

*International Migration and Economic Development:
Lessons from Low-Income Countries*

by Robert Lucas

Cheltenham (UK) and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2005

ISBN: 1845423836

Hardcover \$108.00, xvi + 360 pp.

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Robert Lucas has written an important and engaging book about a subject in international people migration that has received relatively little attention. Research and writing about international migration has tended to focus on three aspects of that movement, namely (1) the actual act of migrating, (2) the effects on the receiving countries or areas of the migration, or (3) the effects on the sending countries or areas of the migration. While (1) and (2) have received most of the attention, Lucas has focused on the third: what is the impact of international migration on the sending or the origin country or area? His book offers a clear, well organized, well researched picture of the development that may or may not take place in the sending regions that can be linked directly or indirectly to the fact that people have emigrated to other countries, areas, or regions. In his picture of development, economic development is emphasized, but other connections with the sending areas are also included; material is included that, for example, relates to the social effects of emigration on those who do not migrate. The discussion is quite complete, with no obvious omissions.

There are two general points to note at the start. The first is that this book was published in 2005. This means that the data included and the literature and other research reviewed in this book generally end in about 2002 or (in the case of much of the data) 2000 or 2001. This is just a fact and is neither good nor bad, but eight or nine years have passed since then. There may well be more recent data that would be useful to have, or different perspectives may have been published since. The second point relates to the Canadian audience of this journal. There is not much reference to the Canadian situation in this book; there is a great deal of material on other countries and regions, but most of the material with reference to North America refers to the United States.

In examining the empirical effects of international human migration on the sending areas or countries, Lucas has used four migration areas for particular

attention. Using his titles, those regions are (1) migration to the European Union, (2) contract workers in the Persian Gulf from South and Southeast Asia, (3) the brain drain to North America, and (4) migration transition in East Asia. Because these four migrations are used as illustrations throughout the book, they provide a unifying theme so that comparisons across those four regions can be made throughout. Where useful and appropriate, data are also included from other migration stems and other sending countries or regions, but the four flows noted above provide most of the empirical evidence about impacts and effects in the sending areas.

The book's organization is logical, which greatly aids the reader in following the writer's arguments. The book's introduction contains an excellent presentation of the facts about international migration from the four specific regions that are studied; Lucas makes excellent use of tables and charts to demonstrate the extent and the significance of those international people flows. Once the magnitude and characteristics of the people moving have been established, the book moves on to the heart of the matter: what are the consequences in the sending regions or countries of that emigration? This part of the book includes chapters on labour market effects in the sending areas, highly skilled emigration (mainly to North America), remittances, networks that develop between those who emigrate and those who remain in the sending regions or countries, and social impacts. Having examined the migration flows and their effects on the sending regions, the book concludes with a discussion of the benefits from that migration, and of policy implications.

Each of the chapters in the heart of the book appears to be organized in the same way, with a few exceptions where appropriate. This organization, too, is very useful. The chapter that deals with remittances can be used as an example. First, data are presented on the size and direction of those remittances, in order to establish their significance and general characteristics. This is followed by a discussion of the connections between remittances and their possible impacts in and on sending regions or countries; here, theory is often used to set up hypotheses that can sometimes be tested. The chapter then examines data from the four specific flows that appear in every chapter; those four flows are noted above. This part of the chapter often allows the hypotheses to be examined in light of data from some or all of the four specific regions. The chapter ends with some policy implications with respect to the size of remittances and their direction of flow. Other chapters employ slight variations of this structure, but the same general organization is used. This organizational style seems very appropriate to the arguments that the writer is making, and gives a similar unity to each chapter in this part of the book.

This book is well argued and well written. Any criticisms are minor, and only three will be noted. First, where Robert Lucas discusses the effects of emigration on labour supply in sending regions in Chapter 3, he might have mentioned specifically the effects of lost income on the demand for goods and services from those people who migrate; once they leave, they are not in the sending country to spend. This is another factor that may affect labour supply in sending areas. Second, in presenting data on the number of highly skilled migrants in Chapter 4, permanent immigrants are sometimes combined

with migrants who are on visas, such as students and job transfers; it may not be possible because of data difficulties, but it would have been preferable to separate out the groups, as their motivations for migrating and their consequences for the sending regions may be different. Third, in the same chapter, one wonders if the foreign-born who are educated in the receiving country, at least at the tertiary level, are also included in some of the data; such people are emigrants from some sending country, but their impact back in the sending areas could be different than someone who left as an adult with her or his education already complete.

In conclusion, Robert Lucas has made a significant contribution to the debate about the effects and consequences of international people migration. His book presents a very good summary of emigration flows as of the early 21st century, the hypotheses that link emigration to sending countries' or areas' development (especially economic development), and the evidence, especially for four specific flows, supporting the hypothetical claims.