



Globalisation, migration flows and sustainability

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Doi: 10.2478/gssfj-2019-0020

The frontiers, material or mental, of lime and bricks or symbolic, are sometimes battlefields, but they are also creative workshops of the art of living together (Bauman, 2009).

Abstract

The mobility of people is an important theme of geographical research because immigrant currents profoundly transform regional models, mainly urban areas, configuring themselves as a factor of social destabilization, as they change the composition of the population, triggering processes of mutual cultural contamination that are projected on the territory, differentiating it from its geographical surroundings. The contribution, starting from a look at international migration, intends to analyze different aspects related to the phenomenon of mobility such as globalization, sustainability and the role of International Cooperation in the light of the objectives of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, challenges that concern not only the present, but especially the future.

Keywords: *migration, Agenda 2030, globalization, Sustainability, International Cooperation.*

1. Introductory considerations

The mobility of people is an important issue of geographical research because immigrant movements profoundly transform regional models, mainly urban areas, configuring themselves as a factor of social destabilization, as they change the composition of the population, triggering processes of mutual cultural contamination that are projected on the territory, differentiating it from its geographical surroundings.

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The first aim of the work is to analyze the relationship between social geography and the theme of migration, with particular attention to contemporary processes of international migration, induced by globalization and the evolution of geopolitical and geo-economic scenarios worldwide. The second aim is developed, starting from this theme, to question itself on issues of a more epistemological nature, related to nature, evolution and also the adequacy of geography, in an attempt to analyze and interpret the phenomena of contemporary reality.

Therefore, this article aims to reflect on international migratory movements as a growing phenomenon, also due to globalization which, on the one hand, increases relations and trade, and on the other hand shows an increasing gap between rich and poor countries. In this way, the evolution and characteristics of international migratory flows are analyzed, and specifically, the causes linked to the phenomenon of globalization, in the light of the economic, social and cultural reasons that determine them.

Then the attention shifts to an analysis of the following interconnected phenomena: globalisation and migration, migration and sustainability and, finally, migration and International Cooperation.

The sustainability of migration is one of the challenges of the new millennium, also linked to the 17 objectives of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

These reflections will be followed by proposals aimed at identifying key steps in the field of migration policies taken from the international literature of reference.

2. The framework

Migration flows are increasingly regarded as a structural and systemic aspect, imposed by the current model of globalization. Placed in these terms are a new phenomenon, they create a real "relocation" or world geo-socio-economic reorganization. According to several scholars, they could be considered a paradigmatic example of the value of mobility (Castles, 2002); mobility is in fact one of the central phenomena of globalization (De Lucas, 2003).

Therefore, migratory flows are to be considered a forefront of globalization, because they announce their arrival, or, because their growth accompanies the process of globalization. This is obviously a thread of thought, an approach among many in the study of migration. In fact, there is no doubt that the development of globalization leads, and has already led, to an increase in migrations, but these are "not free" migrations, which are induced by need and necessity.

As is well known, the value of globalization can be measured in two different ways: on the one hand, the barriers that hinder a certain kind of flows are broken down, but new ones are being built, increasingly strong on migratory flows.

Globalization is connected to the unstoppable process of expansion of capitalism and the market, a process controlled not by the freedom of circulation -condition of the freedom of the flows (necessary, but not sufficient) but by the determination to gain control of the flows also of the migratory ones.

And again, in today's process of globalization, borders have become permeable for speculative capital, for technology and information and for the labour demanded occasionally in the so-called North of the World, but they have remained impregnable for people who have the desire to emigrate to the North of the World and are not useful according to the criteria of the market (Ambrosini, 2008). It is therefore the global market that dictates the laws of these movements, and opens the doors to a small number of migratory flows, at the same time attracting many others and taking advantage of the abundance of supply that is created and that remains in an orbit of precariousness and shadow in which then operate illegal economic circuits.

At the same time, the multinationals of the global market, in order to reduce labour costs, move their activities to the "periphery" (child labour; exploitation of developing countries). In this way, according to Saskia Sassen's thesis (2002), the fracture extends beyond the commonplace North-South of the World because a part of the South (the elites) become part of the global market, while a part of the North and most of the South remain distant and marginalized.

This is the thesis of a new geography of centrality and marginalization that sees or interprets migration flows as a global, complex, integral phenomenon.

