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# Migration and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Migration in sub-Saharan Africa, as in the rest of the world, has always been an essential element in the historical processes of social, political and economic change. Development (however defined) and migration are intertwined in a set of complex, heterogeneous, and changing relationships in which causality is never one way. In short, migration can be seen as a both a cause and consequence of development and, equally, development is both a cause and consequence of migration. Until relatively recently, the analysis of the overlap between the two processes has often been relegated to the margins of development studies. It is only in the 2000s that questions about the extent to which migration can help or hinder development have moved to the center of both academic and policy agendas, including that of the field of political economy.

Studies of African migration have tended to offer a somewhat contradictory picture of movement and its relationship with development on the continent. Two key strands of literature have largely existed in parallel with limited contact. On the one hand, there are many studies that highlight the mobility of the peoples of Africa, which has given rise to a rich diversity of intertwined languages, cultures, and traditions whose historical threads can be traced far across the continent. Migration is presented as a norm of life, one that plays an essential role in sustaining livelihoods—diversifying income sources and diffusing risk—and disseminating goods, skills, and labor across Africa (Bilger and Kraler, 2005; de Bruijn et al., 2001; de Haan and Rogaly, 2002).

On the other hand, a large body of literature tends toward a more negative view (Burawoy, 1976; Murray, 1981; Amin, 1995; Akokpari, 2000; Epstein and Jezeph, 2001). This literature also relates migration to livelihoods, but presents it as the result of structural forces, the failure of individuals to make ends meet where they live, or crises—such as conflict, environmental degradation, and/or natural disasters—that make life intolerable. Moreover, those who move can create new problems in both their areas of origin, for example by reducing agricultural production, and the areas in which they settle, such as increasing pressures on urban infrastructure. Hence migration has been seen as a symptom and cause of exploitation and underdevelopment; either way, it has been treated as a problem that needs to be addressed. It is only in the last decade that the picture of migration as a development problem has come to be routinely challenged, with the 'discovery' of remittances and a newfound enthusiasm for identifying policies and approaches that can secure the maximum benefits of migration for countries of origin, countries of destination, and migrants themselves in so-called win-win-win scenarios.

To a large extent, the on-off relationship between development and migration in Africa echoes trends in the rest of the world. For example, enthusiasm for understanding the potential engagement of the diasporas in development in Africa is part of a global interest in such issues (Mohan and Zack-Williams, 2002; Ionescu, 2006; Davies, 2007; Thomas, 2008). These broad debates about the relationship between migration and development and the impact of remittances are discussed by Ronald Skeldon in the previous chapter. Rather than reprising those discussions here, I will instead focus on some of the distinctive features of sub-Saharan Africa that have shaped both the conduct of academic debates and policy responses within the region.

In the next section I argue that the experience of colonialism left an indelible mark on the political economy of Africa, shaping both the patterns of migration and their impact across the continent. The European powers created the boundaries of nearly all the modern sub-Saharan African states, and these borders have had a profound effect on mobility. Moreover, in their attempts to marshal the labor of Africans to serve the colonial enterprises in the profit centers of plantations and mines while maintaining traditional ways of life in the rural areas, the colonialists established migration systems that remain important to this day; examples include the labor migrations to the coast of West Africa and the mines of southern Africa. They also established an ideology of state control of mobility that continued after independence. Another important legacy of the colonial era is the institutionalization of concepts of development, which have tended to cast rural-urban migration as a problem to be addressed. Hence, in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the notion of development has become inextricably linked with the control of mobility. I suggest that this “sedentary” bias is echoed in development strategies across the continent today. The subsequent section briefly outlines the changing directions and scale of migration in sub-Saharan Africa. I argue that the dynamics of migration on the continent have been shaped by shifts in political and economic conditions at the national, regional, and global levels. I also highlight the fact that, despite the preoccupation of policymakers and academics in Europe, a large majority (more than 70 percent) of sub-Saharan African migrants move within Africa.

Having set the scene, I then turn to the relationship between migration and development in sub-Saharan Africa. The discussion focuses on four areas that are particularly prominent in the debates on Africa. These are the impact of migration on income and inequality and the contribution of remittances; the emigration of skilled workers and the issues generally summed up in the phrase “brain drain”; the attempts by development actors to engage African diasporas in their development activities; and the consequences of the protracted displacement of refugees on development progress. The conclusion draws attention to an inherent contradiction in many contemporary discussions about the links between migration and development. On the one hand, migration and the contribution of migrants are being feted for offering new avenues to achieve the elusive goal of development in sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, these mainstream conceptions of development, to which they are expected to contribute, have deeply embedded within them sedentary assumptions that cast migration as a symptom of development failure.

It is important to note that although the focus of this chapter is on sub-Saharan Africa, migration patterns cross regional and even continental boundaries. For instance, despite the portrayal of the Sahara as a natural border that separates North Africa from the rest of the continent, the desert has long been crossed by well-established migratory routes. The use of such routes has ebbed and flowed over the decades, but the settlement of sub-Saharan Africans in North Africa is not a new phenomenon. The history of trans-Saharan migration is particularly important to bear in mind in the face of growing European unease about transit migration, which tends to stem from an assumption that all those moving north across the Sahara are migrants en route to Europe.

