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Migrants inside and outside Africa. Motivations, Paths and Routes

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Abstract

The phenomenon of migration has always existed during the history of man since the beginning of time, just think of the history of the diaspora of the Jewish people until the great migrations of the nineteenth century which involved several European peoples, including Italians, Germans, Poles, and non-Europeans, such as the Japanese, heading to North or South America.

This article, using official sources provided by IOM, UNHCR and other accredited international statistical sources, aims to offer a critical reflection about the motivations, routes and paths of migrants outside and inside Africa, showing that only a small part of them reach Europe.

In fact, the first attractive centre for internal migration is Côte d'Ivoire, one of the countries, together with Nigeria, which is the driving force behind the sparsely populated economy of West Africa, rich in agricultural raw materials (starting with cocoa and coffee).

Finally, particular attention is given to the Italian case because is the geographical area most affected by the landings of migrants. In fact, hostility towards migrants in Italy at the end of last year was on the increase: one Italian in two said he considered immigrants a danger and was afraid of it.

Keywords: *migrations outside and inside Africa, routes, motivations, "case Italy"*.

1. Framework

The phenomenon of migration has always existed during the history of man since the beginning of time, just think of the history of the diaspora of the Jewish people until the great migrations of the nineteenth century which involved several European peoples, including Italians, Germans, Poles, and non-Europeans, such as the Japanese, heading to North or South America. Contemporary migrations are the consequence of the great events of the 20th century: the end of the English

and French colonial empire in Africa and the fall of the Soviet Union (1989) had direct consequences such as the collapse of the socialist regime in the former Yugoslavia or that in Albania, both of which occurred in 1992 (Viola, 2000). Furthermore, the current global economic crisis and the input produced by the "Arab Spring" in North Africa and Syria starting in 2011, have contributed to redesigning the international migration scenario, starting from the routes, inevitably conditioned by the civil wars that exploded in Syria and Libya and by the birth and advance in the Middle East of the Islamic State (ISIL).

In 2017 we saw the highest levels of migration ever recorded: about 65.6 million people were forced to leave their country: of these, about 22.5 million were refugees and more than half minors[1].

A geographical approach combined with a historical perspective can clearly summarize the directions taken by migratory flows and their numerical trend over the last three decades. In 1990, 6.200 people were granted refugee status in Europe, 128.900 in 2009 and 40.800 in 2013 (only 1.7% of all refugees worldwide). While North America welcomed 18.300 refugees (2013 data), in the same year there were 140.700 in North Africa, 143.500 in Central Africa, 167.900 in the Horn of Africa and 1.67 million in the Arabian Peninsula.

According to UNHCR, in 2015 there are 65.3 million forced migrants (refugees and displaced persons) in the world (if they were united in a single nation, they would represent the 21st most populous country). Taking the total number of migrants into account, it is as high as 243 million. The so-called "immigration emergency" that in recent years has been putting European countries into crisis and undermining the very stability of the EU, is therefore only the tip of the iceberg of global migration: the flow of migrants from Africa to Europe (almost always mediated by traffickers) has never exceeded a few hundred thousand people per year, while African migrations "within" (for economic, political or environmental reasons) now involve almost 30 million people.

As stated by the Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (2002), migrations are a world phenomenon connected also to globalization, a total social fact, an event that involves all aspects of society. For this reason, migrations are studied and analyzed by disciplines of Social Sciences such as Sociology, Cultural Anthropology, Geopolitics, Human Geography and lastly also by Social Psychology and Pedagogy. Push and pull factors are closely linked to them: push factors concern the motivations that push migrants to leave and can be economic, social, political or environmental, while pull factors are within the host countries such as the need for more or less qualified workers to be employed in certain sectors and, generally, the higher level of wellbeing that migrants imagine finding after the long journey. In this context, Africa has become a significant case study because it is affected not only by migration to Europe but also by continuous and huge movements of African populations and people from the Middle East.

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[1] Source: https://www.unhcr.it/risorse/statistiche

Migration from Africa and from the Near East to Europe has increased dramatically in recent decades and it is one of the most difficult issues facing European authorities in the next few years. However, while migrations from the Near East have a clear political origin - especially after the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011 - and they have been recorded under the heading "refugees". (asylum seekers and refugees), migration from Africa has a mixed character, mixing economic, political and environmental causes.

As highlighted by the United Nations scenarios, it is important to follow the demographic and migratory evolution of the African continent, which is destined to double its population in a few decades.

2. African Migrants: motivations and paths

According to the United Nations (2015) out of a total of one billion people present on the continent, there are about 34 million emigrants from various countries while the remaining are immigrants: it is interesting to note that most of the migrations remain from Africa while the foreign presence is growing, especially from China.

An exception is certainly Libya which, despite being a relatively large but not very polarised country, after the civil war that followed the end of Gaddafi's government (2011) abandoned the role of migratory attraction pole of the area it had exercised for a long time because of the presence of a large and flourishing oil industry (Di Pasquale, Stuppini, Tronchin, 2016).

The choice of the destination country by the African migrant is made on the basis of different criteria, among which the quality of life and the language stand out, in fact, the migrants from the English-speaking countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia) move towards English-speaking countries, mainly the United States and the United Kingdom and Northern European countries. Finally, French-speaking countries (Mali, Benin, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Togo, Cameroon, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Conakry) choose France, while migrants from Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and, to a lesser extent, Angola and Mozambique leave for Portugal.

According to Frontex statistics and sources (2017), the long and dangerous path of irregular immigration by immigrants from the sub-Saharan region, as is well known, begins with the crossing of the Sahara, in part with means of subsistence, wagons, old jeeps and trucks, and then continues with the crossing of the Mediterranean by boats or rubber dinghies, towards the main entry points to Europe, usually Spain or Italy. For Spain, the points of entry are Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves within Moroccan territory. For Italy, the crossings start from Tunisia and especially from Libya to arrive at the island of Lampedusa or directly in Sicily or Calabria. Some minor groups of migrants also pass through the Canary Islands, leaving from the coasts of Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia and Guinea (Figure 1). In the following paragraphs will be presented in depth about routes and routes.
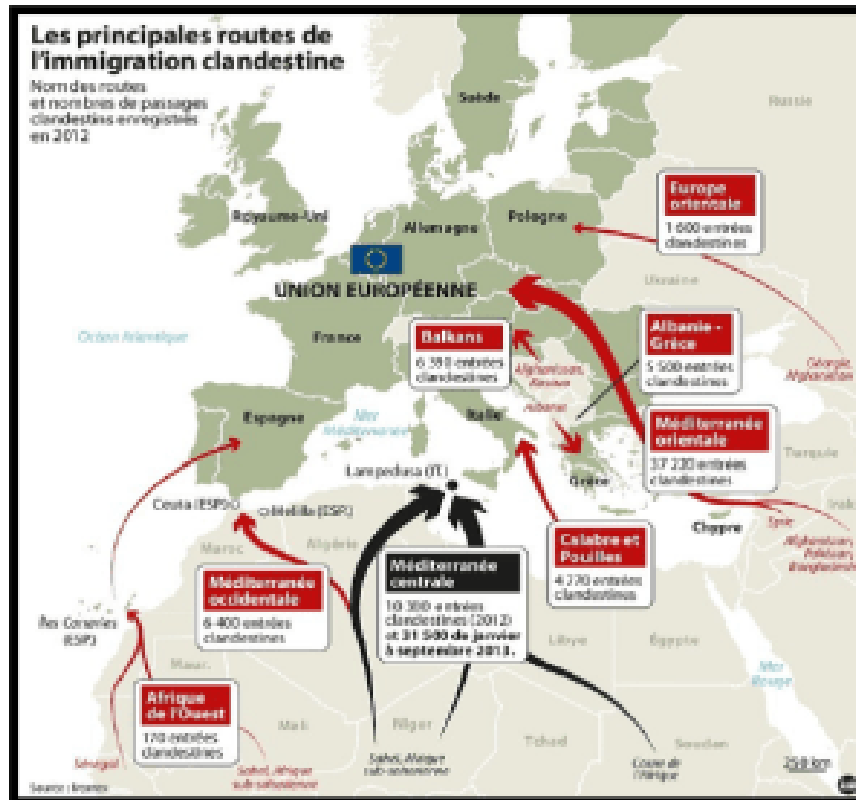
Figure 1. The main routes of migrants to Europe (Source: Frontex).

