Introduction

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Over the past decade, migration has become a critical humanitarian and development issue in the world, including in Africa. Moreover, remittances sent by migrants to their home countries provide substantial funds that have been increasing, surpassing official development aid.1 Research has shown that migrants act as agents of change through their financial contributions that improve the living standards of those left behind. Through the transmission of norms and knowledge, migrants stimulate social and political changes in their home countries. However, migrants also face several challenges and barriers during their journey to their transit and host countries. Such challenges violate migrants’ rights and reduce their potential contribution to development in their home countries.

Surprisingly, the previous development agenda (the UN’s Millennium Development Goals) did not pay attention to the importance of migration and remittances in transforming the societies in migrants’ home countries, nor did it tackle the challenges migrants face in their transit and host countries. Thanks to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), migration has been formally recognised as an important factor that should be considered for poverty reduction, human rights protection, and inclusive development by 2030.

Cutting-edge research is needed to better understand the role of migration and remittances within the SDG context in addition to an examination of the potential repercussions that nonresponsive migration policies may have on the achievement of SDGs in Africa. Therefore, this book’s main goal is to research, document, and discuss the role of migration in transforming the economic, social, and political aspects necessary for the success of SDGs. It also contributes to the discourse on the characteristics of migration decisions and challenges faced by migrants from Africa and analyse how some policies in the SDG context may help alleviate the conditions of African migrants. The book offers timely and comprehensive evidence to inform policymakers, researchers, and students who are interested in the links between population movements and the SDGs in Africa.

Unlike other books on migration and remittances, this book examines the links between the evidence and the goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and how failure to undertake responsive migration
policies may affect the success of some of the SDGs. The findings in each of the chapters identify SDGs’ goals or targets that have informative implications. It is worth noting that few reports exist on migration and the SDGs that have discussed why migration is important to the success of the SDGs. We go beyond anecdotal evidence and conduct accurate quantitative and qualitative research and use the findings to recommend policies for specific SDG goals. The authors of the chapters have adopted quantitative, qualitative, and explorative approaches in the book, which allows students and teachers to use it as supplementary or complementary material. This book is also a useful tool for policymakers interested in rigorous policy-based evidence with regard to migration issues. The experts writing the book chapters have a diverse range of experiences, backgrounds, origins, and genders. They have enriching experiences in conducting research and field work in Africa.

The book’s scope is related to the following issues: (1) migration, remittances, and the transformation of economies in Africa; (2) migration, remittances and education, and knowledge; (3) migration, remittances, and corruption and conflict; and (4) challenges in the management of migration flows. Cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and women’s empowerment and youth are also examined in the book.

Migration and remittances in Africa

Even though migration across countries represents a significant share of global human mobility, a much greater number of people migrate within their country’s borders. Based on the latest estimates, more than 700 million people in the world have been reported as having migrated within their country (IOM, 2018). Furthermore, recent environmental changes, as well as the over-exploitation of resources, are significant causes driving rural–urban and cyclical migration in Africa. Four out of five of African migrants, or 19 million, originate from another African country. Put differently, migration in Africa is predominantly an intracontinental phenomenon, with nearly 80% of African immigrants coming from elsewhere in the region. Moreover, it is important to recall that Africa is also an attractive destination, as in 2017, 22% of immigrants were coming from outside the continent (AfDB, 2019). These figures are helpful to put into perspective the narrative around African migration, which often focusses on the flows outside the continent, or the phenomenon of irregular migration. Without underestimating the challenges posed by those types of flows, the picture of migration in Africa is more complex and nuanced than one might think. Migration patterns have thus been evolving across years and influenced by a set of different factors (UNCTAD, 2018).

Within the continent, Western Africa is characterised as the region with the highest share of migrants coming from other African countries and, more precisely, from neighbouring countries (Adepoju, 2017; AfDB, 2019). For instance, this flow largely comprises migrants originating from Mali and Niger moving to prominent migration hubs in the region, such as Cote d’Ivoire
and Ghana (IOM, 2018). This migration pattern is strongly driven by seasonal, temporary, and permanent workers, for which labour mobility across the region has been facilitated by the visa-free movement instituted within the Economic Community of West African States. Southern Africa has also experienced an increasing level of intraregional migration. This flow has primarily been shaped by growing economic opportunities such as those emerging from the mining industry in South Africa (UNCTAD, 2018). In addition to economic reasons, conflicts and political instability have significantly influenced migration patterns in Africa over recent years, especially in Central and Eastern Africa.

