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The Future of Mobility and Migration Within and From Sub-Saharan Africa

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Executive summary

African migration – its drivers, dynamics, and consequences –increasingly features in global policy debates. Concerns vary widely, including everything from economic and human development, human rights, and human and state security. For OECD countries, particularly members of the European Union, there are additional concerns. These include securing labour required to support an aging European population and expensive social welfare system; upholding commitments to human dignity; maintaining a positive reputation and influence throughout the 'global south'; and politically derived imperative to starkly limit spontaneous movements of Africans across Europe's external boundaries. As illustration, despite a growing need for labour, the number of newly issued long-term work permits (12+ months) for African labour migrants has been reduced from 80.000 in 2008 to 20.000 in 2016.

Through an examination of existing data and drivers of African mobility, this paper suggests there are few reasons to expect dramatic changes in the sources, directions, or nature of migration within and from sub-Saharan Africa. Economic inequality (within the continent and between Africa and Europe), climate change, persecution, and conflict will continue to encourage ever diversifying movements to cities, to neighbouring countries, and beyond Africa. The vast majority of those moving will stay within their countries of citizenship or move to neighbouring countries. About one-fifth of sub-Saharan migrants will seek passage to Europe, Australasia, or North America (the percentage from North Africa is much higher). Although the proportion of Africans migrating internationally may not substantially increase in the decades ahead, the onset of the continent's demographic boom will result in many more Africans on the move. Ironically, current development investments intended to sedentarize would-be migrants or reduce fertility (and hence the number of potential migrants) are only likely to intensify movements.

Looking forward, Europe's need for labour and its relatively high wages (even if the absolute demand decreases) will continue making it an attractive destination for Africans from across the continent. Increases in African education and experience increase relative earning potential in Europe. Small increases in Africans' income within the continent will also make possible longer-distance journeys. Given the Middle East's inability to produce surplus labour of the kind required, Europe will need to call upon Africa as a primary source of migrant labour. Eastern Europe may help ease that dependence, but is unlikely to eliminate it.

The report argues that global economic inequality and demographic trends have already 'locked in' the general patterns of sub-Saharan African migration for the next thirty years. For sub-Saharan African economies to absorb surplus labour, African states would almost universally need to sustain two decades of economic growth at a pace previously unseen in global history. Moreover, those likely to enter the labour force in the next 15-20 years are already being born or will be in the coming five years. Even if the general trends are likely to continue, three 'second order' variables will importantly influence the consequences of human mobility.

1. The degree of socio-spatial inequality within sub-Saharan Africa. Greater equality (of wealth or poverty) may limit movement while socio-spatial inequality will likely exacerbate migration. The latter is more likely as greater resource-based wealth and the concentration of resources in elite enclaves create concentrations of wealth. Even modest economic growth across a country will likely enable people to move while spatially concentrating opportunities. Education and vocational training may help generate small increases in African-based employment, but are more likely to generate earning potential and unmet earning expectations. This will subsequently encourage movements towards more diversified, high-wage, labour-poor locales.
2. Europe's willingness to accept significant numbers of African migrants and the strategies pursued to regulate such movements. Recognising that African incentives to enter Europe will remain strong, policies enabling movement will reduce the costs of doing so and the degree of violence, corruption, and organised crime associated with migration.
3. African state strategies to facilitate or control movements. These strategies – exercised at national, regional, or continental scales, will produce a number of externalities connected with political tensions, human rights abuses, and criminalisation of public institutions and business within Africa and Europe.

The paper ultimately outlines three plausible scenarios stemming from demographic, economic, and political variables. Within *The Cosmopolitan Concord,* European and African leaders promote openness in ways that limits corruption and violence while promoting socio-spatial equality and migrant inclusion. Europe's openness to black Africans retains popular good will, investment opportunities, and European political influence. Under *The Containment Compact,* European and African leaders seek to limit mobility without countering heightening socio-spatial inequality. This results in widespread violence, criminalisation, and conflict across Africa and into Europe. Underground migrant communities in Europe will be met by hostile,

nationalist mobilisations while China, Turkey, and Russia gain economic and political influence across sub-Saharan Africa. By contrast, *Militerranean,* results from continued European closure to African migrants countered by African openness with moderate levels of inequality within Africa. While sub-Saharan Africa will face reduced violence and corruption, the Mediterranean will become militarised while Europe becomes an ideological battleground. Overt and organised political hostility to Europe by African political leaders leads to economic closure and declining European influence. Russia, China, and Turkey capitalise on and actively encourage these hostilities through heightened aid and trade.

The policy questions that remain are not whether people will continue to come, but what will be the long-term economic, political, cultural, and criminal consequences of Europe's efforts to prevent, contain, or redirect movements.

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List of abbreviations

AU	African Union (formerly the Organisation of African Unity)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FMP	Free Movement of Persons Protocol of the African Union
Frontex	The European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GCM	Global Compact on Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The future of mobility and migration within and from Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

This paper considers the future of international migration within and from Africa. It is primarily concerned with people from sub-Saharan Africa moving within the continent and to other world regions. It concentrates specifically on current and future movements to or towards the European Union.

Many factors are likely to shape these movements and understanding responses to African migration – in Europe and elsewhere – demands situating Africans' movements within global social and political trends. Among these are varied movements towards Europe. In 2015, over 1 million people arrived in Italy and Greece by boat after crossing the Mediterranean Sea.[1] Almost none of these people had entry visas and only about 20% were from the African continent. With increasingly restrictive European immigration policies, most would make asylum applications or disappear into the underground economy. Most of those arriving since June 2016 were Africans.

When compared with 280,000 arrivals in 2014 or 60,000 in 2010, this spike in unauthorised movements towards Europe has represented a moment of crisis for European politicians and policymakers. Many of those arriving were seeking protection from conflicts in the Middle East. A smaller number were moving north from Africa to seek safety and economic security. In the subsequent years, the numbers moving from the Middle East have dwindled while those from sub-Saharan African continue to reach the European Union albeit in declining numbers (190,000 in 2016; 146,000 in 2017; and only 33,000 in the first six months of 2018). These arrivals have not been uniform across the European coastline with Italy remaining at the centre of these movements.

Even if European citizens, politicians, and media outlets viewed the 2015-2016 numbers of unauthorised immigrants as extraordinary, sub-Saharan African migration to Europe is by no means novel. Indeed, the number of arrivals to Europe have remained relatively constant although people are increasingly moving outside of formal legal channels. Moreover, for many years, countries such as France have actively sought forms of 'co-development' designed to engage the African diaspora in ways benefit Europe and sending countries. The rise of undocumented migrants and illegal entries was also not without precedent: the numbers of African migrants crossing the Mediterranean and claiming asylum in Europe rose sharply following the Arab Spring (2011) and the fall of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.[2] Most of these were from North Africa, but consistently included people from further south. As options for legal channels into Europe decline, people sought entry by other means. Without legal means to move, people took extraordinary risks. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 3,784 people died in 2015 as they made the perilous journey from Africa to Europe. Although the figures are uncertain, many more have died crossing the Sahara.[3]

Demographics and other material dynamics have been less important than media representation and political framing in shaping Europe's response to sub-Saharan African migration. The possibility of Greece leaving the Eurozone; ongoing economic challenges stemming from the 2008 global recession; ongoing political negotiations with Russia and Turkey; and terrorist shootings in France, Germany, Belgium and Denmark infused European politics with a sense of insecurity. Political leaders have exploited fears of globalisation and cultural threats, unemployment, and inequality to position themselves in the political mainstream with xenophobic and racist ideas that would have been shunned a decade ago.[4] As centrist parties stave off challenges from the far-right (or form coalitions with them), the migration 'crisis' further exposed tensions within European Union as countries debated who was responsible for migrants and refugees.

In attempting to restore a sense of order, the European Union and EU member states launched a series of efforts intended to slow, divert, or halt unauthorised movements of people towards Europe. Initial responses were oriented towards those fleeing crisis in the Middle East and Asia (e.g., Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan). Subsequent activities centred on those originating in Africa. These include a diverse set of initiatives, too varied to discuss here in any detail. However, heightened border control and externalization strategies seem to have had the desired short-term effects: Although the numbers of unauthorised entries remain higher than pre-2014 totals, there was a 35% decline in irregular Mediterranean crossings in 2016 (to 363,504). The numbers fell still further in 2017 (to 171,635) and in 2018.[5]

European attention to African mobility has generated a 'crisis framing' that demands almost immediate action while obscuring a broader understanding of what is driving African migration and who, how, and where Africans are moving. Most importantly, it hides the fact that African migration numbers to Europe are relatively constant: although the numbers of Africans moving without authorization to Europe increased dramatically in 2015, the overall numbers did not. Moreover, the vast majority of sub-Saharan Africans (upwards of 80%) are continuing to move within the continent as they have done for the past decades.[6] (North Africans and people from Jordan and the Gulf states also continue to move as they have, largely towards Europe although there are declines here as well.) This pattern is unlikely to change substantially in the decades ahead.

Through an examination of existing data and drivers of African mobility, this short paper suggests that the current dynamics driving increased movements in Africa will continue to create strong incentives that will drive African mobility. At present, Africans remain proportionally among the least migratory regions in the world. Given prevailing poverty in many parts of the continent, the percentage of Africans leaving their homes is unlikely to rise sharply. Africans will largely continue to move as they have in search of profit, passage, and protection. However, given substantial increases in the pool of potential movers – people entering adulthood – this means substantial growth in the absolute number of migrants. As is now the case, the vast majority of those who leave their communities of origin will stay within their countries of citizenship.[7] Most will move to cities, secondary towns, or regions with labour-intensive commercial agriculture or mining. Those crossing borders are most likely to remain nearby, typically within their respective regional economic communities (RECs). Given the enhanced numbers of people moving, destinations and duration are likely to diversify in response to shifting migration policy, conflict, and the concentration of economic opportunities.

