The Great Mediterranean Challenge

What pushes people from Africa northwards

The Monographs of ResetDOC

Carbone, De Georgio, Herbert, Impicciatore
Mercuri, Morone, Palm, Qayum, Rosina

edited by Stefano M. Torelli

ResetDOC

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Introduction

Stefano M. Torelli

The migration issue has taken on an unprecedented political dimension in recent years. Since 2011 – and even more so from 2015 onwards – the hundreds of thousands of migrants arriving in Europe through the Mediterranean route have contributed to a rekindling of the debate on migration. So much so, that it has now reached the top of the political agenda in many countries, becoming thus the most important issue in election campaigns and the formation of public opinion.

However, the phenomenon of migration through the Mediterranean has often been tackled in a very simplistic way, manipulated in the interests of political expediency and without due consideration of the true dynamics underlying the movement of people from Africa to Europe. In the Italian and, more generally, the European public debate, the emphasis has mostly been placed on arrivals. For this reason, the supposed negative consequences that the migratory dynamics have for the security and the societies of the destination countries have consumed the lion's share of attention and focus in European public debates.

Migration has thus become a pretext for some political forces to bring sovereignist, populist and protectionist positions to the fore. These groups have been able to ride the wave of anxious public opinions, by presenting short-term solutions to a phenomenon that is in fact a very long-term challenge.

Indeed, at the basis of the choice to migrate from Africa to Europe are the so-called push factors which will continue to intensify in the years to come. The kind of migration we are witnessing in Europe and, in particular, in Italy has its roots in long-term problems and dynamics, which cannot be undone via legislative decree or interventions aimed at temporarily stopping incoming flows.

What are these ongoing push factors? On the one hand, there are economic, social and demographic imbalances, which are leading more and more people to leave their countries of origin and move northwards. On the other hand, new factors may push other people to move outside their countries of origin and even increase the number of migrants who will try to arrive in Europe. Faced with such a situation, the response of European member states and of the European Union overall has been too weak and has not been able to build a management and reception system that takes into account the current dynamics and the factors underlying migration. This has created a sort of blind spot in the European vision. The consequent failure to fully understand the phenomena has, in turn, seen a dearth of rational and structured answers to what is now clearly perceived as a problem in search of solutions. Against this backdrop, too often the true drivers of migratory choices are overlooked and delegitimized, creating an unbridgeable distance between the reality "on the ground" and the perception of what is happening in destination countries.

This volume thus comes at an opportune moment. Its chapters reflect the need to carefully analyse the drivers of emigration to Europe in the countries of origin. They offer much-needed insight beyond the perception of "migration emergency" and "crisis". Migration, in fact, can be understood as a permanent structural phenomenon that – precisely because of the kind of characteristics driving it – can only ebb and flow, and never ceases completely. Moreover, it cannot be

stopped simply by blocking departures from the North African coasts or by closing Europe's external and internal borders.

There is one primary social factor that determines the logic of migration between Africa and Europe: demography. As Roberto Impicciatore and Alessandro Rosina analyse in the first chapter of this volume, demography explains why there are so many people who move from Africa to Europe. After all, the continent with the largest population growth in the world – the African population will double in the next thirty years – sits next door to the continent where population growth is in decline. Demographic imbalances tend towards a natural "readjustment" of the population through the influx of new people from the most populous to the least populous countries.

Yet Europe has not yet been able to provide adequate long-term responses and has turned a blind eye to demographic factors, focusing almost exclusively on the security dimension. It is for this reason that European authorities have focused on stopping the flows, often through agreements with the countries of origin and transit, as their chosen strategy. This is the subject of the second contribution by Anja Palm, which details the major European policies on migration in recent years, emphasizing their lack of a long-term vision.

The second part of the volume focuses on the push factors that matter most in different contexts. The chapter by Giovanni Carbone focuses on the dynamics of migration from Nigeria, the most populous African country and one of the largest sources of migrants arriving in Europe generally, and on Italian coasts in particular. As analysed in the fourth contribution by Andrea de Georgio, the entire region of West Africa is no less important, having its own migratory dynamics.

Along with the contexts of origin, however, there are also those of transit, as exemplified by Niger. Another contribution by Andrea de Georgio presents the situation of this country in

the Sahel belt, which has become the most important country on the migratory routes from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa. Over the last few years, Niger has built an entire informal economic system around migration, turning itself into a hub for hundreds of thousands of people on the move. Niger – especially the European intervention there to try to stop migration flows – throws the European approach aimed only at stopping flows, instead of tackling the structural causes of migration, into stark relief. Rather than triggering virtuous processes of cooperation and development, in turn, the European approach will likely have negative effects for third countries.

The virtual journey continues on to Libya, another fundamental junction of the migratory routes towards Europe. The situation in Libya is detailed in the sixth chapter by Michela Mercuri, who analyses the complex dynamics that move the migratory flows to and from Libya. Tormented by internal conflicts and almost without institutions, in Libya it is often difficult to distinguish between traffickers, those in charge of detention centres, representatives of local authorities and coastguards. Here, the Italian and European policies in support of the fight against migrant smuggling have often produced controversial effects. The decline in departures from Libya has led to a situation in which thousands of people find themselves trapped in formal or informal detention centres, with dim prospects but no material change in the country's security situation.

Two other North African countries, Tunisia and Morocco, have also returned to play an important role in the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. As Matt Herbert outlines in great detail in the seventh chapter, both have become not only countries of origin, but also countries of transit and destination, following different dynamics that are highly context-dependent. Even in these two cases, Europe must be at the

forefront of developing effective positive, long-term policy, if the negative social and economic effects of closure policies are to be avoided in the coming years.

The Horn of Africa is another region of emigration that demands the same level of involvement by European countries. As described by Antonio Maria Morone in the eighth chapter, in countries such as Eritrea and Ethiopia there are local factors that push people to emigrate, but even in this case, in the absence of structured policies, it will be difficult to have a positive impact to control, manage and alleviate the problem of migration.

The last part of the volume focuses on a country that is not African, but has become increasingly important for the migratory composition entering Europe and Italy: Bangladesh. While Africa – with its different facets, and contexts of origin and transit – is crucial, it is not the only source of emigration to Europe. Indeed, Bangladesh is the only non-African case among the major countries of origin of migrants on the Mediterranean routes. In her contribution – the final chapter – Nayma Qayum analyses this particular context, in order to shed light on a South Asian reality that may seem very distant to us, but that is brought closer through transnational migration.

The overall aim of the volume, therefore, is to trascend the narrative of emergency and to see beyond the European and Italian points of view. In so doing, it seeks to provide a complete picture of an issue that – when seen only from the perspective of European capitals – is highly prone to misinterpretation and thus to distorted outcomes. Conditions for migrants in countries of origin, the motivations that push them to migrate and the dynamics that drive the migratory processes are aspects of primary importance for the understanding of the phenomenon and for the implementation of structured responses not moved by schizophrenia. As in all global processes that affect the world today, only through a 360-degree analysis can we fully

understand and address the phenomena, considering all factors and points of view. Stopping only at the analysis of migration in Europe and Italy, without delving into what is behind it, is misleading and a harbinger of inadequate responses. Restoring legitimacy to migration policy choices through understanding the situation as a whole is the first step towards a rationalization of the phenomenon. Hopefully there can then be a stepwise change in responses to the migration phenomenon, so that in the future these dynamics are harmonized instead of being instrumentalized.

Part I

The European Immigration Challenge. Geopolitical Framework and Scenarios

Chapter I

Europe and Africa: Demographic Dynamics and Migratory Flows

Roberto Impicciatore, University of Bologna
Alessandro Rosina, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan

Continents in transition

Africa is a continent undergoing a great transformation. At the most basic level, this is being driven by what is usually called the 'demographic transition' (i.e. declines in mortality and birth rates accompanied by a middle transition phase characterized by intense population growth and likely higher out-migration rates). Europe's transition began in the nineteenth century and was slow and gradual, leaving room for continuous adaptation to the changing demographic profile. In Africa, this change began only after the Second World War as medical knowledge and health practices from the most developed countries were transmitted, leading to rapid declines in mortality, especially infant mortality. Fertility behaviours are slower to change, however (given relatively stable patterns of culture and values), and Africa thus remains a region of high fertility (4.7 children per woman on average) – the highest, indeed, in the world. If the desire for better health and greater chance of survival is widely shared, reductions in family size may not be perceived as an improvement. This is particularly true in those contexts where children are an important source of labour for family businesses and support for the elderly, or where more children equates to higher social status for the family.

Having fewer children requires a cultural transition that is neither automatic nor taken for granted. In pre-transition Europe, the vast majority of the population did not 'choose' to become parents or how many descendants to have; having children was simply the natural order of things. The reduction of births implies, therefore, the entry into a new world, different from the previous one, in which family size becomes a choice. This means that the challenge of fertility reduction may be won only when the transition from 'quantity' to 'quality' in family planning is accomplished. In many African countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan area, this transition is at the very beginning or it has not yet started. This is the most important factor underlying the current population trajectory of Africa (consequently, also the main factor pushing world population growth).

After the Second World War, the European population growth has progressively declined, gradually approaching zero-growth. At the same time, growth rates in less developed countries in the rest of the world have increased rapidly. These annual growth rates peaked at 2.5% in the 1960s and 1970s, a value that implies a doubling of the population in less than thirty years. Since this time, as the transition has progressed, even in Africa as a whole there was a decline. However, growth rates remain well above zero. Consequently, the world's population continues to rise, although at a decelerating rate.

Africa's population boom

Almost all the population increase in the globe in the remainder of this century will be concentrated in the less developed countries – Africa in particular. Thus, in the coming years the demographic relevance of Europe will decline significantly. In 1950, 20% of the world's population lived on this continent but the UN predicts that this percentage will fall to less than 8% by 2050. In contrast,

Africa will become a population giant: a quarter of the world's people will live there by 2050 (it was less than 10% in 1950). Africa's population was half that of Europe during the 1960s; today it is close to 1.3 billion while the European population is less than 750 million. In the next two decades, the African population will reach over 2.5 billion, more than three times that of Europe.

Demographic projections also show that in the next 20 years, half of the planet's population growth will be concentrated in Africa, with the rest coming from Asia (where the population will rise from 4.5 to 5.1. billion people). While India and China will continue to be by far the most populous countries, by 2038 Nigeria will have risen from seventh to fourth place, contending for third place with the United States. The largest European countries – all among the top ten most populous in 1950 – have now all fallen below fifteenth place and will fall further by 2038. Italy, in particular, will fall beyond the thirtieth position.

Fertility dynamics play a crucial role in the differential pace of growth. Today, in Nigeria (and in many other African countries), the average number of children per woman is still well above five. These headline figures for Africa, however, hide much heterogeneity across the continent.[1] On the one hand, birth rates have fallen significantly in the Mediterranean countries (although there has been a slight rise in the last few years) and in Southern Africa (which follows a similar trend to that of Asia and Latin America). On the other hand, we observe sustained fertility levels for the countries of the central area – still close to 6 children per woman. The particularity of the sub-Saharan area is emphasized by the fact that now about half of the countries of the world register a fertility below the replacement threshold (usually set at 2.1 children per woman and such as to allow the generation

[1] R. Impicciatore and A. Rosina, 2016. *Le quattro sfide demografiche del XXI secolo*. In: *Oltre le frontiere: generazioni e culture*. Milano: Guerini e associati.

of children to replace numerically that of the parents). Thus, the major challenge to the sustainability of the global population growth is linked to the demographic expansion of Africa, which in turn depends on the uncertainty about the timing and the extent of the reduction of fertility in this continent.

Development and population growth

The relationship between population growth and development is not trivial. In Europe, the two factors have supported each other in the past, but this does not always happen (i.e. the so-called "Malthusian trap").

With the growth of the population already underway, there is a strong need to sustain development and, at the same time, create the conditions for decelerating growth rates through mechanisms that link virtuous economic growth and family choices to see 'quality' rather than 'quantity' emphasized. The concentration of a large part of the global growth in the poorest countries is one of the greatest challenges for fair and sustainable development of the planet. As highlighted by the Agenda 2030 objectives, this result is strictly dependent on the possibilities of improving health and education of the new generations, together with the promotion of women's empowerment.

Fertility reduction, as already said, requires a cultural transition. The true discontinuity – which produces all the other changes in the chain – lies in the choices of young women and consists in being able to take their destiny into their own hands and have a vision for a better future for their children.

Fertility is also strictly linked to child mortality. Nowadays, in many African countries, one in ten children does not reach the fifth birthday. Still, it is estimated that child mortality levels will halve in the next two decades. Reducing risks at younger ages allows life expectancy to rise above 60 years even in the poorest

countries. As occurred in Europe in the last century, lower child mortality may facilitate a reduction in the number of pregnancies.

Will Africa enter a phase of population decline by the end of this century (or the beginning of the next) as in the rest of the globe? It is likely. In the meantime, demographic pressure will manifest through conflicts over resources and in internal and international migratory flows (as happened also for Europe in the middle phase of its demographic transition).

A fast demographic transition implies not only very high growth rates, but also a rapid transformation of the internal structure of the population. In the transitional phase, reduced mortality, especially child mortality, combined with still high fertility, boosts the proportion of children and young people and, after a few years, the share of the active age population compared to dependent age groups (children and the elderly). This mechanism, which demographers dub the "demographic dividend", can facilitate, if well managed, economic growth. This was observed in the Western countries after the Second World War and, more recently, in East Asian countries. However, not all labour force surpluses can actually be used locally, especially if economic growth is not sustained or if it is at an initial stage. This is a driving force for international migration, which may be strengthened by the parallel reduction of the working age population in the richest European countries, as well as the presence of strong wage differentials or, at least, expectations of social ascent in the destination countries.

African migration: Beyond misleading assumptions

Demographic and economic imbalances, together with globalization trends, have created the conditions for growing movements from African countries to Europe. Several African countries experienced a decrease of real income relative to

the rest of the world and an increase in unemployment. At the same time, improved infrastructure, cheaper transport and the rapid diffusion of telecommunications have facilitated territorial mobility.[2] The increasing level of education, meanwhile, has heightened awareness of opportunities outside the continent and, consequently, people's migration aspirations.

Relevant migration flows between Africa and Europe started during the 1960s, mainly from the north of the continent. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, the share of sub-Saharan Africans in the migration flows to Europe has been steadily increasing together with more intense trans-Saharan flows of people looking for work in Libya and other Northern African countries. Moreover, intercontinental migration – once the preserve of a tiny elite (migration entails significant costs) – became progressively more accessible to those from less privileged backgrounds.[3] However, the conventional image of a mass exodus of desperate people fleeing poverty – propagated in media and through popular culture – is based on inaccurate assumptions about the underlying drivers of migration. The sense that the world's poor are poised to leave their homes *en masse* for a life elsewhere is quite widespread. This view is based on the mistaken idea that poverty and violence are the main drivers of south–north migration. However, migration usually requires significant resources and very poor people are usually trapped because they cannot afford to leave. Thus, extreme poverty immobilizes people. Conversely, economic growth, infrastructure and improved education and wealth open opportunities to move also because they increase people's

[2] M.L. Schaub, 2012. *Lines across the desert: mobile phone use and mobility in the context of trans-Saharan migration*, Information Technology for Development, 18(2):126-44.

[3] S. Castles, H. de Haas, and M.J. Miller. 2014. *The age of migration. International population movements in the modern world*. London: Palgrave Casablanca 1995.

capacities and aspirations to migrate. Among poor people, there is not only a lack of resources supporting migration but also a lack of expectation about the potential to improve living conditions by moving.

Research has confirmed this "migration paradox", showing that the poorest countries exhibit a much lower level of emigration than more developed nations. For instance, sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest migration rates in the world. More stable and wealthier African countries like South Africa, Ghana and Senegal, instead, have higher out-migration rates. There, people have higher aspirations to migrate and the means to do so. It is therefore no coincidence that the prominent emigration countries – think Mexico, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey – are also middle-income ones.

Two direct consequences arise against this backdrop. Firstly, development in the poorest countries, for instance in sub-Saharan Africa, will almost inevitably lead to more migration from there in the near future. Therefore, future immigrants in Europe might increasingly come from sub-Saharan Africa instead of Turkey and North Africa. Development, which is at the basis of fertility decline, also favours the decision to leave to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Secondly, there are no simple answers to global inequalities and the challenge linked to international migration. The oversimplified slogans proposed by politicians (both the closure of borders and international development assistance) aid neither understanding of or solutions to a complex process that requires actions at all levels. A more effective approach would consider interrelated aspects – development in countries of origin, integration process in countries of arrival, environmental risks, peace and security conditions – all requiring concerted international cooperation and coordination.

Another (related) cliché is the persistent idea that African migration to Europe is entirely irregular (i.e. without authorized documentation). Research reveals that irregular migration

has remained a small fraction of total EU immigration for years (lower than 10%). Most African migrants possess valid residency permits, and most irregular migrants have entered Europe legally and subsequently overstayed their visas.[4] Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that irregular migration is itself a product of "pull factors" – namely, a structural demand for cheap labour in the informal sectors of the economy in Western countries.

The tragic images of African migrants in unsafe, overloaded boats crossing the Mediterranean Sea thus offer a misleading impression of mass, uncontrolled (and scarcely controllable) migration. However, anxiety linked to some imagined "invasion" of Europe by African boat people mostly reflects a Eurocentric perspective on global migration dynamics. Indeed, the incessant focus on intercontinental migration flows obscures the larger story – the dominance of intra-continental migration in Africa. Only a small fraction of international migration in Africa results in journeys to Europe. This particularly applies to sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of movement is intra-regional. Together with countries that have historically attracted large numbers of migrants – Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa – several new migration poles have emerged in the recent past, such as Angola, Ghana and Mozambique. North African countries (Libya in particular) are experiencing increasing transit and settlement migration.

In West Africa, intraregional mobility has been dominated by movement from the landlocked countries of the Sahel to the coastal areas.[5] Such coast-bound migration patterns have also

[4] H. de Haas, 2007. *The Myth of Invasion: Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*. Oxford: International Migration Institute (IMI), University of Oxford: www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/reports

[5] S.E. Findlay, 2004. *Mali: Seeking opportunity abroad. Migration Information Source*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. B. Kress, 2006. *Burkina Faso: Testing the tradition of circular migration*. Migration Information Source. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

often been reproduced inside African countries. Moreover, African migrants are increasingly directed away from traditional destinations in Europe and North America and towards the fast-growing economies of Asia. China, in particular, is becoming a desired destination for African migrants, given the relative ease of accessing temporary visas. Numbers apparently spiked following China's accession to membership of the World Trade Organization in 2001.[6]

Migration as a key element of development

Immigration remains a hot topic, generating heated debates and electoral effects. There is an urgent need to see and include migration as an intrinsic part of economic growth and societal change rather than a continuous emergency to face. From this perspective, it is possible to better manage and organize the mobility of people. It is inevitable that open and wealthy societies will experience substantial immigration in the future as well, whether they like it or not.

