

# HUMAN MOBILITY MIGRATION FROM A EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN VIEWPOINT

EDITED BY GIOVANNI CARLO BRUNO,  
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## *African Migration: the case of Western Africa*

### *Abstract*

Perceptions on Africa migration is often based on some circumstantial facts encrusted, however with over simplification ending with the creation of myths. The latest events, with thousands of refugees attempting to leave the North African shores have contributed once again to give a less than accurate description of the African migration movement. Despite the general perspective, migration between African countries, take up more migrants than that with the neighbor Europe while overall migration between developing countries outnumbered every other form of migration. In this paper we attempt to add to the current literature on African migration, focusing in particular on West Africa. In the last decade African migration flows have increased of intensity, with countries serving at the same time as places of origin, transit and destination of migrants. This has amplified the social and political tensions inside the countries object of such movements, while on the other hand has also increased the need from Western countries to better understand such new phenomenon. In first part we describe the paths of migration which originate from the Sub Saharan countries, pass through the West African and North African countries aiming to reach the European Mediterranean countries. In doing this we examine the interconnection between the different migration path. Subsequently we will look at migration policies highlighting the increasing involvement of the European Union in the promotion of developmental policies for the country of origin of migrants and the implementation of new immigration priorities.

1. Introduction - 2. Migration, recent data and new paths: the West Africa scenario - 3. Explaining migration movement in Africa: The West Africa case - 3.1. The EU Global Approach on the migration issues - 3.1.1 Migration policy in West Africa - 4. Conclusions

### *1. Introduction*

The layman perceptions on Africa migration is often based on some circumstantial facts, which are however encrusted with over simplification of the phenomena

ending with the creation of myths such as that all Africans crossing the Sahara are in transit to Europe or that the trafficking of women and children is the most common form of migration within and from Nigeria<sup>1</sup>. Believe in such myths is strengthened on the one hand by the way in which tragic events, which often hit the African continent, are depicted by the media, and on the other hand by the chronic lack of reliable data on African migration, which make difficult to the scholars to provide accurate descriptions of the phenomenon. These considerations will be at the base of our analysis.

Been described as continent on the move<sup>2</sup>, Africa is indeed characterised by a variety of forms of migration. The latest events, with thousands of refugees attempting to leave the North African shores, have however contributed, once again, to give a less than accurate description of the African migration movement. As recently indicated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)<sup>3</sup>, despite the general perspective, migration between African countries takes up more migrants than the migration in the northern neighbor Europe, while migration between developing countries outnumbers every other form of migration.

Among Africa migrants we can identify economic migrants (contract workers, labour migrants, skilled professionals), refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as well as environmental migrants, all moving as indicated by Adepoju<sup>4</sup>, "within a continuum of internal, intra-regional and international circulation". Despite the intensity of migration flows and their significant socioeconomic, political and ecological impacts, migration remains the least understood demographic phenomenon in Africa, due particularly to the availability and reliability of data which affect the quality of migration studies. In this paper we will attempt to add to the current literature on African migration, internal and international, focusing in particular on West African migration flows.

In the last decade African migration flows have increased of intensity<sup>5</sup>, concurrently the traditional vision of migration have indeed changed with countries serving at the same time as places of origin, transit and destination of migrants.

1. Bakewell, O., de Haas H. (2007), African Migration: continuities, discontinuities and recent transformations, in Chabal P., Engel U., de Haan L. (eds.) (2007), *African Alternatives*, Leiden, Brill, p.95-118.

2. Curtin P., (1997), «Africa and Global Patterns of Migration», in Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Global History and Migration*, Westview Press, p. 63-94; de Bruijn M., Van Dijk, R., Foeken, D., (2011), *Mobile Africa. Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond*, Leiden, Brill; IOM, (2005), *World Migration Report 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration*, Geneva.

3. IOM, (2008), *World Migration 2008. Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy*, Geneva, Vol. 4, World Migration Report Series.

4. Adepoju A., (2008), «Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa», in *Current African Issues*, n° 37, Nordiska Afrikaninstitutet.

