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Research Article

Prospects for the comparative study of international migration using quasi-longitudinal micro-data

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# Prospects for the comparative study of international migration using quasi-longitudinal micro-data

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### Abstract

### **BACKGROUND**

Longitudinal micro-level data on international migration behavior is notoriously difficult to collect, but data collection efforts have become more frequent in recent years. However, comparative research on the patterns and processes of international migration remains quite rare, especially that which compares across regions.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

We highlight the promises and difficulties of comparative international migration research, by offering a detailed comparison of two prominent data collection efforts.

#### METHODS

We systematically review existing sources of longitudinal and quasi-longitudinal individual-level and household-level data on international migration. We then compare two widely used data sources: the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) and the Migration between Africa and Europe project (MAFE).

### RESULTS

Data collection efforts are increasingly diverse, yet public accessibility to data remains limited. Also, comparability of data collected across settings can be complicated. In our MMP-MAFE analysis we show some ways in which comparability can be achieved.

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#### CONCLUSIONS

A primary roadblock to international comparative research is that, with some exceptions, the public accessibility of data remains low. Even when data is public and surveys are modeled after one another, comparability is not easy due to necessary tradeoffs in adapting surveys to local settings and to developments in the field.

#### CONTRIBUTION

We demonstrate that, despite great strides in collecting quasi-longitudinal data on international migration, limited data accessibility still hinders the study of migration. With regards to comparability, our article provides important lessons for future data collection and analysis efforts that could improve comparability and thus advance understanding of the complex dynamics of international migration.

### 1. Introduction

Compared to many other life events and transitions of interest in the social sciences, data on migration – especially international migration – is notoriously difficult and costly to collect (Black and Skeldon 2009; Willekens et al. 2016) and use (Beauchemin and Schoumaker 2016; Riosmena 2016). Migrants, by definition, are on the move and thus elusive. Most efforts to collect data either focus on origin or destination. At destination, representative samples of migrants are difficult to collect because migration is a relatively rare occurrence, migrants are difficult to locate (especially those with irregular status), and appropriate and efficient sampling frames are usually unavailable (González-Ferrer and Beauchemin 2011). At origin, surveys rely on return migrants' experiences or proxy reports on current migrants elicited from kin left behind. Perhaps more problematic is that efforts to sample migrants can suffer 'left censoring' when entire households migrate abroad or outside the survey area. Despite shortcomings, origin-based surveys can be useful in situations of circularity when migrants and/or members of their social networks frequently enter the geography of the context of origin.

Despite the difficulties of migration data collection, micro-level longitudinal data remains essential for understanding the drivers of migration, and two main strategies dominate data collection: 1) prospective longitudinal surveys and 2) quasi-longitudinal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Indeed, most surveys of migrants at destination aim to better understand issues of adaptation and well-being, rather than migration dynamics and motivations.

retrospective surveys.<sup>6</sup> The intent of many prospective longitudinal data collection efforts, often referred to as panel surveys, is not migration. Instead, the focus is on the representativeness of a dynamic population, and information is ascertained prospectively by locating and re-interviewing individuals across successive panels over time.<sup>7</sup> However, most fail to follow migrants who, by definition, are more likely to leave the survey area or country. One notable exception is the nationally representative Mexican Family Life Survey (MxFLS), which has invested heavily and been successful in locating and re-interviewing a large majority of respondents who migrated to the United States between waves (Goldman et al. 2014; Rubalcalva et al. 2008). That said, longitudinal approaches are resource-intensive and, in the absence of a large migration flow (e.g., Mexico–United States), their usually short panels might yield a relatively small number of migration transitions to study.

A second, somewhat more common approach is a quasi-longitudinal design, which is also known as a retrospective or life history survey. Rather than engaging in prospective tracking the goal is to collect comprehensive life histories, of which migration is a potential component, during a single interview. This approach is more in line with a standard cross-sectional survey in terms of sampling and thus can be less costly than a prospective longitudinal approach. Although retrospective surveys capture information that is essential for understanding the determinants of migration – information about the time before migration (Bilsborrow et al. 1997) – recall bias can be a problem. That said, evidence suggests that salient life changes like a long-distance move or an international migration are less problematic (Smith and Thomas 2003), and various survey instruments have been developed to increase the accuracy of retrospective data collection (see Beauchemin and Schoumaker 2016). Another concern, which can also be the case for prospective panels, is the absence of households who have entirely migrated out of the study area prior to interview, which can potentially bias estimates of emigration downward. 8

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive account of the issues related to the production and use of such data, see Beauchemin and Schoumaker (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In order to include a viable number of immigrants, some destination-based panel surveys employ a migrant 'boost sample' or oversample – e.g., the German Socio-Economic Panel (Dustmann 2003). Data collection efforts aim to reduce these biases by including a supplemental sample in destinations, or by gathering information on family members (most notably, the children of the household head who do not live in the sampled dwelling at the time of survey, but also siblings and parents of the household head) for the purpose of aiding the indirect estimation of international migration (Zaba 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Data collection efforts aim to reduce these biases by including a supplemental sample in destinations, or by gathering information on family members (most notably, the children of the household head who do not live in the sampled dwelling at the time of survey, but also siblings and parents of the household head) for the purpose of aiding the indirect estimation of international migration (Zaba 1987).

The lack of long- and short-panel longitudinal data and the relative paucity of information from retrospective, quasi-longitudinal data gathering efforts hamper our ability to understand many emerging (and older) migration circuits. This results in general theories and patterns of migration being based on locations where data is available, regardless of the distinctive qualities of many heretofore unsampled sending and receiving contexts. As a result, theoretical and empirical understanding of international migration has been largely built on the case of Mexican migration to the United States, which is known to be fairly exceptional in terms of migrants' sociodemographic profiles, as well as the broader context (Massey and Riosmena 2010; Massey and Sana 2003; Passel 2006; Riosmena 2010). This scarcity of information, along with the aforementioned shortcomings of existing surveys, make comparative research particularly difficult, challenging our ability to test and refine migration theories and understand the broad applicability of immigration policies (also see Riosmena 2016).

