

Africans on the Move

Migration, Diaspora and Development Nexus

Edited by
Fassil Demissie

Africans on the Move

The 20th century witnessed the large-scale displacement and dispersal of populations across the world because of major political upheavals, among them the two European wars, decolonization and the Cold War. These major events were followed by globalization which accelerated free trade and the mobility of capital, new technologies of communication, and the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world. This book explores the complexity of African migration and diaspora, the discourse of 'diaspora engagement' and new models of citizenship and transnationalism in the context of these issues.

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Fassil Demissie, PD.D is a faculty member in the Department of Public Policy, DePaul University, USA. He is currently the Co-Editor of *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* and is the author of *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories* (2012) and *Postcolonial African Cities*, (2008).

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Hugo Bréant

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David Garbin and Marie Godin

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Immigrants and transnational engagement in the diaspora: Ghanaian associations in Italy and the UK

Francesco Marini

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Guinea-Bissau immigrant transnationalism in Portugal: a substitute for a failed state?

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Being here and there: migrant communities in Sweden and the conflicts in the Horn of Africa

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From 'remittance' to 'tax': the shifting meanings and strategies of capture of the Eritrean transnational party-state

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Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe

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Chapter 9

Affective economies: Eastleigh's metalogistics, urban anxieties and the mapping of diasporic city life

Lorenzo Rinelli and Sam Okoth Opondo

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Preface

The twentieth century has witnessed the large-scale displacement and dispersal of populations across the world because of major political upheavals, among them the two European wars, decolonization and the Cold War. These major events were followed by globalization which accelerated free trade and the mobility of capital, new technologies of communication, and the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world, fundamentally changing the nature of place and one's sense of the world.

The international migration of people lies at the core of the ongoing process of globalization. Driven by a multitude of reasons, contemporary African migrants may move temporarily or permanently, nationally and transnationally, individually or in groups, return to their countries of origin or migrate to another country, or move cyclically between two or more countries. The complexities of African migration today can be attributed to a diversity of factors, which stimulate and characterize it. It is no longer sufficient merely to identify countries as sources or recipients, since it is also necessary to consider those, which, because of their geographical position, have become gateway states towards intended final destinations. Furthermore, African migration is no longer limited to particular clearly identifiable human groups as in the past: the range of the types of persons involved whose migration affects the social reproduction of their families and the development of their communities of origin is increasingly broad. Furthermore, in their places of final destination they establish links with diverse social groups, build networks of contacts which stretch across transnational borders, and use different strategies and means for their movements, enhancing the ability of migrant groups to live both 'here' and 'there'.

Africans on the Move: Migration, Diaspora and Development Nexus draws upon a wide variety of interdisciplinary fields to shed new light on the mobility of contemporary African migrants and diaspora at a specific time when globalization has generated new optimism for the dominance and value of the market through which individuals and societies can maximize their full potential and secure a place in the global economic order. The contributors also examine the mobility of African migrants and diaspora in the dynamic and intertwined worlds of 'here' and 'there' by forging multiple attachments that sustain multi-stranded social relations linking together their societies of origin and settlement.

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Fassil Demissie

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What if diasporas didn't think about development?: a critical approach of the international discourse on migration and development

Hugo Bréant

Department of Political Science, University Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

This paper explores the links between migration and development emphasized by international organizations. This discourse, which encourages migrants to work at their level, toward the development of their country has become consensual. But if one looks closely, these natural links seem fragile, both in international migration policies and social experiments of migration. By studying the case of the Togolese migration, this article shows that the institutionalization of this new paradigm is weak and that the recent implementation of migration policies in Togo just seems to be an answer to the requirements of international partners. More than a real programmatic issue, the role of the diaspora in development becomes an obligatory resource in negotiations with sponsors. Then, if the discourse on development began to emerge among migrants themselves, it is not necessarily synonymous with the growth of a strong culture of transnational or diasporic commitment. Few associative structures are actually created and migration trajectories and histories are first and foremost thought of in an individual or familial frame, far from social imperatives of community development. Finally, if we analyze the more general logic of these migrations in Togo, while they seem to foster identity transformations they may primarily function as a driving force behind reproduction of social inequalities in the country of origin.

The new *doxa* of migration and development

More and more people are excited about the ways in which migrants can help transform their adopted and their native countries. More and more people understand that governments can cooperate to create triple wins – for migrants, for their countries of origin, and for the societies that receive them. (UN 2006).

These words condense the spirit of the two days of the High-Level Dialogue of the General Assembly of United Nations on International Migration and Development, in September 2006. These two sentences link individual migration and the development of their origin countries.