The issue is to understand that people have always moved around and that migration is driven by very deep social forces, such as demographic trends, changes in the structure of the labour market and economic imbalances. Higher education is fundamental for economic growth but it also increases aspirations to find a job that matches qualifications and a desire to be much more mobile. These processes are a prerogative of the human kind and trying to stop them just by imposing barriers is futile. As the sociologist Hein De Haas suggests, where we have development, and change, we will have people on the move.

[6] P.R. Ghosh, 2010. *African immigrants gravitating to China'*. International Business Times: http://m.ibtimes.eo.uk/china-africa-immigration-43475.html

As mentioned, attention has focused overly on the flows between Africa and Europe in the light of the relevant demographic and economic imbalances between the two continents. However, the existing literature has highlighted crucial points that belie some of the worst clichés. These can be summarized as follows. First, only a minority of those who live in a foreign country are irregular. The big majority of migrants coming to European countries follows the rules. Second, Africa is not currently the continent with the highest absolute number of departures. Third, most movements take place *within* continents (from rural areas to cities and, in the case of refugees, to neighbouring countries). Fourth, the outflows from Africa are not only directed to Europe, but also to the countries of the Gulf, Asia and North America. It is however true that the Mediterranean Sea will continue to be a critical area in global migration flows. Fifth, the largest flows do not start from the poorest countries, but from those with a development process already started. In fact, it requires a certain degree of economic and social development to trigger aspirations for improvement, availability of resources and knowledge necessary to implement the decision to emigrate.

So far, immigration to Europe, and to the southern countries in particular, has seemed excessive and "out of control", mainly for three reasons. Firstly, migration has increased rapidly in countries without a solid tradition of entry flows. Secondly, the 2007–2010 economic crisis saw, after a period of sustained in-migration, a generalized but unexpected increase in unemployment. Thirdly, the active age population has been relatively large due to the presence of the demographically significant generation of baby boomers. As shown by the data of the European Commission's 2018 Ageing Report, in the years to come we will see a substantial reduction in Europe's active age population, while the elderly population will increase rapidly.

If Europe wants to grow economically, these imbalances must be faced in an integrated plan that should favour both the empowerment of the new generations in the labour market and an immigration policy that is coherent with the development processes of advanced economies. This is the only way to foster growth that can be expanded to open up new opportunities for everyone. Otherwise, the old European countries risk slipping into a decline characterized by limited and low-quality job opportunities.

Thus, two aspects need to be managed correctly. The first is linked to African population growth, which must be governed together with solid development policies that lead to more investment in quality than quantity in family planning. The second is linked to the ability to manage population ageing, in particular the imbalances caused by low birth rates. Conversely, Africa will have the opposite problem – namely, too many young people chasing too few possibilities for economic advancement. These two distinct problems thus end up somehow connected and calling for a common solution if a better future both in Europe and in Africa is to be assured.

Chapter II

The Political Dimension: European Responses to the Migratory Challenge

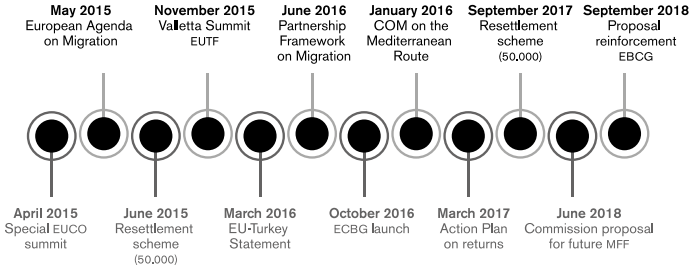
Anja Palm, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Migration is not a new topic to European foreign policy, having been on the agenda since the late 1990s. Nevertheless, responses have evolved considerably and taken different shapes during this time. Historically, Mediterranean member states were the most affected by irregular arrivals. These countries typically engaged with their neighbours in the region to address the issue through ad hoc or bilateral initiatives. While the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility set the scene for structured and joint cooperation with third countries on migration-related issues, it was not until after 2015 that migration management reached the top of the European Union's (EU) common priority list. The increasing attention caused by the significant spike of arrivals as well as deaths at sea in the Mediterranean – and the consequent collapse of the Schengen system – appeared as a key driver for the Europeanization of external migration policy. Increasing emphasis was placed by the European Agenda on Migration and the New Partnership Framework on coordination, coherence, and complementarity of EU and member state actions. The recent return to unilateral approaches nevertheless suggests that a common EU external migration policy might be at risk. This may have consequences also at the global level, as the recent dealignment of EU member states regarding the Global Compact on Migration demonstrates. Overall, we have seen an increasingly flexible and

multipolar approach in recent years, with a combination of EU – as well as member state – led responses. This demonstrates that agreement on the political saliency of a policy issue does not necessarily drive a Europeanization of the policy response.

The so-called crisis of 2015 saw a spike in arrivals to the EU and, as a consequence, unmanaged secondary movements. This quickly transitioned from a humanitarian to a political challenge, when the divergent approaches and interests of the EU member states – as well as a lack of mutual support and trust among them – surfaced. In a triangular dynamic between the media, public opinion, and politics, migration gained increasing attention and was quickly politicized as a result. The need to respond to the concerns of European publics and their loss of confidence in the ability of both national governments and (even more so) the EU to effectively manage flows and irregular movements became a mantra for political forces across Europe. As a consequence, internal border controls were reintroduced in 2015-2016 – initially declared as temporary, they remain in place at the time of writing. And no final agreement has been reached as of today on many of the key questions regarding internal migration and asylum policies. Thus, the hopes and aspirations of policymakers have increasingly focused on the external dimension. EU foreign policy in this area has sought to achieve three main objectives – namely, the prevention of spontaneous irregular arrivals at external borders, effective enforcement of returns, and addressing the drivers or 'root causes' of migration. To do so, policy has focused on building more effective cooperation mechanisms with third-country governments, since achieving the above-mentioned goals requires their active input and collaboration.

The April 2015 European Council meeting stated that the 'prevention of illegal flows' was the common priority to be tackled by stepping up cooperation with key countries of transit.



Thus, an overarching framework for EU external migration policy was created. The European Agenda on Migration – combining short and long-term migration-related external policy objectives and structured around four main policy pillars – represents a key founding block of such framework.[1] The principal instrument was identified by the New Partnership Framework on Migration in stronger cooperation with third countries, which can take different shapes and forms, ranging from technical and legal agreements to political memoranda.[2] The migration dimension was consequently incorporated into all aspects of European foreign policy when dealing with countries of origin or transit. This impacted the broader relations with these countries, as migration-related objectives now often influence the main targets (both geographically and thematically) of cooperation, and other foreign policy dimensions can be used as levers to foster collaboration in migration management.

[1] A European Agenda on Migration, 13.05.2015. The four pillars are: reducing the incentives for irregular migration, improving border management – saving lives and securing external borders –, developing a strong common asylum policy, and a new policy on legal migration.

[2] European Commission, *On Establishing a New Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration*, COM (2016) 385, 07.06.2016.

As mentioned, EU external migration policy is centred on four main lines of action. These are: 1) enhancing border management and preventing spontaneous arrivals to the EU's shores; 2) strengthening return and readmission; 3) developing a legal migration policy, and; 4) addressing the root causes of migration. To prevent irregular migratory flows to the EU, actions have been taken both at the external borders of the Union – e.g. transformation of FRONTEX into the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG), launched in October 2016 and meant to coordinate joint maritime border-control operations – and, even more importantly, through agreements with partner countries of transit (for instance Libya and Niger), providing equipment and building their capacity in border control and migration management. Since summer 2018, the Commission has also tried to lay out disembarkation rules. This was a consequence of the Italian government's restriction of search and rescue activities by non-governmental organizations. This topic has, perhaps unsurprisingly, been highly contentious, and the persistent lack of agreement resulted in the confirmation of Operation Sophia without naval assets and keeps on blocking progress on the Dublin reform.[3] Additional efforts have been made to foster information exchange, particularly in the fight against migrant smuggling, with important steps taken through the establishment of the EUROPOL European Migrant Smuggling Centre and the deployment of migration liaison officers to 12 partner countries.

Notwithstanding the 2017 Action Plan on returns and the successful closing of arrangements with an additional six countries over the last years, bringing the total number to 23,[4]

[3] G. Mantini, *A EU Naval Mission Without a Navy: The Paradox of Operation Sophia*, IAI Commentary 19|33, 05.2019.

[4] Implementation Report on the European Agenda for Migration, 06.03.2019

important challenges remain both at the internal and external level. On top of internal procedural and practical difficulties, readmission also represents one of the most contentious demands on the European side with regard to partner countries. The dimension related to the opening of legal access channels has mainly stayed within member states' competence, with relatively little progress made in recent years. At the same time, the EU framework only covers short-term visas, highly skilled migration (the Blue Card Directive), family reunifications, and mobility for students and researchers, as well as proposing resettlement schemes.

In parallel to these lines of action, increasing attention has been dedicated to interventions aimed at combating the root causes of displacement by mainstreaming migration in development cooperation. Improving local security, stability, and livelihoods in countries of origin of migratory flows are key examples. To support these actions financially, the EU has deployed new funding instruments, which aim at regrouping existing funds (such as the European Development Fund reserves) as well as triggering new contributions from member states. The Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF, €3.6 billion) has been the main instrument supporting EU external migration policy in all of its dimensions, as it has the aim "to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration, and to contribute to better migration management".[5] The recent EU External Investment Plan, worth €4.5 billion, is further expected to leverage investments up to €44 billion. It is designed to support the EUTF in enhancing growth and job-creation in Africa and the European neighbourhood.[6]

[5] EEAS, The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, 21.03.2018.

[6] Implementation Report on the European Agenda for Migration, 06.03.2019.

Notwithstanding the developments in the four lines of action described above, recent events underscore that climbing the ladder of EU priorities does not necessarily translate into greater Europeanization in policy responses. On the contrary, when looking at European migration policy, we can observe that the increasing politicization of the topic – coupled with the unprecedented salience that it has assumed in recent elections – has actually produced less agreement and common action among member states. Indeed, in the last few years, we observe movement in opposite directions: official documents and summits have repeated the call for stronger cooperation, but in practice, there has been an observable de-Europeanization of responses at numerous levels, with EU member states increasingly reclaiming control of migration-related files.

Within the EU, we have witnessed the collapse of the Schengen system as we knew it, and no positive signs of possible agreement on disembarkation, relocation, and broader reform of the common asylum system are in sight. This lack of common vision within the Union has also resulted in ever more (external) migration policies being pushed beyond the realm of EU decision-making. Different formats have (re-)emerged, ranging from the establishment of 'coalitions of the willing' or cooperation fora of select member states with countries of transit and destination, to the reprioritization of bilateral initiatives. The lack of agreement on key principles regarding migration and asylum policy have also influenced the multilateral dimension, as the pull-out of several member states from the Global Compact on Migration demonstrates.[7]

The reprioritization of bilateral initiatives at the European level is most evident when looking at Italy. Its key initiatives

[7] M. Gatti, *EU States' Exit from the Global Compact on Migration: A Breach of Loyalty*, EU Migration Law Blog, 14.12.2018.

regarding Libya and Niger have supposedly contributed significantly to reducing flows that had previously followed a route from Niger to Libya and finally across the Central Mediterranean to Italy.[8] This could either be read as an excellent example of the principle of complementarity between the actions of the EU and member states, or as a unilateral initiative taken out of the frustration with the lack of European engagement and need to provide internal responses. It must nevertheless be noted that a strong interdependence between EU and member state approaches and actions remains. Bilateral agreements closed by member states are often backed up politically and economically by the EU, as is the case with the Italy–Libya memorandum of understanding, while projects are often financed by member states contributions, pooled by EU funding mechanisms, and then implemented by national bodies or agencies.[9]

Overall, it seems that flexibility and multi-polarity have become the name of the game in EU external migration policy. Actions are proposed and implemented by different constellation of actors: the EU as such, all EU member states (see the EU–Turkey statement), ad hoc groups of member states, and individual member states. But the partners also vary, as agreements are struck at various levels, from bilateral, to regional and continental. Further, migration-related responses within the foreign policy realm have become increasingly multi-dimensional, touching upon various policy areas, including development, humanitarian aid, trade, security sector cooperation, and CSDP missions, among others. They are also multi-temporal, as they often present both short and long-term

[8] For a more detailed analysis of Italy's external migration policy see: S. Colombo and A. Palm, *Italy in the Mediterranean: Priorities and Perspectives of a EU Middle Power*, FEPS and Fondazione EYU, 02.2019.

[9] For instance, Italy is the second strongest contributor to the EUTF, and a € 45 million worth project aimed at supporting Integrated border and migration management in Libya is implemented jointly by ICMPD and the Italian Ministry of Interior.

objectives that need to be reconciled. While this flexibility and multi-polarity has the advantage to potentially be context-specific and adaptable to the specific conditions of each country or region, it can also produce negative externalities, as it provides fertile ground for gaps or overlaps, and confusion with partners as to who is the main interlocutor.

This push for multi-dimensionality – coupled with the ever-growing focus on the need for better migration management and its increasing salience in relations with third countries – has nevertheless raised several questions concerning the right balance between migration and broader foreign policy objectives of the EU and its third-country partners. Beyond the re-shaping of the geographic areas of interest – focus has shifted mostly to countries of origin and transit – there is also a risk that the holistic approach (understood both geographically and thematically) will be jeopardized by the predominance of migration-related concerns. Further, the established overall consensus among EU institutions and member states on the need to further develop foreign policy approaches to migration and, notably, external border management, does not mean that there is always agreement on the specific goals or the means to achieve them, nor the geographic regions to focus on. Prioritizing migration-related issues can also potentially produce frictions with third countries, whose interests and priorities may diverge. Challenges related to development, stabilization and local ownership should not be overlooked in this process. The humanitarian costs of the externalization of border control and migration management measures to third countries, often with fragmented power and unstable governance, add a further layer of criticism to these policy choices. Recent developments in Libya are only the latest demonstration of the fragility of such policies, which could turn out to have disastrous effects on both local and European stability, as well as causing further death and suffering.

With the overall European foreign policy objective being to build mutually beneficial and balanced partnerships with third countries, major question marks remain regarding the EU's future engagement with countries of origin and transit. The substantial cooperation efforts and investments of the last years will ideally be translated into building blocks for more far-reaching future cooperation. Such collaboration would ideally go beyond the crisis management mode to structured partnerships. This is particularly pressing in view of the important dossiers that will be on the table in the coming years, including the post-Cotonou agreement and developments within Africa such as the operational of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCTA), but also the future European Multi-Annual Financial Framework. The definition of the scope of the foreign affairs instrument (NDICI) and its interaction with instruments aimed at tackling the internal dimension (such as AMIF) will indeed be key for the identification of concrete actions to be taken in the future. This calls for forward-looking reflection on how the EU and its member states want and can position themselves in these changing scenarios and on the long-term relationship they would like to establish with the neighbouring continent, beyond the focus on migration.

Part II

The Roots and Routes of Migration

Chapter III

Nigeria and Contemporary African Migration

Giovanni Carbone, University of Milan

With a fast-growing population of some 200 million, Nigeria is home to about one in five Africans south of the Sahara. The country weighs heavily on regional trends, and international migration dynamics are no exception. This is more so because Nigeria belongs to a sub-region – namely, West Africa – that is a key area for both intra-regional as well as overseas migration.

Africa's colossus

The complexity of Nigerian society can hardly be overstated. The country's vast population is made up of some 250 distinct ethnic communities, speaking as many as 520 different languages. Inter-ethnic relations and balance revolve primarily around the three main groups. These are the Hausa–Fulani, who comprise about 30% of the entire population, the Yoruba (20%) and the Igbos (some 17%). Nigeria is also crossed by important religious divides. In the north, Islam dominates among the Hausa-Fulani. Most groups in the south-east, including the Igbos, are largely Christian or animist. The southwest is home chiefly to the large Yoruba community, which is religiously less homogeneous as it is essentially split between Muslims and Christians. A so-called "middle belt", on the other hand, hosts a mixture of communities whose

loyalties are divided between the two faiths, often leading to violent clashes, as has frequently been the case around the city of Jos. It is no accident that Nigeria opted for a federal set up – allowing for a degree of autonomy for its 36 states – to try and address such intricate internal diversity.

Historically, the predominantly Muslim north has been economically less dynamic when compared to southern regions. As a result, there are substantial socio-economic disparities that roughly overlap with the north-south divide, with per capita income typically lower in the northern areas of the federation. The state of Katsina, for example, is the poorest, with around $400 per capita income, or just over $1 a day. Lagos, by contrast, is the country's economic heartland and commercial hub, with per capita income reaching as high as $5,000 - $8,000. The southeastern states of the Niger Delta region – notably Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom – are also relatively rich as a result of the oil industry being concentrated in this area, although this does not reflect in sufficient unemployment opportunities. Turning to social indicators, such as education levels or health, the same kind of divide between the comparatively poor performance of northern states and the better ones in the south is broadly confirmed.

Holding together such a country – like virtually all African states, the artificial product of colonial occupation, albeit much larger and more complex than most – has never been an easy task. The politics of Nigeria have thus long produced instability. Since independence in 1960, the country has experienced six coups d'état and two civil wars (one in the south-east and one in the north-east), alongside myriads of other smaller episodes of violence. Political power was mostly in the hands of military strongmen until the end of the twentieth century. However, Nigeria then joined the majority of African countries

in moving towards multiparty rule. Founding elections were held in 1999 and voting has been repeated regularly, every four years since. Elections, however, have rarely been trouble-free. The 2011 vote, for example, was widely recognized as transparent, but it notoriously led to widespread violence and as many as 1,000 deaths. Yet by allowing the peaceful alternation in office of four presidents across 20 years, the introduction and use of multiparty elections has proven something of a political revolution in Nigeria.

The early part of the new century was also highly promising, with unprecedented economic progress. Between 2000 and 2014, the sub-Saharan region as a whole grew at an impressive annual average rate of 5.5%, with many countries appearing to reverse previous disappointing trends. Nigeria was an undisputed protagonist of the process of economic renewal. The country has recorded an average annual expansion of 6.3% for the better part of two decades (2000-2018). The less favourable oil price trend that set in from late 2014, however, led to a marked slowdown. After decelerating to a mere 2.6% for 2015, Africa's demographic and economic powerhouse was in full recession for one year (–1.6% in 2016), before climbing back into moderately positive terrain in the couple of years since. In spite of the recent slowdown, however, Nigeria has now become Africa's largest economy, overtaking South Africa in 2014. It is also the number one oil-producer in the region and the largest market in terms of consumers. In 2017, Nigeria alone accounted for some 22.5% of the entire sub-Saharan GDP, almost one-fourth of all economic activity in an area of 49 independent countries. With the possible exception of South Africa, no other country is more important than Nigeria to the economy and development of the continent.

