

New Patterns in the Human Migration in West Africa

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Abstract

Despite the striking importance of migration and its socioeconomic and political implications, it is the least studied demographic phenomenon in West Africa. The paper presents a historical and descriptive overview of the migration phenomenon in West Africa, while paying particular attention to Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The latter countries illustrate the historical specificities and new patterns of the West African migration, including development strategies based on migration, citizenship and belonging, and return migration. The study concluded that inter-regional mobility remains the most efficient mechanism to reduce inequalities and foster growth. Therefore it recommends maintaining a sustainable level of free movement of people.

Despite the intensity of migration flows and their significant socio-economic, political and ecological impacts, migration remains the least understood demographic phenomenon in West Africa. Statistical limits (availability and reliability of sources) heavily affect the quality and possibilities of migration studies.

The paper presents a historical and descriptive overview of the migration phenomenon in West Africa, while paying particular attention to Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire's. The first and second sections show the extent and evolution of West African migrations since the colonial period and give an account of the existing regional regulations and treaties on population mobility. Then the third section focuses on the main characteristics of migration flows between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The fourth section depicts the West African migratory perspectives in the context of the Ivorian crisis. Finally the main aspects of this historical review of migration in West Africa are summarized in section 5.

1 History of Migration in West Africa

1.1 Evolution of migration

1.1.1 Large and evolving migration flows

Within sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa is an area with a long tradition of human mobility, enhanced in particular during the colonial period. After independence, this population mobility turned into labor migration for wage work, weaving a complex grid of relations and inter-dependences over the artificial borders inherited from colonialism.

Since the end of the 19th century, West African migrations developed gradually through the extension and the multiplication of the areas and sources of emigration. In the early 1960's, both South-South and South-North migrations developed simultaneously. The expansion of cash crop productions (cocoa in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, coffee in Côte d'Ivoire) attracted a workforce from Burkina Faso and Mali. The success of the French automobile industry in the valley of the Senegal River also called for immigrants' labor. Agricultural export-oriented countries in Africa and European industrial countries were therefore encouraging migrations in order to meet their labor requirements.

Over the 1960's and the 1970's, the migratory system in West Africa developed around two main host countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria) and a

few sending WASAT¹ countries (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso). During recurring economic crises, when a host country designed restrictive migration policies and organized the expulsions of migrants, the latter simply changed their strategy and moved to neighboring countries. For instance, decline periods in Ghana coincided with economic growth in Nigeria. In spite of the occasional shocks, population movements within the region thus remained relatively stable and balanced.

However in the 1980's, the host countries faced severe economic difficulties which lead to a deep change in the classical migration pattern. Simultaneously the question of refugees becomes central for some countries that were confronted to conflicts at their borders (Côte d'Ivoire with 240,000 refugees in 1991, Senegal and Mali with respectively 53,000 and 14,000 in 1991).

1.1.2 Current trends of migration

Before 1993, the only available data sources on international migrations were general censuses of the population and surveys prior to the 80ies. One of the first studies on migration and urbanization at the regional level was carried out by Zachariah and Condé (1980) using data covering the 70ies, followed by another survey conducted in 1982 by the OECD² and the Sahel Institute in Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal in the Senegal River area. Migration data are old and come generally from national censuses which provide only a static picture of international migrations. The Network of Surveys on Migration and Urbanization in West Africa (NESMUWA)³, created in 1989, carried out an important survey in seven countries in 1993: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. This survey was coordinated by the CERPOD (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur la Population et pour le Développement) in collaboration with IRD (Institut français de recherche scientifique pour le

¹ West African Semi-Arid Tropics

² Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

³ Also called REMUAO. Nigeria was also added for some aspects of the study.

développement en coopération), CEPED (Centre français d'Etudes sur la Population et le Développement) and the demography Department of University of Montreal.

The particularity of the NESMUWA survey was to use retrospective collection of migratory biographies for the five years 1988-1992 and measure migration flows rather than migrants stocks, as is the case in censuses.⁴ The survey recorded all residential changes that lasted more than six months concerning individuals above 15 years old. According to this definition, each individual may have migrated several times during the study period, disregarding his nationality but focusing on the source and destination country or area. The NESMUWA survey shows the intensity of West African migrations and the diversity of the urbanization and migratory situations of the different countries. Between 1988 and 1992, more than 6.4 millions migratory movements were recorded between the seven countries of the network (Bocquier and Traoré 2000)⁵. Among these migrations, 2.3 millions were international. The most important flows were recorded between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (half of the total flows. See Bocquier and Traoré 1996, 2). Burkina Faso has the lowest internal migration incidence (30 percent of the total flows only as compare to Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal (62 percent), Mauritania (54 percent), Mali and Guinea (51 percent) and finally Niger (47 percent). However, there is recent disruption in the migration profile between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, the net migration rate changed from -0.7 percent to -0.2 percent per year between the period 1969-1973 and 1988-1992. Even though Côte d'Ivoire still holds a leading destination position (see table 1), it experienced a sharp decrease in the flows of international migrations inside NESMUWA that leads to a nearly null migration growth in the years 1988-1992. This reversal of trends toward increasing return

