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One key area of concern within the root causes of rural to urban migration, is examined to provide material for a suggested way forward.

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Preface

Why root causes?

The contested nature of the root causes approach emerged from a reading of Zolberg et al.'s *Escape to Violence* (1989). It appeared that the approach claimed to have one aim, the improvement of conditions in the countries of origin, but was in fact resulting in a quite different outcome, an increase in control, deterrent and prevention mechanisms towards those seeking asylum or other 'unwanted' migrants (Martin & Taylor, 2001, p.95). Indeed, the very existence of root causes activity or an 'integrated approach' (EU, January 1999a, point 12) provided justification for the EU to strengthen its preventative measures.

Further reading revealed that some positions held by root causes proponents seemed inconsistent with a full understanding of migration processes. The role of rural-urban migration, an undifferentiated view of migration and a failure to incorporate segmented labour market theory provided justification for the activities and approaches of root causes proponents. These concerns initiated the topic as a dissertation but were augmented by the suggestion from my supervisor, Dr. Richard Black, that the High Level Working Group (HLWG) demonstrated the root causes approach in action, and so the topic was broadened to include analysis of this group.

Methodology

Discussion here of the theoretical elements of the root causes approach, and its historical and political context are informed by existing literature (see bibliography). The material covering EU policy and the HLWG is based on primary documentation from the EU and NGOs as outlined in the bibliography, and interviews with policy makers. The documents have been used to identify the activities of the group, to assess its success or failure by its own criteria and as sources for assessing the failure of the root causes approach, and the HLWG in particular, to incorporate an adequate understanding of migration processes. Interviews were designed to contextualise primary documentation, to add background information, to address criticisms of the project and to gain an insight, not so far apparent in

existing literature, into the workings of the group. I am particularly indebted to Lars Lonnback and Maureen A. Barnett at the EU, Dr. Maria-Teresa Gil-Bazos and Lars Olsson at Amnesty International, Areti Siani at ECRE for sharing time, knowledge and documentation with me.

1. Criticising the root causes approach

The emergence of the approach

The 'root causes' approach, also termed a 'comprehensive approach' (Thorburn, 1996, p. 120) focuses on identifying causes of forced migration and attempting to modify them through activities in the countries of origin. There are obvious merits in tackling causes of conflict and other causes of distress to people in developing countries but when it is motivated specifically by the desire to prevent migration this can be counter-productive. In addition the root causes approach emerged as a policy solution to migration issues and is not adequately supported by theory. It encompasses some misconceptions of the reality of migration which undermines its *raison d'être* as well as its strategies. This paper will draw out these issues and analyse some alternative approaches.

There is no consensus in this area about exactly what a root causes approach is, what the root causes are or how they affect the movement of people. One area, which requires some clarification, is how far this approach can distinguish or chooses to distinguish between different types of migration. Originally the approach was designed to tackle refugee flows but there is increasing consideration of all migration under the root causes approach, as developed countries have gone through the cycle of closing down migration opportunities, attempting to restrict all migration and now moving towards a stance in which migration is 'managed' (EU, Sept. 1998, p.2) but still extremely

have qualified as refugees but did not need to be part of the 'refugee regime' (Zolberg et al., 1989, p.18 & passim) because they were able to move under family reunion rules or labour migration programmes, are now forced into the asylum system. On the other side of the coin, people who want to move to work in developed countries may also use the asylum system in the absence of any other routes. This path may be exacerbated by the increasing use of 'agents' who provide the necessary documents and routes for people hoping to enter developed countries. In the light of these factors it is easy to see how the root causes approach has come to apply as much to migration, which is assumed to be economic as it is to that which is often called 'political' migration. Despite the complexity of motivations accompanying migrants, policy makers must be aware that there are some people, denied the safety of their own state, who need safeguards to ensure that they can reach asylum in a country that will protect them.

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The convergence of asylum and migration in the policy context has a strong political element to it. The refugee regime has its roots in the post-World War Two situation and in the Cold War. During the Cold War there was a strong ideological incentive for states to accept refugees, which initially mainly came from communist countries and then tended to come from countries where one or other side had a strategic interest (Loescher, 1993, p.55).

