



# Navigating the Economic Impacts of Migration in Africa: A Comprehensive Review

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## Abstract

Migration in post-colonial Africa has become an essential source of economic development. However, for some countries, it has also threatened national security. This paper examines the challenges preventing Africa from harnessing migration for economic development. The paper contends that while one cannot ignore migration's economic potential, African countries struggle to leverage migration for economic development. Reviewing literature as a data source, this paper found that a lack of political will, national vs continental interests, and the lack of social integration policies coupled with widespread political instability are significant problems that give rise to Africa's struggle to consolidate migration for economic development. The paper concludes that without effective policies, Africa will continue to miss the economic benefits of migration.

**Keywords:** Migration, Development, Security, Africa

## Introduction

Traditionally, in Africa, before colonialism, migration was seen as an essential process to establish new families, learn about new cultures, and expand one's knowledge within the context of Africa. In pre-colonial Africa, cattle grazing and agriculture occurred across boundaries without strict laws and regulations (Green, 2013). This paper argues that African migration can be better understood within

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the context of African societies' political and historical evolution. The effects of colonization and decolonization on the economy and indirectly on migration are most visible when examined in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras (Adepoju, 1998). Prevailing sociopolitical and ecological conditions, such as conflict and natural disasters, facilitated migration. The current discourse around understanding migration in a pre-colonial era argues that migration was expected. It was a way of life for Africans, and the family maintained much greater social cohesion (Okoth, 1989).

Colonialism altered African migration patterns through coercive measures to secure labour in different regions for the mines and plantations. This paper contends that colonialism broke the social fabric that bonded the family together. It took away the culture, values, and sense of belonging embedded in the migration process. These were replaced by force- and rules-based mobility processes and there were severe consequences for those who did not follow these rules. However, when colonialism ended, there was a need to consider how migration could be used for economic development. Some arguments observe migration as a developmental force (Mohieldin & Ratha, 2019), albeit with policies to regulate the process. The formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was meant to usher in African unity to ensure socio-economic development by utilizing the skills of the African people. The same principle still underpinned the subsequent formation of the African Union, as the organization noted that promoting Africa's growth and economic development by championing citizen inclusion and increasing cooperation and integration of African states, thus underpinning the need to leverage migration for economic development.

However, African states have struggled to leverage migration for economic development in post-colonial Africa. Instead, what we see in Africa is reminiscent of how the European Union has responded to undocumented migration from Africa and the Middle East, which has been premised on border securitization and militarization designed to keep them out (Abede, 2019). Moreover, nationalistic sentiments have also informed how migration is observed in Africa. In South Africa, migrants have been accused of stealing jobs meant for locals, thus inciting xenophobia (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). In

North Africa, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa have been held captive and sold as slaves, fueling hate and discrimination (Kah, 2019). This paper explains why African countries need to do more to leverage migration for economic development. For example, Betancourt (2022) notes that in 2019, immigrant households earned \$4.8 billion in income, with \$591.8 million going to federal taxes and \$440.7 million going to state and local taxes. This paper examines the challenges of harnessing Migration for African development. The following question underpins the paper: Why can't African countries harness migration for economic development, and what are the associated challenges?

## Literature Review

In pre-colonial Africa, migration has always been part of the way of life for various reasons. The migration process was crucial because it was necessary to establish new relations and habitats. Because communities were prone to natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and environmental degradation, migration was essential to find new places unaffected by these disasters (Adepoju, 1998). There was also the need to see migration as a safe passage for one who seeks to escape political violence and conflict. Within the context of pre-colonial migration, the family played an essential role in the process because migration was seen as a collective activity in which, if undertaken successfully, benefits accrued to the whole family (Green, 2013). The need for security and new, safe, and adequate land for farming was also at the heart of migratory patterns in pre-colonial Africa.