5. ESA UN, (2009), International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1>.

On the one hand this amplified the social and political tension inside the countries object of such movements, while on the other hand has increased the need from Western countries and of the European Union (EU) in particular, of better understanding such new phenomenon to develop appropriate migration policies. In the first part of the work we will describe the new paths of migration which nowadays originated from the Sub-Saharan countries, pass through the West African and North African countries often aiming to reach the European Mediterranean countries. In doing this we will examine the interconnection between the different migration paths. Particular emphasis will be given to the Western African countries which have seen profound transformation in the consistent migration flows in the sub-region. Subsequently we will look at the reasons underpinning the migration flows in the context of the recent dynamics in West Africa migration concluding with an assessment of the European policies with regard to the migration issues. In this study, the term 'migrant' includes both labour migrants and refugees, unless otherwise specified, therefore the term transit will not be used to categorise individual migrants. This term seems to be more useful to describe a migratory phenomenon at the macro-level of societies and countries. Transit migration, in fact, as indicated by Düvell, (2006), can then be defined as the movement of people entering a national territory, who might stay for several weeks or months to work to pay or to organise the next stage of their trip, but who leave the country to an onward destination within one year. This study will also draw on the concept of migration systems as defined by Mabogunje (1970), whom referred to a migration system as a set of "places linked by flows and counter flows of people, goods, services, and information, which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between the places". While Mabogunje focused on rural-urban migration within Africa, Portes and Böröcz (1987) and Kritiz et al. (1992) extended this to international migration. Here we endorse the international migration system definition used by Fawcett (1989), Gurak and Caces (1992) who refer to it as "countries - or rather places within different countries - that exchange relatively large numbers of migrants, and are also characterized by feedback mechanisms that connect the movement of people to concomitant flows of goods, capital (remittances), ideas, ideals, representations and information"

## 2. *Migration, recent data and new paths: the West Africa scenario*

Too often, it is assumed that most migration involves the movement of people from South to North, when, in fact, the number of people migrating internationally between countries in the South is substantial. Considering in particular Sub-Saharan Africans it is possible to say that they represent a small immigrant

minority in Europe. Going back to the nineties, they represented only 6 per cent of the foreigners in EU-15, and a full half of those present were from western Africa. More recently, in 2000, they accounted for only 4 per cent of immigrants resident in OECD countries<sup>6</sup>. In practice, few sub-Saharan migrants away from Africa. According to a compilation of census data<sup>7</sup>, fewer than one in a hundred people born in sub-Saharan Africa and aged 25 or over, lived in an OECD country in 2000 (0.9 per cent). This was three times fewer than the proportion of emigrants in North Africa (2.9 per cent) and thirteen times fewer than the number in Central America (11.9 per cent). By comparison with internal migration flows, the flows towards Europe were small. The apparent increase in the number of sub-Saharan immigrants is mainly due to the fact that their number in the 60s, when data initially were collected, was very small. This pattern is confirmed also by the latest revised migration figures<sup>8</sup>.

*Table 1. International Migrant Stocks 2010*

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Stocks</i>	<i>%</i>
Africa	19,263,183	9.0
Asia	61,323,979	28.7
Europe	69,819,282	32.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	7,480,267	3.5
Northern America	50,042,408	23.4
Oceania	6,014,693	2.8
World Migrants	213,943,812	
World Population	6,895,889,000	3.1

*Sources: United Nations, (2008).*

2010 estimate, indicates that the number of international migrants in the world was at 214 million, (with an increase of almost 18 in 10 years and 30 per cent in 20 years) representing 3.1 per cent of the total world population. As expected, the more developed regions show the largest migrants stock (table 1).

6. Docquier F, Marfouk A., (2006) "International migration by educational attainment (1990-2000) - Release 1.1", in Caglar Ozden and Maurice Schiff (eds.), *International Migration, Remittances and Development*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

7. Lessault D., Beauchemin C., (2009), «Les migrations d'Afrique subsaharienne en Europe: un essor encore limité», in *Population & Sociétés*, n°452, Janvier, pp. 4.

8. United Nations, (2010), Database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2010, [www.unmigration.org](http://www.unmigration.org).

However, as suggested by the International Migration Report 2009<sup>9</sup>, in 2010, contrary to general perception, South–South migration (migration between developing countries), was slightly larger than migration from the South to high-income countries (particularly to those belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development -OECD). 74 millions of migrants (43.1 per cent) moved from developing countries to live in other developing countries compared with the 73.3 million (42.8 per cent) moving to live in high income OECD countries (see table 2)<sup>10</sup>.

Table 2. Global Migrant Stock Estimates - percentage of emigrants

Migrants from	Migrants living in (value in%)			Total
	Developing countries	High-income OECD countries	High-income non-OECD countries	
Developing countries*	43.1	42.8	14.1	100
High-income OECD countries	13.6	83.3	3.1	100
High-income non-OECD countries	20.9	74.1	5	100

Sources: Ratha, D., Shaw, R., (2007); United Nations Development Programme (2009); OECD 2010; U.S. Census Bureau 2008.

