

EUROPE, MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Critical remarks on an emerging policy field

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1. HOW EUROPEAN MIGRATION AND FOREIGN POLICIES SPLIT, AND THEN MET AGAIN

At the roots of contemporary migration policies, in western Europe, is a *parallel process of unilateral closure* and of “*securitisation*” of international human mobility. A crucial trigger factor was the 1973 Oil Crisis, started by the decision of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) to stop selling oil to industrialised states supporting Israel in the then ongoing Yom Kippur/Ramadan War. The embargo made prices soar. Inflation and recession ensued. In a social climate which had already shown signs of anti-immigrant sentiments, this prompted the governments of all labour-importing countries in western Europe to stop legal admission of new foreign workers. Such a major policy decision was taken individually by each country, without any coordination with other receiving countries or, even less so, with the main sending countries in southern and south-eastern Europe, northern Africa, or the Middle East.

Those dramatic events are worth recalling because they marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of European migration policies, one which can not be considered closed yet. Unilateral policy-making and the framing of immigration as primarily a security issue have since then and still are largely characterizing migration policies in the Old Continent.¹

From a broader point of view, the unilateral adoption of stop policies for economic immigration inaugurated the *structural decoupling of migration policies and foreign policies* in European political systems. In the previous decades, since the resumption of large scale labour imports after World War II, migration management had largely been driven by bilateral (often post-colonial) relations and by multilateral dynamics (in the context of the European Economic Community). After 1973-4, immigration policies of European states retreated within the sphere of each destination country’s “internal” policy domain. International migration was reframed ever more strictly and exclusively as belonging to “home affairs”.

Such fundamental change in western European politics did not produce its intended results, as immigration continued, although in different forms, namely with a continent-wide increase in asylum seekers, family regroupments, unauthorised entries and stays. Such unwelcome policy outcome became ever more evident over the 1980s. In an increasingly integrated Europe, the connections between national immigration systems and the interdependence of domestic control policies gradually convinced receiving states’ governments of the need to cooperate. Intergovernmental intra-European cooperation in the field of migration controls, which had started at an embryonal stage in the late 1970s, went through a process of *gradual institutionalization and diversification* which brought first to the Schengen agreements (1985 and 1990), then to the inclusion of migration issues in the European Union’s Third Pillar (1993), and finally to the launch of a largely “communitarised” European common migration policy (1997).²

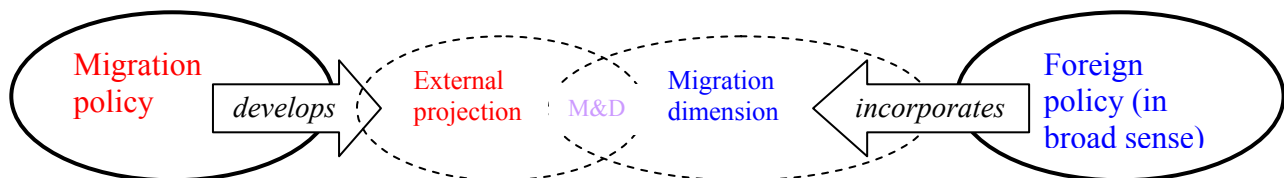
The European cooperation in the field of migration management began and developed itself, until very recently, under an hegemonic role of Interior Ministers and national police forces, without any form of systematic coordination nor even consultation of sending countries. It was only since the mid-1990s that an increasing awareness of the practical limits and shortcomings of a unilateral approach to migration controls pushed European states and institutions to set up, first bilaterally and then at supranational level, channels to dialogue and cooperate with the main states of origin and transit of migration flows (Van Selm, 2002; Pastore, 2004b; Guiraudon, forthcoming). This tendency has been generating an *external projection* of European migration policies, essentially

¹ The literature is endless; as an essential historical reference, see Bade, 2003; on securitisation, a seminal work is Waever, Buzan, Kelstrup and Lemaitre, 1993; on general features of European immigration policies, see for instance Geddes, 2002; Cornelius, Tsuda, Hollifield, Martin, 2003; Guiraudon, Lahav, 2006.

² Here too, the literature is immense, for an analysis of the main political and institutional developments, see Pastore, 2004a; for an in-depth legal perspective, see Peers, 2006.

driven by control and security logics and priorities. In parallel, and partly as a reaction to this evolution, we have been witnessing, in Europe and in other developed regions, an increasing interest, on the part of the foreign policy communities in a broad sense (including thereby development policy-makers and professionals), in international migration as a relevant factor both of international relations and of development processes. These two trends, schematically represented in figure 1, have been interacting in generating what we can define the “Migration and Development (M&D) policy field”.

