“CIRCULAR CODEVELOPMENT”

Codevelopment for temporary migration programs

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................. 2

2. Temporary Migration Programs are back......................................................... 3

3. Codevelopment ........................................................................................................ 6

4. Codevelopment for TMPs ..................................................................................... 9

   4.1 Introducing the Foundation .............................................................................. 9

   4.2 Circular Codevelopment ................................................................................ 10

       Integration in destination.....................................................................................12

       Development in origin .......................................................................................13

   4.3 Some implications ......................................................................................... 16

5. Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 17

Bibliography ........................................................................................................... 19
1. Introduction

The Migration-Development nexus has been largely explored although no conclusive results have been achieved (IOM, 2006: 14). Remittances, return and the role of diasporas have been the main areas of interest. Migration scholars have put forward proposals to increase the developmental impact of migration in the regions of origin of the migrants.

In the last decade, we have witnessed a change in the migration agenda of most developed countries. From the restrictive immigration policy of the 80s and 90s, that lead to an increase of undocumented migration but not to a stop of inflows as expected, in the twenty-first century there is a growing number of voices, both within academia and the political realm, promoting a more flexible approach to immigration. From generally considered immigration as a negative thing, currently the aim is more in controlling and selecting inflows. Immigration is no more regarded as negative per se, instead some inflows are encouraged - e.g. high-skilled migrants or migrants with specific skills - whereas others publicly condemned whilst tacitly tolerated. In order to cause all these flows to become visible, measurable and thus easier to filter in the interest of receiving economies, public regulation is requested by different social groups, e.g. employer organizations that face labour shortages in specific economic sectors, trade unions, migrants’ organizations, etc. The re-introduction of temporary migration programs has gathered an important number of supporters. Most of them use expressions such as “development-friendly schemes” or “win-win-win situations” in their backing discourses. Mobility, instead of migration starts to appear in the migration policy and research agendas (King et al., 2003: 9). There is a clear switch in the preference of policy-makers from immigration of a permanent nature towards a preference for

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1 This emphasis on development is by no means intention-free, as the first section of this paper will try to show. Instead, this stated target can be regarded as a mean to achieve developed countries’ self-interests.
temporary migration. This change clearly has implications for the development of migrants’ origin regions. Thus, traditional related notions must be re-thought. The concept of codevelopment is one of them. The emphasis placed by this notion on shared governance and equal partnership between origin and destination countries, is doubtless in the line of current migration approaches. Hence, it can play an important role in the process of migration policies’ planning, as long as the new nature of encouraged temporary migration would be acknowledged.

The aim of this paper is to inquiry how the previously mentioned changes, the foreseen immigration policy switch towards temporary migration programs, could affect the still-under-construction concept of codevelopment, and vice versa, how new conceptions of codevelopment can turn temporary migration programs into truly development-friendly schemes. The experience of a foundation set up by an agriculture employers’ organization, Pagesos Solidaris, in the Spanish region of Catalonia, can be considered as a optimistic starting point, with their concept of “circular codevelopment”.

This paper is structured in three main sections. The first section targets to illustrate the change in (im)migration policy preferences in the developed world. The second one inquires about the concept of codevelopment itself, about its origins – and here it is essential to mention Sami Naïr and France – and conceptual evolution. Finally, the empirical case of the Pagesos Solidaris would allow us to test the current and future potentialities of the codevelopment when associated to temporary migration programs.

2. Temporary Migration Programs are back

Two main discussions about migration are currently taking place, both within academia and in the political arena: the synergies between migration and development, in both directions, and the discussion about temporary migration programs (TMPs from here onwards). Although the relationship between permanent migration and development has
been extensively studied, there are very few studies that inquiry about this relationship in the case of temporary migration (Agunias, 2007). Hence, these two main concerns about migration are not currently linked.

The current immigration policy of most developed countries, both in Europe and North America, is masterly summed up by Phillip Martin when states that the aim is “to welcome the highly-skilled while rotating the low-skilled” (Martin, 2007). This situation indicates a change from previous decades, and in a sense, we could be witnessing the end of an era of restricted immigration policies and the beginning of another one, more interested in selecting than indiscriminately blocking labour migrants.

