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Displacement and Cross-Border Mobility in the Great Lakes: Region Re-thinking Underlying Factors and Implications for Regional Management of Migration

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Displacement and Cross-Border Mobility in the Great Lakes Region

Re-thinking Underlying Factors and Implications for Regional Management of Migration

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Abstract

This paper analyses the factors underlying the displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region by problematizing the role of the Westphalian nation-state model, borders and governance structures on policies and legislative frameworks that inform various interventions concerning cross-border mobility at national and regional levels. Using data on displacement and cross-border patterns in the region, this paper examines the role of the Westphalian nation-state model as applied in the African context, and its influence on the migration dynamics linked to conflicts and state instability, the inter-state relations and the management of migration at regional level. The premise of this approach is the recognition of the complexities within the African context in terms of changes in the cultural, socio-economic and political processes, which are tied to pre-encounters with other civilizations and contemporary social processes. In the foregoing, I argue that a limited focus on the implications of this blending of practices and contradictions generated by the Westphalia national state (the colonial model and its legacy in the governance structure and political practices) and the disruptions caused by artificial borders undermine internal and regional initiatives aimed at addressing migratory dynamics and their political and socio-economic consequences in the region.

Introduction

Developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, increasingly face huge challenges presented by conflict-induced internal displacement and cross-border mobility within and between different regions. In 2015, an estimated 12 million people were displaced in sub-Saharan Africa, with about 1.1 million newly displaced.¹ In 2013, displaced people in the Great Lakes region were estimated at 3.3 million and comprised internally displaced persons (IDPs) (83%) and refugees (18%).² In 2015, an estimated 11 million IDPs was recorded in the region.³

Displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region can be explained under two broad themes, namely mobility prior to the establishment of modern-nation states and the mobility after the partitioning of Africa,⁴ linked to the functioning of the Westphalian nation-state model. As John Oucho succinctly points out, 'internal displacement is largely a function of the history of both colonisation and decolonisation'.⁵ Both the first and second themes share features such as displacement that is generally caused by conflict, violence and disasters,⁶ with varying degrees in specific countries. Equally, they are caused by environmental disasters (flooding and drought) due to climate change,⁷ and are exacerbated by low coping capacity, high levels of socio-economic vulnerability, and high exposure to natural and human-made hazards.⁸ However, the second theme covers the first three factors and additional ones, namely regime condition-induced migration, socio-economic-induced migration, regional cooperation and integration initiatives (economic and political) that encompass free movement of persons and goods, establishment of supra-state institutions and harmonisation of policies. These themes provide a lens for examining the policy response in the face of mixed migration flows generated by conditions of political instability and natural disasters.

Taking conflict as a starting point, displacements in the Great Lakes region have been generated by civil war, state collapse and/or fragility, politically-instigated ethnic violence, competition for natural resources, and disputes in the volatile regions over land ownership. The land and resource-related problems are much more serious in countries with historical injustices that are traceable to the colonial mapping, colonial land and labour legacies,⁹ and governance models in the post-independence Africa states.¹⁰ Crucial in the context of governance is the political culture that emanated from the implementation of the Westphalia model of the nation-state. The dysfunctional nature of the Westphalia state model in Africa can be noted in the failure of political institutions, policy and legislative frameworks to address the fundamental issues within a developmental state context, which is less homogeneous and has a diversity of governance practices.¹¹

With variations and considering the heterogeneity within individual countries and the continent at large, the post-colonial political culture has been a major factor in the policies that determine resource distribution and management of economy and the polity. This can be observed through the prism of the bondage of boundaries and identity politics in post-colonial Africa.¹² The insensitivity to the diversity question and contradictions inherent to the modern nation-state system tied to artificial boundaries (within countries, across countries and regionally) and the disruptive nature of the colonial legacy (how African societies organised themselves and continue to do in the 21st century) underpins the development challenges facing the African state. The rootedness of this omission and commission, in the model of governance in Africa, underpins much of the observed

political instability, diminishing sources of livelihoods and limited opportunities. Combined with changing demographics in terms of population increase, the impact of climate change on food productivity, state violence, the long-lasting impact of economic austerity measures such as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) on public services (health, education) and the unequal outcomes of neo-liberal economic models, African states function in a constant state of vulnerability and instability that trigger different dimensions of mobility.

The Great Lakes region provides a most relevant illustration of the highlighted features. Most significant developments over the last forty years include the conflict in Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s,¹³ the Rwanda genocide,¹⁴ the Burundi conflict¹⁵ proxy wars between Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda,¹⁶ authoritarianism and single-party dictatorship, the recurrent conflicts linked to ethnicity, and electoral politics.¹⁷ Others include land-related issues linked to historical injustices,¹⁸ resource-linked conflict in the DRC,¹⁹ ethnic competition, and political conflict in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia.²⁰ Additionally, countries in the region regularly witness the impact of climate change through protracted periods of drought and flooding,²¹ which has an impact on sources of livelihoods such as agriculture and pasture for animals. Similarly, they are experiencing developmental challenges linked to colonial labour and land legacy,²² and contemporary practices such as land grabbing, land acquisition for large-scale agriculture, real estate and infrastructure development.²³

At the same time, there is cross-border mobility between these countries because of primordial, historical, cultural and socio-economic ties that take place parallel to the mobility that is more visible within the modern borders. As observed by Okumu,²⁴ there is an escalation of 'trans-boundary resource disputes due to the colonial boundary-making errors, undefined and unmarked borders, poor or lack of border management, poor governance, and population bulge'. These historical and contemporary, demographic, socio-economic, political and nature-related changes inform the various patterns of internal and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region. In recent years, the region has also witnessed attempts at regional cooperation and integration, which includes free movement and harmonisation of policies and enhancing exchanges.²⁵

This paper therefore seeks to address a fundamental question, namely what factors underlie the internal displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region and how can they be understood in the context of the impact of the nation-state model and governance structures on policies and legislative frameworks that inform various interventions concerning cross-border mobility at national and regional levels. The paper aims to address this question by calling for a re-think of the role of the nation-state system (Westphalian model) as applied in the African context, and how it has influenced the governance system that underpins the management of migration in most countries and at regional level. It also highlights the importance of acknowledging the role of the Westphalian nation-state model, including borders and governance systems as a basis for informed models of intervention (political, institutional, policy and legislative) within specific countries and through regional cooperation (inter-state relations).

