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Meron Zeleke and Lahra Smith (Editors), *African Perspectives on South-South Migration*. Publisher: Routledge Studies on African and Black Diaspora Series, 2024, 216 pages. ASIN: B0CTCQDP4X.

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International migration patterns have undergone significant shifts in recent years, with South-South migration emerging as a dominant trend. Over one-third of all international migration now occurs between countries in the Global South, surpassing the volume of South-North migration as of 2020[1]. This shift highlights the increasing importance of intra-regional and inter-regional movements within developing nations. Notably, migration from South Asia to the Middle East has become the most significant South-South migration corridor globally, reflecting changing economic dynamics and regional interconnections. These trends, observed between 1990 and 2020, underscore the evolving nature of global migration flows and the need for a nuanced understanding of population movements within and between regions of the Global South [2].

*African Perspectives on South-South Migration*, co-edited by Meron Zeleke and Lahra Smith, is an excellent collection that shifts the focus of migration studies to the often-overlooked phenomenon of South-South Migration (SSM), particularly within the African continent. This timely volume challenges prevailing narratives and provides a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics of intra-African migration. The book offers a fresh perspective on SSM by focusing on three key themes. It emphasizes the agency of African migrants in shaping their journeys, challenging the victimhood narrative. The volume also expands the understanding of resource flows in migration, considering not just money but also skills and knowledge. Lastly, it explores the enduring appeal of the Global South for migrants, providing a counterpoint to the typical emphasis on South-North migration. These themes collectively offer new insights into the complexities of SSM, particularly within the African context.

The book under review is structured into three primary sections, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of intra-continental migration

dynamics within Africa, particularly focusing on South-South Migration (SSM). The introductory section provides an overview of the scale and significance of intra-continental migration while critiquing the prevalent academic and policy emphasis on irregular migration and northward-bound migrants. As noted by the authors, this foundational critique highlights the tendency to overlook the substantial flows and complexities of migration within the Global South (p. 3).

The second section, titled "Agency in South-South Migration," investigates migrant agency across diverse contexts, including informal settlements, labor migration, and transnational experiences. Joseph Mujere's contribution (Chapter 2) thoroughly examines the intersections of platinum mining, labor migration, and the proliferation of informal settlements in Rustenburg, South Africa, during the post-apartheid period (1994-2018). Mujere's central thesis underscores the transformative impact of the platinum boom on labor mobility and informal urbanization, positioning these settlements as pivotal to the socio-political fabric of the mining industry. His analysis emphasizes citizenship, land tenure, and grassroots activism, reframing informal settlements as integral components of the regional socio-economic landscape rather than peripheral anomalies.

Fana Gebresenbet's chapter extends the discourse on SSM by interrogating the predominance of southward migration from Ethiopia. Applying the aspiration-capability framework, Gebresenbet elucidates the collective nature of migratory decision-making rooted in shared community experiences and aspirations (p. 37). The chapter highlights how community networks and reduced migratory risks sustain SSM as a durable and viable practice by exploring historical, geographic, and socio-economic determinants. This analysis offers a critical counterpoint to dominant narratives that emphasize containment and deterrence, advocating for a more nuanced appreciation of the socio-cultural underpinnings of migratory resilience.

A further exploration of transnational migration is presented in the chapter by Kandilige, Yaro, and Mensah, which investigates Ghana-China migration corridors. By applying social network theory, the authors demonstrate how Ghanaian migrants navigate vulnerabilities and leverage networks to mitigate risk, thereby enriching the broader discourse on South-South Migration (SSM) through an emphasis on migrant agency and resilience. The chapter's recommendations concerning formalized exchanges, such as English teaching programs, highlight the potential for reciprocal developmental benefits within South-South migration frameworks.

Tirsit Sahldengil's chapter, "Looking Beyond the Victimhood Discourse," critically reassesses dominant portrayals of forced migrants, particularly within the context of the Global South. Through ethnographic research at the Sherkole refugee camp in Ethiopia, Sahldengil challenges the reductionist narrative of refugees as passive subjects, illustrating how displaced individuals exercise agency in choosing destinations and integrating into host communities. This intervention contributes to re-theorizing displacement by foregrounding the strategic actions and social networks that inform migratory trajectories.