\* Refers to low- and middle-income countries (developing countries) as defined by the World Bank's country classification.

When looking in details to the African continent estimate by the United Nations<sup>11</sup>, indicates that the total number of international migrants in Africa rose from 9 million in 1960 to 19 million in 2010. The first largest increase occurred, between 1960 and 1980, when the number of international migrants in Africa rose from 9 million to 14 million then the growth reduced in the period 1980 to 1990, almost alt in the following decade to then increase again in the period between 2000 and 2010, (table 3).

9. United Nations, (2011), *Human Development Report 2011 Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*, New York.

10. Between 1980 and 2008, the majority of immigrants to Europe came from developed countries, especially other European countries. In absolute numbers, the inflow of immigrants from less developed countries was high in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The numbers increased for France and the United Kingdom between 1990 and mid-2000, but not for Germany. The number of immigrants to Italy and Spain from less developed regions also increased.

11. United Nations, (2003), *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: 1960-2000, 2003 Revision*, POP/DB/MIG/Rev.2003; United Nations, (2008), *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision*, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008.



International migrants are also not distributed homogeneously among the African regions. By 2010 the continent was hosting 19.2 million international migrants, up from 9.4 million in 1960, but both Eastern Africa and Western Africa have generally had higher numbers of international migrants than the other regions of the continent. Western Africa in particular has experienced a fairly important increase in the number of international migrants since 1960, from 2.5 to 8.5 million. In Eastern Africa, the number of international migrants also increased steadily until 1990 but has decreased in the last decade, so that by 2010 it stood at 5 million.

In Southern Africa, the number remained close to a million from 1960 to 1980 and then increased during the 1980s to reach 2.1 million in 2010.

*Table 3. African Global Migrant Stocks 1960-2010*

<i>Region</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>
Africa	9.4	9.7	14.4	16.2	16.3	19.2
Eastern Africa	3.1	3.2	5.1	6.1	4.5	5.0
Middle Africa	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.6
Northern Africa	1.5	0.9	1.5	2.2	1.9	2.0
Southern Africa	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.5	2.1
Western Africa	2.5	2.7	4.8	4.9	6.9	8.5

*Sources: United Nations, (2003), (2008).*

In Middle Africa, the number of international migrants increased from 1.3 million to 1.9 million between 1960 and 1980, but declined to 1.5 million by 1990 and is estimated to have remained virtually unchanged since then. In Northern Africa, the increasing trend in the number of international migrants that persisted during 1970-1990 was reversed in the 1990s, and by 2010 the region was estimated to host 2 million international migrants.

As a result of these trends, by 2010, 44 per cent of the international migrants in Africa lived in countries of Western Africa; 26 per cent in Eastern Africa; a further 10 per cent in Northern Africa; 8 per cent each in Middle Africa and 11 per cent Southern Africa, (table 4).

*Table 4. Distribution of international Migrants in Africa% 2010*

<i>Region</i>	<i>%</i>
Eastern Africa	26
Middle Africa	8
Northern Africa	10
Southern Africa	11
Western Africa	44
Africa	100*

*Sources: United Nations, (2003), (2008).*

*\* The value is not 100 because decimal point of percentage are not indicated*

Overall as indicated in the table 5 below, Sub-Sahara Africa migration plays an important role in the migration<sup>12</sup>.

The stock of the emigrants represent 21.8 million (2.5 per cent of the population) while that of the immigrants 17.7 million (2.1 per cent of the population).

63 per cent of the movements appears to be inside the region with the top 10 recipients countries being Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and the top 10 immigration countries: Ivory Coast, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia.

*Table 5. Sub Saharan Migration Flows*

<i>Destination Stock of Emigrants in%</i>				
<i>Developing countries</i>	<i>Other Developing countries</i>	<i>High-income OECD countries</i>	<i>High-income non-OECD countries</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
63.1	1.8	24.8	2.5	7.8

*Sources: The World Bank, (2011).*

Based on those figure it is important to emphasize that West Africa does have a prominent position in these flows, considering that 4 of the top 10 migration corridors are located in this sub region, among them the Burkina Faso–Ivory Coast, the

12. The World Bank, (2011), Migration and Remittances Fact book 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Washington DC.

Ivory Coast - Burkina Faso corridors, the Mali- the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo-Rwanda corridors<sup>13</sup>.

According to census data, estimates by the United Nations Population Division, suggest that West Africa houses the largest absolute international immigrant stock (based on place of birth data) in Africa.