To realise this objective, the paper looks at the nature of displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region from the perspective of the historical political developments that have shaped the governance practices that play a central role in the dislocations, displacement and flight across the borders (refugees, asylum and labour). The premise of this approach is the recognition of

the complexities involved in the everyday practices within the African context, which most analyses of the developments in Africa seem to ignore. More specifically, they neglect realities in Africa in terms of changes in the cultural, socio-economic and political processes, which are tied to the practices of pre-encounters with other civilizations.²⁶ The surviving pre-colonial practices in Africa have blended with contemporary practices – as determined by the modern nation-state system and borders and the African colonial state. The contradictions generated by this legacy play a major role in the drivers of various types of involuntary migration in most of Africa. The application of the Westphalia nation-state model in its constitution and functioning (governance structure) has played a disruptive role in how African societies deal with socio-economic and political aspects of everyday living. This includes an amalgamation of practices (governance systems, practices and social relations). The disruption of these practices by the colonial enterprise, post-independence governance structures bequeathed to post-independent African leaders, and subsequent authoritarianism, are factors that underlie the human-made causes of displacement and cross-border mobility. In the foregoing, I argue that a limited understanding of the implications of this blending and contradictions continues to obscure the African reality (historical and contemporary), and contributes to the inability of the institutions and policy prescriptions for dealing with migratory dynamics and their consequences (political and socio-economic) from a regional perspective.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section describes the context in which displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region have taken place from a historical perspective. The next section highlights some conceptual issues concerning displacement and cross-border mobility. The section revisits the notions of push and pull factors, livelihoods, nation-state and imagined communities and how they can help explain the factors underlying the continued internal displacement and cross-border mobility and their implications for regional cooperation. The next section presents an overview of factors that underlie internal; displacement and cross-border mobility using illustrations from specific context in the Great Lakes region. This is done by examining both historical and contemporary patterns. The next section examines the implications of the current patterns of displacement and cross-border mobility for policy (management of internal, regional migration and cooperation). The next section revisits the implications of the nation-state model in terms of borders and identities, and how this leads to and is impacted on by internal displacement and cross-border mobility. The concluding section presents final reflections.

Conceptual issues concerning displacement and regional cross-border mobility

For a deeper understanding of the factors underlying displacement and cross-border mobility within the context of conflict and natural disasters, several conceptual issues deserve attention, owing to the complexity of the drivers of migration. The concepts are explored and grouped in two main categories: state-related and migration-related. In the nation-state-related category are concepts such as nation-state and imagined communities, and push and pull. The relevance of the concepts in the first category lies in the relationship between the role of the state and the socio-economic and political dynamics within and outside the state, and both internal and external mobility and

how they are managed at national and regional levels. Important here are factors such as how to deal with root causes of conflict, regional cooperation and management of migration in terms of settlement, re-settlement, return and circularity. In the second category, which is migration-related, are concepts such as livelihoods, aspirations, capabilities and opportunities. Specific attention is given to aspirations and livelihoods, since these concepts are useful for understanding the role of human agency in the migratory patterns and dynamics. This can be discerned from the perspective of how migrants mitigate different conditions – forced or voluntary; or collective action to alter the undesired conditions.

The nation-state and imagined communities

The notions of nation-state and imagined communities²⁷ have been applied in migration studies in an attempt to explain the contextual drivers of migration. This is connected to social and structural transformations taking place in different societies, and the shifting identities and loyalties beyond the border of single nation-states. This relates to questions about the role of the nation-state and migrant transnationalism,²⁸ simultaneous transnational practices and belonging. While these notions have been useful for understanding some of the specific context-based migration dynamics and policy responses, their application can still be expanded for a nuanced capture of both historical and contemporary factors underlying current internal displacement and cross-border mobility. In the case of the Great Lakes region, they can help elucidate internal displacement and cross-border mobility from the perspective of the role of the Westphalia nation-state model, bondage of boundaries, system of governance, and identity politics in post-colonial Africa.²⁹

The contemporary patterns of mixed migration and the dynamics they generate bring into question the role of the nation-state³⁰ within the discussions about methodological nationalism.³¹ The ability of refugees to survive and maintain their identity across borders highlights the post-colonial predicaments in terms of de-territorialised nation states.³² These realities call for rethinking the role of the Westphalia nation-state model in Africa and its impact on nation-state-building and citizenship,³³ and as a major factor underlying most of the conflict-induced internal displacement and regional cross-border migration.

The past and current conflicts in the region are, for instance, characterised by contestation about political power linked to state resources and redistribution. This ties to the notion of nationhood and territoriality, especially the instrumental manipulation of citizenship and narrowing definitions of national belonging, which underlies the political struggles as observed in Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Somalia, Tanzania and South Africa.³⁴ In the countries mentioned above, the conflicts observed are legitimated through claims of exclusionary nationhood and redefinitions of citizenship.³⁵ These tendencies can be examined from the perspective of imagined communities,³⁶ where countries tend to ground themselves in a territorial and social space. However, as argued by Benedict Anderson,³⁷ nations are challenged by 'sub-nationalism within their borders'. Anderson perceives the nation as imagined because of the limited connections between the populations that constitute most nations. He notes that in most nations 'the members will never know their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their

communion'.³⁸ Anderson's description can be illustrated in the case of the DRC, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia, where political competition takes ethnic or regional dimensions to capture state power and gain access to state resources. While the institutions of the state ought to be neutral³⁹ in relation to legitimate actions of the state, the existence of 'sub-nationalisms' or ethnicity as the main tool for political mobilisation and gaining power within a Westphalia nation-state model undermines the functions of the state. If implemented according to Weberian prescription, the functions of the state for the common good generally include 'control of the means of violence, territoriality, sovereignty, constitutionality, impersonal power, the public bureaucracy, authority/legitimacy, citizenship and taxation'.⁴⁰ Equally, the fact that artificial borders have either cut off groups that were once territorially united further challenges the notion of a unified nation (a people, a territory and having symbols). Seen from such perspectives the factors underlying the ongoing and recurrent internal displacement and cross-border mobility can be argued to be deeply embedded in the implementation of the nation-state model.

