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Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe: Reasons, sources of information and perception of German engagement

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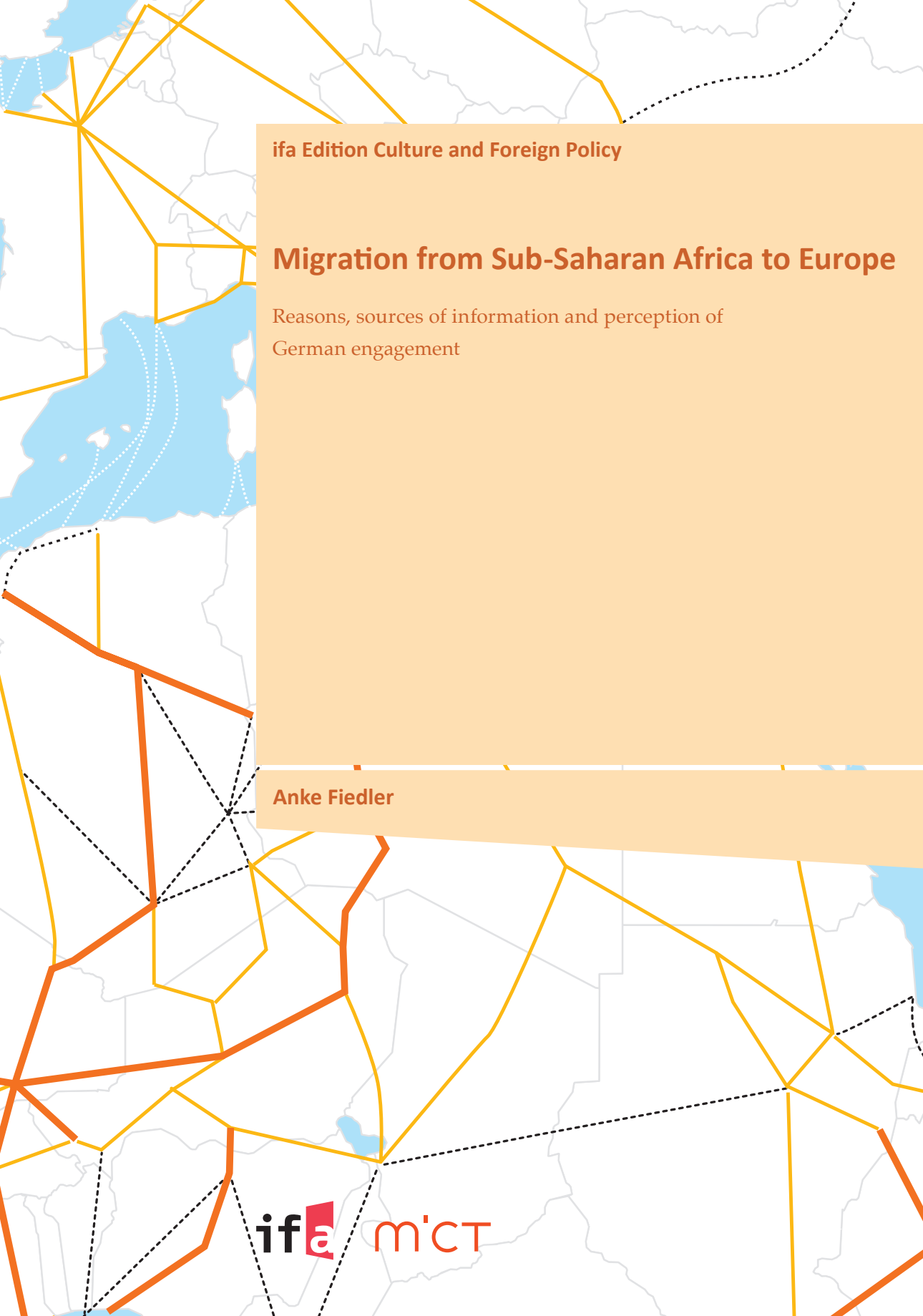

ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy

Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe

Reasons, sources of information and perception of German engagement

Anke Fiedler

ifa m'CT

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Foreword

"But no matter whether it be a good life or hardship, I will still go nevertheless," says Seydou (m), a 25-year-old unmarried shoe seller from Touba in Senegal, in the focus group interview for this study.

Increasing migration from Sub-Saharan Africa presents Europe with challenges requiring solutions that do not only address the reasons for fleeing but that also include the personal reasons of the people intending to migrate.

Why do so many people set off on the dangerous route of irregular migration? Where do they get information about the planned migration from? What is the role of players locally and in the target countries? These questions were asked in conversations in Sub-Saharan Africa with people intending to migrate and the results are presented in this study.

The study was developed in the context of the ifa Research Programme, "Culture and Foreign Policy". I would like to take this opportunity to give Anke Fiedler, the study author, and Klaas Gleenewinkel from MiCT (Media in Cooperation and Transition) my heart-felt thanks for their cooperation and commitment to this research project. My thanks also go to the Head of the ifa Research Programme, Odila Triebel, as well as Sarah Widmaier and Isabell Scheidt, who conceptionally and editorially supported the project.

ifa works worldwide for a peaceful and enriching coexistence between people and cultures. ifa monitors the topic of flight and migration in diverse exchange programmes, exhibitions and conferences and is developing new formats in order to respond in terms of cultural policy.

Ronald Grätz,
Secretary General, ifa

Summary

In this study, by way of qualitative research group discussions with migrants and people intending to migrate from Sub-Saharan Africa, (i) the reasons for migration, (ii) the use of information and knowledge about migration, and also (iii) the role of projects of international cooperation in the context of migration are investigated. The starting point of the investigation is the assumption that the push/pull models only inadequately describe migration processes; however, they are often deployed in policies in order to explain the reasons for flight and to present ways of combating it. In total, 17 research group discussions with participants from nine Sub-Saharan African countries were carried out in the period between March and May 2017. The results show that not only the "classic" push factors but also social pressure from the family, who attach certain expectations to the migration of a family member, play a part in the decision to migrate. It means that those who return and who have not met these expectations often suffer from social isolation. Furthermore, the group interviews show that migrants are better informed of the risks of migration than is generally perceived by the public. For example, this information includes knowledge about the dangers of fleeing as well as the risk of failing abroad. A further result of the investigation is that the reach of projects of international cooperation focusing on migration could be further expanded and also the image of central players in this area is in need of improvement.

Executive Summary

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people from Sub-Saharan Africa leave their home countries with the desire and goal of building a new existence in the European Union. In order to do so, they accept the risks connected to irregular migration. The central question in this context regarding the reasons for flight is primarily answered in the political sphere and in the media with classic push/pull models, which are based on the assumption that on the one hand push factors, such as violence, poverty, political repression, unemployment and lack of prospects, promote the desire to migrate while on the other positive perceptions of better living conditions in other parts of the world act as attractive pull factors.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing discussions about tackling the causes of flight, in this study the push/pull models are critically examined and at the same time, it is investigated whether apart from the well-known causes of flight and migration there are further motives for migration that go beyond the classic push/pull theory. Simultaneously, it is examined whether migrants or people intending to migrate actually unreservedly believe in the sometimes idealistic notions of better living conditions in Europe – or if in reality these people aren't actually better informed about the situation of many migrants in the EU than is generally believed. And finally, it is investigated what role projects of international cooperation in the context of migration play for people intending to migrate and how do they evaluate such projects and the players working in this area.

In order to answer these questions, a qualitative research design was selected. In total 17 focus group discussions with 130 participants from four countries in West Africa (Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire) and also from five countries from East Africa (Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo) were organised and held in Guinea, Mali, Kenya and Sudan between March and May 2017.

The results can be condensed to the following points: the participants primarily cited the reasons for the (intended) migration as the "classic" reasons, such as prolonged unemployment or lacking educational opportunities – which were particularly mentioned by participants from West Africa – and also violence and conflicts – which were primarily mentioned by participants from East Africa. However, further additional reasons were cited that can only be described with the push/pull models with difficulty or not at all. Many participants reported that migration is considered as a "success story" in their communities and that there is sometimes great social pressure on young people to go abroad and to provide for their families at home from there.

Many of the study participants also highlighted the "natural" desire to migrate. With regard to the access to information and the use of information, it can be recorded that the study participants are by and large well informed on the topic of migration. All participants were aware that irregular migration did not only involve a whole range of dangers but that there was always also the risk of failing in Europe. Admittedly, detailed knowledge of the asylum procedure and the like is not included here.

A strong belief in fate or God allows many migrants to hope that they could be one of the few chosen ones to succeed in a foreign country despite all the obstacles. The results of the study also show that many migrants consider that other people intending to migrate are not media savvy and particularly attribute a very manipulative effect to social media (facebook as a seducer). In this regard, a "third person effect" is spoken of. It is presumably the reason for the incorrect image among the public that migrants are not well informed or do not know the danger they place themselves in.

Regarding the projects of international cooperation, it can be summarised that they are fairly unknown among their target groups and in particular there is a need for action here. Although central players, such as UNHCR or IOM, were known names for many of the participants, these organisations have a dubious reputation. NGOs were also viewed with a great distrust. They were accused of corruption and nepotism. Projects for people returning home were not known to the majority of the participants. On the contrary, in the focus groups it was emphasised many times that not enough was being done for those returning home. At the same time, people who let themselves be repatriated back to their home country have a difficult position among the population. Those who do not fulfil their family's expectations and return from Europe are considered as "failed" and "damned" in their community. The study participants sometimes spoke of social exclusion.

Expectations of the European Union are above all linked to a departure from Eurocentric interests – e.g., changing the visa policy to make it possible for more people from Africa to enter, a better integration policy for African migrants in Europe or more support for local initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa. Irrespective thereof, the desire for more and better development aid was expressed, for example, by the creation of new jobs and in the form of new educational initiatives.

1. Introduction

The necessity of tackling the reasons for flight has already been the focus of the political sphere and the media for years (cf., e.g., Becker/Krause 2015; Ayeh et al. 2015). In addition to the challenges of integration and respectively acceptance into the country or repatriation, the divisive demand to control migration by developing the living conditions of the people in the countries of origin is increasingly being discussed. The central question in this regard concerning the reasons for flight are primarily answered in the political sphere with the classic push/pull models, which are based on the assumption of a rational weighing-up. Push factors, such as violence, poverty, political repression, unemployment and lack of prospects foster the desire to emigrate. At the same time, positive perceptions of better living conditions in other parts of the world act as attractive pull factors (cf., Haase/Jugl 2007; Schoorl et al. 2000). According to the theory, the decision to migrate arises from the interplay of these two forces.

