

BOOK REVIEW

International Migration and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Viewpoints and Policy Initiatives in the Countries of Origin

Aderanti Adepoju, Tom van Naerssen & Annelies Zoomers (eds.), Leiden & Boston: Brill Publishers, 2008. 307 pp.,
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Reviewed by Thomas Antwi Bosiakoh

Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, P. O. Box LG 65, Legon, Accra, Ghana

This book, an edited volume by Aderanti Adepoju, Tom van Naerssen and Annelies Zoomers, comes to initiate an important discourse in migration literature - to put the spotlight of migration thinking and policy initiatives in the countries of origin. Often, the tendency for migration scholars has been to examine these issues from the perspective of the global north as if the trend in global migration were always in that direction. In this book, the authors, while examining the nexus between international migration and national development, draw attention to the need to recompense the deep northern bias in the current discourse and practice on migration and migration policy making with interesting cases from sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. To this end, the authors jog our memory of the need to shrivel the negative upshots of migration, and simultaneously optimise the development impacts that emanate from it.

The book, bearing its origin to an expert meeting on migration perception and current policy initiatives in countries of origin in Nijmegen, Netherlands, in August 2006, by selected group of experts from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America and Europe, consists of 14 chapters of equally important topics. The editors contribute to the first chapter - an introduction to policies on international migration and national development in sub-Saharan Africa. In Chapter 2, the first editor focuses on the potentials of migration in contributing to development, not only in the origin sub-Saharan African countries, but also in destination countries. In Chapter 3, John Oucho interrogates the 'quartet of migration issues', namely brain drain/brain gain, the diaspora, remittances and return. He also points to several issues that African governments need to address to benefit from migration including bilateral agreements between countries of origin and countries of destination and fiscal changes to spur up inflow of remittances. A key thread in this chapter is Oucho's admonition that there is more rhetoric than action. This chapter is particularly important in its projections into future directions of how Africans can benefit from migration and suggests a number of possibilities including introduction of 'brain tax' to be paid by migration receiving countries, making African migration part of WTO trade talks, placing more emphasis on virtual return of migrants, among others.

Chapters 4 and 5, and to some extent Chapter 6, first discuss the migration patterns and characteristics and then focus on the diverse migration policy initiatives. While Chapter 4 looks at the return/repatriated migrants from Ivory Coast in 1999 and 2002/3, Chapter 5 provides definitional perspectives on migration management. In Chapter 6, the author adds an important dimension by providing a contextual background to international migration from Botswana. Efforts to reintegrate repatriated Burkinabe migrants into the Burkinabe society has led to national conversations regarding access to land. The authors of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, Annelet Broekhuis, Inês Raimundo Oucho and Thando Gwebu respectively, recognise that migration streams from Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Botswana are mainly to neighbouring countries. They also show that while these migration narratives have a long history, the remittance estimates are generally small. A key dimension to the discussions on migration in Botswana relates to development where the country's links with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), among others have contributed positively to the country's economy. The country also attracts immigrants, because of its recent economic successes.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 shift the gear from countries with just internal migration and migration to neighbouring countries to countries with significant migration streams directed at destinations outside of Africa. In Chapter 7, Maguemati Wabgou explores the role of government in formulating migration policies in Senegal. In Chapter 8, Hein de Haas places the spotlight on Nigeria. Chapter 9 by Marcel Rutten and Koki Muli, however, is unique in its treatment of the growing migration debate in Kenya where in one breath, migration is seen as burden and in another, it presents a golden opportunity for economic development. Chapters 10, 11 and 12 shed light on three experienced international migration participating countries, namely Philippines, Mexico and China. In Chapter 10, Fabio Baggio shares some best practices on migration-development using the Filipino case. Chapter 11 focuses on Mexico where the author Marianne Marchand argues that migrants are now regarded as 'heroes' and 'heroines'. In Chapter 12, Maggi Leung shows China's involvement in centuries-long international migration and the role played by the Chinese outside of China in China's development. Zoomers and Adepoju provide some final reflections on international migration policies and the fight against poverty in Chapter 13. In Chapter 14, they conclude by providing concrete migration policy initiatives and recommendations appropriate for migration management in both southern and northern countries.

This book is an important text. It provides the reader with extensive discussion of migration policy initiatives in countries of origin (principally sub-Saharan African countries). In addition, it connects the arguments on migration policy discourse and initiatives to poverty reduction and development in general. It also ties the different streams of migration flows - internal, international towards neighbouring countries and outside of Africa and the very experienced countries in international migration - Mexico, China and

Filipinas - all together in what seems like a coherent piece without losing the connecting thread. Going through the book, the reader comes face to face with refreshing analyses on nine different countries scattered across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. Majority of these countries, however, are in Africa – Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Botswana, Senegal Nigeria, and Kenya. The discussion on Chinese migration is particularly refreshing because of its reverberating insights on the long term perspective important for understanding diaspora engagement and interactions with the home country for development purposes.

A key propitious feature of the book relates to the several years of experience the authors have had, as both scholars and practitioners in the field, which helps them provide important insights for migration-development policies. The book also highlights the fact that, contemporary migration policies require collaborations among the state, migrants themselves and the institutions they have formed in the diaspora as well as multilateral institutions working in the area of migration.

While I recommend the book to diverse set of audiences - government officials and academics, civil society and practitioners because it carries practical issues for migration policy development, theoretically savvy readers will be disheartened as the recommended policy initiatives lack theoretical grounds. I will also side with the methodologically savoir-faire readers who, after going through the book, will whimper for its lack of methodological rigor. A more trifling critique of an otherwise solid book relates to a few typographical slips. But these drawbacks notwithstanding, this book presents what it sets out to do very well and given the complex nature of the subject matter and the deep-seated politics on contemporary migration particularly, from the global south to north, one does not have to agree with every position of the authors to be grateful for the issues they convey for migration policy development in both sending and receiving countries.

Thomas Antwi Bosiakoh holds a teaching position in the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana. He obtained B.A degree in Sociology with Geography and Resource Development (2005) and an M.Phil degree in Sociology (2009) from the University of Ghana, Legon. His research interests include migration, criminology and child studies. He has published in the *Children and Youth Services Review*, *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *Journal of Educational Reviews*, *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* and the *Legon Journal of Sociology*, among others. He can be contacted at tabosiakoh@ug.edu.gh