After the oil-crisis of 1973 and economic retrenchment by powerful states, migration became less acceptable but states discovered it was not possible to close the door entirely. Family reunion meant that migration continued and continuing conflict and easier modes of travel meant that more asylum seekers were reaching developed countries (Zolberg et al., 1989, p.229). The end of the Cold War meant that refugees were no longer ideologically useful (Chimni, 1995, p.298) and this coincided with fears that uncontrolled East-West migration could result (Westin, 1999, p.35). These factors meant that migration and asylum increasingly became seen as problematic, whilst the end of the Cold War opened the door to political solutions.

Action (CPA) for Vietnam, which established regional solutions as a target of the root causes approach (Loescher, 1993, p.190 & Adelman, 1999, p.98). Regional solutions prevent states from having to accept responsibility for refugees seeking asylum with them and maintain the view that flows of migrants are the responsibility of the sending country.

The desire of states to devolve responsibility for forced migrants is well served by the root causes approach. The long-term nature of most of the issues covered by this approach conflicts with the immediate needs of migrants in the North and the South but it allows states to derogate their responsibility. Hathaway points out that states are happy to engage with root causes as they have 'few immediate consequences' and that 'agreements in principle and statements of intention are a small price to pay for a deflection of focus from the failure of the international community to come to grips with the protection needs of today's involuntary migrants' (Hathaway, 1991, p.117).

As well as these political criticisms, commentators have identified a number of criticisms about the empirical content of the root causes approach. Looking at these areas will provide material for comparison with the root causes approach in practice. The areas to look at are criticisms of the causes that have been identified, the effect that these causes have, the effect of actions to tackle causes, and then its structural approach.

Empirical criticisms

Many commentators have observed the

development and forced migration. Schmeidl sees that poverty could be a 'trigger' (2001, p.82) for refugee movements and points out how geo-political changes at state level have happened more peaceably for wealthier states (2001, p.83). Castles & Loughna review the arguments about the role of underdevelopment, stressing the complexity of the relationship. They concentrate on the role that underdevelopment can play in conflict, when underdevelopment is a result of 'corruption and authoritarian rule' (2002, p.13).

Another criticism of this aspect of the root causes approach is that the process of economic development (as indeed of any change to societies) can itself lead to forced migration. One aspect of this is that improved circumstances may lead to emigration of those who were previously prevented from leaving by inadequate resources. This is known as the 'migration hump' (Martin & Taylor, 2001, p.105) and is matched by a 'refugee hump' (Zolberg, 2001, p.14) created by the process of democratisation. Economic development can also create forced migration if development perpetuates inequitable distribution. Zolberg et al. point out that policies for economic reform can contribute to 'uneven development' and that economic aid can have 'an uncertain or unexpected impact on the structure of social conflict' (1989, p. 262). Chimni looks at how the specific features of the international global economy can 'exacerbate ethnic tensions' (Chimni 1998, p.361). Meanwhile, Weiner stresses the political roots of forced movement and asserts that 'economic development may be neither necessary nor sufficient to remedy these political conditions' (1996, p.32), while higher incomes or a reduction in inequality could 'reduce conflict in some countries but actually intensify it in others' (1996, p.31).

A criticism of the roots causes approach which takes these objections a step further says that while economic and social change can drive migration, any attempt to stop migration can also hinder this change, and that an attempt to prevent population movements is 'the equivalent of trying to oppose social change' which is both 'impossible' and 'undesirable' (Zolberg et al., 1989, p. 262). Even conflicts have a role to play in certain circumstances and 'not all conflicts can

or should be prevented' (Weiss, 2001, p.210) as 'violent change may be a necessary path towards a more just social order' (Zolberg et al. 1989, p.263).

Structural criticisms

Conceptions of a just social order are also at the centre of a structural critique of the way that the root causes approach is applied. We have seen on page 8 how the root causes approach assumes responsibility for forced migration lies with the countries of origin (Loescher, 2001, p.173, Chimni, 2000, p.258). The approach concentrates on turning to the countries of origin to provide solutions for the conditions that are assumed to give rise to migration, without taking into account the influence of international or global conditions. Zolberg et al's book *Escape from Violence* is quite firmly placed in the geo-political conditions of the 1980s with the Cold War and apartheid South Africa dominating international relations, but it more widely establishes the role of external influences on refugee-producing regimes which 'have emerged under conditions shaped by external strategic and economic interests' (1989, p.264). More recently Zolberg has reiterated this point with reference to France and the U.S. in Indochina (Zolberg, 2001, p. 9). In a speech on Refugee Day 2002, the UK's Minister for the Department for International Development alluded to the exertion of external influences in the conflicts of developing countries when she said 'Countries suffering most from conflict are those with the richest resources – this is not an accident'².

