# Migration Governance: Migration within and from Africa

Yumi Nakayama

Lecturer, African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

**Abstract**

A recent and significant increase of migrants from the Global South to the Global North has caused serious issues such as smuggling and brain drain; additionally, illegal immigrants are included in the movement of people. As the migration problem has become a global issue, multi-layered migration governance is resulting in the rapid emergence of inter-regionalism, regionalism, and bilateralism.

In Africa, regional efforts for facilitating the free movement of persons and improving border control have been progressing gradually in several decades. For instance, the Economic Community on West African States (ECOWAS) agreed on introducing common passports in 2000. These developments are the results of neoliberalism on the one hand and external pressure exerted – especially by Europe—on the other hand. Funds from the EU support technical assistance and capacity building of the ECOWAS Commission. Confronted with illegal migrants from Africa, the EU developed an inter-regional approach to contribute to the externalisation of migrant control beyond its regional framework. The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) since 2005 focuses on continuous dialogue and the conclusion of readmission agreements with non-EU countries.

Apparently, migration governance in Africa is strongly affected by European preferences. However, this essay argues that African countries are no longer merely rule takers and that they attempt to seek leverage from European countries both in inter-regional and bilateral approaches. Furthermore, it raises issues regarding governance of migration within and from Africa.

**Key Words**

migration, Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs), inter-regionalism

The number of international migrants reached 244 million in 2015; this figure is 1.6 times compared to that in 1990 (UN DESA 2015). Most of these migrants were born in the Global South. In 2015, 90.2 million of the south-south migration represented 37% of the total international migrant stock, whereas 85.3 million of the south-north migration was more than double the 40 million figure in 1990 (IOM 2015). In contrast, migrants born in the North represent 28% of the total migrants. Interestingly, 55.2 million move to the North and only 13.6 million move to the South.

These trends reveal that the increase in the number of migrants has been led mainly by migrants born in the Global South, causing serious global issues such smuggling and brain drain. Illegal immigration is an additional problem. However, according to the definition of regime as explicit or implicit 'principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area' —as Krasner (1983: 1) has mentioned—, Koslowski (2011) insisted that multi-layered migration governance has resulted in the rapid emergence of inter-regionalism, regionalism, and bilateralism instead of the international regime.

This article focuses on migration governance as it relates to the various problems derived from migrants born in Africa. The international flow of African migrants is an important political issue for African countries as well as European countries on the opposite side of the Mediterranean. Thus, migration governance for African migrants has developed within the interactions of Africa and Europe; moreover, their relationship has also changed. This paper is organised into four parts. Section 1 offers an overview of African migrants. Section 2 examines the dynamism of migration governance from European aspects. Section 3 reveals that Africa and Europe has changed from 'policy makers and takers' towards 'partners'. Section 4, in turn, focuses on Africa's elaboration for establishing migration governance. Finally, the article raises issues regarding governance for migration within and from Africa.

## 1. Overview of African Migrants

The population of African migrants reached about 30.6 million in 2010, more than double the population in 1980 (Ehrhart *et al.* 2014: 3). Because of the diversification in migrant destinations, the share of African migrants who stay in Africa has decreased gradually, about half of them still live in Africa in 2010 (Ehrhart *et al.* 2014: 9). In contrast, in 2015, the number of African migrants staying outside the African continent reached 1.79 million, more than doubling in 15 years (UN DESA 2015).

Europe has been the second most popular destination for African migrants. The emigration of highly skilled labourers from Africa to Europe began in the 1960s. Between 1960 and 1987, Africa lost 30% of its highly skilled labourers (Adepoju 2010: 13). It is considered that until the early 1980s, the emigration of highly skilled labourers was caused by governments of countries of origin, such as Uganda and Somalia, which oppressed the highly educated and intellectuals accused of opposing their governments. In contrast, economic stability in Africa at that time was attractive for highly skilled African labourers, so they tended to remain in their countries of origin. However, since the mid-1980s, the economic restructuring failure pushed such labourers towards international markets and better working conditions with higher salaries. As a result, Africa has suffered from serious brain drain problems. For instance, the doctor brain drain caused Sub-Saharan African countries that invest in training doctors to lose $2 billion in 2010 (Kelland 2011). In Sierra Leone, as the Ebola crisis has revealed, the country had only 136 doctors and 1,017 nurses in 2010. These figures equate to one doctor for approximately every 45,000 people. Surprisingly, 27 doctors and 103 nurses trained in Sierra Leone were employed in the UK at the same time (Borg *et al.* 2017: 143).