4 A specific questionnaire was also designed for international migration of individuals above 15 years old.

⁵ See page 5 in Decaluwé, Dumont, Mesplé-Somps, and Robichaud (2000).

migration is confirmed by the estimated yearly growth rates of the Burkinabè migrant population residing in Côte d'Ivoire (see section 3, table 3). The number of returning migrants, principally to Burkina Faso, has been constantly increasing since the 1980'. The network survey indicated that Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso are the only countries with a growing population in rural areas and the reasons are increasing flows of return internal or international migrants. This pattern is not the first case in West Africa⁶ but reveals the adaptability of migrants who change destinations based on better economic incentives elsewhere.

1.2 Integration into the world migration system

Even though the African models of regional integration have so far limited the need for migrations outside the continent, the declining capacity of host countries is modifying the migration pattern (Coussy 1994, 273). The recent changes in West African migration patterns (see paragraph 1.1.2) actually show that migrations that depend only on a local natural resource remain extremely fragile and dependant on the world market. West African migrations are becoming part of a dynamic and unstable world migration system and are strongly affected by economic and migration policies (expulsions and restrictive policies) both in developed and developing countries. The West African migration system is not an autonomous entity and closely relates to several migration systems in the South and in the North and interacts with them (Robin 1996, 68). West African migrations have gradually become inter-regional and inter-continental. West African migrants now transit in North Africa or Central Africa in order to reach Europe or other northern countries.

6 Ghana and Nigeria stopped receiving migrants and now became sending countries as well.

Table 1: Matrix of international migrations (in 1000).

Origin	Destination										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Burkina Faso (1)		281		11	*	14		*	18	2	329
Côte d'Ivoire (2)	227		24	117	3	47	13	15	21		468
Guinea (3)		*	38		11	3	*	38	40	17	149
Mali (4)	13	166	10		6	10	12	44	49		312
Mauritania (5)	*	8	2	5		*	32	na	na		47
Niger (6)	13	67		8				1	200	36	323
Senegal (7)	1	18	37	14	31	1		63	81		347
Other Africa (8)	16	105	38	10	Na	112	30				311
Rest of the World (9)	2	14	6	13	Na	28	25				88
Total (10)	273	697	117	187	45	213	152	380	206		2274

Sources: NESMUWA survey. * Figures less than 1000 migrations; na: not available.

Notes: Period 1988-92, population aged 15 years and more.

According to NESMUWA survey estimations, the West African migrations flows to Europe represented roughly 110,000 in the study period 1988-92 (22,000 per year) and from Europe to the NESMUWA network, the cumulative figure stood at 33,000 (6,600 per year). The migration balance in favor of Europe is roughly +15,600 per year of the African population aged 15 years and more. However, while trade of goods is essentially outward-oriented, migrations toward Europe remain negligible relative to West African intra-regional migrations, constituting less than 9 percent of total migration between countries of the network. Both types of migration remain complementary and closely linked to several other migration systems oriented toward Austral and Central Africa or Northern countries.

Migration opportunities and favorable policies are diminishing in Africa as well as in the European Union. Migrants who live in countries that face persistent economic difficulties are searching for new prospects. They develop new migration strategies and show a great ability to adapt to new constraints. For example, the increase in the number of applications for asylum and the development of new transit areas are examples of these current changes.

2 Main characteristics of West African migration

2.1 Migrations as major contributor to Integration

Several authors find in intra-African migration flows the base and the engine for the regional integration process (Coussy 1994, 269 Lachaud 1999, 1). Regional migrations play a leading role in the regional integration process and compensate for the weakness of the other channels of West African economic integration, such as trade and investment flows. Moreover, migration contributes to increasing the latter, through remittances, trade between host and sending countries via creation of business networks (known as “Diaspora externality”),⁷ and through consumption growth. Migrations have generated strong interdependences between African countries, as shown by the sensitivity of the source economies and their migration flows to the cash crops export earnings of host countries.

