

Determinants of Migration from Africa to EU: Empirical Evidence of Geopolitical and Political Factors

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Abstract—this paper serves as a multi-disciplinary study as it not only attempts to identify the most important determinants of emigration from Africa to EU, but also analyzes the EU laws and regulations and loopholes that have caused border control failure in the past decade. We use quantitative research methodology and panel data to cast light on the topic and to measure the elasticities of migration from Africa to EU to economic and political factors such as poverty, corruption, terrorism, militarization, fragility of the state and violence in the origin country compared to fundamentals such as business cycles and job opportunities in the destination. The paper contributes to the literature by investigating the push factors and pull factors that moderate emigration destination choice. Contrary to the general findings in the literature, we find that geopolitical and political factors such as corruption, militarization and violence play more important roles than economic conditions, whether in origin or destination. We also contribute to the literature by identifying the hierarchy of determinants of emigration from Africa to the EU. Finally, based on our empirical results we propose policy recommendations to policymakers to control the borders more effectively and avoid border control failure.

Key Terms: Migration, Corruption, Global Military Index, Terrorism, Violence, Geopolitics, EU regulations.

I. INTRODUCTION

A growing literature on the topic of migration has yielded insights into the complex dynamics of emigration and its roots. However, consensus among scholars remains absent, specifically as it relates to which factors drive emigration patterns. The question remains - do people escape from their homes due to non-acceptable conditions or due to economic boom and job opportunity in the destination? Empirical data shows that migration is crystalized due to manifold causes. Although the field has vastly expanded during the last decade, it lacks consensus and a comprehensive quantitative analysis that consider interrelated dynamics of pull and push factors. This paper attempts to measure the effects of geopolitical and political conditions in the home country on emigration versus macroeconomic conditions in the destination, using quantitative analysis and panel data. Indeed, only a few studies have analyzed this topic with emphasis on political and social factors. We contribute to the literature by casting light on the topic through identification and investigation of causal moderating variables, which affect migration patterns. The meteoric increase in migration trends in the past decade has affected the ordinary life of millions of people in European countries. In some cases, even have led to humanitarian crises. The goal of this paper is threefold. First, we address the gap in the literature by deepening our understanding of causal and moderating factors, which affect migration trends through analysis of panel data. We compare the effects of economic fundamentals in the destination compared to the geopolitical conditions in the origin country such as violence, terrorism, corruption, militarization index, and fragility of the state. Second, we outline the hierarchy of variables on emigration from Africa to EU. Third, we analyze the current gaps and loopholes in the laws and regulations and the quota system that have led to the failure of border controls and the role that each party including institutions, governments, civil society, human traffickers, and migrants should play in order to achieve a more effective system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization and international integration remain two of the most important challenges of the twenty first century geopolitical circumstances. To effectively control borders and manage the migration, we need to recognize the magnitude and nature of various determinants that affect migration. While more cooperation among European nations does not necessarily reduce the migration level, it seems to be a fundamental element in creating an ordered and regulated process (Sohst et al. 2020).

In fact, since 1990 Europe has faced important transitions and challenges. Southern European countries have become the target destination of migration from several African countries that escape from war, poverty, violence, and militarization. Irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe has created several security problems such as crime, violent, conflict, human trafficking, terrorism, and even environmental challenges (Castles, De Hass, & Miller 2014; Cuttitta, 2007; Goldschmidt, 2006; De Hass, 2018; and Lutterbeck 2006). The violence and terrorism caused by the migrants in Europe has resulted in material costs for the European states. This phenomenon requires an in depth analysis and investigation with

emphasis on geopolitical conditions in Africa. Indeed, addressing the new millennium development goals is one of the key challenges of the 21st century, which requires a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and complexity of emigration with an in depth look to the roots causes of problem.

Moreover, the 2007-09 financial crisis intensified the non-European emigration to the continent. Several studies have found that migration policies have been ineffective, as the majority of immigrant continue to flow to EU unlawfully. However, it might be naïve to think that people migrate and risk their lives only for finding a job opportunity, safety and freedom in the destination. This implicit assumption is based on push-pull model, which characterizes migration as a cost-benefit analysis. However, most migrants do not move between poorest and wealthiest countries; nor they return to their origin country after a war is over; wealthy and educated people tend to migrate more often than poor and illiterate migrants. Moreover, the poorest countries tend to have lower level of emigration than middle-income countries (Castles, De Hass & Miller, 2014).