As studies of social psychology have shown, migration is always an event that generates stress; it is not easy to leave one's life and one's affections. In fact, it determines what can be defined as a "cultural shock", a strong double rupture, twofold because it involves both the homeland and the place of arrival.

The motivations that move the migratory flows in Africa, both intra-African and extra-African, can be traced back to what follows:

-Youth unemployment caused by a strong demographic increase in cities, in fact, considering the index of multidimensional poverty (IPM), the arrival in urban areas is due to the fact that 86% of people living in the countryside are in absolute poverty[2].

-Lack of civil rights and armed conflict, also determined by the advance of extremist factions ideologically close to ISIS such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab.

- Health emergencies: the main one, in recent years, has been characterized by the Ebola virus, which continues to claim numerous victims throughout the continent.

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[2] Source: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi

-Food emergencies: there are considerable famines affecting the continent, one of the last has seen the protagonist of the youngest state, South Sudan, born in 2011[3].

-Environmental Emergencies: Ecological causes can lead to real waves of refugees from one state to another, as happened, for example, in 2001 in Mozambique when 400,000 people have driven away due to heavy rainfall (Petrungaro, 2017). An emblematic case of this phenomenon is the Chad Lake which, in the last 60 years, has seen its basin decrease by about 90% with a consequent considerable worsening of the condition of the population that exploited its water and food resources (Varani, De Andreis, 2016)[4].

- Widespread poverty and economic crisis, especially in the states of the Sahel area (Eritrea, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania). These figures are also confirmed by the ISU (Human Development Index), which places these countries among the lowest in the world in the ratio between GDP (gross domestic product) and education, life expectancy and schooling of the population[5].

-Family reunification, especially for those who are heading abroad.

-Reasons for study and personal training, in fact there are many Africans enrolled in European universities and beyond.

-Highly qualified migration. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2017), about 2/3 of migrants from West Africa have a medium-high level of education.

The above, together with the crisis of the main sectors of employment in Africa, namely construction, mining, agriculture, manufacturing, combined with a very low average per capita wage that varies, in most countries, between 1.000 and 5.000 dollars per year makes the population of the continent physiologically driven to migrate to try to improve and / or save their lives and their families. In fact, the average wage per inhabitant is USD 1.638 per year in ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), USD 2.674 per year in Southern Africa (SADC), USD 1.019 per year in East Africa (COMESA) and USD 1.271 per year in Central Africa (CEEAC).

This is followed by low job creation given that the high productivity sectors are wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing and low productivity: informal services and agricultural activities. The main employment sectors in Africa are agriculture (the main sector), mining and other extractive Industries (limited capacity), construction (precarious employment), manufacturing Industry (to a lesser extent), services (generally informal and precarious employment).

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[3] Source: https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2018-05-29/urgent-action-needed-prevent-famine-south-sudan-oxfam

[4] The Chad Lake, in fact, was a large lake on the border between four states: Cameroon, Nigeria, Chad and Niger.

[5] Source: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi

A brief analysis of these causes shows that economic growth in West Africa, when compared with the exponential demographic growth of the countries in this area, is very low: 5% (2015), 6.1 % (2016), 5.8% (2017)[6].

In addition to these two growth parameters, it is important to complement the indicator of the Multidimensional Poverty Index[7]; this indicates an inequality in the various areas:

-In coastal areas, the IPM index is 0.23 with 4% of the population (41 million) in absolute poverty.

-In inland areas, the IPM index is 0.43 with 86% of the population (252 million) in absolute poverty.

-In urban areas, the IPM index is 0.11, with 26% of the population in absolute poverty, while in rural areas it is 0.39, with 74% of the population in absolute poverty. (data source: BAFD, OECD & UNDP 2015) .

Besides economic migrations, forced migrations must also be considered; among the causes, the economic, political and social problems in some countries of the Horn of Africa are highlighted, such as Somalia and Eritrea, together with the advance of terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. Moreover, as already highlighted above, we cannot fail to take into account the overheating of the Planet, which is one of the causes of another type of migration, environmental migration, which also generates a large number of refugees.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre[2], there are at least 8 million environmentally displaced people in Africa, almost half of the world's 19.3 million environmentally displaced people. Niger, Nigeria, Chad, South Sudan and Madagascar are among the countries most affected. Given the lack of prevention and the vulnerability of those countries, it is easy to predict an increase in the phenomenon in the coming years(Di Pasquale,Stuppini, Tronchin,2016).

In fact, as can be deduced from some reports of the United Nations Eviroment Program (UNEP) in 2050, due to progressive deforestation, the expansion of deserts and hydrogeological instability, the internal refugees of the continent will be between 150 and 200 million, according to estimates provided by UNHCR.

To frame what has been reported, a substantial weakness of the governmental institutions persists, often tied economically and financially to old colonial logics and incapable institutionally of meeting the needs of the population and to the migrations, both internal and external to their own Country, so much so that they consist in a sort of Taboo, so much so that the subject, even though it is a problem more real than ever, is almost ignored by the national and local media.

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[6] Source: https://www.indexmundi.com/africa.html

