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SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICA:
ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

by

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PREFACE

The world is growing more interdependent, a fact made particularly evident in the labour market, where a more fluid and larger market has emerged. The percentage of the world's population tagged as migrants has risen from 2% to 3% over the last 50 years – and South-South migration forms around 50% of these stocks overall.

Migration brings economic benefits not only to migrants themselves and their countries of origin, but also to the countries of destination, in particular by helping to relieve sectors suffering from labour shortages and solve demographic imbalances between active and inactive populations. Yet, home country populations tend to reject immigration, citing threats to social cohesion and well-being. As a result, migration policies are increasingly restrictive. This happens not only in the North, but also in the South.

This paper turns to West Africa, where South-South migration is prevalent, to show that although regional economic migration is on the rise, policies dealing with integration are considered secondary. In fact, migration policies help shape the negative view attributed to migrants, rather than focusing on the benefits they bring to the social and economic well-being of the country. The paper reviews current best practices of integration around the world and explores the policy implications for countries in West Africa, including regional policies aimed at improving linkages between countries and their labour markets.

This paper is part of the "Effective Partnerships for Better Migration Management and Development" project, financially supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Since June of 2008, the project has aimed at carrying out an in-depth assessment of the migration-development relationship in Central America and West Africa in two critical policy domains: the governance of international migration at the global, regional, national and local levels; and the link between migration and labour markets in developing countries.

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RÉSUMÉ

Bien que les migrants Sud-Sud doivent faire face aux mêmes problèmes de discrimination et d'intégration que les migrants Sud-Nord, les flux Sud-Sud doivent être abordés sous un angle différent. Une étude approfondie de l'expérience migratoire en Afrique de l'Ouest, notamment au Ghana, montre qu'en dépit d'une prévalence des flux intra-régionaux, la plupart des gouvernements négligent la question de l'intégration, générant des coûts non seulement pour les immigrés et leurs familles, mais aussi pour les communautés d'accueil. Dans ce contexte, les modèles d'intégration – assimilation et multiculturalisme – utilisés dans le Nord ne s'appliquent pas forcément dans le Sud. D'une part, les frontières y sont généralement plus poreuses et les contrôles migratoires plus laxistes, ce qui rend les modèles d'assimilation inadaptés, la plupart des migrants ne restant pas suffisamment longtemps pour adopter les coutumes locales. D'autre part, il existe souvent une plus grande diversité linguistique, culturelle et ethnique en Afrique de l'Ouest, réduisant ainsi la portée du modèle multiculturel. Les problèmes de cohésion sociale qui en résultent sont renforcés par l'arrivée massive de réfugiés et de migrants de transit. Les politiques d'intégration dans le Sud devraient tenir compte de ces différences et se concentrer sur la protection des droits des migrants, sans pour autant oublier la lutte contre les discriminations et l'incorporation des immigrés dans la société.

Classification JEL: F22, J15, O15, O55

Mots clés: Migrations Sud-Sud, intégration des immigrés, Afrique de l'Ouest

ABSTRACT

Although South-South migrants face much of the same discrimination and integration challenges as their South-North counterparts, South-South flows need to be analysed from a different standpoint. An investigation of immigrant experience in West Africa, with particular focus on Ghana, shows that despite the prevalence of intra-regional migration, most governments neglect integration issues, generating costs not only for immigrants and their families, but also for host communities. Against this background, the standard models of integration used in the North – assimilation and multiculturalism – are not necessarily applicable. On the one hand, borders are generally more porous and immigration controls more lax, so that assimilation models are not well adapted as many migrants do not stay long enough to adopt local customs. On the other, national linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity tends to be higher in West Africa, so basing immigration integration on multicultural premise may have little impact. Integration policies in the South should take into account these differences and focus on the protection of migrant rights, while also fighting discrimination and fostering the incorporation of immigrants into society.

JEL Classification: F22, J15, O15, O55

Keywords: South-South migration, immigrant integration, West Africa

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I. INTRODUCTION

Should policies for the better integration of immigrants in West Africa be prioritised? Perhaps not if we consider the long list of challenges governments in the region have on their socio-economic agenda. How can West African countries emphasize integration issues when most of the locally born do not have access to many basic services themselves, such as adequate housing, education and health, and where bad job prospects are the norm, not the exception? Moreover, the long tradition of intra-regional mobility in West Africa, eased by relatively porous borders and strong cultural, linguistic and cultural ties, makes international migration a likely more diffuse notion than in Europe or North America.

But this perspective only scratches the surface of how integration must be understood in the region. The fact that immigrants come from neighbouring countries does not prevent political leaders from exploiting their precarious status. The history of post-independence West Africa has been punctuated by xenophobic pressures and immigrant scapegoating, particularly acute in times of economic turmoil (Adepoju, 2009). Immigrants in West Africa, in particular refugees and transit migrants, often face deplorable human rights violations. They also suffer recurrent discrimination, especially in the regions where there is strong ethnic or religious homogeneity of which they are not part of.

So then what might integration mean in West Africa? The analytical framework used in the North does not apply to the South in general, or to West Africa in particular. In fact, the notion itself of integration is challenged in most countries of the world, whatever the "model" in place – assimilation or multiculturalism (Simon, 2011). Socio-economic characteristics of both countries of destination and (self-selected) immigrants are different, as are the problems faced by the latter. But this does not mean that authorities should not tackle integration issues. In fact, the non-integration of immigrants may be more costly in the South than in the North when tensions spiral out of control.

If the experience in OECD countries is to provide any lesson, it is that integration must be dealt with before the build-up to these tensions makes it too difficult to manage. To minimise these problems, a pragmatic and coherent policy framework aimed at fighting the most insidious forms of discrimination while taking the economic, social and cultural contribution of immigrants better into account can help countries in the region mitigate eventual problems.

The paper relies heavily on the results of two workshops (one in Dakar, the other in Accra) and on interviews with experts, immigrants, non-governmental and international organisations, policy makers and private businesses in Ghana in 2010[1] to analyse how the

1. The questionnaire for the interviews is included in the annex.

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experience of immigrants in the South is different from those in the North. West Africa is an interesting region in which to study immigrant integration as it boasts the highest levels of (growing) intra-regional migration in the world. These regional labour movements present an economic opportunity but also a potential threat to social cohesion. Côte d'Ivoire erupted into civil war in the last decade, to cite one of the most extreme examples of non-integration. The wide diversity of economic engines in the region makes migration a natural part of the regional integration process.

This paper argues that although most migrants from West Africa are found in other West African countries, immigrant integration is not a current priority for many policy makers in these countries. Discrimination and the tendency of immigrants to live in makeshift communities however have helped breed divisions in society and moreover generate economic and social costs. Because migration is highly circular, labour activities are mostly informal and relative deprivation between locals and immigrants appear negligible, analysing immigrant integration in the South requires a different approach from that taken in the North.

The paper is organised in the following way. Section II describes and contrasts the prevalence of South-South over South-North migration with the lack of integration policy in West Africa. Section III discusses the concept of immigrant integration in West Africa, and compares it with notions used in other parts of the world, particularly the North. Section IV proposes a framework on which to formulate coherent policies with the goal of enhancing social cohesion while dealing with immigration in the South.

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II. MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICA: IS SOCIAL COHESION AT RISK?

II.1. The prevalence of intra-regional migration

Around 3% of the population of West Africa lives outside of its country of birth (OECD, 2009)[2] mostly in another West African country, as 75% of migrant stocks are within the region. By way of comparison, the share of intra-regional migration in 2010 is estimated at 63% in all of Sub-Saharan Africa, 31.5% in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 28.2% in South Asia, and only 12.9% in Latin America (World Bank, 2010).

As shown in Table 1, the main countries of emigration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are Burkina Faso (around 1.6 million emigrants in 2010), Côte d'Ivoire (1.2 million), Mali and Nigeria (each 1 million). Cape-Verde is the first country of emigration as a share of the population (37.5%), followed – by a long margin – by Liberia (10.5%) and Burkina Faso (9.7%). In most of these countries (11 out of 15), the first country of destination is another country of the region: Nigeria in four cases and Côte d'Ivoire in three.

On the other hand, the main countries of immigration in West Africa are Côte d'Ivoire (2.4 million immigrants in 2010), Ghana (1.9 million) and Nigeria (1.1 million). As a share of the population, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are the main receiving countries (16.6%, 11.2% and 7.6%, respectively). In each of these cases, the first country of origin is another ECOWAS member country, with the exception of Cape Verde, where the first country is Sao Tomé-et-Principe.

Extra-regional migration is therefore limited, at least in volume. In 2010, 7.5 million West African migrants officially lived in another country within the region, but only 1.4 million in Europe and 0.5 million in North America (World Bank, 2010).[3] In fact, only the migrants from 4 of 15 ECOWAS countries had an OECD country as a primary destination: Nigerians (United States), Gambians (Spain), Cape-Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans (Portugal). Despite the prevalence of French in the region and the weight of former colonial links, France does not represent the primary destination of migrants in any West African country, no more than the United Kingdom does in the English-speaking countries.[4]

2. This percentage falls in line with the number of migrants worldwide, which is also 3% (UNDP, 2009).

3. Since the early 2000s, sub-Saharan Africans have begun to emigrate to Latin America: first because the wage differential between most African and Latin American countries is significant enough to convince would-be migrants to cross the Atlantic; second because border controls are less stringent than in Europe and North America; third because Latin America serves as a beachhead to the United States. But this phenomenon is still marginal.