First of all, global, for its planetary dimension, which renders useless any attempt of analysis connected to the perspective of the national State (De Lucas, 2003). In fact, the migratory flows are no longer only demographic movements of a local dimension, as far as the majority of these movements concern neighbouring Countries and not those which go from the periphery to the centre of the North of the world (EU, USA, Canada). More than a phenomenon of human geography, they have become a characteristic, a structural constant of the entire World, a sort of phenomenon which involves a sort of "socio-cultural relocation of the World".

Secondly, it is an integral phenomenon (or global in a different meaning of the term), because, as Mauss (1965) taught us, immigration is a total social phenomenon because it includes different aspects (work, cultural, legal, political) of social relations. Circumscribing the phenomenon in a single dimension, as often happens, that of work, of public order, is a mistake, as the Swiss writer Max Frisch (1974) has shown us, coining an expression that has become famous and contains this reference to globality: "we were looking for arms, men arrived".

All this requires a sensitive look at the complexity to get aware of the reality migration, without being influenced by the stereotypes that give a greater return

in situations of conflict that meet in the process, and that involve at least three different agents: the countries and societies of origin, those of destination and the migrants themselves.

Despite widespread opinion in economic area, modern processes of globalization have not created a world without barriers at all, and have even generated a real multiplication of borders. The paper mentions the effects that this dynamic produces on work, on migratory movements and on the political life and social dynamics of the population.

Therefore, migratory flows and globalization of markets are no longer seen as positively interconnected phenomena but, with the prevalence of increasingly restrictive policies introduced to limit "illegal immigration" and crime related to these flows and their use in illegal activities, the population has been fuelled by insecurity and hostility to the difficult coexistence of very different social and cultural models.

The emigration of millions of workers, not all illegal and criminal evidently, but also of political exiles, refugees, victims of conflicts of all kinds and with higher levels of training and professional qualification, has produced fears and reactions of "rejection" by the host countries (European and non-European).

Studies and research in the field of social sciences, including geography (in particular social and intercultural), in the field of migration are increasingly aimed at correctly informing about the trend of the phenomenon and to form new knowledge and skills on the fact that migration flows represent a phenomenon that will not show signs of containment in the future but, rather, signs of further dramatic growth.

3. Migration and globalisation

It is not possible to think of political or geopolitical answers to the phenomenon of migration without knowing the factors that determine them, as well as the countries of origin of the migrants and the reasons that lead them to leave.

Already Ravenstein, in the Nineteenth century, attributed to the "economic factor" one of the main reasons for human mobility, including this topic in the famous "Laws of Migration", presented at the Royal Academy in London between 1885 and 1889. Monetary factors are the main factors in the scientific literature dedicated to migration even after the studies in Ravenstein, indeed it can be said that "the decision to migrate depends on the difference between the expected incomes over the life cycle in the country of residence and in the country of possible destination, net of the costs of migration" (Agenzia italiana per la Cooperazione allo sviluppo, 2017, p. 13).

However, movements are also affected by other factors, such as the diversification

of capital markets and family reunification. In this sense, the family plays a crucial role in migration in helping (or not) the relative who intends to travel.

The latter will in fact have to face many expenses related to transport, residence permit, education, insurance, passport, and sometimes will also have to take into account the use of irregular routes that will involve additional considerable and burdensome costs. In fact, in the presence of multiple types of migratory routes, the decision will also concern which channel to use.

Although the reasons that determine migration are mainly of an economic nature, it is not certain that only the poorest nations and families will emigrate. On the contrary, the highest mobility rates are found in the areas that are relatively more dynamic in terms of growth or, in any case, in middle-income countries. For example, Mexico, which has always been considered one of the areas with the highest percentage of emigrants in the world, is not classified among the poorest countries by international organizations.

The populations of Sub-Saharan Africa are also highly mobile but, mainly, are internal migrations or, in any case, towards neighbouring areas (Bernardini, Varani, 2018).

Currently, among the countries with the most immigrant jobs in the world are the Philippines, Turkey, Morocco and Mexico, low-income or middle-income states. In the next few years, Sub-Saharan Africa will be added to this figure, without a shadow of a doubt. At the same time as environmental problems, Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing, in general, a considerable demographic growth that will cause an increase in demographic pressure in the medium and long term (Agenzia italiana per la Cooperazione allo sviluppo, 2017).

