

Altruistic Preferences as Motivation for Migrants in The Diaspora to Remit to Home Communities

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyse what motivates the migrants from the Central African Region who are in the diaspora, to remit part of their earnings to target development within their region of origin. This contribution is based on the hypothesis that the remittances of the migrants living abroad are organized and motivated by altruism to contribute to the improvement of the social welfare. We have used a utility function, and an altruistic preference function to show that altruism is the main driving force for diasporans to continue supporting various development projects in their countries of origin. The main result is that, altruistic diasporans are the key strategic agents that make the nexus between migration and development a reality.

Keywords: Diaspora, Remittances, Development, Altruistic preference function

1. Introduction

Altruism is the willingness to give part of one's time or resources for a good cause. This willingness to give is in the utility function of the giver, otherwise, it becomes obligatory. Altruism is unselfish concern for the social welfare of others. Altruism focuses on a motivation to help others or a want to do good without reward, while duty focuses on a moral obligation towards a specific individual, a specific organization, or an abstract concept. Some individuals may feel both altruism and duty, while others may not. Pure altruism (Becker, 1981) is giving without regard to reward or the benefits of recognition and need. Remittances are sent out of affection and responsibility towards the family, community or country. It has been argued in the poverty literature that the major reason why people migrate to other countries is due to poverty. According to the altruistic model, sending remittances yields a satisfaction to the migrant out of a concern for the social welfare of his family, community or country.

Social security is provided generally through savings when people are working and by the State for those who cannot provide for themselves. In the Central African Region, and indeed, most of Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) where most people eke out their living through subsistence agriculture, and where the States are generally too poor to provide for adequate social security, social security is provided mostly by the family and the clan, or the ethnic group through giving and sharing. This is an integral part of the culture of the people of this region. A child born to a family belongs to the community. In this sense, altruism and charity are embedded into the culture of the people.

Although with education and globalization, people are migrating from the geographical locations of their clans, they continue to live mostly according to the norms of the clans: clan leaders and norms continue to have strong influence and impact on clan citizens wherever they may be. This influence and impact is passed on to children born in the Diaspora. Thus, clan members that migrate, continue to while adapting to their new environments, pay allegiance to their home countries. A major way of paying allegiance is through repatriating funds to support various clan activities. The expectation is that this process should wane over time as the memory of the home country fades with the passing away of family members and close friends in the home country. What is the rationale for continuing to remit even when one in the diaspora has lived a long time away from the home country, and maybe has taken up citizenship in the host country?

The fundamental thesis of this paper is that altruism, which we use synonymously with philanthropy, is what continues to motivate this behavior. Philanthropy is defined in many different ways by researchers and practitioners, its most simple definition being that it is the practice of giving, of sharing and helping the poor and those in need. It consists of the voluntary means that any culture, social group or individual uses to redistribute financial and other resources for the purposes of promoting some collective good and social wellbeing. The institutional, social and cultural mechanisms that surround these voluntary, altruistic and charitable practices vary across societies and their constituent communities (Copeland-Carson, 2005).

Philanthropy is the act of giving, or of donating money, goods, time, or effort to support a charitable cause, usually over an extended period of time and in regard to a defined objective. Charitable contributions made by individuals (Clotfelter, 2002) and collectives constitute one of the main sources of finance for the vast nonprofit sector in the world. In a more fundamental sense, philanthropy may encompass any altruistic activity which is intended to promote good or improve human quality of life. Someone who is well known for practicing such acts is normally referred to as a philanthropist. Although such individuals are most often fairly wealthy, many people without or with limited wealth do perform many philanthropic acts.

In this paper, we are interested in what motivates the migrants from the Central African Region who are in the diaspora, to remit part of their earnings to target development projects within their region of origin, which remittance improves on the social welfare of the local people. What motivates them? How are they organized to contribute to the development of their country of origin and family wellbeing? Thus, this approach views philanthropy as a social relation that may be manifested in different institutional guises (Schervish & Ostrander, 1990). Besides contributing to the social welfare of the poor in receiving environments, remittances are a form of showing the attachment migrants have with the country, community and village of origin (Sikod & Tchouassi, 2007).

The main question being investigated by this paper is whether Central Africans in the diaspora are motivated by philanthropy to remit part of their earnings. Specifically, the study is interested in trying to understand how Central Africans in the diaspora are motivated to show their attachment with their countries of origin. What motivates them to contribute to these developments in their countries of origin: is it altruism?

