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A Critical Analysis of the Role Played by Free Movement of People to Economic Development in the ECOWAS Region

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ABSTRACT

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted in 1979 the Protocol on free movement of people with the objective of granting the rights of free movement, residence and establishment to the community's citizens. More than forty years after the adoption of the Treaty, this article discusses the journey of free movement in the region. Only the first of the three stages of implementation of the Treaty's provisions has been fulfilled; the non-full realization of the implementation is due to some challenges that have been the subject of multiple treatments. Free movement of people enters in the sphere of regional economic integration whose aim is to improve the socioeconomic level of member states; in this domain the EU is the most advanced model. Thus, free movement in the ECOWAS can be approached in the light of the EU case. By having a comparing analysis between the two communities, it appears that the elements that have assured European success are lacking in the ECOWAS. Furthermore, an examination of the reality in the region shows a complexity that is unique to West African countries. Therefore, it stands out that efforts to fully implement free movement, that it may contribute to the improvement of the economic development of ECOWAS countries, must be preceded by the satisfaction of many conditions at different levels.

Keywords: Free movement of People, Economic development, Economic Integration.

Une Analyse Critique du Rôle Joué par la Libre Circulation des Personnes dans le Développement Économique de la Région CEDEAO

RÉSUMÉ

La Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) a adopté en 1979 le protocole sur la libre circulation des personnes dans le but d'accorder aux citoyens de la communauté les droits de libre circulation, de résidence et d'établissement. Plus de quarante ans après l'adoption du traité, cet article examine le parcours de la libre circulation dans la région. Seule la première des trois étapes de la mise en œuvre des dispositions du traité a été franchie ; la non-réalisation complète de la mise en œuvre est due à certains défis qui ont fait l'objet de multiples traitements. La libre circulation des personnes entre dans la sphère de l'intégration économique régionale dont l'objectif est d'améliorer le niveau socio-économique des États membres ; dans ce domaine, l'UE est le modèle le plus avancé. Ainsi, la libre circulation dans la CEDEAO peut être abordée à la lumière du cas de l'UE. En procédant à une analyse comparative entre les deux communautés, il apparaît que les éléments qui ont assuré le succès de l'Europe font défaut à la CEDEAO. En outre, un examen de la réalité dans la région montre une complexité qui est propre aux pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest. Par conséquent, il apparaît que les efforts visant à mettre pleinement en œuvre la libre circulation, afin qu'elle puisse contribuer à l'amélioration du développement économique des pays de la CEDEAO, doivent être précédés par la satisfaction de nombreuses conditions à différents niveaux.

Mots clés: Libre circulation des personnes, Développement économique, Intégration économique.

INTRODUCTION

To better face the challenges of the globalization, countries group into economic unions, thus forming Regional Economic Communities (RECs) across the world. The existence of economic unions can go back to the nineteenth century, to the time between the global wars and after the Second World War which saw many waves of regionalism (Langenhove and Costea, 2005). Through RECs economic integration is aimed, which is the process of strengthening economic ties between Member States of the communities. Regionalism is meant to achieve the goals that are difficult to be obtained worldwide, e.g. the abolition of obstacles impeding trade, the flows of capital and people inside a given economic community.

The ultimate goal of the efforts towards the intensification of movement of flows of capital and people in the economic union is the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of people in that union. Because of its complexity, the impacts of movement of people on economic development of RECs are difficult to estimate and appreciate.

The Economic community of West African states (ECOWAS) is one the eight regional economic communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union in Africa. The first treaty establishing the ECOWAS was signed on 28 May 1975 in Lagos, after a renewed treaty was agreed upon in July 1993 in Cotonou. The community is now made of 15 West African countries which are regrouped in three linguistic groups (inherited from colonization); the French-speaking countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo; the English-speaking countries: Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone; and the Portuguese-speaking countries: Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Also, the ex-French colonies of the organization plus Guinea-Bissau form the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ). Its population counts for over 300 million people tucked in a total area of about 5.1 square kilometers.

Around the world RECs can be found, they are efforts made by countries to create blocks of liberalization. That process of liberalization starts with some economic arrangements among some countries by the establishment of a free trade area, after a customs union of the area follows; by adding the free movement of persons and capital to free circulation of goods and services the community tends towards the creation of a common market; after the harmonization of monetary and economic policies, an integrated economic community will be formed. Some RECs have recorded successful progresses in economic integration; a best example of them is the European Union (EU) which is the current advanced model of REC.

The main motives behind the creation of regional economic arrangements (REAs) or RECs have been mainly free trade in goods and services and free movement of capital. Free movement of persons has constituted a minor factor though high level of mobility is ensured in some regions, as in the case of EU. Thus, there is a more and more deregulation concerning the flows of goods, services and capitals. Meanwhile, countries are increasingly taking measures to close borders to foreigners despite the fact that thousands of people are moving every day from their places, among whom a considerable number perishes.

One of the most migrating zones in Africa is West Africa; but, contrary to the impress given by the number of deaths of sub-Saharan migrants on the road to Europe constantly reported by medias, the flows of migrations from West Africa to Europe are much less important than the flows inside the West African region. The numbers of migrants within West Africa were estimated to be 7.5 million, accounting for 86 % of total emigration (Pécoud et al., 2017; OECD-SWAC, 2008).

The ECOWAS, in its efforts towards integration, adopted the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment on the 1st of May 1979. To this preliminary Protocol supplementary protocols followed: the Protocol Relating to the Definition of Community Citizen; the Supplementary

Protocol on the Code of Conduct for the Implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment; the Supplementary Protocol on the Second Phase (Right of Residence) of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment; the Supplementary Protocol Amending and Complementing the Provisions of Article 7 of the Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment; the Supplementary Protocol on the Implementation of the Third Phase (Right of Establishment) of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment.

By looking at these Protocols, the ECOWAS Authorities have been all aware of the important role that the smooth movement of people can play in the process of integration. The aim of integration being the improvement of life conditions of the countries involved, free movement of people should ultimately contribute to the leveraging of the development level of the citizens.

It is undeniable that West African countries are economically among the poorest countries on earth though years have passed since the creation of the ECOWAS. So, how could we explain this deteriorating state of West African countries despite the efforts made by the ECOWAS to enhance the level of economic integration through free movement of people? To answer this question, we may be brought to ask further questions: How have the implementations of the different protocols been? Have the different protocols on the free movement of people been fully implemented as expected? If not, what has impeded the implementation of the protocols? If yes, has there been any correlation between free movement of people and economic development inside the ECOWAS region?

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Related to the topic are the generalities and theories on free movement of people (or persons) and its relationships with the progress of countries which tend to regroup to form integrating communities. The discussions on free movement cannot be done without preliminarily treating the notion of migration. A discussion on migration alone is not sufficient; its relationship with economic development must be given place.

The Theory of Migration

The Theoretical construction of migration

The phenomenon of migration is intimately linked to the history of mankind. From immemorial times till now humans have always moved from one place to another; migrating has been a need for survival for human species. Like any other phenomenon of human action, migration has also been the subject of thinking from social scientists. The construction of a theoretical framework that forms a discipline of studies depends on the nature of its object. Thus, different perceptions of the nature of the phenomenon bring about different approaches in studying it.