Wage differences in the age of globalization, understood in both the negative and the positive sense, are determined by the general structure of the labour market of the host countries. In particular, the growth and structural demand for labour from First World economies determines the formation of a new geography of markets and migratory movements, influenced by factors of attraction, such as the well-being imagined in the host countries (Everett Lee, 1966; Hatton, Williamson, 2005).

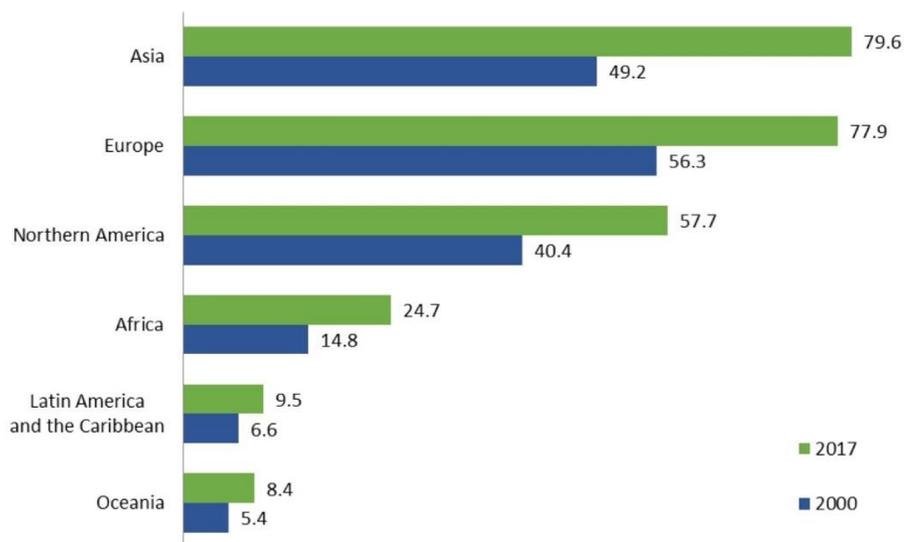


Figure 1. Trend International migrations 2000-2017. Source: UN, 2017.

Moreover, the labour market of the countries of the First World is becoming more and more specialized and specializing and, in some sectors, there is always a greater demand for labour supply which, to be satisfied, has a physiological need for immigration. On the whole, however, it emerges that the rules governing immigration in the country of destination play a significant, although not prevailing, role in orienting the choice of migration. In fact, they are directly linked to the practices for obtaining a residence permit, to the costs of travel and to the risks associated with irregular migration (Agenzia italiana per la Cooperazione allo sviluppo, 2017).

In the age of globalization, the ever-growing gap between rich and poor countries, together with the lower costs of transport, will determine the maintenance of a high migratory pressure (Czaika, de Hass 2011), also considering the fact that, at present, mobility flows are lower than in the past because they have grown less than other flows of globalization, such as those of trade and capital (Faini, 2003). In essence, migrants tend to leave countries whose labour markets are not competitive or there are formal obstacles to development but, as we have seen, there are other factors that influence migration, not primarily linked to the economic factor such as the "networks of migrants" consisting mainly of family or friends.

Current studies also show how another factor influences mobility, namely the Internet and social networks that play an increasingly important role in the

creation and implementation of migrant networks, making it easier and more direct migratory choices.

Finally, dealing with a complex phenomenon such as migration in the light of the globalization of men and means, we cannot forget that mobility may not be a permanent choice, but may represent a circular process; for this reason many scientific literature dedicated to the phenomenon has often spoken of "return" migration. There are many documented cases of return migration, such as those from Italy to Morocco; indeed, considering the data on the rate of global migration between 1990 and 2015, analyzed by scholars Adrian Raftery & Jonathan Azose (2019), it can be concluded that one in four migrants eventually ends up returning to their country of origin.

4. Substantiability of migration: Agenda 2030 and remittances

Migration is sustainable when it respects certain parameters:

- it is transformative;
- produces widespread benefits;
- it must not have significant operating costs.³¹

Migration ties the countries of origin to the countries of destination and therefore the policies for managing the phenomenon should be sustainable for all the countries involved and designed in close collaboration. Education, training and labour market interventions in the least developed countries and incentives to return are needed.