Fig. 1: The formation of the Migration and Development (M&D) policy field



Due to this peculiar formation, M&D policies in Europe are marked since an early phase by a certain strategic fuzziness, by intrinsic political ambiguities, competence overlappings, policy incoherencies and bureaucratic competition (including, at European level, turf battles within the European Commission).

2. DEVELOPMENT AGAINST (OR THROUGH) MIGRATION? COMPETING PARADIGMS IN THE EUROPEAN DEBATE

M&D is therefore a new but already quite fragmented and controversial policy field. We have tried to explain how this is related to its peculiar historical and political genesis (par. 1). But the operational uncertainty - often accompanied by some strategic opacity and ambiguity - of European M&D policies is not just an effect of institutional lack of coordination and sometimes open competition. It has also some more profound causes of a cognitive nature. As a matter of fact, the fundamental explanatory paradigms about the causal relations between migration and development, at the roots of contemporary M&D policies, are blurred and sometimes grossly flawed.

Almost 120 years ago - when Italy was still in an initial phase of its century-long emigration cycle, and when Germany and Great Britain were the largest sending countries in the world - an Italian intellectual and liberal politician, Francesco Saverio Nitti (1868-1953), was already clearly identifying a direct relationship between economic development and migration. In an influential pamphlet, where he advocated passionately for the recognition of a “freedom to emigrate”, he wrote:

The countries in the old continent that do not experience emigration, are in general the less prosperous and those predestined to a less flourishing future. These are countries, such as France, where population growth has almost stopped, or else torn by civil wars, like Spain, or even worse, almost desert countries, where civilization has not yet arrived, such as Russia or Greece (Nitti, 1888, pp. 21-22).

At the time, in backward Italy at least, this was still an isolated position. In the last decades, however, since at least the seminal works of Michael Todaro (1969) and Wilbur Zelinsky (1971), the scientific community has been developing a broad and cross-disciplinary consensus on the direct link generally existing between capitalist development and human mobility, especially international migration. More recently, economists have developed a paradigm often labelled “migration hump” (Martin, 1996) according to which “an inverted U-shaped curve exists between

the level of country per capita income and international migration. Developing countries with low or high per capita GDP produce smaller shares of international migrants than do middle-income developing countries” (Adams and Page, 2003, p. 1).

But how is this scientific evidence reflected in policy-making? Some scholars argue that, for instance, the migration hump paradigm was consciously taken into consideration in the early 1990s by the US administration in taking the strategic decision to establish a free trade agreement with Mexico.³ In the case of Europe, however, the early stages of supra-national policy-making in the field of M&D were clearly inspired by a different paradigm, sometimes termed “root causes approach” (Gent, 2002). According to such approach, the primary strategic goal of European M&D policies would be to tackle political and economic push factors of (irregular, low-skilled, politically undesired – this is usually left in implicit terms) international migration in order to reduce both pressure and flows. Such rhetorical posture has become increasingly evident since the early policy documents produced by the European Commission since the late 1980s, through the important 1994 Communication on immigration and asylum policies (COM(94) 23), until the heights touched in October 1999, with the magniloquent Conclusions of the ad hoc European Council held in Tampere:

The European Union needs a comprehensive approach to migration addressing political, human rights and development issues in countries and regions of origin and transit. This requires combating poverty, improving living conditions and job opportunities, preventing conflicts and consolidating democratic states and ensuring respect for human rights, in particular rights of minorities, women and children. To that end, the Union as well as Member States are invited to contribute, within their respective competence under the Treaties, to a greater coherence of internal and external policies of the Union. Partnership with third countries concerned will also be a key element for the success of such a policy, with a view to promoting co-development (Tampere European Council, Presidency Conclusions, Point 11).