The Theoretical construction of migration

In his epistemological investigation of a general theory of migration, Mangalam and Morgan (1968) considered the misconceptions of the nature of migration as some of the causes impeding the establishment of the framework of a general theory, among other causes. According to him the early students of migration, in approaching the phenomenon, misunderstood its characteristics: Contrary to their perceptions, migration is not a random phenomenon; different from being an individual behavior, migration is rather an inter-individual or social behavior; migration is a complex whose study necessitates interdisciplinary approach; and separate migrations are not unique in kind.

Though non-economic factors are among the causes of migration, migration is generally viewed as an economic phenomenon. And Safa (1975) states that “migration is a manifestation of a world-wide shift from a rural agrarian base to an urban-industrial base in the economies of most Third World Countries.”

Some of the varieties of migration are return migration, circular migration, onward migration, intermittent migration, and transnational migration. One of the important features of migration is its being the third component of demographic change after birth and death.

Building a migration theory

Contrary to most of the fields of science, the birth of the studies of migration was not immediately followed by the construction of a general framework of theory. Till late, this framework took place. As mentioned above, Mangalam and Morgan (1968) in his *Human Migration* investigated the reasons for that absence of theory. Besides the nature of migration, according to him, reasons for the absence are related to the nature of data used, disciplinary orientations of the scholars, and a lack of concern by social organizational theorists for the phenomenon.

In migration literature there is a consensus that the works of Ravenstein in England laid the foundation of the migration studies. From the British Census of 1881 and data from many other countries, Ravenstein theorized the underlying principles that characterize the processes of migration in Britain in what he called the laws of Migration. Those laws were stated in three separate articles; the first one, which was exclusive to England, was published in the *Geographical Magazine*, and the later extending to cover Europe and North America were published in the *Statistical Journal* in 1885 and 1889 (Grigg, 1977). Below, those laws are stated out.

Another work that is considered to be an important study of migration from a theoretical point of view is Thomas and Znaniecki's *Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927) (Mangalam and Morgan, 1968). With their work there is a shift from a study of migration in national boundaries to an intra-national approach. The implications of globalization put emphasis on the phenomenon of migration across countries and even continents. The authors of the five-volume work, published at different times between 1918 and 1920, used original methods of studies. They used sources of information such as "correspondence exchanged between Polish migrants and their families, life histories and autobiographical accounts, letters written to local newspapers, documents of associations, church parishes and court records that migrants dealt with in various ways across Poland and America" (Sinatti, 2008). The use of personal documents for investigation gave a rough and authentic character to the data but, at the same time, posed the question of scientific validity to the results obtained from such unconventional sources of information at the time.

A view of the flow of migrants responding to the economic laws of labor demand and supply across some distance was developed by Stouffer (1940). He named that trend by the concept of "intervening opportunities" which stated that "the number of migrants over a certain distance and time is proportional to the number of opportunities in the center and inversely proportional to the development of intervening opportunities which are produced by economic expansion in the hinterland of larger conurbations". After the 1950s the migration had to be seen as a process involving decision making, so that a proper understanding of the phenomenon then had to take account the behavior of individuals as well as aggregates. Wolpert, in 1965, used field theory to explain differences of space experience of the migrants through the lifecycle, and to draw attention to the ambivalence of the decision making to migrate. The works that followed tried to further understand the behavioral process of the migrants in the acts of migration. Through observations of documentation provided by statistic officials, stress was put on the back-and-forth movements of migrants across distances, which made the observers see the migration from a mobility angle. They classified those movements as local migration, chain migration, circular migration, and career migration (Siddle, 2000).

According to the level of study the theories of migration can be classified under micro, meso and macro approaches; the micro-level theories study the choices and the behavior of migrants in their decision-making, the meso-level theories focus on migrants families and networks across sending and receiving

regions, while the macro-level theories tend to assess the social structures, large systems and long processes that shape the motivations and options of migrants (Stiglitz, Cortina and Ochoa-Reza, 2013).

The Ravenstein's Laws of migration

Ravenstein presented his two papers of the laws of migration respectively in 1885 and 1889 before the Royal Statistical Society. His laws were mentioned by most of the subsequent works on migration. Lee (1966), an early theorist of migration, discussed the laws before examining the factors motivating the phenomenon. Another work on laws is the Grigg's Ravenstein and the "laws of migration", published in 1977 by the Journal of Historical Geography. The laws listed by Grigg, in number of eleven, are as following:

(1) the majority of migrants go only a short distance; (2) migration proceeds step by step; (3) migrants going long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centers of commerce or industry; (4) each current of migration produces a compensating counter current; (5) the natives of towns are less migratory than those of rural areas; (6) females are more migratory than males within the kingdom of their birth, but males more frequently venture beyond; (7) most migrants are adults: families rarely migrate out of their county of birth; (8) large towns grow more by migration than by natural increase; (9) migration increases in volume as industries and commerce develop and transport improves; (10) the major direction of migration is from the agricultural areas to the centers of industry and commerce; (11) and the major causes of migration are economic.

Lee's Factors of Migration

One of the major tendencies in the elaboration of the migration theory has been the generalization of the different factors of the phenomenon. As stated above, migration being considered mostly an economic phenomenon, the factors at its core are therefore primarily of economic nature.

Upon an analysis of the laws of Ravenstein, Lee (1966) developed his theory of migration in which he stated the factors in the act of migration. Lee classified the factors in four categories associated with: the place of origin, the place of destination, the intervening obstacles, and the personal considerations. In both the places of origin and destination there are attractive and repulsive factors; those attractive are called Pull-Factors and those repulsive Push-Factors. The pull-factors are the positive elements that retain people to remain at some place or attract migrants from another place, meanwhile the push-factors are the negative conditions that cause people to leave a place. The move from the place of origin to the place of destination does not take place smoothly; they are factors that render the migration process challenging. The nature of those intervening obstacles influences the decisional attitude of migrants.

Migration and Development

For the purpose of this research, the kind of migration that is referred to is labor migration. The reason for this is simply the predominantly economic-oriented nature of the phenomenon. Besides, it is the labor migration that has consequential related impacts to the economic problem. This migration is voluntary, different from other kinds of movements which are caused by factors such as natural disasters, civil war or political crisis. Two of the categories of the typology of Tilly (1978), which are the chain and career types of migration, are part of this free labor migration and most integral to development; the other two typologies with less significant relation to the processes of development are the local and circular forms of migration (Stiglitz, Cortina and Ochoa-Reza, 2013). Internal migration, characterized by the rural-urban migration, is an important issue in many countries, however it is the international migration, movement of people across countries, that has a bold connection to the question of development. In economic literature the concept of development is approached diversely according to epistemological perspective. For this work, the concept of economic development refers to the improvement in the socioeconomic conditions of life.

The theory of the mobility of labor is embedded within economic liberalism that stands for the "laissez-Aller" or the efficient endowment of economic factors such as labor and capital, which is possible by

their free circulation across areas. One of the ultimate implications of this philosophical view in economics, that is well defended by the classics and the neoclassic, is that countries have better to gain by opening their borders and letting the economy be regulated by the push and pull factors. Till the half of XX century the flux of migration was from the North to the South which was characterized by the movement of colonization and the extension of capitalism; from the second half of the century the direction of the flux reversed, former colonies and countries from the South started migrating to their former colonial metropolis. Thus, the route of migrants took on a historical deterministic character.

