and analyse how groups of people pool their resources and diversify their activities in order to reduce risk, co-insure one another, and manage the investment and distribution of resources to ensure individual well-being in the present and foreseeable future. It refers to all productive activity undertaken by a social group or by individuals, their portfolio of activities, including (and perhaps especially) those that are non-formal in nature. These 'social groups' are understood in the literature to be micro units or households, and broadly refer to nuclear, fluid, and extended households.¹ Better management of households is likely to be associated with better well being of members (Whitehead 2002).

According to Scoones (1998), a household located in a particular context and economy may choose between (or be constrained from choosing) three main clusters of livelihood options – agricultural intensification and extensification, income diversification, and migration. In turn, De Haan and Rogaly (2002), in an important collection on labour mobility and rural society, argue that migration is much more common as a livelihood strategy than is often suggested, including for the poor. This echoes the conclusion of Ellis (1998: 55) that '(m)igration is one of the most important methods of diversifying rural livelihoods', although as Kothari (2002) notes, it may not be an option

¹ The approach rests on an assumption (which is not explicit) of the different kinds of tacit and non-formal obligations (e.g. on intergenerational contracts, see Kabeer 2000) existing between different household members, stemming from their affective relations. Part of the reason for talking about 'households' may be to avoid the complexity of conceptualising the social reality of 'family'. Tiemoko (2003:65) refers to categorisations of families into nuclear or extended families, and the implied judgement there that some members are legitimate while others are extenders, thus projecting a culturally specific fact as cross-cultural reality. Noting that whilst everyone has an idea about what a family is, the boundary in terms of a blood tie 'is more a notion than a concept' (de Oliveira, 1992, in Tiemoko, 2003:66).

for the poorest. This paper aims to document studies and research of households and communities that use migration as a means to diversify the portfolio of household activities, to improve capacity and flexibility to respond to external shocks, and simply to reduce the number of people the household must sustain.

It should be noted, that livelihoods approaches are by no means uniformly conceptualized or implemented. As indicated above, a distinction might be made between the applied use of Sustainable Livelihoods Frameworks by donor agencies for development policy, and a broader conception of 'livelihoods' used in less applied ('academic') enquiries. The latter do not involve the messy and complicated matrices characteristic of the former (Murray 2000), or of how an individual might expand her/his 'assets pentagons'. The Sustainable Livelihoods approach has been critiqued for glossing over inequalities of power and conflict within or between communities in terms of ethnicity or class (Power 2003), and even for the fact that frequently, the smallest unit of analysis is the household. The approach assumes that households are sites of consensus.² This ignores important inequities among men and women, children, and the elderly, both in resource distribution as also in the different ways conflict is manifested or power resisted. Feminist arguments that households are not necessarily sites of sharing and equity are reviewed and contributed to by Whitehead and Kabeer (2001).

Related to this is the conflict-blindness prevalent in development policy, and the conventional distinction between literatures around war or conflict situations, and poverty or development literatures within which much of the livelihoods literature is located.³ There is also a tendency to strongly separate migrants from refugees, which in part relates to the different literatures, but also to policy, different legal frameworks, methods of study, and conceptualisation. Kothari (2002) makes the point that whilst such categories can be useful methodologically, there are conceptual problems: economic migration may be as forced as migration for political reasons. In addition,

² In other studies sub-household dynamics are examined more explicitly: that in situations of poverty people are more likely to compromise both within the household and with other households (or within kin networks) due to necessity (on Zambia, see Moore and Vaughan 1994).

³ The degree to which the literature and policy remains conflict-blind or apolitical may have terrible consequences as it has in the past, for example, in the case of the Mahavali Dam scheme in Sri Lanka. This 'development' project was partly funded by the World Bank, as a project to improve reliable water supply, but involved the displacement of populations that had lived by the Mahavali River. This displacement, under a Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist government, resulted in the increase of the proportion of Sinhala-Buddhist populations in areas that had been majority Tamil or Tamil-speaking Muslim (see Peebles 1990).

migration is a process that involves change, negotiation, resistance, and arguably it could be more relevant to use theories that look at conflict and negotiation than those based on consensus or harmony as found within poverty-related literatures. This is relevant as reference will be made to studies of refugees and internally displaced populations that employ a livelihoods approach, although the outcomes are not reviewed separately, or the literature, comprehensively.

Questions of international political economy may slip from view in the 'seductive rhetoric' of livelihood discourses (Murray 2001, cited in Power 2003: 182). The first reason for this is to do with how poverty is measured. Most studies adopt a relative notion of poverty within the community or migration stream in question, but do so without contextualising the community within macro data which would *probably* define the communities included in these studies as poor (that is, located below or moving above and below nationally and internationally defined poverty lines). Without providing this wider context, it is difficult to undertake meaningful comparison between studies, even though we may implicitly understand that all are poor according to some more objective standard. Thus the inequity of global resource distribution tends to get lost as a focus.

Arising from this discussion are three important points about livelihood strategies. First, they are *context specific*. The wider structural context, the institutional environment, access to key decision-making around resource allocation, and access to different kinds of resources (or 'capitals'), all influence the agency of different individuals and households. In addition, the roles that intra-household relations and decision-making processes play in livelihood strategies that involve migration are crucial. This makes cross-national and cross-cultural comparisons of livelihood strategies problematic. A further complication is the extent to which the livelihoods of the rich and poor are linked in a dynamic and contested relationship. Yet, in the context of inter-household inequality, they serve to re-enforce inequitable resource allocation and thus the status quo. Indeed, in the context of resource scarcity, one household's benefit may be caused by another household's loss (see Murphy, 2002).

Second, there is a *temporal dimension* to the livelihood choices that people make. For example, investment in the education of children may not affect livelihood outcomes until the next generation, but may be an important component in eradicating the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Meanwhile, judgments about different choices may differ over time, responding to changing physical and other less tangible outcomes. Murphy (2002) comments that it is impossible to understand labour migration and social change by conducting observations that are narrowly restricted by time and place. In this sense, the 'success' of the outcome of migration as a livelihood strategy may take time to become apparent.

Third, in talking about migration as part of a livelihood strategy that involves the geographic dispersal of some household members, there is obviously also a *spatial component*. This is relevant in two respects. First, the role migration plays in linking different economic areas, leading to a conception of origin and destination as a singular economic space, causes De Haan (2000) to argue that the 'geographical categories' of migration (i.e. rural, urban, internal, international etc.) are not the most useful way to analyse different types of flows. These terms, for example, overplay the difference between internal and international migration in terms of how porous borders are. Some borders are certainly less porous than others but these may include the borders of internal provinces and restrictions (in China), just as much as the borders separating countries like Albania and Greece. We can also question how far a livelihoods approach can be stretched geographically. To what extent should it include international migration strategies?

These questions are raised here but not resolved. Rather the paper seeks to cover empirical research of internal and international migration by household members, and of fully mobile households, wherever this is conceptualized as a livelihood strategy, and looks for evidence of impacts on the poor.

This paper concentrates on 'livelihoods' studies that may explicitly specify a sustainable livelihoods approach, a broader livelihoods approach to labour migration, or may simply be a consideration of household well-being that extends beyond income. The review includes more studies found in academic journals, which employ a broader notion of livelihoods, and generally (though by no means systematically or, sometimes, not at all) refers to the methodology and methods used in generating the information. Much of the literature starts from an open-minded view of migration, for the large part moving away from normative ideas around migration as a 'social evil', although certain studies do conceptualise migration in this way. The fact that the majority of the studies

included are located in Africa and Asia reflects the geographic bias in the literature (and funding/donor interest), but also the interest of the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty. Literatures around nomadic peoples, pastoralists, etc. are not included in this review although clearly they have a fully mobile livelihood. The paper documents evidence in the following areas: inequality (Section 2), vulnerability (Section 3), remittances and savings (Section 4), social identity and networks (Section 5), and issues of health and education (Section 6). Across these different areas, there is a diversity of findings, and evidence is mixed and largely inconclusive about the livelihood outcomes of migration for poor people. However, there are areas and issues about which little is known, which represent fruitful areas for further research.

2. Migration and Inequality

The search for a better and more secure livelihood drives many migratory movements, and according to Nyberg-Sorensen *et al.* (2002), is most common where survival is at stake. Mobile livelihoods or livelihoods involving the geographic dispersal of household members *can* be poverty reducing and involve the redistribution of resources not only across space but also within a family or household. Yet, access to migration, as an opportunity, the ability to choose whether or not to migrate, and the outcome of migration for livelihoods are not evenly distributed. Rather, whether the poor can benefit from migration as much as, or more than the rich or less-poor, will depend on their means (assets, resources) and strategies (networks, planning), as well as relations of power and inequality and by implication, 'on the institutions that allow access to, or exclude people, households or communities from resources, whether these are economic, social, political or natural' (Whitehead 2002: 577).

Inequality clearly influences and is, in turn, influenced by migration. For example, research in Burkina Faso (Hampshire 2002) and Mali (De Haan *et al.* 2002) shows how different groups have different migration patterns, although these are not fixed, but vary across space and time and are contested. Ravallion and Wodon (1999) find 'hidden' constraints to mobility, or location, in their study of Bangladesh, having controlled for other non-geographic household characteristics. The absence of certain types of social capital, for example networks or contacts with prospective employers, may preclude some households from having the option to migrate (Kothari 2002: 6).

