Migration and the Constant Search for Self-Improvement in Africa

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Abstract

Globally, narratives about the nexus between migration and development have gained prominence among academics, policymakers, development practitioners, as well as social partners. However, the historical and contextual factors that have shaped the patterns of migration flows within and from the African continent have been poorly conceptualized and theorized. The components of migration that have the propensity to lead to self-improvement and development such as the sending of cash, social, and political remittances; skills and knowledge transfers; and diaspora-origin country engagements, need to be examined as a composite in order to fully appreciate the developmental potential of migration within the African context. Using thematic and content analysis of relevant extant literature, we examine the contextual factors that characterize the nexus between migration and self-improvement/development in Africa. Our analyses are situated within an Africa-centered conceptualization of development and migration. We argue that the development impacts of migration vary across different regions in Africa depending on the contextual factors that shape such migrations. Migration spurs self-improvement and development just as self-improvement and development facilitate migration.

Keywords: development, labor migration, Africa, contextual issues, historical, environments

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INTRODUCTION

The role of migration in supporting development in Africa has been overshadowed by securitized discourses that turn to project migration from Africa as a problem that needs to be solved. The volume of migration from Africa to other regions has been exaggerated by anti-immigrant sentiments and through narratives that seek to demonize migration from Africa (Adepoju et al., 2010; Zanker, 2019). Africa accounts for only 14 percent of the global migrant population, compared to 41 percent from Asia and 24 percent from Europe (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2023). However, Western media and public discourse focus predominantly on migration from Africa to Europe. Africa is seen as a continent of bulk migration to Europe often caused by poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). However, migration from Africa is more complex and layered than this. Focusing on an African-centered development approach, which highlights self-improvement, this paper provides a nuanced understanding of the bi-directional relationship between migration and development in Africa.

There is a sedentary bias in migration discourse, whereby movement is perceived as an anomaly, and the conventional wisdom is to argue that promoting socio-economic development in Africa has the potential to reduce the migration of Africans to the global North (Bakewell, 2013). This sedentary bias is a continuation of colonial policies that were designed to mobilize labor for mines and plantations, while preventing permanent settlement in the cities (Castles, 2009). European policymakers and some academics are particularly concerned with flows from Africa. Consequently, measures are taken by the European Union (EU) and its member states, which are often designed to reduce these flows but in the guise of well-meaning development policies (Sinatti and Horst, 2015). The reality, however, is that the majority of migration of Africans occurs within the continent, as migrants seek employment opportunities in neighboring regional economic hubs (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2023). In 2020, around 21 million Africans were living in another African country – a significant increase from 2015, when around 18 million Africans were estimated to be living within the region (IOM, 2023). Eighty percent of aspiring African migrants do not have an interest in leaving the continent (IOM, 2020).

However, discussions about the relationship between migration of Africans and development tend to focus on the developmental benefits to Africa from migration to the global North. This paper departs from this tendency by broadening the analysis to include migration to stable African economies. The results draw on narratives on Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Sudan, Lesotho, the Gambia, and Cabo Verde as case studies on the continent. This is reflective of the heterogeneity that characterizes African countries. We acknowledge that the migration-development nexus debate should encompass both the origin and destination country contexts. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of a critical strand within the African context. The paper is guided by the question, "What are the contextual factors that characterize the nexus between migration and self-improvement/development in Africa?" This paper gleaned data from a critical review of extant literature on the migration-development nexus. The authors made deliberate efforts to go beyond the top journals and most referenced authors to include academic material on "migration and development in Africa" from a broader scholarship. We then did a content and thematic analysis of themes that are relevant to our study, such as cash remittances, social remittances, political remittances, foreign direct investment, and skills transfer.

CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

Since this paper focuses on an African migration context, we adopt an Africa-centered conceptualization of development that builds on Amartya Sen's "capability approach." Sen (1999: 3) conceptualizes development using the "capability approach" and argues that it is "the process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy." Development is, therefore, seen as a tool that enables people to reach their highest potential through being free to live the lives they choose to lead. There is an emphasis on development beyond the strictures of a financialized and highly economized world. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 19), African development can be defined based on Marcus Garvey's perspective as perpetual and continual African search for self-improvement. Because of persistent legacies of enslavement, colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and under-development, as well as the recent rush for Africa's natural resources, African theorization of development continues to be a tussle for what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009a, 2009b, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 20) calls "re-membering," that is, "a quest for wholeness after over five hundred years of 'dismemberment.'" Development as understood from a decolonial "re-membering" perspective is basically a revitalizing and recovery project (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015a, 2015b, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 20).

Regarding migration, we focus on the totality of African migration, which includes both intra- and inter-continental migration. Narratives about migration of Africans have tended to overemphasize migration of Africans to the global North, ignoring other African migration trends. Narratives are "selective depictions of reality across at least two points in time that include one or more causal claims" (Dennison, 2021: 3). Narratives include related social practices and contextual factors used to make sense of experience (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008). We emphasize that Africans also migrate to other global southern destinations such as in Asia and in the Middle East. China, for example, has become a popular destination for Africans, so have some Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS IN AFRICA

The relationship between migration and development is multifaceted. While most scholars in migration and development in Africa often connect these two phenomena to remittance inflows from developed countries, some scholars have also related these concepts to regional integration and affective migration governance (Dick and Schraven, 2018; Spel, 2021), climate change (Bilgili and Marchand, 2016), and conflict (Bussotti and Coimbra, 2023). Oftentimes, the relationship between migration and development is not one-sided. These concepts have been conceived based on their bidirectional nature. Migration can both contribute to and hinder development. This symbiotic linkage between migration and development has been acknowledged in scholarly literature and policy discourse (Castles, 2009; Bakewell, 2013; De Haas, 2019). Thus, migration can contribute to and be influenced by development processes, thereby affecting the socio-economic associations of countries of origin and destination. From a constructive perspective, migration has fostered development in countries of origin through avenues such as knowledge transfers and investments facilitated by return migrants and members of the diaspora community. On the other hand, migration can also pose challenges to development, particularly in countries of origin experiencing significant population loss or demographic imbalances. The departure of young and skilled individuals can exacerbate labor shortages and hinder the delivery of essential services, such as healthcare and education, in sending communities. Additionally, the social and cultural impact of migration, including the separation of families and the erosion of traditional values, can have profound implications for community cohesion and identity (Castles, 2009). African emigrants and the diaspora have been recognized as dual agents, capable of both promoting peace and inciting conflict. According to De Haas et al. (2019), while diaspora communities frequently engage in philanthropic activities, invest in peacebuilding projects, and advocate for peace and justice reforms, the same diaspora communities sometimes become embroiled in conflicts abroad, either through direct involvement in political activities or by providing financial and logistical support to warring factions. Additionally, return migrants who are noted for knowledge transfer can also return with adverse expertise, which is detrimental to development in countries of origin. Thus, the return of migrants who have been exposed to radical ideologies or militarized environments abroad can pose security challenges and potentially escalate conflicts in their home countries (IOM, 2020).