However little credible this manifesto – where migration policy ambitions expand almost to the point of “swallowing” the whole of EU’s external action in certain areas of the world –, it inspired some important policy developments such as the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration (HLWG), born out of a Dutch proposal in December 1999 (Van Selm, 2002). This was a cross-pillar task force of national and EU officials, whose objective was “to help reduce the influx of asylum seekers and immigrants into the Member States of the European Union [and to] analyse and combat the reasons for flight taking account of the political and human rights situation”.⁴

More recently, the frustration for the difficulty to operationalise a concept as vague as that of “root causes”, and possibly the multiplication of experts’ and academics’ analyses proving its intrinsic weakness⁵, concurred in producing a shift in the European Commission’s discourse. In the December 2002 Communication entitled “Integrating migration issues in the European Union’s relations with Third Countries” (COM/2002/0703), an ad hoc section was devoted specifically to “Migration and development”. With a new emphasis on remittances and “brain circulation”, and an explicit mention of the “migration hump” model, this new blueprint seemed to endorse a more

³ “The Clinton Administration used the migration hump to argue that Congress should approve NAFTA because the additional migration—the hump—was a reasonable price to pay in the short run for less Mexico-U.S. migration in the long run” (Martin, 2004, p. 3).

⁴ Council of Ministers of the European Union, January 1999, Terms of reference of the HLWG on Asylum & Migration, doc. 5264/2/99 JAI 1 AG 1 REV 2, cited in Gent, 2002, p. 13.

⁵ Particularly influential was an in-depth study commissioned during the Danish Presidency: N. Nyberg Sørensen, N. Van Hear & P. Engberg-Pedersen, “*Migration-Development Links project*”: *Final papers and reports*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen; materials available at page <http://www.cdr.dk/ResTHEMES/conflict/migdevfinal.htm>. Revised versions of the studies were published in *The Migration-Development Nexus*, Special Issue 2, “International Migration”, Vol. 40, No. 5, 2002.

positive view of international mobility, not just as a “side effect” but as a fundamental facet, perhaps even an essential condition, for economic and social development (Pastore, 2003).

However, this new orientation – partly reflected in the use made since then of thematic financial instruments (such as Aeneas) – is not clear-cut and uncontroversial. The idea that well-regulated international mobility is conducive to development, at both poles of the migration movement⁶, still coexists with the more established, although routinely questioned, “root causes approach”. The latter still represents an official long-term goal of the EU’s M&D policies, as it was once more reasserted by European Heads of State and Government in June 2007:

The European Council underlines the importance of closer cooperation with third countries in managing migration flows. Specific partnerships on migration with third countries could contribute to a coherent migration policy which combines measures aimed at facilitating well managed legal migration opportunities and their benefits [...] with those fighting illegal migration, protecting refugees and *tackling the root causes of migration* while at the same time impacting positively on development in countries of origin (European Council, June 2007, Presidency Conclusions, point 17).

3. WHO LEADS THE GAME? THE DIFFICULT BALANCE BETWEEN BILATERALISM AND MULTILATERALISM

Being at the crossroads between internal and external policy-making (par. 1), and experiencing a dialectical (and sometimes even conflictual) coexistence of the “Development instead of migration” and of the “Migration for development” paradigms (par. 2) are not the only factors of fragmentation of the European M&D policy field. A third source of problematic complexity is the multiplicity of institutional levels and fora where European M&D policies are made.

Until the mid-2000s, concrete measures aiming at enhancing synergies between migration management and development cooperation were experimented almost exclusively at the level of individual states, in the framework of their bilateral relations with sending countries. This early stage of M&D policies in Europe is little researched, partly due to the atomization of activities in a multitude of pilot-projects and micro-policies, which made it difficult to systematically monitor and analyse trends and outcomes. In an earlier work (Pastore, 2003, p. 4), a distinction was made between “purist” and “instrumentalist” attitudes towards the linkage of migration and aid policies in Europe in the early 2000s. The first position was until recently characteristic of some western and northern European countries (UK, Denmark, Scandinavian countries) with a stronger tradition of development cooperation, which produced scepticism and even hostility towards the idea of systematically linking migration and development.

Elsewhere, such as in a few Latin countries where aid policies have less political weight and development policy communities a weaker professional identity, M&D experiments found initially a more propitious ground. In most cases, the spreading of pilot programs was favoured by a perception that M&D approaches could be functional to wider policy goals. Even outside the naïve “development instead of migration” paradigm, other and more subtle forms of instrumentalisation of the M&D agenda have been flourishing, mostly although not exclusively, in Mediterranean Europe:

- a) In the Italian case, for instance, specific aid packages or privileged bilateral legal immigration regimes (based on special quotas for nationals of given sending countries) were often used as a quid pro quo in exchange for more effective cooperation on migration controls (Chaloff, 2006; Einaudi, 2007, pp. 266-274);

⁶ The term “co-development” is often used as a catch-phrase to express this broad concept (Chaloff, 2007).