However, brain drain has partly been transformed to brain circulation. Because of economic decline in the Global North, highly skilled labourers have recognised that alternative destinations should be emerging economies in outside Africa, such as China and India, or inside Africa, such as South Africa and Botswana (Adepoju 2010: 16-17). Furthermore, governmental efforts are effective in reducing brain drain. The founding of the University of Djibouti in 2006 resulted in a reduction of students going abroad to study (UNESCO 2015: 519).

In contrast to severe problems triggered by brain drain, migration is an important survival mechanism in terms of remittances (Adepoju 2010: 14). At the community level, without basic welfare services, migrants' remittances supplement the pressing basic need for a better life with housing, education, and healthcare. At the national level, remittances could be a source of foreign exchange. Formal remittance inflows to the Sub-Saharan Africa region are projected to increase by 10% from about $34 billion in 2016 to $38 billion in 2017, led by Nigeria with its projected remittances of $22 billion. Remittances can also be a source of GDP growth. For instance, remittances are significant in Liberia as a share of the GDP by as much as 26% (World Bank 2017).

According to Adepoju (2010: 15), because the migrant-diaspora-return continuum and its linkages are strong in Africa, many African migrants do not intend to stay elsewhere indefinitely; their plans are to return home. Thus, they keep their families in their countries of origin. Although there remains a dispute about who constitutes the diaspora, the African diaspora has been expected to contribute to the development of countries of origin.

Despite the African experience of rapid economic growth, unemployment rates are currently high, and this situation is serious among youth. Therefore, many African youth have been encouraged to cross the Mediterranean over the past decade, causing tragic deaths and missing persons in huge numbers. Fortunately or unfortunately, Africa – with its continuous demographic boom – is the only continent with a working population that is expected to grow over the next decade (Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden/Development and Peace Foundation 2016). Therefore, a solution for unemployment is mandatory.

Without reliable data, trends regarding irregular migration are supposedly significantly underestimated. While irregular immigration from North Africa has persisted since the 1990s, Libya's foreign policy reforms has contributed to an influx of trans-Saharan migration to Libya and Europe. Libya has been intensifying its relations with Sub-Saharan countries especially since the 1992 - 2000 UN embargo (De Haas 2008: 15). In terms of migration, Libya started to welcome Sub-Saharan Africans to work in Libya under its renewed 'pan-African' policies. There are more Sub-Saharan Africans living in the Maghreb than in Europe. Though an estimated 65,000 and 120,000 Sub-Saharan Africans enter the Maghreb annually, only 20 to 38 % of them enter Europe (De Haas 2008: 31). In contrast, most West Africans entering Europe recently do so legally; they represent only a fraction of the total EU immigration of 2.6 million in 2004. The implication is that most migrants enter Europe legally and overstay their visas. It would be prudent for Europe to develop a measure of control over the influx of African migrants.

## 2. European Aspects: Towards Fortress Europe

European countries have accepted migrant workers from inside and outside of Europe to solve the labour shortage since the end of World War II. Accordingly, bilateralism has been the mainstream of migration governance to normalise the flow of migrants. As Betts (2011: 21-22) mentioned, the international politics associated with international migration is characterised by a fundamental power

asymmetry between sending states and receiving states. Generally, the former would be rule takers and the latter would be rule makers. Therefore, bilateralism usually reflects the preferences of receiving states. For instance, France concluded a bilateral agreement between Tunisia and Morocco.

However, the economic recession caused by the 1973 oil crisis resulted in the rejection of the new entry of migrant workers. Migrants from Africa flew into Southern Europe, from which migrants were formerly sent. Moreover, the labour demand derived from the accession of Spain to the European Community in 1986 and the recovery of the European economy in the 1990s encouraged an influx of legal and illegal migrants, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa.

As a result, after the 1990s, bilateral agreements between European states and African states shifted from recruiting migrant workers to dealing with illegal migrants. For instance, bilateral agreements between Spain and Morocco in 1992 and France and Senegal in 2005 included readmission and visa facilitation. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) between the EU and non-EU states, including northern African states, started in 1995, placing as one of its main priorities a reduction in migratory pressure on the EU. It required non-EU states to accept readmission of illegal migrants by conducting bilateral agreements individually.

At the regional level, while an intergovernmental agreement of 1985 aimed to establish a free movement of persons within the so-called 'Schengen area' (where internal border checks have been abolished), the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 and the Treaty on European Union required cooperation in addressing the migration problem from the fields of justice and home affairs as a so-called third pillar under intergovernmental methods. However, having experienced a large number of migrants and a refugee influx in the 1990s, the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 integrated the policies on migration, asylum, and the free movement of persons in the European Community section of the EU Treaty. Additionally, the European Council held in Tampere, which addressed the creation of an area of freedom, security, and justice, was a milestone for a common EU asylum and migration policy that included elements such as constructing a partnership with countries of origin and developing efficient management of migration flow. In the border management field, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX) was established in 2004, two years after the ad-hoc centres on border control had been established. Its first major operation at sea was Joint Operation Hera dealing with irregular immigration from West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean.