Zolberg et al. criticise the root causes approach for failing to grasp the implications of its internalist viewpoint and for maintaining an apolitical stance because the 'causes of refugee flows are not apolitical' (1989, p.32). As well as the political structures of the world, which Zolberg et al. analysed within the specific historical conditions of the late cold-war years, they also identified global economic conditions. They pointed out that poor countries have no choice but to participate in the global economy on disadvantageous terms (1989, p. 231). More recently Chimni has criticised the internalist approach of root causes advocates by

critiquing 'global relations of domination' (Chimni, 2000, p.244) which render the development process inequitable and lead to the 'mass violation of human rights' (2000, p.251). He sees that the internalist approach exculpates those countries that are truly responsible for refugee flows caused by 'the geographical spread of capitalism and the politics of imperialism' (Chimni, 1998, p. 359) and therefore absolves them from responsibility. These structural criticisms make an important point about the contradictory nature of the root causes approach, which demands changes from countries of origin while perpetuating conditions, which encourage migration. This is encapsulated in the response of Abdelkrim Belguendouz commenting on the High Level Working Group Action Plan on Morocco at a conference in 2001. He said, 'if you don't want to allow Moroccan tomatoes to enter, well, you'll get Moroccan people'³.

These criticisms of the root causes approach: the political (absence of political will, abrogation of responsibility for asylum), issues addressing the empirical content of the approach (questioning the causes that have been identified, the effect that these causes have and the effect of actions to tackle causes) and criticisms of its structural approach (the internalist/externalist debate) underline the premise of this paper. Most of the criticisms of the root causes approach have been based on theories of economics or conflict prevention. The root causes debate is, however based on the movement of people and as such should be evaluated in the light of migration theory. This paper will therefore also look at the emergence and development of the root causes debate to see where a failure to adequately account for theories of migration will lead to its failure. It will go on to look at how a re-conceptualisation could provide a beneficial rather than repressive root causes approach. Below, the application of the root causes approach in European policy is evaluated in the light of these criticisms.

labour migration opportunities in this context). It does not acknowledge that restricting the movement of 'illegal' migrants has a preventative effect on all migrants including refugees.

The 1994 communication identifies conflict as a cause of forced migration as well as two other causes, which are considerably more controversial: Demographic and ecological pressures. Work by Kibreab and Black has questioned the role of ecology within forced migration. Kibreab suggests the emergence of 'environmental' refugees is an attempt to de-politicise the causes of displacement (1997, p.21) while Black is concerned that writing on environmental refugees has more to do with 'bureaucratic agendas of international organizations and academics than with any real theoretical or empirical insight' (2001, p.14). On demographic issues Schmeidl specifically addresses the issue of population pressure and forced migration. She looks at both Weiner's approach of population pressure as an 'underlying cause' and at population pressure as an 'accelerator' (2001, p.82). However her quantitative analysis leads her to conclude 'none of these variables could significantly predict refugee migration once political factors were controlled for' (2001, p.83) and indeed she also finds that countries with higher population densities can produce less out-migration in situations of civil war (2001, p. 83). This debate about the 'causes' of migration is not engaged with in the 1994 EU document.

Despite these flaws there are some elements of this 1994 paper, which provide a more sophisticated view of migration processes, which could have contributed to the development of a root causes approach. One is that despite its failure to adequately distinguish the characteristics of migrants whether forced, economic or 'illegal' the paper does make some statements about the necessity of differentiating between different groups of migrants with different experiences as 'not all groups behave alike' (EU, 1994, p.18). The suggestion that these differences should be looked at seems a good one but unfortunately the agenda of the paper reveals itself in the technique suggested, which is 'profiling' (EU, 1994 p.18) a term more

commonly used with respect to criminals than to broad-based sociological research.

The other area, which seems to suggest some potential for innovative thinking within the root causes approach, even if belatedly and half-heartedly, is an acknowledgement that countries of origin have an important role to play in migration issues which affect their citizens. It raises the suggestion of looking at the patterns of movement within a country and how that relates to international migration. As this paper will show, if the EU could adapt its root causes approach to the extent that real dialogue with other countries and real understanding of migration processes could inform its activities, this concept could offer some chance of progress.

