LEVERAGING MIGRATION FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract: This paper examines whether Africa can leverage migration for its economic development. Migration and the resulting remittances lead to increased incomes and poverty reduction, improved health and educational outcomes, and promote economic development. The paper employed a qualitative research approach where a review of the literature was undertaken. The functionalist theory was employed to examine migratory patterns and their association with development. The paper revealed that Africa has ample opportunities to leverage migration for development. However, for this to happen, there is a need to consolidate remittance channels, improve migration management frameworks and support the integration of migrants, Additionally, governments in Africa need to change the way they perceive migration, rather than observing migration as a threat, there is need to observe migration as a process which has the potential to contribute to the development of the continent.

Keywords: Development, Africa, Migration, Support, Growth

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INTRODUCTION

Migration in Africa has evolved to become an important issue concerning its potential for development, however, while such debates have been raging for decades, more recently, migration has become heavily securitized because of its association with terrorism, cross-border crime, xenophobia, and state sovereignty. The September 11 attacks in the United States changed how states view migration, in the aftermath of the attacks, migration became a focal point for policymakers, increased vetting and screening procedures became the order of the day, and borders were fitted with high-end technology to restrict the undocumented movement of people.

This resulted in migration being viewed as a security issue rather than a process that if well managed can contribute to development. There have been opposing views as to the true impact of migration on development, King and Collyer (2016) and Wise and Covarrubias (2009) positively associate migration with development migration (citing processes such as remittance, which increases the regional flow of capital and skills development) with development.

However, while skilled migration contributes to development in the host country, it is difficult to measure or ascertain how irregular migration contributes to development, even though is it important to acknowledge that undocumented migrants in many host countries are involved in the informal sector. The movement of people is likely to result in some form of economic activities and in some way contribute to economic development.

There is an urgent need for Africa to leverage migration for its development, African Union figures show that the level of intra-African migration rose from 13.3 million to 25.4 million between 2008 and 2017 (Frontline, 2021). African migration could boost growth and positively transform the structure of the continent's economy, "Population movements across borders often offer individuals a chance for a better life, with the social and economic benefits extending to both source and destination countries, as well as future generations. The report further revealed that in 2017, 19 million international migrants moved within Africa and 17 million Africans left the continent (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

However, while these figures can be viewed in a positive light, there have been questions as to whether African governments are willing to leverage migration for development owing to the increasing observation of the securitization of migration across the continent.

For example, in South Africa migrants are viewed as job takers and do not contribute to the economy, thus increasing the negative perception of migrants in society. Policymakers can help leverage the contributions of migrants to the development of Africa, reduce remittance costs, improve the efficiency of remittance markets in both origin and destination countries, and address the needs of the origin countries without restricting the emigration of high-skilled professionals.

This paper examines migration in Africa and seeks to understand if Africa can leverage migration for its development. While the term migration can mean both legal and illegal, this paper focuses on the illegal aspect of migration and its potential for development.

METHODS

This paper is based on a qualitative research approach resulting from reviewing the literature to answer the questions underpinning the paper, i.e. what step should Africa take to leverage migration for development and what role should nation-states play in this process.

This approach enabled researchers to critically review literature from a regional and international perspective on migration and their associated debates.

This approach was employed to broaden one's understanding of the ongoing debates informing this contemporary issue and reports on the debates from various stakeholders and theoretical literature.

Considering the pre-colonial, colonial, and current narratives around migration and development, these narratives will therefore become integral in allowing the paper to reach a meaningful conclusion.

THEORETICAL SUPPORT

This paper applied the Functionalist social theory to examine how migration in Africa can be leveraged for development. Functionalism emerged in the early 20th century and is associated with authors such as Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Herbert Spencer, and Robert Merton, who dominated American social theory in the 1950s and 1960s (Pope, 1975).

At the core of functionalism is that all aspects of a society—institutions, roles, norms, etc., —serve a purpose and that all are indispensable for the long-term survival of the society. Functionalism argues that every part of society needs to work with each other for the stability of the whole (Crossman, 2020).

From a functionalist perspective, society is made up of different parts, The various parts of society are assumed to work together naturally and automatically to maintain overall social equilibrium. Family, government, economy, media, education, and religion are important to understanding this theory and the core institutions that define sociology.