Adjustment to the market conditions is never instantaneous. While trade agreements and unions have encouraged trade, they have also led to job losses for blue-collar workers, who suffer from lack of skills and competition power (Martin, 1993). Moreover, wage stickiness causes workers not to be able to find a job in their origin country. Available data suggest that some of the South African countries that are among the poorest countries in the world is the least migratory region in the world (Castles, 2014). Therefore, the question remains - "what are the main drivers of emigration?" Several studies have found a high correlation between business cycles and immigration to Europe (Mayda, 2005; and Cuttitta, 2007). However, migration seems to be more affected by both labor demand in EU countries and by the existence of the conflict in the origin countries. Early literature recognizes three factors: (i) root causes (ii) proximate conditions, and (iii) intervening factors (Flahaux and De Hass, 2016).

While African migration remains overwhelmingly intra-continental, since the late 1980s there has been an acceleration and spatial diversification (beyond colonial patterns) of emigration out of Africa to Europe, and North America (Goldsmith, 2006). Contrary to conventional interpretations, that African migration is essentially driven by poverty, violence and underdevelopment, migration out of Africa seems rather to be driven by processes of development and social transformation, which have increased Africans' capabilities and aspirations to migrate, a trend which is likely to continue in the future (Goldsmith 2006). Several authors have emphasized the motivation for remittances. For example, Oucho (2002) and Adugna (2019) discuss the positive effects of migration on eliminating and reducing poverty through remittances. However, there are some problems in terms of identifying the causes and effects and some inherent contradictions within the conclusions drawn by advocates of the root causes approach (Lutterbeck, 2006).

Schmeidl (1997) uses empirical tests and pool data for the period of 1971-1990 to regress number of refugees on several political and economic factors. Interestingly, he finds that civil wars with foreign military interventions are more important in producing large refugees population and prolonged migration than civil wars without outside influence. In addition, he finds that economic conditions have very little impact on predicting refugee migration.

Poverty could be a trigger for refugee migration, and it can affect the geo-political conditions in different countries. Castles and Loughna (2002) emphasize on the role of underdevelopment, especially when it is a result of corruption and authoritarian rule. Empirical evidence suggests that in time of conflicts, we observe higher migration and violence as the main root of immigration (Gent, 2002 and Schemidl, 1997). However, other factors such as age, gender, ownership, income, and health have also played roles in migration decisions.

Hatton (2004) considers the immigration trend to the U.K., by using econometric models. The estimated results indicate that differing income distribution at home and abroad largely accounts for the variation in data. He concludes that the improved economic conditions in the U.K. relative to overseas countries has increased the migration trend. Meanwhile, rising inequality in the UK has even had a larger effect on the migration.

Mayda (2005) investigated economic and non-economic determinants of migration inflows into fourteen OECD countries between 1980 and 1995. Focusing on both demand and supply side, she found that income distribution in the destination and origin countries shape migration movements, particularly in response to positive improvement in the pull effect, which is an improvement of income opportunities in the destination. She also found that geography and demographics factors are the most important non-economic determinants of migration flows. According to her results, doubling the distance between source and destination country reduces the number of emigrants by 0.04 percent. In addition, the share of young people in the origin country has a positive significant impact on emigration rate.

Massey (2006) surveyed ninety-nine communities in Mexico and thirty-five in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean and found that contradictions of the U.S. policy during the 1990s (what used to be a circular flow of skilled male workers) transformed into a permanent migration of families, which will have profound effects on American social structure.

Hamood (2006) examined the experiences of refugee seeking in Libya, which has turned to a key transit country for sub-Saharan Africa. The route through Libya to Italy has been characterized by a mixed migratory flow. Analysis of the existing cooperation between EU and Libya in combatting irregular immigration is still in the early stages but evidence suggests that a security approach of border control and surveillance has been adopted, while little attention is being paid to ensuring human rights protection and solving the root causes of the problem in the origin countries.

Crush and Frayne (2007) investigated the nexus of migration and development in Africa. They find that the relationship between migration and development is country specific and even varies inside the country. South African governments are concerned that skilled workers tend to emigrate in large scale, leading to a brain drain in Africa.

Etzo (2008) analyzed the determinants of interregional migration in Italy for the period of 1996-2002 using push and pull factors. He finds that GDP is the main economic determinant both for pull and push factor. The unemployment rate also appears to be an important determinant. As Zimmermann (2009) argued, irregular movements arise because people have interests in accessing safety, as well as quality of life in exile.

Adhikari (2012) examined the decision people make whether or not to flee from their homeland during civilian conflicts. He argues that conflict per se is not the only factor that affects people's decision to flee or stay. However, since civil war and conflict destroys economic infrastructure and creates economic hardship, it contributes to displacement.

Panzaru (2013) investigated the effects of economic and non-economic factors to assess their influence on migration in Central and Eastern Europe during 2000-2010. For economic factors, he uses ease of doing business index, and the index of labor market regulation. For non-economic factors, he uses judicial independence index and integrity of the legal system index. He finds that while economic factors are important for emigration, judicial independence and legal system index have limited effects on emigration.