Push/pull models have a long tradition (cf. e.g., Adepoju 1994; Lee 1966; Oucho 1995; Ravenstein 1889; Stark/Bloom 1985) and continue to be used in order to explain migration. At the same time, from the results of the latest research into migration it becomes clear that the assumption of a linear and additive combination of push and pull factors does not satisfy the complexity of the actual process of deciding to migrate (Belloc 2011; De Haas 2008). Also the figure of the "homo oeconomicus", who arrives at a decision to migrate on the basis of a rational weighing-up of advantages and disadvantages, hardly corresponds to the psychosocial reality in the, predominantly African, countries of origin. Consequently, the question is posed, whether there are not also further and other reasons for flight and migration beyond the well-known ones (cf. B. Hippler 2016; Wahl 2016) that until now were likely to be disregarded in academia, the political sphere and the media. For example, Jeff Dayton-Johnson, an economist and occasional employee of the OECD Development Centre in Paris and Louka Katseli, who was a director there from 2003 to 2007, write that there are "few empirical indications that increasing economic growth and falling poverty would reduce the incentive to emigrate, as is often claimed by politicians". On the contrary, in many cases increasing incomes "have further stimulated migration, at least in the short to medium term"[1] (Dayton-Johnson/Katseli 2007). Reasons listed included; that people in states with medium incomes tend to develop ambitions to migrate ("aspirations") and then they also have the financial means, resources and social networks ("capabilities") available to them in order to be able to consider emigration (De Haas

[1] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

2014). The empirical evidence appears to prove this theory because migrants in Europe generally do not come from the poorest countries in the world (Flahaux/De Haas 2016). Furthermore, it could be brought into doubt whether the (poor) prospect of a good job or prosperity (pull) drives people to migrate because it assumes that they actually believe that they are able to profit particularly from the amenities in the host country.

Consequently, at the centre of this study is firstly the question about additional reasons for migration that go beyond the known push factors, and secondly the question of how well people intending to migrate are informed about the target countries and how they think about the chances of success abroad (= pull factors). If further causal factors for migration should actually be found, then the question is posed how political actors and organisations of international cooperation could better address such factors in their programmes, for example, which aspects must be taken into consideration in the conceptual orientation of projects with the focus on migration in the migrants' countries of origin? In other words, which (new) strategies could help to improve the living conditions in the home countries of people wanting to migrate and thus possibly make remaining there more attractive to a certain extent?

The relevance of the topic remains unchanged, even if at the moment less people are reaching the European mainland than in the so-called 2015 "summer of refugees" (cf. Schulte von Drach 2017a). In 2016, approximately 362,000 migrants arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea – 181,000 of them came by way of the Central Mediterranean route. The majority of them, an estimated 90 percent, left for Europe from Libya (Schulte von Drach 2017b). In the same year, 4,400 people drowned crossing the Central Mediterranean Sea (Knaus 2017: 83). This year already 1,089 migrants have lost their lives at sea; 1,002 of them died on the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy (as on: 23rd April 2017; Der Spiegel 2017). Allegedly, there are currently a further 300,000 to 350,000 migrants in North Africa waiting for an opportunity to set off on the dangerous journey to Europe (Schulte von Drach 2017b).

Against the backdrop of the presented research problem and the current status of research, a total of 17 focus group discussions with 130 migrants and people intending to migrate from nine different countries of Sub-Saharan Africa were carried out between March and May 2017 for this study in order to find out more about (i) the reasons for migration and (ii) the use of information and knowledge about migration, and to further differentiate the theories in the literature. The participants were (iii) requested to discuss

existing projects financed by the German Federal Government and to formulate suggestions for development cooperation related to the reasons for flight.

In the context of this study, which was carried out in the framework of the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.) Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy" by the Berlin media development organisation, *Media in Cooperation and Transition* (MiCT), in four countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea, Mali, Kenya and Sudan), the focus was particularly placed on projects by the German Federal Government in bilateral cooperation with local partners in the countries of origin and transit countries (e.g., education initiatives, structural aid, support for those returning home). There is now a series of academic macro studies (e.g., Flahaux/De Haas 2016; Belloc 2011) and micro studies on the basis of interviews and surveys on the topic of migration in and from Africa to Europe, however, the latter are largely confined to a handful of "better-researched African countries", e.g., Morocco, Senegal, Ghana and South Africa (Flahaux/De Haas 2016: 3). Thus, this study also widens the scope to other countries in the Sub-Saharan region.

The second chapter of this publication explains why the focus of this study has been placed on Africa: it is precisely this continent where there is disagreement as to how migration will develop in the future. Following this chapter, there is an overview of the relevant literature on the topic of migration and development. This section also sets out the theoretical framework for this study. Subsequently the method is presented – starting with the investigation design up to the challenges in conducting the focus groups. The following results section is structured according to the three central research areas (i) reasons for migration, (ii) use of the information and knowledge about migration, and (iii) the role of projects of international cooperation with a focus on migration.

2. Migration in Africa

A quarter of the over 60 million refugees in the world are located in Africa, which is why, according to Joel Glasman and Hanno Brankamp, in global comparison the continent is "the epicentre of domestic and cross-border movement of refugees"[2] (Glasman/Brankamp 2016). Africa is considered the "continent of migration" but due to numerous conflicts it is also primarily considered as the "continent of flight and displacement"[3] (Ostheimer 2015: 9). With regard to transnational migration movements, it is forecast that African migrants will form the largest share among the new arrivals in Europe in the future. According to Tom Burgis (2016), a foreign correspondent at the Financial Times, in particular migration due to poverty will seriously increase; meaning that, in future, refugees and migrants will no longer come from the Middle East but rather from Sub-Saharan Africa. For the Ethiopian-German business consultant and analyst, Asfa-Wossen Asserarte (2016) the population growth in Africa, the increase in "failed states", corruption, the exploitation of natural resources and political repression are the main reasons that soon it will no longer only be thousands but millions of people leaving the continent. In his book "Vermächtnis" [legacy] (2016), which was published just before his death, Rupert Neudeck, co-founder of the *Cap Anamur* organisation named war, dictatorships and climate change as the driving forces of the south-north migration that will affect millions of people in Africa.

However, such figures, forecasts and also the anonymisation of flight and migration (cf. e.g., Kirchner/Mühlauer 2017; Pinger 2017; Kirchner et al. 2016; Assopgoum 2011) – for instance, the reporting about "boat refugees", who appeared for the first time in the 1990s after the Schengen Agreement came into force and security around the external EU borders in European territorial waters was increased (Andersson 2016: 1056-1059) – are also indeed the subject of criticism and according to many studies give the impression that an exodus is about to happen. "The boat is full" has become a standard phrase – and precisely the boat metaphor and the image of people from Africa who are driven to Europe by poverty in their masses has not only become very popular in the media and in the political sphere but also with some academics according to Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Hass, who have traced the development of migration patterns in Africa in the period from 1960 to 2010 (Flahaux/De Haas 2016: 2; De Haas 2005; De Haas 2008a). In doing so, it is impossible "to give precise figures about the number of West Africans leaving their country each year in search of other destinations within and outside the region". Data on flight and migration should be treated "with the greatest caution because they rely on data of

[2] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.
[3] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

varying quality and, for some countries, figures have been obtained through estimation" (De Haas 2008b: 21-22).

Different empirical studies (Flahaux/De Haas 2016: 2) have shown how diverse migration in Africa is (e.g., Bakewell/Jónsson 2011; De Bruijn et al. 2001; Graw/Schielke 2012; Steinbrink/Niedenführ 2017), that it is more likely to occur intra-continentally than inter-continentally and that therefore, proportionally fewer African migrants actually come to Europe via the sea route (Schoumaker et al. 2013; Sander/Mainbo 2005). With more than 60 million displaced people around the world the number of "boat refugees" is actually relatively low (Kleist 2015): in 2015, "only" 7.5 percent of African refugees fled to Europe (Zanker/Prediger 2017). In addition, African migrants also consider countries in the Middle East or Asia as possible destinations. Therefore, according to Oliver Bakewell and Hein De Haas it is a "myth" that all Africans that cross the Sahara inevitably want to go to Europe. Above all it is the chronic lack of data that helps to keep such myths alive (Bakewell & De Haas 2007: 95; also see Zanker/Prediger 2017). In 2014, there were 374,000 people living in Germany whose birthplace was in Sub-Saharan Africa; that was equal to 0.46 percent of the German population (Wahl 2016: 59). Such figures are likely to be an important reason that in some studies "the boat" is not as full as it is suggested in other places (Becker/Krause 2015; Schuhler 2016).

3. Theoretical Background

The theoretical deficit in the field of "migration studies" continues to be bemoaned in the literature. Previously, academics mainly used the classic concepts, primarily the push/pull models and theories from the field of neoclassic economic theory but without developing new theoretical approaches. Therefore, the old models and theories often continue to be used despite all the criticism surrounding them (De Hass 2014: 4; cf., e.g., Haase/Jugl 2007). In this section, the central ideas of the two most important theoretical approaches will be briefly discussed. Then, an overview of them will be given with regard to what academia has presented as alternatives.

Neoclassic theories from the field of macro or micro economics define migration as a rational decision making process. While macro theories focus on the development of migration for work in the process of economic development, micro theories put the individual at the heart of them. They assume that "individuals make rational cost-benefit calculations, not only about the decision whether to migrate or not, but also when considering alternative destinations" (Schoorl et al. 2000: 3). According to this idea, which is based on neoclassical theories, the migrant is thus a rationally acting being, a "homo oeconomicus", who is driven by "individual income (or utility) maximising assumptions" (De Haas 2014: 4).

Much more popular than the neoclassical theories are the so-called push/pull models, which are likewise "implicit in economic models of migration" (Schoorl et al. 2000: 3). Push factors are located in the migrants' countries of origin; they "foster the desire to emigrate" and are therefore translated "with the term 'pressure factors' [in German]"[4] (Haase/Jugl 2007). The literature reveals a broad range of such "pressure factors" for migration. Above all, conflicts and the conditions of war are considered the main reasons for flight and migration. However, the following reasons are also considered: political repression by authoritarian regimes, poverty, the social-economic situation of a country combined with the lack of prospects for young people and unemployment, terror(-ism) and forms of structural violence, human rights violations, climate change and natural catastrophes or extreme weather conditions, discrimination of all kinds, political instability, the worsening circumstances in the initial host countries, a lack of formal education, an inadequate provision of health care, geopolitical changes (e.g., in Libya), permanent tensions between religious or ethnic groups and elementary needs being inadequately met (e.g., access to water and food) (cf. Banulescu-Bogdan/Fratzke 2015; Becker/Krause 2015;

[4] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

Helfrich 2016; Hippler 2016: 40; Ostheimer 2015; Wahl 2016: 55, 60; Wirsching 2015). Franzisca Zanker and Sebastian Prediger (2017) cite a "deficient physical and social infrastructure, lack of legal certainty, low and barely diversified industrial production and low productivity, (...)"[5] as well as a lack of rule of law and political participation.