That new reality caused economic and political debates on the linkages between migration and development. It is possible to identify three different corpuses of thoughts on the matter: the neoclassical approach, the historical and structuralism view, and the alternative approaches. The first one considered migration to be a contributor to development. As said above, it stands for free action of the push-pull factors. The rationality postulate of the neoclassical school considers individuals to be well aware of the disparities of wages across and to have access to information on the other parameters of the labor market. Upon that awareness the migrant can then take the decision to migrate by calculating the costs and the benefits of such adventure. The flows of migration would reduce the disparities and the wages to an equilibrium level; there must be no obstacles to that regulating mechanism of the market. This doctrine created in the 1950s and 1960s an overwhelming positive view on the linkages between migration and development (Castles, 2009).

The second paradigm is formed by the heterodox view, also known as historical-institutional theory, who have built their corpus on the dependency theory. The theory, which has its roots in the Marxian theory of dependency and was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, stated that the South-North relation is at the expense of countries from the South because of colonial heritage. According to theorists of dependency, the emigration from the country of the periphery “South” is just another way of exploitation that deprives them of their human resource which is crucial for the dynamic construction of their economies.

In attempts to propose alternative approaches to the one-way dimensional point of view of the previous theories, theories such as the New Economics of Labor migration (NELM) which takes account household dynamics, risk-sharing and overcoming market inefficiency - is the current dominant perspective and states that migration has had a mixed but mostly a positive impact on economic development (Jeronimo Cortina & Enrique Ochoa-Reza, 2013) , Dual or segmented labor market theory, migration networks theory, and transnational theory were developed. Those theories have more direct connection to the topic of this study because they set out to link mobility to processes of development and economic integration (Castles, 2009).

De Haas (2007) presented this classification of the theories of migration and development as following:

Table 1: *Main phases in migration and development research and policies (De Haas, 2007)*

Period	Research community	Policy field
Until 1973	Development and migration optimism	Development optimism; capital and knowledge transfers by migrants would help developing countries in development take-off
1973-1990	Development and migration pessimism (dependency, brain drain)	Growing skepticism; concerns on brain drain; after experiments with return migration policies focused on integration in receiving countries. Migration largely out on sight in development field.

1990-2001	Readjustment to more subtle views under influence of increasing empirical work (NELM, livelihood approaches, transnationalism)	Persistent skepticism; tightening of immigration policies.
Up to 2001	Boom in publications: mixed, but generally positive views.	Resurgence of migration and development optimism under influence of remittance boom, and a sudden turnaround of views: brain gain, diaspora involvement.

Free Movement of People and Economic Integration

On the contrary of migration, which is a real phenomenon, free movement of persons is rather a wanted situation than a fact. In other terms, it is a political wish that translates into policies to smoothen the circulation of people between countries. It enters in the process of transnational migration. As said above, the movement of people has not enjoyed the same liberty as the movements of goods, services and capital in the context of globalization. What is difficult to achieve on a world-wide scale has been tried to be concretized in the more concrete basis of economic integration. Thus, free movement of people has constituted a core element in the establishment of the regional economic communities or economic unions.

The oldest and well-established of economic communities being the EU, whose creation was galvanized by the idea of lifting all restrictions to the movement of citizens (Pécoud and De Guchteneire, 2007), the concept of free movement can be analyzed within the context of the EU.

The evolution of integration in the EU with respect to free Movement of people

In the aftermath of WWII, the need for substantial cooperation among the previously belligerent countries, in order to improve the socio-economic conditions, has been stressed out by some European countries. That brought six European states together to establish three important intergovernmental bodies that laid the foundations of the economic integration in Europe; the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), or Treaty of Paris, was signed on the 18 April 1951, and the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Energy Community (EAEC, also known as Euratom), or Treaties of Rome, were signed on 25 March 1957. The six countries to sign were France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (Sokolska, 2022).

From the three bodies it is the EEC that came out to be the driving force to economic integration and involved to give birth to the current EU. The provisions of the establishing treaty of EEC concerning free movement covered only workers and the right of establishment. The Article 48 of the EEC Treaty (the French version) states the general dispositions concerning the movement of workers; the free circulation of workers is assured inside the community by the end of the transitional period; any discrimination, based on nationality, concerning employment, remuneration and conditions of works of workers of different Member States is abolished. The workers in public administration were not concerned by those provisions. Regarding the right of establishment, Article 52 mentions the removal of the restrictions to the undertaking of a resident of a Member State to establish, to create agencies and subsidiaries in another Member State (CEE, 1957). Thus, from 1978 to 1972 more than 8 million work permits were issued to foreigners by the original six EEC members; among those workers one third came within the EEC (Koikkalainen, 2021).

With the Treaty of Maastricht¹⁰, the more the whole process of integration accelerated the more the notion of free movement evolved to the concept of European Citizenship which is obtained automatically by all nationals of EU countries. With the implementation of the Schengen Agreements in 1995 the Schengen Area has come to existence. The Schengen Area, which is made of EU countries (except Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania) and some non-EU countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein), enables the citizens that come from within to travel, work and live internally without being subject to border checks.

The movement in the Euro zone is highly mobile. According to Costica Dumbrava (2020), in 2018 there were 17.8 million EU movers (12.9 million of working age) and 1.5 million EU cross-border workers. As of 2020, according to Eurostat there were 15.4 million citizens of the 31-country free movement zone living elsewhere in the area (Koikkalainen, 2021).

Table 2: *Number of European Free-Movement Area Citizens Residing Elsewhere in the Area, by Country of Destination, 2020 (Koikkalainen, 2021)*

Country of residence	Number of migrants	Share of total (%)
TOTAL	15 339 185	100.0 %
Germany	4 402 596	28.7 %
Spain	1 649 663	10.8 %
Italy	1 477 974	9.6 %
France	1 392 652	9.1 %
Switzerland	1 378 935	9.0 %
Belgium	924 747	6.0 %
Austria	764 603	5.0 %
Netherlands	538 963	3.5 %
Norway	364 277	2.4 %
Ireland	345 972	2.3 %
Sweden	344 760	2.2 %
Denmark	237 137	1.5 %
Czechia	236 849	1.5 %
Luxembourg	223 887	1.5 %
Greece	175 220	1.1 %

¹⁰ It constitutes the Treaty on the EU that was signed in Maastricht in 1992 and entered into force in 1993.

Portugal	149 151	1.0 %
Finland	97 437	0.6 %
Hungary	78 747	0.5 %
Romania	60 182	0.4 %
Slovakia	58 737	0.4 %
Iceland	40 758	0.3 %
Poland	32 473	0.2 %
Slovenia	20 908	0.1 %
Estonia	20 179	0.1 %
Croatia	18 244	0.1 %
Liechtenstein	10 666	0.1 %
Bulgaria	10 154	0.1 %
Lithuania	7 711	0.1 %
Latvia	6 398	0.0 %

The challenges to free movement of people in the EU

Alongside the achievements of the EU in freeing the mobility of its citizens, the free movement in the EU has come across some challenges that impedes its future. Among the difficulties that have hindered free movement in the EU are the weakening in the single market, the effects of economic and financial crisis (between 2008 and 2009 the Union's GDP contracted by 700 million € and nearly 5 million lost their job), the concerns about the migratory flows and the terrorist threat, and the fear of social dumping (expressed via the observation of differences in labor costs).

From those factors an anti-EU sentiment (Euroskepticism) arose among some layers of the population in some EU countries. This anti-EU sentiment resulted with the divorce between The United Kingdom and the EU, famously known as Brexit. The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020. The country was one the considerable Member States of the Union and a major destination of European migrants; in 2019 about 4.4 million citizens of the Schengen Area were living in the UK (Koikkalainen, 2021).