Nigerian migration trends

Contrary to common perceptions in Europe, most migrants from sub-Saharan Africa remain in the region. Nigeria – alongside other states with relatively large or diversified economies – is an important recipient country. In 2017, the top destinations for migrants hailing from other countries in the region were South Africa (2.2 million), Côte d'Ivoire (2.1 million), Uganda, Ethiopia and Nigeria (each of the latter three with over 1 million).[1]

In Nigeria, African immigrants have been numerous since at least the mid-1970s, when large infrastructure and construction works were initiated during the oil boom years, alongside the expansion of the education and other services. By 1982, some 2.5 million skilled and unskilled workers from neighbouring countries (mostly from Ghana, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Niger and Chad) had thus been pulled to Nigeria (as many as 1.5 million illegal West African migrants were expelled by the government in 1983).[2] Civil wars and other conflicts in the region also led many to seek refuge there. Ethnic ties across national boundaries and the visa-free movement of people allowed within the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) has helped make intra-regional migration flows in West Africa more common than in other regions in the continent.

However, Nigeria's net migration rate has consistently been negative, oscillating between –0.20 per 1,000 people in 1985-1990 and –0.35 per 1,000 people in 2000-2015. Nigeria is primarily a country of out-migration. In particular, it "is a

[1] UNCTAD, *Economic development in Africa. Report 2018. Migration for structural transformation*, UNCTAD, New York, 2018, pp. 46-47.

[2] Blessing U. Mberu and Estelle M. Sidze, "The hidden side of the story: intra-African migration and migrations towards MENA countries", in Giovanni Carbone (ed.), *Out of Africa. Why people migrate*, Milano, ISPI, 2017, pp. 73-94; Blessing Mberu – Roland Pongou, "Nigeria: multiple forms of mobility in Africa's demographic giant", *Migration Policy Institute*, 2010.

country with a variety of migration configurations, including cross-border movements, migration of contract workers, labour migrants (especially from rural to urban situations) and migration of skilled professionals... [as well as] irregular migration and human trafficking".[3]

Prior to colonial times, large-scale population movements originating in present-day Nigeria were related to the slave trade – including the Atlantic and, to a lesser extent, the trans-Saharan slave trades. Local communal conflicts also produced some mobility.[4] During the British occupation, new migration patterns developed. Many departed for the Gold Coast and Dahomey (today's Ghana and Benin, respectively) to work in construction, agriculture or mining. Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan (the latter currently hosts the largest community of Nigerians living abroad, many hailing from the north) were also key destinations.[5]

After independence (but also before), Nigerians moving overseas headed primarily to the United Kingdom and the United States. Migrant numbers subsequently increased and destinations diversified after the 1980s as a combined result of the oil crises, the 1986 structural adjustment reforms, and worsening living standards. Tens of thousands of highly skilled workers – many of them health professionals or technicians – left for the classic destinations (i.e. the UK and the US) but also new ones, such as continental European countries or the Gulf states. The trend was later reinforced by a wave of less skilled or unskilled workers who often emigrated irregularly, or without the necessary documentation. These people took up work "as construction labourers and workers in the '3D' – Dirty, Dangerous and

[3] Aderanti Adepoju, "Nigeria: leaving Africa's giant" in Giovanni Carbone (ed.), *Out of Africa. Why people migrate*, Milano, ISPI, 2017, p. 123.

[4] Blessing Mberu and Roland Pongou, "Nigeria: multiple forms of mobility in Africa's demographic giant", *Migration Policy Institute*, 2010.

[5] Ibid.

Demeaning – jobs that nationals scorn".[6] Meanwhile, refugee flows from Nigeria also rose from the 1990s, initially inflated by political repression under military rule and then by violence and instability in the southeast and northeast regions.

Most of the complex and hazardous journeys to Europe in recent years have occurred through the Western route within Africa towards Libya (an established destination in itself, as well as a country of transit) and the Central Mediterranean route from Libya across the sea. The latter path narrowed dramatically following to the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, due to greater insecurity and risks, in favour of the Eastern Mediterranean route. The Nigerian exit points are thus the northern frontier with Niger and most directly into the Sahara (often leaving from Kano), the northeastern borders with Chad and Cameroon, and the southwestern border into neighbouring Benin. Very few have the option to fly out from Lagos or Abuja.[7]

According to official statistics (Table 1), about one-third of emigrant Nigerians have settled in Europe, with another third remaining in Africa. The rest have established residence in some other part of the world, primarily North America.[8] In recent years, many have reached the shores of Italy. Nigerian migrants were the largest single group entering the country in 2015 (14.5%, or 22,337 out of 153,842 arrivals), 2016 (20.7%, or 37,551 out of 181,436 arrivals) and 2017 (15.2%, or 18,158 out of 119,369 arrivals). In 2018, however, the number of Nigerians entering Italy dropped to just 1,250 out of 23,370 (5%). From the largest group in 2015, then, Nigerians

[6] Aderanti Adepoju, "Nigeria: leaving Africa's giant" in Giovanni Carbone (ed.), *Out of Africa. Why people migrate*, Milano, ISPI, 2017, p. 126.

[7] International Organization for Migration, *Enabling a better understanding of migration flows and (its root-causes) from Nigeria towards Europe. Displacement tracking matrix*, 2017, p. 24.

[8] Ibid., p. 12.

dropped into sixth place overall after Tunisians, Eritreans, Iraqis, Sudanese and Pakistanis in 2018. This is down to new closure policies adopted since April 2017.[9] Overall, the total number of Nigerians in Italy increased from 48,220 in 2012 to 106,069 in 2018.[10]

Decades of outbound movement have produced a large Nigerian diaspora. While the data are uncertain, high-end estimates refer to a few million (up to 20 million) Nigerians living abroad, when including the large number of "second – and third – generation Nigerians who were born overseas and are foreign passport holders, but still maintain close ties with, and send remittances to, their families at home".[11] These are not only those in Europe or North America, but also the 3 million living in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in West Africa. A large diaspora has important financial implications. At over $22 billion, money sent back from Nigerians living abroad in 2017 made the country the seventh-largest destination for remittances in the world.[12]

[9] UNHCR, ITALY *Sea arrivals dashboard*, December 2018.

[10] Based on ISTAT data: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRCIT1#

[11] Aderanti Adepoju, "Nigeria: leaving Africa's giant" in Giovanni Carbone (ed.), *Out of Africa. Why people migrate, Milano*, ISPI, 2017, p. 123.

[12] World Bank, World Development Indicators, accessed on 17 April 2019.

Nigeria	
Stock of emigrants (mid-2017) [a]	1.255.425
To developed regions	718.998
To developing regions	536.427
To Sub-Saharan countries	499.744
To Asia	32.487
To Europe	395.050
To North America	314.457
To other areas	13.687
Refugees (incl. refugee like situations) [b]	267.009
Asylum-seekers [b]	86.687
Internally Displaced Persons (incl. refugee like situations) [b]	1.978.508
Total population of concern [b]	2.518.302

Table 1. *Nigeria: migration statistics*
Sources: (a) UNDESA, International Migrant Stock, mid-2017; (b) UNHCR, Population Statistics, mid-2018.

What makes Nigerians leave?

But why do Nigerian migrants embark on what are often hard and dangerous migration journeys? Factors driving contemporary out-migration from Nigeria include demographic pressures, poverty and unemployment, and conflict.

Africa as a whole is at the forefront of the world's population expansion. Once again, Nigeria leads the pack. Estimates for 2019 suggest that the sub-Saharan population has surpassed one billion, with Nigeria's alone reaching 200 million.[13] This is up from 100 million people in 1992, less than 30 years ago.

[13] United Nations, *World Population Prospects*, 2017.

Following the same trend, Nigeria's population is projected to double again to reach 400 million by 2050, overtaking the United States as the third largest country in the world after China and India (see Figure 1). This is the exact opposite of what is happening in much of Europe, where youth cohorts are falling. Table 2 shows this with a comparison of demographic trends for Germany and Nigeria.

One component of the extraordinary population changes Nigeria faces is rapid urbanization. The capital Abuja, for example, saw a 140% increase in the number of residents in 2000-2010 (UN Habitat 2014). A second has to do with available land. Nigeria's land is not as boundless as its population growth appears to be – the country is already quite densely populated. In the region, only tiny Rwanda and Burundi have more inhabitants per square kilometre. Demographic pressures are thus mounting quickly. In certain areas, in particular, land is fast becoming scarce and/or overused, raising the stakes of disputes among competing communities.

The fast and unrelenting population increase has not been met with job creation on the same scale for the expanding ranks of young people. Even during the aforementioned, relatively long, spell of high economic growth in Nigeria, it was mostly jobless.[14] The new breakdown of national economic statistics produced after the 2014 'rebasing' (i.e. statistical reassessment) shows that the country is "transforming from an agrarian economy to a tertiary service economy, without going through the intermediate stage of industrialization. This atypical transition, the so-called 'tertiarization' that has so far failed to deliver quality jobs poses challenges for the sustainability and inclusiveness of economic growth in Nigeria".[15] As a result, unem-

[14] A. Ajakaiye, A. T. Jerome, D. Nabena and O. A. Alaba, *Understanding the relationship between growth and employment in Nigeria*, UNU-WIDER, May, 2016.
[15] Ibid., p. 1.

ployment almost quadrupled from 6.0% in 2011 to 22.6% in 2018. Economic progress has ultimately been insufficient to abate poverty, which has also grown significantly. The poverty rate rose from 54.4% in 2004 to 69% in 2010.[16]

Conflicts and violence have also been major causes of population displacements within and outside Nigeria since at least the Biafra war in the 1960s. In recent times, three main forms of instability across distinct areas of the country have featured prominently among motives for people to move. The best-known case is the Boko Haram jihadist struggle in the north-east. Born as a Sunni sect around 2001-2002 in Maiduguri – capital of Borno state – Boko Haram gained prominence a few years later as a vehicle for demands for a more socially-just society based on a country-wide adoption of sharia (the Nigerian constitution explicitly proclaims the secular character of the state). Between 2009 and 2011, the militants' actions against the authorities and un-Islamic targets (including banks and churches) escalated the level of violence, particularly in states such as Borno, Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Adamawa, and around national elections times. By 2012, a state of emergency had been declared in the most directly afflicted areas.

The rise of Boko Haram partly expressed local frustration in politically and economically marginalized areas. The latter also suffered environmental pressures due to water scarcity as a result of nearby Lake Chad drying up. While the Nigerian army, alongside the militaries of neighbouring countries, was relatively successful in responding to the emergency, particularly from 2016, the jihadist insurgency brought immense disruption in the northeast and deeply affected mobility patterns. Recent estimates refer to some 34,000-37,500 deaths caused by the

[16] Unemployment data from IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (accessed on 17 April 2019). Poverty data from National Bureau of Statistics, in A. Ajakaiye, A. T. Jerome, D Nabena and O. A. Alaba. *Understanding the relationship between growth and employment in Nigeria* UNU-WIDER, May, 2016, p.1.

insurgency between 2011 and 2018. Almost two million people were displaced internally (or 94% of all IDPs within Nigeria), with an additional 272,000 Nigerians taking refuge beyond national boundaries and into Cameroon, Niger and Chad.[17]

Yet jihadism was not the only source of instability-induced mobility in Nigeria. The oil-rich Niger Delta has seen the presence of anti-government rebellions since early after independence, when a secessionist movement emerged for the creation of an independent Republic of Biafra. While the scale of the late 1960s revolt was never later achieved, several other waves of violence have agitated the region across the decades and up until today – even after the temporary stability reached by a 2009 amnesty – particularly across the states of Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers, and partly linked to economic and political grievances in an environmentally-fragile area.

Much less known outside Nigeria, on the other hand, are the clashes between herder and farmer communities that rage in the so-called "middle belt", a highly diverse region across central Nigeria. Here, semi-nomad herdsmen – mostly belonging to the Hausa-Fulani – traditionally shared the use of land with local cultivators, including, for example, those belonging to the Tiv, Mambila, Berom, Eggon and Jukun communities. But tensions have been mounting in the context of increasing demographic and environmental pressures (particularly desertification) that have reduced the availability of arable land and water resources. The resulting violence killed an astonishing 10,000 in a decade, and some 4,000 people in the last three years alone (2016-2018); as many as 182,000 have been displaced.[18]

[17] UNHCR, Operational Portal – Nigeria Situation (accessed on 15 April 2019); John Campbell and Asch Harwood, *Boko Haram's Deadly Impact*, Council on Foreign Relations, 20 August 2018.

[18] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herders as death toll nears 4,000*, 17 December 2018; Udo Jude Ilo, Ier Jonathan-Ichaver, Yemi Adamolekun, "The deadliest conflict you've never heard of", *Foreign Affairs*, 23 January 2019.

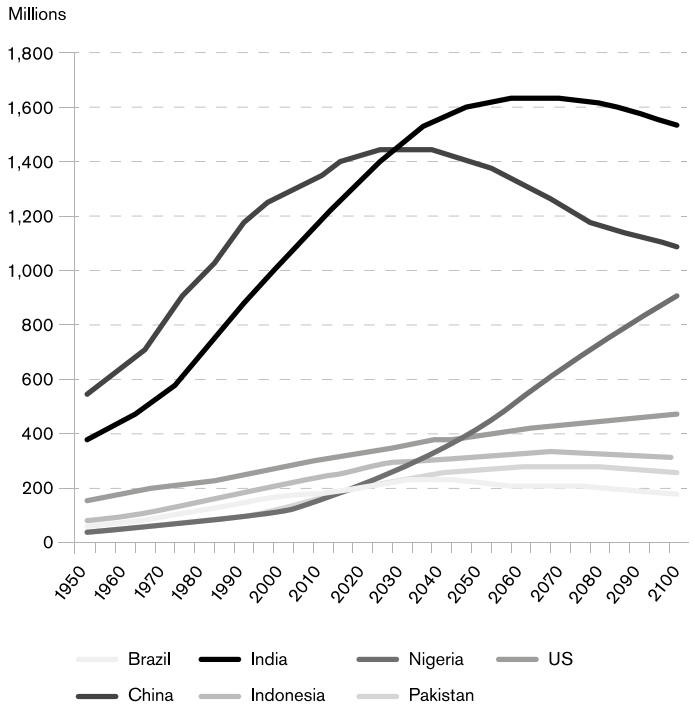


Figure 1. *Population growth in the most populous countries in the world*
Source: UN, World Population Prospects 2017

Current Nigerian migration is thus affected by several distinct factors that interact in various ways within the national territory and across time. Adding to the complexity of the phenomenon, migrants' motivation and choices are also linked to other circumstances. These include opportunities for entering Europe legally (e.g. through family reunification, student visas or seasonal work permits), household strategies

Population in Nigeria and Germany (million), 2015 and 2050						
Age	**0–19**	**20–39**	**40–59**	**60–79**	**80+**	**Total**
Germany						
2015	14.4	19.4	24.6	17.7	4.6	**80.7**
2050	10.7	14.5	17.4	18.5	10.8	**71.9**
% change	-25.7	-25.3	-29.3	+4.5	+134.8	**-10.8**
Nigeria						
2015	99.0	51.3	23.7	7.8	0.3	**182.2**
2050	277.5	139.3	67.2	24.0	1.3	**509.3**
% change	+180.3	+171.5	+183.5	+207.7	+333.3	**+179.5**

Table 2. *Population growth prospects: Nigeria and Germany compared*
Source: Massimo Livi Bacci, *Il pianeta stretto*, Il Mulino, 20

(whereby a family decides to invest in a child's journey in view of making him or her the household's breadwinner), and existing social and personal connections (both a migrant's group of origin, his or her journey and destination country). The kind of job he or she targets can also be affected by the information gathered from 'successful' relatives, friends or other acquaintances who have already migrated, and smuggling and trafficking networks. The latter, for example, developed and then perpetuated a system of recruiting sex workers mainly drawn from Edo state, especially from Benin city, and destined for Italy or other European countries. Some of the latter variables help explain why a large share of Nigerian migrants hail from communities in the southwest (like the Yorubas) or in the Niger Delta region of the southeast (like the Igbos, but also the Edos and the Ogonis). More generally, however, they once again remind us the extreme complexity of contemporary Nigerian migration processes.

Chapter IV

West Africa: Economic and Socio-Political Dynamics

Andrea de Georgio, Journalist

In many different ways, West Africa is now among the most dynamic regions of the continent. But despite the higher rates of economic growth recorded in the region recently, countries such as Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Guinea have continued to occupy top positions in lists of origin countries for migrants reaching Europe irregularly.[1] Yet, considering that over 80% of the migratory flows affecting the region are intra-African,[2] few sub-Saharan citizens are on the march to European countries in search of Eldorado. They are not – as the common view would have it – trying in every way to circumvent the restrictions and controls at the external and internal borders of the EU.[3]

Still, they are in exodus (just not to Europe, for the most part) and we must therefore ask: what is prompting them to leave? Conferences and debates organized in the region by NGOs, UN agencies and international organizations in the last

[1] See https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics

[2] According to regional research conducted during the period 2010-2018 by Professor Brema Ely Dicko, Director of the Department of Sociology at the University of Bamako, one of the leading specialists in the migration issue in West Africa.

[3] In view of the recent rise in Asian and American destinations – Canada but also Central and South American countries – West African citizens traveling to Europe are only a small part of the total number of sub-Saharan emigrants.

few years have often stalled on this apparently simple question. The most inflated response from the experts surveyed is "they flee wars, violence, misery and famine". This is partially true. But from a more "local" perspective – one that considers more carefully the socio-cultural nuances of each specific case – contemporary migratory phenomena seem to respond to more complex and multi-faceted, collective and individual challenges. It scarcely needs repeating that the economic or security lens alone cannot synthesize these effectively.

Although each country is characterized by distinctive conditions, the region has also few common traits that shed some light on drivers of migration to Europe. The first is relatively high nominal GDP growth across almost all of West Africa. According to World Bank data, the GDP of Ivory Coast in 2018 grew by 7.6% compared to the previous year, Senegal's by 6.6%, followed by Burkina Faso (6%), Guinea Conakry (5.8%), Gambia (5.3%) and Mali (4.9%).[4]

However, this macroeconomic indicator – like others – is misleading if not related to the low redistribution of wealth produced and the high levels of corruption that end up distorting growth so that it is very non-inclusive. Despite their fast-growing economies, countries such as Senegal and Ivory Coast,[5] for example, continue to see young people fleeing in droves, seeking opportunity and a better life elsewhere.