In Central Africa, there is a long tradition of giving and sharing, which provides a good basis for the development philanthropy. In order to stimulate and support effectively the development of basic social wellbeing, financial and non financial resources have to be mobilized in the country and abroad. This contribution is based on the hypothesis that the remittances of the migrants living abroad are organized and motivated by altruism to contribute to the improvement of the social welfare of the local people.

The methodology used in this paper is based on a descriptive and a preference model analysis. Because of the dearth of information, the study is fairly limited in the data analysis. It is based on mostly secondary data, and very limited primary data. The primary data is based on an informal random survey of households, individuals and groups carried out at the receiving end, to determine how they receive remittances, what they use them for, and what they see as motivating factors for people far away, to support those that they may not even know. The paper is structured as follows: section one is introductory; section two analyses data on the basic fundamentals of the link between diaspora and development and section three develops an altruistic function to show that altruism is what motivates those in the diaspora to continue remitting to support development activities in the home country.

2. The link between diaspora and development: data analysis

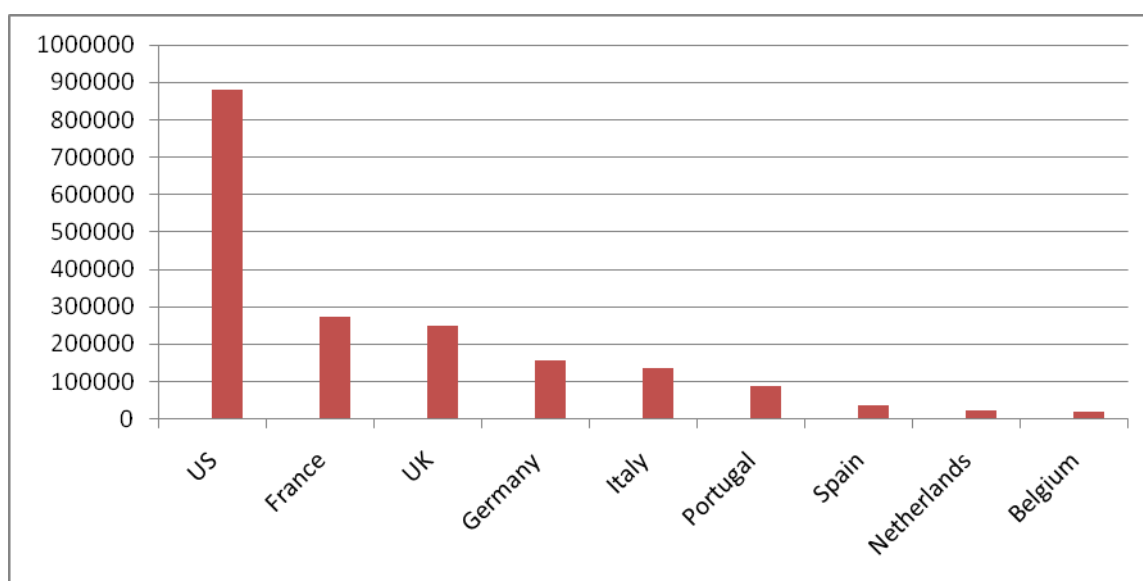
Many Central Africans in the diaspora fit into the category of philanthropists. These are people that have migrated from their home countries and have settled in different countries, but continue to feel attached to their home communities. Migration is a complex and dynamic process that changes the migrants' home and destination countries and, of course, the migrants themselves (Özden & Schiff, 2005). By working in host countries, migrants typically provide in addition to funds, business contacts and information about investment opportunities in source countries, laws and regulations, and differences in culture and ways of doing business. They serve as a bridge between the source countries and their countries of origin. Thus, migrants can increase exchange between three sets of locations: *i*) between source and host countries; *ii*) between different host countries if people are from the same source country, region, ethnic origin or religious group; and *iii*) between different regions of the same country in the case of internal migration (AFD, 2006). The term diaspora has acquired a broad semantic meaning. It now encompasses an array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, and overseas communities. It is used increasingly by displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home.

Thus, concepts of diaspora include a history of dispersal, memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return - which can be ambivalent or utopian - ongoing support of the homeland and, a collective identity defined by the above relationships. Remittances are a way that people in the diaspora maintain ties with their countries of origin. Remittances constitute a powerful economic and social force for socio-economic development in many African countries, providing financial resources that not only alleviate poverty by sustaining the basic needs of many families and communities, but also supporting private sector investments.

