

Externalization and Securitization as Policy Responses to African Migration to the European Union

Victor H Mlambo

University of Zululand

Email: halavico@yahoo.com

This paper examines how African migration to the European Union (EU) has become externalized and securitized and the implications this has for migration management for both the EU and Africa. To accomplish this, the paper employed a qualitative research approach which reviewed current literature on the topic under study. It found that the externalization and securitization of African migration to the EU have failed to prioritize and address the different socio-economic and political conditions that are driving irregular migration. Additionally, externalization and securitization as policy responses do not stop irregular African migration; rather, they prolong the misery of migrants who are at the mercy of smugglers who prey on their desperation. The paper concludes that migration management between the EU and Africa needs to be anchored on policies that address the core 'push' factors driving irregular migration from Africa, rather than policies which do not stop migration (even though they have slowed it down) but rather indirectly empower smugglers and leave considerable room for the abuse of migrants.

Keywords: Africa, development, management, migrants

INTRODUCTION

There have been growing debates not only on African irregular migration to the European Union (EU) as a phenomenon but also on how it could be reduced. Since the 1970s, more than 2.5 million migrants have crossed the Mediterranean Sea to enter Europe without visas (IOM, 2018). However, the attacks in March 2004 in Madrid and on 7 July 2005 in London became a defining moment as to how the EU responded to migration. Even though the number of Africans arriving irregularly at EU shores has been on the decline, this has not coincided with the decline in anti-immigrant attitudes in some EU states. For Ivanova (2016), the Visegrád Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) has at times, incorporating the concept of state sovereignty, vehemently disagreed with the European Commission's directive how migration ought to be handled collectively. The EU does not operate in a vacuum, and thus the European Commission has to take into consideration the interests of member states. Despite a decline in those arriving (over a million in 2015 and 140 000 by June 2019) (Mbiyozo, 2019), EU member states have been torn apart by bitter disagreements over how to collectively manage irregular migration without infringing on the territorial sovereignty of member states while also adhering to international human rights practices (Farrell, 2015).

The EU (through the European Commission) has attempted to pressure Africa (majority sending countries of migrants) to cooperate on migration management. For example, the EU introduced a new visa code which will continue to regulate the short-stay entry of third-country nationals. The new visa code introduced restrictive processes for countries that fail to cooperate on readmissions. However, the African Union (AU) and most African states say that returns must be voluntary and people cannot be forced to go to countries against their will (Mbiyozo, 2019). The above reflects that the current migration and refugee crisis in Europe requires an understanding of the different drivers of migration and how they can be addressed collectively. It is not a question of opening or closing borders, but rather, there is a need to understand the complex and overlapping relationship between forced and economic drivers of migration to Europe as this can better shape an appropriate policy response to the phenomenon.

This paper discusses the extent to which EU initiatives (securitization and externalization) have been successful in reducing this irregular flow which has been deemed an influx by EU media. The common narrative has been that socio-economic and political factors are drivers of irregular migration; however, such narratives have missed the point by not focusing on the often-ignored factors driving migration. This paper is based on a review of the literature on irregular African migration to the EU. The paper aims to provide a sound basis for a more evidence-based discussion of this highly debated and politicized issue, i.e., what drives African migration to the EU, how has the EU responded and how effective have these responses been. Irregular African migration to the EU as a process flows into Europe along land and sea routes under the control of human smugglers, and migrants in the process face further

marginalization and exploitation. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: after this introduction, the paper reviews EU migration management policies such as the EU charter, the EU trust fund and the new pact relating to migration. Subsequently, it discusses securitization and externalization as policy reactions to irregular African migration, their effectiveness, shortcomings and finally, how the African Union needs to play a more important role in the quest to reduce irregular migration to the EU. This is followed by the policy implications and conclusion of the paper.

Many African migrants who try to reach Europe (using the North African route which cuts through Libya) by boat are often intercepted by the Libyan coast guard and handed over to criminal gangs that traffic them. Nearly 20,000 people have been detained in Libya according to Amnesty International. Therefore, it becomes imperative for this paper to examine whether EU policies with regards to migration management have contributed to the abuse and deaths of migrants.