- b) In the French case – and more recently in other countries, including for instance the Netherlands (De Haas, 2006, pp. 15-16) – economic incentives to “voluntary” returnees (usually facing the alternative of coercive repatriation) were presented as a development tool⁷;
- c) In broader terms, the M&D agenda has been increasingly used in various domestic political systems as a rhetorical counterweight of security-centred immigration policies, with a legitimising function towards liberal electorates and ethnic minorities.

It was only in the last few years that a substantial trend towards a supranational EU-level M&D policy was initiated, besides the declaratory politics in place since Tampere. From a political point of view, a key trigger were the shocking events occurred in Ceuta and Melilla between August and October 2005, when several unarmed migrants were killed in the attempt to climb over the fences surrounding the two Spanish enclaves in Northern Morocco (Migreurop, 2006). Since then, the political unsustainability of a European approach to irregular migration from Africa almost exclusively based on control measures became evident (CeSPI and SID, 2006). In a relatively short lapse of time, a complex set of multilateral political and diplomatic initiatives was deployed to explore less unilateral and more comprehensive strategies to deal with African migration.

Until then, the issue of African migration towards Europe had been dealt with internationally within two separate institutional frameworks: one for North Africa (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and, for the western Mediterranean, also the migration component of the so-called 5+5 dialogue) and a separate one for Sub-Saharan Africa (under the Cotonou agreement, regulating EU development cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific states until February 2020); each of these fora having its specific institutional and administrative machineries, and its own financial instruments. The growing – and indeed often exaggerated (Düvell, 2006) – awareness of transit migration flows linking Africa south of the Sahara to the Maghreb and the Mashreq convinced governments of the opportunity to set up an institutional forum to debate more widely about Euro-African migration issues. Spain, as one of the EU countries more directly touched by irregular flows from Africa, took the initiative first. In close cooperation with the French and Moroccan governments, it launched a Euro-African inter-governmental dialogue on migration and development. After a launch event at ministerial level in Rabat (10-11 July 2006), a lower-key follow-up meeting was held in Madrid on 21 June 2007.⁸ The widespread dissatisfaction about the limited geographical scope of the Rabat process (both in terms of concrete priorities and of participants, given the absence of Algeria, due to the deep-rooted tensions with Morocco) convinced the EU and the African Union to sponsor a further EU-Africa ministerial conference on Migration and Development, which was held in Tripoli (22-23 November 2007).⁹

⁷ For a critical appraisal of instrumental linkages between return policy and *codéveloppement* measures in the French case, see Weil, 2002. In the last years, French M&D policies have grown beyond their initial auxiliary relation to (restrictive) domestic immigration policies; for an official overview, see

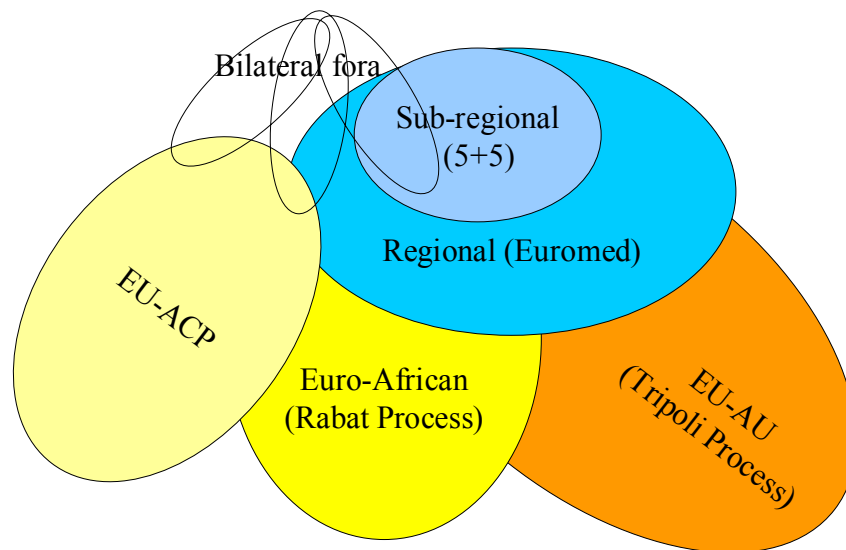
http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/publications_827/cooperation-internationale-developpement_3030/index.html). Nevertheless, the Head of the newly established and highly controversial “Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development” (<http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/iminidco>), Mr. Brice Hortefeux, considers voluntary returns a top priority and maintains that “the method of transferring funds via returning immigrants to their country of origin was a better policy than providing aid for development” (Ecran Weekly Update, 19 June 2007, *France considers paying migrants to return*, http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRAN_Weekly_Update_Special_19th1.pdf).

