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The human capital characteristics and household living standards of returning international migrants in Eastern and Southern Africa

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Abstract

Africa's experience with return migration is not new. However, few empirical studies have examined the social and economic characteristics of returning migrants within the continent. In this study, the human capital endowments and household living standards of returning migrants in Uganda and South Africa are examined using recently available data. The study compares returnees in both countries with immigrants as well as the native-born population with no international migration experience. It also investigates how factors such as previous country of residence, year of arrival, and other demographic factors predict levels of education and living standards among returning migrants. In Uganda, the results show that recently arrived returning migrants had better educational endowments than both immigrants and non-migrants. Migrants who returned to Uganda following the fall of Idi Amin's regime had the lowest educational levels and lowest living standards compared to other returnees. Furthermore, the results indicate that previous residence in countries in the West was associated with four additional years of schooling while returning migrants arriving from other African countries had the lowest levels of schooling among returning migrants. In South Africa, the study finds that returnees arriving almost immediately following the end of Apartheid had the highest levels of education compared to either immigrants or non-migrants. Returnees on average also had the highest household living standards in South Africa. Among South African immigrants, the results indicate that those arriving towards the end of the century had lower educational endowments compared to immigrants who arrived in the country two to four years after the end of Apartheid.

Introduction

Although considerable attention has been drawn to the emigration of skilled migrants from developing countries to the West (Kadria, 2001; Pellegrino, 2001; Nesbitt, 2002; Sako, 2002; Reynolds, 2002; Oberoi and Lin, 2006; Kirigia, et al., 2006) less consideration has been given to the determinants and consequences of return migration in the developing world. Invariably, studies discussing how to reverse the negative impacts of the emigration of skilled professionals from African countries have pointed to the potentials of return

migration to contribute to the development process (e.g., Diatta and Mbow, 1999; Gaillard, 2001). The majority of these discussions, however, are generally supported with little or no empirical evidence concerning the nature of this potential. Also missing from policy discussions is the identification of the characteristics of African returning migrants with high levels of human capital, or an investigation of the comparative differences in the human capital potentials of returning migrants and those of immigrants. This lack of evidence is in part due to the limited number of empirical studies on return migration in Africa especially as it pertains to skilled professionals returning from abroad. The problem is exacerbated by the scarcity of data on the scale of return migration in recent years and an insufficiency of information on the characteristics of professionals abroad who choose to return home. Where administrative data on returning migrants are available they are of questionable quality, since they are likely to be plagued by problems associated with the limited coverage of administrative data collection systems. Empirical knowledge on the human capital profile of returning migrants in Africa and on their social and economic welfare therefore needs to be further developed in order to provide a solid foundation for evidence-based policies linking return migration processes to economic development.

In this study, the question of how return migration is associated with human capital endowments and household living standards is examined using data from Uganda and South Africa. These two countries are selected because of their rich international migration history within the context of the African sub-region. In Uganda, the rise and fall of the Idi Amin regime has been associated with significant emigration and return migration flows (Rogge and Akol, 1989; Crisp, 1982), while South Africa's impact on the international migration dynamics of the continent is also well recognized (e.g., see Adepoju, 2002). A major objective of this study is to tease out the possible effects of political contexts, such as the collapse of the Idi Amin regime and the end of Apartheid, on return migration and assess the extent to which these contexts are associated with the human capital profiles of returning migrants. Furthermore, the study juxtaposes the human capital and socio-economic characteristics of returning migrants with those of immigrants and native-born non-migrants in with no international migration experience. In doing so, the study seeks to capture important disparities in educational attainment and household living standards by international migration status. An attempt is then made to assess the extent to which other social, demographic, and place of residence indicators determine disparities in human capital endowments and household living standards among returning migrants and between migration status groups in Uganda and South Africa.

Africa's experience with returning migrants is not new. Some scholars suggest that many Africans migrating within the continent view their move as temporary and intend to return to their places of origin sometime in the future (Hatton and Williamson, 2003). Historically, however, most large-scale return migration flows in Africa were associated with social and political forces operating within both countries of origin and destination. Changes in the political economy of the South African mining industry in the mid-1980s, for example, were associated with the large-scale return migration of labour migrants from neighbouring countries (Hatton and Williamson, 2003; Zlotnik, 1998). Other international return migration flows were the direct consequences of governments' attempts to tackle the issue

of undocumented migration or the waning economic fortunes of countries that had previously attracted large numbers of labour migrants (Gould, 1995). Expulsions of large numbers of immigrants in African countries were also common in the decades following their independence. The policy implications of the associated return migration flows have been discussed in a number of studies (e.g. Afolayan, 1988; Adepoju, 1984; Brennan, 1984), and there is now a growing number of studies exploring strategies that could be used to harness the potentials of return migration flows (Ammassari and Black, 2001). However systematic investigations on the social and demographic profiles of African returnees are still lacking.

Recent patterns of refugee repatriation also make significant contributions to return migration flows in Africa (Allen and Morsink, 1994). In fact, compared to refugees from other world regions African refugees are more likely to return to their home countries when conditions permit (Rogge, 1994). Scattered evidence is also available about the socio-economic needs of refugees returning to their home countries (Bakewell, 2000). More empirical studies are, however, needed to distinguish between the socio-demographic characteristics of returning refugees and those of other returning migrants, in order to have a better understanding of the consequences of their return on poverty and economic development.