[7] The index shows the number of people who are multidimensionally poor and the number of deprivations that can be found in domestic life. It is based on 10 parameters derived from the health, education and living standards of the population. The value of IMP is 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest).
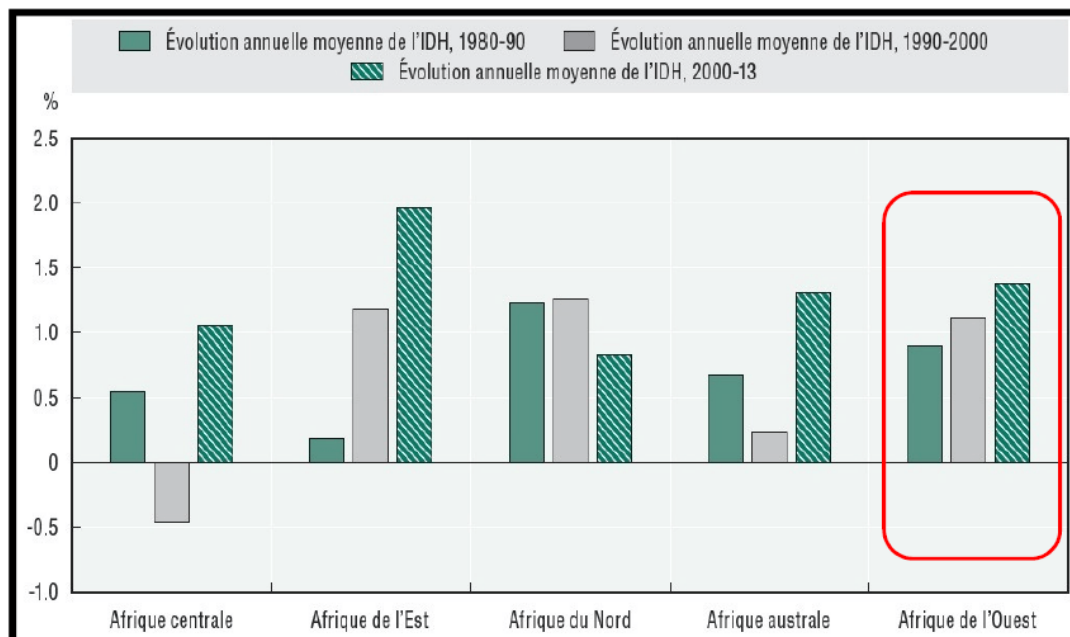
Figure 2. Development of Human Development Index - HDI: West Africa compared to the other areas of the continent.
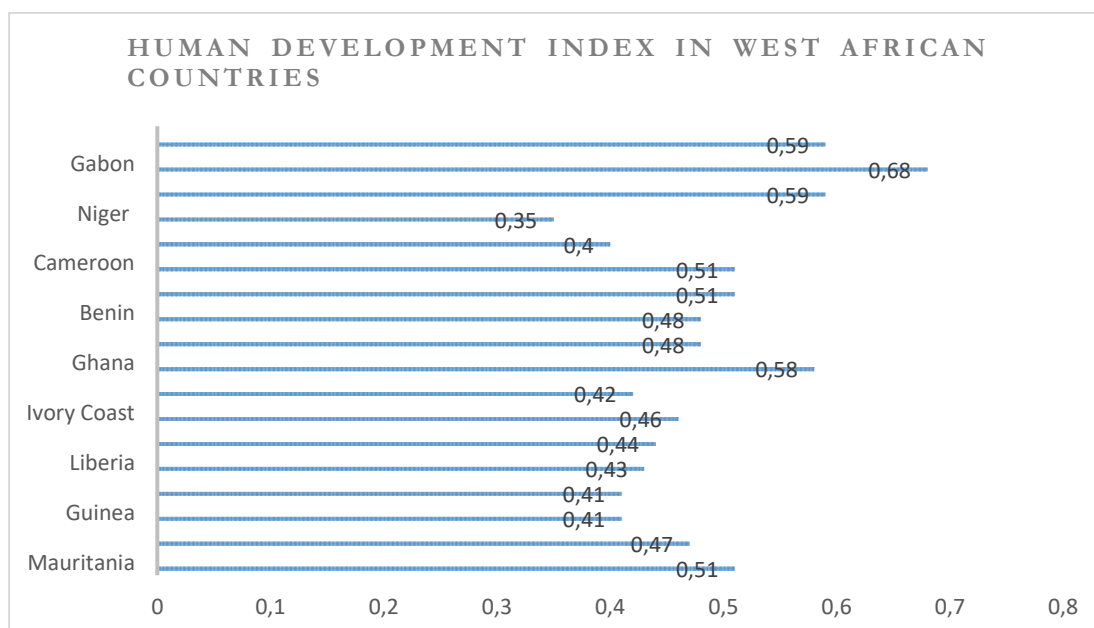

Figure 3. Human Development Index in West African Countries. Authors elaboration of HDI data 2017.

3. Internal Migrations: flows, paths and routes

As already mentioned, most migrants remain in Africa, in fact only a small part (about 12%) reaches Europe.

Intra-African migration "is very old" and knows at least four main routes, as Sylvie Bredeloup (2017) argues in a recent article in La Tribune Afrique, other experts on internal African migration also propose another line of thought on the plurality and complexity of migratory movements in Africa, departing from the typically pro-European interpretations.

The dynamics of population displacement have an interregional dimension, moving migrants from rural areas to other rural areas of neighbouring countries as well as to large urban centres - or from sparsely populated areas to more populated and job opportunities. In any case, natural resources always attract visitors: from the earth to the subsoil.

In the following paragraphs, we will deal with both internal and external routes to the African continent, with particular attention to the routes of migrants through Africa and, then, the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. In addition, the routes involving the Black Sea and the Balkans, used by Syrian migrants following the civil war that affected the country in 2011.

3.1 Intra-African paths and routes

The first attractive centre for internal migration is Côte d'Ivoire, one of the countries, together with Nigeria, which is the driving force behind the sparsely populated economy of West Africa, rich in agricultural raw materials (starting with cocoa and coffee). Historically, it has attracted young labour from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Mali as well as Guinea and Senegal.

Another land of immigration in Africa is Nigeria, seen from populations from Ghana and Benin as "mirage" for its generous oil resources.

Nigeria's GDP has recently surpassed that of South Africa, becoming the leading African economy, no longer dependent solely on oil. (Di Pasquale, Stuppini, Tronchin, 2016).

The country will suffer a real population explosion by 2050[8] and can be considered (like many other African countries) both as a destination for immigration and as a source of emigration.

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[8] Source: https://www.populationpyramid.net/it/nigeria/2050/

3 - LA GIOVANE AFRICA

Paesi	Popolazione (stime Cia)
TANZANIA	51.045.882
KENYA	45.925.301
ALGERIA	39.542.166
UGANDA	37.101.745
SUDAN	36.108.853
MAROCCO + SAHARA OCC.	33.893.565
GHANA	26.327.649
MOZAMBICO	25.303.113
MADAGASCAR	23.812.681
CAMERUN	23.739.218
COSTA D'AVORIO	23.295.302
ANGOLA	19.625.353
BURKINA FASO	18.931.686
NIGER	18.045.729
MALAWI	17.964.697
MALI	16.955.536

ZAMBIA	15.066.266
ZIMBABWE	14.229.541
SENEGAL	13.975.834
RUANDA	12.661.733
SUD SUDAN	12.042.910
GUINEA	11.780.162
CIAD	11.631.456
TUNISIA	11.037.225
SOMALIA	10.616.380
BURUNDI	10.742.276
BENIN	10.448.647
TOGO	7.552.318
ERITREA	6.527.689
LIBIA	6.411.776
SIERRA L.	5.879.098
CENTRAFRICA	5.391.539
CONGO	4.755.097
LIBERIA	4.195.666
MAURITANIA	3.596.702
NAMIBIA	2.121.307
BOTSWANA	2.182.719
GAMBIA	1.967.709
LESOTHO	1.947.701
GUINEA B.	1.726.170
GABON	1.705.336
SWAZILAND	1.435.613
MAURIZIO	1.339.827
GIBUTI	828.324
COMORE	780.971
GUINEA EQ.	740.743
CAPO VERDE	545.993
SÃO TOMÉ E PR.	194.006
SEICELLE	92.430

