Migration and Demography in Africa: Interlinkages, Challenges and Opportunities

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1. Introduction

The image of Africa as a continent in constant move under the effects of poverty, violence, tensions, population growth, and environment degradation is a stereotype largely and universally diffused by international media, as well as by politicians and scholars. They represent Africa as a continent where high percentage of its population are planning to leave their countries towards Europe, Americas and Asia, without taking into consideration, neither the sub-regional and countries' variation, nor the weigh impact of the intra-continental migration.

Is there any reciprocal implications between international migration and demographic growth? In the beginning of the 21st Century second decade, P. Fargues has been deploring how demographers still exclude migration as a demographical subject, from demographical theory. By then, no demographer dared to tackle the study of the link between international migration and population growth. However, though international migration theory keeps silent about demography, and this latter ignores international migration, we will try to highlight the interlinkages between migration and some demographic aspects of African societies. Because demography studies population, and population growth takes place necessarily in a territory, by extension migration becomes, too, a demographic subject. From this conviction, we will draw attention to issues related to rural-urban migration, interstates mobility and extra-continental migration, as well as to the relation between demographic transition and international migration. We will also focus our attention on labor migration flows between African sub-regions and analyze, at the same time, local, national and regional demographic and socioeconomic challenges of migration. In this endeavor, we will also take into consideration age, gender and geographical variables, and provide quantitative data as well as qualitative insights. No less important for us would be the women and families left behind, and the policies and programs that may help to establish orderly processes of internal and external migration.

2. Trends in internal and international migration in Africa

Africans are amongst the most mobile people on earth. Several social scientists consider that for Africans, "being mobile' is not an exception, but rather 'a way of life' ... 'a certain culture of migration is engrained in the history, daily life, and experiences of the populations'" (Uberti et al., 2015: 79). A large percentage of them migrate within the continent, and particularly to neighboring countries. Most of them have followed the pattern of migrating from inland marginal countries and areas towards coast-bound countries and areas. This pattern does exist between countries (Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire), as well as within countries of Western Africa (north-south migration) or with Egypt (southnorth migration). Several researchers indicate that most African migrations do not take the direction of Europe, but primarily to other African countries, and to a lesser degree, to the Gulf countries and the Americas (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016: 2, 11). The statistical data proves the existence of a "clear relation between the level of socioeconomic development and the volume and the geographical orientation of African migration" (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016: 16). It means that the more a country is poor and marginal, the more it tends to have lower levels of extra-continental migration and higher levels of migration towards neighboring African countries or within their own country of residence. Migration transition theorists link this latter mobility to materiel poverty, and thus, to the lack of capabilities to move. On the contrary, the countries with higher levels of extra-continental migration are mainly those that are coastal, richer, more urbanized and advanced in demographic transition (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016: 17).

Even though intra-African migration has generally declined from 1960 to 2000, as an effect of the emergence of post-independence nation-states tending to assert their frontier and nationalism, further research shows some variation. It corroborates the fact that intra-continental migration intensities are the highest in inland West African countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as in some Southern or small African countries such as Lesotho and Eritrea. Western Africa is where the highest intra-continental migration is registered. It is due to certain factors : the existence of many smaller countries in population and land surface, the extension across national frontiers of the same ethnic groups, and the visa-free mobility within ECOWAS countries. However, it tends to be low in the closest countries to Europe (the Maghreb), and the most populous (Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa).

Extra-continental migration do prevail in countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, South Africa, and to some extent in Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda. It is probably due to conflict, to refugee resettlement resulting in the creation of long distance networks, and to colonial ties as in the case of Angola. West African countries with higher levels of economic development, as is the case of some coastal countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal), with the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, are beginning to experience an increasing extra-continental migration (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016: 9-10).

In 2019, the share of African international migrants relative to the total in the World is 10%, a percentage that is lesser than in Asia (31%), Europe (30%), Northern America (22%); but higher than Latin America and the Caribbean (4%), and Oceania (3%). By the same date, international migrants do not represent more than 2%, compared to 3.5% for the whole World. Is higher in Northern America (16%) and Europe (11%). In 2019, the percentage of international migrants, within Africa, reaches (30%) in Eastern Africa, (28%) in Western Africa, (17%) in Southern Africa, (14%) in Middle Africa, and (11%) in Northern Africa. However, this percentages change when we take into consideration the subregions' total population. Then we have Southern Africa (1.9%), Eastern Africa (1.8%), and Northern Africa (1.2%). Moreover, Demographers state that in 2019, 79% of all international migrants in Africa, which is very close to the share of international migrants in the World (48%). The median age of international migrants in Africa is significantly lower than that registered at the global level (respectively, 30.9 against 39) (AU/IOM, 2020: 16-18).