Approximately 70% of sub-Saharan African international migration remains within African Union (AU) member states, down from 75% in 1990.[8] This change in percentage along with growing overall populations foreshadows continued growth in absolute terms of migrants headed towards the Middle East and the European Union. There is little evidence that internal or external investments in African economic development are likely to create the kind of labour absorption required to halt movement in the coming decades. The residents of sub-Saharan Africa are so poor that they would need two decades of sustained economic growth at a pace almost previously unknown in global history. Moreover, rises in GDP per capita would need to coincide with an equalling of economic opportunities to ensure that opportunities are available to all families. This would reflect a marked break from growth patterns in the resource-based economies that have typically been among Africa's best performers (e.g., Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa). More likely is that even modest economic growth will spatially concentrate opportunities with benefits accruing to the politically connected. Although education and vocational training are ends in themselves, without a structural shift in Africa's economies, these are likely to generate unmet earning expectations. This will subsequently encourage movements towards more diversified, high-wage, labour-poor locales.

While heightened restrictions on crossing borders within sub-Saharan Africa or along its external frontiers may slow or distort movements, they will do little to change absolute numbers. Rather, migration will become more dangerous and permanent. Unauthorised overland and maritime journeys will continue to represent a minority of all moves. However, unless the European Union is able to make entry to its territory extraordinarily expensive – through a mix of coercion and penalties – Africans will continue to journeying north. The policy questions that remain are not whether people will continue to come, but what will be the long-term economic, political, cultural, and criminal consequences of Europe's efforts to slow movements.

This report argues that while global economic inequality and demographic trends are unlikely to change substantially within the next three decades, three less stable 'second order' variables may shape migration outcomes in important ways. The first is economic equality within Africa. There is little evidence that investments in African economic development are likely to create the kind of labour absorption required to halt movement.[9] However, the extent to which socio-spatial inequality is exacerbated or reduced will shape movements going forward. Greater inequality due to resource driven wealth and the concentration of resources in elite enclaves will create incentives for movement although may limit people's abilities to move. However, modest economic growth across a country will likely enable people to move while spatially concentrating opportunities. Similarly, education and vocational training may help generate small increases in African-based employment, but it is more likely to generate earning potential and unmet earning expectations. This will subsequently encourage movements towards more diversified, labour-poor locales.

The second two variables relate explicitly to migration policy. The first is Europe's willingness to accept significant numbers of African migrants and the strategies pursued to regulate such movements.

Recognising that African intention to enter Europe will remain strong, policies enabling movement will reduce the costs of doing so and the degree of violence, corruption, and organised crime associate with migration. Similarly, African state strategies to facilitate or control movements will produce a number of externalities connected with political tensions, human rights abuses, corruption, and criminalisation.

The paper ultimately outlines three plausible scenarios stemming from demographic, economic, and political variables. Under *The Containment Compact* European and African leaders seek to limit mobility without countering heightening socio-spatial inequality. This results in widespread violence, criminalisation, and conflict across Africa and in to Europe. Underground migrant communities in Europe will be met by hostile, nationalist mobilisations. By contrast, within *The Cosmopolitan Concord,* European and African leaders promote openness in ways that limits corruption and violence while promoting socio-spatial equality and migrant inclusion. The final scenario, *The Militerranean,* results from continued European closure to African migrants countered by African openness with moderate levels of inequality within Africa. While sub-Saharan Africa will face reduced violence and corruption, the Mediterranean will become militarised while Europe will become an ideological battleground. China, Turkey, and Russia will exploit Afro-European tensions for political and economic advantage.

Methods and approach

This paper employs demographic and political analysis to inform the outlined scenarios.[10]
The figures and maps draw on published sources, largely United Nations (UNDESA) data and peer-reviewed analyses. There are a series of original tables and graphs offering insights into the relationships among development, urbanisation, and mobility in sub-Saharan Africa. Many of the figures show nonparametric cross-country regressions of sub-Saharan African emigrant stock on various development indicators. Data on emigrant stocks are from the United Nations Population Division, income per capita is reported in 2005 constant USD from the *Penn World Tables*, and other indicators are drawn from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators Database*. Here, each country's emigrant stock is measured as the total number of people born in that country residing outside that country, divided by that country's population. Trends shown are separated by destination region – world total, European Union, and African destinations excluding internal migration – following the hypothesis that the relationship between emigrant stocks and development indicators may vary across different destinations.

As the data used for this report are exclusively historical, they do not definitively demonstrate future paths for any given country or for the region at large. Instead, they capture past trends over time. This approach draws on a growing literature on the relationship between migration and development,[11] and is the first to investigate these trends for a specific world region. In many cases, we exclude outliers from our analysis. These include the island states (i.e., Mauritius, Seychelles) whose populations are uncharacteristically wealthy and non-mobile. We also exclude countries that have experienced dramatic displacement events due to natural or violent crises. Rwanda, for example, is not included for the period immediately following the 1994 genocide. Although crises remain important in shaping migration, they are largely unpredictable and skew generalised trends and extrapolations.

Building on an examination of past and current migration drivers, we draw on standard scenario planning techniques to explore possible future projections. These distinguish between first and second order variables likely to shape migration outcomes. The first order variables – in this case European and African demography and global economic inequality – shape general trends and are likely to change dramatically in the coming decades. The second order variables – national economic inequality and African-European immigration policies – will have secondary but important mediating effects. There are an almost infinite number of factors that could be included in such scenarios, most of which must be overlooked in generating coherent narratives. As our expertise is largely on African politics and migration, we place greater emphasis on policies and practices within or directly oriented towards Africa. Internal European labour, social, and immigration policies along with broader social attitudes and political mobilization are all important but largely beyond the scope of this analysis.

Key findings and analysis

To provide historical background for future scenarios, this section provides an overview of the key trends and drivers shaping contemporary migration in Sub-Saharan Africa. Where necessary, it incorporates data from North Africa because shifts in regional dynamics may result in new patterns of mobility between sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and that region. By way of summary:

- Between 2000 and 2017, the number of international migrants in Africa increased from approximately 15 million to 25 million. Over this same period, the percentage of all international migrants globally who reside in Africa increased from 9 % to 10%.[12] Due to undercounting, the actual numbers may be considerably higher.

- Viewed in global perspective, Africans are among those least likely to move internationally (see Table 1). Much of this can be explained by generalised poverty and poor transportation infrastructure that denies people the resources to move towards opportunities. When distinguishing between Africans from North and South of the Sahara, sub-Saharan Africans are even less likely to be on the move;
- Due to the relatively small numbers of sub-Saharan African migrants, singular events (e.g., genocide, war, climatic extremes) resulting in mass movement can temporarily distort continental trends;
- Most sub-Saharan African migration is within Africa; for those crossing international borders, most stay within their regions, many in neighbouring countries;
- As elsewhere in the world, economic and spatial inequality and demography are migration's primary drivers. However, conflict and persecution disproportionately shape sub-Saharan African mobility;
- Environmental events and broader patterns of change are likely to exacerbate existing conflicts and intensify patterns of mobility rather than mark a dramatic break;
- Urbanisation rates are not closely correlated with international migration within sub-Saharan Africa, but appear to be positively correlated to extra-continental movements. This may also be explained by the strong correlation between urbanisation and wealth;
- The growing number of people entering the labour force will greatly increase the number of migrants even if the percentage of people moving remains constant;
- Strong economic growth and wealth are not generally correlated with reduced international migration. Only at levels of employment and income unlikely to be achieved in the near future will Africa's population sedentarize.

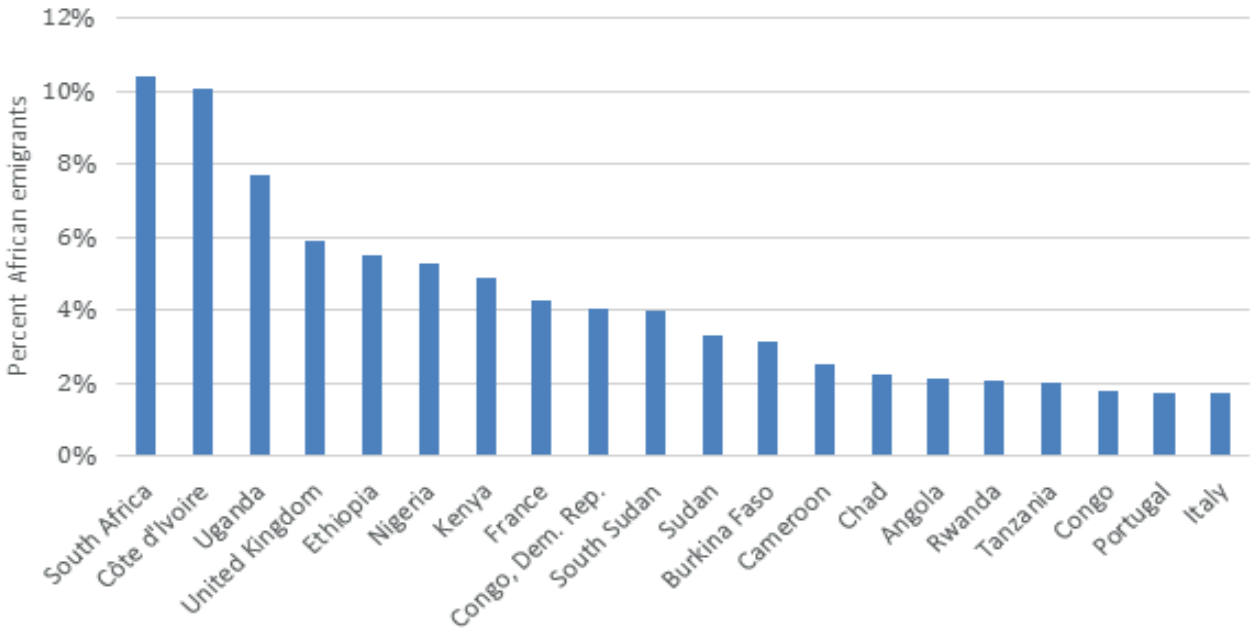
According to the United Nations, there were almost 258 million international migrants worldwide in 2017. Africa hosts 24.7 million of these, about 10% of global stock (See Tables 2 and 3). Between 2010 and 2017, the continent experienced a 5.3% annual growth rate in international migrant stocks – more the double the world average and the largest increase amongst regions of the world.[13] Some of this is due to ongoing conflicts (particularly in Somalia, South Sudan, and elsewhere). Much is due to increased population.