Another major determinant that has severely impacted free movement in the EU is the COVID-19 pandemic that arrived in the early 2020 to Europe. Immediately restrictive measures to the cross-border mobility followed by the countries to halt the deadly virus from spreading. This resulted in the closing of European borders that hindered the movement of both persons and foods; the allowed movement was subjected to tight controls which are unusual in the EU.

Free movement of people and socio-economic development in the EU

The main purpose of political initiatives towards free movement is its contribution to economic integration. The free circulation, thus, by contributing to the integration of a community, is supposed to increase the general level of the socioeconomic conditions of the member countries. In order to discuss the link between free movement of people and economic progress in the EU works and researches have been done.

Kahanec and Pytliková (2016) assessed the impact of migration from the eastern countries of the EU to the Western countries. They approached the EU in its West-East dichotomy; the Western Europe constituting the most advanced and industrialized countries and the old EU member countries (they are in number of 15: EU15), the eastern Europe the less developed countries that were once part of the Soviet Union. These countries of Eastern Europe joined the EU in waves in 2004, 2007 and 2013; 2004 was the year of the biggest enlargement of the organization at once, with the joining of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (referred to as the EU10); in 2007 Bulgaria and Romania joined (EU2) and in 2013 Croatia was the last member joining the EU.

Their work studied the effects of immigration from the new EU member states (countries that joined in 2003, 2007 and 2013) and Eastern Partnership countries on the economies of the old EU member states (EU15) from 1995 (corresponding to the establishing year of the Schengen Area) to 2010. In this work, interest is put on the migration from the new EU member states only. To conduct their analyses, the authors used international migration data on bilateral flows and stocks of immigrants from 42 destination countries over the period 1980-2010. The EU15 were considered as destination countries and the EU12 as sending countries. The authors used an empirical modelling to process the data, with an aggregate production function framework; they investigated the “effects that immigration has on wages (as proxied by GDP per capita, PPP) and economic growth rate, as well as on total employment, physical capital, total factor productivity and the capital to labor ratio”.

The results of their regression analyses showed that the immigration from the new EU member states had positive and significant effects on GDP, GDP per capita, and employment and an effect on output per worker of the EU (EU15 and EU as a whole). These results confirm the claim that free movement of people (promoted by the European citizenship principle), that the East Europe countries have enjoyed after entering the EU, has contributed to the economic development of the EU by enabling an economic growth of not only the old EU members but also of the EU at large.

Organiściak-Krzykowska (2017) studied the determinants and the consequences of the increased mobility that occurred after the 2004 EU enlargement, from central and eastern European countries (CEE). It concerned the EU10 and EU2 countries. To illustrate that strong mobility, the number of immigrants for the CEE to the more industrialized West European countries have moved from 1.66 million in 2004 to 7.3 million in 2016. By analyzing the data regarding permanent international migrations in CEE in the years 2004-2015, the author distinguished two categories of countries: first category, which regroups The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia Hungary and Estonia had a positive net migration (the number of immigrants is higher than the number of emigrants). The second category, regrouping Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania, had a negative net migration (the number of emigrants is higher than the number of immigrants).

As for assessing the impacts of the East-West mobility, the flows remittances, that east European migrants sent to their countries in their residing in the west part of Europe, were analyzed by the author.

In the period of 2004-2005, the EU10 received a total inflow of 166.6 billion Euros from working abroad. The countries unevenly received remittances from their counterpart West European countries. The relative difference in the amount of remittances is not much revealing of the importance of these in the economic advancement of the countries. However, the share of remittances in the national GDP can give a glance of what is their contribution to the economy. This share is 3.72% for Hungary, 3.14 for

Latvia, 2.96 for Bulgaria, 2.9 for Slovakia, 2.05 for Lithuania, 1.95 for Estonia, 1.8 for Slovenia, 1.7 for Romania, 1.68 for Poland and 1.54 for The Czech Republic in 2015. On the other hand, emigration from the CEE countries is said to have positively influenced the economy of the receiving countries (the EU-15).

In his work, Klaus Müller (2019) analyzes the economic dimensions impacted by the free movement of workers; those dimensions are employment, unemployment, qualification and recognition rates, remittances, wages and labor productivity (minimum efficiency gains to date), and population structure and fiscal impact. According to the author the degree to which European citizens take advantage of the right to free movement of persons in the EU is influenced by the following factors:

- differing national wages and GDP
- physical distance
- unemployment rates and education levels
- the existence or absence of a common/similar language
- the presence of networks abroad from the home country
- the remaining obstacles in the destination countries.

At the end of his work the author concludes that “the free movement of economically active citizens leads to a higher employment and lower unemployment rates, as well as to higher productivity and income (remittances), and has a positive impact on taxes and social contributions.” He then finally estimated that the potential GDP gain from free mobility for the next 5 years would be €53 billion per year.

European countries are part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a transatlantic organization that regroups the bulk of world’s most developed economies. Members of the OECD such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia have a long tradition of international migration; naturally the impacts of migration in these respective countries are matter of research because of their political implications. Some studies have been done in this regard. The OECD’s Migration Policy Debates issue of May 2014 tried to answer the question of whether migration is good for the economy. To do so, the paper studies the ways immigrants impact the economy in OECD countries for three areas: the labor market, the public purse and economic growth. The outcomes state that immigrants:

- play a significant role in the most dynamic sectors of the economy. In declining occupations like craft and related trade workers, machine operation and assembling, immigrants are filling “labor needs by taking up jobs regarded by domestic workers as unattractive or lacking career prospects”
- help address labor market imbalances in Europe
- contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits
- contribute to spur innovation and economic growth.

Ekrame Boubtane et al. (2016) studied the overall impact of immigration on economic growth in the OECD countries between 1986 and 2006. The authors used structural model to examine long term migration flows by country of origin and skill level on economic growth. The resulted that they obtained were the following:

- there is a positive impact from migrants’ human capital on GDP worker
- a 50 % increase in net migration of the foreign-born generates, on average, an increase of the three-tenths of a percentage-point in per worker GDP per year in OECD countries
- the long-run effect is, on average, about 2 %.

Morley (2006) conducted an econometric study causality between economic growth and immigration. The data serving in the study concerned Australia, Canada and the USA. Interestingly, he came up with a conclusion different from the results obtained in the previous studies; according to him, in the long-term economic growth, measured by per capita GDP, causes immigration. On the other hand, immigration does not induce economic growth.

Whatever the methods they used, the studies assessing the relationship between free movement of people and economic development show an overall positive picture; the EU has enjoyed and benefited from the smooth mobility of its citizens that has been possible by the determination of the organization.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Pattern of the Research

Given the nature of the topic, it has been preferred to conduct a qualitative work instead of a classical time-series analysis. The reason for this choice lies in the characteristics of the main variable which is the free movement of people. The proxy to represent the free movement of people could be the flows of migration; considering that migration is principally economically motivated, free movement of people in an economic region could be assessed in terms of free mobility of labor. However, it is difficult to empirically measure labor mobility; besides, in the specific case of ECOWAS region the mobility of people is considerably informal, meaning its flow is not appropriately evaluated, which makes the collection of data concerning free movement of people complicated.