According to functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society (Crossman, 2020). If it no longer serves a role, an institution will die away. When new needs evolve or emerge, new institutions will be created to meet them. Regarding migration, functionalist theorists see migration as a positive process that contributes to the prosperity of a given society, thus eventually resulting in economic benefits in sending and destination societies through bidirectional flows of resources such as money, goods, and knowledge (De Haas, 2021).

Essentially, they interpret migration as an optimisation strategy, in which individuals (and sometimes families or households) use migration to access higher and more-secure sources of income and other livelihood opportunities. For functionalists, migration should be harnessed and used to spur economic development because migrants possess skills that can result in economic.

However, King (2013), notes that functionalists acknowledge that undocumented migration (if not managed properly) gives rise to societal tensions which could lead to conflict, thus affecting diplomatic relations between countries. Undocumented migration can aggravate social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and crime. functionalists argue that in the absence of effective emigration management policies, undocumented migration will always be viewed be from a security issue, rather than a developmental process.

While migration can be an important tool for development, however, the management and the integration of undocumented migrants needs to be underpinned by relevant and functioning policies which allow migrants to play a role in development. From the above, it can be argued that migration in Africa can be used as a catalyst for development with the right migration management and integration policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW: BORDER MIGRATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

Border disputes on the African continent continue to be a source of many interstate conflicts (OECD, 2007). Following waves of independence across the continent, African leaders accepted the poorly and selfishly established borders by colonialists without making changes that would facilitate the aspirations of their respective communities. Soysa and Numayer (2008)

note that conflicts and political instability have resulted as a result of inadequate border management, leading to debates about whether national boundaries are required and may contribute to the African continent's growth and integration. African research on migration has focused on the impact of fractionalization on country conflict, economic growth, and political stability (De Soysa and Numayer (2008).

It is critical to determine whether governments respond to security concerns (caused by immigration) by increasing preventive militarization (De Soysa and Numayer (2008); Blomberg (1996).

In two instances, migration could be deemed a security issue: (a) geopolitical upheaval following the end of the Cold War, and (b) wider sociopolitical shifts following globalisation (Huysmans, 2006). According to Choucri, (2002) and Koser (2011) Koser, 2011), migration and security are inextricably linked.

The public debate on the migration-security nexus tends to concentrate on issues such as national security and citizen well-being protection. Many contend that irregular migration jeopardizes national security. In this age of globalisation, understanding the interaction between migration and security is very important.

Most debates on 'security' broaden the orthodox and narrow concept of security as safeguarding the state from threats emanating from outside borders (Soenmez, 1998) to include other wider and relevant threats linked to globalisation, such as economic, environmental, and human rights threats, as well as migration.

INTRA AFRICA MIGRATION: AN OVERVIEW

As a result of cross-border migration, the problem of boundaries is brought to the forefront. Therefore, it is necessary to see boundaries as diverse institutions that are seen differently by state and non-state actors to better comprehend them (Nshimbi and Moyo, 2020).

Human mobility on the African continent has traditionally been characterised by intra-African migration. This reality has a long history that dates back to pre-and colonial eras and continues into the twenty-first century. People in Africa have participated in cyclical and seasonal migration throughout these times, as well as travelled and lived permanently in new places that supported life and maintained livelihoods. African migration, however, has traditionally involved both internal and external forced migration.

The pre-colonial shipping of Africans to the Americas in the Atlantic slave trade was one of the first significant types of forced mass migration of Africans. Africans were compelled to move inside Africa during the colonial era to work in colonial economies (Moyo, Laine, and Nshimbi, 2021). Adepoju (2000) intra-and inter-African migration as well as movement between African nations and the former colony's metropolitan area and elsewhere have been bolstered and aided by historical economic ethnic and political connections across Africa's continent. Intra-regional migrant labourers, undocumented migrants, nomads, frontier workers, refugees, and, increasingly, highly qualified professionals make up the majority of Africa's migration.

Shimeles (2010) indicated that poorer nations have a lower rate of emigration and a greater rate of intra-African migration. Poor socioeconomic circumstances seem to increase the rate of emigration of highly trained persons. In general, migration is motivated by the desire to enhance one's living, with noticeable changes in labor market position.