As shown in Figure 3, the Westphalian nation-state model 'created as a bordered geography in Europe to solve specific contextual problems of governance of that time, remains alien to the African socio-political reality'.⁴¹ In Africa, 'the traditional exercise of power in contrast to the West is defined by the people, not by territory'.⁴² These political developments as the result of artificial borders and complexity in the composition of populations in the modern nation-states in Africa has an impact at local community and national level in terms of ethnically based political competition and capture of state institutions. At regional level, it has ramifications in terms of instability and policy responses within the framework of regional political and economic integration.

Push and pull factors in migration

Migration is considered 'a collective action arising out of social change, and affecting the whole society in both sending and receiving areas'.⁴³ From a push and pull factor perspective, migration can be considered a product of global political and economic dynamics. These dynamics are disrupting the dichotomy of the core, the periphery and the semi-periphery.⁴⁴ Migrants from the global south cross these lines, either pushed by conflicts and as result of the marginalisation of the majority of the world,⁴⁵ or attracted by better economic prospects in Europe and North America. Similar patterns can also be observed in the African continent within the frame of rural-urban migration,⁴⁶ as well as regional migration within the South-South migratory trajectories.⁴⁷ From an economic perspective, push and pull dynamics have links to economics and labour-market conditions that drive emigration or immigration. Migrants generated by these conditions come from both stable and unstable states; hence displacement (forced or voluntary) and cross-border mobility have implications for regional cooperation – especially within the migration corridors that share borders.

At local level, major push factors include conflict (state violence, civil war or ethnic tensions) and disasters such as drought and flooding. The natural causes can be periodical, while conflicts do erupt occasionally in some countries due to cross-border resource disputes or prolonged open conflict between groups or states. The conditions of safety and new sources of livelihoods elsewhere therefore become major pull factors. This includes connections and networks already established

in urban areas, other regions or across the borders in neighbouring countries. In this case, migration becomes a collective action⁴⁸ aided by a network of actors in the affected areas and beyond the borders. At regional level, people fleeing from internal conflicts in specific countries often seek safety and shelter, as well as new sources of livelihoods in neighbouring countries once the local conditions have deteriorated. Depending on the proximity of the destination country, groups or individuals that share ethnic heritage and pre-colonial territorial unity cross these borders regardless of the physical boundaries (using historical connections and routes that function in parallel to modern passages and border control points). These outlined issues regarding push and pull factors in the migration studies provide a basis for re-examining the role of the state in the dynamics that underpin internal displacement and involuntary regional cross-border mobility and their implications for the management of migration within the context of regional cooperation and integration.

Livelihoods

Poverty, relative deprivation and political exclusion have been noted as some of the major drivers of violent conflict in sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁹ These conditions threaten the very existence of local populations in the area. Hence, the concept of livelihoods captures a core component of human security. For instance, it has been described as comprising 'capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living'.⁵⁰ This includes basic needs and capital assets (material and social resources) that support the livelihood of individuals, households and groups.⁵¹ Examples include human capital (skills, knowledge labour, good health and physical capability); social capital (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations and associations); natural capital (land, water, air and forest and environmental services); physical capital (infrastructure such as buildings and roads, production equipment and technologies); and financial capital (savings, credit and debt, and economic assets).⁵²

The aspects that constitute livelihoods as described by Morse, McNamara and Acholo⁵³ point to the importance of 'the policy and institutional context within which these capitals exist'. Linked to the institutional context is the socio-economic and political environment, which forms the basis for stability and realisation of livelihoods. As shown in the case of the Great Lakes region and other hotspots in Africa, political instability⁵⁴ plays a major role in all forms of displacement and cross-border mobility. This emanates from the direct impact of violence or economic meltdown because of conflict and civil strife.⁵⁵

Aspirations

Aspirations in migration as described by Jürgen Carling⁵⁶ highlight the role of the individual associated with human agency and attitude. As shown in Figure 1, this agency is linked to capabilities in an interface that lead to decisions and choices made in the trajectory of migration.

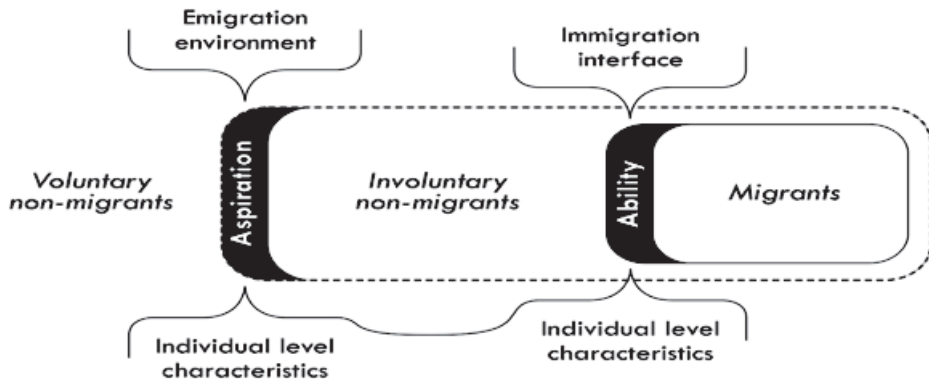


Figure 1 – Migrant aspirations and role in the trajectory of migration

(Source: Adapted from Carling, 2012)

Even in situations where the individual aspirations are constrained by involuntary conditions or intervening obstacles,⁵⁷ the ability that is derived from the human agency shapes that migrant's wish to migrate or not and actions in pursuit of better opportunities. Hence, in the context of deprivation, threatened livelihoods emanating from conflict or disasters, people are likely to come up with strategies, paths and scripts based on context-specific social constructions⁵⁸ to migrate and creatively mitigate these conditions. Aided by increased access to communication and technology⁵⁹ and improved infrastructure mobility within and across the borders become much more fluid.