TMPs which have been thought to be dead long ago (Castles, 1986), are back on the table (Castles, 2006b). Although des-locations has been made in a number of economic sectors during the last decades in the higher-income countries, there are at least three main occupation groups that can not be transferred to lower-income countries, i.e. agriculture, construction and consumer services/ tourism – as recognized by the European Commission in its Policy Plan on Legal Migration (CEC, 2005: 7). This last group is the most diverse, with jobs related to catering, nursing, caring... all them requiring very different levels of skills. Concerns about “brain drain” are specific to migrants in these occupations, and particularly in the health sector (House of Commons, 2004: 28). Nevertheless, the most remarkable change in immigration discussions and policies in the last decade has to do with the role of low-skilled migrants (Lowell and Kemper, 2004: 117) and its acceptance on a temporary basis to meet labour shortages in specific sectors. A number of developed countries have already in place seasonal or temporary migration schemes, e.g. Belgium, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States (Castles, 2006b: 750). This revival of TMPs has been accompanied by a growing literature about best practices and ways of manage these programs – (Abella, 2006; Arango and Martin, 2005; Martin,
2003). In general terms, efforts have been restricted to design temporary programs that best suit the labour needs of the receiving countries. However, a discourse that explicitly advocates for the implementation of a policy of codevelopment to enhance win-win-win situations in TMPs is sometimes used. Nonetheless the stated aims in those win-win-win discourses are sometimes dubious. The emphasis of these discourses on return can be regarded as an illustrative example. Scholars and policy makers emphasise the opportunities for the development of the places of origin of the future temporary migrants that become open with the return of these migrants (through improved human, economic and social capital). However, it should be kept in mind that one of the biggest, if not the biggest, obstacle to the re-introduction of TMPs is the failure of the guest worker programs in the 50s and 60s to be really temporary. The current emphasis on making temporariness the main feature of the twenty-first century TMPs (Ruhs, 2006: 29) can lead us to doubt about the correlation between the stated and the actual aims of these new TMPs.

Studies and proposal more committed with the developmental impact of these programs stress less the idea of return and prefer to introduce the idea of “circular migration” (Agunias, 2006: 27). The idea of “circular migration” blurs the traditional opposition between temporary and permanent migration (King et al., 2003: 9). According to Castles, implementing TMPs that allow migrants to change jobs, bring their families and stay permanently if desired would open the door to “circular migration” because “as long as the option of return is open to them, many migrants have no desire to stay permanently” (2006a: 30). In other words, “highly restrictive policies and barriers to entry push them into settlement” (Hugo, 2003: online). It is clear that this circular

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2 When talking about the developmental impact of temporary migration schemes is almost compulsory to mention the Canadian Seasonal Agriculture Workers Program, mainly because due to its long existence - it has been recruiting Caribbean workers for over forty years now and Mexican workers since 1974 (Brem, 2006: 2) - it has been well studied, and it is regarded by some authors as having several “good practices” worth adopting by other seasonal schemes (Preibisch, 2003: 17-20).
migration, no matter how it is promote\(^3\), has benefits for receiving countries, since it can be regarded as an incentive to return - a “carrot” in Agunias terminology (2006: 28) - by temporary migrants. However, do this kind of migration has any benefits for migrants and regions of origin? Can ideas about codevelopment still be useful in a context of circular migration?

3. Codevelopment

In order to assess the usefulness of an “old” concept (codevelopment) in a “new” reality (an expected increase in circular migration), it appears necessary to briefly revise the origins of the concept. Previously, it is basic to state that codevelopment is not – and never has been - a concept easy to define\(^4\). Due to its lack of concreteness it has been used in a whole set of meanings, sometimes meaning next to nothing (Mosangini, 2007: 17). The first mention to the term has nothing to do with migration. It was first coined in the context of international cooperation, to highlight the need to conceptualize international cooperation as a two-way process. This will enable practitioners in the field of international cooperation to avoid unilateral approaches and de facto imposition of development projects whose design and planning would have been developed far away from its beneficiaries (Muynck, 2006: 2). Only when migration became an issue in most European countries, and specifically in France, migration was introduced into the definition of codevelopment. Hence, codevelopment turned into a concept where migration and development were linked in a way not always explicitly stated.