**{A}African Mobility{/A}**

Africa has long been portrayed as a continent of people on the move (de Bruijn et al., 2001). The myths of origin of many ethnic groups draw on narratives of great migrations—for example, the Bantu expansion of movement from Central Africa, the Hamitic myth of migration from north to south, and even the Voortrekkers' so-called Great Trek in South Africa. While some of these migrations may be little more than legends, they all serve an important function in the (mythic) construction of Africa and its people in the modern world (Bilger and Kraler, 2005).

Across Africa, migration has always played an important role in sustaining and expanding people's livelihoods in many different ways (de Haan, 1999). These include expansion into new areas to gain access to natural resources, such as land, minerals, water, game, and fish; the conquest of neighboring groups to capture both their goods and their labor, either directly through slavery or indirectly through the payment of tribute; and the expansion of networks to gain access to new markets for both goods and labor. Migration has also been driven by conflicts at different levels, ranging from family disputes to wars.

From the early days of their encounters with African populations, European powers sought to control this mobility. Once the brutal transatlantic slave trade had been abandoned, they turned their attention to controlling the movement of Africans within the continent to ensure that labor was available to serve their colonial endeavors. They introduced measures such as forced labor, little removed from slavery, which was practiced in Portuguese colonies until the middle of the twentieth century (Henderson, 1978); the imposition of hut and poll taxes; the expropriation of the best land for settler agriculture; and the provision of services to attract wage laborers. Such policies drew Africans into the cash economy as wage laborers in the mines of southern Africa; in the rubber, cocoa, coffee, and tea plantations of East, Central, and West Africa; and in the colonial administration via armies and police forces across the continent. Thus they stimulated the large-scale movement of people across Africa. Most notably, in West Africa, the colonial period saw widespread labor migration from Benin, Niger, Mali, and Togo to the plantations and mines of Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d'Ivoire (Schuerkens, 2003). In southern Africa, the mines of South Africa and the Zambian (then Northern Rhodesian) Copperbelt drew in hundreds of thousands of laborers from across the region. These colonial policies established patterns of migration that continue to this day. For example, in South Africa, the recruitment of young men on short-term contracts from Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi to work in the gold and diamond mines was highly organized. During the apartheid years, "immigration policy was a naked instrument of racial domination"; but, despite attempts to reduce dependence on foreign mine workers since 1994, recruitment has continued at increasing levels (Crush, 2003).

The international borders that divide mainland Africa into 48 separate states are another legacy of the colonial period that has had a profound influence on migration across the continent. Most of these were agreed by European powers in the late nineteenth century. These colonial lines on the map paid little respect to language and cultural boundaries, cutting across traditional chieftainships and separating kinsfolk. Many run over huge distances in very remote areas. Formal crossing points are relatively rare; many of the borders are unmarked and can be crossed with no government control (Griffiths, 1996).

A number of authors have suggested that, lacking legitimacy or enforcement, these borders mean little in the day-to-day lives of African people and thus that international migration in Africa should be treated as an informal extension of internal migration (Skeldon, 2006: 19; Adepoju, 2008a), or "cross-border" migration (Deshingkar and Natali, 2008: 180). Although there is certainly a case for breaking down the sharp distinctions between internal and international migration, the significance of African borders may be downplayed too often.[i] Skeldon may be right to claim that sub-Saharan Africa contains more borders drawn by colonial powers "without regard to underlying social and political realities" than does Asia (Skeldon 2006: 19). However, his contention that the crossing of such borders should be treated as internal migration is less convincing. As he himself argues, when people cross borders, their rights, their relationship with the state, and even their self-identities change (Skeldon, 2006: 19). The colonial borders were created to mark territories for different institutional regimes, for taxation, social policies, military service, language of education, and so forth. The Europeans defined their power by the territory they controlled, and the borders defined the extent of their authority. This immediately created incentives for Africans to cross to the more favorable side. For example, the introduction of taxes in Zambia by the British stimulated movement into neighboring Angola. The Portuguese practice of forced labor in Angola encouraged people to move the other way into Zambia (Pritchett, 1990; von Oppen, 1995). Crossing borders has also meant finding protection from war for many thousands of refugees across Africa. Hence the establishment of these international borders introduced a new set of constraints and opportunities that have become an important part of lives for African people, whether they cross to avoid taxation and violence, gain protection, or find jobs, markets, education, and health care (Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996; Miles, 2005).

