Abstract
Currently, migration and food insecurity are transboundary challenges that are at the forefront of global agendas as they are entwined with almost all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They significantly impact each other on a household as well as on national levels, being embedded in the context of a particular society, as on a global scale in their relation to human development, world population, and climate issues. Hence, though policy qualities can be universal in theory, in practice they should incorporate local contextual realities. This article, therefore, explores and analyzes the multidimensional relationship between migration and food insecurity and the wide range of applicable policy qualities and constraints. It also provides a methodological procedural approach of tackling the problems in Eastern African countries.

Keywords: Food Insecurity, Livelihood, Migration, Policy, SDGs

1. Introduction
Migration was human’s primary livelihood strategy before the Neolithic revolution and has continued to be crucial for survival throughout the centuries (Manning, 2013). People used to move to new places in pursuit of food, water, shelter, and security (Manning, 2013). Migration thus touches the core of our basic needs, although throughout history many of its intricacies have changed (Bade, 2003; Manning, 2013). The industrial revolution, for example, has caused around 50 million Europeans to migrate within and outside of Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Manning, 2013). The phenomenon is still intact and is recognized as a problem than an opportunity (Lindley, 2014; IOM, 2017; FAO, IFAD, IOM, 2018). Indeed, it is defined as one of the world’s biggest crises since World War II (IOM, 2017; IDMC, 2019). As such, it has brought lots of wide-ranging controversies and puzzles on policy options (IOM, 2017).

Migration and food insecurity are inexorably intertwined (FAO et al., 2018). One of the most basic push factors of migration is food insecurity. Migration can also expose people to economic crises including food insecurity. To put it differently, migrants can experience food insecurity due to the costs of traveling, challenges of adjustment. Unexpected expenses resulting from uncertainties make food insecurity to be the consequence of migration (FAO et al., 2018). Some food security policies and programs can also latently induce migration unless this covert consequence is taken into account and systematically addressed (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This demonstrates the two-sided relationship between these two variables, migration and food insecurity (FAO et al., 2018). Experts in the area have identified some perspectives and policies at the macro, household, and micro or individual levels to thoroughly analyze this vice versa relationship. It is noted that a thorough understanding of the intricate relationship
among these two variables is a key for designing a comprehensive policy framework that can be applied for alleviating the challenges pertinent to them.

One of the macro-structural perspectives which explain the dynamic relationship between migration and food security is agricultural transformation (Arendonk, 2015). By its nature, an increase in farm production through mechanization shifts labor-intensive farming to capital-intensive farming. In the long run, this process decreases agriculture factor income and its contribution to the national GDP in comparison with to industry and service sector economic activities (Dennis & Talan, 2007; Arendonk, 2015). This means also a gradual decrease in the number of people engaged in agriculture (Dennis & Talan, 2007; Arendonk, 2015). In other words, more people would become potential economic migrants unless they are absorbed by diversified activities in the rural area (Dennis & Talan, 2007; Arendonk, 2015; Todaro & Smith, 2015). The Lewis structural model is a typical example. According to Lewis, the idle population obtained through this process can have an added value to the national economy. They can be used to fill the labor gap in increasing industrial and service sector economic activities. However, due to infant industries and market restrictions in developing countries, the model is more pragmatic in developed countries (Todaro & Smith, 2015). In developing countries, cities are typically struck by a massive rural-urban exodus and infant industries are incapable of absorbing all the rural immigrants (Cohen, 2006; Todaro & Smith, 2015). This urban augmentation, in turn, leads to an escalation of cities’ economic, social, and political chaos (Cohen, 2006; Todaro & Smith, 2015).

At the household level, migration and food security have a very straightforward interconnection (FAO et al., 2018). A study conducted by the United Nations in Uganda reveals that the chance of migration is 20 percent higher for food-insecure households compared to the well-to-do counterparts (FAO et al., 2018). Migration is a major coping strategy when one’s livelihood is threatened. The strategy offers the household at least double benefits; a decrease in household consumption resulting from the emigration, and remittance, in times when the migrants are blessed with jobs (FAO et al., 2018). In other words, migration can diversify the sources of income giving additional strength to the household to enhance food security. The Department for International Development’s (DFID) sustainable livelihood framework also demonstrates the model (Scoones, 1998).