Often, self-employed or jobless émigrés ended up in wage work. Awumbila (2017) stated that migration within Sub-Saharan Africa is bigger (67%) than migration to other regions. South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia are the most popular places to visit in Africa. In West Africa, 84 percent of migration is within the region. This makes West Africa the region with the most migration within the region. Many of these people are workers who move within the

subregion to take advantage of opportunities in other parts of the subregion.

More and more young people are also moving to take advantage of educational opportunities in other parts of the region. In connection with this, migration in Africa has always had a big cross-border component. This is partly because most national borders were made up by colonial governments, partly because the economies of different ecological zones are interdependent, and partly because regional political and economic alliances were made in the 1960s and 1970s.

Awumbila (2017) further indicated that in southern Africa, the end of apartheid and South Africa's joining the SADC region have made it much easier for people to move across borders and around the region. High rates of poverty and unemployment in both rural and urban areas, as well as different levels of social service provision, have made migration an increasingly important way to make a living. South Africa remains the most popular place for many migrants to go. According to Gnimassoun's (2020) findings, while the amount of work and income in Africa is usually the same, intra-African migration might assist improve incomes by making labor a more prominent element of economic cycles, particularly in agriculture and services.

Flahaux & De Haas (2016) alluded that the intensity of intra-African migration has decreased. This might be connected to the emergence of states and the subsequent implementation of restrictions to free movement in the aftermath of decolonisation, as well as the concurrent growth of nationalism and inter-state disputes.

While African migration remains largely intra-continental, there has been an acceleration and geographical diversification of emigration out of Africa to Europe, North America, the Gulf, and Asia since the late 1980s. The establishment of visas and other immigration limitations by European governments seems to have contributed to this diversification of African emigration.

Rather than being driven by poverty, war, and underdevelopment, growing migration out of Africa seems to be driven by processes of development and social change that have enhanced Africans' capacities and ambitions to move, a trend that is expected to continue in the future.

THE PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

All countries enforce immigration rules, but we know very little about the variables that influence how often they do so. Immigration policies may provide authorities and non-state entities the authority to enforce immigration rules (Vigneswaran, 2020).

In 2015, more than a million Africans crossed the Mediterranean Sea to get to Europe, where they hoped to find safety and better jobs. Nearly 4,000 people died on the dangerous trip. Images from the news of overcrowded, rickety boats and dead bodies washing up on shore sent shockwaves around the world. By the end of 2016, the EU had shut down the migration routes through the Mediterranean. This cut the number of people coming to Europe by 70%. Focusing on the "EU migration crisis" and growing fears of the "hordes" moving to Europe has kept policymakers in Africa and the EU from coming up with practical ways to meet the demographic needs of both continents. On the one hand, Africa has a growing number of young people who have few job opportunities (Kihato,2018). More than 50 million Africans are projected to be among the world's 150 million migrants. Given that the number of migrants is increasing and is anticipated to continue in the foreseeable future, migration management has inevitably become one of the essential concerns for states in the new century. However, migration movements are taking place in an African setting characterised by the absence of institutional capacity in certain African

nations to handle challenges both individually and collectively (Africa Union, 2006). The continent of Africa has seen a variety of migratory patterns as a result of factors such as population growth, poverty, weak economic performance, and regional wars. In the past, migrants saw the sub-region as a free-trade zone where goods and services could be traded freely (Adepoju, 2009). The underlying reasons for migration are varied and complicated. The push-pull framework sheds light on the many dynamics at work in migration. Poor socioeconomic circumstances in Africa, such as low salaries, high unemployment, rural underdevelopment, poverty, and a lack of opportunity, drive out migration. These issues are often caused by a mismatch between fast population expansion and available resources, a lack of necessary technologies to utilize accessible natural resources, and a lack of ability to produce employment and jobs in the nations of origin (Africa Union, 2006).

Migration patterns in Africa toward other African nations or beyond the continent are connected to the degrees of development divergence amongst the countries and are underlined by African governments' incapacity to manage their populations and economy. On the one hand, globalization has exacerbated the growth in international migration; on the other hand, poverty and instability in African nations have intensified it, creating grounds for migration.

Managers have been unable to deal with the enormous and irregular exodus of individuals from their country (Raimundo, 2009). Trafficking and smuggling in the African continent is regarded as one of the most important and pressing concerns confronting migration policymakers and practitioners (Truong, 2006).

