

Chapter 1 - Editorial

Migration, and Integration in Africa: Implications for Policy and Practice

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Abstract

This project explores the discourse around migration and integration in Africa from several dimensions: local integration, development paradigms, human rights, and environmental issues. The phenomenon of migration and integration in Africa are complex and multifaceted issues that intersect with broader socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics. Within this premise, it is vital to note that the occurrence of migration produces a disturbance to the functioning status quo of both the host and migrant communities. These interactions have been known to produce varying outcomes for those within and outside these communities. Consequently, at the heart of this project is the aim to critically examine the convoluted nature of this ongoing and dynamic relationship between migration and integration, all within the purview of the continent of Africa.

Keywords: Africa, Integration, Migration, Mobility, Xenophobia

Introduction

Without a doubt, migration has been a pertinent issue of discourse across space and time. The concerns surrounding migration are as old as human existence, tracing back to as early as the historical movement of the *Homo erectus* out of Africa across Eurasia about 1.75 million years ago (Rightmire & Lordkipanidze 2010; Khalema *et al.* 2018) largely due to socio-economic and political factors such as changing climate and landscape, inadequate food-supply, and resources among others. Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013) posit that migration is the main force in the production and reproduction of capital within the social system. It is also acclaimed as the force which produces different forms of social stratification. The subject of migration remains complex and complicated, but nonetheless, it needs to be extensively studied since it is an important phenomenon of population change.

The interrelatedness of migration and integration is a complex and multifaceted issue that intersects with broader socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics. It is vital to note that migration produces a disturbance to the functioning status quo of both the host and migrant communities. This leads to a need for a shift, (especially for the host), in the host's culture, acceptance of the 'new' migrants' humanity (and culture), and resource redistribution among others.

While migration in Africa has a long history, migration patterns in Africa (both intra and intercontinental) are shaped by broader historical and contemporary issues such as economic opportunities, political situations, environmental changes, etc. Also, bearing in mind the multiplicity of cultures in Africa, it becomes pertinent to explore the socio-economic and political implications of migration for and within Africa. While the discourse on African migration focuses largely on the intercontinental migration of Africans transiting outside Africa, there has been a growing conversation on the implications of intra-African migration in recent years. Also, the process of integration in terms of migrant and host communities' absorption into the social, economic, and political systems of the host community as well as the challenges posed by these migrations is pertinent for note. Issues such as xenophobia and migrant scapegoating for governance failure, barriers to obtaining citizenship, access to basic services (like healthcare, education, and housing), forced migration, and conflicts among others are reoccurring migration and integration issues prevalent in the African debate (Adjai & Lazaridis 2013).

This book project focuses on the discussions around migration from several dimensions: from identity and identity construction to local integration,

development paradigms, human rights, and environmental issues. At the heart of this book project is the aim to critically examine the nature of migration and integration in relation to Africa. Papers in this volume interrogate issues of indigenous knowledge systems and how to carefully calibrate mobilities and movements of people to generate a corrective feature in the discourse that responds to the imperative nature of identity, indigeneity, and knowledge production. The contributions collectively advocate for a deliberative fusion as opposed to pursuing the imposition and reproduction of epistemological knowledge imported from elsewhere to Africa. The arguments dwell on identity and migration dynamics aware of colonial impositions and global knowledge. The fact that the debate on African identities, mobilities and migrations has, in the past, lost its memories due to the violence created by both the colonial and contemporary world systems is not overlooked. This issue flips the narrative to develop ways to fuse knowledge about identity and migration in Africa and epistemological norms to meet the needs of Africa in the 21st century.

The Contributions in this Book

Considering mobility and international migration, Hingston's paper presents a unique perspective on using digital technologies in identity preservation and construction. Presenting a case discourse on Twitter usage, identity, and Sierra Leoneans' diaspora, the paper explores how young Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora use the social media app Twitter to establish and maintain cultural identity. Considering the implication of globalization on culture, extinction and diffusion of culture, this paper, using the Identity Negotiation Theory, contributes to the literature on contemporary migration and cultural issues by amplifying the voices and lived experiences of migrants in the new era of using social media to give visibility to cultural identities. The study argues that the digital space had provided viable platforms for migrants in the diaspora to develop a sense of community and identity even within culturally unfamiliar spaces.