A considerable number of research work has been conducted on the topic of diaspora remittances over the past few years (Mohan, 2002; Mutume, 2005; AFD, 2006; Page & Plaza, 2006), especially as the contributions have become substantial, over 126 billion US dollars in 2004 (Sikod & Tchouassi, 2007). Some of these studies assumed that migrants leave their countries, settle in a new country, start integrating in their new society, and abandon their ties with their country of origin. Today, however, globalization, that is, modern communications makes it possible for those in the diaspora to remain connected with their native countries while residing abroad (Page & Plaza, 2006).

Given that studies that have been done on diaspora remittances in Central Africa so far, have looked at the contribution of these remittances to development (Tchouassi, 2004; Sikod & Tchouassi, 2007), this paper is interested in venturing in the area of social and human sciences by examining the motivations of those remitting; whether these remittances are motivated by philanthropy or some other reason. Sikod & Tchouassi (2007) found that remittances from the diaspora played a very important role at the family level in smoothing consumption over time, at the clan and community level in providing some social services like water points, educational infrastructure, etc.

Where are Sub-Saharan Africans (SSA) in the diaspora found? One finds them in Canada (206,425 immigrants born abroad, and of SSA origin as of 2001), in the United States (881,300 in 2000), in the European Union (1,042,897 as of 2000 (Note 1)). This does not include Ireland, Austria and Luxembourg. Disaggregating the immigrants in the European Union by countries results in 274,538 in France, 249,720 in the United Kingdom, 156,564 in Germany, 137,780 in Italy, 88,956 in Portugal, 39,336 in Spain, 23,806 in the Netherlands, and 18,900 in Belgium (Note 2). In the last few years, the number of people born in Africa and living in the United States has grown considerably. A 2000 census in the United States showed 881,300 Africans, representing 2.8 % of the total population born outside the country. By region, the Africans living in the United States revealed the following statistics: West Africa (326,507), North Africa (190,491), Central Africa (57,607), East Africa (213,299), Southern Africa (66,496) and 2690 Africans unclassified (Note 3).



Source: Authors' calculations, based on Eurostat (2002). www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu

Figure 1. Countries Hosting Sub – Saharan Africans in the Diaspora, 2000 – 2002

In the United States alone, where there is more detailed statistics, we find there are over 57000 Central Africans. Central Africa in the larger sense, is made up of the Central African Economic Community (CEEAC), represents an enlargement of groups in Central Africa such as the Central African Monetary Community (CEMAC), the Economic Community of the Great Lakes (CEPGL), made up of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, and Sao Tome and Principe. In all, Central Africa is basically the Congo Basin.

In Central Africa, regional migration is provoked mostly by political and economic instability, bad governance (corruption), inter-ethnic and interstate conflicts, inequality and poverty. Those most affected by regional migrations are the most vulnerable groups in the societies, for example, peasants. Migration to distant places like Europe and the developed and rich countries are mostly by the above average citizens, especially those with some means, from the political class, business class, and intellectuals. By migrating, this group tends to accumulate more human and socio-cultural capital than those that have remained back home.

However, the migrants remain very sympathetic about the plight of those left behind, and consequently have developed international philanthropic networks that are located mostly in Europe and North America (Pourtier, 2003).

According to the 2002 United Nations report on international migration, of eleven Sub-Saharan countries, only Equatorial Guinea experienced a negative or in-migration during the 1995-2000 period. Eight other countries including Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Chad, experienced a positive migration (see Table 1). This represents a net loss in terms of the population each year. Migrants are widely distributed across the continent, with a disproportionate number in Central African countries. In absolute terms, it is the large West and Southern African countries that are most affected by migration.

Table 1. Net Annual International Migration: Selected Central African Countries in the 1995-2000 Period

Country	Total Population (millions)	Net Annual Migration (thousands)	Rate per 1000 persons per year
Equatorial Guinea	0.5	-48	-6.2
Cameroon	14.8	1	0.1
RCA	3.7	2	0.5
Chad	7.9	20	2.7

Source: Authors' calculations, based on (Tchouassi, 2004).

The last two decades (1980-1990 and 1990-2000) were those of the new category of migrants. People migrated because they were escaping from desertification, drought, and famine. There are also political migrants escaping from dictators and political instability in Africa as well as economic migrants, who are victims of endemic unemployment, inequality and poverty. Migration of Africans to some western countries has thus become an important international phenomenon of the 21st century. It is therefore, not an exaggeration to use the concept diaspora to designate the Central African populations in voluntary or involuntary exile today dispersed in the four corners of the earth. With these dynamics, remittances have become very crucial. Total remittances to Africa amounted to US \$ 9 billion in 1990 and by 2003 had reached US \$ 14 billion, and the continent receives about 15 per cent of flows to developing countries (Mutume, 2005). Africa received US \$ 23.1 billion in remittances in 2007, the smallest share of global transfers, representing 6.8 per cent of global remittance flows of US \$ 337 billion (World Bank, 2008).