Pull factors are understood to be "attraction factors" in the migrants' target countries that appear so attractive "that people accept the hardship of a migration". Emigration appears to them as an investment that is "worth it [...] because they expect better living and/or employment conditions or a higher wage and/or social level"[6] (Haase/Jugl 2007). Other attraction factors stated in the literature are: family reunion, linguistic and cultural affinity to the destination country (post-colonial structures), the destination country's social-economic attractiveness, the presence of a large diaspora and (in)formal networks (e.g., travel agencies, banks, etc., which are run by migrants) (Hippler 2016: 41; Ostheimer 2015; Wahl 2016: 57 et seq.).

Push/pull models have a long tradition (cf. e.g., Adepoju 1994; Lee 1966; Oucho 1995; Ravenstein 1889; Stark/Bloom 1985) and continue to be used in order to explain migration, "despite their manifest inability to explain real-world migration patterns" (De Haas 2014: 4). This study joins the ranks of this research: although push/pull models are used as a starting point, consideration is given to the existence of possible other factors that should be borne in mind when explaining and interpreting migration processes. The findings could also help other academics to establish theories and help policy-makers in the development of strategies to improve the circumstances of migrants in their home countries.

The main criticism of the push/pull models is in particular directed against the assumption of a linear connection between the pressure/attraction factors and migration. In concrete terms, it means that it is suggested that in eliminating the push factors (e.g., combating unemployment and poverty), migration will also fall. Conversely, push factors do not automatically result in mass emigration – not everybody goes, not everybody stays (Belloc 2011: 187). Gery Nijenhuis and Maggi Leung (2017) clarify in their investigation that this incorrect assumption is also reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) of the United Nations. In these goals migration is "a binary and linear process" – and "poverty and development are seen as rather territorialized processes, and development is regarded as a process that only takes place 'at home'" (Nijenhuis/Leung 2017: 52).

[5] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.
[6] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

However, it is precisely Sub-Saharan Africa that shows migration patterns that are contrary to the push/pull factor theory: in no way do poverty and economic underdevelopment lead to mass emigration. Rather, it is argued in the literature that poor countries with a low GDP also show low emigration rates (Belloc 2011: 189). Mobility is instead a privilege of the wealthy classes (Bakewell 2008: 1350). Furthermore, it can be recorded that "86% of international migration within Africa is not primarily related to conflict" (Flahaux/De Haas 2016: 3) – and it is precisely conflicts that are regarded as a central push factor for migration (see above). According to Oliver Bakewell and Ayla Bonfiglio (2013) migration patterns persist even when a conflict has abated. For this reason, the two migration researchers bring social change into play as a defining parameter in the migration process, as they show using the example of the Great Lakes region in Central Africa ("migration for education attainment, urbanisation, and family formation"), which is mainly investigated in the context of "forced migration" (Bakewell/Bonfiglio 2013: 23).

Also for Filippo Belloc, migration is "a part of processes of social and economic change". He claims people do not simply flee from poverty "but generally move in order to improve their social and economic living conditions". According to him, migration is "mainly driven by the feeling of relative deprivation rather than by absolute poverty" (Belloc 2011: 188). Although mobility is considered as one of the main characteristics of the modern world (Castles/Miller 2013), the history of humanity has always been determined by migration – beyond push and pull factors (cf. Mitchell 1989, Portes/Borocz 1989, Zolberg 1989).

In their study, Marie-Laurence Flauhaux and Hein De Haas (2016) not only reject the conventional assumptions about migration in Africa, which according to the literature is caused by violence, under-development, famines, environmental catastrophes and wars, but they also call for migration to be recognised as an "intrinsic part of broader processes of social transformation and development" (De Haas 2014: 4). In this context, De Haas refers to the two concepts of "aspirations" and "capabilities", which he derives from sociological theories. In his opinion, push/pull models overlook the fact that people also have to have ambitions to emigrate to other countries and ultimately also the means to do so. Therefore, on the one hand it is a question of expectations and goals ("aspirations"), which are purely subjective and are subject to cultural and social change (e.g., access to information and "exposure to other lifestyles") and on the other hand it is a question of material resources, networks, education and knowledge ("capabilities").

On the basis of this definition, there is also essentially no "forced migration". As a result of development in one country both the "aspirations" and the "capabilities" increase (De Haas 2011: 19). Naturally, it is to be assumed that people who live in an authoritarian state are more likely to have the desire to emigrate (aspirations) than people in countries with fewer authoritarian traits. However, authoritarian states often control emigration more tightly (e.g., North Korea). It explains why there is paradoxically a positive correlation between political freedom and emigration (Flahaux/De Haas 2016: 5; De Haas 2010). States can also directly or indirectly promote migration; however, they can also "prevent" it.

4. Research Design and Method

For this study a qualitative research design was selected: in the focus countries of Guinea, Mali, Kenya and Sudan a total of 17 focus group discussions were carried out in the period between 7th March and 1st May 2017 with people wanting to migrate and migrants in transit. The pivotal criteria for the country selection was not only the high number of migrants from these countries and/or migrants in transit through these countries but also that MiCT had local contacts there who facilitated an efficient and fast implementation. In addition, in these countries the German Federal Government is pursuing development projects of bilateral cooperation and the safety of the research team on location could be guaranteed.

Qualitative research designs are suitable when nothing or relatively little is known about the research subject. By way of the explorative method, a light is also shone on areas, which researchers had not considered in advance. In addition, qualitative procedures are more flexible because even during the process of collecting data, modifications to the survey instrument can be made; prior knowledge or rather knowledge generated during the collection of data can be incorporated into the continuing data collection process. This is not possible or only partially possible in the case of quantitative research design. Qualitative methods allow research particularly into reasons, (behaviour) patterns and background. All these reasons explain why a qualitative design is more suitable for this study than a quantitative design that would quickly reach its limitations here. Results of qualitative studies can be generalised, however, they reveal nothing regarding statistical distribution and the like.

Table 1 (see Knaus 2017: 83) shows the main countries of origin of the migrants who have entered the European Union over the Mediterranean (e.g., Italy or Greece).
Above all people from West Africa come over the Central Mediterranean route, which generally goes from Libya to Italy: more than half of the new arrivals are originally from Nigeria, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Senegal or Mali. Among the East African migrants, there are notably nationals from Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia. When recruiting the participants for the focus groups, a point was made to preferably interview participants from these countries, whereby the focus for West Africa was placed on French-speaking states and therefore (potential) migrants from Nigeria and The Gambia were not represented in the sample (cf. Table 2).

Italy		Greece	
Nigeria	21 %	Syria	47 %
Eritrea	12 %	Afghanistan	24 %
The Gambia	7 %	Iraq	15 %
Côte d'Ivoire	7 %	Pakistan	5 %
Sudan	7 %	Iran	3 %
Guinea	6 %	other	5 %
Somalia	5 %		
Senegal	5 %		
Mali	5 %		
Bangladesh	4 %		
other	22 %		
total	**175.244**	**total**	**172.607**

Table 1: Citizenship of new arrivals in Italy/Greece
Source: 1. January to 11. December 2016, UNHCR (cf. Knaus 2017: 83)

Table 2 provides an overview of where the focus groups were carried out and the nationality of the participants. In total, 130 people took part in the study. The majority of the participants came from Guinea.

Here **Guinea** acts as a "proxy" for a country of origin of West African migrants in Europe. The coastal state that shares a border with six other countries has valuable natural resources (e.g., gold and diamonds), however, it suffers from corruption, poverty and a high level of unemployment primarily in rural areas; they are regarded as the main reasons for migration (cf. IOM 2010). Five focus groups were held in Guinea. In doing so, attention was paid to having a good mixture of the urban and rural inhabitants. Two focus groups were held in the capital, Conakry, (approx. 1.6 million inhabitants), a group was held in Kankan in the East (third biggest city in the country with around 115,000 inhabitants) and two further focus group discussions took place in the northern region of Labé (Moyenne Guinée), from where, in comparison to the rest of the country, many migrants head for Europe. When recruiting the study participants attention was paid to the selection of Guineans who wanted to or were interested in migrating – generally young men (between 20 and 30), who were either considering fleeing to Europe or have already tried to once or more and have respectively returned to their country. In addition, a further focus group was held with Guinean migrants in transit in Mali so that a total of six discussions took place.

Citizenship	Number of interviewees	Place of interview
Guinea	51	Guinea / Mali
Mali	17	Mali
Côte d'Ivoire	15	Mali
Senegal	15	Mali
Eritrea	5	Sudan
Somalia	6	Kenya
Sudan	5	Kenya
South Sudan	9	Kenya
Democratic Republic of the Congo	7	Kenya
total	**130**	

Table 2: Participants in the focus group discussion

In this study, **Mali** represents a West African country that in equal measure is a country of origin for migrants and also an important transit country for West African migrants (cf. Ostheimer 2015: 3). Above all the economic situation, environmental factors and conflicts drive many Malians out of their country – extreme poverty, a high level of unemployment, illiteracy, droughts, armed conflicts and also terrorism are considered as causal factors for migration (cf. IOM 2014; Erlecke/Katzer 2015: 12-13). Two focus groups were held in Bamako with Malian participants. Five further discussions took place with migrants in transit. Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world and in recent years, it has become established as a migration hub in the Sahel region. In 2016, an estimated 30,000 - 40,000 West African migrants crossed the landlocked state towards Algeria or Libya; the majority of them were originally from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal or Côte d'Ivoire. The Goa Region and its capital of the same name in the north-east of Mali is considered to be an important hub for trans-Saharan migration routes. The dropping of visa restrictions for nationals of the ECOWAS area and porous borders without or with only inadequate controls facilitate irregular migration and human trafficking (cf. Molenaar/van Damme 2017; IOM 2013; Ostheimer 2015: 3). Since the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, the EU has more intensively sought to expand its development policy cooperation with the migrants' countries of origin and transit countries in Africa, including Mali (Trauner/Deimel 2013).

Senegal is considered a classic immigration country in West Africa because in the past many people from neighbouring states have found refuge there from numerous violent conflicts and political crises in the region. Above all since the turn of the millennium, increasing numbers of Senegalese have been seeking their fortunes in Europe; IOM assumes that in 2015 there were approximately 585,000 Senegalese nationals living abroad, particularly in other African states (especially in The Gambia) and in Europe (primarily in France) (IOM 2017a; on the history of migration in Senegal, see Schoumaker et al. 2013: 8-

9). The unsatisfactory social and economic situation in Senegal, the aspiration for a better life for themselves and their families and also the multitude of education and training opportunities in Europe are named as the main reasons for emigration (Kolb/Gierczynski-Bocandé 2015: 17). In the context of this study, two focus groups were held in Bamako with Senegalese migrants in transit.