Background

The most important international migration flows in Uganda following its independence were those associated with the rule of Idi Amin. Amin's rise to power in 1971 was followed by an unprecedented out-migration of Ugandans to neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan (Nyeko, 1996; Khadiagala, 1993; Harkovirta, 1993; Adepoju, 1982). Emigration flows to neighbouring countries increased in scale during the final years of Amin as the Tanzanian-backed insurgency fought its way through the country in their campaign to oust Amin. By 1983, four years after the fall of Amin, there were still an estimated 350,000 refugees in Sudan and Zaire alone (Crisp, 1986).

Although a significant number of Ugandans who fled Amin's rule were rebel fighters allied with the resistance movement, a large number of the forced Ugandan emigrants were skilled professionals. In Zambia, for example, most members of the Uganda Liberation Group (Zambia) resistance movement were career professionals such as university lecturers, doctors, and lawyers (Nyeko, 1996). As a result of a battered economy and ongoing small-scale military skirmishes few Ugandan exiles immediately returned to home following the collapse of Amin's regime in 1979 (Rogge and Akol, 1989). It was not until the mid-1980s that significantly more exiles began to return home from abroad. These return migration flows were also related to an increase in armed attacks on Ugandan refugee settlements in neighbouring countries (Rogge and Akol, 1989; Crisp, 1986; Stein, 1994). Furthermore, this period was also one of robust economic recovery in which there large increases in the salaries for public servants by Amin's democratic successor Milton Obote as part of his attempts to improve living standards in the country (Tindigarukayo, 1988).

With regard to South Africa, the departure of its native-born population into exile during the period of Apartheid has been discussed in several studies (e.g., Ellis, 1991). With the end of Apartheid in 1994, some attention has now been given to the return migration of South African exiles (Majodina, 1995; Israel, 2002; Steyn and Grant, 2007) although the post Apartheid migration literature is clearly dominated by recent immigration trends. In its discussion of South African return migration, Majodina's study (Majodina, 1995) estimates that during the first half of the 1990s close to half of all South Africans forced into exile during Apartheid had returned. In spite of the study's small sample size, its findings suggest that returning exiles faced significant socio-economic constraints associated with the lack of financial resources, employment, and accommodation that combined to have a negative effect on their material well-being. In a more recent study, Steyn and Grant (2007), assert that there were two cohorts of migrants returning to South Africa after the end of Apartheid each with its own unique characteristics. Among the first group were members of the underground movement of the 1960s and 1970s who were either professionals before their departure or received further education while in exile abroad. The second group consisted of a younger cohort of returnees who were semi-literate and had left for military training in neighbouring countries much later during the Apartheid struggle.

Towards the end of the twentieth century a new wave of emigration was observed in South Africa that was quite unlike the migration patterns observed in the previous decades. Emigrants from South Africa in recent years are mainly professionals who were migrating to other more developed countries in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Some scholars argue that these new emigrants were mostly members of the white population who were concerned about the implications of the return of black majority rule in South Africa (Adepoju, 2002). South Africa has also experienced significant emigration of native-born professionals who are lured by better paying jobs in the developed world or are attempting to escape perceived increases in crime and other security concerns (Bhorat, Meyer and Mlatsheni, 2002; Crush, 2002; Adepoju, 2002). Carrington and Detragaiche (1999), for example, list South Africa, along with Ghana and Egypt, among the top African source countries of immigrants in the United States and indicate that the majority of these immigrants had some tertiary schooling. The extent of this "brain drain" problem, its determinants, and associated implications for South African economic progress has been discussed in several studies (Bhorat, Myer and Mlatsheni, 2002; Shrecker and Labonte, 2004; Mattes and Mniki, 2007). However, the question of whether skilled South African emigrants are returning home has not been systematically addressed nor has there been an extensive attempt to examine the household socio-economic statuses of migrants returning to South Africa in recent years.

Theoretical Issues

Several perspectives on the human capital endowments of returning migrants can be implied from the postulates of international migration theories. To begin with, the neo-classical migration theory predicts different patterns of human capital selectivity depending on the comparative differences in earnings between countries of origin and destination (Rooth and Saarela, 2007; Hatton and Williamson, 2002). Thus, assuming that migrants desire to optimize their earnings over their lifetime they will be positively selected on observable

skills such as education, if the returns to education are higher in the destination country than in countries of origin. However, when earnings are higher in the origin than in the destination area, migrants are more likely to be negatively selected in terms of human capital endowments (Rooth and Saarela, 2007). Neo-classical migration theory therefore predicts that the decision to return is taken only among “failed” migrants whose initial migration was based on erroneous information and are thus unable to realize their expected earnings in their destination countries (Cassarino, 2004; Constant and Massey, 2002; Borjas and Bratsberg, 1996). In these circumstances, returning migrants represent the “worst of the best” (Rooth and Saarela, 2007), although they are still likely to have better human capital endowments than non-migrants at their place of origin despite their lack of labour market success abroad. Reichert (2001) also indicates that lower levels of education among returning migrants is an indication of a failed migration experience. Her main argument is that factors associated with a failed migration experience, such as inaccurate information and poor information search skills, are more likely to be associated with lower rather than higher levels of educational attainment.

The new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory indicates that a clear nexus exists between international migration and the material well-being of migrants and the members of their households. In fact, according to the NELM, international migration is part of a household socio-economic strategy that has as its basis a desire to acquire and accumulate resources abroad. Since return is part of the initial strategy, migrants prepare for their return home by increasing their level of savings and investing in human capital acquisition (Dustmann, 2003; Co, Gang, and Yun, 1998). An important factor in this process is the transfer of remittances and the accumulated savings migrants bring with them when they return to their places of origin (Tiemoko, 2001). These resources can be used in diverse ways to improve the well-being of returning migrant household members (Williams and Balaz, 2005; Thieme and Wyss, 2005). In some cases, migrants use remittances to invest in the construction of modern dwellings at their places of origin as they prepare for their eventual return (Orowolo, 2000). Other studies suggest that there is an association between educational attainment and the use of returning migrants’ resources. Williams and Balaz (2005), for example, report that returning migrant professionals were more likely to use their accumulated savings to improve their houses.