*Table 6. West Africa Migration Stocks*

	<i>Emigrants</i>	<i>Immigrants</i>	<i>Imm-Emig Difference</i>
Benin	500,401	190,250	-310,151
Burkina Faso	1,554,125	1,011,834	-542,291
Cameroon	123,452	149,425	25,974
Cape Verde	20,333	2,176	-18,157
Chad	122,875	201,358	78,482
Ivory Coast	1,049,878	2,365,629	1,315,750
Gabon	6,002	155,834	149,832
Gambia, The	20,597	277,593	256,996
Ghana	460,523	1,851,814	1,391,291
Guinea	476,792	394,557	-82,235
Guinea-Bissau	62,289	16,553	-45,736
Liberia	346,455	85,542	-260,913
Mali	906,423	154,719	-751,704
Mauritania	85,434	87,554	2,120
Niger	376,984	176,877	-200,107
Nigeria	397,760	894,439	496,679
Senegal	373,057	167,226	-205,831
Sierra Leone	200,519	102,643	-97,877
Togo	313,544	153,029	-160,515
Total West Africa	7,397,442	8,439,053	1,041,069
Total West Africa Migrants in the World	9,783,185		

*Sources: Ratha, D., Shaw, R., (2007), updated with additional data for 71 destination countries as described in The World Bank, (2011).*

13. The other corridors being: Zimbabwe-South Africa, Uganda-Kenya, Eritrea-Sudan, Mozambique-South Africa, Lesotho-South Africa, Eritrea-Ethiopia. cf. Note 6.

As indicated in table 6, in 2010, they amounted to 8.4 million; interestingly, West Africa is also the only part of sub-Saharan Africa where migration stocks relative to the total population have increased over the past few decades<sup>14</sup>.

The West African migration system is not an autonomous entity, it is closely related to several migration systems in the South and in the North and interacts with them (Robin, 1996) thus gradually becoming inter-regional and intercontinental. The region is in fact at the same time the point of departure of migrants and the "transit area" for migrants originated from other sub-Saharan countries that move to North Africa or Central Africa in order to reach Europe or other northern countries. Overall when considering the migration routes used for such movements it is interesting to note that often these were the same trans-Saharan caravan routes used by the nomadic African population to "cross" the desert and reach the coastal areas<sup>15</sup> for trading and exchange of scholars<sup>16</sup>.

Figure 1. West Africa migration movements



Sources: Elaborated from Gnisci D., 2008

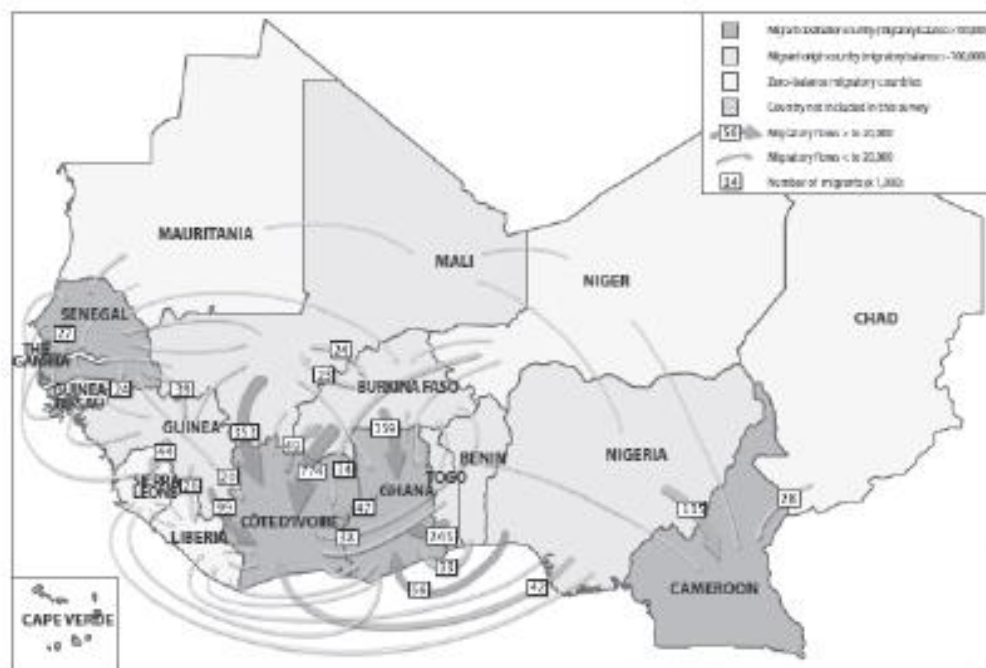
14. de Haas H., (2007), *Le mythe de l'invasion. Migration irrégulière d'Afrique de l'Ouest au Maghreb et en Union Européenne*, Travail de recherche de l'IMI (International Migration Institute), University of Oxford, pp. 81.