In fact, "Internal, intra-regional and international migration takes place within diverse political, socioethnic, and socioeconomic contexts". From one sub-region to another, migration forms do differ: labor migration takes place from Western and Central Africa to other continental areas, European countries or to the rich oil-countries of the Gulf; it also links Eastern Africa and countries of Southern Africa with South Africa. As to the refugee flows, they are mainly located in Eastern, and increasingly, Western Africa; and a sort of clandestine, seasonal and nomad migration seem to be widespread in West and East Africa (Oyebamiji & Asuelime, 2018, 219). Their population structure in terms of size, age, and gender is an emanation of essential demographic dynamics: fertility, mortality and migration to be specific. Migration represents an important component of household strategies across Africa. It does concern mainly young people and is increasingly female.

3. The challenge of labor migration

Inter-state migration takes the route of some economic poles in Africa such as South Africa, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Botswana, and Morocco. A strong impact does affect sending as well as receiving countries. By 2022, Africa has a population of 1.4 billion. It is the youngest in the World (In 2020, 60% of the population are under the age of 25). With a projected population of 2.3 billion by 2050, Africa would have the greatest reservoir of human capital in the upcoming decades. By 2040, Africa would surpass China and India in terms of available workforce.

In 2018, the African region comprises 7.9% of the global migrant workforce. In spite of the increasing number of migrant workers, they still represent a small share of the African workforce. In Sub-Saharan

Africa, the 11.9 million of its migrant workers do not represent more than 1.6% of its workforce. A roughly similar proportion applies to Northern Africa where 1.1 million of hosted migrant workers do not represent more than 1.6% of its workforce (AU/IOM, 2020: 157).

In countries such as Morocco and South Africa, the youth-to-adult unemployment ratio has significantly risen, to the extent that youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts. In many African countries, the satisfaction of youth job needs requires also crossing borders to other neighboring countries, and the "optimization" of regional labor markets, as well as the creation of sub-regional services to the benefit of the establishment and socioeconomic rights of the migrating youth (Sofie & Olsen, 2012: 4-5).

In most cases, statistics show that wherever population and labor forces grow rapidly in developing source countries, in contrast to their shrinking in developed host countries, migration does occur in more or less massive way. However, the opinions and the results reached by various researchers on this link remain contradictory: some of them confirm the hypothesis that population growth results in international migration, and others consider that economic conditions matter more than population growth and fertility, and express their doubt as to the strength of this causal relation (Salinari & De Santis, 2013, 61-62).

4. Migration and demographic transition

From the mid-sixties to the end of the Century, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced a shy demographic transition. This slowness is "due to factors such as child mortality, HIV/AIDS and general health, sanitation and immunization problems, as well as political instability and wars _ not to mention high net emigration" (Sofie & Olsen, 2012: 2-3).

Ideas related to procreation, generational family composition and women's status do have great impact when migrants do convey people from their community of origin. The transmitted values and practices, mainly by the constant use of the new means of communication and the periodic return to home country, contribute to an increased use of birth control, to the reduction of birth rates, and to the sending of "ideational remittances"). This kind of change applies especially in the case of some high birth African countries whose migrants have chosen to reside and live in Western Europe demographically identified as composed of low birth countries. It also applies because the communities of origin see usually the migrant as a successful person, and as a powerful model. This impact leads to identify migration also as a mechanism of demographic transition (Fargues, 2011: 595).

Comparison provides researchers with better understanding of the link between migration and demographic transition. This is exactly the Fargues's perspective who compared Morocco and Turkey on the one hand and Egypt on the other hand, taking into consideration the host geographical area of each country's migrants. It appears that because most Egyptian' workers do migrate mainly to the Gulf countries, where conservatism still prevails, either in family relationships or regarding women's status within the family and public sphere. All these conservative positions gets reinforced by the state's financial means that has no impediment to foster fertility increase which becomes higher than in migrants' source country. Thus, the transfer of remittances to Egypt, as well as the Gulf's model related to fertility values and practices, contributed, in the regions where non-migrants interact more with migrants, to slow fertility decline in comparison with other regions of the country of origin where it is getting more pronounced.