Uwem and Matoane's paper looks at asylum seekers' vulnerability and precariousness, which the paper argues that these increased at the height of the covid-19 pandemic. As Patrick *et al.* (2021) argued, the pandemic affected life and livelihood and led to business unusual in all facets of life. Their paper highlighted the Social Protection and Legal Provisions available to asylum seekers in South Africa during the pandemic. Their paper assesses the extent to which the policies either widened or narrowed the protection gap for asylum seekers in vulnerable situations due to the pandemic. They argue that while

social protection policies address social and economic vulnerabilities and improve an individual's capacity to respond to shocks, these protection policies fail to recognize the unique needs of vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers. They go on to suggest the need for improving protection policies and legislation to reduce the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers. Considering the polarized nature of social protection of asylum seekers among host communities, the need for integrated approaches that include asylum seekers in national social protection responses would be beneficial as coping mechanisms for vulnerable groups and for integration and social cohesion among host and migrant communities.

Kaputa and Goronga's paper provide a perception of xenophobic inclinations and social cohesion between migrants and host communities using lessons from the experiences of Malawian immigrants and their offspring in Zimbabwe. The paper offers a case for why outright or organized xenophobic acts seem to be relatively absent in Zimbabwe, unlike her neighbor South Africa. It traces the historicity of Malawian migrations to Southern Rhodesia as necessitated largely by economic factors. They argue that the need to relocate to Zimbabwe for work in South African mines through the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), popularly known as *Wenela*, spurred a mass migration of many Malawians. The paper summarily maintains that xenophobic inclinations in Zimbabwe are neutralized through historical inclusion and integratory practices among migrants and host communities, such as intermarriages, Christianity, and education. Therefore, prioritizing improving relationships by encouraging inclusivity in all aspects of societal life is seen as a viable and crucial policy agenda for social cohesion and peacebuilding among migrants and host communities.

Ola, Chekero, Kongo and Mpahlo's paper, takes the discourse on migrant-host communities' hostilities reflected in xenophobic tendencies to another level in terms of institutional tendency for xenophobia. The paper assesses institutionalized or structural xenophobia manifest in post-apartheid South Africa by exploring the lived experiences of migrants from African countries living in South Africa. Specifically, their paper focuses on the extent to which xenophobia proliferates within and around public institutions that offer services to citizens and non-citizens. The paper presents migrants' hostile experiences ranging from neglect to blatant hatred when assessing public services. It contends that political utterances and pronouncements by influential political leaders also exacerbate the already volatile situation. Such statements provide the perpetrators of xenophobic violence the ammunition to attack the migrants boldly as they are assured of impunity within and outside the

government. The paper further states that while South Africa is still a major center for migration in Africa, migrants seeking to survive within the polity must contend with various structural forms of violence in addition to the physical violence that has been extensively studied. The paper examines the underlying rationale for the host community's xenophobic tendency to result from historical inequality and neglect, leading to the unending poverty that South African host communities have endured since the apartheid era. To this effect, any African migrant is seen as an advantageous competitor likely to receive the host community member(s) existing merger resources. The study concludes that migrant freedom and rights must be considered without violating the local populations' social, economic, and political rights as protected by the South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and international human rights law obligations. By this, the reduction and eventual elimination of hostilities towards migrants by the host communities' members would be possible.

Khalema, Costumado, and Ngcobo provide a fundamental argument that advances a gendered identity politics of migration within its embedded social and population aspects and normative gendered context. The chapter adds a meaningful exploration on the role of the family or household in influencing internal migration and migration inequality (gendered migration) with the framework of migration and societal and institutional integration within the host nation. This paper states that any discussion of gender identity and migration must be premised on its capitalist, apartheid, and colonial situation, rendering a different discourse of migration and identity politics.