\(^3\) A number of measures can be introduced in order to promote the “circular movement” of workers, such as the ones proposed by the European Commission in its Policy Plan on Legal Migration, i.e. long term multi-entry visas or preference given to former migrants in future temporary recruitment processes (CEC, 2005: 10).

\(^4\) Any concept whose definition involved that of development can not be easy to define. Development has been defined in a number of different ways, from mere economic growth to Amartya Sen’s proposal of Human Development.
The publication by Sami Naïr of his “Rapport de bilan et d'orientation sur la politique de codeveloppement liée aux flux migratoires“ (1997), due to the national debate about migration that its release caused in France, can be regarded as the birth of the concept of codevelopment in its best known sense.

Figure 1: Overview of the Sami Naïr’s report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Axis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Promotion of the integration of legal immigrants</td>
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<td>2) Control immigration (contingents)</td>
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<td>3) Bilateral agreements</td>
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<tr>
<th>II. Actors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Regional and local authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) NGOs and migrants’ organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Universities and research institutes</td>
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<tr>
<th>III. Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) To promote mobility between France and origin regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) To support development projects set up by migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) To encourage a decentralized cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Importance of migrants’ organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Measures to encourage foreign students to return to their countries of origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) To encourage the private sector to hire young migrants (for them to get paid training but without option to obtain permanent residence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) To encourage the mobility of artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Measures to incentive migrants to use their saving for productive purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) To extend the idea of codevelopment in the European Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration from the “Rapport de bilan et d'orientation sur la politique de codeveloppement liée aux flux migratoires”
There are several issues in Naïr report worth mentioning. Firstly, the report highlights the importance of migrants for the development of their regions of origin. Diaspora and migrants’ organizations are regarded as key actors who could be relevant while planning cooperation projects with their regions of origin. They were depicted as a kind of “transnational actors” or “cultural mediators”, with a relevant knowledge of their regions of origin that can be used to optimize development projects. The idea was to encourage individual or collective initiatives by the migrants themselves by providing them with economic and training support. The report also intended to get several other social actors involved, both in origin and destination, and establish a sort of thick network whose aim would be the development of the regions of origin of migrants. The idea of circular migration was already present in the report, although not related to TMPs. Codevelopment à la Naïr is then a mixture of cooperation, migration and development, that relies on the migrants as “agents of development” – with the financial and educational support of different French social actors - and that revolves around the integration of migrants in origin and the promotion of development in their regions of origin, in close partnership with countries of origin of the migrants.

Although all the objectives of the Bilan can easily be considered very development-friendly, its implementation by the French government was handicapped since the beginning. French authorities used the concept of codevelopment in a very narrow sense, as a measure to restrict flows and encourage “voluntary” returns (Muynck, 2006: 6). A term with high potentialities is perverted when implemented. This is the biggest danger of the concept. Due to its vagueness – as a consequence of relying on “big words”, i.e. development, cooperation, migration – it has to be contextualized in order to become operative.
4. Codevelopment for TMPs

The initiative of the “Pagesos Solidaris” foundation is one of the local contextualizations of the codevelopment. It can be considered quite innovative since it links, rather successfully, codevelopment with temporary/seasonal migration.

4.1 Introducing the Foundation

*Pagesos Solidaris* (Committed Farmers) was founded in 2001 by the main agricultural employers’ organization in the Spanish region of Catalonia (Unió de Pagesos de Catalunya) in order to deal with some of the stages of the “recruitment in origin” procedure. The quota system allows Spanish employers to recruit workers, preferably from those countries Spain has signed migration agreements with\(^5\), when vacancies cannot be filled up with national or European workers. Agriculture is a sector that relies heavily on migrant labour due to its seasonality that makes it highly unattractive to native workers. However, the initiative of “recruitment in origin” of this organization of agricultural employers can be considered to be quite innovative, since the Spanish agriculture has usually relied on undocumented migrants. In order to deal orderly with labour shortages in the Catalonian agriculture, since 1999 this organization has been recruiting migrant workers from several countries. Two years later, in 2001, this organization realized the need to establish a Foundation, *Pagesos Solidaris* that specifically would deal with some of the stages of the procedure.