To the contrary, the case of Moroccan and Turkish migrants is different, in a sense that most of them migrate to Europe where fertility is particularly declining. A different demographical pattern gets transferred to Morocco and Turkey, affecting especially migrants-sending regions, and generating through contacts and interactions, the adoption by the non-migrants of new values and practices that favor a faster fertility decline and more rapid demographical transition (Fargues, 2011: 596-598; Mounford & Rapoport, 2014: 2).

5. Variations on rural to urban migration

In the real historical and socioeconomic process, the migrants who tend to cross the Mediterranean towards Southern Europe are mainly from Northern Africa and Western Africa. Researchers partially assume, depending on the specific conditions of each country, that when population increase, two reactions are possible: expansion of arable land, rural productivity improvement and urbanization, or emigration. It is estimated that population growth in Northern Africa and Western Africa begun around the 1920s through to 1950s. From 1950 to 1980, these "safety valves" work as alternatives to emigration in conditions of population growth. During this period, urbanization and rural development get higher, so emigration rates remained low. However, since the 1980s, the safety valves lose their weigh in the stabilization of the African population, resulting in massive migratory flows to Europe (Salinari & De Santis, 2013: 65, 76).

In Africa, the percentage of the urban population has increased from 15% in the 1960s to 43% in 2018. Furthermore, experts do expect that it is going to rise to 50% by 2030. A high percentage of the rural migrants do settle in informal and unplanned areas, all this combined with the paucity of infrastructures that may host and integrate the migrants in the city, and lack of employment skills in industry, urban services and manufacturing, as well as stable jobs. Most African migrant workers find occupations in low-skill sectors, such as seasonal agricultural jobs, construction, mining, and domestic work. They suffer from unjust wages and poor working conditions. However, demand for highly skilled jobs in sectors such as engineering, information technology, education, finance and management works as a driving force of international migration within Africa. The share of these highly qualified migrants accounts for 25.2% in South Africa, 16.1% in Zimbabwe, and 9.4% in Ghana. The higher rural migration flows do occur mainly towards intermediate and small cities in search of better income and livelihoods, security, housing, education for children, and health care. In most cases, it occurs from inland marginal areas to urban coastal areas. We also notice that many rural migrants do not settle permanently in the cities. The move to these urban areas represent for them, especially in Northern Africa, just a transit to another migratory move to Europe and Gulf countries. A circular and seasonal migration between rural areas and the cities allow for taking advantage of both, the urban opportunities and the lower cost of rural livelihoods. Remittances from urban jobs are also vital to rural life resilience and socioeconomic needs. In the medium term, this mobility may result in continuous socioeconomic linkages, alleviation of a sharp imbalance, and beneficial development outcomes for both areas.

Throughout time and space, economic development in Africa has been associated with massive ruralurban migration, and from agricultural activities to work in service and industrial sectors. Researchers assert that in Nigeria as much as in India the development gap between rural and urban areas seems enormous. However, the gains resulting from this type of internal migration involve many aspects of individual and family life. Researchers have confirmed this improvement, for instance, in the cases of Kenya and Tanzania (David Lagakos, 2020: 175-176; 181-182).

By the 1950s and through previous decades ago, rural to urban migration was male-dominated. It was so entrenched that the percentage of female migrants did not surpass 15% in Kenya at 2005, and 15% in Rwanda at 2002. However, in the last decade, gender differences among migrants have significantly declined. Currently, migrant women represent 30% of the total migrant workers in Africa. Very probably, numbers of other migrant women remain statistically invisible. This is due to "their engagement in informal, unpaid or underpaid work, including unpaid care or domestic labor". Much more female rural migrants have become to move to the cities. This is due to changes such as female's education, search for better job opportunities, family reunification, and also migration as a reaction against all sorts of discrimination and violence they suffer from within rural community and family. Once in the city, migrant women do suffer more than migrant' men from vulnerable working conditions (AU/IOM, 2020: 41-46, 157-158).

However, despite all regions of the World have experienced, since 1950, a continuous increase in its urban population, regional trajectories do differ. Regarding the acceleration speed of the urban population, we can note that its pace, between 1950 and 2015, was higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than in more developed regions between 1850 and 1915. While the percentage of the urban population, between 1950 and 2015, has increased, in the former Sub-region, from 11 to 39, it does not evolve beyond 34 for the more developed regions. As for North Africa, it appears that the speed of urbanization, after 1950, followed that of the more developed regions, and over the last decades, it has substantially fallen (UN, 2018). It remains that, at the continental level, Africa still has the highest rates of urban population growth, a fact due, in part, to its highest rates of overall population growth. The more probable prospect is that Africa, unlike other regions of the World, will continue, during a few upcoming decades, to experience the highest absolute increase in urban population growth (Tacoli et al., 2015: 5).