Meanwhile, Mosse *et al.* (2002) provide evidence from tribal western India that poorer families are more likely to migrate all together, whereas individual adults will migrate from richer (more food secure) households, sending remittances to support the family. In Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, there are relatively large cross border movements of both clans and individuals between a home village and a local employment or trading node (Cross 2002).⁴ De Haan (2000: 8) comments how 'the kind of work, distance, in short access to opportunities is central for the composition of the migration stream in terms of gender and other socio-economic differentiation, and for who profits from migration'. Migration can break down, affirm or change social and economic relations, and not always through the conscious agency of migrants.

Not only does inequality influence who can migrate where, when and how, but it may also be a primary cause of migration. The socially embedded nature of access to land tenure, and to other resources like water or irrigation, causes out-migration where there are not sufficient opportunities for other kinds of employment, or these kinds of employment are temporary, or unsustainable. For example, Salemink (2002) shows how internal migration in Vietnam relates to a lack of land rights in customary law for certain excluded social groups. Gaps in access to water and land resources are also documented as causing migration in South Africa (Rwelamira *et al.* 2000), Cameroon (Schridder and Knerr 2000), West Bengal (Rogaly 2003), and tribal western India (Mosse *et al.* 2002). Meanwhile, where structural change and economic transition has increased inequality, this may stimulate migration (on Southern Africa, see O'Laughlin, 1998, on Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya, see Cross 2002).

There is a significant literature on how poverty and inequality influence migration, which is dealt with in more detail elsewhere (Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler 2004). Here, however, the concern is more with how migration influences inequality. Yet, in part, this does relate to the nature and extent of inequality in the sending area in the first place. It may also relate to the type and destination of migration. Deshingkar and Start (2003) draw a distinction between 'coping' and 'accumulative' strategies of migration, showing how inequality can preclude certain groups of people from entering the latter, more 'positive' migration streams. For migration to reduce inequality, poor families and individuals need to have access to more positive forms of migration

⁴ This study surveyed 1200 households in 40 villages in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi.

than richer families, or their movement needs to bring the potential for relative empowerment in some other way. The following two sub-sections review evidence for both the negative and positive consequences in terms of inequality.

How Migration Increases Inequality

The observation that the poor are excluded from certain migration streams should alert us to the possibility that inequality might increase as a result of migration. This is most obvious in the context of international migration, where this brings benefits for the migrant, but where migrants are not drawn from the poorest in society. De Haan and Rogaly (2002: 5) report research in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines, which suggests that in comparison to internal migration, international migration is more likely to increase inequality. For example, Ballard (2003) shows how in the Mirpur District of Pakistan, international migration has led to sharpening inequality between those who migrate and those who do not. Osella and Osella (2003) note that whilst there has been some 'development' in Kerala in terms of education, health and housing, the employment creation has mainly been in the tertiary sector, and the economic spin-offs in sectors dominated by the middle classes. The poor are thus excluded from the kind of rapid accumulation that can result from international migration, and this has led to sharpening inequality as well as changes in the nature of inequality. Of course, this depends in part on the degree to which returning migrants can invest productively, and the kinds of enterprises in which they invest, which according to Murphy (2002) is a function of existing infrastructure, local policy and the existing level of occupational specialisation.

However, patterns of inequality may be reinforced not only through the exclusion of the poor from international migration, but also through differential access to different types of domestic migration. Most obviously, where the poor are forced into, or restricted to certain types of migration, and their movement involves access only to badly paid unskilled jobs, poor living conditions, or inadequate services, inequality may also be increased between poorer and richer migrants and between poorer migrants and the population as a whole, as well as between richer migrants and those staying put (c.f. Mosse *et al.* 2002).

How Migration Reduces Inequality

Despite the evidence cited above, migration can also reduce inequality. Most obviously, individual poor migrants may do well, but the outcome of migration on livelihoods may also be accumulative, enabling poor households in sending areas to get out of poverty too. Rogaly (2003) reports how one poor Bengali labour migrant has used migration as a strategy to improve his condition back home. This respondent was able, through the proceeds of his labour migration, to undo the mortgage on his land and create more choice for himself in terms of future migration. Rogaly and Rafique (2003) report how the migration strategy of one household initially began in a response to a need for money, and continues despite growing prosperity (the father owns two acres of land and has invested a considerable amount in a small grocery business as a result).

Where poor migrants are able to use the money they earn to gain access to land and a secure livelihood (or to build their political or social capital), there are fewer possibilities of their being forced to migrate in the future for economic reasons. The process of creating and increasing choices can be an outcome of migration for the migrant and his/her household, even in cases where the initial migration is forced. Rogaly recounts stories of migrants who have, in addition to increasing their choices, also enhanced their sense of dignity and self-worth. A recurrent theme is the way in which the financial proceeds from migration are transformed into something symbolic. For example one respondent reported how there were certain kinds of jobs that he would not do any more, because he found them humiliating, or the place of employment dirty. Others similarly described how a dislike for contractual relations in the Bengal rice fields meant they worked nearer to home (often on their own land).

Migration can enhance status, yet many migrants experience greater powerlessness at destination areas than in their home locality. Migrant workers can and do respond to inequality, resisting what they feel to be unjust or disrespectful treatment, providing hope for positive outcomes. Rogaly and Rafique (2003) noted this particularly with regard to the quantity and quality of food payments, how these payments are served and received, and non-payment and under-payment of wages. These led to migrants using the following resistance strategies: embarrassing employers by spreading rumours about the treatment they had received, insulting their employers, going slow, informal strikes by workers during peak activity in protest for not having been paid for overtime work, or

leaving. Van Hear (1982) documents similar resistance strategies used by child migrant workers in Ghana against the unfair practices of their employers. Migrants can increase their power through becoming important information brokers in the labour market, even bargaining with their employers in situations where there is a high ratio of employers to labourers. Rogaly *et al* (2002) document how one group from Puruliya district have managed to shift from a position of dependency to a loosening of obligations to the ruling (land owning) classes. This has been brought about because of the increased access to seasonal out-migration for agricultural and manual work, contributing to the diversification of their livelihoods. Also, the labour shortages experienced by the richer classes during certain seasons (because of the migration) has led them to improve the conditions of land and labour contracts for the (migrant) labourers. Rogaly and Rafique (2003) note how in West Bengal agricultural employers are anxious about their labour supply and performance, since workers are part of their own livelihood strategy.

3. Migration, Risk and Vulnerability

Pursuing mobile livelihoods can be seen as a poverty-reducing strategy, which involves 'refashioning resources dispersed in space into family livelihoods' (Nyberg-Sorenson *et al.* 2002: 8). Mobility is thus an important part of people's livelihoods diversification, with the potential to manage or reduce risk, smooth consumption, create savings or access to credit in order to prevent risk. This section considers migration specifically as a response to risk, or a strategy to reduce household vulnerability. It refers to specific kinds of vulnerabilities experienced by those who migrate, and those who do not, and the sources of protection that migrants seek against vulnerability (this is dealt with in more depth by Sabates-Wheeler and Waite 2003).

How Migration Responds to Risk and Vulnerability

Many poor households migrate as a group, or send household members away either in response to vulnerability or as a strategy to manage risk and reduce vulnerability. Poorer streams, like those documented by Mosse *et al.* (2002), often consist of entire households migrating in response to a few factors: the inability to subsist due to the deterioration of the sustainability of the agro-resource base, or indebtedness, or lack of food security (on Nepal, see Gill 2003; Adhikari 2001). In streams that are slightly less poor, household members may be dispersed, but some members will stay put

in order to look after land, animals and so on. This response may be for similar reasons, such as the situation in rural West Bengal documented by Rafique and Rogaly (2003) of increasing vulnerability, associated with lack of access to land, irrigation water, finance, supportive networks, contacts and qualifications.

A number of studies (within the New Economics of Labour Migration or NELM literature) test the hypothesis that a household organizes the migration of some of its members as a strategy to diversify sources of income and thereby reduce risk, as well as to overcome barriers to credit and capital through remittances substituting for missing markets and providing a form of social protection. Quantitative studies demonstrating the importance of remittances in reducing vulnerability have been carried out in India (Rosenzweig and Stark 1989), Botswana (Lucas and Stark, 1985, Stark and Lucas 1988), Peru (Cox *et al.* 1998), and in the Kayes Area of western Mali (Gubert 2002). Similar findings are also reported in qualitative studies: De Haan (2000) found that migrants in Bihar, India, migrated to reduce the uncertainty of a family income, provide investment funds, and livelihoods for those with small plots. Similar findings are reported of households in rural Andhra Pradesh (Deb *et al.* 2002). And being known to be a migrant in West Bengal improved household credit rating (Rogaly and Coppard 2003).