Moreover, these regions are characterised not only by a high number of outgoing migrants and refugees, but also by an increasing number of incoming migrants and refugees. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia are origin countries of a large refugee population and host countries for this population coming from other countries (UNHCR, 2016). In contrast to Western African, migrants moving across Southern, Eastern, and Central Africa often use irregular channels to migrate, and they are frequently facilitated with the help of smugglers to reach their intended destinations (Carling, 2016; Frouws & Horwood, 2017; Majidi & Oucho, 2016). Unlike the other regions, Northern Africa does not feature high intraregional migration. Instead, the region has principally been recognised as a transit area for migrants and refugees going to Europe, due to its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. Libya is the country that has hosted the most international migrants since 2010, originating mainly from Eastern and Western Africa (UNCTAD, 2018). However, the story is slightly different in Morocco. While this country was previously used mainly as a transit channel for migration, it is progressively converting into a destination country for migrants coming from other African regions (Berriane et al., 2015). This is also well documented in Chapter 14 of this book.

While the number of African migrants residing outside the continent has remained low compared to the number of internal migrants, extracontinental migration experienced a faster growth over recent years compared to intracontinental migration (UNCTAD, 2018). Between 2000 and 2017, the number of international migrants increased by 49% across the globe, from 173 to 258 million. African migrants contribute to 14% of the international migration flow, being 36 million across the world (UNDESA, 2017). This migration flow is characterised by a higher share of Northern African migrants, for whom the propensity to migrate outside the continent is higher than for migrants from other regions in Africa.

High levels of unemployment, as well as high income disparities between the origin and destination countries, are recognised as important drivers of this migration. In terms of destination, Europe and the Middle East are the main extracontinental destinations for African migrants (IOM, 2018). A number of migrants from North and West Africa are, for instance, hosted in Europe (European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2018).
The importance of these flows highlights the potential benefits associated with migration, which has been recognised as a potential source of development. In the context of labour migration, migrants contribute not only to filling labour and skill shortage in destination countries but also to the development in their country of origin, through remittances. For instance, the flow of financial remittances to Africa has been increasing constantly over recent decades. By 2018, remittance inflow in Africa reached $86 billion. In addition to being more stable than official development assistance and foreign direct investment, remittances have recently exceeded these other inflows (see Figure 1.1). Some countries in Africa are highly dependent on remittances, such as Liberia and Lesotho, for which 27% and 18% of their GDPs, respectively, are composed of remittances (UNCTAD, 2018).

**Migrants as agents of change in their home countries: a brief literature review**

Remittances are recognised as a powerful factor in poverty reduction for families staying in their communities of origin (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017). For instance, evidence from Ghana and Ethiopia show that households receiving remittances are significantly less likely to be poor (Adams & Cuecuecha, 2013; Beyene, 2014). In addition to alleviating poverty, remittances have been found to reduce inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa (Akobeng, 2016). Using household surveys from Kenya, Bang et al. (2016) provide evidence that remittances increase expenditures at all levels of the distribution, though poorest households tend to benefit the most.
Due to the presence of imperfect insurance markets in developing countries, remittances can also be viewed as an informal insurance, which acts as a safety net for households in the event of negative shocks (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Yang, 2011). As a consequence, this mechanism has been found to lessen household consumption instability for a range of different adverse events, such as unfavourable weather, natural disasters, and conflicts (Bettin & Zazzaro, 2017; Combes & Ebeke, 2011; Fransen & Mazzucato, 2014; Wouterse & Taylor, 2008).

Additionally, remittances can be pro-cyclical and used as a means to accumulate assets and physical capital investment, leading to an improvement in the wealth of households and long-term welfare (Yang, 2011). For instance, household surveys from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda show that 20% of international remittances are used for investment in buying land or equipment, starting a business, or improving a farm (Boly et al., 2014). More recent reports on Ethiopia show the same tendency, yet with an increased share of 40% of international remittances that are used for physical capital investment (UNCTAD, 2018). Besides the accumulation of physical capital, remittances can have a positive impact on education (Nicolai et al., 2016). Based on a household survey from Ghana, Adams and Cuecuecha (2013) provide empirical evidence that households that are the recipients of international and internal remittances tend to spend 1.9% and 3.6% more at the margin on education, respectively.

In terms of educational outcomes, remittances have been found to increase school enrolment, school completion rate, and private school enrolment in developing countries; for these outcomes girls tend to benefit more from remittances than boys (Azizi, 2018). Consequently, the absence of the migrant does not necessarily have a disruptive effect by increasing child labour. Using the case of Burkina Faso, Bargain and Boutin (2015) demonstrate that child labour decreases when remittances increase. Regarding another dimension of human capital, remittances can positively affect health outcomes for recipient households (Tulloch et al., 2016). For instance, studies have demonstrated that remittances play a significant role in reducing both child and infant mortality in developing countries (Chauvet et al., 2013; Terrelonge, 2014). Furthermore, life expectancy tends to be positively affected by remittance inflows. More precisely, Zhunio et al. (2012) provide evidence that a 1% increase in real remittances per capita translates into a 0.03% increase in life expectancy in developing countries.