Map values: EGITTO 88.487.396 · NIGERIA 181.562.056 · ETIOPIA 99.465.819 · REP. DEMOCRATICA DEL CONGO 79.375.136 · SUDAFRICA 53.675.563

Età media della popolazione
- Da 15,2 a 16,7
- da 17 a 17,9
- da 18 a 18,8
- da 19 a 19,9
- da 20,1 a 28,5
- da 31,9 a 34,4

I 5 paesi più giovani
1. Niger
2. Uganda
3. Mali
4. Malawi
5. Zambia

I primi 5 paesi per numero di abitanti
1. Nigeria
2. Etiopia
3. Egitto
4. Rep. Dem. del Congo
5. Sudafrica

181.562.056 Popolazione dei primi 5 paesi

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Fonte: Età media, www.cia.gov/library/pubblications/the-world-factbook/fields/2177.html - Popolazione, www.cia.gov/library/pubblicayions/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html
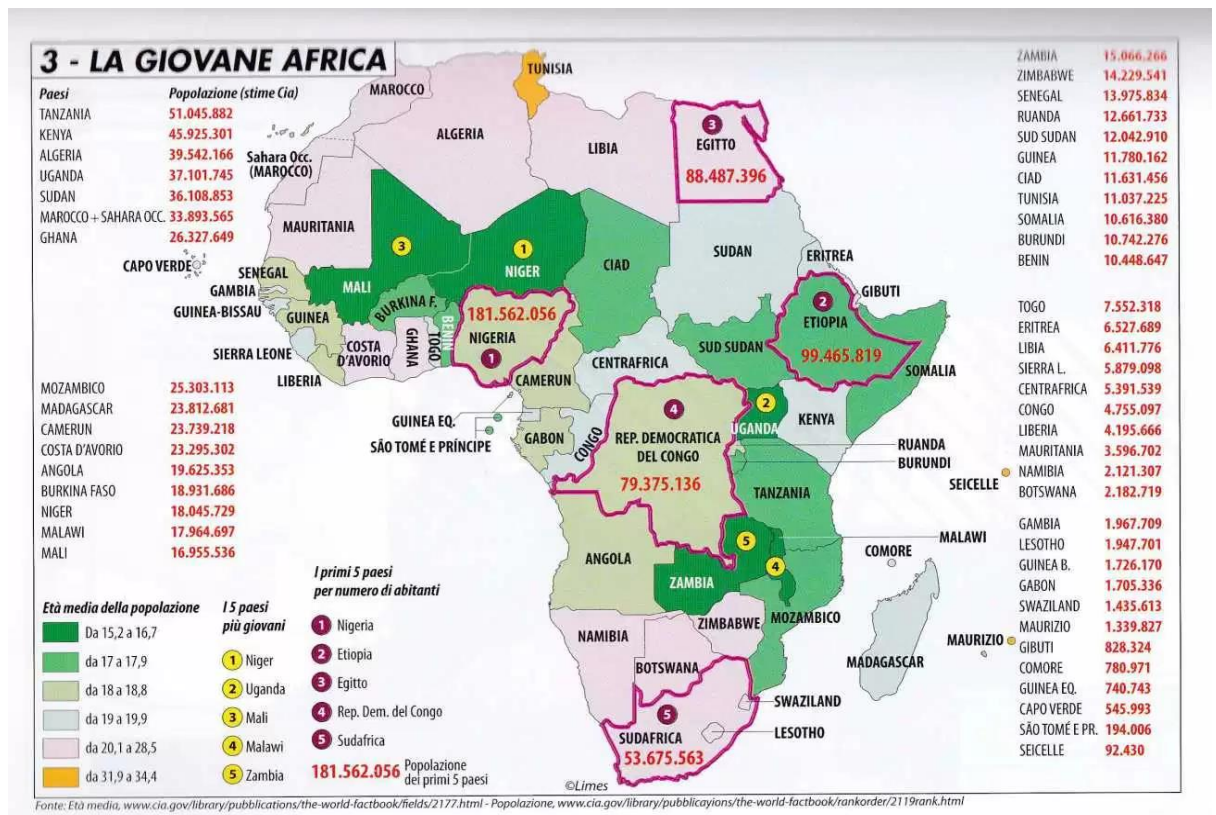
Figure 4. A look at the population of the African continent. Map property of Laura Canali. (Source: http://www.limesonline.com/cartaceo/perche-la-cina-punta-ancora-sullafrica?prv=true).

Some countries, such as Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, owe their economic development also to relative political stability, which is not a trivial factor in a continent still plagued by ethnic conflicts

For historical reasons, since the times of French-speaking West Africa, Senegal and Gabon have always been points of arrival for citizens of neighbouring countries, including Guinea and Cape Verde.

Also the intra-African migratory routes concern the important and traditional driving economy of the Continent: South Africa which, with its diamond and gold mines, combined with a well developed agricultural and industrial apparatus, has always been a privileged destination for the populations of Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana, but not only.

The Dakar-based Movida Laboratory for Mobility, Travel, Innovation and Dynamics in Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa argues that the trend towards migration within the continent will remain, while migration to Europe will be made more complicated by the strengthening of border controls and existing and future agreements between European countries and those on the southern shores

of the Mediterranean. This will involve an increase in the flows of young Africans (students and workers) towards China, an economic giant not only Asian but now global.

This phenomenon is linked to the massive investments made in Beijing and the growing presence of Confucian Institutes in many African countries. Nowadays Asia welcomes a growing number of "African economic and social exiles", about 5.1% of migrants leave Africa to reach the Asian continent.

Finally, no other migratory route is bringing more and more a new generation of African migrants to the Gulf countries such as: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

From this map, it emerges that the populations of West Africa and part of southern Africa are moving more, while those of central Africa remain almost unchanged. Another useful information disseminated by the Movida Laboratory concerns the identity of the migrant. While it is true that most of them are low-skilled workers, in practice we are faced with a variety of faces: students, traders, but also sportsmen, entrepreneurs and more and more women.

The change of status is also very frequent, often from legality to illegality.

One of the most important aspects concerns the social impact of migration, which often results in rejection, xenophobia and violent tensions. Like what happens in Europe, in recent years the rulers of many countries in Africa have also adopted very restrictive migration policies, fearing that their resources will be plundered, that the wealth produced will leave the borders and that their national identity will be threatened. There are more and more cases of mass expulsions at borders and restrictive regulations. The UN Refugee Agency (UNCHR) has highlighted that South Africa is the least refugee country in the world, rejecting on average 80% of asylum applications.

In the light of these aspects, made little known by the mass media, the founding fathers' ideal of pan-Africanism and the slogan "Africa must unite" of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which then became the African Union in 2002, were put at risk, clashing both with resistance in the regional blocs and with the dynamics, policies and problems also present in Europe, such as unemployment, insecurity, cultural identity and social tensions.