The essential conditions for sustainable migration to countries of origin are necessarily:

- making migration a choice, not a necessity;
- increasing the employability of potential migrants;
- preparing future migrants with "skills" and knowledge on migration;
- to encourage the involvement of the diaspora communities in the countries of origin;
- to make migration a reversible choice, encouraging 'return migration';
- protect children left in the country of origin;
- to favour the so-called "circular migration" (it allows to take advantage of job opportunities abroad without permanently leaving the country).

³¹ Source: report Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12422.pdf>

4.1 Agenda 2030 and migration

The phenomenon of migration presents a necessarily complex reading, even more if correlated to the same concept of sustainability, which overcomes visions linked to "emergency", "problem", "social danger", and which instead knows how to highlight the inequalities

global as structural causes of which migration is not only an effect but also an element of rebalancing and response to differences and Gap between countries.

Speaking of migration, it is necessary to constantly take stock of the state of the phenomenon, define systemic migration policies and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of Agenda 2030 also to limit forced migration.

As is well known, on 25 September 2015 the General Assembly adopted the "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development" with 17 Objectives and 169 precise Targets (specific targets), with the objective of promoting global sustainable development; one of the Objectives concerns migration for the first time. Within the tenth objective of the United Nations ("Reducing inequality within and between nations"), the seventh point concerns migrations that can tend to be sustainable: all should facilitate "orderly, safe, regular and responsible" migrations and mobility of people, including through planned and well-managed migration policies.

The reference to migration is given in full in point 10.7 "Facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of persons, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". There is no mention of migration in terms of sustainability, nor is there any explicit reference to combating forced migration. It is, however, an important step that affects all migrations and all migrants, not just those fleeing persecution and conflict, climate change and disasters. One could and should reflect on each of the four adjectives chosen, also to verify whether they refer to both (migration and mobility), how to diversify migration mobility from immigrant mobility, how to translate them into competent national and European migration policies, open and systematic, non-emergential.



Figure 2. Agenda 2030 The Global Goals for sustainable development. Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

All four adjectives also refer to the conditions of those who emigrate, but in the widespread perception, order, security, regularity and responsibility are associated above all with the community in which they immigrate. The great issue of security from terrorism should not be underestimated: closing the borders, as we have seen, is not decisive.

Including a Target on migratory flows among the Objectives of sustainable development was not so easy and therefore, from the perspective of sustainable development of Agenda 2030, this phenomenon can be understood and governed only if it is related to other areas such as climate change, demographic trends, the global economy, the evolution of the labour market and skills, the development of business networks, etc. Agenda 2030 is still not very effective on the global phenomenon of migration, but it must be framed together with other major international and European acts such as the New York Declaration of 2015, the Global Compact on Migration³². Subsequently, it took stock of the action taken by DG Immigration with the International Labour Mobility Programme.

Supporting SDGs and commitments to sustainable development is also a way to limit forced migration, those states and those human behaviors that determine them. It is

³² For more informations: <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>

necessary to identify specific measures, specific policies, specific aid to intervene at the origin of forced migration or after it has occurred, knowing that there are no eternal and universal solutions.

Agenda 2030 undoubtedly promotes new challenges of co-development, the role of remittances and the role of migrant communities as actors of cooperation. A change of approach is needed in the relationship between migration and sustainable development. Until now, international development cooperation in the field of migration has been used by economically more advanced countries as a tool to reduce and prevent the phenomenon from poor countries or countries in the South of the world.

Therefore, according to the sustainable development perspective of Agenda 2030, migration, a cross-cutting and global phenomenon, can only be understood and governed if it is linked to other areas such as climate change, demographic trends, the global economy, the development of business networks, labour market developments, etc. The management of migration flows implies a multi-level, multi-actor and multi-lateral logic.

4.2 Sustainability, migration and the role of remittances

The phenomenon of migration, and consequently that of remittances, is rooted in the history of peoples at a global level. If we go back in history, we find that more than 100 million Europeans left their country of origin between the 19th and 20th centuries, most of whom frequently sent money to their families. This event has changed radically in the last fifty years, driven by different demographic and economic realities, by the needs of populations, by integration, by the expansion of the EU, by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and finally by post-colonialism, which has changed relations with African and Asian countries. Thanks to remittances, a solid base has been guaranteed to families and businesses, so that they can give life to the European continent as it is today³³.