Through these different channels, remittances have been advanced to foster economic growth, and particularly for countries with low levels of financial development (Sobiech, 2019). However, this effect may be mitigated by the institutional quality present in the origin country. For instance, Adams and Klobodu (2016) find that regime durability and democracy are necessary factors for remittances to have a significant and positive impact on economic growth in Sub-Saharan African countries.
Moreover, these findings are supported by Chitambara (2019), who shows a stronger impact of remittances in Africa when associated with other instructional quality measures. However, institutions in origin countries may themselves be affected by migration, through another type of remittances, which are often referred to as social remittances. Social remittances are defined as the norms, beliefs, and practices that migrants accumulate in the host country, which they transfer to the country of origin either during their stay or when they return (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In the case that there is a positive difference in institutional quality experienced by the migrants in the host country, these social remittances have been found to positively affect institutional development, such as democratic changes in developing countries including Sub-Saharan Africa (Docquier et al., 2016; Williams, 2017).

Moreover, these findings are supported and complemented by other studies based on the African context, which find that political accountability and participation, as well as electoral competitiveness, are improved through the transfer of political norms emitted by migrants, both during their stay in the host country and upon their return (Batista et al., 2019; Batista & Vicente, 2011; Chauvet & Mercier, 2014). In addition to affecting institutional quality in origin countries, social remittances can be used as a means of skills, knowledge, and technology diffusion, which could subsequently contribute to economic growth in developing countries (Hübler, 2016; Rapoport, 2018).

**Migration, remittances, and the Sustainable Development Goals**

Although migration and remittances were not included in the previous development agenda (the UN’s Millennium Development Goals), they play an important role in the development process and as such may have implications for several Sustainable Development Goals such as SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships for the goals). Nevertheless, migration and remittances can have further implications for many SDGs due to their cross-cutting nature (IOM, 2017). For instance, migration, through remittances, can contribute to alleviating poverty in origin countries, which reflects progress towards SDG 1 (no poverty), and can act as a powerful instrument to secure consumption levels of recipient households, thus contributing to progress on SDG 2 (zero hunger). SDGs 3 (good health and well-being) and 4 can be supported through the use of remittances in human capital accumulation, which can subsequently have implications for target 16.2 on child labour. In addition, the allocation of remittances towards the investment in physical capital, such as new businesses, can enhance employment opportunities, which supports SDG 8. Additionally, SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) can be supported by the skills and technological transfers spurred by migrants and returnees. Moreover, migration can contribute to SDG 10 by reducing global inequality
across countries through the transfer of remittances from high-income to low-income countries, and it can diminish inequality within countries. Last but not least, social remittances can provide support for the improvement of institutional quality in origin countries, thus contributing to SDG 16, which can, in turn, be favourable to the environment in which economic growth takes place, supporting, again, SDG 8 (ODI, 2018).

However, the positive effects of migration and remittances on welfare can be attenuated by several challenges and barriers that migrants face throughout their journeys, which may violate migrants’ rights and reduce their potential contribution to development in their home countries. Although irregular migration is difficult to quantify, it remains a real issue preventing safe and orderly migration, as recommended by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM). Such migrants often utilise smugglers as a means to facilitate their transit to their destination. However, these practices tend to lead to vulnerabilities for these persons, such as extortion, violence, trafficking, and often inhumane conditions during transit (Metcalfe-Hough, 2015). Women are in a particularly vulnerable situation when transiting through irregular channels (IOM, 2018).

After their arrival in the destination country, migrants may face barriers in transferring money to their community of origin due to the high costs of remitting channels. In comparison to other regions in the world, Africa has the highest costs of sending remittances (equalling 9% in transfer fees to send $200; UNCTAD, 2018). As a consequence, the net value of remittances received by recipient households decreases, impeding the money’s potential positive impact on welfare (The World Bank, 2018). In addition to challenges faced by migrants, poor institutional settings in the country of origin can lead to an adverse welfare impact of remittances. Because remittances increase household income, receiving them may indicate a higher ability to pay bribes in exchange for provision of public goods and services in the presence of poor institutional quality (Abdih et al., 2012; Berdiev et al., 2013). Even though no empirical evidence exists for the case of Africa, it has been suggested that diaspora remittances could, in some cases, be diverted to fuel conflicts in origin countries (Mariani et al., 2018; Van Hear, 2003). As a result, remittances could indirectly hinder the welfare impact in migrants’ home countries, by increasing the level of corruption and conflict.