Strictly comparative studies are few and far between. Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) and Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) are prominent examples, but both focus on one continent of origin and destination. The International Association for the Promotion of Cooperation with Scientists from the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (INTAS), which surveyed Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, is another example. The Push and Pull (Factors of International Migration) Project, which was completed in the late 1990s, is one of the earlier multi-origin and multi-destination data collection efforts and focused on North-South migration flows to Europe. Technically this effort, with the inclusion of contexts of origin/reception in Europe, Africa, and Asia (i.e., Anatolia), included three continents, but it did not nor was it intended to offer insight into the Americas. None permits comparative cross-continental study of international migration. As a result, it is difficult to understand and test how universal findings for Mexican–US migration are in other, very different contexts.

In this paper we respond to a recent call for a comprehensive and disciplinary-boundary-crossing approach to international migration research, published in *Science* (Willekens et al. 2016), and argue that the comparative study of international migration is necessary for understanding migration's causes and consequences. We outline the prospects of such study by primarily focusing on international migration between less developed and more developed countries<sup>9</sup> (UNPD 2013), which represent nearly one-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> We employ the United Nations Population Division's designations for less-developed and more-developed countries (UNDP 2013), while recognizing the heterogeneity of countries and their diverse trajectories. More-developed countries include all regions of Europe plus Northern America, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, while other countries are 'less-developed'.

third (Abel and Sanders 2014) to 53% (Ratha and Shaw 2007) of the international migrant stocks in the world. First, we present an exhaustive (to the best of our knowledge) review of micro-level longitudinal and quasi-longitudinal surveys of international migration and identify key elements. Then, focusing on two – the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) and the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) Household data – we discuss their important characteristics (sampling coverage, measurement of key instruments) and comparability, and finally present some pertinent descriptive statistics of Mexican and Senegalese households and international migration.

# 2. Review of longitudinal and quasi-longitudinal micro-surveys of international migration

Here we review what we believe to be the most prominent sources of micro-level longitudinal and quasi-longitudinal quantitative data on 'South-North' international migration (Table 1). As mentioned above, we restrict the review to international migration between low/medium-income countries and high-income countries. The unit of interest is the individual or a member of the household or family. To understand the determinants of migration behavior, surveys must include information about both migrants and non-migrants at origin. Surveys failing to meet one or more of these characteristics are excluded (e.g., German Socio-Economic Panel, Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, New Immigrant Survey). Information about migration may be elicited directly from return migrants or through proxy reports by household members. Most surveys are origin-based, but a few are multi-sited at origin and destination (Beauchemin 2014). In Table 1 we identify principal characteristics: project name, years, origin/destination, survey type, sampling strategy, the principal investigator, funding sources, data accessibility,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> As a consequence, we have excluded innovative and influential data sources like the Men's Migration and Women's HIV/AIDS Risks project, a 2006–2011 panel survey of Mozambican women which included reports of husband migration, mostly to South Africa (Agadjanian, Yabiku, and Cau 2011, Agadjanian, Arnaldo, and Cau 2011; Yabiku, Agadjanian, and Cau 2012), and many household surveys at origin, like the Survey on Overseas Filipinos (Yang 2008; Yang and Choi 2007).

Longitudinal means that the data elicits – at least – timing information on one migration event from individual or household migration histories. We use the term 'quasi-longitudinal' to refer mainly to retrospective data collection efforts that may be left-censored (missing entire households which have migrated), and 'longitudinal' to refer primarily to prospective data collection efforts – or panel studies – that aim to follow and survey migrants at destination.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Our review does not include national censuses that permit the study of emigration. The list misses, for example, the 2000 and 2010 Mexican censuses.

and sample publications. Then in the following section we present a cross-continental comparison of two data sources of international migration.

Table 1 shows that data collection efforts of quasi-longitudinal and longitudinal micro-data of international migration have grown more frequent and diverse over time. In the 1980s the Philippine Migration Study and the Mexican Migration Project were the only projects of the kind. In the 1990s, six new projects started and/or were completed. In the 2000s, 14 new projects were developed. So far in the 2010s there have been three new projects. At the same time, the geographical range has expanded considerably. To date, at least six different surveys have been utilized to examine Mexican migration to the United States. Other migrations of interest are out-migrations from or within Latin America, Asia (East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia), Europe (Central Europe, South-East Europe), Africa (North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa), and the South Pacific.

While most surveys rely on retrospective information about migration, the Family Life Surveys (FLS) are prospective. The Indonesian FLS is probably the best known (http://www.rand.org/labor/FLS/IFLS.htmlhttp://www.rand.org/labor/FLS/IFLS.html), while the Mexican Family Life Survey and the Chitwan Valley Family Life Survey appear to be making substantial progress in collecting prospective information on international migration.

Unfortunately, while nearly all projects received significant public financing, only data from 11 of the 25 projects appear to be publicly accessible now. <sup>13,14</sup> Of these, six data sets cover Mexico, and another covers other Latin American nations (Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Haiti, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, all surveyed at different points), leaving only four accessible data sets of migration from the rest of the world (Push-Pull Project, Albania 2005 Living Standards Measurement Survey, Migration between Africa and Europe, and the Chitwan Valley Family Life Survey). This severely limits the ability of scholars to replicate findings or pursue new comparative research.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> In correspondence, principal investigators have cited consent (INTAS) or legal (Polish Migration Project) issues as barriers to public data availability.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Besides the 11 publicly available data sets, data from at least four other projects are likely to be available through the project PI. Two other projects (BEMS and TEMPER) are still collecting and/or preparing data.