Table 2. Remittances in Selected Central Africa Countries

Central Africa Countries	Remittances (million US \$)	% of Remittances in the GDP
Cameroon	267	1.5
Central African Republic	73	4.9
Chad	137	2.1
Equatorial Guinea	77	5.7
Congo (Republic of)	423	7.4
Gabon	60	0.9

Source: Authors' calculation, based on IFAD (2007). www.ifad.org

In Central Africa, the Republic of Congo is the largest recipient of remittances representing 7.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Remittances to sub-Saharan Africa accounted for around 2.5 per cent of GDP on average between 2000 and 2005, which is considerably lower than in some other developing countries (Gupta, Pattillo & Wagh, 2007). Today there is a critical mass of Central Africans in the diaspora with high skills and critical work experience. While many have completely integrated into the systems and cultures of their host countries and may have no desire to return to the continent, some still desire to return. This desire is being fuelled by the feeling of autochthony, a feeling of belonging to some group of people. Both groups, nevertheless, agree on one thing: that they have a positive and significant role to play in leveraging the socio-economic development of the African Region. For this reason, a significant number of Central Africans in the diaspora have maintained strong socio-economic and socio-cultural ties with the Region.

Diasporans are generally organized by hometown associations, that is, associations are formed by those from the same family, clan, or ethnic group. In the case of few people from the same location, the organization could be by country. They meet at regular intervals or as the situation warrants, to discuss hometown issues, and issues of interest to their stay in the host country. Hometown associations are characterized by charitable and altruistic acts. They have recently become the focus of attention because they have been identified as potential new development actors. These philanthropic associations aim to support migrants in the new location, but importantly, they also undertake collective efforts to support development in the hometown. Hometown associations, (Page, 2007), bring together indigenes of a given place living away from home. They are a common means by which migrants from Central Africa maintain socio-economic and socio-cultural links with their place of origin, not necessarily a 'town' but sometimes a group of settlements, district or region. It can be their own place of birth, that of their parents, or an ancestral homeland. Although philanthropic hometown associations have tended to be more firmly established among the urban domestic diaspora (for example in towns and cities of the home country), with growing international migration, they are increasingly found in cities in Europe, North America, and various parts of the world.

In all the Central African countries, foundations are the main hometown association working in social sectors: health and education. In some countries these associations are regional; depend on ethnicity, languages and religion. In Cameroon and abroad, for example in United State, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, and Belgium, we have identified some networking hometowns associations: BANDECA, BASCUDA, AAED, BINAM, NUFI, MECA working in different areas. The members of these associations are living in America, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Historically, the primary concern of philanthropic hometown associations was charitable and mutual support among migrants, particularly when one of their member or close kin died and altruist members would collectively contribute towards sending the body home for burial. Most philanthropic hometown association activities (charitable and mutual support or developmental) still rely on endogenous means, although more dynamic or well connected philanthropic associations sometimes access resources from government, NGOs or international donors.

Central Africa diaspora philanthropic organizations are characterized by considerable diversity in their form (individual and association), general objective and focus (medical, education, arts and culture, tourism, environmental protection, refugee, etc.). The typology of Central Africa diaspora philanthropic groups or actors is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Typology of Central Africa Philanthropic Groups

· Individual	· Welfare/refugee group
· Hometown/country association	· Umbrella body
· Ethnic association	· Supplementary school
· Alumni association	· Virtual organization
· Religious association (foundation)	· Research/think tank
· Professional association	· Tourism, arts and cultural group
· Development NGO	· Women's group (foundation)
· Investment group/business	· Development education centres
· Political group	· Service provider
· National development group	· Youth group (foundation)
· Medical foundation	· Educational foundation
· Peace foundation	· Social wellbeing association

Source: Authors' compilations, based on field work.

The main objectives of these groups in Central Africa are to provide charitable funding, to support charitable, religious, educational, scientific, and health-related programs and to help other organizations which are philanthropic in nature and the community at large.

A typical example of a philanthropic hometown association that has evolved over time is the Bali-Nyonga Development and Cultural Association (BANDECA), a constitutionally established, legally registered philanthropic association made up of both people living in the Bali-Nyonga fondom and also of people with an affinity to Bali-Nyonga who are living outside the fondom elsewhere in Cameroon (the ‘domestic diaspora’) (Page, 2007), and outside Cameroon. It aims first, to organize altruistic and charitable migrants so that they can give, share, help and support each other when they are away from home. And second, to foster social welfare and social development back in the ‘hometown’. It is part of civil society - that sector of public life upon which such a burden of expectation has been placed in recent years.