⁸ The (rather bureaucratic) Conclusions are available at page http://www.maec.gov.ma/migration/Doc/359_07_Comit_de_Seguimiento_ACTA_DE_CONCLUSIONES_EN1.pdf.

⁹ Final Declaration available at page http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko47/en_GB/1164354155373/.

Such multiplication of initiatives – which fits well in a global policy environment marked by a boom of analogous initiatives¹⁰ – could initially be interpreted as a positive signal of a more comprehensive understanding of migration issues and of reinforced political will. By now, however, the ongoing proliferation of largely symbolical initiatives – and particularly the persisting dualism of the Rabat and Tripoli processes (Fig. 2) – risks turning into a factor of confusion, waste of resources and loss of credibility.

Fig. 2: The proliferation of international fora dealing with African migration to Europe



A further factor of institutional complication is the continuing geographical expansion of the EU’s M&D agenda. The “Global approach to migration” - the encompassing strategy adopted by the European Council in December 2005, which incorporates M&D - has so far explicitly prioritised the Mediterranean and Africa. The very nature of European Union’s external action (mostly unanimity-based), however, prevents such high prioritization to last too long. As a matter of fact, the Global approach has only recently been extended to the “Eastern and South-Eastern regions neighbouring the European Union”¹¹. Although positive in abstract terms, such further broadening of the strategic horizon involves a risk of operational and financial overstretching.

¹⁰ Following the preparatory work of the Global Commission on International Migration (December 2003-December 2005, <http://www.gcim.org/en/>) the M&D debate landed in the UN environment with High Level Dialogue held during the 61st session of the General Assembly (14-15 September 2005, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/>). Due to disagreements among states on the opportunity to institutionalise such dialogue in a UN institutional environment, the follow-up was held in an ad hoc intergovernmental framework (1st Global Forum on Migration and Development, 9-11 July 2007, Brussels, <http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/>). At African level, the most significant development so far has been the African Common Position on Migration and Development, adopted in Algiers in April 2006 and by the AU Assembly in Banjul in July 2006. It is worth mentioning also the Joint Regional Approach to Migration adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Bamako, on 29-31 May 2007. A very useful directory of policy documents and policy-oriented research on M&D is available at page <http://www.migrationdevelopment.org/index.php?id=8>.

¹¹ Cfr. Council Conclusions on “Extending and Enhancing the Global Approach to Migration”, endorsed by the European Council of 21-22 June 2007. The previous steps of the Global Approach were marked by the following documents: a) European Commission, Communication on “Priority Actions for Responding to the Challenges of Migration”, 30 November 2005; b) “Global Approach to Migration: Priority Actions Focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean”, adopted by the December 2005 European Council; c) Commission Communication on “The Global

In conclusion of this brief overview of the emerging European M&D policy field, three fundamental policy recommendations, responding to some of the main shortcomings, can be formulated:

I. Targeted measures are needed in order to mitigate the negative side-impact on development of security-centred migration policy approaches. This requires, for instance, more flexible visa regimes, more mobility-friendly immigration legislations, more open rules on dual nationality, a tighter monitoring on the outsourcing of migration controls.

II. Strong political will and intense communication efforts are needed in order to give continuity and to increase the scope of M&D policies, even in front of the foreseeable oscillations in the receiving states' public opinions, caused by the spreading awareness that "Migration for development" strategies will not necessarily reduce or help in containing unwanted migration.

III. A central priority has to be given to institution-building in sending and transit countries, in the awareness that this is a key precondition to turn the emphatic promises of "win-win-win" outcomes of international migration into concrete achievements.

Approach to Migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy" (COM(2006) 735), 30 November 2006); d) Presidency Conclusions of the December 2007 European Council, point 24; e) Commission's Communication on "Applying the Global Approach to Migration to the Eastern and South-Eastern Regions Neighbouring the European Union" (COM(2007) 247), 16 May 2007.

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