I read the Harrtgen and Klasen paper before the Rossi paper was available and have not subsequently altered my comments on it. Having now read both papers, I wonder about the division of subject matter between the two. The Harrtgen and Klasen paper covers South-North migration (and North-North?) and Rossi paper South-South. But the available data and literature do not allow an easy division along these lines. I can see an argument for dividing the subject matter more along the lines of migration as viewed from the North and migration as viewed from the South. This would justify e.g. the former continuing not to deal with the impact of remittances in the South, and the latter considering any remittances to the South, irrespective of whether they come from other South countries or from the North.

I note the Harrtgen and Klasen paper is about ‘migrant children’ while the Rossi paper is about ‘the impact of migration on children’. The latter is a broader approach, since it more naturally includes consideration of children ‘left behind’ and broader impacts of migration on all children. Is this difference intentional?

1. HARTTGEN and KLASEN

Focus
The authors rightly address a wide range of topics with some very interesting discussion. But in order to maximise understanding and impact, I feel the paper would benefit from a tighter structure so as to give it more focus and so as to carry the reader through what is, necessarily, a long read. At present, each element makes a worthwhile contribution but I tended to lose track of where the paper was going and what were the main questions it tries to address. One device that might help is to turn the section titles into questions, which the contents of each section would then address. Sections would then naturally conclude by summarising what is known about the answers to the question concerned. At present sections lack conclusions or summaries, which does not help the reader retain the main messages while moving through the paper.

I suggest the Introduction is re-written. I think it needs to move more quickly to make clear what the paper does (what’s in, what’s out etc). I suggest cutting back the general first two pages, and expanding the third page to (a) explain the logical structure of the paper and the progression from section to section, and (b) give a clearer and more extended preview of the questions each section will address – and probably the answers that are reached as well. In that way the reader will have the paper in a nutshell from the outset and then when reading each section will already have seen how it hangs together.

The paper would also benefit from tighter drafting within each section. The style is fairly leisurely and an element of repetition creeps in at times. (NB I recognise that this is a pretty cheap comment, since the paper is a first draft.)

Restriction to Europe
The paper is about migrants in Europe, rather than in all of the North. The high immigration countries of the USA, Canada and Australia are therefore excluded. A number of comments follow, several of which could be addressed in the Introduction.

First, I think the focus on Europe needs a much clearer justification than it has at present. Why just Europe? It may be that this restriction is on purely practical grounds, so as to reduce the (vast) job being faced, and if that’s the case it would still be worth noting. Or it may be that there is an intellectual or policy-orientated motivation, which
in this case would merit more substantial discussion. NB I suggest that reference is
made to Parsons and Smeeding (2006), a recent major study of immigration to Europe.

Second, I suggest that the implications of restricting to Europe be made clear early on. We need to know the proportion of all migrants – and ideally migrant children and youths – in the North that as a result are not within the paper’s ambit. And, linked to my first point, we need to know (briefly) in what ways migrants in Europe differ from those elsewhere in the North and how the issues differ.

Third, the restriction to Europe within the paper is not in fact complete. For example, there are a number of references to empirical studies from North America. I see no problem with that as long as it is clear from the context that the reference is being made for, say, methodological reasons rather than because it is necessarily telling us anything about migration in Europe.

Fourth, it is not fully clear whether the paper is about all child/youth migrants in Europe or only about those who come from the South (or at least from either the South or the ‘poor East’, defined as the likes of Albania, other poor parts of SE Europe, and the former Soviet Union). The last part of footnote 20 implies that North-North is excluded. I suggest this is made prominent in the main text (and in the Introduction). However I don’t think the paper is consistent in applying this exclusion. Indeed it probably cannot be since much of the data do not identify country of origin. But I’m not convinced North-North migration should be excluded anyway.

Theory
Discussion of theory is welcome (sections 2.2 and 2.3). But I suggest it is cut back and orientated more towards key issues and features of the paper, (a) the well-being of migrant children and young people and (b) Europe. What are the implications of the theory for the well-being of migrant children in Europe? These sections would then be better linked to the rest of the paper and their position in terms of where they come would be clearer. Perhaps the theory could be used to suggest some hypotheses or research questions about young migrants in Europe, even if those hypotheses cannot be tested or the questions answered in this paper. This would help the logical flow.

Migration to Europe
I suggest two principal revisions to section 2.4. First, sharpen somewhat the presentation and analysis of Tables 4-6. The rows in Tables 4 and 5 could be sorted on one of the column values of interest rather than alphabetical order of countries, with the discussion then linked to this. Table 4 is very dense (units of thousands for the numbers of migrants would be preferable). The difference in definition of ‘migrants’ (Table 4) and ‘foreign born’ (Table 5) is unclear. NB If the focus of the paper is on South-North migration, is not the data in the appendix in Table A2 more useful to present in the main text than Tables 4 and 5 that refer to all migrants? I would give one decimal place only for the percentages in Table 6 – and add two further columns, one giving the total percentage ‘100.0’ in each case (the title also needs to indicate that the figures are percentages) and one giving the total number of migrants in each case. (NB should not another row be added for ‘country of birth unknown’?) This table could then be discussed much more, with a focus on the 0-14 and 15-24 age groups. As far as possible additional tables are concerned, is there information available on the number of second generation migrants by country?