To better understand the flows and paths of migration within Africa, it is interesting to read the 5 routes of migrants described in the Exodus project of the Association MEDU (Doctors for Human Rights) and which also correspond to the data provided by UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency)[9], Frontex Europe[10],

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[9] Source: https://www.unhcr.it/news/storie/viaggi-dei-rifugiati-diventano-sempre-piu-pericolosi-lunhcr-cerca-alternative-piu-sicure.html
[10] Source: https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-map/

European Agency for Border and Coast Guard and Limes[11], Italian magazine specializing in geopolitics.
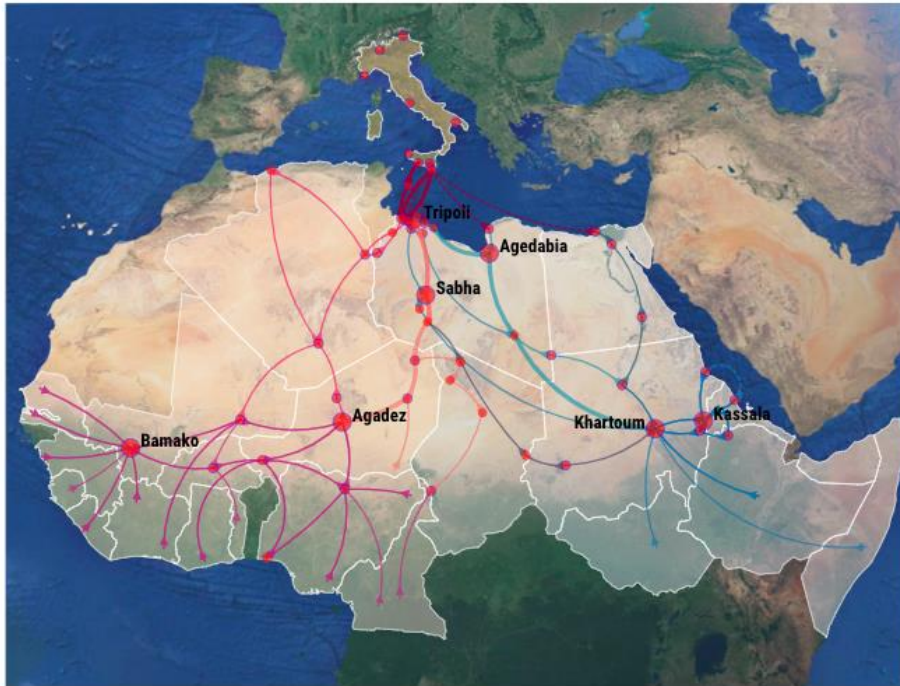
Figure 5. A Map of Internal Migration by Medu-Exodus Project, Doctors for Human Rights. (Source: http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/).

The 5 routes were elaborated on the basis of testimonies and life stories, collected in almost 3 years from 2014 to 2016, of a sample of a thousand migrants from Eritrea, Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and other sub-Saharan countries:

-The West West-Route where migrants, after leaving West or Central Africa, try to reach Libya via Niger and Algeria, considered a country where they would have found better working and living conditions than in the Sahel area. This route has been gradually abandoned due to the increase in controls at the Niger-Algeria border[12].

-The West-East Route used by the majority of migrants leaving from Senegal, Gambia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. They meet other groups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger respectively. This is where those who come from Nigeria and

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[11] Source: http://www.limesonline.com/le-principali-rotte-delle-migrazioni-2/100436

[12] Source: http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/#occidentale-ovest

Cameroon meet and start a terrible journey to Libya, via Chad. This route is also considered "at risk" due to the agreements between Niger and Italy (2017) aimed at reducing the migration phenomenon and greater control of the borders[13].

-East-west route, used by migrants trying to reach Libya from the Horn of Africa via Sudan and Chad. Also in 2017, our country signed agreements with Libya and Chad with the aim of reducing the transit of migrants and countering human trafficking in the region, especially in the desert areas of Sudan, on the border with Libya[14].

-Eastern route-centre, used by the majority of migrants from Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia, a particularly risky route for the armed border between Eritrea and Sudan and for the presence of different tribes that tend to kidnap migrants in order to get large amounts of money from their families. In addition, the journey between Sudan and Libya is told as particularly hard: life is constantly at risk due to precarious transportation, violence, detentions and kidnappings and water deprivation of which they are often victims[15].

-East-east route, compared to the other routes described, is distinguished by the transit from Egypt in fact migrants, also starting from the Horn of Africa, reach Asuan, Cairo and then Alexandria. In Egypt, too, they are exposed to a life-threatening situation, dictated both by a longer journey at sea than leaving Libya, and by the risk of detention in Egyptian prisons, which can last from several months to several years[16].

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[13] Source: http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/#occidentale-est

[14] Source http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/#orientale-ovest

[15] Source: http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/#orientale-centro

[16] Source: http://esodi.mediciperidirittiumani.org/#orientale-est
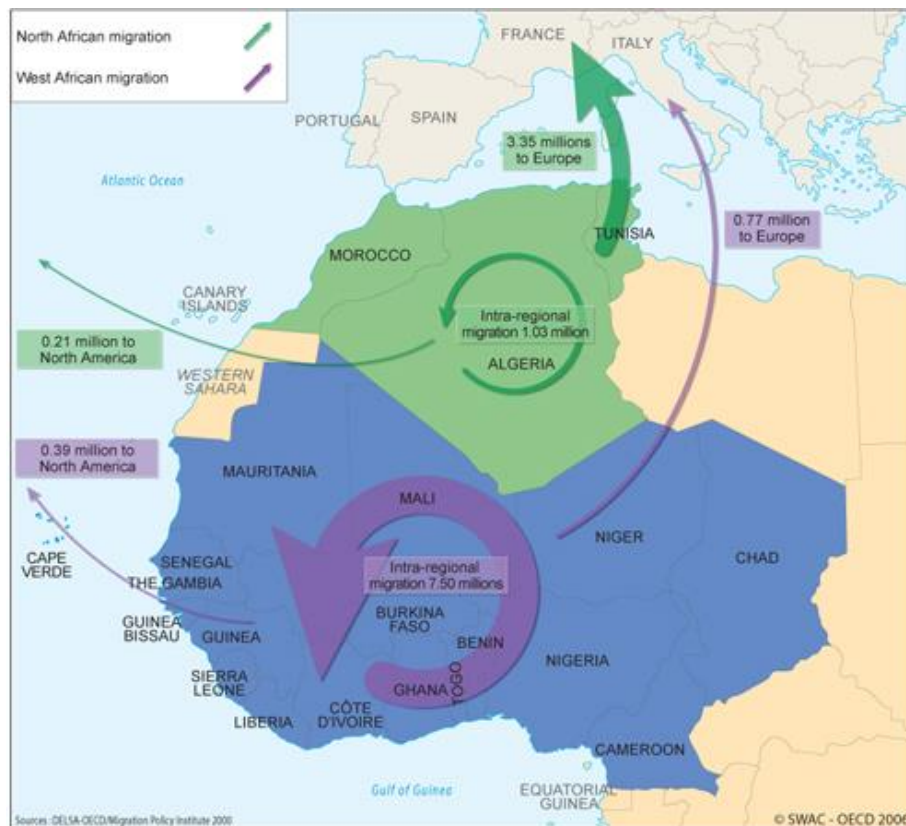
Figure 6. The flow of migrants within West Africa. (Source: DELSA-OECD, 2006).

In principle, the current routes travelled by migrants are nothing more than a transposition of the ancient routes used centuries ago for the spread of spices, trade and markets, the true hub of West Africa. Many of them do not arrive at their destination: they often end up in the hands of criminal groups after running out of money and are exploited until they get the money they need from family or friends or lose their lives. Even more "at risk" is the condition of unaccompanied migrant minors who can easily fall victim to human trafficking or, even worse, illegal organ trafficking, a very lucrative black market worldwide[17] .

