FUTURE MIGRATION
SCENARIOS FOR EUROPE

Working Paper

Drivers of International Migration

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Working Paper

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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of existing theoretical and empirical findings regarding the drivers of international migration and how they operate differently across contexts, interacting with each other. The study of the migration drivers is intended as one of the elements of the formulation of FUME's future international migration narratives and the basis for the evidence-based population projections. The aim of the report is to support the formulation of better-informed migration scenarios through the integration of knowledge regarding the factors at micro, meso and macro levels that shape international migration processes.

The understanding of the patterns and drivers of international migration is developed within the analytical framework of the aspiration/ability model formulated by Carling (2002) that has been further developed since then by various authors (de Haas, 2014; Carling & Schewel, 2017). The aspirations to improve ones' own living conditions that are at the basis of the potential desire to move abroad do not necessarily imply a concrete intention to migrate or the ability to do so. Mobility and immobility are mutually constitutive components of the individual experience. Gender and aspects of the life course (age) as well the educational level are the determining forces of the aspirations. Mostly the young and better educated are more inclined to emigrate.

The individual aspirations that may lead to the concrete decision to migrate form a complex process that is dependent on a multitude of factors pertaining to and shaped primarily by the household context, the family dynamics, the extension of network, as well as the formal and informal social group to which the individual belongs. This context often determines the socio-economic status of the individuals as well as the social and financial resources available for a migratory project as the information about preferable migration trajectories and destination countries or specific areas. The drivers of international migration at the macro level are dominated by the economic ones: poverty and economic hardship are a strong motivation to emigrate, but the actual realisation of a migratory project asks for financial resources. In the destination countries or areas, the demand for immigrant labour or the availability of economic opportunities in general determine their attractiveness. Migration policies shape the international migration flows linked to social, economic, political and environmental dynamics.

What can be learned from this discussion of the drivers of international migration for the formulation of narratives of future migration scenarios? This report aims at putting forward some explanations to this question, not necessarily concordant or harmonious, nor providing take-away answers, but rather offering a consistent and evidence-based framework enabling our societies to look at the potential future scenarios of migration and to support forward-looking policies.

The social, economic, political and environmental processes of the next decades will determine the size and socio-demographic selectivity of the international migration flows with single individuals and their families being at the basis in considering these drivers for their international migration projects.

Acronyms

CEAS Common European Asylum System
ECDC European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EFTA European Free Trade Association
EU European Union
EURODAC European Dactyloscopie
FDI Foreign Direct Investment
GCR Global Compact on Refugees
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GFMD Global Forum on Migration and Development
GMG Global Migration Group
GNI Gross National Income
HALE Healthy Life Expectancy
HDI Human Development Index
ICPD International Conference on Population and Development - United Nations
ICT Information and communication technologies
IDMC Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
ILO International Labour Organization
IMD International Migration Drivers
IMF International Monetary Fund
IMI International Migration Institute
IOM International Organization for Migration
IPPC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JRC Joint Research Commission
LFDR Labor Force Dependency Ratio
LNHCR League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MAFE Migration between Africa and Europe
MMC Mixed Migration Centre
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PICMME Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe
RMMS Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
SAR Search and Rescue
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
SRSG Special Representative of the Secretary-General - United Nations
THEMIS Theorising the Evolution of European Migration System
TPS Temporary Protection Status
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East - United Nations
WB World Bank
WHO World Health Organization

1. Introduction

The 'Future Migration Scenarios for Europe (FUME)' project will improve our understanding of the patterns, motivations and modalities of migration at multiple geographical scales, and envisage possible future migrant movements in Europe. The understanding of international migration flows (WPs 3 and 6) and the provision of population and migration projections (WPs 4 and 5) form integral parts of the project. The aim is to estimate future migration to, from and within Europe and analyse its impact on demographic developments at different geographical levels. The projection model requires future long-term migration scenarios based, inter alia, on the review of the drivers of international migration flows to, from and within the European Union (EU), both at a national and regional level.

In this report, we provide an overview of the understanding of contemporary international migration flows that should inform the development of international migration scenarios in WP 3 of the FUME project as an input FUME's migration and population projections.

The aim of this report is the comprehension of the drivers of international migration to facilitate the formulation of future migration scenarios for Europe. The focus is on the migratory movements between the countries of origin and Europe and between European regions and cities of Non-EU citizens.

'Root causes', 'drivers', 'factors' and 'determinants' of migration could be used interchangeably. The relationship between drivers and international migration flows is never direct or deterministic but operates through the individual and its context of family and social group. The drivers touch various spheres like the political and social context, the economic and environmental situation in origin and destination areas. Economic disparities and opportunities are playing a key role: in the form of resources available for the migratory project of the individual but also in the form of the economic situation in the origin countries and in the destination countries.

This report does not use a classification of international migrants according to personal characteristics or motivations of the migrants since these categories are often grounded in administrative categories. The categorization in international labour migrants, joining family members, refugees and individuals in search of international protection, etc. are only used when specific aspects regarding the specific category are discussed. International migrations include a wide range from forced to voluntary movements and also its forms and motives are very heterogeneous.

International migrations are not conceived necessarily as a one-way transnational process, nor as a clearly defined and permanent action based on projectual decision, but rather as trajectories subject to interruptions, transition phases and continuous adjustments. The report explicitly refers to return migrations, since they are an important part of international migration flows for European countries.

The backdrop of this report is constituted by the following key points:

• At the basis of the decision to migrate are the aspirations and the desires to improve the living conditions of the individual, the household or social group of reference. Without these aspirations and desires for change the drivers of migration would not lead to migration. People migrate hoping to find better living conditions or better opportunities elsewhere, being it in the realm of education, of the professional and economic situation, or of the personal life.

• The socio-demographic characteristics of the individual influence the aspirations and decision to migrate: gender, age, educational level etc.

• These characteristics, the aspirations and the decisions of the individual are embedded in the context of the household or the family.

• The process of transformation of the migration aspirations into actual international migration can have different outcomes: 1) succeeding, 2) failing or getting stuck on the migration trajectory, or 3) involuntary immobility.

• Migration as a result of intertwined multiple processes. Key assumption of the report is that the drivers shaping migrant decision-making do not "work" as lonely monad. Instead, the intention to migrate or to stay put, the making of certain decisions about destinations or migration trajectories is the result of their interacting combination, operating differently across social and geographic contexts and time. Also, the drivers are not static, but can change decisively and rapidly.

• Mixed motivations of the individual at the outset and shifting motivations along the migration trajectory prove the difficulty of categorizing individual international migrants in an absolute way as forced or voluntary migrant, as economic migrant or as asylum seeker etc., whereas the distinction between irregular versus regular migration is based on the legal basis of the presence of the migrant. Although we acknowledge that certain existential situations, more than others, increase greater motivation to move of individuals, supporting the classic interpretative dichotomy of voluntary or forced migration, the report will overcome this difference addressing all drivers that appear of relevance in affecting migration aspirations and decisions.

• The following dimensions should be considered: locality, scale, duration, selectivity.

• For the international migration processes the existing networks formed by transnational, transregional or translocal communities obviously play a role.

The report concentrates on the migration systems formed around Europe as a group of destination countries and the most important emigrants' countries of origin. Special attention is given to the countries of transit. The geographic focus regarding the countries of origin will be mainly on Africa, the continent with the greatest expected future population growth and currently one of the main sources of migration flows to Europe. In addition, two case studies of the FUME project are located in Africa (Senegal and Tunisia). However, factors of international migration to Europe from other geographical areas/regions will also be discussed. It is obvious that distance is playing an important role for the international migration flows where distance cannot be understood only in a geographic sense but in the sense of cultural distance (language, colonial ties, etc.) considering the costs of realising the migratory project.

The role of migration policies is another key in understanding the international migration between origin and destination countries. The pattern of migration policies implemented, more or less favourable to migrants' mobility and social integration, will have great potential in shaping the future international migration flows and individual trajectories.

The following discussion of the international migration processes refers mainly to the last decades and the present-day situation. The societies and economies of the origin, transit and destination countries will go through changes over the next decades and the influence of specific drivers might increase or diminish in the future.

In the following, we first give an overview of the decision-making process of international migrations based on the aspirations and (cap)abilities to migrate. Then the drivers of international migration at the micro/meso and meso/macro level are discussed. All the findings are integrated with the findings of the country of origin case studies (WP 6). Finally, we endeavour in a comprehensive view of the drivers in view of the formulation of long-term future international migration scenarios for Europe.

2. Decision-making: aspirations and (cap)abilities to migrate

According to most of the empirical studies the most common profile of who prepares or concretely plans to migrate is a young male, more educated with long-standing networks abroad. Regardless of income level the older the individuals, the lower their likelihood to express the wish to migrate (Gallup, 2017). Although the complexity of the contemporary migration dynamics and the mixed, often shifting, motivations of the migrants' experiences have increasingly displayed the dysfunctionality and the limited explanatory capacities of categorization such as forced, voluntary, economic, seasonal, internal, environmental migrant, etc., the understanding of migration aspirations has been "often dismissed as the analysis of the poor determinants of actual migration" (Carling, 2014: 5).

However, in contemporary societies where an increasing but still small proportion of the population is longing to be elsewhere, this desire becomes a key aspect of the societies, an important driver of their change and development along with the process of migration decision-making. Without these aspirations and desires for change the drivers of migration would not lead to migration. Carling (2014) observes that when seeking to explore the drivers of international migration, the role of individual or collective aspirations in analysing migration dynamics is fundamental in two interconnected ways: 1) as an important factor that directly or indirectly affects migration or 2) as a term to describe the motivation to consider migrating desirable. In line with other scholars, in this report migration aspirations will be conceived as the attitude or preference for migrating with respect to staying, regardless of the reasons.

"Rethinking the drivers of migration to foreground notions of aspiration and desire requires relinquishing the primacy of economic rationality [...] means recognising that even economic narratives of movement are socially constructed and can only be read in relation to the subjectivities of migrants, their states of feeling and the circulation of affect within and across borders" (Carling & Collins, 2018: 913).[1] It is generally argued that the migration aspirations mainly take shape in terms of a comparison of places or a comparison of culturally defined projects. While the first case recalls the logic of push-pull models of migration and "connects migration aspirations to concepts such as place utility and spatial preferences", the second approach is rooted in a socially constructed idea of an "emigration project" which is often embedded into particular social expectations and values shared among individuals (Carling, 2014: 6; Flahaux & de Haas, 2016). As will be discussed more thoughtfully in the following sections, in relation to this latter approach the studies of the drivers of migration have devoted increasing attention also to the 'culture of migration', those historically shared ideas, socio-cultural practices, behaviours and artefacts that contribute to reinforce the collective perception and acknowledgment of migration and migrants as most desirable option to improve living conditions. As noted by de Haas the "concept of migration aspirations expands the notion of migratory agency into the subjective realm" (2014: 23). To understand migration, it is necessary to analyse the causes and the contexts within which people develop their ambitions to migrate; this approach implies to conceive migration aspirations not as inherently individualistic expressions but rather as the "social grounding of individual desire" (Ray, 2006: 209). In other words, the migration aspirations only exist in relation to a particular social context, marking a connection of personal, collective and normative dimensions (Carling & Collins, 2018).

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[1] With respect to an economical approach, as argued in the recently published International Migration Drivers (IMD) report: "Varied patterns are noticeable across different countries. In low income countries, people aged 25 to 29 are most likely to be preparing to migrate. In middle income countries, people aged 20 to 40 are approximately 50 per cent more likely to prepare to migrate compared to the younger group (aged 15 to 19)" (Migali, Natale, Tintori, Kalantaryan, Grubanov-Boskovic, Scipioni, Farinosi, Cattaneo, Benandi, Follador, Bidoglio, McMahon & Barbas, 2018: 8).

Moreover, as long as migration desires are embedded in the daily life of people, migration takes an intrinsic value according to which neither the place of destination nor the mobility itself become motivations to migrate (Carling, 2014). The substantial body of literature that points out how the longing for a place is more often not related to precise geographical locations but rather to a undefined spatial location – an 'Elsewhere' imbued of symbolic meanings and cultural values and socially described with specific terms – sheds new light on the understanding of the drivers of migration and the will to go abroad. Numbers of individuals are currently set off for the Southern shores and Eastern land borders of EU Member states without any visa or regular travel document.

For instance, as for many Senegalese and Gambian youngsters, the wish to migrate 'elsewhere' is not inscribed in a stereotyped and homogeneous image of Europe as a rich El Dorado (Gaibazzi, 2012; degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017) but it is an attitude socially grounded. Being mobile does not primarily refer to the desire to migrate. While it could mean succeeding (degli Uberti, 2014; Mondain & Diagne, 2013; Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012) in societies where social adulthood (the path towards adulthood) implies more than simply being independent from one's parents and elder brothers. It is understood in the sense of "being a complete man". While among the inhabitants of a Soninke village in the Gambia the ambitions to migrate stem from an experience of dispersal and abandonment in migrant households and emerge as means of restoring the viability of family relationships (Gaibazzi, 2019), in the case of young and educated Bangladeshis the desire to leave becomes a metaphor for disappointment and disengagement rather than the first step towards migration (Bal, 2014). As noted by Bakewell: "people do not aspire to migrate; they aspire to something which migration might help them achieve"[3]. It is the desire for social, rather than physical mobility that drives many people to take the risks of the journey by boat through the Mediterranean Sea or crossing the perilous paths of the West-Balkan region.

According to recent analysis "there is a consistent gap between those wishing to move abroad and those actually preparing to make an international journey" (Migali et al. 2018: 7). Globally 21.4% of the surveyed population expresses a wish to migrate to another country. Only 1.1% of the population actually prepares to move. These results have mainly supported the argument that a wish to migrate is not a reliable enough indicator to inform policymakers about future migration, the size of potential migration or the characteristics of future migrants (Migali et al. 2018). Though, these data urge also to reflect upon the fact that the desire to move abroad representing the aspirations to improve ones' own conditions due to life dissatisfaction, does not necessarily imply a concrete intention to migrate or their ability to do so (Carling, 2002). Somehow, it sounds reasonable to agree with Carling when observing the number of people who wish to migrate and those who actually do, he suggests that we are living in the age of "involuntary immobility" (Carling, 2002) rather than in the "Age of Migration" (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014).

"Involuntary immobility" emerges as a conceptual outcome of the analysis of the unfulfilled migration aspiration in Cape Verde and Carling's aspiration/ability model (2012). The examination of the differences in aspiration, ability or both is meant to shed light on variation in migration across time or between groups. According to the so-called "two-step approach" (an evaluation of the potential occurrence of the act of migrating and the concrete realization of mobility or immobility condition), aspiration and ability are conceived as two concepts that define three migratory categories of people: those who have the abilities to convert the desire into actual migration (migrants), those who cultivate the aspiration but lack the ability (involuntary non-migrants) and those who consider non-migration as a preferable option (voluntary non-migrants) (Carling, 2014).

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[2] Åkesson, 2004; Ali, 2007; degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017; ; Fouquet, 2007; 2005; Gaibazzi, 2018; Graw & Schielke, 2012; Langevang & Gough, 2009Melly, 2010; Mescoli, 2014; Souiah, Salzbrunn & Mastrangelo 2018.

[3] Oliver Bakewell's contribution to discussions at the workshop 'Aspirations and Capabilities in Migration Processes', coorganised by the International Migration Institute and the Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oxford, 10–11 January 2013.

More recently a further refinement of the aspiration/ability model was put forward by de Haas, who suggested the adoption of the term 'capability' instead of 'ability' to analyse how conditions of immobility relate to development. Drawing from Sen's argument which conceives the freedom to achieve well-being as a moral imperative to be assessed in terms of people's capabilities (1999), whether in the aspiration/ability model the ability refers mainly to the potentialities of prospective migrants, the aspirations/capabilities framework considers migration processes as "an intrinsic part of broader processes of social transformation" (de Haas, 2014: 4) where 'capabilities' refer to diverse aspects of well-being and "the capability to migrate is a valuable freedom in its own right, regardless of people's preferences for staying or leaving" (Carling & Schewel, 2018: 957).

Although it is not a new analytical framework (Portes, McLeod & Parker, 1978), Carling's model has drawn the attention on the importance of scrutinizing empirically the dimension of immobility as the flip side of the same coin: mobility and immobility as mutually constitutive and reinforcing components. It is against this background that, as argued by Schewel (2019), the subject of immobility has increasingly become a key dimension of migration research opening up a more critical exploration of its causes and consequences that have been systematically neglected hindering the attempts to explain why, when, and how people migrate. The advancements of the research on immobility have mainly developed in response to this "mobility bias", such as "the overconcentration of theoretical and empirical attention on the determinants and consequences of mobility" (Schewel, 2020: 4). In particular, the analytical approach to immobility developed in a new interest toward the reflection of those who do not want to migrate and "the often-overlooked 'retain' and 'repel' factors and economic 'irrationality' that also shape migration decision-making" (Schewel, 2020). As for the future scenarios, it seems important to recall the fact that at a global level the wish to remain in the country of origin is a more recurrent attitude than the preference to migrate abroad, also in areas with the highest rates of migration aspirations, such as Sub-Saharan Africa: over half of adults have not expressed interest or the desire to move to another country even for a short time period (Esipova, Ray & Pugliese, 2011a; Esipova et al., 2011).

As noted by Schewel, "voluntary non-migrants are often described as those with resources to migrate but without the desire to do so" or, in the case of the poorer "people are implicitly categorized as involuntary immobile" (2015: 6). Instead, the understanding of the aspirations to stay and more extensively, the causes and consequences of immobility in its multiple social configurations, gives a means to frame a more coherent and adequate picture of the future migration scenarios, not limiting the analytical approach to the drivers of migration.

Beyond highlighting the constraints of controlled mobility, the geographical variation that informs the relationship between the wish to move abroad and the translation of the desire into actual migration has called for attention to the context and an analysis of migration processes and the "migration industry" (Castles, 2004a). More broadly, an analysis of the role of "the systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility" (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014: 124; Kley, 2017) seems necessary. Among the processes of intermediation and the connections and infrastructures that generate, enable or obstruct migration, five dimensions of the "migration infrastructure" are identified: the commercial (brokers, smugglers), the regulatory (state apparatus and procedures), the technological (communication, transport), the humanitarian (NGOs and international organizations), and the social (migrant networks).[4] As the following sections of the report more clearly address, the examination of how these mediating actors actively shape the contours and the outcomes of migration highlights the intertwining of subjective and collective dimensions on one side, and the meso and macro migration infrastructures on the other (Xiang, 2012 and 2014; Xiang & Lindquist, 2014).

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[4] According to the five dimension of the "migration infrastructure" three possible outcomes are envisaged: 1) succeeding; 2) failing, such as returning, or get stuck on the way (transit); 3) involuntary immobility (Carling, 2017).

Nonetheless the rising awareness of the need to integrate the understanding of the migration decision-making processes with an examination of the different determinants that explain immobility, whether as outcome of preferences or not, has further challenged the straightforward bond between mobility and freedom. The analysis of the individual and collective agency cannot overlook the fact that the individuals' ability to act depends on the wider social milieu in which the action is performed. In this perspective, the grand scenarios of alleged contemporary fluid mobility of people (Bauman, 1998) need to be framed in relation to the structural and personal forces that restrict or resist the drivers of migration, namely in the light of those "different intersecting regimes of mobility that normalise the movements of some travellers while criminalising and entrapping the ventures of others" (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013: 189). The regimes-of-mobility approach casts new light on the understanding of the changing dynamics of mobility and immobility, and more extensively on the attempts to formulate consistent and reliable future migration scenarios, by calling for a serious account of the role of the governmental powers that are territorially based at different geographic scales.

Picture: Philip Myrtorp/Unsplash.com

3. The drivers of migration

3.1 Drivers at the micro/meso levels

Networks

Social capital. In migration studies social capital translates to the set of material and immaterial resources provided by family, friends and compatriots in order to facilitate the migration journey and social and work integration in the country of destination (Massey et al., 1987). Social structures and interpersonal networks are thus understood as potential sources of social capital which contributes to increase the probability of migration for non-migrants by reducing economic, social and psychological costs and risks associated with international movements (Arango, 2000; Flores-Yeffal, 2015; Palloni et al., 2001; Portes, 1998; Schapendonk, 2015). Information and resources also induce migrants to prefer places where they already have contacts and where networks become the only reason why people continue to migrate, even in the absence of other significant reasons. Once started, migratory movements become self-sustainable and alter the economic and social context in which migratory projects are carried out (Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen, 2004). The social capital can also take different forms and measures depending on the context of the place of origin, whether rural or urban, and on the basis of the distance between the place of origin and destination (Flores-Yeffal, 2015; Fussell & Massey, 2004).

Regarding migration to the European Union, a recent survey (Liu, 2015) that explored the influence of social capital in the country of origin and in the country of destination on the Senegalese migration patterns, provides an insightful example of the multiple factors at stake. The study shows that both kinds of social capital appear to be complementary in shaping decision-making and influencing the probability of individuals to migrate from Senegal to Europe. Migrants are more likely than non-migrants to have social capital in the country of destination, but there are no differences in terms of social capital in the country of origin. Migrants are more likely to have both strong (family networks) and weak ties (acquaintances or strangers with distant social relationships and infrequent interactions) in the country of origin and destination. This supports previous quantitative data on the role of weak ties in the destination country (Liu, 2013) and previous qualitative results on strong ties in the country of origin (Poeze, 2010). Unlike non-migrants, the Senegalese who migrate to European countries are younger, mostly males, and belong more often to the Mouride brotherhood. At the time of migration, migrants are more likely to be single and have fewer children, are more educated, more active in the labour market and more likely to own land and a house. The research results also confirm that the influence of social capital in the country of origin is connected to gender resources, norms, roles and family obligations. The migratory choices of women are not independent but are highly limited and closely linked to social capital in the country of origin and migrations seem to be subject to a wider range of constraints. For women, weak ties in the country of destination are more important than strong ties in the country of origin. Women who only have social capital in the country of origin are less likely to migrate to Europe than those without social capital in the country of origin or destination. Therefore, the social capital in the country of origin discourages female migration when the woman does not also have the social capital in the country of destination. In addition, having a husband in Europe dramatically increases the probability of women to migrate. For men, the social capital in the country of origin or of destination, or in both countries increases the chances of migration.