4. Many Lebanese immigrants have lived for generations in various countries of West Africa (Chua, 2003). While their total numbers are stagnating, they have progressively been replaced by immigrants from

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Table 1. **Migration in West Africa, 2010**

Country	Stock of emigrants, thousands (a)	Main country of destination (b)	Stock of immigrants, thousands (a)	Main country of origin (c)
Benin	531.6 (5.8)	Nigeria (44.8)	232.0 (2.5)	Niger (34.8)
Burkina Faso	1 576.4 (9.7)	Côte d'Ivoire (83.1)	1 043.0 (6.4)	Côte d'Ivoire (80.8)
Cape Verde	192.5 (37.5)	Portugal (32.9)	12.1 (2.4)	Sao Tomé-et-Principe (33.7)
Côte d'Ivoire	1 170.9 (5.4)	Burkina Faso (71.9)	2 406.7 (11.2)	Burkina Faso (54.5)
Gambia	64.9 (3.7)	Spain (27.9)	290.1 (16.6)	Senegal (61.1)
Ghana	824.9 (3.4)	Nigeria (22.5)	1 851.8 (7.6)	Mali (n.a)
Guinea	532.7 (5.2)	Côte d'Ivoire (25.2)	394.6 (3.8)	Liberia (48.0)
Guinea-Bissau	111.3 (6.8)	Portugal (27.1)	19.2 (1.2)	Senegal (51.0)
Liberia	431.9 (10.5)	Guinea (43.8)	96.3 (2.3)	Guinea (51.9)
Mali	1 012.7 (7.6)	Côte d'Ivoire (43.5)	162.7 (1.2)	Côte d'Ivoire (47.7)
Niger	386.9 (2.4)	Nigeria (22.6)	202.2 (1.3)	Mali (34.5)
Nigeria	1 000.0 (0.6)	U.S. (21.1)	1 127.7 (0.7)	Benin (21.2)
Senegal	636.2 (4.9)	Gambia (27.9)	210.1 (1.6)	Guinea (38.5)
Sierra Leone	267.0 (4.6)	Guinea (58.8)	106.8 (1.8)	Guinea (64.7)
Togo	368.7 (5.4)	Nigeria (31.4)	185.4 (2.7)	Benin (40.1)

Notes: (a) figures in brackets correspond to the percentage of total population.
(b) share of total emigrants from the country of origin in the main country of destination.
(c) share of total immigrants from the main country of origin in the country of destination.
(n.a) not available.

Source: World Bank (2010).

other parts of Asia. The Chinese diaspora, for instance, has significantly expanded over the last decade. In this respect, three categories of migrants emerge: traders, temporary workers in Chinese multinational companies, and transit migrants on their way to Europe (Ma Mung, 2009).

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Incentives to migrate out of Africa are very high, even more so when considering the wage gap with high-income OECD countries as well as the demographic imbalance in the ageing developed economies. Yet, four main factors explain the current disproportion between migration movements within the region and to OECD countries:

- The 1979 ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of persons, the right of establishment and residence helped spur migration within the region. In a context of strong historical, cultural and linguistic regional ties, and despite its many limits,[5] the protocol facilitates both regular and circular migration.
- The financial constraints faced by most West Africans do not enable them to move to the richer countries of the North (Hatton and Williamson, 2005). The (opportunity) costs associated with the decision to migrate include those linked to transport (which, due to smuggling costs, are typically higher for irregular flows), but also the time required to arrive safe and sound (again more significant for irregular migration, which implies transiting through several countries) as well as the adaptation period in the host country (notably for job search), which can be explained by the existence – or lack – of social networks.
- The hardening of immigration policies in OECD countries over the last decades has limited migration from Africa. The combination of administrative (*e.g.* the external borders of the Schengen Area) and physical barriers, with the erection of walls (*e.g.* at the Spanish-Moroccan border), has forced would-be migrants to either abandon their plans and stay home, or, more presumably, move to another nearby country or yet again, attempt to cross borders in the North through irregular channels. The result has been increasing South-South migration, with many migrants "stuck in transit". Even though international statistics are still unable to give an accurate account of this phenomenon, it has become common knowledge that the North African countries of Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have become the focal point for thousands of West African migrants trying to reach the shores of Europe.
- The rapid economic growth of some of the region's economies, such as in Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria, contributes to both decreasing emigration from these countries to the North and increasing immigration from neighbouring ones. Given the restrictive migration regimes in the North, fast-growing economies offer more labour opportunities to their citizens, who also benefit from a rise in real wages, and have fewer incentives to emigrate (Hatton and Williamson, 2010). In addition, the improvement in economic conditions implies a widening of the wage gap with the other economies of the region, which makes them increasingly attractive to potential migrants.

5. Even though ECOWAS enabled the free movement of labour in 1979, initial individual country reaction was to restrict mobility at their own borders, and the protocol was never fully and truly implemented. In fact, several countries (Senegal in 1990, Benin in 1998 and Côte d'Ivoire in 1999) have called-up obscure clauses in the protocol in the past, in effect cancelling the rights that accompany it (OECD, 2008).

In addition, there are two reasons why intra-regional migration will likely keep increasing in the future. A first reason is the demographic boom in Africa. Between 2010 and 2050, the still-in-motion demographic transition will contribute to expanding working-age population by 125%, from 0.58 to 1.3 billion (UNDP, 2009). This implies high levels of labour market competition for young adults with few economic opportunities and low real wages.

A second reason is related to environmental changes, in particular those induced by global warming. The deterioration of the natural environment in the Sahelian countries, as witnessed in Burkina Faso and Mali, is already driving intra-regional migration (OECD, 2009). But the volume of displaced people may increase as deforestation, desertification and flooding disrupts livelihoods dependent on the stability of local ecosystems.

As a result, new corridors, for both destination and transit, will develop and adapt to new realities. This implies new destinations with new immigrants leading to situations in these countries that have never existed in such proportions.

II.2. The lack of integration policies and its consequences

Despite the growing importance of South-South migration, many West African countries do not consider integration a priority.[6] Yet ignoring integration comes with a cost, one that is ignored until problems become insuperable and there is a political backlash in reaction. The lack of integration policies is often reinforced by discriminatory practices, both official and hidden. Moreover, the high concentration of refugees and migrants stuck-in-transit in the region contributes to increasing the vulnerability of migrants and the socio-economic costs faced by the "host" society.

As the number of immigrants in several West African countries has risen, challenges related to social cohesion have naturally surfaced in tandem. Like in the richer countries of the North, where there is a longer tradition of immigration and integration policy, local populations do not always perceive the arrival and settlement of foreign workers favourably.

Low-skilled immigrants, in particular, are often blamed for taking jobs away from locals and applying downward pressure on their salaries and bargaining power. They are often held responsible for rises in unemployment and insecurity and viewed as putting pressure on society and draining resources, all the while acting in their own interests, sometimes as groups. Foreigners then serve as scapegoats for the economic problems of the country – and above all when there is no social safety net in place.

This makes scapegoating easy for policy makers eager to win favour with voters. Immigrants are thus often held responsible for all that ails in society and eventually, without proper policy, such situations incite riots, attacks and civil conflict. In this respect, Côte d'Ivoire is a good illustration of how the escalation of nationalism, in this case through the controversial concept of *"ivoirité"*, can generate civil unrest and never-ending political crises (ICG, 2004; Moustapha, 2011). By contrast, a country like Ghana, whose economic success also relies on

6. As one interviewee in Ghana put it, "because they are in the minority, the topic is not a priority for the government". In fact, the tendency has been to put more resources into controlling borders and irregular immigrants.

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immigrants, has been spared from major migration-related social problems, at least in the last decades. But nothing says that Ghana is impervious to stigmatisation and discrimination against immigrants. Tensions have already surfaced in the last few years due to the increase in immigration, and the situation could rapidly worsen if public authorities do not react in time.

Three elements that make integration efforts difficult in West Africa are explored below: discrimination, the formation of ghettos and high vulnerability.

Discrimination

Discrimination against immigrants in West Africa is not new. Following the succession of independence in West Africa, the position of immigrants had become increasingly insecure. In fact, the achievement of independence provided several countries with an opportunity to rid themselves of foreigners and culminated with a series of expulsions. Nearly every West African country had been involved at some level, but the most infamous case was the deportation of 100 000 Nigerians from Ghana in July of 1969. According to the Ghanaian government, *"their presence was not conducive to the public good"* (Peil, 1971).[7]

While most countries are much more tolerant today, the full integration of immigrants has never been part of the political equation in the region. In 2004, for instance, Côte d'Ivoire passed a law that essentially gave Ivoirians priority over foreigners in all types of jobs, from qualified to manual labour.[8] Likewise, Sierra Leone's constitution authorises discrimination against "non-native" citizens (Chua, 2003).[9] And deportations are still occurring. In November 2010, for instance, Nigeria deported 700 irregular immigrants from the North of the country. In some cases, immigrants are not even returned to their home country but rather to a nearby country with which the host country has signed a readmission agreement, potentially fuelling additional conflict.

This behaviour is most evident in times of crisis, when immigrants become the scapegoats for all that ails, providing the authorities momentum for expulsions. The spread of the Ivorian conflict was summarised by the ICG (2004) as follows: *"The belief that immigrants steal bread from the mouth of Ivorians grew as the economic situation fell into crisis"*.[10] Without proper integration and moreover facilitated by marginalisation, immigrants constitute one of the easiest targets for governments to blame, and for local workers to vent against when things go sour. And it is only more worrying when it is easier to distinguish the two groups.

7. This was later followed by the expulsion of more than 1 million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983, although it can be argued that the expulsion was not a product of a crisis but rather a boom (Nigeria was enjoying an oil boom).

8. Decision 1437 of 19 February 2004.

9. Section 27 of the constitution states that "no person shall be discriminated against by a law-enforcing agent or public officer or person in public authority" but an additional clause (b) adds that "the right does not apply with respect to persons who are not Sierra Leoneans or those who acquire citizenship of Sierra Leone by registration, by naturalisation or by resolution of parliament".

10. Original french text: *La croyance selon laquelle les immigrants "ôtent le pain de la bouche des Ivoiriens" a grandi à mesure que la situation économique s'enlisait dans la crise.*

In this respect, the current trend in many developing countries of creating individual identification systems, though necessary, has many worried that immigrants will be left out – or worse – will facilitate expulsions and discrimination (see Box 1).

Box 1. Identifying Individuals in Ghana – will immigrants count?

A number of countries in the South, for instance India (2007), Gambia (2009) and Uruguay (2011), have recently adopted individual identification document systems. These programmes are typically costly to implement since they require expensive counterfeiting mechanisms with biometric technology, including fingerprints and optical security features.