Region	Emigrant stock (mil)	Population (mil)	Emigrants/population
Africa	36.3	1256.3	2.89%
Asia	105.7	4504.4	2.35%
Europe	61.2	742.1	8.25%
Latin America & Caribbean	37.7	645.6	5.84%
North America	4.4	361.2	1.12%
World	257.7	7550.3	3.41%

	International migrant stock (millions)				Average annual change in migrant stock (per cent)			
	1990	2000	2010	2017	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2017	2000-2017
World	152.2	172.6	2220.0	257.7	1.2	2.4	2.3	2.4
Developed region	82.4	103.4	130.7	146.0	2.3	2.3	1.6	2.0
Developing regions	70.2	69.2	89.3	111.7	-0.1	2.6	3.2	2.8
High-income countries	75.2	100.4	141.8	164.8	2.9	3.5	2.2	2.9
Middle-income countries	68.5	64.0	70.2	81.4	-0.7	0.9	2.1	1.4
Low-income countries	8.5	7.7	7.5	10.9	-1.0	-0.2	5.3	2.0
Africa	15.7	14.8	17.0	24.7	-0.6	1.4	5.3	3.0
Asia	48.1	49.2	65.9	79.6	0.2	2.9	2.7	2.8
LAC	7.2	6.6	8.2	9.5	-0.9	2.3	2.02	2.2
NA	27.6	40.4	51.0	57.7	3.8	2.3	1.8	2.1
Oceania	4.7	5.4	7.1	8.4	1.2	2.8	2.4	2.7

Origin 2017 Estimates	Destination (%)			
	Eastern Africa	Central Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
Eastern Africa	82	15.10	59.96	0.07
Central Africa	17	66.39	8.30	2.59
Southern Africa	1	1.87	29.65	0.03
West Africa	0.21	16.63	2.10	97.32

Figure 1: Geographic distribution of African emigrants, percent of 2017 Total



Source: UNDESA

In line with global trends, most mobility in Africa occurs within regions with the exception of North Africa whose movements, for historical reasons, are oriented towards Europe and the Middle East (see Table 3 and Figure 1). Intense intra-regional mobility is partly a factor of proximity – international migration tends to occur between geographically proximate countries. The figures also show that regions with free movement and residency protocols tend to have more intense circulation of people within them. This partially explains why North Africa has so little movement amongst countries while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) experience the most intense levels of inter-regional mobility. North, Central, and Southern Africa, which have no signed agreements on free movement protocols, tend to have comparatively lower levels of mobility then ECOWAS and the EAC (refer to the following section for a discussion of regional and continental governance frameworks).

While intra-regional movements dominate migration patterns, fewer leave their regions. Contemporary patterns of migration show that inter-regional migration patterns are far less important than intra-regional population movements. Where inter-regional movements occur, it is typically between adjacent regions, rather than disparate regions. For example, Central Africa represents the second largest source of migration for East Africa, whereas there is remarkably little mobility between Southern and West Africa which are on opposite ends of the continent. Again, these patterns confirm the gravitational model hypothesis that geographic distance plays a significant role in shaping migration patterns.

African migration to Europe

Importantly, even if the majority of sub-Saharan Africans still move within the continent, a greater number are leaving Africa than in the past. Over the past decades, the percentage of Africans reaching sites

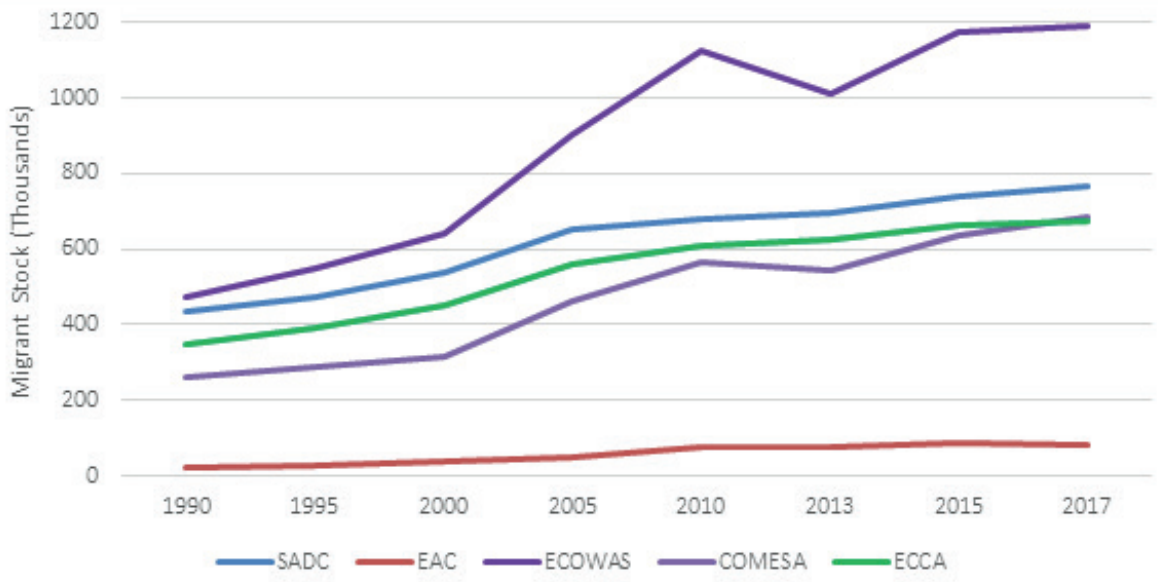
outside the continent has risen.[14] Regional analysis reveals which regions are likely to be source countries for intra- and extra-continental migration. Overall, North Africans are far more likely to emigrate outside of the continent, but the rate is decreasing. At its peak in 1980, a North African was six times more likely to migrate outside the continent than a sub-Saharan African. Presently there is little difference in the propensity for *people in East, West, and Central Africa to move outside the continent. The exception is South Africa, which saw an acceleration in extra-continental movements linked to political unrest in the 1980s and uncertainty* during the transition to democracy in the 1990s (See figures 2 and 3 below).

As noted, most extra-continental emigration occurs in North Africa as it has for decades. Yet since 1960, the rate of emigrants leaving the continent from countries like Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and Somalia has intensified. Movements from Sudan, Somalia, and Angola are attributable to war and civil unrest within these countries. As a former settler colony South Africa's historical links with Europe, its high level of economic development, and the country's transition from apartheid to democracy can explain the high rates of extra-continental emigration (see the sub-section below). Indeed, we continue to see large-scale movements among highly unequal countries.

As Figure 2 (below) indicates, African migrants to Europe are disproportionally from ECOWAS member states (i.e., West Africans). As a proportion of total migrants to the European Union, East Africa is almost negligible. Although Figure 2 suggests West Africans are increasingly prone to move, Figure 3 cautions against regional generalisations. Rather, increases in migrants from most regions generally track with population growth. As populations increase, so too do the numbers of people leaving their countries of birth within a given region. As home to a significant and highly fertile proportion of Africa's population, West Africa is likely to continue producing large numbers of regional and extra-regional migrants.

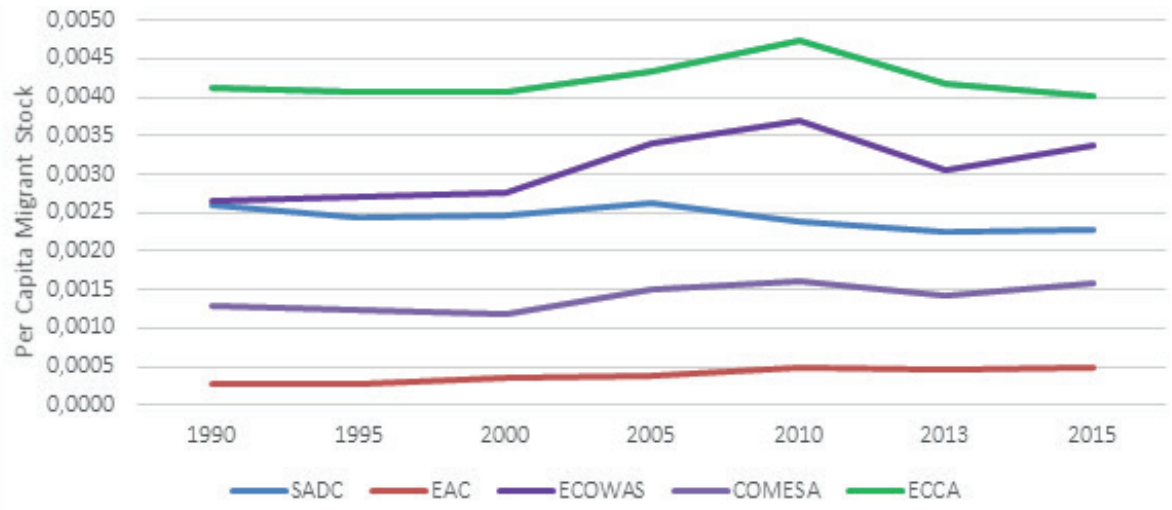
It is worth noting that Sub-Saharan migrants have not spatially distributed themselves equally across Europe: many move to areas where family members or other migrant communities are already established. This pattern is likely to continue, although there is a slow diversification of destinations across the continent. Specific settlements and destinations are determined, as elsewhere, by a mix of regulatory frameworks, access to social services and support, and economic opportunities.