## 3. Relationship between African and Europe: From Policy Takers to Partners

Regarding the EMP, mentioned in section 2, Geddes insisted that whether a country would be able to join the EU or not created different incentive structures among non-EU states. In other words, candidate countries of the EU accession would give the EU more leverage, and countries without the prospect of joining the EU would strive for the opportunity to gain leverage and negotiate with the EU (Geddes 2012: 407).

Deadlock in terms of enforcement of the unilateral EU migration policy led the EU to seek dialogues and negotiations with African countries. Since 2005, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) has been a hybrid framework of the EU external migration and asylum policy characterised by both the bilateral and inter-regional approaches. Bilaterally, GAMM's aim is to establish mobility partnerships (MPs) or Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility (CAMMs). MPs include negotiations involving visa facilitation and readmission agreements, mainly vis-à-vis neighbouring countries. So far, MPs have been signed with Cape Verde in 2008, Morocco in 2013, and

Tunisia in 2014. CAMMs without negotiations involving visa facilitation and readmission agreements have been used for other third-world countries like Nigeria in 2015.

For developing the inter-regional approach, establishing a formal dialogue between Africa and the EU began in 2000. The first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo resulted in an agreement on the support of the EU for African countries in ensuring free intra-African mobility of labour and migration, collaboration in addressing the root causes of migration, and the reciprocal integration of migrants, migrant rights, readmission agreements between European and African countries, and efforts to combat racism and xenophobia. However, it took seven years for the second Africa-EU Summit to take place, in which they adopted the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership based on formal dialogues and the Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME). Although the fourth Africa-EU Summit adopted the EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility, which suggests a high level of interest in inter-continental migration, the MME would be insufficient without concrete outcomes contributing to the progress of migration governance for African migration problems.

Regional consultative processes (RCPs) are inter-regional dialogues with the following features: informal and non-binding, dealing with migration issues only, continuous, and not officially associated with formal regional institutions. RCPs, with their multilateral governmental networks, spread from the ministerial level to lower-levels of national regulators and are supposed to contribute to cooperation among states by encouraging information exchanges (Köhler 2011). Moreover, a 'projectised' approach enables RCPs with small secretariats and small budgets to be effective, since RCPs can authorise the hiring of staff for specific projects (Betts 2011: 34). RCPs are facilitated with the support and secretariat functions of international organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) between migration officials in countries of origin, transit, and destination has been encouraging dialogue among Africa, Europe, and the Middle East since 2003. The 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean, officially launched in Rome in 1990, provided an informal forum since 2002 to promote information exchanges, joint management of international borders, agreed forms of labour migration, migration for development, and protection of the rights of migrants among member states.

Although the RCP model does not ensure the efficient dialogue among states (Freyburg *et al.* 2015: 158), the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process) indicates that institutional procedures reflecting preferences of sending states are necessary. Since 2006, the Rabat Process has been bringing together European and African countries from North, West, and Central Africa, as well as the European Commission (EC) and the ECOWAS Commission; this proactive RCP has four pillars of strategic priority: organising mobility and legal migration, improving border management and combating irregular migration, strengthening the synergies between migration and development, and promoting international protection.

The rapid increase in the number of irregular migrants crossing the Straits of Gibraltar or reaching the Canary Islands poses a problem that is not exclusively the responsibility of Morocco and Spain. In this context, France, Morocco, Senegal, and Spain took the initiative to establish the Rabat Process. While Spain and France have viewed the fight against irregular migration as a priority, Morocco and Senegal have considered the development problem a priority to reduce migration flow. Senegal, regarded as a gatekeeper of western Africa, has suspended negotiations with the EU regarding an MP (Chou and Gilbert 2012). At the same time, it is conducting bilateral agreements with France, Spain, and Italy for the deportation of irregular migrants instead simplifying procedures legal migration of

experts and students from Senegal (Barolomeo *et al*. 2010). Morocco regarded migration problem as a 'geographical rent' (Natter 2014:18), searched approach to negotiate for their preference.