Despite the groundwork that was laid for a European migration and asylum strategy no progress was made on the back of the 1994 communication. The third pillar structure, and the difficulty of co-ordinating the differing approaches of states in an area that touches so directly on sovereignty, could be a reasonable explanation of the slow progress, but another explanation was put forward in a strategy paper on Immigration and Asylum by the Austrian presidency of the EU in 1998. This outlined the shortcomings in the Commission's communication in terms of 'no comprehensive political approach ... no operational work programme ... and no action plans' (EU, Sept. 1998, p.3). In addition, the strategy paper claims that developments in terms of rights for immigrants have been constrained by 'the incessant influx of illegal migrants and the effects of migration crises on demographic policy'. This paper will show how these assumptions led to the adoption of the particular root causes approach of the High Level Working Group which limits its effectiveness and results in a highly restrictive policy. The 1998 paper therefore merits some analysis.

Austrian Presidency's Strategy Paper on Migration and Asylum Policy 1998

The Austrian presidency's strategy paper was not uncontroversial. It was subject to much revision and complaints from a number of NGOs particularly regarding a proposed overhaul of the Geneva Convention which would have

moved from 'protection concepts based only on
the rule of law to include politically oriented

HLWG, with an emphasis on resettlement of refugees away from Turkey (EU, Sept. 1999c, Annex III p.4). Similarly UNHCR stresses in its Annex to the Albanian plan that Albania cannot be considered a safe third country for asylum seekers and therefore readmission should be considered carefully to avoid refoulement.

One of the preoccupations of the Moroccan Action Plan is to prevent migrants using Morocco as a route to reach the European Union. As a result there are a high number of restrictive policies including encouraging Morocco to use a rigorous visa policy particularly towards nationals of West African states (EU, Sept. 1999d, p.16) which reinforces the concern that 'Fortress Europe' is being pushed further out and could prevent refugees being able to seek asylum in safety. Internal contradictions in the Action Plan on Afghanistan also point directly to possible issues with human rights, particularly relevant during Taliban rule. Again there is an emphasis here on encouraging reception in the region, mainly in Pakistan and Iran where most Afghan refugees reside. However, at the same time as readmission agreements are being sought with Iran and voluntary return encouraged (EU, Sept. 1999a, p.25), there is also a project underway to address the issue of forced repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan (EU, Sept. 1999a, p.22), still relevant while EU states do not consider forced returns safe for Afghan asylum seekers. These contradictory policies suggest that if the EU returns rejected Afghan asylum seekers to Iran it could result in refoulement.

There are contradictions within the Action plans in terms of development issues as well as human rights. The benefits of migration for development are mentioned in passing, but in reality legal options for migration are so limited (for example seasonal agricultural workers in the UK, students, or skilled workers such as IT experts in Germany) that this is unlikely to be a viable option in the short to medium term. In fact the emphasis of the Action Plans on restriction of migration and asylum could have a directly negative impact on development as indicated within the Albanian plan. In the analysis of migration the plan states that 'it is commonly acknowledged that one person per each Albanian family is living abroad and

contributes to the family maintenance. Albanian economy currently relies heavily on emigratory remittances' (EU, Sept. 1999b, p.12). It also acknowledges that this is likely to continue (EU, Sept. 1999b, p.30). Bearing this acknowledgement in mind it seems counter-productive to stress the importance of preventative measures such as increased visa requirements (p.37), and an emphasis on return, readmission (p.39, p.41) and an attempt at deterrence through information campaigns (p.39).

Activities of the HLWG

One of the main concerns with the root causes approach as encapsulated by the HLWG is that while some of the restrictive and control policies are focused, actionable and measurable, most policies on the political, economic and development side are vague, ill-defined and unmeasurable. This confirms the impression given in policy documents that the root causes approach is in fact only concerned with restricting migration at any cost rather than with alleviating the situation in countries of origin. In addition the very nature of these root causes policies encourages a restrictive approach in the interim period. The 1998 strategy paper says that the root causes approach 'is not a substitute for restrictions on immigration and border controls' (p.20) but the failure to engage with improving conditions in the countries of origin means that only the restrictive policies have any effect.

