Drivers of Migration and Urbanization in Africa: Key Trends and Issues

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Introduction

- Urbanisation is increasingly being acknowledged as one of the defining issues of the twenty-first century. More than half of the world's population now live in towns and cities and that figure is projected to rise to 75% by 2050 (United Nations Population Division, 2014), with most of this urban growth concentrated in Africa and Asia.

- Migration is a significant contributor to urban growth and to the urbanization process, as people move in search of social and economic opportunity and from environmental deterioration.

Introduction (continued)

- However, the capacity of urban towns to plan for and cater for the increasing migrants by providing employment, access to land and basic amenities are limited leading to a largely negative policy position of governments, city authorities, and often host communities, on migration into urban areas.

- Despite this largely negative view of urban growth in Africa, urban areas are "becoming not just the dominant form of habitat for humankind, but also the engine-rooms of human development as a whole" (UN-Habitat, 2014)

Key Migration Trends In Africa

Although the focus is often on African migration to Europe and North America, the bulk of African migration takes place within the continent, as people circulate within Africa, looking for economic opportunities

- In Sub-Saharan Africa, intra regional migration is larger (67 percent) than migration to other regions. Major destination countries within Africa are South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

- In West Africa in particular intra regional movements make up 84% of migration movements making it the region with the largest intra regional movements (SWAC and OECD, 2012).

Key Migration Trends In Africa (continued)

- Migration in Africa has always had an important cross-border component, partly reflecting the arbitrary nature of most national boundaries inherited from colonial administrations

- Despite this overwhelming dominance of intra regional migration within Africa, recent data also indicates that since about the 1980s there has been an acceleration and diversification of emigration destinations from outside the continent, beyond colonial and linguistic patterns

- Although international migration has received more attention in recent debates on migration, internal migration within individual African states is far more significant in terms of the numbers of people involved and perhaps even the quantum of remittances and poverty reduction potential of these (UNDP, 2009)

- Lastly, within these mobility flows within Africa, rural- urban migration remains a dominant migration stream

What is Driving Migration Trends in and Out of Africa? Conceptualising Drivers of Migration

"Drivers" of migration have been defined as forces which lead to the *inception* of migration and to the *perpetuation* of movement (Massey *et al*. 1998, Van Hear et al, 2012) and thus are the factors which get migration going and keep it going once begun

Such 'Push-pull' models suggest that migrants were pushed by low incomes in their countries or regions and pulled by better prospects in more affluent areas (Lee 1966; Harris and Todaro 1970) .

Other explanations focus on the micro or meso level, in household decision-making and in social networks, where migration as a household strategy is motivated by the need to spread risk, rather than an individual matter (Stark 1991).

- Poverty was at first held to be a key driver of migration. However, since the early 1990s it has been recognised that the poorest often cannot migrate since resources are needed to do so, especially for international migration (UNDP, 2009, Van Hear et al, 2012).

Types of Drivers

Economic opportunities is often highlighted as a major driver of migration.

However well-acknowledged "drivers", includes social factors such as the search for educational opportunities or obligations to kin, such as marriage or inheritance practices, political factors which includes discrimination or persecution, conflict, levels of security and policy incentives,   demographic factors which includes population density and structure and risk of disease and environmental factors, including exposure to hazards and land productivity.

Development Processes as Drivers of Migration in and from Africa:

- The increasing trends of migration out of Africa and also large numbers circulating intra regionally seems rather to be driven by social processes of development and social transformation occurring in Africa which have increased Africa's capabilities and aspirations to migrate, a trend which is likely to occur in the future.

- African countries with comparatively higher levels of development (such as in the Maghreb or coastal West Africa) also tend to have the highest intensity of extra-continental migration, while the poorest countries (such as many landlocked Sub-Saharan countries) have lower levels of overall emigration and most emigration is dominated by short-distance migration to nearby countries.

- **The Role of States and Policies as drivers of Migration**
- While levels of development seem to clearly affect immigration and emigration volumes and the distance of migration, state policies also play an important role both for the dominant intra regional migration flows and the increasing African emigration trends.
- For example, the general increase in visa restrictiveness can be a partial driver towards an increasing spatial diversification of migration patterns away from colonial patterns.

Migration and Urbanization Linkages: Key Issues and Prospects

- Although the rate of natural increase in towns, as well as re-classification of settlements into urban areas accounts for a large percentage of this increase in urban population in Africa, significant long-term migration into urban settlements accounts for a significant proportion of this growth.

- Most of this projected urban growth will take place in intermediate and small cities and not in megacities such as Lagos or Cairo.

- The vast majority of the additional urban dwellers will continue to add to the intermediate and small cities. This therefore implies that the need for urban management is greatest in these intermediate-sized and smaller cities (UN-Habitat, 2014).

Addressing drivers of Migration in countries of Origin and Destination

Need to address the drivers of migration from perspectives of both countries / regions of origin and destination in a holistic way. To address migration drivers from this inter linked perspective, the following questions are raised:

- How can we leverage and enhance the opportunities offered by the large flow of intra regional labour migrants for Africa's development?. What role can regional bodies such as ECOWAS and SADC and destination and origin countries play to facilitate intra-regional migration within Africa?

- How can we promote migrants as resources, beneficial to themselves as well as their communities, (not trapped in a camp) not as a burden on destination countries or lost brain drain on sending countries, but as a resource? How do we transform migrants capabilities into a resource? What is needed for this transformation?

- How can we build on brain gain initiatives in countries of origin and destination?

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Addressing drivers of Migration in countries of Origin and Destination (continued)

- How can we enhance development opportunities in countries of origin *through for example implementing programmes to reduce unemployment   and poverty in migrant sending communities, s*kills development trainings and income generating activities, for youth in migrant sending communities and agricultural modernization and transformation and reducing spatial inequalities in development?

- How can we improve systematic data collection (including collecting comparable sex- and age-disaggregated data) and analysis towards effective and informed policies that will address the drivers of migration in a holistic way tailored to different populations and contexts? This would include the collection of longitudinal data to adequately account for longer-term processes driving migratory patterns, such as climate change, demographic transitions, and structural transformation.

- How can we strengthen cooperation between and among States and other stakeholders on data collection to better predict, understand and address the drivers of migration?

Conclusion

- Africa is witnessing rapid urban growth, with migration, particularly rural-urban migration continuing to play an important role in the urbanisation process is not in question. Therefore it is argued that in an increasingly urbanised world, the development challenges of the 21st century will be met in Africa's cities and towns and no longer in rural areas.

- Sustainable Development Goal 11, commits to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030" (UNDP, 2015), and thus provides the opportunity for African governments to change the negative perception of "cities as vessels of problems" to cities as "accelerators and facilitators of sustainable urbanization and development" as UN-Habitat (2014) urges

- Whether African states can manage the urbanization trends in a way as to harness the benefits of migration and rapid urbanisation remains to be seen.

- The scope is large for new, wide-ranging urban and migration policies and strategies which will turn African cities and towns into engines of sustainable structural transformation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2016 common African position on urban development provides the critical framework for understanding and addressing the drivers of both irregular and regular migration and to allow individuals to live and work in a healthy, safe and secure environment at home or to choose to migrate safely.

THANK YOU