Following its creation in April 2006 with the Identification Authority Act (Act 707), the Ghanaian National Identification Authority began actively developing a national database collecting all kinds of information on Ghanaian citizens for the first time. And in early 2011, authorities began handing out securitised identification cards, aptly named *ghanacard*, which enables its holders to carry-out transactions directly with government and public sector institutions, civil society organisations and private sector businesses. Most importantly for authorities, they will help identify citizens. In fact, the ultimate aim of the National Identification Authority is to "set up a national information and security database". The system reportedly has a projected cost of USD 40-50 million.

It is not clear however, how and whether such systems they will help or deter the integration of immigrants. What will this mean for the country's irregular immigrants as only those with regular status were authorised to register? In fact, the issue hit a high point in late 2010, following the accidental shooting of an unidentified taxi driver by border guards at the Afloa crossing between Togo and Ghana. The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) urged that the new national identification system cover all immigrants at the very least along this border, where many cross daily for work and informal commercial activities.

The plan of the GIS is to equip border communities with special identification cards, complementary to the national system being put in place. In fact, foot crossings through legal means will likely rise at this border point, since Ghana and Togo inaugurated a foot bridge, circumventing roads normally taken by vehicles, to speed up the process. The GIS notably highlighted the importance of local leaders in helping to create a more fluid work space.

An important longer term question is whether the tolerance the country has exemplified over the years for irregular immigrants will remain, now that it will be easier to differentiate between foreigners and the local population.

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Official discriminatory practice can come in different forms – some more apparent and destructive than others. In most cases, discrimination results from the lack of legal and administrative protection. Discrimination can materialise in the form of lower wages and barred access to jobs, housing and services. In its most extreme forms, it may be synonymous with human trafficking and labour exploitation. In 2005, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination denounced the Nigerian government for what it considered *"active discrimination by people who consider themselves as the original inhabitants to their region against settlers from other States"*.[11] As a matter of fact, Nigerian constitutional guarantees against racial discrimination do not extend to non-citizens (CLO, 2005).

Integration may be challenged in regions where social hierarchies are pre-determined. In several West African countries, caste systems continue to dictate social relations, preferential treatment as well as the jobs one can do. In fact, the same processes that sometimes make migration a smooth process (porous borders, seasonal circularity, closely linked cultural traits), may hinder it in others. The fact that borders and ethnic lines are not congruent in West Africa means that the integration of immigrants in certain corridors may be part of these social processes. Such is the case for the Igbo and the Osu caste system in the Southern corridor of West Africa, the Mande in the West of West Africa and the Wolof in Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal. Ethnic discrimination is highly prevalent in many parts of West Africa: the Tuareg in the North, the Griot in Senegal, the Yoruba and Hausa in Nigeria to cite a few recent examples. This type of discrimination may take place whether migration is internal or international in nature.

Religion also forms a core determinant of discrimination in West Africa. According to the USDoS (2010b), Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria have claimed to feel discriminated against on several levels; in Guinea it is Christians claiming discrimination. The types of discrimination range from citizenship and voting rights in Côte d'Ivoire, employment access in Nigeria to political and social exclusion in Ghana.[12]

Many countries have attempted to take steps in minimising discrimination. In 2008, Côte d'Ivoire enacted a law against xenophobia in which those found guilty of xenophobia, racism or tribalism face five to ten years and a significant fine. In Mali, both major Christian and Muslim holidays are official state holidays. But even in contexts of strong legislation, the largely informal labour market and lax legal system ensure that unfavourable practices remain. Visibly, the law in Côte d'Ivoire has done little to curb anti-immigrant violence. Likewise, although the Nigerian and Senegalese labour laws apply to legal foreign workers, not all companies respect these laws in practice (USDoS, 2010a).

11. www.fidh.org, "Racial Discrimination in Nigeria: a UN committee denounces the inertia of the Nigerian government".

12. Discriminatory practices against immigrants came up in many interviews. As one interviewee put it "Immigrants contribute mostly positively to the economy, but not necessarily legally. Immigrants would register a business under a Ghanaian name and contribute positively, but it's illegal to run that business".

It is worth noting as well that most West African countries (all but Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia) are signatories to the International *Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, an international pledge to protect migrants' rights within one's borders.[13] While the Convention is based on soft law principles, its ratification has raised awareness of the issue of immigrant rights in countries not accustomed to dealing with the issue. In 2010, a consortium of NGOs condemned the Senegalese government for not complying with its obligations after ratifying it in 1999.[14]

Ghettos

Resentment and opposition can force immigrants to seek or create enclaves of poverty-stricken ghettos. Unbeknownst or ignored by authorities, many immigrants in the large slums of cities in West Africa, such as Makoko in Lagos or West Point in Monrovia, live segregated from the grip of authority. As the marginalisation of immigrants into separate spaces of society continues, the build-up of ghettos tend to reinforce themselves. The neighbourhood slum of Old Fadama in Accra has seen its share of foreigners increase over the years partly due to its reputation as a safe haven for immigrants (see Box 2).

The proportion of slums as a percentage of urban centres is typically over 50% in West Africa.[15] The majority of slum dwellers comprise three not mutually-exclusive groups: the poor and uneducated, women and migrants. The plight of living in slums is to be excluded from *"the right to vote, the right to enter and enjoy all areas of the city, the right to use social and cultural facilities and venues, the right to access basic services, and various other rights which effectively restrict their full enjoyment of the right to the city."* (UN-Habitat, 2010).

So why do immigrants crowd together if it exposes them to finger-pointing? First, there is an aspect of familiarity. Migrants may not want to venture into the unknown and rather seek a certain level of comfort. Second, local perceptions against immigrants lead to stereotyping and eventually to discrimination. Within enclaves, immigrants have a greater chance of being treated as equals or continue living within their pre-established social hierarchies. Third, enclaves may provide immigrants without legal documentation to live and stay in the country while being sheltered from authority. Immigrants may feel safer if everyone around them is also without required "papers". Conversely, they may feel that within an immigrant enclave they can blend easier into a larger group where there is a mix of regular and irregular workers.

13. http://treaties.un.org/

14. www.fidh.org, "Civil society organizations denounce violations by Senegal of the UN Migrant Workers Convention".

15. Progress in target 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aims at reducing the number of slum-dwellers in the world and has contributed to helping immigrants move out of dire living conditions. The success of policies aiming towards this goal has been one of the success stories of the MDGs; from 2000 to 2010, 227 million people moved out of slums, 2.2 times the target and 10 years earlier (UN-Habitat, 2010).

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Box 2. Finding Refuge in migrant ghettos: the case of Old Fadama, Accra

Accra's well-known Old Fadama settlement constitutes a good illustration of the problem. Nicknamed "Sodom and Gomorrah" (or more formally "Agbogbloshie"), Old Fadama is like a world in itself, made up of diasporas from all over Ghana and other West African countries. It is a highly stigmatised place. But although it may appear chaotic to municipality officials, it is very organised, with its own rules and regulations. This type of setting is common in many informal settlements across West Africa.

However, residents of Old Fadama suffer poor sanitation, and women are vulnerable to sexual predators and disease – the settlement lies in a region prone to flooding. Education services are rare. Many immigrants are temporary residents (so children are often not resident long enough to settle) and make return trips home to visit, to help at harvest time, or to try to start a business venture. Most work in the informal economy, particularly making and selling foodstuffs (Pellow, 2011; Tufuor, 2009).

Unfortunately for many of these workers and residents, Old Fadama also sits in the way of government plans which by 2009 took a firm decision to evict the more than 40 000 dwellers without any form of compensation or relocation. While many immigrants have since been evicted, a constant battle over the right to keep their homes has garnered support from other communities, including some outside of Ghana. The community has since moved to building networks across Accra of community-based and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a scope which goes beyond the prevention of the Old Fadama evictions to addressing broader issues of social exclusion faced by Ghana's urban poor. But the looming threat of eviction remains.

As ghettos develop, they tend to become increasingly exclusive as a result of a grouped protective measure against xenophobic attacks. Ghettos also deal a strong blow to the natural environment and eventually become nests of extreme poverty, sometimes even as the country gets richer. Because these enclaves form the rock bed of very low forms of sanitation, they act as vectors for resistant and deadly diseases, such as influenza pandemics, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (UN-Habitat, 2010). In addition, without schools and medical clinics, human capital development, and thus social and intergenerational mobility, is halted.

Pockets of extreme poverty not only breed disease and circular poverty traps but also growing negative sentiments against locally-born workers and public authority. There is a risk that the social contract erodes while organised crime and popular forms of justice develop. As the infringement of local laws and customs by immigrants rises, costs also increase for the receiving country in providing more administrative services (*e.g.* police) to maintain order. In many cases, these tensions escalate to violence.

Refugees and stranded migrants

A common trend throughout the world is the increasing vulnerability of immigrants, left unprotected by authorities willing to turn a blind eye to sustain positive popular opinion. This is

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particularly the case for two notably large and vulnerable groups in West Africa: refugees and transit migrants. Both, however, deal with very different situations.

The sporadic conflicts that occur in West Africa have given rise to refugees fleeing to nearby countries, with intentions to either eventually return home, integrate into the new host country or resettle in a third country. The conflicts in Mauritania, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo over the years for instance have left many people displaced in countries other than their own, even after years of the conflict's end. In 2010, about 150 000 registered refugees were living in various West African countries (Table 2). In Guinea-Bissau, over 40% of immigrants are refugees, representing the highest share in the region; the next highest relative figure is in Senegal (slightly over 10%). In absolute numbers, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal have the highest number of registered refugees.[16]

Table 2. **Refugees and Asylum Seekers in West Africa in 2010**

Country	Number of refugees	Asylum seekers
Benin	7205	124
Burkina Faso	543	515
Cape Verde	24	7
Côte d'Ivoire	24604	222
Gambia	10118	69
Ghana	13658	598
Guinea	15325	928
Guinea Bissau	7898	289
Liberia	6952	535
Mali	13538	1706
Nigeria	9127	1145
Niger	325	32
Senegal	22151	2796
Sierra-Leone	9051	211
Togo	8531	150

Source: UNHCR.