Nevertheless, still the relationships between free movement of people and economic development in the ECOWAS can be assessed. It is intended to conduct a critical analysis on the topic by, firstly reviewing the different protocols on free movement of people adopted by the ECOWAS, the existing literature on migration, the relationship between migration and development, and the link between free movement of people and economic integration; secondly, mentioning some of works assessing free movement of people in ECOWAS; and lastly, as result of that analysis, in taking into account the current socioeconomic evolutions – the COVID-19 context, providing some insights on the topic.

The Scope of the Research

The research of the article is covering one of the key indicators of economic integration which is free movement of people. It is investigated inside the ECOWAS region which is made of fifteen (15) West African countries. The phenomenon of economic integration and the reality of free movement of people in the ECOWAS region are examined.

Data Collection

This work being primarily qualitative, the data to be collected for the redaction of this article are through desk research which provides the obtention of books, reports, articles, etc. Through the Anadolu University Online Library Proxy many resources have been reached out. Because of geographical limitation and absence of means to travel for a field observation, no polling or interview is being made for the conduct of this research.

FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IN THE ECOWAS REGION

After dedicating some lines to migration, it is time to start opening the question of free movement of persons in West Africa. As it has been clarified in the previous pages, the international migration is different from international mobility which is a displacement of back and forth of individuals between points of settlements and movements. It has also been said that the factors determining the fluidity of mobility are of political nature. As a matter of illustration, the European case has been picked to show

how a certain level of mobility can be achieved through a serial and incremental implementation of collective political from an integrating group of countries. For the ECOWAS, the political willingness to free the movement of people in the region is expressed in the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol.

A presentation of the ECOWAS Protocols on free movement of persons

The ECOWAS has adopted its Protocol on free movement of people in 1979 and has later added some supplementary protocols. Below are the provisions of these Protocols.

The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment

Four years after the founding of ECOWAS, the Organization adopted its Protocol related to free movement of persons, signed in Dakar on 29/05/1979, and was ratified in 1980. The Protocol starts with a recall of Article 2 of the ECOWAS treaty (founding Treaty) that urges Member States to “ensure the abolition of the obstacles to free movement of persons, services and capital”. Also, a recall was made of paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 27 that respectively “confers the status of Community citizenship on the citizens of Member States and enjoins Members States to abolish all obstacles to freedom of movement and residence within the Community” and demands of Member States to “exempt Community citizens from holding visitor’s visa and residence permits and allow them to work and undertake commercial and industrial activities within their territories”.

The Protocol granted to the “Community citizens” the right to enter, reside and establish in the territory of Member States; the granting was about to be concretized progressively in a transitional period of fifteen years from entry into force of the Protocol. The three grants were to be implemented in three phases, each one in a phase.

The implementation of the first phase had to abolish all visas and entry permit for citizens from the Community in the travel not exceeding ninety (90) days. The implementation of the second phase could then begin after a five-year period of the entry into force of the Protocol.

The Phase 1 officially started to be implemented on 05/06/1980 and expired on 04/06/1985 (Supplementary Protocol on the Second Phase).

The Protocol Relating to the Definition of Community Citizen

This protocol defined the “Community citizen” (Article 1) was adopted on 29/05/1982. It defines what is a “community citizen” in the ECOWAS.

The Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/85 on the Code of Conduct

The first supplementary protocol to guide the implementation of the main protocol was related to the code of conduct that was signed on 06/07/1985. This one states the general rules governing the exercise of the rights granted by the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment. For this, it assigns role and obligations to Member States of origin and host Member States of immigrants; for the migrants, their rights and the obligations upon them to fulfil in order to benefit from the provisions of the Protocol are stated out. In this supplementary protocol on code of conduct, mutual cooperation in the sharing of information and fair treatment reserved to migrants among and between Member States of the organization is emphasized.

The Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/86 on the Second Phase (Right of Residence)

The phases following the first phase of implementation were to be undertaken upon observation and recommendations of the concerned commission (the main Protocol – paragraph 3 of Article 2). This protocol enjoins Member States to “grant to citizens of the Community who are nationals of other Member States, the right of residence in its territory for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income earning employment” (Article 2). Could benefit from the right of residence those who would apply for jobs effectively offered, travel for this purpose, hold employment in Member States. The right did not cover employment in civil sector. The Community citizens, after entering another Member State’s

territory without visa, should get an “ECOWAS residence card” or a residence permit in the host country. Border area workers, seasonal workers and itinerant workers could join all the rights of movement in all the Member States in the course of the activities without enjoying the right of residence. This supplementary protocol was signed on 01/07/1986.

The Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/6/89 Amending and Complementing the Provisions of Article 7 of the main Protocol

This supplementary protocol was an amending one to the Article 7 of the main protocol. The said Article was as following:

Any dispute that may arise among Member States regarding the interpretation or application of this Protocol shall be amicably settled by direct agreement. In the event of failure to settle such disputes, the matter may be referred to the Tribunal of the Community by a party to such disputes and the decision of the Tribunal shall be final.

The amendment relegated the role of the settlement of the disputes to the Authority of Heads of states and governments, thus removing judicial involvement. It was signed on 30/06/1989.

The Supplementary Protocol A/SP.2/5/90 on the Implementation of the Third Phase (Right of Establishment)

After the rights of visa-free entry and residence, the provisions of the implementation of the third phase concerning the right of establishment were detailed in this supplementary protocol that was signed on 29/05/1990. The second phase it followed was meant to expire on 04/06/1990. The supplementary protocol defines the right of establishment as “the right granted to a citizen who is a national of the Member State to settle or establish in another Member State other than his state of origin, and to have access to economic activities, to carry out these activities as well as to set up and manage enterprises, and in particular under the same conditions as defined by the legislation of the host Member State for its own nationals” (Article 1). While the right of residence concerned mainly workers, the right of establishment concerns businessmen or promoters of businesses; its provisions thus are elaborated around the movement of capital and promotion of investments of citizens of the community with the Member States.

The operationalization and implementation of the ECOWAS Protocols on free movement of persons

After presenting the different protocols of ECOWAS on free movement of people in the previous section, in this section the implementation of their provisions is discussed. From the time of the ratification of the main protocol (1980) till now 41 years have passed; for this reason, there is much to say on the effectiveness of the protocols. Though the community of ECOWAS can praise itself for attaining some achievements in the field of integration, the expected results from the protocols are far from being attained. Thus, after making state of the evolution of the implementation, the factors or the causes that have impeded the effective implementation will be discussed.

The Evolution of the implementation of the Protocols

The provisions in the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment were to be operationalized in a period of fifteen (15) years after the enter into force. The path towards total free mobility in the region were divided into three phases concerning respectively the rights to enter, reside and establish; each phase was consigned a period of five (5) to be conducted: Phase 1 (1980-1985), Phase 2 (1985-1990), Phase 3 (1990-1995). The first phase has been fully implemented with the successful achievement of the aim of the abolition of visa to enter the member countries for a maximum day of ninety (90) days. With a delay, the second phase started in 1986 and has not enjoyed the same

level of fulfilment as the first phase. Unfortunately, the implementation of the third phase has not started till date (Adepoju et al., 2007).

The most notable achievement in the implementation of the protocol has been the removal of visa requirements for community citizens to enter any member state upon a stay no longer than ninety (90) days (Adepoju, 2002). Following this acquis is the abolition of mandatory resident permits in the member states. Relating to travelling ECOWAS has been able to provide some instruments such as Brown Card Travel Certificates and ECOWAS travelers' cheques that can be used by the community citizens to travel with ease in the region. Concerning the residence, ECOWAS has issued ECOWAS permit that can be obtained from competent authorities of the member countries. Another major achievement is the instauration of the ECOWAS Passport that is the common Passport which is to replace national passports in all member countries.