Nowadays *Pagesos Solidaris* can be said to have two main tasks\(^6\):

- It is in charge of providing and managing accommodation of quality for seasonal workers recruited in origin, and to welcome and provide them with support

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\(^5\) Currently eight countries have signed agreements of cooperation. Spain has always been very keen on these kind of agreements as a tool to manage the growing inflows of undocumented migrants.

\(^6\) As stated in the webpage of the foundation: [www.pagesossolidaris.org](http://www.pagesossolidaris.org).
throughout the whole stay (normally five months). It offers seasonal workers training during their stay in Spain and activities to get in contact with the local population, landscape, language ...

- It is devoted to the practice of codevelopment, through its course of “agents of codevelopment”, the mentoring and support of projects of development in the regions of origin of the seasonal migrant workers, and to make known the codevelopment and provoke discussion about the concept itself.

These experiences, although of a small scale – in the 2005 season just 5316 migrant workers from four different countries, Colombia, Morocco, Bolivia and Romania, where recruited (Pagesos Solidaris, 2005b: 4-5) - has been highly successful. That can be proved by its extension towards other Spanish regions (Valencia and the Balearic islands), its cooperation with the OIM in Colombia regarding to the recruitment stage and its recognition by the European Union as an example of “best practice” (Niessen and Schibel, 2004: 25).

4.2 Circular Codevelopment

If at first sight would have been difficult to keep maintaining the relevance of the notion of codevelopment in the way it was first defined by Sami Naïr, since it was very much based on the permanent nature of migration, the further conceptualization of Pagesos Solidaris in the context of a seasonal migration program is an interesting development worth taking into consideration. “Circular codevelopment” is the expression coined by Pagesos Solidaris as a way to name the set of principles guiding its activities (Subirá, 2006). Nowhere the Foundation gives a “closed” definition of what it means by “circular codevelopment”. What could be at first sight regarded as a pitfall is in fact a strength of its approach. This omission is absolutely intentional, since it wants to emphasize the under-construction stage of the concept and encourage discussion. Nonetheless, from what can be drawn from its projects, publications and webpage,
“circular codevelopment” could be defined as a proposal to link circular migration and codevelopment in a way that both regions, origin and arrival, can mutually take advantage of these temporary movements. It is very important to notice that the employ of this expression highlights a feature that is usually overshadowed both, in the literature and in public discourses, the fact that these temporary migrations are mutually beneficial for both societies, promoting development and economic growth also in the arrival regions. In some cases, specifically in the case of the agricultural sector in developed economies, it is difficult to see how it could probably survive without migrant labour. This conceptualization still revolves around the same two axis of the Sami Naïr proposal: integration in destination and the development in origin.

**Figure 2:** “Circular codevelopment” outline

Source: Own elaboration with data from Subirats, 2006.
Integration in destination

Most proposals of TMPs fail to address the issue of the integration of temporary migrants, that is very important if a real win-win-win migration policy is to be achieved (this third win would state for the welfare of migrants themselves while working abroad). The issues of accommodation and working place rights should be taken into consideration when planning TMPs inspired by codevelopment principles. *Pagesos Solidaris* is in charge of providing and managing accommodation of quality to the seasonal migrant workers recruited in origin each season by the farm employers’ organization. At the same time, *Pagesos Solidaris* is committed to provide migrants with essential knowledge about useful “how-know” in the receiving societies through booklets and workshops in their mother tongues. This knowledge covers a wide range of topics – as for instance how to access health care or basic notions about Spanish immigration laws - and keeps on growing each season thanks to the petitions of the migrants themselves. The provision of this knowledge is a way of empowering migrants workers, that otherwise would have had much more difficult to access to that information.