In West Africa, events like endemic conflict, population growth, and poor economic development were factors that gave rise to migration in the region (Adepoju, 2005). People in the region perceived migration as free of regulation and thus would freely move between different places/countries to trade in goods and services. In Southern Africa, Crush, Williams, and Peberdy (2005) claimed that the end of apartheid in South Africa and the country's integration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) increased migration patterns regionally, primarily destined for South Africa as labour demand in the country's agricultural and mining sectors increased dramatically. To ensure sustainability in

pre-colonial Africa, production systems revolved around hunting and gathering, mining and simple manufacturing, and agriculture involved most people (Green, 2013). However, these production systems were not free of challenges, as hostile environments and labour scarcity were at the forefront of these challenges. Moreover, in many regions, the environmental conditions were unfavourable for production.

It was colonialism that altered the migration patterns in Africa. Migration became associated with the need for labour rather than seeking safety or migrating to establish farming initiatives. During colonialism, the movement of people for labour people became important (Vosloo, 2020) as colonizers were fixated on extracting African resources to fuel development in their home countries. In Southern Africa, colonial and white minority rulers created and implemented multi-tiered citizenship systems – extending full rights only to settlers (Mbiyozo, 2022). Migrants were a cheap and readily available source of labour, primarily to work on farms and mines. Within British colonies in the region, people could move relatively freely throughout the British colonies of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi). Labour migrants from non-British or non-colonized countries, including Mozambique, Eswatini, and Lesotho, were also recruited (Mbiyozo, 2022).

In West Africa, Konseiga (2005) noted that after Independence, colonial patterns of population mobility turned into labour migration for wage labour, weaving a complex grid of relations and interdependences over the borders inherited from colonialism. Slave-raiding and violent processes of pre-colonial state formation made voluntary frontier migration exceedingly unlikely. In East Africa, Musonda (2006) notes that forced and unforced labour movements were encouraged to supply labour to plantations and estates. There was also the labour movement for other reasons, such as building the Kenya -Uganda railway. Moreover, in East Africa, voluntary migration was more than roaming pastoralists and expanding agriculturalists. Instead, individuals often migrated in and out of pastoral livelihoods, seeking shelter with farmers in times of need, such as climate shocks.

Nevertheless, new drivers have come to emerge and drive the migration process. While conflict remains at the core, poverty, inequality, and the lack of economic opportunities for youth have become vital factors in post-colonial migration in Africa. Within Africa, most of the poverty is concentrated in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Central Africa has the highest extreme poverty rate of 54.8%, followed by Southern Africa at 45.1%. Western and Eastern Africa rates are 36.8% and 33.8%, respectively (Aikins & Du Toit Mclachlan, 2022). If developmental policy cannot address widespread poverty and inequality, this will work against Africa's commitments to Sustainable Development Goal Number One, which speaks to poverty alleviation.

Moreover, with globalization leveraging migration for economic development and addressing labour shortages, countries with effective migration management policies are taking full advantage of these opportunities. However, there is a lack of urgency in Africa to harness migration for economic development. The lack of progressive policy drives this, as well as the fear of the other, the lack of understanding of the migration process, and the fear of the perception and attitudes of locals toward migrants. However, there is a need to look above such challenges and observe the economic benefits associated with migration. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development argues that Migrants boost the working-age population. Migrants arrive with skills and contribute to the human capital development of receiving countries. It becomes confusing why migration is still viewed from the confines of fear, as this limits the economic potential of migrant contribution.

### **The African Union and Migration: The Quest for Development**

Promoting Africa's growth and economic development by championing citizen inclusion and increased cooperation and integration of African states has become essential. The African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action greatly emphasise development through migration and integration (Dinbabo & Badewa, 2020). The policy notes that there is a need for the integration of migrants into the labour market and the education and training sector, as well as the provision of social protection and

social security benefits for labour migrants while working abroad and upon their return. The AU understands that global migration has become an essential process in development, and Africa should take advantage of this opportunity through effective policy harmonisation frameworks. In pre-colonial Africa, migration was relatively free of regulation and control and was not feared.