Looking at the economy of the entire region, we encounter systems borrowed from the colonial past that are struggling to grow mainly because of the lack of industrialization and the high dependence on international aid and on the proceeds of concessions for the exploitation of natural resources to foreign multinationals. On this subject, the case of Guinea Conakry is striking. An "ecological ticking time-bomb", in which compa-

[4] See https://data.worldbank.org

[5] In Senegal in the 2000s important oil and natural gas deposits were discovered.

nies from Canada, Australia, South Africa, China and France extract bauxite, uranium, iron, diamonds and gold, the country experiences considerable damage to the environment and to inhabitants in the mining areas. In addition to these regional considerations, further elements of economic fragility are also the major infrastructure gaps and the influence of the CFA franc – one of the last remaining colonial currencies in the world – on the regional import-export balance.[6]

Other common elements in the region are unbridled population growth and uncontrolled urbanization. Niger is the country with the highest birth rate on the planet, with an average of 7.1 children per woman. The figures for Mali (5.9), Burkina Faso (5.2), Ivory Coast (4.8), Guinea (4.7) and Senegal (4.6) are also high.[7] The city of Bamako has the seventh-highest population growth rate in the world. In Senegal, on the other hand, the sudden and deregulated urban boom of Dakar in recent decades has convinced the rulers to consider the possibility of moving the capital about 50 km inland, to the new industrial, administrative and residential centre of Diamniadio.[8]

A population that is increasingly large, young and urban poses major problems, particularly for the labour market. For this reason, at each new election local politicians promise to create thousands of new jobs. However, demand grows at a much faster rate than growth in jobs leaving an ever-increasing gap at each election in unfulfilled expectations. As recently happened in Burkina Faso (2014) and Gambia (2016), extraordinary political events can become carriers of new hopes and a desire for revenge. The city uprisings that led to the overthrow of Yahya Jammeh and Blaise Compaoré – two of the longest-run-

[6] On this topic see Fanny Pigeaud - Ndongo Samba Sylla, *L'arme invisible de la Françafrique: Une histoire du franc CFA*, La Découverte (2018).

[7] See http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/total-fertility-rate/

[8] A giant project in which China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia participate.

ning and cruelest dictators in African history – have opened the way to renewed demands for change and improvement in living conditions for large sections of the population. However, the revolutions that followed a few years later have not borne the desired fruits, increasing instead in the medium and long term the discontent and frustration of the people. The "demographic time-bomb" and the obvious difficulty of local governments to meet the fast growing demand for employment, however, only partially explain the exodus of Africans. Climate change also cannot be overlooked – it is a pool factor that in this region registers worrying peaks of intensity. The Sahel area, which extends from Senegal to Chad, is particularly affected by global warming. A range of issues follow, including galloping desertification, increasingly scarce rainfall, recurrent cycles of drought, famine and food crisis, and the difficulties in accessing water and cultivable land. These challenges combine to produce a lethal cocktail for the survival of local populations, driven by unsustainable practices like deforestation (wood for household use) and land- and water-grabbings.

In countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso, difficult climatic conditions even lead to seasonal inter-ethnic conflicts between sedentary farmers and semi-nomadic shepherds. Access to water wells and land, and the right of herds to pass over plowed fields and traditional "transhumance corridors" thus become flashpoints for conflict. Historical disputes have worsened in recent years due to the proliferation, throughout the Sahel, of automatic weapons of war,[9] replacing the less lethal handmade hunting rifles of the past. Clashes between shepherds of the *peul* and *dogon, bambara* people (Mali) or the *mossi* farmers of Burkina Faso, besides causing hundreds of victims, push thousands of people to flee every year. A wave of internally displaced people who often cross

[9] Partly from the famous "missing arsenal" of Colonel Gaddafi, whose fall is one of the main reasons for the outbreak of conflict in Mali, which began in January 2013.

national borders to seek shelter in neighboring countries further complicates the conditions of cross-border areas already particularly affected by terrorism and illegal trafficking of all kinds.[10]

As a result of climate change, work in the fields becomes more and more difficult, uncertain, unprofitable and, consequently, unattractive for young people, who are trying in every way to escape their daily conditions, perceived as an obstacle to the affirmation of identity. Their initial landing place is often one of the urban centers of the country. A growing proportion of young Africans attracted by the shimmer of easy earnings continue to leave their villages and fields to move to the city. For young people with little education and specialization, however, the reality of life in capitals such as Dakar, Abidjan, Banjul and Conakry is anything but rosy. Here, social inequalities divide the few rich living in the most unbridled luxury and the mass of destitute people who flock to overflowing, degraded suburbs. The difficult conditions of survival often give rise to a deep sense of distance from the ruling class and disaffection, if not disinterest, with party policies and democratic participation. This trend was seen in the most recent presidential elections in Mali (July 2018) and Senegal (February 2019), where low participation rates and complaints of fraud and buying and selling preferences by the opposition and civil society have partly disrupted the legitimacy of the vote.

Against this background, student and grassroots movements are again flourishing in the region also thanks to clear positions on the issue of migration. Fadel Barro is leader of the historic Senegalese collective *Y'en a marre* ("Fed up" in French) and of the new mother of pan-African activism Afrikki Mwinda ("Light of Africa", combining the ancient name of the continent with the term *mwinda*, which means "light" in the Lingala

[10] Especially drugs, weapons, cigarettes, gasoline, cars and humans, whose smuggling finances the Sahelian "narco-jihadism".

language).[11] He maintains that "Europe uses the leverage of African development funding to impose its own laws on strengthening border control, the famous externalization of European borders, and wants to make our governments do the dirty work". African movements attribute this failure not only to the "neocolonialist" West, but to the tacit subjugation of African rulers, eager to enrich themselves personally at the expense of the interests of their citizens. "Our politicians have sold us as slaves chained in Libya, as low laborers exploited in European industries and fields, as bargaining chips exploited in negotiations with the EU", Fadel Barro concludes bitterly.

In the interpretation of the antagonistic groups of West Africa, the phenomenon of migration is a golden goose for the local politicians, who exploit it as a release valve in the face of raging youth – a quick solution to unemployment, population growth and protest – and as a diplomatic lever to obtain more European funding. The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa) is, for example, a €3.9 billion instrument decided at the Valletta summit in November 2015 that regulates the "new relationship between the EU and Africa" through funding conditional on the collaboration of African states in contrasting irregular migration to European soil.[12]

Despite the growing criticism and awareness of civil society on European and African migration issues and policies, regional leaders still do not want to address the issue publicly, in campaigns or election programs as well as during their mandates.[13] There are

[11] Born in July 2018 from the meeting, in Dakar, of activists and artists from over thirty African countries – see Andrea de Georgio, *I giovani africani si organizzano per cambiare i loro paesi*, online since August 9, 2018 https://www.internazionale.it/reportage/andrea-de-georgio/2018/08/09/giovani-africani-movimento

[12] See https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/content/homepage_en

[13] See Riccardo Cappelletti, *Elezioni in Senegal: chi parla di migrazioni?* https://www.ritornoinsenegal.org/blog_article/elezioni-in-senegal-chi-parla-di-migrazioni/

few investigative journalists holding leaders to account, and they are at great risk. The regional media are mostly controlled by the executive power, so they are basically not free.[14]

That said, however, the fact remains that each extended family, which in this part of Africa includes on average groups of 30-40 people, has at least one member who has gone "on the adventure".[15] It is therefore clear that this phenomenon directly or indirectly affects the vast majority of the population. In Mali, for example, wherein the zone of Kayes some villages record an almost total exodus of their young people to cities or to other countries, the migration issue is the unique topic around which a real public opinion has developed. The presence in the region of organizations such as the Association Malienne des Expulsés (AME) – a group made up entirely of expelled ex-migrants who have been fighting for the rights of migrants for more than three decades[16] – testifies to the crucial importance of this struggle in the panorama of West African activism.

In some regional countries, the issue is so much discussed that it has even led to a gradual political recognition of the representation of the diaspora. The weight of migrants' remittances is a key factor here. According to the World Bank, the migrants remittances to the sub-Saharan Africa totalled $38 billion in 2017, of which towards Senegal 2.2, while the contribution of migrants remittances to the GDP of Gambia in 2017 was 21%.[17] The social influence of citizens living abroad has pushed many West African states to create government agencies and ad hoc ministries, such as the Ministry of Malians and Senegalese abroad. During the last

[14] See World Press Freedom Index 2019 edited by Reporter Without Borders, https://rsf.org/fr/classement

[15] This is how irregular migration is called in many West African countries.

[16] See http://www.expulsesmaliens.info

[17] See https://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/news/press-release/2018/04/23/record-high-remittances-to-low-and-middle-income-countries-in-2017

local elections in Senegal, in July 2017, some members of the diaspora were elected as representatives of the Senegalese overseas. The new political actor has been renamed the "15th region".

But despite the recent efforts of national administrations to grant some sort of formal recognition to diasporas, the tools available to states to try to stem this brain drain are still very limited. The message of "staying to build a better Africa" – conveyed by the awareness campaigns carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the many European NGOs, as well as by the African citizens' movements and their collaborators – has yet to fully reach the majority of underprivileged and poorly educated young people in the suburbs, who continue to leave.

The sense of abandonment by institutions and governments – perceived as distant or even absent – is accentuated in remote rural areas that traditionally produce the highest number of migrants to Europe, such as, for example, the region of Kayes in Mali or those of Kolda, Tambacounda and Matam in Senegal. In these places many young people feel marginalized and – with their internet-connected smartphones in easy reach – are on the hunt for an acute exit from their generational loneliness. While this identity crisis has no boundaries – and is, indeed, a common feature throughout the contemporary world – in West Africa there are only two viable ways of escape: migration or radicalization. The proliferation, in the region, of terrorist brands like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Great Sahara (ISGS) is rooted in the same generational discontent, in the same need for redemption and revenge of a mass of young people excluded from the privileges of the modernity that favors emigration. Seen in this way, migration and terrorism are two sides of the same coin. The very same process of self-affirmation of identity, made problematic by globalization and the still dominant neoliberalism, rests at the base.

Against the backdrop of such complex conditions, more and more researchers and analysts – Western and African alike – are calling for the consideration of the human dimension of migration, the burden of betrayed hopes and incurable despair that young Sub-Saharans carry with them on their journey to a new life. In his interesting field work in Pikine, a suburb of Dakar, the German anthropologist Sebastian Prothmann has found "[…] a kind of obsession, like a collective dream of an entire youth layer. Clandestine migration was then a part of a locally construed 'culture of migration', which, symbolized by practices and artifacts of migrants upon their return, was stepped in an economy of celebrating the success from abroad".[18]

On this point, it is particularly useful to note how for some ethnic groups such as the *sarakollé* – a population living at the interstices between the borders of Mali, Mauritania and Senegal – the journey to Europe has replaced the traditional initiation rites in which young people had to prove to the village their manhood. In many West African ethnic groups, these rituals are always symbolically linked to the journey, leaving the village shell to face a dangerous path from which it is not easy to return alive. The parallels with the modern experience of "departing on an adventure" are evident.

From this type of focused observation, it is clear that the migratory prism should be deconstructed. A deeper understanding requires probing its cultural traits and not only – as too often happens in the Western media and research centres – the socio-economic macro-dynamics.[19] In order to do this, we must develop distance from the systemic logics that underlie the legal

[18] Sebastian Prothmann, "Lifeworlds of Young Men: beyond Migration and Immobility in Pikine, Senegal" (Rudiger Kopek Verlag, Koln, 2017), p.110.

[19] See Papa Demba Fall, "La dynamique migratoire ouest africaine entre ruptures et continuités" (2007) http://www.dea.univr.it/documenti/OccorrenzaIns/matdid/matdid550083.pdf

definitions of "economic migrant", "refugee", "asylum seeker" and other categories. These tend to define rights in terms of variable geometries and according to the logics of political expediency, thus limiting objective analysis.

It is precisely from here that the curiosity to consider a more "local" and "human" perspective on migration ought to arise. Such a change of view is crucial if we are to restore in migration analysis the centrality of the person, understood as a subject who acts in relation to a range of factors and not only as an object moved by global socio-economic dynamics. As a former Malian migrant who has worked for many years as a legal operator at the AME in Bamako summarized: "every migrant is a migration".

Chapter V

Niger: A Hub of Migrants' Routes Towards North

Andrea de Georgio, Journalist

During the last few years Niger has become the "model pupil" of the European Union in the matter of migration control and externalization of borders. This great Sahelian country – the second poorest in the world according to the HDI – is now the main crossroads of the so-called "central Mediterranean" migration route. About 90% of sub-Saharan migrants, in fact, pass through the northern desert areas of Niger to Algeria and Libya, and then try to knock on the (closed) doors of Europe.

Against this background, the strategic partnership with Europe has matured since the Summit in Valletta in November 2015, which in a short time has transformed the "priority" Niger into the biggest per capita recipient of EU aid in the world. Through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF), which officially "aims to promote stability in Africa by addressing the root causes of destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration",[1] the EU is pumping into Africa €3.3 billion. Niger is the main beneficiary of the EUTF with a commitment of €272 million. Following the European Council of late June 2018 an additional €500 million have been allocated to the Trust Fund, most of it earmarked for Niger.

[1] See https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/index_en

A central objective of European leaders is to get the countries of origin and transit more and more involved in controlling flows towards the Union. Considering that, Niger is their best ally. When visiting Niger in July 2018, then president of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani said that, thanks to the Nigerien government's commitment and community funds, in this "regional model" migration flows to Europe had fallen by 95%.[2] "Niger is an example of the successes achieved by the European Union, also thanks to the optimal deployment of the Trust Fund for Africa. The resources are running out, and new appropriations are needed to help the country – among the poorest in the world – protect borders, manage migratory flows and guarantee security", added Tajani.[3]

Today this country appears a real laboratory for on-the-ground testing of the inseparable relationship that European policies have established between security, development and migration. The EUTF, in fact, is coming from the European Development Fund (EDF), but it finances mostly military cooperation and border control projects.[4] Few members of the European Parliament seem to have become aware of this major contradiction. Elly Schlein, Italian former Italian MEP, for instance, is very critical of the Trust Fund. "The objective of the cooperation for development is only one: the elimination of poverty and the reduction of inequality. I would like to understand how projects that are all aimed towards border management can reduce poverty and inequality. It seems to me that

[2] In 2016 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) observed 333,891 individuals departing across Niger's borders (mainly to Libya). In 2017 the number decreased to 17,634.

[3] See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/home/newsroom/page-Content-area/newsroom/tajani-visit-to-niger-95-percent-decrease-in-migration-flows-to-libya-and-europe-thanks-to-eu-partnership-and-funds---president.html

[4] On this topic see Diverted Aid project founded by European Journalism Center: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/content/homepage_en

vice versa they risk further growth" claims Schlein, who led a working group on Migration and Refugee in the Development Committee of the previous European Parliament.[5]

The EU's interest is partly justified by the renewed geopolitical centrality of Niger, a country rich in natural resources such as gas, oil, gold and uranium and a new hot front in the fight against Sahelian Jihadism. Against that background, the business of migration is also very profitable for the Nigerien government, 45 percent of whose current budget comes from foreign aid. While Transparency International ranks Niger 114th out of 180 countries worldwide in terms of endemic corruption,[6] 75 percent of the actual EU aid to Niger ends in direct budget support to the government.

Hassane Boukar is an analyst from Niger's Alternative Espace Citoyens (AEC), a militant civil society association permanently targeted by arrests and pressure from the executive power. Reflecting on Niger's politics, he notes: "Ours is a politically unstable country, which since independence from France (1960) has experienced four military coups, the last of which was in 2010. The current president Mahamadou Issoufou has already been in office for two terms and, knowing that according to the Niger Constitution he should leave power in 2021, uses the argument of migration and security as a lever on international allies to affirm his leadership". He continues: "Europe's responses do not go beyond repression and call on African countries to do the same. But our countries do not have the means to block the entry and exit of migrants. In any case, in our opinion, these policies cannot prohibit the right to emigrate in favor of so-called 'development' programs".[7]

[5] Watch part of the interview at https://vimeo.com/227870978 (Diverted Aid project)

[6] See https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018

[7] See Andrea de Georgio, *Au Niger et au Mali, avec les migrants de retour de Libye*, Mediapart, online since 25th May 2017.

It is interesting to note that, unlike its regional neighbors, Niger is a country of heavy transit of migrants but not a country of departure to Europe. Nigeriens traditionally emigrate temporarily to North African countries such as Algeria[8] and Libya to beg or do small jobs, but very few try to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. The local government, therefore, has freer hands than other countries of the region, where strong popular pressure reflects the fact that in almost all families there is at least one migrant who has gone "on the adventure".[9]

Starting from 2012-2013, the conflict that broke out in the neighbouring north of Mali between the Franco–Malian troop deployment and the Sahelian jihadists caused a substantial change in the roads used by migrants from West Africa (who previously passed through northern Mali to reach Algeria and Libya), bringing Niger back to occupy a strategic position within sub-Saharan migration routes.[10]

So the northern town of Agadez – once a flourishing oasis at the centre of trade on caravan tracks, now the suffering capital of a desert region larger than France – has become "the gateway to the desert", a crossroads capital of regional migrations. From there to the border of Libya are some 800km of uncontrolled slopes, sand and dunes. Under strong pressure from the EU, however, since June 2016 has come into force throughout the region the notorious Law 36, a measure issued by the Niger's government officially to combat trafficking in human beings.

[8] Where, since 2014, there have been cyclical waves of arrests and mass deportations of sub-Saharan migrants. As Amnesty International has denounced, more than 20,000 people were forcibly removed, among them even 18,000 Nigerien seasonal workers. See: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/algeria-mass-racial-profiling-used-to-deport-more-than-2000-sub-saharan-migrants/

[9] See previous chapter.

[10] Migration routes are constantly changing in relation to the contingency of political events in the various countries of the Sahel, as well as the effect of the closure policies imposed by the EU on the countries of the region.

The new law, which has been hailed as a great success by European leaders, provides for heavy penalties: 5 to 10 years' imprisonment and the confiscation of the vehicle for "passeurs" (*smugglers* in French) caught in the act of committing a crime.

The criminalization of smugglers and migrants imposed by the EU has led to a repressive climate which, in the region, adds to a foreign militarization which has been going on for several years now. Drones, bases and armies of France, USA, Germany and Italy, in fact, are officially deployed on Niger territory to fight global terrorism, unofficially to position themselves on the new geopolitical chessboard. Other European actors – such as Italy, which recently opened an embassy in Niamey, or England – are starting to send soldiers to the Niger desert with the mission of countering irregular migration flows.[11]

The increasingly frequent raids of Niger's security forces – who go up to the far desert to patrol the water points where the traffickers' convoys used to refuel – have led traffickers to look for new, more remote paths, less controlled and therefore more expensive and dangerous for those who venture there. The presence of old unmarked minefields on the tracks leading to the border with Libya and Chad[12] results in greater risks for the passeurs, who are therefore more likely to abandon migrants in the wilderness, in case of controls or emergencies. According to different estimations, the desert that has already killed two to three times more people than the Mediterranean has more victims than ever due to the direct effect of police repression.

[11] Operation Red Desert was first decided by the Italian government in December 2017 and should involve 500 soldiers deployed in the French base of Madama, in the far north of Niger on the border with Libya. But delays, polemics and turnabouts continue to delay the effective deployment of Italian troops in the country.

[12] A new route to Libya that passes through informal gold mines run by rebel groups that are self-financed by the passage of migrants.