Dmytro (2013) analyzed the bilateral migration flows into OECD countries. He finds that bilateral migration flows are affected by the physical costs of the move and by educational attainment. Network effects promote negative self-selection, while the physical distance, existence of a common language and colonial links between countries are insignificant in explaining the composition of migrants.

Kurekova (2013) considers the role of welfare systems in shaping migration patterns in central and Eastern Europe and finds that states have affected migration trends by widening opportunities through the welfare system policies. This explains why Central Eastern Europe (CEE) countries where social spending has been lower and unemployment benefit schemes have been less attractive, experienced greater out-flow migration.

Ravlik (2014) investigated the determinants of migration between countries and tested two hypotheses: (i) migration occurs to countries where living standard is higher than origin country (ii) migration occurs to countries where rule of law is more respected compared to origin country. Using data for 212 origins and 167 destination and independent variables such as human development index, rule of law index, and the common colonial relationship between pair countries, he finds that migrants are more attracted to countries with higher development index, and higher rule of law index. Finally, migrants tend to be attracted to countries with common colonial history (not only a common historical background), but also with a cultural link.

Williams (2015) used data from a survey in Nepal and tested a number of hypotheses regarding the impact of factors such as violence, economic opportunity, physical infrastructure or geographical conditions, and social networks on forced migration. The estimated results indicate besides the conflict, there are a number of significant economic, social, and political factors that affect individuals' decision to flee.

Bergh, Mirkina, and Nillson (2015) argued that institutional factors are better proxies for determinants of migration. People may prefer to stay in a country if the institution quality is good because good institutions have intrinsic values, while low income and poverty work as push factor. Using data from the Worldwide Governance Indicators, and controlling for income in source and destination country, they find that institutional quality matters significantly for migration. They also find that absolute poverty in the country of origin limits migration trend.

Flahaux and De Haas (2016) explored the drivers of migration from Africa and found while the intra migration among African countries has decreased, the trend of migration remains overwhelmingly intracontinental. Indeed, since the 1980s there has been an acceleration and spatial diversification of emigration out of Africa to Europe. Contrary to general findings that poverty, violence, and underdevelopment shape the migration from Africa, they found that the process of development and social transformation has increased Africans' capabilities and aspiration to migrate.

Hallaire (2017) analyzed West African maritime routes, specifically from Senegal to the Canary Islands that emerged as a direct response to the externalization of European borders. The study explores the mobility of fishermen who became migrants and actively participated in irregular sea migration from Senegal to Europe mainly from 2000 to 2008. Fishermen's experiences reflect a complex reality of border migration management. They find that fishermen responded to an opportunity in Europe as much as to a deep-seated crisis of the fishing sector in their homeland.

Keuntae and Cohen (2018) focused on the migration inflows to 17 western countries and outflow of 13 countries, using panel data from 1950 to 2007. They used demographic, geographic, and social independent variables. They find the most important influential variable is demographic (log of population of origin country) and geographical (log of distance between origin and destination). Social and historical factors were less influential. In addition, they find that a young age structure in the destination was associated with lower inflows while a young age structure in the origin country was associated with higher outflows. Sharing a minority language and colonial links also had statistically significant but quantitatively smaller effects on international migration.

Franc, Casini and Barisic (2019) used panel data with country and time fixed effects to explore pull-push factors of East-West EU migration for the period of 2000-2017. Their results indicate that immigration rate responds to changes in economic factors such as GDP per capita and unemployment rate of youth in immigration country.

Adugna (2019) investigated transnational migration and found, in contrast to what is suggested by the migration literature, poor families send immigrants to places that require lower investment; that means financing of immigrants should be considered as an important variable. He also found that sending remittances by migrants is one of the most pervasive variables for migration in Africa.

Kuhnt (2019) examined different macro and micro factors that causes people to flee their homes including governance regime, income, wealth of household, age, gender, education, personality traits, environmental changes, the role of networks and smugglers and technology. He concludes that while the desire to move varies for each individual, migrants share a common desire for a better life, which suggests macroeconomic factors dominate social or microeconomic factors.

Hejdukova and Kurekova (2020) analyzed the internal migration in Poland covering the period of 2003-2017. Using GLS models, and push factors such as unemployment rate, housing costs, and degree of urbanization, and pull factors such as wage and demand for workers in the industrial sector, and foreign human capital, they found that regional wage differences and unemployment differences together explain a large portion of changes in internal migration. In addition, using the dummy variable for the period of crisis indicated that regional migration increased during the 2007-09 financial crisis.

Maru et al. (2022) analyzed migration between Africa and Europe and insights from pastoral systems; they identified important similarities between international migration and pastoral mobility. Both trends show multiple, intersecting socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental drivers.