Consequently, the Rabat Process takes a balanced approach towards sending states and receiving states. The steering committee is the strategic governing body; it is composed of five African countries and five European countries: Belgium, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, France, Italy, Mali, Morocco, Portugal, Senegal, and Spain, as well as EC and ECOWAS. The ministerial conference, the forum for the highest level of dialogue within the Rabat Process, has been taking place in Africa and Europe alternately (*i.e.* Rabat, Paris, Dakar, and Rome). Thematic meetings dedicated to specific topics of migration have been co-hosted by both African and European states; thus, unilateral discussions led by either Africa or Europe are avoided. An example was the thematic meeting on return, readmission, and reintegration under the co-presidency of Belgium and Côte d'Ivoire in 2016. Nevertheless, return and readmission are issues in which receiving states prefer to use their power, with meetings allowing African states to claim the developing database for identification; revalidation of penal provisions for irregular migrants and assistance in reuniting migrants were inevitable for an anti-irregular migrant policy (Rabat Process 2016).

Other significant aspects of the Rabat Process are support projects crossing pillars. Such projects support capacity building programmes in terms of the objective for supporting information sharing and improved coordination between partner countries. For instance, support projects develop tools sharing as a good practice (*e.g.* Guides on the Use of Migration Data in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mali). Moreover, the Rabat Process launched a flagship initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in Africa in 2016.

The significance of the Rabat Process to other RCPs is the Rabat Process that facilitates cooperation among sending states and transit states in Africa. As migrants' routes became more diversified, evolving into a complex phenomenon, transit countries such as Morocco and Senegal spent money for the deportation of migrants from Sub-Saharan African states and strengthened border control, recognising the need to link countries of origin, transit, and destinations affected by the migration routes linking Central, West, and North Africa with Europe.

Thus, the Rabat Process, representing the practical RCP model for countries of origin, transit, and destinations, provided the EU with an alternative approach beyond the dialogue between African countries. The EU-Horn of the Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process) was established in 2014 as a continuous dialogue to address human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants through regional collaboration between countries of origin, transit, and destinations on the route between the Horn of Africa and the EU.

In addition, from the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process, a formal dialogue between Africa and Europe known as the Valletta Summit on Migration, brought together European and African heads of state and governments in 2015. In response to the summit, the European Commission has launched an 'Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa', with €1.8 billion from the EU budget and the European Development Fund.

## 4. African Approach: Progress and Stagnation

Various approaches for facilitating regional economic integration in Africa have been strongly influenced by Balassa's theory that regional economic integration develops in five stages: free trade, customs union, common market, economic union, and political union (Balassa 1961). Therefore, African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS, the East African Community

(EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) attempt to establish regional free movement of labour between member states.

At the continent level, the Abuja Treaty, which planned to establish the African Economic Community by 2028, requires African Union (AU) member states to adopt necessary measures in order to achieve the free movement of persons and ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence and establishment by their nationals within the Community.

In 2006, the AU provided guidelines for member states and RECs in Africa to formulate national and regional migration policies through the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), which includes respect and protection for the rights of labour migrants. In the same year, the African Common Position on Migration and Development (ACPMD) recommended that migration and development issues should be addressed at national, continental, and international levels. It is emphasised that MPFA and ACPMD are not intended to be legally binding, nor do they impose any obligations on member states.

Though various policy instruments exist that affect and facilitate migration adopted by the AU, the 2004 AU Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation and the Declaration on Migration of 2015 have not attained sufficient results so far.

Under the provision, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the EAC and SADC agreed in 2012 to harmonise their programmes for trading arrangements, the free movement of people, joint implementation of inter-regional infrastructure, and institutional arrangements for cooperation. Therefore, the free trade area was launched in 2015. As a next step, cross-border migration and labour policies should be concluded by 2017; however, the facilitation of frequent labour migration within this area is underdeveloped presently.

In contrast, ECOWAS, with the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment as a legislative basis, is a pioneering REC for developing regional free movement. Although the establishment of free movement in the ECOWAS was planned for implementation in three phases within 15 years, progress on the second and third phases was stagnant because of the decline in economic performance in the 1980s and regional instability caused by wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone throughout the 1990s. Since the 2000s, the ECOWAS Travel Certificate, ECOWAS common passport, and various national identity cards have enabled ECOWAS citizens to travel freely within the region. In 2009, the ECOWAS Regional Labour and Employment Policy and Plan of Action was adopted. Since its implementation remains limited, the International Labour Organization has supported the effective implementation through a project funded by the EU under the 10th European Development Fund since 2013.

Namely, the elaboration of RECs in Africa are the results of neoliberalism on the one hand and external pressure – exerted especially by Europe – on the other hand. Activities of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) since 2000, an RCP designed to encourage ECOWAS Member States to discuss common migration issues and concerns in a regional context, have been strongly supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Thus, support includes technical assistance for the MIDWA Secretariat.