NELM studies also emphasise how migrant and household remain linked through processes of 'co-insurance', whereby the household collectively, or members of the household, may fund initial movement and provide a kind of insurance against transitory income shocks whilst the migrant is getting settled, in return for the migrant providing equivalent insurance against unforeseen income shocks at home once they are established abroad. Lucas and Stark (1985) find that there are examples of 'co-insurance' between different migrating and non-migrating members of the same household. This was also found in the Dominican Republic (De la Briere *et al.* 1997, in Gubert 2002:269). In Cameroon, Schrider and Knerr (2000) find evidence that migration is a social security mechanism for smallholder households in Cameroon. Another finding in Cameroon was that the amount remitted is partly dependent on the size of the inheritance expected by the migrant. They observe how young urban migrants from rural regions have begun to neglect traditional obligations to support their elderly parents, especially if they do not intend to return to their native village, do

not expect any sizable inheritance and have no reciprocal insurance commitment with them. In these circumstances, rural (elderly) people are exposed to the risk of staying without support.

Societal customs relating to marriage will also affect where migrants send their remittances. For example, Murphy (2003) finds that virilocal marriage customs (where the bride marries into the husband's village and family) in China means that Wanzai daughters who contribute their remittances toward the building of the family house are net losers because they do not receive a share of the family property when it is divided. Their goal of a comfortable future must be secured by marrying well. Whitehead (2002) shows how some Ghanaian households' accumulative livelihood strategies are dependent on marrying well, and often necessitate that household members are dispersed. She also shows how the kinds of strategic choices that individuals and household heads make with regard to migration and other livelihood activities affects, to some extent, which households provide 'security for household members over time... and emerge as sites of flexible and adaptable responses to external shocks' (p.597).

Circulation between different households within a kin network is a common theme. Research near Mafikeng in South Africa encountered the father of a successful household and how he moves between his sons' and brother's houses: 'When you have a family, they shouldn't be clustered in one place because, when they die, they all die. When they are in different environments, trying to make a living, they won't all die at the same time' (Francis 1999, in De Haan 2000a: 14). Circulation of labour between households at harvest time ensures the necessary peak-time labour supply (Tiffen *et al.*, in De Haan 2000b: 16).

Migration can cause increased vulnerability. This is the case where the household becomes dependent on migration and its proceeds, but either the migration opportunities themselves, or the cash flows they generate, prove to be unreliable. Studies around this are generally of contexts where there are limited opportunities within a country or area, and where the encouragement of the state or other factors have led to an increasing flow of international migrants undertaking employment in strongly segmented labour markets. Osella and Osella (2003: 113) argue that whilst migration in Kerala is 'a key tool in family strategies towards upward mobility and identity fashioning', it has also led to high dependency on revenues from an unreliable international labour

market. The increased vulnerability of migrants and their dependents at home in the context of unstable employment conditions has been documented from a macro perspective in relation to migrants and their treatment in the context of the Gulf War and the Asian Financial Crisis (c.f. Wickramasekera 2002). Some studies document that the motivation of the families is to diversify risk to individual members (see Chen *et al.* 2003 on family strategy around international migration from Taiwan and Hong Kong, China), yet the impact of crises like these greatly increases the vulnerability of those households that have become reliant on remittances.

Vulnerability of Migrants

Many studies document the appalling working and living conditions of migrants, and the associated increase in their vulnerability through migration. Rogaly and Rafique (2003) noted that migration for manual work by workers is itself a source of vulnerability – through ill-health, insecurity on the journey, employers' malpractice, humiliation and the felt indignities involved in receiving cooked food as part of the payment for work. Receiving payment was a huge source of anxiety for some migrants, particularly where they were paid at the end of the season, and no formal mechanism existed to ensure that employers would actually pay up. A study of tribal Bhil households by Mosse *et al.* (2002) also reports labour exploitation. Deshingkar and Start (2003) find that although millions of poor labourers are migrating seasonally or circularly for the best part of the year, inadequate Indian policy creates a situation where migrants are not entitled to livelihood support systems and formal welfare schemes, do not receive a full wage, and where women and children are most affected by the lack of access to basic facilities.

In terms of safety in remitting money back to their households, studies note that poorer migrants and migrants from remote areas tend to lack access to, or experience of, banking facilities. A study in Bangladesh revealed that 73 per cent of remittances were enacted by person-to-person cash transfers (Afsar 2000). Finding reliable couriers can impose major constraints (Hossain *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, migrants that transfer remittances back home by returning are extremely vulnerable to losing their savings as a result of crime. This problem is acute in the Rangamati District of eastern Bangladesh where soldiers impose 'tolls' on passers-by. Fears of recurrent violence in some particularly notorious areas have led to circulatory migratory patterns being curtailed (*Ibid.*).

Rogaly and Rafique (2003) also report seeing *lathi* charges⁵ on migrant labourers in train stations by police in West Bengal.

However, as with inequality, migrants themselves have sought to reduce their vulnerability. Various strategies are documented, including travelling in groups ranging in size from two to sixty, to provide strength in numbers and some personal security on the journey and within the migrant labour market. Rogaly *et al.* (2002) document how local government institutions in West India have been important in ensuring seasonal migrants receive payment for their work, with several instances of these institutions interceding in favour of migrants. In addition the agricultural union has implemented a district-wide wage floor for all agricultural workers.

Vulnerability of Those Staying Put

Migration may affect the level of vulnerability felt by migrants themselves, but also affects the vulnerability of those that stay put. In West Bengal, many couples migrate seasonally for work, often leaving behind very young children, and other older adults (Rogaly 2003). When the children are old enough, they migrate with their parents initially, and later alone or with their partner. Some mothers are constrained from migrating because they are widowed or do not have people they can leave their children with. Kothari (2003) reports how potential migrant workers require others to stay behind and look after their children, land, house or animals. The experience of those staying put may be one of increased vulnerability. This is true also of those at the end of so-called 'global care chains'. This refers to the strongly segmented labour markets for care workers in industrialised countries which results in migration by women from poorer countries to work as nannies, maids and sex workers (see Ehrenreich and Russell Hochschild 2002). Studies of this phenomenon raise issues about this effect on families and particularly who cares for the children and the elderly at the end of the chain.

The way that a household organizes the migration of its members depends on its resources. A household may wish to be able to have some members stay put in order to protect homesteads and other assets such as livestock. Rogaly and Coppard (2003) document how one migrant from

⁵ A Lathi charge is a police baton charge that is used by Indian police when they try to clear an area or break up a demonstration or quell a riot.

West Bengal, who had previously moved with his family, had recently acquired livestock that his wife now stayed to look after. He also reported that had they left the children alone to look after the livestock, the neighbours would eat the animals. Other reasons for members to stay put is to look after young children, although in the absence of alternative forms of employment parents may be forced to take their children with them when they migrate; children can also work and support ageing parents who cannot perform heavy manual labour (Rogaly 2003). The outcome of who stays and who migrates is gendered. In much of the literature, women tend to stay behind and carry out reproductive work/caring for children and the elderly or sick, whilst men migrate because of employment opportunities elsewhere (on households in South Africa, see Rwelamira *et al.* 2000).

In some cases, the household that stays put, and that does not have enough activities for a sufficient or sustainable livelihood, is dependent on remittances, other resources such as livestock, and social relations and kinship networks; and the literature documents the increased vulnerability resulting from out-migration. Whilst remittances may be a crucial form of insurance for households engaged in migration, family members that stay put may be very dependent on their male (agnate) relatives for protection and for loans. In West Bengal, this is found to be the case for some of the women whose husbands migrate seasonally (Rogaly 2003). Respondents reported having to borrow food and ask for assistance in emergencies and the longer term. In Mali, seasonal migration resulted in the women and children in one household using up their granary, and spending the remainder of a season living off loans and millet donated by family and neighbours despite their efforts to cultivate a field (De Haan 2000a: 30). Rogaly and Rafique (2003) find that women in households with a single male earner rely more heavily than others on social relations outside their household to keep things going during their husband's absences. This relies on good relationships being maintained with their relatives – the cost here is felt through compromise or in continuing to play a full part in the life of a community, e.g. giving gifts at marriages and other important occasions. A study of 72 female-headed households in different parts of rural Bangladesh found that women from households with men who had migrated feel more vulnerable to food insecurity, social insecurity and illness when the men are gone (Khan *et al.* 2003).

In contrast to the more common occurrence of men migrating and women staying put, are the strongly segmented migration flows of women (e.g. international migration as domestic workers). Literature about this is infused with debates around what happens to children, in terms of their vulnerability. Spencer (2003: 4) reports how, in a context of high female out-migration, villagers in Sri Lanka perceive that children are left in other's care and when things go wrong, the mother is not there and tragedy ensues. In the end, 'the mother is to blame, and migration is the source of moral disorder'. In another study in Sri Lanka by Gamburd (2000), the increase in alcoholism by men left behind surviving on their wives' remittances is documented. Whitehead and Kabeer (2001), writing about Southern Africa, refer to the 'booze and fags' discourses about male spending of remittances found not just locally, but also running through research studies themselves. Gamburd (2000), Anderson (2001) and others set these kinds of local moral attitudes and stories that construct female migration as a social evil against the situation in which these choices are made, and the essential contribution female migrants make to the communities from which they come.