Table 1: Review of quasi-longitudinal and longitudinal micro-data sources of international migration

Year/s Project Philippine 1980 - Migration 1984? Study	9	Origin Philippines (llocos Norte)	Dest.	Survey type	strategy	<u>-</u>	source/s	public?	website
	ppine atton y	Philippines (llocos Norte)							
	ppine ation y	Philippines (llocos Norte)			Random				
	ppine ation y	Philippines (llocos Norte)			baseline survey	Fred Arnold,	National Institute		
	ppine ation y	Philippines (Ilocos Norte)		Household survey	at origin +	Gordon F. De	of Child Health		
	ppine ation y	Philippines (Ilocos Norte)		(including list of former	longitudinal	Jong, James T.	and Develop-		
	ppine ation y	Philippines (Ilocos Norte)		HH members and	follow-up of	Fawcett (East-	ment (NICHD),		
	ation	Philippines (Ilocos Norte)	NSA	immediate family who	migrants in	West Popula-	Population		Arnold 1987; Caces et al.
	>	(llocos Norte)	(Hono-	live outside Barangay)	United States	tion Institute) +	Center Founda-		1985; De Jong et al. 1985;
			lulu)	+ Individual survey	and Manila	others	tion (Manila)	<i>د</i> .	Fawcett and Arnold 1987
									Curran and Rivero-
									Fuentes 2003; Donato,
									Wagner, and Patterson
									2008; Fussell and Massey
									2004; Massey and
						Douglas S.			Espinosa 1997; McKenzie
				Household survey (of		Massey			and Rapoport 2007;
				head) with retrospec-	Random	(Princeton) and			Riosmena and Massey
Mexican	can			tive migration info of	sampling of	Jorge Durand			2012;
1982 - Migration	ation	Mexico (selected		household members,	households at	(Universidad de			http://mmp.opr.princeton.e
present Proje	Project (MMP)	communities)	NSA	children of HH head	origin	Guadalajara)	NICHD, Hewlett	YES	/np
									Groenewold and Bilsbor-
									row 2008; Heering, Van
									Der Erf, and Van Wissen
					Random				2004; Icduyga and Unalan
					sampling of				2001; Schoorl et al. 2000;
					households at	Jeanette			narcis.nl/dataset/RecordID
					origin + mostly	Schoorl			/oai%3Aeasy.dans.knaw.nl
		Egypt, Ghana,	Italy,	Household survey	nonrandom	(Netherlands			%3Aeasy-
		Morocco, Turkey,	Spain	(answered by HH	sampling of	Interdisciplinary			dataset%3A61753/id/1/La
1996- Push	Push-Pull	Senegal (Se-	(Select	head + included info of migrants at	migrants at	Demographic	European		nguage/NL/uquery/push%
1998 Project	act	lected Regions)	Regions)	absent members)	destination	Institute)	Commission	YES	20pull/coll/dataset

Ta	ble 1	: (Cont	inued)		
	Sample publications + website	Osili 2007	Stecklov et al. 2005; evaluacion.oportunida des.gob.mx:8010/EVA LUACION/index1.php	Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2009, 2011; perl.psc.isr.umich.edu/ chitwanvalleyfamilystu dy1.html	Massey, Fischer, and Capoferro 2006, Massey and Riosmena 2010, Riosmena 2010, Sana and Massey 2005; lamp.opr.princeton.ed u/
	Data public?	<i>د</i> -	YES	YES	YES
	Primary funding Data source/s publi	Social Science Research Council, Ford Foundation	PROGRESA (Programa de Educacion, Salud y Alimentacion)/ Oportunidades	NICHD	NICHD, Mellon
	ឨ	Uka Okonkwo Osili (Indiana University)		William G. Axinn (Univ of Michigan, Ann Arbor)	Douglas S. Massey (Princeton) and Jorge Durand (Universidad de Guadala-
	Sampling strategy	Random sam- pling of destina- tion households + linked origin households in Nigeria	ENCASEH (Nov 1997 census of all communities considered) + Experimental design + Ran- dom sampling (ENCEL, follow- up surveys)	Random sam- pling of house- holds at origin	Random sampling of house-holds at origin
	Survey type		Census + Household panel, with retrospective migration data on current HH members	Prospective monthly panel of household members, migrants followed within Nepal (1977-2006) + new data collection in Western CV (2008)	Household survey (of head) with retrospec- tive info
	Dest.	USA (Chicago)	USA		vi II vi v
	Origin	Nigeria	Mexico	Nepal (Chitwan Valley)	Varying: Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru,
	Project	United States- Nigeria Migration Study	PROGRE SA/Opor- tunidades	Chitwan Valley Nepal Family Life (Chitwan Study Valley)	Latin American Migration project (LAMP)
	Year/s	1997	1997– 2000, 2003, 2007	1997– 2006, 2008	1998- present

Table 1: (Continued)

Year/s	Year/s Project	Origin	Dest.	Survey type	Sampling strategy	ī	Primary funding Data source/s publi	Data public?	Sample publications + website
	Paraguay-			Household	Random sam- pling of house- holds at origin + nonrandom	Emilio Parrado			
999	Argentina Migration Project	Paradilav	surv Argentina with (Buenos Aires) info	survey (of head) sampling of with retrospective migrants at destination	sampling of migrants at destination	(UPenn) and Marcela Cerruti	MacArthur, Pan American Health Organization	contact	Parrado and Cerruti
	IPUMS 10.5% sample of the 2000 Mexican census +			Census survey + Proxy reports of last trip house- hold member		Mexico Insituto Nacional de Estadística v	Mexico Insituto Nacional de Estadística y	:	Choi and Mare 2012; international.ipums.org
2000	Migration Supplement	Mexico	USA (97.3% of cases)	USA (97.3% of Jan 1, 1995 and cases)	Stratified duster design	Geografía (INEGI)	Geografía (INEGI)	YES	designs/sample_designs_mx.shtml
2002, 2005- 2006, 2009-	Mexican Family Life Survey	Мехісо	USA	Prospective panels of ALL adult members of Households + follow-ups with migrants, Random sam- including those in pling of house- the United States holds at origin	Random sam- pling of house- holds at origin	Gracieta M. Teruel (Universidad laberoamericana) and Luis N. Rubalcava (Centro de Análisis y Medición del Bienestar Social)	NICHD, US National Science Foundation (NSF), Fondo Conacyt Sedesol, etc.	YES	Creighton et al. 2011, 2012, Goldman et al. 2014, Nobles and McKelvey 2015, Rubalcava et al. 2008; ennvih-mxfls.org/english/inde x.html
2002- 2003	China Interna- tional Migra- tion Project	China (Fujian USA (New province) York City)	USA (New York City)	* Household survey (of head) with retrospective into at origin and destination *Community-level (village) questionnaire	Random sampling of households at origin + honds at origin + sampling of migrants at destination	Zai Liang, University at Albany SUNY	NICHD, Ford Foundation, NSF	contact	Liang et al. 2008, Song and Liang 2013, 2014; albany.edu/cimp/