16. The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010 and early 2011 contributed to the increase in the number of refugees in the region. By March 2011, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had estimated that 116,000 Ivoirians had reportedly fled to eight different West African countries: Liberia, Ghana, Togo, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Nigeria and reports also surfaced that immigrant cocoa workers – mainly from Burkina Faso and Mali – were amongst the targeted groups by the militia ("Côte d'Ivoire: West African Immigrants Massacred", Human Rights Watch, 31 March 2011).

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The UNHCR is the primary international authority on decisions made for refugees; it is also responsible for their temporary and long term integration. While refugees are provided with access to health care, education and specific skills-training, they often also arrive in a hostile environment. Xenophobia can arise naturally because nationals see the new arrivals obtain special treatment from the United Nations. The fact that the UNHCR normally organises refugees in camps may facilitate the formation of enclaves, and limit the possibilities for their social inclusion. National governments also intervene in the integration of refugees. The government of Benin, for instance, granted access to to school to refugees from Togo following civil conflict in their home country in 2005 (USDoS, 2010a).

Stranded migrants en route from West Africa to Europe form another particular group at risk of human rights violations (UNHCR, 2010). Since 2000 a major anti-immigrant backlash in Libya has contributed to a diversification of trans-Saharan migration routes and an increasing presence of immigrants in other North African countries (de Haas, 2007; Hamood, 2006). But, reliable figures on transit migrants are hard to come by.

Bensaâd (2003) reported that in 2003, the city of Agadez in Niger recorded a minimum of 65 000 transit migrants heading north. In fact, Niger is increasingly becoming a major point of convergence for many immigrants going to Libya and Algeria, either to stay or continue on to Europe. One of the reasons is that the government has taken a very open position in its approach to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocol on free movement (OECD, 2009). For this reason, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recently opened two migrant transit and assistance centres, in Dirkou (on the route to/from Libya) and Assamaka (on the route to/from Algeria).[17] The 2011 Libyan crisis has clearly dampened the prospects associated with migrating to Libya. A Reuters report estimated that over 200 000 migrants returned to Niger as f June 2011 and that billions of CFA francs were lost in trade and remittances since conflict erupted earlier in February.[18]

In addition to being victims of xenophobia as well as racial and ethnic discrimination, the irregular status of immigrants in transit countries subjects them to a wide range of abuse committed not only by smugglers and human traffickers, but also by border guards, immigration and police officers as well as by regular locals. Violations committed include extortion and exploitation, arbitrary detention in inhumane conditions, lack of due process, deprivation of access to basic services as well as physical abuse and harassment.[19] Unaccompanied children and women are the primary victims. In this respect, the lack of access to social networks and legal aid

17. While many migrants cross intermediate countries in route to another country, arising phenomenon is that of migrants staying in the transit countries and taking advantage of the flow of people coming through. Their impact on local economies can be considerable. In Agadez for instance, economic and cultural spillovers are being enjoyed by emerging transit cities. The city is being transformed by the new dynamic and lucrative transit migration sector: hotels, food, networks, all being exploited by the many individuals choosing to stay rather than move on (Amadou *et al*. 2009).

18. "Libyan crisis hammering Niger economy – president, Reuters Africa, July 2nd 2011.

19. In August and September 2010, an estimated 600 to 700 West African immigrants were arrested following police raids in Morocco. Many of those captured were reportedly left deep in the desert near the Algerian border (Touzenis, 2010).

services increase the risks of being forced into commercial sex activity, contracting sexually transmitted infections and incurring unwanted pregnancies.

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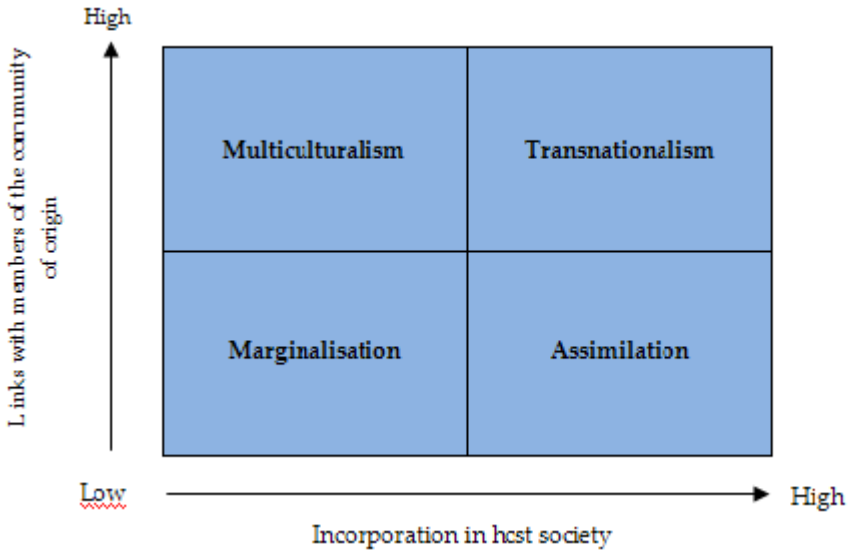
III. RE-THINKING IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

The lack of integration does not only affect immigrants. Many individuals, households and firms gain when immigrants are successfully integrated, and everyone loses when they are not.[20] Therefore, how can immigrants be better integrated in West Africa, given the added difficulties of hidden and official discrimination as well as the particular cases of refugees and stranded migrants? Turning to traditional models of integration, notably those dominating the debate in the North, may not be the optimal solution. Instead, a new organic integration model, taking into account the realities of the labour market and the general makeup of West African societies should be developed.

As pointed out by Sadiq (2009), the understanding of citizenship is based "*overwhelmingly on the states of Western Europe and North America. In these states the government's power to regulate entry and settlement is unquestioned.*" The same can be said of immigrant integration. The notion most policy makers understand of integration is relatively concrete, where immigrants stay permanently, learn the language and eventually their measurable socio-economic statuses (wages, types of jobs, education, school quality, consumer goods) converge to match those of the locally-born. This fine and mostly distinguishable line is much more abstract in the South. To borrow from Sadiq (2009), the *distinguishability assumption*, the assumption upon which we can actively distinguish between citizens and immigrants in the North applies much less in the global South. In this respect, Figure 1 displays a 2x2 typology of integration models based on two cornerstones of societal living: links with members of the community of origin (in the country of immigration) and incorporation into the host society.

20. As pointed out in interviews, for instance, "migrants from Burkina Faso are often viewed as contributing positively to the Ghanaian economy by establishing businesses and creating opportunities for employment".

Figure 1. **A typology of integration models**



Marginalisation is frequent both in the North and the South. It occurs when immigrants fail to integrate into the host society at the same time as they break links with fellow-countrymen. This is precisely the situation that leads to increased vulnerability and generates high costs for society.

At the other end is transnationalism, which refers to immigrants perfectly incorporated into host society, while also maintaining strong links with their community of origin, both in sending and receiving countries. Transnationalism is a growing theme for migration research in the North (Guarnizo, 2003; IMISCOE, 2010; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). But even though the idea behind transnationalism has existed for centuries, especially in the South where seasonal circular migration constitutes a lifestyle, it is an ideal type whose conditions are difficult to fulfil. Cape Verde is often highlighted as a typical example of a country with many citizens living a transnational lifestyle (Batalha and Carling, 2008).

The two other cases correspond to intermediate situations, but also to two very different models of integration, which dominate discussions in the North. In the assimilation model, a significant degree of cultural adaptation by immigrants is assumed. In the multiculturalism approach, the capacity of a community to structure collective life prevails. The multicultural character of society is alleged to be reinforced by mutual understanding between various sub-communities in the country. But neither really fits the realities in West Africa.

III.1. Limits of the assimilation model for West Africa

Models that aim for the assimilation of immigrants, as in continental Europe, are not very adapted to societies in the South in general, and in West Africa in particular. First, because of a neighbourhood effect, migration from nearby countries is more prevalent in the South than in the North, thus reducing problems of integration; second, because the overall economic and social climate is equally dire for migrants and the locally born, relative deprivation tends to be lower than in the North.

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Neighbourhood effect

Despite the gradual global fall in the reliance on language and colonial ties,[21] migration within ECOWAS still relies primarily on physical proximity. It is a fact that South-South migration stocks between neighbouring countries are more prevalent than between South and North. 45 out of 63 developing countries (71%) whose emigrants have as their first destination another developing country share a border with that country. Mexico is the only developing country (out of 78) sharing a border with the first country of destination of its emigrants, namely the United States, when that country is developed. The ECOWAS region is one of the most fluid in the world. As mentioned earlier, 75% of West African migrants are live within the region and 73% of countries (11 of 15) have another ECOWAS member country as its first destination. Moreover, nearly all member countries (14 out of 15 or 93%) have another member country as the first source of immigrants. Even though transport costs are falling worldwide, a solid land border affords easier travel and lower opportunity costs.

In addition, the formalities for entering a country are easier to circumvent or simply ignore in many countries of the South than in the North; what is regulatory and legal in the South is not necessarily reflected in reality. Governments are overburdened with other priorities, which means that, with a limited administrative capacity, immigration controls are often overlooked. In cases where that issue is indeed dealt with, it is usually and increasingly done under the pretext of national security concerns. This has direct implications for integration. As a large amount of labour movements in the South can be attributed to short-term movements to areas where borders are often left unmonitored, the migratory system in this sense is smooth and seamless – and pro-cyclical with the demand for labour.

The neighbourhood effect means it is easier not only to emigrate but also to integrate into another country. In fact, cultural and linguistic ties play a primary role, particularly for lower-skilled (and temporary) immigrants. The Ewe from Togo, for instance, seek work in the eastern regions of Ghana, where Ewe is the primary language, a factor that facilitates their seasonal migration for work in the cocoa plantations. Some languages have even evolved as primary migratory route languages, joining people with similar customs across large spaces. Such is the case with the Hausa language and the Islamic faith, facilitating trade relations in West Africa for centuries. These ties go beyond language: religion, food, working habits and family customs all help in forming immigration routes (Amor *et al.*, 2010).