With regard to forced migrants living abroad, a coherent theory on the association between their return and their human capital characteristics is lacking. However, some conceptual arguments have suggested that forced migrants’ skills and experiences acquired while in exile may positively affect their economic circumstances after they return and give them better living standards than non-migrants who were left behind (Rogge and Akol, 1989). Previous country of residence also has important implications for the welfare of returning migrants regardless of whether they lived in exile or not. For those in exile, residency in countries in the developed world is associated with access to resources needed for increasing their educational attainment and socio-economic status compared to exiles living in African countries (Harkovirta, 1993; Hein, 1993). The social context of the country of previous residence is also important. For example, forced migrants may increase their pursuit of educational achievement in societies that emphasize the importance of education as a means for achieving social mobility (Zhou and Bankston, 2001). Some studies also indicate that

most forced migrants in exile in the developed world accumulate savings using traditional and non-traditional means and also sometimes send remittances to family members at home (Diaz-Briquets and Prez-Lopez, 1997; Johnson, 1989; Johnson, 1999). African exiles based in neighbouring countries however face levels of deprivation that are even higher than what they would have faced at home (Hatton and Williamson, 2002).

Data and Methods

Even though there is a lack of extensive international migration data in African countries (Ricca, 1989; IOM, 2003), the few sources of migration related data available for most African countries are yet to be fully exploited. In this study, data from one such source -- censuses -- are used to generate insights into the skill endowments and living standards of returning migrants in the absence of alternative data sources that are comprehensive enough and useful for the examination of these issues. Thus, the study's main data sources are 10 per cent samples of the 2002 population census of Uganda and the 2001 census of South Africa available in the international database of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS, Minnesota Population Center, 2007). For analytical simplicity, the study only focuses on data for respondents between the ages of 25 and 65.

Apart from the fact that these data contain a large number of observations, they also contain migration related data that are crucial to the questions examined in this study. The Ugandan 2002 census, for example, collected information on previous country of residence and nativity status that are useful for identifying native-born migrants arriving from specific countries abroad. With regard to South Africa, census information can be used to identify respondents who were abroad during the five years preceding the census, although unlike Uganda, no information is available on the specific country of previous residence of these migrants returning home. This five year temporal window imposes some analytical limitations in the use of the South African data. Nevertheless, the study will illustrate that the unique characteristics of returning migrants arriving during this period are crucial to the development of a broader understanding of recent return migration to South Africa.

For purposes of this analysis, native-born returning international migrants are defined as respondents born in their country of enumeration (Uganda and South Africa) but whose previous place of residence was in another country. Immigrants on the other hand are defined as the foreign-born population. Both immigrants and returning migrants are compared to native-born non-migrant populations who are defined as the native-born population with no international migration experience.

Another advantage of these data is the fact that they contain information on the educational characteristics of respondents, that is, years of completed schooling and levels of educational attainment, as well as information on other demographic and social characteristics of the enumerated population (e.g., age, sex, marital status, occupational status, etc.). These data are useful for the analysis of the association between human capital characteristics, such as educational attainment, and other demographic factors such as age and sex, by international migration status.

Information on household amenities crucial for the analysis of household living standards is also available in both censuses. It is thus possible, for example, to determine whether households have access to electricity, sanitation, or pipe borne water facilities, and to differentiate between households that have refrigerators, cell phones, and television sets from those that don't. Household level data also indicate the type of building materials used for construction purposes and whether or not the house is owned. These data are important for two reasons. First, they are useful for assessing the comparative prevalence of specific household amenities in returning migrant, immigrant, and native-born households. Second, they can also be used to generate summary indices of living standards that can be used to determine how return migration and immigration status affect household living standards.

Proxy indices of living standards are now increasingly used in studies attempting to measure socio-economic conditions in countries where traditional indicators of wealth (e.g., income) are poorly reported and alternative data sources are unavailable. As part of its analytical strategy, this study uses the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method to develop a summary living standards index. Specific details on computational processes involved in PCA are available in other studies (e.g., Duntzman, 1989; Montgomery, et al., 2000; Filmer and Pritchett, 2001). However, it is important to note that the PCA is a data reduction strategy that transforms data available in multiple dimensions (e.g., indicators of household ownership, electricity supply, possession of TV sets, etc) into a one dimensional indicator (e.g., a living standards index) in a process that involves no significant loss of information. The study then divides this index into quintiles of living standards that reflect a rank order of household wealth. Thus, the poorest households are found in the first quintile with less poor households progressively found in the second, third, and fourth quintiles, and households with the most wealth in the fifth quintile. This living standards index is used as a dependent variable in an ordered logistic regression framework to examine variations in living standards among returning migrants and by international migration status in the two countries.

Results

Patterns of arrival among the native-born that previously lived abroad give a preliminary indication of the extent to which return migration flows have been an important feature of the population dynamics of South Africa and Uganda. In the absence of reliable administrative data on such flows, Figures 1a and b use census data to illustrate the distribution of migrants in the samples by their years of arrival. Arrival years are estimated by subtracting duration of residence measured in years from the value of the census years. It is, however, important to note that the trends presented in Figures 1a and b are not to be interpreted as true return migration or immigration rates because of two reasons. First, mortality is likely to have lowered the actual number of migrants arriving in each of the years preceding the respective censuses. Secondly, some migrants arriving in the years preceding the census may have subsequently emigrated before the censuses were conducted. The analytical utility of these distributions lies in the fact that they reflect the effects of return migration and immigration flows in the past on the duration of residence profiles of international migrants captured in our data.