EU CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is a legally binding treaty for member states which outlines fundamental rights for everyone within the borders of the EU, regardless of their migration status. However, the EU does not exist in a vacuum or operate detachedly from the member states or the people. The European Commission is a politically independent institution that proposes legislation, policies and programs of action. It represents the collective interests of member states (Laine, 2020). It is also responsible for implementing the decisions of the European Parliament, the voice of the people, and the Council (of Ministers), the voice of the member states. There is also the European Council, comprising of the heads of state or government of all the EU member states. It is the highest-level policy-making body in the EU, which defines the overall political direction and priorities of the Union, but it does not exercise any legislative functions. While it is the European Commission that initiates procedures and proposes new laws, it is the European Parliament and Council that adopt them. Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by EU citizens to represent their interests and the Council consists of government ministers, i.e., elected officials, from all the EU member states (Laine, 2020). However, the issues of irregular migration have divided opinion in the EU, with disagreements blocking agreements on reforms of EU asylum laws and fair distribution of responsibility for processing migrants and asylum seekers entering and already present in EU territory. The focus remains on keeping migrants and asylum seekers away from the EU, including through problematic proposals for offshore processing and migration cooperation with non-EU countries with fewer resources, human rights abuses and less capacity to process asylum claims. While European attempts to 'secure' or 'protect' its borders have reduced irregular migration from Africa, considerable efforts are needed to address the factors facilitating irregular African migration. These revolve around understanding the drivers of migration, enacting policy (jointly by EU and Africa) to address these drivers. Apart from policy development concerning

addressing the drivers of migration, from an African perspective, good governance and economic development are key necessities in the continent's drive to reduce irregular migration.

Framing migration as a problem in the EU was a result of the upsurge in anti-migrant and right-wing political parties, and thus migration was observed as a border security issue that needed to be addressed (Laine, 2020). Seeking to debunk the common misconceptions about migration and suggest an alternative narrative that is based on mutual interests, this paper observes that from the onset, the EU and the AU acknowledged that cooperation is greatly needed to address the problem. However, contentions have arisen about how this cooperation ought to take place. For the EU, securitization and externalization initiatives have received their share of criticisms, for either not doing enough to help those in need or doing too much in trying to protect its borders.

THE EU TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF for Africa) was established as a mechanism to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management in Africa (Castillejo, 2016). The EU Trust Fund was born out of the implementation of the Action Plan adopted at the Valletta Summit. The EU committed 1.8 billion euros from the EU budget and the European Development Fund (EDF), to be complemented by contributions from the EU member states and other donors (Hunt, 2015). For the EU, irregular migration from African and the Middle East, coupled with the rise in right-wing populism, warranted an intervention to stem the inflow of migrants. The EU Trust Fund was anchored on soliciting cooperation from third parties through financial support. Programs under the EU Trust Fund are spread across three regions in Africa (involving twenty-six partner countries) mainly the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa and North Africa (Cangas and Knoll, 2016). The EU Trust Fund undertakes a number of activities related to strengthening the rule of law, creating economic and educational opportunities, building better governance, and ensuring the effective and sustainable return, readmission and reintegration of irregular migrants not qualifying for protection. The support of the EU Trust Fund in Africa requires a firm commitment to supporting capacity-building of third countries in the field of migration and border management, as well as to the stabilization and development of these regions of Africa. The EU with its financial support solicits cooperation from African states who are most fragile and those most affected by migration. Cangas and Knoll (2016) explain that the EU Trust Fund is anchored on four types of interventions. Firstly, economic programs, which are focused on creating employment and also to integrate returnees. Secondly, resilience projects, which are meant to improve food security and provide services for local communities and refugees. Thirdly, migration management, which is geared towards fighting irregular migration and smuggling, focusing on return, readmission, international protection and legal mi-