These examples demonstrate that it is not necessarily the ability to speak the country's national language that facilitates migration and integration. In Ghana the national language is English while in Togo it is French. Hausa is a recognized national language in only two countries (Niger and Nigeria) despite its wide use across West Africa, and even beyond. International borders split groups with similar languages and cultures, and the migratory links that continue to bind them after decades, sometimes centuries, are international in nature.

21. Many West Africans, for instance, are increasingly finding job opportunities in non-historically linked countries like Italy, Spain and the United States (OECD, 2009), and also outside of OECD countries (Minvielle, 2010; Haugen, 2011).

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Relative deprivation

In many developing countries, local people often do not have access to formal employment, decent housing or social protection. At the same time, the absence of a comprehensive welfare state in many developing countries lowers economic and social discrepancies between foreign-born and local-born populations and makes integration less central.

One significant example is related to informality. Despite the rise in the number of multinational companies in the South, the few high-quality jobs that have been created are often filled through international recruiting. The lack of formal job creation by the private sector means that it has a smaller role to play in the integration of new workers than it normally has in the North. The high prevalence of informality in the South (over 50%) implies that job insecurity affects individuals, whether they are immigrants or not. One consequence of this lack of formal jobs is that the absence of a welfare state affects equally both immigrants and local workers: when economic shocks hit the country, both suffer from the lack of a social safety net.

Differentiating between regular and irregular immigrants, even on basic civil rights, may thus be largely futile in the South. Indeed, immigrants are disproportionately represented in the informal sector (Amin, 2010; De Vreyer *et al*., 2009 for examples in West Africa), because of the type of channels they use to enter the country, the sectors they work in, and the low administrative capacity of the destination country properly to register them. Because the informal sector helps them blend into society, authorities often have little capacity to count and manage their inflow. In many countries, identification cards do not even exist for the locally born, let alone immigrants, although change is under way in several countries. What, therefore, is regarded as a lack of integration in the North is the normal condition of most citizens in the South.[22]

III.2. Limits of the multiculturalism model for West Africa

The "multiculturalism" model, popular in Anglo-Saxon countries, is also not adapted to the challenges faced by migrant-receiving countries in the South, in particular in West Africa. Many developing countries already display a great diversity of backgrounds. First, the geographic diversity implies that immigrants face very different challenges according to the country in which they settle. Even within countries, geographic and demographic differences are

22. That is until relative deprivation between the two groups spreads. One respondent answered that "some immigrants end up taking jobs that Ghanaians should be entitled to, using Ghanaian facilities but paying their taxes in their home countries, or engaging in criminal activities in Ghana," and "the government needs to set out clear rules to ensure that immigrants do not compete unfavourably against poor Ghanaians and do not have access to more/better facilities than Ghanaians. In many responses, caution was exercised in stating that immigrants are welcome as long as they obey the rules, in answers such as "immigrants are integrated as long as they respect the rules and regulations of the host community"; "unless a crime is committed, they have no problems living in any part of Ghana"; and "tension occurs if a crime is committed or if the immigrant appears to have some form of upper hand over the locals". One respondent answered that some immigrants contribute economically to the country, while others "also engage in negative practices like the drug trade and illegal mining activities thereby damaging the environment."

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considerable. The dichotomy between rural and urban settlements, coupled with the population density in migrant-receiving areas, is particularly significant in terms of immigrant integration. The low level of national economic integration in many countries means that many regions operate semi-autonomously; regional cultures thus dominate in economic, social, cultural and even legal aspects.

Moreover, and even if the neighbouring effect means that cultures are somewhat similar, most societies in the South already exhibit high levels of cultural diversity.[23] Even if the Ewe and Akan share relatively similar habits compared to the Jat and Bengalis in Southeast Asia, it does not mean their habits are not different (and vice versa). Based on pure ethnicity, the South is in general more diverse – but cultures between migrants and locally born populations are relatively closer.

Cultural diversity is a consequence of the geographic diversity of West Africa. Even though a significant share of migration from Southern countries consists of intra-regional flows, cultural differences between countries of origin and destination remain significant. In particular, the diversification of flows in the last years implies growing cultural differences between immigrants and native populations, which may deter integration (as discussed in various contexts and regions in Amor *et al*., 2010; Lucassen, 2005; Ozyurt, 2009). In these circumstances relying on a model with the objective of facilitating the ethnic character of many communities may simply be aiming for the status quo – and not necessarily be helping integration.

As an illustration, Figures 2 and 3 show ethnic and linguistic fractionalisation in a number of OECD countries in comparison with West Africa.[24] Both indicate a much higher prevalence of diversity in West Africa. Even in countries considered very multi-ethnic, such as the United States and Belgium, diversity is lower than in West Africa.

23. In general, respondents answered that integration was not a problem for immigrants in Ghana, giving answers such as "immigrants are hardly noticed and treated differently in Ghana", "some immigrants move in quietly without any problems" and "the government should be responsible for all people". Some even expressed that "with time refugees are socially and economically integrated into Ghanaian society. Some of the Liberian refugees are still in Ghana as workers and are married to Ghanaians." Even though they may be mostly in irregular situations, as one respondent put it, "immigrants in Ghana are not really integrated formally since it is difficult to get your papers straight, but nevertheless it is easy to blend in, especially if you are black".

24. The average of ethnic and linguistic fractionalisation is, respectively, 0.24 and 0.23 in OECD countries, as against 0.73 and 0.75 in West Africa.

Figure 2. – **Ethnic fractionalisation by country, OECD vs. West Africa**

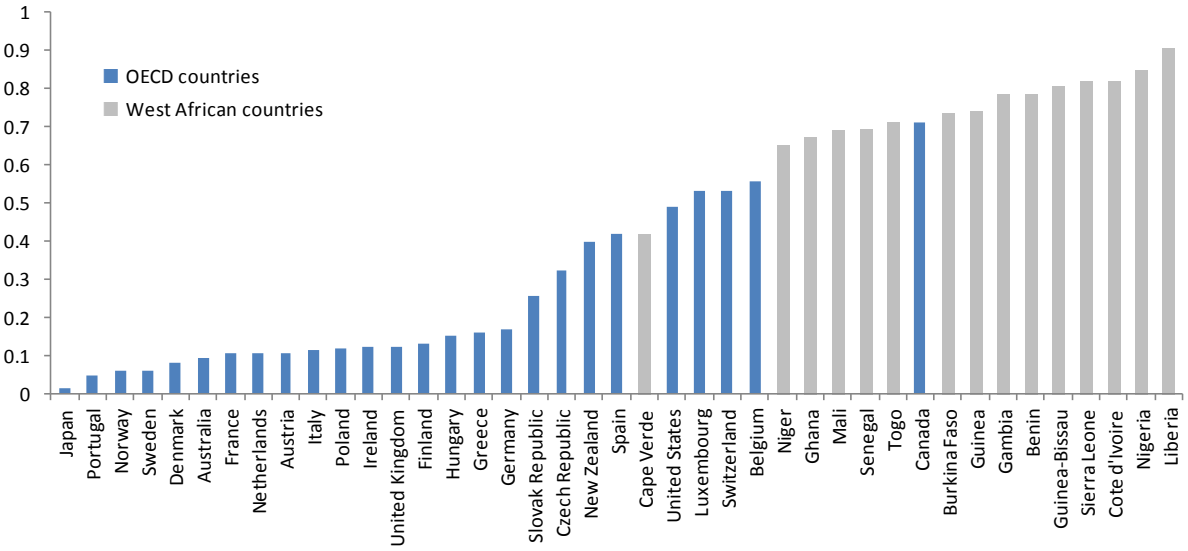
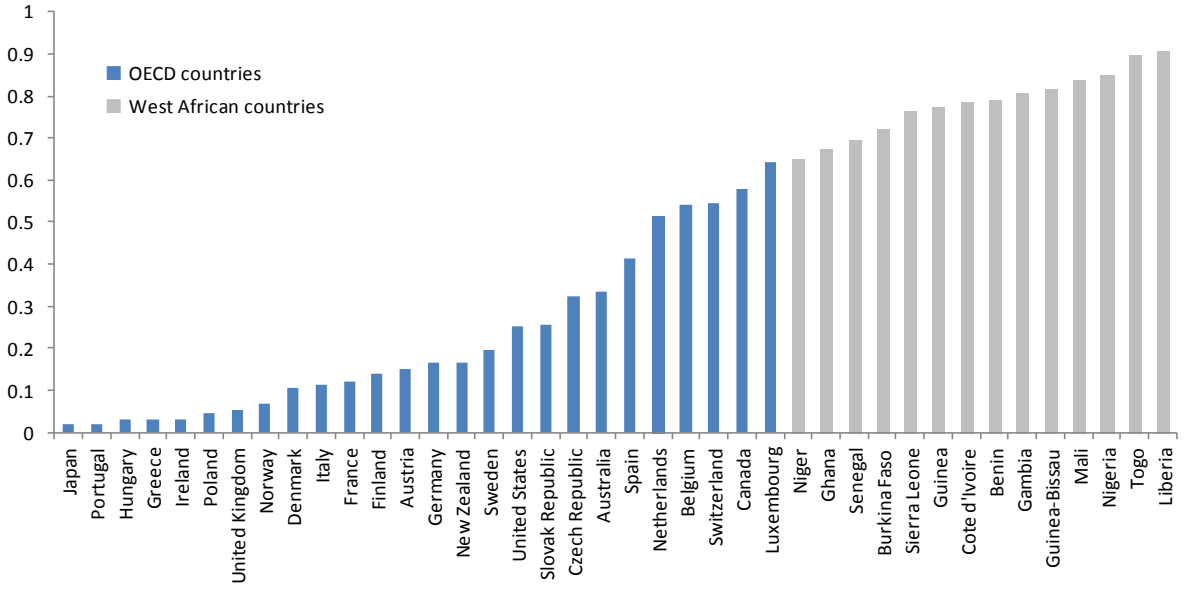


Figure 3. – **Linguistic fractionalisation by country, OECD vs. West Africa**



Notes for Figures 2 and 3: The fractionalisation dataset measures the degree of ethnic (racial characteristics), linguistic and religious heterogeneity in various countries (only linguistic and ethnic are shown). The higher the index, the more fractionalised are the countries. In most cases the primary source is national censuses, and often based on subjective judgement. Information on how the index is compiled and issues of comparability are explained in Alesina *et al.* (2010).