For analytical simplicity the patterns presented in Figure 1a are restricted to the 12 years preceding the 2002 Ugandan census. Returning migrants and immigrants captured in these data have two different population distribution patterns. The surge in the return migration of native-born Ugandans in the mid-1980s that has been extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., Rogge and Akol, 1989; Crisp, 1986) is captured in Figure 1a. As noted earlier, this period coincided with a period of economic recovery following the slump during the Amin administration. In contrast, the number of native-born Ugandans returning home in the years following 1990s is much lower. However, it is also during this post-1990 period that many immigrants in the sample arrived in Uganda. The analysis therefore suggests that by the turn of the century immigration was more important than returning migration in the population dynamics of Uganda than it was during the 1980s.

As a result of the fact that data in duration of residence in the South African 2001 census data is also limited to the preceding five years, Figure 1b is only able to capture the distribution of immigrants and returning migrants who arrived between 1996 and 2001. A striking feature of the five year distributions is the rapid decline in the number of immigrants who arrived in South Africa between 1996 and 2001. This pattern is a likely reflection of South Africa's strict post-apartheid immigration policy that saw the creation of new barriers to restrict cross-border movements from neighbouring countries between 1994 and 2000 (Crush and Macdonald, 2001; Oucho and Crush, 2001). These policies may have contributed to the decline observed in Figure 1b in two ways. First, the large numbers of immigrants who were deported from South Africa during these two periods (Crush and Macdonald, 2001) may have contributed to the decline in the number of immigrants enumerated in 2001, especially those who arrived much later during this five year interval when enforcement levels were stronger. On the other hand, stricter enforcement levels may have generally made South Africa and unattractive destination for immigrants over time leading to true reductions in the number of foreign-born arrivals between 1996 and 2001. Throughout this period, however, the scale of return migration of the native-born population living abroad was much smaller. The analysis also indicates that apart from the fact that there was a slightly higher number of returning migrants who arrived in 1996, there is a constant distribution of returning native-born migrants who arrived between 1996 and 2001.

Schooling and post-secondary educational attainment

In Table 1 the question of whether the demographic profiles of returning migrants and immigrants are associated with their mean completed years of schooling is examined. Although this table focuses on international migration status in both Uganda and South Africa, disparities in completed years of schooling are observed between the two countries across migration status groups. This is a likely reflection of the higher levels of education in South Africa, although it also suggests that South Africa attracts immigrants with higher human capital endowments than does Uganda. Within Uganda, there is a clear association between age-group and sex with years of schooling. Females have lower levels of schooling than males regardless of age-group or migration status unlike what is observed in the South Africa (Table 1, bottom panel). Among women in Uganda, however, non-migrants have more years of schooling than returning migrants or immigrants, while among males, immigrants have a slight schooling advantage between ages 25 and 44, although schooling

levels are highest among non-migrants between the ages of 50 and 59. A different schooling profile is observed in the South African distributions. Migrants returning to South Africa consistently have higher levels of schooling than either immigrants or non-migrants regardless of age-group or sex, and in addition native-born non-migrants have the lowest levels of schooling in South Africa except among the population below age 35.

Table 2 examines the distribution of post-secondary levels of educational attainment by international migration status.ⁱ In general, year of arrival is an important determinant of post-secondary human capital among returning migrants and immigrants. In Uganda, for example, returning migrants arriving following the collapse of the Amin administration (i.e., approximately between 1982 and 1992) were on average less likely to have post-secondary qualifications than those who arrived before 1982. This is not necessarily surprising considering the fact that many refugees who fled Uganda during the Amin regime were from rural areas (Kabera, 1989). In recent years Uganda has attracted immigrant and returning migrant populations that proportionally have more vocational and university credentials. However, Ugandan returnees arriving after 1992 were more likely to possess post-secondary qualifications (vocational, undergraduate, or postgraduate) compared to native-born non-migrants and had higher proportions with vocational or post-graduate credentials than immigrants.

In the lower panel of Table 2 there is a consistent returning migrant advantage in South Africa in terms of the percentage of the population with various post-secondary credentials across levels of post-secondary educational attainment. More returning migrants than immigrants had post-secondary credentials while returning migrants were also more likely to be endowed with post-secondary qualifications than the native born non-migrant population. Another important finding captured in the South African data is the disparity in the post-secondary educational composition of migrants by the period of their arrival. Returning native-born migrants and immigrants arriving in South Africa immediately following the collapse of Apartheid had greater human capital endowments than other returning migrants and immigrants arriving in South Africa closer to the end of the century except among those with post-graduate degrees. Among immigrants, there are slightly lower levels of post-secondary qualifications among those who arrived before 1996. In this analysis, these immigrants are defined as the foreign-born population of South Africa who did not arrive in the most recent five years. Immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 1998, however, had the highest levels of post-secondary qualifications among South Africa's current immigrant population.

Regression results—To better understand the determinants of education among returning migrants, the association between completed years of schooling and other factors such as previous country of residence and marital status were further analysed using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models. These models focus on completed years of schooling rather than categories of post-secondary attainment because of the need for

ⁱVocational qualifications in this table are limited to vocational credentials among the population that also has complete secondary schooling.

making the analysis inclusive of the greater proportion of migrants and returning migrants lacking post-secondary qualifications.