2.2 Labor migrations

The main characteristics that appear from national censuses and migration surveys allow describing West African migration as a temporary or circular labor migration (Cordell, Gregory and Piché 1996; Lalou 1996, 358). Migration remained very attractive because the migrants were not

⁷ The argument is that emigration creates trade and business networks, and promotes technology diffusion.

disconnected from their home country as indicated by the importance of seasonal and return migrations.

West Africa is one of the most important regions of international labor migrations, which involve movements from rural to rural areas as well as from rural to urban areas. In general also the weak development of agriculture has marginalized rural areas and pushed migrants to urban areas inside their country.

Socio-economic profiles of African migrants are diverse (Lalou 1996, 359). Migrations have generated a specific division of labor within Africa. Migrations primarily concern young men (aged 15-34 years), coming from rural areas, that are single, less educated than the host population⁸ and employed in agricultural, mining, trade or service sectors with low qualified jobs and relatively low wages. At the beginning of the migration experience, migrants were often agricultural workers, traders, craftsmen and were often excluded from public sector and denied of land ownership. Some authors have noticed a recent change in the characteristics of the migrants toward an increase of female migrations, independently from male migration, toward household migrations and toward a longer duration of stay in host countries (see references in Lalou 1996, 359).

2.3 Difficult application of migration agreements and regional treaties

All West African regional treaties deal with the important issue of population and labor mobility. The Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO), created in 1973, was the first regional organization to include specific provisions on the migration phenomenon. Article 39 of the treaty stipulated: "movement of people and capital within member countries is free" while article 4 of the Agreement stated that the free movement of people guarantees the ability to work and settle in member countries for nationals of CEAO member states. However, the agreement has only been

8 While 76.9 percent of the foreign population is illiterate, the rate is only 57 percent in the host Ivorian population (Zanou 2001, 3).

partly enforced until CEAO disappeared in 1994 because of certain clauses that enabled member countries to implement their own migration policies in case of economic, social and financial crisis.

The current regional organizations have also ratified agreements on mobility of people that include significant innovations. Created in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has promoted a progressive abolition of obstacles to the free movement of people, services and capital and agreed that the nationals of the member-states be regarded as citizens of the community. They are entitled to enjoy the right of establishment, to work and to settle in the entire region (abolition of visas, right of residence and right of establishment that enables free entrepreneurship of the citizen in all member-States). Despite these provisions, the free movement of labor is occasionally impaired by the fact that regional and national regulations are not synchronized yet. Migrants still face administrative obstacles and restrictive migration policies. Massive expulsions of migrants occurred after the approval of these agreements (e.g. Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire respectively in 1983 and 1986).⁹ In fact a number of member States implement their own migration policies that remain more restrictive and highly sensitive to the fluctuations of their labor market. However, the renewal of the treaty in 1993 reinforced the former provisions (article 9, chapter X of the Treaty, subparagraph 1). Citizens of the ECOWAS have the right to enter freely, to reside and to settle in any other member state, which has to enforce the recognition and implementation of these rights within its own territory.

⁹ Nigeria expelled 1.5 millions of immigrants in 1983, after the oil shock (Lalou 1996, 353).

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)¹⁰ created in 1994 has also inherited of agreements that included provisions on the free movement and settlement of citizens in its member states. Recently the treaty was modified and the member states included new provisions on labor migration. To achieve the objective of a common market, the 2003 modifications adopted provisions that foster the implementation of the principles of free movement of citizens, free establishment and entrepreneurship. The new Article 91 abolished all kind of discrimination against members in the Union labor market, exception made for civil servant positions. Article 92 recognized the right of residence and right of establishment and free entrepreneurship of any citizen in all member-States. Yet, one year later in February 2004, obstacles to the implementation of these regulations appeared with the Ivorian law for national preference concerning access to employment in the private sector. Not only that the new provisions discriminate against all foreigners including member states, it also urges enterprises to achieve in a very short run (two years maximum) a complete nationalization of employment.

In conclusion, all the regional organizations have ratified agreements that effectively encourage the free movement of West African population. Even though the enforcement of these rules is a real challenge, the treaties are of high quality and meet international standards.

3 The mainstays of migration between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire took over several other countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Gabon and Senegal) the leadership in hosting West African migrants while half of the migrant population in Côte d'Ivoire comes from Burkina Faso.

¹⁰ WAEMU (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africain or UEMOA in french) counts eight countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. ECOWAS extends WAEMU to the non francophone countries: Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

3.1 Origin and history of Burkinabè migration

3.1.1 An emigration rooted in the colonial past

Migration is a secular tradition in Burkina Faso. Populations that constitute the current country of Burkina Faso have settled by successive waves since the 10th century. These movements of settlement continued until the end of the 19th century.