The micro perspectives on migration and food security are specific. According to Todaro’s model, rural-to-urban migration is the result of an individual migrant’s cost-benefit economic analysis (Todaro & Smith, 2015). When the potential benefits of living in urban areas exceed the rural, more people would be determined to make so-called progressive decisions (Todaro & Smith, 2015). However, there are situations where individuals have limited or no options to make this analysis as staying equals starvation. This is in times of acute food insecurity and crises. In 1984-1985, for example, farmers in Ethiopia massively migrated to different places within the country to escape starvation resulting from drought and famine (Kidane, 1989).

These days, the critical and transboundary nature of migration and food insecurity are not debatable. In fact, there is at least a minimum common ground among experts and policymakers about these two concepts. However, policy options on how to mitigate them is still controversial. This is due to the dynamic nature of the problems, regional socio-economic disparities, and the diverse national interests of countries (Guiraudon & Lahav, 2000). Yet, the continued systematic approaches for creating coordinated efforts on the subjects are gaining momentum. The initiative and agreement made between nations in 2000 and 2015 to achieve the Millennium (UN, 2003) and Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) where migration and food insecurity among the agendas are good examples.
This coordinated joint effort has created an extensive base of literature on the various aspects of migration and food insecurity, albeit some lacuna still exists. Trusting on a review of the existing literature, this paper serves as an add-on to the available evidence through specifically addressing the most common grand policies targeting migration and food insecurity, their opportunities and constraints and a procedural approach for East African countries in tackling the aforementioned challenges.

2. Materials and Research Method

This scientific paper is entirely based on secondary sources data. Accordingly, it has used international reports, books, journal articles, and independent academic research findings, and sources form online official web pages.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Common Policy Options on Migration and Food Insecurity

One among the most commonly discussed policy options in migration and food security is inclusive development. Unfair resource distribution has always been a chronic and continuously aggravating problem that results in many problems including migration and food insecurity (Cook, 2006). It impends the national economy, directly and indirectly, as recently became highly visible through the unequal and inequitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines within and across countries (Clarke, Ali, Silverman, & Stranges, 2022). Non-inclusive growth and development intensifies violence and conflicts and pushes the destitute to migrate and/or live below the poverty line. This is exemplified by the long-lasting struggles in the resource-rich eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that involve local militias as well as global stakeholders. Due to the ongoing violence and conflict more than a quarter of the Congolese population is acutely food insecure and over 5.6 million people are displaced within the DRC itself, whereas no less than 900,000 Congolese refugees are living in neighboring countries (Claessens, Bisoka, & Ansoms, 2021). Inclusion policy tries to create a ‘trickle-down’ system to reach the lower sections of the society (Cook, 2006; Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015). It ensures that development programs and projects are designed to benefit all members of society, regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc. (Cook, 2006; Gupta et al., 2015).

Thus, inclusive development identifies the more vulnerable groups in a society, based on a thorough understanding of local and global disadvantaging dynamics and grants them extra support to not only be part of the developmental transformation but to be the engine of it (Cook, 2006; Todaro & Smith, 2015). This can take the shape of affirmative action, the provision of start-up and fixed capitals (e.g. land), need-based training, and social services at zero or discounted prices. Such pro-poor policies need to counter the growing gap between the poor and affluent members within societies (Cook, 2006; Todaro & Smith, 2015).