Traditionally **Côte d'Ivoire** is also more likely to be a country of immigration rather than emigration. Young Ivorians are driven primarily by the search for a job in Europe (Erlecke/Katzer 2015: 11-12). In 2015, approximately 3.6 percent of Côte d'Ivoire nationals were living outside of their country; the majority of them were in West African states, in particular Burkina Faso. The largest Ivorian diaspora is found in France (IOM 2017b). For this study, migrants in transit from Côte d'Ivoire were interviewed in two focus groups in Bamako.

Kenya is "a place of refuge for numerous refugees"; the East African state is considered a "focus country for German development cooperation"[7] (Klein 2015: 6; see also IOM 2015a) and for this reason it was selected for this study. Two of the largest refugee camps in the world, Dadaab and Kakuma, are located on Kenyan territory (cf. Glasman/Brankamp 2016). Even though Kenyan migrants definitely come to Europe, in this study Kenya is primarily regarded and treated as a country of refuge and transit therefore no Kenyans were interviewed in the context of this study. According to IOM, in 2015 the number of immigrants in the East African state was more than 2.3 percent of the total population of approximately 47 million people (IOM 2017c). The majority of refugees, who seek refuge in Kenya, are originally from Somalia; the second largest group come from South Sudan (Klein 2015: 6). Further refugees also come from the Great Lakes region (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo) as well as Eritrea and Ethiopia. Originally, five focus groups were planned for Kenya. As it was not possible to organise a group with Eritrean refugees there, a group had to be organised in Sudan at short notice.

The second largest group of migrants arriving in Italy over the Central Mediterranean route is originally from **Eritrea** (see Table 1), which is why a survey of Eritreans appeared essential for the project. In the literature, the repressive political system in Eritrea, which is characterised by human rights violations and the systematic oppression of the opposition, is blamed for the comparatively high number of refugees (Zanker/Prediger 2017;

[7] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

Helfrich 2016; Hippler 2016: 39). As it was not possible to persuade Eritrean migrants in Kenya to participate in the research project and the Eritrean diaspora there is smaller than in, e.g., Sudan and Ethiopia, (cf. Ostheimer 2015: 2) a focus group with Eritreans was held in Khartoum.

For decades, Somalia has been plagued by armed conflicts, extremism and terrorism. Currently, approximately 16 percent of Somali nationals are living abroad (IOM 2015b). The largest number of refugees or migrants in Kenya is originally from Somalia. In 2015, Somalis accounted for nearly 70 percent of all refugees or migrants in Kenya (Klein 2015: 6). They represent an important target group for this research project. Therefore, a focus group discussion was also held with Somali refugees in Nairobi.

Although Kenya is not on the direct route to Europe for refugees from South Sudan, the country is initially easier to reach than mainland Europe for refugees in transit who are seeking protection from the civil war in their own country. Alongside war and massive violence against civilians, the acute famine and bitter poverty drive the people over the border to the neighbouring state (cf. Wahl 2016: 60; Ostheimer 2015: 6). In the context of this study, a focus group discussion with South Sudanese refugees was organised in Nairobi.

Migrants from **Sudan** also represent a further large group in the current refugee waves in Europe. In this case, conflicts are also a central reason for flight or migration (see Table 1; cf. Becker/Krause 2015); furthermore the economic and political situation in Sudan also often plays a part in the decision to leave the country. In Nairobi, a focus group with Sudanese refugees or migrants was held.

For years, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** has been the focus of national and international waves of migration. Four million people are affected by displacement in the second largest African state in terms of size; the country counts 2.8 million internally displaced persons, more than half a million Congolese have fled abroad from their home country (Krüger 2015: 5; on the history of migration in the DRC, see Schoumaker et al. 2013: 7-8). In the DRC, the reasons for fleeing are also extreme poverty, inadequate (training and) education opportunities, unemployment, conflicts (in particular in the east of the country), human rights violations and violence against civilians. In the course of this study project, a group discussion with Congolese was also held in Nairobi.

Following the principle of theoretical saturation, migrants with different profiles were interviewed. The biographical variables (gender, origin, age, profession) were varied with the aim that new cases would not yield any additional gain in knowledge (cf. Richie et al. 2014: 115). The recruiting of the focus group participants, the moderation and transcription of the discussions was carried out by three local MiCT consultants, who prior to the study were trained in research objectives, the selection of the participants and the survey instrument. The complexity of the study design required the following method. The majority of the focus groups had to be held in the language of the local country, whereby sometimes local interpreters were deployed or study participants helped in the interpretation. The majority of the focus groups in Mali could be held in the lingua franca of French (see Table 3), which is reflected in the shorter duration of the discussions because no time-consuming consecutive interpretation was required. All focus groups were recorded and transcribed in full with the exception of the discussion with the Eritrean study participants in Sudan; the reasons for which are described in detail below.

All participants were guaranteed anonymity. At the same time, participants were assured that their safety would not be jeopardised by the research project. All names used in the report are pseudonyms **without exception**. When recruiting the study participants, attention was paid to preferably identifying people who want to go Europe or who are on their way there. For the majority of the participants, this was of course only hypothetical because nobody could be sure whether they would actually complete the journey with all its obstacles. So, for example, the majority of study participants in Kenya have already been "in transit" for years (some of them since birth). In this context, a so-called "protracted refugee situation" is spoken of. It arises when, "refugees can neither be repatriated to their countries of origin nor resettled in third countries nor be permanently integrated locally"[8] (Krause 2016).

[8] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

Place	Date	Target Group	Interviewees	Length	Language
Conakry	07.03.2017	Guinean	8 ♂, 1 ♀	2:59	Susu
Conakry	07.03.2017	Guinean	5 ♂, 3 ♀	2:04	Susu
Kankan	10.03.2017	Guinean	10 ♂	2:45	Malinke
Labé	14.03.2017	Guinean	8 ♂	3:25	Peul
Labé	14.03.2017	Guinean	8 ♂	2:21	Peul
Bamako	13.03.2017	Ivorian	7 ♂	1:50	French
Bamako	29.04.2017	Ivorian	8 ♂	1:51	French
Bamako	13.03.2017	Malian	6 ♂, 2 ♀	1:47	French
Bamako	14.03.2017	Malian	6 ♂, 3 ♀	1:42	French
Bamako	16.03.2017	Guinean	7 ♂, 1 ♀	1:32	French
Bamako	16.03.2017	Senegalese	7 ♂, 1 ♀	1:29	Wolof
Bamako	01.05.2017	Senegalese	8 ♂	1:47	French
Khartum	11.04.2017	Eritrean	3 ♂, 2 ♀	1:30	Arabic/ Tigrinya
Nairobi	13.03.2017	Congolese	4 ♂, 3 ♀	2:30	Kiswahili
Nairobi	27.03.2017	Somalian	6 ♀	2:30	Somali
Nairobi	21.03.2017	South Sudanese	3 ♂, 6 ♀	3:45	Arabic
Nairobi	17.03.2017	Sudanese	2 ♂, 3 ♀	3:00	Arabic

Table 3: Overview of the focus group

The "classic" profile of the refugees and migrants who come to Europe is also reflected in the sample for this study: most likely male (even through a feminisation of migration is being observed: cf. Nyberg Sørensen et al. 2003: 9-10; Schoumaker et al. 2013: 17-18), most likely young (generally between the ages of 20 and 30) and most likely from educated classes (i.e., at least a high school diploma; mostly even university degrees) (cf. Wahl 2016:59). While in Guinea, the presence of study participants in the sample from both urban and rural areas was guaranteed by holding the focus groups in different places (Conakry, Kankan, Labé), this mixture generally automatically ensued in the case of the other focus countries. For example, the participants from Senegal, who were surveyed in Mali, were originally from other places, Tambacounda (in the east of the country, border region to Mali), Fatick (in the West on the Atlantic coast) or Louga (in the north-west on the Atlantic coast).

The focus group participants were recruited via the network of local consultants. In the case of Kenya, one person was always identified from this network, who in turn looked for participants within his/her community. In addition, there was always a meeting with potential participants beforehand, in which the aims of the study and the structure of the focus groups were explained. While it was relatively easy to persuade Sudanese and South Sudanese to participate because the local MiCT worker had good contacts to nationals of both states, the recruitment of Congolese and Somali study participants was much more difficult.

Via the local network, contact could be made to a Congolese refugee who formerly worked as a taxi driver and was well connected in the community. His trust could only be gained in the course of several meetings and telephone conversations; it was only then he agreed to help in the recruiting process. The Somali participants were initially very reserved and hesitant to participate in the project. Also in this case, the help of a contact person was necessary. The most difficult was the recruitment of Eritrean refugees, for whom participation in such a project appeared absolutely out of the question. It was only via a contact person in Khartoum that five people could be found who said they were prepared to take part, even though several attempts were also needed in this case. A reason that the Eritreans gave for this was that the UNHCR prohibits refugees from participating in interviews and discussion groups. At the same time, they expressed the worry that they could get into trouble with the Sudanese authorities. Therefore, the Eritrean participants participated under the condition that no audio and video recordings were made of the discussion. For this reason, a minute-taker was brought in to record the content of the conversations. In Mali, local contact persons were also used for recruitment. The goals and structure of the focus groups were explained to them and they in turn looked for potential participants in their community. Also in this case, the research team was met with great distrust, above all among the "non-Malians" and several attempts were necessary before participants from the focus countries were found. It was only in Guinea that the recruitment did not present any great difficulties. It can probably be explained with the fact that the participants there were still in their usual environment and did not (yet) find themselves in uncertainty or in "limbo" as the participants from the other focus countries did.

At the start of the discussions, all participants were expressly made aware that in the context of the project no information that could be linked to their person would be published. All participants were assured that they could stop the discussion at any time and could refuse to answer. Despite the obstacles in the recruiting process stated above, the participants spoke very openly about their fears, hardships, further plans and personal goals. Evidently, the discussions offered them not just the opportunity to exchange information but also a chance to reflect with other people in a similar situation. For example, a South Sudanese participant said during the focus group discussion that he was telling "his story" for the first time and another participant said, "We have been waiting for this opportunity. We have so many worries and we want to talk about them." The atmosphere of the discussion with the Sudanese participants was characterised by much positive energy. The participants stood by their statements with full conviction, repeatedly reinforced them in the discussion and showed a great willingness to discuss the topic of migration.

The discussion panels with the Congolese and Eritrean participants were characterised above all by great tension, especially at the beginning, which started to dissipate in the course of the discussion. Some questions caused the Eritreans unease meaning that their answers were short. During the discussions, the Somali participants clearly articulated several times the hope that there would be an improvement to their circumstances in Kenya as a result of the project.