Even though the ECOWAS's protocol is five (5) years earlier old than the European Schengen Initiative, EU surpasses by far ECOWAS as being the most integrated form of free movement area, not only of people but also of trade and capital. This ineffectiveness of the ECOWAS' protocol of not being able to create a free movement zone in the West Africa region is due to some factors that hinder the full implementation of the protocols.

Factors impeding the effective implementation of the Protocols

A large corpus of literature is available on the assessment of the implementation of the different ECOWAS's protocols on free movement of people. From that literature many causes are advanced to explain the slow progress of the community towards full elimination of barriers among member states. Here, the causes are regrouped into categories according to their nature.

Institutional factors

The most noticeable feature of regionalism in West Africa is the overlapping membership of the countries to different organizations, in other terms the multiplicity of regional regroupings of West African countries. This state of things is itself caused by the repartition of the countries into linguistic blocks which is sadly colonial inherited: mainly the three linguistic block of English, French and Portuguese languages. As result, different institutional systems of governance coexist in the most inclusive regrouping of ECOWAS, which coexistence renders difficult the smooth compliance of the requirements implied by the decisions of the organization (Adepoju, 2002).

In the region, the countries that are called the francophone countries, that were colonized by France and whose official language is French, surpass the others in number. During colonial period, those countries under French domination were regrouped in the community AOF (French West Africa); the French doctrine of a "French Union" had been so well implemented and rooted that it affected all the political initiatives that were conceived by the countries after their independences. Thus, the francophone countries of West Africa reshaped the old organizations or created new ones, but all characterized by their common experience of being French colonies. They have advocated (on their own detriments) French influence in the region; and through them France has vividly fought against the anglophone influence led by Nigeria. That conflict of interest by procuration has marked the journey of integration since its beginning. Even in the recent revolutions of socioeconomic and political atmospheres in the region, the foreign implication is reproved not only by officials of some member countries, but also by common citizens of the community¹¹. Therefore, the foreign print in the institutional setting of regionalism in West Africa has not only impeded the successful exercise of cooperation but will continue

¹¹ Recent evolutions in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

to undermine the spirit of communion and mutual trust between the countries. This strange cacophony has hindered the realization of some major decisions that have long time been taken by the leaders¹².

Moreover, institutional problem is experienced by the countries taken individually. The institutional frameworks that characterize the socio-political and economic lives of West African countries are artificially set; inherited from colonization or copied from the systems of ancient colonizers, they do not correspond to the reality of the West African society, and therefore are not in a position to deal with the resolution of problems and planning of the future for West African citizens. That incapacity makes West African states in the eyes of their citizens illegitimate. By looking at all the institutional problems (no rule of justice, endemic corruption, coup attempts and coup d'états, concentration of power by an elite, no inclusivity in the sharing of power, etc.) faced by the countries of the region, one can barely talk about the existence of a functioning state.

Contextual factors

In this sub-section of contextual factors, the socio-economic conditions that coincided or accompanied the adoption and the implementation of the protocols have been gathered. The time of ratification of the main protocol coincided with a period of global recession that hit most of the African countries, including countries of ECOWAS. The period of 1980s was characterized by economic crises that affected mainly mineral resource-based countries; Nigeria, which had just been turned to a receiving country of migrants in the region, due to the crisis and the difficulties resulting of it, expelled many migrants from its soil. From that decade through the 1990's to beginning of 21st century, the contagious civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone had posed serious problems to the implementation of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the protocol on free movement.

The underlying spirit in the integration of countries is to enhance the level of interactions, mainly economic, among and between the member states of the integrating community. By promoting free trade, free movement of people and capital, integration aims at boosting the collective potential of the members. Meanwhile, to participate adequately in the process of integration, member states must have some requirements for it, meaning their micro and macroeconomic conditions play a great role in their gaining from their integration with one another. When looking at the socio-economic health condition of the ECOWAS countries, the national economies of most of countries are not built enough to allow some consequential gains from any economic regrouping. As an illustrating example, the region lacks the minimum level of good infrastructures which are the concrete driving forces of integration.

So that the socio-economic conditions of the ECOWAS countries do not favor the process of integration in general and the implementation of the protocol on free movement of people.

Technical factors

The public, the primarily concerned by the protocols, is not aware of the provisions in the different protocols of free movement. Even the officials, those in charge of the correct implementation of the provisions, most of the time do not have knowledge of the existence of such measures targeting the freeing of movement of persons with their goods. That ignorance of the protocols from both the public and the officials causes the former to resort to illegals means to get what the provisions guarantee them for free; and the later to abuse of their positions to harass users of transnational borders. Adepaju (2002) relates some of other technical issues: "the non-convertibility of currencies hinders financial settlements and the harmonization...A high proportion of cross border movement in the subregion is unrecorded

¹² An example is the common currency ECO, this was scheduled for December 2009 but has not yet happened. The ultimate goal is to unite the WAEMU and the WAMZ to form a West African Monetary Zone. and airline for ECOWAS would take off by 2004 (Adepaju, 2015).

due to the ubiquitous roadblocks across frontiers, the lengthy and costly formalities at border posts, and the corruption of officials” (p.13).

It is more unlikely that ECOWAS or the member countries dispose the required technology to implement a centralized and coordinated tack of exchanging and circulating information. Furthermore, mechanisms to collect accurate data on migration movements in the region are non-existent. Adepoju (2009) talks about an inadequacy of the migration data for the compilation of national migration policies, its inconsistency and not comparability across countries. Therefore, in the absence of reliable migration data any policy regarding migration would come unsuitable; and any further initiative would not be supported by a sound knowledge of the migration patterns and the influx of movements. The ACP Observatory on Migration’s 2014 study of labor migration in the ECOWAS region reveals that: “the absence of comprehensive, reliable and accurate data on migration and labor markets as a major obstacle to the facilitation of labor mobility”.

Adepoju et al. (2007) deplores the non-establishment of national committees for the monitoring of the implementation of the protocols by member states, and the ineffectiveness of their work in countries where they exist.

Stability factors

Logically, all initiatives of any kind are meant to be undertaken in a stable environment. The stability is of a diverse nature: social stability, political stability, economic stability and safety. Barely, one of these different facets of stability is fully assured. One can say that instability define life in the region of West Africa. The region’s experience with the first regimes of governance, after independences, has resulted into bitter memories of hardship, oppression and tortures from the tenants of power. Unfortunately, the so-called democratization process of the 1980s through the 1990s was rather an imposition of ideal of democracy that was judged suited by “alien brains”. The inadequacy of this imported type of political regime, conjugated with an absence of concerted local political regimes favored the rejection of the political leaders and the systems they entertain by the peoples. That rejection has manifested in an infernal vicious circle of political unrests, rebellion movements and military coup d’états.

One can barely talk about the existence of national economies in most of the countries of West Africa, given the fact that the forces supposed to serve as motor for economic expansion are subject to everything but not dynamism. The implementation of the Breton Woods Institutions’ counselled programs with the assaults of globalization upon West African countries and their economies have destroyed the little that was gained after independences that could give any hope of economic building. That is why economies in the region are not able to meet the needs of its population by providing employment to the millions of young eager to for their the better their lives. Unemployment rates in the region are among the highest; those who cannot find their place in the only employing informal sector are choosing the path of the deadly migration roads to Europe, America and Asia.