Contemporary development policies that deal with migration and food security need to consider the balanced and sustainable nature of rural-urban-growth, the second grand policy. For low-income countries, a common feature of urbanization is the primate urban pattern (Henderson, 2002). A primate city is a city that dominates a region in terms of population size, resources, social services, influence, and other opportunities (Cohen, 2006; Henderson, 2002). This resource monopoly by giant cities serves as a pull factor for immigration from all over the country and/or region (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Primate cities can seem to be in sharp contrast with the countryside and consequently aspire rural people to go and get higher quality
education, health services, good infrastructures, electricity, clean water, etc. (Todaro & Smith, 2015). As a result, a huge number of skilled and unskilled workers migrate to primate cities to fulfill their dreams (Cohen, 2006; Henderson, 2002; Todaro & Smith, 2015). This movement challenges both urban and rural sustainable growth. Rural areas as suppliers of labor and resource to the surrounding urban areas and primate cities further deepen the existing socioeconomic differences (Todaro & Smith, 2015). In relative terms, primate cities take advantage of the process. However, the process also causes the expansion of slums, increasing informal economic activity and criminal activities such as drug dealing and human trafficking, in addition to overcrowding and traffic congestion (Cohen, 2006; Henderson, 2002).

The aim of a balanced rural-urban growth policy is not to cut off the rural-urban chain, nor to let it continue as before. Instead, it aims to reduce the existing rural and urban socio-economic gaps by sustaining urban growth and lifting the rural counterpart (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Resources should be dispatched from the primate cities, development projects should avoid urban biases, and indispensable social services should be extended to rural communities providing education, health care, electricity, clean water, and infrastructures (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Indirectly, these measures reduce rural-urban migration, hence enhancing food security and avoiding urban chaos. Ultimately, the process balances the chain between primate cities and other settlements and maintains sustainable and balanced rural-urban growth through a “win-win policy” chain (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

Historical evidences shows that the large proportion of migration takes place from rural-to-urban areas (Manning, 2013). This is because many of socio-economic problems are more prevalent in rural than urban settlements (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This feature of migration is one among the rationales behind the introduction of integrated rural development policy (Ruttan & Paul, 1984), a policy aimed at enhancing the overall life of the rural people and maintain sustainable rural growth through a comprehensive packages.

Since its introduction in the 1970s, rural development is playing a decisive role in reducing rural-urban migration and maintaining food security (Ruttan & Paul, 1984). These days, the policy is very broad and includes a wide-range of programs in the countryside. It comprises the enhancement of labor productivity, entrepreneurship, and health through agricultural and health extension programs (Nemes, 2005). Moreover, it prioritizes the identification and utilization of local resources through community mobilization. It integrates them to feed each other and enhance efficiency (Nemes, 2005). Part of the policy is the creation of a strong rural institutional system. This gives additional power to solve common sustainability issues that rural communities are encountering. By doing so, the ultimate goal is enhancing the overall living standard in rural areas and consequently balancing out the pros and cons of potential emigration to urban areas (Ruttan & Paul, 1984; Nemes, 2005).

According experts in the field, nurturing democratic culture and institutional frameworks reduces many of the structural challenges encountered pertinent to migration and food insecurity. In fact, one of the leading political causes of migration and food insecurity worldwide is conflict and violence, forming a challenge within and across nations’ boundaries (IDMC, 2019). As of December 2018, the conflict has internally displaced 43.2 million people from their original place of residence in 55 countries (IDMC, 2019). The figure is the highest record in human history; Syria, Colombia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo hold the leading positions, contributing 6.1, 5.8, and 3.1 million respectively (IDMC, 2019). The principal source of political migration has been attributed to lack of democratic culture and its outcomes; violence and conflict, dictatorship, unfair resources distribution, lack of accountability and transparency, corruption, poor criminal justice systems, lawlessness, poverty, etc. (Schwarzmantel, 2010; UN, 2013). Hence, this policy quality is driven by the
motto that democratic culture is the basis for a strong economy and sustainable peace (UN, 2013).

Besides, as transboundary in nature migration and food insecurity require global and local partnerships, structural adjustments, asylum regulation, routinization, monitoring, and follow-up (Padilla & Franca, 2016). Strategic policies targeting the issues must be subjected to transparent reviews and modification when necessary. This demands the establishment of strong institutions. The effectiveness of these combined policies relies on the creation of a system for efficient, effective, and sustainable management of migration and food security through institutionalization and international partnership. Otherwise, the policies remain fragile, authorities become lawless, corruption becomes rampant, and transparency and accountability remain ineffective. In this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) exemplify the need to work together locally and globally within a shared framework.