Starting from the early 20th century, Burkina Faso experienced an increasing labor emigration that took its roots in the French colonization process. In 1919, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), initially part of the colony of the Haut-Senegal-Niger, was created. However, the increasing needs for workforce to exploit natural resources in Côte d'Ivoire and the failure of the economic development policy of Upper Volta that was undertaken by the governor Hesling contributed to the dismantlement of the colony in 1932 and its partial attachment to Côte d'Ivoire. It became a genuine provider of labor to the profit of coastal zones. The economy of the colonies was labor intensive and depended on good transport infrastructure (construction of railways and roads) to facilitate the farming of cash crops in the rich coastal regions. The use of forced labor, the high level of colonial taxes, the Second World War and the sending of the conscripts to plantations were the instruments that contributed to increasing Burkinabè migrations to Côte d'Ivoire.

In the first half of the 20th century, Burkinabè migrations were actually oriented toward two main destinations: Côte d'Ivoire and the Gold Coast (now Ghana). The latter was offering better working conditions and wages than Côte d'Ivoire and was giving the opportunity to migrants to escape from the above restricting French policies. Therefore, massive migrations to Gold Coast occurred until 1946. In 1923, the ratio was of 100 voltaic workers in Gold Coast to 33 in Côte d'Ivoire. This pattern of migrations generated a shortage of workers for the plantations in Côte d'Ivoire up until 1946.

In 1946, forced labor was abolished and Upper Volta was reconstituted in its former borders in the following year, reshaping the migration pattern. The movement of people became an individual and spontaneous socio-economic decision. However because this type of migrations entailed flows that were below the needs of plantation owners in Côte d'Ivoire, the SIAMO (Interprofessional Trade Union for the routing of the Labor) was created in 1951. This organization worked as a colonial structure for labor management until 1960. It accelerated and regulated the flows of migrants to Côte d'Ivoire with a consequent diversion from Ghana.

3.1.2 A new turn after independence

(i) The receiving country: a labor-intensive development model

As a prolongation of the colonial economic system based on the farming of cash crops (cocoa, coffee), the economic development model of Côte d'Ivoire was the principal factor that affected the dynamics of settlement and migration processes. The main characteristic of the cocoa and coffee farming system rests on the simple combination of production factors (land, capital and labor), and its competitiveness depends on the relatively low costs of land and labor. According to this very simple agricultural production technology, Ivorian growth has been fostered by the extension of cultivated surfaces and the abundance of migration labor. Therefore after 1960 and the end of the colonial forced labor mobility, the newly independent Ivorian State favored the labor migration by the development of the regional transport system. Since 1960, Côte d'Ivoire has become the favorite destination of Burkinabè migrants.

The important contribution of the voltaic migration was confirmed with the ratification of bilateral conventions, protocols and regional treaties. Regarding the hard working conditions of Burkinabè migrants and the non respect of labor legislation by employers in Côte d'Ivoire, Upper Volta and Côte d'Ivoire decided in 1960 to create a bilateral

instrument to regulate migration flows. The main objectives of this convention were to monitor migration flows as well as the financial flows of remittances to Upper Volta. The convention also aimed at controlling and humanizing working conditions of migrants to the profit of Ivorian farmers. Its principal clauses include social protection of migrants (job contracts, equal social advantages with Ivorian workers), creation of recruitment and transit centers, and financial compensations for Upper Volta (transportation and accommodation costs).

However in practice, this Convention produced disappointing results. For the period 1960-1974, 55,072 workers were conveyed by the official way but many more informal departures took place. Firstly, Burkinabè migrants refused to migrate within an institutional and official framework (fear of official control, trauma of the colonial forced labor system) and the Burkinabè administration did not have the capacity to enforce the Convention. Secondly, the main clauses have not been respected by the plantation owners in Côte d'Ivoire (especially the working conditions, wages, and living conditions). Finally, the government of Côte d'Ivoire was reluctant to send remittances funds because of the negative impact on its balance of payments. In 1974, the voltaic authorities decided to stop the official routing of migration labor.

Overall the period 1960-1990 was characterized by a relatively free migration policy with three main pillars: bilateral agreements (the 1960 Convention signed with Burkina Faso), multilateral agreements (ECOWAS for example) and a voluntarist policy. In spite of these agreements, the informal migration networks developed and remained particularly active and uncontrolled. Meanwhile Côte d'Ivoire has become the leading host country in terms of immigration flows in West Africa and immigrant labor played an important role in the agricultural development of the country.