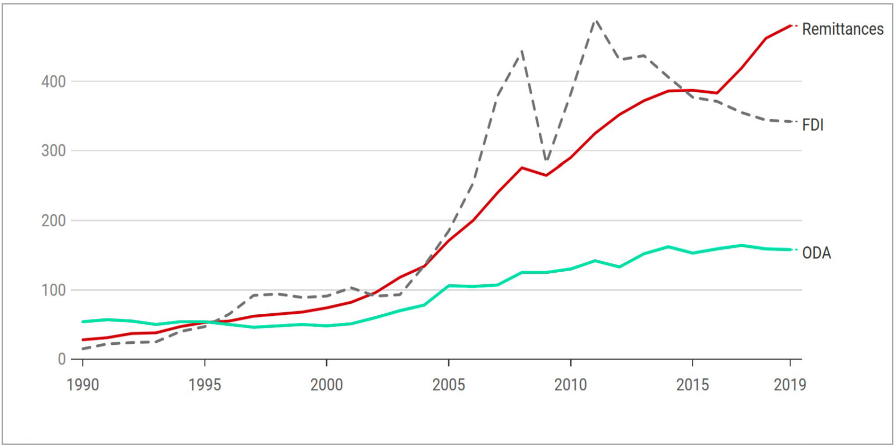
Another perspective of the relationship centers on migration flows and development. A common trend of migration flows is from developing countries to developed ones; however, developing countries do not record the highest emigration figures. This is because migration is resource driven, which requires prior improved levels of development in terms of skills, finances, knowledge, and networks. Consequently, an increase in emigration generally in developing countries is a result of the impact of economic growth in poor areas (De Haas, 2019). Migration is a potential driver of development both in destination and origin countries, because whereas migrants bring their productive contribution to the economy at destination, they also remit money and ideas that are resources for families and communities in countries of origin (McNicoll, 2020). Given this scenario, factors such as migration policies, migration status associated with rights, and access to labor markets, technological transformations impact the relationship between migration and development in both countries of origin and destination. This, therefore, calls for a nuanced understanding of the transforming and dynamic relationship between migration and development in Africa.

COMPONENTS OF MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT RELATIONSHIPS IN AFRICA

As noted by De Haas (2019: 6), higher levels of economic and human development are initially associated with higher levels of emigration, which only decrease less precipitously with growing prosperity and development. Typically, over the course of a "mobility transition," the rate of emigration only begins to fall when countries attain upper middle-income status (Clemens, 2014). This inverted-U relationship has been called different names by different scholars – the "mobility transition" (Zelinsky, 1971), "migration curve" (Ackerman, 1976), "migration transition" (Gould, 1979), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993), and "emigration lifecycle" (Hatton and Williamson, 1994). Development experienced in African countries (such as Libya from oil revenues, Côte d'Ivoire from cocoa revenues, Ghana from cocoa and gold revenues, Nigeria from oil revenues, South Africa from mining revenues, Kenya from tea, ICT, and tourism revenues, and Morocco from tourism and agriculture revenues) has led to an increase in migration aspirations. This is because the cost of international migration, especially to destinations outside the continent, represents up to two years' salaries of the average African employee. These can only be afforded when employment rates and standards of living improve with development. In addition, the exponential expansion in access to the internet, social media platforms, and to mobile money transactions have expedited the formulation of migration aspirations through exposure to opportunities elsewhere and easy transfer of remittances from social network members abroad. Also, higher education levels across Africa and greater opportunities for skills acquisition have been associated with higher migration. Higher qualifications and higher skills in economies that are incapable of absorbing the youthful population have triggered labor migration to destinations with higher employment opportunities. For those who find well-paying jobs, they are better able to fund their migration projects. Over the long term, however, higher education, especially of women, is expected to lead to a reduction in the population growth rate on the continent, thereby reducing the demographic pressure. Over time, popular destinations for African labor migrants have broadened beyond the traditional countries in Europe and North America to include countries in the Gulf region (Kandilige et al., 2019) and China (Obeng, 2019).