It should be pointed out that the social capital does not only have positive connotations. Following the critical line introduced by Portes (1998) and, in particular, the notion of negative social capital applied to migration theories (de Haas, 2010), migrants who have already settled can put an end to forms of encouragement and

support for new comers, especially due to excessive requests (for work or for other benefits) from family or friends.

The evolution of the social capital theory has led to a further distinction introduced by Putnam (2000): bonding and bridging social capital. In the first case, reference is made to a social capital characterized by strong ties, collaboration, loyalty and solidarity within an ethnically homogeneous group, which can generate negative effects (forms of ghettoization or ethnic segregation and threat to collective social cohesion), positive or even no type of effect (Crowley & Hickman, 2008; Pelliccia, 2019; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Toma, 2016). In the second case, social capital is made up of contacts between members of a given social group with the whole of society, with positive consequences in terms of integration, social mobility and production of information and innovative ideas outside of social network (de Haas, 2010; Nannestad, Svendsen & Svendsen, 2008; Poros, 2001). This distinction, if understood too narrowly, can however produce a false reductive and simplistic dichotomy (Patulny & Svendsen, 2007). It is not necessarily mutually exclusive and, as Putnam observes, migrants can present high levels of both forms of social capital following a continuum of social relations and along different dimensions that not only include ethnicity but also other variables such as, for example, the social class (Fernandez & Nichols, 2002; Nannestad, Svendsen & Svendsen, 2008; Ryan, 2011). Generally, the literature tends to highlight how the combination of strong bonding social capital with weak bridging social capital leads to the exclusion of group members from new information and ideas (de Haas, 2010). In the context of migration and possible future scenarios, this translates to the fact that in the presence of this combination there would be a lower propensity to implement a migration project and, therefore, there would be a greater probability of disseminating information on new destinations through relatively weak connections compared to close contacts. The combination of a strong bonding capital with a strong bridging capital would lead, on the other hand, to a greater probability of migrating to new destinations due to the wide access of information but, at the same time, could involve a greater probability of creating particular enclaves in the host society. An example is the Mourid Sufi brotherhood in Senegal which, through trade, has achieved a high degree of access to information and economic success but, at the same time, is characterized by a strong group identity resistant to any form of assimilation (de Haas, 2010).

Some scholars have criticized the overly simplistic assumption of bonding social capital that treats migrants as ethnically homogeneous groups and that "all members of the ethnic community are equally committed to that culture or to specific notions of ethnic authenticity" (Shah, 2007: 20–30). Instead, they focus more attention on the nature of the relationship between individuals and on the resources available within contexts of economic inequality rather than insisting on the differentiation between bonding and bridging social capital (de Haas, 2010; Ryan, 2011). In this sense, relatively poor and low-skilled people depend more on social capital linked to networks when starting a migration project than relatively wealthy and highly qualified migrants, who mainly use other channels. This also explains why low-skilled migrants tend to cluster in specific cities and neighbourhoods instead of more individualized and spatially more widespread settlements of wealthy and highly skilled migrants, who are able to migrate more independently. Similarly, other studies show that immigrant network formation occurs not only on the lines of ethnicity, but also on cultural and human capital: newcomers with lower levels of human capital are more likely to bond, whereas higher human capital newcomers often bridge (Chuatico & Haan, 2020).

As already mentioned, the role of networks in migrants' employment seeking may be differentiated by skills and occupation. With respect to the labour market, from a recent survey on highly qualified migration from Zimbabwe to the United Kingdom (Thondhlana, Madziva & McGrath, 2016), particularly attentive to the sources and structures of social capital as well as to migration routes and how they shape the skills and models of networking for inclusion in specialized occupational areas, two types of networks have emerged: professional and non-professional. In the first case, they are extremely useful in providing work-related information before the migration experience and in obtaining a positive integration after emigration. Highly qualified migrants often prefer this type of professional connection that goes beyond ethnic background. In the second case, non-professional networks do not take into account highly qualified career expectations and aspirations and direct migrants towards unskilled or semi-qualified jobs, favouring economic capital over professional status.

Despite its widespread use, the notion of social capital as a conceptual framework is still the subject of debate and controversy about its impact in defining future migration scenarios (Thondhlana, Madziva & McGrath, 2016) due to the ambiguity in the application of this concept (Portes, 2000), the lack of empirical evidence on the practical processes of migratory networks (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014) and finally the relative lack of research on how social capital is based on other forms of capital in the negotiation process of migrants on different social ties and job opportunities in different contexts (Ryan, 2011).

Migration-undermining feedback mechanisms. Given the lack of attention to the decline of migration (de Haas, 2009 and 2010), some scholars have recently focused on the role of networks in discouraging migration (Engbersen, 2013; Epstein, 2008; Fussell & Massey, 2004; Timmerman, De Clerck, Hemmerechts & Willems, 2014; Van Mol et al., 2018). These qualitative studies tend to highlight the presence of negative feedback mechanisms that work through networks, constituting what is called the "diminutive causation", and which counterbalance the dynamics of self-perpetuation of migratory processes (de Haas, 2011). Moreover, it should be added that negative information on obstacles in the destination country seems to be underestimated by migrants in order to demonstrate the success of their migration in the eyes of their compatriots in the country of origin (Kuhnt, 2019). Epstein (2008) hypothesized that the increase in the size of the networks causes two opposite effects. The first effect is the mutual benefit between new migrants and migrants already settled in the country of destination, for example thanks to the growth of "ethnic businesses" and the establishment of schools. The second effect is instead that, over time, these benefits tend to decline due to an alleged or real increase in competition in the labour market and the consequent pressure on wages, thus reducing the will or ability of first migrants to provide assistance to new ones. This is even more evident with the succession of generations since the second and third generations seem to express less sense of responsibility, interest and benevolence towards new migrants. Some scholars have shown that the probability of an individual to emigrate to a particular country, in relation to the number of immigrants already present in that destination, takes the form of an inverse U (Bauer, Epstein & Gang, 2000; de Haas, 2010; Epstein, 2008). This therefore means that the number of migrants and the connections of the networks, once they have reached the maximum level thanks to the effects that gave rise to the migration processes, tend to decline over time due to factors such as the increase in diseconomies of scale and employment competition. It must also be said that the network dynamics are not immediately set in motion after the departure of the first migrants, otherwise it would be inexplicable why not all initial migratory movements develop into migration systems.

Regarding migration to the European Union, among the many results obtained, the THEMIS research project (Theorising the Evolution of European Migration System) has shown how resident migrants can deliberately try to reduce further migrations within their social networks (Engbersen, 2013; Snel, Faber & Engbersen, 2013). In their study on reducing migration rates between Morocco and the Netherlands, Snel and colleagues (2013) found that Moroccan residents in the Netherlands are willing to provide significantly less assistance to potential migrants than when they emigrated. Their analysis starts from the three "contexts of reception" proposed by Portes (1995): government policies of the destination country, opportunities in the labour market and societal reception. The extent to which resident migrants are willing and able to provide instrumental and emotional support to potential newcomers (family, friends and compatriots) is related to the variation of these three contexts of reception. For example, macro-level developments such as declining opportunities or fierce competition in the labour market, more restrictive immigration policies and growing public hostility towards migration or against specific groups of migrants have not only direct negative effects on migration rates, but also affect feedback mechanisms that undermine migration, such as the willingness of already settled migrants not to support potential newcomers and to discourage their departure. In fact, the majority of respondents would not advise their compatriots to come to the Netherlands; one in eight would recommend it only in some cases, and less than one in ten say they recommend to friends and relatives to emigrate. The research also highlights how older immigrants transform themselves from selective "gatekeepers" who invite only a few compatriots to come to "gateclosers" who close the migratory corridor to potential new migrants by discouraging them and not supporting them.

Also, within the THEMIS research project, through a qualitative and quantitative analysis, Engbersen (2013) studied the role of migrant networks in reducing immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands. According to this study, the decline is attributable not so much to the saturation of the networks, but rather to the mechanism of diminutive causality. In this analysis, three social mechanisms are examined: institutional phenomena at macro level (restrictive migration policies, limited job opportunities and hostility toward migrants) which negatively influence the beliefs, desires and motivations of migrants in the Netherlands in supporting potential new arrivals (situational mechanism); the feedback that undermines migrations by resident Moroccans towards potential migrants through deliberate actions of non-help to potential migrants or of assistance only in a very selective way (action-formation mechanism); the changing of cultures and migratory aspirations in Morocco due to feedback which weakens migration by migrants residing in the Netherlands (transformational mechanism). This study also supports not only macro-institutional factors (labour markets, national policies), but also other feedback channels, such as online social media. Finally, the passage of migrants already settled from "gatekeepers" to "gateclosers" is confirmed, but, as for some migratory corridors such as that from Ukraine to Portugal, the opposite is also true: the resident migrants continue to act as social bridges by influencing decision-making process and encouraging migrants to come despite declining job opportunities. The diminutive causality theory can also be useful to explain the decrease in other migratory flows such as that from Brazil to Portugal or the stagnation of migration from Morocco to the United Kingdom.

Kin and community network. The drivers and factors of migration are considered cumulative as each act of migration creates social structures that cause further migration, generating diaspora networks and diffusion of a migratory culture (Migali et al. 2018). While taking into account that not all migration leads to the creation of loose diasporas or what could be identified as diaspora networks (Gevorkyan, 2022), the accumulation of social capital leads progressively to self-sustained and self-perpetuated diaspora networks. They can become the only reason why people continue to emigrate regardless of the structural determinants that caused the start of migration (Arango, 2020; de Haas, 2011; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014; Snel, Faber & Engbersen, 2013; Engbersen, 2014;). Using the words of Massey and colleagues, "once begun, international migration tends to expand over time until network connections have diffused so widely in a sending region that all people who wish to migrate can do so without difficulty" (1998: 45). However, it should be noted that in recent years some caution has prevailed in this regard, since the assumption of self-sustaining flows cannot fail to consider political and economic constraints and, therefore, for example, political closures (restrictive conditions of entry, institutional contexts not conducive to immigration etc.) and the shortage of economic opportunities in some countries. This has led to shifting attention to family strategies, within diaspora networks, designed to circumvent restrictions on mobility, such as arranged marriages in order to escape the stop of migration for work or some amnesty measures for irregular migrants. In this case, the strategies of the networks are considered almost an independent variable, with a relative indifference towards the regulatory context and the political-institutional regulation of migration. Moreover, a diaspora can reach the "saturation of the network", thus leading to a gradual loss of dynamism in the migration process and generating the need for greater reflections on the decline of migratory systems over time (de Haas, 2010). The dynamics of the growth and saturation of the migratory networks therefore constitute an interesting area that requires further investigation and insights (Arango, 2020).

As in the past, a significant part of contemporary international migration and diasporas in the world takes place in the context of the migration of the larger family, as suggested by the high number of migrants admitted to family reunification in Europe (especially in the old immigration countries) (Beauchemin, 2012). Through transnational mobility, families create space-time networks and are channels of information and assistance which in turn influence the process of migration decision-making. The geographically displaced family members are part of "multi-stranded social relations which link together migrants' societies of origin and settlement" (Baldassar & Baldock, 2000: 63). In their report on the drivers of international migration, Migali and colleagues (2018) underline that the presence of individuals with a migration background in the destination countries is the first driver of migration for family reasons to the countries of the European Union. Family reunification is by definition dependent on the presence of kin members already present in the countries

of the EU. Having a spouse abroad affects their migration chances differently than other relationships due to the spouse's sponsorship procedure in most democratic destination countries. Furthermore, arranged marriage is favoured in many 'traditional societies' and is a growing component of migration to many European countries, becoming alternative to 'traditional' family reunification with a new family formation (Coleman, 2015). Indeed, there are many migrants motivated more by the prospect of migration than by the pleasures of marriage. In the Netherlands, this type of migration was the most important component of all migrations from North Africa and Turkey (Coleman, 2015).

Based on data from the MAFE Project (Migration between Africa and Europe) (2013), for all three countries examined (Senegal, Ghana, DR Congo), extended family contacts were the most common type of connection, indicating the existence of social networks beyond nuclear family ties. The percentage of transnational families was particularly high for Senegalese migrants, but less for Congolese and Ghanaian migrants. African migrant families do not always reunite in Europe. In fact, a significant number of all family reunification took place in the country of origin. Among migrants with families, reunification in Europe was far from universal, with a quarter of Ghanaian migrants and a third of Congolese migrants reunited at the time of the survey. Reunification was even less common among Senegalese families. Families in Africa generally did not contribute to the financial costs of migration for their members: only a fifth of Ghanaian families and a quarter of Congolese and Senegalese families contributed financially. This is a surprising discovery as current migration theory emphasizes migration as a family strategy. Those who received support were more likely to be children of the breadwinner, although support for spouses and siblings is also relatively widespread. Obviously these findings could vary from country to country and from continent to continent. In many cases, help and support from family members are not dependent on cohabitation or physical proximity.

OECD data (2019a) show that spouses who meet after ten years or more earn less than migrants who move as a couple. In addition, spouses who arrive later are less likely to learn the language of the host country correctly. Migrant children who arrive at preschool age seem better integrated than migrants who arrive at school age, especially in terms of linguistic competence. As far as possible future scenarios are concerned, we can predict that family reunification will undoubtedly continue to have an impact on the integration of migrants. Therefore, policy makers from EU countries should carefully consider the role of family reunification by following the Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification to create sociocultural stability facilitating the integration and promoting economic and social cohesion. In these future scenarios, it can also be assumed that the conditions, the procedures for reunification and the modalities for access to the labour market of family members, will be fundamental to increase the attractiveness of a country by migrants and therefore to attract and retain the most qualified migrants.

Literature and empirical studies have almost always privileged networks characterized by strong ties, i.e. close family members such as spouse/partner, parents, siblings and children, and weak non-personal ties, i.e. the aggregate levels of migration from the countries of origin. Less attention has been given to networks made up of forms of extended kinship and friends (Espinosa & Massey, 1999). The contribution of Granovetter (1973), taken up later by other scholars, has laid important foundations for the theory of networks as regards the "strength of weak ties" for the dissemination of information in migratory networks. Weak ties function as bridges between network clusters and thereby provide individuals with new information that would not otherwise be available through strong ties. According to this thesis, strong ties lead to more reliable information, but weak ties can be more valuable and useful than strong ones (Schapendonk, 2015). Reporting the words of Palloni and colleagues "networks based on kinship are not necessarily the most efficient or most salient in shaping migration decisions [...] weaker ties or friendship or acquaintance may be equally or more important than kinship ties" (2001: 1295-1296). However, the value of a weak tie depends on the gender, social position of the actors involved or the extent to which they are able to convey useful information. Speaking in a generic way of "weak ties" without considering these and other variables can certainly generate confusion on the production and transmission of information and resources (Ryan, 2011). For example, using longitudinal data collected in Africa (Senegal) and Europe (France, Italy and Spain), Liu (2013) has shown that, while for female migrations, the networks consisting of aunt/uncle/niece/nephew are particularly important

and influential like those characterized by strong ties (close family members), for male migrations, networks based on friendship seem to play a key and more influential role than those with strong ties. The merit of this research was to have analysed the interactions between migration and family trajectories in order to study the socio-demographic changes caused by international migration and the relationships between migration and family formation/transformation.

In a previous other study on migration from Morocco and Senegal to Spain and from Egypt and Ghana to Italy, Herman (2006) confirms the crucial role of networks in the destination countries and demonstrates how migrants belonging to networks based at the same time on both strong and weak ties are able to obtain more advantages, as regards the help and ease of migration, compared to migrants who use only strong ties, who had considered using the networks of weak ties only as an alternative plan in case of lack of support from individuals with strong ties. The research also showed that a person with a spouse in the country of destination is much more likely to obtain a residence permit or another useful visa through the network of strong ties without having to resort to illegal ways. Finally, some scholars point out that today many individuals are not part of traditional, densely united and closely tied communities. Theirs are mostly weakly tied networks, subject to constant changes (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). It should be noted that, from an anthropological point of view, the historical, cultural and kinship context of each country has its own peculiarities and therefore it is not always possible to refer to universal and comparable parameters (Herman, 2006). However, for future migration scenarios and migration decision-making process, we can hypothesize that a certain balance between strong intra-family ties and wider weak ties are a necessary condition for a successful migration project.

A final consideration concerns the recent COVID-19 crisis. This emergence, like other crises, can certainly contribute to the transformation of social capital or, at least, the perception of resources provided by networks. For instance, as shown by some studies (LaRochelle-Côté & Uppal, 2020), migrants could be more likely than natives to have higher levels of concern about the maintenance of social (both strong and weak) ties and about the ability to support one another during or after the pandemic. The risk is that this concern turns into reality by producing substantially social isolation and loneliness and impacting migrants' physical and mental health. The task of national and local governments and civil society will be to understand how this unique experience during and after the pandemic may impact their health outcomes and social ties, by intervening on structural and socio-economic conditions and vulnerabilities faced by many migrants.

Extending the network aproach – the migration industry? In In the case of migrations for work to the European Union, the existence of networks in the destination country represents the most important driver, although to a lesser extent than family migrations (Migali et al. 2018). Despite a long tradition of studies on the role of personal networks in finding a job, there are still many gaps in our knowledge in how such networks are used in entering the labour market and developing careers. Studies on the role of migration networks in the labour market have provided mixed results. Some argue that they are a valuable resource, increasing the participation, professional fulfilment and remuneration of the immigrant workforce (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Amuedo-Dorantes & Mundra, 2004; Damm, 2009; Munshi, 2003). Generally, with reference to the labour market, it is believed that immigrants are particularly dependent on social ties, in the absence of other types of capital that can facilitate their economic integration, such as the language skills of the host country, allowing a rapid transmission of information, for instance, on the opening of workplaces or on the opportunities for start-ups of companies or self-employed jobs (Waldinger, 2003). The use of compatriot networks is normally more relevant for immigrants in irregular conditions, less free to move, to access public services, to look for jobs in wider employment areas (Bloch, Sigona & Zetter, 2014; McIlwaine, 2015). Those who try to enter qualified positions can hardly count on the small resources that relatives and compatriots can provide, as long as the employment niches influenced by the actions of the migratory networks are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchies. Other studies have not highlighted negative effects such as the entrapment of workers in less prestigious and unskilled occupations, exploitation by compatriot employers, and lower wages (Aguilera, 2009; Alba & Nee, 2003; Kalter & Kogan, 2014; Kanas, van Tubergen & van der Lippe, 2011; Lancee, 2012). Similarly, other studies have found that forms of assistance depend on the type of ties: close relatives are

more likely to offer free accommodation to new arrivals, while extended relatives, friends and acquaintances are more helpful in finding a job (Comola & Mendola, 2013; Kalter & Kogan, 2014).

In her diachronic and comparative study on the functioning of Senegalese networks in France, Italy and Spain, and using the data of the research project "Migration between Africa and Europe" (MAFE), Toma (2016) examines the extent to which the context of reception shapes the role of ties within networks, in particular on short and long term economic effects. The analysis compares the role of Senegalese (male) migration networks in three different areas: migration flows, the labour market and migration policies. The results show that the presence of close relatives in the host country increases the probability of being hired both in the first year of arrival in Europe and subsequently, while extended relatives and friends have no influence. The second issue addressed by the research is whether access to migrant networks affects the type of work obtained in the country of destination. Both the typology of the first jobs and the subsequent professional transitions are considered. At first glance, pre-migration ties have no effect on professional status. But when their influence is distinguished from the destination context, substantial and significant differences are observed between the roles of the networks in France, on the one hand, and in Italy and Spain, on the other. In France, where the Senegalese community is well established and diversified from a socio-economic point of view, pre-migration networks and ties lead to better economic prospects, increase the probability of accessing qualified employment on arrival and protect against the precariousness of autonomous activities. On the contrary, in Italy and Spain pre-migration ties lead mainly to the perpetuation of ethnic niches in small and precarious business activities. The presence of pre-migration ties does not appear to have any significant influence on subsequent professional transitions. This could be attributed to new ties that developed after the arrival both with their compatriots and with the local population. The structure of the host societies' labour market and the historical links between countries are probably responsible for these dynamics. The extensive underground economy in Italy or Spain undoubtedly supports these ethnic niches, while the historical and linguistic links and the more generous integration policies between Senegal and France have encouraged a growing flow of Senegalese students, many of whom have a real professional employment, thus contributing to a greater diversification and social stratification of the Senegalese community in France.