(ii) The source country: damming up the labor outflows

Four political regimes in Burkina Faso successively marked its migration policy and tried to regulate the flows since 1960:

- First republic (1960-1966): signature of the first labor Convention between Upper Volta and Côte d'Ivoire in 1960.
- Exceptional regime (1972-1974): in the context of the eradication of river-blindness disease, the government developed hydro-agricultural infrastructure and organized transfers of populations within the country. The second labor Convention was signed in August 1973.
- Exceptional regime (1980-1982): in order to face the negative effects of massive emigration on the national economy, the authorities imposed an exit visa.
- Exceptional regime (1982-1983): the former legislation was repealed because of the reluctance of populations and a risk of bypassing the law through the development of illegal emigration.

Because most of the migration flows did not occur within the official channels designed by Conventions, each political regime in Burkina Faso failed in its attempt to control migration flows, whose principal characteristics and tendencies remained constant. In addition to the early historical factors mentioned above, the economic motive of migration becomes essential and predominant to date. The weak economic performances of the source country, the differential of wages and standards of living have been the main reasons for Burkinabè to migrate in Côte d'Ivoire since the independence (Somé and Gbangou 1990, 8 and 59). Other agro-climatic, demographic and sociological factors also explain the migration phenomenon:

- Natural resources and climatic factors: poor quality lands, droughts in 1969, 1973, and 1984, instable rainfalls, extraction and over-exploitation of natural resources due to high population density in areas such as the

Central Plateau compounded their effects and forced populations to move and seek more fertile soils and better livelihoods.

- Sociological and cultural factors: the matrimonial status (marriages, divorces, widowhoods etc.) explains part of the migration. Wedding and access to land in Moose areas are controlled by the elder and represent the key of Moose's social organization. The dependence of young people on adults lasts on average until the ages of 35-40, the period chosen by young Moose to migrate. Emigration is also part of an initiation process and an adventure, which can benefit migrants when they return to their region of origin. However the financial independence acquired during the migration does not endanger or call into question the traditional social hierarchy, explaining the sometimes weak investments in agriculture by return migrants in that region (Blion 1992, 29).
- Other historical factors: movements of population were frequent in Burkina Faso even before the colonial period in particular in the former Moose Empire and in the Lobi population.
- Human capital factor: Education also takes young people away from agricultural sector to cities and abroad.

3.2 Extent of the bilateral flows

International migrations represent a significant share (more than two thirds) of Burkinabè migrations. The dynamics of the internal migration in Burkina Faso are closely linked to its international dynamics, especially with Côte d'Ivoire, country of destination of 90% of the Burkinabè international labor flows. However, following the international economic situation of the 1970/80s and the recent Ivorian economic crisis, significant changes have occurred in the size and the direction of migration flows. There is a re-balancing of international flows marked by an increase of return migrations to Burkina Faso (see table 2 and figure 1). Following the hardship of structural adjustment programs (increased return of skilled and unskilled young unemployed Ivorian to rural zones), and as a result of

administrative harassment (e.g. requirement of residential permits) in the last decades, 76 percent of the sample used in figure 1 planned to return to Burkina Faso.

Table 2: Migration flows between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire

Average annual migration flows	1969-1973	1988-1993
Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire	59,731	56,203
Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso	37,000	45,490
Migration balance of Burkina Faso	-22,731	-10,713

Source: Data NESMUWA, 1993.

In the period 1988-1992, the migration rate of Burkina Faso was negative and roughly equivalent to -0.26% per year for the population above 15 years old (NESMUWA survey). However, this rate is inferior to the one estimated by the national Survey carried out in 1974-1975 for the study period 1969-1973 (-1.2%). For the population as a whole, the migration rate actually moved from -0.7% in the years 1969-1973 to -0.2% in the period 1988-1992, indicating a re-balancing of the migration flows toward higher return migrants.