3.2 Old and new routes: Mediterranean, Black Sea and Balkans

The already mentioned ESODI project - elaborated by MEDU - is also useful to give a more correct interpretation of the maritime and land routes from the

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[17]For a more detailed analysis see the following article: https://news.robadadonne.it/traffico-organi-bambini-immigrati/ and
http://www.ilsussidiario.net/News/Cronaca/2017/9/5/TRAFFICO-DI-ORGANI-DEI-MIGRANTI-Profughi-uccisi-e-messi-in-vendita-a-pezzi-/781119/

African coasts to Europe and tells, through the protagonists' testimonies, the main migration routes from sub-Saharan Africa to Italy, as well as the difficulties and violence faced by migrants. The routes are continuously updated and represented in various interactive maps, based on the testimonies of migrants collected in the places where the Association operates in Italy: the Hotspot of Pozzallo, the Welcome Centre for asylum seekers of Mineo, the CAS (Extraordinary Welcome Centre) of Ragusa and other centers in Rome, Ventimiglia and Egypt, Cairo and Asuan. Medu provides both health and psychological support to those who have been tortured or subjected to physical and psychological humiliation during their journey, which can last up to a year, before reaching Europe[18].

The route of the central Mediterranean is the route that mainly involves Italy. The area concerned remained under intense migratory pressure in 2015, when the total number of migrants landed in Italy was around 154.000. The main reason for the increase was the displacement of many Syrian migrants on this route in addition to that of the eastern Mediterranean which affects Greece. In the first two months of 2017, 61.001 Syrians entered the EU borders of Italy and Malta. However, the largest number of irregular migrants come from Eritrea and Nigeria (107.203 and 80.396 migrants respectively).

The route of the Eastern Mediterranean is the other major route that affects the Mediterranean Sea, the most travelled since 2009, especially thanks to the peak of migrants in 2015. 885.000 migrants arrived in the EU through this route, 17 times more than in 2014. Most landed on the coasts of the Greek islands, in particular Lesvos, with the known consequences of the numerical unsustainability of migrants in a limited geographical area such as the 1.633 square kilometres of the island. Syria, however, remains the country from which most of the migrants who cross these borders illegally come. 636.088 admissions since 2009, in front of Afghanistan (339.919 migrants). This route is also affected by the land borders between Bulgaria and Turkey.

The third route that affects the Mediterranean is the Western one. For years driven by the pressure of migrants from Morocco trying to reach Europe. However, cooperation between the two countries has considerably reduced the number of migrants coming from Morocco, so much so that the African country is now in

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[18] Migrants interviewed by Medu reported 38% of being captive to the Asma boys gang, 27% of soldiers or militias, 18% of traffickers, 13% of the police and 4% of Niger rebels. Some say that prisons and detention centres have been freed from rival armed gangs and migrants who have been taken to the sea free of charge. The situation is difficult: nobody can ensure order, let alone respect for human rights. The common denominator of many interviews is that in Libya a sort of "market" has been generated where Africans are sold. (Source: http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/italia-mondo/2017/10/05/news/migranti-le-cinque-rotte-per-l-italia-in-una-mappa-1.15947379/amp/)

fourth place among the first ten countries of origin that affect this route. The largest number of illegal migrants comes from Algeria, about 20.000 since 2009.

Deaths at sea off the coasts of Ceuta and Melilla[19] attempting to cross the Mediterranean via the western route are reported by IOM; 223 deaths have been recorded in the 2017 Report. From the beginning of 2018 to June 96 people lost their lives on this route.

Figure 7. Migration flows to Spain. (Source: Ansa).

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[19] Ceuta and Melilla, which were sold to Spain by Portugal in 1580 and 1496, have always been border towns. Free from material obstacles that would prevent communication with their hinterland and sensitive to migratory flows from Morocco, the two autonomous cities were laboratories of cultural coexistence.

It was in the 1990s that Ceuta and Melilla began experimenting with migration from sub-Saharan Africa, in connection with the entry into force, in 1995, of the Schengen Convention, which effectively abolished the internal borders of the European continent and guaranteed the free movement of persons. As soon as they became the gates of Europe on the African continent, the two cities were promptly sealed to stop irregular migration, thanks to cooperation between Spain and the European Union. In fact, the beginning of the construction of a barrier, consisting of vertical strips of earth between three high walls of netting and barbed wire, guarded by cameras, movement sensors and armed men, dates back to 1998. Eight kilometres of fence isolates Ceuta from the continent, twelve Melilla.

A project funded entirely by the European Union, at a cost of about 35 million USD.

When the migrants began to overcome them, the barriers were raised even higher, to reach the current 6 meters. Then an attempt was made to cross the border by sea, a natural barrier that migrants had to learn to face. Attempts at containment, even violent, do not prevent hundreds of people from attempting, every year, the "leap" of the barrier (Ferrero, 2018).
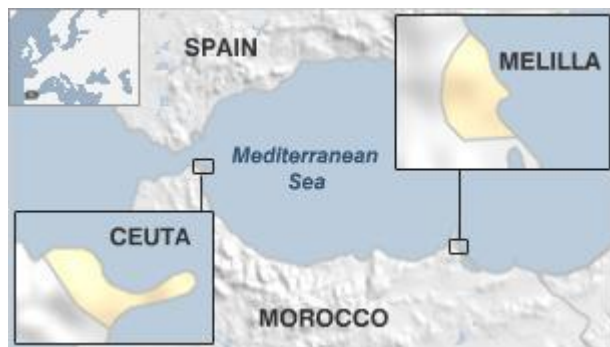
Figure 8. The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. (Source: http://www.nigrizia.it/notizia/i-sauteurs-e-i-muri-della-vergogna).

The last predominantly maritime route concerns the Black Sea and the coasts of Bulgaria and Romania. The Black Sea Route also peaked between 2014 and 2015, and is not far behind the other routes under review. The migrants come mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, but with much lower figures than other routes: 328 from 2009 for Afghanistan, 236 for Syria, 102 for Iraq. Among the land routes, the most important is certainly the one involving the borders between the countries of the Western and Eastern Balkans.

The large number of migrants arriving on the Greek coast and generally crossing the eastern Mediterranean route has a direct influence on this area. Many migrants who arrived in Greece try to move between Serbia and Macedonia to Hungary and Croatia to reach Eastern Europe. After Hungary completed construction of the fence with Serbia, flows into Croatia intensified[20]. In 2015, the region registered 764.000 irregular migrants, 16 times more than in 2014. Once again, the number of Syrian migrants is higher, 101.713 since 2009.

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[20]   Two four-metre-high parallel fences rise along the 175-kilometre border between Serbia and Hungary, to prevent migrants trying to reach Europe via the Balkan route from entering. The first barrier, a barbed wire, was built in 2015. The second, equipped with electric shock sensors, was completed in March 2017; finally, the Hungarian government built a second barrier and created a police division called "Border Hunters" (AA. VV., 2018).

Figure 9. The barrier built between Serbia and Hungheria. Authors elaboration. (Source: Internazionale.it)

The land border between Greece, Albania and Macedonia. Irregular migrants mainly come from Albania, 112.950 since 2009.

