

BOOK REVIEWS

Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne (editors), *Surviving on the Move: Migration, Poverty and Development in Southern Africa*, Cape Town: Idasa Publishing, 2010, 242 pages, ISBN 978-1-920409-09-8

Review by Cristina MATIUTA

An analysis of migration trends in the last 50 years indicates that migration has become a truly global phenomenon, which affects, in a greater or a lesser extent, all parts of the world. In the lack of accurately data, the most common measure of the international migration flows is the UN concept of “migration stock” (understood as the number of foreign-born residents in the population at the time of the most recent census). According to this, the global migrant stock increased from 75,9 million in 1960 to 190,6 million in 2005. Africa is ranging among the regions profoundly shaped by migration, enduring the positive and negative effects of this complex phenomenon.

The book reviewed here, *Surviving on the Move: Migration, Poverty and Development in Southern Africa*, edited by Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne, is very useful for understanding the various facets of migration and its relationship with development in southern Africa. As the editors argue in the first chapter, migration was generally seen in the research literature and contemporary policy debates in southern Africa as essentially a bad thing, having negative impact on development, especially by the exodus of skilled citizens, and increasing poverty. This book adopts a different perspective, viewing migration as a reality and as an inevitability and taking into account the development potential of migration:”...The

people of southern Africa are becoming more and more mobile, both within and between countries. The real policy challenge is not to devise means to stop the unstoppable; it is to devise managed migration systems that encourage legal migration and do not push migrants into the shadows -and the sweatshops." (pp. 16).

The book is organized in 13 chapters, which address several significant subjects for the migration-development nexus in southern Africa.

The first one is the "brain drain", discussed in two chapters, one treating the emigration of South African students and another the migration of healthcare professionals from Zimbabwe. Both articles suggest that governments could slow down the brain drain of skilled citizens rather by positive approaches (offering economic and other benefits and opportunities), than by negative ones (setting up barriers to leaving).

The second theme treats the problem of migration and poverty reduction, particularly the urban migrant livelihoods and food security strategies. Four chapters of the book underline the complexity of migration to cities and the necessity that governments understand and support the livelihoods of urban migrants; otherwise, the social, economic and political welfare of society as a whole may be undermined.

The third subject, discussed in two chapters, is that of remittances and their role for development in the sending communities in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Remittances improve the living standards and the access to education and healthcare and, in a lesser extent, are invested in productive activities. In order to realise the fully potential of remittances, the authors stress the necessity to foster the collaboration between governments, migrant groups, local communities, NGOs, to find the ways of encouraging the flow and to create an environment for more sustainable investment of remittances.

The fourth theme debates the migration phenomenon from the gender perspective. Two chapters show how the historically dominant role of rural males in the labour migrant system in southern Africa is changing and how women are increasingly on the move.

Finally, the last theme deals with the relationship between mobility and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, two chapters arguing that migrants are significantly higher exposed to the risk of disease than non-migrants and that programmatic interventions, with a thorough understanding of the context of migrant

vulnerabilities, are necessary.

One of the strong points of this book is that all chapters are based on primary research. The book combines the results of large-scale representative surveys with in-depth local case studies and provides an accurate picture of the relationship between migration and development in southern African context. The authors emphasize the migrants' contribution both to countries of origin and countries of destination, their positive role in the process of poverty reduction and genuine development and stress the necessity that migrant lives and livelihoods to be in the centre of international and African debates about migration, poverty and development.