gration. Fourthly, governance and security, which is premised on the need for good governance, through strengthening the rule of law, security and development, border management and conflict-prevention systems. However, pouring billions of euros into countries which are characterized by political instability, human rights abuses and disregard for civil liberties, raises questions about the EU's commitment to the respect and support for international human rights. Therefore, this means that the lack of clarity over funding could mean that EU aid money is repackaged as border security with no development goals. Moreover, tackling 'the root causes of irregular migration' is a lengthy, non-linear, unpredictable process, depending on many more contextual factors than support from financial and technical development partners. However, the narrative around the EU Trust Fund for Africa suggests that aid can buy partner countries' cooperation (in readmission and strict border management), and hence curb migration flows to the EU (Cangas and Knoll 2016). While the EU Trust Fund envisions a cooperative framework with regards to migration management, the EU however, with its financial muscle, has the upper hand with regards to policy development and soliciting cooperation through financial means.

THE EU MIGRATION PACT

On 23 September 2020, the European Commission announced its New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which is underpinned by strengthening border security (Kirisci et al., 2020). The new pact (European Commission, 2020) consists of three layers. Firstly, the pact advocates for the development of policies to keep people in their countries. However, such policies ignore the positive benefits of migration, in both Europe and countries of origin. In addition, the investments in addressing the 'root causes' of migration within these partnership agreements have, to date, done little to prevent onward movement (Kirisci et al., 2020). From an African perspective, Abebe and Mbiyozo (2020) explain that the increased emphasis in the New Pact on migrant returns is contrary to Africa's position and could affect negotiations around the Post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement (ACP) and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Even though the number of those arriving in the EU from Africa has decreased, the EU has turned its attention to returning migrants who do not have legal rights to remain. Thirteen of the 16 priority countries under the European Commission's 2016 New Partnership Framework are in Africa (Abebe and Mbiyozo, 2020). The new pact aims to increase returns through strengthening border control, signing returns agreements with third countries and allowing EU member states to choose between resettling refugees and sponsoring returns. However, African states have resisted intensified returns policies, maintaining that returns must be voluntary. The second layer of the new pact involves the investment in increased border security and deterrence. From an African perspective, incorporating the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, processes such as the Africa-EU Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME) Partnership, the Rabat Process, The Rome Declaration and Programme for 2015-2017, The Khartoum Process, and the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020

are all processes that are geared towards strengthening border security (European Commission, 2015). The third layer of the pact proposes rules to resolve the long-standing challenge within the EU to achieve a more balanced distribution of responsibilities and promote solidarity among EU members in dealing with asylum seekers and refugees. This has however, been met with considerable rebellion from within the EU (Abebe and Mbiyozo, 2020).

Critics of the pact argue that it is so inward-oriented that it fails to recognize the policy implications of the dire state of forced migration globally. Secondly, the pact makes little allowance for how the COVID-19 pandemic is going to impact the EU's migration and asylum policies, since the pandemic has profoundly affected the capacity of host countries to manage the presence of refugees and ensure their protection (Kirisci et al., 2020). From an African perspective, the call by the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum for revamping partnerships with third countries is reminiscent of the EU's long-standing policy of externalizing the cost and responsibility of managing its external borders. Critiquing this approach, Abebe and Mbiyozo (2020) contend that cooperating with third countries with regards to migration by tying policy issues such as development assistance, trade concessions, security, education, and visa facilitation has long been criticized as asymmetrical. The pact takes this relationship to a new coercive level by suggesting the possibility of "apply[ing] restrictive visa measures" to third countries unwilling to be cooperative (European Commission, 2020).

