

## Rethinking the Migration – Development Nexus in Africa

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### Abstract

The migration-development nexus is proving to be one of the most capacious of the discourses on African migration. It informs the policy thinking in many states in Africa where an instrumentalist view of migrants (solely) as sources of foreign exchange holds sway. So pervasive is this perception of migrants in policy circles that some African states have ministries or units (often located in the office of the president) devoted to migrants/diasporas with the primary aim of maximizing remittances. In the European Union's politics of deportation relative to Africa, migration and development is couched in the language of "returning" migrant to, and "integrating" them in their "homes" so that they can develop their countries<sup>1</sup>. While enough evidence exists that point to an association between migration and development, the simple causality, and the uses and abuses of the nexus is one that deserves a new structural critique. An important starting point in the case of Africa is a twin set of questions: Does anyone migrate with the intention of developing any country or locality? Whose development is referenced in the migration-development fusion? The dominant formulation, and the resulting policies emerging out of the migration-development nexus ignores and then deepens several divides and contradictions. The presentation takes up one of these contradictions and its anti-developmental consequences: the ongoing multilateral and continental plans/protocols/rhetoric of migration and development, and policies that directly militate against mobility. What emerges is conscious promotion of immobility while professing mobility as a pillar of development.

### Biography

Faisal Garba is an Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility at the Africa Institute, Sharjah, and a Senior Lecturer of Sociology at the University of Cape Town. He works on migration and mobility, social movements and working-class forms of organizing, social theory, and historical sociology. He recently edited a special edition of the Global Africa Journal with Uchenna Okeja titled: "Theorising for the Present and the Future"

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<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, European states are poaching healthcare workers from African countries with severely understaffed healthcare facilities.