**Conclusion**

It appears that governance for African migration is undergoing a dynamic transformation and is strongly affected by European preferences, who need a comprehensive migration governance framework to deal with irregular migrants' problems.

However, the author of this essay argues that within the RCP model, represented by the Rabat Process, African countries are no longer merely rule takers, and they seek leverage from European countries. In addition, efforts to develop African migration governance are remarkable among African RCPs, which require both technical and financial support from outside Africa. The implication is that African ownership faces an enormous dilemma of intervention by European countries.

It is anticipated that more than half of the expected growth in the global population by 2050 will occur in Africa, with transformation of global governance for unemployment and migration in Africa deserving attention.

**Reference**

Adepoju, A. 2010. 'Introduction: Rethinking the Dynamics of Migration within, from and to Africa'. In *International Migration within, to and from Africa in a Globalised World*. Ed. A. Adepoju, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, pp. 9–45.

African Union 1991. 'Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC)'. TRT/AEC/001

Balassa, B. 1961. 'Towards a Theory of Economic Integration'. *Kyklos* 14(1): 1–17.

Barolomeo, A.D., T. Fakhoury, and D. Perrin 2010. 'CARIM Migration Profile: Senegal', Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration. <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/22444 / accessed on March 2017>.

Betts, A. 2011. 'The Global Governance of Migration and the Role of Trans-regionalism'. In *Multilayered Migration Governance: The Promise of Partnership.* Eds. R. Kunz, S. Lavenex, and M. Panizzon, London: Routledge, pp. 32–42.

Borg, B. and C. Regan 2017. 'From the Poor to the Rich'. In *80-20: Development in an Unequal World,* 7th edition. Eds. B. Borg, M.R. Costello, T. Daly, C. Regan, and C. Regan, Oxford: New Internationalist, pp. 128–147.

Chou, M-H. and M. Gibert 2012. 'The EU-Senegal mobility partnership: from launch to suspension and negotiation failure'. *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 8(4): 408–427.

De Haas, H. 2008. *Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An Overview of Recent Trends*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

Ehrhart, H., M.L. Goff, E. Rocher, and R.J. Singh 2014. 'Does Migration Foster Exports? Evidence from Africa'. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 6739: 1–28.

Freyburg, T., S. Lavenex, F. Schimmelfennig, T. Skripka, and A. Wetzel 2015. *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighborhood.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Geddes, A. 2012. 'Migration and 'Fortress Europe''. In *The EU and Africa: From Eurafrique to Afro-Europa*. Eds. A. Adebajo and K. Whiteman, London: Hurst, pp. 405–418.

IOM 2015. *The Global Migration Trends Factsheet 2015*. < http://gmdac.iom.int/ global-migration-trends-factsheet / accessed on 20 October 2017 >.

Kelland, K. 2011. 'Doctor Brain Drain Costs Africa $2 billion'. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-african-doctors-migration/doctor-brain-drain-costs-africa-2-billion-idUSTRE7AO00O20111125 / accessed on 20 October 2017>.

Köhler, J. 2011. 'What Government Networks Do in the Field of Migration: An Analysis of Selected Regional Consultative Processes'. In *Multilayered Migration Governance: the Promise of*

*Partnership*. Eds. R. Kunz, S. Lavenex, and M. Panizzon, London: Routledge, pp. 67–94.

Koslowski, R. 2011. 'Global Mobility Regimes: A Conceptual Framework'. In *Global Mobility Regimes*. Eds. R. Koslowski, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–28.

Krasner, S.D. 1983. 'Structual causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables'. In *International Regimes*. Ed. S.D. Krasner, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp.1–22.

Natter, K. 2014. 'The Formation of Morocco's Policy towards Irregular Migration (2000-2007): Political Rationale and Policy Processes'. *International Migration* 52(5): 15–28.

Rabat Process 2016. 'Réunion Thématique sur Le retour, la Réadmission et la Reintegration'. Bruxelles, Belgique, 31 May–1 June 2016.

Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden/Development and Peace Foundation 2016. *Regional Migration Governance in the African Continent. Current State of Affairs and the Way Forward*. <http://www.sef-bonn.org/fileadmin/Die_SEF/Publikationen/SB/sb_studie-2016_en.pdf>.

UNESCO 2015. *UNESCO Science Report: towards 2030*. < https://en.unesco.org/unesco_science_report >.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) 2015 'Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision', *United Nations database*, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015.

World Bank 2017. 'Remittances to Recover' Modestly After Two Years of Decline'. Press Release 2018/033/JOBS. < http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/03/remittances-to-recover-modestly-after-two-years-of-decline / accessed on 20 October 2017>.