15. Caruso I., Venditto B., (2008), «*I flussi migratori. Le migrazioni di transito nel Mediterraneo*», in Malanima P. (ed.), *Rapporto sulle Economie del Mediterraneo*, Bologna, il Mulino, p. 43-66.

16. Boahen A., (1966), *Topics in West African History*. London, Longman.

With regard to West Africa, the total number of people leaving this region is 9,783,185 million, of which almost 7.4 million intra-regional and the remaining divided between North America and Europe (figure 1). Intra-regional mobility, as indicated above, (figure 2 and table 6), is generally characterised by a North-South, inland-coast movement from Sahel West Africa (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) to the plantations, mines and cities of coastal West Africa (predominantly Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and in the West to Senegal and The Gambia)<sup>17</sup>.

Figure 2. Intra West Africa migration movements 2000



Sources: Gnisci D., Tremolières M., (2006).

Looking at some particular cases we can observe that in 2011, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast had the largest migration movements; the number of people leaving Burkina Faso was an estimated 9.7 per cent of the country's population<sup>18</sup>. Approximately 1,554,125 Burkinabe and 1,049,878 Ivoirians migrate to other

17. Findley S.E., (2004), Mali: Seeking Opportunity Abroad, Migration Policy Institute, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=247>; Arthur J. A., (1991), «International Labor Migration Patterns in West Africa», in *African Studies Review*, 34, p. 65-87; Kress B., (2006) «Burkina Faso: Testing the Tradition of Circular Migration», in *Migration Information Source*, March.

18. Mohapatra S., Ratha D., (2011), in The World Bank, *Remittance Markets in Africa*, Washington DC.

West African countries, with Ivory Coast and Ghana being the countries with the highest number of immigrants<sup>19</sup>. Ghana has a long history of migration both internal as well as to and from the West African sub-region and the rest of the continent. Complete, reliable migration data about the numbers of Ghanaian emigrants are difficult to obtain, and although migrant destinations have changed lately to include Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia, migration to the West African sub-region, especially to Ivory Coast and Nigeria, has continued. Exploitation of natural resources, particularly the commencement of oil drilling, is on the other hand attracting new immigrants, both from the West Africa region and outside.

Senegal has long traditions of both immigration and emigration, being one of the few countries in the region with stable immigration; for the past three decades, it has been losing ground as a host country and is becoming a country of origin. According to the World Bank data, West African countries remain the principal destinations for Senegalese migrants, however, France is still the preferred European country. According to official statistics, France had almost 91,446 Senegalese immigrants in 2010-36 per cent the population of Senegalese migrants in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

Mali is a country of net emigration; political conflict and pressures within or next to Mali's borders have had a profound effect on the options for migrants. In the early 1990s, there were prolonged conflicts throughout the Sahel. Unrest in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast brought an estimated 18,000 refugees to Mali by 1996. These were assisted in being lodged temporarily by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and with the conclusion of the peace accord in 1995, many were repatriated<sup>20</sup>. In the last decade, continuation of civil war in Ivory Coast made this country unsafe for Malians and the Ivoirians themselves, increasing the migration movements toward France. The tightening of its immigration regulations in the early 2000, and later on the economic recessions, has turned Malians increasingly to the United States.

However, considering the region movements in its complexity, we can observe that the migration net rate is confirming the statements that internal migration movements are higher than those outside the region. For this reason it is hence important to analyse the underlying factors which can help to understand the motivation behind migration movement in Africa.

19. More than 50 per cent of Burkinabe currently migrate in Ivory Coast while in the period between 1988 and 1992 emigrants from Burkina Faso to Ivory Coast represented 85.4 per cent of the immigrants in the country. Cfr. Mohapatra S, Ratha D., (2011).

20. Findley S. E., (2004).

### 3. *Explaining migration movement in Africa: The West Africa case*

It is widely accepted in the literature<sup>21</sup> that analysing migration movements in West Africa is quite challenging due to the complexity of the phenomenon, where poor theoretical understanding, added up to the lack of comprehensive statistical data, often only allow to make qualitative considerations. Scholars of African migration movements<sup>22</sup> have clearly identified *poverty, poor economic performances, political instability, poor health infrastructure and environment degradation*<sup>23</sup> as the main underlying factors explaining migration in the continent. This is particularly true in the case of West Africa, where, in the last decade, the combination of the above identified factors has to come to terms with both internal and international dynamics which have exacerbated the migration movements in the region<sup>24</sup>. From a regional point of view, using the “rural–urban” model of migration, we observe that the urban economic structure, although diversified as it may be, is still unable to absorb the majority of migrants. To the rural migrants, whom we can easily associate with the economic migrants, we have in fact to add also the non-economic migrants. Consequently, and concurrently with this dynamic, we interpret international migration as the combined result of the inability to address the needs of rural/economic migrants and that of the non-economic migrants. For this reason in a globalised context, internal and international migrations represent key elements to understand the new social dynamics and vice versa.