Therefore, the imposition of European borders should remain the same how migration was perceived before colonisation. Instead, in a globalised world, leveraging migration for development has become an essential part of development. FWD.us (2020) reveals that in the USA, migrants added \$2 trillion to the US GDP in 2016 and \$458.7 billion to state, local, and federal taxes in 2018. In Latin American countries, migrants contribute as entrepreneurs and investors, migrants contribute as consumers, and migrants contribute as taxpayers (Escobar, 2023). Migrants are agents of sustainable development, contributing to countries' economic growth. Migration is also a tool for poverty reduction for migrants and their families, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals. The World Bank also reflects those remittances to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) withstood global headwinds in 2022, growing an estimated 5% to \$626 billion. This is sharply lower than the 10.2% increase in 2021 (World Bank, 2022).

Tredger (2020) reflects that intra-African remittances in Africa could be around \$14 billion a year. Within Sub-Saharan Africa: South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, and Uganda were the top remittance senders in the region, sending out a total of \$2.5 billion in 2019. The absorption of migrants in the labour market in African countries is the first step towards leveraging migration for development. Migrants are employed in different sectors. For example, South Africa's higher education and health sectors are characterized by a considerable presence of skilled migrants, contributing to developing the country by rendering services and paying taxes. However, Tati (2008) argues that undocumented migration is a significant global problem. Undocumented migration and its association with crime, drug trafficking, and competition with locals have increased its securitization. Therefore, at the core of observing the benefits of migration concerning development is the need to have welcoming policies that support the migrant's role in economic

development. Thus, integration becomes essential. The biggest problem, however, is the informal nature of migrant concentration and the lack of adequate policies to formalize the informal sector, where most migrants ply their trade.

For example, Guven and Karlen (2020) communicate that Africa's informal sector accounts for over 80% of all employment in sub-Saharan Africa. This, therefore, means anything that impacts this informal sector needs to be taken with serious consideration. Africa's informal sector represents over \$300 billion worth of credit market (Munang, 2022). However, this remains untapped because formal credit structures, such as commercial banks, remain reluctant to invest in measuring the creditworthiness of players in the informal economy. Over 95% of their transactions are still in cash. The drive for formalization lies within greater calls for integration and access to opportunities to allow the migrant to use their skills towards the host country's development. In Sub-Saharan Africa, most people are employed in the informal economy. Even when agriculture is excluded, informality still dominates employment: 78.8 percent in Central Africa, 76.6 percent in Eastern Africa, and 87 percent in Western Africa (African Union, 2020).

Therefore, the economic potential of migrants in the informal sector is immense. Thus, an underlying or formalized approach in the informal sector ensures that these benefits spill over to the economies of African states. However, while the AU supports migrant integration, one cannot ignore that global events have given rise to the securitization and militarization of migration. Today, countries have reinforced their border to limit who comes in, even if it means externalizing migration control. Migration today has become a broader societal and political issue, and countries under pressure from citizens have resorted to harsh measures to keep the migrants out, often relegating Human rights to the back door.

### **Migration and Securitisation in Africa**

Securitisation is the process through which migration becomes a security issue, not necessarily because it is a threat but because it is presented as such. As argued above, even though Africans argue that borders were of colonial imposition and ought to be removed,