Regarding to the security concern the Sahel region, which encompasses, many countries of West Africa, is subject to endemic eruptions of violence, terrorism and trafficking. In the region interethnic conflicts, which cause bloodshed and eradication of villages, are recurrent and commonplace. It has been some decade that the terrorism movement led by Al Qaida, Boko Haram and others, has ravaging literally life in the Sahel region. Till now, despite many initiatives and mutual commitments, the countries are not being able to contain these terrorist groups. The groups terrorizing the populations sustain their operations from activities related to trafficking, the trafficking of resources and the levy of illegal taxes.

Thus, in that chaos in all spheres, one cannot not except initiatives such as a project of free movement of people to work as planned.

Striking factors

Under this title of striking factors, factors that are the most patent and hit the most the effectiveness of the regionalism in general and the working of the free movement protocol in particular are discussed.

These factors have more or less to do with political sovereignty, and who talks about sovereignty talks about colonialism and neocolonialism. The non-effectiveness and non-completeness of the rupture of West Africa with colonialism have made neocolonialism flourish in the region. In the institutional setting of national and regional political systems countries have resorted to the same elements they colonial master used to conduct their colonial rule. Up to date, the legislative and institutional regulations in the countries have been characterized by this long-lasting mimicry from political actors.

In addition to the mimicry of institutional framework, the presence of ancient colonial powers and other foreign powers (which were not involved in the colonization of the region) is overwhelming in the policy making of regional concern. For example, EU union is directly or indirectly involved in migration matters in West Africa for its own concerns. Thus, the European organization makes itself invited in the debates, discussions or initiatives organized in the region on behalf of migration and migrants; EU even takes on its own initiatives towards migration in the region and ally to its cause local countries to what it judges of being suitable for European migration policies (Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration – Policy Brief, June 2020).

The reason for this foreign meddling in regional affairs is related to a problem that all African organizations suffer from: self-financing. From the African Union (AU) itself to regional communities, African regroupings are not able to find themselves the policies they adopt to implement. That incapacity is taken as a way-in by foreign actors to attain their goals on the continent. To be sure of that reality concerning the free movement of people project, one has to assess all the concrete measures taken to ensure the implementation; it will come without no surprise a considerable presence of foreign contribution.

Political factors

This category of factors has been chosen to be the last because the causes and the remedies for all the other factories mentioned above are all related to the political factors. By political factors it is intended to talk about all the features of political consciousness which is embedded in the free will of the leading elites to act upon to realize their ideals of society. When examining the leaders of West African countries, one notices a lack of a real political consciousness; therefore, they have no real defined visions and clear ideas on the paths to follow to achieve the intended level of socio-economic development for the region.

For the case of the implementation of the protocols of free movement of people, the political factor is of a crucial one. Though the other factors do undermine the effective implementation of the protocols, their role is not much compared to the paralyzing effects caused by the absence of a bold will from political leaders to reincarnate the vision of African integration that animated the fathers of independences.

Economic Activities and Labor Market in Ecowas

Common characteristics of ECOWAS member countries

In recent indicators of different ECOWAS economies show a level of progress which does not translate into some improvement in the way of life of the citizens. This fact can be explained by the nature of the structures of the economies, from which the growth emerged. A general pattern in the economies is the dominance of the primary and the tertiary sectors in the GDP. West African economies have always been driven by the primary sector, especially the agrarian sector which employs much of the population. Two kinds of agriculture are practiced: the agriculture of subsistence is traditional agriculture that individuals and families practice sustaining their subsistence; for a large part of the population (the rural population), it represents the main source of subsistence or revenue; the industrial agriculture was introduced by colonial enterprise that specialized each country into the production of specific cultures according to their geographical characteristics. The latter form of agriculture is one the main sources of

revenue for ECOWAS economies, at the same time the main means of procuring foreign exchanges, meaning it constitutes the large part of export. The other source of revenue both internally and externally is the bunch of extractive products (oil, gold, iron, bauxite, uranium, etc.).

The commodity-oriented nature of the economies makes them vulnerable to conjunctural fluctuation, thus the need for diversification is being on every tongue. The diversification should go by the putting in place of a substantial industrial base, that is why the ECOWAS has been adopting many policies to facilitate the industrialization of the region.

On the structure of ECOWAS economies Nwokoye, Geraldine and Uzodigwe (2018) provide insightful statistics:

- The agriculture sector represents approximately 36 % of the region's GDP and 60 % of the active labor force. Agricultural exports generate around USD 6 billion annually, or 16.3 % of all products and services exported from the region.
- The share of agriculture in GDP, since 1980s, has declined in countries with high GDP per capita and high growth rate such as Cape Verde, Ghana and Nigeria; and increased during the 1980s in countries like Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo.
- The Manufacturing sector has underperformed in the region, its share in GDP only increased in 7 of the 15 countries between the 1980s and the 2000s and remains at 23 % on average, for the whole region it declined from 13 % in 1972 to 5 % in 2008.
- Nigeria being the biggest economic player in the region, any evolution of the country's will inevitably impact on the region's trends; thus, with an increase of the share of manufacture from 2.4 % in 2018 to 9 % in 2015 in Nigerian GDP, an increased contribution of non-extractive industries in the region has been observed.
- Besides, the country's share in the region's manufacturing industry had evolved from 5.9 % in 2005 to nearly 9 % in 2015. However, without Nigeria, the region's overall industrial place in the economy decreased from 11.2 % to 8.5 % over the same period.
- In the period 2005-2015, the shares of service and agricultural sectors in GDP respectively increased from 29.3 % to 51.6 % and to 22.6 %.

The point that comes out of the observation is the existence of a non-structured economy in the region. The positive increase in both the primary and the tertiary sectors has not been followed by a positive evolution of the industrial, thus showing the low level of industrialization of the region and therefore its dependency on external markets for manufacture products.

Labor market

An examination of labor migration in the region has to be preceded by an analysis of the state of employment/unemployment, especially of youngsters, in the individual States; for the reason that migration results from the Push-factor of lack of opportunities and jobs in the migrant sending countries, and from the Pull-factor of presence of opportunities and jobs in the migrant receiving countries. In this domain too, unfortunately West African countries do not possess efficient Labor Market Information Systems (LMISs) that can bear witness of the real conditions of labor markets in ECOWAS (Mariama Awumbila et al., *Across Artificial Borders: An assessment of labor migration in the ECOWAS region*, 2014).

The main characteristic of labor in West Africa is its strong informality. In all ECOWAS countries, State employs a minor part of the population, the rest being self-employed and workers for private entities. So that, apart from the few individuals who work for government or are managers in private corporations, the bulk of labor force is labelled with irregularity; irregular workers include self-employed workers, family workers, seasonal or task workers, and temporary workers (Mbaye and

Gueye, 2018). The irregularity comes from the non-compliance of their work to rules of labor, either be national or international. Therefore, though official statistics may consider these irregular workers as employed, thus resulting in the reduction of unemployment rate, job precarity is illustrated by the vulnerability of the many jobs that employ most West African population.

A Comprehensive Analysis

Some analysis can be held in order to comment on the facts that are given in the above sections concerning the ECOWAS; by commenting an attempt is made to explain what may be some possible causes of the current conditions. In order to better appreciate the ECOWAS reality, which is unsatisfactory, the EU is taken as reference for comparison for the EU has the best record of regional integration in the areas of free movement of goods and services, free movement of persons and free movement of capital. Thus, this section tries to provide as comprehensive as possible a treatment of causes about the state of free movement of people and regional integration in the ECOWAS region by having a comparison with the EU.