A limitation of network theory lies in the excessive emphasis of the migration supply side, neglecting the role of other agents and actors who act outside traditional networks (Krissman, 2005). Therefore, an extension of the network perspective was developed, considering many other agents who contribute to the structuring of migrations by mediating individual aspirations and the possibility of entering the host society, creating and reinforcing the migratory processes (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Schapendonk, 2015; Van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018). This is also defined as the "migration industry" (Castles, 2004a; de Haas, 2010), interested in the continuation of migration – both regular and irregular – and consisting of multiple configurations involving different actors both in the country of origin and in the country of destination such as travel agents, job recruiters, lawyers and bankers, student recruitment agents and international higher education departments, online virtual communities, and (legal or illegal) organizations that facilitate the transfer of people through borders. Migrants and their networks can be included in the migration industry for their role as facilitators in the migration process and these specific networks can be constituted by smugglers who promote and strengthen irregular migration. An omission in the substantial network theory literature is related to smugglers' networks, including their influence on the migratory destination and the feasibility of irregular migration (Cummings et al., 2015; Khunt, 2019; Sanchez, 2017). As recent studies suggest, smuggling networks can be considered as a dynamic and transnational part of migratory networks (Khunt, 2019), often based on bonds of trust (Achilli, 2015) and, following the classification proposed by Van Liempt (2007), distinguishable in networks of occasional smugglers; on a small or large scale; based on their organizational structure, the services offered and the figures in charge (see also UNHCR, 2017). Other scholars underline the ethnic organization, the "ethnicization" in this type of economic activity, and the more or less strict and hierarchical structure of smuggling networks (Triandafyllidou & McAuliffe, 2018). According to Kuschminder and colleagues (2015), these networks act in the context of irregular migration in three ways: 1) on the routes and destination choices that they propose (or deny) to migrants; 2) in concretely deciding the destination of migrants; 3) in violating an agreement made with migrants leaving him in a destination other than the agreed one. The extent to which

a smuggler chooses the destination depends on the nature of the relationship with the migrant, which could be determined by a financial transaction or exploitation (Wissink, Düvell & van Eerdewijk, 2013). As a pivot of the migratory industry, smuggling networks are becoming increasingly professional, due also to the use of social media that facilitate migratory processes and in light of the growing ability of migrants to pay for more sophisticated services, as happened for Syrian refugees (Cummings et al., 2015). Today, thanks to the World Wide Web, potential migrants have access to more diversified sources of information and assistance than in the past. In order to fully understand the complexity of the migration processes, it is therefore essential to further explore the role of multiple sources of assistance beyond the migratory networks (Van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018). The smugglers' services are advertised on online social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, providing all the minimum details on the modalities and characteristics of the journey, arriving, like the legal travel agencies, even to offer discounted offer packages for children under five years. Often images of the arrival at their destination are successfully posted on social media, also to promote the reliability of their organization. In addition, suggestions are provided on where and how to apply for asylum and on the countries where it is easier or more convenient to emigrate. It must be said, however, that the use of online social networks by migrants penalizes the networks of smugglers, since many manage to complete their journey independently, sharing a series of valuable information via their smartphones, such as GPS coordinates (Zijlstra & van Liempt, 2017). This also entails a drop in the prices charged by smugglers, especially as regards the routes travelled by Syrian migrants. Lacking the protection often afforded by smuggling facilitators, migrants are more susceptible to specific forms of violence, like scams, robberies and abuse by smugglers, other migrants, ordinary citizens, law enforcement, and groups involved in criminal activities.

A final consideration regards the recent COVID-19 crisis and, particularly, the implications of restrictions related to the COVID-19 response on irregular migration and smuggling activities, such as closure of borders, quarantines imposed to both migrants rescued at sea and the ships' crews of rescue vessels, and other state-imposed mobility restrictions. Some scholars argue that these restrictions, as well as other similar restrictions related to any analogous emergencies, do not stop migrants from traveling irregularly (Sanchez & Achilli, 2020). In fact, they may suspend or reduce irregular migration, but they do not lead to the end of the demand for smuggling services. As demonstrated by some evidence, smuggling facilitators have continued to organize journeys from Libya despite the refusal of some countries (Italy, Malta and Libya) to grant a safe port to rescue vessels and the Mediterranean continues to be an area with a high presence of smuggling networks. Besides, closed borders might push an increasing number of people towards informal, more risky migration channels (Yayboke, 2020), where humanitarian support and rescue are often unavailable.

For a better understanding of future migration scenarios and migration flows, especially those crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, it is desirable to realise in the future a greater number of studies on the networks of smugglers, on their role in the migrants' decision-making process, on the effects of selection by them (Khunt, 2019), and on the interaction between border control and wider enforcement efforts and the shifts in smuggling routes and modus operandi, by focusing attention not only on the destination countries but also on places of origin or transit (Triandafyllidou & McAuliffe, 2018). A further field of investigation to be explored is certainly that which includes the relationship between smugglers' networks and other determinants of migration, such as the use of technology and newer forms of communications (Sanchez, 2017). While facing unique emergencies like COVID-19 crisis, governments of EU countries will have to pay specific attention to an eventual evolution and transformation of irregular migration and smuggling networks, and to how regulations related to the COVID-19 response may impact smuggling activities. Any solutions to contain irregular migration and activities of smuggling networks, while contributing to the safety of people on the move under COVID-19 or any other crises in the future, must take into account that there is a systemic decrease in legality, safety and well-being of migrants behind the demand for smuggling services.

Historicity, culture and imaginaries of migration (and to stay put). The cumulative dimension of migration to which we have referred earlier turns the attention to the understanding of how migration becomes a desired and prominent strategy of household members (mainly among youngsters) and more broadly, how in a specific country or in local communities "being mobile" increasingly comes to be perceived as a social

and family's expectation. Yung generations choose to emigrate following an almost obliged strategy, based on shared values on migration, where all other options are not taken into consideration or are seen as an existential failure (Cummings et al., 2015; Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen, 2004).

As noted by several studies, mainly focusing on African migrations, over time the choice of mobility becomes a "way of life" rather than an exception (de Bruijn, 2007: 110), a value characterized by its historicity, rooted in shared social meanings and practices of a collective (Boesen & Marfaing, 2007; Bredeloup & Pliez, 2005). "Mobility is engrained in the history, daily life and experiences of the population" (Amin, 1995; Bakewell & de Haas, 2007; Brachet, 2009; de Bruijn, Van Dijk & Foeken, 2001: 1). Far from being an opposition to sedentariness, mobility practices beyond the African continent are engrained in the history, daily life and experiences of several populations who were already mobile within Africa. For instance, the transnational migration trajectories of Senegalese and Moroccans are often an experience of re-immigration (degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017; Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen, 2004; Sinatti, 2011) to the extent that their patterns of internal mobility (e.g. rural-urban/urban-urban/urban-rural, seasonal or commuting practices), as much as the intra-regional migration of many Sub-Saharan populations (degli Uberti et al., 2015) have further evolved into the decision to emigrate to Europe (Bakewell & de Haas, 2007; Ceschi, 1999; OECD, 2009).

Exploring the motivations of migrants and how cultural beliefs and social patterns influence the decisions of people to move or to remain at home (Schewel, 2015; Schewel & Fransen, 2020), an increasing number of scholars has drawn the attention on the role of certain cultures of migration (Cohen & Jónsson, 2011; Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011; de Haas, 2011; Kandel & Massey, 2002; Hahn & Klute, 2007; Massey et al., 1987) and "culture of staying" (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018) as determinants on individual and household mobility decisions in the countries of origin. Drawing from their studies on Mexican migration to United States, Massey et al. (1993: 452–453; Cohen, 2004) state that a culture of migration emerges when: "at the community level, migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviours, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values". Similar cases of the culture of migration or culture of mobility argument (Tarrius, 1993) have been documented in many parts of the world: India (Ali, 2007; Karupiah, 2018), among African population (Hahn & Klute, 2007) in Morocco (Jolivet, 2015), Mali (Jónsson, 2008; REACH & MMC, 2020), Ghana (Carr, 2005), Cape Verde (Carling & Akesson, 2009), Gambia (Conrad Suso, 2019) Senegal (Bal & Willems, 2014; degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017), among regular and irregular migrants in Turkey (Sirkeci & Cohen, 2016; Timmerman et al., 2014), Ukraine (Van Mol et al., 2018) as well as among Iraqi Kurdish migrants (Paasche, 2020). As noted by Bal & Willems on the introduction to their co-edited special issue on the imagination of futures 'away from home', for a mounting number of (young) men and women throughout the world "the culture of migration is those ideas, practices and cultural artefacts that reinforce the celebration of migration and migrants" (2014: 253; degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017), inasmuch as that successful migration causes migration (e.g. Kandel and Massey 2002).

As illustrated by Hahn, the term "cultures of migration" also "acknowledge[s] the perpetuation of local cultures which have the capacity to cope with the temporal absence of some of their members and to integrate the migrants' experiences from abroad into their own horizon" (2007: 169). In this way it embeds the evolving perceptions and the changing understandings of migration. The act of migrating changes the social context and circumstances in which the decision was made, providing migrant aspirations with new sources of inspiration as a result of the incorporation of different lifestyles, tastes and understandings of migration. In their study on Moroccan emigration, Heering et al. emphasize that "over time foreign labour migration becomes integrated into the structure of values and expectations of families and communities. As a result, young people contemplating entry into the labour force do not consider other options" (2004: 325).

Thus, an accurate discussion on the socio-cultural patterns which could shape the future migration scenarios should keep into consideration that a culture of migration within certain groups may, for instance, explain why immigration continues to occur even when the contexts of destinations have undergone concrete changes as a substantial reduction of the labour demand or in the face of increasing national as well as international policy mechanisms aimed at curbing unregulated migrants' mobility. That is the cases, for instance, of the migration

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aspirations of young men in Kayes region of Mali, which remain mainly directed towards Europe, have not changed despite restrictive migration policies (REACH & MMC, 2020). Transformations rather occurred in the mode of travel, which has become increasingly irregular; this change "has led to an exacerbation of the vulnerability of the people of Kayes, be they migrants in transit, at destination, or their relatives in the community of origin" (REACH & MMC, 2020: 45).

Nonetheless, as a historically determined process, the culture of migration is a shifting phenomenon shaped by the transformations affecting the societies as the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of preparation and the unknowns of this physical and intellectual experience of insecurity have progressively affected not only the mobility of people, undermining their very same efforts to make informed decisions concerning their potential journey (Cohen, 2020), but is presumably leading to progressive shifts on the perceptions and values historically attached to migrate. A topic rather under examined.

Although mobility is driven by insecurities that takes many forms at points of origin and destination (Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011), if emigration from a specific country or locality is associated with the idea of success, then social pressures and expectations can arise. In this respect the perception of the socio-economic benefits and advantages connected to those who migrate plays a greater influence on people from the same country of origin who decide to undertake a migration project in order to obtain the same benefits for themselves and their families, using their contacts and networks to facilitate migration (de Haas, 2011). The empirical feedback of migrants obtaining benefits from their families therefore reinforces the intentions of others to emigrate. By assuming more and more meaning in some countries or regions, migration can therefore transform into a strategy assimilated and desired by a particular population. Similarly, "the investments of migrants in their families or local communities are a strong encouraging factor for other families and communities" (Schapendonk & van Moppes, 2007: 8), as well as frequent visits to the country of origin and all forms of transnational communication contribute to strengthening the culture of migration by disseminating information related to the benefits of migratory movements (Snel, Faber & Engbersen, 2013).

With respect to some variables such as gender and religion, some studies have shown that the culture of migration can play a significant role in the movement of male and female migrants, for whom the presence of a family network abroad is a driving factor (Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen, 2004). A strategy based on pressure and expectations is also present in the religious sphere. In their study of Senegalese migration Schapendonk and van Moppes (2007) highlighted how religious leaders often push individuals to emigrate in order to support their religious community through economic remittances.

The collection of shared socio-cultural patterns, expectations, values and perceptions of migration (Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen, 2004; Khunt, 2019; Timmerman et al., 2014) that affect local culture and inform the aspiration and decision to migrate, not only those families that send migrants abroad, but also those who remain at home (Ali, 2007: 38–39), does not presume a 'rational' calculation of costs and risks among migrants and migrant-sending households. Being a migrant in and of itself has become a status symbol; something to aspire to, not to downplay the risk of physical death, as in the case of young undocumented men who set off for the Canary Islands from the Senegalese coasts, but rather to overcome a state of "social death" in a country unable to ensure either economic development or the reproduction of social and family relationships (degli Uberti, 2014: 101). As a culture of migration establishes itself, migration becomes a social norm or a modern rite de passage (de Haas, 2009) and instead staying at home becomes in many cases associated with failure or a lack of ambition.

As already shown with reference to networks in discouraging migration, qualitative studies on the role of the cultures of migration and related feedback mechanisms reveal that migration is not necessarily and unanimously perceived as positive or the best option among people living in migrant-sending countries. Several are the "contextual feedback mechanisms", which operate more indirectly in the sending and receiving countries, counteracting migration-facilitating dynamics and weakening the pre-assumed self-perpetuating migration systems (de Haas, 2009). Timmerman et al. provide evidences on how the existence of a particular

culture of migration in some districts of Turkey could hamper migration aspirations as they contribute to the idea that migration is not necessarily the only solution or the best adaptation strategy possible to cope with environmental changes (2014; Jolivet, 2015). In other cases, the need or the wish to migrate decreases either when it is socially perceived that migration has led to low social positions in the immigration country, jeopardizing the opportunities to send remittances (Gemenne & Blocher, 2016; Timmerman, Hemmerechts & De Clerck, 2014), or migration results in more structural investments in one particular area of origin.

The culture of migration, as a considerable determinant of migratory movement, is a complementary factor to examining economic factors and network ties to migrate. Indeed, with respect to a culture of migration, whether people learn to migrate and learn to desire to migrate (Ali, 2007), the local and transnational networks people have access to, give rise and inform the social imaginaries of migration (Hillmann, van Naerssen & Spaan, 2019; Koikkalainen & Kyle, 2016).

In the more recently approaches to the understanding of the "migration imaginaries", the examination of the human experiences who faced a condition of "involuntary immobility" (Carling, 2002), has drawn the attention to the role of electronic means of communication and the socio-economic impact of return migrants. The mixed influences of their economic remittances (e.g. the flaunting of wealth during their return visits or the provision of financial support through co-development projects) and their socio-cultural influence (e.g. values, skills, social capital) assume a key role in shaping the changing perception of Europe as place of destination (degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017; Kleist & Thorsen, 2017). As suggested by Bal and Willems, the migration imaginaries "provide us with an analytical lens or perspective on how people make sense of their life worlds, their individual lives, their pasts, presents and futures" (2014: 254), and which migration scenarios may be forecasted considering their propensity to migrate.

Return Migration

Return migration can be considered a driver of migration since it can be considered an integral part of the migration project. Including the return seems helpful to have a complete picture of the entire migration process and to capture the policy implications that it may have for the origin and destination countries in the perspective of delineating future scenarios for migration in Europe (Carling, 2004 and 2014; Williams et al., 2018).

Some scholars, such as Olesen (2002) and Ruhs (2006) believe that return migration should be considered a "brain gain" for the migrants' sending countries, because, along with monetary remittances, it contributes to the development of such countries. On the other side, receiving countries may consider migrants as a temporary labour force, developing immigration schemes more aligned to temporary stay rather than long term settlement (Baizan & Gonzalez-Ferrer, 2016; Boese & Macdonald, 2016; Cassarino, 2004; Castles, 2006).

In this regard, it is useful to note that many international agencies, such as the UN, the IOM, the World Bank and the European Commission, in accordance with national governments are promoting the creation of managed circular migration systems, able to effectively involve migrants' origin and destination countries in a 'win-win-win process'. Circular migration, understood as repeated movements between the home country and one or more countries of destination, is indeed able to produce mutual gains for migrants' sending and receiving countries and for migrants themselves and their families. The potential benefits of circular migration are the followings: 1) circulation of human capital and production of remittances for development; 2) preservation of sectoral labour shortages, by ensuring that temporary migrants leave; 3) prevention and reduction of irregular migration; 4) recruitment of reliable and trained workers (Vertovec, 2007). Last but not least, circular migration is a policy strategy that could be better accepted by public opinion in most receiving countries, especially in periods of economic crisis and political instability. However, to have an effective and positive impact on countries' development and migrants' well-being, circular migration should be carefully managed through the integration of national and regional development policies and migration policies in both origin and destination countries (Hugo, 2013).

Regarding return migration, considered the economic and demographic role played by migrants in receiving countries, the migrant's decision to eventually return to the country of origin may have consequences not only for his/her status and rights in the host country, but also more broadly for the policies affecting the entire society (Demeny, 2016). In other words, future migration scenarios should consider migrants' future return intentions and behaviours. These considerations become even more interesting in the context of the recent COVID-19 crisis, where migrants could witness a deterioration of their living and labour market conditions and decide to leave the destination country.

A vast corpus of international literature has disentangled the main factors associated with return migration, including return intentions, which are considered a good proxy of actual behaviours (Bonifazi & Paparusso, 2018). Many of these studies have based their analysis on the so-called "integration-transnationalism nexus"; whereas others have focused their attention on some socio-economic factors in the country of residence or in the country of origin, such as year of arrival, age at migration, length of stay abroad, marital status, family members left behind, employment, home ownership, remittances, skills, such as educational level, host language fluency, subjective well-being and social networks (Anniste & Tammaru, 2014; Carling, 2004 and 2014; Carling & Pettersen, 2014; de Haas & Fokkema, 2011; de Haas, Fokkema & Fassi Fihri, 2015; Erdal, 2012; Fokkema, 2011). All these studies agree that different processes influence return migration: integration is a factor that tends to strengthen the ties with the country of residence, whereas transnationalism reinforces those with the country of origin. Therefore, return migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, in which individual choices are influenced by conflicting but not mutually exclusive processes (Fokkema, 2011; de Haas, Fokkema & Fassi Fihri, 2015).

The importance of the context cannot be overlooked when analysing the trade-off between social integration and transnationalism and the relationship with return migration. Contextual and institutional factors in both countries of residence and origin can shape migrants' social integration and, therefore, affect migrants' wish to return to the country of origin (Ruist, 2016; Yang, 1994). In other words, a favourable and inclusive social setting in the country of destination has a positive effect on migrants' well-being in the country of residence and a negative effect on migrants' decision to return to the home country (Alberts & Hazen, 2005; Riccio & degli Uberti, 2013; Della Puppa & King, 2019; Güngör & Tansel, 2014; Massey & Akresh, 2006; Model, 2016; Piotrowski & Tong, 2013; Schiele, 2020). This consideration has become even more important in the past decade. The economic crisis in Europe has transformed how return is viewed and talked about by both migrants themselves and public institutions in origin and destination countries. While the return tended to be conceived as a long distant life project in relation to the conclusion of the working life, or as the successful outcome of the migratory adventure, for an increasing number of vulnerable migrants, return is seen as a safety net with respect to a precarious present condition.

Cerase (1974) has conceptualized four categories of return: "return of failure", "return of conservatism", "return of retirement", and "return of innovation". The "return of failure" refers to migrants who are returning to their home country due to failure to realize the social and economic goals of their migration project. The "return of conservatism" denotes the concept of returning to restore one's culture and habits because of unsuccessful integration into the host country. On the positive end, the "return of retirement" does not necessarily entail failure in the host society, but simply marks the desire to return to one's homeland to spend his or her remaining life. The "return of innovation" consists of the type of returnee who view their migration project as "the possibility of a greater satisfaction of his needs and aspirations" (Cerase, 1974: 251).

Alongside this categorization of the possible contours and outcomes that return migration can take in the countries of origin, a parallel strand of research examines the impacts of returnees on societies of origin, not only with reference to their families and community environments, but also in terms of development (Black & King, 2004; Akesson, 2011), and the impacts of public policies which support voluntary (Boccagni & Lagomarsino, 2011) and forced returns (David, 2017; Flahaux, 2017).

However, according to the "myth of return" (Anwar, 1979; Carling, 2015; Gmelch, 1980), return can be postponed for an indefinite period, and for many migrants "it remains just a projection into the future in an

almost mythical form" (Boccagni, 2011: 471; Pelliccia, 2017). In some cases, return could never happen or be only a short-term experience, in the form of a holiday in the homeland (Pelliccia, 2018). It can also take the form of a "pendulum" experience, consisting in spending a part of the year in the country of origin, while maintaining official residence in the new country of settlement (de Haas & Fokkema, 2010).

Return visits, which have been intensified through the advancement of technologies and affordability of travels' costs, can be part of the mobile and transnational life of migrants, despite of their intentions to return. They represent a "recreational transnationalism" (Carling & Erdal, 2014: 7), which can help preparing the definitive return to the home country or at least feeding the 'myth of return'. In this vein, return can be a choice not necessarily permanent and definitive; instead, it should be interpreted as part of the migration cycle, useful "to cultivate an individual relationship with the country of origin" (Jain, 2013: 910; Dustmann & Görlach, 2016). In general, any kind of transnational activities, which allow migrants to stay connected with both the country of origin and the country of destination and to live a double identity, are functional to both circular and return migration, and to its benefices (Lenoël, David & Maitilasso, 2020).

Information technology and Communication

The role of technology and communication tools is becoming increasingly important in migration studies. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have undoubtedly changed the ways in which the social networks act in relation to migration (Cummings et al., 2015). It is not only the media that has changed, but also the structure of the networks in which the communication takes place, as well as the quantity and type of accessible information. For a long time, communication within the migrant networks has been asynchronous, today it is synchronous; in the past it was punctual, today it is widespread. Migrants are now increasingly exposed to information from new media, in order to indicate the routes of travel, providing mutual support and reducing the risks and costs of migration processes, in the country of origin, during travel and in the country of destination or transit (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Schaub, 2012; Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2014). It is not wrong to hypothesize that access to modern technologies and the reduction of their costs of use is leading to the transformation of migration models, lowering the migration threshold and allowing the poorest people to implement a migration project (Collyer, 2010), not only by making it easier to access information and creating different types of networks, but also by becoming migration drivers themselves (Hamel, 2009; IOM, 2005). However, other scholars, such as Vilhelmson and Thulin (2013), argue that technology and communication tools like the Internet cannot be considered drivers of migration, but represent, if anything, instruments that favour migration. In addition, with respect to the degree of accessibility to social media, it must be recognized that there is still a digital divide between potential migrants, also as regards the quality of use of social media, often due to variables such as socio-economic status, level of education, urban/rural residence or age that can generate significant differences (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste & Shafer, 2004; Norris, 2001). Dekker and Engbersen (2014) also invite to reflect on how it is more interesting to analyse the issue of the digital divide by focusing not so much on the owners and non-owners of the internet as on the capabilities of its use.

