

Book review

Laine, Jussi P., Moyo, Inocent and Nshimbi, Christopher Changwe (eds.), 2021.

Expanding Boundaries: Borders, Mobilities and the Future of Europe–Africa Relations

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The book is an edited volume consisting of fifteen chapters, excluding the introduction and concluding remarks. It provides interesting perspectives on various policy-making initiatives whose purpose is to manage Africa–European Union (EU) migration. This volume is organized into three parts – Part 1 focuses on critical perspectives on border regimes. In chapter one Calvin Minfegue argues that policies and actions aimed at the “externalisation of European borders into Africa” have failed to achieve the intended goal of controlling African migrant streams to Europe and might have resulted in increased migrant flows to Europe that have intensified the refugee crisis. In chapter two Anna Moraczewska contends that the externalization of EU border management is essentially an attempt to broaden the spatial reach of the Union beyond its territory in order to manage African migration flows to the EU. Okechukwu Oji argues in chapter three that migration challenges in West Africa are largely caused by weak border security management and poor intelligence gathering. In chapter four Rodrigo Lacy and Henk van Houtum show that the “authoritarian turn” in the EU’s bordering policies has resulted in many deaths of African migrants along the Mediterranean frontier. In chapter five Anna Casaglia maintains that the humanitarian corridors on the Mediterranean frontier of the Euro-African border have created hierarchies of migrant rights that are based on the categorization of migrants based on their “deservingness” to enter the EU. She argues that the categorization is essentially a filtering process that places migrants in various categories, based on whether they are “welcomed” or “unwanted”. Casaglia shows how such approaches have exposed the “entangled relationship” between the various humanitarian actions to assist the “welcomed” migrants, on the one hand and the deep security concerns to keep out the “unwanted” migrants at all costs.

The five chapters in Part 2 explore the EU’s political transnationalism project and its policy impact. In chapter six, Tomasz Milej asserts that an Afro-European integration scheme needs to be in place in order to break the current identity narratives that unfortunately stigmatize African migrants. He cautions that such a scheme would necessitate a policy shift from perceiving the various forms of

EU-Africa migration through a narrow security-risks prism to a much broader and balanced view that appreciates both the risks and opportunities created by particular migration processes. Chapter seven by Leon Tshimpaka on “Solidarite en mouvement” against homeland authoritarianism presents a close analysis of the transnational political activities of Europe-based African migrants. Tshimpaka concludes by calling for a rethink of “the relations between Africa and Europe around migration” (p.130). In chapter eight Quivine Ndomo presents the findings of an empirical study that explored the daily lived experiences of twenty-three African student migrants from Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia who chose to remain in Finland on completion of their studies. In this chapter Ndomo presents a powerful narrative that highlights the “systematic, extensive and institutionally executed exclusion of the group” from the various spaces of society they occupied (p.139). Ndomo argues that despite the “pervasive internal bordering”, the end result for many African migrants in Finland has been “longer and even permanent stays” in the country. In chapter nine, which is titled “Untying the migration knot through trade: A case study of Nigeria”, Omotomilola Ikotun and Juliet Ogbodo observe that the promotion of agribusiness and trade-related activities would diminish the emigration push factors that are driving Nigerian migration to Europe. In chapter ten Mika Raunio and Disney Andreas assess whether the governance of EU-Africa relations, especially in the areas of migration and development processes, have had beneficial or harmful impacts. Based on their case study of Finland and Namibia, Raunio and Andreas conclude that “the Finland-Namibia experiences suggest that the sustainable and mutually beneficial eco-system development” is feasible (p.182).

Part 3 focuses on alternative framings for Europe-Africa relations and it consists of five chapters. In chapter eleven Lena Englund examines how African writers present migration in contemporary texts and shows that migrants are often presented in literary texts as either victims of oppression and injustice or as opportunists hoping to ensure a better life elsewhere. She argues that “rethinking the representation of migration in celebrated novels ... is necessary to enable new perspectives on migration itself and the multifaceted experiences that emerge from it” (p.188). In chapter twelve Laura Sumari cautions that Europe’s security measures pertaining to sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants produce multiple forms of suffering, fear, and hate. These measures invariably lead to intensified uncertainty and insecurity in the targeted groups, adversely affecting their everyday lives and inevitably shaping how sub-Saharan African migrants understand and perceive Europe. In chapter thirteen Jussi Laine draws on the literature on bordering processes, migration, mobility, regional integration, and psychology to make the case for shifting “the discussion of migration as a phenomenon in its own right and with its own dynamics to its broader societal implications”. He further argues that it is the colliding visions over migration rather than the immigrants that present challenges to the EU and European societies. In chapter fourteen Felix Donkor and Kevin Mearns argue that the time has come to rethink the widely misrepresented Euro-African

relations. They assert that good governance, communal resilience and robust conflict resolution mechanisms are needed in order to effectively address climate-induced migration. In chapter fifteen Olukayode Faleye examines migration as an engine of interregional mutual development within the framework of EU–Africa relations. In the concluding section, Laine, Nshimbi and Moyo posit that European–African relations cannot be reduced to migration matters alone and suggest that migration should not be isolated from the broader challenges and phenomena to which it is inherently linked.

The volume “Expanding Boundaries” is an important contribution to the literature on borders, mobilities and the future of Europe–Africa relations, despite the fact that a few chapters – notably chapters 3 and 9, although quite interesting, would have benefitted from more in-depth discussion of the issues at hand.

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