There is a strand of literature that could be perceived as contributing to a 'moral panic' about migration, a more negative perception that has dominated the literature in the past. An example is Hugo's (2002) treatment of how families that stay put in Indonesia may experience a breakdown in traditional family obligations. The move away from the extended family to focus on the nuclear family results in the emotional nucleation of the family as well, reducing effective protection for elderly parents and leading to serious mental health problems (Hugo 2002). Similarly, there are social and emotional costs associated with the 'latchkey children' of migrants (on the Philippines, see Asis 2002). In contrast to these studies, some cross-cultural studies conducted about acculturative stress and migration show that the relation between stress, depression and migration is extremely complex and differentiated by a range of other factors that relate both to individual characteristics as well as structural considerations. Vega *et al.* (1987) conduct multivariate analyses of immigrant Mexican women in the US and conclude that demographic factors (education, income level), perceived economic opportunity, the perceived distance between the two centres involved in migration, and loss of interpersonal ties were the most parsimonious subset of depression indicators within the model. But Berry *et al.* (1987) found there to be substantial variation in stress phenomena across types of acculturating groups alongside a number of individual difference variables (sex, age, education attitude and cognitive style) and social variables

(contact, social support and status).⁶ They concluded that there was a need for further comparative studies so the acculturation phenomenon could be understood in terms of origins and variations across host societies, acculturating groups and their interactions.

Outcomes

In some cases migration may not be an activity with net economic benefits to the household. If the income gained from migration is only sufficient to provide a subsistence existence, then the long-term household gains are likely to be negligible. Sometimes the initial outlay (the investment in migration) is made despite limited knowledge of whether there will be a return. This is often the case in international migration, where there may be added costs for those who choose legal migration routes.

Construction workers from East Cirebon, Indonesia, migrated to Jabotabek and, according to Breman (2001), returned when they were physically incapable of labouring any more. However, the rewards they had gained during their period away had been so low that they and their households were no better off than before the migration. In this case, poverty may be classified as 'chronic' as migration does not offer the opportunity to break the cycle of deprivation for subsequent generations.

Where the start-up costs for migration are high, the outcome may be a net loss. This was found to be the case for contract migration to Singapore from Hooglekandi, Bangladesh. The costs included the fees paid to contract agents and dubious Bangladeshi-owned remittance agencies in Singapore. Rahman's (2000) study concluded that the poorer and least educated migrants were the most vulnerable to this. In turn, middlemen or agents have been successful in extracting large amounts of rent from Albanians migrating to Europe. Nicholson (2002) reports that one Greek consulate has become notorious for issuing few official visas, but instead offering black market visas via networks of intermediaries. Six-month visas were sold for £1000 UK sterling (the official price was £37). The range of options for getting from Albania into Europe included: crossing the mountains in Greece with a guide (£100 per person), a dangerous sea crossing in an open boat to

⁶ They surveyed 1197 individuals who had migrated to Canada from a range of countries including South East and East Asia, Europe, as well as internal (native) migrants.

Italy (£750), and obtaining a false passport and visa (£1000-£2500). Whilst Nicholson's research does not capture the impact of this on the poor, it would be logical to assume that the poorer migrants will take the cheapest (and more dangerous) options. They are also more likely to migrate without documents or visas, and be more likely to undertake jobs in the informal sectors which do not pay as well, tend to be more exploitative or unregulated, and vulnerable to repatriation.

4. Remittances and Savings

Migration can have a direct effect on poor peoples' livelihoods, to the extent that migrants send money to their families to sustain livelihoods and social relations (Nyberg-Sorenson 2002). Migration can also act as a social security mechanism for poor households (Schrieder and Knerr, 2000; Sabates-Wheeler and Waite, 2003). For many poor households and individuals across the world, remittances now constitute a major source of income, insurance and capital accumulation. The outcomes can be direct – flowing straight into the pockets of the poor – but they can also be indirect. For example, research in Mexico indicates that benefits may even accrue to households that do not receive remittances (Taylor 1999). The livelihood outcome depends on a number of issues. First, how much is remitted and into what kind of context. Here it is useful to employ Deshingkar and Start's (2003) typology of whether the migration is a coping or accumulative strategy. Second, how the remittances are spent and over what time period of analysis – for example, some investments might only pay dividends to future generations.

Levels of Remittances and Motivation

The level remitted by migrants varies. De Haan *et al.* (2002) record that just two per cent of households in their study in Ethiopia received remittances from migrants, whereas in Bangladesh the majority of migrant-sending households received remittances. Rooney-Pople (1998) records how temporary Bangladeshi domestic migrants remit less (contributing 16 per cent of household income in some villages) whereas permanent domestic migrants remit more (contributing up to 34 per cent of household income).

What influences the extent to which money is remitted to the poor, to support their livelihoods? Research indicates that poorer migrants tend to remit a higher proportion of their income than do

richer migrants. However as the migrant's income levels rise, the amount remitted (as a percentage of their income), on average, levels off and then declines (Black *et al.* 2003).⁷ Nonetheless, as documented in Section 3, NELM literature raises (proves) two major hypotheses: that the geographical dispersion of household members serves to diversify sources of income in order to reduce risk, and that at different stages of the process both household and migrant co-insure one another. Another incentive for remittances, discussed in the more qualitative studies, is the capacity for migrants to remit money to increase their (and their family's) status or social standing in the hometown. This could result in the building of new houses (in Pakistan, see Ballard 2003) – or other displays of familial wealth through spending on social functions such as weddings, and other rituals (in Kerala, see Osella and Osella 2003). Apart from this, migrants (particularly in the diaspora) also invest in public works or development initiatives (c.f. Widgren and Martin, 2002, on the Mexican government's '3 (US dollars) for 1 (US dollar remitted)' scheme which is expected to create 7000 jobs in the garment-sewing industry). In the Kayes Area of Mali, Martin *et al.* (2002) report how remittances have been used to provide clinics.

Coping or Accumulative Migration

Households use remittances, and save remittances, in order to smooth consumption over a year and to access lump sums for times of heavy expenditure. For example, earnings by young women for their dowries may not contribute to household income but are an important method for saving (De Haan 2000a). Savings may be in cash or in kind (e.g. rice) (Rogaly 2003). Rogaly and Rafique (2003) note how seasonal labour migrants from West Bengal are enabled by kin and others at the place of origin; such relationships require careful negotiation and maintenance, and remittances are an important way to do this. Investment in livestock is often cited as a productive investment in rural areas, yet whether this is feasible depends on access to grazing land (Rafique and Rogaly 2003). Who has control over these resources depends on the household set-up and is subject to contestation and change over time. Remittances play a crucial role in the context of growing inequality especially for landless households. Rogaly and Rafique (2003: 679) conclude that for most poor migrants, remittances act as insurance against ill health, 'a way of hanging on',

⁷ In this study of relatively highly skilled migrants, returning to Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire after a period abroad, remittance-sending behaviour was modelled differently by regressions carried out on data from the two groups: elite and less-skilled migrants. This suggested that different processes might be at work in these two groups: less-skilled migrants with better jobs abroad were more likely to remit, whilst the reverse was true for elite migrants. Black *et al.* (2003: 19) suggest that there might be some sort of inverse-U effect, in which those in middle occupational categories are most likely to save and remit money to their relatives.

whilst Deb *et al.* (2001) report that the overwhelming experience of rural livelihood diversification that involved migration (in Mahbubnagar District, Andhra Pradesh) was as a coping strategy. Coping strategies, where migration enables households to diversify their livelihood portfolio and maintain a current quality of life, is one that means living on or close to the poverty line.

In some cases, where remittances are used to enable remaining family members to maintain a basic standard of living, the typology of survival migration has resonance. Asfar's (2000) research in Bangladesh indicates that between 80-90 per cent of poorer migrants remit money to support consumption in the sending household to meet basic needs. Brun (2003) found that remittances to Muslim communities that had been internally displaced to Puttalam District during the conflict in Sri Lanka had been essential in keeping people alive. Rogaly (2003) finds that some labour migrants from West Bengal undertake seasonal migration in order to ensure a presence on landholdings. In one case, even though both female and male members are dispersed, the household is still forced to take out loans, which have to be repaid at harvest time, and interest on which is paid in manual labour.

Where remittances are used as a substitute for capital markets, migrants are able to borrow and lend money, as well as save, leading to better 'outcomes'. Where migration contributes to an accumulative livelihood strategy, it can enable households to lift themselves significantly above the poverty line (Deb *et al.* 2001: 6). Deshingkar and Start (2003) find that in accumulative migration strategies of sugar cane cutters, earthworkers and agricultural labourers from Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, migrants have been able to save enough to invest in agriculture and their children's education. In West Bengal, some migrated solely for investment purposes as their daily consumption was guaranteed (Rogaly and Rafique 2003). Migrants from Bihar also report how circulation is part of their households' strategies to maintain or improve their livelihood, keeping hold of their plot of land, or 'investing in agriculture' (De Haan 2000a: 9)

Given that international migration tends to be accessed by the less poor, and that potential earnings abroad are often much higher, it might be argued that this is more likely to be an accumulative strategy. However, Rahman (2000) finds that 30 per cent of remittances from contract workers in Singapore were used in Hooglekandi, Bangladesh for the maintenance of

households through the purchase of food and clothing. In Sri Lanka, international migration appears driven by *inter alia* high domestic unemployment and the lack of domestic resource-based development. Gunatilleke (1985) describes the migration by women as domestic workers to the Gulf as part of an economic adaptation or livelihood strategy. Sriskandarajah (2002) estimates that each female migrant supports five people at home, whilst 15 per cent of the total population is believed to 'rely' on remittances. Perhaps whether the strategy is coping or accumulative could be identified by the kinds of things remittances are spent on. For example repairs and upgrades to the house (improving toilet facilities), land agricultural inputs so that HYV rice may be grown, health care and education (on Ghana, see Ammassari and Black 2001), might all be examples of more accumulative strategies, with the exception of investment in health care. Mahmood's (1992) study of a cross-section of Bangladeshi socio-economic groups who had migrated to the Middle East revealed that remittances were used for purposes such as building houses (19 per cent), buying land (15 per cent), and weddings (9 per cent). Meanwhile a study of relatively highly qualified returning migrants to Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire found a surprisingly high proportion had remitted to family members to supply the basic subsistence needs of their parents and siblings (Black *et al.* 2003), an example of a coping strategy.