In addition to impeding the welfare impact of migration and remittances, these challenges and barriers can be detrimental to the accomplishment of particular SDGs. For instance, the extortion faced by migrants transiting with the help of smugglers can stand in the way of the achievement of SDG 1 (no poverty). Furthermore, the violence and inhumane conditions experienced through this type of transit jeopardise several health-related SDGs, such as SDG 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), and 6 (clean water and sanitation). Women’s irregular-channel transit can have a negative impact on SDG 5 (gender equality). Additionally, financial remittances could lead to unfavourable consequences such as an increase in corruption
and conflict in origin countries, thus reducing the progress towards SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). Based on these challenges and barriers, nonresponsive migration policies could thus have negative consequences for the achievement of the SDGs in Africa. Accordingly, appropriate policies should be considered regarding these issues, which could consequently lead to maximising the impact of migration on poverty reduction and development.

**Structure of the book**

This book is a collection of reviews of the literature, empirical evidence, and policy discussions, which is intended to inform academics, policymakers and advanced students who are interested in the relationship between migration and its implications for the achievement of SDGs in Africa. There are 13 chapters structured into four parts, in addition to the introduction and the conclusion.

Part I addresses the contribution of migration and remittances to economic transformation in Africa. In Chapter 2, Vanore provides a literature review on the conceptual and empirical linkages between migration and trade. Moreover, this chapter explores how policies can help to foster this relationship. Mbaye and Tani, in Chapter 3, investigate the relationship between short-term migration and innovation, by particularly identifying how short-term forms of people’s interactions may intensify the introduction of new processes, products, and services. In Chapter 4, Oucho discusses the youth-employment-migration nexus, with a focus on the linkages between labour market challenges and internal migration in Kenya. This chapter explores the drivers of internal migration, as well as the link between urbanisation and migration, using mixed methods including survey responses of both migrants and non-migrants, qualitative interviews, and focus group discussions with youth groups. In Chapter 5, Nanziri and Gbahabo examine the effect of the cost of remittance transactions on welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa using Remittances Prices Worldwide data from the World Bank that cover 17 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa over the period 2011–2018.

Part II focuses on the human capital accumulation that can be positively influenced by migration through remittances invested in education and the transfer of knowledge. In Chapter 6, Cebotari analyses the relationship between migration and educational development of children using panel data collected in two Ghanaian regions, Kumasi and Sunyani, by comparing children whose parents migrated and children living with both parents in the country. Additionally, the author contrasts the findings based on the gender of both migrants and children. Chapter 7, by Mueller, examines how diaspora members involved in the programme Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D) transfer both explicit and tacit knowledge to institutions in their origin countries. This chapter adopts a comparative case analysis, which relies on data collected in Sierra Leone and Somaliland. In Chapter 8, Setrana and
Arhin-Sam investigate social and political remittances in the context of the return of skilled migrants in Ghana. Moreover, the authors examine how these migrants sustain their return and mobilise themselves for the development of the country of origin. In Chapter 9, Fourmy studies the effect of mobile money on remittance recipients’ household welfare using longitudinal data from Kenya. By providing transfer records for each recipient household, this data set allows investigators to precisely identify the actual use of mobile money in remittance transfers.

Part III covers the political implications with regard to migration and remittances. In Chapter 10, Konte and Ndubuisi empirically evaluate the effects of remittances on corruption levels using Afrobarometer surveys across 36 African countries. In this chapter, the authors investigate this relationship not only through the financial remittances channel but also through the transfer of norms. Merkle, Reinold, and Siegel, in Chapter 11, address the role of corruption in shaping the migration path and how it continues to be important throughout the journey. Based on desk research and semi-structured interviews, the authors also conclude that for irregular and forced migrants in Africa the experiences with corruption are gendered. Ouedraogo and Soureouema, in Chapter 12, also employ Afrobarometer surveys to explore how remittances affect electoral violence in Africa, which remains a major issue that threatens the development and consolidation of democracy within the continent.

Part IV explores the challenges in the management of migration flows in Africa, which are important to consider because they may interfere with how migration contributes to development. Chapter 13, by Oucho, provides insights on the mainstreaming of the principles outlined in the GCM with regard to irregular migration in Eastern Africa. Because migration policies are addressed differently across countries, the implementation of the GCM framework may involve further challenges for some countries compared to others. This chapter also advances some solutions based on best practices across the world that can be contextualised in the African environment. In Chapter 14, Mourji, Ricard, and Doumbia examine how Morocco has recently become a country of destination for African migrants. More particularly, the authors use survey data from two migration hubs in the country, Casablanca-Mohammedia and Rabat-Salé, to study the profile of migrants and their social and professional integration in Morocco. Furthermore, this chapter is complemented by a comparison of the socio-economic and behavioural characteristics of migrants, as well as an analysis of their perception of social integration compared to that of the native population.

The final part of the book summarises the findings of each chapter and more particularly discusses the contributions to the accomplishment of specific SDG targets. Furthermore, recommendations for policymakers are advanced, and research gaps that need to be further investigated by researchers interested in migration and remittances in Africa are identified.
Notes

2 However, this migration taking place within country borders in Africa is not as measurable as for the case of migration taking place across countries (IOM, 2018; UNCTAD, 2018).

References