Source: Alesina *et al.* (2003), revised in 2010

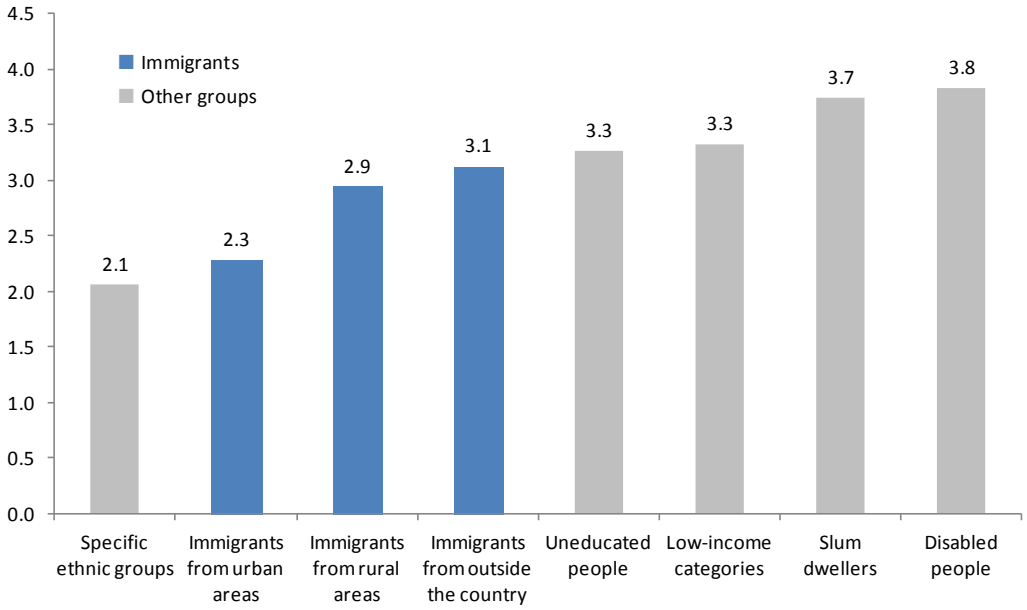
This has important repercussions for integration, which might be more connected to internal fractionalisation than nationality. Continuing with the example of West Africa, immigration within the region is perhaps more part of the greater urbanisation process unfolding in developing countries; or at least to a certain extent. In 1960 urban population accounted for around 15% of the West African population; it was about 44% in 2005 (OECD,

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2009). As borders and ethnic lines are not congruent in West Africa, internal and international and migration are often part of the same process: rural Malians and Senegalese moving to Dakar, rural Beninois and Nigerians moving to Lagos.

Discrimination against new members of society may in this case not be the same as discrimination against foreigners. In some cases international migrants are more easily integrated than internal migrants as part of the same process of urbanisation. Good examples of this phenomenon are found in the SKBo region[25] and the "mega-region" running from Accra to Ibadan, through Lagos (Dahou *et al.*, 2002; UN-Habitat, 2010). A survey conducted by UN-Habitat in 2009 found differences in responses on social exclusion in seven different African cities were nearly the same for international immigrants and rural migrants (Figure 4).

Figure 4. **Average perceived degree of exclusion of underprivileged groups (Abuja, Accra, Dakar and Ibadan)**



Note: Average of ratings (on a scale of 0 to 5, 5 being high perceived exclusion) by local experts responding to the UN-HABITAT 2009 survey in four West African cities (Abuja, Accra, Dakar and Ibadan).

Source: UN-HABITAT (2010).

III.3. How can we measure integration in West Africa?

Because circumstances are so different, defining and measuring immigrant integration in West Africa become much more difficult. Integration in West Africa has indeed much more to do with human rights, attitudes and perceptions, often in very hidden forms, than with the formal right on paper to be protected or the economic convergence of immigrants. The neighbouring effect and multi-ethnic makeup of the region obscure many of the problems of integration, because on the one hand new members of society have a culture which is close to that of the

25. SKBo is the acronym given to the region comprising the cities of Sikasso (Mali), Korhogo (Côte d'Ivoire) and Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso).

locally born. Yet on the other there are so many of these small groups that society is extremely multi-ethnic.

As a consequence, measures of integration in the North are hardly applicable in the South. First, legal benchmarking indices, such as they are practised in Europe, are less relevant than in the North because laws and regulations are not enforced. Measuring whether discrimination is a crime punishable by law or not between countries is futile if the legal system is burdensome, inefficient or nearly non-existent. Second, many of the outcomes measured for the integration of immigrants in the North are simply not applicable in the South because they are based on economic and social outcomes that are also less likely to be achieved by the locally born. Trying to measure whether immigrants have access to the formal job market might not be useful in many cases, particularly when 80% of the population are informally employed.

Studies need rather to focus on different measures of discrimination, reflecting the field realities of the country – services and benefits easily accessible to most of the local population. This can be done, for example, by focusing on a very flexible, yet realistic, definition of wages and employment, and by comparing the wages of informal working immigrants in a specific sector with those of their local counterparts. The key lies in identifying the more comparable counterpart. Although it costs more, experimental testing can also help in revealing whether subtle discrimination exists (see the experiment by Bossuroy and Selway (2011) in Chennai, India as an example).

Because not only immigrants, but also the poorest locally born, live in large, informal slums, studies also need to focus on measures of segregation, that is, turning to the sociological concept of spatial analysis as a measure of integration (Lee, 2009). For instance, in cities where slums are the norm for a large part of the population, an important way to measure immigrant integration is by observing the spatial component of city living arrangements as between locals and immigrants over time. Attempting simply to measure outcomes may not reveal the true driving force behind non-integration – it may be that segregation between the two groups in different ghettos is contributing to non-integration.

But objective data are clearly not enough. Subjective questions in surveys, such as attitude towards immigrants or degree of acceptance in society, may be the easiest and quickest way to reveal, and even predict, whether discrimination and conflict pose a problem. Periodic views on integration and acceptance in the community, on immigration and on work and life satisfaction would help determine the likely non-linear relationship between immigration and integration outcomes (see, for instance, Fertig, 2004, or Maxwell, 2010).

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IV. TOWARDS A BETTER INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

The social and economic situation in West Africa presents challenges different from those in the North. Therefore, the integration policy framework is likely not to be the same. In particular, an integration strategy requires incorporating the particularities and field realities of West African economies, such as the high circularity of migration, prevalent informal labour market activities and low relative deprivation between the locally born and immigrants.

In this respect, because locals face many of the same difficulties as immigrants, it would probably be a mistake to formulate a policy framework exclusively oriented towards immigrants. Indeed, how can public authorities provide immigrants with services not even available to their own citizens? Expecting successful integration of immigrants in a number of areas considered luxuries even for locals may be unattainable, and to a certain degree undesirable for fear of resentment from locals. Main economic, social and political reforms should then be universal in nature, and focus on priority areas such as employment, social protection and education.

However, to avoid immigrants from being marginalised in the general reform process, specific measures to protect and include them should be taken, particularly for the most vulnerable. This section will show, based on the experience of various developing countries, that such goals can be achieved. Priority should be given especially to the protection of rights, the fight against discrimination and incorporation into society.

IV.1 What objectives, for what integration?

Protecting rights

Perhaps the biggest hurdle to immigrant integration in the South is the prevalent violation of human and civil rights. The lack of rights particularly hits both short and long-term workers, while transit migrants are a particular category of migrants with few rights. Normative and institutional structures combating the vulnerable nature of certain migrants are on the rise, but enforcement remains low. The following guidelines would help guide immigrants away from a violation of their rights.

First is the extension of civil rights and protection for all members of society, regardless of status. This implies the inclusion of all members of society, including irregular immigrants, in all economic and social reforms. It also implies governmental support and promotion of the right for immigrants to organise, assemble and represent themselves or the groups of which they are part, including the freedom to practise and share elements of culture, but also to participate in the culture of the host country.

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Second is to ensure that employers of immigrants guarantee their registration and minimum accommodation. Many employers exploit the fact that immigrants represent cheaper labour and are without rights or adequate legal representation. Insisting that they register employees implies that migrants can access basic public services.

Third is to target the perpetrators of violations. This can be done by launching awareness-raising campaigns for the local population, immigration officials, police officers and local leaders. More aggressively, tougher sanctions can also be imposed on wrongdoers. In this respect, Mexico has adopted a series of measures to protect transit migrants, for instance by establishing refuges for children, financing campaigns on the rights of migrants and prosecuting the perpetrators of human rights violations, in particular police officers.

Fighting against discrimination

All workers, including immigrants, should be free from all forms of discrimination in the labour market. Even in contexts of strong legislation against xenophobia and discrimination, the largely informal labour market ensures that unfavourable practices remain. A relatively high number of immigrants are stuck in bad and/or informal jobs compared to locals, with little in terms of social security; many are pushed further into unsafe and hazardous jobs. The barriers that segregate the labour market make it easy to discriminate against immigrants in terms of pay, housing, land rights and education. Stereotypes clearly play a big role, but targeted policy can curb the outcome.

A first step is to deal with discrimination directly. The dismantling of discriminatory laws has been gradual, but many practices remain, notably in the field of religion. Policy makers can target local perceptions of immigrants and tone down myths by launching awareness campaigns, and helping ensure multi-ethnic and unbiased journalism.

A second step is to deal with informality. This can be done with adapted social security measures (basic housing and health) which take into account vulnerable workers and dangerous jobs. Labour market reforms must ensure that they cover all workers, and not only those with formal jobs. One way to do this is by regularising immigrants and making it easier for them to circulate legally between home and host country. This gives the benefit to the host country of knowing the number and characteristics of immigrants in their country, while paving the way for many of them to access jobs and services such as health and housing.