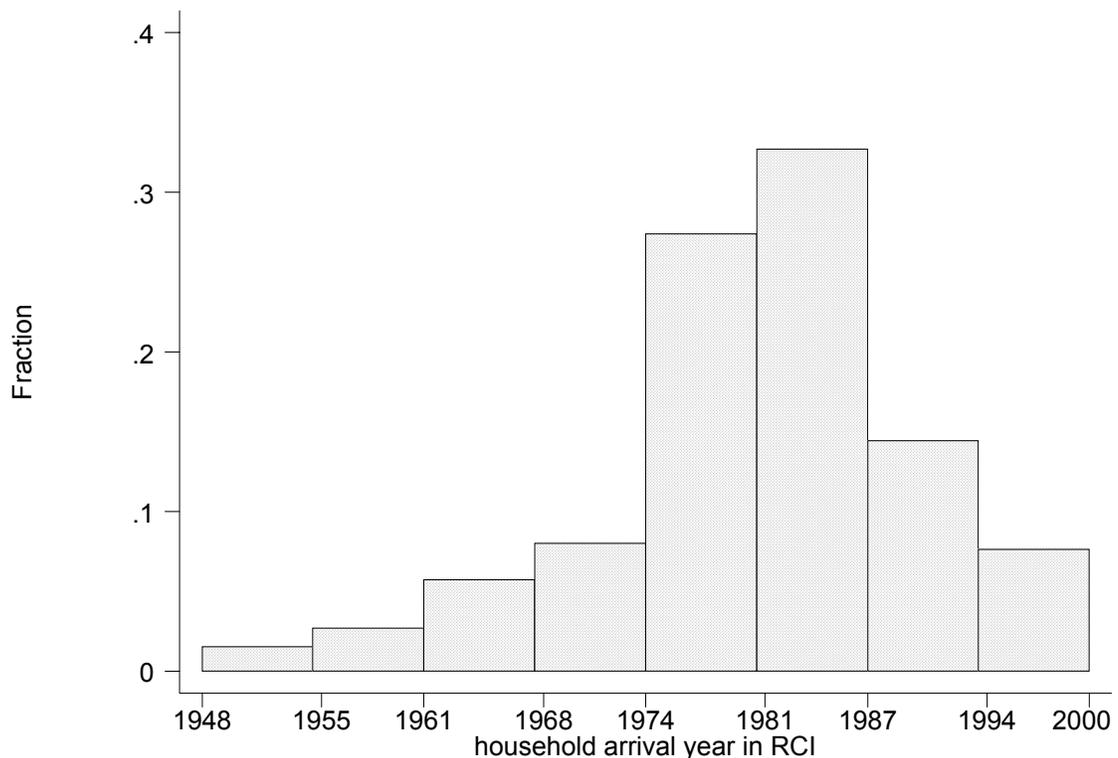
3.3 Increase of return migrations

Although remaining a polar country of international immigration in West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire's position as a net beneficiary of labor migration is eroded. The current migratory rate is only slightly positive (+0.41 percent/year) vis-à-vis the rest of the network.¹¹ This declining role is mainly explained by the increasing return migration to Burkina Faso (REMUAO 1997, 42). The latter now receives increasing flows of return migrants and fewer departures to Côte d'Ivoire. While international emigration involves Burkinabè aged less than 35 years, the returnees are

11 In their study, Decaluwé, Dumont, Mesplé-Somps and Robichaud (2000) predicted under a successful liberalization of UEMOA, an increase in Ivorian migration net balance of +1.7%.

older with more than 30 years. Compared with emigration departures that are more organized in networks, return migrations are individual strategies (Blion 1992, 31).

Figure 3-1: Recent trends in migration from Burkina to Côte d'Ivoire



Source: Own survey in Côte d'Ivoire (summer 2002). Sample size: 263 households.

Notes: RCI stands for Côte d'Ivoire. Fraction stands for fraction of the total sample

Between 1969 and 1973, the average annual return flow was estimated at 37,000 individuals and it reached 45,090 between 1988 and 1993 (see table 2). Using stock data of migration population from national censuses, one can also estimate the average annual growth rate. Table 3 clearly confirms the decrease in the growth rate of the Burkinabè migrant population in Côte d'Ivoire. Keeping all other factors constant, the destination becomes less attractive and lost -0.67 percentage points between the two periods in terms of average annual growth rates. A similar situation can be observed for all the other source countries.

Economic recession in Côte d'Ivoire (drop in world prices, urban unemployment), degradation of conditions of living, congestion externalities and restrictive migration policies explain the surge in return migrations. First, there is an exceptional return flow from urban areas to rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire. This concerns Ivorian who suffered the severe economic crisis and unemployment during the past last decades (skilled and unskilled unemployed labor). The return of Ivorian citizens into their rural areas crowded out the Burkinabè farmers. Second, to face the unfavorable prices for cocoa and coffee in the period 1988-1992, farmers increased cultivated areas and called for family labor.