Conditions that lead to displacement and cross-border mobility therefore has a direct link to the prevailing governance systems at the nation-state level, the kind of politics and socio-economic policies as a basis for creating opportunities and secured livelihoods. Absence of opportunities undermines aspirations and, consequently, people will look for alternatives elsewhere,⁶⁰ Equally, their resettlement or return⁶¹ is also dependent on the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the post-conflicts or -disaster periods.

Since migration affects both the sending and receiving countries, the decisions made by migrants consequently have policy implications. In the case of countries sharing borders, as illustrated in the Great Lakes region, regional cooperation and measures to manage all dimensions of migration must consider the human agency. Influenced by aspirations and capabilities, displaced or dislocated people cross borders in search of opportunities (economic and safety) to address secure livelihoods that are threatened at the place of origin or possible settlement or return.

Tracing internal displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region

Historical

The Great Lakes region comprises the following countries: Burundi, DRC, Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. These countries have diverse colonial backgrounds, political arrangements, socio-economic and cultural mixes that underlie internal displacement of the population. These

factors have differing implications for individual countries, and the East African community in general. Some studies incorporate South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Central African Republic.⁶² The region has a long history of mobility prior to the establishment of the modern nation state in the 1800s. Movements during colonial times in the Great Lakes region were influenced by the colonial mapping and redrawn boundaries,⁶³ as well as colonial labour legacy that displaced populations within and across borders.⁶⁴ A fundamental explanatory factor, linked to the question of the nation-state and borders, is the prevailing governance system and post-colonial challenges to state-building. The political practice and culture, and the policies that they produce and reproduce, are derived from the Weberian nation-state model and its impact on boundaries in Africa. The current borders, based on the colonial mapping, have implications for the functioning of the nation-state and mobility in Africa.

As shown in Figure 2, the pre-colonial ethnic boundaries depict a complex configuration, reflecting and representing the diversity that characterise the African continent. This complexity further includes systems of governance around territory, the management of the commons (natural resources), as well as relations within and across the borders. Figure 3, in contrast, shows an

Figure 2 – Ethnic boundaries in Africa before colonisation



(Source: Ethnic boundaries in Africa adapted from Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2011)

Figure 3 – Ethnic homelands and national borders after the partitioning of Africa

(Source: *Ethnic boundaries in Africa adapted from Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2011*)

arbitrary re-drawing of the borders and creating neat formation (straight lines in some cases), which obscures the local realities of Africa. As noted by Van Reisen, Mawere, Van Stam, Stocker and Williams,⁶⁵ the state with fixed borders (on paper) only institutionalised an overlay template, a veneer, creating yet another layer under which the local realities of Africa were obscured for outsiders. The redrawn borders under the modern nation-state system have had a disruptive role – not only in terms of territorial homogeneity and belonging but also in the governance system that reflects the geographical and social realities in Africa.

It is, however, imperative to note that human mobility across territories and frontiers was not a new phenomenon in Africa. Despite the porousness of the borders and groups having relations that span several regions, communities had clear markers that identify the borders that are shared with neighbouring groups. As pointed out by Zeller,⁶⁶ 'pre-colonial African politics did incorporate a complex politics of land and territoriality, as well as of people and populations, even if this later remained elusive to colonial efforts from the 1890s onwards, to map and concretize a European kind of cadastral politics for its own administrative purposes'. Still, there were occasional conflict-induced migration linked to the search for pasture for livestock and fertile ground for agriculture. Nonetheless, the colonial mapping that delineates modern states in Africa as outlined in Figure 3

consequently changed the migratory dynamics in significant ways and intensity. It generated different types of involuntary migration, settlement, resettlement and new conditions under a central authority over territory and movement of people. In the foregoing, some of these conflicts have spilled over at national and regional level in the form of contestations about territory, as well as border and resource disputes.⁶⁷ The Westphalia nation-state model in this regard ignored cultural meanings attributed to borders, the flexible view of political community and highly diverse aspects of social, political and entrepreneurial creativity and negotiation between citizens and states that is part of everyday life in Africa.⁶⁸

Contemporary times

Since the redrawing of the borders as part of the establishment of the Westphalia nation-state model, governance structures and systems also changed. The consequences include social transformations in the production systems, social, economic and political domains, with a single centre of power. Other factors underlying displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region also relates to the politics of citizenship.⁶⁹ Within the less homogeneous nature of states in Africa, which is linked to ethnicity, citizenship question in relation to the role of the state in providing the necessary conditions for the realisation livelihoods highlight the complexities and contradictions of African nationalism.

Another critical explanatory factor that underpins internal displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region is the failure of the development state during the era of authoritarian developmentalism.⁷⁰ Zeleza⁷¹ observes that, 'while the majority of African countries have retained the integrity of their colonial boundaries, many have had difficulties in forging nations out of them'. Exacerbated by single-party dictatorships at the beginning of the post-independence period, and influenced by Cold War alliances and support from the major powers, the 'modern' nation-state in Africa has been unable to address the African socio-economic and political realities. A critical omission is a disregard for the pre-existing governance systems and politics, while adopting the Westphalia model of nation-state. Therefore, various countries have experienced one form of political turbulence or the other, especially, military coup d'états, brutal military and civilian dictatorships, civil war and ethnic conflicts⁷² that are largely connected to struggles for state power as well as local social and economic conditions.⁷³ Setbacks in the nation-state building process has given room to ethnic-oriented forms of governance, whose climax has led to human catastrophes such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994⁷⁴ and post-election violence in Kenya.