The third section, "The Flows of Resources in South-South Migration," interrogates the movement of skills, ideas, and cultural practices alongside humanitarian labor within the Global South. Lauren Carruth's chapter, "Humanitarian Nomads," critiques the hierarchical structures of the global humanitarian assistance sector. Carruth underscores the paradox of local aid workers' indispensable contributions juxtaposed against systemic constraints that limit their mobility and professional advancement. The analysis of Somali aid workers reveals enduring inequities within the humanitarian labor market, thereby problematizing the "white savior" trope and highlighting the need for greater recognition and compensation of local expertise.

In their chapter on agricultural skill transfer, Tebkieta Alexandra Tapsoba and Bonayi Hubert Dabiré challenge prevailing remittance-focused discourses by emphasizing the non-monetary contributions of returning migrants from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso. Through qualitative data from the MIDEQ project, the authors demonstrate how returning migrants facilitate agricultural innovation, fostering sustainable development and socio-economic resilience. This perspective broadens the conceptualization of migratory benefits beyond economic remittances, positioning skill transfer as a catalyst for localized growth.

Dereje Feyissa's chapter explores the transnational flow of ideas within the Ethiopia-South Africa migration corridor, emphasizing the transformative impact of social remittances on the Hadiya community. Through rich narrative accounts, Feyissa illustrates how returning migrants challenge entrenched inequalities and promote entrepreneurial initiatives, thereby contributing to local development. This analysis highlights the dual role of migration in both reinforcing and disrupting socio-economic hierarchies.

Johara Berriane's examination of African migration to Morocco situates religious place-making as a critical vector of migrant integration and mobility. By analyzing religious sites in Fès, Rabat, and Casablanca, Berriane reframes Morocco as a dynamic site of settlement and circulation,

challenging Eurocentric, transit-focused narratives. This analysis underscores the role of religious institutions in fostering transnational networks and local belonging.

Chiré and Pinauld's chapter on Djibouti highlights its strategic role as a migratory hub within the Red Sea Basin. Their analysis reveals that regional instability, economic opportunity, and geopolitical positioning shape migratory flows through Djibouti. The authors' empirical insights enrich the academic discourse on transit migration by illustrating the layered factors influencing mobility across the Horn of Africa.

Finally, Mohamed A. G. Bakhit's chapter explores the legal and socio-political liminality experienced by South Sudanese migrants in Sudan post-2011. By introducing the concept of "community citizenship," Bakhit complicates conventional understandings of legal status, highlighting the role of social networks and cultural affiliations in shaping migrant identities and livelihoods. This analysis contributes to a more holistic understanding of forced migration, emphasizing the lived experiences and adaptive strategies of migrants navigating complex post-secession realities.

In conclusion, "African Perspectives on South-South Migration" is a critical and timely contribution to migration studies, foregrounding African experiences and offering a vital corrective to Eurocentric perspectives. By highlighting the prevalence of intra-continental migration, the volume dispels misconceptions that predominantly frame African migration in the context of movement toward the Global North. The book's focus on migrant agency, the multidimensional flows of resources, and the increasing appeal of the Global South as a migratory destination enriches the discourse and provides valuable insights for academic inquiry and policy development.

Despite its contributions, the volume leaves room for further exploration in key areas. A more profound engagement with the conceptual ambiguities surrounding "South-South Migration" and the contested definitions of the Global South could enhance the theoretical underpinnings of the work [3]. Additionally, while the case studies offer rich and diverse perspectives, a more explicit comparative analysis across African regions or other parts of the Global South would broaden the book's scope and applicability. A greater emphasis on gender dynamics within South-South migration could add depth to the existing analyses. At the same time, including quantitative data alongside qualitative insights would present a more comprehensive overview of migration trends.

Nevertheless, these areas for further inquiry do not diminish the book's overall value. Zeleke and Smith have successfully curated a diverse and compelling collection that advances the study of South-South migration, particularly within the African context. By amplifying the voices of scholars from the Global South and grounding the analysis in localized experiences, this volume emerges as an indispensable resource for researchers, students, and policymakers. It is poised to become a key reference for understanding the intricate and evolving patterns of migration across Africa and the broader Global South.

## References

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