A third legacy of the colonial intervention in Africa is a concept of development that is inherently "sedentary" (Bakewell, 2008a). As noted earlier, the functioning (and profitability) of the colonial state required that people move to work. At the same time, the colonial authorities took great care to ensure that these migrants did not settle permanently in the new urban centers (Rakodi, 1997a). Migrant laborers were expected to retain links with their homelands; ideally, when they finished their contract or retired, they would return to the village to make way for new laborers. In order to encourage this circular migration, the authorities encouraged African labor migrants to maintain their village homes and traditional ways of life. In many areas, these were assumed to be largely sedentary, based around stable villages in fixed locations populated by particular (static) tribes. Such views were embedded in the work of structural-functionalist anthropologists. Migration featured very little in their conservative analysis, which portrayed many African societies as homogeneous, largely unchanging, and isolated from other groups (Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). Moreover, the colonial systems for the collection of taxes, the imposition of colonial law, and the provision of government services all relied on the knowledge of people's whereabouts. Mobility left the Europeans confused. As James Ferguson remarks,

> {EXT}Colonial rulers were dismayed at the high mobility exhibited by villagers in Northern Province [of Zambia] and could not understand why people did not stay put in "proper villages." They were sure that such behavior was not "traditional" but the result of recent pathology

> brought on by industrial development and the “migrant-labor system.” Small, temporary villages, with people moving about in an undisciplined manner between them, they felt sure, were a sign of the “breakdown” of traditional institutions, a breakdown that government policy would have to check if “detribalization” was to be avoided. (1999: 39) {/EXT}

This concern over migration came to be fixed in the foundations of social and economic development thought across Africa. Out-migration from rural areas was widely seen as creating economic and social problems, from the decline in agricultural production to the erosion of rural societies. Although the practice of sending remittances from urban areas back to the villages was widespread, these were thought to be used for consumption rather than investment and tended to increase inequality within rural communities (Lipton, 1980). In urban areas, unplanned in-migration was seen as overwhelming the embryonic urban structures and creating enormous social pressures (Rakodi, 1997a).

As African states gained their independence in the second half of the twentieth century, this analysis remained largely unchanged. The new governments dropped many of the colonial restrictions on urban settlement and pursued policies of industrialization and modernization focused on the cities (Rakodi, 1997b), but they were still anxious to control migration. Many development aid programs focused on the improvement of rural areas, which was seen as essential to encourage people to stay in the villages rather than try their luck in the ever-growing cities. There were massive government investments in rural development programs, agricultural extension, and rural infrastructure (such as roads, water supply, health facilities, and schools). Policies such as Tanzania’s so-called villagization “arguably reinforced a mindset among policymakers that development was best promoted through interventions in rural areas that would reduce the need for migration” (Black et al., 2004: 27).

Such policies have had very limited impact on rural migration; urbanization across African has increased regardless (Rakodi, 1997c). Development in the forms of improved incomes, education, and infrastructure has tended to be associated with higher levels of mobility. It may change the conditions of migration (for example, by reducing transport costs) and enable different people to move (as income levels increase, migration becomes a more affordable option), but it does not reduce the scale of migration (de Haan, 1999: 20). Despite this insight, gained over many years, the belief that development progress will be marked by reduced migration—whether rural-urban migration or African-European—is deeply embedded in contemporary approaches to development by donors and African states. Both the European Commission and the African Union have claimed that poverty is the main cause of migration and that creating development opportunities and jobs in Africa will serve to reduce the flow of migrants from the continent:

> {EXT}Turning to the migration and development agenda, the prime challenge is to tackle the main push factors for migration: poverty and the lack of job opportunities. The EU [European Union] must recognize that creating jobs in developing countries could significantly reduce migratory pressure from Africa. (CEC, 2006a: 5).{EXT}

> {EXT}Migration can be an effective tool for development. . . . However, poverty is one of the main causes of migration. Creating development opportunities in countries of origin would mitigate the main reasons for young people to engage in migration. (African Union, 2006: 4) {/EXT}

**{A}Changing Patterns of African Migration{/A}**

Having forged both the political boundaries of nation-states and an economic system based largely on primary production and resource extraction, colonialism has left an indelible mark on the political economy of sub-Saharan Africa. This is still clearly reflected in the postindependence patterns of migration. For example, the divisions between colonial powers have tended to channel movement within European, especially Anglophone and Francophone, language zones; there have been large population exchanges between Ghana and Nigeria, and many migrants have circulated within the East African Community of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Francophone migrants have tended to move within Francophone West and central Africa. Nevertheless, such colonial patterns of migration have been reshaped by local, regional, and global shifts in political and economic conditions in the decades since African states gained their independence. In this section, I pick out a few examples to illustrate these changes.

Across the continent, newly independent governments adopted various strategies to enhance the processes of nation building. Many states focused on consolidating the loyalty of citizens to the state via for example, the philosophies of Ujamaa (African socialism) in Tanzania or Harambee ("All Pull Together") in Kenya. By contrast, in West Africa, the relatively prosperous countries of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire adopted a strong anticolonial ideology of pan-Africanism, which had a direct impact on migration. In the early years of independence, both countries, especially the latter, welcomed immigrants to work and stay (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2003). They attracted large numbers of people from countries such as Togo and Nigeria (who went mainly to Ghana); Burkina Faso and Guinea (who went mainly to Côte d'Ivoire); and Niger and Mali (who went to both).