The approaches outlined in the sections of the Action Plans on foreign policy and development assistance are quite wide-ranging, reflecting the different situations in the various countries, with emphasis on diplomatic, economic or humanitarian efforts depending on the situation. However most of them cannot be described as 'actions' when they are as vague as 'stimulation of the democratic process' for Northern Iraq (EU, Sept. 1999c, p.16), 'measures to stimulate the respect for human rights and minorities' in Albania and the neighbouring region (EU, Sept. 1999b, p.35), or 'consider ways of supporting Somalis in achieving sustainable development of peace, stability and economic development', (EU, Sept. 1999e, p.24) amongst many others. By contrast, the prescriptions in the 'migration' section of the Action Plans are remarkably

consistent, despite the differing conditions. The 'migration' section of the Action Plans include voluntary repatriation, return of failed asylum seekers, measures to tackle 'illegal immigration racketeering' (EU, Sept. 1999e, p.27 and EU, Sept. 1999f, p.14), increased use of Airline Liaison Officers, training of officials, especially with regard to visas and false documents, and information campaigns. There are still some ill-defined policy suggestions such as the integration into society of citizens of these states legally residing in the EU and measures to improve reception and protection in the Action Plan countries and those neighbouring them but, as can be seen in the following assessment of progress, it is only the restrictive migration policies which have made any progress at all.

The HLWG has made very little progress in implementing any of the objectives of the Action Plans. It made a report to the European Council in Nice where it outlined the reasons for its slow progress including the difficulties of working across the different policy areas 'whose interests do not necessarily coincide' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p. 14), the difficulty of reconciling the priorities of 'national administrations' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.14), and the difficulty of trying to divert resources from other departments' budgets rather than having a dedicated budget. In addition to these internal difficulties the HLWG has been the target of criticisms from commentators who have expressed concern about the weight given to restrictive migration policies and from the target countries themselves who are understandably concerned to be presented with plans dictating policies that will affect their internal, economic and foreign policy activities, with very little consultation (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.15). The Nice report suggests that these criticisms rest on 'misunderstandings' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.15) and a 'sense of a lack of consultation', which can be overcome without changing the fundamentals of the HLWG approach but instead by improving communication.

The presentation of the achievements of the HLWG in 2000 (EU, Nov. 2000b) is as vague and ill-defined as its original aims. The measures carried out are not related directly to the Action Plans and there is no indication of how success or otherwise could be measured or assessed.

The actions are a combination of administrative elements such as meetings, spending from non-HLWG budgets such as ECHO (humanitarian) and MEDA (Mediterranean-Europe project) and actions carried out by individual states. Despite the concerns of the introductory document (EU, Nov. 2000a) to stress the balance between foreign affairs, economic and migration activity, most of the measures and actions are migration-related. In the Morocco section only four out of 19 measures are not directly migration-related, in the Afghanistan section only six out of 17 are not migration issues and in Iraq seven out of 14.

The emphasis of the HLWG on restrictive migration measures has been exacerbated by the introduction in 2001 of a budget line (B7-667) dedicated to enacting some of these migration-only measures (EU, Sept. 2001). The justification for this new budget is that although there are Community budget lines for the areas of development and economic assistance no 'appropriate budgetary allocation' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.17) is available for migration issues. This justification does not acknowledge the difficulty of 'integrating objectives relating to migration into development policies' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.14), despite the availability of funds, thereby risking further over-emphasis of the control and restriction elements of the HLWG's activities. In 2002 some efforts have been made to overcome this barrier by attempting to investigate links between migration and development. The Spanish presidency instigated a questionnaire and report process for member states on the issue (EU, Feb. 2002) but this has not yet resulted in any meaningful contribution from most member states⁴.

One of the main difficulties for the HLWG in

The ambition for 'dialogue, cooperation and co-development' (EU, Sept. 1999g, p.6) can also be seen to be over ambitious. The countries targeted by the HLWG have been presented with a *fait accompli* and there has been a 'lack of consultation' (EU, Nov. 2000a, p.15). Countries targeted for action have been threatened with sanctions should they fail to comply. In discussions with Turkey (regarding the Iraq action plan), a report from the Spanish presidency states that Turkey 'had to be reminded of its candidate-country status' particularly with regard to potential 'funds and credits' (EU, Feb. 2002, p.4) which denies the HLWG claims to 'cooperation and co-development'. The HLWG has failed even the limited aims it set itself. As a tool of the root causes approach it also lays itself open to criticisms in more general terms.

The HLWG and criticisms of root causes

The mainstream criticisms of the root causes approach were outlined above (pp.10-14) and include the lack of political will to tackle the root causes issues, structural criticism of the internalist stance of the approach and empirical criticisms of the content of the approach. Here, the HLWG is measured against these criticisms.