ICTs are more than just technologies; they are also sites of cultural production. It has been emphasized that modern technology influences the way people think about borders (Pries, 2005; Timmerman et al., 2014), as "the act of migration begins in the mind" (Hamel, 2009: 10) and the images of the media are important sources in the creation of migratory aspirations, often based on an idolized "paradise" that shapes the expectations and final decisions to emigrate (Hamel, 2009; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Schapendonk & van Moppes, 2007; Timmerman et al., 2014). In the context of migration, traditional mass media remain an important source of information but are gradually giving way to new media, since unlike the former, online social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, forums, weblogs, etc.) go beyond one-to-one communication through an infrastructure that extends accessibility to individuals who are not part of the migrants' network (Burrell & Anderson, 2008; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Dekker, Godfried & Faber, 2016; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2014). However, some studies claim that the use of online media still occurs alongside traditional communication channels. This indicates that online media have not completely replaced traditional media

but are instead complementary to other transnational communication tools such as telephone, email and Skype (Dekker, Godfried & Faber, 2016). Furthermore, the contents provided by online social media are mainly generated by their users thus constituting a form of resistance to dominant structures, such as the increasingly restrictive immigration regimes of advanced societies (Broeders & Engbersen, 2007; Pelliccia, 2019; Scott, 1990). In the case of migratory networks, for example, information on possible amnesties, the availability of jobs and informal accommodation or illegal ways of crossing borders can spread very quickly, thus affecting migration strategies.

In their study, included in the "Theorising the Evolution of European Migration System" project (THEMIS), conducted on Brazilian, Ukrainian and Moroccan immigrants in the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, aimed at understanding how social media act on migration networks, Dekker and Engbersen (2014) demonstrate how online media, thanks to their transnationality of communication, allow to maintain strong social ties between individuals geographically dispersed in a deterritorialised space and, at the same time, to build new weak ties in order to organize and facilitate the migration project by providing for example useful information relating to the integration process in the destination country (see also Mahler, 2001; Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2014). Online media also help to create "latent ties" that connect previously unconnected individuals, allowing weak ties to develop and revitalize (see also Dekker, Godfried & Faber, 2016; Haythornthwaite, 2002). The latent ties also seem to be particularly useful for non-migrants without the social capital of traditional migratory networks. Dekker and Engbersen (2014) also found that some of their interviewees have maintained closer relationships with those from whom they are geographically separated rather than with the acquaintances near the place where they live. These results seem to integrate with other studies that have highlighted how the introduction of long-distance communication technologies facilitates a virtual co-presence that increases the degree of access and probability of migration (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012; Madianou, 2012; Parreñas, 2005; Vertovec, 2004; Wilding, 2006). Furthermore, the Internet can be complementary to information from official sources and an integral part of the migration process, especially for irregular migrants who cannot go to regular immigration offices to ask for information or help in finding labour or housing, due to their status. In addition, while in the past the feeling of loneliness could push migrants to seek companionship in the host society, online social networks can act as an "emotional buffer", diminishing the motivation to integrate. In fact, they allow migrants to virtually transport the network of friends and family from one place to another, reducing the need to establish strong local connections, stimulating further migratory movements. There is therefore no lack of reason to believe that the use of new technologies can end up virtually segregating migrants within the wider society in which they live. But there are equally solid theoretical arguments in favour of the assumption that the construction of a virtual community of migrants can actually support and facilitate the integration process by creating a connection between the online world and the offline world (Pelliccia, 2019). For instance, as for the COVID-19 crisis, there have been many positive experiences in several European countries with the aim of making online and offline worlds interact, by removing barriers preventing migrants' access to long-distance communications and bridging the gap between services and migrant communities regarding COVID-19 information. One of these experiences was the creation of a virtual/online drop-in, through a Facebook page and an online information hub translated into more than 40 languages, for 15 migrant community networkers in Leeds (UK) representing community groups from Guinea, Roma/Romania, Tanzania, Sudan, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Somalia, Libya, Syria and France. This initiative was very useful for reducing their isolation, improving their access to information and mitigating the psychosocial impacts they suffered as a consequence of the crisis.

With reference to the survey of van Meerten and Pereira (2013) on Brazilian migrants in Portugal and the Netherlands, the scholars observe that the Internet is mainly used by students and qualified immigrant professionals to obtain information related to finding a new home, a new job or any other type of support. The role of social media and internet tools can vary between nationalities or specific migrant groups (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Within the THEMIS project, through a study on migrants in four European countries (the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom) and non-migrants in three countries of origin (Brazil, Morocco, Ukraine), Dekker and colleagues (2016) analyse the relationship between the use of online media and migration decision-

making, trying to understand how much the use of media can stimulate migratory aspirations and how much online media are intentionally used by those who aspire to migrate. While failing to identify a causal effect of the use of online media on migration aspirations and decisions, their research shows that online media are used significantly for transnational exchanges within migratory networks. The results report the positive correlation between the propensity of non-migrants to emigrate and the use of online media. However, they are unable to demonstrate whether online media increases the likelihood of migrating. Dekker and colleagues (2016), then investigating how the use of online media by non-migrants is crucial for decision-making, conclude that online media are not (yet) substantially changing the social capital and information available to potential migrants. The claims that online media cause international migration are therefore premature. They are popular only among some groups of non-migrants, mainly young people with higher levels of education.

As highlighted in the section on networks, the smuggling networks are becoming increasingly professional thanks to the use of social media that facilitate migration processes. There are not many field researches that analyse the relationship between social media and irregular immigration. One of these is the report of the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS, 2014) which has shown the spread of online social media (Facebook, YouTube and online forums) to obtain updated information, from irregular migration routes to weather conditions. Also, in other surveys (Brunwasser, 2015; Noori, 2020; Yüksel, 2020), the frequent use of digital tools (maps for smartphones, GPS applications, social media, and messaging applications such as WhatsApp) was highlighted by migrants heading to European countries. For instance, in relation to Syrian refugees, there are several Arabic-language Facebook groups that provide, in the smallest details, all the information necessary to undertake the long journey. And the same smugglers participate in theses Facebook groups even offering discounted packages for children under five years. Often, images of the arrival at their destination are successfully posted on social media, also to promote the reliability of their organization. Thanks to the increasing accessibility to all modern technologies, it seems however that migrants are becoming more and more independent in all phases of the migration project, from the organization to the execution of the travel, publishing online updates in real time on routes, arrests, border police movements, places to stay, prices, always keeping in touch with their social networks. GPS-enabled smartphones allow migrants to get in touch with transnational support networks by making emergency calls or alerting supporters via WhatsApp, who in turn map and track their positions and movements at sea and intervene in situations of distress in real-time, thus becoming a strategic tool for survival.

Similarly, through the "Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smart Phones and Social Media Networks" project, Gillespie and colleagues (2016) show how crucial it is for Syrian refugees to use the smartphone on their travels. The absence of a real migration project, and therefore of a well-structured social network with social capital, pushes them to rely solely on that "network capital" (Urry, 2012) which allows them to make themselves more mobile than others while traveling and staying in touch with family and friends. The research also shows that Syrian refugees prefer to access international information sources not so much by consulting the official Facebook pages nor the national or funded Twitter accounts, but rather unofficial social media or news feed apps.

Much of the literature reveals how social media influence the establishment of migrant networks, altering their structure within which communication takes place and changing the type of information. At the same time, some qualitative research has shown that access to modern technologies increases awareness of the difficulties of the migration process (Horst, 2006). However, empirical research based on the analysis of the weight that social media have in the countries of origin remains lacking, i.e. how they influence the choice to migrate and what are the possible conditions on whether or not to undertake a migration project (Cummings et al., 2015; Dekker, Godfried & Faber, 2014). Also their interrelation with other determinants of migration, such as the heterogeneous use of social media between the different types of migrants or their impact on networks, as well as their application in situations of conflict or crisis (like COVID-19 emergency), the definition of economic aspirations, the role of networks during the travel and in the places of transit and how the individual characteristics (in particular gender) connect to these networks, are gaps to be filled in the research for understanding the future migration scenarios (Kuhnt, 2019). The study of the influence of social

media on family dynamics would also be of great interest: are they functional to support the family of origin once migrants have reached the country of destination? Do they offer the family of origin the opportunity to remotely monitor or control their migrant family members? Finally, it may be relevant to observe how the discourse concerning cumulative or diminutive causation can be applied not only through the networks of migrants in person, but also through new feedback channels provided by social media (Engbersen, 2014). In light of the constant changes in technology, for the future migration scenarios, it is not easy to imagine exactly the impact of ICTs on migration drivers, such as artificial intelligence and the future of work, as well as defence/military technological advances. However, there is no doubt that new technologies (above all smartphones and related apps) will continue to have a relevant role, included in relation to the smuggling networks, in such an interconnected and mobile world, where migration and new media flows intertwine transnationally through both formal and informal circuits. ICTs will maintain a relevant role in shaping migration decision-making processes and in the way migrants negotiate the potential trajectories, by an interaction of spatial and virtual mobilities affecting mobile subjects' social fields in the long run.

Education

Educational opportunities and skill acquisitions play an important role at many stages of an individual's intentions and decisions to migrate (de Haas, 2018; Elder et al., 2015; Schewel, 2014). However, education is not often a primary driver of international migration, except in the cases of young people going to universities abroad. More specifically, the literature points out that adolescents between the ages of 15 and 25 are the group that most strongly considers migrating for education (Browne, 2017) and the growing wealth of emerging economies has pushed young people in the expanding middle classes to seek educational opportunities abroad. Rather, education is seen as a secondary driver associated with the search for a better life, made up of positive economic prospects and adequate jobs. There is not yet a unique and unanimous view among experts and scholars on the role that education plays in international migration, also due to the fact that people's motivations change over time and as they travel (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2016). For instance, a question concerns the relationship between education and aspirations: does studying increase aspirations to migrate or does the desire to leave affect education? (Ali, 2007; Browne, 2017). Scholars agree that in low-income countries, higher educated people are more likely to migrate, due to a combination of increased financial resources, greater aspirations, and lack of adequate employment that fits their education in their country (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018). Furthermore, across the world, there is certainly a positive correlation between education and the structure of labour markets (IMF, 2016): as the level of education increases, the labour markets and division of labour expand and become increasingly complex.

Education strongly relates to people's desire to migrate, especially in case of an increasing gap between education-driven rising aspirations and the availability of jobs in the potential destination country that could match those aspirations. Younger people and high-skilled individuals holding degrees of either secondary or tertiary education tend to be more likely to express a desire to relocate permanently (de Haas, 2018; Migali et al., 2018). In other words, the more concrete the intention to migrate becomes, the higher the share of highly educated. Moreover, the distance between the country of origin of potential migrants and their desired destination, along with the presence of dense networks in the country of destination, represent an important driver for migration aspirations both highly and low educated individuals (Dao et al., 2018; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2010).

There is a relationship between education, wealth, and the aspiration to migrate. Poor families are less likely to access both education and migration. For instance, in Ethiopia, people with low levels of income, little or no education were more likely to stay than individuals belonging to the middle-class (Schewel & Fransen, 2018). Indeed, many studies highlight that middle-class people, who generally aspire to white-collar jobs, express a greater desire to leave their country, having greater economic resources to support the expenses that are necessary to realise a migration project to study abroad. Interestingly, those with higher incomes do not express a greater desire to migrate than the middle class, probably because of a higher level of satisfaction or because of greater chances to achieve their broader life aspirations where they are. Instead, based on a study

in Northern Senegal (Newman, 2019), belonging to a lower caste family, along with factors such as young age, absence of a network and capital to emigrate, is associated with greater investments in state school diplomas and aspirations to formal sector employment in Senegal. However, many young people question the advantages of state schooling and consider the alternative of dropping out of primary or secondary school to attend Koranic school and invest in trade, and in the study of French literacy, functional to a migratory project. Other studies have analysed the educational aspirations of youth in migrant-sending contexts related to diaspora communities. Regarding Jamaican diaspora, the aspirations of many male adolescents to migrate, after secondary school, to economically advanced countries such as the UK, the US and Canada were strongly influenced by positive narratives about higher education and university success stories from members of the diaspora (Stockfelt, 2015).

In addition to migration aspiration, some studies have analysed migration plans and migration preparations by level of education and on a global scale, in order to understand how potential migration translates into actual migration (Migali & Scipioni, 2017; Migali et al., 2018). Among the many results, it emerged that having an university degree is associated with a higher probability of planning to migrate in all countries, regardless of the income level of the country. There is also a positive association between tertiary education and the probability of preparing for the migration and this association is more significant than the previous one regarding migration intentions. The probability of higher educated individuals of preparing to move is between 1.6 and 2 times higher than that of the primary educated.

Another interesting aspect is that higher education seems not to be related to irregular migrations in search of work (Khunt, 2019). Irregular migration is mainly characterized by young and unmarried men with a low level of education. While it is not uncommon for irregular migrants to have secondary-level education, those with a higher skill levels have greater opportunities to migrate legally (Cumming et al., 2015).

Following the theoretical approach of new economics of migration that view migration choices no longer as individual decisions, but as family options, aimed not only at maximizing income, but at diversifying risks (Stark, 1991), children's education is often considered a family investment for the future (Bakewell & Bonfiglio, 2013). The household or family is where decisions are taken about sending one or more children to study abroad or about the migration of children with their parents. These decisions are often a rational choice and not motivated solely by the search for individual well-being. Families of the countries of origin are the real decision-making unit, in which calculations and investments are made, encouraging some of the younger and more productive components to leave, even diversifying destinations, to minimize risks and increase opportunities. This can relate to either a middle-class Indian family sending a child to a British university or a low-income Eritrean family encouraging their children to go to Ethiopia for studies. However, it is also true that these family choices do not seem to be always rational. For instance, taking up the example above, children travelling alone from Eritrea into Ethiopia are frequently sent by their families in the belief that they will find a better life, despite the high risks and the conflict that took place between the two countries (Cossor, 2016). This latter case has also to do with migration within Africa for higher education that has been growing intensely in recent years. Some African governments and universities are implementing policies and starting programs to recruit more and more students from other African countries, developing partnerships or establishing overseas campuses, prompting students enrolled in home country institutions to transfer to programmes abroad. There are also numerous initiatives to attract foreign students in specific academic fields or with specific skills, especially students from African areas characterized by a high level of insecurity and a breakdown of the education system. One of these areas is the African Great Lakes region, in particular the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which for decades has been experiencing a prolonged conflict and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that have prompted many students to leave their country for studying at schools and universities in other African countries such as Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda (Bakewell & Bonfiglio, 2013).

In this context it seems useful to mention the link between education and internal migration: especially the rural-to-urban migration for higher education. Accessing education, particularly secondary and tertiary

educational institutions, is often the first reason for rural-urban migration in poorer countries. Urban centres not only make up for the lack of educational opportunities in rural areas but also offer young people the opportunity to avoid rural labour (Elder et al., 2015). For example, in Ethiopia many young people aspire to an urban future, and higher levels of aspiration to migrate from the rural area are found among those who have obtained primary education compared to those less educated or without any education (Schewel & Fransen, 2018).

In all these cases, the choice of families to send away children to study beyond the borders of their own country or to an urban centre can be interpreted as a family's livelihood strategy. It is aimed not only at improving the educational opportunities of the single individual but also to give the whole family the opportunity to have a better life in the future. Moreover, once on the move, families with children may consider access to education as an important factor in deciding where to go (Hagen-Zanker & Mallet, 2016). However, it should be mentioned that sometimes, in receiving hospitality and accommodation from a family or a diaspora member in the urban centre, as an alternative to a boarding school, these children can be subject to exploitative relationships where they are expected to pay their way through domestic work, which sometimes leads to them dropping out of school altogether (Temin et al., 2013).

Migration for education has a strongly gendered aspect. However, there are still knowledge gaps on the relationship between gender, education and migration. A first point concerns internal and international destinations: with the exception of the Middle East and North Africa, in most regions around the world young men are more likely to want to move, often without knowing exactly where (Esipova, Ray & Pugliese, 2011b). Regarding rural-urban migration, in some countries, like Bangladesh and Burkina Faso, adolescent girls leave their rural areas to migrate to urban centres where they can continue and improve their studies. However, although they have a better education than their rural peers, urban non-migrant girls' educational level is often higher (Temin et al., 2013). There is also an association between educational aspirations and domestic work. Very often carrying out a job allows migrant girls to pay for their studies, being the only educational option realistically open to them. Moreover, as evidenced by a study in Ghana (Tsikata, 2009) and in other Western African countries, while preferring vocational training over traditional academic education, migrant girls are supported by their employers for this training or for an apprenticeship improving practical skills and marriage prospects. In relation to education and marriage, some studies show concern about gender inequality and discrimination, for example, about marriage and early school leaving among young women in the Global South, such as Senegal (Newman, 2020) or Ethiopia (Cossor, 2016). For this reason, often against the will of the parents, many girls emigrate to avoid early marriage and to seek better educational and employment opportunities. Obviously, women who migrate abroad or to a city specifically to study often enjoy more freedoms than they do at home and are less likely to want to return home after completing their education (Fagen, 2011; Temin et al., 2013). In fact, education is a discriminating factor because generally female migrants are more likely to stay at home, taking care of the household, than work or be in school (McKenzie, 2007).

Another interesting aspect concerns educational choices as a sort of culture of migration to study. In some geographical areas, like Somaliland and Puntland, for young people, especially those already educated, the study experience abroad, as well as being a reaction to a lack of up-to-standard educational facilities, seems to represent a "way of life", a status symbol, and a value characterized by its historicity, rooted in shared social meanings and practices of a collective in which the right education can only be obtained abroad, in Europe or the US (Hall, 2015). Similarly, studying abroad is a particular value affecting local culture and informing aspirations for young middle-class Indians who moved, among others, to the UK where the fees are often lower than in the USA or Canada. Moreover, for them education is the easiest and fastest route to getting a visa.

In the European Union, international students are an important aspect of migration and constitute a significant expressions of mobility, also in making the society more intercultural. However, the current political and economic framework, which sees an ever-growing collaboration between different European countries, has

certainly made possible the development of this type of exchange that has been stimulated in many ways by the European institutions. The increase in international migration to study does not concern only Europe. In fact, the presence of foreign students in universities is perceived by all the economically advanced nations as a chance to obtain a flow of skilled immigration which will help raise the cultural heritage, and thus competitiveness, of the country. Therefore, in recent decades a strong competition among the most economically advanced countries has developed to ensure the presence of foreign students in their universities. This has given the international students advantages of various types, such as the possibility to obtain a residence permit in the host country, and even after obtaining a degree, to find a job suited to their skills that in the future may be useful in the home countries for contributing to knowledge acquisition, technological advancement and capacity building (OECD, 2020). This situation has led to a rapid growth in the number of university students who choose to do all their course of study in another country. Factors that strongly influence the choice of the country are manifold: the quality of university teaching programs, the costs of university and life, immigration policies, the academic reputation of universities, the flexibility of programs for the acquisition of a degree, policies for university admission and the recognition of foreign qualifications. As the latter case, there are not rare instances in which qualifications are not sufficient to get a job in economically most developed countries or non-recognition of qualifications entails enrolment in further education once abroad in order to convert the abilities into recognised qualifications (Banerjee & Verma, 2009; Browne, 2017). The presence of migration networks, future job opportunities, cultural aspirations and government policies in facilitating the transfer of educational credits between institutions of the country of origin and destination, and the similarity between the higher education systems also play a key role in the internationalization process of the universities. A final important factor is the language used in universities. The preference, in absolute terms, for English-speaking countries reflects the continued use of English as the universal language. At the same time, economic factors (such as the costs of international flights), technological factors (such as the spread of the internet and social media that allow contacts to be maintained across borders) and cultural factors (such as the use of English as a common working and teaching language) have contributed to making international study substantially more accessible than in the past (OECD, 2020). According to Eurostat (2019), for some European countries, the geographical, economic or historical connection with countries, particularly formerly colonies, play a relevant role. This occurs, for instance, in countries like Cyprus and the UK with more than half of all foreign tertiary students from Asia (55.7 % and 50.4 % respectively), or France where 43% of tertiary students come from Africa, and Spain with a high share of foreign students from Latin America of 38.2 % in 2017. Across the entire EU, China (including Hong Kong) was the main country of origin for higher education with 11.2% of all tertiary students, above all in Germany, Ireland and Italy, as well the United Kingdom.

As for the future scenarios, whether education is a long-term driving force shaping societies as a whole, it is of key importance to understand how it will be influential for future international migration. Any migration policy must take education into account since migration often implies the achievement of education and may result from receiving education in the countries of destination. The benefits of an increased education can be manifold: an increase in the ability to obtain higher degrees and specialized skills, in employment qualifications, salaries and mobility to obtain jobs. Education also raises awareness of employment opportunities elsewhere and may affect life and migration aspirations. Conversely, access to better education facilities decreases the propensity to express an intention to emigrate. This is especially true for rural areas of economically developing countries. In fact, expanding and improving educational infrastructure of secondary schooling in these areas might decrease the immediate need to migrate for education, although the gradual accumulation of human capital among rural residents may also increase the likelihood of their out-migration in the long-term.

For the future scenarios, it will be increasingly important to analyse the influence that different forms of education have on aspirations and capabilities to migrate over time, and to understand and anticipate the effects that sudden conjunctures have on education systems. One of these sudden conjunctures is undoubtedly the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, all educational institutions, including European universities, have closed due to the spread of the COVID-19. The lockdown imposed has had serious consequences on the continuity of learning and the delivery of teaching materials as well as students' perceptions of the value of their degrees. In order to ensure continuity of education, higher education institutions have identified

technologies and offered online lessons and online learning experiences as a substitute for in-class time. These changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could have a huge impact on the internationalization of European universities and the mobility of international students in the coming years. Students are missing out on all the benefits of international mobility such as the opportunity to live abroad, broadening their horizons and cultural experiences, expanding prospects in the labour market, networking, and improving their linguistic skills (OECD, 2020). In the absence of these benefits of international mobility, foreign students have questioned the high costs of university expenses and this has already resulted in partial refunds of their tuition fees and costs of room and board by universities. The negative financial effects do not only affect higher education institutions. The decline of international mobility risks having a negative impact on advanced sectors concerning innovation and research in future years, especially countries that have considered student mobility as a tool to facilitate the immigration of foreign talents and enabling their entry into the labour market after graduation. The education systems will face a long series of challenges and actions will have to be directed towards a rethinking of the quality of learning and delivery mechanisms in the classroom and will have to provide adequate responses to the needs of an international student population that could be less willing to cross borders for the sole reason to study.