However, this ideology was inevitably tempered by economic and political upheavals. In Ghana, a coup in 1966 was followed by increasing repression, a declining economy and rising unemployment. The immigrant community in Ghana became a scapegoat for the deteriorating situation, and in 1969 the Ghanaian government enacted the Aliens Compliance Order, leading to a mass expulsion of an estimated 155,000 to 213,000 migrants working informally in the cocoa industry, predominantly Nigerians. Ghanaians also started emigrating in large numbers. An estimated 2 million Ghanaian workers left Ghana between 1974 and 1981, their primary destinations being Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. Skilled Ghanaians such as teachers, doctors, and administrators migrated to Nigeria, Uganda, Botswana, and Zambia. Since the mid-1980s, Ghanaians have increasingly migrated to a range of destinations in Europe and North America (Van Hear, 1998; Anarfi and Kwankye, 2003; Bump, 2006).

While migration to Côte d'Ivoire continued, oil-rich Nigeria took Ghana's place as West Africa's major migration pole when oil prices rose dramatically in 1973. However, misguided economic policies and a major decline in oil production and prices soon heralded a long period of economic downturn alongside with sustained political repression. In 1983 and 1985, Nigeria followed the Ghanaian example and expelled an estimated 2 million low-skilled West African migrants, including more than a million Ghanaians (Arthur, 1991; Bump, 2006). As Ghana had done earlier, Nigeria transformed itself from a net immigration to a net emigration country (Black et al., 2004: 11), although many immigrants (in particular Beninois and Ghanaians) have remained. Toward the end of the 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire's position as West Africa's most important migration destination was reversed as it entered into a civil war and a deep economic crisis, creating a new population of refugees.

At the other end of the continent, the southern African labor migration system has been transformed by the end of apartheid in South Africa. Until 1994, the mines of South Africa drew in migrants from the labor reserve countries of the region, namely Lesotho and Mozambique, but migrants from further afield in Africa were few and far between. With the end of apartheid, the situation has changed dramatically, and over the last fifteen years South Africa has become a major pole for migrants from all over the continent (Crush, 2003).

In East, central, and southern Africa, conflict and violence have played a much larger role in shaping postcolonial migration. Beginning in the 1960s, prolonged liberation wars such as those in Algeria, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Namibia as well as civil wars such as those in Sudan and Somalia forced millions of refugees to flee to neighboring countries (and millions more to become internally displaced persons) over generations. The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s helped bring some of the prolonged conflicts to an end, but during the 1990s new and brutal civil conflicts erupted in West Africa (namely Sierra Leone and Liberia), Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, creating more refugees and internal displacement.

The plight of refugees in different regions of Africa has quite rightly been the subject of great concern and policy interest and has stimulated major aid interventions over many years. While highlighting the situation of refugees has been essential with respect to some parts of Africa—in particular the Horn and East and central Africa (Oucho, 2006)—doing so has cast other forms of migration into the shadows. This focus on refugees epitomizes what can be called the “misery discourse” of migration in sub-Saharan Africa: “In this region, completely grounded in poverty, emigration pressure is compounded by demographic dynamics, unstable politics, endemic ethnoreligious conflicts, persistent economic decline, and environmental deterioration” (Adepoju, 2008b: 21). Such factors have always played an important role in shaping African migration. Farmers and pastoralists have been driven off land by falling yields and crop prices; erratic economic growth has failed to keep step with growing populations; and migration is a strategy widely employed to diversify income streams and reduce household risk (Stark and Levhari, 1982).

In order to understand the evolution of contemporary African migration, it is also necessary to recall the rapidly changing global context in which Africans are moving. Despite its weak position, Africa is embedded within the globalized political economy; hence African migration processes are driven by the same broad forces of globalization that shape migration in the rest of the world. As a result, patterns of African migration share many features with those of the rest of the world in that they are becoming more complex, involving a wider range of people moving to more destinations over longer distances. Like the rest of the world, the real costs of travel in Africa have decreased with the slow expansion of road networks and air routes. Although air travel remains the most exclusive form of transport, fares have come down and it is more affordable for more people. This is helping to expand opportunities for ordinary people across Africa: for example, Ghanaian market traders are now moving between Accra and China (Awumbila et al., 2009).

Africa may lag behind the rest of the world in access to new information technologies, but the latter are still having a profound affect across the continent. Satellite television beaming images of life in other parts of the world can be found even in very remote areas of sub-Saharan Africa, expanding the horizons of potential migrants. Perhaps more important, mobile telephony penetration is growing rapidly, and with the development of community phone schemes, phones reach far beyond individual subscribers.[ii] African migrants anywhere in the world are now able to maintain links with families, friends,, and business contacts in their countries of origin relatively cheaply. This facilitates the development of sustained transnational relationships over long distances and many years.