In recent years, electoral violence that 'takes place during the electoral cycle, including the pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral periods'⁷⁵ has emerged as a major driver of internal displacement during election periods in Kenya, Zimbabwe, DRC, Uganda, Burundi and Ethiopia.⁷⁶ This type of violence is coupled with a deeply embedded political culture of "clientelist parties, institutional fragility, informalisation and criminalisation of the state, and the decentralisation and privatisation of violence".⁷⁷ These are features that cut across many countries in the Great Lakes region and sub-Saharan Africa at large. The high stakes tied to elections in Africa⁷⁸ are rooted in the winner-takes-all electoral politics and governance systems that are highly influenced

by the colonial model of divide and rule, use of state power for accumulation of capital, and unequal resources distribution. During elections, these practices are likely to 'reignite latent social divisions leading to a resumption of previously dormant conflicts'.⁷⁹ Stagnation in the democratic transition and slow shift towards systems of governance that provide for decentralisation of state power and decision-making over resources, politics of ethnicity and patronage remain obstacles to civil nationalism in the African state.⁸⁰ Consequently, countries continue to experience political instability a result of divided loyalty (between the ethnic and the nation) and running of state affairs. Combined with state violence in response to agitations for change, continued political and economic marginalisation, these conditions act as a major determinant of forced migration within countries and across the borders.

Internal displacement and subsequent movements across the border in search of safety and livelihoods in the Great Lakes region can also be traced to the conflicts over natural resources. Some of this is attributed to pillage and plunder,⁸¹ and such conflicts are often fuelled by external actors that partake in the appropriation in collaboration with local elites and state functionaries – as illustrated in the case of violence, war and plunder in the DRC.⁸² At the local community level, a combination of factors linked to land, territory and the ecosystem result in conflicts. With weak state institutions and a lack of political will to address the socio-economic conditions and emanating disputes, the affected populations resort to migration that includes involuntary movements across borders. Notable social conditions are changing demographics and competition for scarce resources, such as land for agriculture and pasture, territorial claims based on local customary systems of land ownership and values placed on land, land expropriations during colonial periods, and more recently, land governance influenced by the neo-liberal paradigm that fuel land-grabbing and large-scale investments in the agricultural and extractive industries.⁸³ High youth unemployment in rural areas, as well as social and economic inequalities, are also main drivers of internal and cross-border migration in the region.⁸⁴

Another phenomenon that drives large-scale displacements and conflict-induced cross-border/regional mobility in the Great Lakes is the violent intrastate and proxy interstate conflicts.⁸⁵ While not new, the recent interstate conflicts in the region are different in scale, intensity and complexity, since it involves several countries at the same time. The complexity is exacerbated by population mixes that cut across national borders (ethno-regionalism), and insurgencies launched from several neighbouring countries by both state and non-state actors. This is demonstrated in the case of the DRC and the involvement of military forces from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda in different periods, and phases of the internal conflict,⁸⁶ but also in the case of South Sudan and Somalia. Internal strife within states such as Ethiopia, Central African Republic, and Congo continue to generate high numbers of refugees that cross borders into neighbouring countries. In specific countries, politically motivated conflicts have led to internal displacement where electoral politics is increasingly accompanied by state violence – as witnessed in Kenya in 2007-2008 and 2017,⁸⁷ Malawi in 2014, Uganda in 2011 and 2016,⁸⁸ Burundi in 2015⁸⁹ and Ethiopia in 2005.⁹⁰

Displacement and cross-border mobility: patterns and policy implications

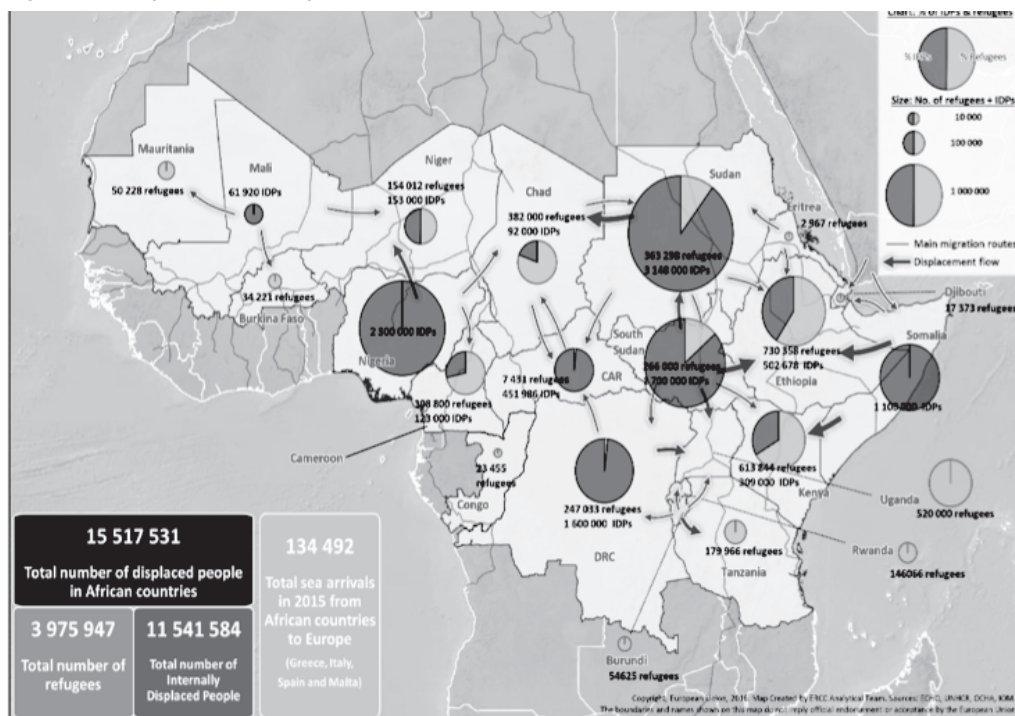
The failure of the prevailing nation-state model (Westphalian) to consider these historical and geographical realities, as well as governance practices, can be argued to underlie some of the observed civil order in Africa.⁹¹ The contradictions and complexities generated by this omission lie at the root cause of most conflicts and consequent displacement and cross-border mobility. Within specific countries, the violence resulting from inter-group conflicts over resources (land, pasture) and politically motivated clashes generate different forms of internal displacement, dislocation and mobility that affect regions within specific countries and spill over into neighbouring countries. This can be observed by the mixed migration flows that link East Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa.⁹² Cross-border movement in the form of refugees who are uprooted from their original places of stay (locally within countries and regionally across the borders) can be observed in the different trajectories illustrated in Figure 4 below. 'Routes to better life', as indicated in Figure 4, describe movements under illegal migration and has been largely presented as a South-North phenomenon. Figure 4 shows a northward pattern of mobility, largely involving West Africa, North Africa and the Horn of Africa, however. Figure 5 demonstrates that migration in Africa is very much fluid and involves mixed flows, shaped by 'unique historical context', 'territorial dynamics' and 'complex drivers of migration'.⁹³

Figure 4 – Migration in West, North and Horn of Africa



(Source: Van Reisen et al, 2017)

Figure 5 – Map of forced displacement in sub-Saharan Africa



(Source: UNOCHA, 2016)

In terms of movement linked to displacement (as shown in figure 5), the Great Lakes region demonstrates a relatively high number due to protracted conflicts in the region, which vary in terms of causes, dynamics and actors involved. While these are developments within specific countries, they are likely to spill over to neighbouring areas due to the nature of borders (proximity, porosity), geography, cultural ties and prevailing economic and political situations in the country of origin and destination. Main migratory corridors in the region are described in Table 1.