Table 1: (Continued)

					Sampling		Primary funding Data	Data	Sample publications +
Year/s	Project	Origin	Dest.	Survey type	strategy		source/s	public?	public? website
					Targeted random				
					sampling of				
	Gender,				households at				
2002-	Migration and				destination +				Flippen and Parrado
2003 and	Health among		NSA		sampling of top	Emilio			2015; Parrado,
-9002	Hispanics		(Durham,		sending commu-	Parrado		contact	McQuiston, and Flippen
2007	study	Mexico	N.C.)		nities at origin	(NPenn)	ΞZ		2005
	"Vietnam	Vietnam		Individual survey of	Random sam-	Mark J. Van-			
2003-	migration	(Ho Chi	USA (New	randomly selected	pling of house-	Landingham			Fu and VanLandingham
2002	project"	Minh City)	Orleans)	household member	holds	(Tulane)	NICHD	٠,	2010, 2012a, 2012b
				Household survey,					
	Albania 2005			with retrospective					Stecklov et al. 2010,
	Living Stand-			migration histories			Albania Institute		Mendola and Carletto
	ards Meas-			of current and past	Random sam-	Albania	of Statistics, with		2012;
	urement			household mem-	pling of house-	Institute of	World Bank		microdata.worldbank.or
2002	Survey	Albania		bers	holds at origin	Statistics	support	YES	g/index.php/catalog/64
2005	Polish Migration Project	Poland (4 commu- nities)	Germany	Household survey (of randomly selected HH member) with retrospective migration histories of household members, close kin pling of house- and extended kin holds at origin	Random sam- pling of house- holds at origin	Frank Kalter	Deutsche Forschungs- gemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)	contact	contact Kalter 2010; Massey, PI Kalter, and Pren 2008

Table 1: (Continued)

	Origin Dest.	, v	Sampling strategy	Ы	Primary funding source/s	Data public?	Sample publications + website
Mexico		Rotating panel survey of ALL individuals in households for five consecutive quarters, reason for absence noted	Random sampling of households at origin	Mexico Insituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)	Mexico Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografia (INEGI)	YES	Villarreal and Blanchard 2013; inegiorg myest/contenidos/Proyectos/encuestas /hogares/regulares/ence/
Mexico		2006 Household survey, including information of international migration by household members in last 5 years	nationally representa- tive sample of house- holds at origin	Mexico Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), except 2006 by Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO)	Mexico Insituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)	YES	2006 survey employed by Massey, Rugh, and Pren 2010; Riosmena and Massey 2012; inegi.org.mx/est/contenid os/proyectos/encuestas/ hogares/especiales/end id/default.aspx
Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine	, n . n .	Household survey, including information of return migrants	Random sampling of households at origin	Nikolai Genov (Free University of Berlin)	European Commis-sion	~	Danzer and Dietz 2008, 2009; Genov 2008; Kutsenko 2009; Wallace and Vincent 2007, 2008
Georgia		Household survey with information about most recent migration of current and former household members	Random sampling of households at origin	GeoStat (Georgia National statistics office	GeoStat	٥-	Hofmann and Buckley 2013

Table 1: (Continued)

	400 100	i i i i i	1	1	Sampling	ā	Primary funding	Data	Sample publications
1641/5	riojeci	Oligili	Dest.	our vey type	sirategy		sonice/s	band	+ website
						Global Develop-			
						ment Network and			
						Institute for Public	Agency for		
						Policy Team	International		
						Londono: Marinioio	Dev. (Austrolia)		
						leaders: Mauricio	Dev. (Australia),		
						Cardenas (Colom-	Ministry of		
						bia), Mili Kaitani	Finance (Aus-		
						(Fiji), Robert	tria), Min. of		
				Honsehold		Tchaidze and	Foreign Affairs		
				survey with	Random	Karine Torosyan	(Finland), Min. of		
				information	sampling of	(Georgia), Francis	Finance (Lux-		
				about prior	households	Dodoo and lan	embourg ),		
		Colombia,		migration for	at origin,	Yeboah (Ghana),	Agency for Dev.		Gerber and
		FIJJ.		current	nationally	Elizabeth Thomas-	Coop. (Norway),		Toroyosan 2013,
		Georgia,		members	representive	Hope (Jamaica),	Min. of Foreign		Chappell et al.
		Ghana,		and current	in all	Zoran Nikolovski	Affairs (Spain),		2010, Torosyan,
	Develop-	Jamaica,		migration for	countries	(Macedonia), Dang	Dept. for Inter-		Gerber and
2007	ment on the	Macedonia,		former	but Colom-	Anh and Quynh	national Dev.		Goñalons-Pons
2009	Move	Vietnam		members	bia	Nguyen (Vietnam).	(UK)	٠.	2015
									Baizan et al. 2012,
				* Household					2014; Beauchemin
				surveys with					et al. 2014;
				retrospective					González-Ferrer
				migration					and Beauchemin
				information					2012; Liu 2013,
				*Retrospec-					2015; Mezger,
				tive individual					Kveder and
				dnestion-	Random				Beauchemin 2015;
		Democratic		naires to	sampling of				Toma and Vause
		Republic of		randomly	households				2013, 2014;
		Congo,		selected	at origin +				Vickstrom 2014;
	Migration	Ghana,		household	mostly				Vickstrom and
	between	Senegal		members in	nonrandom				González-Ferrer
	Africa and	(Major		origin +	sampling of				2016;
2008-	Europe	capital		migrants in	migrants at	Cris Beauchemin	European		mafeproject.site.ine
2010	(MAFE)	regions)	Europe	destination	destination	(INED, Paris).	Commission	YES	d.fr/en/