Olivier Neola, head of EUCAP – Sahel Niger, the mission of the European Commission to assist and sustain the security forces in the country, recognizes the risk of side effects of such a measure. "The alternative routes, created after the closing of the traditional passages, avoid urban centres and are therefore more dangerous". To its mission, engaged in the country since 2012, a new objective was recently added: the focus on migration and the fight against human traffickers. "Thanks to the experience we have accumulated on the territory, we collaborate on the projects of the Trust Fund for security", Neola affirms. EUCAP – Sahel Niger has also coordinated the launch of a project, financed by the Trust Fund with €6 million, in which the French and Spanish police forces have collaborated to create a team of Nigerien police specialized in the investigation of the networks of irregular migration.[13]

An EU official who followed the program said in an recent interview with *Refugees Deeply* "the law was imposed in a brutal way, without any prior consultation, in a process where the government of Niger was heavily pressured by the EU, France and Germany, with a minimal consideration of the fact that Nigerien security forces are involved in this traffic".[14] So far, enforcement of Law 36 has led to the confiscation of hundreds of jeeps and the arrest of hundreds of low-level operatives, while those who command the irregular migration rackets live undisturbed in the capital Niamey or abroad, taking advantage of the rise in prices to do some good business with the new routes.[15]

[13] See Ludovica Jona, *Africa: EU uses development funds for migration control*, Afronline, May 2017 (Diverted Aid project).

[14] See Daniel Howden and Giacomo Zandonini, *Niger: Europe's Migration Laboratory*, Refugees Deeply, May 2018: https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2018/05/22/niger-europes-migration-laboratory

[15] For example, the road that passes through Gao, a town located in the dangerous north of Mali, which has been recently restored because of the partial closure of Agadez.

A side effect of the introduction of Law 36, the impact of which should not be overlooked, is also the deterioration of the local market for "service providers" in the Agadez region. Those that Europe calls "human traffickers". After the first arrests, activities that were previously carried out in the sunlight were forced into hiding. The so-called "ghettos", about a thousand private houses where local families rent rooms to migrants, putting them in contact with the drivers of the jeeps for the crossing of the desert, have moved to the outskirts of the city. Discretion has become a must: the migrants are locked behind barred doors and windows, waiting for the first convoy of jeeps to leave for Dirkou or Madama.[16]

The conversion of the economy of the Agadez region into alternatives to activities recently declared illegal is a major problem. Thousands of people suddenly found themselves out of work. Not only drivers and smugglers, but also managers and staff of bars, restaurants, shelters, telephone services and brothels. A governate conversion program was launched a year ago but delays, malfunctions and corruption are still undermining its real efficiency. Instead, an anti-EU sentiment is growing in Agadez, feelings opposed by European development projects to counterbalance the impact of anti-migration measures. The popular perception of the inhabitants of this region is that European funds remain blocked in the capital Niamey, where they are shared out by international organizations and the Nigerien government, thus not reaching the legitimate beneficiaries.

As a good desert man, the Governor of the Agadez region, Mohamed Anacko, uses a meteorological metaphor to comment on the absence of local compensation projects. "It's like observing huge dark clouds hovering in the sky over the area and never seeing the rain fall", he says. The concern of local administrators in the region is reiterated by the governor at every official visit of

[16] These are the last Nigerien points before crossing the Libyan border.

European heads of state, now used to going to Agadez to self-censor the successes of their "best student".[17]

"What the EU is trying to do here is in clear violation of the free movement zone of the ECOWAS", states Anacko. For citizens of the 15 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS/CEDEAO), in fact, no visa or special travel documents are required for visits of up to 90 days to another country in the area. According to West African Community law, therefore, the limits of the free movement zone extend as far as the border with Libya. "Today, however, the southern border of Europe passes by here, in Agadez", says the former leader of the Tuareg rebellion.

The passeurs arrested and imprisoned in northern Niger are almost all young Tuareg sons of the 2007–2009 rebellion who have already participated in state reconversion projects. In these programs they were given jeeps to transport tourists. But with the rise of jihadist terrorism throughout the Sahel, tourism collapsed and the vehicles filled with migrants instead. This is a much more profitable business. Alarmed, the regional governor warns: "Our boys can only manage two things well: driving jeeps in the desert or shooting Kalashnikovs. If they are not offered viable alternatives, the Agadez region will soon explode".[18]

The situation in Niger is already complicated by a humanitarian crisis (defined by the UN as "unprecedented") affecting the whole of the Sahel, and by the cyclical waves of refugees from the various regional wars. For example, around 120,000 Nigeriens in the south (region of Diffa) have fled the violence of the war against Boko Haram and more than 56,000 Malians

[17] From the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and from French President Emmanuel Macron to the former Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, almost all major European leaders visited Agadez in recent years.

[18] Watch part of his interview at https://vimeo.com/227771196 (Diverted Aid project).

in the north (region of Tillaberi) are fleeing from the conflict against Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. To complete the humanitarian picture, there are about 175,000 IDPs currently in the country and nearly 2,800 refugees were evacuated temporarily from Libya to Niger as part of the ETM (Emergency Transit Mechanism) from November 2017 to April 2019.[19]

As the case of Niger makes clear, the security–development–migration nexus professed by current European migration policies is dangerous because it conditions humanitarian aid to repressive policies that can have a decidedly negative impact on already fragile countries. The main concern, seen from a European perspective, is that Niger's "perfect experiment" could go mad and get out of hand, with the risk of further destabilization in an area that is already particularly hot. To avoid further collateral damage, the EU should urgently adopt a broader vision of migration management that goes beyond a repressive logic that, in the medium and long term, could well prove counterproductive to the objectives set.

Meanwhile, without regard to life or limb, the sands of the Sahara desert continue to cover bodies, stories and hopes of thousands of sub-Saharan men and women. These silent deaths mark the passage of people whose only fault was a desire to reach a continent where they are clearly no longer welcome.

[19] According to UNHCR's last data available: see https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/69587

Chapter VI

The 'Black Hole' of Libya: Internal Dynamics and Illegal Businesses

Michela Mercuri, University of Macerata

Libya seems to have become a true "black hole" in the map of North Africa, an almost bankrupt state where the highly sought after reconciliation between contending factions seems less likely every day. For months parts of the west and south of the country have seen an intensification of Libya's civil war, as militias fight over money, resources and some kind of "recognition" from the various international players vying for pre-eminence in the country. Libya, it hardly needs repeating, is deeply divided – with no central authority, intense competition between many sites of power continues unabated. Indeed, the assumption that the Libyan structure can be cast in terms of a simple "division" between Fayez al-Sarraj and General Khalifa Haftar is highly reductionist. The former is a weak leader recognized by the UN, while the latter is known as the "strong man of the east", whose control has now spread to different zones of the country right to the gates of Tripoli.

Coalitions with the different international players that do business with the individual militias and warlords is how local groups ensure their domination of particular localities or areas across the country. France, Russia, Italy, Qatar, Turkey, Egypt and other regional and international participants all seem more interested in securing the support of local leaders than in planning a path towards national stabilization, a word that has by now become a hollow mantra. Notwithstanding some

international summits – convened not by the United Nations as should be the case, but by individual states like France and Italy – the situation has not changed much. Thus, the facade of diplomacy erected by the world's powers continues. And Libya forms part of a broader proxy war that extends to Yemen, going through Syria – one that sees the interests of the big powers prioritized at the expense of ordinary people.

Meanwhile, criminal groups continue to strengthen and make money trafficking people, drugs and indeed any business that might yield some kind of economic return. Moreover, these criminal networks have become bound tighter and tighter with jihadist groups who see the former Jamahiriya ("state of the people" in Arabic) as a safe haven where they can operate undisturbed. Everyone sees this but no one has stepped in with concrete help to cope with the problem. Corruption is the rule and illegal activities flourish. Desperate human beings – sometimes attracted by the promises of criminal organizations that are then not honoured – revisit a crossing that tastes more like death and less like hope, paying for the privilege of enduring a torturous journey. Confronting such a scenario, and in the face of almost total European indifference, the new Italian government has continued the path of the previous one, strengthening the power of the Libyan Coast Guard to delegate search and rescue activities to local authorities and granting them more autonomy to block the migratory flows heading to Italy. This has directly strengthened the illegal traffickers who are increasingly difficult to eradicate and has triggered further deterioration of the already dramatic situation of the rejected (or detained) migrants in Italy. We will examine these two issues separately.

The business model of the traffickers and the connections with jihadist organizations

> Two brothers lead the organization. One deals with the organization of the crossing, the other with the boats. The father is their cashier and the mother their accountant. And as they are very powerful, they even have a shipyard to build and repair boats. Some boys from the sub-Saharan area work there as helpers, but the ships' carpenters are Tunisians and Egyptians. The shipyards are in Zuwarah, Sabrata, and Ras Lanuf.[1]

This declaration by a people smuggler – made at the public prosecutor's office of Syracuse to the team charged with fighting illegal immigration – summarizes one of several migration approaches. We have here a picture of a single organization working in Libya but it is just the tip of the iceberg; the entire phenomenon is much more complex and articulated.

In the last few years in fact a new type of trafficking – rooted mainly in the territory of sub-Saharan Africa and in the south of Libya – has come to the surface. It is dominated by transnational criminal networks based either in areas of "limited" state sovereignty or in peripheral regions, outside the control of the central authorities. Such networks are thus able to manage the trafficking from a position of virtually total socio-political control of the territory. These groups are not only able to bypass borders but, through a system of widespread corruption, have also realized effective authority over vast swathes of some countries, creating safe havens for crime – including terrorism.

Libya is one such case. Here, according to a survey by the UN in July 2018, between 3,000 and 4,000 ISIS fighters were dispersed across the country.[2] Less a "proto state", the militiamen – often fleeing the control of warlords in the east – have been bent on cementing an "illegal terrorist network", finding

[1] C. Giudici, *Ero uno scafista, adesso vi racconto come funziona il nostro quartiere generale in Libia*, in «*Il Fatto Quotidiano*», 18th January 2016.

[2] United Nations, Security Council, *Monitoring Team Reports*, S/2018/705, July 2018.

the region of Fezzan an ideal hub. They are thus able to exploit the illegal trafficking and the connections with other groups such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. In addition, they have widened their zone of influence across borders, connecting with armed groups in Sudan, Chad and Mali. These "alliances with a varying geometry" are catalysed on mutual economic benefits rather than on shared ideology. Exploiting the porous borders of the Libyan failed state, the militiamen ply their wares and attract new recruits. One consequence has been the structuring of an inhuman market of migrants unwinding from the most remote places of Africa and going through the most difficult terrain on the continent, where the only winners are criminal organizations. Meanwhile, the terrorists and jihadist movements have become stronger and control many routes of transit in the Sahel and in Libya. The profits so captured can be reinvested in criminal activities and feed local civil conflicts that, in their turn, produce new waves of human migration and new recruits for terrorism.

It is evident, therefore, that the migratory issue cannot be parcelled out from that of organized criminality, which has organized itself around these "routes of death". In its latest risk analysis, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), claims that 96% of the migrants that have travelled along the central Mediterranean route admit to using smuggling networks.[3] The several militias that run these networks thus hold Europe to a kind of "ransom". Put bluntly, if they are hindered in their business in any way, the traffickers can threaten to open the "taps", allowing migrants to flood the coasts of northern Mediterranean shore, with "fortress Europe" at risk of being overrun. Thus, Europe has – wittingly

[3] Frontex, *Risk Analysis for 2019*, Warsaw, February 2019, reference number: 1218 / 2019.

or otherwise – subcontracted the management of migratory fluxes to criminals. Such political short-sightedness has fed, year after year, the business model of the traffickers, putting the lives of migrants at increasing risk.

A boom occurred between 2013 and 2014 as criminal networks became better organized, which saw a stepwise increase in the quality of their logistical operations. The town of Agadez in Niger has become the main hub for the whole of Africa. What is the result? In 2012 four convoys left heading to Libya every month with about 30 migrants on board, the following year it was 100 convoys per week.[4] In 2015, the business model expanded even more, capturing 40,000 people for an average turnover equal to €150,000 per person.[5] A joint report by Europol-Interpol in 2015 calculated the turnover of the organizations that manage the migrant trafficking towards Europe at about €5-6 billion.[6] Thousands of migrants paid between €3,000 – €6,000 each for the crossing. Today's figures are even higher. This, then, is a profitable (albeit not particularly complex) business model.

An example can help us understand this phenomenon better. Some years ago the journey from an African country to the Libyan coast lasted a few months and cost, on average, about €2,000; nowadays it can reach €10,000 and last for years because of the number of organizations and actors within the "model" have increased. There are the *investors* (who make advanced funding available), the *recruiters* (of potential "customers"), the *carriers*, the *corrupt officials* (to supply documents, visas, etc.), the *informers* (who collect information about the surveillance of both the maritime and the land borders),

[4] P. Quercia (edited by), *Migrazioni e sicurezza* internazionale, Geografia, politica, sicurezza, Trieste 2017, p. 59.

[5] M. Ricci, *Migrazioni: il business dei trafficanti di uomini vale 6 miliardi*, in «La Repubblica», 2nd May 2016.

[6] Europol–Interpol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks*, Joint Report, May 2016.

the *guides*, and finally the people in charge of laundering dirty money.[7] Each wants a slice of the cake – paid in cash – inflating the cost of the journey. All have an interest in seeing the business continue and, indeed, grow.

In addition, these "entrepreneurs of death" are forever enhancing their "sales techniques" to lure new "customers" in their countries of origin. These sometimes include "special offers" – by now, pay later – for those who cannot access the required money immediately. As in any service market, this is an attractive offer. The traffickers not only offer the simple service of illegal transport, but also the possibility of paying for the journey through illegal activities, with a criminal plan already designed in the countries of origin. Those who cannot afford to pay immediately are thus steered towards drug trafficking and prostitution, often against their will.

Is Libya a safe harbour?

Another serious consequence of Europe's recent policies to "restrain" flows from Libya concern the agreements with actors across that country to provide "safe harbour" for those interdicted on water or returned after detention in Italy and elsewhere. Are there really "safe points" for repatriation in Libya, though? The issue is rarely taken up at European summits convened to deal with the "crisis", but the problem is surely not of secondary importance.

Indeed, two crucial if related questions arise against the backdrop of agreements for "safe return". First of all, where do migrants go after they are taken back to Libya and in what kind

[7] A. Aronowitz, G. Theuermann, E. Tyurykanova, *Analyzing the Business Model of Trafficking in Human Beings to Better Prevent the Crime*, Technical Report, Osce, May 2010. For a more recent analysis see: Europol–Interpol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks Report*.

of conditions are they living? Secondly, can Libya be considered a safe harbour and therefore a reliable partner? Let's start with the first question. The price paid for a reduction in arrivals on European Mediterranean coasts has been the return of thousands of human beings to Libya – managed by the Libyan Coast Guard – who are then shut again in detention centres, often managed by the same militias involved in the trafficking. In other words, the disembarkations in Italy have decreased not only due to the restrictive policies of the government in Rome, but because the rate of collections by the Libyan Coast Guard and repatriation to Libya has expanded dramatically. According to the UNHCR 85% of those who start from Libya are intercepted by the Coast Guard and returned, to be settled in Libyan prisons.[8] Many of these people will try to cross again, shelling out more money for traffickers and feeding their never-ending business.

We need not linger on the terrible conditions migrants imprisoned in Libya face, a topic widely dealt with in the reports of the different humanitarian agencies. But we must try to understand what possibilities exist to safeguard the human beings that have been returned and are "blocked" in Libya. In the first place, international organizations working on the ground (e.g. the IOM) have clarified that – while present and active in some places of disembarkation, where they supply the first assistance to migrants rescued at sea – they have zero authority over the detention centres to which migrants are then transferred. These are managed by "government authorities", a rather vague term against the backdrop of state failure in Libya. Essentially, they are run by groups that have themselves sometimes colluded with the traffickers and that rarely answer to the government in Tripoli in any case. Bear in mind it is with this "national government" in Tripoli that Italy has stipulated the different "agreements on migrants".

[8] UNHCR, *Desperate journeys. Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders*, January 2019.

Returning to our second question, we observe the so-called "path of the repatriates". Since the beginning of 2018, more than 17.000 migrants have been repatriated with IOM support, leaving behind the Libyan hell. In the last year, charter flights have started again from southern Libya. The first flight left on 8 November 2018 and repatriated about 130 Nigerians from the town of Sebha, in the Fezzan region. Nigeria is the top "country of repatriation", followed by Mali and Niger.[9]

According to the UNHCR there has been a little improvement in the situation recently. A greater number of states have committed to resettle returning refugees, enabling more people to be helped through the Emergency Transit Mechanism set forth by Niger. At the end of 2018, UNHCR opened a "gathering and departure" facility in Tripoli, enabling the release of some migrants closed in detention centres. Nevertheless, it is evident that this is a partial solution. The repatriation programs managed by the IOM and the UNHCR have been strengthened but they manage to help only a small part of the migrant population in Libya.

Having explained this point, we have to ask ourselves what will happen to the people still held in Libya or to those brought back by the Coast Guard to the detention centres? It is here that the thorniest matter arises: can Libya be considered as a safe harbour? The answer is predictable: Libya will not be a safe harbour until it becomes a safe country. This, it hardly needs emphasizing, is where the problem becomes really complicated. How can Libya be made safe? How is it possible to secure what is essentially a failed state and a zone of conflict – especially in the southern area and around Tripoli from where the greatest share of migrants depart or transit – that remains divided among different armed groups and of the militias who are prosecuting a full-blown civil war?

[9] Data available at: http://www.nigrizia.it/notizia/libia-almeno-15-000-i-rimpatri-volontari-di-migranti-effettuati-dalloim.

One first step includes proposals to re-activate lines for financing Libya to support an economic recovery and restoring central control. A good starting point, but one that must deal with the appetites of the militias. As we have already stated, the trafficking of human beings is a business worth billions of euros annually, shared among armed groups and jihadist organizations and the increase in smuggling has further destroyed the economy of the depressed southern zone. Due to this, it is at least necessary to offer the southern populations an alternative form of economic development. This, however, cannot be realized without the buy-in of groups that make money off of migrants and the jihadist organizations. Oil looms large in this picture. It will be necessary, then, to consider mechanisms of redistribution of the income deriving from the proceeds of hydrocarbons, the main source of income for Tripoli since the 1970s. Finally, it will be essential to re-launch a "controlled redistribution" of salaries within the population, even pivoting on the municipalities and their role in control and management.[10]

Having stated all this, we need to clarify some points. On the one hand, strengthening the financing for local participants could encourage economic recovery. Yet on the other, it might prove counterproductive in the long run in a state that is largely in the hands of local militias. If badly managed, part of the economic gains could end up in the hands of criminal groups, reopening the appetites of any local factions excluded from redistribution. This would simply drive new conflicts.

There is a further problem to consider. If it is true that the number of migrants departing from Libya has decreased remarkably in the last few months, this is hardly likely to be the "new normal" given the level of instability in the country.

[10] B. Mikaïl, *Security and stability in Libya: the way, forward*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Regional program political dialogue south Mediterranean, n. 2, 2017.