Balanced population growth and action on climate change are also among the top grand policy lists discussed on the subject. Sustainable food security and migration policies advocate for a balanced population growth in relation to the country’s economic development through programs like family planning practices (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Most low-income countries have a population growth that outweighs their economies (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Farmers are displaced because of farmland fragmentation, deforestation is rampant, pressure on the ecosystem in general is high, and ultimately it is threatening people’s livelihood (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Hence, balanced population growth can moderate migration and food insecurity in a sustainable manner. Likewise, it has been more than fifty years since the 1979 international conference on climate change at Geneva, which was considered a wake-up call for the public. Increasingly, we are being confronted with the consequences of environmental and climate deterioration, on stage by the climate strikers and off stage by floods, heatwaves, drought, etc. Many projects are ongoing on the subject and the approach to tackle climate change has become more and more globalized (Kousky & Schneider, 2003). Climate change is a threat to food security and a push factor for migration putting the agenda among the forefront policy dealing with migration and food security (IDMC, 2019).

3.2 The Policy Opportunities and Challenges

Grand policies on migration and food insecurity have brought some manifest and latent opportunities; one of these is enriching global and regional integrations. For decades, efforts on tackling migration and food insecurity were performed by nations unilaterally and it used to have a centralized nature. However, this seems steadily improved and countries are responding in a coordinated and rigorous manner. The concerted response of the UN in MDGs and SDGs is a good illustration of how nations can work together and share experiences for a common goal. Through time, there is a growing realization of the efficiency and effectiveness of coordinated action on the challenges of migration and food insecurity. Recent grand policies are also recognizing the importance of the bottom-up approach at the expense of the long-standing top-to-bottom policy structures. The participatory bottom-up approach is extremely important to comprehend the contextual regional differences and it is playing a decisive role in community mobilization, use of local resources, and circular rural economy, giving the policy additional quality to secure the target group’s livelihood (Ruttan & Paul, 1984; Nemes, 2005).

The grand policies have also brought an opportunity to enhance people’s well-being through fair resource distribution. This started by challenging the misguided understanding of equating economic growth with development which was apparent in classical times (Todaro & Smith, 2015). The new understanding of development was a breakthrough for the introduction of more inclusive growth and social development policies that focus on the well-being of the nation.
Bear in mind that marginalized groups are the primary victims of migration and food insecurity, this policy shift has its unique merit in acknowledging and prioritizing the most vulnerable groups, which were previously left out or forgotten. It enables them to share from the national fruits obtained (Cook, 2006; Gupta et al., 2015).

Despite all these opportunities, the aforementioned policies are constrained by several factors, one of which is the lack of knowledgeable and skilled experts, particularly in low-income countries. For a policy to be effectively implemented, it must be translated into programs and specific projects, later continuously monitored and evaluated (Ndyetabula & Hella, 2017). This is done by a team that consists of technically and professionally skilled experts and experienced practitioners. To assemble a team with the necessary knowledge and skills can form a constraint on the foreseen time frame and budget of the program or project. In many low-income countries, policy experts are very scarce due to brain drain (Beine, 2001), sometimes causing policies to end even before reaching the implementation stage (Ndyetabula & Hella, 2017).

Another limitation can be the broad nature of some policies. For example, integrated rural development, climate action, and democratic culture demand a multitude of projects to achieve the mitigation of migration and food security. In order not to get lost in translation, these broad policies need strong coordinating units and resources. Otherwise, integrated rural development policies show little results as observed by previous adaptations of similar policies since the 1970s (ACET & JICA-RI, 2016).

The financial and institutional capacity is the other bottleneck that no program or project can avoid easily (Ndyetabula & Hella, 2017). Organized institutions can propose SMART strategies to maximize their outcome. These approaches are also applicable at national and international levels. For instance, the liberalization of market restrictions can initiate private investors to involve in projects, accordingly saving governments’ public expenditures (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is another strategy (Osborne, 2000). Governments request private investors to work jointly with the state (Osborne, 2000). Community mobilization is also gaining popularity. In addition to the target goal, this strategy empowers the community, adds value to the sustainability of policy outcomes, builds trust, and smooths the relationship between people and governments. In most cases, external sources of funding play a big role as well in the implementation of policies. For example, to tackle this challenge, the United Nations (UN) and other regional organizations invest billions of dollars in developing countries.