Figure 2: Regional Origin of sub-Saharan African Migrants in the European Union (Total)



Source: UNDESA

Figure 3: Regional Origin of sub-Saharan African Migrants in the European Union (per capita)



Source: UNDESA

Primary African mobility drivers

Migration is a complex phenomenon and individual choices are structured as much by perceptions as material realities. Aside from people fleeing for their safety because of war and violence, it is difficult to identify single factors driving individuals to migrate. People's mobility is often entangled in complex socio-economic, political, personal, and communal decision-making frameworks, which together determine individual migration outcomes – why, where, and how people move.

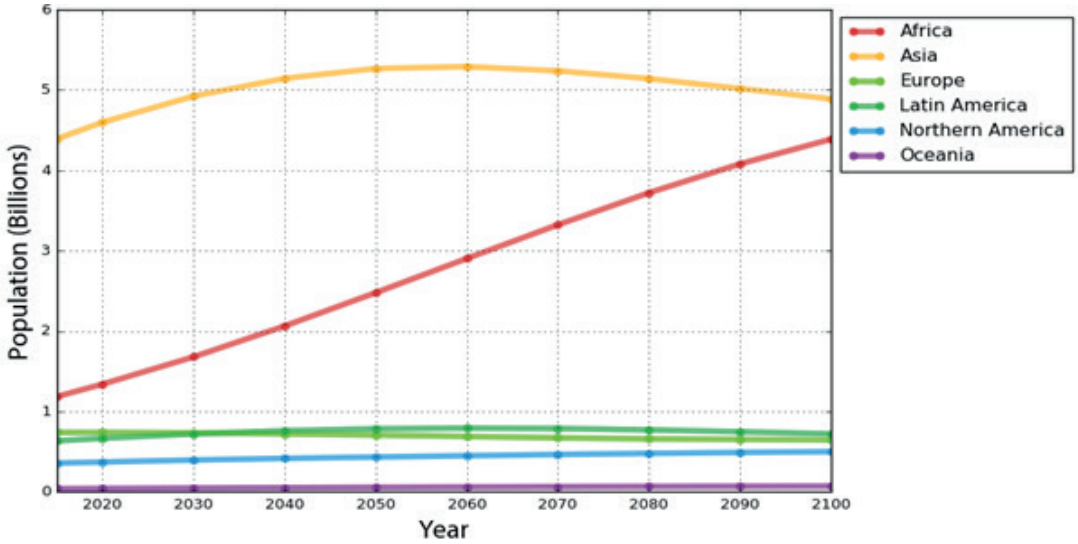
Although disentangling motivations for migration at a micro level can be challenging if futile, at a macro level it is important to distinguish between events that trigger migration and the underlying factors providing the conditions for migration. This section analyses the drivers of African migration at two different levels. The primary drivers of migration reflect the underlying factors that create the conditions for long-term sustained migration. These are deep-rooted structural factors that are unlikely to change within the next one to two generations and have strong causal links to persistent mobility patterns. We identify two variables in this category – Africa's demographic dynamics and its economic growth patterns.

Secondary migration factors include events or structures that have marginal impacts on migratory movements and impacts. These may buttress or partially counteract deep-rooted underlying patterns – especially when viewed at the micro-level – but are unlikely to disrupt overall trends. These include factors related to governance and under-development such as, poverty, inequality, unemployment, natural disasters, economic and political instability. These drivers are difficult to separate or weight in order of importance and often fail to explain specific instances of mobility that are shaped by far more contingent factors. Moreover, secondary drivers such as conflict can become enduring drivers of sustained migration flows. Unlike demographic patterns which can take generations to change, secondary factors can conceivably shift faster and within a generation. Disaggregating migration drivers in this way provides a useful analytical frame for understanding African migration and an opportunity for thinking critically about effective policy interventions.

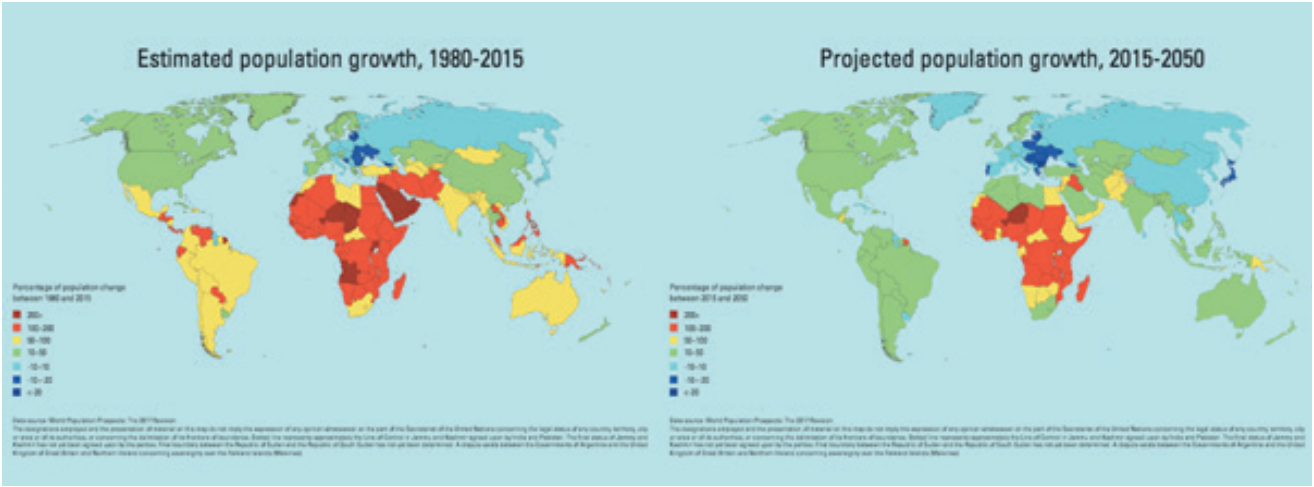
Africa's demographic trends

High fertility is perhaps the most important factor shaping Africa's population dynamics – including migration. A recent study by Hanson and McIntosh compares population projections in 2050 across global regions. They find that between 2010 and 2050, declining fertility rates in the Americas, Europe and East Asia and stable rates in the Middle East and Africa will result in substantial differences in population growth between these regions.[15] If current rates continue, sub-Saharan Africa's population (which is now about 40% larger than Europe) will be six times greater than Europe's population by 2100.[16] Although growth rates may slow in some of the continent's more industrialised or wealthier regions (particularly in Southern Africa), most countries are unlikely to undergo a demographic transition in the next generation. Improved education for women is invaluable and potentially empowering, but empirical analyses suggest that it has limited effects on reducing fertility in Africa.[17] Coupled with regional income disparities, these population pressures are likely to intensify intra- and inter-regional migration.

Figure 4: UN Population forecast in billions by world regions 2015-2100



Source: UNDESA



Source: UNDESA

Table 4: Regional population change (projected), 2015-2100

Region	2015 Population	2100 Population	Populate change (absolute)	Percentage change
Africa	1,186,178,282	4,386,591,069	+3,200,412,787	+270
Asia	4,393,296,014	4,888,652,982	+495,356,968	+11
Northern America	357,838,036	500,143,198	+142,305,162	+40
Latin America	634,386,567	721,128,695	+86,837,620	+14
Oceania	39,331,130	71,128,695	+31,797,565	+81
Europe	738,442,070	645,577,351	-92,864,719	-13

Source: UNDESA

Even if Africa's fertility rates drop, the total population will continue to grow rapidly in absolute terms. Such 'population momentum' is due to sub-Saharan Africa's youthful age structure that means that the children today will reach adulthood in future decades.

> Africa's share of global population, which is projected to grow from roughly 17 per cent in 2017 to around 26 per cent in 2050, could reach 40 per cent by 2100... In all plausible scenarios of future trends, Africa will play a central role in shaping the size and distribution of the world's population over the decades to come

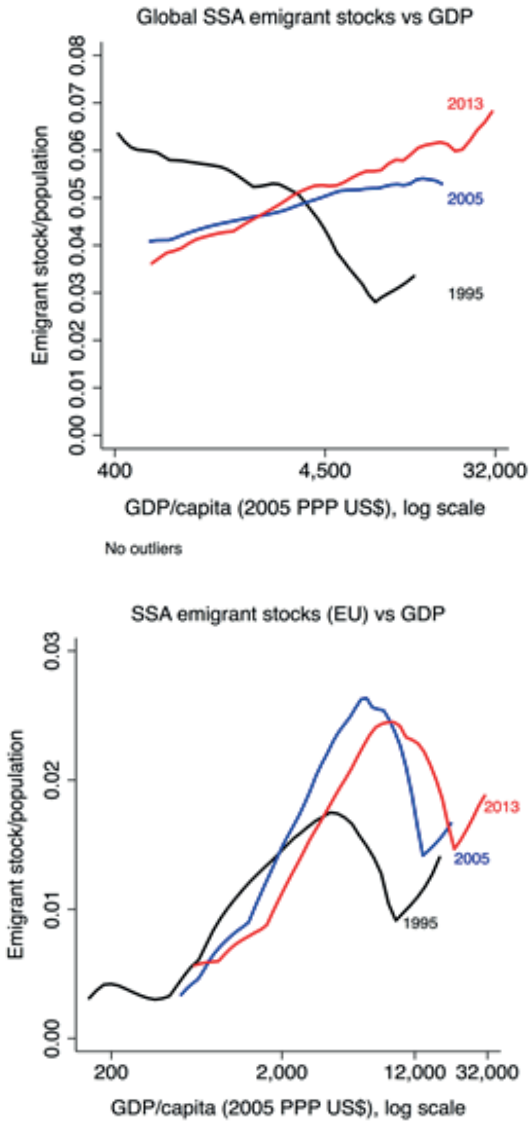
Overall wealth:

With contemporary policy discussions, prevailing explanations for high-levels of African migration typically focus on Africa's prevailing poverty. Strategies designed to slow migration subsequently focus on improving generalised prosperity and employment (for the latter, see below). However, such strategies run counter to the evidence which generally indicates that the wealthier Africans become (measured here as GDP per capita), the more likely they are to emigrate. This does not speak about individual or family wealth, but only average wealth at the country level.