Dennison (2022) tested theoretical approaches, socio-demographics, economic and political context for migration from MENA to Europe. He used logistic regression model and found that economic reasons and education opportunities are the most important reasons for migration. In addition, his results indicate that actual income and unemployment are poor predictors of desire to migrate. He concluded that the very poor or very rich are both less likely to emigrate.

Ou-Salah, Praag, and Verschragen (2022) studied migration from Morocco to Belgium with emphasis on environmental factors. They found that climate change has led to desertification in Africa, which has induced a great number of immigrants to Europe. Many provinces are affected by earthquakes, mudslides, landslides and volcanic eruptions that affect the aspiration of populations to migrate. However, the study indicate that there is no direct relationship between emigration and environmental factors. Their second finding was that migration reason change during the time and they find evidence in favor of economic, educational, and political motives. Their third main finding was that the effects of environmental change on migration decision-making vary based on economic activities and livelihoods, gender roles and responsibilities within the household.

Praag (2023) conducted a qualitative study on the migrants living in Belgium and found that migrants with more cultural capital in the origin had more transnational bridging ties to contribute to the development of the region. They bring the concept of migrant capital into the study of climate adaptation, which fills the gap in the literature on environmental migration.

III. EU LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS ON IMMIGRATION

The complexity of Afro-European migration flows is further compounded by European regulations and policy loopholes. The quota system itself appears to be an important challenge as it distributes different number of refugees among European

countries unevenly without considering their capabilities to adopt the migrants. For example, Adam et. al. (2020) discovered that some European nations focus on “domestically-driven migration policy goals to cooperate more closely with the diaspora” (p. 3,101) while other nations focus on border protection and quota reduction. Morawska (2013) argues that some migrants are more perceptive in navigating the systems and migrants’ understanding is a key variant in country choice and migration success. In addition, public discourse and hegemonic attitudes of some countries have resulted in gaps and loopholes, where migrants have become increasingly resourceful in exploiting them (Eule, et. al 2018).

The effectiveness of migration policies and regulations has been widely contested due to their failure to steer immigration and due to their unintended consequences and counter-productive effects. However, evidence remains inconclusive. Although there is consensus among scholars that macro-contextual economic and political factors and “meso-level” organizational factors such as networks all play ‘some’ role in the current system, there is no consensus on their relative weight and dynamic interactions. However, considering migrants’ integration in a “meso” perspective, Przytula and Matusz (2020) point to the growing importance of multilevel governance engaging many actors in this process (e.g., municipalities, cities, nongovernmental organizations, SMEs, corporations, churches, etc.), which are partners for national-level policymakers.

De Haas (2011) emphasizes that fragmented insights from different disciplinary theories could be integrated into one theory through conceptualizing all forms of migration as a function of capabilities and aspirations. Second, to increase conceptual clarity he distinguishes between the dominant role of states in migration processes from the hypothetically more marginal role of specific immigration and emigration policies. Subsequently, he hypothesizes four different elements (spatial, categorical, inter-temporal, and reverse flow), which can partly explain why polices have failed to meet their objectives.

Kubal (2013) conjectures illegal immigration could be viewed as a multidimensional space, where migrants’ formal relationships with the state interact dynamically. It is essential to explain why many neoliberal regimes, which claim that law and order should be the main features distinguishing them from others, actually engage in perpetuating the legally ambiguous modes of incorporation. Delineating the conditions of semi-legality, Kubal (2013) uses data from 360 qualitative interviews with migrants in four European countries and underlines three important challenges that have created several problems for destination countries. First, “incomplete” responses to regularization programs (amnesties) - de facto fulfilling the legalization conditions, yet facing barriers to formally implementing it. Second, balancing between the temporality of residence in various EU countries, under-staying in some and overstaying in other countries. Last, not least, the nexus with employment, where migrants’ residence in a country is lawful, but their work exceeds the restrictions permitted by their visas. These inconsistencies have created legal challenges for several European states as well as for migrants.

Because Schengen Agreement has significantly eased mobility within the Europe, external border control has become a permanent challenge. Indeed, alongside increased deterrence, entry into Europe is eased for members of selected nationalities or with specific skillsets, making the migration regime less transparent. One of its key characteristics has been the strategy of externalizing border control and monitoring migrants before they reach the EU borders (Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Lahav and Guiraudon, 2006; Ryan and Mitsilegas, 2010; Seiffarth, 2011; Zaiotti, 2016). There has been developments in attempts to prevent migration flows to Europe through triple approach of “development”, “deterrence”, and “information spreading in countries of origin” (Pécoud, 2010). Consequently, legal migration opportunities have been limited and illegal migration has changed to a norm. Hence, migrants have been motivated to take riskier routes and transportation means such as boats in the Mediterranean Sea, where they risk their lives.