On the other hand, it seems that demographic transition and urban transition do overlap and interrelate within self-reinforcing processes. The decline of mortality and fertility coincides with the increase of urban population growth resulting largely from rural migration towards urban areas as well as from other economic, social and cultural conditions.

To what extent does migration contribute to this increase? If between 2000 and 2010, the World's urban population growth that could be ascribed to migration accounts for roughly less than half, in Sub-Saharan African region, migration accounts for approximately one third of the population growth, a region whose urban population growth rate is the highest in the World (4% a year). In Asia, the contribution of migration is significantly higher where the urban population reaches approximately 60% and will continue to grow in next years. Only the occurrence of an economic decline in Asia, or a higher economic growth in Africa could change this situation (Tacoli et al., 2015: 6-7).

6. Implications of families' and women' left behind

What happens in some African countries when husbands migrate and leave their wives at home? A study done in Lesotho shows negative impact on women who find themselves, after their husband departure, burdened with double responsibilities, inside and outside home, and even suffering from strain and stress in the management of activities and resources. In Morocco, it is noted that economic worse off could result during the first months, or even years of migration for the family left behind, until a better employment could be found. Moreover, as effect of men's labor migration, the family could face higher probability of divorce. More than two-thirds of Ethiopian migrants' wives sought off-farm labor, but the outcomes they got did not compensate the loss of the husband's agricultural productive activities. Due to the migrant's economic improvements, the percentage of Egyptian women living in nuclear families has increased from 32 before men's migration to 57 afterwards (Yabiku et al., 2010, 294-296).

In Nigeria, the returning female migrants, as successful persons in the eyes of the non-migrants, become objects of emulation for the young. Whereas for rural women, what they tell them about the city life incite them to think seriously about the eventuality of migration. Within Africa, most Nigerians migrate to Southern Africa. From there, they send remittances to their family back home that use them in different ways. The available data about remittances sent from outside or within Africa, as well as those offered by hand during visits, show variation as to on what they get spent. Classified according to their socioeconomic interest, migrants invest, first, in the purchase of land, second, in business, and third, in education, domains that promote physical and human capital, and may improve productivity. This kind of expenditures accelerate the enterprise development and impacts positively the Nigerian economy (Oyebamiji & Asuelime, 2018, 224-225).

In Mozambique, even a slight decrease in fertility resulting in women's care reduction contribute to increase their autonomy. Researchers observed that every woman whose husband had migrated does enjoy greater autonomy. Confirming other previous studies, they show that "men's labor migration

and women's autonomy are positively linked". At a mechanism levels, it appears that women who spent more years working, have greater level of autonomy. However, those who co-reside with inlaws, or were fertile on the measurement period, they have lower level of autonomy. Researchers have also proved that successful migration (defined by remittances sending or women's perception), or unsuccessful, both result in women's autonomy. However, it worth noting that, in many cases, autonomy goes with gender inequality. In situations of financial strain, it increases women's autonomy through the expansion of their responsibilities, as it increases household gender inequality by putting it in a position of dependence towards men's remittances (Yabiku et al., 2010, 302-304). In the migration field, there is a shift from women's approach to the analysis of gender power/social relations and the distribution of resources. (Boswell & Barbali, 2007: 142).

Two factors are changing the order between migration and family-start: the unchanging international migration age, and the delay of marriage and procreation. It is occurring in a sort that the sequence, "marriage-procreation-migration" has been gradually converted to another sequence, "migration-marriage-procreation" (Fargues, 2011: 602). This is the case of some Arab countries, particularly Morocco and Egypt. Increasingly, single migrants begun to replace the married, and some of them do contribute to increase the rate of intermarriage in the host country, while others return to the country of origin to look for a local marriage partner (Fargues, 2011: 603).