Another problem is that many immigrants do not have the proper paperwork to apply for regularisation, either because of corruption in the home country, bilateral conflicts, jus sanguinis laws or because they were part of the blurred citizenry in their home country and never obtained formal identification papers. Moreover, the widespread circulation of fraudulent papers does not help the process. Many immigrants are indeed rendered stateless through immigration. Countries often use the good will generated from regularising irregular migrants to restrict migration and step up enforcement.

Finally, policy makers can help ease bureaucratic processes with respect to immigration, thus ensuring segregation from the locally born cannot take place, at least formally and legally. This includes the removal of bureaucratic rules for employers wishing to hire qualified immigrants, but also making institutions more flexible by, for instance, allowing immigrants to own or rent real estate, invest, and pay the same school fees as locals.

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Incorporating immigrants into society

Immigrants are often pushed to the bottom of their host country's class system, usually because of their low levels of material wealth and (perceived) human capital. For those staying long term, a better incorporation requires better jobs, more skills, access to services and less segregation. Most long-term policies for their incorporation include those dealing with basic rights and fighting discrimination noted earlier. They also generally apply to all workers in the economy, not only immigrants; this is especially true with respect to public services for informal workers. But a few key objectives can specifically help their incorporation, without taking anything away from locals.

The first is to facilitate job-matching between host and home country, by consolidating labour markets; it is important that measures are adopted integrating labour markets, locally and nationally. This ensures that immigrants are not deceived by rumours and word-of-mouth demand, but are drawn by actual job offers. This can be quite effective for seasonal work, particularly when home and host country institutions work efficiently together. This implies, in particular, a gradual move towards more formal economic activity. The creation of national job centres, for instance, is an effective way of consolidating labour markets. By creating job-matching centres within the region, ECOWAS countries can already provide information directly to immigrants before emigration decisions are made, further reducing labour market frictions. Several West African countries, within the framework of an EU-funded project entitled *Management of Labour Migration*,[26] already work in this direction.[27]

Secondly, and for those staying for the longer term, access to education for immigrant children can hasten integration and understanding, through spillovers of language and culture. For adults specific hands-on and vocational training for jobs in high demand in the country can boost the matching mechanism.

The third element is a facilitation of housing arrangements and avoidance of the creation of ghettos by immigrants crowding together. Ensuring that formal restrictions for immigrants to access housing are lowered partially ensures that they do not end up in ghettos. However, the policies above constitute pieces in a larger puzzle. Box 4 provides an example of how South Africa turned a potentially disastrous situation into a net gain for the country by taking a comprehensive approach to immigrant integration.

26. More details at http://www.migrationsprofessionnelles.net/

27. The South African Development Community is busy finding solutions for its own Protocol on the Facilitation of Movements of Persons where the goal is to *"promote the participation of the diaspora in development and mitigating the effects of the brain drain by, for example increasing opportunities for skilled migrants to remain within the region."* In late 2010, the 15 member states met, pushing forward their *Managing Migration through Regional Cooperation* agenda. Dealing with similar issues, the SADC and ECOWAS should share lessons and debates on the common objective.

IV.2 International good practices

Several developing countries in other parts of the world have implemented, in the last few years, policies dealing with the challenge of immigrant integration. They can serve as a reference point for West African countries. These countries from different parts of the world face diverse social challenges related to immigration. Their experience covers several aspects of social cohesion and represents good practices that can be realistically implemented in West Africa.

With its quick rise as a major country of immigration, the government of **Costa Rica** published a new migration law in 2009, granting more rights and flexibility to immigrants. Immigrants benefit from greater protection and can leave the country for up to two years without losing their right to work in Costa Rica. Besides, family members of regular migrants can legally work in the country. In 2010, the *General Law on Migration and Alien Status* was passed and a campaign obliged irregular immigrants to regularise their situation before early 2011. Moreover and although there is a cleavage between official declarations asserting the importance of human rights and curriculum policies, the importance of human rights is more evident in school curriculum guidelines and in textbooks than it was two decades ago (Shiman, 2009).

Thailand was criticised in years past for placing too much emphasis on attracting skilled migrants with the reform of the Board of Investment (BOI) in 2001 and the implementation of the "elitecard", granting special access to skilled workers to many benefits in the country (UN-Habitat, 2010), and pushing aside the integration of lower-skilled migrants. In 2003, Thailand granted immigrants access to the national health care system and, in collaboration with the IOM, launched a Migrant Health Program focused on the border with Myanmar. The objective was to improve their health and well-being, regardless of their migrant status. The programme has put in place migrant-friendly health services (including vaccinations) – migrants pay an annual fee to the Compulsory Migrant Health Insurance (CMHI) Scheme – and increased the capacity of local administrative bodies. From 2004 to 2008, the programme helped train 1000 migrant community health workers and build 10 community health posts as well as 56 smaller health corners. 16 000 migrants are cared for annually and 55 000 are given lectures on the importance of health and the prevention of diseases. In the process, Thailand has also strengthened its own preparedness for health outbreaks and pandemics. The next goal is to replicate the program in other parts of the country and continue advocating for better health lifestyles for migrants. In 2010, representatives of 14 countries in South and South East Asia met in Bangkok to discuss the health challenges facing the growing number of labour migrants in Asia.

While regularisation and naturalisation are usually uncommon in the South, other countries have also recently taken this route, including Argentina, Barbados, Malaysia and South Africa. The problem with these programmes is primarily related to the cost of registration, which can amount to several times the monthly wage immigrants earn. Moreover, the process (or the renewal) can be complicated. Since many immigrants in the South are illiterate, regularisation may be out of reach for them.

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Argentina has also opened the right for all migrants in 2003, regardless of their status in the country, to access health and educational services. The *2003 Migration Law* gives migrants free legal representation, the right to a fair trial prior to expulsion and the right to family reunification (Jachimowicz, 2006). The country's National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers (RENATRE) has also extended unemployment schemes for agricultural workers, regardless of their migrant status. Employers contribute 1.5% of their worker's monthly salary to the scheme.[28] In addition and as a reaction to the rising number of immigrants arriving on their continent from Africa and Asia, 18 Latin American nations met in late 2010 in Brazil and agreed to do more for the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people in the region.[29]

As a matter of fact, human rights have been at the core of many immigration policy debates. Bilateral agreements have helped countries that mutually benefit from migration. In early 2011 for instance, **Bangladesh** (through the Bangladesh Association for International Recruitment Agencies) and **Saudi Arabia** (through the Saudi National Recruitment Committee) struck an agreement on migration recruitment by pre-establishing four categories of workers, their salaries, age limits and named a human rights association to which migrants can voice their complaints in cases of violation. According to both parties, recruitment will surpass 10 000 workers per month. Approaching the challenge of integration using only one of the three pillars of social cohesion is not enough. **South-Africa** provides a good example of how all three pillars can be taken into consideration in the formulation of policy on immigrant integration (see Box 3).

Donors also have a role to play in curbing human rights violations through public interventions. In 2010, for instance, the UNESCO Steering Committee of the West Africa Institute (WAI) created a research institute on regional immigrant integration in West Africa. The general objective of the WAI is to advance knowledge on West African regional integration and to provide decision makers with related policy options conducive to development, peace and the protection of human rights in the sub-region. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) held two sub-national workshops followed by a series of local consultations on "the protection of vulnerable persons on the move" in eight member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[30] These workshops also encompassed the return of refugees as well as minimising child trafficking.

28. Annex to the Global Forum for Migration and Development Roundtable 2.1 Background Paper (WHO/IOM).

29. The agreement has been termed the "Brasilia Declaration on the protection of refugees and stateless persons in the Americas".

30. Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. Information available at http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/policy-research/regional-consultative-processes/.

Box 3: Migration policy and social cohesion in South Africa

In May 2008, a series of riots against immigrants from nearby countries in a township of Johannesburg spread to the cities of Gauteng, Western Cape, Cape Town, Durban and other provinces. By the end, 62 immigrants had been killed, several hundred injured, thousands displaced and many properties looted and destroyed. The wave of violence occurred at a time of rising immigration (especially from Zimbabwe) and a general deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the most deprived areas of South Africa.

The government immediately condemned the xenophobic attacks and deployed police to restore order and arrest suspects. It also created temporary camps and implemented re-integration plans. Following the wave of violence, social cohesion and integration policies became a matter of concern for the government and a central subject of study, and in August 2008 the "Migration and Social Cohesion" Project was launched by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), an independent public interest organisation. It aims to fight the negative perception of migration as a threat to social cohesion and to communicate the ways in which migrants can be positively incorporated into society. It follows two principal assumptions: that integration enhances the contribution of migrants to the economic, social, cultural and political development of the host society, and that diversity is an opportunity and a source of enrichment.

To foster the participation of migrants in South African society, the project promotes research and publication. After gathering policy-relevant information, the team organises workshops for policy makers, so that they can implement proactive programmes and change the legal framework. The project also encourages collaborative engagement and mutually reinforcing relationships between migrants and locals. Finally, it improves public awareness of the role, status and contribution of immigrants.

One significant lesson derived from the experience of the project has been the importance of beginning at the local level, where the process of integration occurs primarily. City projects have thus been implemented in Cape Town, with the establishment of a loan and savings scheme, and in Johannesburg, through a migrants' help desk. Such initiatives ease integration by encouraging interaction between immigrants and citizens. A second way to enhance social cohesion is through partnerships between the government and other stakeholders and the involvement of a large range of actors at all levels. The IDASA project also argues for legislation as the preferred tool to guarantee equality and non-discrimination and to fight against exploitation and abuse.

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IV.3 A strategy for implementation in West Africa

Most West African countries have, so far, conducted benign-neglect integration policies. Two primary reasons explain the situation:

- Lack of financial and administrative capacity: developing economies consider the management of migration and of immigrants a secondary priority as many other policy domains require more attention as well as the little resources they have;
- Lack of political will: public authorities do not perceive immigrant integration as a priority, or even as important, in the political agenda.

Although the unprecedented budgetary boost in some West African countries benefiting from natural resources has provided them with the opportunity to restructure their labour markets, including the integration of immigrants, most countries in the region still face stretched budgetary constraints.

