



Migration, Legality and Poverty

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22nd January, 2010

Purpose

1. Provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of irregular migration
2. Explore how migrants make decisions about compliance
3. Dispel myths around irregular migration
4. Think through policy options

Outline

1. Who are 'irregular' labour migrants?
2. How many are there?
3. How do migrants make decisions?
4. Migration myths
5. What should we do?

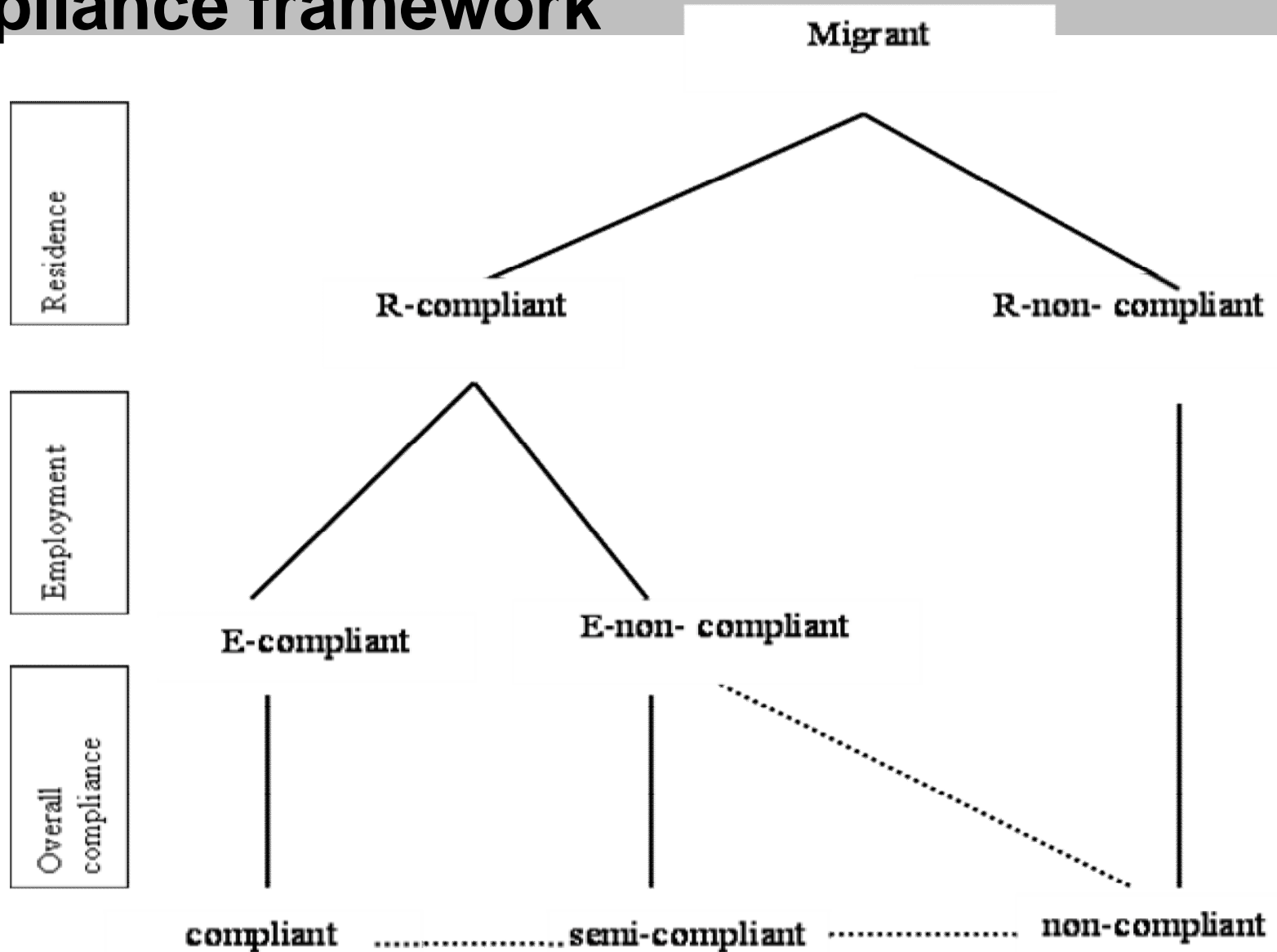
Definition

- Migrants whose immigration status does not conform to the norms of the country where they reside
 - Irregular migrant workers as a sub-set
- (il)legality is a multifaceted concept
 - Regular/irregular blur
 - ‘Compliance’ as a better framework