Overall, it is possible to say that the expansion and the contraction of the world economy, combined with regional economic difference which do persist in the continent<sup>25</sup>, influence international migration, both in terms of the impact on per capita income and on the development of new means of communication, contributing in this way to modify the migration routes. As result, migration fluxes have

21. Adepouju A., (1995), «Migration in Africa, an overview», in Bacher J., Akin Aina T., (ed.), *The migration experience in Africa*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p. 87-108; Adepouju A., (2005), *Migration in West Africa. A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM)*, September, pp. 23; Robin, N., (1992), «L'espace migratoire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest: panorama statistique», in *Hommes et migrations: migrants de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, n° 1160, décembre, p. 6-15.

22. Barros L., Lahlou M., Escoffier C., Pumares P., Ruspini P., (2002), «L'immigration irrégulière subsaharienne à travers et vers le Maroc», in *Cahiers de Migrations Internationales*, 54 F, Bureau International du Travail, pp. 152.

23. In this context we are going to consider poverty and poor economic performances as “economic” drivers of migration while political instability, poor health infrastructure and environment degradation as “non-economic” drivers.

24. Simon G., (2008), *La planète migratoire dans la mondialisation*, Paris, A. Colin.

25. Strong economic unbalances do remain between Northern and Southern African countries and between these and the Western African one.

changed, both in terms of stocks and in terms of characteristics<sup>26</sup>. At the same time the distinction between country of origin and country of destination of the migrants has become more uncertain, making difficult to define when a country belong to one of the other category since often both definitions do apply. The distinction between internal and international migration is also becoming less distinct due to the fact that many countries now fit in the connotation of transit countries. For these reasons the study of migration dynamics and its analysis must be enlarged and consider a more holistic approach which encompasses also the neighboring countries. Starting from the 60s it is possible to observe profound modifications in the West African economies; these changes have had an influence in the migration movements. Two of the more prominent countries, Ghana in the 60s and more recently Nigeria in the 80s, have lost their "men power pulling" attraction in the region becoming countries of emigration<sup>27</sup>. Other neighboring countries such as Ivory Coast, Cameroun, Gabon and also Zambia, as result of the oil crisis, have expelled thousands of immigrants; while in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal<sup>28</sup> and the same Ivory Coast, rural-urban migration<sup>29</sup> maintains the number of migrants both internally and internationally stable since rural migrants to the urban areas take the place of those who migrate from the urban area abroad. The demographic transition experienced by these countries does not contribute to alleviate the phenomenon; in fact, the majority of the West Africa countries, as well as the sub Saharan ones, are characterised by a *crystallised demographic transaction*, which means that in the last decades, although the rate of mortality has been reduced, the rate of fertility has remained high<sup>30</sup>. Political instability at both national and regional level, combined with the population growth has contributed among

26. The work of Stalker "Workers Without Frontiers: the Impact of Globalization on International Migration" is often mentioned to this regard. In his book the author considers globalization as the starting point to analyse the trends of international migration. In particular he shows how migration connects with movements of goods and capital, and how it is closely tied up with social and economic changes. In assessing the complexities of the issue, he addresses the questions of how globalization causes migration pressures to subside, or releases new migrant flow.

27. Robin N., (1992), «L'espace migratoire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest: panorama statistique», in Hommes et migrations: migrants de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, n° 1160, décembre, p. 6-15.

28. Senegal can be considered today as a transit country and the in such way a country of origin of may irregular migrants.

29. Ricca S., (1990), Migrations internationales en Afrique: aspects légaux et administratifs, Paris, L'Harmattan; Adepoju A., (1990), La migration Sud-Nord: la situation de l'Afrique, Genève, IOM, pp.

24, (Communication au Séminaire de l'IOIM sur la migration, Genève, 4-6 décembre 1990, document n° 1 - 1); Russell e al., (1990), *International migration and development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, vol. 1, vol. 2, World Bank Discussion Papers, n°101, n°102.

30. Pison G., (2011).



other things, to hamper economic performances<sup>31</sup> of these countries maintaining high the migration levels<sup>32</sup>.