The picture is somewhat less clear when it comes to movements within the continent, but in both emigration within SSA and towards the EU it appears as if migration increases overall along with GDP. In many ways, this counters the classic development 'hump' hypothesis which indicates that people move regularly to a point and then populations stabilise. This may be due to the levels of poverty, the nature of economic development, or other undetermined factors. While the figures above reflect historical migrations and not current flows, it nonetheless suggests that in terms of containing migration, strategies aimed at creating wealth within Africa may be counterproductive or take decades to see substantive results.

Employment: The quest for work remains one of the perennial motivations for movement. Historically the migration of young men has been a leading driver of movement. As women increasingly enter the workforce, they have significantly added to global migration stocks. Across sub-Saharan Africa, the relationship between youth employment and migration is ambiguous. In most instances, there is a predictable decline in emigration as countries move towards full employment. However, this applies to only a select few countries and is unachievable for most. Rather, we initially see a sharp increase in emigration as youth employment increases. This is particularly the case with migration

Figure 5: Sub-Saharan African emigrant stocks vs GDP (Global and in European Union)

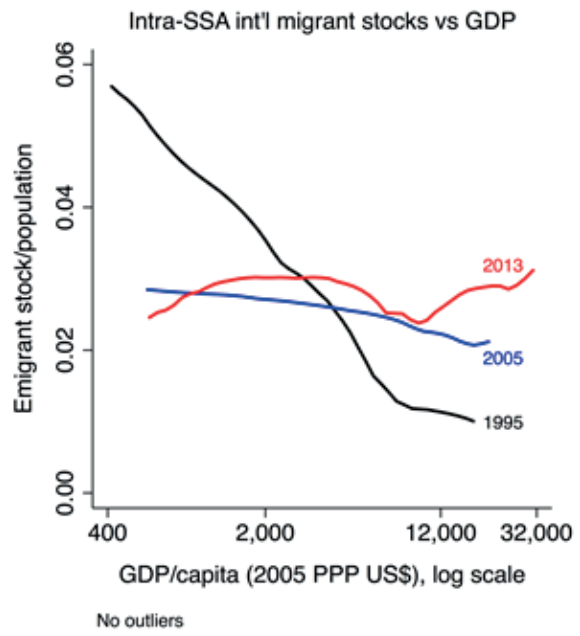


Source: Author analysis of UNDESA data

towards the EU where countries have only seen declines in emigration over approximately 70% employment before emigration declines (See figure 7 below).

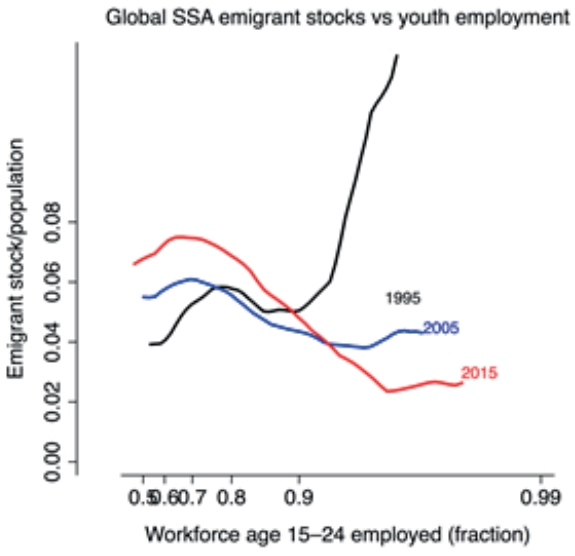
There is, of course, the theoretical possibility of achieving the kind of growth needed to absorb large numbers of would-be African migrants. However, given current economic conditions and projections, this would require a continental economic about-face for which there is almost no precedent. The closest the world has seen was due to the Marshall Plan following the Second World War or in countries like Rwanda following the genocide. However, these were targeted, immensely expensive, and contingent on favourable

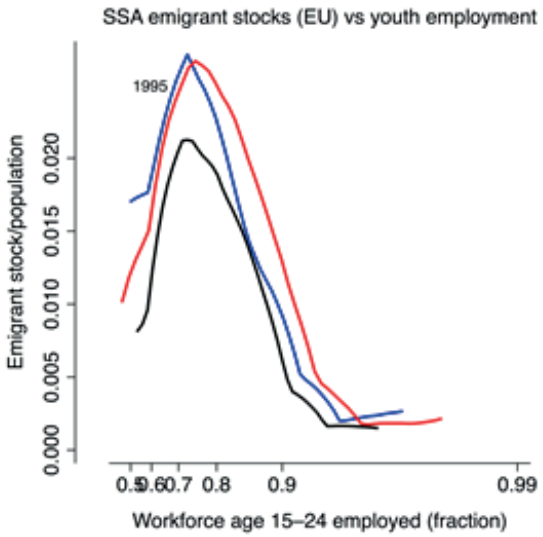
Figure 6: Intra-African emigrant stocks vs GDP (excluding island states)



Source: Author analysis of UNDESA data

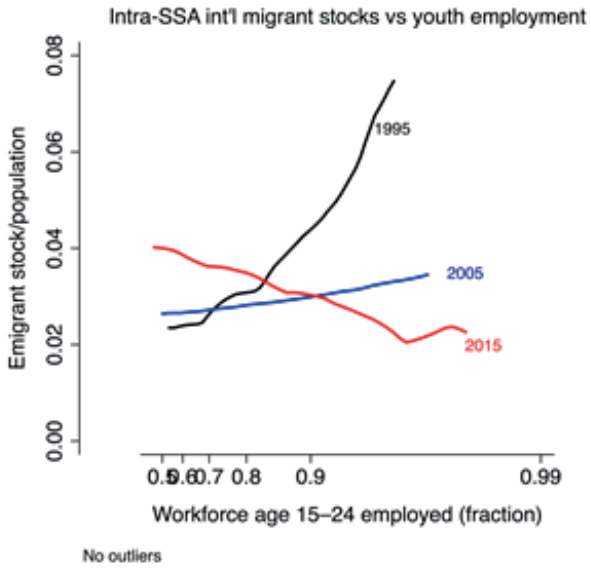
Figure 7: Global African emigrant stocks vs youth employment (global and European Union)





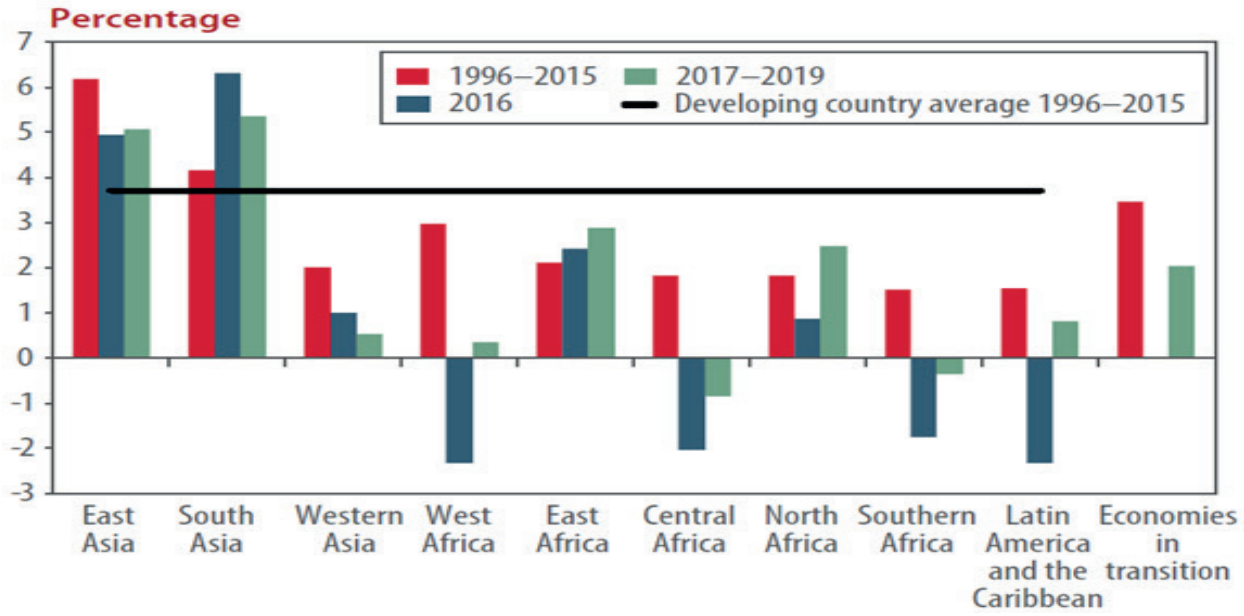
Source: Author analysis of UNDESA data

Figure 8: Intra-African migrant stocks vs youth employment (excluding island states)



Source: Author analysis of UNDESA data

Figure 9: Real GDP growth by region 1996-2019



Source: Reproduced from UNDESA, World Economic Situation and Prospects: January 2018 Briefing, No. 110.