In particular, the discussions with the East African participants were characterised by a high level of emotionality. War and violence have left psychological scars to the point of post-traumatic stress disorders among the study participants (cf. in this regard inter alia Craig et al. 2009; Khawaja et al. 2008). The participants sometimes described the terrible things that they had experienced themselves or their family members, relatives or friends had experienced. The desire for peace and safety was a central element of the discussions here. In contrast, the content of the discussion groups in West Africa focussed on topics, such as (youth) unemployment, poverty and lacking education opportunities. It could explain why the atmosphere of the discussions in the focus groups in the West African countries was paraphrased with very different attributes, e.g., "relaxed", "friendly" and "in an inviting atmosphere".

The survey instrument – a semi-structured guide document, with which the focus group discussions were led – was developed on the basis of the research interest and academic literature. The guide document has five parts:

(i) **Introduction***:* At the start, the participants were asked to introduce themselves (age, origin, profession, family status). Then there were two opening questions, which were intended to make the start of the discussion easier and to relax the atmosphere. After that, the participants were asked to describe their everyday life at present and their next goals for a (potential) emigration/continued journey.

(ii) **Flight and the causes of flight***:* In the next section of the discussion, the participants discussed why people flee from their home countries and which reasons are pivotal and which are of secondary importance in the decision to flee or migrate. In addition, this section is also about the risks and challenges when fleeing or after arrival in the destination country.

(iii) **Sources of information and how well refugees and migrants are informed**: In the third part of the discussion, it was debated how refugees and migrants get information or rather from what information sources they draw their knowledge. In this regard, the participants' perceptions of an achievable life in the destination country or the living conditions in the destination country itself were discussed. Lastly, options for returning and how returning is regarded by the local population were addressed.

(iv) **Projects of international cooperation**: Finally, deliberations were made together as to what projects appear to be useful in order to improve the prospects of people staying in the focus countries. In this regard, the participants were asked to name projects concerning migration sponsored by the Federal German Government that they were aware of from their home countries or the transit country. In addition, the participants were asked for a brief assessment of the projects that were presented to them by the principal investigators.

(v) **Conclusion**: At the end of the discussion, the participants themselves were given another opportunity to highlight points themselves and to name topics and aspects that they felt were dealt with too briefly or were possibly underinvestigated during the discussion.

5. Research Results

The following section summarises the most important results from the focus groups. Initially, the reasons for flight are described on the basis of a profile of the surveyed participants: What distinguished migrants in West and East Africa? How do they earn, e.g., their living, and what expectations do they have for their future? What reasons can be derived from this for their intention or desire to go to Europe? The following section deals with access to information and the use of information by migrants and people intending to migrate.

5.1 Reasons for/causes of flight

West Africa

Single, young and in precarious circumstances – these attributes can be used to summarise in short the profile of the participants from West Africa. The majority of them have no children, are not married and are unattached, which may make the real or desired journey to Europe easier because they have no family ties. Whoever has a job – and a surprisingly large number do – works as a rule in a trade or in an industry. The next largest group work in the service sector; while only a few are salaried employees. Many have been to university and are frustrated by the poor career prospects or the "lowly" work that they have to do despite having a degree.

Socio-economic reasons

Therefore, socio-economic interests were usually mentioned as reasons for the intended migration to Europe: to earn money and "become rich", to find a well-paid job, to establish their own company – in short to improve their circumstances. Many of the participants hope above all to have access to education and the employment market in Europe. The desire to have a family, to own a house, to become independent from their parents and to be able to support them financially in their old age prevails privately. However, it would be incorrect to reduce the desire to migrate held by the participants from West Africa to purely economic interests alone. The participants from North Guinea also named ethnic conflicts as a reason for fleeing and the female participants spoke of fleeing from forced marriages. Furthermore, racism, political tensions, unrest and looting, bad governance and the irresponsible use of natural resources was also discussed.

Migration as a "success story", social pressure and those returning seen as "failures"
Many of the reasons mentioned by the participants fit into the well-known theories on the causes of flight and also the desires and perceptions regarding the target countries. However, two reasons for migration do not fit the classic push/pull pattern: **Firstly** for many of the participants in West Africa, migration is considered as a "success story" and a way to gain respect and standing in their social milieu. The social pressure within the family and in the community is sometimes so great that many young people feel "forced" to leave their country for Europe, although they may not want to at all. For example, Amadou (m), a 24-year-old intern from Senegal said, "These days you simply cannot please parents. They constantly compare their children with the children of other families. If they see that a child from another family has made it to Europe and regularly sends money home, then you are berated, by your mother, by your father that you don't do anything other than sleep and eat." Djibril (m) from Conakry, who gave his profession as "I'm a footballer", told a very similar story, "Once you have finished school, your family drops you. Here in Africa many people live polygamous and desert their children – particularly, if your brothers achieve something and you don't. I also want to leave. I finished university in 2011, have applied for jobs everywhere but without success. I have friends; they are married and have jobs. Even in my family there is competition between us children. They are all reasons for leaving."

Family pressure through polygamy was often mentioned in the focus groups that were held in Guinea. This pressure was intensified by the social recognition that is given to "successful" family members abroad. Abdoulaye (m), a married jeweller from Dakar who desperately wants to go to Europe, talks of his big brother who "has lived in Italy for 30 years and earns good money. I love him for that. He has done so much for us." Also Cellou (m), a married, unemployed academic from Labé in northern Guinea who has already failed once in his attempt to legally study in France, has a brother who lives in Europe, "When I was still in school, there was always a big celebration when he came to the village. Everybody was there and danced. And we, who had stayed in the country, felt small and meaningless. Sometimes, he didn't transfer any money for two months but then when 100 euros arrived, everyone was so happy and talked about nothing else. That is how our culture is. If you emigrate, you are socially well regarded."

However, by implication it means that those returning home with "empty hands" have a very difficult position in their community. Masja Van Meeteren et al. (2014) already discovered in a study of those returning to Morocco that "whether return is an expression of success or failure depends on the original migration motives of migrants". Especially

those migrants who cannot meet the financial expectations of their family often have problems after they have returned. Therefore social networks do not only serve transnational support, but at the same time also mean transnational obligations (Van Meeteren et al. 2014: 338, 356). For example, Jacques (m), a 26-year-old marketing student said, "Those who got into debt with friends or families before they departed are pursued after their return. There are people here in Kankan, who have done some dreadful things. It sometimes happens that a friend borrows your motorbike and disappears. He drives it to Siguiri and Kourémalé, sells the motorbike and takes the money to travel to Europe. Such people have problems after they return." Samira (f), an unemployed academic from Conakry, told a similar story, "Most young people don't even tell their parents that they are leaving. They disappear overnight without saying goodbye. In my quarter, a boy disappeared; he had stolen 1,000 euros, 400,000 Guinea francs and a computer from his mother in order to pay for his journey to Europe."

At the same time, the social pressure creates a high level of psychological strain among those affected. "There are many Guineans in Europe who are suffering. But they don't want to return because here they are regarded as failures and feel ashamed," discloses Mamadou (m), an 18-year-old singer from Conakry. Sandaly (m), a 24-year-old painter from the capital of Guinea, experienced it for himself, "I once disappeared for two months. Everyone thought I was in Europe and when I was suddenly back again, it was said that I had been sent back. I was treated like a failure. It made me really sad. I felt excluded and was depressed." According to Ahmed (m), an unemployed academic from Labé, those who return are "lazy in the eyes of the people here. The family doesn't understand why someone who returned would have allowed themselves to be repatriated, when others didn't. Even if they came back of their own accord, the family is not happy. For them that is a failure. It is said that those returning are condemned. In our country, people speak of the 'crimes of the condemned'". And Djibril (m), the footballer, speaks of the undignified controls that those returning are subjected to once they are home, "Already at the airport, you are treated badly. The police consider you a bandit. There are neither NGOs nor government bodies that offer support. Not even your family. In the end, many become mentally ill and take drugs or go mad."

Migration as a „natural process"

Secondly migration is considered a "natural process". Nomadism is in the blood of many people in West Africa alongside a thirst for adventure and curiosity, meaning that many migrants do not understand why they should not succumb to these "natural" urges. In this sense, migration is also a means to overcome the "boredom" in your own life. For

example, Antoine (m), a 28-year-old unmarried chauffeur from Conakry, emphasised that migration "did not start existing today". However, migration has continued to "increase". For, "many young people have the idea of going abroad in their head." Mohamed (m), a 28-year-old Ivorian from Abobo is even of the opinion that the "majority of people [go to] Europe for fun". According to Ibrahima (m), a 30-year-old maintenance technical from Conakry, migration "has now become routine. Here in Africa, people think that Europe is heaven on earth. People want to achieve something in their lives, that is natural. Even if you have everything, enough to eat and a roof over your head, you still always want to go to Europe. The Africans want to have a better life." Also his countryman Fodé (m), a sociology student from Labé, places an emphasis on the aspect of "natural", "If you can afford it, then you go. Every community travels. You leave the country to seek your fortune."

Two further quotes, which conclude these findings, head rather in the direction of "nomadic existence", for instance, Rachid (m), an unmarried 27-year-old accountant from the Fouta Toro region in Senegal, said, "Here in Senegal, just like in Mali, it is the Soninke. It is in their nature, it is their tradition. And even if there were millions of them, they would still head off." And Abdoul (m), an unmarried and unemployed academic from Labé, used the Peul as an example, "If you look at their history and analyse the different ethnic groups, then you can see that the Peul are travelling people. Migration is a sign of social standing. It is innate in Guineans. The Peul move from region to region in order to find grazing land for cattle."

At this point it was noted that almost all West African focus group participants emphasised that they want to help their own country through migration, e.g., through the transfer of knowledge, and that they would only stay abroad until they had earned enough money. For example, Ousmane (m), a 20-year-old unmarried and childless student from Senegal said, "I want to be a big businessman, to help myself and my country, and to reduce unemployment in my home country." Thierno (m), an electrician from Conakry, has even bigger ambitions, "I want to be the president. I want to fight for Africa and show the Europeans. I want to get Africa out of the hopeless situation that the continent finds itself in." It is reported that many of the West Africans wish to be able to personally do something to combat unemployment, delinquency or "gangs" in their own countries.

East Africa

The majority of the participants from East Africa are married and have children (which are sometimes living in a different country, separately from one or both of their parents respectively). Some of the East Africans have already been in transit for years; some of them even since birth or childhood. The age composition for the East African participants is therefore much more mixed (i.e., more older participants). Many of them earn their money with odd jobs (e.g., as salespersons, as domestic helps or serving in restaurants). The majority of them do not have work permits, are considered "illegal" and therefore cannot take on proper jobs. The despair among the East African participants could be clearly felt; during the focus group discussions, many of them asked for help.