In Model 1 in Table 3, we find a strong schooling advantage for returning Ugandan migrants who previously lived in countries in the West. Thus, previous residence in Europe, Canada or the United States is significantly associated with about four additional years of completed schooling. Conversely, migrants returning from other African countries had three less years of schooling illustrating a striking human capital disadvantage for migrants returning from countries within the region. In Model 2, the schooling advantage of recently arrived native-born Ugandan migrants is confirmed. However, although the results indicate that returning migrants arriving between 1982 and 1992 had the least number of years of completed schooling this disadvantage disappears when other demographic characteristics of returning migrants are controlled in Model 3. Model 3, the full model for Uganda, also reveals that the schooling advantage of migrants returning from Europe, Canada, and the United States, as well as that for recently arrived migrants is robust, even after other factors are controlled. Moreover, male returnees had an additional three years of schooling compared to females and those returnees who had never been married before had approximately two additional years of completed schooling. Model 3 also captures striking differences in the human capital profiles of older and younger migrants that are statistically significant in the case of Uganda. Levels of schooling are clearly higher among younger cohorts of returning migrants, especially those between the ages of 25 and 29, while much older returning migrants have the lower levels of schooling. These differences are a possible reflection of changes in access to educational opportunities and other related factors over time that give younger cohorts an educational advantage over their much older counterparts.

As noted earlier, no information on previous country of residence was available for native-born migrants returning to South Africa. However, while native-born South Africans who returned between 1996 and 1998 had slightly higher levels of completed schooling (Model 4), this finding was not statistically significant. Model 5, however, indicates that never married South African returning migrants, unlike their Ugandan counterparts, had significantly lower levels of schooling (about half a year) compared to married South African returnees.

The effects of return migration, immigration and nonmigration status on disparities in completed levels of schooling are examined in Table 4. Gross differences in completed years of schooling by international migration status in Uganda are illustrated in Model 1. Both immigrants and returning migrants who arrived in the two periods preceding 1993 have significantly lower levels of schooling compared to native-born Ugandans with no international migration experience. We also find slightly higher levels of schooling, about a year, among returning migrants who arrived after 1992 than non-migrants, and a much smaller difference in the schooling advantage of recently arrived immigrants compared to non-migrants. These findings are robust to the effects of other factors controlled in Model 2.

In the OLS models applied to the South African data (Models 3 and 4) early returning migrants, that is, those arriving between 1996 and 1998, have the highest levels of schooling compared to all immigrants and native-born non-migrants. However, in Model 4, although

levels of schooling are still highest among returning migrants, the advantage of early returning migrants is slightly reversed after controlling for their age, sex, and marital profiles. With regard to immigrants, Model 4 indicates that immigrants who arrived two to four years after the end of Apartheid in 1994 had higher levels of schooling than immigrants who were already in South Africa. Recent immigrants, that is, those arriving after 1998, on average had higher levels of schooling compared to immigrants who arrived before 1996, however their levels of schooling are still lower than immigrants arriving between 1996 and 1998. These findings clearly indicate that the end of Apartheid has been accompanied by a significant transformation in the educational profiles of the South Africa's immigrant population.

The household living standards of returning migrants

Many studies have demonstrated the effects of previous migration experience on individual, household, and community level socio-economic conditions in other regions of the world (e.g., Williams and Balaz, 2005; Thieme and Wyss, 2005; Thomas-Hope, 1999). In African countries, there is a general lack of reliable data on incomes useful for such analyses. Few studies, however, have discussed theoretical and conceptual issues related to how return migration can lead to better development outcomes (e.g., Logan, 1999; Nair, 1999) and provide useful insights into the possible effects of previous residence abroad on socio-economic outcomes. Using census indicators measuring the availability household amenities, this section attempts to determine whether there is an association between previous residence living standards of households headed by returning migrants in Uganda and South Africa.

Data from the census samples indicate that the availability of amenities within households varies by international migration status. These variations, by the migration status of the household heads, are captured in the summary distributions of household amenities presented in Appendices 1a and b. House ownership disparities by international migration status, for example, are greater in Uganda (Appendix 1a) where returning migrants are the most likely to own their homes and about 12 per cent more returning migrants own homes compared to nonmigrants. On the other hand, returning migrant households were on average the least endowed in terms of amenities such as pipe borne water supply. A possible explanation for this may be found in the composition of the Ugandan returning migrant population. As noted earlier, many of those who fled Uganda during the Amin administration were from rural areas (Kabera, 1989). Furthermore, the census data used in this study indicate that about 80 per cent of all returning migrants in Uganda were those who arrived between 1982–1992, that is, the period following the fall of Idi Amin. Return migration to Uganda during this period was possibly dominated by migration flows from refugee camps in neighbouring countries that had previously hosted large numbers of rural Ugandan refugees (Crisp, 1986). Not surprisingly, returnees arriving between 1982 and 1992 had the lowest human capital endowments (Tables 2 and 4), and because of their large numbers would affect overall estimates of access modern amenities in returning migrant households.

In the case of South Africa the home ownership profile was different. Non-migrants were the most likely to own homes that were fully paid off, while returning migrants owned more homes on mortgages (Appendix 1b). However, regardless of whether South African returnees owned their homes or not, they were the most likely to own consumer durable goods such as TVs, refrigerators, phones, or have access to electricity, toilet, and pipe borne water supply within their premises.

An analysis of the degree to which the living standards of households headed by returning migrants are affected by their previous region of residence, year of arrival, educational attainment, and other demographic factors is presented in Table 5. As mentioned earlier, the dependent variable in the ordinal logit regressions models in Table 5 is an index that ranks living standards in ordinal categories with the poorest households in the first quintile and the wealthiest households in the fifth quintile. The results presented in Table 5 are odds ratios indicating the extent to which various independent variables are associated with the odds of having higher household living standards.