There are two strong indicators that the HLWG's failings are at least partly related to issues of political will. Firstly the migration agenda of the HLWG undermines any attempt to make lasting changes to the conditions in countries of origin as we have seen from the action plans' shift of focus. Related to this, the agenda of the HLWG does not accord with that of other EU departments, particularly the development Directorate and as a result there is a clash of political will which, so far, the HLWG has not resolved and is unlikely to, due to the existence of national agendas for development. The foreign affairs element of the HLWG is more likely to include migration considerations in its dealings with other countries (for example readmission agreements) but the major changes that have happened in Kosovo or Afghanistan since late 1998 have not been driven by the HLWG and, although there is a migration element in each of these interventions they have been prompted by very specific circumstances. By comparison the Sri Lankan government

refused all international intervention in its internal conflict for years (EU, Sept. 1999f, p.7) and the EU did not have the will to intervene beyond diplomatic manoeuvres.

Internalist criticisms can certainly be, and have been, levelled at the HLWG. The examples above of the lack of consultation with the action plan countries are an obvious starting point. In addition, criticisms of the emphasis on regional solutions for asylum problems also point to an internalist approach. Most damningly ECRE points out that despite the emphasis on ensuring that countries in the regions of origin or transit countries can provide support for an asylum system and protection for refugees there is no reference to the responsibility of EU countries to provide asylum for refugees (ECRE, Oct. 1999, p.2). The issue of free trade as encapsulated by Belguendouz⁸ and also discussed by Myers (1996, p.18) is at the heart of the root causes dichotomy for the EU. Economic development issues are highlighted as one of the priorities for tackling root causes, but

factors implicated in such a complex causal relationship can be unpicked is debateable, as the criticisms of the empirical content of the roots causes approach has shown. It is certain that the limited attention paid to these issues by the Action Plans cannot hope to accurately represent the causes of migration in such diverse countries.

This analysis of the HLWG shows that the EU's root causes policy has so far failed to engage with root causes either on its own terms or on the terms of those commentators who have criticised the root causes approach in general. The failure of the HLWG to enact its policies or to engage with a wide range of actors who could help it in its aims can be ascribed to failures of the underlying approach. In the last section of the paper I will examine the conceptual failings of the root causes approach which suggest that policy measures such as

3. Is there a way forward for the root causes approach?

This final section of the paper will show how a failure to incorporate a theoretical understanding of migration processes has led to the difficulties of the root causes approach. It will also consider whether, if these flaws were addressed there would be a way in which addressing root causes could be used to make migration issues more of a choice and less of a necessity for those in developing countries. Could root causes become more in tune with other policy aims such as those of development organisations? Bearing in mind the requirement of states to control immigration, is there a way in which the root causes approach could use a better understanding of migration to inform immigration issues? These issues will be considered by addressing the conceptual basis for root causes, some more useful concepts that could be integrated into root causes and finally how migration itself could be used to improve the root causes approach.

The sedentarist bias

Policy and writing on the root causes approach is dominated by a 'sedentarist bias' (Malkki, 1995, p.509). This assumes that in their ideal states populations are sedentary, they do not move except as a result of economic, ecological or political upheaval. Associations are made between functioning and 'moral' (Skeldon, p.142, 1990) societies, which are sedentary, and dysfunctional and problematic societies, which are associated with people moving, particularly towards cities. Malkki elucidates this idea in a paper on return in which she describes a discourse which sees something dysfunctional about refugees being out of their country of origin. Conceptually this discourse sees states

and causes means that the issue of remittances is discussed but as we have seen in the issue of the Albanian Action Plan (above, p.23), not resolved.

Finally, the sedentarist bias, as expressed in the root causes approach, does not acknowledge multiple actors, multiple migration experiences and the multiple outcomes of these experiences. Instead migration is aggregated into a reaction to an economic, political or ecological crisis with certain social, economic and political outcomes. This is expressed in the EU Strategy document on Immigration and Asylum which refers to a 'tide of illegal immigration' (EU, July 1998, p.32) offering no differentiation between types of migrants, origins or circumstances, as does Prodi's comment on 'destabilising' migration cited above. These assumptions lead to an expectation that the outcomes of migration are likely to be negative for countries of destination, and negative for the places of origin.

Migration and development

The complexity of these variables is particularly relevant when looking at the relationship between migration and development which, as we have seen (above p.8), is at the heart of much of the root causes debate. De Haan reviews the conflicting opinions on the relationship between migration and development in four key areas: how development affects migration in areas of origin and destination, and how migration affects development in areas of origin and destination. He concludes that there is 'little consensus in the literature' (1999, p.22), a view echoed by Skeldon who says that whether migration is seen as positive or negative for development 'will depend very much on the context' (1997a, p.195), and Nyberg-Sorensen et al. who believe 'current thinking is still tentative and available evidence sketchy' (2002, p.40). The number of variables including differences in time, economics, issues of equity and distribution, gender relations, distances and the functioning of social networks between places make it difficult to draw conclusions across regions, different people and times.