Conflicts, wars and political situation in the home country

Conflicts and wars as well as the political situation in the home countries were named as reasons for fleeing their home countries. Flight or migration are dominated by the need to bring yourself and your family to safety. Many of the participants suffer from anxiety and trauma, were the victims of acts of war, violence or rape, and have lost relatives. The desire for peace in their home countries and returning there are priorities. The participants hope for education for themselves and their family, a permanent job and a regular income in Europe.

That is not to say that the same reasons for flight and migration as already named by the participants from West Africa do not sometimes come into play for the participants from East Africa. Alia (f), a student from Sudan who works in television, said with regard to the social standing of migrants, "The privileged people in Khartoum go abroad. To show off. 'Look at my son, he is in Malaysia and works there. God bless him. And my daughter is in the USA and regularly sends us money.' The poor people leave the country because of the war, social isolation, the genocide and things like that."

Those who return as "shirkers"

While in West Africa those who return are seen as "failures" by the majority, in East Africa those who let themselves be repatriated are more likely to be perceived as "shirkers". This became apparent above all in the focus group with the Eritrean participants. Awate (m), a married Eritrean with two children, who had worked as violinist in various restaurants in Sudan but is now unemployed, said, "Those who return are not trusted. People think that they shirked the hard times. Society has no mercy." Dan (m), a married Eritrean with four children, who helps out in a restaurant, agreed, "People think that they are people who are lazy. They live well and have a lot of money." And Sesuna (f), a 20-year-old Eritrean, explained that those returning were "not wanted, apart from by their families and relatives. All the other people do not accept them. People think they are outsiders. They have not been through the same things or suffered like all the people who stayed at home. They fled and no longer belong in their home country."

Problems of the migrants in transit in West and East Africa

Nearly all the migrants in transit – in West Africa but even more so in East Africa – named discrimination by locals as a recurring problem. For example, the study participants reported that their expenses were far higher than those of locals, be it for rent, the children's schooling, medical care or living expenses. Many of them were not properly paid for their work. For example, Joyce (f), an unmarried school dropout from South Sudan who has been living in Kenya for one year, explained, "I worked in a restaurant, but I stopped when I was no longer paid. Three months without pay – what a waste of time. Now, I'm looking for another job. Without work, you have nothing to eat, you can't pay the rent." Seydou (m), a 25-year-old shoe seller from Touba in Senegal, also knows this situation, "In the beginning, I slept on the street and suffered greatly. Then I opened a small business with shoes and now I can afford a room for 12,000 FCFA a month."

Due to lacking identity documents, many East African study participants are regularly victims of arbitrary police checks, "Without identity documents, it is hard. The police stop us on the streets and often it takes hours before we are allowed to go again," reported Sesuna (f), a 20-year-old unmarried and childless Eritrean, who works for an organisation whose name she does not want mentioned out of fear. She added, "The majority of Eritreans came here because of political problems. We did not flee for economic reasons but because our lives are in danger." The participants described problems dealing with authorities, in particular with government bodies and the UNHCR. Many refugees in Kenya are not registered because registration via the UNHCR is generally only possible in refugee camps, which many people avoid for understandable reasons (e.g., overcrowding,

violence, illnesses, etc.). However, they therefore do not have a legal status as a refugee and as a result no work permit. For example, Mary (m), a 21-year-old student of human resources management from Somalia, explains, "If you were brought here by smugglers, then it is impossible to go to Kakuma or Dadaab because you are already staying in Kenya illegally. It is also difficult to work because you need a permit."

Discrimination is reflected in day-to-day life, in particular through the lack of integration. "I went to Senegal for a while. In Dakar, the locals discriminated against me. That somehow motivated me to return to Guinea," said Mamadou (m), the 18-year-old singer from Conakry who has no wife nor children. And yet, many Senegalese do not fair better abroad, as Amadou (m), the already quoted Senegalese intern now living in Mali, was aware, "It is not easy to gain the trust of the people here. As soon as they notice that you are a foreigner, they distrust you." This distrust can take on dangerous traits. Another quote from Mary (f), the student from Somalia, "Even here in Kenya, you are not safe. As soon as they know that you come from Somalia, they think you're Al-Shabaab. They could shoot you on the spot."

5.2 Access to information and use of information

Sources of information and knowledge about migration

Personal contacts

Irrespective of their country or region of origin, all study participants named personal contacts as the most important source of information. Babacar (m), a 26-year-old tradesman from Senegal, said that he knows about the difficulties of migration to Europe, "because I have friends who have gone to Europe. Some of them run out of money on the journey. You have nothing left to eat, you sleep on the street." His countryman Oumar (m), a 27-year-old assistant tailor from Tamba, said, "We know that the conditions are hard. We have friends who fled to Europe. They have told us that you have to watch out for the Arabs. And there are bandits on route. Followed by the sea and boats that sink. We know so much about the refugee route."

Contact to their social circle is maintained among other ways via social media (including facebook), which was named as an important source of information. In individual cases, the participants referred to other sources. For example, Seydou (m), the 25-year-old shoe seller from Senegal, who desperately wants to go to Europe "even if it is via Libya," said, „Artists sing about fleeing. For example, Master Soumy. But you also learn things from those returning." Birane (m), a Senegalese jeweller from Dibel, talked about a smuggler network in Dakar, "where you find out how you can get to Europe. Some people sell all their belongings in order to be able to pay the sums that they demand."

In other focus group discussions – whether they took place in East or West Africa and whether participants came from urban or rural areas – social media was met with great distrust. Participants spoke of a glorification of Europe, of lies and deception about the true situation there. Many participants emphasised that the legal way is the only right way and that is what they were seeking. For example, Sandaly (m), the unmarried childless painter from Conakry, said, "I call on all young people to take the normal way, travel by plane. Not over the ocean." Also Abdoulaye (m), the jeweller from Dakar, who desperately wants to go to Europe and was already quoted above, spoke of, "many friends, who had gone. One friend went with a group of 50 people over the Mediterranean. Only nine of them arrived." Therefore, he would travel "to Europe only via the legal way" and he was even applauded for this by the other study participants in his focus group. Also his countryman, Elhadj (m), a 26-year-old tailor from Louga, wants "to take the normal route to Europe, when I get the papers. Under no circumstances do I want to have to live in Algeria. The Arabs are malicious and the Senegalese there are sick of life." Ahmed (m),

the unemployed academic from Labé, got to the heart of the matter as follows, "Illegal migration is our enemy. It is a kind of suicide."

Knowledge about the dangers of migration

These quotes already give an initial indication that among the participants the perception about the life of migrants in Europe is much more realistic than is assumed on the basis of the push/pull models. For example, Andrea Ostheimer from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung called for the awareness among young migrants "about the poor prospects of a legal residence status and the current situation in the European refugee camps to be increased"[9] (Ostheimer 2015: 9). In this regard, a quote from Abdoul (m), the unemployed academic from one of the focus groups that was held in Labé, Guinea, "It is not a good idea to live in Europe without papers. You can't travel freely, you are not treated if you are ill. In short: You can't live the life of a free man. And also his countryman, Jacques (m), the 26-year-old marketing student from Kankan, said, "As a Guinean without papers in Europe, you will not been seen as human, you are treated like an animal."

The study participants spoke out even more clearly regarding the poor employment prospects for migrants in Europe. In this regard, there are a multitude of examples in the transcripts. For example, Amadou (m), the intern from Senegal, said, "The Africans in Europe have to do work that they would not do here in Africa." His countryman, Rachid (m), a 27-year-old accountant working in a company agreed with him, "If someone here told us that we had to collect the refuse, we would never do it. In contrast in Europe, we do much worse things." But also in the transcripts from the other countries, similar arguments are found. According to Mamadou (m), the singer from Conakry, Africans who live in Europe are "not proud of their jobs. The things that you would never do here, you do for the whites, for example, working in a retirement home. You have to swallow your pride." Florence (f), a 25-year-old unemployed hairdresser from the Guinean capital, also used refuse as an example, "You collect things from the refuse. You have no dignity. In that case, I would rather return to my home country, instead of living in such conditions." A final example from Moussa (m), a 36-year-old married Ivorian with four children, „People go to Europe and don't find a job. Or perhaps, they only get one washing the plates of the whites, even though they actually have a PhD."

In addition, the difficult living conditions for migrants in Europe were discussed, for example, Sagal (f), a 24-year-old divorced Somali with two children, said, "Those who go

[9] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

to Europe want to help their families. But when you arrive there you also have many problems. That makes me sad. You run away from you home country, but when you arrive in Europe nobody helps you." Demba (m), a salesman from Labé, refers to the financial aspects, "The migrants abroad do not want to admit that they have to do inferior jobs. Those that come home from Europe are thrifty because it's hard to make ends meet and therefore they don't want to spend any money." Even communication problems were mentioned, for instance, by Albert (m), a 36-year-old minister in a refugee church and originally from Fizi in eastern Congo, "Those who flee to Germany have to speak the language in order to find a job." His countryman, Pierre (m), who also comes from eastern Congo and lives in Nairobi, was generally critical, "Europe is not heaven on earth. There are also problems there. If I leave Africa, then I know that it is perfectly possible that I will have to live there the same as I do here." And for Alia (f), the Sudanese student working in television, the alleged push and pull factors were nothing but an orchestrated campaign against Africa by rich Europeans, "The white people's media is full of propaganda. They are good at communicating an image of beauty and power, and presenting Africa as a continent that is full of conflicts, war, death, hunger and corruption. They are in heaven and Africa is hell. Yet, there are still homeless people in Europe. Why do they pretend, this only happens in Africa?" This quote and the recording as a whole show that the theory of the "power" of the pull factors is not viable. Contrary to what is assumed in the literature, the focus group participants were thoroughly informed of the risks and hardships of migration.

Use of the information: migration against better judgement?

Why do people expose themselves to the dangers of irregular migration – against their better judgement? How do migrants and people wanting to migrate use the information about migration to Europe that they have or rather what information is used? Despite poor employment prospects, of which they are aware, many of the participants want to go – including Samira (f) from Conakry, who has a degree but is unemployed, "I just can't find a job; it stresses and annoys me. In my family, I am considered a failure. That is why I want to go to Europe. Even if I have to wash the genitals of the whites, I will earn money and have a better life there than here." Many of the study participants emphasise that they would only consider legal migration and would never risk their lives. However, some participants openly admitted wanting to travel via the dangerous sea route despite the real danger of dying at sea, of which they are aware. Such a risky decision that is barely calculable in terms of the consequences cannot be explained with rationality (key word: "homo oeconomicus"). For example, Mahmoud (m), an unmarried student from Labé,

said, “When I have enough money, I will take the journey, today, tomorrow, no matter when. There is nothing that can stop me.”