3.2 Drivers at the meso/macro levels

EU and nation state apparatus and regulatory power

Immigration policies. Migration has always had a strong political connotation because it challenges the right of the state to control its external borders and to define the terms of belonging to its community (Bauböck, 2006; Castles, 1995). As consequence, even within organisations with large policy powers, such as the European Union (EU), immigration policies are still intimately connected to state sovereignty. As the refugee crisis has largely demonstrated, member states are still reluctant to limit their sovereignty and to accept a supranational management of their borders and immigration policies.

In the effort of limiting migration inflows and long-term settlement, immigration policies at European level have become more restrictive over years, as the erection of border walls and fences along Europe, the strengthen of visa requirements and asylum procedures, the almost total closure of the labour migration channel and the introduction of civic requirements for acquiring residence and naturalization rights have made clear (Geddes, Hadj-Abdou & Brumat, 2020; Joppke, 2017; Paparusso, 2016).

Several reasons, such as the protection of the national culture and the loss of jobs, are behind this policy of closure. However, experience shows that borders are extremely porous, and that the adoption of restrictive immigration policies does not prevent people to move (Cornelius, 2001 and 2005; de Haas et al., 2019). On the contrary, since it hinders legal entry and circulation, policy restrictiveness increases the risk of smuggling and dying at border crossing and migrants' irregularity into the residence country (Massey, Durand & Pren, 2015). Moreover, when some migration routes are closed, migrants will choose another route, even more dangerous, to reach their destinations.

Immigration policies are not able to limit or channel migration because of (1) structural factors at both origin and destination, such as wars, political instability and poverty, the demand of low-skilled workers and the need of replacing the ageing working population with cheaper foreign work force and (2) political factors, such as the signature of international laws and human rights norms, such as the non-refoulement principle, and the pressure exerted by domestic political parties and public opinion, which, for multiple and diverse interests, tend to require and accept newcomers (Castles, 2004 and 2014; Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Joppke, 1998). According to some scholars, these factors have contributed to the so-called 'liberalization' of immigration policies (e.g. Abou-Chadi, 2016; Koopmans, 2012) over years, although states continue to fortify their borders and adopt several forms of policy controls. Because of this 'liberalization', immigration policies turn to be unintentionally permissive towards migrants, and migration stay "singularly intractable to policy intervention" (Skeldon, 2008: 14).

Picture: Kotryna Juskaite

The global governance of migration and the future role of the Compacts. A global governance of migration is often advocated, as a solution to help migrants' receiving countries and intergovernmental organizations to fully understand that migration is not a temporary and exceptional phenomenon and that adopting muscular, short-term and emergency measures is highly onerous for them and, above all, go against both common sense and solidarity. The main goal of the global governance of migration – which can be defined as the ensemble of norms that regulate and help states and actors in responding to migration (Betts & Kainz, 2017) – is to combat the negative effects of policy restrictiveness on human mobility and to strengthen global stability. It means to give legitimacy to the right of people to immigrate, by recognizing human mobility as a global public good able to produce positive effects for all the actors involved in the migration process (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). Despite many hesitations, lack of agreement and cooperation between international organizations, receiving countries, political parties, syndicates, immigrant and no-profit organizations, some important key points in the development of the global governance of migration can be traced (Wihtol de Wenden, 2013b).

The genesis of the global migration governance can be traced back to the inter-War years. The main actions of that period were aimed at protecting Europe's refugees and consisted in: the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (LNHCR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), which signed a series of labour rights conventions which were increasingly applied to migration and in particular to displaced individuals in need of economic opportunities, especially in the first stages of its creation in 1919; the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) of 1949; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) established in 1950 and responsible to supervise the Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951; the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) created in 1951 (later to become ICM in 1980 and IOM in 1989) to support actions on the movement of displaced populations (Betts & Kainz, 2017).

The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, represented a fundamental starting point of the reflection on the global governance of migration in a broader sense: it suggested the importance of applying international norms to migration. The Global Migration Group (GMG), an inter-agency group, was founded in 2003, with the aim of promoting the application of all international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration. It has a symbolic link with the United Nation (UN), through the person of Peter Sutherland, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for International Migration. The High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) is, instead, at the origin of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), launched in 2006 at the General Assembly of the United Nations by the then Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan. The main aim of the GFMD is to discuss issues related to migration and development in a multilateral context and with a plurality of actors. Therefore, the GFMD has been organizing annual meetings, for example in Manila, Athens, Brussels, Geneva, and Puerto Vallarta, with distinctive elements of reflection and innovative policy-oriented goals. Successful experiences and best practices on migration policies and development have

been shared by countries to give to human mobility the same importance and dignity of other international issues. Although the GFMD is not part of the UN system, it is open to all UN member states that are interested in adopting a sustainable management of migration flows.

The common feature of these initiatives is the multilateral partnership and the responsible involvement of many governmental and non-governmental institutions, such as IOM and ILO. However, although they produce important recommendations and advices and offer advanced visions on the migration policymaking (Geiger & Pécoud, 2014), they lack a political legitimacy able to influence countries' prerogatives on migration. So far, there is no international treaty on migration or an UN agency with a mandate for migration, except for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, which has a mandate for refugees and asylum seekers (Hampshire, 2016).

Therefore, the existing global governance of migration is unable to produce an authoritative political advocacy aimed at limiting countries' ability to regulate migration. She fails to convince them of the detrimental effect of a restrictive policy and border controls, not only on migrants, but also on building cohesive and vibrant societies. Repressive security measures are counter-productive since they make more precarious the presence of migrants in receiving countries and foster their irregularity. This produces sentiments of anxiety and fear towards migrants and gives raise to racism and xenophobia, thus increasing isolation and hindering the process of social acceptance and the successful incorporation of migrants into the host country. In addition, measures based on border controls ignore the fact that most irregular migrants are not people who have illegally crossed a border, but people who have regularly entered a country and have overstayed their visa. Therefore, security measures based on the enforcement of border controls are doomed to failure in combatting illegal migration and controlling migrants' irregularity (Paparusso, 2016).

"Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", a global development agenda with seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated Targets for all countries and stakeholders has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 25th, 2015. The Declaration adopted with the Agenda 2030 specifically recognizes the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development of countries of origin, transit, and destination. In particular, migrants were included in four SDGs among other groups, concerning the access to rights and the elimination of trafficking and violence against women (goals 5 and 16), the provision of safe environments for migrant workers (goal 8), and data collection on migratory status (goal 17). Finally, migrants were also considered in SDG 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries' and in particular in target 10.c 'to reduce the cost of remittances' and SDG target 10.7 'facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies (Betts & Kainz, 2017).

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly hosted a high-level summit on refugees and migrants. It was the first time the UN General Assembly decided to bring countries together, to strengthen the global governance on migration. The summit adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, with the commitment of: (1) protecting the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status; (2) supporting those countries rescuing, receiving and hosting large numbers of refugees and migrants; (3) enhancing the positive contributions made by migrants to economic and social development in their host countries; (4) implementing a comprehensive refugee response, setting out the responsibility of several actors; (5) strengthening the global governance of migration, by bringing the IOM into the UN system; (6) negotiating the adoption of a global compact in 2018, in order to achieve a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees.

To this end, a wide consultation process has been planned with the most important public and private institutions involved, followed by intergovernmental negotiations that have produced the final draft of the "Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration". The Global Compact, which is structured in 23 objectives and aims at inviting migrant sending and receiving countries to improve international cooperation and solidarity according to the principle of subsidiarity, have been adopted on 10-11 December in Marrakech, Morocco.

Some time is needed to be able to evaluate if this ambitious declaration of intent will influence migrants and refugees. The Global Compact is a non-legally binding framework rooted in the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, some countries, such as the Visegrád countries, Austria, Israel, Italy, the USA, and Australia, have not signed or have signed against the document. Nevertheless, the Global Compact will probably succeed in filling one of the main gaps of the current global governance of migration: building an effective multilateral action on human mobility. The Global Compact has an important symbolic meaning: it gives legitimacy to the right of people to immigrate and recognizes human mobility as a global public good able to produce positive effects for all the actors involved. Currently, there is no international treaty on migration or UN agency with a mandate for migration, apart from the UNHCR, which has a mandate for refugees and asylum seekers.

Political instability. According to political sociology with its theoretical foundations in Max Weber's work first published in 1922 on the concept of power and politics (Weber, 1968 and 2002) political stability, as the antonym of political instability, depends on the legitimation of an authority of a state. Political stability is understood as the fruit of constitutional legitimacy and instability is seen as the product of the failure of the state. Furthermore, political stability can also be identified with the longevity of a government where stability is equated with the duration of the government (Russett, 1964: 97–100). Political stability is not seen as the absence of change or as a stagnation of the political system, but change would take place as a result of institutionalized and functional procedures and not through anomic or normless processes that solve problems through civil conflict and violent behaviour (Hurwitz, 1973). Thus, by political instability we understand the inability of states to respond to processes that tend to trigger regime changes or changes in fundamental policies realised through violent conflicts. In this case, the instability translates into the inability or lack of political will of the government to guarantee the rights and provide the basic functions to its people.

The weakness of the political institutions of the state therefore represents a fundamental dimension of political instability. The failure of the state or its instability always occurs when major challenges deriving from economic or political factors like poverty, economic crises, civil wars, etc. occur in the presence of weak institutions that are unable to react to ensuing conflicts.

It is well known that some political regimes are better suited to manage possible conflicts, but it is the coherence between political institutions and types of political regimes that ensures stability in the event of emerging conflicts. According to research based on the Polity IV dataset[5], democratic states and autocracies can create stability and stable states alike (Carothers, 2002; Goldstone et al., 2004). It is therefore the weakness of the institutions of the state (authoritarian or democratic) that has effects on instability. Their coherence with the types of political regime ensures the guarantee and validity of political and institutional arrangements between individuals and groups in society. Coherent institutions act in ways that serve to maintain the effectiveness and authority of the rule of law and not, to protect themselves from unforeseen challenges.

Therefore, the other drivers of political instability such as conflicts that arise around the distribution of scarce resources, natural disasters, external shocks or internal ethnic conflicts find in the coherence of political institutions their clearing house which, when it fails, leads to the failure of states (Bates et al., 2010).

Intuitively, political instability influences migratory movements in the sense that it represents a driver that could encourage migratory movements. Simply put: more political instability, more emigration. But the effects of political instability do not work so linearly. In the first place, it is necessary to distinguish between emigration and immigration, that is, between the effects of political instability in the countries of origin and the effects in the countries of destination.

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[5] Among prominent datasets, the Polity is a data series in political science research that measure democracy and autocracy.

Political instability as defined here could be an incentive to emigrate and thus act as a driver (push effect) of migration, but its greatest effects in terms of migratory movements can be observed in the case of forced migration.

The common element that distinguishes the so-called 'forced migration' from other forms of migration is violence. Forced migrants are people who left their country of birth or of residence because of a well-founded fear of violence that arises from political instability or that is exacerbated by political instability (Zolberg, Suhrke & Aguayo, 1989). Political instability, when it takes the form of serious violent conflicts, is generating migratory movements made up mostly of people fleeing the violence. These can be victims of political instability who are accidentally caught in the crossfire between the warring parties and who are exposed to generalized social violence. However, very often this type of movement remains mostly concentrated in the countries immediately bordering the country where political instability has taken hold. According to UNHCR data, in 2019 over eight out of 10 refugeeslive in developing countries, generally in a country bordering the one they fled (UNHCR, 2020).

The latter ones become countries of immigration, a process that increases the strain on the political institutions responsible or dedicated to welcoming these migratory inflows. The weakening of these institutions could represent a source of political instability in the case of a country already marked by other social, ethnic, economic or political conflicts or crises.

A further effect of political instability in a country on migratory movements affects the transit countries. The migratory movements use countries where political institutions are weaker as transit areas to reach their desired destinations. Under the pressure exerted by these immigrants, these countries equip themselves with the necessary political institutions to manage these migratory flows and are becoming eventually countries of immigration, like Libya and Turkey. The assessment or prediction of the effects of political instability on migratory outflows must take into consideration the coherence of political institutions with the political regime, as a definition of political instability. Moreover, the events affecting political institutions more fragile in terms of migratory issues like migration control, migration policies, population control, etc. or events weakening these political institutions must be taken into consideration. The damaging events of political instability in themselves do not constitute a driver of migration since, as the cases of Libya and Turkey demonstrate, and they can be neutralised in the presence of strong political institutions.

Effects of asylum policies on migration flows. As already stressed, the adoption of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in December 2018, marked a watershed in the international refugee system, as it signalled a global yearning for multilateral action to tackle the protracted tensions around the issue of refugee movements.

The international refugee system, based on the 1951 Refugee Convention, was a product of the post-World War II period. Having proved to be quite adaptive for the following 70 years, it was pushed to a breaking point during the so-called "refugee crisis", when in 2015 a historic flow of potential refugees to EU's border led to a humanitarian crisis that shook the very foundation of the European Union (Ferris & Donato, 2020).

From 2010 to 2019, at least 100 million people were forcibly displaced internally and internationally around the world. Among those, 5 million asylum seekers were granted international protection, while 15 million people were recognized as refugees outside the asylum process, with procedures such as prima facie or temporary protection. At the end of the decade, around 754,500 people are still stateless, or in the process of obtaining or confirming nationality (UNHCR, 2019). Against the backdrop of the last decade's trends in the global flow of refugees, internally displaced people, asylum-seekers, and stateless people, it is clear that "forced displacement nowadays is not only vastly more widespread but is simply no longer a short-term and temporary phenomenon" (UNHCR, 2019: 6). In fact, the vast majority of internally displaced people and refugees live in protracted situations that last for years and even decades – suffice it to say that the displacement of Palestinian refugees is lasting for about 70 years (Ferris & Donato, 2020).

The International Refugee Regime is based on the normative framework of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. With 149 States being parties to both, they define the term 'refugee' and outline refugees' rights and the legal obligations of States to protect them, including the principle of non-refoulment. The Refugee regime revolves around a single UN agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but there is a separate body for the Palestinian refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Administration for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Even though the "right to seek and enjoy asylum" is a fundamental human right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, UDHR 1948, article 14), deciding whether asylum seekers are entitled to asylum and which rights can be enjoyed by refugees is a responsibility of the receiving countries. Developed countries, such as the US, Australia and European countries have played a key role in creating the regime and still formally appraise the international legal framework for refugees' protection. However, these same countries often put in place policies that aim at reducing the number of refugees reaching their national territory and offer minimal contribution to assist those organisations that are more engaged in international protection (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017). At the same time, in the Global South, where 85% of the refugees are living, host governments often claim that the international community does not provide the necessary support to deal with the "burden" of refugees. This is especially true for countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, that have dealt with multiple and protracted waves of refugee inflows (Ferris & Donato, 2020). The perception of a lack of the necessary support from the international community, especially in terms of funding can also lead host governments to develop increasingly restrictive asylum policies, as is the case of Tanzania (see Whitaker, 2008).

In countries of the European Union, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) proved unsuited to channel the inflows of asylum seekers during the "refugee crisis", and revealed many of its structural deficiencies (Beirens, 2018). As a consequence, in many Member States methods of deterrence have been expanded in the last few years, sometimes in contrast to the founding values of respect for human dignity and human rights and contradictory to the Members' duties of sincere cooperation and commitment.

The Dublin Convention is the cornerstone of the Dublin System and is central to refugee law in the European Union. It was first negotiated in 1990, in response to the implementation of the Schengen Agreement, which allowed asylum seekers to move around the area easier. The objectives of the Convention were: (1) to determine which Member State was responsible for an asylum seeker, (2) to eradicate the possibility of "asylum shopping" – i.e. applying for asylum in the country that the asylum seeker perceives as the most favourable –, and (3) to avert delayed access to protection for an asylum seeker, in case that non-EU Member claimed responsibility. In 2003, the Dublin Regulation (Dublin II) replaced the Convention. The aim of the regulation was to ensure a rapid and efficient determination of the State responsible for asylum application, in order to grant a valid examination of all asylum claims. To this end, EURODAC – database of fingerprints of asylum applicants – was created (Mitchel, 2017).

In 2013, the Dublin Regulation was again revised, to clarify the criteria of responsibility for asylum seekers for the Member States. Dublin III came in effect in 2014, its most consequential novelty being the prohibition of the transfer of asylum seekers to states with "systemic flaws" in the asylum procedure and in the reception conditions for applicants in that Member State, resulting in a risk of inhuman or degrading treatment within the meaning of Art. 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights" (Regulation (EU) No.604/2013). The term "systemic flaws" was first used in this sense in two cases decided by the European Court of Human Rights and by the European Court of Justice, regarding the compatibility of transfers to the first country of arrival in the EU with fundamental rights inscribed in the European Convention on Human Rights. The decision of the two cases determined an almost complete stop to transferring asylum seekers that had entered the EU through Greece back to the country (Mitchell, 2017).

During the refugee emergency in Europe, Dublin III was the subject of great controversy, as the principle of the "first country of arrival" overwhelmed the asylum system of countries on the southern border, such as

Italy and Greece, leading to overcrowding and degrading reception conditions (Brekke & Brochman, 2015). At the same time, it also places restrictions on asylum seekers, who would rather continue their journey to other European countries, which might be more appealing because of structural conditions and the presence of social networks. In an attempt to tackle the issue, in 2015 the EU Council decision 2015/1601 was put into place. The decision, entitled "Establishing Provisional Measures in the Area of International Protection for the Benefit of Italy and Greece" entailed the relocation of 120,000 applicants from Italy and Greece to other Member States, as well as more aid options for the two countries. However, while 20 Member States voted in agreement with the relocation decision, 4 voted against (Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), while Finland abstained from voting. Until 2019 only 34,700 people had been relocated inside the EU from Italy and Greece, less than a third of what was initially planned in the Council decision (European Commission, 2019).

The insufficient fulfillment of the redistribution program reveals a shift in policy development, from seeking to manage the inflow by sharing the responsibility among the Member States to the framing of a "refugee crisis" that was to be tackled with more drastic measures. Already in September 2015, following the increase in the redistribution quotas from 60,000 to 120,000, the Hungarian government built a fence of barbed wire to shut the border with Serbia and keep off asylum seekers. Other Balkan countries started being more outspoken about their growing intolerance, while soon after Austria and Sweden started tightening and reconsidering their welcoming policies. In February 2016 the Balkan countries, both EU and non-EU Members, closed their borders, following Austria's limitations of the asylum seekers flow. The increasing seclusion and the fortification of borders were in a close relationship with political and media discourses, as well as mobilizations in the civil society around the "refugee crisis" (Triandafyllidou, 2018).

The faults of the Dublin System, which came to the surface in 2015–2016, and the lack of European solidarity that followed called for reform. In office since December 2019, the President of the European Commission Von der Leyen, in her first State of the Union speech has highlighted the deep division caused by the 2015 so-called migration crisis and called for a "human and humane approach" that still manages to "make a clear distinction between those who have the right to stay and those who do not". The President affirmed the necessity of rebuilding trust and solidarity in the European Union, remarking that "Migration is a European challenge and all of Europe must do its part" (Von der Leyen, 2020).

In the speech, Von der Leyen also addressed the issues of hate and racism. During the crisis, the antagonization of refugees, perceived not only as distinct "others" but also as threats, led to an inward turn and the building of metaphorical and physical walls throughout Europe. The rise of populist currents and the diffusion of anti-immigration and xenophobic discourses converged in an outbreak of anti-European sentiments and a lack of solidarity among the European Members States in the aftermath of 2015 (Postelnicescu, 2016). The adoption of a national – as opposed to European – logic of handling the refugees also led to considering asylum seekers as "rational actors" that select the country in which to apply for asylum based on the ease of obtaining protection and on the level of protection offered. Following this line of thought, during the refugee crisis, a number of Member States securitised their borders and tightened reception policies, believing that this would reduce the number of asylum seekers that apply for protection (Barbou des Places, 2003; Costello, 2005).

On September 23rd 2020, the European Commission has proposed the already announced new Pact on Asylum and Migration and called for 'A fresh start on migration: Building confidence and striking a new balance between responsibility and solidarity'. It would be interesting knowing which changes – besides some instruments to improve the management of EU external borders in cooperation with non-EU countries – the new Pact will effectively bring, considering that any effective migration-related policy advancement – especially if aimed at improving trust in EU's ability to manage migration and asylum – is beneficial to the well-being of individuals and communities in migrants' origin, transit, and receiving countries.

However, the thesis that more restrictive reception policies reduce the influx of asylum seekers has not found empirical proof in the literature. Rather, Thieleman (2004) shows that the relative restrictiveness of a country's

asylum policy has only a minor influence on the number of asylum seekers travelling to that country. Far more relevant are factors such as the prosperity ranking of the country, employment rates and historical links between countries of origin and countries of destination. The author evidences the fact that some countries that have in place some of the most restrictive asylum policy regimes are nonetheless the most popular destination for asylum applicants (Thieleman, 2004). Reaching similar conclusions, Bocker and Havinga (1998) find that even when the increased strictness of asylum policies, both pre-entry and other kinds of deterrence measures, reduces the influx of asylum seekers, the effect tends to be transient.

Given the inefficacy of tightening asylum policies on the reduction of the number of refugees, it is important to evaluate what kind of impact refugees have on host countries. Hosting refugees for long periods of time can lead countries to experience diverse and context-specific political, social and economic consequences, which can be positive. In fact, despite the possible increase in public expenditure, the international funds provided to support the refugee camp operations can benefit the host community as well. The presence itself of refugees may stimulate the demand for certain local goods, which can lead to a positive chain reaction or stimulus in the local economy. Refugees also contribute to the host countries' economy by providing human capital, knowledge and skills, as well as access to transnational social networks (Gomez et al., 2010). Therefore, despite the inevitable context-specific socio-economic and political constraints, rather than implementing policies aimed at reducing the refugees' inflow, it is necessary to focus on creating development interventions that mitigate the negative consequences and stimulate the positive impact of the presence of refugees in host countries.