7. Policies for strengthening migration governance

As for the fields of intervention to implement policies and programs aimed to improving labor migration governance in Africa, the following priorities do emerge:

To intervene at the continental level in order to establish a better coordination and coherence between the actual policies, and strengthen capacities on labor migration governance. During the last decades, a number of highest official agreements relative to labor migration in Africa called for the allowing of free movement of persons, the right to residence, the development and the exchange of skilled human resources, the harmonization of policies related to employment, income, and social security. Agenda 2063, signed in 2015, linked the free movement of persons with the horizon of continental integration. It is worthy also to mention the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, adopted in March 2018 by the African Union Heads of States Extraordinary Summit. The free circulation of goods, services and capital would represent a strong push to labor migration. Furthermore, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) (updated in 2018), recommend the adoption of gender sensitive policies, structures and legislations. Trade Unions and continental employers' organizations are also concerned with workers' education, rights violations of the migrant workers and their families, and decent work requirements (AU/IOM, 2020: 161). However, in practice, rules relative to free mobility have been poorly implemented, and migrant workers faced restrictions imposed by member states. Further, mass deportations did occur in several African countries, especially in times of economic crisis (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016: 12).

_ To develop bilateral and regional cooperation regarding labor migration and social security in Africa and outside. Some regional organizations such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and East African Community (EAC) have made a substantial progress in the work on freedom of movement of migrant workers within the sub-region. Regional officials worked on rights protection, the simplification of visas' procedures and border crossing, as well as the boosting of employment and the enterprise creation. Developmental and migratory organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) display a quite similar effort in Southern Africa promoting labor mobility, regular migration, appropriate recruitment practices, and effective data gathering. Countries from different African sub-regions have included migration within their employment and labor market policies.

_ To ensure social protection for migrant workers is a challenge that many African organizations concerned by migrant mobility should address by identifying the barriers they face, particularly in the

informal economy, disseminating information about their rights to social security, and by revising the legal restrictions related to their status as migrants, their residence and employment duration. Bilateral and multilateral agreements may allow the achievement of vital steps in the field of social security.

_ To collect data on labor migration and improve its quality is a fundamental requirement for any strategic approach in this field. One of the main objectives is to gather data on gender and age "disaggregated on migrants' economic activity, employment, skills, education, working conditions, and social protection situations". The publication of the Labor Migration Statistics Report in 2017, to serve as a source of data for 34 member countries, represents a remarkable progress. Later on, the African Union confirmed this tendency by the establishment of the African Union Migration observatory in Rabat. The real issue is to reach statistical comparability and good data quality through household surveys and censuses, and subsequently, supplement them with administrative data sources (AU/IOM, 2020: 161-163).

Conclusion

The employment of migrant workers seems to be effectively beneficial to per capita growth, and to public finance through taxes payment and contribution to the social welfare systems. Their contribution to economic growth of the host country may be higher to their proportion in the total population (e.g., Côte d'Ivoire). The more migrant workers gain integration in the host society and labor market, with all the rights that prevent discrimination, racism and participation in jobs of quality, the more their contribution to the development, of both sending and receiving countries, would be positive and rewarding. The impact on migrant workers themselves would translate into more stability and constructive attitudes and behaviors.

Moreover, migration is a total social phenomenon whose challenges require an approach from multiple and crosscutting angles. It is not just a question of employment, but goes beyond to involve other sectors such as education, health, housing, social protection, gender equality, infrastructures, urban planning... It does concern, not only the central authorities, but also their regional and local representatives. We need to go beyond the study of the overall process of migration to focus on its forms, the factors and actions that lag behind, its relation with the wider socioeconomic contexts, the sociodemographic consequences resulting from intra-regional migration, and the mechanisms of integration in the host societies.

Most of African migrants continue to move within Africa, and still in higher numbers than those who choose extra-continental migration. However, in case of migration outside Africa, the social norms affect fertility through transfer from countries of destination to countries of origin. Fertility tends to diminish or to increase depending on the nature of the demographic model prevailing in the destination countries, in this case Morocco/Turkey and Egypt.

Rapid urbanization in Africa is partly due to high population growth rates and to rural-urban migration. Simultaneously, out-migration labor from agricultural areas generates national food shortages and rising prices of agricultural products. Both dynamics are leading to mass urban unemployment and to seasonal labor deficits in rural areas and underutilization of resources. In conditions of cute unemployment and underemployment, many African countries do face, nonetheless, labor and skills shortages.

Even though a new conceptual framework and strong regional and intra-regional dimensions have emerged with respect to migrant mobility and the development of the African labor market, the latter remains understudied. The data regarding the demographic dividend remains limited to country level. One of the main challenges still faced by social scientists in Africa, is the paucity on both quantitative and qualitative data on migration, as well as on timely information on population movements, at national and international levels.

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