More recently, several authors have emphasized that migration policy is a result of a complex and dynamic amalgam of national and international actors, rather than the outcome of well-designed regulations (Andersson, 2014; Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Feldman, 2012; Hampshire, 2013). European legal regimes are by nature polycentric (Lavenex, 2006), where they operate on multiple levels that overlap and seldom cooperate with each other on immigration issues as some states are run by more liberal governments and others by populists with different attitude toward immigrants. The fact that it is impossible for states to fully regulate immigration is well documented by several authors (Bommes and Sciortino, 2011; Castles, 2004). Different reasons have been discussed ranging from frictions between migration policies (Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Feldman, 2012; Fischer, 2012), tacit toleration (Ambrosini, 2015; Engbersen and Broeders, 2011), emerging interests of the industry of border controls’ (Andersson, 2014).

The difficulty of implementing consistent and homogenous policies among different states is obviously an important issue. Migration agencies and institutions have to cooperate at the international level and react to new strategies of irregular migrants, who try to circumvent controls. These institutions lack a coherent legal framework to control the borders more effectively at international level. On the other hand, several studies have focused on the resistance and creativity of irregular migrants when confronted with improving border technologies (Engbersen and Broeders, 2011). It is fundamental to take the migrant’s subjectivity seriously with regard to border technologies. More recently, scholars have underlined the weaknesses of information and communication technologies and their implementation (Sontowski, 2018; and Scheel, 2018). Indeed, the permanent ‘failing’ state of the transnational mobility regulations and their enforcement has induced more migration trends, as migrants have recognized the loopholes, which keeps the control system away from running effectively. The concept of the migration regime allows us to rethink and revisit the dynamic aspects of the border, as well as laws and regulations.

The notion of a migration regime can be composed of ‘a mix of implicit conceptual frames, generations of turf wars among bureaucracies, and waves after waves of “quick fixes” to emergencies, triggered by changing political constellations of actors’ (Sciortino, 2004). This implies that the immigration regime is always in the state of flux and temporary changes without the ability to fix the problem fundamentally and permanently (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos, 2008). Indeed, these quick fixes are short-term responses to the emerging crisis without looking to the root causes of the problem.

The more dynamic understanding of migration regime differs from a more static understanding of ‘border regimes’ (Berg and Ehin, 2006; Ghosh, 2000). Actors and states have been responding to external changes and flu of migrants through temporary adjustments of their border practices without paying attention to geopolitical conditions in the origin countries. Action in the migration regime looks like a repair, as it has not been following a rational logic. This special issue does not work out as a coherent logic, but aims at an understanding of the migration regime through the analysis of frictions, inconsistencies and contradictions as well as taking seriously the migrant agency (sometimes human traffickers). The latter should not ignore the tremendous effects of states’ control practices on individual migrants. Migrants are constrained by complex and sophisticated technologies of border controls and need to find new loopholes to thwart states’ endeavors to prevent their access to territories. They have to endure being stuck in so-called transit zones (Hamood, 2006; Schapendonk, 2012) or in a semi-legal (Kubal, 2013) limbo while waiting for a decision to their asylum applications and often have to suffer from a disastrous living or working conditions, which are sometimes even worse than their origins (Bloch and McKay, 2016; Sager, 2015; Griffiths, 2014; Turnbull, 2016).

In the meantime, several researchers have emphasized that the restrictive European migration regime has led to changing migrant journeys that often become longer and more dangerous (Collyer, 2007; Dijkstra, Meijer, and Besters, 2011). In fact, legal channels to Europe are very limited for people from outside Europe and is almost only reserved for highly skilled workers, while the rest, especially blue-collar workers are subject to permanent threat of deportation. However, several studies have shed light on the resistance that migrants exhibit regarding the growing fences around Europe. Indeed, they are not deterred by improving border control technologies because the geopolitics in the origin is intolerable. Hence, the crux of matter is to focus on the root causes of the problems in the origin countries and the dynamics of migrants’ tactics used in response to stronger borders.

The asymmetric power of different parties in the current migration regime underlines the importance of taking into account the dynamics and complexity of different actors in the migration regime. Indeed, the contributions of different studies on the subject indicates “*policy failure*” is caused by a combination of several legal, structural, institutional, and individual factors. However, negotiations between involved agencies, institutions, migrants, traffickers, civil society actors, and states, and revisiting the current regulations and the quota system at the union level could change the status-quo and create a more effective border control, a safer place for EU citizens and a better living conditions for the immigrants. Though this prospect seems far away from the status-quo, the goal would be achievable by the contribution of all participants in the migration regime, from states, to civil societies, humanitarian institutions, and immigrants.