Therefore, it should be pointed out that the sending of money cannot be considered a waste of resources, but as a great source of subsistence to give a solid basis to territories, geographical spaces in great difficulty, which in the future could become commercial partners, essential for economic development, and mutual exchanges (Martini, 2016).

Migrants' remittances are not only an advantage for the country where they are received, but they are also an advantage for the countries of destination of the

³³ As Mauro Martini, from IFAD, explains, in Moldova for example, 22% of GDP is made up of remittances from Europe. <https://www.eunews.it/2016/01/11/rimesse-migranti-vantaggio-ue/47834>

migratory flows. This is supported by a recent study on the sums of money sent by workers who are abroad, specifically in the European Union (EU) countries to the country of origin, in order to help family and friends remained in the country of origin. The research, conducted by IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), underlines how to benefit not only the country that receives the money, almost always one of the developing countries, but also the EU.

These remittances, often criticised because it does not seem possible to make any profit from the transfer of money abroad, have been "re-evaluated" by the authors of the report. In this case, the salaries sent to the country of origin "lighten" the expenses for humanitarian aid (which amount to exactly one third of the former); in other words, it could be said that those who support developing countries most are the migrants themselves (Natali, 2016).

With the passage of time, Europe now has a population of migrants that exceeds 50 million has gone so far as to be a region that received remittances, on the continent with the highest rate of monetary sending in the world. Over the past 15 years, money flows have been steadily increasing, and today they are a key element in aid to developing countries. The World Bank's data, studied and analysed in the Report *Sending money home: European flows and markets*, speak for themselves, the flows, besides constituting a lifeline for millions of individual families, produce at a local level a strong impact on the development of entire villages, and consequently favour growth, with the possibility of a "circular migration", which presupposes a generally temporary mobility (exceptional response to the fluidity of the global labour market). Therefore, they can constitute a sort of "financial basis" for the eventual definitive return of migrants to their own country (Pison, 2019).

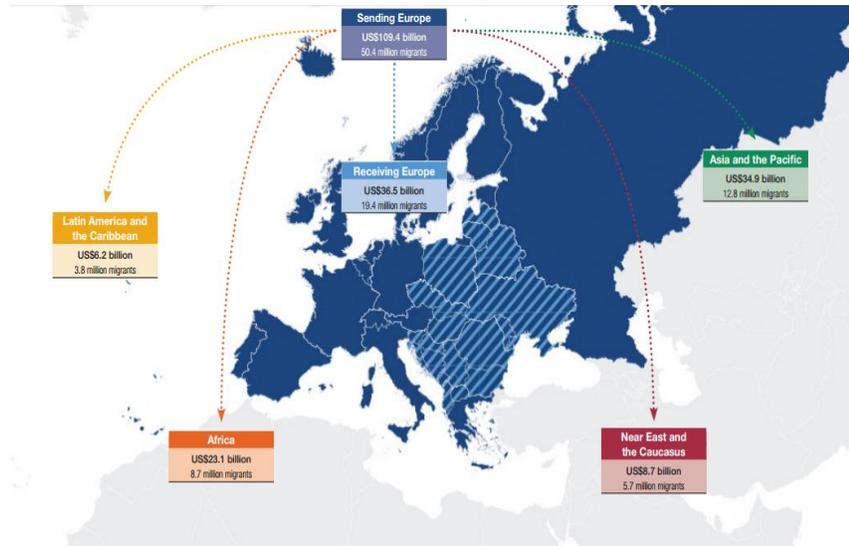


Figure 3. the relationship between receiving and sending remittances in Europe. Source: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40187194/money_europe.pdf/b0003fbb-bb10-4f3c-90c7-f12fdc3c450b

Migration and monetary flows are moving in the same direction, as shown by the positive growth rates of Great Britain, for example, a country that has currently sent more remittances outside its national borders, with a total of 17 billion dollars in 2014 alone (Figure 4). Germany follows with 14 billion. France and Italy also follow, each with 10 billion dollars in remittances. These are the highest figures, added to those of Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and the remaining 22 countries of the Union, reaching a total of almost 110 billion. A much higher number than that of humanitarian aid.