Regionally, cross-border mobility linked to conflict and internal displacement in the Great Lakes is demonstrated by the increasingly high number of refugees recorded in different countries. As shown in Table 1, countries experiencing protracted and new bouts of violence record the largest number of outflows. This is illustrated in the case of intractable conflict in the DRC and South Sudan. Somalia is categorised as a failed state, experiencing bouts of intensified conflict that has constantly shifted between different warlords and, more recently, between various governments and terrorist-linked groups such as Al-Shabaab.

Table 1 – Contexts and dynamics of migration corridors in Great Lakes region

Context of the corridor	Countries involved	Dynamics in the corridor
Relatively stable	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda	Historical ethnolinguistic and geographic ties: Tanzania-Kenya (Maasai ethno-regionalism and pastoralism, Luo people of Nyanza in Kenya and in Mara region in Tanzania; Kenya-Uganda, Elgon/Teso, Masaba in eastern Uganda, and Bukusu in Kenya); and Kenya-Somalia (Somali ethno-regionalism and linguistically related and traders) Colonial and post-colonial regime conditions
Fragile	Kenya, Uganda	Territorial claims: Borders and natural resource disputes in Lake Victoria
Instable	DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, CAR	Historical ethnolinguistic and geographic ties, colonial and post-colonial regime conditions, intra- and interstate conflicts, civil war, ethnic conflict and genocide
Regional cooperation and integration	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan	Free movement of people and goods, labour migration, regional integration

(Source: Compiled by the Author, 2017)

Displacement: Volumes and patterns

In the Great Lakes region, the nature of migration includes both voluntary and involuntary movements, with some countries functioning as destinations and transit locations. In 2016, an estimated 15 517 531 people were displaced in African countries. About 3 975 947 were refugees and 11 541 584 were IDPs.⁹⁴ As shown in Table 2, several countries in the Great Lakes region experienced large numbers of internal displacement over the 2008 to 2016 period. While these figures serve as a useful starting point, understanding the extent and nature of displacement in the region is difficult, since not all displaced persons are recorded in remote locations and because of weak national statistical systems. Additionally, internal 'migration also receive limited attention with research on internal migration relying on indirect sources'.⁹⁵

In the Central African Republic, the high numbers of displaced persons as noted in the period between 2014 and 2016 are attributed to ongoing conflict that has also taken on a religious dimension. As a consequence, the Muslim population in the capital Bangui dropped from 138 000 to 900.⁹⁶ Displacement in Burundi, in contrast, can be traced to the civil war period, which included migration across the borders.⁹⁷ With the ongoing conflict in the DRC, a significant number of people have been internally displaced. As demonstrated in Table 2, the numbers reached almost four million in 2013, which was the period of conflicts involving several neighbouring countries. While the overall figures have dropped significantly to 0.3 million specific regions within the DRC, such as Kasai, still witnessed massive displacements. An estimated 1.3 million were displaced in the province in 2016 as a result of conflict between the national government and local militias that spread to other provinces.⁹⁸

Table 2 – Number of internally displaced in the Great Lakes region (2008-2016)

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Burundi	100 000	100 000	100 000	79 000	79 000	79 000	78 000	122 000	75 000
CAR		117 000	216 000	127 000	238 000	187 000	612 000	662 000	458 000
Congo		7800	7800	7800	7800	7800	7800	7800	58000
DRC	1460102	29000000	2100000	1878000	3700000	2963799	3860000	2857400	3150000
Kenya		250 000	250 000	300 000	418 000	467 000	529 000	309 000	138 000
Rwanda	5 000		5 900	1 900	3 200	1 000	2 000	9 700	9 700
Uganda		166 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	30 000	86 000
Tanzania	2 400	11 000		22 000	10 000		14 000	3 500	36 000
Ethiopia		550 000	300 000	400 000	350 000	495 000	534 000	506 000	554 000
Somalia		1900000	1800000	1590000	1535000	1180000	1996000	1323000	70000
South Sudan				700 000	540 000	766 000	2812000	1896000	2135000

(Source: Adapted from World Bank, 2015; IMDC, 2017; UNOCHA, 2017)