Development conceptualized as self-improvement (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) has been associated with migration through a variety of proximate factors. The extant literature on intra-African migration as well as migration from Africa to destinations outside the continent has focused predominantly on the receipt of mostly cash remittances. This has served as the litmus test for whether migration has potential developmental implications at diverse spatial levels – micro level on individuals and families left behind, meso level on migrant origin communities, and macro level on national economies (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019; McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). While narratives on the micro- and meso-level effects might be relatively evident, macro-level claims are more spurious because of the many confounding factors that ultimately determine national development. This is in spite of the World Bank's continuing linkage of remittances to national development. Good governance systems, availability of infrastructure, conducive environment for investments, extension of rights to diaspora members, clamping down on corruption, and education on productive uses of remittance receipts, among others are prerequisites for cash remittances to trigger or support development at the macro level. Globally, remittances have proven to be less volatile and a reliable source of income to developing countries compared with foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA), as demonstrated in Figure 1. This narrative about the viability of remittances as a foreign exchange earner is informed by the collation of inexact data on remittance receipts. While there has been an appreciable hike in the number of remittances-sending agencies as well as the deployment of innovative technologies using virtual platforms, large volumes of remittances are sent through informal channels (Teye et al., 2017; World Bank, 2021). These channels include "Unity-Link" operating from London, "Sendwave" that facilitates the sending of remittances from the USA, UK, Canada, and the EU, "Xe" foreign exchange company that is based in Canada but facilitates transfers to 200 countries in 100 currencies, "World Remit" that operates from the UK, and mobile phone-based money transfer services such as "M-PESA" originating from Kenya, among others. Despite the use of informal channels, the fact that remittance figures are produced by credible entities such as the World Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) adds to the overall credibility of this narrative.

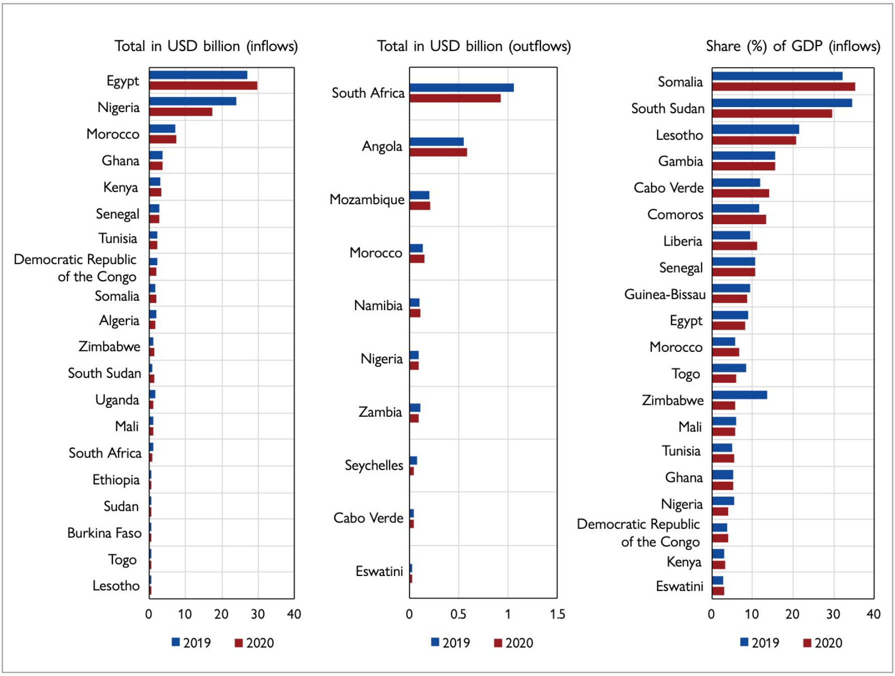
Figure 1: Receipts from remittances relative to FDI and ODA



Source: Barne and Pirlea (2019). Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD).

As noted by Ratha (2010), cash remittances can have wide-ranging effects on local economies, such as being used to stabilize local currencies, to reduce the depth and severity of poverty, to stimulate economic activity, to be used as collateral for foreign loans, and to boost the savings portfolio of recipients. Remittances can also support foreign currency reserves to cover the importation of goods and services. They also have the propensity to improve the credit rating of countries and their external debt sustainability. Figure 2 presents data illustrating that across the continent, the countries that receive the highest amounts of remittances, those that are sources of the highest amounts, and those whose economies rely heavily on remittances differ. Whereas Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana, and Kenya top the recipients' list, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Morocco, and Namibia are the five leading sources of remittances in Africa. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), Somalia, South Sudan, Lesotho, the Gambia, and Cabo Verde have the highest dependency on remittance income.