The gap in the literature is that scholarly efforts have mainly focused on the effects of migration on development rather than finding the roots causes and drivers of migration. To address this shortcoming we use a quantitative research methodology and implement econometric regression models, where we estimate the coefficient (elasticities) of migration to different factors and we distinguish the hierarchy of those determinants. By doing so, we contribute to the literature to find better solutions to control the borders and irregular migration to EU. In addition, empirical studies have not determined the hierarchy and the importance of different variables in shaping migration to EU. To address this gap, this study determines the hierarchy and importance of macroeconomic factors versus the geopolitical conditions in the origin country including corruption, militarization index, fragility of the states, violence, and terrorism. Indeed, one of the novel features of this study is that it investigates which factors play the most important roles in shaping migration pattern from Africa to EU. The results of the study will help us to have a better understanding and analysis of the root causes of migration and to overcome the challenges that exploited migration has imposed on EU citizens.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

We employ a multi-variate regression model approach, where the migration from Africa to EU is a function of business cycles, measured by GDP growth in destination, employment in EU, poverty in the origin country, corruption perception index, global militarization index (GMI), fragile state index, number of violence measured by deaths, and terrorism index in the origin country. Our sample consists of twenty sub-Saharan African countries including: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d’ Ivory, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, which have experienced the highest levels of violence (deaths). The list of countries and the number of deaths can be found in Appendix-1. We test the hypothesis whether the geopolitical and political conditions in the origin country such as corruption, militarization index, violence and terrorism are more important than the economic conditions (business cycle and job opportunity) in the destination or not.

V. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Covering the period of 2010-2021, we implement panel data and regression models to find out what are the most important determinants of the migration from Africa to Europe. The list of variables, their definitions and sources of data are presented in Table 1. The econometric model and relationship between migration and independent variables are presented in Equation 1.

$$\text{Migration} = a_0 + a_1 \text{GDPPCAF} + a_2 \text{EUGDP} + a_3 \text{Employment} + a_4 \text{Corrupt} + a_5 \text{GMI} + a_6 \text{Fragstat} + a_7 \text{Deaths} + a_8 \text{Terror}$$

Equation 1.

Where migration refers to the number of migrants from the African countries to EU. GDPPCAF is the GDP per capita in the origin country in Africa and EUGDP refers to GDP per capita in the EU. Corrupt represents corruption perception index and GMI represents the global militarization index measured by Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies. Fragstat represents fragility of the state and is measured by the Global Economy and the World Bank. Violence is measured by number of deaths in the origin country. We use two measures of death to check for the robustness of our results; one issued by Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the other issued by Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED). Finally, Terror refers to the Global Terrorism Index issued by Vision of Humanity, a U. K. think tank.

The descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables are reported in Table 2.

Table 1. List of variables, definitions, and resources

List of Variable	Definition	Source
Migration	Number of immigrant from Africa	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
GDPPCAF	GDP per capita of the origin country in Africa	World Bank
EUGDP	GDP Per Capita in EU	OECD
Employment	Employment rate in the EU	OECD
Corruption	Corruption Perception Index	Transparency International
GMI	Global Military Index (Relative weight and importance of a country's military apparatus in relation to its society as a whole), measured by Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies	Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies
Fragstat	Fragility of the state: Between 0, low and 120, high	The Global Economy
DeathUCDP	Number of deaths from UCDP website	Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Department of Peace and Conflict Research
DeathACLED	Number of deaths from ACLED website	The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED)
Terror	Global Terrorism Index	Vision of Humanity

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables included in the Model

List of Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Migration	0.00013	0.0008	0.00	0.0015
GDPPCAF	1346.73	830.17	261.01	3185.12
EUGDP	24536.01	401.23	12341.60	36578.90
Employment	67.14	31.16	53.14	75.16
Corruption	26.56	7.62	11.00	45.00
GMI	134.64	51.50	59.51	277.17
Fragstat	92.80	8.87	68.70	112.70
DeathUCDP	941.52	2779.56	0.00	23295
DeathACLED	1537.67	3778.03	0.00	27890.00
Terrorist	3.79	2.68	0.00	9.11

VI. FINDINGS

We use both ordinary least square (OLS) and two stage least squares (2SLS) for estimating equation 1. Indeed, when the explanatory variables correlate to the error term then the endogeneity problem appears. The advantage of using 2SLS method compared to OLS is that it avoids the endogeneity problem and biased results.

The econometric results for OLS and 2SLS models presented in Table 3 suggest that all independent variables together are able to explain more than 82% of changes in the emigration from sub-Saharan Africa to EU. The D.W. statistics indicate that there is no auto-correlation among residuals.

Since models are estimated in the logarithm forms, the coefficients of variables represent the elasticities of emigration to different variables. Therefore, the magnitude of the coefficients in the econometric results represent the importance of related

variable.