Integration should never be considered as a one-way process, with the migrants as the only ones in charge of it. This is particularly true when talking about temporary migrants, where the lack of time and the specific features of the rural environment can become insuperable obstacles. *Pagesos Solidaris* conceives integration as a true two-way process, with a role to play by both seasonal migrants and rural communities in destination. According to this conception, *Pagesos Solidaris* tries to make seasonal migrant workers and native rural populations become known to each other. Several activities aim to establish spaces where these two groups can meet, e.g. through the practice of sports or fairs. Rural environment, traditionally portrayed as conservative, is becoming multicultural.
Development in origin

The second objective of the “circular codevelopment” is to promote activities aimed to achieve the development in the regions of origin of the seasonal workers. With the structure of flows built by Pagesos Solidaris (see Figure 3), the three main kinds of capital, with economic interest, are effectively transferred and used:

- Financial capital: the wages earned during the five months in Catalonia, with a salaries much higher than in their regions of origin, have allowed some migrants\(^7\) to set up development projects, whether of a productive kind (e.g. production and marketing of uchuva, an Andean fruit, in Colombia) or of a more social type (e.g. association of rural women in Morocco as a way of women empowerment, although this project eventually has lead to the establishment of activities of a productive nature). Pagesos Solidaris also seeks funding in Catalonia to financially support those projects\(^8\).

- Human capital: during the stay of the seasonal worker in Catalonia, Pagesos Solidaris, in partnership with regional research institutes and other formation related groups, runs courses that enhance the human capital of the seasonal workers. The provided training is specifically thought to in fact improve the human capital of the workers. Spanish language, Catalonian language, basic computing notions, veterinary notions, Spanish immigration laws are but some examples of the courses taught in the 2005 season (Pagesos Solidaris, 2005b).

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\(^7\) It is essential to mention here that not all seasonal migrant workers either use their earnings for productive purposes or become “agents of codevelopment”. Pagesos Solidaris gives the option to attend to short training courses during the five months of the season – out of working time-, some of them directly related to codevelopment issues. For those workers clearly interesting in becoming “agents of codevelopment” and potentially promote development in their communities of origin, Pagesos Solidaris annually schedules a one-month course in Lleida (Catalonia) specifically dealing with practical parts of setting up a development project.

\(^8\) Several Catalonian town councils, NGOs, the Government of Catalonia, Catalonian fund for cooperation among other institutions financially support Pagesos Solidaris (http://www.pagesossolidaris.org/cat/ent.htm).
Social capital: *Pagesos Solidaris* has also realized the importance of developing decentralized links between the agents of development themselves. In order to achieve it, *Pagesos Solidaris* has started a virtual forum and regional meetings (three for the time being, one for Colombia, another for Morocco and a third one for Romania). This social capital is also gathered through the continuous relationship and mentoring of the Foundation.

**Figure 3**: Structure of flows and relations

**Source**: Own elaboration based on Subirats, 2006: 6.
However, *Pagesos Solidaris* does not limit its codevelopment activities to enhance these three kinds of capital during the seasonal stay in Catalonia. It maintains relations with the agents of development while they are in their areas of origin through the virtual forum, the periodic meetings and their following returns to Catalonia to work in following seasons. As the whole *Pagesos Solidaris* project is conceived around the idea of circular migration, former seasonal migrant workers are likely to return in following years. This can be regarded as positive by the Catalonian employers, that already known them, and also by the workers themselves, that can reinforce links with *Pagesos Solidaris* attending to more codevelopment courses and sharing their experiences with the foundations, i.e. helping in the construction of the concept of “circular codevelopment”.