In a recent survey, FRONTEX certified that the number of people leaving in the direction of Italy has fallen to below 2012 levels, while the flux of those trying to travel the western Mediterranean route between Morocco and Spain[11] has increased. Other analyses prefigure different scenarios. A recent study published jointly by the UNHCR and the think tank Impact states that migrants have not abandoned the intention of continuing their project of mobility to Europe. The report found this is despite the ongoing difficulties in reaching the Libyan coast and the increase in checks in countries of transit like Niger and Chad. The numbers bear this out. If at the end of 2017 there were about 400,000 people "stuck" in Libya,[12] the figure for 2018 was 700,000. What is behind this continuation in latent demand? For one, the smuggling networks are adaptive and have reengineered their *modus operandi* to cope with shifting policy. Yet the clearest reason is the simple fact that the situation in most countries of origin has not changed and the crossing towards Libya is still a better alternative than staying.[13]

And then, beyond the need to stabilize Libya in the short term, we have the question of finding a long term solution. The starting assumption must be that Europe will have to take a leading role – and not simply in "rescuing" them at sea to then drop them off in Mediterranean ports. And the guiding inference must be that the economic profits based on exploita

[11] Frontex, *Risk Analysis for 2019,* Warsaw, February 2019 Risk Analysis Unit, Frontex reference number: 1218 / 2019. The data are also reported by the figures supplied by the Italian Home Office, according to which a constant decrease in arrivals has been recorded since 2017: 119,000 people in 2017 but only 23,000 in 2018. The data we have at our disposal for the year 2019 suggest about 335 migrants arrived in Italy in the first three months of the year – a decrease of 94% compared to the same period in 2017.

[12] IOM, *Displacement Tracking Matrix* (Dtm), Libya's Migrant Report Round 12, July–August 2017.

[13] UNHCR, *Mixed migration routes and dynamics in Libya*, May - December 2018.

tion and suffering of human beings must be dismantled once and for all. Europe must therefore lead in crafting policies aimed at fighting organized criminality. And the EU must favour an approach of both bilateral and multilateral cooperation, involving the countries of origin in a concentrated and coordinated approach. In the meantime, criminal groups will continue their "business of death".

Chapter VII

Just Across the Sea: The Changing Politics of Irregular Migration From and Through Morocco and Tunisia

Matt Herbert, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

Libyan beaches are newly quiet. Irregular migration through the country has dropped precipitously over the last 24 months. Assessing this decline as a success, the European Union (EU) has declared the that the bloc's "migration crisis" is over.[1]

Whether the 2014-2019 pulse of irregular migrants into the EU should ever have been termed a crisis is up for debate. The proclamation of its cessation should be greeted with equal scepticism. While irregular migration from Libya has declined, embarkation from other countries in North Africa has increased significantly over the last 24 months.

In the western Mediterranean, apprehensions by Spain of irregular migrants departing from Morocco more than quadrupled between 2016 and 2018, to 65,383.[2] Another 89,000 irregular migration attempts were halted by Morocco in 2018.[3] Apprehension statistics from both nations indicate that around 20% of those detained were Moroccan nationals, with the remainder comprised of Sub-Saharans, Syrians, and others.[4]

[1] Jennifer Rankin, "EU declares migration crisis over as it hits out at 'fake news'", The Guardian, 6 March 2019.

[2] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Operational Portal: Mediterranean Situation,": https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/Mediterranean.

[3] Ahmed Eljechtimi, "Morocco foils 89,000 illegal migration attempts in 2018–interior ministry", Reuters, January 18, 2019.

[4] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Operational Portal: Mediterranean Situation".

In the central Mediterranean, the departure of irregular migrants from Tunisia has also jumped. Apprehensions by Italian and Tunisian authorities quintupled between 2016 and 2018, to 10,114.[5] Unlike embarkations from Morocco, made up mostly of foreigners migrating through that territory, the overwhelming majority of those departing Tunisia were Tunisian nationals.

Rather than ceasing, irregular migration from North Africa to Europe has simply altered form. In Morocco and Tunisia, the centre of gravity for irregular migration has reverted back to some of the first routes pioneered by irregular migrants seeking to reach Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. While many migrants departing from the region hail from Sub-Saharan Africa, Syria, or South Asia, the number of Moroccans, Tunisians, Algerians, and Libyans attempting to reach Europe has jumped sharply.

These changes have affected the politics around irregular migration in Morocco and Tunisia. Halting the migration of foreigners through their territory has been, and remains, largely a win-win situation for the two countries, who recoup significant aid from Europe for their efforts while facing little risk. However, halting the outward irregular migration of their nationals is very different for Tunisia and Morocco, as closing off departure options for others economically and socially marginalized youth heightens tensions and raises the risk of social unrest.

This chapter explores the changing nature of migration in Morocco and Tunisia. It begins by detailing the routes and departure points employed by foreign irregular migrants transiting through the two countries. Next, it analyses irregular migration by Moroccans and Tunisians, including methods of departure and what is driving the recent surge in numbers. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the political impact of changes in North African migration.

[5] These data were compiled by the author based on Tunisian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence communiques and media reports.

Zones of Transit

Throughout Europe's migration crisis, North Africa was viewed primarily as a transit zone. Irregular migrants and refugees from outside of the region – including from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East – set out from North African shores towards Europe. Until 2017, nearly all departed from Libya, though a small but persistent flow of migrants sought to cross into Europe via maritime and land routes from Morocco.

Morocco

The sharp drop in irregular migration through Libya has left Morocco as the primary embarkation point for non-North African irregular migrants. Close to 80% of the 154,325 irregular migrants apprehended by Morocco and Spain in 2018 were non-Moroccan.[6] Transit migration through Morocco mostly involves young men from West African states such as Guinea (Conakry), Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Gambia.[7] Some irregular migrants also come from the Middle East and South Asia, including Syria, Palestine, Yemen, and Bangladesh.[8] The decline in transit migration through Libya appears to be linked somehow to the rise in transit migration from Morocco, though this is highly dependent on the nationality involved. Few Nigerians or Eritreans, nationalities which used to transit in large numbers through Libya, are apprehended in Morocco.[9] However, the decline in transit by Guineans,

[6] International Organization for Migration, "Europe – Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Yearly Overview (2018)," February 8, 2019.

[7] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Spain: Sea and Land Arrivals January-December 2018", January 10, 2019.

[8] Ibid.

[9] International Organization for Migration, "Europe – Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Yearly Overview (2015)," January 1, 2016; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Operational Portal: Mediterranean Situation".

Ivorians, and Malians through Libya has been matched by an increase in apprehensions of the nationalities departing from Morocco.[10] The latter nationalities have historically transited through Morocco in significant numbers, and the smuggling infrastructure in existence likely accounts for their relatively rapid shift from the Libyan route to the Moroccan one.

Some transit migrants travel from their home countries to Morocco via commercial flights. Costlier (yet safer) than land transport, this method has become more popular as the Kingdom has loosened its visa regulations for many African countries.[11]

Most transit migrants, however, arrive in Morocco by land. Routes from west Africa stretch through northern Mali to the southern Algerian city of Tamanrasset. From there migrants head to Algeria's large coastal cities – most then travel west to Maghnia, a town on the Algeria-Morocco border.[12] Human smuggling routes also exist further south, including between the Algerian wilaya of Béchar and the Moroccan province of Figuig.[13]

Despite efforts by Algeria and Morocco to harden their border security infrastructure, migrants continue to find ways to cross the border between Maghnia and the Moroccan city of Oujda. This is in part down to the ruggedness of the terrain and corruption amongst security forces on the border.[14] Professional smuggling networks – composed of Algerians and Moroccans or Sub-Saharan migrants – enable passage between the countries, charging $36 to $50 per person – to be paid on arrival.[15]

[10] International Organization for Migration, 2016; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Operational Portal: Mediterranean Situation".

[11] Joe Wallen, "Sub-Saharans in Tangier pray to be 'lucky ones' who reach Spain", Al Jazeera, September 28, 2018.

[12] Interview, Cameroonian irregular migrant, Tangier, January 2019; Querine Hanlon and Matt Herbert, *Border Security in the Grande Maghreb*, U.S. Institute of Peace, Peaceworks no. 109 (2015), p. 23.

[13] Human Rights Watch, "Algeria/Morocco: Syrians Stranded at Border", May 5, 2017.

[14] Interview, international organization official, Rabat, May 2016.

[15] Hanlon and Herbert, p. 23.

Once in Morocco, many migrants must find work to earn enough for onward passage to Europe. Often this means manual labour in the construction or agriculture sectors, though some are forced into prostitution or begging. Smuggling networks, organized by nationality and language, sometimes coerce migrants into the latter two activities.[16]

Non-Moroccan irregular migrants attempt to depart from Morocco to Europe via the sea and overland. Most irregular migrants apprehended by Spanish authorities – 87% in 2018 – go by sea, departing from zones close to the Straits of Gibraltar or along the Alboran sea towards the southern Spanish provinces of Cadiz, Málaga, Granada, and Almeria.[17]

While some sea-born attempts are independent operations – with groups of migrants purchasing a boat and motor and heading north unaided – the more common approach is to use people smugglers. The degree of assistance provided by smugglers is in direct proportion to the cost paid. For those migrants with the resources to pay, smuggling networks offer a quick, safe shuttle to Spain and provide false documents and other assistance on arrival.[18] Those with more limited means have little choice but to attempt the crossing on overloaded and often unseaworthy vessels.

A smaller number of irregular migrants attempt to reach Europe overland – namely, by crossing into Spain's North African enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla. The most well-publicized attempts have involved recurrent attempts by large groups of migrants to storm these cities' walls.[19] Less visibly, other

[16] Hanlon and Herbert, p. 23; Interview, international organization official, Rabat, May 2016.

[17] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019.

[18] Hanlon and Herbert, p. 24.

[19] See, for example, "Hundreds of migrants storm fence to reach Spanish enclave of Ceuta", BBC, February 17, 2017.

migrants – including many from the Middle East – attempt to access the cities via falsified travel documents.[20]

Tunisia

In counter-point to Morocco, few foreign migrants leverage Tunisia to get to Europe. Of the 4,678 irregular migrants apprehended by Tunisian authorities in 2018, only 401 were non-Tunisian.[21] This is no aberration – similarly low-levels of transit migration were reported in 2017 and 2016.[22] Of this small number, most hail from Sub-Saharan Africa, with the remainder from other North African countries and the Middle East, including Iraq and Syria.[23]

The decline in irregular migration through Libya has had little impact on transit migration through Tunisia. Tunisian military and security forces stationed on the border between the two countries occasionally intercept small groups of irregular migrants coming from Libya. Migrant arrivals along the border are, however, sporadic. There is, in other words, no evidence of any well-structured migration routes from Libya into Tunisia.

Rather, most migrants arrive in Tunisia via air.[24] This includes the growing number of irregular migrants who live and work in the country, as well as migrants who intend to depart for Europe from Tunisia's shores. This travel pattern reflects Tunisia's fairly open visa policy for individuals from Middle Eastern and Sub-Saharan African countries.

[20] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019.

[21] These data were compiled by the author from Tunisian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence communiques and media reports.

[22] Observatoire Maghrébin Des Migration, *Rapport Annuel sur la Migration Irrégulière en Tunisie -2016* (2017), p. 8; REACH and Mercy Corps, *Tunisia, country of transit and destination for sub-Saharan African migrants*, October 2018, p. 7.

[23] Author compilation and analysis of Tunisian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence communiques and media reports.

[24] REACH and Mercy Corps, p. 23.

In addition to arrival via air and across the Libya–Tunisia border, a small flow of migrants enter the country overland from Algeria. Most recent apprehensions have been of Syrian refugees travelling in small, family-based groups, though some Sub-Saharan migrants have also been caught on the Algeria–Tunisia border.

Irregular migration departures from Tunisia take place all along the country's littoral. However, it is in central zones that apprehensions of foreign migrants are highest – primarily the governorates of Mahdia and Sfax, including the Kerkennah islands.[25] From these points, irregular migrant voyages aim to reach Italy's Pelagic islands or, less frequently, Sicily.[26] Nearly all foreign irregular migrants departing Tunisia by boat employ human smugglers. There is little evidence of any Tunisian smuggling networks catering only to foreign irregular migrants nor of foreign smuggling networks active in the country. Rather, foreign irregular migrants embark for Europe as part of larger groups composed primarily of Tunisian nationals.

The Politics of Transit Migration

Morocco and Tunisia have faced the transit of migrants through the Maghreb in a fairly straightforward manner – largely with the bilateral and multilateral relations they share with the EU and its member states in mind. Since the late 1990s, the EU and member states have relied upon North African states to halt the northward flow of migrants.[27]

[25] These data were compiled by the author from Tunisian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence communiques and media reports.

[26] Matt Herbert, *At the Edge: Trends and Routes of North African Clandestine Migrant*s, Institute for Security Studies and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime (November 2016), p. 3.

[27] Anna Di Bartolomeo, Tamirace Fakhoury and Delphine Perrin, "CARIM Migration Profile: Tunisia", *Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration* (2010), p. 4; Vasja Badalič, "Tunisia's Role in the EU External Migration Policy: Crimmigration Law, Illegal Practices, and Their Impact on Human Rights", *Journal of International Migration and Integration 20*, no. 1 (February 2019), p. 85; MPC Team, "MPC Migration Profile: Morocco", Migration Policy Center (June 2013), p. 4.

Initially, this was directed at the northward flow of Moroccans and Tunisians. However, over the last decade and a half, the focus has turned decidedly towards transit migration, especially through Morocco. Counter-migration programming has continued to involve a mix of both coercive efforts to prevent embarkations and developmental efforts intended to offer migrants alternate livelihood options, most notably Morocco's regularization process through which transit migrants can gain legal residency.

While there is heterogeneity in the aims and implementation of counter-migration programs aimed at transit migrants, they share a commonality: their implementation brings few political downsides to the governments involved. Rather, the diplomatic goodwill and aid that comes with preventing foreigners from departing for Europe from their shores of Morocco and Tunisia is an effective means of rent seeking.

As will be discussed next, the few negative consequences Morocco and Tunisia experience in halting transit migrants contrasts markedly with the highly political impact of seeking to stop their own citizens from departing for Europe irregularly.

Zones of Origin

Even as transit migration continues through Morocco (and to a far lesser degree Tunisia), growing numbers of Moroccan and Tunisian citizens have begun migrating irregularly to Europe. In 2018, around 32,000 Moroccan irregular migrants were intercepted by European and North African states, or by the Moroccan authorities, representing a steep rise over previous years.[28] Further east, slightly more than 10,000 Tunisian irregular migrants were intercepted by European or Tunisian authorities, up from a bit under 1,900 in 2015.[29]

[28] Author calculation based on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data.

Equally importantly, migration routes have shifted. For nearly a decade, Moroccans and Tunisians migrating irregularly to Europe travelled through third countries such as Turkey or Libya. Now, most now embark directly from home shores.

These two trends have changed the politics around migration management in the two North African countries. When dealing with their own nationals departing irregularly, the two states are now forced into an uncomfortable balance – weighing the diplomatic benefits and increased aid that come with migration management against the potential that enforcement might exacerbate social tensions or contribute to popular unrest.

Routes and Methods from Morocco

The vast majority of Moroccans embarking on migrant boats towards Europe do so from points close to the Straits of Gibraltar or on the Alboran Sea, part of the larger flow of foreign migrants through these locales. A growing number of Moroccan nationals now depart from beaches to the southwest of the Straits of Gibraltar, between Salé and Larache.[30]

Some Moroccans also employ smugglers. These attempts generally involve wooden or rubber boats, packed with up to 70 people, at a cost of between €1,000-3,000.[31] Alternate options also exist, including jet-skiis that traverse the straits with 2-3 migrants onboard, which costs around €1,800.[32]

[29] These data were compiled by the author from Tunisian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence communiques and media reports, and data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

[30] Matt Herbert, *'La mal vie': The Routes, Drivers, and Politics of irregular migration in the Maghreb*, The Institute for Security Studies (forthcoming 2019).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

However, self-organized departures dominate irregular migration by Moroccan nationals from Morocco. Here, a group of migrants will buy a boat, motor, and sometimes a GPS system directly, and depart towards Europe without a smuggler. The rise of social media has fuelled this method of transit – making it both easier for prospective migrants to learn where to buy the necessary equipment and laying out precisely how to navigate northwards to the Spanish coast. While migrants split the cost of such self-organized endeavours, they cost is about the same as using a smuggler, averaging € 1,400-2000.[33] However, avoiding smugglers makes self-organized trips significantly easier and quicker to set up and execute.

Routes and Methods from Tunisia

Tunisian irregular migrants embark towards Europe, primarily Italy, from beaches all along the coastline. Several migration hotspots exist, however. In the north of Tunisia, migrants seeking to get to Sicily use beaches close to the city of Bizerte and on the Cap Bon peninsula. Further south, in Mahdia and Sfax, many migrant boats are destined for Italy's Pelagic islands.[34] This is the end destination as well for vessels departing from the southern beaches of Djerba and Zarzis.

In contrast to Morocco's self-organized smuggling, nearly all Tunisian irregular migrants contract with smugglers. The cost of the voyage varies from € 570 to 4,000, depending on the type of vessel taken and the degree of speed and safety desired. Small and medium sized fishing boats are the cheapest.[35] However, these vessels are often poorly maintained and severely overloaded, leading to several lethal accidents in

[33] Ibid.
[34] Herbert, 2016, p. 3.
[35] Herbert, 2019.

recent years. Other options are safer – including speedboats and yachts – but their costs are prohibitively expensive to many Tunisian migrants.

Irregular Migration Drivers and Enabling Factors

No one factor can explain the recent rise in irregular migration by Moroccans and Tunisians. Rather, a range of different drivers are in play. These include economic stresses, entrenched structural inequality, and political frustration. While none are new, each of these factors has been exacerbated in the last several years. Worsening circumstances has helped propel the current migration surge by Moroccans and Tunisians.

Economic factors drive the great bulk of Moroccan and Tunisian irregular migration to Europe. Both countries struggle with stubbornly high unemployment rates, which officially stand at 9.8% in Morocco and 15.5% in Tunisia.[36] There is significant variation, however, with youth in particular challenged by far higher rates. In Morocco, for example, the unemployment rate amongst youth in some urban areas stands at 42.8%.[37] In Tunisia, youth unemployment in the present day is worse than it was before the country's 2011 revolution.[38] This reality fuels efforts by the jobless to seek economic opportunities wherever they can be found, including via the dangerous irregular migration to Europe.

Wage stagnation and high inflation constrain the ability of those youth lucky who are enough to get a job to actually survive

[36] Ahmed Eljechtimi, "Morocco's unemployment rate drops to 9.8 pct in 2018 – planning agency", Reuters, February 5, 2019; Institut National de la Statistique, Indicateurs clés (retrieved March 25, 2019), http://www.ins.tn/fr/indicateur-cle.
[37] Jeune Afrique – AFP "Maroc: l'inquiétant chômage des jeunes s'inscrit dans la durée", February 12, 2018.
[38] Chris O'Connor and Cheima Dahmani, *Tunisia's conflict dynamics: an overview of social, political, economic and ideological drivers of tension at the national and local levels*, U.S. Institute of Peace, 2018, pp. 11-12.

off it. This is an especially pernicious issue in Tunisia, where inflation has ranged above 7%.[39] "When you stop being able to afford to live, you would want to leave", explained one Tunisian official.[40]

It is not just the bleak economic moment in Morocco and Tunisia fuelling a desire to depart, but also pessimism regarding future prospects. This can lead some would-be migrants to wager that it is better to leave now, before the savings necessary for the journey are eaten away by inflation.