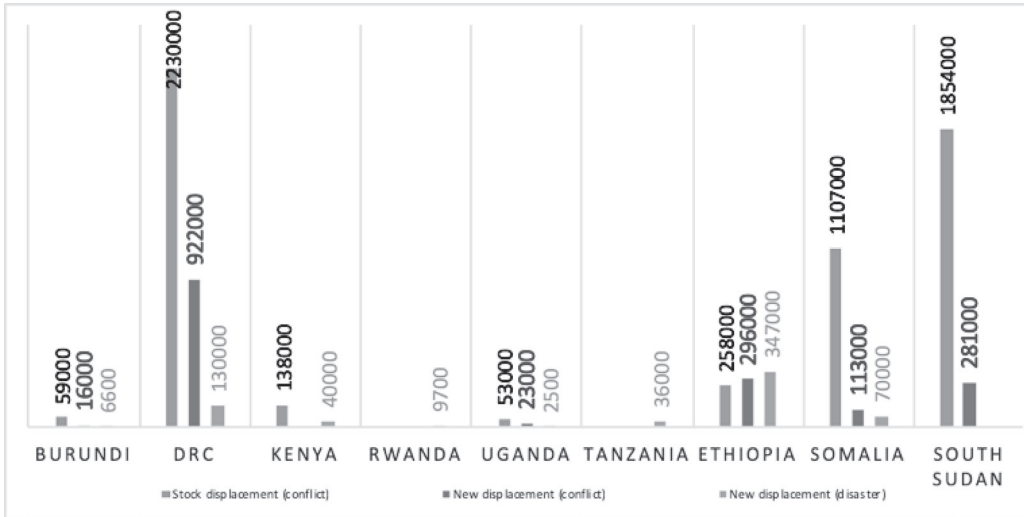
Kenya, in contrast to most of the other countries in the region, functions as a major destination for both refugees and regular migrants. At the same time, the country experienced displacement largely linked to pre- and post-election violence. Some of these are rooted in the historical injustices concerning land, political and economic marginalisation. Hence, while Kenya projects a stable context, internal contradictions and political dynamics present trigger points that inform the relatively large number of internally displaced. Rwanda and Tanzanian demonstrate an interesting exceptionality in the region. While Rwanda is emerging from a civil war and genocide, the incidences of displacement are very low and none was recorded in 2006, as shown in Table 2. Tanzania, relatively the most stable in the region, has the lowest number of displacements, as shown in Figure 2. These were mainly disaster-related.

Conflict and disaster-generated IDPs in the Great Lakes region

A significant number of internal displacements in the Great Lakes region can be categorised as those generated by conflict and natural disasters. In the conflict-generated category are countries that have witnessed civil war and continue to experience different forms of conflict (intra- and interstate, ethnic and electoral-related, and terrorism-related). As shown in figure 6, these can be observed in Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, DRC, Somalia and inter-state wars mainly involving Ethiopia Eritrea. Between 2011 and 2016, South Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia and Somalia recorded some of the highest numbers of displacements, fuelled by conflict (see Table 2). The recorded conflict-related displacements include stock of displacement and new displacements shown in Figure 6. The high number of new displacements in the observed countries can be explained, changing conflict dynamics in the region, for instance, following the proxy wars involving Uganda.

In Rwanda in the DRC, a large number of new displacements were recorded. Meanwhile, new displacements in Somalia could be attributed to increased conflict between Al-Shabaab, the Somali government and operations of the African Union peace-keeping mission (AMISOM), which brought armies from several African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burundi).

Figure 6 – IDPs in the Great Lakes region: Conflict and disaster-generated 2016



(Source: Adapted from IDCM, 2016)

Another category is displacements driven by disasters. As shown in figure 6, Ethiopia, the DRC and Somalia are some of the most affected. Drought in parts of Ethiopia has a history of devastation that affects human beings and cattle. Somalia has also witnessed harsh climatic conditions with prolonged dry seasons, causing death of animals, malnutrition and higher stocks of displacement. Tanzania is another exception, despite having a diverse population – a factor that underlies most conflicts associated with ethnicity. The absence of new conflict-related displacements in Kenya makes it another exceptional case. However, simmering tensions in regions affected by land, human and animal conflict during drought, and post-election violence that has become a routine occurrence, put the country in a fragile situation. Some of these incidences hardly get captured in the national statistics due to the politically sensitive nature of the underlying factors (historical land injustices, and political and economic marginalisation). In Uganda there were no new conflict-related displacements recorded in 2016. Like in Kenya, most conflict in Uganda (after the peace agreement in 2006 with the Lord’s Resistance Army) remains largely electoral-related. Rwanda, with its genocide history that displaced many during the civil war, emerges as an exception with the lowest number of displacements. Much of these outcomes are owed to progressive land policies and efforts to provide equal opportunities to different population groups.

As illustrated in Table 3, countries in the Great Lakes region experience disasters which affect them individually and in some cases the impact covers several countries, leading to displacements in the Great Lakes region. Disaster-related displacement affected more than 50 000

people in Uganda during the 2010 floods, whereas in Kenya the impact included 94 deaths, 12 167 displacements and 141 164 affected persons. In Rwanda, 14 deaths and 1 184 displacements were reported.⁹⁹

Table 3 – Example of natural disasters and regional impact in Great Lakes

Type of disaster	Period	Affected countries
Floods and landslides	March 2010 Nov 2012 Aug/September 2013 Feb 2016 March/June 2016 Apr 2016 May 2016 May 2016 Jan/May/Dec 2016 May 2016	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania Congo CAR Tanzania (country-wide) Ethiopia Kenya (country-wide) Somalia Burundi DRC Rwanda
Drought and famine	2015 December 2015	Ethiopia Somalia (Siti area)
Armyworm infestation	March 2017	Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda
Storms	April and September 2017 March 2013/2017	Rwanda CAR
Earthquakes	February 2008	Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda

Source: Adapted from UNOCHA 2017

Drought and famine are also major factors that fuel displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region. For instance, the movement from the Horn of Africa to Kenya is in part linked to lack of livelihoods – forcing people, including women and children, to migrate for better pastures. Another illustration of such disaster was the armyworm infestation in March 2017, which affected Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda.¹⁰⁰ As shown in Table 3, the impact of the armyworm infestation in East Africa in March 2017 covered several countries. It affected hundreds of thousands of hectares, especially for maize and wheat production. These conditions threaten livelihoods, thus acting as triggers of migration, no matter how temporary. Prolonged states of such disasters lead to more long-term displacement when local populations lack the input and resources to mitigate the impact. Seen from a human security perspective, natural disasters can generate serious food insecurity situations, including threats to livestock as a source of livelihood for pastoralist communities in the region.