decades after their demise, borders still exist and have become reinforced. Globally, migration policies have, since September 9, 2001, coordinated suicide terrorist attacks in the USA, changed from a welcoming to a more restrictive posture (Rut, 2009). Strict border controls, restricted entries, and increased reliance on detention, deportation, and other processes have characterised migration today, processes designed to keep the other out and deter would-be migrants from taking the journey. The increase in undocumented migration from Africa to the E.U. has seen the E.U. spend 17 billion euros in 2014-2016 to reduce the inflow of refugees and migrants. Externalization policies have been central to the EU's approach (Cosgrave et al., 2016). In the USA, since the last major overhaul of the U.S. immigration system in 1986, the federal government has spent an estimated \$263 billion on immigration enforcement (American Immigration Council, 2016).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the debate around the securitization of migration focused on South Africa, which has been accused of attempting to securitize migration. Sutherland (2022) notes that the South African government's increasing securitization of migration does not align with its domestic and international law obligations. However, political and social rhetoric give rise to this process in South Africa, where opinion describes migrants as stealing jobs meant for locals. Politicians in times of elections of election use migrants as scapegoats, painting them as the reasons South Africa suffers from so many social ills. This feeds into societal discontent, giving rise to hate and xenophobia. By viewing migration as a security threat, in and of itself, it becomes an urgent and essential issue to solve. If migration is an urgent security threat, any action taken to remedy that threat requires less rigorous reasoning and justification (Sutherland, 2022). In Africa, intra-African migration is increasingly securitized due to European Union policies implemented on the continent that aim to stem African migration to Europe. Some African countries' policies also contribute to the securitisation of migration.

This paper argues that post-independence was to be underpinned by values such as unity, Pan-Africanism, and African solidarity. This meant issues of common concern were to be resolved guided by the above values rather than unilateral actions. However,



global policies must be addressed in this process. Because undocumented migration has become so securitised, African countries have also begun to change their stance on migration through increased border controls. There are several ways in which the securitization of migration takes place.

Enhancing border controls and tightening visa policies in countries of origin or transit, Abebe (2019) notes that the socio-economic aspect under which job competition with nationals, the burden on the welfare system, and health threats relating to new and old viruses brought in by migrant has also served as driving factor behind the needs to securitize migration. The potential spillover from conflict has also become another critical element to note. In this respect, non-state actors, including al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, and Islamic State West Africa Province pose serious security threats (Abebe, 2019). EU migration-related policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy, Joint Valletta Action Plan, Frontex, EU Emergency Trust Fund, and EU Partnership Framework on Migration have directly contributed to the securitization of migration, especially in North African countries, which are seen as transit points for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. The repercussions have been severe (Abebe, 2019). In Agadez Niger, EU policies have started dismantling Agadez's 'migration industry' without offering residents alternative income generation.

Moreover, since the increased securitization of migration was not accompanied by measures to address root causes, it has unwittingly contributed to a rise in human smuggling, which responds to the existing demand for people to move. Migrants have also been exposed to more significant risks and have had to undertake more complicated travel journeys, exposing migrants to more human rights abuse and hardship (Abebe, 2019). The growth of risks to migrants and the dramatic increase in fatalities at Europe's borders are linked to the reinforced border control measures.

## **Theoretical Support: Why do People Move?**

The causes of migration are complex and cannot be explained by one theory. Hence, over the years, theories associated with different schools of thought and disciplines have emerged, attempting to understand the migration process and the factors influencing the impact of migration concerning socio-economic development for both sending and receiving countries (Ratha et al., 2011). Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand these theories, their assumptions, and how they explain the migration process. Consequently, the paper describes the assumptions of the neoclassical and Marxist approaches in their attempt to explain migration. After that, it aims to understand how African countries view migration and how they have responded to it. Neoclassical theories, as argued by Moyo, Nicolau, and Fairhurst (2012), posit that migration occurs because of economic considerations: higher incomes and economic gain.

The neoclassical economic theory explains migration by geographical differences in the supply and demand for labour. Additionally, Castles, De Haasm, Castles, and Miller (2013) expounded that at the micro-level, neo-classical migration theory views migrants as individual, rational, and income-maximizing actors who decide to move based on a cost-benefit calculation. The new economics of labour migration assumes that migration flows and patterns cannot be explained solely at the level of individual workers and their economic incentives. However, those broader social entities must be considered as well. One example of such an entity is the household (Massey et al., 1993).