A second factor driving irregular migration from the two countries is entrenched structural inequality. In both Morocco and Tunisia, economic opportunities and access to government services vary significantly based on class, education, family, and region of birth. Efforts to surmount these barriers are daunting, leaving large numbers of citizens in both countries effectively marginalized, with even less access to opportunity than official employment statistics would suggest. Migrating abroad – legally or irregularly – is one of the few means of escaping this.[41]

Further, there is a perception amongst North African migrants that Europe is a place where rule of law and rights exist, and where government services are provided fairly and equally. While the reality of the situation often does not match this ideal – posing a bracing shock for newly arrived irregular migrants – the perception is nonetheless a powerful draw for those whose lived experiences in Morocco and Tunisia have been largely defined by what they do not have access to.[42]

The final factor driving irregular migration from Morocco and Tunisia is political frustration. There is a perception amongst youth in particular in both countries of estrangement from the political process and frustration over the inability to

[39] Institut National de la Statistique, Indicateurs clés (accessed March 25, 2019).
[40] Herbert, 2019.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

make a change. As one Tunisian youth noted, "I have given up. It's pointless to vote".[43] This resignation fuels perceptions that there is little to be gained by staying in place – set against the great opportunities which exist for those willing to risk the dangerous, irregular journey to Europe.

In addition to the factors driving irregular migration by Moroccans and Tunisians, there is one key factor that bears repeating: sheer proximity to Europe. Unlike irregular migrants transiting through the Maghreb, those from the region do not need to undertake a lengthy or expensive trip reach the embarkation point to Europe. For most Moroccan and Tunisian irregular migrants departing at present, the journey is measured in hours or days, rather than the weeks or months typical for transit migrants.

How this Changes the Politics of Migration in Morocco and Tunisia

The rising number of Moroccan and Tunisian irregular migrants has begun to change the political calculus around migration for their governments. While irregular migration does not address the larger economic and structural issues, it does tamp down social tensions by offering otherwise frustrated youth a pathway to a perceived opportunity. Halting migration thus risks height ening social tensions, potentially leading to social unrest or other threats to the political control of existing regimes.

Countering migration by their citizens therefor does not offer the risk-free political gains of countering transit migration by foreigners. Rather, it involves significant trade-offs between domestic political necessities and bilateral relations with migrant receiving nations in Europe. Some domestic necessi-

[43] Ibid.

ties, such as social stability, are core national security issues, and are therefore very likely to trump international relations for Moroccan and Tunisian decision makers. Given the degree to which domestic political calculations around migration in states such as Italy and France dictate foreign policy responses, it should come as no surprise that Morocco and Tunisia sometimes choose to prioritize their own domestic political necessities over bilateral relations when it comes to migration.

Conclusion

The changing composition – and hence changing politics – of irregular migration from Morocco and Tunisia are likely only to intensify in the near future. While transit migration through North Africa can be rerouted via state pressure (or, as has been seen in Libya, where a state collapses) there is little indication that the flow of migrants can be halted. Rather, it is likely that host of factors – including spreading insecurity in the Sahel, high fertility rates, climate change, and pure economic need – will lead to increased transit migration through the region.

North African irregular migration is also likely to grow. The region faces significant economic, social, and political challenges. There is a risk these will deepen, especially if key economic partners in Europe fall into a recession, thereby damaging the economies of Morocco and Tunisia and driving more youth to emigrate in search of economic opportunities.

As these trends unfold, the politics around irregular migration will also shift in Morocco and Tunisia. While both states are likely to help counter foreign migrants from transiting their territory to get to Europe, they may equivocate somewhat concerning departures by their own nationals. Rather, for the governments of Morocco and Tunisia irregular migration by their citizens may end up as a key strategy for weathering their current fragile moment.

Decisions by Morocco and Tunisia to abstain from intensive efforts to halt migration by their citizens should prompt the EU and member states to engage policy introspection, rather than frustration and bluster. While migration is clearly a volatile and elemental component of the political debate in European states at the moment, its salience will wax and wane over time. Therefore, it behoves the EU and member states to ensure that their policy approaches to the short-term goal of halting migration do not unintentionally affect the long-term political and social stability of Morocco and Tunisia. In the current moment, neither Morocco nor Tunisia can afford to be Europe's migration gatekeeper in the eyes of their citizens, especially when the migrants being halted are their citizens.

Chapter VIII

Dynamics of Mobility in the Horn of Africa and the European Approach to Migrants' Containment

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In recent years, the debate on migration in Europe has often been corrupted by narratives and misrepresentations that can have a serious impact on decision-makers and their policies towards the governance of international migration. One of the most consolidated of these narratives depicts the Mediterranean as a pivotal region in present migrations from sub-Saharan Africa towards Europe via Libya or other North African countries. This account, therefore, overlooks the masses of people moving in a south-to-south direction. This is the case in the Horn of Africa, where states are mainly depicted as countries of migration departure, a gross oversimplification. The reality is rather more complex: these countries are simultaneously countries of departure, transit and arrival.

In addition, the bulk of migrants is not necessarily travelling towards Europe. In 2013, sub-Saharan migrants in the Mediterranean region represented only 7% of migrants there overall. In fact, most sub-Saharan migrants (67%) were migrating mostly within the sub-Saharan region.[1] Once the reality of the south-to-south migrations is recognized, a paradox arises and namely, that European decision-makers

[1] Belachew Gebrewold and Tendayi Bloom, Introduction, in Id. (Eds), *Understanding Migrant Decisions. From Sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean Region*, Routledge, London, 2016, p. 6.

repute the ongoing migration policies as inadequate. Then, decision-makers start to introduce new policies to better govern (and contain) migrants on the presumption that the migrants will decide sooner or later to migrate towards Europe. This EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative is a case in point. During Italy's six-month EU presidency campaign, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi promoted the Khartoum Summit in Sudan, from the 13-16 October 2014, which launched the so-called "Khartoum Process". Subsequently, the process was officially established at the 4th Euro-African Ministerial Conference held in Rome on 27-28 November 2014.

The following pages discuss the gap between current international policies on migration and the multifaceted pattern of migration in the Horn of Africa. In so doing, the chapter will attempt to critically review the dynamics of international migration and deconstruct the narratives and misrepresentations that recurrently revolve around a supposed predetermination of migrants' trajectories.

The regional scenario

Migration dynamics in the Horn of Africa are a response to many push factors. Beyond the usual suspects – conflict, famine, unemployment or political persecution – economic development, education and the broader African diaspora network are crucial factors here. Since the 1960s, the Horn of Africa has been shaken by recurrent conflicts which are closely interconnected with starvation and economic recession. Conflicts have occurred within states, between states, among proxies, and between armies and armed groups. Ethiopia and Somalia clashed over sovereignty of the Ogaden region in 1963-1964 and again in 1977-1978. Then, in 2006, Ethiopia directly intervened in Somalia which, since 1991, had been subject to ongoing civil war

between various military factions. This 30-year civil war saw the collapse of the Somali Republic – declared independent on 1 July 1960 after the union of Italian Somalila and British Somaliland – and led the country to a process of political, social and territorial fragmentation. Thus, the national territory was reconstituted along regional borders. One such region – Somaliland – is now undergoing a process of state consolidation, political stability and economic growth; however, it still lacks international recognition.[2] The so-called Northern-Central region of Puntland is now trying to run a similar process of increasing autonomy on the model of Somaliland, while Southern Somalia is still the most unstable part of the former Republic of Somalia where international involvement never ended and, after US and UN military interventions, Ethiopia, Kenya and the African Union intervened more recently.

On the other side of the Horn of Africa, Eritreans and the Tigrinyan people of Ethiopia fought a long war against both the imperial rule of Haile Selassie and, later, the Marxist military regime of the Derg. This ran until Eritrean independence de facto in 1991 and de jure in 1993. A new war erupted in 1998 between Ethiopia and Eritrea that lasted until 2000, even if the peace was signed only in 2018 after twenty years of political tension and border closure between the two counties. The new Ethiopian Federal Ethnic Constitution of 1991 re-shaped the internal space of the country and consequently the power relations among the different Ethiopian linguistic communities. However, the new mechanism of decentralization, in reality, was not capable of avoiding new inter-community conflicts, especially between the southern communities (Oromo, Somali and Afar people) and the Amhara and Tigrinyan communities in the north of the country. The main source of tension inside the

[2] Luca Ciabarri, *Dopo lo Stato. Storia e antropologia della ricomposizione sociale nella Somalia settentrionale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2010.

Ethiopian Federal State was hegemonic rule by the Tigrinyan people, which only ended recently with the rise to power of the new Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed Ali, who was previously a leader of the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization.

According to UNHCR data, in 2017 more than 474,000 Eritrean people were refugees globally.[3] Half of these are residing in Ethiopia and Sudan with another large share based regularly or irregularly in Israel. Somalia is the major refugee-sending country in the Horn of Africa (more than one million in 2014), in addition to another million internally displaced persons (IDPs).[4] So many Somalis are abroad that a new transnational-diasporic Somalia has come into existence, in addition to the Somalis in the Horn of Africa. The total number of Somalis residing in Europe is around 250,000, which is less than a quarter of the total Somali diaspora, while other Somali communities continue to live in Kenya, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and the United States.

Ethiopia is another Horn of Africa country with a long-standing refugee tradition from war, political persecution and economic constraints. Ethiopia has experienced refugees and displacement of people for decades. According to the UNHCR, Ethiopia currently hosts more than 900,000 refugees: 173,000 Eritreans, 257,000 Somalis, with the rest from Sudan and South Sudan.[5] During the so-called "red terror" (1977-1978), the Derg persecuted many Ethiopians, forcing them to seek asylum abroad. When the new federal regime arose in 1991, inter-community violence and clashes continued to generate IDPs and outward migration. In addition, Ethiopia's recent economic boom has triggered major population shifts, including considerable internal migration and urbanization.

[3] https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/eritrea#4694c7
[4] https://www.unhcr.org/pages49e483ad6.html
[5] https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67744

The total number of people of concern to the UNHCR in the region is approaching 4.5 million (included IDPs and refugees). According to this migratory pattern, many of those fleeing the Horn are entitled to refugee status. However, the assumption – mostly on the European side – is that those people are targeting Europe as a destination for seeking refugee status is oversimplified. It is true that internal or regional migration usually represents the premises for international migration. However, internal as well as international migrations are often undertaken as a path to social mobility and an improvement of life conditions, even before seeking refuge or humanitarian protection. Even if asylum seekers are less influenced by economic factors than the so-called 'economic migrants', they still need to provide for themselves. Thus, once the decision to leave is made, economic factors come in to play concerning choices about the route and the desired country destination. This consideration is very useful if we are to understand why thousands of people are fleeing the Horn of Africa, seeking employment in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Israel or Lebanon. Therefore, refugee status entitlement does not necessarily drive people to travel to Europe to have that status recognized.

International interference

For European governments, migration policy is first and foremost as an issue of security. It thus produces a demand for control over irregular migration rather than opening humanitarian corridors, facilitating remittances or reforming visa policy to reshape legal access to European territory. The Khartoum Process is Europe's answer to controlling migrants' mobility from the Horn of Africa. In light of the discussion in the previous sections, it rests on (largely faulty) assumptions

about migration drivers and patterns in the Horn of Africa. As stated in the Final Declaration of the Rome Conference, the Khartoum Process is aimed at "improving the national capabilities" of transit countries in "migration control" and ultimately extending or strengthening the means of flow control that has already proven to be effective in the Mediterranean area, especially in countries considered to be of strategic importance, such as Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.[6]

More specifically, the Khartoum Process seeks to further externalize control of migration flows from Europe to states south of the Sahara, replicating policies and strategies implemented in North Africa, especially in Libya, since the 2000s and Turkey since 2011.[7] In addition to cooperation in policing and readmission agreements, specific reference was made to the creation of "reception and government centres" that were to be opened on the basis of "an individual and voluntary request of a country in the region," with the aim of controlling flows and identifying migrants entitled to seek political asylum in Europe.[8] In this regard, the previous Libyan experience is particularly controversial because of the harm done by such centres to the international sovereignty of African countries. Not by chance, during the 31st African Union Summit held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, from 25 June to 2 July 2018, the member states, with the exception of Niger, stated their opposition to the plan to establish these centres in Africa. Furthermore, , the African Union recently elaborated its position against the EU plans for

[6] Rome Declaration: Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process, EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, 28th November 2014.

[7] Antonio M. Morone, *Policies, Practices, and Representations Regarding Sub-Saharan Migrants in Libya: From the Partnership with Italy to the Post-Qadhafi Era*, in Paolo Gaibazzi, Stephen Dünnwald and Alice Bellagamba (Eds.), *EurAfrican Borders and Migration Management. Political Cultures, Contested Spaces, and Ordinary Lives*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2017, pp. 129-155.

[8] Rome Declaration, 2014.

"regional disembarkation platforms" in North Africa and the possibility to open "de facto detention centres" on African soil.[9]

Against this background of extremely rapid expansion of containment policies in the Horn of Africa, one of the main levers to obtain collaboration from the states of the region is development aid. While aid was historically intended to foster social development, economic growth and human rights, the funds are now more explicitly targeted at migration control. For Qadhdhafi's Libya, the trade-off for the control of flows was purely political, since Libya, as a relatively rich country with its own ambitious international cooperation program, clearly did not need European aid.[10] In contrast, in the Horn of Africa development aid takes on an aspect of prime importance. This is in addition to international recognition, which is certainly a very important asset for countries that have for years been regarded as authoritarian or terrorist regimes and condemned for this by the West, even. In this way, cooperation for development become increasingly subordinated to conditions regarding migration, which have taken precedence over those related to respect for human rights. According to the so-called "Italian non-paper", *Migration compact. Contribution to an EU strategy for external action on migration* of 15th April 2016,[11] the Italian Cooperation was addressing more substantial bilateral funding countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, in addition to Niger and Nigeria. Furthermore, the Italian commitment to promoting the containment of migration reveals Italy's successful process of Europeanizing its agenda on migration in Africa.

[9] Daniel Boffey, *African Union seeks to kill EU plan to process migrants in Africa*, The Guardian, 24 February 2019.

[10] Emanuela Paoletti, *The migration of power and North-south inequalities: The case of Italy and Libya*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2011.

[11] http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/immigrazione_0.pdf

There is a glaring contradiction in opening the taps of strategic aid to governments such as Eritrea under current circumstances. This is simply because development aid was denied – or heavily curtailed – in the past, explicitly on the grounds that these countries were failing to meet European human rights standards. Today, containment policy seems to have seen human rights conditionality evaporate at the very moment when protecting migrants' rights should be affirmed as a priority. No migration policy can be sustainable if it rests on the promises of gross human rights violators to protect migrants' rights in the interests of containment. Allowing such countries to determine the status of asylum applicants for international protection thus rests on an assumption that these are "safe countries". Such a determination, however, is not based on objective reality, but simply due to said country's willingness to cooperate in preventing the human mobility of their nationals or those of third countries.

According to a report released by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (established in June 2014 by the UN Human Rights Council) on 6 June 2015, the Eritrean regime had a system of "mass surveillance" in place that was driving at least five thousand people a month out of the country.[12] The government of Asmara has been pursuing, for years, control of the migrants' flows within the country and abroad through policies ranging from checkpoints along the roads, compulsory and indefinite national military service, to incarceration, to the killing of people on the run. Cooperating with Eritrea means collaborating in this kind of policy and we certainly cannot expect, as once again the experience of Qadhdhafi's Libya proved, that an authoritarian regime denies itself. The recommendation of the UN Commission is therefore

[12] A/HRC/29/42, Human Right Council, 29th Session, Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, p. 6.

diametrically opposed to Italian and European policies when it asks the Asmara government to "immediately allow freedom of movement within the country [...] and to facilitate the legal movement of people inside and outside the country" by considering the right to leave one's country as a fundamental freedom recognized among human rights.[13]

In the case of Ethiopia, since 2015 the inter-community clashes that pitted Oromo against the Amhara and Tigrinyan people produced a few hundred deaths and many thousands of Oromo refugees who crossed the border between Ethiopia and Djibouti or Somaliland. Then, Ethiopia was shifting its consolidated pattern of receiving country of refugees from Eritrea and Somalia as well as Somaliland that is usually regarded as a departing country became a receiving country. However the most relevant consideration is not the inversion of migrants' flows, but rather the fact that, once more, the label of "safe country" granted to Ethiopia promises to protect Somali and Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia but does not protect the Oromo who are persecuted in Ethiopia and forced them to flee towards Somaliland.

Conclusions

The Khartoum Process was intended to broaden the international scope of migrant containment, taking for granted that the Horn of Africa was one of the main regions producing migration towards Italy and Europe. However, even as it has been successful in extending capacity building and migration control across many African states it has not considered the fact that the bulk of migrants continue to reside in the Horn

[13] Ibid., p. 19.

or in other parts of Africa and the Middle East. The final outcome is the reproduction and increase in policies intended to contain migrants who are supposedly intended to reach Italy and Europe, while in reality, the main group of migrants is still moving inside the region or along south-to-south directions.

This is not a marginal point since the policies of migrant containment have constituted a grave interference in Horn countries in terms of international sovereignty, national politics, and social constraints. The great hypocrisy of European politics is the claim that the principal driver is to stop thousands of people fleeing, especially from the Horn of Africa, is their own well-being and the humanitarian need to protect them from traffickers. This so-called "protection regime" – presented in humanitarian rhetoric – sees European states collaborating with autocratic regimes to monitor and control people movements, without however mentioning at all the many thousands of people who are in equally dangerous escapes, on the run from the Horn of Africa to non-European destinations.

The regional peace process that the new Ethiopian leadership launched in autumn 2018 seeks to overcome the regional conflicts not only between Ethiopia and Eritrea but also inside Somalia. This might well be the more effective approach to counterbalance the main negative push factors (i.e. conflict, famine and political persecution) at the regional level. The future gamble is that the regional peace process among the states can contribute to promoting a dynamic of democratization also within them and that the strong and growing Ethiopian economy can be a driving force at the regional level to enhance social mobility and discourage international migration for employment.