SECURITIZATION AND EXTERNALIZATION OF AFRICAN MIGRATION

Migration control is typically seen as a natural part of legitimate nation-states' exercise of sovereign power. External border surveillance is, according to the European Commission, a necessity because of the relaxed internal borders within the Schengen region (Palm, 2020: 10-14). Contrary to EU media reporting, labeling the arrival of African migrants as an invasion, such reports fail to take into consideration that most African migrants move within the continent – they are not overwhelming Europe or the rest of the world. African migration to the EU is complex and characterized by complex factors which present numerous dangers to migrants. A study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019) explains that irregular migrants who made the fraught journey from Africa to Europe would do so again despite knowing the dangers of the trip. The report further reveals that getting a job was not the only motivation to move, not all irregular migrants were 'poor' in Africa, nor had lower education levels. Additionally, 58 per cent were either employed or in school at the time of their departure, with the majority of those working earning competitive wages. Even though the UNDP study shows that economic need was not the main driver of migration, other studies (Dinbabo and Nyasulu, 2015; Marie-Laurence, 2016; Mlambo, 2017; Giménez-Gómez et al., 2019) argue that key to migration is the need to maximize economic opportunities that do not exist in countries of origin. Nevertheless, this paper argues that tackling irregular migration requires a consider-

able understanding of the other drivers of migration (political factors, family ties, socio-cultural determinations, etc.) beyond economic consideration.

Irregular immigration from sub-Saharan Africa has created considerable tensions between the EU, North African countries and sub-Saharan states. From general observation, North African governments seem to have undoubtedly bowed to EU pressure and were swift in adopting dominant European public discourses on 'combating illegal migration' (Dagot, 2020). However, some North African states openly opposed several elements of these policies, partly because they were seen as reinforcing their position as transit countries, e.g., being reluctant to readmit large numbers of irregular migrants from third (sub-Saharan) countries and establishing offshore 'processing centers' for immigrants and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the paper considers what informs these securitization and externalization initiatives. The question may seem inconsequential, but the migration to Europe has not always been a problem. In fact, in the 1950s and 1960s, migration was seen mainly as an extra workforce in most western European countries. However, today, migrants are viewed as the 'other' and incompatible with EU culture. Sensationalist media reporting gave rise to right-wing populism and sadly, political campaigning in the EU on anti-immigrant slogans have succeeded in sowing more discord across the continent, with many centrist and liberal politicians having difficulty formulating a response (Hameleers et al, 2017). The rise and popularity of the far-right in the EU and ways in which they use the securitization of migration and the alleged threat migrants pose to 'their' state, economic and ontological security and identity, as a conduit to justify and legitimize their anti-immigration, racist and xenophobic rhetoric and praxis are not based on current migration patterns from Africa to the EU (Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015). Reinforcing the notion that Africa-EU migration is misunderstood, Jobson (2017) reasons that Europe's panic over migration alienated many of its African partners, this driven by media-fueled perceptions of European countries being 'swarmed' by Africans, arouse deep-rooted insecurity about national identity, mistrust of the 'other', racism, and xenophobic attacks, thus giving way to securitization and externalization of African migration.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the externalization and securitization policies are not a new phenomenon; rather they are a response to the increasing rates of migration worldwide which have evoked nationalist politics. Examples have been observed in the USA/Mexico border area, with regards to irregular migration. They have also been observed in the EU's cooperation with the Middle East, failing to stem the outflow of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. In Africa, West and North Africa have been central to the EU's securitization and externalization policies and these policies have become entrenched, largely due to the financial support that comes with them. Border agencies and police officers in cooperating countries (Libya, Mali, Niger, and Chad) have received training in border operation and migration management and hence this has allowed for the consolidation of securitization and externalization policies. Although the EU and many of its member states, have

committed themselves to protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, such commitment has been overshadowed by the EU's prioritization of restrictions rather than addressing the drivers of migration. Populism reinforced the securitization and externalization as key to curbing migration and even though these approaches have reduced irregular African migration to the EU, they have also contradicted the EU's commitment to protecting refugees and asylum seekers (Laine 2018: 290).