Households headed by Ugandan returnees had socio-economic disparities that were conditional on previous region of residence. On average, returnee household heads returning from Europe, Canada, or the United States lived in households that were about twice more likely to have higher living standards compared to the households with migrants returning from other regions (Model 1). Conversely, households headed by Ugandans returning from within the region of Africa had significantly lower standards of living. There is also a positive relationship between the gross effects of educational attainment and the odds of higher living standards among both South African and Ugandan returnees. Thus, Table 5 shows that there is an apparent living standards premium for households headed by returning migrants possessing graduate or undergraduate university degrees and a sequential decrease in the odds of experiencing higher living standards as educational attainment decreases in both countries (Models 2 and 4 respectively). This effect of educational attainment is still robust after controlling for the other characteristics of returning migrants (Models 3 and 5). Moreover, when other factors are controlled among Ugandan returnees (Model 3), there is no longer a significant living standards disparity by region of previous residence. This finding suggests that the higher living standards of households headed by returning migrants from the West, and the disadvantage of households headed by returnees from Africa in Model 1, is the result of differences in their educational attainment, age, and year of arrival. Model 3 indicates that households headed by Ugandans who arrived during the period of mass return migration following the collapse of the Idi Amin regime (i.e., between 1982 and 1992) had significantly lower standards of living compared to the households of migrants who arrived before or after that period. Among South African returning migrants there is no significant difference in living standards between households headed by returning migrants who arrived soon after the end of Apartheid (i.e., between 1996 and 1998) and those with returnees arriving in more recent years (Model 5). Moreover, returning migrant households in urban areas have a distinct living standards advantage compared to those in rural areas in both South Africa and Uganda.

The broader question of whether there are differences in household living standards between returning migrants, immigrants and native-born nonmigrants is examined in Table 6. In

Uganda (Model 1), the highest standards of living are generally observed among households headed by immigrants. Immigrants with university credentials, for example, headed households that were about seven times more likely to have higher living standards (Model 1) and their advantage is consistent even after controlling for other demographic attributes and urban residence in Model 2. While households headed by returning migrants with university or vocational credentials were slightly more likely to have higher living standards than the households of their non migrant counterparts, the advantage of returning migrants over non migrants is not consistent across all levels of educational attainment (Model 1). In fact, after controlling for other factors in Model 2, the advantage of households headed by returning migrant graduates compared to their non-migrant counterparts disappears, indicating that other demographic factors, such as differences in age and sex distribution, place of residence, and household size, accounted for the relatively higher standards of living among returning migrants observed in Model 1.

In the case of South Africa, although households headed by immigrants with vocational levels of schooling or university credentials were more likely to have higher living standards than similar households with returning migrant and non-migrant heads (Model 3), the immigrant advantage is not consistent. When other factors are controlled (Model 4), South African households headed by returning migrants with secondary levels of schooling and above are the most likely to have higher living standards compared to households head by individuals with similar levels of schooling across migration status groups. In addition as observed among Ugandans, households headed by native-born South Africans with no international migration experience generally had the lowest standards of living.

Discussion and Conclusions

Very little empirical work has been done to investigate the human capital endowments of returning migrants in African countries and their household socio-economic conditions after they arrive home. In general, there is a paucity of reliable data suitable for such analysis although extensive analyses on similar issues are available for countries in other regions of the world (Lockwood, 1990; Lindstrom, 1996; Thomas-Hope, 1999; Dustmann, 2003). In this study, an attempt has been made to fill the void in the current state of knowledge on the characteristics of returning migrants in Africa by analyzing the outcomes of returning migrants in South Africa and Uganda. Using recent census data, the study has examined the educational profiles of returning migrants in comparison with those of immigrants and native-born populations with no international migration experience. The question of how return migration is associated with household living standards has also been addressed with particular attention paid to the determinants of living standards among returning migrants and disparities by migration status. While these data help to provide useful insights on the return migration, they have a number of limitations including the fact that they are cross-sectional in nature and that they do not contain information on where returning migrants and immigrants acquired their education.

A key finding of this study is that recently arrived returning migrants in both Uganda and South Africa have better human capital endowments in terms of years of schooling than either immigrants or the native-born population with no international migration experience.

Although the analysis was done using cross-sectional data, this finding is consistent with the NELM view that migrants abroad intending to return home invest in the acquisition of human capital (Dustmann, 2003). In general, the human capital advantage of returning migrants in Uganda is mainly concentrated among migrants returning from countries in the West. These findings are instructive and have important implications for policies attempting to link return migration to development in Africa. The fact that returning native-born populations have better human capital endowments than immigrants suggests that there is a crucial need for more effective policies to fully exploit these endowments for development purposes. For example, how well returning migrants are reintegrated after arriving home is likely to be determined by factors such as the availability of suitable employment and the presence of working conditions geared towards their retention, thus preventing subsequent outmigration for better opportunities abroad.

Possible effects of national political developments on the human capital characteristics of returning migrants and immigrants have also been identified in this study. Migrants who returned during the period of mass return migration after the fall of the Amin regime had lower levels of schooling. A possible explanation of this finding is the scale of the initial emigration from Uganda that occurred during the Amin administration. A large number of Ugandan refugees in neighbouring countries during this period fled from rural areas especially during clashes between Amin's forces and Tanzanian troops who subsequently ousted him in 1979. In South Africa, immigrants and returnees who arrived following the end of Apartheid had higher levels of schooling, although levels of schooling are lower among more recent immigrants. It is not clear whether this effect is a consequence of a stronger enforcement of South African immigration policies towards the end of the last century that may have negatively affected trends in the schooling profiles of immigrants. However, it is clear that migrants returning during the 1996 to 2001 period consistently had the highest levels of schooling in South Africa.