Some policy aspects are already hampered by conflicts of interests among cooperating partners or institutions. For example, Sustainable Development Goal number 13 deals with climate action (UN, 2015). Although climate change is impacting millions of people’s livelihood in a negative way (IDMC, 2019), almost none of the international laws on climate action are legally binding. Instead, they trust on consensus because of inconsistent national interests among nations (Stewart et al., 2013). This undermines both the quality of strong institutional frameworks as climate consideration.

In the end, it is worth mentioning that the non-democratic political environment and its consequences such as corruption, violence, unfair distribution of resources, etc. are among the other constraints impacting the success of the policies aforementioned (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

3.3 Methodological Approaches for East African Countries

East Africa hosts mainly low-income countries and is considered as one of the less stable regions in the world with a range of complex socioeconomic and political challenges (Todaro & Smith, 2015). The issues of migration and food insecurity are consequently deep-rooted and
persistent (Connell et al, 2007). The region’s economy profoundly depends on agriculture (UN, 2014; Todaro & Smith, 2015). The sector is the main source of employment, national GDP, and foreign hard currency (UN, 2014; Todaro & Smith, 2015). Therefore, regional development policies can benefit from integrated rural development policies with special attention to migration and food security. However, a policy cannot be formulated or adopted without solid evidence (Wills et al., 2016; Howlett, 2017).

According to Wills et al (2016), concerned authorities, at least, should exhaustively consider the following consecutive activities to pass on “best policy options” migration and food insecurity. At first, a detailed analysis of the region should be made. This comprises the investigation of the causes of the problems, the region’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT), culture, environment, politics, demography, health, etc. A holistic approach should be adopted to make sure that all the facts on the ground are captured. Second, based on the findings, the factors and problems should be ranked and prioritized. Third, the available policy options should be critically and comprehensively examined. Success and failure stories of the policies from other countries’ experiences have to be thoroughly evaluated. At last, the appropriate policy should be formulated or adopted. If the policy is alien, contextual adjustments must be made for fitting purposes. The remaining task is the post-policy appraisal. This activity ranges from the translation of policy into programs and projects to monitoring and evaluation of the implementation (Ndyetabula & Hella, 2017).

From the researcher’s perspective, keep in mind the above guideline, many of the region’s problems demand structural transformation. Hence, the first recommendation is to nurture a democratic culture, meaning a more grassroots and bottom-up approach rather than the continuation of centralized structures. From the people’s perspective, it can reduce violence and conflicts, unfair resource distribution, corruption, improve infrastructures, and provide better access to markets. Second, it would be an ignorant decision to adopt policies that prioritize industry or service at the cost of agriculture, because of the sector’s spillover effect on the local economy is of vital importance. Therefore, agriculture should be the top development priority. Later on, productivity in agriculture can attract industry and service sector economic activities (Prabhakar & Alemu, 2013). Integrated rural development policy can be one of the best options to achieve agricultural led economies. The Ethiopian economic policy named Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) can be exemplary (Prabhakar & Alemu, 2013). With this policy, Ethiopia has managed to achieve around 8 percent GDP growth for more than a decade (UNDP, 2013; WB, 2016; FAO, 2017; NBE, 2017). Third, the other policy qualities lead to the sustainability of the policy. Inclusiveness is crucial for this purpose as well as climate action, strong institutional framework, regional and international partnerships, balanced population growth, sustainable rural-urban growth, and other policy options even not covered in this study can be instrumental.

4. Conclusions

Migration and food insecurity are transboundary challenges that are at the forefront of global agendas. They significantly impact each other at macro, household, and micro levels. It is noted that a thorough understanding of the intricate relationship among these two variables is a key for designing a comprehensive policy framework that can be applied for alleviating the challenges pertinent to them. Besides, albeit many of the policies extensively discussed and debated in the international academics pertinent to migration and food insecurity are too grand and theoretical; in reality they can be applied in different societies with contextual adjustments depending on the regional socio-economic realities.
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