John-Langba elaborates on the role of political will in the integration of refugees' rights in Southern Africa's development policies. The paper argues that while forced migration is generally viewed from a security lens, little cognizance is attributed to refugees' value on national, regional, and local economic development. The paper adopts a forced migration-development nexus approach among members of the Southern African Development Community. It adds that while from a legal and political standpoint, the SADC member states are committed to providing legal protection for refugees and developing an integrated approach to addressing refugee-related concerns, the political will for such a policy direction is generally low due to the securitization of asylum in the region. The paper concludes that adopting a migration-development nexus approach for addressing refugee rights necessitates a significant shift in policies and strategies. The purpose is to facilitate the perception that refugees are not a burden but a category of persons who not only require international protection but who can, in the process of acquiring such protection, also contribute

positively to their host country's socio-economic development.

Popoola's paper brings to bear an interesting dynamic useful for policy consideration in relation to the integration within host urban communities in intra-African migration. The paper evaluates spatial exclusion and life satisfaction within urban spaces using the construct of transport poverty and socio-economic variables. It contends that while urban mobility conditions, affordability, and experiences are key in spatial interactions, there seem to be relatively few discourses around urban mobility. The paper investigates mobility poverty as a key construct limiting urban inclusion and satisfaction. It contends that limited access, weak affordability, and unavailability of public transport remain the drivers of and dimension to transport poverty leading to spatial limitation and exclusion. The paper establishes that reliable transport service availability rather than city residents' socio-economic characteristics predicts both spatial exclusion and satisfaction with life. Therefore, policy formation and infrastructure investment toward managing transport poverty rather than a continued emphasis on income or other financial indicators may be critical to achieving inclusive development and quality of life.

Sule and Sambo's paper on the intersection between environmental impact and migration in West Africa provides an interesting dynamic for policy discourse on migration, environment, and conflict. Their study discusses the nature, dimension, and pattern of cross-border migration in West Africa and establishes that climate-induced migration is a fundamental migration challenge in Africa. Moreso, resource depletion compounds the vulnerability of residents within the host and former migrant communities leading to conflict propensity. This postulation is supported by Patrick's (2020; 2021; 2022) studies on climate change, water security and conflict potential in Africa. Sule and Sambo's paper offer a practical example using the farmer/herder conflicts in West Africa resulting from the migration out of the Lake Chad region due to the depletion of the lake. The implication of climate change for vulnerable communities in Africa is further exacerbated by increased intra-Africa migration. The implication for creating social cohesion and policymaking in Africa is enormous.

Patrick and Sheidu's contribution explore the complex dynamics of climate-induced migration and conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region, with a focus on peace-building strategies necessary for nation building. An interesting contradiction in the discourse on the climate change-migration- conflict nexus would be the postulation that climate change is an indirect cause of migration and conflict. The paper provides debates on the narrative about the climate change-migration-conflict connection as one perceived more as rhetoric rather

than reality. They contend that most discourses fail to consider the implication of historical and political dynamics for migration and conflicts. Taking the Sahel region of Africa as a case in point for instance, it is important to acknowledge that the region is among the worst hit region in terms of climate change impact and the significant cause of conflict in the region is linked more to the rise of extremist movements within the region, making the region an epicenter for conflicts. Hence, while climate change negatively impacts livelihood and security, exacerbating conflict in the already volatile communities, leading to the increased displacement of people, other historical and cultural factors come to play for conflict potentials. For instance, a conflict over land may not be solely for agricultural reasons but also for cultural claims to ancestral roots, among other factors. The paper concludes on the premise that while the popular narrative in the climate change conflict nexus shows climate-induced scarcity as one that leads to migration and conflict, close consideration should be given to the possibility that historical and institutional failures may result in the current challenges of migration and conflict in Africa.

Conclusion

While migration brings significant challenges, such as xenophobia, legal barriers, and economic exclusion, it also presents numerous opportunities for regional integration, economic development, and cultural enrichment. The contributions in this special have addressed issues around migration and local integration, development, human rights, and environmental issues arising from intra-African migration. The central postulation is premised on the idea that while migration is as old as human existence, its implications, considering Africa's continuous vulnerabilities, are of serious policy and research concern. This book project is a timely contribution to the literature on the African migration discourse. We hope that the contributions from this project add to the debates and spur the development of inclusive migration policies necessary in fostering more resilient and integrated societies.

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