Surprisingly, this study suggests that schooling advantage of returning Ugandan migrants does not automatically translate into the highest household standards of living. This is not the case in South Africa where our findings reveal that returning migrants had both the highest levels of schooling and the highest household living standards in the country after other factors are controlled. The Uganda findings therefore imply that more needs to be done to help returning migrants economically reintegrate into their societies in a way that will ensure that they enjoy optimal returns to their human capital investments. Without such efforts it would be difficult for governments to attract skilled professionals aboard and retain their services after they arrive home.

More consideration also needs to be given to efforts to broaden the empirical basis of policies that seek to link the return of skilled professionals from abroad with national development programmes. While this study has attempted to interrogate available census data to investigate the human capital and socio-economic indicators of returning migrants, greater investments need to be made in the development of alternative data collection systems suitable for the analysis of other issues associated with African return migration. Longitudinal studies, for example, could explore the processes that inform the decisions of African students abroad on whether to return home or not. Other studies could also

determine the extent to which skilled returning migrants subsequently re-migrate and identify the factors associated with this process. The fact that skilled migrants can contribute to development in Africa is unquestionable. Sufficient attention therefore needs to be given to studies linking these two processes in order to increase the levels of these contributions and advance the cause of economic development in African countries.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Figure 1.

Table 1

Mean years of schooling by sex, age-group, and international migration status based on data from the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses

	Uganda					
	Returning migrants		Immigrants		Non-migrants	
Age group	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
25 – 29	6.5	3.3	6.3	4.1	6.2	4.6
30 – 34	5.5	2.6	6.2	3.7	6.1	4.1
35 – 39	5.2	2.7	6.3	3.1	6.0	3.6
40 – 44	5.3	2.0	5.7	2.2	5.6	3.2
45 – 49	5.7	2.1	4.6	2.1	5.7	2.9
50 – 54	4.9	1.7	4.2	1.5	5.3	2.3
55 – 59	4.6	1.2	3.6	1.2	4.8	1.7
60 – 65	4.1	0.7	2.6	1.0	4.0	1.3
All	5.5	2.5	5.1	2.7	5.8	3.5
South Africa						
	Returning migrants		Immigrants		Non-migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Age group						
25 – 29	10.6	10.8	8.1	8.5	9.2	9.2
30 – 34	11.4	11.4	8.2	8.6	8.7	8.5
35 – 39	11.0	10.5	8.3	8.9	7.9	7.5
40 – 44	11.0	10.5	8.1	9.2	7.3	6.8
45 – 49	11.7	11.1	7.9	9.5	6.7	6.1
50 – 54	9.9	10.0	8.5	9.9	6.2	5.7
55 – 59	11.4	10.5	9.6	10.2	5.9	5.4
60 – 65	11.3	10.6	9.5	9.4	5.3	4.4
All	11.0	10.8	8.3	9.2	7.7	7.2

Table 2

Percentage distribution of post-secondary educational attainment, by international migration status and year of arrival based on data from the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses

	Uganda		
	Vocational	Under-graduates	Post-graduate
<i>Return Migrants</i>			
After 1992	4.71	5.05	2.18
Between 1982 to 1992	2.76	0.32	0.18
Before 1982	3.7	0.85	0.76
<i>Immigrants</i>			
After 1992	3.82	5.4	1.6
Between 1982 to 1992	2.86	1.9	0.3
Before 1982	1.0	0.5	0.1
<i>Non-migrants</i>	4.2	0.9	0.2
	South Africa		
	Vocational	Under-graduates	Post-graduate
<i>Return Migrants</i>			
1996 to 1998	18.2	21.8	6.5
1999 to 2001	17.4	17.6	9.0
<i>Immigrants</i>			
Before 1996	9.6	7.2	2.7
1996 to 1998	12.7	11.4	5.0
1999 to 2001	11.9	10.8	4.9
<i>Non-migrants</i>	5.6	2.6	0.5

Table 3

OLS results for the completed years of schooling by characteristics of returning migrants

	Uganda			South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Region of Previous residence					
Africa	-3.16***	-	-2.85***	-	-
Europe, Canada, and the US	4.14***	-	3.95***	-	-
Other regions (Reference)	(0.00)	-	(0.00)	-	-
Year of arrival					
Before 1982	-	-1.49***	-1.12***	-	-
Between 1982 and 1992	-	-1.66***	-1.12***	-	-
After 1992 (Ref - Uganda)	-	(0.00)	(0.00)	-	-
Between 1996 and 1998	-	-	-	0.08	0.08
After 1998 (Ref - South Africa)	-	-	-	(0.00)	(0.00)
Sex					
Males	-	-	2.97***	-	0.20
Females (Ref)	-	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Age-group					
25 to 29	-	-	2.26***	-	-0.05
30 to 34	-	-	1.54***	-	0.56
35 to 39	-	-	1.58***	-	-0.18
40 to 44	-	-	1.24***	-	-0.19
45 to 49	-	-	1.50***	-	0.38
50 to 54	-	-	0.83***	-	-1.01
55 to 59	-	-	0.48*	-	-0.11
60 plus (Ref)	-	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Marital Status					

	Uganda			South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Never been married	-	-	1.88***	-	-0.56**
Currently or previously married (Ref)-		-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Constant	7.04**	5.46***	4.68***	10.87***	10.89***
N	1,0391	1,0391	1,0391	1,433	1,434
R Squared	0.021	0.013	0.21	0.00	0.02