Human trafficking complicates migration management for sending, transit, and receiving nations because it interrupts orderly travel and breaches national laws, especially migration regulations. But institutions can't consider human trafficking a breach of a country's migration regulations by the victim. They see it as a violation of the victim's human rights by those involved (Truong, 2005).

In Africa, migration is caused by both political and social factors. Poor government, nepotism, corruption, violations of human rights, political instability, environmental factors, war and civil strife, and the real or imagined chance of a better life, a high income, more security, and better education and health care at the destination all play a role in the decision to move. Some of the things that make push-pull factors stronger are lower costs of migration, better communication, more information, and the need to be near family and friends.

Well-managed migration can have a big positive effect on the development of countries of origin and bring big benefits to the countries where migrants end up. On the other hand, migration that isn't well-managed or doesn't happen at all can have serious negative effects on the welfare of States and migrants, including a possible effect on national and regional security (Africa Union, 2006).

Migration from Africa today is caused by many things, such as bad government, underdevelopment, war, poverty, inequality, unemployment, natural disasters, and economic and political instability.

But these are just secondary factors that set the stage for short-term and medium-term changes. Underlying these triggers are structural factors that have been around for a long time and aren't likely to change in the next generation or two, or that have strong links to long-lasting patterns of mobility (Kihato, 2018).

HOW AFRICAN STATES CAN LEVERAGE MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Consolidate remittances channels

Migration using remittances can be beneficial for economic development. In Africa, one out of five people sends or receive international remittances, without considering domestic flows. Most

remittances received in Africa cover daily needs, with a significant amount (25 per cent) available for savings or investment.

When these funds enter the financial system, they can have a positive effect on both the individuals and the community. Taiwo Ojapinwa, a researcher from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, said that although remittances to Africa have recently declined, they still constitute a major component of income to households and investments compared to other external revenue flows (African Development Bank, 2017).

Leveraging remittances for development requires the provision of systems that are characterised by financial education and a broader range of financial services to choose from. Therefore, there is a need to consolidate remittance channels. The ability to expand financial services, however, depends on institutional capacity, willingness to offer services to low-income people, and on regulatory frameworks that enable them to do so (African Development Bank, 2017).

Integrate migrants with local communities

While undocumented migrants may bring with them a vast majority of skills, such skills become unless if migrants cannot be integrated into the communities that they live in. This paper acknowledges that while it is crossing borders without the necessary documentation is illegal, undocumented migration is taking place daily in Africa and this is driven by the porosity of borders, corruption, and maladministration.

Therefore, while policymakers struggle to develop effective policies to respond to this growing issue, in the meantime is important to ensure that the migrants are integrated into the community as this is likely to ensure they can use their skills for development.

Moreover, Bouronikos (2022), communicates that local communities are the places where immigrant integration takes place. It is the playground where both migrants and locals mingle and interact in everyday life, be it at the workplace, school, local markets, or churches.

All in all, immigrant integration efforts demand elements of social interaction acting as a melting pot for the existence of different civilizations (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). Migrants bring way more things than simply their clothes and their essentials in their luggage.

Most importantly, they bring their skills, thirst for work, different ideas, and culture with them. They can boost economic growth and revitalize whole neighborhoods and communities, hence their importance in the integration process.

Promotion of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The adoption of the Promotion of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents an opportunity for traders, both large multinationals and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to trade across Africa through a liberalised market for goods and services.

One of the goal of the agreement is to create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons (Article 3(a), hence this put need migration of persons at the heart of free trade (King'ori, 2022).

The co-dependency between trade and free migration is therefore not unexpected. In Africa, trade is largely propagated through informal cross-border trade (ICBT). Free migration presents at least three opportunities that would catapult Africa to greater economic prosperity.

First, the recognition of informal cross border traders (ICBTs) and their inclusion to the continent's formal economic matrix.

Second, the alleviation of poverty through remittances (King'ori, 2022). Third, building and growing the African economy by reducing reliance on the "colonial economic model". Therefore, the agreement is will greatly ensure states can use migration for development.

Enabling African youth and woman economic opportunities

In recent years, policymakers have paid more attention to youth unemployment and migration to cities, as well as movement across borders.

Many African nations are concerned about the challenges of speeding rural economic development in order to produce employment, as well as a rapidly rising young population (Amare et al., 2021). Youth and women are more inclined than other members of the society to move in quest of better livelihoods since they are typically unfettered by family and societal commitments.