Table 5: Labour market outlook for Africa (%) 2000-2016

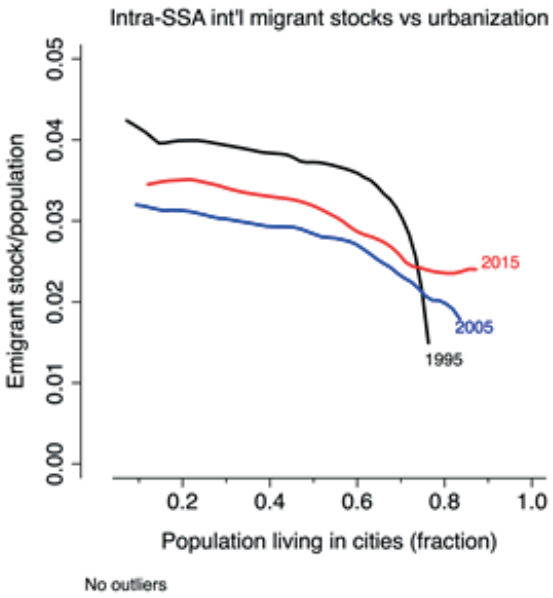
	2000-2007	2008-2014	2014 (Estimated)	2015 (Projected)	2016 (Projected)
Employment growth	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
Labour force participation rate	68.8	69.4	69.6	69.7	69.7
Unemployment rate	9.9	9.4	9.2	9.2	9.2
Labour productivity growth	2.7	0.9	4.0	1.2	2.3
Global labour productivity growth	2.6	1.9	1.8	2.5	2.7

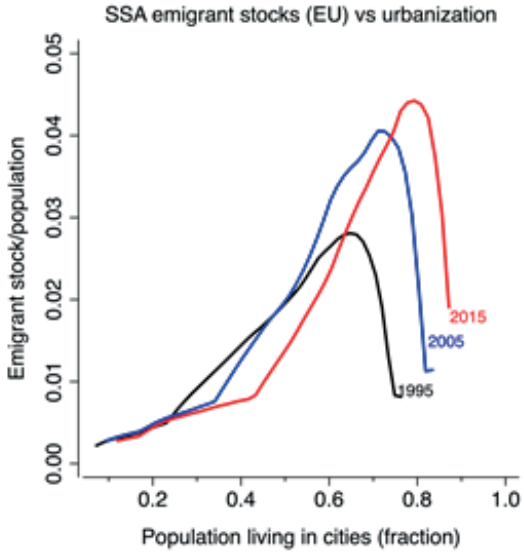
Source: ILO 2015

political and economic conditions that are unlikely to be replicated vis-à-vis Africa. Instead, widespread economic investments in Africa will likely continue to favour extractive industries under terms of trade that that produce greater indebtedness and higher levels of inequality.

Urbanisation: Within the public policy debates around African mobility, there is considerable concern that migration-driven urbanisation is connected to ongoing mobility and out-migration. While it is difficult to determine the increases in urbanisation due to migration (most is due to redistricting and natural increase), there appears to be a limited correlation between levels of urbanisation and international emigration. As Figure 10 below indicates, urbanisation and emigration tend to co-vary to a point at which large-scale emigration largely drops off. This holds for movements within sub-Saharan Africa and, particularly, for movements of Africans towards the European Union.

Figure 10: International migrant stocks vs urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa and EU





Source: Author analysis of UNDESA data

African migration governance

Although demographic and economic factors are most likely to shape African migration in the years ahead, governance frameworks remain an important variable. A full account of immigration and migration governance requires a holistic analysis of the legal, socio-economic, and institutional variables that affect mobility, in addition to the bilateral and multilateral frameworks that govern people's movements and states' obligations. As these are beyond the remit of this piece, the following paragraphs point to four key factors that impact migration governance on the continent.

1. There is no continent-wide agreement on how to address migration in Africa: The formal governance of mobility within Africa is the product of a dynamic set of intersecting and overlapping initiatives and frameworks. Each of the continent's regional economic communities (RECs) has its own initiatives, sandwiched between domestic policies towards displaced people and migrant labour.[18] At the continental level, the African Union (AU) campaigns to promote safe and free movement across its member states.[19] Thus, one of the challenges facing a coherent migration governance framework across the continent is the competing and at times contradictory interests at the national, regional, and AU levels.

As currently conceived, the AU's policies set the normative terms for the free movement of people within Africa and the basic protection of migrants when outside their respective countries of nationality. The AU's Free Movement of Persons Protocol (FMP) is part of Africa's Agenda 2063 that urges member states to 'achieve progressively the free movement of persons to ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence and the right of establishment by their nationals within the Community.' [20] Although the AU's proposal offers only weak guidance on protecting migrants' rights or ensuring state compliance, it presents a flexible migration framework that could potentially be moulded to diverse socio-economic and political landscapes. However, as it now stands, the RECs and states are far more important than the AU in shaping migration policies and practices.

2. Regional economic communities are more influential than the AU in governing African mobility, but remain subservient to national interests: While the AU has long offered overt policy proposals for governing migration, these have been far less effective than the RECs in shaping mobility on the continent. However, even at this level, progress on free movement has been uneven. Some regional economic communities like ECOWAS and the EAC have made the most progress in developing mechanisms that facilitate the movements of people with relative ease within the sub-regions. In late 2017, six francophone states within the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo) ratified an agreement to allow visa-free movements.[21] Within sub-Saharan Africa, SADC is perhaps the least advanced in developing a coherent sub-regional migration framework. Here South Africa has pushed for bi-lateral

rather than multi-lateral agreements, with relatively wealthy Botswana and Namibia also resisting free movement within the region.[22]

At the domestic level, many Africans countries have adopted relatively open policies towards refugees and displaced persons, but have not made migration policy or free movement a priority. A recent study undertaken by the African Development Bank shows that barriers to movement between regional economic blocks remain high. Africans need visas to travel to 55% of other African countries – in fact, North Americans have easier access to the continent than Africans.[23] When comparing visa requirements between regions, Central and North Africa are the most closed regions, while East and West Africa have the most open inter-regional visa regimes. In recent years – particularly since 2015 – many African states are reasserting sovereignty through more restrictive immigration regimes (see below.) With foreign aid dedicated to strengthening border mechanisms and limiting movement, such patterns are likely to outpace efforts to facilitate sub-regional movement.

3. European interests are encouraging migration management policies in Africa in ways that could weaken migrant rights, development, and democratic institutions: With support from the European Union (EU), many African countries (particularly those north of the Equator) have begun developing more comprehensive, often security-oriented migration policies. Since 2015, the continent has witnessed a flurry of activity in migration policy-making through efforts funded by the European Union and implemented by IOM and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).[24] Such policies vary, but involve bilateral agreements to provide technical assistance, development aid and arms to limit irregular migration,[25] secure borders, register and monitor populations, and implement 'development at home' strategies intended to limit the need for movement.[26]

While EU bilateral agreements employ a language of cooperation and win-win outcomes for both continents, they aim to curtail Africans' movements to Europe. They do this in a number of ways. First, the bilateral agreements between African countries and the EU weaken the African Union's plans to promote easier and safer movement within the continent.[27] This strategy may have some impact on the numbers heading to Europe, but risks creating negative externalities within the continent. Second, bilateral EU agreements come with development aid and arms packages that could undermine democratic institutions and human rights. While aid conditionality is not new, human rights organisations have raised concerns that providing aid and arms to authoritarian regimes will heighten insecurity and instability on the continent. This might ironically lead to greater pressure for people to move.[28] Third, migration and border control policies do not guarantee effective implementation. Empirical evidence across Africa consistently points to the disjuncture between the law and its implementation. In border areas, restrictions on movement serve only as an opportunity for corruption and rent seeking –undermining the efficacy of migration policies, and creating opportunities for trafficking and smuggling networks.

4. Despite their profile and global attention, the Global Compacts for Migration (GCM) and Refugees (GCR) are unlikely to mark a significant departure in the formal governance of African mobility: There has been limited involvement of African States and civil society in the drafting of these documents. Compared to the overt aid conditionality placed by donor states – particularly those belonging to the EU – the GCM and GCR provisions will have only indirect influence on Africa's policy frameworks. Furthermore, the GCM is not binding and cannot mandate states to comply. With the withdrawal of the United States from the GCM, and disagreements between Latin American countries, the EU, and Australia on guiding principles, these global processes are unlikely to shift the dynamics of migration governance in Africa.