Another hometown association is the Manyu Elements Cultural Association (MECA), which regroups the wider Manyu elements of the South west Region of Cameroon. It started in the 1970s with the Manyu elements in Yaounde. Today there are sub-parts of it representing villages, and even large families. This development or decentralization arises of course, as those in the diaspora grow, and the larger philanthropic group becomes more and more difficult to handle. In reality, the sub-groups function as independent philanthropic associations.

Another association of Central Africans in the diaspora is the Association for Aid to Education and Development (AAED) (Note 4) a nonprofit organization registered in Quebec, Canada with the vocation to fight poverty in developing countries by promoting education and health, mainly in Africa. The AAED besides making the Canadian public sensitive to the fight against poverty and to international development supports projects in education and in health by collecting, acquiring and shipping drugs and pedagogic materials, as well as establishing partnerships between Canadian development organizations and their counterparts in the South.

Outside of those destined to individuals and households, remittances targeting village or development, generally go through philanthropic hometown associations. Philanthropic hometown associations (medical foundations, educational foundations, and other associations among others: BANDECA, BASCUDA, BINAM, MECA and NUFI), even if created in the diaspora, would tend to have a local or home-based branch that carries out activities as planned and financed by those in the diaspora.

These groups and associations are usually initiated by village elites quite often because of chronic state neglect and the need to carryout various social development projects. These associations therefore become a channel through which village elites can solicit funds from those in the diaspora. Villages also copy each other, thus creating a positive externality. By their very nature as dispersed peoples, the diaspora are experienced in the use of networking to build connections among their charitable and altruistic communities abroad as well as with their countries of origin.

Hometown associations, even if created in the diaspora, would tend to have a local or home-based branch that carries out activities as planned and financed by those in the diaspora. Thus, if we consider the Manyu Elements Cultural Association; their early project was the construction of the Mamfe town hall. In terms of organizing to send money back home, the situations vary, depending on how each country views the diaspora remittances. Individual migrant and diasporas' associations in host countries are now organizing to play an increasingly active role in financing projects to improve living conditions and promote development (Tchouassi, 2004) in their home communities in Central Africa. In this region, this has been part of a long tradition of community and ethnic solidarity.

Why do Central Africans give and share? In light of the apparent incongruity between giving, sharing and the kind of self-interested behaviour usually examined by economists, it is natural to wonder about what motivates Central Africans to make charitable gifts in the first place. Indeed, members of philanthropic hometown associations in the diaspora are motivated to contribute by various factors: genuine altruism; economic self-interest; social or legal pressure; and, for some senior elites, the desire to nurture political capital at home. Underlying these activities is a sense of belonging, which connects those abroad to their home place and fuses spatially dispersed indigenes into a community, variously described as 'translocal', 'multilocal' or 'extended' (de Jong, 1997; Trager, 1998; Lambert, 2002).

Also, somewhere on the cusp between socio-cultural activities and economic roles comes pure philanthropy. The groups most able to demand peace are those that in some way enjoy a degree of 'protection'. In the context of looking at diasporas, it appears that doing charitable work may be a way to provide a safe space for engagement with the home country whilst sidestepping some of the toxic politics of the period. The Bali Cultural and Development Association, was launched in 1999, claiming a regrouping role to include the Bali Cultural Association of the United States of America, and the women's philanthropic association, *nkumu fed fed*. This makes it easier to handle resources sent to the village for various purposes by individuals and groups in the diaspora, who may or may not have any direct ties with the village, and who may have no political ambitions.

We see from the other African (Note 5) diasporan situations that even though the motivations are varied, sympathy, and the desire to help is usually at the root of remittances. While a person who escapes the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Darfur, may not want to go back, the thought of those left behind who continue to suffer is a powerful motivation to support philanthropic activities in these areas. The most moving is usually a state of war or some natural catastrophe that leads to mass displacements of people, creating severe refugee situations in either some parts of the country, or in neighboring or foreign countries. Central African countries are replete with such examples. Displaced people from Darfur in the Sudan moved en masse into the Central African Republic and Chad; Rwanda and Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, continue to have ongoing skirmishes that lead to the displacement of people. There is no doubt that if you are from any of these regions, your involvement will be passionate. Although some of these areas are now stable, providing for those who went through the shock, and are still resident in these regions continues to pose major problems.