The international agenda-setting of migration as an instrument of development in Southern countries is part of a broader paradigm shift around migration issues (De Haas 2010). The term of 'brain drain', meaning the migration of British scientists to North America, was popularized in the 1950s and 1960s by the Anglo-Saxon media.¹ In the late 1960s, the issue of migration of qualified nationals,

particularly from southern states to northern states, was introduced in the UN discourse. Indeed, in 1967, at the joint request of four non-aligned countries, Brazil, Egypt, Iran and Nigeria, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 2320 which aims to undertake research on these migrations.² International discussions that followed were largely marked by a major power struggle among the Southern States, which considered themselves owners of the skills of migrants, and the major Western powers, accused of encouraging and organizing the 'looting' of human resources for their benefit. In the General Assembly, the debate on 'brain drain' was quickly connected to exchanges focusing on the recurring patterns of development of 'underdeveloped countries', or 'developing countries' according to the terminology used from 1948 to the late 1970s. The return of the 'skilled' migrant therefore became a response to this challenge. After researches conducted by the Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated the 'Tokten program' (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals), in 1977 in Turkey, before generalizing it to nearly 30 countries. The objective is that highly skilled migrants do short-term missions in their country of origin to promote development.³ During this decade, several politicians of the South, including Jordan's King Hassan Ibn Talal, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Prime Minister of Jamaica Edward Seaga, proposed a set of compensatory mechanisms for a reverse transfer of technology.⁴ Training of experts and technicians from the South would be financed through international funds supplied by the Northern States that attracted the skilled labor.

These debates have rapidly accelerated since the early 1990s. This resurgence can be explained by the fact that the institutional conceptions of this new discourse, that links international migration and development in the South, have particularly relied on the example of the Asian diaspora, which in this decade, contributed to the economic success of the 'Asian Tigers' model (South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan) by organized migration and mass return. Based on this historical experience, there is no doubt regarding the international community that the model can be extended to other migrations. It seems clear that this speech was made in defiance of the consideration of various social, cultural and historical trajectories and experiences of each diaspora. Therefore, it would not necessarily be appropriate for all situations. Thus, only 2,000 emigrants from 41 different countries came back through the program of Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN), launched in 1983 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The project, initially linked only to skilled migrants, has gradually shifted to include all emigrants from the South. It is no longer a question of confrontations between states, but it is about finding a much more consensual formulation to this phenomenon. Migration is thus increasingly presented as a global phenomenon, inherent to the rise of globalized economies and thus cannot be considered as purely national. The condemnation of the brain drain caused by the massive emigration of graduates from developing countries has given way to the development of 'brain gain'. In other words, international organizations now adopt a discourse that transforms 3 percent of world population living in migration (nearly 200 million people) in resource mobilization for the countries of origin (Klugman 2009). The vocabulary is therefore more economic. Emigration and remigration must unlock 'earnings' and meet the 'shared interests' of all states involved in these phenomena.

In the future, it becomes possible to think in terms of ‘development by exile’ or ‘codevelopment’. Since it seems impossible to stop the emigration of skilled migrants, previously analyzed in terms of ‘loss’ for the south and ‘profits’ for the north, it becomes essential to frame it for the maximum benefits for both countries of origin and destination, as well as the migrants themselves, the latter thus becoming major players in the development of their countries of origin.⁵

During the last 30 years, the UN system has successfully turned a critical claim of Southern countries (the ‘brain drain’ to the advantage of developed countries) in a wider and more consensual scope (the return of skilled diasporas, or not). From 1980, as part of the third UN Development decade, the General Assembly of the United Nations announced in paragraph 123 of its development strategy that these moves are now being seen as an exchange in which the interests of all stakeholders are adequately protected.

The United Nations has clearly taken this debate and its prospects in hand, redefining even the terminology, so much that it is clear today that the subject is always thought of in UN terms. It then appears that one can speak of a true international *doxa*, understandable as a set of beliefs and social practices considered normal, taken for granted and not to be questioned. It is surprising to note that all civil society actors, even the most critical, are now grounding their discourse on this international rhetoric. To take one example, in Paris, parallel to the second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on migration and development, two hundred associations organizing a counter-summit ‘Bridges, not walls’ published a final declaration, called Declaration of Montreuil, calling for an ‘approach to migration and development based on mutual interests of migrant societies of north and south’. However, it should be noted that this *doxa*, which aims to eliminate passionate considerations of the 1970s, is now injecting a moral dimension back into the debate by multiplying injunctions for migrants and creating, as a complete fabrication, the social figure of the ‘good’ and ‘virtuous’ migrant who has to work for the development of his/her country of origin, either from afar or through his/her return.