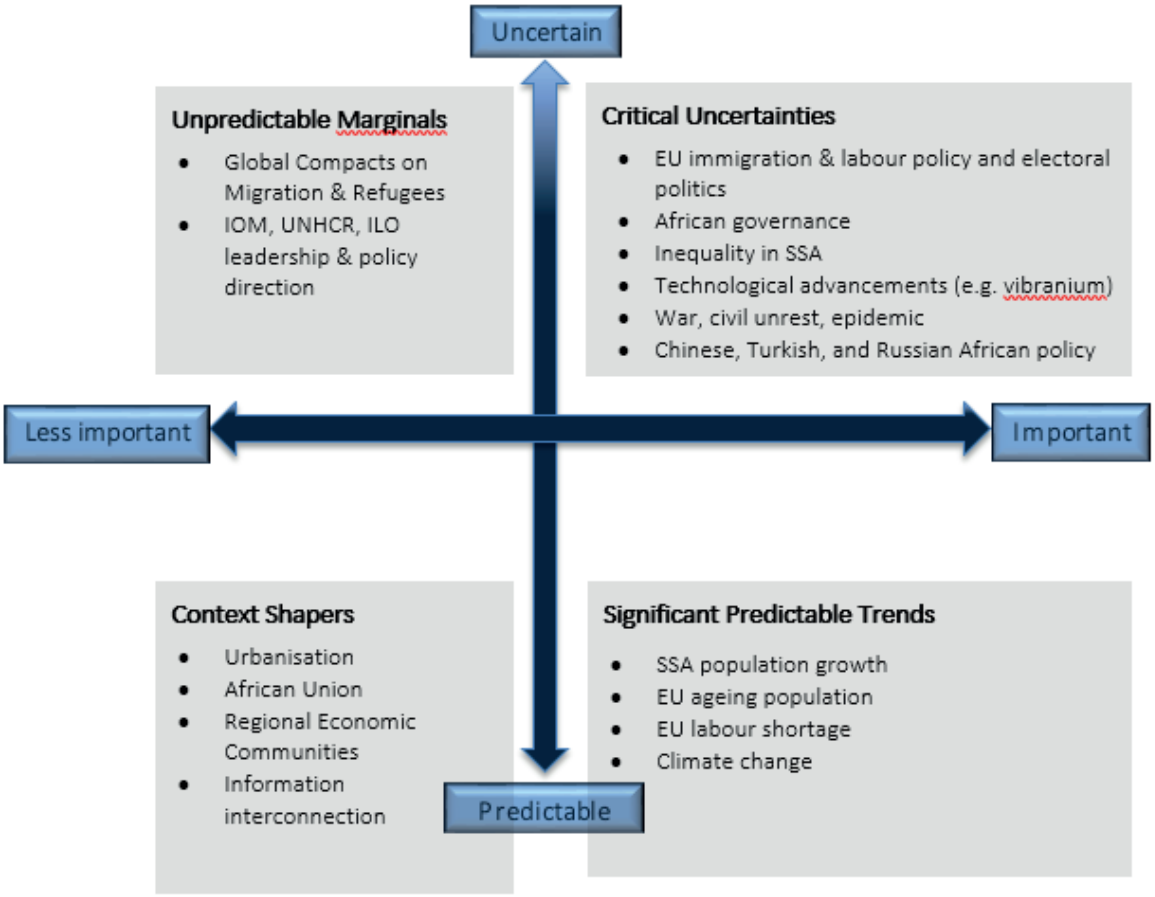
Scenario mapping African migration dynamics in 2035

In the following, we develop three scenarios based on the data discussed in earlier sections of this report. The scenarios stem from the questions framing this report:

- What are the major forces of change affecting inter- and intra-continental migration in Africa in 2035?
- What are the socio-political and economic consequences of changes in migration dynamics on sub-Saharan Africa and the European Union?

Our analysis identifies a series of environmental, political, economic, social, and technological factors currently affecting African mobility within and beyond the continent. We clustered these in terms of their relative importance to or impact on migration, and according to their relative uncertainty or predictability (see Figure 12). Our scenarios build from three critical uncertain variables likely to shape future migration on the continent. These include European Union migration and development policy; African governments' policies towards mobility, trade, and foreign relations; and socio-spatial inequality within and between countries and regions. For present purposes, we define these three as follows:

Figure 11: Drivers of intra- and inter-African migration in 2035 [29]



- **EU immigration and labour policy** is an aggregated variable describing the region's suite of migration, asylum, and development policies towards Africa. These include border management, migration entry channels (e.g., family reunification, asylum, labour regimes), and strategies to promote Africa development through technical and material assistance. Placed along a spectrum of intention, they range between openness and containment or sedentarisation. On the latter end, there are strategies that place severe limits on legal avenues for migration including enhanced surveillance, the militarization of land and sea borders, and the externalisation of migration management south towards the Sahara. Supporting the sedentarisation objectives are a range of development initiatives intended to create opportunities within Africa and prevent human mobility within the continent. These include heavy investments in rural agriculture and vocational training, among other sectors. As part of this strategy, development success is recalibrated. No longer are economic and political inclusion the primary goals. Instead, aid is dedicated to sedentarisation. To reinforce this strategy, aid and trade arrangements become conditional on African states' ability to restrict movements across their borders.
  At the opposite end of the spectrum are policies designed to facilitate the large-scale movement of people within and beyond the continent. These may include opening channels for asylum seekers, permanent and temporary labourers, family reunification, and students. To be viable, these opportunities are not only available to the educated and skilled elite or politically connected, but also to significant numbers of skilled and semi-skilled labourers from across the continent. Development aid continues, but shifts its focus from containment to equitable growth and political accountability. This includes developing core nodes across the continent, supporting African-based labour mobility regimes, and enhancing responses to mobility. In this model, development success ceases to be measured by sedentarisation successes, but instead by aggregate improvements in human development measures (income, education, life expectancy and equity). Where possible, investments that strengthen institutions enhance people's freedoms including possibilities for migration.

- **African policy** refers to two aspects of policy and practice: how African states address mobility within the continent and generalised institutional openness. At one end of the spectrum is generalised openness vis-à-vis borders and politics. At the other is a combination of enhanced autocracy and border closure. The latter are supported by repressive and exclusionary institutions, border closures within Africa, restrictions in internal rural to urban movements, inequitable economic policy, illiberal trade and labour regimes. By contrast, openness results in promoting the safe movement of labour within Africa, stronger commitments to human rights (including migrant rights), and development investments intended to foster equitable development and inclusion. Among these are efforts to build communities' ability to address and absorb domestic and international migrants while fostering rural-urban and transnational linkages.

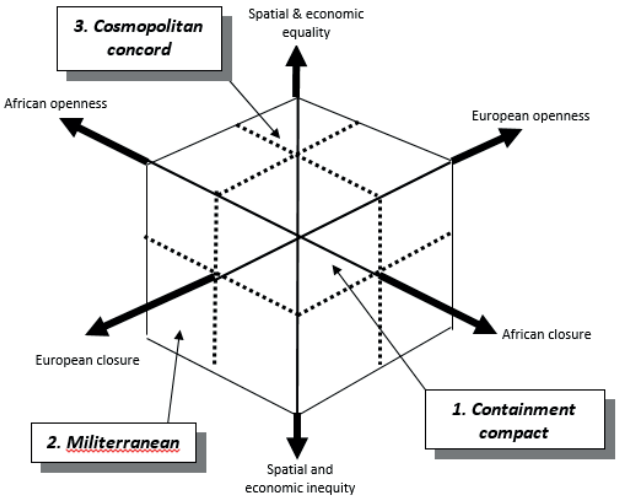
- **Economic equality** presents a spectrum formed by measuring not only economic equity across a population but also across space. At one end is a system in which people have relatively equal access to economic opportunity even if it requires moving within a country or across borders. At the other end of the spectrum is a situation in which a relatively narrow business or political elite (domestic and/or foreign) benefits from economic production and extraction. Moreover, opportunities are spatially concentrated in ways that exclude access to some based on their places of origin, ethnicity, or inability to traverse territory.

As Figure 12 indicates, when positioned together, these axes create eight potential outcomes. Each of these reflects an aggregation of possibilities that are more or less likely to coincide. For present purposes, we select three to discuss below. These are:

- *The Containment Compact:* European and African closure combined with existing or heightening socio-spatial inequality;
- *Militerranean;* European closure countered by African openness with moderate levels of inequality within Africa and significant (but lessened) inequality between Africa and Europe;
- *The Cosmopolitan Concord:* European and African openness with growing socio-spatial equality.

The first and last of these represent the extreme ends of all three spectra with the second reflecting a middle ground or hybrid scenario.

Figure 12: Eight African migration outcomes



Scenario One: Containment Compact

European Union and European-African bi-lateral efforts to stem mobility through coercion and development cooperation have been embraced and implemented across Africa. With enthusiastic compliance from authoritarian African politicians capitalising on military and financial aid, there has been an attempt at population lockdown and mass sedentarisation. Legal channels for movement to Europe are severely curtailed. Asylum claims made within European territory face almost immediate rejection based on a widely accepted 'first safe country' principle holding that people should seek sanctuary close to home. The only Africans able to legally enter and remain in Europe are those meeting high standards of skill, education, or wealth. Within Africa, states have made substantial investments in border controls and attempt to restrict internal movements to cities through a mix of surveillance, policing, and rural development/anti-urbanisation strategies that freezes a burgeoning and youthful population out of the areas with the greatest resources. Economic, political, and military elites capture development and military aid and direct it to areas occupied by their primary ethnic and political supporters (or where they can secure lucrative tenders or kickbacks). Possibilities for cross-border supply chains are greatly reduced and overall growth is supressed as countries undertake policies of neo-autarky. This intensifies class and spatial differentiation between groups in ways that further heighten tensions and create incentives for relocation.

These initiatives' long-term results include the widespread criminalisation of government institutions within Africa and the incarceration or punishment of those seeking to move within the continent. This would include, widespread corruption and a shifting logic of

operation from one dedicated to enforcing laws to one concerned with rent-seeking or supporting the work of organised crime.[30] Environmental change has made small-scale farming less viable, necessitating youth movement to economic centres. However, restrictions on mobility and strong anti-urbanisation programmes often locks people into impoverished areas with declining economic opportunities. Vocational training programmes further raise unmet expectations for earnings that drives frustration and resentment and domestic authorities who respond through increase suppression. Such tensions ultimately heighten the possibility for Rwanda- or Liberia-like conflicts resulting in mass displacement and economic setbacks. Populist African politicians foster anti-European sentiments, pointing to their treatment of Africans even as they accept European foreign aid. This turns popular sentiment further against Europe and European values. China and other external actors continue to collaborate with elites to provide the resources necessary to maintain power and potentially suppress population democratic demand making.

