

economic changes growing from migration have forced women to play an even greater part in providing for their children's subsistence either through food production or off-farm income-generating activities. With little means of bringing pressures to bear on their husbands, women have continued to bear most of the costs incurred in the households.

The impact of migration on African families is two-sided, precisely because of the tension between diminishing opportunities in the agricultural sector coupled with land shortages and the persistence of social norms of patriarchy. Migration is a rational response to poor employment opportunities and land hunger in rural areas, but this trend has loosened traditional social control mechanisms that regulated social reciprocities and responsibilities within families. New family structures have therefore emerged to capture the straddling of populations between urban and rural environments. The choices of being either permanent rural residents or urbanites are open to very few Africans.

International Migration

Globalization has also fostered new forms of migration as Africans seek better economic opportunities in Europe, the Middle East, and North America. In recent years, labour migrants (of unskilled and semi-skilled persons), refugees and asylum seekers have also migrated to these regions as well as to Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand. The worsening economic circumstances and political instability have forced the best-educated Africans to leave home and work abroad. *For the majority of these migrants, migration is part of the struggle against both debilitating poverty and implicit and explicit forms of political repression.* Africa's track record on civil war, violent conflict, strife and political instability has, with a large measure, contributed to refugee flows. By 1995 Africa contained one third of the world's refugees. About 10 million people have been the victims of forced migration. In most cases, neighbouring countries host refugees from each other. For example, there are Mauritanian refugees in Mali, and Malian refugees in Mauritania.

One of the impacts of the wars in the continent is the increasing number of widowed women, female-headed households, and orphans. Like rural-urban migration, international migration is a double-edged sword to families, furnishing potential economic benefits through remittances, but also breaking the social bonds of amity that sustain families. Moreover, while most international economic migrants are compelled to flee their homes for diverse reasons, many are constrained by tightened restrictions on their mobility. As governments of industrialized countries have implemented restrictive immigration policies to regulate the supply of labour from poor countries, most of the migrants become either illegal or have few opportunities of employment. Despite the restrictions on migration, the rising numbers of able-bodied men and women who are found washing up on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea demonstrate the determination of migrants to reach Europe.

To underscore the enormity of this problem, UNICEF has estimated that cross-border smugglers in Central and West Africa enslave 200,000 children a year. Traffickers tempt victims with job offers and offers of adoption in wealthier countries. They in turn keep them in subservience through physical violence, debt bondage, passport confiscation, and threats of violence against their families. These insidious forms of "migration" are thriving on the margins of globalization as African states lose the ability to control and police the activities of economically powerful non-state actors.