For example, the decision to migrate can be facilitated by the shortage of capital; it is then assumed that remittances sent back by the migrant would contribute to the upkeep of the household. The above assumption is supported by Ivlevs, Nikolova, and Graham (2019), who argued that remittances can improve the well-being of family members left behind and boost the economies of receiving countries. This then supports the assumption of the new economics of labour migration that households, besides the individual's own decision to migrate, households have considerable influence on the decision to migrate. The relative deprivation theory argues that awareness of the income difference between neighbours or other

households in the migrant-sending community is essential to Migration (Massey et al., 1993). Inequality and poverty in Africa are some of the causes of migration, and one may argue that when people observe that their needs are not taken care of in a particular setting, they are bound to migrate to a region that can satisfy those needs; hence awareness becomes an essential element within the migration process. Finally, attempting to explain the migration process, Lee categorized the causes of migration into push and pull factors.

He contended that push factors are unfavourable elements in one's current living environment and that push the individual to migrate. The pull factors are those things that are favourable in the place of destination (Lee, 1966). In his analysis, Lee observed that barriers often exist between the place of origin and destination. He called these the intervening factors that might influence the decision to migrate. Akokpari (1999), in support, claimed that migration within sub-Saharan Africa, while conflict has also been a significant cause, historically and even today, the need for economic gain remains a crucial driver. For example, looking at African migration to the EU, Min-Harris (2010) asserts that the hopeless poverty of sub-Saharan Africa, where populations are growing faster than output, causes many people from the region to risk their lives to reach Europe. The author asserted that migration is determined by push and pull factors. Lee contended that conflicts, persecution, drought, and economic stagnation push people to migrate to regions uncharacterized by these issues.

Moyo, Nicolau and Fairhurst (2012) concluded that neo-classical migration theories emphasize income disparity and unequal development levels as migration drivers. On the other hand, Marxist migration theories examine the relocation of people from one region or country to another in response to the economic forces at play in a specific historical context. These theories are based on historical materialism. At the core of the Marxist approach to migration (like neo-classical theories) in attempting to understand migration is the notion that migration is fundamentally economic. Operating from the assumption that most people will not leave the comfort of their nation (a territory with a common language, economy, and culture) due to cultural estrangement, there must be an incentive (Moyo et

al., 2012). Migration might be understood as part of a fight-or-flight response to poverty or war. The incentive for migration is to escape these conditions by leaving one's home and, in the case of poverty, receive a higher income (Moyo et al., 2012).

## **Methodology**

As with any other research paper, for a literature review to be considered a proper research methodology, the necessary steps and actions must be taken to ensure the review is accurate, precise, and reliable. Considering the research question for this review/paper, a semi-systematic review was adopted to understand the importance of migration and economic development in Africa. A semi-systematic review, also known as the narrative review approach, is a type of review that follows a partial as opposed to full guidelines of a systematic review in terms of a literature survey and selection but also includes steps of framing a written discourse about literature that can be used as part of the research process (Zunder, 2021). This type of review is designed for topics conceptualized differently and studied by various groups of researchers within diverse disciplines (Snyder, 2019).

## **Information Sources and Data Collection Process**

A search strategy for identifying relevant literature was developed and conducted between November September 2023 and December 2023 under five electronic databases: Google Scholar, Sabinet, SAGE journals, Social Science Citation Index (Web of Science), and EBSCOhost. Table 1 below presents the total results for each database during the preliminary literature search. The selected search terms included were “Migration” Mobility in Africa, Development, Economics and Africa. These terms are directly related to the research question of this review. Further, to examine and track trends and challenges of migration and development in Africa, the paper searched for literature within the past 20 years, as the paper needed the old literature to find trends that explain the latest developments of this phenomenon.