The smuggling and trafficking networks that have corrupted African officials now extend into Europe where they arrange entry and manage African labour within underground, deeply exploitative economies. Such economies provide critical labour and skills to certain European industries, but also undermine wages and working conditions for the native workforce. The limited supply of workers does little to add flexibility in the labour market and an inability of the remaining European industries to remain nimble and competitive. The rising cost of workers in the care profession – where regulation and licensing is enforced – places a severe strain on public and individual finances. The absence of young workers also limits new contributions to the tax base, straining the state's ability to maintain social support for the elderly or infirm.

Due to fear of institutional and social exclusion, Africans living in Europe create defensive enclaves where engagement with official institutions and host populations are minimised. These form the basis for socio-political radicalisation within Europe. This includes mobilisation among immigrants who, unable to participate in formal governance regime, opt for forms of self-regulation and governance informed by defensive or millenarian ideologies drawing on discursive resources fostered through the diaspora. In the face of an immigrant population seen as legally illegitimate, and economically and culturally threatening, native-born host populations respond with heightened xenophobic sentiments channelled through policing, vigilantism, and support for radically conservative political parties. The heightening costs of caring for aging generations further exacerbates frustrations. The result is greater urban discord and support for culturally resurgent and authoritarian parties across the European Union.

Scenario Two: Militerranean

Despite the need for low and semi-skilled labour across the Union, Europe remains fearful of large-scale African migration and maintains strong restrictions on entry. These are supported by an elaborate array of containment mechanisms extending across the Mediterranean and into parts of North Africa and the Middle East. However, the African Union and its member states now recognise that political stability and economic vibrancy are enhanced by the facilitation of intra-continental movements through visa free travel and the almost universal right to employment and residence. In the face of a youthful population entering the labour market, this reduces political pressure in poorer states while allowing better-positioned and -resourced countries to capitalise on the demographic dividend through flexible labour supply. The opportunities afforded to migrants result in remittances dedicated to social-reproduction in sending communities (villages, secondary cities, small towns). While this creates jobs for some outside of the cities, it ultimately generates a more prosperous and educated population that follows their relatives into cities. Economic opportunities are relatively democratised, yet production and global trade become centred on a relatively small number of regional trading hubs. The full benefits of such economic concentration remain limited by European efforts to keep Africans from moving freely outside of the continent. African political hostility to Europe encourages strengthened relationships with Turkey, Russia, China, and other emerging powers to secure investment capital and market access. Spatial inequality within the continent continues to drive both prosperity and ongoing mobility.

Africa's improved mobility and prosperity results in a better-educated, more ambitious, but widely underemployed workforce. While the elites continue to find their way to wealthy countries beyond Africa for university studies and employment, those with only secondary or vocational training are unable to capitalise on such opportunities. Wage differentials between Europe and Africa (European wages have climbed significantly due to labour shortfalls outpacing gains within African economies) provide incentives to move northward. Given the ease of movement across the continent, significant numbers of Africans pool in the countries bordering the Mediterranean: Morocco, Libya, and Algeria. Firmly committed to the African Union goal of building an integrated African economy and resentful of European interference, these countries allow entry and seek to absorb those interested in living or working

there. However, significant numbers of people continue to push for Mediterranean crossings. Unable to do so legally, they turn to the extensive smuggling rings that continue to operate around the Mediterranean basin, helping people to achieve illegal entry into Europe. While effective at bringing people to Europe, their illegality and irregularity means they are unable to supply the demand needed to supply European labour needs. This results in rigidity within the labour market and the ossification of European industry. However, the presence of undocumented African immigrants, often maintaining long-standing debts to the smugglers who facilitated their entry (i.e., indentured labour), help generate multiple underground economies within both North Africa and Europe. This results in social fragmentation, enclave living, police harassment, and enmity between native-born and immigrant populations. Enclave populations within Europe turn towards millenarian and anti-European political ideologies. The militarization of the Mediterranean through patrols, deportation, surveillance, and other interventions is enormously costly and harmful to Europe's global reputation and self-image as a region committed to rights and the rule of law.

Scenario Three: Cosmopolitan Concord

Recognising the benefits of more liberalised trade and migration regimes, both the African and European Union develop strategies to facilitate the widespread movement of people within Africa and between Africa and Europe. Managed through skill-matching and other mechanisms, Europe is able to present its native population with a sense of controlled and regulated movement in ways that productively and equitably meet European labour demand. Although some smuggling continues, the possibility to move safe and legally into Europe encourages Africans to use formal channels, greatly reducing the costs and risks of travel.

Within Africa, relatively free movement creates increased dynamism and a fluid population able to return home and stay engaged in sending communities. People's ability to move reduces political pressure on poorer states, fostering greater institutional stability. Although initially challenging to municipalities and host governments, officials ultimately develop coordinated mechanisms for responding to population mobility. These include new policy frameworks designed to ensure that poorer countries are able to fund social reproduction (education, health, and infrastructure) through the benefits of remittances and mobile social protection strategies. Such policies help overcome economic nationalism, creating more diversified, extended supply and production chains. The wealth generated through such mobility initially accelerates pressures to move towards Europe among those who are better educated and more entrepreneurial. As noted earlier, these movements largely occur through labour recruitment agencies and formal channels.

The transfers of skills and finances create extended supply chains across Africa and Europe that ultimately improve the economic competitiveness of both regions in ways that limit Chinese ability to capture African resources. Strengthened relationships and goodwill between the regions helps facilitate European access to Africa's land, labour, and natural resources. Africans living in Europe continue to concentrate in areas with long-standing immigrant populations, but are able to engage with host communities and institutions in ways not shaped by fear. They maintain some degree of cultural distinction, but repeated engagement results in a broader tolerance of multiple cultural practices bound by the rule of law and respect for public institutions. Although there continues to be anti-immigrant sentiments within Europe, the economic benefits of immigration and rising public engagement by people of immigrant backgrounds ultimately generates more cosmopolitan politics.

Concluding reflections

Given the drivers and dynamics outlined in the previous pages, migration policy questions need to be framed as managing a response rather than shaping aggregate flows. Continued development aid is potentially valuable on many fronts. *Ceteris paribus*, such assistance is unlikely to transform general migration patterns in a five to ten year period. Given the structural variables at work, transformations in general migration patterns will be seen over the span of decades. For those leaving due to political insecurity, deterrence is largely ineffective.[31] The more substantial question is whether receiving states and regional blocs will respond in ways that capitalise on migration's benefits or seek to repress it. In this regard, there are effectively two principles that can inform policy: containment or facilitation.

A containment approach – designed to reduce movements through strict border controls and restrictive legal frameworks – is unlikely to substantially shift overall numbers. Based on experiences in the United States, however, it will still have significant consequences. In the first instance, it will prevent circular or seasonal movement. By raising the costs of entry, it will encourage people to remain once they are within a jurisdiction. Moreover, rather than maintaining translocal households, they will find ways to bring close relatives and dependents to them. This not only results in higher pressure for immigration, but increased budgetary costs. Families under such circumstances are likely to join informal and

underground economies, robbing the public coffers of resources and creating varied forms of social marginalisation and fragmentation. These are not the only informal economies such movements will engender. People's inability to move (individually or collectively) within the law will provide opportunities for smugglers and traffickers. The slave markets in Libya are but an early sign of larger criminal networks likely to emerge should EU and AU states pursue a containment policy.[32] The premium placed on refugee status or other opportunities to move within the law will also generate considerable corruption within states of origin and destination.[33] Direct aid for enhanced border control and surveillance will also likely foster abuses at the hand of state agents and the kind of insecurity that all but necessitates movements.

An approach premised on accepting the inevitability and potential desirability of African mobility will have little effect on the numbers who move. However, creating multiple legal avenues will help to capture the benefits of migration by adding fluidity to labour markets and improving taxation, industrial regulation, budgeting, and planning. Perhaps most importantly, offering legal pathways to movement can greatly reduce the costs to economic and physical security by limiting the profitability of smuggling networks.[34] The greatest risk to such a strategy is political – namely that reactionary political forces will launch a backlash against politicians and migrants themselves. However, analysis suggests that hostility to immigration largely stems from a sense of uncontrolled influx. Presenting the populous with a reasonable, managed form of managed migration can help to assuage popular anxieties.[35] A well-framed case about providing the skills necessary to support host populations may also limit resistance.[36]

Responding effectively to African migration – in ways that are humane, developmental, and in both African and European interests – requires realism and a willingness to accept that history has bequeathed sets of institutions and incentives that cannot be quickly overcome. In moving forward, there is still much we need to know about the movements of people and the potential consequences of mobility for communities, states, and individuals across Europe and Africa. If nothing else, this paper calls for further disaggregation of future analyses and policies. There is no single African migration story. Each country, sub-region and region face their own combination of population, political, and economic dynamics. Responding effectively means rethinking fundamental presumptions about the possibility of redirection and containment, as well as links between development and mobility. Doing so requires a perspective informed by empirics, pragmatism, and political analysis as much as demographic projections. It also requires a recognition that human behaviour on a macro-scale is rarely shaped by a singular interest or set of political institutions. Interventions intending to do so may work with or against history but will certainly generate unexpected and potentially undesirable outcomes.

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