The time period over which these outcomes are measured and the iterative processes through which livelihood strategies involving migration improve or decline is important. Parry (2003) provides examples of how migration as a livelihood strategy can provide positive outcomes, which are felt mainly by subsequent generations. One household, whose members had migrated to work in the central Indian steel town of Bhil, had started a business from the proceeds, which they bequeathed to subsequent generations. Whitehead (2002) provides examples of how investment decisions change over time. She notes how in 1975, a key accumulation strategy was to invest in non-market mechanisms for labour distribution that fed into crop surpluses and re-investment and savings strategies. Livestock was also a good way of saving surpluses in good years and liquidating them in bad years. Yet in 1989, migration did not provide income in the form of remittances, but was a source of savings for farm investment for returned migrants and their households.

Several writers note that the 'usefulness' of the activities in which remittances are invested may be questioned in terms of their contribution to the sustainable economic development of the nation. There are stories here around remittances being spent on non-sustainable development goods such as palatial houses (c.f. Ballard 2003). Ballard (2003) notes how there has been a high remittances inflow into rural villages, such that Pakistan's five major banks have set up village banks. The inflow has been unstable and Mirpur has experienced a series of short-term housing booms, peaking in the 1970s.

Other studies focus around the way financial flows and lump sums are transformed into investments in family relationships, kin ties and social or occupational mobility. Such kinds of investment are argued to be 'more meaningful' by Watkins (2003) on Pakistan, but this point is also found in other studies (c.f. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 37(1 and 2)). In Bangladesh, Afsar (2000) notes that expenditures on religious and social functions are a crucial component of the maintenance of rural networks sustaining 'patron-client' relationships. This investment is about managing risk, an insurance strategy, but also indicates the importance of networks and social capital in accessing migration as a livelihood option.

5. Social Identity and Networks

This section deals with evidence of the impact of migration on social resources. This is interpreted broadly to refer both to the identities of migrants (the way in which these identities are asserted, reconfigured and contested through the migration process); and connected, the ways in which investments are made in the relationships, contacts and networks that facilitate migration, allowing or enabling households to access this as a strategy, reduce the economic costs of migration itself, as well as reducing vulnerability through, for example, information dissemination (Widgren and Martin 2002). Reference will be made to the role migration plays in: gaining status, linking sending and receiving areas into a single economic space, introducing different social norms and values or re-enforcing existing (orthodox) practices, and the capacity for the (transnational) diaspora to play a role in developing their home region or country.

Social Identity and Networks: Enabling or Excluding

Work in different parts of India by Parry (2003), De Neve (2003) and De Haan (2003) documents how networks are important, even crucial assets to enable migration. This may be through kinship or other kinds of social affiliations and identities such as caste solidarity. In the former, dependency, patronage and other kinds of support (e.g. business partnership) can lead to upward mobility. For the latter, the village community can be a good source of information and help with alternatives. In West Bengal, Rogaly (2003) reports how migrants establish long-term relations with individual employers, which are 'crucial for survival' (2003: 4). Kuhn (2003) reports how slum dwellers in Bangladesh who migrate from rural areas precisely because they lack support or are unable to access kin networks, may form alternative exchange networks based on informal resources available in the slum, with similar households in the urban destination. De Haan (2003) reports that caste identity plays a role in the personal networks that mediate the migration of migrants to Calcutta. Deshingkar and Start (2003) find that caste may contribute to exclusion of certain types of people from positive migration streams. Labour migration may also be a way for relatively prosperous households to further enhance their livelihood security. Hampshire (2002) found this with the Fulani in Burkina Faso, noting that the identity of the migrant and their village networks were essential to the strategy's viability.

Family ties and networks make important contributions to migration outcomes. In the first instance, as discussed above, intra-household decision making processes play a role in who migrates and for what purposes. Yukawa (1999) finds this is true of migration from the Philippines. In Sri Lanka, extended families are important facilitators of female migration from Sri Lanka (Gamburd 2000). With regard to migration of women out of Indonesia Hugo (2002) argues that family control of female migrants can still be exercised via strong social networks that have developed between origin and destination. Palloni *et al.* (2001) test the hypothesis that family ties and networks have a positive impact on the experience and outcomes from migration; they find that diffuse networks encourage migration. Studies of internal migrants (in China, see Ma, 2002) and international migration (for Asian Indian migrants in New York and London, see Poros, 2001) examine the importance of social networks for these flows or streams. The study by Poros especially clarifies the role and meanings of different networks as regards the kind of migration and the occupations found by migrants. Their findings challenge the emphasis placed on the role of human capital in

producing distinct outcomes for migrants. Nyberg-Sorenson *et al.* (2002:11) conclude that transnational entrepreneurship, especially, reproduces social asymmetries along class, gender, and racial/ethnic lines.

A common theme is the capacity migration can have for some individuals to gain status – either through occupational or social mobility. In Calcutta, De Haan (2003) found occupational mobility did happen but upward mobility by migrants and their families was less common. Moreover, these social identities were important not just in the way they were treated by different employers, but they were a critical factor in providing access to jobs, housing in the city, the structure of family life and intra-household relations and habits. Simpson (2003) documents how status gain may result from some types of migration in India. Osella and Osella (2003) also note the extent to which the proceeds from international migration are strategically converted into prestige and status in Kerala.

Anthropological studies of migration have looked at the negotiation of cultural meanings in a context of social change. Watkins (2003) looks at how households involved in migration as a livelihood strategy 'eat' the saved resources, principally transforming the remittances and savings into investments in family and kinship ties and the maintenance and re-enforcement of relationships that are important for the security of the household. In turn these relationships help to fund initial migration and protection of families staying put, through extending loans and credit and assisting with the cultivation of land. Similarly, others document how spending on weddings and local celebrations can help to ensure that those that stay put during migration are still a part of the community and able to access the protection afforded by this membership or their kin (c.f. Rogaly 2003 on West Bengal; Kabki and Appiah 2003 on rural families of Holland-based migrants in the Ashanti Region of Ghana).

This kind of on-going investment in networks and contacts in both sending and receiving areas is part of the way in which migrants and their families continue to occupy the same economic space. Rogaly (2003) documents how people in Jalpara, West Bengal, had five decades worth of history, knowledge and contacts involved in moving between source and destination areas, commenting that migrants see the source and destination area as part of a home territory that they circulate within. This is also borne out by other studies. People from the copper belt in Zambia feel equally

at home in their village of origin as in Lusaka as their networks of kin and friends allow them to move easily between the two areas (Samuels 2001). Ballard (2003) documents the links between migrants and their sending communities – the extent to which Pakistani migrants remain informed about and influenced by events in their home villages; sometimes even flying the deceased back home. Meanwhile, De Haan (2000: 14) suggests that though the poor may gain status at home, their migration may be more likely to lead to a loss of social networks at the place of origin, as well as isolation in insecure living and working conditions.

Circulation in particular can promote the transmission of different values and ideologies. Osella and Osella (2003) note how migrants return with more orthodox and standardised religious practice in Kerala. By contrast Ballard (2003) reports differences in the practices in Pakistan following from migration, which include subtle changes in women's status and their increasing visibility in public places. Similarly, Thangarajah (2003) documents a transformation in the gender relations and local patterns of religious consumption in Sri Lanka concerning female migration to the Gulf. Asis (2002) and Espiritu (2003) describe how young Filipino women migrate as a means to free themselves from parental control, and in order to make more independent choices about marriage. Whitehead (2002: 595) finds that male out-migration in North East Ghana leaves women to look after their dry-season onions, noting that, '(T)his was one of a number of changes in gender relations that were entwined with the changing levels and kinds of commoditisation and the decline in some of the non-market spheres of provisioning'. A study in Vietnam provides interesting information about the importance of social capital in influencing internal migration decisions (Anh 1999). Of particular importance are the skills gained by people in building interpersonal relationships and social ties, and the transmission of values and norms. Such skills are highly transferable and can be used to bring about positive social change in home regions.

New kinds of technology may also be introduced as a result of migration. De Haan (2000) records how migrants can play innovative roles in bringing back new machinery or methods such as double cropping. Black and Mabwe (1992) report how refugees in Zambia brought seeds for crops from their source area in Mozambique, through this diversification they reduced the risk of dependence on mono-cropping. Meanwhile in farming communities in Portugal, migrants were found to be

responsible for a certain amount of modernization of agricultural practice – through increasing mechanisation (mechanical hay cutters, tractors, etc.) (Black 1992).