* p<0.05,
** p<0.01,
*** p<0.001

Data source: 10 per cent samples of the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses

Table 4

OLS results for the completed years of schooling by international migration status and year of arrival

	Uganda		South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
International Migration Status				
<i>Returning Migrants</i>				
Before 1982	-0.70***	-0.48***	-	-
Between 1982 and 1992	-0.87***	-0.84***	-	-
After 1992	0.79***	0.62***	-	-
Between 1996 and 1998	-	-	3.53***	3.07***
Between 1999 and 2001	-	-	3.44***	3.11***
<i>Immigrants</i>				
Before 1982	-2.51***	-1.54***	-	-
Between 1982 and 1992	-0.86***	-0.65***	-	-
After 1992	0.26***	0.12*	-	-
Before 1996	-	-	0.85***	0.98***
Between 1996 and 1998	-	-	2.14***	1.72***
After 1998	-	-	1.85***	1.53***
<i>Native-born Non-migrants (Reference)</i>	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Sex				
Males	-	2.19***	-	0.33***
Females (Ref)	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Age-group				
25 to 29	-	2.70***	-	4.53***
30 to 34	-	2.42***	-	3.82***
35 to 39	-	2.16***	-	2.88***
40 to 44	-	1.79***	-	2.20***

	Uganda		South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
45 to 49	-	1.65***	-	1.55***
50 to 54	-	1.13***	-	1.09***
55 to 59	-	0.64***	-	0.86***
60 to 65 (Ref)	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Marital Status				
Never been married	-	0.90***	-	-0.61***
Currently or previously married (Ref)	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Constant	4.67***	1.50***	7.43***	4.83***
N	719,716	719,716	1,572,574	1,572,574
R Squared	0.003	0.11	0.004	0.10

* p<0.05,
** p<0.01,
*** p<0.001

Data source: 10 per cent samples of the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses

Table 5

Ordinal logistic regression results showing differentials in the household living standards index among returning migrants

	Uganda			South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Region of residence					
Africa	-1.20***	-	-0.16	-	-
Europe, Canada, or US	2.03***	-	0.17	-	-
Other region (reference)	(0.00)	-	(0.00)	-	-
Educational Attainment					
University Graduates	-	4.98***	3.52***	4.22***	4.06***
Vocational Graduates	-	2.04***	1.44***	3.97***	3.97***
Secondary Schooling	-	1.06***	0.61***	2.82***	2.73***
Primary Schooling	-	0.23**	0.07	-0.06	-0.04
No Schooling (reference)	-	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Year of arrival					
Before 1982	-	-	-0.22	-	-
Between 1982 & 1992	-	-	-0.39***	-	-
After 1992	-	-	(0.00)	-	-
Between 1996 & 1998	-	-		-	-0.19
After 1998	-	-		-	(0.00)
Sex					
Male	-	-	0.17*	-	0.31
Age group					
25 to 29	-	-	0.21	-	-0.97*
30 to 34	-	-	0.30**	-	-0.40
35 to 39	-	-	0.26*	-	-0.06
40 to 44	-	-	0.19	-	-0.21
45 to 49	-	-	0.05	-	0.03

	Uganda			South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
50 to 54	-	-	0.10	-	0.35
55 to 59	-	-	-0.12	-	0.33
60 to 65 (Ref)	-	-	(0.00)	-	(0.00)
Urban Residence	-	-	3.74***	-	1.72***
Household Size			0.03***		-
N	5489	5489	5489	755	755
Log likelihood	-8046	-7761	-7229	-759	-720

* p<0.05,
** p<0.01,
*** p<0.001

Data source: 10 per cent samples of the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses

Table 6

Ordinal logistic regression results showing differentials in the household living standards index by international migration status

	Uganda		South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Returning Migrants				
University Graduates	4.50***	3.62***	4.31***	3.89***
Vocational Graduates	1.81***	1.73***	4.07***	3.82***
Secondary Schooling	1.08***	1.05***	2.97***	2.60***
Primary Schooling	0.44***	0.62***	0.34	−0.05
No Schooling	0.27***	0.52***	0.42	0.01
Immigrants				
University Graduates	6.91***	5.20***	4.35***	3.67***
Vocational Graduates	2.92***	2.22***	4.17***	3.54***
Secondary Schooling	2.07***	1.64***	2.45***	1.96***
Primary Schooling	0.54***	0.68***	0.74***	0.37***
No Schooling	0.11**	0.37***	0.05	−0.05
Non Migrants				
University Graduates	4.27***	3.71***	3.84***	3.42***
Vocational Graduates	2.28***	1.89***	2.97***	2.71***
Secondary Schooling	1.76***	1.32***	1.87***	1.51***
Primary Schooling	0.43***	0.37***	0.63***	0.33***
No Schooling (Reference)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Year of arrival		0.01***		0.03***
Males		−0.15***		2.62***
Females (Reference)		(0.00)		(0.00)
Age Group				
25 to 29		0.48***		−1.29***
30 to 34		0.43***		−0.92***
35 to 39		0.41***		−0.62***
40 to 44		0.33***		−0.39***
45 to 49		0.25***		−0.25***
50 to 54		0.11***		−0.12***
55 to 59		0.05**		−0.03**
60 to 65 (Reference)		(0.00)		(0.00)
Urban		3.29***		2.12***

	Uganda		South Africa	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Household size		-0.02 ***		-
N	393,999	393,999	760,376	760,376
LL	-601687	-553608.8	-1116834	-2112878

*
p<0.05,

**
p<0.01,

p<0.001

Data source: 10 per cent samples of the Uganda 2002 and South Africa 2001 censuses