Table 3: Annual demographic contribution of migration in Côte d'Ivoire

	Average growth		
	1975-1988	1988-1998	1975-1998
Burkina Faso	3,52	2,85	3,23
Mali	3,66	0,211	2,16
Guinea	4,55	-0,190	2,49
Ghana	8,75	3,43	3,45
Benin	3,90	1,64	2,92
Niger	6,52	1,45	4,32
Togo	8,59	4,94	7,00
Senegal	3,97	0,493	2,46
Mauritania	Na	0,506	Na
Nigeria	-1,1	4,05	1,12
Liberia	Na	Na	Na
Rest of Africa	Na	3,81	Na
Rest of the world	Na	-1,667	Na
Non declared	Na	Na	-7,17
Total	3,9	1,96	3,06

Source: Own estimations.

The phenomenon of return migration can also be explained by the migrant initial strategy and its linkage to a broader migration system. At their first departure, migrants are single and work as family help in cocoa farming. The first return of the migrant occurs on average three years after the departure and corresponds to the wedding or its preparation. In

addition to this first return, visits can be justified by the social commitments of the migrant (death of a relative). Because of the death of the head of household, migrants may be forced to stop their adventure at least for a time. Additionally children, born in Côte d'Ivoire, often return to the village, because of the increasing costs of schooling in Côte d'Ivoire (Zanou 1999, 12). The costs gap in favor of Burkinabè educational system was highest during the education policy of the Burkinabè Revolution (1983-1987).

In general, the early 1990s were marked by "emergency" returns of the unemployed migrants from Abidjan due to their professional and residential status. The return of Burkinabè migrants from the rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire did not occur at that time although the economic crisis affected the farming sector after 1989 when the authorities stopped subsidizing the farmers. To overcome the latter difficulties, the Burkinabè farmers, owners or sharecroppers, organized a seasonal movements of their labor needs between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.

Return migration to the rural region of origin is decreasing as well. In 1973, 90 percent of return migrants chose to settle in rural areas. In 1985, they were only 78 percent. Bobo Dioulasso and Ouagadougou are the favorite urban destinations. In cases rural destinations are chosen, migrants who returned outside their area of origin used to settle in the rich lands of Western Burkina Faso. Migrants who returned in rural areas often invested in productive activities: livestock, ploughs, small-scale industrial and craft activities. When return migrants settled in the urban areas of Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, their success depended a lot on their vocational qualifications acquired during the migration period and on the extensiveness of their social network and preceding investments in Burkina Faso. Most of the return migrants are active (93.8%) and work as entrepreneurs.

4 The future of West African migrations

4.1 Long-Term Perspective Study

In 1990, the Club du Sahel and the OECD undertook a regional study of the long-term prospects for West Africa (Cour and Snrech 1998). The West Africa Long-Term Perspective Study (WALTPS) highlighted the long-term interactions between the population dynamics and the economic, social and environmental trends. Three patterns of human mobility have prevailed so far: from North to South, from the inland to the coast, and from rural to urban areas. This has led to four homogeneous zones of settlement:

- Zone 1: comprises the main urban centers in the coastal countries. The population density is very high because it is the main destination of migration.
- Zone 2: comprises the bordering areas to the coast (Soudano-Sahelian zone). Even though this relatively under populated zone has been sending migrants during the last 30 years, it is probably the next immigration zone.
- Zone 3: more urbanized than zone 2, these are the most dynamic areas of the Sahelian countries and are net senders (-0.3 percent of migration rate).
- Zone 4: covers the rest of the Sahel and represents the main sending area (-0.7 percent of migration rate) with the lowest demographic and economic potentials.

West Africa must cope with particularly high rates of population growth that will induce important intra-regional migration flows and a rapid urbanization. In 2020, West African population is therefore likely to double (at least 430 million), creating enormous political, economic, social and environmental tensions. Between 1960 and 2020, the total population would have multiplied by 10 while the urban population by 100. Even though the WALTPS study recorded eight million migrations in the period

1960-1990, the stock will reach twenty million people, a real source of potential conflict. Meanwhile mobility played a key role as economic risk coping strategy for the West African communities and migrations will continue to flow from the land-locked countries to the rest of Africa, under the increasing constraints of climatic changes and environmental congestions as well as the fluctuating demand for migrant labor in the coastal countries. The inter-regional mobility remains the most efficient mechanism to reduce inequalities and foster growth, therefore the WALTPS suggests maintaining the free movement of people, even though a mechanism should be created to control the negative effects of massive migrations.