Finally, transnational networks have become a particular focus because of the potential of the diaspora to stimulate economic activity back in the home region. Attention has been drawn to the positive economic impacts of ethnic groups, such as the Chinese communities in Vancouver (Thrift and Olds 1996) and Birmingham (Henry, *et al.* 2002) upon their destination. Such economic success is often predicated upon involvement in some form of transnational network. Documented examples in Birmingham include East End Foods in Smethwick, which has become the UK's biggest importer/exporter of Indian food, and Wing Yip's supermarket chain, which draws upon import/export links with China and its surrounding regions. In this way developing world producers are able to access developed world markets, initially serving the ethnic community but often spreading to form a sizeable niche within mainstream markets (Cook and Harrison 2003). Less clear is the impact of such transnational business on livelihoods and job creation in poor countries. Nadvi and Halder's (2002) study of the global surgical instruments industry, an example of the new phenomenon of multi-sited production chains, provides some indication of the impact of transnational business on livelihoods in poor countries, though this was not their focus. In this global production chain, different sites carry out high and low technology production, in Germany and Pakistan respectively. The demand for the medical instruments produced in Sialkot, Pakistan, comes from expatriate Pakistani traders (alongside foreign buyers, sales outlets). Such processes can be enabled by the diaspora through their specialist knowledge of their country, its economic/political/legal institutions, and as loyal customers.

6. Migration, Education and Health

So far, this paper has focused on livelihoods outcomes in the sphere of economic well-being and stability (robustness in the face of shock), and the social status that may underpin or be affected by changes in livelihoods associated with migration. However, a further important area concerns the access of migrants, their families and home communities, to education and health services, both as an essential aspect of well-being, and as a critical factor that influences, and is influenced by livelihoods. For certain households, the migration outcomes may mean improved access to

education (e.g. for children) and hospital or private health care, but such gains are far from automatic.

Education

Education is an important sphere of well-being that can be affected by migration, and a livelihood outcome in its own right. Literatures around education emphasise its importance in terms of breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. With regard to migration, education may be an important determinant in accessing more positive migration streams. Through migration, individuals may be educated or skilled (i.e. it may be a motive to migrate itself). Where migration is an accumulative strategy, not simply one of survival, future generations may benefit through investment in their education – this is part of the assumption that migration exposes migrants to new opportunities and values and can lead to changes in their patterns of investment.

Education can assist the development of critical consciousness, and expose individuals to different values and norms. Education can have other positive spin off effects, for example, the well documented relationship between women's education and reduced infant mortality, through better decisions around health and nutrition. It can also have important impacts on rights, rights-based approaches and rights claims. However, it can oppress, for example those migrant children who are excluded from school or suffer discrimination by teachers because of their social identity. Whilst education systems arise from a (structural) system that informs the school curriculum, language spoken, and access, this impacts on the agency of different individuals differently.

The educational level of migrants is diverse. In China the educational level of rural migrants is higher than the average – tending to have more special skills. De Haan (2000: 7) reviews literature from parts of India, Zimbabwe, and Kenya finding, on balance, that migrants are more educated. He notes that there is often a question of causality: are migrants richer or more educated because they have migrated, or do they migrate because they are better off? Certainly education appears to be a major factor in who benefits from and is able to undertake migration within a community, even if this is only in relative terms (Skeldon 1997).

There is some evidence that better skilled and better-educated migrants can expect better wages. However educational gains (resulting from migration), like the material gains from migration, may also increase differentiation and inequality (on Western Kenya see Francis and Hodinott 1993). Research by Afsar (2002) on internal migration in Bangladesh has demonstrated how disparities in opportunity can reinforce pre-existing socio-economic divides. Migrants living in slum areas of Dhaka were less likely to be educated than non-slum migrants, with the differential being most marked at the tertiary level. Yet, higher education is the most significant factor affecting urban income. Rogaly (2003) finds that most manual workers in West Bengal who are forced to migrate for economic reasons, are further disadvantaged from undertaking more remunerative work due to lack of formal education and training, and social contacts.

The opportunity to gain formal or informal educational experiences is also a common motivation for migration (De Haan 2000a). Even picking up a few words of French in Cote d'Ivoire, for example, can constitute a significant step for Malian migrants (De Haan and Rogaly 2002). The acquisition of practical skills can also assist migrants both to find jobs and, upon return, to set up trading and other activities or improve productivity in agriculture (De Haan 2000a). Hossein (2003) documents that just over half of the sampled Bangladeshi domestic migrants he talked to had changed their occupation after a period away.⁸ Other migrants recorded that they remained within the same occupation but considered that their status had changed and they were able to undertake more responsible or skilled tasks. Others noted that they were unable to change their occupation at home due to expectations imposed by other family members, most especially that they should continue within the traditional family trade. De Neve (2003) and De Haan (2003) find that occupational mobility is easier for migrants than upward social mobility.

The ways that migrants' invest money, their 'entrepreneurship', depends on the individual's skills (human capital) (Nyberg-Sorenson *et al.* 2002). Migrants sometimes invest in educational facilities within their home area and may run classes in order to disseminate some of their new skills and knowledge (De Haan 2000b). The Kayes Area of Mali has become extremely dependent on remittances from international (to France) and regional (West Africa) migration. Martin *et al.* (2002)

⁸ The sample comprised 294 people, from 16 villages located in eight agro-ecological zones in Bangladesh; 113 respondents gave information on migration (Hossein 2003).

report how these have been used to improve the lives of those in the source areas through providing schools. Migrant return can lead to skills being dispersed. Where women are educated they are able to participate in transnational migration and entrepreneurship, sending remittances that help to sustain social networks, and participating in migrant organizations (Nyberg-Sorenson 2002).

Education can break the intergenerational transmission of poverty (Kothari 2002). Decisions to invest in children's education are influenced by the fact that as children become older, the opportunity cost of sending them to school increases. Rogaly (2003) reports how many of the households where members are involved in seasonal migration (in West Bengal) aspire to better formal education for their children, yet are constrained from doing so by financial and other factors. His fieldwork shows how some parents cut down on migration in order to avoid exposing children to dangerous journeys and working and living conditions. Yet as the children mature in many cases they are taken along too because there is no other alternative employment for their parents. Deshingkar and Start (2003) also find that decisions relating to children's education are linked to structural factors determining who can or cannot migrate, and the outcome of their migration. Thus not only have migrant sugarcane cutters, earthworkers and agricultural labourers from remote and poor villages of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh improved their standard of living and invested savings in agriculture, but they are also better able to educate their children.

The need for children to work to support the household further restricts their access to education, and without some level of skill development, entrenches them within the poorer classes. Equally, the access by women to education is often restricted due to domestic burdens and a need to work. The varied impacts of migration are evident in Siddiqui's Bangladesh study: 'In some instances migration afforded children better educational opportunities, and in others children's education suffered because of the absence of their mothers' (2003: 6). In Kerala, more than a million families depend on internal migrant wages in order to send their children to school (Zachariah *et al.* 2001)

Health

Similar issues exist concerning the health of migrants as those involving education: healthier individuals may be more able to migrate, whilst migration may have significant health outcomes,

both directly and by influencing access to health care. There is relatively little evidence on how health impacts on access to migration, although Kothari (2002) notes that health is a major component of human capital, and a factor that can contribute to an individual's exclusion from the opportunity to migrate. In addition, it is clear from the literature that ill-health can affect the household through loss of income (doubly so when it is a wage earner that is affected) as well as the limitations placed on other household members in terms of time spent caring and associated limitations on mobility of the carer (due to the lack of social or other formal support systems).

Migrant Health: There is clear evidence that the migrant's health may be compromised during the migration process. Ill health may be related to the violent treatment meted out by the police to migrant workers en route, for example, lathi charges at train stations in West Bengal (Rogaly et al. 2002: 104). Also, the absence of effective regulation regarding terms and conditions of work causes ill health in terms of intensity of work, over exposure to harsh weather conditions, and unhealthy workplaces.⁹ In addition, employers may consider migrants to be too temporary to commit resources to training, and communication problems may reduce this possibility further (c.f. Littlefield et al. 1987). The World Health Organisation documents how migrants, especially the undocumented, often accept dangerous working conditions for fear of bringing attention to themselves, losing their jobs or being deported (WHO 2003: 27). The UN Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants has highlighted the problems faced by female migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, including, 'withholding of wages, acts of physical and sexual violence, under-nourishment and seizure of passports' (Pizarro 2000, in WHO 2003: 26). IOM report that a high number of Ethiopian women die while working in Arab states as temporary workers, or return home evidencing broken limbs, acid burns and other physical abuse (IOM 2001, in Ibid.)

Migrant populations may not be able to access sufficient food supplies, and food aid may be of poor quality, or not received at all. Unnithan-Kumar (2003) found in her study of migrant labourers in Rajasthan, that the resultant fluctuating consumption of nutritious food accompanied by hard labour to obtain it, contributed to malnutrition. Rogaly *et al.* (2002) report how migrants can in

⁹ On migrant agricultural seasonal workers in the United States, see Sakala (1987), who finds that the occupation and associated living conditions of workers poses exceptional health hazards (due to over exposure to the sun, pesticides, injurious equipment, poor field sanitation).

some circumstances be excluded from public provision of food. One provider of free nutrition supplements for pre-school children in West Bengal would not deliver to temporary residents, explaining that they were outside their remit.