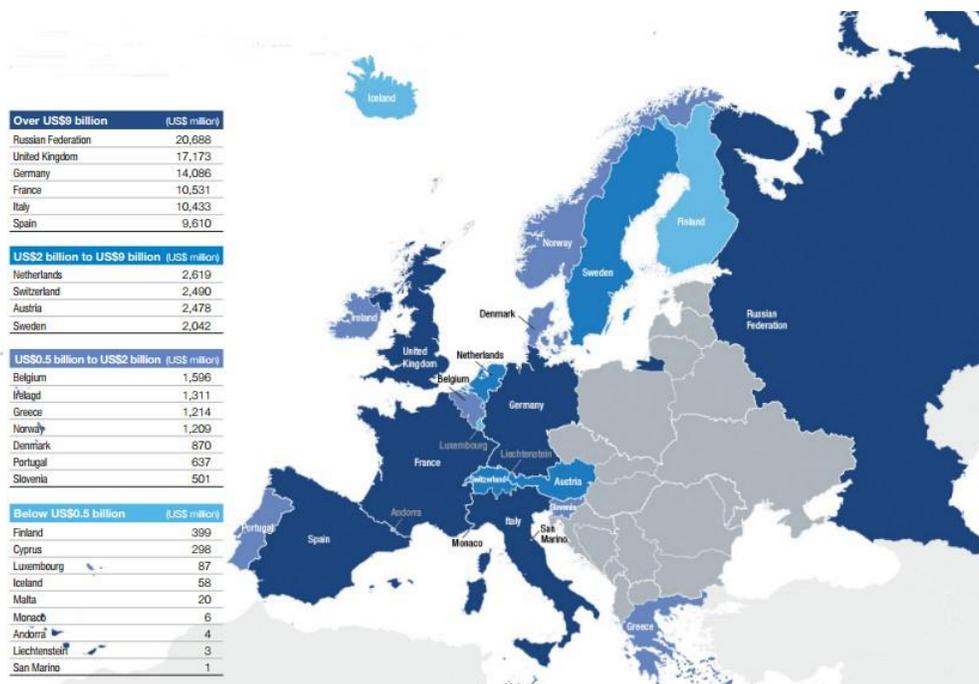


Figure 4. The remittances to Europe. Country Analysis.
 Source: <https://www.eunews.it/2016/01/11/rimesse-migranti-vantaggio-ue/>

5. Migration and International Cooperation

The link between development and migration is certainly not new or recent. The Mediterranean separates two continents, Africa and Europe, historically protagonists of different models of development and underdevelopment that have determined, in the course of history, the birth, growth and diffusion of the migratory phenomenon. The mobility of people is ancient and complex because the search for better living conditions has always driven people to undertake trips with the aim of finding new opportunities. Differences in the various parts of the world are more evident, mainly due to the spread of the media and mass media, as well as the lowering of travel costs. According to the International Migrant Stock 2019 there were 272 million international migrants in the world in 2019, or 3.5% of the world's population. Ideally, it is as if the fifth largest state in the world were in constant movement. The link between migration and development has been one of the main phenomena studied by the International Cooperation, starting from the assumption that aid in the country of origin led to a reduction in migration flows. New strategies are currently being studied to link the migration phenomenon to

international cooperation in a sustainable way, with the aim of enhancing the value of the migrant, both in the country of origin and in the country of destination. In this way, migrants become real agents of development as they take advantage of opportunities both inside and outside the community. To deal with the phenomenon of migration in the light of the Goals of Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>), which also include youth employment, it is necessary to revise the standards, which are currently outdated, concerning the conceptual categorisation of the same and the policies for managing flows at a global level.

5.1 Possible measures in the countries of origin. Is migration a choice?

In order to make migration sustainable, the European Union, in agreement with the Migration Compact of the Italian government, underlines the importance of supporting development policies in the countries where migration originates. Interventions in migrants' countries of origin should respond to some strategic objectives: 1) to make migration a personal choice, both reversible and non-reversible; 2) to increase the skills of future migrants; 3) to promote employment in both the country of origin and the country of destination; 4) to simplify the mobility of migrants; 5) to protect children who, sometimes, cannot accompany parents or relatives in migration.

In this paragraph, in order to give a geographical slant to the article, we have chosen to deal with the first of the objectives, migration as a choice.

Intervening in countries of origin and improving their labour market conditions can contribute to the reduction of migration flows and, consequently, irregular migration. These measures are primarily targeted at disadvantaged and vulnerable people who constitute a heterogeneous group and are distinguished by: low skills level, low income level, extreme poverty or the combination of these factors, to which can be added the possible participation in armed conflicts (Agenzia italiana per la Cooperazione allo sviluppo, 2017).