Despite the complex relationships between migration and development it is important to draw out some generalisations in order to

consider a useful way forward for the root causes approach. There is an understanding that 'policies that accept the wider mobility of the population are likely to accord with policies that will enhance the well-being of greater numbers of people' (Skeldon, 1997b, p.3 & p.15). However this is tempered by a number of other observations about the relationship between migration and development. One is that migration policies have different impacts on the poor and the better off, whilst another is that the effect of migration is likely to be 'consistent with populations' social and cultural values' and 'embedded in social relations' (De Haan, 1999, p.15). This can result in migration increasing inequality, because of the different opportunities available to different people (De

The Action Plan acknowledges that barriers to flight prevent the poorest from leaving (EU, Sept. 1999f, p.7) but at the same time action points within the Development and Economic Cooperation sections focus on targeting 'the poorest', a trend confirmed by the Nice report (EU, Nov. 2000b) which details actions being taken to enact the Action Plans. This conflicts with the HLWG's aim to reduce migration to the EU and is likely to be the effect of development priorities having a higher profile in the Sri Lankan Action Plan drafted by the UK and which incorporated input from DFID (The Department for International Development).

The above issues identify where the root causes approach fails to incorporate an adequate understanding of migration issues but they also point to areas where migration theory could inform a more useful version of the root causes approach. Looking at the issues raised by root causes proponents' abhorrence of rural to urban migration will elucidate how this could happen and what might be a more effective way forward for the root causes approach, embracing a more holistic understanding of migration issues.

The role of urban migration in improving the root causes approach

The sedentarist bias of the root causes approach reveals itself in concerns, not exclusively with international migration, but with internal migration as well. Bissell & Natsios reveal that their concern is not only with 'international' migration but with all movement, citing 'urbanization' as a 'symptom of the destruction of a stable, integrated social and economic system' (2001, p.311). This anxiety about movement to the cities is characteristic of the sedentarist bias. In Papademetriou's assertion, quoted earlier, that development and migration weaken attachment to traditional ways of life, there is no engagement with the questions raised by the reference to a 'traditional way of life', especially those concerned with the role of migration within a 'traditional' society.

Papademetriou's stance is typical of those who see movement as severing previously inseparable ties. The EU strategy document of 1998 also identifies rural-urban migration as a destructive and destabilising force leading inexorably to unemployment causing internal

migrants to drift into international migration (EU, Sept. 1998 p.8). Governments also often see rural to urban migration as a threat to stability (De Haan, 1999, p.4 and Harris, 1991, p.55) as the traditional view of rural-urban migration is of a 'flood' of migrants destabilising the political, social and economic equilibrium of the city (Skeldon, 1990, p.152 and see Kaplan, 1994). Governments often want to slow migration to the cities or stop it altogether but these policies have not been successful (Harris, 1991, p.58; De Haan, 1999, p.4; Skeldon, 1997b, p.14 & Sommers 2000, p.1).

Despite the fact that most movement is between

believes that the 'transfer of population from rural to urban areas seems to be an integral part of any process of development – not one poor country is highly urbanised' (Skeldon 1997a, p. 2) although there is 'nothing inevitable about urbanisation in all parts of the world' (Skeldon 1997a, p.197) it does appear inevitable in those areas where rapid development is occurring. In addition it is impossible to consider rural and urban environments separately as 'there is continual interaction between urban and rural and any attempt to delimit them into separate sectors will be artificial' (Skeldon, 1997a, p.54). Theories of circulation and networks stress the links between places of origin and destination or 'simultaneous engagement in [places] of origin and destination' (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002, p.18) including flows of remittances, information and which may or may not include return. This can also be true of urban refugees as well as other types of migrants. Refugees sometimes embody all the fears of migration in terms of exacerbating urban poverty and presenting security risks (Sommers, 2000, p.2-3) but they tend to reflect other patterns of movement within the country, and for some parts of the world that is seen as a movement towards urban areas (Sommers, 2000, p.4). However, refugees and other migrants alike continue to send remittances to their country of origin (Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002, p.26). For example, Bissell & Natsios outline the seasonal movements of refugees from Cambodian and Liberian camps to their homes and back (Bissell and Natsios, 2001, p. 307).