Those from these regions that migrated and settled in other parts of the world, look back with nostalgia, charity and sympathy, and feel morally obliged to contribute to the reconstruction of their homelands and communities of origin.

3. The altruistic preference function of the diasporans: model and discussions of the results

Diasporas are the key strategic agents that make the nexus between migration and development a reality. Why should diasporans remit? There are a number of reasons for remitting. First, pure altruism - migrants care about individuals who may stay behind in their home family, community and village. This motive is likely to be strongly related to the extent that migrants have family links to their home countries, one measure of which is the number of family members who are left behind. Second, direct benefits - remittances may help create basic social infrastructures that can be consumed upon return, and that are a way to self-insure against risk. And third, family and social commitments and pressure - migrants may want to be supported by their family and not experience social exclusion upon return, and a way to insure this is to remit to support the family and also the home community. There are also people who no longer have relatives or friends in the home country, but continue to remit out of nostalgia, and the desire to alleviate poverty in developing countries.

Modeling the behavior of philanthropic migrants in relation with the financial transfer to home countries is based on the theory of Becker (1974) which is founded on the tradition of Lancaster (1966), which states that goods and services bought are not arguments in the utility function, but rather the inputs of a process which generate basic goods or commodities, which as a result, gives utility. Clearly, the utility function will be defined as a particular function of a number of characteristics possessed by the goods, rather than by a greater quantity of goods. Even if the altruistic model predicts that remittances would tend to decrease over time (Stark, 1991), the philanthropic migrant is an economic agent that exercises an activity: s/he transfers a part of his/her income to his home family, community or country for various reasons at a time, t . The transfer gives him satisfaction from the characteristic that it possesses for ameliorating or producing the well being of family members left behind, or the community, such as education, health, access to basic services such as water. By so doing, the migrant in the diaspora exhibits a sense of altruism.

The objective of the philanthropic migrant is then to maximize his satisfaction for a given time, and the analysis is done with the help of a utility function which gives a measure of the satisfaction felt for a level of a given argument. From Stark (1995) with the altruistic motive model, this can be written as:

$$U = U(C_m, TR, L), \quad (1)$$

where C_m is the consumption of the migrant, and the marginal utility is:

$$\partial U / \partial C_m > 0 \text{ with } \partial^2 U / \partial C_m^2 < 0, \quad (2)$$

TR is the total transfer he makes to his home family, community or country, and L is leisure. Implicit in L is the tradeoff with work to earn income. TR is characterised by access to potable water, education, health of the family, community or society: all things that give satisfaction to the migrant. We can thus write TR as:

$$TR_i = f(M_i, T_i, E_i, H_i) \quad (3)$$

where M is quantities of material goods, T is time, E is education, and H is health of the family members, the community, or the society.

The utility function of the migrant then becomes a function of his utility production. Given the fact that this utility function is in the tradition of Lancaster (1966), the amount transferred does not give direct satisfaction to the migrant in the diaspora, but indirectly through the commodities it generates for family members or the community in the home country.

For the migrant, the variation of utility increases if the amount of transfer increases, which implies an amelioration of the family wellbeing from the function of TR_i , which means that the marginal utility is:

$$\partial U / \partial TR > 0 \text{ but } \partial^2 U / \partial TR^2 > 0, \quad (4)$$

which implies a monotonic increase in the marginal utility, which is contrary to the Gossen Law of decreasing marginal utility. This monotonic increase in the marginal utility of the philanthropic migrant means that as long as the transfer continues to increase the wellbeing of the family back home, the migrant will continue to transfer resources, and his utility/satisfaction will continue to increase: his contribution to the development of the people back home will continue to provide him with more satisfaction.

Migrant philanthropic associations in host countries are now one of the key players with an active role in financing social and economic projects to improve living conditions and promote local development in their home communities in different regions of Africa. In Central Africa, this has been informally part of a long tradition of community, family social protection system and ethnic solidarity. In recent years the establishment of migrant associations in host countries has lent a new momentum to these efforts. For example, a significant proportion of Central African migrant savings accumulated in France was channeled through migrant associations to finance community assets in the village of origin, including construction of schools and health facilities among others. Female migrants from Central Africa have also been active in setting up philanthropic associations within the wider framework of '*Organisation de solidarité internationale issue de l'immigration*' (OSIM).