First, the results indicate that push factors (political and geopolitical conditions) in the origin country are more important than the pull factors (GDP growth and employment in the EU). Indeed, the coefficient on GDP per capita in Africa and EU and employment in EU are not statistically significant. In other words, the economic conditions in the destination and origin does not seem to induce emigration from Africa to EU.

Based on our result, an increase in the level of corruption has a positive significant effect on the level of migration and a 10-percentage point increase in the corruption perception index leads to 0.3 percentage point increase in the migration from Africa to EU. This is an important finding as it indicates that migrants are adversely affected by corruption level in the origin country. In fact, corruption reduces the available resources for economic activities and may have an indirect effect on migrants through reducing economic opportunities in the origin.

The second important variable influencing migration is terrorism. Our results indicate that a 10-percentage point increase in terrorism index leads to 0.3 increase in the number of migrants. Indeed, terrorism creates risk and uncertainty for businesses and economic activities; as a result, businesses and individuals are more likely to leave the country due to terrorism. Our results are consistent with the findings of a few empirical studies that have discussed the negative effects of terrorism on migration (Castles, De Hass, & Miller 2014; Cuttitta, 2007; and Lutterbeck 2006).

The third important factor shaping the migration is GMI (global militarization index). The higher the level of militarization index, the more people will leave their homeland. Indeed, several sub-Saharan countries are currently confronted with coup d'état and militarization. The explanation for this trend is that with the increase in military expenditures fewer resources will be available for social welfare programs, which creates economic hardship for the population. The results indicate that GMI has a positive statistically significant effect on emigration. A 10-percentage point increase in the index of militarization creates 0.2 percentage point increase in the migration from Africa to EU.

We use two different proxies for violence, numbers of deaths from UCDP and ACLED to test for the robustness of the results. We find that both coefficients are statistically significant and have positive effects on emigration. However, the coefficient on UCDP is greater than ACLED as these two sources have reported different number of deaths. Finally, violence and fragile state stands at the forth level and have lower significant effect on migration compared to other independent variables. The coefficient on the fragility of state indicates a 10-percentage point increase in the index leads to 0.1 percentage point increase in the number of migrants.

However, the coefficient on GDP per capita and employment in EU are not statistically significant, indicating that the pull factors or the business cycles in EU do not play a significant role in shaping the migration from Africa.

The results here are in contrast to the finding of De Haas (2016) who find that the pull factors are more important than push factors or initial conditions in the origin country. Our results are also in sharp contrast to those of Mayda (2007) who find economic factors in the destination are the most important elements for shaping emigration. Based on our results, economic factors do not play statistically significant role, while corruption, militarization index, terrorism, number of violence (deaths), and fragility of the state are the most important drivers shaping the migration from Africa to EU.

Our empirical results support the findings of Schmeidl (1997; Gent, 2002; and Williams 2015), who find that political violence in the origin countries are the root of migration. Our results indicate that the geopolitical conditions, military index, political instability, terrorism, and fragility of the states in the origin dominates the coefficients of economic conditions in origin or destination.

Table 3. Econometric results of OLS and 2SLS regression models

List of Variable	Coefficient (OLS)	Coefficients (2SLS)
GDPPCAF	0.21 (0.34)	0.11 (0.41)
GDPPCEU	0.17 (0.46)	0.12 (0.53)
Employment	0.05 (0.21)	0.04 (0.19)
Corruption	0.03** (0.01)	0.028** (0.004)
GMI	0.02** (0.005)	0.02** (0.03)
Fragstat	0.01** (0.02)	0.057** (0.03)

Deaths (UCDP)	0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
Deaths (ACLED)	0.01** (0.004)	0.01** (0.003)
Terrorism	0.03** (0.01)	0.032** (0.01)
Time Fixed Effect	0.03 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)
Constant	12.47 (14.69)	16.56 (18.92)
Number of Observations	480	460
Adjusted R-Squared	0.85	0.82
F-Statistics	57.19	49.36
Durbin-Watson	1.86	1.82

Numbers in parenthesis are standard deviations. * refers to significant at 5% level and ** refers to significance at 1% level.

VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Though discussion on the roots of migration remains an open controversial question, the empirical evidence from this study shows that the most important factors shaping the migration are non-economic, but social, political, and geopolitical. These findings have important policy implications for policy makers in EU as can help them to use more effective policies in controlling emigration through controlling foreign aids to corrupted countries with high level of violence and militarization index. In addition, technical assistance should be provided to African countries, which promote democracy and avoid militarization and coup d'état. Indeed, the militarization index in Africa has been growing in an unprecedented manner during the past decade; and has been accompanied with higher level of human rights violation and prosecution, which has contributed to higher levels of migration.