**Table 1:** Results of the preliminary literature search using databases.

| <b>Databases</b>                               | <b>Total number of results</b> | <b>Peer-reviewed papers</b> | <b>Included for review</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Google Scholar                                 | 110                            | 86                          | 28                         |
| Sabinet  | 80                             | 62                          | 30                         |
| SAGE journals                                  | 23                             | 10                          | 5                          |
| Social Science Citation Index (Web of Science) | 100                            | 50                          | 3                          |
| EBSCOhost                                      | 124                            | 70                          | 6                          |

Source: Authors' compilation

**Article Selection**

As shown in Table 1, the search yielded 437 articles, and duplicates and studies irrelevant to migration and economic migration in Africa were removed, leaving a total of 278 articles. After a further rigorous review process and consideration of all the inclusion criteria (discussed in detail below), only 72 articles were selected for analysis. Data extraction was in the form of reading abstracts first and making selections, followed by reading full-text articles later before making the final selection. Once this step was completed and the initial articles (or other relevant literature) had been collected, the texts were screened in full to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. As an additional strategy, references in the selected articles were scanned to identify other potentially relevant articles. Findings were synthesized through thematic analysis, a method commonly used to identify, analyse, and report patterns in text themes (Snyder, 2019). The data abstracted was based on findings and conceptualization of migration and economic development in Africa. The information of interest was themes in literature, perspectives, and a historical analysis of African migration and economic development.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Regarding research quality, deciding on inclusion and exclusion criteria is one of the most critical steps when conducting a review (Snyder, 2019). The inclusion criteria were the year of publication

(between 2005 and 2023), the language of the article (strictly English), the type of articles were conceptual and empirical papers, and media sources as well as reports from institutional organizations. Studies considered were qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The sources that did not talk about migration and economic development were excluded.

**Results:** The Challenges of Harnessing Migration for Economic Development in Africa

### **Societal Integration and the Othering**

For migrants to play an effective role in the host country's economic space, there need to be effective policies that assist migrants in their integration into society. With Africa being such a diverse continent, integration policies are paramount to ensure the migrants familiarize themselves with the host country's laws, regulations, and environment. The first step to implementing effective migrant integration policies is to know who does what in policy sectors that are key to integration. More significant interaction and integration are crucial to easing social tensions in countries that are host to a growing number of migrants. Integration policies should ensure access to labour markets, social support, and access to resources. Five elements should be present to ensure a smooth integration process: perception, Community engagement, Urban planning, Leadership and Policy reforms (Charles & Guna, 2017).

In Africa, there is a disjuncture between the need to integrate migrants and policies to support such. What has been seen, however, is the continued fear, hate, and discrimination against migrants. Migrants are often "othered" and seen as different from the natives, overlooking the potential economic benefits associated with migrants. For example, as shocking as the severity of the xenophobic violence is, such widespread abuses are tolerated in South Africa, a country with some of the most expansive rights in the world for refugees and other migrants. The widespread violence and displacement leading to homelessness and unsafe living conditions, along with systemic government failures to protect migrants from arrest and deportation, has created a massive health crisis for migrants—and their hosts—in South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2009). While there are conventions that protect migrants and the AU,

through its policy framework, pushes for migrant integration in Africa, it becomes essential to note that accepting migrants is always tricky, making the integration process difficult.

### **Lack of Political Will**

There seems to be a lack of political will to ensure the seamless integration of migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa. This can be due to the region's different levels of economic development. Countries that are major receivers of migrants are unlikely to agree to relax and harmonize migration policies out of fear of harming their national interests. Some sub-Saharan African migrants survive with support from religious organizations, NGOs, and informal networks (Brij, 2009). Driving this is the discrimination and rejection of migrants in the host country. Politicians are likely to side with locals out of fear of losing votes if they support the integration of migrants. As a result, migrants often lack social support, are employed in low-paying and exploitative jobs, and do not have access to essential services. African countries perform poorly despite their strong political commitment to regional integration. Human mobility is an integral part of our globalized world, and managing that mobility is challenging for African governments. Therefore, without political support, migrant contribution to economic development will remain elusive.