It is possible to assume that migration flows have been influenced by the above factors determining movements of people also towards countries which are not directly linked by historical, cultural, political or economic ties with the countries of origin of the migrants. We are under the impression that, particularly in West Africa, internal and international migration routes have changed dynamically so to react to the changes caused by the regional and international economies, determining new routes of migration and new profile of migrants. Assuming as given what happened in the past, a clear trend can be identified: the increase of economic migration as a corollary of globalization. On the one hand we observe the pulling factor exercised by the Western countries (in Europe and North America) where despite the economic crises experienced in the recent years, the prospect of a better life and the protection of fundamental rights still continue to attract migrants; on the other one new employment opportunities are originated by the signed agreements between West African countries, and between these and the exporting oil countries of the Gulf, (as well as Libya<sup>33</sup> before 2011). This trend must however be considered having in mind the changing relationship between Europe and Africa with regards to migration particularly the Global Migration approach and the "*Priority actions for the Mediterranean and African countries*".

### 3.1 *The EU Global Approach to Migration*

The Global Approach to Migration (GAM) has been formally introduced by the EU at the Bamako ministerial troika meeting in December 2005 to address migration and asylum with a comprehensive approach based on "common interests and challenges for both EU non-EU countries of origin, transit and destination"; it was also agreed to organise a joint ministerial Conference dedicated to migration in 2006. Such EU-Africa Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development was held in Tripoli in November 2006 to achieve the objectives indicated in the GAM laid down in Bamako the previous year. The Tripoli declaration indicates the actions to follow in order to:

31. Many of these economies lack of flexibility in terms of export depending from just few "mono production", which do not require any value added generating process.

32. To this regard beginning with the collapse of civility and authority in Liberia in 1989, violence has since spread across the region surrounding Liberia determining relevant movements of refugees and migrants to Guinea, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone. Nigeria has played a key role in helping to stabilize the region, despite its own difficulties in establishing civilian government and managing communal and separatist conflicts among its diverse population.

33. Libya had several cooperation agreements signed with Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali, ensuring the free movement of their citizens in the country.

- a. facilitate mobility and free movement of people in Africa and the EU,
- b. better manage legal migration between the two continents,
- c. address the root causes of migration and refugee flows,
- d. find concrete solutions to problems posed by illegal or irregular migratory flows, and
- e. address the problems of migrants residing in EU and African countries<sup>34</sup>.

Interestingly it also emphasized that the illegal/irregular migration had to be tackled not only with security measurements but had to be addressed within a framework of a partnership for development, maximizing the positive correlation between *migration* and *development*.

In the first half of 2011 there was a first evaluation of the Global Approach to respond to the emerging challenges brought by the changing migration trends also as results of the political turmoil in the North African region. This led to a renewed Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), whose broader political priorities for EU cooperation with the Southern Mediterranean and African countries were outlined in a Joint Communication on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) adopted in May 2011, and followed by two Communications on migration<sup>35</sup>. Fundamental in the GAMM approach is the migrant's perspective is as a central feature, and enhancing the human rights of migrants, is indicated as a priority across all EU actions on migration and development.

However despite such declarations, security actions are still the yardstick with which to measure the level of openness and assistance provided by the EU to neighboring and African countries. In fact *provided that the Southern Mediterranean countries take steps to improve the general security situation – including justice and police cooperation, border controls and readmission, and measures against trafficking and smuggling – they would gain access to more opportunities for mobility in the EU through visa facilitation, for example, for students and researchers*<sup>36</sup>.

In this way the burden of policing the entry of migrants into the EU is externalized onto the neighboring countries, in return for new entry opportunity for "desired" legal migrants and the mainstreaming of migration into EU development cooperation strategies<sup>37</sup>.

34. COM(2011) 743 final

35. European Commission, Communication on migration, COM(2011) 248 final, 4.5.2011 (Brussels, European Commission, 2011); A dialogue for migration, mobility and security with the southern Mediterranean countries, COM(2011) 292 final, 24.5.2011 (Brussels, 2011).

36. Kristof Tamas, 2012 <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/migration-policy-and-research/migration-policy-1/migration-policy-practice/issues/februarymarch-2012/how-comprehensive-is-the-eus-global-app.html>

37. COM(2013) 292 final

Figure 3. The Different components of the GAMM



### 3.1.1 Migration policy in West Africa

As indicated in paragraph 2 West African citizens are among the world's most mobile populations. Population censuses indicate that the region's countries until 2010 harbored approximately 7.5 million migrants from other West African countries - i.e. almost 3% of the regional population; it is hence important to understand how West African countries have reacted to the EU Global Approach to migration and particularly to the objective of establishing a link between migration and development.