Integration policies should therefore follow a strategy that takes into the particularities and field realities of West African economies. In particular, policies need to internalise the facts that migration flows are easier and attract immigrants with lower human and financial capital, that discrimination may be more difficult to counteract and possibly more prevalent, and that not only immigrants but also the locally-born are mostly in precarious situations. In this respect, integration policies need to consider the native working population: first, because they may feel like the ones being marginalised and paying the price of immigration; second, because many stereotypes linked to immigration are not true, and authorities have an educational role to downplay certain myths.

A strategy for implementation in West Africa should rely on decentralised policies and regional co-operation.

Decentralised policies

Integration policies must be sufficiently decentralized to adapt to local needs and be embedded in the general local socio-economic development strategies (OECD, 2006). This is particularly true in many developing countries, where labour markets are relatively isolated and individual integration first plays out at the local level (See Box 4 for an example).

Under these circumstances, the onus largely falls on local and traditional leaders to help integrate and maximise social cohesion between old and new members of society. Local leaders are in the best position to understand their community's ability to shape social capital and reduce tension between immigrants and locals. This may include provisions that allow immigrants entering through informal channels to register locally with ease, a task which can be delegated to local leaders. By easing their way towards meaningful status, governments are effectively providing them the same access to education, better jobs, social security and legal protection as the locally-born.

Furthermore, local authorities have better knowledge of local problems. In this sense, they may react faster and communicate strategies and solutions more quickly. Because authorities are closer to households, the potential for corruption may be lower, for altruistic reasons and also because managing smaller regions and groups is easier, and the reverse relationship – accountability – more binding. In addition, in many countries traditional leaders

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exercise more influence over households than does the central government. They may be more adapted to dealing with local customs, working habits, language, and business culture.

Finally, the decentralisation process implies that all administrative levels are better prepared to deal with all dimensions of migration, in particular through improved capacity building (IOM, 2010). The fight against human trafficking, for instance, requires training of police and custom officers, but also of social workers and magistrates. In this respect, international co-operation can complement decentralisation and improve field capacity by enabling transfers of expertise. The IOM and the African Capacity-Building Centre, for instance, have been working closely with the Ghana Immigration Service in training border guards on migration management, trafficking and data collection.

An important component of decentralisation is the support of cultural and social hometown associations (HTAs). Because messages need to come across quickly, particularly when tensions spiral out of control, HTAs help communicate messages quicker to large groups of immigrants. They also provide leadership for underrepresented groups of society. For the many immigrants who do not speak or read the local language, it brings an aspect of representation and communication, for information gathering or even for venting about encountered problems. In addition, cultural organisations become instruments of expression, helping share traditions within society. The many Nigerian HTAs that have sprung up in Ghana in the last years (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009) provide an opportunity for a better integration of Nigerian immigrants and for the understanding of home and host country cultures.

Decentralisation processes can also help improve the regulation of flows, by focusing on key corridors and negotiating bilaterally. In February 2011, for instance, ECOWAS took over 17 hectares of land from Benin and Nigeria to create a common border crossing between both countries. The new border station will speed-up crossings and streamline protocols on both sides. Other major border posts are also under conversion, such as the one in Aflao, which separates Ghana and Togo.

Regional co-operation

Despite the protocol on free movement, the actual movement of people remains hindered by administrative obstacles. While free movement of workers seems optimal on paper, in reality national concerns tend to trump regional ones, mostly for security-related reasons. The recent ECOWAS meetings, most recently in early 2010, on the free movement of labour have re-kindled the spirit and the importance of the protocol first underlined in 1979. And in April of 2010, the heads of immigration of each member country met for the third time to discuss the issue, agreeing to further integrate the protocol into their legislations. Building on this political momentum, the region must continue to work in this direction to maximise the new regional opportunities brought about by economic growth, demographic booms and globalisation.

First and foremost, the region must keep defending the protocol's key points on the right to look for a job and work in another member state, the right to reside and remain in that state and the right to equal treatment. As such the region needs to work together to help people get to the jobs, enjoy the benefits of working and minimise the exploitation of people, most notably to ensure social cohesion.

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In this respect, the creation of regional job centres, which provide information directly to job-seekers before migration decisions are taken, would further reduce labour market frictions. Encouraging new forms of technology can also be useful. Exploiting a randomised experiment for instance, Aker *et al.* (2011) found that the use of mobile phones increased the likelihood of emigration from Niger to other countries by 6% to 9%. Mobile phones helped alleviate several market failures in the region, such as in credit and insurance markets.

There have been other examples of agreements in the region not reaching their objectives. In 1993, for instance, the Social and Cultural Affairs Commission of ECOWAS adopted the General Convention on Social Security to ensure equal treatment of workers from other ECOWAS countries and the preservation of their rights while living abroad. The Convention ensures that individuals residing in a given ECOWAS state will have the same rights and obligations under the social security laws as do nationals of the host country (IOM, 2007).

In addition, several countries have signed agreements to jointly fight human trafficking. In 2002 and 2003, Benin, Nigeria and Togo signed a series of agreements, together with UNODC, on common border issues, including trafficking. The signing followed earlier agreements by Côte d'Ivoire with Senegal and Mali on child labour in 2000.

But key elements are being left out of the regional discussions. First, the integration of immigrants is currently not a policy objective of ECOWAS or of any national government policy. Second, a clear path to citizenship would help quell several of the problems afflicting the region. As noted by Sadiq (2009), this is one of the primary reasons for the segregation of immigrants in society, the prevalence of informality, and the high level of trafficking of illegal goods and people. In West Africa, the ambiguous notion on how to become a citizen has been a major determinant in many of the wars in the region, notably in Côte d'Ivoire.

To further facilitate the ease of acquiring regular status many West African countries have changed their rules to allow dual citizenship or are in the process of considering such changes. Among those that have changed the rules in the last decade or so are Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone. In this regard, ECOWAS has also moved forward in trying to solve the problems plaguing the 1979 protocol on free movement of labour such as more capacity building initiatives for border guards, facilitation at high traffic border points as well as a common biometric ECOWAS passport, to be implemented by 2020 (9 countries have moved towards this so far).

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V. CONCLUSION

The experience of West Africa is symptomatic of the challenges that integration represents for the countries of immigration around the planet. It notably shows that the lack of specific measures to fight against social exclusion and promote integration may turn immigration into a threat to social cohesion. The primary victims are first and foremost the immigrants themselves, who suffer from violations of their human rights, discriminatory practices and xenophobic pressures. But society as a whole is also affected, as social tensions between foreign and native-born populations arise.

The experience of OECD countries might offer one important lesson in this respect: it is never too early to deal with integration issues. Social problems faced today by most countries of immigration are the result of a lack of long-term strategy. Migration-related social cohesion must indeed rely on a coherent policy framework that goes beyond anti-discrimination measures. A smooth integration process should notably encompass a comprehensive set of social, employment, education and housing actions. Efforts also need to be made to improve the perception of native-born citizens towards immigrants. This implies – and this is the trickiest part – that politicians stop making immigrants the scapegoats for problems in society, but rather bring forward their contributions to the development of the host country.

Finally, the reflection on immigrant integration in West Africa falls within the broader scope of fighting poverty and extending social welfare. Targeted measures for immigrants only makes sense if other segments of the population, namely ethnic minorities, women, the poor and the uneducated, are not themselves marginalised. This implies that policy makers in developing countries *"invest enough money and talent in running good quality social services for the poor, including free access to good schools, preventive medical care, and hospitals"*.[31]

31. Esther Duflo, in an interview with Economix (http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com) on 10 May 2011, considers this as a key priority for the new leaders of South Soudan.

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ANNEX

Background work was done in preparation for this paper in 2010 in Ghana, one of the main countries of immigration in West Africa (both in absolute and relative terms). The first purpose was to investigate policies and programmes that facilitate the integration of immigrants and help fight discrimination in countries of the South. A second aim was to uncover attitudes with respect to immigrants and immigration policy from diverse points of views.

The case of integration of immigrants in Ghana is an interesting case of South-South migration, as immigration to Ghana from neighbouring West African countries is significant and increasing. In the last decade, the Ghanaian government has reformed its immigration system, ratified the UN Convention on Migrants' Rights and modernised its immigration control technology. In addition, migrant hometown associations (HTAs) and private sector initiatives have been developing quickly in response to the increase in immigration.

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The authors held a one-day experts meeting at the University of Ghana (Accra) and carried out interviews with (a) academics, (b) policy makers, (c) international organisations and NGO's, (d) the private sector and trade unions and (e) immigrants and representatives of immigrants. Each interview as well as the workshop was based on the following core questions:

1. What is the current state of immigration in Ghana?
2. What are the different dimensions of immigrant integration in Ghana?
3. What policies foster integration in Ghana and what are their limits?
4. How can the situation be improved for both immigrants and nationals?

In addition, individual interviews focused on subjective questions, asking respondents how they felt about the state of immigrant integration in Ghana. Respondents were asked general questions but encouraged to give long and detailed answers. The additional questions were as follows:

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According to you […]

1. […] what is the state of immigrant integration in Ghana?
   a. Are immigrants well integrated in Ghana?
   b. Is it an important policy issue? Should the government spend money on integration?
   c. What rights should immigrants have in Ghana? What rights should they not have?
   d. Do immigrants contribute positively or negatively to the economy? Should Ghana open the borders to more immigrants?
2. […] what determines an immigrant's successful integration?
   a. What helps an immigrant's integration?
   b. What deters it?
3. […] does the government help in the integration of immigrants?
   a. Should it have a role? Should it do more? Less?
   b. What role should it have?
   c. Should the government protect the locally-born from immigrants in matters of employment?
4. […] whose responsibility is it to integrate immigrants?
   a. Local or national decision-makers?
   b. Private businesses?
   c.Traditional leaders?
   d. International organisations? Aid donors?
5. […] are immigrants perceived as a threat to the locally-born?
   a. Are immigrants discriminated against? In what way?
   b. Is tension high between the locally born and immigrants?

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