In some cases, whilst migration can result in improvements in employment and income levels, the living conditions at the destination can pose a threat to health. Littlefield *et al.* (1987) find that health hazards to migrant agricultural workers in Colorado, United States, are posed by both employment *and* housing conditions. Afsar (1999) reports that it is common for the slum and squatter areas, which contain many migrant households, to lack access to a safe water supply and sanitation system. The morbidity rate of 56 per cent in these areas of Dhaka (compared to 35 per cent in non-slum areas) is indicative of these problems, aligned to a lack of access to decent healthcare facilities.

Another theme emerging in the literature is the impact of migration on individual migrant's (and their family's) psychological stability. Spencer (2003: 14) reports how there is a correlation between a higher risk of suicide amongst young inter-district migrants in Sri Lanka, noting that suicide is more common in 'places where half or more of the population are recent immigrants, usually poor, and on the margins of state surveillance and control', and pondering whether it is 'poverty or migration or something else entirely that induces suicide'. Other accounts focus specifically on the different processes and diverse factors that act on individuals, and their differential impacts (c.f. Berry *et al.* 1987, Vega *et al.* 1987). Particular concerns are expressed where migrants constitute a contained population. For example, the Physicians for Human Rights (2003, in WHO 2003: 17) recently raised concerns about how asylum seekers are treated when they arrive and if they are detained in industrialised countries. Their findings indicate that the experience is extremely stressful, as does other research documenting refugees' experiences of life in camps. For example see the discussion between Professor Barbara Harrell-Bond (American University, Cairo) and Jeff Crisp (UNHCR) of the 'prison-like' restrictions based on unjust and *ad hoc* punishment systems in place in many camps in Africa (id21 2003).

Finally, there is an emerging literature on migration and health, especially from Africa, which concentrates on HIV/AIDS and its spread. Brouwer and Biddlecom's (1999) study of Kenya

argues that migrants in rural and urban areas are more likely to practice unsafe or high-risk sex. This belief that migration can contribute to the increase in the incidence and spread of HIV/AIDS has led to some travel restrictions being placed on those with HIV/AIDS. However, WHO point out that there is no role for HIV testing among screening procedures for entry to a country.¹⁰

Access: A second major problem is with gaining access to good quality health services, especially for the poorest. For example, for many poor migrants it appears that access to healthcare is only available through private health clinics. This is both because of the way they are treated in public hospitals and because of issues around access as temporary (and 'illegal') residents. WHO (2003) draw attention to the problems experienced by undocumented migrants in accessing health services, particularly in industrialized countries. Rogaly et al. (2002) report that for most migrant workers in eastern India, access to health care is through the private sector, and this access is usually dependent on loans from employers. Ill health can be costly both in terms of time spent not being able to work, but also the research documents several instances where migrants were forced to liquidate all of their assets in order to pay for hospital treatment.

Related to this, and to a point made earlier about how the livelihoods of the rich and poor are interlinked, is the fact that access to health services in some countries is compromised by the high outflows (the so-called 'brain drain') of medical professionals. A survey of African countries in 1998 revealed vacancy levels in the public sector between 7.6 per cent (doctors in Lesotho) to 72.9 per cent (medical specialists in Ghana); and a 52.9 per cent vacancy level for nurses in Malawi (Dovlo 2002, in WHO 2003: 13). Dovlo concluded that the vacancy rates are leading to inadequate coverage and that some of the population's health needs will become increasingly difficult to meet if the trend continues. This leads WHO (2003) to recommend that the 'recruiting' countries should assess the impact of their policies on the health care in other countries.

There is evidence in the literature of the importance of health systems that can be flexible and culturally sensitive to migrants (see also WHO 2003). This need is certainly borne out by some of the studies of migrants' health-seeking behaviour. In a survey of migrant women's perceptions and

¹⁰ Such policies are ineffective and counterproductive for the following reasons: HIV is present in every country; it is impossible to close borders effectively and permanently; to the degree that people fear the application of restrictions they may enter or remain illegally, and with clandestine status are not likely to use preventative interventions (WHO 2003: 17).

experiences of state and private health provision with regard to reproductive health care, Unnithan-Kumar (2003) documents how Indian state hospitals and primary health care centres are more concerned with controlling fertility than addressing the widespread problem of infertility amongst migrants. Migrants therefore avoid using these hospitals or centres. Meanwhile, Shaokang *et al.* (2002) explores the obstacles to maternal health care access for internal migrants in Shanghai, China, seeking to understand why women migrants do not use the antenatal care provided.

Health Outcomes and the Household

Ill health, in a livelihoods framework, affects both the afflicted individual and other household members. In countries where the family is the dominant source of social welfare, it is the household that bears responsibility and cares for the ill person; and this can affect livelihood outcomes (and decisions). Illness can mean substantial amounts of time spent on 'nonproductive' kinds of work. For example, Rogaly and Rafique (2003) document how one adult female respondent from West Bengal took care of her paralysed mother from the age of seven. This obligation continued throughout her life, resulting in their shifting between villages several times in order to this, ending up living in her natal village despite her mother's death. Illness that requires medical assistance may also cause a household to go into debt. For example, a household in eastern India had to sell all of their goats to finance medical care for a sick child, and is also reliant on credit to see local doctors (Rogaly and Rafique 2003).

Migration can help to smooth household consumption throughout the year. Most literally, this can mean food consumption – critical to the capability to be well nourished. Rogaly and Rafique (2003:668) document how two landless nuclear households, with just one male earner, manage to survive when staying put during the period for seasonal migration. Both of these households reported fearing how they and their children would be able to get by – especially if someone fell ill. In order to manage during these periods, one respondent reported how she changed her cooking times, when her husband was away, so that 'children eat less often and she can save some food'. When her husband is at home she cooks 1.75 kg of rice per day. When he is away she only cooks 1kg of rice for 4 people per day. A migrant worker who had recently lost his wife reported how he was concerned about his dependent children sustaining a good diet whilst he was away (Rafique and Rogaly 2003). Nonetheless those migrants supporting families who have stayed put, through

sending remittances, can help to defend against the downward spiral associated with illness, especially in terms of shoring up social relations outside of the household – an important form of social protection (Rafique and Rogaly 2003).

Research on the outcomes of international migration points to the accompanying spread of ideas about health from industrialized countries. Hadi (1999) found indications that morbidity rates tend to be reduced in his study of Bangladeshi households where international migration was a part of the livelihood strategy. He argued that this is partly the result of increased wealth, which facilitates the attainment of a better quality diet and improved water and sanitation systems. Another factor, however, is the cultural effects of the migrant's exposure to western secular societies, where health concerns are part of daily lifestyle discourse. This in turn influences the migrant's own attitude to health, and such attitudes tend to be disseminated on return. 'Health seeking behaviour' is thought to be more typical of return migrants from industrialized than industrializing nations. For example, a scheme set up by Ivorian migrants in 2001 in France (MEDIREX) created a health insurance scheme that migrants could subscribe to and insure dependent residents in Cote d'Ivoire. A similar scheme was later set up by Ghanaians in Ghana for expatriate migrants to insure their Ghanaian dependents as well as providing a month's health insurance for their visit to Ghana each year.¹¹

7. Conclusions

This study has examined some of the literature that uses a livelihoods approach to analyse and understand how labour migration affects well-being outcomes of poor people. The review starts from a broad understanding of livelihoods, i.e. the tactical and strategic behaviour of impoverished people – the diverse ways people make a living and build their worlds (Whitehead 2002); and also looks at literatures that evinced an understanding of the dynamic and contested nature of people's lives, and life as part of a household or collective. These literatures adopted different approaches, including understanding characteristics of flows and streams, as well as documenting situated accounts of how migration affected people's lives, life course, and livelihood strategies.

¹¹ Tiemoko, 2004, research proposal on Health Insurance Schemes, to be funded by Migration, DRC. See also: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora/artikel.php?ID=38203>

A livelihoods approach refers to both the kinds of production the household undertakes – its ‘portfolio’ of economic and non-economic activities; and the kinds of assets it has at its disposal. The review has concentrated on assets that are important in the migration strategy, and those background factors that allow access to these assets and the extent to which they can produce a positive outcome. Different individuals embody or own these assets. In the case of the former, access to, development of, and the value of different kinds of assets depends *inter alia* on the social identity of the individual and the context in which that social identity has been constructed. The agency or autonomy of the individual to undertake different kinds of activities, gain access to or realize different well-being outcomes, will also impact on this. In addition, the kinds of investment made in different individuals, particularly investments in children’s education, depends on different types of return, or social norms, and these may have gendered outcomes. In some cases, analysis at household level does not show us how the livelihood outcomes are distributed by age and gender (who is invested in, and on what terms). The outcome, for example, could be very positive, though the benefits may be felt by only one person.