Such factors are likely to have contributed to the marked feminization of migration in sub-Saharan Africa (Adepoju, 2006), albeit at a much slower pace than we have seen in parts of Asia (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). According to empirical research by the Southern African Migration Project, the proportion of women, especially younger single women, among international migrants in the region was increasing in 2008, although a large majority was still male (Dodson et al., 2008).

The impact of globalization can also be seen in the diversification of destinations for African migrants (Zlotnik, 2006: 30). Table 7.1 shows estimates of stocks of migrants by region of origin in Africa and destinations across the world. It is important to note that a large majority—more than 70 percent—still remain within the continent (see also Sander and Maimbo, 2003; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Even in West Africa, where migration to the industrialized countries is higher than elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, regional migration is still at least seven times greater (OECD, 2006). Thus, despite popular views of an invasion of sub-Saharan migrants into the EU, the actual numbers remain very limited compared to those of migrants from Eastern Europe and North Africa (de Haas, 2008).

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However, it should be no surprise that, with the rapid development of global social, economic, and technological networks, net migration from Africa to wealthier regions of the world has likely grown since 1990. European census data show that 14 percent of the foreign-born people living in the EU were from Africa, forming the second largest group of immigrants (Katseli et al., 2006). Italy, Spain, and Portugal have reported significant increases in migration from Africa. The overall trend for migration from Africa to the United States has also been upward since the 1990s. The proportion of the African-born population in the United States grew from 1 percent in 1995 to 3 percent in 2005—a fourfold increase in absolute numbers from 270,000 in 1995 to 1.1 million in 2005.[iii] Today African migration represents a small but growing segment of the overall migration picture in the United States.[iv]

Changes in the global political economy are not only driving increases but also decreases in African migration. As the economy across the world moves into recession and resource prices plummet, the demand for African migrant workers will shrink, both within the continent and beyond. For example, there have been large-scale layoffs in the Zambian Copperbelt; similar retrenchment in the past has led to the return of large numbers of workers to rural areas (Ferguson, 1999; Potts, 2005). The tightening of job markets in Europe, North America, and Asia is likely to reduce the already limited employment opportunities for African graduates in the global labor market. Furthermore, widespread concerns about terrorism across world have resulted in migration being increasingly linked to security. In both Europe and Africa, national security is commonly cited as a rationale for imposing tighter immigration controls, as governments erect ever stronger bureaucratic and physical barriers to limit movement.

**{A}The Relationship Between Migration and Development in Africa{/A}**

This very brief survey of migration patterns illustrates that African migration is strongly related to processes of economic, social, and political change. Development progress may facilitate migration, for instance by providing new transport routes, but may also render it unnecessary by creating new livelihood opportunities in local areas. In very general terms, it is not the poorest people who migrate; wealthier countries have higher levels of out-migration than do the least developed.[v] This suggests that as countries increase their incomes, we may expect to see higher levels of mobility among their populations. In other words, increasing development is likely to be associated with increased migration.

Unfortunately, to date, the levels of development in much of sub-Saharan Africa remain very low. By almost every development indicator, sub-Saharan Africa remains the least developed region of the world. Of the forty-one states in mainland sub-Saharan Africa, twenty-nine are categorized as least developed countries by the United Nations (UN), and thirty are low-income countries according to the World Bank. Sub-Saharan African countries take thirty-one of the bottom thirty-three places in the ranking for the Human Development Index, which is calculated on the basis of income, literacy, and life expectancy (UNDP 2009). Moreover, it is in sub-Saharan

Africa that the least progress has been made toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite countless development interventions in the region absorbing billions of dollars over the last fifty years, it seems little has been achieved. Indeed, the structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund across the continent in the 1980s, which drastically cut back state subsidies in an effort to introduce competition to stimulate developing economies, succeeded only in entrenching poverty and increasing inequality (Milanovic, 2007).

Given the consistent failure of conventional development programs in sub-Saharan Africa, the recent reassessment of the potential impact of migration on development has offered the tantalizing prospect of a new set of approaches. The turnaround in thinking was foreshadowed by Douglas Massey and his colleagues , who argued that the prevailing view of the impact of migration on economic development was “unduly pessimistic and harsh,” based on inadequate theory and data (1998: 272). The World Bank’s *Global Development Finance Report 2003* helped to propel the issue up the policy agenda by drawing attention to the massive growth in remittances (Ratha, 2003). As Devesh Kapur (2004) has somewhat ironically put it, remittances have become “the new development mantra”.

There is a vast and rapidly growing literature on the links between migration and development (Sørensen et al., 2002; Chamie and Dall’Oglio, 2008; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008; Naik et al., 2008). Much of the empirical research is based on cases of migration from poorer to wealthier regions of the world, especially Mexico-US migration. Research on migration’s impacts on development and poverty reduction within poor regions such as sub-Saharan Africa has only recently come to the fore (Black et al., 2006; Hujo and Piper, 2007; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). The emerging literature shows that the specific nature of the relationship appears to be very complex and heterogeneous. As the broad debates are outlined in Chapter 6, my discussion is focused on four themes that are particularly pertinent in the context of sub-Saharan Africa: the impact of migration on income and inequality and the contribution of remittances; the impact on human capital formation, particularly the brain drain; the engagement of the African diaspora in development; and the consequences of protracted displacement on development progress.