The relative bureaucratization of the *doxa*

Although this new global paradigm seems to serve as a performative formula, or a self-fulfilling prophecy, the study of the regional or national readjustments and renegotiations shows that the apparent support is relative in facts. If this *doxa* seems to spread widely and without obstacle, it is nonetheless clear that the parallel establishment of an international policy on migration seems much more problematic and that this institutionalization appears relative. It is then difficult to speak of a real international public policy linking migration and development. It seems that only the rhetoric of the global discourse is the subject of consensual diffusion inside and outside the United Nations. Few concrete programs are now introduced; only ‘good practices’ are touted, related to short-term missions of highly skilled migrants and remittances from the diaspora (AFDB 2008, Ratha 2011). The main message conveyed can be summarized in one sentence delivered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan at the opening of the High-Level Dialogue on Migration in September 2006: ‘Governments are now beginning to see international migration through the prism of opportunity, rather than of fear. You are focused on

magnifying the positive, mutually beneficial aspects of migration: on sharing your experiences, developing practical ideas, building partnerships’.

For two decades, the UN and IOM have been working to strengthen the conditions of possibility for the emergence of global migration governance. Five years after the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 54/212, which encourages both Member States and organizations of the United Nations to continue and strengthen ‘international cooperation in the area of international migration and development in order to address the root causes of migration, especially those related to poverty, and to maximize the benefits of international migration to those concerned’. The growing desire to create a formal frame to international discussions was reinforced in subsequent years with the successive creations of several organs: the Bern Initiative in 2001; the Geneva Migration Group in April 2003 at the initiative of the executive heads of several intergovernmental agencies; the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), which according to the report of the General Secretariat of the United Nations in 2002 calling for ‘gaps’ in the international system in this field, has set a goal to include migration and development at the heart of ‘global agenda;’ the Global Migration Group in 2006 (replacing the Geneva Group), an inter-institutional agency actively preparing the September 2006 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development which included 140 states around the UN General Assembly; the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in July 2007 under the leadership of the General Secretariat of the United Nations and the Belgian Ministry of Cooperation.

It appears that the UN leadership is essential in this process of institutionalization of global migration governance.⁶ This is permitted by the multiplication of arenas designed as spaces of discussion that bring together representatives of UN agencies, multilateral organizations, Member States, non-governmental organizations and various associations. Envisaged as informal, voluntary, largely confidential, non-binding and advisory, this process does not include the establishment of decision-making bodies, but simply increases contacts and exchange of experiences promoting a programmatic mimicry. For instance, since 2001 as part of the International Dialogue on Migration, the IOM setup conference sessions and seminars where both analytical and rhetorical framings are shared. This process has brought together a wide range of actors: general management and administration of IOM; diplomats and permanent representatives of States to the United Nations; regional migration program administrators; national political or administrative actors (ministers and state secretaries to ministries as varied as Foreign Affairs; International Cooperation; Development, Migration, consular Affairs, Development, Economy and Health); or Presidents and program managers within IGOs and NGOs.

Finally, it should be noted that the emergence and spread of the international *doxa* is not only the result of the action of administrative staff or international diplomats, but it also owes much to the pressure and mobilization of other social actors, grouped around particular corporate interests. To refer to only one case, one can take the prime example of the entrepreneur Didier Acouetey. During his business studies in France, he decided to create an association of young African graduates, called ‘African Renaissance’, with the intention to establish contacts with political leaders in African and Northern countries. Subsequently, in 1996, he created a

recruitment agency for Africa, 'Afric Search'. If the startup was shy, he managed to rapidly establish multiple partnerships with the World Bank, IMF, West African Development Bank, the Central Bank of West Africa, the African Development Fund and Western Union. He moved the head office of his thriving business on the Champs-Élysées in Paris and opened branches in Abidjan, Lomé, Douala, Dakar, Johannesburg and Washington. Convinced that the 'brain drain' should stop, he quickly built a militant image of 'Africa on the Move' and as a 'promoter of African expertise'. Thus, he initiated several experiments such as the lounge 'Afric Talents' in 1999 or the first Economic Forum Africa and South-East Asia in April 2010 in Singapore. Didier Acouetey, in the vein of many African businessmen that mobilized within the Forum Africa & Action Agenda advocating 'for new leadership in Africa', is in constant contact with associations, contractors and international organizations. These new globalized entrepreneurs have made migration and development their priority with major commitments into the UN system.