Figure 2: Top African international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank (2021, quoted in the World Migration Report, 2022: 65).

While the physical absence of migrants from the country of origin could be argued to amount to a loss of positive externalities (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019), there is a narrative on an incentive effect, which occurs ex-ante of emigration itself. This narrative suggests that families are motivated to invest in the education of their children in the hope of future emigration. As a result, this inadvertently boosts the stock of human capital since not all highly educated and highly skilled persons would emigrate eventually (Agrawal et al., 2011). In addition, there is the narrative of an ex-post effect through diaspora on-going links with the home country by their financial transfers or their possible return, but especially by their participation in scientific, political, and business networks (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019: 3). Rapoport (2010) argues that such networks potentially generate trade and capital flows, technology transfers, and can also contribute to the dissemination of social and institutional norms conducive to development. Intangible social remittances have increasingly been acknowledged as equally beneficial as cash remittances to the development prospects of countries of origin in Africa. As popularized by Levitt (1998), there is a narrative that suggests that behaviors, habits, ideas, attitudes, and social capital that are transmitted by migrants from destination countries to origin countries could inform positive behavioral changes. These translate into better work ethic, honesty, holding duty bearers accountable for their actions and decisions, and positively shaping attitudes toward democracy. This rather simplistic refrain has, however, propagated an overly optimistic assumption. It suggests that virtues reside in destination countries and migrants automatically imbibe these development-enhancing attitudes. These virtues are then transmitted to origin countries, either upon permanent return or during temporary periodic visits. These putative narratives sometimes find meaning in a Eurocentric framing of migration from Africa whereby "backward" and "uncultured" African migrants are "evangelized," in enlightened and progressive European destination countries. Such migrants are expected to subsequently transmit development values and norms to their origin countries. There is, however, the need for a nuanced examination of the narrative on the alleged nexus between social remittances and development in Africa by reflecting on the following questions: What are the value systems in destination countries and are they necessarily superior to those in the origin countries? How many return migrants would it take to change societal attitudes and norms in their country of origin? How susceptible to change are people in the country of origin and do return migrants have the credibility to drive systemic change? What is the likelihood of indoctrination of migrants through locals' bad behaviors, xenophobic tendencies, homophobic sentiments, misogynistic attitudes, and criminality in destination countries? Whose standards are used to measure values and norms that are relevant for development? More critical scholarship (Mazzucato, 2008) rather provides a more balanced analysis on social remittances being bidirectional rather than a one-way street with values, ideas, and norms coming to "Africa" from elsewhere.

Closely aligned with narratives on social remittances are those on political remittances. Governance systems, values of probity and accountability, quality of institutions, and voter participation are presumed to be enhanced by the transmission of democratic values by migrants (see Bauböck, 2003; Chauvet and Mercier, 2014; Batista et al., 2019). A further claim is that of crediting return migrants who stand for political office with using their assumed refined political acumen acquired during their migration to improve the political landscape of the origin country (Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Kapur, 2014; Boccagni et al., 2016). Some empirical studies such as the one by Docquier et al. (2016) support this narrative by demonstrating empirically that emigration from developing countries to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries helps to improve democracy in the countries of origin. Whereas there are examples of prominent return migrants who led their countries of origin to independence or provided visionary leadership (such as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana), there are equally examples of African governments that have been comprised of a substantial number of returnees, but those governments have been marred in non-democratic activities. These have included corruption and swindling of state resources, incompetent leadership, connivance with foreign agents to loot state resources, and gross abuse of human rights. This notwithstanding, using the gravity-based Two-Stage Least Squares (2SLS) estimation strategy, Gnimassoun and Anyanwu (2019) examined the impact of the African diaspora on democracy in Africa. They examined variables such as political rights by examining the functioning of institutions through electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government. In addition, they considered civil liberties through freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, personal autonomy, and individual rights. Their results demonstrate a very strong linkage between African diaspora in developed OECD countries and democracy in Africa, especially for the highly educated diaspora.