The eastern borders of the European Union run for 6.000 km, along the borders of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. A long border with significant differences in terms of border controls. In relation to its size, the flow of irregular migrants is much lower than the Mediterranean routes and represents about 0.1% of the total in the EU and Schengen areas.

Many of the migrants come from Guinea and Ivory Coast, then Syria, Nigeria and Gambia.

In March 2016, thanks to an agreement between Turkey and the European Union, the Balkan route practically closed and arrivals to Greece were drastically reduced. The route of the central Mediterranean, the one that connects Libya to Italy, has remained the only one open to reach Europe.

In 2015, the "refugee crisis" was talked about, especially for the countries of Northern Europe, because the pressure of thousands of people fleeing Syria opened the so-called Balkan route between Turkey and Northern Europe. In 2015, more than a million refugees, not only Syrians, but also Iraqis and Afghans, travelled this route. The majority arrived in Germany and in northern European countries such as Sweden and Norway.

This new migratory pressure - which has affected Greece and the Balkan countries in particular has led to the disappearance of the Dublin III Regulation, the European Common Asylum System, which stipulates that asylum applications must be lodged in the first country of entry into Europe.

4. The case "Italy"

Dealing with routes and paths of migrants inside and outside Africa, we cannot but talk about the geographical area most affected by the landings of migrants: Italy, so much so that in the literature specialized on migration we talk about a "case Italy".

According to a survey conducted by Demos in November 2017, hostility towards migrants in Italy at the end of last year was on the increase: one Italian in two said he considered immigrants a danger and was afraid of it.

However, it should be pointed out that the number of migrants arriving in 2018 on the Italian coast is almost 80 % lower than in the same period of the previous year. According to data from the Ministry of Interior, in the first six months of 2018, 14.441 people arrived in Italy by sea, while in the same period of the previous year there were 64.033 (Demos, 2018).

There is no doubt that Italy has faced on its own the arrival of migrants and refugees after 2011, when the wave of migration from North Africa began again following the so-called "Arab Spring" and the political upheavals that have occurred in the countries of North Africa and the Near East. After 2011, in fact, the agreements that the European Union had stipulated with many non-European countries to close the external borders and prevent refugee boats from reaching the coasts of the continent, were cancelled. One of these was the Treaty of Friendship between Italy and Libya signed in 2008 by the Italian Prime Minister and Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi.

Another aggravating factor for the "case" of Italy is to be referred to as 2015, when some countries, such as France, began to re-establish controls at the internal borders of the European Union, with the motivation of wanting to guard the borders in order to avoid attacks. So migrants and refugees who, once arrived in Italy from the Mediterranean route, left the country to reach their families in other European countries were blocked at Italian railway stations and at the northern border of Italy, creating emergency situations in Rome, Milan, Como, Brenner, Ventimiglia, Udine.

In particular, France has begun a strict policy of returning refugees at the border between Ventimiglia and Menton. At the same time, the European Commission has proposed to the various European countries to distribute asylum seekers through a system of quotas established on the basis of GDP and the population of each state and has set up hotspots in border countries, such as Italy and Greece, i.e. centres for the identification of migrants on landing. The establishment of hotspots has made it possible to identify 99% of migrants landing on the Italian coast.

Before 2015, Italy did not identify many of the migrants who arrived on its shores and in this way allowed it to reach the countries of Northern Europe without getting stuck in the meshes of the Dublin Regulation. But after 2015 the Italian system broke and people were forced to apply for asylum in Italy, or at most to apply for a relocation to other European countries (possibility granted only to Syrians and Eritreans). Subsequently, the European Commission proposed a draft reform of the Dublin Regulation, to go beyond the principle of forcing border countries to accept all arriving migrants.

But since February 2017, the Italian government has found an agreement with the government in Tripoli to close that path as well. This has led to a drastic reduction in arrivals on the Italian coast.

The agreement has been much criticised by human rights groups: some investigations have shown that groups of traffickers have been involved to stop the departure of migrants to Libya and that the period of imprisonment of detained migrants has extended with very serious violations of people's fundamental rights. In absolute terms, the number of deaths along the route has decreased, but mortality has increased. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 1 in 33 migrants dies when attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

The reform project was worked on for two years and after long negotiations, in November 2017 the European Parliament approved a reform that Italy and the Mediterranean countries considered very positive, because it provided for obligatory quotas for the relocation of migrants. But the reform was blocked by the European Council, that is to say by the Heads of State or Government of the European Union, who did not reach an agreement precisely on quotas and on overcoming the principle of first entry.

The final decision of the Council is to be taken at a European summit in the coming summer months. The new Italian government rejected the reform proposal and the new Minister of the Interior took a position close to that of the Hungarian president, contrary to the compulsory quotas for the distribution of migrants.

The meeting of 24 June last in Brussels between the leaders of the main European countries saw the rise of tensions between France and Italy: the French government argued that Italy is not experiencing a migration crisis. The Italian Government has responded very strongly; in this climate, the forthcoming official summit of the European Council, the decision-making body of the European Union, in Brussels on 28th, will be very important. Two hot topics will be on the table: the reform of the euro and the reform of immigration management instruments[21].

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[21] Source: https://amp.tgcom24.mediaset.it/articolo/798/3147798.html

In summary, in the last four years (2014-2017) Italy and Greece were left alone in the face of the so-called crisis of migrants and refugees in 2015 (which in Italy began a year earlier, in 2014), but at the same time worked on a project that would eliminate the problem at the origin: the reform of the Dublin Regulation. Moreover, within the European Union there have been different attitudes on the part of its 28 countries. Germany, which has received the highest number of asylum applications in recent times, has always been willing to adopt quotas. In particular, it was the governments of Eastern Europe, those of the Visegrád group countries, that opposed the allocation of quotas and the inclusion of principles of shared responsibility and solidarity, the same governments with which the current new Minister of the Interior seems to be more in tune.

Despite the reduction in arrivals, Italy continues to speak of an invasion. But in absolute terms, Italy is not the country that hosts the most refugees and asylum seekers: it is Germany, which in 2017 granted refugee status to 325.370 people, ten times more than Italy's 35.130 (which is also the third country in terms of the number of refugees received, after France).