Implications of Westphalian nation-state model for regional cooperation and management of displacement and cross-border mobility

The highlighted migration patterns and the migration dynamics that they generate in the Great Lakes region raise questions about the role of borders under the current Westphalia nation-state model. It calls for revisiting questions about the nation, the state and territory in Africa in terms of their origins, evolutions and relationships.¹⁰¹ The issues raised by White and White are relevant to the case of the Great Lakes region, where conflicts have not only emerged within specific national borders, but also tend to spill over and around borders. The challenges facing the countries are not only migration-related, but are intertwined with border issues whose origins can be traced to 'the arbitrary nature of colonial mapping. An illustration of these challenges can be noted in the resource and cross-border disputes in the standoff between Kenya and Uganda over the ownership of Migingo Island in Lake Victoria, the 2008 border incident between Eritrea and Djibouti, the continuing Somali nationalism in the region, and border skirmishes between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) over the oil-rich Lake Albert region'.¹⁰²

Within the framework of regional cooperation, IDPs and cross-border mobility as a result of conflicts are critical aspects in the measures aimed at the management of migration. In the case of the East African Community (EAC), this first of all has implications for managing populations that have crossed borders as refugees, since they are likely to carry along conflicts from their countries of origin. These scenarios become more serious in the context of likely infiltrations by terrorist groups that exploit the refugees' situation. Large numbers of refugees have implications for host countries in terms of social amenities and environmental impact, as witnessed in host countries such as Tanzania during and after the conflict in Rwanda and Burundi. Kenya has experienced an influx of refugees from Somalia and South Sudan, while Uganda has been hosting refugees fleeing the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Political implications of these cross-border movements include the likely spill-over of conflicts (inter-ethnic or based on political groupings that operate across borders). Equally, certain refugees can become a threat to the host country in the context of increased activities of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab in Uganda and Kenya. The shifting mobility patterns in the Great Lakes region and their implications, therefore, call for approaches that consider the interplay of complex drivers of migration. The observed complexities can be argued to emanate from the socio-economic and political developments in specific countries, which simultaneously act as pull and push factors. Historical and contemporary injustices, especially those associated with the 'political economy of colonialism and its legacies'¹⁰³ on issues such as land, continue to undermine stability. This can be observed in the struggles for state power through manipulation of state institutions, negative ethnicity and imbalanced development outcomes acting as major triggers of violence and conflict. Governments in Africa cannot act differently as long as they carry the legacies of their colonially drawn statehood and architecture. As Zeleza points out, these were states 'established through physical violence and maintained through political violence'.¹⁰⁴

Zeleza's reflections corroborate the assertions by Dorman, Hammett, and Nugent that the 'national boundaries are predicated upon a claim to historical legitimacy' and 'the projection of an exclusive historical project, often based upon a claim to oppression and subjugation'.¹⁰⁵ This

condition, which has been described as 'Africa and the curse of the nation-state',¹⁰⁶ affects countries (nation-states) as they remain contested spaces even after gaining 'independence' from colonial powers. This history and contemporary reality (socio-economic and political), combined with the dynamics generated by mixed migration flows, are concerns that are likely to impact regional efforts towards integration. This is more so in the case of initiatives that seek to facilitate more free movement of persons, since the movement of goods is relatively addressed through regional and bilateral agreements. Compounding this challenge is the fact that IDPs no longer remain within a country's borders, and the 'guiding principles' relating to IDPs are not binding.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

This paper started off by highlighting the link between internal displacement and involuntary cross-border mobilities and the transposition of the Westphalian nation-state model in Africa. The main thesis was that, applied literally in the African context, the national system has generated disruptions and alterations of how African societies managed their socio-economic, cultural and political realities prior to violent encounters with other civilisations. A major character of this disruption has been the borders created by treaties during the partitioning of Africa.¹⁰⁸ Linked to the nation-state system was the creation of a bordered geography and governance model that was unfamiliar to Africans. The nation-state, its territorial character and systems of governance, generated a paradigm clash in terms of development.¹⁰⁹ This political context serves as a major explanatory factor for past, ongoing and recurrent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the Great Lakes region. I argue that the limited acknowledgement of the links between the impact of the Westphalian nation-state model and the political practices and culture it has produced, undermine a nuanced explication of internal displacement and cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region and other hotspots in Africa. Such an omission further undermines measures aimed at addressing the post-conflict situation, including peace-making, peace-building and the settlement, resettlement, relocation and return of the displaced. These dynamics can be observed in the case of post-conflict situations in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, CAR, Somalia, South Sudan and Kenya, where past conflicts or ongoing conflicts and recurrent displacement linked to electoral violence are persistent. Most of these countries are yet to address major historical injustices during the colonial and immediate post-independence period, especially land-related issues, abuses of state power and atrocities committed during military and single-party dictatorships.

The question of bordered geography is also a major pillar in the debate about stability/instability and its role in displacement within and across borders. The current borders remain an imposition,¹¹⁰ even though their impact is real and, in some cases, they have been normalised (including straight lines).¹¹¹ In most cases, the borders remain imaginary to local communities whose pre-colonial geographical reach transcend one single nation-state territory. These overlaps created by colonial mapping do not reflect local ethnographic or realities, thus underlying the conflict-induced migratory patterns at regional level, and have implications for regional cooperation and integration. These artificial borders do not reflect local ethnographic realities and continue to undermine the ability of the state to govern and manage public goods in an inclusive manner.

Cross-border mobility in the Great Lakes region is fluid and complex. It is characterised by mixed flows involving internally displaced persons, refugees (conflict-induced, regime and condition-driven, economic-driven), cross-border movement linked to primordial ties, and nature-induced calamities (drought, flooding and mudslides). This reality should give the impetus for rethinking the nation state at its role in conflict-induced migratory patterns at regional level and the implications of such realities for regional cooperation and integration. Political, policy, institutional and legislative frameworks are central to settlement, re-settlement, return and circularity. However, these measures must consider the African realities, namely socio-economic disparities in the Great Lakes region, and how to address the perceived challenges of hosting refugees (including the participation of the dislocated in the local economies of the host countries). Also linked to the political and policy considerations are the conditions for settlement, re-settlement, return or circularity. These options in the management of cross-border migration are feasible – not only from a policy perspective but also if coupled with the recognition of the agency of migrants. The agency of migrants can be deduced from the role of aspirations and capabilities which shape migrant decisions to move in situations where the main sources of livelihoods are threatened or degraded by conflict. In this sense, stability (political and economic) and mitigation of the impact of climate change, matters for free movement and securing livelihood opportunities spanning the current borders, and policy measures designed to address the challenges generated by mixed migration flows.

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