Transit countries and migration trajectories. In the last decades, the globalization of migration has resulted in the South-South migration being progressively numerically more equivalent to the traditional South-North migration, thus leading to a sort of migratory emergency of the South (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). At the origin of this process, there is the growing difficulty of entry for many international migrants, because of more restrictive migration policies globally (e.g. Faist, 2019; Withol de Wenden, 2013a). Consequently, a new phenomenon has occurred: the regionalization of migration (Pellerin, 1996; Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). Complex migration systems have been developed around a well-defined region: within that region migration flows are favoured by geographical, cultural, and linguistic proximity, by a common historical heritage, and by transnational networks of migrants (Ambrosetti & Strangio, 2016). Complex migration systems do not correspond to the geographical division of continents, but to a demand which encounters a supply of numerous regional migrants.

According to Massey and colleagues (1994), an international migration system is made of a core receiving region – a country or a group of countries – and a set of specific sending countries, connected by large flows of immigrants. The countries involved in the system do not need to be geographically close; on the contrary, economic, and political links generally characterize these countries. Moreover, migration systems are not fixed over time: indeed, political, and economic situations behind such systems may change (Ambrosetti & Strangio, 2016).

Transit countries can facilitate migration flows within a migration system. In particular, transit countries can be understood as both "waiting rooms" for and "backdoors" towards the main final destinations in a migration system. Due to the role they play, they can foster or hinder migration flows also depending on the existence of migration policies or bilateral and multilateral agreements within the poles constituting the migration system (Collyer, Düvell & de Haas, 2012).

In the EU, the emergence of political concerns associated with the concept of "transit" contributed to the development of new approaches to migration and asylum policy based on the externalization of border and migration governance. Crucial to this new approach was the development of close cooperation with countries bordering the EU, which have been charged with the task of containing the illegal flows of migrants (Collyer, Düvell & de Haas, 2012; Düvell, 2012). Two of the most relevant cases of externalization of migration governance in the last years are that of Turkey and Libya, which are discussed below. Furthermore, the two cases are relevant because they also represent two of the main migration routes that lead to Europe, the Balkan Route and the Central Mediterranean Route.

Turkey is a country with a long history of immigration and emigration, as well as a crucial case of cooperation on border management. In addition to its geopolitical location, its NATO membership and the somehow stalled ongoing process of EU accession contribute to giving the country significant relevance in global migration governance. The EU membership negotiations have had a remarkable influence on the development of the governance of migration in Turkey and on the political and public discours around migration in the country. At the same time, it would be naïve to analyse the current practices, policies, and institutions related to migration merely as a consequence of the externalisation of the EU border regime. Turkey has historically witnessed emigration flows – e.g. of 'Gastarbeiter' ('guest worker' in German) to Western Europe, of people fleeing the country after the 1980 military coup, but also skilled migrants moving to Europe or the United States – as well as a substantial inflow of immigrants from the USSR seeking employment and of people of Turkish descent from neighbouring countries (Ataç et al., 2017; Heck & Hess, 2017). More recently, the complexity of the migration system in Turkey has increased due to a surge in the number of migrants who enter the country but then continue their migration towards Europe (İçduygu & Yükseker, 2012).

This has led to a strong increase in EU's interest in cooperating with the country, despite Ankara's non-compliance with customary international law on refugees. Although Turkey signed the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees, the country only accepts refugees coming from Europe, meaning that the procedure for refugees coming from non-EU countries is channelled through the UNHCR. In 2011, when the civil war broke out in Syria, Turkey initially maintained an open-door policy, welcoming all Syrian refugees and referring to them as "guests". In 2013, the government passed the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, establishing the categories of "conditional refugee status" and "subsidiary protection status". Syrian refugees, however, were categorized separately with the "temporary protection status" (TPS), which, due to its unclear definition, generated ambiguous legal and social conditions for its subjects. This change of approach was confirmed in 2014 by the cancellation of the open-door policy towards Syrians and by the initiation of a registration process for Syrian refugees in Turkey (Heck & Hess, 2017).

In 2015, an unprecedented number of potential refugees fleeing from war, persecution and destitution made their way to Europe crossing the Aegean Sea and via the Balkan route. Already in June 2015, the European Commission included Turkey in the list of safe countries of origin, and in November Turkey and the EU agreed on a joint action plan to manage the flow, which included the improvement of the condition of Syrian refugees in the country and the enhancement of the control of the border towards Europe, in exchange for visa liberalization for the Schengen area for Turkish citizens, 3 billion Euros, and the resumption of the EU accession negotiations (Council of the EU, 2016; Heck & Hess, 2017). The cooperation was formalized in the EU-Turkey agreement, signed in March 2016, which established that: (1) all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands are to be returned to Turkey; (2) for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian is resettled to the EU; (3) Turkey takes any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU; (4) the fulfilment of the visa liberalization roadmap is accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016; (5) the accession process is re-energized; and (6) the EU and Turkey work to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria (European Commission, 2016). According to several analysts, the EU-Turkey agreement has three main shortcomings: (1) it infringes the EU fundamental values, such as the respect of human solidarity and protection; (2) it violates the second paragraph of the Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, according to which "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country"; (3) it implies that Turkey is a safe country (Cagiano de Azevedo & Paparusso, 2019).

Difficulties in the implementation of the agreements were evident in the early days of the Statement. Against an agreed quota of 72.000 refugees, from March 2016 to January 2017 only 838 individuals were readmitted to Turkey (Haferlach & Kurban, 2018). Three years after the stipulation of the agreement, about 85.000 refugees arrived on the Greek islands and a mere 2% were returned to Turkey under the agreement (ESI, 2019). As already noted, the agreement considers Turkey a "safe third country", whereby refugees arriving in Greece should have applied for international protection in Turkey instead. This implies that the EU-Turkey accord

considers refugees in Turkey not at risk of human rights violations, persecution, and illegal refoulment. Given the concerning human rights situation for refugees in Turkey, Greek authorities, at a crossroad between the political pressure to return refugees due to the EU-Turkey agreement and the requirement to abide by the 1951 Convention, have often judged the asylum applications as inadmissible in a first instance based on the statement, while then reversing the sentence in appeal in fulfilment of the Geneva Convention (Haferlach & Kurban, 2018).

Although being legally granted access to health care, education and a work permit, the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey has been harsh since the early years of their displacement and is exacerbated by the social insecurity arising from the temporary nature of the TPS (Heck & Hess, 2017). The high pressure exerted on Turkey with the deal further aggravated the precarious condition of migrants and contributed to the rise of xenophobic and anti-refugee sentiments in the country (Haferlach & Kurban, 2018). Currently, Turkey is the country with the highest number of refugees worldwide, "being home" to circa 3.6 million Syrian refugees and about 400.000 refugees and asylum seekers from other countries (UNHCR, 2019). The great majority of refugees do not reside in camps, but in urban and peri-urban areas, where they often lack access to basic services. Most refugees in urban settings are not having a legal work permit and gain their living in the informal sector, in the illegal economy often in unacceptable conditions. Besides intensifying the refugees' stigmatization, this also leads to wage deflation in unskilled occupations, which aggravates the local population's hostility towards them. The ethnic-religious dimension is also crucial to the difficulties in refugee integration in the country (Icduygu, 2015). While ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ refugees are exposed to discrimination in urban settings, they also fear being deported to state-run camps, where episodes of violence by state officials have been exposed. After the stipulation of the agreement with the EU, NGOs have also reported cases of excessive use of force by soldiers, including the killing of refugees from Syria attempting to cross the border, and violence by civilians (Haferlach & Kurban, 2018).

After many years of isolation from the international community, due to the UN sanctions imposed on Libya in 1992, the rising number of arrivals via the Mediterranean led the EU to initiate cooperation with Libyan authorities on the management of international migratory flows, despite Libya's deplorable human rights record. Italy and Libya signed a first agreement establishing cooperation on the issues of terrorism, organised crime, traffic of narcotics and illegal migration in 2000. After lifting the arms embargo in 2004, in June 2005 the Council of the EU also initiated a dialogue with Libya, which led to the drafting of an EU-Libya Action Plan on Migration (Hamood, 2008). These dialogues and agreements resulted in the signing of the Libyan-Italian Friendship Treaty in 2008, which established cooperation on illegal migration by the creation of joint patrols in the Mediterranean and the assignment to Italian companies of the construction of the electronic border controls in Southern Libya. In exchange for Libya's collaboration, Italy promised to mediate between Libya and the EU. Italy's second Berlusconi government implemented a policy of pushbacks of migrants' boats, which Libya accepted to receive, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement (Toaldo, 2015).

After the deposition of Gaddafi in 2011, the country precipitated into chaos, and the international community suffered the lack of a strong interlocutor in the country. If under Gaddafi smuggling was tightly controlled, the plurality of actors and the fragmentation of power in the country led to the creation of a wider network of smugglers, dominated by southern tribes and local militias (Philips, 2020). Even though the majority of the 1.2 million Libyans who left the country after 2011 fled to Egypt and Tunisia, the political disintegration led to a surge in non-Libyan African migration to Italy and Malta. Despite the Search and Rescue (SAR) Operation 'Mare Nostrum', thousands of migrants died in the sea. In 2014, the Italian SAR was substituted by the smaller and less costly Frontex operation 'Triton'. It was only after a series of deadly shipwrecks that the EU intervened with a more consistent military operation in 2015, operation 'Sophia'. In early 2017, Italy sought closer cooperation with Libya's UN-backed government and signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fayez al-Serraj on development cooperation, illegal immigration, human trafficking, fuel smuggling and reinforcement of borders. The MoU was then endorsed by the EU (Baldwin-Edwards & Lutterbeck, 2019). In particular, the agreement established Euro-African cooperation to eliminate the causes of illegal immigration towards Europe. To that end, Italy provided technical support to the Libyan

Coast Guard and to the Department for Combating Illegal Immigration, whereas Libya sought to close its Southern border – the main point of transit for migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa – and promised to bring its reception centres to international standard.

More than 10 years after the beginning of the cooperation between Italy, the EU and Libya, the extensively documented situation of human rights abuse, arbitrary detention, unlawful use of force and brutal living conditions in detention centres remains largely unchanged. To the contrary, the securitized approach to migration upheld by the European Union and its members, whose focus is largely reserved to the management of illegal immigration, erroneously disregards the local concerns and the issues relevant to local actors (Philips, 2020).

To conclude, the role played by transit countries with the European migration system may affect future migration scenarios, by playing a leading role in the process of externalization of border and migration governance. In particular, the EU makes use of transit countries to strengthen its border controls and make migration policy increasingly restrictive, with a view to limit migration inflows. However, this approach to migration has proven to be dubiously effective: although it is able to modify migration trajectories and routes, creating new poles of origin, transit and destination, it does not stop migration but exacerbates the already complex human rights situation in countries on the fringes of the EU (Saatçioğlu, 2020).

Picture: Svetlana Gumerova/Unsplash.com

Labour demand as a driver of migration to Europe

Many theories have tried to explain migration, focusing on some aspects, and neglecting others: therefore, an all encompassing theory of migration does not exist (Arango, 2000). The economic theory of migration and the political theory of migration consider the economic factors and the political factors, respectively, as drivers of migration. However, there are few global explanations able to overcome a one-sided view based on the simple cause-and-effect mechanism.

One of the first attempts to identify 'laws' of migratory movements was made by the Anglo-German geographer Ernst Georg Ravenstein (1885). According to the positivist view of the era, these laws had to provide tools for the description/explanation and above all for the prediction of (internal) migrations. Concerning the importance of economic factors, the author argues that while migration is mostly due to economic causes, the migratory mobility increases with economic development. These laws, considered together with his observations about the relative importance of natural increase and migration in the growth of cities, represented basis for most research on migration and its drivers.

Two main processes are generally distinguished as more relevant that the others: the role of economic factors in initiating and determining the extent of migration flows, with particular reference to the demand for work and the role of immigration policies as tools for managing migrations of workers in relation to the determination of the quantitative dimensions and the articulation of the components of immigrant labour.

The well-known theoretical model developed by Harris and Todaro (1970) explains rural-urban migration, further extended to include international migration as well. According to this model, the migration decision is based on the expected income differentials between the departure area and the arrival area, rather than on real wage differentials alone. Therefore, migratory flows increase if the salaries of the destination areas increase, i.e. the expected income increases; if unemployment in the destination areas decreases, the expected income increases; if the creation of jobs in the target areas increases the number of jobs available, then the expected income increases. Equilibrium will be reached when the expected income in the destination areas will be equal to the marginal product of the potential migrant worker and unemployment disappears in the origin areas.

Judging this model from within the perspective of marginalism,[6] it basically suffers from two limits. The first consists in neglecting the risk propensity of the potential migrant which could lead him to increase the amount of the expected income in relation to an increase in the risk related to the movement or vice versa. The second is represented by the underestimation of the transaction costs (Williamson, 1985) incurred by the potential migrant in obtaining the necessary information for the calculation of the expected income which could have, also in this case, an effect of overestimating or underestimating the expected income.

By translating the assumptions of marginal economic theory (neoclassical approach) from the individual (micro) to the collective (macro) level, it emerges that the decisive explanatory factor of economic migration would lie in the interaction between supply and demand in the international labour market. In this regard, the theoretical argument is the one proposed by Heckscher-Ohlin which considers migration and trade as substitutes, arguing that both trade and labour migration lead to an equalization of the costs of the production factors. In this context, if a country exports labour-intensive goods, this export can be considered equivalent to that of labour. Thus, the theoretical predictions of trade theory regarding commodity flows can be applied symmetrically to migrations (Ethier, 1985; Mundel, 1957).

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[6] Neoclassical economic approach that explains the discrepancy in the value of goods and services by reference to their secondary, or marginal utility.

Other authors draw attention to the role of unemployment rates, noting how the presence of unemployment in countries with an abundant supply of labour can have a positive net effect on migration, an effect that is reflected in the demand for labour by areas of low levels of unemployment (Jennissen, 2003).

The drivers considered by the approaches presented so far can be grouped into two large groups: one formed by the drivers who push emigration in the starting countries (Push); and a second group which attract migratory flows in destination countries (Pull). Without the mutual and combined action of these two groups of drivers there would be no migration. The economic theories of migration that draw their assumptions from the approach of marginalism (neoclassical) consider the demand for labour (pull effect) as a fundamental driver.

The forecast of migrations of workers from countries with high unemployment rates (push effect) to those with low rates (pull effect), however, clashes with the presence of high rates of immigration in some areas of high unemployment. This is because the economic theories previously illustrated consider the supply and demand for labour as homogeneous sets within them.

Division into segments of the labour market: the demand for labour in immigration countries is divided into segments that offer well-paid jobs and segments for unskilled jobs. The lower pay makes the secondary sector unattractive for indigenous/autochthonous workers, so these jobs remain available for immigrants who are more motivated to work in these low-level jobs because the expected income is higher than that of their areas of origin (Piore, 1979). Therefore, in the elaboration of predictive scenarios the labour demand should be taken into account both with respect to its composition by economic sectors (agriculture; industry; services) and its qualitative composition (skilled; unskilled jobs, degree of literacy). Nonetheless also the job offers provided by migrants is highly differentiated and prompts different migratory behaviours. In order to elaborate predictions, it becomes necessary to understand on what basis migrants make their migration choices.

The human capital approach takes into account the differences in the endowment of human capital (primarily defined through the level of education) and their effects on migratory choices. According to this approach, emigration is an individual investment that aims at increasing the productivity of the migrant's human capital. Furthermore, this approach also includes social networks as a source of information that act in the direction of greater certainty of economic returns in potential migratory destinations within the notion of the migrant's human capital (Taylor, 1986).

The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) approach considers that migration decisions, even if they concern an individual migrant, are made collectively by all family members aiming at the well-being of the entire family (Stark & Bloom, 1985). In this sense, families tend to maximize income and social status and to minimize the risks associated with migration. This theory explicitly links the migration decision to the impacts of migration through remittances (Taylor & Fletcher, 2001).

Several scholars have also observed that if we correlate emigration rates with levels of human development, the relationship resembles a 'hump' (Martin & Taylor, 1996), whereby emigration rates are lower in poor and rich countries than those among countries with moderate levels of development. This means that, on the one hand, the poorest individuals do not have the capabilities to migrate and, on the other hand, that the likelihood to migrate decreases at the increasing of economic development (de Haas, 2007 and 2010). Therefore, the relation between migration and development can be described as inversely U-shaped (Zelinksy, 1971).

More recent analytical approaches to migration go beyond the prevailing economic approach in explaining the main drivers of migration (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2018), emphasizing the role of the individuals with respect to global environment. The world systems theory as proposed by Wallerstein (1974), for example, interprets migration as an exchange of human resources between capitalistic and non-capitalistic societies. Money and resources, as a result, flow from one society into another. Consequently, the archaic yet still relevant concept of a world comprised of a "core" (colonists) and a "periphery" (the colonized) persists, as the differences in the level of development between the so-called modern societies or "the core", and developing

countries, also known as "the periphery", lead to the former to receive immigrants from the latter.

Strong links between the receiving countries and sending countries, or transnationalism, as developed by Portes (1999) and colleagues (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999; Portes & Zhou, 1999) refers to "occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementations" (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999: 219). These frequent movements between host and home countries which allow migrants to be 'here' and 'there' at the same time, living transnationally, investing in the homeland the resources acquired from the host country, regardless of the level of integration abroad. This phenomenon has been further intensified through the advancement of technologies which facilitate communication of information and transports.

Nonetheless, as previously noted the "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin" (Massey et al., 1993: 448) reduce the costs and risks of migration and thus encourage migration flows. Regardless the economic contexts of origin and destination these different patterns of social networks contribute to the now widespread idea that migration is a self-feeding and self-perpetuating process (Massey et al., 1999).

The process of globalization of production has found its territorial base of choice in global cities (Sassen, 1988) and the export of capital has stimulated a new phase of migration and proletarianization in the developing countries and in the global cities themselves. While a growing gap increases between highly skilled workers in the high-productivity service sector, a growing number of low-skilled workers provide the services to meet their needs, often through the informal economy, in which immigrants play a great role.

In recent labour migrations the skilled component has acquired a new political and statistical significance (Czaika, 2018; Mahroum, 2000). Empirical studies have found that skilled migrants have a positive effect on innovation, but the effect is stronger in industries with low levels of over-education, high levels of FDIs and, finally, in industries with greater ethnic diversity (Fassio, Montobbio & Venturini, 2019).

Economic factors are traditionally seen as the main determinants of migration, but skilled migrants may be able to obtain acceptable income even in their home countries. Therefore, their migration choice could be influenced to a greater extent by non-economic factors. For instance, career opportunities and, in general, a better quality of life play a more significant role as drivers for this type of migration (Mihăilă, 2019).

Driven by the restructuring of the economy and the increase in the global trade in services, the mobility of skilled workers is increasingly recognized as an important factor for growth, innovation and employment. The need for companies to be able to access this supply of skilled labour in a flexible manner according to the labour market demand, has led many multinational companies and professional associations to take a more active role in the international regulation of the global labour market in the direction of a complete liberalization of the mobility of the highly skilled workforce (Lavenex, 2007).

Many countries have therefore begun to adopt immigration policies that are more open and favourable towards skilled workers (Boeri, 2012), in the belief that immigration policies can play an attractive role for these workers. The EU itself has recently adopted a more favourable entry policy for migrants intending to be employed in the highly skilled sector: the EU Blue Card. However, it has recently been found that these policies attraction represent an ineffective political tool (Tani, 2018).

Human Rights, Security and Social Integration

The discourses and perceptions of the European Union as a democratic context respectful of human rights have certainly an impact on international migration behaviour. Each EU member state regulates the access and chooses the selection criteria of international migration flows and determines the framework of rights that

are granted to international migrants. However, international migrants can suffer human rights violations, resulting from denial of civil and political rights or social and economic discrimination, especially when they are in an irregular situation.

According to the "numbers versus rights" hypothesis (Ruhs & Martin, 2008), in destination countries exists an inverse relationship between the number of migrants employed in low-skilled jobs and the rights they enjoy. A reason for this trade-off would be that the demand for labour coming from employers is negatively correlated with labour costs and that granting more rights to migrants causes higher costs. Moreover, the destination countries are striving to minimize the costs associated with the migration of the low-skilled and to keep the number of migrants at a low level. For this reason, higher numbers of migrants tend to be associated with fewer rights for migrants, and vice versa (Ruhs & Martin, 2008). However, the "numbers versus rights" hypothesis received critics from the theoretical and empirical point of view (Cummins & Rodríguez, 2010), and some authors consider such a trade-off more plausible in the case of humanitarian migration. In fact, the costs of international protection for the destination countries lead to the reinforcement of border controls in order to slow the entry of potential applicants for asylum and to decrease the number of asylum applications and the package of rights connected to it (Thielemann, 2004).

The migrants' perception of being able to reach a safe setting, open to granting civil and even political rights to foreigners, has certainly a positive effect on the migration aspirations (Timmerman et al., 2014). Indeed, more rights for migrants in destination countries might stimulate labour migration (Ruhs, 2013), whereas racism and anti-immigrant discrimination can dissuade especially highly qualified migration and, more in general, lead to a protracted integration process for international migrants (Duch et al., 2019; Gorinas & Pytliková, 2017). Other authors define "dynamic decision-making of those on the move" (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019) the choice of many migrants to reach Europe only in a second move, for instance from transit countries such as Turkey, bdue to the generally perceived security and good economic conditions in the EU countries.

The opportunity to acquire civil rights and the tolerance level towards the newcomers are relevant aspects for the migrants in choosing the destination country (Fitzgerald, Leblang &Teets, 2014).

Usually migrants are looking for favourable contexts from the social and political point of view, where conditions to acquire citizenship are less restrictive and right-wing political movements are less relevant. That is to say that the choice of the destination country in a first phase can be based on political considerations besides economic ones, leading to the choosing of a country more open to migrants, although the labour market opportunities are less positive. At a later stage, onward movements within the European Union may occur if the first host country offers few chances of social and economic integration and is perceived as unsafe or even hostile, due to episodes of discrimination, racism or violence (Triandafyllidou, 2009).