When compared to previous generations, the younger population, particularly those in eastern Africa, has greater knowledge and education, increasing their chances of migrating to other nations (Bezu et al., 2020). Africans' economic life, particularly African youths, continue to be strongly reliant on informal labor markets and mixed livelihoods.

This often involves farming, particularly in rural regions, where the bulk of Africans remain. Recognizing and better comprehending this reality, as well as finding areas for development within it, may contain some of the solutions to the region's young unemployment and working poor.

The practice of integrating agricultural and other income-generating occupations throughout time and geography is popular among low-income Africans, notably young, in order to decrease risk and diversify opportunity (Moore, 2015).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) promotes women migration throughout Africa, which would result in additional job possibilities, higher earnings for unskilled employees, and a decrease in the gender wage gap, all of which would have a favourable influence on poverty reduction and gender inequities (Mlambo et al., 2022).

Promoting Africa Agenda 2063 for migration management in Africa

The African Union's Agenda 2063 calls for the creation of a visa-free zone and the harmonisation of member countries' immigration policies.

Under this plan, the criterion for selection would be based on location. To be eligible for free movement, a person must be a citizen of an AU member state. As part of Agenda 2063 and the AU's migration policy framework, visa reduction and unrestricted movement are both prioritized for their economic benefits (Gordon, 2022).

The agenda symbolizes a call to action for all African people to assume personal responsibility for the fate of the continent and to be the major agents of change and development (Edwin, 2022). According to the results of Dumor et al., (2022), migration has a major influence on the flow of bilateral commerce.

As a result, a comprehensive policy agenda must be devised to improve migration and trade-promoting policies among Africa's participating nations to foster African prosperity from a win-win viewpoint. Free mobility is also a fundamental aim of Africa's Agenda 2063 (Hirsch, 2022). The movement of skilled African migrants to affluent nations widens the already existent knowledge gap in African economies.

The increased movement of talented people from poor nations (pull-up migration) is not owing to a lack of patriotism, but rather to Africans' survival strategy to ensure their future and contribute to the global economy. Developed nations have implemented immigrant-friendly laws, and Africa should follow suit to maintain its qualified workforce (Ukponu et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Migration can be a catalyst for development only if there are well-functioning policy frameworks, systems, and the political will to harness its developmental potential. While migration today has become a highly politised issue, it still plays a vital role in the development and wellbeing of many families. In Africa, there is a need to ensure that the increasing number of people moving across borders

(legally and illegally) and together with their skills and capital can be used to spur development for both the sending and host country.

Leveraging migration for development will largely depend on the political will of the governments. There are growing calls for governments in Africa not to adopt Western techniques of migration management such as border securitization or militarization, but rather put more emphasis on developing effective and functioning migration management frameworks that can harness the economic potential of migrants while at the same time providing a security net for the sovereignty of nation-states.

Increasing scenes of conflict and terrorism in Africa have given impetus to the securitisation or militarisation of borders and migration, thus suffocating the potential developmental role of migration continentally. Even though this may be the case, no amount of militarisation can stop the movement of people, Hence there is a need to ensure that migration management frameworks can work to harness the power of migration rather than discriminate or seclude migrants.

However, the porosity of borders, corruption, and maladministration will continue to be the greatest limitation as to how far Africa can go in developing an effective migration framework with the ability to harness the economic potential of migration. Migration management in Africa is an area that has received little attention from African authorities; as a result, African governments have not made significant attempts to develop migration management policies and migration systems to regulate migration in Africa.

The most perplexing reality is that migration is a huge issue in Africa. Africans travel between African nations in search of a better life, resulting in a huge number of illegal immigrants in African countries. For example, South Africa has the highest number of illegal immigrants of any African country.

Due to inadequate migration management in Africa, foreign nationals or immigrants are considered as foreigners in their own continent, and numerous homicides, xenophobia, and afro-phobia have occurred in African nations.

The African people assume that other Africans come to their nation to take their economic chances. African leaders may utilize the AU to develop policies that support migration management in Africa. Migration may help Africa grow by transferring talents across African governments and increasing commerce between African countries.

This is feasible via the development of integration in Africa, which is possible through the AU as Africa's higher institution, which represents all 54 African governments. Effective migration management policies and the implementation of migration control tools may enhance migration management in Africa, which will ultimately boost development in Africa. Only by promoting African unity can this be achievable.

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