Another component of migration that holds much promise is the narrative about the potential for skills transfer from African migrants to others who are based in origin countries in Africa. The departure of newly qualified professionals from Ghana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe to other countries within the continent or outside it, is associated with opportunities to specialize in areas of qualification (Skeldon, 2005). Medical doctors, for instance, pursue specialist training and sometimes progress to become consultants in niche areas of specialization. Others take advantage of sophisticated equipment in destination countries such as South Africa or Kenya, which might be lacking in their countries of origin. Sports migrants join professional teams in destination countries such as Egypt, Morocco, or United Kingdom that support the honing of their skills. Health professionals equally further develop their skills during their migration journeys. African migrants with practical skills or hands-on expertise who migrate to destinations where various types of labor are in demand also acquire skills in construction, hospitality, cleaning, manufacturing, and agriculture, among others. Under the "transnational turn," there is the potential for acquired skills to be transferred either prior to or upon return. Temporary return programs such as the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in countries such as Sudan, in 2006 benefited thousands of Sudanese and the Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) program facilitated the return of 71 highly skilled Ethiopians in the diaspora to support national development. Also, the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) initiative by the IOM, for instance, enabled 21,000 health workers in Ghana to understudy 1,000 Ghanaian health professionals from the diaspora between 2005 and 2015. Moreover, the Returning Experts Programme by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has supported over 15,000 returning experts globally since the 1980s. All these initiatives have been supported by development partners to encourage skills transfers. Beyond the formally orchestrated programs, there are skills transfers that take place organically during short visits by individual African migrants as well as upon permanent return. For these processes to unleash their full developmental potential, the domestic environment must be conducive. Unfavorable domestic environments are associated with inadvertent loss of human capital in the form of brain waste (Mattoo et al., 2005). However, the skills transfer hypothesis assumes that African migrants necessarily acquire superior skills that are worth transferring. While most migrants do obtain new or better skills, this blanket view obfuscates the several instances whereby skills are rather lost during migration. Highly skilled or qualified migrants who fail to secure jobs comparable to their experience or qualifications can experience deskilling and possible brain waste. Over an extended period, such migrants' skills become rusty, and this complicates their reinsertion into their previous professions after their return. As a result of these fears, several African governments have instituted reaccreditation schemes that validate the skills of professional return migrants.

Migration is also said to drive FDI by non-nationals as well as by diaspora members. The presence of migrants can foster good international relations among countries. In such situations, migrants are perceived to be agents for socio-economic development in their origin countries (Faist, 2008). They can leverage their existing social networks abroad to invest in niche businesses in Africa, such as food processing, scrap-metal reclamation and recycling, dry cleaning, parcel delivery services, taxi-hailing businesses, shuttle services, tourism, fish farming, among others. The cultivation of investment interest is boosted through business expos and roadshows that are organized by labor attachés at African countries' embassies and high commissions abroad. There is also a push for diaspora-led investments. To maximize receipts from the diaspora, some African governments such as Ghana have adopted a very loose definition of their diaspora to include anyone of African descent who is interested in the development of their country. By casting the net wide, people who have never possessed the citizenship of these countries are extended a sense of belonging. Well-curated "homecoming" events are used to marshal investment income from returning nationals, diaspora members, as well as business associates of diaspora members who are exposed to investment opportunities during such events. A classic example is the "Year of Return" celebrations by Ghana, which were planned to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slaves in the Americas. This event culminated in the arrival of famous and influential individuals and groups, especially from the African American community of the USA. Other visitors came from across the globe and investment pitches were made to the participants, some of whom subsequently invested in the country. Proceeds from hospitality services, transportation, tourism sectors, and others amounted to nearly 2 billion US dollars (ATC News, 2019). Governments also float diaspora bonds as a means of raising development capital. Such attempts have been oversubscribed in most instances. This channel of raising funds for capital projects saves African governments from the international financial markets where interest rates are usually prohibitive.