The social policy regimes that aim at reducing socioeconomic inequalities to foster social cohesion within a country are commonly believed to represent also one of the drivers of migration. The 'welfare magnet' hypothesis (Borjas, 1999) assumes that international migrants, low-skilled in particular, are attracted by countries with generous welfare systems. Empirical studies carried out in different contexts have produced mixed results, highlighting weak effects of social benefits on motivating migration (Kurekova, 2013; Levine & Zimmerman, 1999). Other authors pointed out that welfare is not a crucial driver of migration and the choice to migrate to a country is not based on the level of generosity of its welfare provisions, while in many destination countries immigrants have less access to social benefits than natives, in spite of higher poverty rates (Barrett & Maître, 2013). Moreover, when differences in the levels of welfare dependency between natives and international migrants are observed, they are largely related to the heterogeneity of their social and demographic characteristics (Giulietti, 2014). A study carried out on asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, for example, highlighted that only a few of them had an in-depth knowledge of the welfare benefits of the receiving country (Robinson & Segrott, 2002). Other findings suggest that the social policy regimes of the origin countries could be more relevant for international migration flows than welfare provisions in the destination countries (de Haas et al., 2019; Mahendra, 2014).

Nevertheless, It should be stressed that onward movements within the European Union can be fostered by differences in the welfare systems of the single EU member states (Kuschminder, de Bresser & Siegel, 2015). Furthermore, different welfare regimes of the destination countries – social-democratic, corporatist, liberal, familistic (Allen, 2006; Esping Andersen, 1990) – are related to different conceptions of society, types of redistribution and levels of decommodification of public services and trigger diverse patterns of ethnic integration or segregation (Arbaci, 2019; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2013).

Levels and patterns of segregation differ greatly across countries, regions and urban areas, due to the heterogeneity of the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the migrant population and the socio-economic structures observed in the areas. Comparative studies highlighted the relevance of contextual perspective to study distinctive structural factors of socio-economic segregation – social inequalities, welfare regimes, housing systems, economic structures and global connectedness (van Ham & Tammaru, 2016) – interacting over time differently depending on national, regional and local contexts (Andersson et al., 2018; Tammaru et al., 2015).

De-segregation is not in itself the solution to the problems of inequality and marginalization of vulnerable immigrant groups (Arbaci & Malheiros, 2009). Although spatial concentration of foreigners or immigrants may present a protective effect, the disadvantages seem to prevail, because the process of spatial dispersion can foster upward social and housing mobility.

Population change

Population structure and demographic characteristics. Migration is even the expression of community and household ties and on the micro level involves personal cost-benefits analysis made by each potential migrant to decide whether or not to migrate from a given geographical and social context. The features of this social context determine the basic variables and limitations involved in the decision-making process, which is therefore the meeting point of macro and micro factors, between the structural and individual aspects of migration (Massey, 1990). In this respect, the new economics of migration has the merit of shifting emphasis from individuals to households in the broad sense, highlighting how migration can also be a factor of risk diversification to be seen in the context of the overall strategies followed by households in their countries of origin (Stark, 1991). In this context, the migration of household members has the function of reducing risks and is equivalent to the one performed in Western countries by private insurance and social security and the financial market. Mobility, therefore, becomes a form of insurance against poor harvests, the fluctuation of farm-product prices and unemployment; it is a means for capital accumulation, recalling that immigration may be induced not only by an absolute lack of income but rather a relative deprivation compared to the economic conditions of other households in the same community (Bonifazi, 2002).

Demographic characteristics are also related to different level of migration intentions and preparations, influencing migration process at a micro-level (Kuhnt, 2019). According to the results of Gallup polls analysed (Migali et al. 2018) age, gender, family structure, marital status, migrant background are all demographic variables directly affecting the wish to move and the effective preparation of a migration. In particular, in this second case "the standard socio-demographic characteristics become stronger explanations of their migration decisions" (Migali et al. 2018: 48).

Population growth in the countries of origin. Demographic transition remains one of the most powerful explanations of the evolution of human societies and even of human migration. The Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition proposed by Zelinsky (1971) fifty years ago is still a useful point of reference with its three phases. Demography is one of the main contextual factors of international migration. Demographic trends define the size of the population potentially affected by migration drivers. From this point of view UN estimates and projections gives a reliable evaluation of past and future population trends for all the countries of the world. As regards countries of origin, demography can be a powerful macro-driver of emigration especially when the gap between population growth and economic growth is very large. Countries with a high fertility are characterized by a growth in size and share of young population, the part of the population with the

highest aspiration and ability to move. This 'youth bulge', with its limited socio-economic opportunities and future perspectives in the country of origin, is the direct source of current and future migration flows. However, this affirmation should not be intended as an automatism, but as a condition favouring a current and future international migration flows. Young people are generally more risk-taking to migrate because of their potential gains in terms of job opportunity and life quality in general so the wider the young population share, the higher is the propensity of people to migrate. Population growth is higher especially in low-income countries and this, combined with the young people higher propension to migrate, might results in an increase of internal and international migration (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2020; Migali et al., 2018).

The situation described had been common to all the developing world during the second half of the last century, but presently is (and in the future will be) mainly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa. As already illustrated earlier in the report, a non-linear relationship between migration and economic development exists: an inverse U-shaped relation according to which migration first increases and then decreases with a country's economic development (de Haas et al., 2019). This goes in the same direction of the mobility transition and this kind of relationship is shown by the fact that "in middle income countries, rising GDP per capita is associated with higher migration levels whereas in high income countries, higher GDP per capita is associated with lower migration levels" (Migali et al. 2018: 6). From this point of view, the analysis in Clemens (2014) is a good synthesis of this debate on the relations between migration and economic development. In fact, the author gives a picture of what happens during "mobility transition", with the rise of emigration until countries reach an upper-middle income. However, another recent article has questioned this result, showing that the cross-sectional pattern could be misleading and finding a negative association between income and emigration independently by the level of income of a country (Bencek & Schneiderheinze, 2019). Paraphrasing the title of the paper, it would mean that more development always implies less emigration to OECD countries.

Population changes tend to be quite stable in the short and medium term. Moreover, demographic variables are easier measurable and predictable than social and economic ones. "Population growth may affect migration indirectly through environmental and security-related drivers of migration", as well as demographic trends are strictly related to the process of industrialization and structural changes of economy (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2020: 28). Multivariate analysis has not yet found a significant direct effect of fertility trends or of the share of young people on migration rates (de Haas et al., 2019; Migali et al., 2018). According to de Haas et al. (de Haas et al., 2019: 894) "this suggests that demographic factors play an empirically uncertain and only indirect role in migration processes", an indirect role that is strictly related to other economic, social and cultural processes, reflecting the level of socio-economic development (Migali et al., 2018). As a matter of example, countries with a low GDP have high fertility rates and are countries of emigration; while, on the contrary, countries with a high GDP have a low fertility and are receiving countries. Furthermore, "the negative association between the total fertility rates and emigration [...] can be explained by the fact that countries with relatively high fertility are generally those in the first phase of demographic transition and with lower socio-economic development" (Migali et al., 2018: 40). In any case, it is difficult to dispute that population trends determine the size of the potential aspiring and effective migrants.

Migration was mostly considered a male process in which men are the first and often the only decision-makers. In recent years, instead, many studies highlighted how women are, in several situations, the main character of migration process (Cristaldi, 2006), moving from the view of the woman as only the wife of the male migrant.

Many factors are involved in the decision of a woman to migrate and may modify her propensity to do it: individual characteristics, factors related to the family of the woman and macro-factors related to the country of origin. Individual factors include age, ethnicity, urban or rural origins, educational level and occupational skills but also marital status, reproductive status and role in the family. Family factors include size, age and sex composition of their members. Macro characteristics of the country of origin might influence migration propensities of women: the general state of the economy and the labour market conditions but also the geographic position of the country or the language in the chosen destination country. Moreover, societal

factors often are involved in the decision and in the real possibility to migrate for a woman: "those community norms and cultural values that determine whether or not women can migrate and, if they can, how (i.e., labour or family reunification) and with whom (alone or with family)" (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

As mentioned above, female migrations are often influenced by the structure of the family in the country of origin: the presence of elderly or children dependents decreases the chances of women to migrate, while children or elderly non-dependents increase female migrations (or preparation to migrate) as they become able to leave their home and begin to participate in labour market in destination country chosen (Brockerhoff & Eu, 1993).

Regarding of destination countries, progressive ageing of their populations and reunification with families settled in developed countries are factors that have attracted a large number of women in recent years. The population ageing in the high-income countries, for example, is increasing the demand of care services, traditionally and stereotypically female occupations. Many women, in fact, enter (and are admitted) in the labour force of these countries, as workers concentrated in domestic services or nursing (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

Economic reasons and family reunifications are two main drivers of female migrations but not less important is that women often move from their origin countries due to social constraints, low rights and lack of protection against domestic violence. Asylum seekers is increasing, mainly due to instability in countries in Middle East and Africa, and the exposure to risk in these countries is very high for women.

In general, female migration is redefining the role of woman into the family and the society of origin because with migration they become the family member that earn and send money to their families in origin country, the "breadwinner", role typically played by a man.

Population decline and population ageing in the countries of destination. Demography is a driver of migration even from the side of destination countries. In this case, population trends can stimulate migration for two different reasons: the decrease of the working-age population and the growth of the elderly population. In the first case, the pull function is strictly related to the mechanisms governing the functioning of the labour markets in the developed countries, characterised by a high level of segmentation. As a result, imbalances between labour demand and labour supply appear in specific sectors and jobs, generally at the top or at the bottom of the occupational ladder. These imbalances could be enlarged by the increase in education of the young cohorts entering in the labour market that reduces the size of the native workforce available for low-skilled jobs. As regards the relation between aging and migration, it is caused by the high demand of workers for the care-services for elderly. In this case, the size of the demand is largely determined by the specific characteristics of the welfare system.

Recent studies have shown how changes in educational attainment and in labour force participation can reduce the impact of unavoidable population ageing on the active population of the more developed countries and especially in the EU (Marois, Sabourin & Bélanger, 2019). In fact, some trends are counteracting the negative impact of persistent low fertility on the size of the labour force: the improvements in educational levels with the resulting increase in the active population; the increase of participation rates over 55 years; the narrowing of the gender gap in economic activity rates (Marois, Sabourin & Bélanger, 2019). As a matter of example, according to Loichinger and Marois (2018), if the EU countries had the same labour force participation rates (by age, sex, and education) as Sweden (where the rates are the highest) the decline in the size of its labour force would be avoided. By and large, the alternative scenarios developed by Marois et al. (Marois, Sabourin & Bélanger, 2019, 150) "show that reducing inequality in labour force participation and education could lessen the decline of the labour force size and significantly narrow the increase in the labour force dependency ratio". In particular, in the scenario called Super equality, the reduction in the expected decline in the size of the labour force between 2015 and 2060 would be of 54 per cent, while the reduction in the increase in the labour force dependency ratio (LFDR) would reach 70 %. It is important that these changes in the socio-economic structure of the population are carefully considered in the implementation of demographic scenarios. The process of

substitution of cohorts in the populations of the more developed countries generally implies a reduction in the size of the age groups, but even a relevant improvement in terms of human capital. "These countries also face a unique opportunity, as older cohorts of workers are replaced by more-educated and more-productive young generations entering the labour market" (Vézina & Bélanger, 2019). In general, it would be very useful to properly consider ethno-cultural super-diversity emerging in our societies to have a more realistic view of the future demographic process. "This is essential for research on the future consequences of immigration, and it would also serve to improve analyses of demographic and social trends that are not directly focused on immigration because of the way ethnic and cultural groups vary in their demographic and socioeconomic behaviours" (Bélanger et al., 2019, 296).

Environmental changes

Among the environmental changes, a growing number of scholars argue that climate change is the most important one. Other environmental changes are often considered local phenomenon with a clearly limited impact even if they can be devastating. In the discussion of the nexus between environmental change or climate change and migration a distinction between slow developing events or slow-onset events, like sea level rise, desertification and droughts leading to crop failure, and fast developing events or fast-onset events, like storms, heat waves or floods, is made.

Changes of environmental conditions or the change or variability of climate might cause floods, flooding of low lying coastal zone, draughts, heat waves, rising temperature, land degradation, soil degradation, anomalies in rainfall or temperature, and natural disasters…as potential causes of migration flows depending on the vulnerability regarding environmental threats.

Low- and middle-income countries, where the most vulnerable populations are concentrated, will be more touched, especially when the livelihood of the population dependents mainly on agriculture.

The nexus between climate change and migration, especially international, is widely discussed, but for the time being there is no general agreement in the scientific literature about the closeness of the relationship. Especially fast-onset environmental change can lead to short-distance and short-duration migrations e.g. displacements. On the other hand, slow-onset events can contribute to migration decisions as one of the adaptation strategies.

Slow environmental or climate changes act usually through the loss of agricultural land or a decreasing agricultural productivity leading to economic loss. In this case climate change can lead to changes in the crops produced and to other adaptation strategies. The Groundswell Report (Kumari Rigaud et al., 2018) shows the potential effects of climate change on internal migration or displacement. A migration decision in these cases is not determined only by environmental change but the economic resources available to the household play an important mediating role. The resources or assets available influence the opportunities or options available to the household. In the case of unavailability of resources, the population will be trapped. Environmental and climate change are threatening in many instances the most vulnerable part of the population, that lack the economic, social and educational means, and in this situation migration, especially an international move, is probably often not an alternative. Being exposed to climate related hazards or the degree of vulnerability to environmental risks of the population determines its possibilities to react, either stay and try alternatives or emigrate. Especially in the case of gradual changes of the environmental conditions (slow onset events) migration can be adopted as an alternative strategy to agricultural production. However alternative strategies to guarantee livelihood and staying in the area or in the country seem to be more likely, because they allow stay close to their communities. In a recent contribution de Haas (2020) criticized using the threat of 'climate refugees' and tried to put the role of environmental change for international migration into perspective (see also de Haas et al., 2020).

Also, Bettini (2017), as others, criticizes the idea that climate migration is seen as a problem to be solved, for example as by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Rather, the author argues that this nexus should be seen as an open question for future alternatives, as well as a symptom of the irreducible political tensions inherent in any form of mobility, as well as in any attempt to manage or govern it. It seems difficult to causally linking environmental factors and climate change to international migration patterns since environmental factors are mostly associated with other factors, like social and economic ones. They can hardly be seen in an isolated way. It seems more adapt to talk about direct and indirect effects of environmental factors (in relation to the economic ones, and political instability). As thoughtfully pointed out by Borderon and his colleagues: "Migration is a complex phenomenon driven by the interactions among different demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and environmental factors. Climatic and environmental factors may aggravate conflict, instability, and insecurity arising from worsening economic conditions" (2019, 528).

Two perspectives do exist:

Migration is the result of a failure in the provision of sustainable livelihoods, therefore a development issue gradually driven by the evolution of environmental changes (IDMC, 2018), defined also as the "push and pull" approach (McLeman & Hunter, 2010). This causal approach, dominating the debate, has nevertheless been criticized in the literature as static and basing itself on just one component, neglecting the interplay of environmental, political, economic and cultural factors (Jónsson, 2010; McLeman et al., 2010; Black et al., 2011). It also perpetuates the myth of African migrants' desire to reach Europe for a better life, when data show that regional migration "still is at least seven times higher than migration from West Africa to the rest of the world" (De Haas & Bakewell, 2007).

Migration as a coping strategy that could avoid further pressure on natural resources, provide income and benefits for the community staying behind and diversify the income of migrants, families and origin communities (Van der Land & Hummel, 2013; Schöfberger, 2018). Yet, it seems that no clear pathway can link this process as it is extremely context dependent (Lo, Coulibaly-Tandian & Sakho, 2014). Modern discourses on migration, especially regarding Africa, tend to ignore the relationship between poverty and migration, and give little recognition to the importance of social practices that emerge from below and shape migration patterns (De Haas & Bakewell, 2007) also in the context of environmental and climate change.

In a recent very detailed and extensive meta-analysis of the results of 30 country studies Hoffmann et al. (Hoffmann et al., 2020) discuss the nexus between environmental change and migration. Environmental change seems to affect migration even the relationship depends on the economic, socio political and geographic context. As already mentioned the role played by agriculture in the country seem to determine the effects and Hoffmann et al. (Hoffmann et al., 2020) find that the effect of changes in the levels of temperature on international migration are the strongest in countries with an economy dependent on agriculture. Most migration flows seem to take place in the country (internal migrations) or are directed to (other) low- and middle-income countries reflecting "the findings in the empirical literature, which reports that environmental migration is often short-distance, regional and temporary" (Hoffmann et al., 2020: 3, referring to Cattaneo et al., 2019 and Hunter et al., 2015). It seems less likely that Europe is chosen as a destination of these international migrants. The results indicate that the lack of economic resources might be enhanced in times of environmental stress and change. Further, the variability of the nexus of environmental change and international migration is slightly negative in the case of countries with conflicts. Environmental conditions or changes seem to be rarely alone the driver of international migration. However, they are important in combination with other drivers of international migration.

More than the other drivers of international migration, environmental and climate change seem to be inherently linked to a geographic context (Black et al., 2011) like specific areas struck by droughts or flooding or other adverse climatic events or phenomenon. The capacities and strategies of adaptation depend on extra-climatic factors in the different contexts.

In a further strand of research this geographic specificity appears clearly when introducing 'conflict' to the nexus between climate change and international migration (Abel et al., 2019). Climate change augments draught severity and the likelihood of conflicts causing in turn outflows of refugee populations, a situation clearly observed due to the political transformations in some Western Asian countries.

Even if the future of environmental and especially climate change is undisputed (see the publications of the IPPC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) the potential effect on internal and international migration flows is extremely uncertain. Between being exposed to environmental change and the decision to migrate stands the capacity to cope with these changes, or in short, the resilience of the population. If internal migration or the migration to neighbouring countries are considered as a first step to a move to the Global North, the results could be an indication for the potential of environmental change for international migration in the future. However, until now a clear increase in international migration to Europe due to environmental factors, especially climate change, can hardly be perceived.

Around the world the exposure to environmental and climatic change is expected to increase in the future. The countries and areas most vulnerable to future climate change are located in sub-Saharan Africa an area that

Picture: Mhrezaa/Unsplash.com

will be also characterized by population growth in the next decades.

However, it is difficult to consider past observations to inform future trends regarding specific drivers and their impact on migration decisions. In this regard Findlay (2011: 57) states that his analysis "has provided some evidence to refute the suggestion that environmental change will result in mass migration from many different parts of the majority world towards the wealthier countries in the decades ahead. Instead, it has suggested that the most likely effect of environmental change over the next 50 years will be to amplify and modify pre-existing migration channels, and that it is these that will shape the pattern of migration destinations selected by future environmentally linked movers."

Health and migration

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines good health as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".[7] Health and physical well-being may be one of the most important aims to be aspired to by individuals; any choice of life is directly or indirectly tied to obtaining a better health status: career choices, the decision to get married and, obviously, the choice of the place where to live.

Migration and health are linked by a bi-directional relationship: health status affects decisions to migrate as well as migration is recognized as a determinant of health (Wickramage et al., 2018) through the conditions associated with all the phases of the process (pre-migration, migration trajectory and the phase of immigration).

The access to health services is a direct precondition to have a healthy life but not everybody has this access. Whereas citizens of developed countries have typically access to high quality health care, those living in economically less well-off countries often have to face low performing health care sectors. One of the most critical issues is the lack of economic resources compared to the needs of the population (O'Donnel, 2007). The public health expenditure as percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) is quite similar for developed countries and developing economies,[8] but there are very huge differences in GDP per capita. Following the human development groups classification of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the average value of GDP per capita for countries with very high human development is around 35000$/year, while for low human development countries it is less than 1000$/year. [9]

A fragile health sector, whose services and needs are not easily accessible by everyone, provides a fertile ground for a decision to migrate by individuals in search of a better life (Castelli, 2018).

In general, the health status of a person is not only influenced by the access to health services, but by a multitude of factors: genetic, behavioural, socio-economic and environmental factors are involved in leading to disparities in health outcomes between countries, for example by influencing the prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Health disparities change between countries and over time (Gushulak & MacPherson, 2006) and reducing them is part of the Sustainable Developments Goal (SDG) n° 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", through universal health coverage and access to quality health care, medicines and vaccines for all by 2030 (UN, 2012). The lack of essential health goods and services, as well as traditions and behaviours, is making people in many countries less healthy, increasing the prevalence of infectious diseases like Ebola, Malaria and HIV. In addition, the precarious conditions of employment in dangerous and demeaning jobs compromise the health status. Bad conditions in the origin country and the knowledge about better living conditions in other countries motivate individuals to emigrate.

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[7] World Health Organization, 1946.

[8] Global Health Expenditure Database, WHO. https://apps.who.int/nha/database/ViewData/Indicators/en

[9] World Development Indicators, The World Bank.
 https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=#

Healthy life expectancy (HALE) is one of the dimensions of the Human Development Index (HDI) besides the educational (expected and average years of schooling) and the economic one (Gross National Income (GNI) per capita) (UNDP, 2019). Observing the rankings of HALEs at birth important differences between countries and macro-areas are highlighted (Table 2): all the European and North American countries, destination countries for international migration flows, score higher values of the dimension analysed than North African and Sub-Saharan countries, considered origin countries.

The three dimensions of the HDI are strongly interrelated and interconnected, and it seems understandable how the hope of improving their own health conditions, could encourage individuals to emigrate.

During the phase before the decision to emigrate is taken, a selection bias can be observed: individuals motivated and decided to emigrate, are usually young and in good physical and mental health. In the literature this phenomenon is known as the "healthy migrant effect": it "describes an empirically observed mortality advantage of migrants from certain countries of origin, relative to the majority population in the host countries, usually in the industrialized world. Occasionally, it relates to a relatively lower morbidity of immigrants as well" (Razum, 2008: 110).[10]

It is comprehensible how, in a large family, the best way to maximize the chances of success of a migration project, considering the limited economic resources available, is to choose the individual that would have the highest probability to reach the destination country (Marcega, 2017). Taking future remittances to the origin country or the reunification of the family in the destination country into consideration would be the successive step.