Second, I think some discussion is needed of the laws and policies limiting migration in Europe (contrasting this with N America and Australia). How do European countries vary in the barriers they put up to migrants, this being one factor influencing
the heterogeneity of migrants across different European countries? This issue is touched on but more concrete information would be welcome. And what are the implications of the Schengen agreement abolishing passport controls? Is there unrestricted movement of migrants within the Schengen zone, so that a legal migrant to one country can move at will to any other? This discussion of variation in laws and policies would link well to later discussion of self-selection in the analytical framework – see below – although the current migrant stock for which evidence on well-being is provided later in the paper will be the result of past as well as current policies.

(The following might or might not be worth looking at: on trends in asylum seekers see Hatton 2008 and on ages at migration see Beine et al 2007.)

Analytical Framework

I suggest reducing the discussion of measuring human well-being (section 3.1) and expanding substantially the discussion of the issues dealt with in the final paragraph on p34. I suggest including a separate sub-section on this, and running the material on p33 in with section 3.1. (Incidentally, the material on ‘social exclusion’ in section 3.3 pp42-7 appears in part to be more suitable for inclusion here – a lot of it is conceptual rather than being evidence, although again I would reduce; on applying the concept of social exclusion to children, see also Micklewright 2002).

I would lay out – with the aid of some simple equations if need be although this could probably be avoided – a more formal framework than at present for assessing the ‘treatment’ of being a migrant (as in the policy evaluation literature). This would help focus attention more clearly on the issues involved in making an empirical assessment of the differences in well-being between migrants and natives (or any other control group) later in the paper. Portraying things in the simplest way, imagine some outcome Y which is a function of treatment M (a 0/1 dummy), a vector of other observable characteristics X, and unobservable characteristics ε:

\[ Y = \alpha + \beta M + \gamma X + \varepsilon \]

The parameter \( \beta \) measures the impact of being a migrant. The advantage of viewing things in this way is that it highlights (a) the issue of the characteristics X observed for both migrants and natives and (b) the endogeneity of M. Two points regarding the vector X: first, it reminds us that we are expecting immigrants to catch-up only with natives with the same characteristics. So, if children of poor natives (where poverty is assumed an observed characteristic) do badly on outcome Y, we are not expecting children of poor migrants to do any better. (Of course, we’d like all children of poor families to do as well as other children, but that’s a different matter.) Second, it reminds us that X may be measured differently for migrants and natives e.g. ‘secondary education’ acquired in the sender country may be of a different quality than secondary education in the host country. In other words, while one may ostensibly control for education when comparing migrants and natives, this may be hard to achieve in practice. As regards the unobservables, this framework helps underline that M is a ‘choice variable’ and cannot be viewed as exogenous. Migrants are self-selected – they make the decision to migrate (even with ‘forced migration’, the migrants are not randomly selected). This might lead them to do better than natives with the same observable characteristics (migrants may have more drive or determination). I’m labouring a point here, as well as noting something that the authors already know. But I think more discussion of these sorts of basic issues familiar from the evaluation literature would help. (On selection of migrants to OECD countries by education, see Belot and Hatton 2008.)
Evidence
I suggest giving in section 3.3 more flavour of the results from the studies cited, including the odd table or two perhaps (e.g. on income differences or poverty rates if they are available), but also relating the problems of interpretation more to an extended analytical framework of ‘treatment’ evaluation in the previous section of the type I propose. How much of this evidence allows separate identification of migrants from the South and of second generation as opposed to first generation migrants? On education, see also Schnepf (2008), which extends her 2006 work referred to in the paper to look at the variation of immigrant children’s test scores in education surveys compared to the variation among native children (rather than just looking at means or conditional means). She distinguishes between first and second generation migrants.

Data
Dronkers’ (2008) review of Parsons and Smeeding (2006) has a nice discussion of data needs for assessing outcomes for migrants in Europe (albeit with no child/youth focus). One important cross-national source that Dronkers mentions is the biennial European Social Survey (ESS). This collects comparable data on a large range of subjects (although in many cases just on attitudes) for a cross-section sample in about 20 countries. (And, unlike I think e.g. Eurobarometer, ESS has an industry-standard probability-based design.) Three rounds of data have been collected and Dronkers notes that since round 2 information is present on migrant status – including whether first or second generation – and country of origin. Sample size is small – about 1500 persons aged 15+ per country per round – meaning that migrant samples will be very small. But data from different rounds can be pooled and in time this should be fruitful. NB Dronkers does not note that round 1 of ESS had a module of question on attitudes to migrants, information that was collected for the whole sample (e.g. see Card et al. 2005). This seems relevant to the measurement of social exclusion of migrants.