Some of the participants (but by no means all of them – more in this regard later) were not put off by the negative stories from their social circle (and nearly everyone knows such a story). “I know two young people, who went to Europe via Libya,” Antoine (m), the 28-year-old chauffeur from Conakry, reported, “If you die or survive, no matter what the dangers are ... these questions are not asked. You still go, even if your head will be chopped off.” According to Hussein (m), a pupil from Labé, “Many people [are] well informed. But they will tell you: I would rather go to prison in Europe than to live here any longer. They long since decided to leave.” For example, Seydou (m), a 25-year-old unmarried shoe seller from Touba in Senegal for whom “Mali [is] just a transit land”, wants “to continue north, to Europe. I have too many problems in Senegal and Mali is not enough. I have to continue.” For this, he received applause from the other participants in the focus group. Where does he want to go? “France or Spain.” Although he does not know anyone in Europe, “But it doesn’t matter if it is a good life or misery, I will still go.” The other focus group participants laughed, which appeared to strengthen Seydou’s resolve, “I’m going, even if I have to sleep in the gutter.” Sesuna (f), the Eritrean who was already quoted, can even take something positive from the negative experiences of other migrants, “Living conditions are too hard. As if you would change your mind regarding migration just because of a few stories from other people. On the contrary. It is good to hear such stories. Then you don’t make the same mistakes.”

Belief in fate and God

Milena Belloni (2016) compared migrants to gamblers and described a legal residence permit as a “jackpot”. The people know that there is little chance of success in Europe, yet even the hope of the smallest of chances is enough to bet on this one card. The gambler metaphor is also helpful in this respect as it again reduces ad absurdum the theory of rationally acting migrants. Even indicating the low probability of winning does not prevent people from playing the lottery. Another comment from Djibril (f), the footballer from Conakry, “People talk about fate. Loosing or winning, that is a question of fate.” We are not all equal before luck. People want to try their luck, whatever the risk in doing so is and despite the information that they have about the dangers.” His countryman, Ibrahim (m), a salesman in Conakry, says that “many people have been misled by psychics who predict their future. If these charlatans tell you that you will be lucky and survive the journey, then the people just go. No one can change their mind and they say to you, ‘you are not a prophet.’” Sagal (f), the Somali, said, “The only thing I know is that I have to go

to Europe. Everyone has their own luck. Maybe I will be lucky. Maybe I will be the first Somali refuge, who gets a full education in Europe! I have hope." Also Mary (f), the already quoted student who is also from Somalia, had a similar opinion, "You hear many stories; maybe they are true, or maybe not. You simply go. Maybe you will have no difficulties. You simply try." The attempt to have more luck than the others was a reoccurring theme in all focus groups. "Everyone simply wants to try it themselves," said Dan (m), the married Eritrean with four children who would like to go to Italy, where his sister lives.

The belief in luck is fed by the success stories of the few migrants who, in keeping with the betting analogy, have bet on six winning numbers. For example, Shaker (m), an unmarried South Sudanese journalist who would look for work and a wife in Europe, thought of the successful South Sudanese basketball players in the NBA, "You can simply be successful like Manute Bol or Luol Deng. Or Mohamed Jalil Hashim, who worked as a consultant for some Sudanese in Holland and in doing so helped his country." Ibrahim (m), the salesman from Conakry, thought instead about a "young Malian immigrant," who "once saved a white, French child from drowning. The French president received him and gave him French nationality. I think, it was Nicolas Sarkozy."

In addition to hoping for luck (or fate), the study participants also have a deep faith in God that leads to "rational" information about migration also being blocked out. For instance, Birane, the Senegalese jeweller (m) from Dibel, said "I am just passing through. I have a couple of uncles in Kayes," and added, "God wanted me to stay here so long." Also the question of who dies at sea and who doesn't is placed solely in God's hands by many, such as Antoine (m), the chauffeur from Conakry, "When you travel over the sea and have money, God will protect you, you are in the hands of God." Or Lambert (m), a 26-year-old salesman who also comes from Guinea's capital, "For me it is a matter of fate, of God. Of those that leave the country, some of them make it to Europe, some of them die at sea. What God has decided for you will come to pass." A final quote from Kaba (m), a 30-year-old singer, who also lives in Conakry, "Going abroad is a question of fate. I would always encourage my brothers, my friends and my family to leave Guinea for Europe. Fate decides who dies at sea and who survives. I would never stop anyone from leaving the country."

Role of information campaigns

Such patterns of explanation should give an indication as to why information campaigns on the dangers of irregular migration only have a slim chance of success, as is emphasised in the literature. Jørgen Carling and María Hernández-Carretero, who carried out an

ethnographic study with Senegalese migrants who fled from West Africa to the Canary Islands on boats, formulated three reason for the assumption regarding "the limited effect of awareness campaigns on discouraging migration". Firstly, the refugees and migrants feel like they are better informed than the people who produce such campaigns. Secondly, they can discount these campaigns as "biased propaganda"; especially as they only explain the risks of irregular migration but do not explain the rights of migrants. Finally, the information from migrants (e.g., regarding job prospects in their own country) is often classed as being irrelevant (Carling/ Hernández-Carretero 2011: 49). A fourth aspect could be added; that information campaigns target rational considerations with which people intending to migrate cannot be reached or can only be reached with difficulty. It has to be assumed that the messages of the campaigns are filtered by people's own opinions (see in this regard also the study by Nieuwenhuys/Pécoud 2007). Samuel (m), a South Sudanese student of finance, got to the heart of the matter as follows, "Some people think that all the negative things that they hear from a person about Europe are only down to the individual behaviour of this person. They think that they will fit into the new society. All you have to do is to behave just like the members of the society. That is why some migrants are sure that they will manage better than the people from whom they have heard the negative stories."

This sometimes leads to negative stories being reinterpreted or simply not being believed although they come from their social circle. In social psychology, cognitive dissonance reduction is spoken of in this context (cf. Festinger 1957). The phenomenon is known from the behaviour of gamblers and also from the behaviour of people who keep on smoking despite anti-smoking campaigns and warnings on the packets, and although they objectively know the dangers.

The selective choice and fading out of information serves to preserve the capacity to act in difficult and complex situations. "My brother always says that life in Europe is hard. But he earns well. He built us a house, he has financially supported my parents," explained Abdoulaye (m), the jeweller from Dakar. "By now, he has lived there for more than 30 years and looks after everything. He is doing well but he nevertheless says that it is not easy. You have a car, three wives... And you think your life is hard? I don't understand it. I can't believe it. I want to go there too." Nestor (m), a 19-year-old footballer from Conakry, even believes, "Everyone who tells you that Europe is expensive, is lying! If you made an offer to this person to exchange identity papers and to go to Europe in their place, this person would never in their life accept." Frédéric (m), an Ivorian student who already left Côte d'Ivoire at the age of 10, tells a very similar story, "I have an uncle in

Europe. Every time I tell him that I want to come to him, he says, no. It is not good here. You won't find work here. And I say, but you are there and you are doing well." Mouctar (m), a married salesman from Labé working in Mali and who in his own words, "has gone looking for adventure" several times, ultimately failing in Algeria and Morocco, is regularly confronted with the disbelief of the people in his milieu, "I advise everyone against fleeing over the land route, because I know it and know what it means. But in general people don't listen to me when I give them advice. Once I wanted to deter a group of young people from fleeing, but they did not believe my stories. Only on the way to Europe did they realise that I was right. They even rang me and told me that. Today, I really regret that I made the attempts at all."

The quoted examples show that for many study participants, neither poor job prospects in Europe nor the dangers of fleeing influence their personal assessment of risk. One exception: the loss of a friend, family member or acquaintance definitely has a deterrent effect. For example, Mory (m), a pupil from Labé, said, "I wanted to flee and considered all the ways, even the sea. Especially in 2015, I thought a lot about going to Europe. I even tried to steal from my father. But then I did not do it because I lost so many friends. They died on the way."

Third person effect and migration

A reason why the public often considers migrants and people intending to migrate as being badly informed could be the so-called third-person effect. It claims that "people generally consider other people to be more susceptible to attempts to influence them by commercial or political advertising in the media than they are themselves"[10]. Numerous studies have empirically confirmed the third-person effect (Schweiger 2007: 35). "Social media is not a means of information, it is rather an instrument to entice young people to Europe," said Louis (m), a 21-year-old footballer from Conakry, who distances himself from his peers of the same age. "Above all the information on facebook causes problems. A friend, who is currently in Libya or Algeria, can send photos and claim he is in Italy. Local networks provide incorrect information," said Antoine (m), the chauffeur, as well. Samira (f), the unemployed academic, also spoke of illusory images that are doing the rounds on the internet, "Many Guinean brothers and sisters live in refugee camps, but they send deceptive images to the home country. Of cities, restaurants. They spread them via social networks and deceive people about their real living conditions." In the focus group discussion, Moussa (m), a 36-year-old Ivorian whose cousin died while crossing the

[10] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

Mediterranean, complained that there was "no reliable information. The people know nothing of the real problems. They walk through the desert to Europe. They know nothing of the journey, about the real problems and if their money is enough." And yet, according to the participants, it is not always necessarily social media that misleads potential migrants. "Here there are networks of youths, who drum up young people for the journey to Europe. They demand between five and ten million Guinea francs for the journey and show you beautiful pictures of different European countries in order to entice you," said Ibrahim (m), the salesman from Conakry, "And the ignorant fools travel without checking the information. They only realise once they are there, what the reality is." However, the 17 focus group discussions prompt the question whether there are really such things as "ignorant fools" in that sense. On the contrary, it is to be supposed that absolutely everyone wanting to migrate is aware, maybe not of every detail, but at least they roughly know the risks and dangers of irregular migration. However, the reasons stated – belief in fate and God and cognitive dissonance – influence the risk assessment of these people.

5.3 Projects of international cooperation

The results of the discussions can be condensed into five central aspects: Firstly only a very few participants were able to name on an ad hoc basis any projects sponsored by the German Federal Government that in a narrow or broader sense deal with the topic of migration. The majority of study participants had never heard of such projects. For example, Khadim (m), a 29-year-old tailor from Fatick in Senegal, said, "No, such projects don't exist. I'm saying that because even if they did exist, the money would not get to the people who really need it." Adama (m) from Abidjan, also a tailor, held a similar opinion, "The Europeans give money, but nobody knows what happens to it. We have no information that, for example, France has given such and such an amount. We don't know anything specific." Subsequently, when example projects from the German development cooperation were presented, some of the study participants therefore suggested that these projects were "advertised" in order to increase the level of awareness among the migrants. "I wonder why we have never heard anything about these projects. There appears to be an information problem here," found Dan (m) from the Eritrean focus group. His co-participant, Sesuna (f), added, "The biggest problem with these projects is that nobody knows about them. They need to be advertised so that Eritreans know about them and know how they can benefit from them. That must be done." Shaker from the South Sudanese group also saw it this way, "They are good projects, but no journalist is following what exactly is being done so that the people will know about it. South Sudanese journalists could help by reporting about these projects. A journalist could accompany the team and publish his opinion about it."