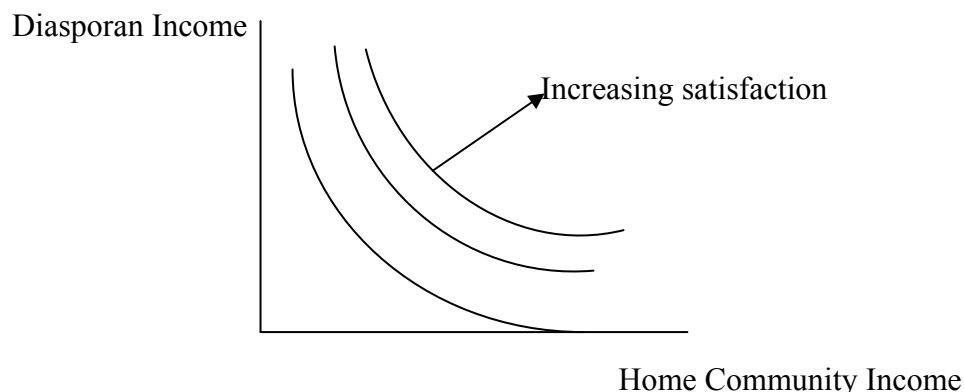
Mohan (2002) argues that there are three inter-related aspects of diasporas' engagement with the world. The first is development in the diaspora, for example the circumstances under which diaspora communities operate in the host country - jobs, housing, welfare, etc. Second is development through the diaspora - the ways that globally dispersed diaspora networks support each other, engage in trade, etc. Third is home development by the diaspora - the support that the diaspora communities provide to ancestral home communities through, among others, remittances, lobbying, altruism and philanthropy. Every day, thousands of

Central Africans living abroad line up in money-transfer offices to wire home the odd dollar they are able to save. From the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and France -the top sources of remittances to Central African countries- some of the money finds its way deep into the rural areas of Central Africa. There, it may send a child to school, build a house or buy food to sustain those remaining at home (Mutume, 2005). Outside of those destined to individuals and households, remittances targeting village or development, generally go through philanthropic hometown associations.

Since 1999 the Bali-Nyonga Development and Cultural Association has raised tens of thousands of pounds and has undertaken a number of projects in Cameroon. It has renovated a building in Bali-Nyonga for its own headquarters, renovated the office of the government's principal official in town (the Divisional Officer) and equipped the offices of the new "gendarmerie brigade" (the military police). It has opened a public library with books provided by the Bali-Nyonga diaspora in the United States and it has organized a cancer-screening exercise. However its two largest projects were the reconstruction of the water supply and the equipping of the mortuary. The Bali Cultural Association (United States Branch) has sent containers of medication and equipment to the Bali district Hospital. AAED also raised Can\$10,000 in 2005, Can\$40,000 in 2006, and Can\$60,000 in 2007 respectively. Most of these funds have been used to support the "Université des Montagnes" (UdM), a community college founded in 2000 in Cameroon by the philanthropic non profit organization, Association for Education and Development (AED). The sustainability of this community college relies essentially on philanthropy and the mobilization of civil society altruism.

The Manyu Elements Cultural association, MECA, has supported improvements at the Mamfe General Hospital. MECA-United States continues to support the construction and equipment of a mortuary in the hospital grounds in Mamfe. The benefits of a few other MECA projects are spread around the division, notably medicines distributed to village health centres. In terms of home area development, common Village Development Association (VDA) projects include construction of town halls, classrooms, health centres, places of worship, and farm access roads, and rehabilitation of pipe-borne water systems. The diaspora thus supplies most of the cash and sometimes materials or expertise for VDA projects, either directly or indirectly. The effectiveness of VDAs as development actors therefore depends partly on the size and dynamism of the village diaspora.

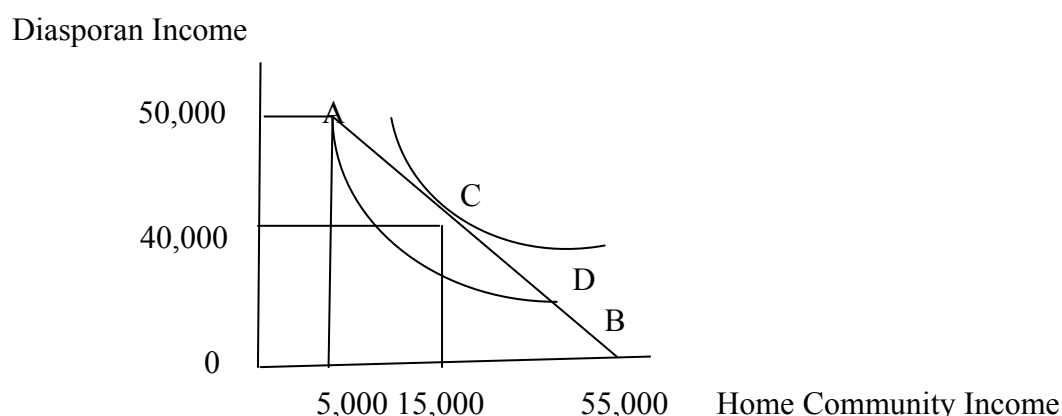
We can also analyse the behavior of the altruistic diasporan through preference functions. These are people whom look beyond their self interest. Let us explore how the notion that some people have altruistic preferences can be incorporated into the model of rational choice. Consider, for example, the case of the Bali Nyonga elements in the diaspora, who care not only about their own income level, but also about the local community of Bali Nyonga. To keep the analysis simple, we consider the elements in the diaspora as a single individual, and the members of the local community back home also as a single individual. Such preferences can be represented in the form of an indifference map, defined over their respective income levels and might look something as indicated in Figure 2 below.