Table 1: (Continued)

;			,	,	Sampling	i	Primary funding Data	Data	
Year/s	Project	Origin	Dest.	Survey type	strategy	Ы	source/s	public?	tions + website
				* Longitudinal	Contact family				
				survey of migrants,	members				
				same questionnaire	reported to be				
				as Chitwan Valley	_				
				FS. plus migrant	(and elsewhere		NICHD.		
			GCC (Bahrain,	GCC (Bahrain, module, *3 inter-	abroad) by		Georgetown		
	Nepali		Kuwait, Oman.	views (one vear	Chitwan Valley	Arland	University Qatar		
	Migrants to		Qatar, Saudi		Family Life Study		Center for		Williams, Thornton,
	the Gulf	Nepal (Chit-	Arabia, UAE)	migrants, 2 inter-	respondents		International and		and Young-
2009	Study	wan Valley)	+ else-where	views for others	(2009)	Michigan)	Regional Studies	٠.	DeMarco 2014
						María			
						López			
	Moroccan					Hernández	University		
	Migration		Spain (Na-		Destination-	(Univ. de	Foundation of		
2013	Project	Morocco	varra)		based?	Navarra)	Navarra	ċ.	Lopez 2014
	Bangladesh			* Household					Donato et al. 2016a,
	Environment			surveys with		Katharine			2016b;
	and Migration	_		retrospective	Random sam-	Donato		.⊑	vanderbilt.edu/ISEE
2013-	Survey	Bangladesh		migration infor-	pling of house-	(George-	US Office of	prepara-	Bangladesh/about.p
2014	(BEMS)	(Southwest)		mation	holds at origin	town)	Naval Research	tion	
		Eastern							
		Europe							
		(Romania,							
		Ukraine); Latin							
		America							
		(Colombia,							
		Argentina);							
		Sub-Saharan							
	Temporary	Africa (DRC,				Amparo			
	vs. Perma-	Ghana,				González-			
	nent Migra-	Senegal);				Ferrer			
	tion (TEM-	North Africa	France, Italy,			(CSIC,	European	in col-	
2015	PER)	(Morocco)	Spain, UK		Origin-based	Madrid)	Commission	lection	temperproject.eu

# 3. Introducing the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) and the Migration between Africa and Europe Project – Senegal (MAFE)<sup>15</sup>

In order to illustrate some challenges to and the potential of comparative international migration research employing longitudinal/quasi-longitudinal data, we use two publicly available data sources that are relatively comparable, the 2000-2012 surveys of the Mexican Migration Project and the 2008 Senegalese samples of the Migration between Africa and Europe Project. The MAFE project collected two surveys at origin: a household survey and an individual biographical survey (for a summary of how topics overlap between MAFE HH, MAFE BIO, and MMP, see Table 2). Although the MAFE individual survey contains rich amounts of retrospective life history information, the MAFE household survey is more suitable for use in comparison with the MMP, for two primary reasons. Both the MMP and MAFE are household surveys. Both use the household head as the primary reference for other individuals on the household roster (household members and children of head, independent of residence). Future work, however, could also explore using the MMP and MAFE individual surveys. Data and supporting documentation (including questionnaires and sampling criteria) of both the Mexican Migration Project and the Migration between Africa and Europe project are freely available on their respective websites (http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu/ and http://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/en/).

## 4. Background

Since 1982 the Mexican Migration Project has collected socio-economic information on Mexico-United States migration (MMP 2016). The project initially started in Western Mexico but has since expanded (MMP 2016). In each wave, several communities are chosen using anthropological methods, so that each community includes some migration to the United States (MMP 2016). In every community, several locations (by level of urbanization) are surveyed, and the household ethno-survey is administered to a representative sample of households. To maintain as comparable a period of observation as possible with MAFE, this paper analyzes recent MMP data from 2000–2012. We focus on 12,530 Mexican households in 83 communities.

In 2008 the Migration between Africa and Europe project collected socioeconomic information about Senegalese migration to Europe and other countries by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> MAFE-Senegal investigates Senegalese migration to France, Italy, and Spain, while the larger MAFE project also examines Ghanaian migration to the United Kingdom and The Netherlands and migration from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Belgium and the United Kingdom.

administering household surveys in Senegal and retrospective biographical questionnaires in Senegal and to Senegalese living in France, Italy, and Spain (MAFE 2016; Beauchemin 2012; Beauchemin et al. 2014a). 16 In the greater Dakar region, firststage sampling was based on the 2002 census and systematically selected census districts with a probability proportional to their estimated population. In each selected district, households were then stratified according to the presence of return migrants and household members abroad, versus households without either current or return migrants. In a final stage, one or several respondents were selected from each household. The stratification in Dakar aimed to obtain sufficiently large samples of households with migrants – a rare group – and thus resulted in their overrepresentation in the samples (Schoumaker and Mezger 2013). The Dakar region is home to about a quarter of the national population, and is the origin of 31% of international migrants reported by Senegalese households in the 2001-2002 ESAM-II survey (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie 2004). In this paper we focus on 1,141 household questionnaires administered in Senegal in 2008 to 458 non-migrant households, 205 households with at least one return migrant, 617 households with at least one current migrant, and 139 households with both return and current migrants. The household response rate was 86.4%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The project was extended in 2009 to include the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana, as well as the primary European destinations for migrants: Belgium and the United Kingdom for the Congolese, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for the Ghanaians. The methodology used in these countries was similar to that employed by the Senegalese study: Indeed, the household and biographical questionnaires were nearly identical in content and format (Beauchemin 2012; Beauchemin et al. 2014a).

## 5. Survey instruments

Table 2 illustrates the general topics covered by the MAFE and MMP questionnaires.