This contradiction has been driven by the ever-changing public and political opinions with regards to migrants in the EU. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door policy, which allowed approximately a million refugees and migrants, faced backlash and forced the German government to backtrack on the policy. This suggests that irregular migration has been seen as being negative within the EU, which has caused a lot of anxieties. Sadly, these anxieties have become intertwined with deep insecurities, triggered by originally unrelated societal changes, such as the precarization of the labor market and dissolving social security (Laine 2018: 292). Consequently, Laine (2018) argues that the debate and public opinions concerning immigration have not been discussed in isolation; rather they have been in tandem with the above issues. Walls, whether on paper or on the ground, may seem effective, but seldom are. Once a wall is erected, people will soon try to cross it and this creates a fencing self-referential – a vicious cycle – which feeds itself, and sadly, enforcement pressures on third countries can increase the difficulty of crossing borders for asylum seekers and refugees as well as the ability to seek or access procedures for determining refugee status (Laine, 2018).

Arguably, the rise of populism has fed into the nationalistic ambitions of right-wing parties. To an extent, this has side-lined the EU's commitment to freedom, democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. This is evident in the humanitarian and moral appeals that have been consumed by debates and outright fear-mongering about economic security and national identity (Kupe, 2019). Moreover, nations that have been at the forefront of developing rights-sensitive standards and procedures for assisting and processing asylum seekers within their jurisdictions, have suddenly created barriers that prevent asylum seekers from setting foot on their territories (Palm, 2020: 12). As a result, migrants have effectively been prevented from even attempting to undertake the journey to the EU, let alone reaching EU shores, seemingly freeing the EU member states from the human rights obligations that they have accepted.

The media reporting on the inflow of irregular African migrants has been overstated, partly because populists, anti-migrant parties and the EU media have been able to frame African migration as a threat to the values and traditions of the EU, discounting the fact that most African migrants migrate continentally. This paper therefore argues that the media can also provoke controversy, for strategic editorial and economic reasons, even without any particular social need for it. Controversy which generally forces political parties and those in charge to take a stance on certain issues, notably immigration and the threat of invasion by the 'other' in

Europe, has imposed itself into the media and political sphere. Laine (2020), Palm (2020), Moreno-Lax (2018), and McAuliffe and Ruhs (2018) observe that there is a strong causal connection between the EU's exercise of power and the many lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea. Firstly, the EU closed legal avenues of entry, which compelled migrants to undertake risky irregular journeys and rely on human traffickers and smugglers to relocate. Secondly, extreme measures were undertaken to block the remaining irregular exit paths and detain those who did not utilize heavily surveilled borders. As a result, both casualties at sea and atrocities in detention camps were foreseeable harms that, with proper measures, could have been avoided.

While the EU is within its sovereign right to protect itself from what it deems security-related threats, which are driven by Africa's failure to reduce irregular migration, it is also duty-bound to protect migrants. Palm (2020: 9-18, citing Altman and Wellman, 2011) asserts that sovereign states have, according to them, foremost obligations towards themselves and their citizens and immigration control as a matter of self-determination, and while the deaths and abuse of migrants in detention centers are condemnable, Africa has left the EU no choice but to unilaterally prioritize the protection of its integrity. This paper however, refutes such assertions and contends that while protecting one's integrity is important, securitization and externalization are not the right way to go about it, as they do not stop migration, and, in many cases, they have a reverse effect.

De Haas (2008) observes that there are two problems associated with securitization and externalization. Firstly, increasing border controls has led to a diversification of trans-Saharan migration routes and trans-Mediterranean crossing points and in turn, has led to an unintended increase in the area that EU countries have to monitor to 'combat' irregular migration. Secondly, increasing surveillance has led to the professionalization of smuggling methods. Smugglers now use larger and faster custom-made boats and zodiacs. Additionally, the huge length of land and maritime borders, coupled with the widespread corruption among border guards and other officials, make it virtually impossible to prevent people from crossing. As more and more restrictions are introduced, this benefits smugglers because it increases the need (and the cost) for their services. Every time a fence goes up, access to the European dream gets a little more expensive (Abebe, 2019). Securitization and externalization have failed to take into cognizance the plethora of drivers of migration and do not address structural inequality, which means that marginalized individuals and communities will continue to migrate (Herbert, 2019). Furthermore, the EU with its securitization and externalization of African migration has not only failed to dissuade migrants from taking the strenuous journey, but it has also resulted in unintended consequences, with migrants being abused and held in inhumane detention centers Libya; centers which are ironically funded by the EU (Andersson, 2016; Abebe 2019).