The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission was mandated to define a joint regional approach on migration at the 30th Ordinary ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Summit in Abuja in June 2006. On 20 December 2006, in Ouagadougou the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council reaffirmed this priority, requesting the Commission President to: «pursue the consultative process for the definition of a common approach to the management of intra-regional migration and migration to Europe in all its dimensions<sup>38</sup>». In January 2008 there was the approval of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration where member countries reaffirmed the principle put forward during the Rabat and Tripoli Conferences, and stressed that international migration *impacts positively on both the host and home country when they are well-managed hence the need of a joint management of migratory flows which should enable West African*

38. ECOWAS 2007, Meeting of Ministers on ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, Abuja, 14 June 2007 <http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/41400366.pdf>

*migrants to have access to labour markets based on opportunities available in these countries.* ECOWAS Member States undertook also to strengthen their cooperation with regard to controlling irregular migration within the ECOWAS framework since bilateral agreements concluded by some ECOWAS Member States with host countries were not sufficient to address these multi-dimensional problems.

#### 4. *Conclusions*

West African human geography has evolved significantly over the past few decades although a high component of the migration movements has been forced, being a reaction to political or economic tensions which have interested the region, such as in Ivory Coast (1964), Ghana (1969), Nigeria (1983, 1985 currently), Mauritania and Senegal (1989), Benin in 1998, or the movements of population that felt threatened (Ivory Coast since end 1999, Mali currently). Despite these tensions, intra-regional migration has played a beneficial regulating role for the areas of departure as well as for the host areas. There is consensus that the "Ivorian miracle" of the 1980s owes much to the inflow of Sahelian labor to the cocoa and coffee plantations of the south of the country. Similarly, it is very likely that the central plateau of Burkina Faso would have found it difficult to sustain a fast growing population on steadily deteriorating lands. If there had not been any urbanisation or migration since 1960, Burkina Faso would have had a rural population of 15 million inhabitants instead of the current 6 million. Migratory strategies are in response to the search for economic opportunities, and can adapt to markets by diversifying destinations or activities<sup>39</sup>.

Many factors will determine the geography of West African migrations in the future decades, but in light of what we have described, and within a context of major uncertainties caused by the recent economic and political instability, both inside and outside the region, it seems that some trends will continue. Even though urbanisation is no longer one of the major reasons for mobility, over the past 45 years, more than 80 million West Africans migrated from rural to urban areas; this trend is likely to continue.

Secondly, as we have tried to argue here, globalization will continue to play a preponderant role in shaping the migration movement both inside and outside the region. In absence of intervention to foster economic development in the region, migration represents in fact the way in which people react to the poverty/instability in their quest for better economic opportunities.

Third, migration policies, particularly the one set by the "host countries", will continue to play an important role, not lastly because migrants choose their des-

39. Gnisci, D., Tremolieres, M., (2006).

tinations no longer based only on economic, historic, or linguistic factors but also despite them.

Looking at the immigration policies of the host countries, while we can see that the geographic proximity of Europe to North Africa has produced several initiatives aimed to foster the cooperation between the two areas, co-operation in migration and development between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa is still far from being structured. This is limited to bilateral discussions between a European country and an African country (Spain – Senegal, Spain – Mauritania, France – Mali, France – Senegal, etc.) for the implementation of more effective methods of limiting departures or incentives for the return of migrants in exchange for compensation. Funding priority is often given to international organizations (IOM, UNHCR), NGOs, members of EU countries and the authorities of member countries of the EU.

The best strategy for West African countries to meet the needs of the population would likely be dynamic action towards regional territorial development, development of new economic initiatives. Migration is both an opportunity and a challenge for development. It has undoubtedly had a positive impact on efforts to achieve many of the MDGs. However, the detrimental effects of poorly-managed migration may also undermine progress towards sustainable development. However, in the context that we analyzed, the discourse on the positive link between migration and development is mobilized by policies, mainly European, to limit their action above all in increasing control and restrict migration.

So far there has clearly been a bias in thematic priorities, in 2007–2010 for example, the Thematic Programme on Migration and Asylum spent relatively less on labour migration (17%) than on irregular migration (31%) and migration and development (28%). While the EU has reserved more development funds for the period 2008–2013 for migration in various National and Regional Indicative Programmes, it is not likely that there will be a significant increase in funding for labour migration.

The policies designed while reframing migration in positive terms, have not produced any binding commitments to date in particular because the outcomes and recommendations remains at the discretion of national governments.

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