Table 2: Comparison of main survey topics of the MAFE (household, biographical) and MMP surveys

MAFE Household Survey	MMP (ethnosurvey V, 2007-2011)	MAFE Biographical Survey
Household roster information		
	Household Roster, dren of head of household <sup>17</sup>	Retrospective histories of household rosters for each residence where interviewee ever lived; non-resident children of HH head not included
• .	hics for household members , relationship to head, etc.)	Relationship to interviewee
Household/Migrant network migrat		
Household migration out of Senegal	Household migration to United States, Canada <sup>18</sup> , within Mexico	Migration out of Senegal
Information about 1 <sup>st</sup> and las	t migration trip of all household members  Information about household head's parents and siblings' 1 <sup>st</sup> United States trips of and whether currently in United States	Full migration histories of all of interviewee's parents, siblings, spouses and children; and those extended family and friends 'who helped or could have helped'
Current document status for household migrants	Count of ever and current migrants in each category: uncles, cousins, nieces/nephews, friends, siblings-in-law, children-in-law, parents-in-law, friends Specific documents of household migrants' 1 <sup>st</sup> and last trips to United States Document history for household head and spouse at each job in United States /Canada	Full (work and residence) document histories for interviewees who had ever or were currently abroad.
Migrant contact and transfers		
Nature of migrant-HH contact For each household migrant, Details of remittances to HH (frequency, channel, last amount, how spent)	For household head or other migrant, details of remittances to household (purpose, average amount)	Histories of interviewee's regular transfers (start/end years, destination country)
Transfer of goods and use	Savings brought to Mexico and use	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The MAFE household questionnaire also elicited information about three other categories of individual: migrant partners of household members; migrant parents of household members under 18 years old; and other migrant kin with whom the household head or spouse had regular contact over the past 12 months.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> This information was only collected for selected communities.

Table 2: (Continued)

MAFE Household Survey	MMP (ethnosurvey V, 2007–2011)	MAFE Biographical Survey
Assets		
Household d	urable goods and vehicles	
Details :	about current dwelling	Limited details about all dwellings
Details of other plots of land	Details about other properties: land, housing, business	Present or past land, housing, business holdings for interviewee
Marital, fertility & labor force inform	ation	
Current marital status of each household member	Marital history of head	Partnership history of interviewee
Ferti	lity history of head	Fertility history of interviewee
	Business or investment history of head	Business history of interviewee
Current labor status, occupation,	Labor history of head	Labor history of interviewee
category for each household member	Labor history of head's spouse	
Other		
1 <sup>st</sup> Return, place of birth, current residence for each household member	Health, use of public services, undocumented border crossings	Return migrations, migration attempts, asylum applications, citizenship history, associations

### 6. Basic definitions

*Migrant*. The MMP collects information about migrations to the United States (some later waves have separate modules for migration to Canada), while MAFE collects information about international migrations in general (a migration is defined as at least one year lived abroad).

Country of origin. In general, the country of origin is Senegal for MAFE-Senegal respondents and Mexico for MMP respondents and usually represents individuals' country of birth. The MAFE household questionnaire includes information about individuals' birth country, year of immigration to Senegal (if born abroad), as well as first out-migration from Senegal for all individuals.

Children of Household Head. All children reported by the household head, regardless of place of residence at time of survey.

Household Membership. MAFE and MMP identify household membership slightly differently (see Figure 1a). MAFE identifies HH members as those living in the household for the last six months or who have the intention of living there for at least six months, while MMP identified HH members as those "eating from the same pot"

(MMP interviewer's manual 2012). Both surveys include all children of the household head, whether or not they are co-resident. Also, as seen in Figure 1a, the MAFE household questionnaire includes all migrant spouses of current household members, all migrant parents of minor children living in the household, and other kin with whom the head or spouse have been in regular contact over the previous 12 months. As a result, MAFE data can be used to fit a strict (actual or intended coresidence) or a broader (including migrants) definition of household.

Timing of migration. Year and destination of first migration are reported for all household members and children of the household head for first migration to the United States (MMP) or outside Senegal (MAFE). Year of first return to origin is reported for all return migrants.

### 7. Comparison of key measures of MAFE household and MMP

What individual information is included and for whom? In Figure 1a, we see that MAFE HH includes a broader group of individuals than the MMP. Both surveys included detailed information about household members, as well as all children of the household head and spouse. In addition, MAFE collected detailed information about different migrants who are linked to the household at the time of survey: partners of any current household member, parents of any minor child who is living in the household, and migrant kin with whom the head or spouse have been in regular contact. While the basic demographic information collected by both surveys is identical (Figure 1b), MAFE HH also captures information about individuals' ethnicity, nationality, and labor market activity.

What do we know about household migrations? Both surveys also collect information about household member's migrations (Figure 2), including similar basic information about the first migration (year, destination). In addition, the MMP collects legal status, marital status, and occupation for both first and last (or current) migrations. Given the possible heterogeneity of household members and diversity of migration flows, MAFE HH collects basic information about immigration (to Senegal), first outmigration (from Senegal), first return migration (to Senegal), and more detailed information about current migration (legal status, purpose of migration, whether household support received).

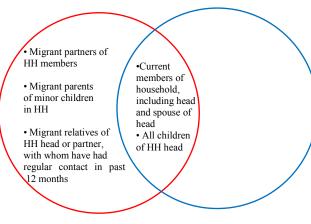
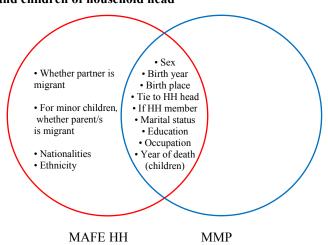


Figure 1a: Individuals for whom detailed information is collected

Figure 1b: Demographic information collected for current household members and children of household head

**MMP** 

MAFE HH



Notes: MAFE and MMP elicit education information differently. For example, MMP identifies years of education, depending on a scheme that includes adult education. MAFE codes specific types and levels of formal education, excluding Koranic school, basic literacy, and national language school (MAFE household survey). Furthermore, differences between the educational systems of Mexico, DR Congo, Ghana, and Senegal should be considered.

Current activity or job information is collected slightly differently. MMP identifies 'occupation' and asks interviewers for 'specification'. MAFE also identifies 'occupation', but asks interviewers to identify 'socio-professional category' (intellectual/higher-level wage-earner, skilled employee, unskilled employee, employer, self-employed, apprentice, family help). MAFE also identifies whether individuals are unemployed, students, homemakers, retired, or otherwise inactive.