{B}Income, Inequality, and Remittances{/B}

There are some indications that the extent to which migration enables migrants and their families to improve their livelihoods depends critically on whether or not they stay within the continent. In general, migration within the continent is less remunerative. For instance, studies conducted in Burkina Faso (Hampshire, 2002; Wouterse, 2006) suggest that internal and international migration within the African continent should primarily be seen as means to enhance livelihood security through income diversification and that welfare gains are relatively small. It was mainly migration to Europe that allowed households to accumulate substantially more wealth and stabilize incomes.

It is also important to bear in mind that regional migration is generally less costly and therefore more accessible for the relatively poor than is intercontinental migration. It is therefore not surprising to find that migration to Europe also tends to exacerbate household inequalities, whereas regional migration is associated with a reduction in inequality (Wouterse, 2008). The latter may not enable households to diversify income and spread risks as widely as can longer-distance migration, but even modest income increases can make a huge difference to their livelihoods and substantially reduce poverty levels. In short, it is possible that intra-African migration may have a much greater positive impact on poor communities.

The major mechanism by which migration enhances household incomes is through remittances. According to the most recent estimates posted by the World Bank at the time of writing, migrants' remittances to sub-Saharan Africa through official sources totaled US$21 billion in 2008, having more than doubled since 2005.[vi] Whether these numbers are a reflection of real increases in remittance flows or simply improved reporting is not clear.[vii] In any case, the actual flow of remittances is likely to be much higher, as many transfers are made informally. For example, the World Bank data suggest that remittances to Ghana were on the order of US$100 million in 2006, whereas Ghana's president, John Kuofor, was reported as claiming they were about US$4 billion (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). The data on the scale or direction of remittances transferred by migrants within Africa are even less reliable. In general, formal channels for sending remittances within the continent are more expensive and harder to access than those for doing so from Europe to Africa. For migrants moving between neighboring countries, reliance on informal channels and the personal delivery of cash and goods is likely to be much easier (Ratha and Shaw, 2007).

That said, recorded remittances in sub-Saharan Africa do appear to be rising more slowly than those in other regions and remain less than official forms of development aid in many countries. They do make a vital contribution to the balance of payments and, of course, to recipient households and communities (Sander and Maimbo, 2003). The highest rates of dependence are found in smaller states, where remittances represent a very significant portion of gross domestic product (GDP): examples include Lesotho (24.5 percent), The Gambia (12.5 percent), and Cape Verde (12.0 percent) (Ratha and Xu, 2008). However, they tend to be highly concentrated in other countries as well. According to the World Bank estimates, remittances to Nigeria account for over half of the recorded remittances to Africa, and 80 percent of total remittances are sent to just six countries (Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, and South Africa). Granted, such figures must be treated with caution. If remittances to Ghana did indeed reach US$4 billion in 2006, it would place Ghana second only to Nigeria at the league table of remittance-receiving nations in sub-Saharan Africa.

The debate about the extent to which remittances actually contribute to development is ongoing in Africa, as it is in the rest of the world. This debate is reflected clearly in the discussions in other chapters in this section of the volume. Research from sub-Saharan Africa remains limited (Montclos, 2005; Azam and Gubert, 2006), and the conclusions may reflect particular understandings of development as much as the findings of empirical research. For example, studies of remittances sent by regional migrants from five countries of southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe) have shown that the vast majority of migrant-sending households receive remittances, mostly in the form of cash (Pendleton et al., 2006; Dodson et al., 2008). A large portion of these remittances are spent on food and there is very little evidence of their being invested in income-generating activities. As Pendleton and his colleagues conclude:

{EXT}Clearly migration and poverty are closely related in this region. The migrant-sending households of Southern Africa are generally poor although the degree of poverty does vary. Migration is a livelihood strategy of the poor. Remittances in cash and kind keep poverty at bay but they do not do much else. There is very little evidence, as yet, that remittances in Southern Africa have developmental value, as conventionally defined. Equally, they are critical for poverty alleviation in many households. (2006: 40){/EXT}

A significant reduction in poverty through remittances does represent a very real improvement in people's well-being. Hence, while these remittances may not have developmental value "as conventionally defined," they do enable people to achieve a better quality of life than they might manage without them. Whether or not they contribute to development depends on one's concept of development.

{B}Human Capital Formation{/B}

Although relatively few African migrants leave the continent, those that do travel to Europe and North America include a high proportion of people with tertiary education. Africa is the main sending region of highly skilled migrants to Europe (13.5 percent of all highly skilled foreigners living in the EU are African). In general, the United States attracts more highly skilled migrants than does Europe, including those from Africa (data from Katseli et al., 2006). Migrants of African origin are the best-educated foreigners in the United States, showing higher rates of high school completion (95 percent) than any other immigrant group (Schmidley, 2001: 37).