**Figure 4:** Overview of codevelopment projects of Pagesos Solidaris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Main aim</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Development of rural communities through sustainable productive projects</td>
<td>Guasca and Choachi (Cundinamarca), Puerres (Nariño) and Bojayá and Quibdó (Chocó)</td>
<td>Rural women and men in risk of social exclusion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Development of rural communities through women empowerment</td>
<td>Tanger and Asilah (North of Morocco)</td>
<td>Rural women</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Promotion of social and economic enterprising initiatives in rural areas</td>
<td>Botosani, Alba, Calarassi and Suceava</td>
<td>Women and men in risk of socioeconomic exclusion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Pagesos Solidaris 2005 Report
4.3 Some implications

What could be easily portrayed as a pitfall of the codevelopment proposal of the Pagesos Solidaris, its under-construction nature, becomes one of its main strengths, because as seen, the agents of codevelopment themselves (i.e. former and current seasonal migrant workers) take an active role in their definition. They are actual agents, with power of decision. This fact turns the specific place-related concept of circular codevelopment supported by Pagesos Solidaris into a truly relationship of partnership between both, destination and origin actors. The foundation, in these efforts to go towards an operative and agreed definition of the “circular development”\(^9\), organizes an annual conference to share codevelopment practices and progress. It is also worth noticing here that though the concept of circular codevelopment is still under discussion, the foundation is clear about two guidelines that should underlying most of the accepted development proposals: the importance of the gender dimension – there is a significant number of female agents of development, as in the case of the two Moroccan projects where, not only the agents themselves, but also the main beneficiaries of the development project, are women – and the usefulness of cooperative values, i.e. attempts to encourage seasonal workers to self-organize and set up productive projects in a cooperative manner.

The use of new technologies, all combined with its six-year long experience, has made possible the maintenance of strong links with their agents of codevelopment, not only during their presence in Catalonia, but also while in their countries of origin - Colombia, Morocco and Romania- what has lead to the establishment of a network of agents of codevelopment that spans these three countries.

Pagesos Solidaris is also committed to extend the practice of the codevelopment and encourage discussion – as in the ninth objective of the Sami Naïr report. Its

\(^9\) 2005 Conference was entitled “Codevelopment experiences and processes of participation” (Pagesos Solidaris, 2005a), while 2006 one was devoted to the discussion of the role of NGOs and mass media in the codevelopment (Pagesos Solidaris, 2006).
information campaigns are in this line. It has to be acknowledged that by doing it the foundation is extending a more positive image of immigration in the receiving society and highlighting the contribution that immigrants do to the development of destination regions.

The biggest weak point of this experience is obviously the small numbers involved – during the 2005 season 5,683 seasonal workers in the integration area, 724 workers have attended to any of the codevelopment courses and 80 currently active agents of codevelopment (Subirá, 2006: 6). Nonetheless, this does not necessary means that identified “best practices” can not be extended to other larger codevelopment projects. In a sense, this experience can be regarded as a laboratory where several features and codevelopment-associated processes have been successfully tested and ready to be introduced in the design of larger TMPs.

5. Conclusion

The idea of linking codevelopment with temporary migration programs is highly relevant due to the expected growing importance of this kind of schemes. Codevelopment then, can become a conceptual guide for the design and implementation of TMPs, as long as in the process, the meaning of codevelopment would not be narrowed - becoming just a synonym of policies of inflow control. It is also essential to keep alive discussion about the meanings and potential practical applications of the codevelopment, as currently Pagesos Solidaris is doing around the concept of “circular codevelopment”.

Circular codevelopment can be said to revolve around the same two axis of the traditional codevelopment concept: integration in destination and development in origin, though with an emphasis on circular movements. By doing this, the “circular codevelopment” is addressing at the same time two important current concerns related to migration: the synergies between migration and development and the resurrection of TMPs.
TMPs based on the idea of codevelopment seem to be feasible and optimally working at the local and regional level, as proved by the experience of Pagesos Solidaris. However, the attempts to introduce codevelopment policies at the national level, as in the French example, have turned codevelopment into a legitimizing discourse for policies of control of flows, which rather than aimed to share responsibility over international migrations, forced origin regions to signed bilateral agreements that are not truly committed with their actual development. Consequently, if codevelopment is to guide future TMPs, origin countries have to play a more important role in the design and implementation of these schemes - as codevelopment means partnership between equals. This will be the only way to establish truly efficient migration governance.
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