Source: Authors' calculations, based on field work.

Figure 2. The Indifference Map for the Diasporans, Altruistic People

Note that the diasporan indifference curves are negatively sloped, which means that they are willing to tolerate a reduction in their income in return for a sufficiently large increase in that of the home community. Note also that their indifference curves exhibit diminishing marginal rate of substitution (MRS), which means that the more income the diasporans have, the more they are willing to give up in order to see the home community have more.



Source: Authors' calculations, based on field work.

Figure 3. The Optimal Income Transfer from the Altruistic Diasporan

The question that the diasporans confront is whether they would be better off if they remitted some of their income to the home communities. In order to answer this question, we first need to display the relevant budget constraint confronting the diasporans. We assume the average income of diasporans in the leading country where remittances come from, the United States, is \$50,000, and the average income in Cameroon is \$5,000. The diasporans can retain all their income, in which case they stay at point A (Figure 3 above), or they can give some of the money to the home community, in which case they will have \$1 less than \$50,000 for each \$1 sent to the home community. Their budget constraint here is the locus labeled B in Figure 3, which has a slope of -1.

If the diasporans keep all their income, they end up on the lower indifference curve (IC). But because their MRS exceeds the slope of the budget constraint at A, it is clear that they can do

better. The fact that the $MRS > 1$ at A tells us they are willing to give up more than a dollar of their own to see the home community have an extra dollar. But the slope of their budget constraint tells us it costs them only a dollar to give the home community an extra dollar. They are therefore better off if they give some of their income to the home community. The optimal transfer is represented by the tangency point labeled C in Figure 3. We therefore assume this rationality on the part of the diasporans with altruistic tendencies.

4. Conclusion

Central Africans, like people from other parts of Africa, and indeed, the world, face the same, and sometimes, even greater problems that oblige them to migrate. This phenomenon has intensified over the last two decades, with the socio-political problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Chad. People forced by circumstances to leave their countries of origin, continue to live under the nostalgia of one day returning to the country of origin. Children born in the diaspora are taught about the home country of their parents, and so their attachment to the country grows, a phenomenon that gets passed down to the younger generations. This phenomenon is best exemplified by the United States, where almost everybody identifies themselves in terms of some country of origin of their forefathers -African-American, Irish-American, French-American, Jewish-American, etc. This means that while remittances to individuals and families may be by recent migrants, those who remit to countries of the origin of their forefathers do so out of altruism. They know no particular person or family in these countries.

Generally, people in the diaspora belong to various types of philanthropic hometown associations that facilitate charitable and mutual help, raising funds for projects in the home countries of origin, transfer of various types of technologies, etc. While recent migrants are motivated by the need to support families back home, distant migrants are motivated largely by altruism, charity, and in today's globalizing world, by the desire to bridge the development divide. We have used a utility production function, and an altruistic preference function to show that altruism is the main driving force for diasporans to continue supporting various development projects in their countries of origin.

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Notes

Note 1. United States, Immigration and Naturalizations Services, Annual Statistics Report, 2003.

Note 2. Eurostat (2002).

Note 3. United States, Immigration and Naturalisation Services, Annual Statistics Report, 2003.

Note 4. AAED is a registered charitable organization based in Montreal, Quebec, with members residing across Canada and the United States.

Note 5. For example, in Britain in 1995, Action for Children (AfC) was formed by a group of British-based Sierra Leoneans. From early fundraising campaigns they moved to partner with an established international NGO working in Sierra Leone, Concern International, and this is now an important partnership. In the United States there seem to be a number of philanthropic initiatives, including Grassroots Empowerment for Self Reliance (GEMS), the Sierra Leone Fund, begun by childhood friends in the United States.