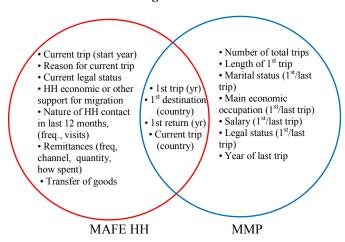


Figure 2: Household members' migration histories

Notes: MAFE identifies migration as at least one year abroad in any country outside country of origin (DR Congo, Ghana, and Senegal), while MMP identifies migration trips to the United States as those involving "work, an active job search, or a reasonably stable residency" (MMP 2012 Interviewer's Manual: 13). Year of 1<sup>st</sup> return can be gleaned from MAFE's question about the 1<sup>st</sup> return – at least one year at country of origin – or calculated from MMP's question about duration of the 1<sup>st</sup> trip.

Legal status is also captured differently. MAFE offers 'yes/no/does not need/don't know' answers to whether the individual currently has "the residence permits/official documents that would allow him/her to stay in the county where he/she is", while the MMP offers a whole range of documents and "undocumented".

Whether the individual holds destination citizenship can be calculated from MAFE and is available from the MMP household survey.

What do we know about migrant networks? Both the MMP and MAFE collect information about migrant networks beyond migrant spouses or migrant children of the household head. The MMP collects more limited information for a larger group of individuals and MAFE collects more comprehensive information for a more select group of network members. Figure 3a shows the network members reported by each survey. Specifically, the MMP has a broad migrant network roster (details of any parent or sibling of HH head migration, and summary information of other categories), while the MAFE household survey's network information is limited to relatives of the household head and spouse who are currently abroad and with whom the household has been in regular contact over the 12 months previous to the survey. All other individuals are selected by the quality of their current relationship to the household. As a result, the MMP includes return migrants in select kinship categories, while MAFE HH includes no return migrants who live outside the household. Figure 3b displays the information collected about migrant networks.

Figure 3a: Network members

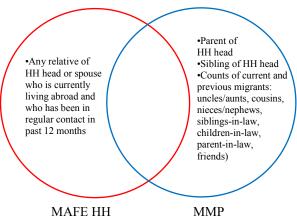
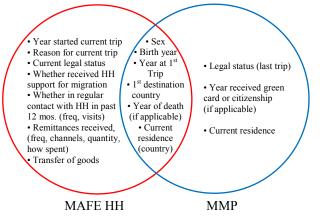


Figure 3b: Information about (non-spouse, non-children) network members



# 8. Characteristics of family migration experience in Mexico and Senegal

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for individuals and households in Mexico and Senegal. Mexican results are also stratified by type of region: ranchos, small towns, large towns, and metropolitan areas. For Senegal, the region of Dakar, although mostly metropolitan, also includes several small towns and rural areas. Overall, Senegalese households are larger than Mexican households: Average household sizes are 7.9 in Senegal and 5.9 in Mexico. This reflects Senegal's higher fertility, with a total fertility rate (TFR) of 5.3 in 2005, <sup>19</sup> while Mexico's TFR is estimated at 2.4 births per woman (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie 2013; United Nations 2011). The complexity of household structures in Senegal is reflected in its larger households, where several family nuclei are commonly found living together. According to the 2002 Senegal Census, a quarter of all marriages are polygamous unions. Most of the population belongs to ethnic groups where, upon marriage, the wife usually moves to the home of her husband's family and shares the household chores and caring tasks with other women of the family, including co-spouses if her husband is polygamous and her new sisters-in-law (Poiret 1996). As was expected in the discussion of sampling design (the assignment of household headship in MMP to absent males), more than a third of households are female-headed in MAFE-Senegal, while only between a tenth and a fifth of MMP households are female-headed. These figures are also related to the malepredominant nature of migration out of Senegal, particularly migration to Europe (Liu 2013; Schoumaker et al. 2013; Toma and Vause 2014), while by 2010 nearly half of Mexico-born individuals in the United States were female (Donato and Gabaccia 2015). Moreover, among both internal and international Senegalese migrants, living apart from their partners is a frequent and long-lasting situation (Baizan, Beauchemin, and Gonzáles-Ferrer 2014a). Findley estimated that between 43% and 68% of couples in Senegal experience this situation at some point during their lives (Findley 1997: 125).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Urban areas had a 35% lower fertility than rural areas (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie 2013).

Table 3: Family migration and household characteristics in Mexico and Senegal

	Mexican M	igration Proj	ect			MAFE-Se	negal	
	Ranchos	Small towns	Large towns	Metro- politan area	All places	All	Living in HH	Living in HH + children of HH head
Households								
No. people in household	6.5	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.9	10.2	7.9	9.2
No. children of household head	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	4.7	3.4	4.7
% Female-headed	12.6	13.3	13.3	17.5	14.1	34.2	34.2	34.2
% of HH with ever migrant on HH roster	49.6	40.1	44.4	23.1	38.6	56.6	26.3	38.1
% of HH with current migrant on HH roster Individuals	27.1	18. 6	24.3	12.0	19.5	47.4	0.0	19.0
% Living in the household	66.9	68.9	69.4	72.0	69.3	78.6	100.0	85.7
% Female	50.2	50.5	51.0	50.6	50.6	50.1	50.4	51.4
% Ever migrated	14.9	12.7	14.9	6.7	12.2	13.3	6.0	8.6
% Currently abroad	8.5	6.7	8.6	3.8	6.7	44.7	-	22.6
Age at first migration	24.1	23.1	22.8	24.7	23.4	23.7	23.2	21.7
N (communities/census districts)	19	34	14	16	83	60	60	60
N (households)	2,094	3,895	1,881	2,853	10,723	1,141	1,141	1,141
N (individuals)	13,571	31,358	13,039	15,930	73,898	12,350	9,671	11,319

Notes: Weights were applied to the Senegalese data. Weights for the Dakar region rely on computing sampling probabilities at each stage of sampling (census districts and households, as explained above). By applying weights for the different stratified groups they become proportional in the analyses to their real number in the population (Schoumaker and Mezger 2013).