### **National vs Continental Interests**

Despite the unity shown by African countries in ridding the continent of colonial occupation, post-independence, coupled with the different levels of economic development, means some countries have focused on internal developmental issues rather than those of the continent. This has given rise to discrimination as the policy focus shifts from migrants to locals. The fear of losing power also drives this. For example, in South Africa, migrants from various parts of Africa and those living primarily in the urban areas have been struggling for decent inclusion in society. The nationalist rhetoric by populist politicians continues to keep many migrants on edge. In 2014, after the terrorism-related crackdown on Somali refugees living in Kenya's various urban centres, thousands were forcibly sent to refugee camp Dadaab, Kenya's third-largest city with

330,000 residents (Mutiga & Harrison Graham, 2016). The sheer size of Dadaab and presumed refugee security concerns encouraged the Kenyan authorities to close the camp in 2017. However, it survived due to the intervention of the Court.

Therefore, while there is a need for migrant integration, countries guided are by their national interests. Omotayo (2008) highlighted that the concept of sovereignty represents a significant challenge in Africa's regional economic integration process. There is a resilient tendency for countries to assert themselves individually in international relations. They operate collectively in international relations mainly to preserve national sovereignty and interest. Omotayo (2008) notes that many African leaders subscribe to state-centric notions that privilege territorial sovereignty, reflected in how they perceive and approach migration issues. Finally, the underlying reason for the challenges at national and subregional levels is that many African states regard migration as a potential security threat. Religious extremists, separatist groups, and other militants have committed acts of violence and destroyed public and private property across the continent, in many cases using porous borders to spread ideologies, arms, and fighters from one country to another.

### **Political Instability and Governance Issues**

In 2020, state-based conflicts were recorded, compared to 27 in 2019. Fifteen conflicts were fought over territory, setting another record (Palik et al., 2022). Of 486 attempted or successful coups worldwide since 1950, Africa has seen 214, the most of any region, with 106 successful (Duzor & Williamson, 2022). Two thousand twenty-three planning figures released by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reflect that 44 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are displaced, up from 38.3 million at the end of 2021 (Mbiyozo, 2023). Inclusive development cannot occur in the presence of anarchy. The emergence of armed non-state actors in Africa will reduce investor appetite in Africa, which is evidenced by the insurgency in Mozambique. In the Horn of Africa, around 130,000 people, according to the UN World Health Organization, are looking at death in the eye, and approximately 50 million are facing crisis levels of food insecurity because of climate shocks, violent insecurity, and disease (UN World Health Organization 2023).



Leveraging migration for economic development needs a peaceful and economically stable environment, and unless African governments can provide such, migration is unlikely to play an influential role in economic development. The future of migration in Africa and its economic benefits are immense. However, while intra-African migration is essential, Africa faces another threat to its economic development: youth migration. Ahmed (2022) notes that African youth have lost confidence in their countries and the continent to meet their aspirations. A rising number are considering moving abroad, according to a survey of young people from 15 countries. For some young people, the inability to find employment at home means migrating to other countries within Africa or outside the continent. However, the African Development Bank argues that the future of Africa's youth does not lie in migration but in a prosperous Africa. However, it would be impossible to address youth migration unless policies effectively address their challenges, as their en-masse migration would be detrimental to African development.

### **Concluding Remarks**

One cannot deny that African countries have numerous opportunities to harness migration to drive economic development. Migrants have the potential to become entrepreneurs. Those who are formally employed contribute through paying taxes and rendering services, thus contributing to knowledge generation. Even though most migrants have taken their trade in the informal sector, there is a need for processes and policies to drive the formalization of the informal sector to ensure that migrants can contribute fully to the economic growth of their host countries. One, however, cannot help but observe numerous challenges that continue to hinder the consolidation of migrants with African society.

Nationalistic sentiments, political instability, and lack of effective policies to ensure integration are significant issues limiting the extent migrants can play a developmental role. The African government could learn from the US, where migrants continue contributing significantly towards economic growth, and integration efforts have been vital. Therefore, for African states to reap the rewards associated with migration, securitisation

approaches that hinder the role migrants can play need to be addressed. Moreover, it becomes essential to note that Africa cannot resemble or adopt EU policies concerning migration management as, in the pre-colonial era, migration played a key in forging new relations. Therefore, harnessing migration at the forefront has to be an effective policy, and the will of politicians is vital in helping Africa realize the benefits associated with migration.

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