Due in part to the predominance of highly educated people among African migrants, migration has come to be seen as a major development issue for the continent. Such figures demonstrate the so-called brain drain that deprives many African states of their few highly skilled personnel. In both Ghana and Mozambique, for example, the emigration rate for people with tertiary education is over 40 percent (Ratha and Xu, 2008). These people are commanding large incomes relative to those available in their countries of origin, and they are generating significant flows of remittances. The extent to which their financial contribution outweighs the cost of their training and the loss of their skills has long been at the center of the migration and development debates.

There has been particular concern about the exodus of trained doctors and nurses from various countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, one of the worst affected countries, more than half the doctors and a quarter of nurses trained in the country emigrate, according to some estimates (Ratha and Xu, 2008). The exit of health professionals has been widely held responsible for the shortage of trained staff in many clinics across Africa, especially in rural areas. However, recent studies suggest that the evidence to support this causal link is quite limited. Instead, they argue that the parlous condition of the health sector is caused by other issues, such as lack of investment and poor governance. The emigration of staff is a reflection of the very poor working conditions and lack of professional opportunities within the domestic health sector. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that even if health workers did remain in Africa, they would actually take up posts in rural areas to meet health needs there (Clemens, 2007; OECD, 2007c).

{B}Engaging the African Diaspora in Development{/B}

The recognition of ongoing transnational linkages between migrants (and their descendants) and their countries of origin has spurred a growing interest in the role of diasporas in development, as indicated by Ronald Skeldon in the previous chapter. From the perspective of African states, not only do diaspora communities provide resources to their countries of origin in terms of both finance and skills, but they can also be portrayed as members of the nation in a way that is impossible for other donors. Both official and nongovernmental organization (NGO) donors in Europe can communicate with African communities through their migrants, whose knowledge of the language and culture gives them an inside track to understanding development priorities and allows them to bypass or challenge the corrupt institutions of African states. African diasporas are now seen by some as “a potentially exploitable if underdeveloped resource” (Davies, 2007: 64).

Thus, there are increasing efforts in both Africa and Europe to facilitate different ways for diasporas to engage in the mainstream practice of development. Major development NGOs and European development ministries such as the UK Department for International Development and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been looking for ways to collaborate with diaspora organizations through funding and capacity-building initiatives (de Haas, 2006). Maintaining, or reestablishing contact with the diaspora has also become an important policy concern for many African governments. For example, in 2001, Ghana changed its citizenship law to allow dual nationality (Akyeampong, 2006: 303). It is also considering introducing a special status for the African-American diaspora to enable them to buy property and invest in the country.

There have also been various schemes to harness the skills and expertise of migrants to support development. For example, the UK-based diaspora organization African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) has established a Diaspora Development Professionals Network with the aim of supporting Africans who are working in development organizations. There have also been multilateral programs to engage the diaspora in development initiatives (Ghosh, 2000). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) program for the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), established in 1976, has operated in various African counties with the aim of mitigating the effects of brain drain by assigning migrants with appropriate expertise for short-term consultancies in their countries of origin. In 2001, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) established Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) as a “capacity-building program, which helps to mobilize competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa's development.”[viii] However, these efforts by development circles to engage African migrants appear to make few concessions to the long-standing practices of so-called hometown associations and other diaspora organizations. These have been providing informal support to their areas of origin for generations (Lampert, 2009; Mazzucato and Kabki, 2009). Such associations are taken seriously only with respect to the potential impact of their political engagement in countries of origin, especially in conflict and postconflict situations, as we shall see (Montclos, 2005; Mohan, 2008).

What is almost completely missing from this picture is any consideration of the African diasporas within Africa, which are likely to include a much larger number of people. The growing body of research and policy initiatives regarding the role of diasporas in the development of Africa is almost exclusively concerned with Africans living beyond the continent (Henry and Mohan, 2003; Sørensen, 2007). As Nauja Kleist points out, in the case of Somalia, "the 'diaspora' refers to Somalis living in the West and the Gulf states and not, it seems, to the hundred thousands of Somali refugees in neighboring countries" (Kleist, 2007: 119). There is virtually no interest in the potential contribution of, say, Congolese living in Nigeria (Bakewell, 2008b).

{B}Protracted Displacement{/B}

Finally, we turn briefly to consider the impact of the prolonged displacement of people by conflict on development in sub-Saharan Africa. About 20 percent of the migrants in Africa are refugees; many more people have been internally displaced. Many in these groups have been in exile for long periods, and there is increasing concern about the impact of such protracted displacement on their identities and livelihoods, as well as on the security and stability of the source and host countries. Protracted refugee populations constitute over 70 percent of the world's refugees (Crisp, 2003; UNHCR, 2008). The long-term presence of refugee populations in much of the developing world has come to be seen by many host states as a source of insecurity. In response, they have enacted policies of containment by placing refugees in isolated and insecure camps, preventing the arrival of additional refugees, and, in extreme cases, engaging in forcible repatriation (Loescher and Milner, 2005).