Part III

Beyond Africa

Chapter IX

Norms, Networks, and Migration to Europe: Bangladesh as an Origin Country

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Introduction

On 10 May 2019, another boat – this one carrying at least 70 migrants and refugees – capsized on the Mediterranean Sea, off the cost of Sfax, Tunisia. Around 54 of the passengers were Bangladeshi, of whom 40 are dead or missing.[1]

UNHCR has labelled the Mediterranean Sea as the "world's deadliest sea crossing", with an estimated 2,275 individuals drowned or missing in 2018 alone.[2] The route is popular with human traffickers transporting migrants and refugees from Africa and Asia – most often via Libya – to Europe. Bangladeshis make up a significant percentage of migrants along this route. Most hope to reach Italy, a destination popular with Bangladeshis since the 1980s, with numbers surging in recent years. According to a 2016 report by Italy's Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Bangladeshis made up 3.6% of the total number of non-EU citizens in Italy, ranking 8th among all non-EU nationalities present.[3] The number has grown by 55.7% between 2010 and 2016. Bangladeshis have now become one of the key nationalities seeking asylum in Italy.

[1] "'Tragic, Terrible': Scores Die as Migrant Boat Sinks off Tunisia," Al Jazeera, May 11, 2019.

[2] "'World's Deadliest Sea Crossing' Claimed Six Lives a Day in 2018: UN Refugee Agency," *Al Jazeera*, January 30, 2019.

[3] Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *The Bangladesh Community: Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy* (Italy, 2016).

But compared to the other origin countries, Bangladesh is neither a conflict country nor one with acute poverty. In fact, the country has made dramatic strides in alleviating poverty, with a poverty rate of 21.8% and an extreme poverty rate of 11.3% in 2018 according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.[4] Despite being the largest least developed country (LDC) in both population and size of the economy, Bangladesh is expected to graduate from LDC category to join the Medium Development Countries (MDC) by 2024, according to the United Nations' Committee for Development Policy (CDP).[5] The country has done phenomenally well on key human development indicators, such as health and education. Life expectancy has increased from 58.4 years in 1990 to 78.2 years in 2017, and mean years of schooling has risen from 2.8 years to 5.8 years over the same period.[6]

Despite these socioeconomic changes, many Bangladeshis brave a perilous journey to Europe in search of work. In this chapter, I explore how migrants' lives at home drive their choice to leave. While the factors influencing migration are many, complex, and often intertwined, I argue that migrant workers from Bangladesh are transnational actors whose lives are deeply embedded in their communities at home. Their choice to migrate is driven by certain norms prevalent in these communities. For Bangladeshi families, this manifests in three ways. Families choose migration as a deliberate survival strategy in a setting where families are at the centre of social life. Once abroad, migrants maintain strong financial and

[4] "Poverty Rate Comes down to 21.8% in 2018," Dhaka Tribune, May 13, 2019.

[5] "Leaving the LDCs Category: Booming Bangladesh Prepares to Graduate," *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, March 13, 2019.

[6] UNDP, "Briefing Note for Countries on the 2018 Statistical Update: Bangladesh," Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update (New York, NY, 2018).

social ties to their families at home. And finally, while national policies have played a role in creating these norms, they have been sustained by extensive recruitment networks in migrant communities of origin. I end by explaining some recent trends in migration from Bangladesh to Europe. Within the larger frame of migration across the globe, I pay particular focus on the path to Italy, the most popular end destination.

Migration as a strategic decision

Migration practices are often tied to norms and practices in migrants' countries of origin.[7] For Bangladeshi migrants, the decision to travel is a strategic one tied to such community norms. Most Bangladeshis in Italy have migrated for work. According to the 2016 report cited earlier, 59% of Bangladeshis who applied to renew their work permits did so on grounds of employment, whereas only 28% mentioned family.[8] Bangladeshis also make up the second largest submitter of remittances, having sent back € 435.3 million – 10.5% of the total value of remittances leaving the country.[9]

Bangladeshi workers choose migration as a survival strategy; they do not merely leave out of desperation. This is not to suggest that they are not vulnerable. Despite the country's successes in human development, about a quarter of the country's population still lives in poverty. There are massive regional differences in poverty reduction; while the eastern parts of the country have

[7] Richard Black et al., "Migration and Development: Causes and Consequences," in The Dynamics of International Migration and Settlement in Europe, ed. Rinus Penninx, Maria Berger, and Karen Kraal (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

[8] Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *The Bangladesh Community: Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy*.

[9] Ibid.

reduced poverty significantly, there are now more poor people than before in the impoverished, drought-ridden northwest.[10] Most temporary work in the Middle East – a popular destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers – is taken up by unskilled or semi-skilled labourers.[11] And Bangladeshi-born citizens in Italy who are employed tend to have a lower-secondary education at most.[12] They come from socioeconomically vulnerable families.

But even under conditions of poverty, people deliberately choose to migrate. Substantial research suggests this to be true across institutional settings.[13] In Poor Economics, Banerjee and Duflo explain how poor families, living at tremendous risk of income, health, and other shocks, hedge their bets in multiple avenues. They diversify their income activities such that if one avenue fails, the others will ensure their survival. For example, the authors find that in West Bengal, farming households spent 60% of their time on non-farming activities, and the median family had three working members and seven occupations.[14]

For many Bangladeshi families, migration promises a quicker path to economic well-being when compared to other options, such as agricultural labour, urban migration, or running small businesses using microfinance. A 2007 study based on household-level survey data on returned migrants from the Middle East shows that in Bangladesh, migrant labour

[10] World Bank, "Bangladesh Development Update: Building on Resilience" (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2018).

[11] Manohar Sharma and Hassan Zaman, "Who Migrates Overseas and Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment of Household Survey Data from Bangladesh," *The Journal of Developing Area*s 47, no. 1 (2013): 281–302.

[12] Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *The Bangladesh Community: Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy*.

13 Oded Stark and Robert E.B. Lucas, "Migration, Remittances, and the Family," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 36, no. 3 (April 1988): 465-81; Black et al., "Migration and Development: Causes and Consequences."

[14] Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).

is an attractive option for households because of the exchange value in terms of salary earned. Having a family member working abroad ensures not only the survival of families but also leaves money behind for investment.[15] Thus, poor people are not forced to migrate – very often, they make a deliberate choice to do so.

Yet, while sending families are vulnerable, they are unlikely to be the poorest families in their communities. Poverty can be a deciding fact for local migration, as found by a study of fishermen in Bangladesh.[16] International migration can be very expensive, with exorbitant costs for tickets, visas, and other expenses that must be paid up front to agents. The poorest families cannot cover these costs up front. For example, the 2007 study on returnees also found that individuals from non-farm families are less likely to migrate as they generally cannot finance the trip.[17]

Family ties

Once workers leave, they maintain deep social and economic ties to their families at home. Most Bangladeshi migrants in Italy are young men living single lives. They are either unmarried or have left their wives and children at home with extended family. Their

[15] Sharma and Zaman, "Who Migrates Overseas and Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment of Household Survey Data from Bangladesh."

[16] Mohammad Mahmudul Islam and Johannes Herbeck, "Migration and Translocal Livelihoods of Coastal Small-Scale Fishers in Bangladesh," *Journal of Development Studies* 49, no. 6 (June 2013): 832-45.

[17] Sharma and Zaman, "Who Migrates Overseas and Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment of Household Survey Data from Bangladesh."

families too are "transnational families" whose realm extends across a great distance.[18] The men work abroad and send money home. They visit when they can and sometimes participate in major life events, such as births, deaths, and weddings. Their responsibilities are both financial and social.

Bangladeshi migrant workers' ties to communities back home can be explained by the central place that family holds in their lives. Diane Singerman finds a similar "familial ethos" among the common people in Egypt, a "common worldview" of what one's rights and responsibilities are within the household and the community.[19] There is a similar unspoken understanding within migrant families, where the relationship is predominantly an economic one. When families choose to send one of their own abroad, they essentially invest in that individual with the understanding that the entire family will benefit in return. They pay the exorbitant cost of travel, including visas, contracts, tickets, and additional service fees for agents. Another study drawing on the lives of returned migrants found that most returnees come from large families, with an average of 6.9 members. It is likely that they have gone abroad because there were too many mouths to feed. They are, on average, 26 years old – not too young to travel, but strong enough to work. And over 60% had financed their trip by selling agricultural land. Others had used savings and taken out loans or mortgages.

Some had even taken microcredit loans from non-governmental organizations like Grameen Bank.[20] These families all chose to go

[18] Brenda S.A. Yeoh, Elspeth Graham, and Paul J. Boyle, "Migrations and Family Relations in the Asia Pacific Region," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 11, no. 1 (March 21, 2002): 1-11.

[19] Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[20] Mohammad Abdul Munim Joarder and Paul W. Miller, "The Experiences of Migrants Trafficked from Bangaldesh," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 653 (2014): 141-61.

into debt with the understanding that the family member they financed would take care of the family with his earnings. Their economic relationship thus spans across time and continents.

So why are they choosing to maintain these ties instead of uniting their families in Europe? The demographics of Bangladeshi residents in Italy – predominantly young men – tell us that most migrants are either unmarried or not bringing their wives through family reunification. As stated earlier, only 28% of work permit renewals in Italy cite family as the reason for their stay. The number remains low even as Bangladeshis in Italy are increasingly becoming stabilized – that is, holding repeated, long-term residence permits.[21] In other words, Bangladeshi residents are not bringing their families to Italy, even after settling down.

One study of migrants in Italy argues that family migration is shaped by gender, cultural, and family norms of migrants' communities at home. Complete family reunification is not particularly high among Bangladeshis, though not as low as migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Ukraine, or Moldova.[22] There are two possible, overlapping reasons for this. First, if men are supporting their extended families at home, they cannot financially sustain two households in two communities, especially if they are fairly young and have not yet made substantial contributions at home. In addition, because extended families are the norm in rural areas, there is nothing unusual about women and their children living with in-laws while their husbands are migrant workers elsewhere.

[21] Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *The Bangladesh Community: Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy*.

[22] Elisa Barbiano di Belgiojoso and Laura Terzera, "Family Reunification – Who, When, and How? Family Trajectories among Migrants in Italy," *Demographic Research* 38 (2018): 737-72.

Policies or networks?

Migrant networks can grow out of government policies – for example, when people travel from destination countries in large numbers over time, they bring their families. Others from their communities may join as they hear of this destination from its growing number of residents. These networks may grow into "migration systems" involving various actors and institutions in between.[23]

Migration is grounded in Bangladesh's development strategies. In the 1980s, large numbers of migrant workers travelled to the Arab Gulf states, with labour migration later expanding to East and Southeast Asia.[24] There is an emerging discourse linking migration and economic development. A wealth of literature – often commissioned by development institutions – has argued that migrant workers make substantial financial contributions to their countries of origin. For Bangladesh, official remittances in April 2019 stood at US$1,434.30 million according to the Bangladesh Bank. The numbers have increased steadily over the years (Figure 1).

Migration also improves the lives of families left behind. Its influence on poverty is higher than official figures suggest. Substantial funds are transferred to Bangladesh through informal remittance systems. According to a World Bank report on remittances in South Asia, such systems are popular in rural areas

[23] Alex Sager, "Methodological Nationalism, Migration and Political Theory," *Political Studies* 64, no. 1 (March 28, 2016): 42–59.

[24] Nayma Qayum, "Chasing the Dubai Dream in Italy: Bangladeshi Migration to Europe," *Migration Information Source: Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*, 2017; Nazli Kibria, "Working Hard for the Money: Bangladesh Faces Challenges of Large-Scale Labor Migration," *Migration Information Source: Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute*, 2011.

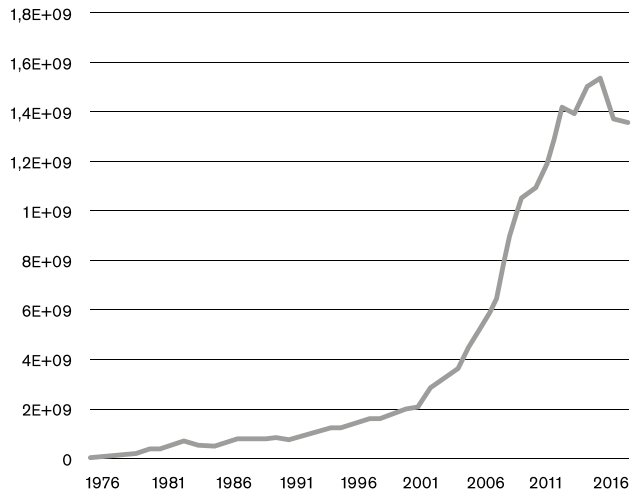

Figure 1. Bangladesh: Personal remittances, received (current US $)[25]

where formal banking systems are lacking.[26] The study also esti mates that because unofficial remittances are most likely brought in by the poor, who are also more likely to avoid official channels, the impact of remittance on poverty is highly underestimated.[27] But while policies have started a migration trend, their impact is not uniform across the country. For example, more households in eastern Bangladesh receive remittances when compared

[25] Personal remittances include all transfers in cash or kind between residents and nonresidents. World Bank, "World Development Indicators," *Data Catalog*, accessed January 6, 2018.

[26] Samuel Munzele Maimbo et al., *Migrant Labor Remittances in South Asia*, Directions in Development (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2005), p. 6.

[27] Ibid., p. 14.

to the west. Remittances have also played a greater role in reducing poverty in the east.[28] Where migrants come from determines whether they have access to migration networks. Workers often travel abroad with the help of middle-men – *dalals* – who charge a lump sum for travel documents, a guarantee of employment, and their own service fees.[29] Studies of labour recruitment for the Gulf countries show that recruiting agencies are mostly urban-based, and thus, rely on these middle-men to recruit in villages. *Dalals* help prospective migrants with a host of services, including filling out paperwork, acquiring passports, setting up bank accounts, arranging transportation to the airport, and even speaking up on their behalf to loan sharks in order to facilitate funds for travel.[30]

Migrants often come from the same regions, possibly because *dalals* target particular communities.[31] A study that draws on a 2009 survey by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that migrants travelling to Italy are predominantly from the districts of Faridpur, Comilla, Dhaka, and Noakhali. This is because *dalals* mainly emerge from early

[28] World Bank, "Poverty Assessment: Assessing a Decade of Progress in Reducing Poverty, 2000-2010," Bangladesh Development Series (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2013); World Bank, "Bangladesh – Poverty Assessment for Bangladesh : Creating Opportunities and Bridging the East-West Divide," *Bangladesh Development Series Paper* no. 26, 2008; Sharma and Zaman, "Who Migrates Overseas and Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment of Household Survey Data from Bangladesh."

[29] Qayum, "Chasing the Dubai Dream in Italy: Bangladeshi Migration to Europe."

[30] Md Mizanur Rahman, "Bangladeshi Labour Migration to the Gulf States: Patterns of Recruitment and Processes," Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement 33, no. 2 (June 2012): 214-30; Joarder and Miller, "The Experiences of Migrants Trafficked from Bangaldesh"; Tasneem Siddiqui, *Cost in Bangladesh: Challenges of Governing Migration in the Countries of Origin*, Working Pa (Dhaka, Bangladesh: RMMRU, 2011); "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 653, Human Trafficking: Recent Empirical Research (May 2014), pp. 141-161."

[31] Sharma and Zaman, "Who Migrates Overseas and Is It Worth Their While? An Assessment of Household Survey Data from Bangladesh."

migrants and their own personal networks, making migration location-specific.[32] It may also be the case that families choose migration as an income-generation avenue and that they pursue specific destinations because people around them have already done so – that is, when it is the norm in their communities. Thus, while development policies seem to have influenced the migration in Bangladesh, norms and networks sustain it.

Explaining trends

The number of Bangladeshi migrants in Italy has increased in recent years when compared to other communities; they have grown from 1.9% of the total number of foreigners in 2008 to 3.6% in 2016.33 More Bangladeshis are also seeking asylum compared to other migrants. This is in stark contrast to the context in Bangladesh, where remittances are actually declining. A World Bank report speculates that more money could now be changing hands through informal channels and is thus not captured by official figures.[34]

It is also worth considering that some families no longer feel the need to send a family member on a harrowing journey given safer income opportunities at home. In addition to dramatic poverty reduction, Bangladesh has done remarkably well on labour-based agriculture. The same World Bank report states that labour income was responsible for driving poverty reduction from 2005 to 2010, possibly due to increasing safety

[32] Md Mizanur Rahman and Mohammad Alamgir Kabir, "Moving to Europe: Bangladeshi Migration to Italy," *Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore* (Singapore, 2012).

[33] Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *The Bangladesh Community: Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants in Italy*.

[34] World Bank, "Bangladesh Development Update: Building on Resilience."

nets provided by the government and NGOs.[35] At the same time, growing trafficking networks and new routes along the Mediterranean may have increased the number of Bangladeshis ending up on European shores.

Bangladesh has also seen increasing political instability, which has likely influenced both traffickers and asylum seekers. Since Bangladesh transitioned to democracy in 1991, its two ruling parties – the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party – have held power in alternate terms, each pushing back against the opposition when leading the government. While electoral violence, vote rigging, and corruption in government institutions were widely recognized phenomenon, the country has recently slipped into murky terrain with increasing violence against the opposition, enforced disappearances, and a crackdown on dissenting voices. While the recent political turmoil may have led some Bangladeshis to seek asylum in foreign countries, it is also likely that it has provided new opportunities for *dalals* to claim asylum for trafficked individuals.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to reorient how we think about Bangladeshi migrants in Europe. In particular, I have explored their identities as transnational actors with strong networks and relationships back home. This challenges the discourse of immigrants as encroachers or threats to their host countries and contributes to conversations regarding their role in development, both at home and abroad. In addition, it pushes back against the idea of immigrants as static or having singular identities. Recognizing the interconnectedness and complex

[35] Ibid.

ities of migrants' lives is instrumental in designing effective immigration policies. For example, we would expect that family reunification visas would contribute to the growing numbers of Bangladeshis in Italy. And yet, many Bangladeshi migrants happen to be single young men; only a small number of women have travelled to join their husbands. It is also important to recognize how money, ideas, and identities can travel through, and exist across, borders. Because Bangladeshi migrants in Europe leave behind extended families, debt, property, and the obligations that go with them, their link with their homelands will likely remain very strong.

** Some parts of this chapter draw on earlier research conducted by the author and published by the Migration Policy Institute as Nayma Qayum, "Chasing the Dubai Dream in Italy: Bangladeshi Migration to Europe," Migration Information Source, October 5, 2017, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chasing-dubai-dream-italy-bangladeshi-migration-europe.

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Migration has become a key issue in the European public debate. In 2015, more than one million asylum seekers entered the European Union and since then Brussels has sought to deal with the issue through various methods. However, our perception of the phenomenon in Europe in general and in Italy in particular reflects a distorted representation of reality. This representation focuses only on the so-called destination contexts (the European countries), neglecting the dynamics and factors that affect the countries of origin and transit of migration. By broadening our point of view, we can fully understand the extent of the phenomenon. For this reason, it is crucial to understand, for example, what happens in West Africa, why people are again emigrating from Tunisia or Morocco, and why Niger and Libya are fundamental points along migration routes. This new study promoted by ResetDOC aims to go precisely to these origins of the phenomenon of migration from the south to Europe, to restore dignity to the choice of hundreds of thousands of people, and objectively reconstruct one of the most politicised issues of recent decades.

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