Beyond the effects of emigration of Africans to destinations both within and beyond the continent on development, there is also a narrative on the nexus between immigration and development. Immigrant labor is instrumental in bridging the skills gaps in destination countries. Despite the common refrain in destination countries that migrants are taking jobs from nationals, empirical evidence suggests that migrants mostly fill vacancies that are either undesirable by the local labor force or there is an acute shortage of skills. This is particularly true for labor migrants with practical skills or hands-on expertise who do menial jobs, such as picking fruits, collecting recyclable plastic waste, stacking of supermarket shelves, cleaning services, hand car wash, waste collection, and janitorial work. In the realm of skilled labor, there are vacancies that are unfilled because the requisite skills are lacking domestically. Examples include petrochemical engineers for the oil and gas sectors of African countries that recently discovered oil and gas (such as Ghana, Namibia, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola), mining specialists, civil engineers, medical consultants, information technology specialists, investment bankers, and insurance brokers. As argued by dual/segmented labor-market theorists (Piore, 1979), there tend to be two parallel labor markets – the primary labor market, which comprises well-paid, secure, and highly skilled jobs that are popular with the native population, and a secondary labor market, which comprises low-paid, insecure, and unskilled jobs that are filled by migrants. The "unskilled" migrants in Africa thus embark on secondary-market jobs, which are largely shunned by the native population because they are labeled as immigrant jobs. However, unlike the dual/segmented labor-market theorists, empirical evidence indicates that some skilled African labor migrants equally feature prominently in the primary labor market as senior executives, managers, employers, and inventors. In reality, the two segments (primary and secondary) are interdependent. Across the two labor markets, access to social protection schemes and portability of social security contributions at the end of migrants' journeys are critical to the well-being of migrants (both skilled and unskilled) and shape their ability to send remittances home toward consumptive and productive uses.

CONCLUSION

This perspective paper engages with the dominant sedentary bias that is associated with migration from Africa, where migration is perceived as "unusual" and it is expected to be temporary. The paper also challenges the unfounded assumption that the majority of Africans are automatically destined for Europe, should they have the opportunity to migrate. We acknowledge the critical contribution of scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 19), who notes that African development can be defined from Marcus Garvey's perspective as constant and consistent African search for self-improvement. We, therefore, perceive Africa-centered development as building on the arguments of economists such as Sen (1999: 3), who conceptualizes development using the "capability approach" and argues that it is "the process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy." Development is, therefore, regarded as a tool that enables people to reach their highest potential through being free to live the lives they choose to lead.

We conclude that cash remittances have the potential to support development in Africa, but this depends on the environments within which migration occurs as well as within which cash remittances are introduced. Similarly, social remittances are credited with possible improvements in habits, attitudes, and social capital that could support development. However, we question the assumption that superior values and norms preside in European destination countries and African migrants imbibe them and transmit them to a vacuous continent that is devoid of developmental values. We critique this approach as being too deterministic. Moreover, we adjudge political remittances to be positively associated with improvements in democracy in Africa based on some empirical studies. While acknowledging this finding, we caution against a blanket assumption of a positive nexus by noting that some political remittances equally contribute to chaos, political upheaval, and corruption. Akin to arguments around social remittances, skills transfers from migrants are acclaimed as progressive and developmental. We, however, note the possible brain drain, deskilling, and brain waste effects that affect a growing number of African migrants. Ultimately, we conclude that the development impacts of migration are variable across different regions and countries in Africa depending on the disparate environments within which migration takes place, and that migration spurs self-improvement, just as self-improvement facilitates migration.

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