The human consequences of this protracted displacement in Africa include material deprivation, psychosocial and gender issues, social tension, and violence. To cope with their situation, displaced persons resort to various survival strategies, often with adverse consequences for themselves and their hosts; examples include sexual exploitation, exploitative employment, illegal and unsustainable farming, the manipulation and maximization of humanitarian aid, negative coping mechanisms such as theft and substance abuse, reliance upon remittances, and migration (Crisp, 2003).

It is clear that such circumstances are inimical to development. However, it is important to consider forced migrants in a wider context beyond that of humanitarian responses. Refugees are often enmeshed in transnational livelihoods, which may span their countries of origin, multiple African countries of first asylum, and resettlement countries, mainly in Europe, North America, and Australasia. For example, Somalis in the camps of northern Kenya are in close contact with the large and economically active Somali community in Nairobi as well as relatives and friends in Europe, the United States, the Gulf, and Somalia itself (Horst, 2006; Kleist, 2007, 2008; Lindley, 2007). This dense network can provide Somalis with the crucial and to some extent autonomous support that lies largely beyond the power and control of aid agencies and even states. Whether this exercise of freedoms (or at least subversion of unfreedoms) and capabilities in the face of incredible constraints contributes to development may be open to question. However, without it, the situation for many Somalis would likely be considerably worse.

**{A}Conclusion{/A}**

There are many other facets to the relationship between migration and development in sub-Saharan Africa that are not explicitly covered here, such as the transfer of social remittances (Levitt, 1999). However, while I do not claim it to be comprehensive, I believe the foregoing discussion illustrates some of the contradictions running through the current discourse on migration and development. As I have outlined, there has been a dramatic shift in the analysis of the potential contributions of migration to development in sub-Saharan Africa; there has also been a fundamental reappraisal of the evidence on remittances and the brain drain, which has resulted in a much more positive assessment than the one criticized by Massey and his colleagues (1998).

African migrants are increasingly being regarded as agents of development who may be harnessed to pull the new development bandwagon. However, what is rarely considered is the path on which this wagon is rolling. While migration and migrants are being celebrated for their contribution to development, many policymakers still seem to be concerned with enabling people to stay at home. Activities that do not reflect their initiatives are often marginalized. For instance, the autonomous activities of diaspora hometown associations tend to be regarded as unprofessional. The contributions of migrants living outside the centers of the development industry in Europe are largely ignored. The remittances of regional migrants in southern Africa are seen as merely reducing poverty rather than contributing to development. Moreover, forced migrants who have been effectively trapped in refugee camps and who develop their own diaspora networks of support are seen as a potential threat to security.

Rooted in its colonial origins, the discourse of development in Africa remains resolutely sedentary. It is largely concerned with enabling people to establish better lives where they are. Mobility still confuses the picture. Most development initiatives are framed around interventions in particular geographical locations. The assessment of development progress is based on measurements within national boundaries. The emigration of people is still seen as a symptom of development failure (Bakewell, 2008a). Studies of the colonial and more recent past suggest that attempts to use development policy as a lever to control migration are likely to fail. The attempt to use migration as a policy lever to stimulate development seems equally problematic insofar as the prevailing development paradigm fails to account for people's aspirations, which may well entail increased mobility. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the virtuous circle—whereby migration from the region stimulates development processes (through remittances, other transfers, and return migration), resulting in reduced migration—seems likely to remain a chimera. Unfortunately, it appears to be on such a fantasy that many of the current policies on migration and development in Africa are based.

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**{A}Notes{/A}**

[i] Discussions of the international migration of Africans usually focus on its intercontinental aspects, largely dismissing the implications of intracontinental mobility. A different logic seems to apply elsewhere. Intra-European borders, for instance, are becoming ever more porous, especially in the expanding Schengen zone, but no one suggests that migration between European states is not really international.

[ii] The International Telecommunications Union (2008) estimates that mobile phone signal coverage reached 40 percent of the population in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa in 2006.

[iii] MPI Data Hub, http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/index.cfm.

[iv] Data from the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2005*, http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/yearbook/index.htm.

[v] For example, the emigration rate as a percentage of population is approximately 2.1 percent for low-income countries, compared to 3.6 percent for high-income countries. Based on data from the Global Migrant Origin Database v.4, updated March 2007, http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls; World Population Prospects 1950–2050 Database, 2006 Revision, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Population Division, New York..

[vi] World Bank Remittance Data November 2009 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/RemittancesData_Nov09(Public).xls.

[vii] The World Bank's own *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008* (Ratha and Xu, 2008) estimated 2007 remittances to sub-Saharan Africa to be US$11 billion, but subsequent revisions have pushed the figure upward.

[viii] IOM Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) http://www.iom.int/jahia/page1306.html (accessed April 14, 2009).