Individual-level indicators also illustrate differences between the Mexican and Senegalese cases. Nearly a quarter of the individuals included in the MAFE household survey do not live in the household. This reflects both survey inclusion rules (discussed above) and differences in migration prevalence and nature. Nearly a quarter of Mexican households have US migration experience, compared with only one-eighth of Senegalese households. At the same time, it appears that more Senegalese are currently abroad than Mexicans. On the one hand, Senegalese-Europe migration differs from that of Mexican–United States migration in that it is less often circular, leading to lower return migration rates (González-Ferrer et al. 2014). On the other hand, relatively little is known about Senegalese migration to other African countries, although it is thought to be much more short-term and to involve greater return migration (Adepoju 2004; Lucas 2006). Finally, Senegalese appear to migrate abroad at younger ages than

Mexicans. Previous work provides some insight, but more systematic research is needed to fully explain this. For instance, studies of Mexican migration to the United States describe an inverted 'U' shaped relationship between a husband's migration and the family life cycle (Lindstrom and Giorguli-Saucedo 2007; Massey et al. 1987). A husband's migration is least likely at the start of marriage and prior to the arrival of children, and then rises with parenthood and as the income needs of the household grow. No such effect has been reported for Senegalese migration to Europe. By contrast, studies emphasize men's need to accumulate resources prior to marriage, often leading to migration at an early age (Baizan and González-Ferrer 2014b).

The discussion in this section illustrates how harmonized samples for different migration flows can help to reveal substantive differentials and commonalities in the characteristics of each migration flow and in the origin population. Yet it also shows how easily these characteristics can be confused by methodological differentials in the surveys.

### 9. Promises and limitations of comparative research

Cross-national, cross-continental comparative research of international migration holds great promise. First and foremost, it is essential for examining how well current theories of migration hold up under scrutiny in a variety of contexts. Are the drivers of international migration similar for individuals and families from many different origins? Are individuals and households driven by similar motivations to migrate? Do they pursue similar strategies? How well does the current scholarly literature help us understand and examine current flows of migration? What are the limits of current migration theory? In which ways do theories of migration need to adapt or expand or get specific? Under what conditions do specific theories/factors become more/less relevant? Second, while helping us identify possibly universal aspects of international migration, comparative research also enables us to begin identifying and analyzing the importance of context-specific characteristics like gendered norms, household expectations, labor market institutions, or specific policies. Such research could be important for contextualizing influential in-depth ethnographies, case studies, and noncomparative quantitative work. In a world where globalizing influences are on the rise, understanding whether and how local contexts influence international migration is particularly important.

There are multiple limitations to comparative research on international migration (see Riosmena 2016). First, different migration flows have different levels of circularity, and circularity is influenced by the maturity of migration streams and public

policy. As a result, the predominantly origin-based or retrospective natures of surveys are particularly troublesome. Who do we capture? Which migrants are missing?

Second, since most migration surveys are not nationally representative of origin contexts, differing sampling frames may inhibit comparative research. The two surveys analyzed here, the MMP and MAFE, have notable differences in scope. While most MMP surveys sample predominantly rural areas in Mexico, the MAFE-origin samples focus on the major urban areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, and Senegal. Because processes of urbanization, internal migration, and international migration are intimately intertwined, the absence of rural areas in MAFE and overemphasis on rural context in MMP can inhibit efforts to carry out comparative analysis. The study of the (macro) context emphasized in the previous paragraph and its possible interaction with micro variables involves the specification of relevant contexts (national, regional, local) for data collection. As a result, robust comparative research is complex for both theoretical and empirical reasons.

A third difficulty refers to the definition and measurement of meso-level contexts in a longitudinal perspective, in particular social networks and households. There are well-known difficulties in defining and analyzing households across time (e.g., Adato, Lund, and Mhlongo 2007; Bauman 1999; Duncan and Hill 1985). Existing data usually provides only a fragmentary view of the household context: its composition, economic exchanges, etc. For instance, MMP focuses on the migration and labor market trajectories of the household head (current) spouse, but provides little other longitudinal information about other household members. In addition, there is even less agreement on how social networks are defined and data collected in existing surveys. Which categories of individuals are included? How to characterize the (strength of the) relationships? What individual characteristics should be collected? This, again, can be illustrated by the comparison of MAFE and MMP, which followed different strategies to collect information about social networks.

### 10. Discussion

We have highlighted some of the challenges facing scholars of international migration (Willekens et al. 2016). Despite recent calls to collect multi-sited quantitative data (Beauchemin 2014), we expose other concerns regarding longitudinal micro-data on international migration.

First, in a context of increasingly diverse data collection efforts, the public accessibility of collected data remains low. Our inquiry suggests that even many publicly funded data collection efforts have failed to make or keep data public and available to researchers, even after a reasonable time frame, and that in some cases

there have been legal impediments to doing so. Anticipating and resolving legal restrictions on data publication before data collection and publishing migration data on sites like the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) are necessary. The preparation of data for publication is very resource-intensive, and is affected by fieldwork delays and strict grant timelines. As a result, a grant (and access to funds) can end before data preparation and publication are complete. If these are not remedied, past and future investments are lost.

Second, even when data is public and surveys are modeled on one another, comparability is not easy. Our research note examining the compatibility of MMP and MAFE household surveys shows that even simple descriptive statistics are precious, and may reflect diverse decisions in data collection (see also Riosmena 2016). Thus researchers are well advised to anticipate theoretically important research questions that would benefit from comparative analysis and incorporate these into the survey instruments.

Finally, despite these difficulties, there is promise for cross-comparative analysis of households and migration across different contexts. Using the MAFE household and MMP surveys, Liu, Riosmena, and Creighton (2015) examine the gendered role of family position and network-derived social capital in how international migration experience is distributed within Mexican and Senegalese families and find evidence of family obligations and differential investments in children. A comparative lens and accessible and longitudinal micro-data are essential for understanding the true and complex dynamics of international migration.

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