To borrow a framework developed by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder (Cobb and Elder 1972), one might well indicate that the *doxa* is currently at the stage of the systemic agenda-setting and not that of institutional agenda-setting. In other words, this issue is now built as part of the problems deserving attention but not yet benefiting from the implementation of programs or firm decisions.

An emerging regional diffusion

While international institutionalization is engaged around the United Nations, it is now at the regional level that the transmission of this *doxa* takes place. Since 2000, several bridges were created to promote the strengthening of these reflections in Africa. The West African Regional Ministerial Meeting on the participation of migrants in the development of their country of origin, held in Dakar in October 2000, marked the start of a series of events: initiation by the IOM and the International Migration Program (IMP) of the two ILO regional consultative processes in 2000 and 2001, in order to better integrate migration issues into the African regional organizations (the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa [MIDSA] and the Migration Dialogue for West Africa [MIDWA] have allowed the proliferation of conferences, seminars, conferences and regional working groups); a workshop in April 2001 in Libreville, organized by the IOM, which brought together representatives of some 20 African countries, and also the African Union, the European Union and the Economic Commission for Africa to prepare UN resolution 614 adopted by the African Union Summit in Lusaka in July 2001, a resolution which laid the foundation of the program 'Migration for Development in Africa' (MIDA) modeled on the principles of the program Tokten; three Euro-African Conferences on Migration and Development (July 2006 in Rabat, November 2008 in Paris and November 2011 in Dakar); the creation by the African Union in February 2008 of 'the African Union – African Diaspora Sixth Region' to structure the linkages with African communities in Europe.

The spread of these themes, that originated in the UN system, to regional and sub-regional African organizations was notably made possible by the presence of African intermediaries, particularly Senegalese, who made their careers in all these arenas and have played the role of smugglers, facilitators or initiators. Three cases may well be mentioned. Jacques Diouf, has completed his studies in France and the

United States, worked at the Central Bank of West African States and was a member of the International Development Research Center in Ottawa before being appointed Ambassador of Senegal to the United Nations, then became Director General of FAO in 1993. Assane Diop studied in Dakar, Sao Paulo and Lisbon before returning to Senegal to become the secretary general of the Union of Professors of Senegal (SYPROS), then head of international department of the National Confederation of Workers of Senegal (CNTS) and Assistant Secretary responsible for education and training to the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU). Also a member of the socialist government of Abdou Diouf, he was appointed in April 2000 as Executive Director of Social Welfare of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He was also very active in the context of discussions on links between migration and development. Finally, the most emblematic case is that of Ndioro Ndiaye. After completing her graduate studies in France, she returned to teach at the University Cheikh Anta Diop, became Minister of Social Development in 1988 and participated in the management of migration crises in Mauritania and Casamance. Subsequently, she became Minister for Women, Children and Families and participated in organizing several international events: the World Summit for Children of UNESCO, the World Summit on the Economic Advancement rural Women, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and the Regional Conference of African women to prepare the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Founding member of the Committee on Women and Development and the 'African Women Leaders for Peace and Development', she has subsequently been appointed Deputy Director of the IOM.

It should be noted that these regional consultative processes and their role in the management of migration in Africa have been little studied, except by Frédérique Channac who describes them as 'pivotal structures' (Channac 2005, 2006). According to Channac, international harmonization must be built around a minimum of understanding between the States – the countries of origin, transit and destination – that have different interests around a common issue. The assumption made here is that this orthodoxy is not built on a 'common understanding' but rather seeks to create this concord. The study of national readjustments to the apparent international consensus will permit to demonstrate it. Before, we must first clarify that, at the regional level, the African states, although they are increasingly adopting the rhetoric of migration and development, are concerned with themes that are far from these issues. If the Organization of African Unity (OUA) took an early interest in migration, it was to sign a convention on refugees in 1974, or in other words, only to support emergency humanitarian situations and not engage in long-term strategies related to development. At the regional consultations that followed in 2000, the security dimension of irregular migration and the economic side of labor migration have been widely promoted.

MIDSA and MIDWA regional consultative processes have been created to consider the following issues: migration/border management, development, health, labor migration, irregular movements, trafficking and smuggling of migrants' rights, return/readmission and remittances. In May 2010, before the opening of the 45th Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank (AFDB), at a workshop bringing together experts from several African countries and also from China, South Korea, United States, France and India on the theme 'Mobilizing Africa's Diaspora for Capacity Building and Development: National and Sub-regional Approaches to