Disputably, externalization and securitization, coupled with populism, have allowed for the migration policy to become an increasingly politicized issue. Benedicto

and Brunet (2018: 17-18) argue that the far-right have manipulated public opinion to create irrational fears of refugees. This xenophobia sets up mental walls in people, who then demand physical walls. This is because externalization is often deceptively framed as either a security imperative or a life-saving humanitarian endeavor (or both) even though such responses to migration pose serious human rights concerns and threaten the integrity of the international refugee protection system (Frelick et al., 2016: 193). Even though initiatives of externalization and securitization involve investing funds in technology-related equipment and ensuring the training of local law enforcement are welcomed, their association with human right abuses has cast doubt over their effectiveness. However, externalization and securitization do not take into consideration the drivers of migration from Africa, hence, the focus should be on addressing the root causes of migration first rather than narrowing the focus on border capabilities.

Theo Francken, Belgium's Secretary of State for asylum and migration, revealed that the EU should stimulate economic growth and employment, to boost the buying power of the African population (Politico, 2018). Michael Clemens, co-director of migration at the Center for Global Development, posits that no amount of financial assistance can stop migration. He maintains that the EU should rather invest in creating skills among potential migrants in Africa — specific skills that the EU needs. Paul Collier, an economics professor at the School of Government at Oxford University, argues that Europe should indeed spend €6 billion to bring jobs to Africa through investment by the European Investment Bank which would support European firms in Africa, thus helping reduce irregular African migration (Politico, 2018).

This paper agrees that while European investments would contribute positively towards the development of the continent, they would, however, find it cumbersome to address the drivers of migration (political instability, porous borders, corruption, smuggling and trafficking syndicates), hence irregular migration will likely persist, although in far fewer numbers. Furthermore, rather than promoting the externalization of migration controls, the EU and other donors could also increase support to regional and international organizations that provide or promote the protection of migrants' rights, including the rights of asylum seekers, in third countries and countries of origin, especially considering that borders in Africa have many entry and exit points (Frelick et al., 2016: 195); hence the question of how to strengthen the capability of one entry point without neglecting the other.

The AU, and by extension African states, are important role players. The AU argues that migration is inevitable, and needs to be better governed in an integrated manner through comprehensive, human-rights based and gender-responsive national migration strategies and policies (AU, 2018). However, the deaths of African migrants in the Mediterranean Sea coupled with their abuse in Libyan detention camps (funded by the EU) have become a thorny issue for the continental body, giving rise to the need to address irregular migration through policy cooperation with the EU.

Moreover, criticisms against the AU have dwelt on the notion that expecting the AU to take the lead in curbing irregular migration is quite unrealistic, since within the AU many decisions are made, but very few are implemented. This lack of consensus, therefore, allows the EU to enforce its externalization and securitization policies, even though such initiatives may not be largely welcomed.

Palm (2020: 20) contends that today privileged nations are, due to their affluence, capable of almost hermetically sealing their external borders using massive investments in sophisticated surveillance systems and financial means to reach agreements with transit countries that secure their interests in keeping 'aliens' out. However, rather than keeping 'aliens' out and hoping that poor countries can help in stemming irregular migration if rich countries want fewer immigrants, their best shot might be to help poor countries become rich so that fewer people feel the urge to leave. This is not to say, however, that Africa has not done anything to reduce irregular migration. The European Commission (2015) notes that the continent has cooperated with the EU on a number of policies such as the Migration EU Expertise (MIEUX), EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue, the Dakar Strategy, European-wide African diaspora platform for development, and Addressing Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Africa. Nevertheless, criticism against Africa has been premised on the notion that it is the EU which takes the lead on these initiatives. It is the EU which comes up with policies to stem migration (rightly so, because Africa does not consider migration to be a threat, but rather as a way to boost continental integration development), often pouring money into the continent to solicit the cooperation of African countries. African countries have little interest in putting in place barriers to stop migration; hence, it makes sense for the EU to intervene as it observes irregular migration as a threat to its sovereignty.