However, the good health of a migrant does not depend only on the living conditions before undertaking the migratory project, but also on other factors intervening during migrating (Marcega, 2017). As reported by Wickramage et al. "We recognize that being a migrant is not in itself a risk to health: it is the conditions associated with migration that may increase vulnerability to poor health. [...] migrants may reside in - or pass through - 'spaces of vulnerability' – key spaces associated with potentially negative health outcomes [...]. Such spaces may contain a combination of social, economic and physical conditions that may increase the likelihood of exposure to violence and abuse and/or acquisition of communicable or non-communicable disease" (2018: 5). Journeys can last many months and migrants are obliged to pass through zones characterized by dangerous conditions, like deserts or long sea travels on little and unsafe boats, or war zones or countries characterised by open violence. All these criticalities increase the vulnerability of individuals and their exposure to worsening or endangering their health status. According to the International Organization of Migrants (IOM), in 2019 almost 112,000 individuals arrived in Europe by Mediterranean Sea routes and presumably 1,885 migrants died during their migration trajectory, mostly by drowning. In addition to severe travel conditions suffered by the majority of migrants, there are many other risks in transit countries that put the health of migrants at risk, like sexual violence, trafficking, kidnapping and imprisonment. During the entire trajectory, migrants may experience phases in a transit or in destination country as well, when confined to often overcrowded sites with unhealthy and unsafe conditions, that could increase the risk for communicable diseases and affect the physical and mental health of the migrant (Zimmerman, Kiss & Mazeda, 2011).

In the phase after arrival in the destination country, migrants are exposed to a completely different social, economic, political and language context that could influence negatively their health status. Some of the potential difficulties that a migrant could have to face in destination country are discrimination, unemployment and lack of knowledge of social and legal rights including the access to the health services. Interactions between newly arrived people and providers of care are often conflictual due to language, cultural and religious barriers.

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[10] https://missingmigrants.iom.int/ and https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=missing

Public health policies finalized to protect migrants during their arrival and integration have a duplex beneficial role, for the migrant and for the society of the destination country. The public health policies can improve the health status of the migrants and protect the receiving society from immediate health risks (infectious diseases) and future higher costs for cure and care. From the public health side, the increase of irregular migration with a different sanitary background can increase the risk of exposure to diseases that could be dangerous. Some of the countries of origin present higher prevalence of infectious diseases compared to most destination countries. For example, in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia Hepatitis A is highly endemic, Hepatitis B has a high prevalence and except for Syria and Iraq Tuberculosis has a higher incidence (ECDC, 2015).

The lack of vaccinations and screening programs, poor health infrastructures, overcrowding and non-optimal hygienic conditions in origin countries could also increase latent and non-communicable diseases. Mental and psychological illnesses including anxiety, depression and alcohol and drug abuse affect some migrants and refugees and may be related to the conditions and experiences made during the migration trajectories. Moreover, mental stress could be associated with respiratory infections, mainly influenza virus (Pavli & Maltezou, 2017).

Access to health care is to be considered an essential element of the integration process since acute as well as chronic diseases might develop: immigrants change progressively their habits getting closer to host country lifestyle and "inheriting" chronical and non-communicable diseases typical of the western countries (diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease) (Castelli, 2018).

Migration and COVID-19 pandemic. SARS-CoV-2 is a new virus detected in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019 for the first time. It belongs to the Coronavirus family and it is the causative agent of COVID-19 disease. On December 31st Chinese government informed the World Health Organization (WHO) about the detection of some similar cases of a respiratory disease due to an undefined agent. On January 7th the virus was identified. From the beginning of 2020 SARS-CoV-2 starts to spread all over the world and was detected for the first time in Europe on January 24th in France, in three people back from China.

First person infected on European territory was found in Germany on January 27th and three days after, WHO declared that the COVID-19 outbreak constitutes a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" (WHO, 2020).

The primary mode of the virus transmission is through human-to-human contact with droplets from an infected person's coughs or sneezes so, in a world strongly connected by population movement, the virus had an easy way to propagate. This is having an impact on migrants and migration in general. One of the first measures adopted by many countries for fighting the outbreak is the closing of borders and, consequently, a tightening of the immigration procedures. Migrants are pushed back or put in quarantine in overcrowded and often dangerous sites, increasing the risk of infection. Moreover, lockdown measures in host countries had direct and indirect consequences on the living conditions of migrants. The return of migrants was compromised, and this could lead to the overstaying of the visa or the impossibility to find a (new) job.

Migrants living in countries particularly affected by the pandemic of COVID-19 are more vulnerable to the virus compared to the native population because of their living and working conditions and their limited or more difficult access to health care services, but also due to discrimination, difficulties with the language and different cultural habits (Guadagno, 2020). The access to health care services is even more difficult for irregular migrants due to their fear to be identified and expelled (D'Ignoti, 2020). Migrants are over-represented in working sectors hardly hit by the pandemic due to continuous contacts with other people: food services, domestic work and caregiving. Moreover, they are often working in precarious jobs without adequate protection and in dangerous conditions. This failure of the welfare system in protecting workers is a double-edged sword because migrants are forced to work also with the COVID-19 symptoms, worsening their health status and increasing the exposure to infection for all people with whom they come into contact (Guadagno, 2020).

As in the almost totality of the crises, migrants are particularly hit and vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their chances to avoid the infection and to safeguard their well-being could be affected by multiple factors with respect to the population of the host country. All the difficulties linked to the social determinants of health, discussed above, are strongly involved in confirming the existence of a gap between migrants and the native population.

The heterogeneity among migrant groups must be taken into account: different origin countries, trajectories and habits are factors that affect the epidemiology and the health status. It is important to eliminate the existing barriers for migrants to obtain health care services.

The COVID-19 pandemic could distort all the 'traditional scenarios' in geographic terms of international migration flows, changing routes and migration trajectories of individuals. Some migrants could believe that Europe and North America are not safe anymore or countries may decide to close the borders and tighten immigration policies and processes as measures to control outbreaks. Future scenarios of migration are, never more than in this period, uncertain and unpredictable, and health aspects have a key role in evaluating these scenarios.

Picture: Alex Azabache/Unsplash.com

4. Lessons from the origin country case studies

The case studies in origin countries, activities of WP6.1, allow fostering the results reported in the present report on the drivers of international migration. Four country case studies were selected: Iraq, Senegal, Tunisia and Ukraine, countries that represent very different forms of international migration flows with different settlement patterns in Europe. The four case studies represent a wide range of characteristics of international migration in the receiving countries of Europe. Most Iraqis came to Europe as refugees and are living today in Germany with a relative important presence also in Sweden and Finland. Most Ukrainians are labour migrants and live mostly in Poland, Italy, Germany, Czechia and Spain with a high share of the resident population in Poland, Czechia, the Baltic Countries as well as Italy and Portugal. Senegalese immigrated mostly to France, Italy and Spain and Tunisians to France and Italy, forming old and new communities of immigrants. All 4 case studies represent recent international migration flows to Europe and its regions and cities.

The main research topics of the case studies according to the FUME project proposal are:

A. **socio-economic** factors of international migration (e.g., income, unemployment rates, housing prices) and socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, educational attainment, etc.);

B. **political** factors of international migration (e.g., security, type of political regime, potential suppression of minorities, gender roles);

C. **environmental** factors (e.g., threats to the livelihood of families because of environmental change, conflict as a consequence of scarce resources);

D. **personal factors** (e.g., personal motivations, possibilities and constraints to migration, mobility history and internal/international migration trajectories, relationships in potential transit countries and countries of destination).

The increase of internal and international migration has very different causes in the four case study areas. Whereas in Senegal and Tunisia the agricultural sector is still important and one of the main drivers of international migration, in Iraq politics and security are playing a determining role. In all case study areas, the economic motivations determine mostly emigration.

Senegal and Tunisia have a long tradition of emigration and return migration with earlier migration flows coming from rural and/or peripheral areas. Today immigrants from these countries in Europe originate often from urban centres. It seems that more and more new city dwellers consider living abroad. The scarcity of resources and/or the absence of favourable future life prospects are driving these migration flows. In Senegal international migration is a strategy of the family to manage or minimise risks sustain by a network abroad that facilitates emigration and integration in destination countries. It seems that the migratory profiles and categories of migrants are more divers today with an increasing participation of women.

Also, in the case of Ukraine emigration the presence of women is an important characteristic. However, these migration flows are characterised by older migrants with a clear project to return to the origin country.

Regarding the educational level no clear pattern could be observed. Even with longer schooling a low-skilled job abroad is accepted.

The trajectories and means to reach a European country are diverse and depend on the distance to be travelled.

For some of the case study areas the visible climate changes will certainly play an increasing role in shaping future migratory dynamics, it is impossible to separate the influence of environmental changes from political, economic, social and demographic factors as well as from the decision processes at the individual and household level.

In order to improve the understanding of migration patterns the decision-making practices of potential migrants to Europe as well as the motivations and propensities driving the people to stay (Carling & Collins, 2017; Schewel, 2015 and 2019) are investigated and analysed in the case studies. Migrations are an effect, but also a cause of social and cultural transformations, and to a certain degree socio-economic development, in Senegal and the other case study areas.

Migrants are frequently represented as contemporary heroes (degli Uberti, 2014) who embody new ways of social mobility; they convey models of existence and alternative lifestyles that do not simply correspond to material success (Sinatti, 2009). The behaviours of migrants during their visits back home shape the imagination of the people who stayed (degli Uberti, 2011; Fouquet, 2005; Willems, 2014). Consequently, migrants and non-migrants are both protagonists of the multidimensional decision process that leads to emigration (Jónsson, 2014). Narratives about migrants as well as images of foreign countries of migration often become metaphors for thinking about the future, and the social and cultural changes that characterize the local context themselves (degli Uberti & Riccio, 2017; Fall, 2014).

Detailed results can be found also in D6.1

5. A first glimpse at the future of international migration

This report discusses future migration scenarios to Europe by adopting an analytical approach centred on the examination of the macro and meso drivers of migration within the theoretical framework of the aspiration-capability model.

The aspirations to improve ones' own conditions that are behind the potential desire to move abroad do not necessary imply a concrete intention to migrate or the ability to do so. The examination of the differences in aspiration, ability or both is meant to shed light on variation in migration across time or between groups. In contemporary societies in most countries around the world an increasing but still small share of the population is longing to be elsewhere. Without these aspirations and desires for change the drivers of migration would not lead to migration.

The detailed and evidence-based comprehension of the patterns and processes of the drivers of international migration and how they operate interdependently and differently across contexts enables us to draw some considerations in view of the formulation of future migration scenarios.

The section that follows aims at providing a first glimpse at the future of international migration by recalling the key elements of the arguments exposed in the previous sections.

Since the beginning, against the background of the studies on migration aspirations, it seems important to recall the fact that at a global level the wish to remain in the country of origin is a more recurrent attitude than the preference to migrate abroad, also in areas with the highest rates of migration aspirations, such as Sub-Saharan Africa: over half of adults have not expressed interest or the desire to move to another country even for a short time period (Esipova, Ray & Pugliese, 2011a and 2011b). As noted by Schewel, "voluntary non-migrants are often described as those with resources to migrate but without the desire to do so" or, in the case of the poorer "people are implicitly categorized as involuntary immobile" (Schewel, 2015: 6). Instead, the understanding of the aspirations to stay and more extensively, the causes and consequences of immobility in its multiple social configurations, allows to frame a more coherent and adequate picture of the future migration scenarios, not limiting the analytical approach to the drivers of migration.

Globally 21.4% of the surveyed population expresses a wish to migrate to another country. Only 1.1% of the surveyed population actually prepares to move. So these results mainly support the argument that a wish to migrate is not a reliable enough indicator to inform policymakers about future migration, the size of potential migration or the characteristics of future migrants (Migali et al. 2018). However, these data need to be assessed in relation to the fact that the desire to move abroad does not necessarily implies a concrete intention to migrate or their ability to do so (Carling, 2002). The analysis of the differences in aspiration, ability or both is meant to shed light on the differences in migration across time or between groups as well as on the forces that foster or hinder migration.

In relation to this, it has been highlighted how the combination of strong bonding social capital with weak bridging social capital leads to the exclusion of group members from new information and ideas (de Haas, 2010). This translates into the fact that in the presence of this combination there would be a lower propensity to implement a migration project and, therefore, there would be a greater probability of disseminating information on new destinations through relatively weak connections compared to close contacts. The combination of a strong bonding capital with a strong bridging capital would lead, on the other hand, to a greater probability of migrating to new destinations due to the wide access of information but, at the same

time, could involve a greater probability of creating particular enclaves in host societies. Nonetheless some scholars point out that many individuals are not part of traditional, densely united and closely tied communities. They have mostly weakly tied networks, subject to constant changes (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

It might be argued that a certain balance between strong intra-family ties and wider weak ties will be a necessary condition for a successful migration project in the future.

In particular, narrowing down the focus on the migration flows crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, the increasing importance of the networks of smugglers and the shifting of smuggling routes, in parallel to the border control and wider enforcement efforts, will increasingly entail to assess the future migration scenarios focalizing the attention not only on the destination countries but also on places of origin or transit (Triandafyllidou & McAuliffe, 2018). Nonetheless, an influential role will be played by the relationship between smugglers' networks with other determinants of migration, such as the use of technology and newer forms of communications (Sanchez, 2017).

Looking ahead in the European context, migrant family reunification will undoubtedly continue to shape the future societies, calling on the policy makers from EU countries to carefully consider the international legislation adopted on this issue to promote greater socio-cultural stability, facilitating the integration and promoting economic and social cohesion. The conditions and procedures for family reunification and the modalities to access the labour market by family members will not only increase the attractiveness of a country for migrants in general, but help attracting and retaining the most qualified migrants.

Historically determinant of migratory movement, the culture of migration still represents a complementary factor to understand the development and the relevance of migration networks. An accurate discussion of the socio-cultural patterns that could shape the future migration scenarios should keep in consideration that a culture of migration within certain groups may, for instance, explain why immigration continues to occur even when the contexts of destinations have undergone changes as a substantial reduction of the labour demand or in the face of increasing national as well as international policy mechanisms aimed at curbing unregulated migrants' mobility.

Considering the economic and demographic role played by migrants in receiving countries, the migrant's decision to eventually return to the country of origin may have consequences not only on his/her status and rights in the host country, but also more broadly on the welfare policies affecting the whole society (Demeny, 2016). Future migration scenarios should consider migrants' return intentions and behaviours, even more in relation to the changes triggered by the recent COVID-19 crisis, where migrants could witness a fast deterioration of their living and labour market conditions.

ICT technologies have undoubtedly changed the ways in which the social networks act in relation to migration although their role as drivers of migration is still debated (Dekker, Godfried & Faber, 2016). However, evidence confirms that the access to modern technologies and the reduction of their costs of use have increasingly led to the transformation of migration models, lowering the migration threshold and allowing also the poorest to realise a migration project (Collyer, 2010), not only by making it easier to access information and creating different types of networks, but also by becoming migration drivers themselves (Hamel, 2009; IOM, 2005). ICTs increasingly allow migration networks maintaining strong social ties between individuals geographically dispersed in a deterritorialised space and, at the same time, building new weak ties in order to organize and facilitate the migration project. The access to modern technologies is changing the experience of migration both in countries of origin and destination.

In light of the constant change and evolution of ICT technology, it is difficult to imagine their future impact as a driver of migration and on other migration drivers. There is no doubt that ICT technology will continue to have a relevant role in the international migration process allowing the migrant to become more and more independent in all phases of the migration project.

Together with the access to information, the educational opportunities and skill acquisitions play an important role at many stages of an individual's intentions and decisions to migrate even if they do not often represent a primary driver of international migration. This role will increase in future scenarios.

There is a relationship between education, wealth, and the aspiration to migrate. Education is a long-term driving force shaping societies as a whole and it is of importance to future international migration. Any migration policy must take education into account since migration often implies the achievement of education and may result from receiving education in the countries of destination. Overall, future scenarios seem to imply a careful evaluation of the influence that different forms of education have on aspirations and capabilities to migrate over time, and the understanding and the anticipation of the effects that sudden conjunctures have on the education systems as, for example, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline of international mobility might risk having a negative impact, especially for those countries that have considered student mobility as a tool to facilitate the immigration of foreign talents and enabling their entry into the labour market after graduation.

During recent years the debates on the drivers of migrations has been certainly fuelled by the challenges posed by the so-called refugee crisis. In this respect, EU member states have shown to be reluctant to limit their sovereignty and to accept a supranational management of their border and immigration policies. Several reasons, such as the protection of the national culture and the loss of jobs, are behind the policy initiatives of restrictions and closures. However, when some migration routes are closed, migrants will choose another path, even more dangerous, to reach their destination. Even if a global governance of migration is often advocated, many hesitations and the lack of agreement and cooperation between international organizations, receiving countries, political parties, trade unions, immigrant and non-profit organizations have limited its development and political legitimacy.

However, the first draft of the Global Compacts, although a non-legally binding framework, may be read in this direction. It is filling one of the main gaps of the current global governance of migration: building an effective multilateral action on human mobility.

The thesis that more restrictive reception policies reduce the influx of asylum seekers has not found empirical proof in the literature. The inefficacy of tightening asylum policies on the reduction of the number of refugees seems to ask to address the issue differently and to begin designing policies of future scenarios by evaluating what kind of impact refugees have or would be desirable to have on host countries. Despite the inevitable socio-economic patterns of specific contexts and political constraints, it is necessary to focus on the elaboration of the virtuous mechanisms that could balance the multiple outcomes of the presence of refugees/migrants in relation to the host societies and to the immigrants themselves.

Similar considerations resound also when addressing the issue of political instability that in many areas of the world causes "forced migration". It appears intuitive that political instability of a country represents a driver that could encourage migratory movements involving origin, transit and destination countries.

The transit countries can foster or hinder migration flows, inasmuch as they play a key role in the process of externalization of border and migration governance.

Overall, an optimal solution to the effects of political instability on migration requires an adequate coordination of immigration policies with the foreign policy of the potential countries of destination, transit as well as the countries of origin. In contrast, an initiative focused on solely restrictive immigration policies represents probably a waste of resources since it can only be marginally effective. This leads us to the conclusion that the estimation or prediction of the effects of political instability on migratory outflows should take into consideration the coherence of political institutions with the political regime, as a definition of political instability. The concomitant idea of transit countries as a means to strengthen its border controls with a view to limit migration inflows to Europe seems rather to exacerbate the already complex human rights situation of the migrants.

This latter aspect has also a great relevance while considering that the discourses and perceptions of the European Union as a democratic entity, respectful of human rights have an impact on international migration behaviour. As previously discussed, the opportunity to acquire social and political rights and the tolerance towards the newcomers are relevant aspects for the migrants in choosing the destination country (Fitzgerald, Leblang &Teets, 2014).

As suggested by evidence, it would be misleading to envisage the future European migration scenarios mainly as the result of the attraction of migrants to countries with generous welfare systems. Whether, in several documented cases, only a few migrants had an in-depth knowledge of the welfare benefits of the receiving country (Robinson & Segrott, 2002), the social policy regimes of the origin countries could be more relevant for international migration flows than welfare provisions in the destination countries (de Haas et al., 2019; Mahendra, 2014).

Similar uncertainties emerge with respect to the specific dimension of health and physical well-being. While it is often argued that a fragile health sector whose services and needs are not easily accessible by everyone, provides a fertile ground for a decision to migrate by individuals in search of a better life (Castelli, 2018), it is also recorded that, especially in societies characterized by large family groups, the best chances of success of a potential migrant is tied to the choice of the individual that would have the highest probability to reach the destination country (Marcega, 2017): usually young and in good physical and mental health. However, the current spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that it is having on migrants and international migration flows is already suggesting the key role of health aspects in evaluating future scenarios of migration. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic is changing all 'traditional' scenarios in geographic terms of international migration flows, changing routes and migration trajectories of individuals, altering the positive social perception of mobility and also the idea of Europe as a safe and secure destination.

In the last decades the economic development, the second demographic transition and the characteristics of the welfare systems in Europe have progressively led to a rising demand of a migrant labour force. Especially the ageing of the European population in general determined a rise in the demand of foreign labour in the care sector and the ageing of the active population determined a rise in the demand in general. Obviously, the economic development and the ageing of the population exhibits clear regional and local patterns. Demographic scenarios indicate that these ageing processes will continue also in the next decades. Dependent on the future economic development the decline in the number of Europeans and the ageing processes will determine the demand of foreign labour and the ensuing immigration processes.

On the other hand, population growth in the developing countries, especially in Africa, seems to continue leading to more numerous young generations that will be probably reach higher educational and skill levels. It is foreseeable that these more numerous and better educated generations with higher aspirations will have greater problems finding suitable jobs, which could lead to higher international migration propensities.

There is no general agreement in the scientific literature about the closeness of the relationship between climate change and international migration and by extension this unsettled relation reflects the uncertainty in imagining future environment related migratory movements. The difficulty to address the impact of environmental changes in an isolated way, dissociated by other factors, like cultural, social, demographic and economic ones (Jónsson, 2010; McLeman et al., 2010; Black et al., 2011; Borderon et al., 2019) and how they are intertwined with contextually specific features of the places of migrants' origin, increase the uncertainty toward straightforward elaboration of future migration scenarios. Within the African continent mobility linked to the consequences of environmental changes is often internal, from one region to another, from the countryside to the cities. Drought periods lead more frequently to increasing internal, short-term or circular patterns of mobility (Véron, 2012). Findlay suggests that "the most likely effect of environmental change over the next 50 years will be to amplify and modify pre-existing migration channels, and that it is these that will shape the pattern of migration destinations selected by future environmentally linked movers" (Findlay, 2011: 57).

Needless to underline that future scenarios of international migration to Europe will be influenced by the economic situations in the countries of origin and of destination. The present report underlines the finding that, even if the economic factors have been traditionally seen as the main determinants of migration, the migration decisions could be influenced in the future to an even greater extent by non-economic factors. However, it seems unlikely that without continuous economic disparities between origin and destination countries we will see intense international migration flows in the future.

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