Status Blur

	Malawians-UK		Ghanaians-UK	
	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure
Undocumented	2.5	26.8	12.6	29.6
Documented	97.5	73.1	87.4	70.4
A. Entry docs only	70.6	49.2	71.8	18.4
Illegal workers	64.7	36.3	55.3	17.2
Not working	5.9	12.9	16.5	1.2
B. Right to Work F/T	14	16.9	8.7	46.9
C. Other	12.9	6.9	6.9	5.1

Compliance framework



Source: Ruhs and Anderson, 2006: www.compas.ox.ac.uk

Migrant blur

- Characteristics of regular and irregular are not so different:
 - Overwhelming motivation for migration = improve income
 - not significantly differentiated by education or occupation upon entry
 - upon arrival they work across the range of occupations and cover the educational spectrum
 - in aggregate all groups are occupationally mobile upwards

Problems of measurement - empirical

- Counting the numbers of irregular migrants
 - Census
 - Apprehension rates
 - Groups working with migrants
- Problems of sampling
 - Incredibly difficult to find respondents
- Bias in response – selection
 - Selection bias in those who participate in surveys
 - Bias in revealing truthful answers
 - Overcome this through returnee experience (again selection problem)

Incentives for non-compliance

- Desire to alleviate poverty trumps compliance
- Unregulated labour markets translate into higher income for irregular migrants
- Prohibitive transactions costs
- Inappropriate Social Protection Provisions
- Limited private economic benefits to regular status

The Political Context

- Highly politicised
 - Stealing jobs
 - Reducing wages
 - Health and social sector tourists
 - Bring all sorts of social ills
 - Irregular = unskilled
 - Different to regular
- Rising public anxiety and often hysteria in the 'north' or more developed magnets (eg, SA)

Do migrants displace native workers?

“The empirical evidence from around the world suggests little or no evidence that immigrants have had a major impact on labour market outcomes such as wages and unemployment”.
Blanchflower 2007.

“ ...if there is an impact of immigration on unemployment then it is statistically poorly determined and probably small in size”.
Dustmann 2002.

Social sector tourism?

- When migrants become regular then claims are made!
(Amuedo-Dorantes2007)
- No evidence of health sector tourism

Do border controls work?

- Increased border controls – leads to increased apprehensions but:
 - No change in outward migration ambitions (MMP)
 - Negative change in return ambitions
 - Overall may lead to increase in total migration
- Evidence that higher prevention increases costs (financial and physical) to the migrant
 - Higher payment to smugglers
 - Up to 2 years to pay back
 - More abuse and exploitation

Does legal Status provides higher benefits ?

- Not really!
- What matters:
 - Language, length of stay, informal social protection and skill level
 - Citizenship
- Migrants face tradeoffs

Facilitate regular labour migration at all levels

- Protection from bonded labour; abuse and exploitation
- Decrease transactions cost of the migrants, increase remittance flows
- Access to services – financial, legal and social for themselves and dependents
- Increase revenues from taxation
- Find the right workers at the right time in the right place to complement native workers
- Reduce cultural and political discriminatory practices
- Retention of skills in a more mobile world

What are the options?

Southern policy makers need to step up regardless of legal status

- Improve consular services
- Increase access to cheap and efficient financial services
- Prioritise ‘safe’ remittances not border control

Destination country response

- Temporary labour migration programmes
- Decent work agenda
- Community cohesion
- Seriously contemplate regularisation

Group Activity

It is reasonable to expect that, with the persistence of relative poverty, many migrants will continue to come and work in the UK without official permits.

1. What policy options are available to UK policy makers in managing this situation?
2. Each group will be given one of the following options. Prepare a case that advocates for this option. How could it be achieved?
 1. Temporary labour migration programmes
 2. Encourage voluntary return
 3. Regularisation/ amnesty
 4. Improving remittance systems for all