Despite problems with the lack of distributive focus, and the fact that some studies are insufficiently contextualised within global power relations, a livelihoods approach makes an important contribution to understanding people’s lives, especially poor people’s lives. As Whitehead and Kabeer (2002:iii) comment, ‘[A] livelihoods approach, which takes account of the key objectives which characterize households in poor, agrarian environments, and the multiplicity of ways in which they seek to attain these objectives, provides a richer and more nuanced account of the nature of poverty...’ The approach produces a wealth of situated information that reflects the complicated routes people take and their decisions. It also, in most cases, focuses on the people themselves – they are not lost as numbers, and their voices are heard.

This review has sought to examine findings on the livelihood outcomes of migration by poor people in relation to inequality, vulnerability, remittances, social networks and identity, education and health. Key findings are summarised below.

Inequality. Most migration is driven by a search for a better or more secure livelihood, and can be poverty reducing. The ability to access migration, to choose whether or not to migrate, and the

outcomes are not evenly distributed however. Whether the poor benefit as much as or more than the rich or less poor depends on their means (assets and resources) and strategies (networks, planning) as well as relations of power and inequality. The kind of work, distance, or, in short, access to opportunities is central, both for the composition of the migrant stream in terms of gender and other socio-economic differentiation, and for who profits from migration. Migration can break down, affirm or change social and economic relations, and not always through the conscious agency of migrants. Agricultural or industrial transition and changes in the relations of production, as well as patterns of ownership of critical resources can cause migration. The poorest can be excluded from migration, whilst some migration streams, for example international migration, can bring such rapid accumulation that they result in widening income gaps in the sending areas between those who migrate and those who don't, and changes in the nature of inequality itself.

There is also evidence that migration can reduce inequality, especially where a livelihood strategy becomes accumulative over time, with benefits accruing to present and future generations. The proceeds from migration can be used to gain access to resources; enhance status; and facilitate symbolic resistance to unfair practice leading to the improvement of conditions for workers and their families.

Vulnerability. Migration can diversify livelihood income sources with the potential to manage or reduce risk, smooth consumption, and create savings or access to credit in order to reduce or prevent risk. Section 3 considered situations where migration was a response to risk or a strategy to reduce household vulnerability. Migration may be caused by a lack of access to resources including physical, kinship networks, qualifications, etc. The degree of vulnerability may influence the form migration takes, with more vulnerable households migrating all together, while in other cases some household members migrate and others stay back to look after land or animals. There is evidence that, through remittances, migration can reduce the vulnerability of both household and migrant, by promoting co-insurance. Customary law, and social customs, for example those relating to marriage, affect these patterns of co-insurance and remittance behaviour.

Migration can however increase vulnerability especially when households become dependent on remittance revenues that result from unstable or unreliable employment. Migrants themselves

sometimes experience appalling living and working conditions, and are vulnerable to ill health, bodily harm, and having their savings stolen, and their wages not paid or underpaid. Migrants may not be entitled to the same support systems and formal welfare schemes. Meanwhile those staying put may also be reliant on kinship networks, the cost being felt in having to compromise. In addition many studies report the vulnerability of children and men when women migrate (e.g. through the creation of global care chains) and the vulnerability of women and children when men migrate. Finally, migration is an uncertain enterprise, which in some cases may constitute a net loss. This is thought to be especially true of undocumented international migrants.

Remittances. Remittances can benefit the poor directly through going straight into their pockets. Remittances can also have an indirect effect on the poor – through the creation of jobs and work in sending areas, for example building booms, etc. This depends both on how much is remitted, the context, what remittances are spent on, and the time period of analysis. Research indicates that poorer migrants remit more as a percentage of their total income than the rich, though this declines as incomes increase. Remittances diversify household income, co-insure household and migrant, and can also enhance the social status of the migrant and his/her household in the sending area.

A distinction may be made between situations where remittances contribute to a livelihood strategy that is coping as opposed to accumulative. Where there is a coping strategy, remittances may be necessary for the household to meet basic needs, and keep people alive. In addition, some kinds of productive investment are not accessible to the poor - i.e. livestock needs grazing land, and this can impede such a livelihood becoming more positive or accumulative. An accumulative strategy is one where remittances enable migrants to borrow (by improving their credit rating or substituting for capital markets), lend or save money, thereby enabling households to lift themselves significantly above the poverty line. International migration can be either a coping or accumulative strategy depending on the stream, and circumstances in the sending area, such as high rates of unemployment. Over time, livelihood strategies can improve or decline with impacts on future generations. Whether remittances impact on the economic development of a nation could be regarded as a moot point. Research indicates that remittances are spent on a variety of goods: houses, weddings, rituals, kinship networks, agricultural and other technology, clinics, schools, education and health care. Not all of these will have a macro 'economic development' effect (i.e. in

increasing GDP), although they certainly have symbolic value, and may be critical to the well being of poor people especially in situations where social support is non-formal.

Social Identity and Networks. These two areas are conceptually distinct but nonetheless linked, and the outcomes were investigated together in Section 5. Social identities are reconfigured and contested through migration: migration can enhance status, and enable occupational or social mobility. Identity is crucial in terms of accessing jobs, housing, as well as informal support networks, the structure of family life, intra-household relations and habits. It is at the intra-household level that decisions are made about who migrates and for what purpose, and their (gender) identity is crucial for this.

Social identity such as caste or kin may 'mobilise' a network that can enable migration to take place and can affect the outcome of the migration – i.e. allowing access to accumulative migration streams. These networks facilitate the establishing of relations with employers and exchange networks with other migrants. Investment in kinship relations and social networks are crucial as these enable migration in the first place, and also contribute to reducing the cost and vulnerability associated with migrating. Such networks effectively link two areas in social and economic space – some migrants even seeing origin and destination as part of a 'home territory' that they circulate within. This also leads to the dissemination of different values, norms, technologies and skills. However, transnational entrepreneurship, especially, reproduces social asymmetries along class, gender and racial or ethnic lines. International networks can facilitate the diaspora in playing a role in the economic development of their country.

Education and Health. Education can break the intergenerational transmission of poverty. There is evidence that it assists households and individuals in accessing more positive migration streams. One of the benefits of migration may be that the migrant gains education or a skill, indeed this may be a central purpose. Future generations may benefit through investment in education; many cases were documented where remittances enabled children's education. Whilst education can assist in the development of critical consciousness, understanding of rights and rights claims, education systems arise from a structure, and have political effects by, for example, discriminating against some social identities such as those of migrant children. Nonetheless education appears

to be a major factor in who benefits and is able to undertake migration, even if this is only in relative terms.

Healthier individuals may be more able to migrate, whilst migration may have significant health outcomes, both directly and by influencing access to health care. Ill health can exclude individuals from the opportunity to migrate and affect households through lack of income, cost of accessing health care, time spent 'caring' and associated restrictions on the carers' mobility. First of all, migrant health can be compromised during the migration process, and this is especially true for poorer and undocumented migrants. At their destination migrant workers may receive food of very poor quality leading to malnutrition; they may also be excluded from the public provision of food and other services due to their non-local status; living conditions can also pose a threat. Illness is extremely costly to the migrant in terms of the time spent not working, and the cost of treatment. Some studies also documented the impact of migration on an individual's psychological well being; and also of the experiences of migrant populations in detention centres and refugee camps. For a poor household, time spent caring for the ill is also costly, whilst the loss of a wage may be catastrophic. Illness can increase vulnerability greatly in 'left behind' families – and is something that they fear. Remittances can help to shore up social relations, a livelihood strategy to defend against the downward spiral associated with illness.

Research indicates the inequitable access of migrants to good health services, especially the poorest. Access to healthcare in some countries is further compromised by the brain drain of health professionals. A clear need is identified for health services to be more flexible and culturally aware and sensitive to difference – in order that migrants do not simply avoid using hospitals. Finally, international migration has contributed to the spread of Western-inspired 'health seeking behaviour' – such as health insurance schemes (co-operatives) for migrants and their families.

The evidence presented in this paper is mixed and inconclusive, especially as this relates to poor people. What is clear is that poor people adopt migration as one of several activities that constitute an individual's or household's livelihood strategy. It is difficult to understand the literature in terms of causality between migration and an aggregate outcome(s) in a particular sphere. It is clear that the initial income level and/or wealth of the migrant or the household from which the migrant

comes, is an important factor in the kind of migration undertaken, corresponding roughly to better or worse outcomes. However whether migration contributes to reducing risk and vulnerability is dependent on resource distribution, as well as the agency and social identity of individuals (which is contested and changes over time). Whilst social mobility by poor migrants is relatively rare, occupational mobility appears more possible and is a point made in several studies.

There are some clear gaps that may be identified within the literature. The first relates to the fact that livelihood strategies are context specific. More research could usefully be done to examine the way that the livelihoods of the rich and poor are connected. Also, the kinds of conflict associated with these kinds of relationships are important, such as strategies to exclude certain categories of workers or mixing workers to reduce worker unity; or where capital excludes local workers and they are forced to migrate. Related to this but also involving a temporal component, is work that looks at livelihood strategies across time and the distribution of resources and opportunities across different generations and genders. This means disaggregating the outcomes to the sub-household level to look at the well-being outcomes for male and female children, or the elderly. There also needs to be a greater focus on health and educational outcomes.

8. Bibliography

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