Even in relative terms, Italy is not in the lead. The 2017 data, released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), offer a radically different picture from that usually described by the media and politicians. In Europe, the country with the highest number of refugees per thousand inhabitants is Sweden with 23.4 refugees, followed by Malta with 18.3. Italy is eleventh with 2.4 refugees per thousand inhabitants. In the world, the top five countries with the most refugees are non-European, only Germany ranks sixth. If we then talk about immigrants in general, that is, foreign citizens who reside in the country in a stable manner, Italy hosts five million immigrants, which corresponds to 8% of the population, in line with the levels of other European countries. The European state that has the most immigrants is Spain, where 10% of the population are immigrants, followed by Germany.
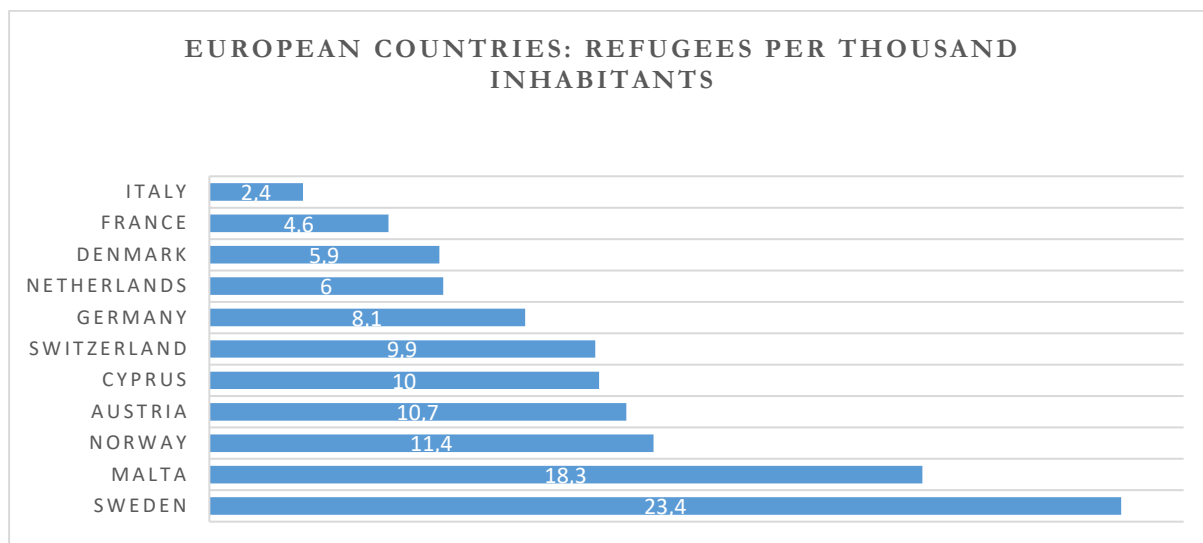
Figure 10. European countries, refugees per thousand inhabitants. Authors elaborations. (Sources: http://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2018/06/20/immigrazione-scopri-quanti-vivono-rifugiati-europei/ and UNHCR, 2017).

Moreover, Italy, between 2013-2017, according to a study by IPSI, has repatriated only 20% of people with the waybill. But the main reason lies in the number of nationalities of migrants arriving in Italy: more than 60 countries. Italy has issued expulsion decrees mainly against migrants from North Africa (49%) and sub-Saharan Africa (18%) (Camilli, 2018).

5. Conclusions

The great Polish reporter, Ryszard Kapuściński, has long maintained that "Africa is a continent too big to describe. [...] It is only to simplify that they call it Africa. Apart from its geographical name, Africa does not actually exist" (2000; p. 60). In fact, also from the political, economic and demographic point of view, the single Countries present very different dynamics, determining some poles of attraction. The causes of migration are therefore diverse, complex and often intertwined. The demographic variable, with the doubling of the population expected by the middle of the century, will contribute decisively to complicate this already very difficult picture.

As argued in the previous paragraphs, migration to Africa involves an approximately equal number of migrants moving within or outside the region. As shown in the figure, in 2015 more than 16 million Africans lived in another African country, while another 16 million lived in another region (OIM, 2018).

The figure shows that, while international migration within the African region has increased since 2000, the most significant growth has been by far in migration from Africa to other regions. Since 1990, the number of African migrants living outside the region has more than doubled, with a stronger growth in Europe. In 2015, the majority of migrants of African origin living outside the region resided in Europe (9 million), Asia (4 million) and North America (2 million).

Although this phenomenon has increased over time, in 2015 Africa hosted a relatively small number of 2.3 million migrants from outside the region, most of them from Asia and Europe.
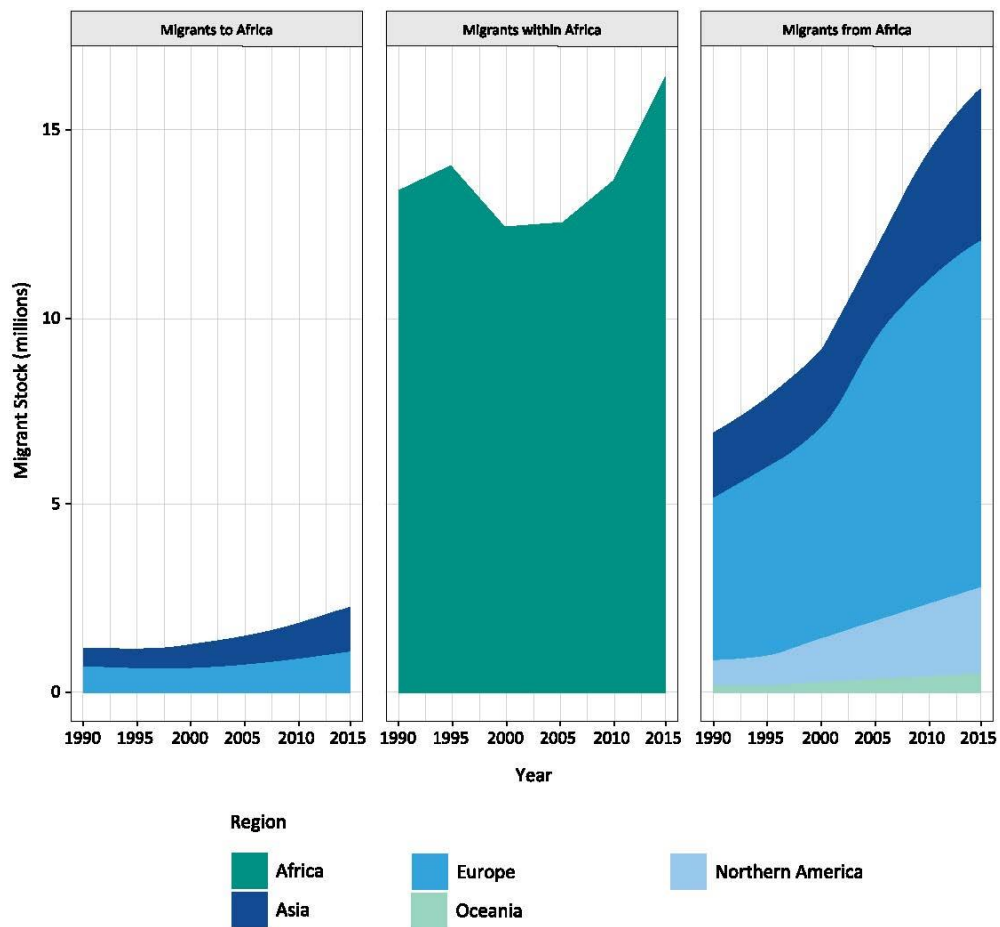

Figure 11. Migrants to Africa, within Africa and from Africa between 1990 and 2015. (Source: OIM, 2018)

African countries with the highest number of emigrants tend to be in the north of the region. In 2015, Egypt had the highest number of people living abroad, followed by Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Algeria. In terms of the number of

immigrants, South Africa is the most important destination country in Africa, with about 3.1 million international migrants residing in the country (about 6% of its total population). Other countries with a high percentage of immigrants in their total population are Gabon (16%), Djibouti (13%), Libya (12%), Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia (both 10%) (OIM, 2018).

Africa is becoming increasingly attractive due to its rates of economic growth, its endless resources and, above all, the increasingly significant demand for services by the local population. Young people, both graduates and non-graduates, who are unemployed in Europe, are also looking for work directly on the continent. For example, the number of Portuguese immigrants seeking employment in Mozambique and Angola has increased in recent years.

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