Secondly the focus groups have shown that initially only the "large" players, such as UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, other UN organisations and the Red Cross, are known. However, the third finding is that these organisations have a very bad reputation among the population. According to Mouctar (m), the salesman from Labé, "The Red Cross [has] done a lot for refugees, even if it did not always correspond to the expectations of the population. The organisation is barely accessible for normal citizens. They have a not very appealing approach. They simply send people away." Albert (m), the Congolese minister in a refugee church in Nairobi, said in this regard, "The whole Congolese population is disappointed by the international community. For 15 years, MONUSCO has been in the country, but they have not found a solution for the problem." Although there are "enough initiatives. In Kenya, there is Médecins sans Frontières, IOM and UNHCR. But we are thousands of refugees. And in order to get access to such projects, you have to wait forever. However, when you get ill and need medicine, then you can't wait."

Also NGOs, who work in the field of tackling the causes of migration/flight, came off badly with most of the participants. "There is a lot of corruption in NGOs. They make you wonderful promises and as soon as they have got their money, they disappear completely," thought Djibril (m), the footballer from Conakry. His countryman, Ibrahim (m), the salesman, said, "NGOs are like family businesses. They only give jobs to their family. If you don't know anyone, then you won't be helped." Also Moussa, from Côte d'Ivoire has "little hope" because "There are so many NGOs. They are people who are only there to make profit. If they really wanted to help, then we would have already been helped."

The fourth result concerns the suggestions to improve international cooperation concerning the causes of flight. Alongside the known recommendations (creation of jobs, improvement of education opportunities, promotion of investment opportunities, etc.), the focus groups have also shown that the expectations of the refugees and the migrants of the Europeans with regard to development policy engagement are above all characterised by the departure from a European centric migration policy. "I think that the EU has to create better living conditions for young migrants in Europe," said Samira (f), an unemployed Guinean from Conakry. "Europe should open the gates to migrants. There were times when Europeans lived in Africa and benefited from it. What is against Africans benefiting from Europe now?" says Sesuna from Eritrea. Jacques (m), the marketing student from Kankan, believed that "the whites" have to help to "stop the clandestine migration. They have to simplify the visa policy in the embassies. You pay a lot of money for a clandestine journey to Europe. With that you could have legally bought a visa. But the mafia works in the embassies." Alia (f), the TV student from Sudan, even pleaded for a special tax, "The whites should pay for the fact that they colonised us. Each European country, be it Great Britain, Belgium or France, should be obligated to pay a colonial tax. Colonialism set us back years and they are still trying to cherry pick."

The fifth and final finding concerns projects of German development cooperation, which were presented to the participants. Even if they were positively evaluated by the majority (Albert on a project with refugees in Kalemie, DCR, "It is very encouraging. I would like to thank the German government for what they are doing in Kalemie."), all the participants wished for more and above all better aid. For example, Evariste (m), a married Congolese with two children who has lived in Kenya for four years, said, "It is true they are good projects, but we would also like such projects here in Nairobi." Mahmoud (m), the student from Labé, is a great fan of the EU PACNOP project (Programme d'appui à la Confédération nationale des organisation paysannes - programme supporting the national association of farmers' organisations), "I think it is really good. A lot is being

done for agriculture. However, the problem with these projects is that they are far too short. They have to go on much longer." In conclusion, another comment from Dan (m), the Eritrean, who sees it in the same way for his case, "All projects with refugees are in eastern Sudan and they are small. We have no benefit from them."

6. Conclusions

To the question, what moves migrants to leave their home countries, the participants in the focus groups initially listed reasons that are know from the classic push/pull models: However, the sections above have also shown that the push/pull models only inadequately describe the phenomena of migration (cf. De Hass 2008) because there are reasons that go beyond push factors and cannot be explained using the classic models. In this regard, this study names two specific examples: For people in Sub-Saharan Africa migration is a way to gain symbolic capital, i.e., social recognition and social prestige. As a result of competition within families and isolation, young people are sometimes forced into migration, although they possibly may not really want it. However, they see migration as a means of complying with social pressure. Migration is considered as a success story as long as you are able to meet the expectations of those who stayed at home (wealth, family reunification etc.). People, who return to their home countries and were unable to meet these expectations are considered as "failures".

Furthermore, this study shows that the study participants view migration as a natural process – and that all the more so because ethnic groups and peoples in Africa look back on a long tradition of migration. Hein de Haas called for mobility to be recognised as an "intrinsic feature of our world" (De Haas 2007: 838). By implication, it would therefore mean that even without push factors, people would always leave their home countries, be it out of desire for adventure, curiosity and simply due to the legitimate desire to improve their current circumstances.

In the final analysis, pull factors are also unable to explain why people go abroad. Admittedly migrants are in fact looking for a better life, which is connected to the classic pull factors, e.g., a permanent job and regular income, access to education and wealth. However, migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa also know the slim chances and the risks that are hurdles to this desire. This knowledge goes directly against the core concept of pull factors. If people actually believed that their living conditions would radically improve by migrating and that was their central drive, there would be many more people who would return spontaneously and voluntarily (Nieuwenhuys/Pécoud 2007: 1686). The will and the desire to go abroad are more likely fed by the hope of being one of the few chosen ones, who could maybe make it if they only believe strongly enough in it and work hard enough for it. For some this hope feeds on a deep belief in a higher power, which pulls all the strings in their lives. At the same time, it makes it difficult for rational arguments to reach people wanting to migrate. Probably, this reason along with the third-person effect distorts the image in light of the fact that people wanting to migrate are actually well-

informed about the generally known risks and dangers (however, probably not about the details of the asylum procedure and the like – this would need to be researched in more detail).

If you take these results and the statements of the participants regarding the development policy engagement in the context of migration as a starting point, then it is to be asked how political actors and development organisations should design their programmes in order to improve the living conditions in the home countries of people wanting to migrate and thus how to make staying there more attractive. Jeff Dayton-Johnson and Louka Katseli call for attention to be directed "preferably at effective migration management. Not more, but rather better development aid can contribute to increasing the use through migration for all parties involved"[11] (Dayton-Johnson/Katseli 2007). A 20-year-old tiler (m) from Kankan, who participated in this study, put it like this, "It would be nice if something came out of this study that would help the young people. That would be a good thing."

[11] Translated from the German original by TL TRANSLATIONES.

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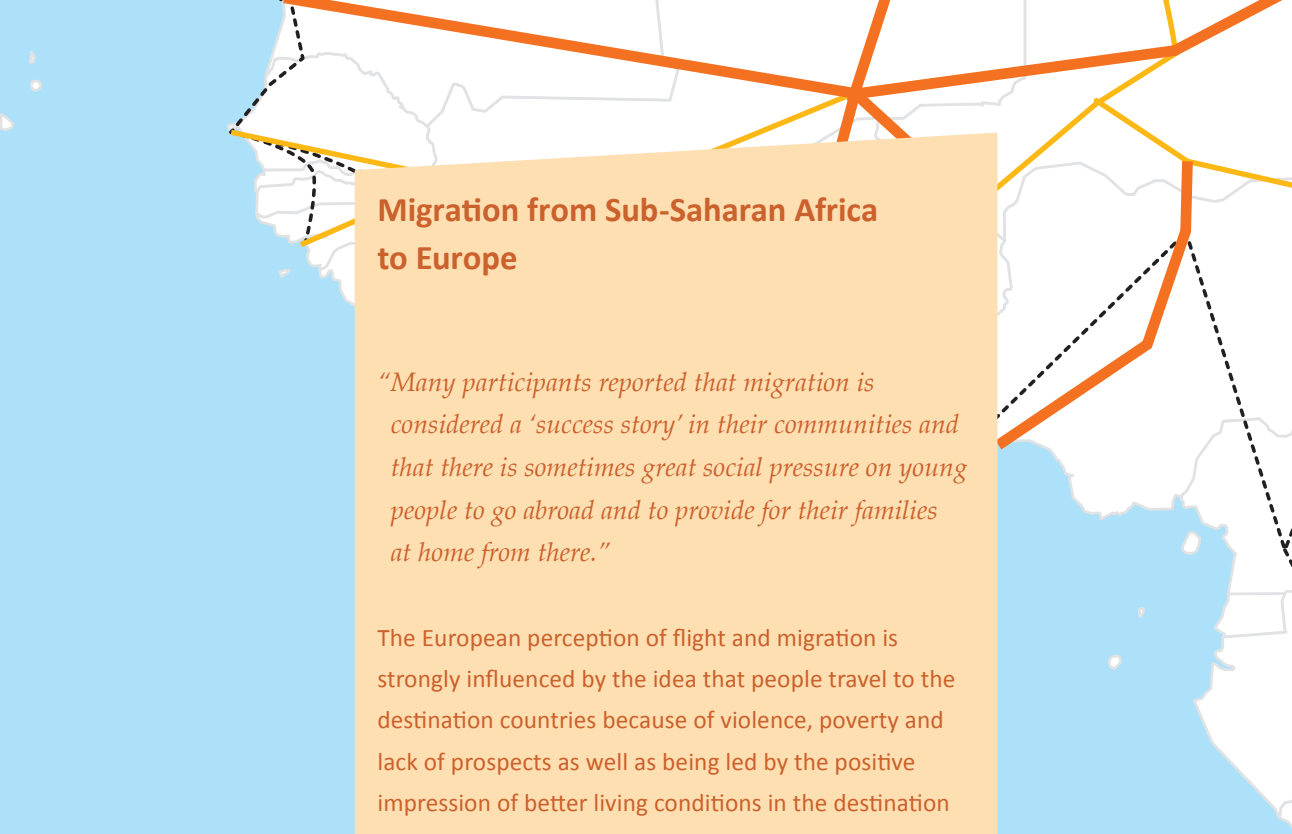

Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe

"Many participants reported that migration is considered a 'success story' in their communities and that there is sometimes great social pressure on young people to go abroad and to provide for their families at home from there."

The European perception of flight and migration is strongly influenced by the idea that people travel to the destination countries because of violence, poverty and lack of prospects as well as being led by the positive impression of better living conditions in the destination countries. However, are these factors enough to adequately explain the steadily growing waves of refugees and migrants? This study investigates this question and presents further reasons recorded in conversations with people wanting to migrate in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to the classic reasons, migration is described as a success story that induces many young people to pursue this journey due to the great social pressure on them. A crucial role is played by the belief of possibly being one of the few chosen ones to succeed in a foreign country despite and precisely because of their knowledge about the risks of irregular migration and the frequently miserable living conditions of many migrants. The author concludes that against this backdrop the Eurocentric interests that manifest themselves in the current visa and integration policies are to be scrutinized.

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