References:
Card D, Dustmann C and Preston I (2005), ‘Understanding attitudes to immigration: the migration and minority module of the first European Social Survey’, CReAM Paper 03/05, UCL http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctpb21/Cpapers/CDP_03_05.pdf
2. ROSSI

Structure
This is a polished first draft. However, I suggest revising the Introduction so as to make the structure of the paper clearer. First, I would carve off all of sections 1.1 to 1.5 into a separate section (new Section 2) titled e.g. ‘Concepts’ or ‘Definitions’. Second, I would expand the page and a half that precede them on pp.4-5, adding a more substantial ‘signposting’ of the rest of the paper that previews rather more what it contains and that makes clear the logical structure of the paper, i.e. the logic behind the ordering of the sections.

Definitions
1.1 Developing country. The definition used of any country below rank 30 on the HDI (bottom of p5) probably includes some of the European countries considered by Harrtgen and Klasen. Nor does it seem necessary – I would dispense with any hard and fast definition of this type. See my comments above on the division of material between the two papers. Rossi includes (rightly in my view) evidence on North to South remittances, rather than attempting to restrict to South-South, something that is neither permitted by the data nor is a restriction followed in the literature.

1.2 Children’s well-being. This is pretty brief and could usefully be expanded a bit. I don’t feel it is necessary to emphasise the Convention on the Rights of the Child (although it may be worth mentioning). Not everyone is convinced by the notion of ‘child rights’ and it seems unnecessary to enter that debate, given that the different dimensions of well-being that are mentioned are ones that everyone can subscribe to.

1.3 Children. I don’t think a restriction to the under 18 age group is useful. A concern with child wellbeing does not stop when the individual turns 18. The future prospects for a 17 year old when he or she is aged e.g. 19 or 20 are as important to consider as current wellbeing aged 17. (This is explains why, for example, UNICEF does not limit its interest to individuals legally defined as children.) So far from being a problem, I see the age-groups 0-15 and 16-24 in fact as being suitable ones to have data on (although it might be useful if both were disaggregated too). NB I would give here McKenzie’s figures on the percentages of migrant children and youths accompanied by their parents, cited on p.38, so that the reader gets a much earlier feel for this issue, which seems pretty important.

1.5 Impact assessment and data sources. These are two rather different issues. On the former, I would move in the material from pp.46-9 – I can’t see the merit in leaving discussion of the topic to after the presentation of the evidence. On the latter, why restrict to peer-reviewed publications only?

Effects on children left behind
I thought this excellent and that it covered all the issues that came to (my inexperienced) mind.

Forced migration and trafficking
The figures on the percentage of refugees who are aged under 18 may need to be interpreted in the light of the percentage of population as a whole of this age. For example, in 1996, 52% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa was aged under 18
Migrant children in developing countries
The data in Tables 3 and 4 are of considerable interest but I feel they could be presented to better effect. NB does the source reveal anything about 2nd generation migrants as well?

First, some brief discussion at the outset of the characteristics of the group of 40 countries would help. What are the criteria for inclusion – these are presumably just the countries that (a) have censuses that contain information on migrant populations and (b) are not rich industrialised countries (so in fact data for more than 40 countries are available)? What regions are over/under represented? Are they mainly middle rather than low income countries? Roughly what percentage of the world’s migrants (or the South’s migrants) do they contain?

Second, the content of the tables could be clearer – I could not immediately relate them to the categories listed on p33 (more informative table titles would help).

Third, I would use almost any other row ordering than alphabetical (something I view as the kiss of death)! Possible alternatives include ordering on the child migration column (Table 3) and the migrant child column (Table 4), possibly having first sorted the countries into regions.

Fourth, so as to avoid distracting the eye from the essentials, I would delete the ‘%’ sign from each entry (just include once over the column heads) and round the data to one decimal place only.

Fifth, the odd scattergram might be revealing, e.g. of the two values Table 4 against each other or perhaps against some other variable.

In discussing the impact on education, reference is made to the PIRLS and PISA international assessments. I think TIMSS also has information on migrant status and recent sweeps of the survey have had substantial coverage of middle income countries (in part due to the advent of PISA in industrialised countries, which has pushed TIMSS to look further down the development scale, in part with World Bank support). I believe there are also a series of surveys sponsored by UNESCO Institute for Statistics and perhaps the World Bank which while not providing data based on a standard instrument that is the same in each country, nevertheless provide data that can be used for comparisons within each country (I don’t know if migrant status is collected).

Empirical challenges and data requirements
See above on moving section 5.1 to near the start of the paper. (NB propensity matching can only match on observables, and migrants may differ from natives on unobservables that are correlated with outcomes, including (literally!) the ‘get up and go’ factor.)

I suggest the paper gives a more concrete assessment of the extent to which standard developing world surveys, e.g. LSMS and DHS, contain appropriate questions on migration for the analysis of child wellbeing.

Finally, a subject that I think is not covered much by either paper – issues to do with excessive geographical segregation of migrants. The papers mention theory that would predict that migrants cluster together. But to what extent does this happen in practice and what are the impacts on children’s wellbeing and development? (There are big literatures on ghettos, especially in the US.)