This paper also argues that irregular migration to the EU is not an isolated incident. Since independence, the role of external actors has, of course, destabilized Africa. Unwarranted interventions from a socio-political perspective have further complicated the political and economic challenges African governments face today. Interventions constantly overlap, with one crisis influencing another, marking the never-ending nature of foreign intervention, especially militarily, which gives way to conflict, forced displacement and migration. While both the EU and AU are eager for a practical and jointly-undertaken solution, it is not going to be that simple. As a point of departure, African and European leaders must now lay the foundations for such a relationship by agreeing on a forward-looking strategy that addresses structural imbalances, harnesses the benefits of migration, and delivers tangible benefits to their citizens. The first step to address such structural imbalances is to ensure adequate opportunities for young people who are at the core of migration. Altogether, the EU should help Africa strengthen democratic and transparent processes and institutions in Africa which will improve the socio-economic and political environment.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper was not an empirical study but rather it relied extensively on the available literature to draw its conclusions. The policy implications and concluding remarks are therefore based on literary works that the paper has summarized. Externalization and securitization have focused on the need to reduce irregular migration to the EU but have not addressed the issues driving these migratory patterns. This signals that externalization and securitization do not speak to the current realities on the ground in an African context. Political instability across the continent has given way to the consolidation of smugglers, who fuel irregular migration. The discourse on irregular African migration to the EU has ignored the observation that most African migrants migrate within the continent. While Marie-Laurence (2016) asserts that Europe remains the main destination for African-born migrants who seek to maximize the economic opportunities that may be available, the European media has failed to take note of vast and increased migration within the continent. The media has instead focused on framing migration from Africa as a threat, even though most Africans migrate within the continent. These migration patterns are informed and driven by an array of factors which include economics, family, networks and individual choices. In its quest to reduce these irregular inflows, the EU has opted to externalize and securitize migration.

This paper maintains that for the EU to reduce migration, there is a need for it to understand the different drivers of migration rather than believing externalization and securitization are a one-size-fits-all solution. The rise of populism linked to migration has changed how liberal parties view migration. Under pressure from right-wing populists, they have sought to externalize and securitize migration even in the face of human rights violations. The EU media also contributes to the observations of migrants as thugs and incompatible with EU culture, leading to the consolidation of racism and the ‘othering’ of migrants (Wodak and Krzyżanowski, 2017). Even though African countries have committed to working with the EU to reduce migration, the financial imbalance favors the EU to be the major player, which often side-lines African states.

Finally, the external intervention in the affairs of Africa has also indirectly contributed to population displacement and citizens becoming refugees. Migration is an ever-evolving phenomenon and putting a complete stop to it is virtually impossible. While there is no quick fix to this situation, this paper contends that from an EU perspective, there is a need to think beyond the funding of securitization and externalization. The EU needs long-term, sustainable alliances with key partners — and with those in Africa in particular. For these to be meaningful, cooperation should go beyond migration, as it is a consequence of much broader shared challenges, including geopolitical instability, demographic developments, climate change, and socio-economic issues. Secondly, while EU developmental aid to Africa is needed, another form of action would be to prepare migrants for work in Europe. The reality is that there is no amount of financial assistance that can stop migration; hence, the EU

should invest in creating skills among potential migrants in Africa — specific skills that the EU needs. From an African perspective, stopping illegal migration seems cumbersome, especially from a socio-economic point of view. However, stable governance is the crucial issue that needs to be addressed and this requires that, cooperation between Africa and the EU is prioritized, if this matter is to be resolved, in the interest of all parties.

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