After exposing the profiles of ECOWAS countries, the state of their labor markets and labor migration in the region, it is time to have these elements in a comprehensive analysis. The matter of free movement enters in the sphere of regional integration, it is therefore linked to the overall condition of the evolution of this latter. To explain the causes of the reality surrounding the free movement of people displayed in the above lines, the journey of regional integration in West Africa can be analyzed by having a comparison between the ECOWAS and the EU. The comparison takes place at many points that concern different contexts.

The foundation context

Let the context of foundation be the first element of analysis between ECOWAS and EU. Relating to the foundation, the number of founding members is a first point. All ECOWAS countries Member states are founding countries of the community; on the opposite, not all the current EU Members were involved in its creation. The early stage of EU was the ECSC, founded in 1952 by six European countries namely France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxemburg. The small number of ECSC founding countries may have played a great role in the success of its treaty: the small is the number of actors involved the less is the degree of disagreement. That was not the case with ECOWAS; the birth of the organization came after a long marathon, as it has been in the chapter 2, the difficulty was related to multiplicity of political ideologies and historical affinities. Meanwhile, a simple declaration of a foreign minister (Schuman) sufficed to trigger the establishment of what would become the most successful form of integration.

The purpose is a second point in the context of foundation. The very name of ECSC tells that it was founded with in mint to achieve a specific goal; hence the main objectives of the Schuman Plan were realistic enough to be reached on time.

So that, the targeted objectives being achieved, the Community had been able to increment on the acquis more ambitious goals, thus has enlarged the treaty to embrace to all fields of the economy and increased number of Member states. The visionary goal of economic integration behind the foundation of ECOWAS, because of its largeness, may be considered unrealistic for countries that had much trouble in getting together.

Early achievements, though small, are symbolic and serve as catalyzers to further realizations which are considerable. This seems to have lacked in ECOWAS, since its establishment the community has a record of a series of postponed implementations, which does not work in favor of galvanizing the members to strive for the progress of the community.

Another point in this first element is the relationship intention-reality. The intention refers to all the provisions of the founding treaty and the reality to the existing condition of countries. Coming back to

the EU, the provisions of the establishing treaty of the ECSC were actually there to work on an industrial machine that was already working; so that, they found terrain for implementation in this latter. For ECOWAS, the primordial goal behind any regional regrouping enterprise, which is facilitating the exchange of goods between its members, was not and is still not backed up by the presence of a working industry in the ECOWAS region.

The historical context

A second element of differentiation between the two Communities is the historical reality defining them. The two regions of Western Europe (the emerging region of the EU) and West Africa have a long-dated relationship. The contact took place centuries ago when the then European kingdoms entered West African territories for the sake of fierce competition among them in exploring land in Americas and elsewhere. It was the time of global expansion through the means of commerce and settlements. In their enterprises, European powers heavily pulled from West Africa millions of men and women to be used as slaves in plantations in Americas. With time passing, they entered the inlands of West African territories with the spirit of colonizing for their resources; this culminated in the separation of territories among them, which separation was officialized by the Berlin Conference. Thus, the once scattered multiple peoples found themselves subjugated to foreign rule. The long-lasting domination has left scars on West African societies with their life being impacted in all its structures. Thence, countries born after independence carried in them configurations and systems that were introduced by the European occupiers. For countries still carrying the scarce of centuries of exploitation and submission to undertake and succeed in fruitful enterprise, either individually or collectively, is not evident. This is best illustrated by the ineffectiveness of West African States in running their countries, and consequently their inability to build effective regional communities. In conclusion, given the historical reality, the legitimacy of the States is questioned: Are West African States, in their current setting, able to deal the challenges facing their countries?

European countries, however, are built on principles that are their own, e.g. the mass of systems governing their countries are products from the inner forces of their societies. The authenticity lacking to West African societies is present in Europe, which enables it to decide effectively about its fate.

The cultural context

Alongside the notable historical element, cultural dimension is another non-negligible point of comparison. The EU community is characterized by a strong cultural homogeneity, which is due to its shared common past. A considerable part of European territories was of the Greek and Roman Empires. The religion of Christianity, starting from the time of Roman Empire, is the main religion in European countries. This means that a strong common ground of principles exists between European countries that renders easy any attempt of cooperation among them.

West African region is home to multiple cultures; moreover, unlike in Europe, no dominant religion exists there are countries mostly populated by Christians, countries mostly populated by Muslims, and countries equally populated by Christians and Muslims. Traditional practices of rituals are also existent in all the countries. Given that religion is serious matter in the life of West Africans, the existence of many cultures and multiple religions may have hindered togetherness in the region. However, a strong caution has to be put here: West Africa being known for religious tolerance, it is difficult to confirm that the multiplicity of religions is an obstacle to integration.

The macroeconomic context

Previous sections in this chapter showed the macro profiles of ECOWAS countries in their economies, populations, and labor markets. There is a connectivity difference between ECOWAS and the EU. ECOWAS countries, despite being geographically bound to one another, are scattered by their profiles. That is why their classification in three groups according to their size is not related to geographical proximity. This is not the case for the EU where economic affinity is linked to geographical ties.

Accordingly, the EU is divided in two groups: on one hand the Western countries, which are the traditional developed countries; on the other hand, the central and eastern countries that lately joined the Community. The distance being an important component of integration, the remoteness of ECOWAS from one another, according to their profiles, may have worked against the acceleration of integration in the region.

A net difference between the two organizations that is critical in bringing about integration is the structure of the economy. A characteristic of ECOWAS economies is their dependency on commodities, another characteristic is the non-connection between sectors of activities. In ECOWAS countries a strong industrial base is absent; on the contrary, Europe was the birthplace of industrial revolution and possesses today an important deal of world industrial plant. EU members have moved from the state of specialized countries in producing specific products to collaborating actors along same value chains: the strength of the Community can be said to lie in this state of complementarity which serves as both the motor and the reason for integration.

Unfortunately, not only industry is lacking in the ECOWAS, but also, they have homogenous economic profiles based on the production of commodities. Thus, ECOWAS countries hold more economic ties with non-ECOWAS countries than themselves.

The next point to naturally follow is the state of labor market. It has been seen that informality reigns in ECOWAS countries' labor markets and that the bulk of jobs employing the working force is made of vulnerable jobs. These factors conjugated together does not favor the movement of people inside the region in seeking better opportunities.

The rope of the analysis followed herein attests of the global nature of matter of free movement of people, this one is shaped within the sphere of regional regrouping, which itself dependent on many factors. At the end, free movement of people comes as a result of a process of integration that starts from the need to strengthen exchanges and flows between countries, given some favoring conditions of different kinds. If the conditions are not favorable in the ECOWAS region, free movement of people is yet to see daylight.

CONCLUSION

The article sheds light on the state of free movement of people in the ECOWAS region. After reviewing the contents of the different protocols adopted by the ECOWAS countries to smoothen the movement of their citizens inside the Community, it has been seen that their implementations have not taken place as planned, they faced many obstacles that are sometimes out of their reach. The need for revolution seems to be ignored; there is sense of an evolvment of Africa from the damages of the past - either be deliberately or unconsciously, the failure to realize that African countries in general are functioning in a delusive reality by the majority of African, especially the leaders, is a serious matter of concern.

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