As we have seen, the opportunity to migrate improves the livelihoods of the poor but they are not able to move as frequently or as far as the comparatively better off (Skeldon 1997b, p.7). As such, the role of rural-urban migration suggests itself as a valuable area of investigation for those concerned with the root causes of international migration. If improving the circumstances of the poorest people is one of the aims of root causes perhaps the migration of the poorest should be examined for useful lessons. Ways should be sought to make it easier for the poorest to take advantage of migration and to draw them into 'local and regional circuits of migration' in order to increase their options and choices (Skeldon 1997b p.15).

Theoretically, the root causes approach has been flawed by its sedentarist approach to migration. In practice, the HLWG has not been close enough to development or to migration theory to understand the role of migration, particularly rural-urban migration. It has not been focussed enough to develop coherent policies towards cities and their role in migration and its understanding of migration is not good enough to address these issues in a productive way. If the root causes approach could encompass a better understanding in these areas the rural-urban story could provide a way in which the movement of people could enhance international development objectives while preserving states' requirement to limit international migration towards the north.

Conclusion - A way forward?

Threaded throughout this paper has been the suggestion that the failures of the root causes approach can be attributed to a number of theoretical and practical shortcomings. We have seen how mainstream criticisms of the root causes approach have identified political, empirical and structural criticisms of the root causes approach and policy attempts to address the root causes have been seen in this light. In addition, the root causes failure to account adequately for the complexity of migration itself has been elucidated and a possible area of development outlined.

Ultimately the root causes approach needs to be overhauled if it hopes to achieve benefits for the countries of origin and to fulfil the requirements of developed states for restricted migration. Initially developed states need to understand better the role of migration in development and as a result of this some aspects of migration should actively be enhanced for the poorest, in order to tackle root causes more efficiently.

One important area where this enhancement of migration could take place is to look at the circulation of migrants. This implies not only physical circulation but transnationalism in all its forms including the flow of remittances and the operation of social networks. One way to increase the benefits of circulation is to make barriers to migration permeable, as rendering migration 'illegal' enforces one-way migration or limits the contribution migrants can make to their home societies by making movement risky. Similarly, where circulation can be less risky, between cities and rural areas, efforts should be made to increase the profitability of migration for the poorest and to encourage schemes which share the benefits more equitably and without exacerbating conflict in times of war (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002, p30).

The benefit of remittances is one of the most hotly contested areas in terms of their contribution to development and inequality (De Haan reviews the arguments, 1999 pp22-26). Some international development agencies are working to leverage the impact of remittances through formalisation and regulation, savings and micro-credit institutions. However much of

the remittance flow comes irregularly and informally (De Haan, 1999, p.23) so may bypass these institutions. Kibreab describes how urban refugees with relatives overseas migrated to Khartoum to facilitate the delivery of remittances (1996, p.161). A way to leverage the benefit of remittances is to enable non-migrants to provide services to migrants, in order to spread the benefits beyond the immediate group (Skeldon 1997b, p.7). The relationship between aid and remittances must also be considered as remittances may 'replace, supplement or even undermine aid' (Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002, p.33) and there is little experience of cooperation between the two areas.

The complexity of connections and diversity of cause and effect in different situations around the world might lend itself to an 'action plan' approach similar to the one taken by the HLWG in the EU but with a number of caveats. Initially it would be vital to consider how the countries should be selected, not driven by migration concerns, but taking into account a number of factors including development objectives. Secondly any 'action plans' should not be static paper documents but dynamic interactions between the parties involved. In addition they should be thoroughly researched rather than created in isolation from experience on the ground. This implies they should not be created in EU fora but with the genuine participation of countries of origin with an understanding of the implications of external as well as internal factors.

Bearing these suggestions in mind, it is worth considering, in conclusion, how they would fit in with initial conceptions of the root causes approach. This approach is a long way from the HLWG model, which is driven by home affairs and political considerations. This new approach would be driven by development and foreign affairs considerations and would be informed by a more complete understanding of migration. However it is not entirely unrelated to some of the original root causes ambitions. In the 1980's when the UN debated the root causes approach its concerns were human rights, the rule of law, civil society and more equitable trade relations (Zolberg, 1989, pp259-260). If root causes can be refocused to give migrants

more choice over whether to move or not and tackle forced migration rather than purely preventing all migration it is likely to be more effective and more equitable.

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