4.2 The new migration destinations

Over the last decades, Côte d'Ivoire experienced the highest rates of population growth (urban and rural) in West Africa. Its population increased from 3 million in 1960 to nearly 15 million in 1990 with a sizeable contribution of migration. Côte d'Ivoire becomes the pole for West African migration and hosts the most important community of foreigners coming from countries of the network. In 1998, the foreign population represented 26 percent of the total population (See table 4) whereas it represents only 2.5 percent in the case of Nigeria in 1982 following the oil boom and 2.7 percent in Senegal using the 1988 national census (Lalou 1996, 355-358).¹²

If the Ivorian economic crisis persists, population movements will probably stop or shift toward new areas, leading to an important change in migration pattern. WALPTS predicts that zone 2 could be the new receiving area in West Africa and that the whole region could benefit because the economic exchanges will be more intra-regional than the extrovert economy of plantations. Located in the North of the coastal

¹² Foreign population and immigrants are not the same; however they share in common individuals born abroad and have foreign nationality. Therefore, foreign population is a good proxy for simple illustration purposes.

countries and in the South of the Sahelian countries, zone 2 has important agricultural resources to meet the growing demands of the regional market (cereals, fruits and vegetable, intensive livestock farming). The main cities (Sikasso/Korhogo/Bobo-Dioulasso) constitute a strategic area for regional trade and for population settlement. Recent migration flows have been observed toward western Burkina Faso, phenomenon that is accelerated by the success of cotton production, urbanization and the eradication of river-blindness.

Table 4: Importance of foreign population in Côte d’Ivoire

	1975	1988	1993	1998
Ivorian total population	6,755,000	11,003,850	13,036,540	15,159,110
Total foreign Population	21.8%	27.6%	25.4%	26.4%
Foreigners from West African countries	21.1%	27.3%	25.3%*	25.6%

Data sources: RGPH 1975, 1988, 1998, survey NESMUWA (1993), World Bank data 2003.

* Approximation with NESMUWA data

5 Summary and conclusion

Migration studies in West Africa are generally impaired by the lack of consistent statistics. The paper depicted the history of migration in West Africa in general and then narrowed the study to Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso. In 1998, the foreign population represented 26 percent of the total population compare with the small 2.5 percent and 2.7 percent in the respective cases of Nigeria and Senegal at their highest points. At that period, Burkinabè represented the absolute majority of foreign population living in Côte d’Ivoire (56 percent in 1998) and 14.6 percent of the total population of the country. By contrast in 1923, the ratio was of 100 Burkinabè workers in Ghana to 33 in Côte d’Ivoire. The restrictive French

colonial policies reshaped and redirected the flows toward Ivorian plantations. After the abolition of forced migration in 1946, the movement of people became an individual economic decision. Meanwhile, several agreements between both countries were favorable to migrant labor that coffee and cocoa plantations needed in the destination country.

From the historical and economic analysis, it appears that migration flows constitute the most observable outcome and the engine for the regional integration process. Between 1988 and 1992, more than 6.4 millions migratory movements were recorded in the network (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal). Migrant remittances enhance national demand and mitigate the effects of poverty during the slack season in the poorer sahelian countries. Remittances represent an important source of foreign exchange that reduce the deficit of the balance of payments.

However, there is recent disruption in the migration profile of West Africa and in particular between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso is receiving relatively more return migrants, which dampened the net migration rate from -0.7 percent to -0.2 percent per year between the period 1969-1973 and 1988-1992. Consequently Côte d'Ivoire's leading destination position is eroded, in favor of new zones. The WALTPS study estimated that migrations will continue to flow from the landlocked countries to the rest of Africa. The inter-regional mobility remains the most efficient mechanism to reduce inequalities and foster growth, it is important to maintain the free movement of people, even though a mechanism should be created to control the negative effects of massive migrations.

West African free trade arrangements encourage the creation of a common market and abolished all kind of discrimination against members in the regional labor market, encouraging the right of residence, right of establishment and free entrepreneurship of any citizen in all the member-

States. However, national laws in receiving countries often challenge these provisions and show the weak enforcement power of the region in the domain of labor migration. Historically, migration between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire have always benefited from cooperation between the two countries. This suggests in face of the recent migration crisis the creation of migration management institutions. The important role that the agreements should play is the regulation of migration flows to meet a sustainable level. Working conditions of Burkinabè migrants and the respect of labor legislation by employers in Côte d'Ivoire should be important aspects of the agreement. The safe transfer of remittances to Burkina Faso should be made possible. Another important objective should be the monitoring of migration flows. Due to congestion externalities, a study should be undertaken on the sustainable migration flows Côte d'Ivoire can afford and alternative destinations should be proposed. However, based on past failure it is important to enforce such an agreement by placing it under regional supervision.

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