Another important factor that shape migration is the corruption in the origin country. To reduce the corruption index in Africa, it is essential to tie the foreign aids to corruption perception index adversely. Corruption in Africa is a fundamental disease, which has contributed to several economic problems and inefficiencies in the public sector. Finally, providing financial aid and technical assistance and cooperation at the international level to combat terrorism in the origin countries could also be helpful to control the migration to EU.

In sum, the advanced economies, particularly the EU countries, can play a pivotal role by reducing the foreign aid to countries with high level of corruption, militarization, terrorism, and violence. Lack of attention to such factors in allocating foreign aid or in trade with those countries will lead to the continuation of status-quo and exploitation of migrants into several EU countries.

Effective control of borders is not only achievable by physical borders, fences and walls, but through helping the origin countries to combat the root causes of the problems, otherwise savvy migrants will always find a way to circumvent the laws; they find the loopholes in EU regulations and will continue to migrate to the destination. This process cannot continue in the long-run, as it will create essential economic, social, and political problems for the destination countries. The current oppositions and hot debates among populist and neo-liberals in different EU states and parliaments on the immigration subject represents the anxiety of public and the depth of the problem. Addressing this problem requires not only revisiting the laws and regulations, but also shifting the EU policies from helping corrupted militarized regimes to more democratic, less corrupted and less militarized regimes.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this research study was threefold. First, we contributed to the literature by casting light on the topic and exploring the political and geopolitical factors that have not been thoroughly discussed in the literature. The second goal of this study was to find the hierarchy of the determinants of emigration flow from Africa to EU. The third objective was to look at the loopholes and deficiencies of the current immigration laws and the quota system that have led to the border control failure.

In the empirical section of the paper, we found that corruption, militarization, terrorism, violence, and fragility of states present the hierarchy of the determinants of migration, respectively, while economic factors such as business cycles and job opportunities in the destination or in the origin do not have any significant effect on migration. Based on our econometric results the root causes of migration are not economic forces, but social, political, and geo-political; particularly corruption, militarization index, and terrorism play the most important roles.

Finally, we contribute to the literature by looking into the EU immigration laws and regulations and their loopholes. We found that in designing a new migration regime all players, including states, civil society, institutions, migrants, and even smugglers should participate in renegotiations and designing new regulations that can help control borders more effectively and avoid border control failure in the future. The current quota system and temporary co-operations among EU countries to do quick fixes has failed to respond to the humanitarian crisis. In order to move forward and achieve the goal of creating a safer EU, it is inevitable to renegotiate with all parties in the migration regime to design new regulations that create permanent cooperation among EU states (instead of temporary fixes) and address the loopholes that can be easily known and taken advantage of by savvy immigrants.

The current quota system lacks equity and transparency and does not consider the capabilities of host countries to adopt and incorporate migrants into existing social structure. In order to reduce the number of migrants, the European Union needs to revisit the current laws and regulations. Access to means for refugees to escape their homelands will drive fundamentally, the material costs to EU states and citizens. The inundation of African immigrants to Lampedusa in Italy and their dispersion among different EU countries cannot be controlled if the problems in the origin countries are not resolved with the cooperation of advanced economies. The only reason the EU states might be indifferent to this flow of migrants is that they would benefit from the low labor cost, which can be exploited by certain industries. However, it is not clear at all that this benefit might be worth the costs it imposes to the destination countries.

IX. AVENUES FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study could be extended in different dimensions. First, is through using different econometric techniques. For example, one may choose Generalized Method of Moments technique to reduce the possibility of errors and spurious regression results. Second, this research study may benefit from adding to the number of sample countries by choosing countries that have suffered from wars, ethnic conflicts, and famine for several decades, particularly in the west and south- Africa.

Third way for improving the econometric results is by adding to the number of independent variables. For example, an independent variable, which plays an important role, is the financial development level of the origin country. Is there any relationship between the level of financial development and emigration from Africa to EU is a topic that has not been thoroughly addressed in the literature and merits investigation.

Finally, another way this study can be extended in the future is to use micro level data for different categories of individuals such as young generation or people with low level of income compared to high-income individuals. The results of such studies can help us achieve a better understanding of the subject, and find more effective solutions to avoid border control failure in the future.

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Appendix 1. List of sample countries and number of deaths

Country Name	State Based Violence	Total death
Angola	30707	33285
Burundi	9056	20884
Cameroon	4819	7025
Central African Republic	2463	14176
Chad	8008	11016
Congo, Republic	31046	122989
Ethiopia	178239	196895
Ivory Coast	938	3599
Kenya	612	6201
Libya	8854	13985
Mali	5315	9966
Nigeria	22657	63468
Senegal	1487	2195
Sudan	51927	97030
Syria	337980	405739
Tanzania	39	139
Uganda	9970	17034
Yemen, Republic	52262	55914
Zambia	6495	9320
Zimbabwe	0	326

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), <https://ucdp.uu.se>