According to a study conducted by Kluve *et al* (2016) , on a global scale, comparing developing countries with the major world economies, active labour policies, in order to make migration sustainable, are summarized in these categories of intervention:

- competence development through training: specific training courses on the job and basic training in case the subjects lack it;
- Promotion of entrepreneurship: facilitating access to credit, to the market, development of entrepreneurial skills;
- Employment services: to improve active job search;
- Financing employment: temporary interventions with the aim of generating or

retaining public or private personnel.

Labour market measures for youth are of primary interest for studies on the phenomenon of migration because young people are the main actors in the large majority of mobility. Furthermore, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and, more specifically, Objective 8 "Promoting sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full employment and decent work for all" underline that youth employment opportunities are of central importance in making migration a sustainable and beneficial phenomenon for both the country of departure and destination.

In general, however, it can be said that it is possible to achieve positive results by intervening in the labour market through aid to disadvantaged people, even if aid can be given to a limited number of people and, therefore, the extent of the effect, can only be small.

Overall, the results aimed at financing jobs in the public or private sector have been discontinuous because it may happen that, at the end of the financing, employment is lost and therefore it cannot be said that these measures generate wealth.

According to the study, the programmes aimed at developing and increasing skills and measures to facilitate small businesses are, overall, the most effective in the medium and long term, considering that trade has always been one of the most practiced and well-known activities in Africa and Asia.

In addition to the study by Kluge *et al.* (2016) there is also the study by Card *et al.* (2015) which reflects on the interventions considering some variables such as time, the geo-social context of the country, the mode of design of the intervention and the profile and characteristics of the beneficiaries of the measures to support the active search for work.

Moreover, the impacts of the measures are greater in middle and low-income countries than in First World countries, in fact, being unemployed in a rich country places workers at a considerable disadvantage, due to the high skills required by the labour market.

On the other hand, in countries with lower incomes, investments in job creation opportunities lead to substantial changes.

However, the research considered in this paragraph suggests that the impact of active labour policies is not very great, but that the suggested interventions still have an important value in providing local employment opportunities. In particular, among the possible interventions in the countries of origin, measures aimed at promoting entrepreneurship are the most effective in increasing the income of the populations and making emigration a choice and not a necessity.

6. Concluding remarks

The most economically advanced countries have always conceived the International Development Cooperation as a means to control, reduce or prevent the migratory phenomenon, but mobility, like many studies and research mentioned here, is a transversal characteristic of men and presents complex variables and modalities. Therefore, considering the point of view of sustainable development advocated in Agenda 2030, the large movements of human beings can be analyzed, understood and interpreted only by considering other factors as well as those mentioned above. For this reason, the policies of the European Union (and not only) that have the aim of managing the flows, should be understood in a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary perspective, a prerequisite for being able to enter into strategic agreements with the countries of departure of migrants.

One of the challenges for the future is to facilitate the development of legal migration channels as European countries will have an increasing demand for qualified personnel, especially in certain sectors. This contribution was intended to provide some reflections on international migration, its causes, motivations, and sustainability in the light of the ever-increasing globalization of people and means, the urgency of sustainability as expressed in the principles of Agenda 2030, and the role of International Cooperation in governing, or rather understanding, mobility.

Finally, as far as International Development Cooperation is concerned, the international literature on the phenomenon suggests a change of perspective, that is, despite the fact that development aid measures in the countries of origin are always recognized as significant, attention should be shifted to Diasporas, putting them at the centre, thus reducing the vast number of irregular migrants, enhancing the economic impact of remittances, and making migration "circular", able to create advantages both in the country of origin and in the country of destination.

It is always necessary to call into question principles and criteria different from those that today interpret migratory flows. The complexity of the phenomenon requires an immigration policy understood as a global policy and integrated in a conception that presupposes an alternative model of civil society. In short, it is useful to recall some principles and foundations that have been mentioned and reflected on in various ways in this work. First of all, the guarantee of the universal human right to emigration, according to a new form of integration that is deeper than the current demands for social integration based on formal equality in the fundamental rights of citizens. Thirdly, but not least, the recognition of human development as an objective that does not concern only individual states

but that must be understood as the right of every human being to achieve his or her own empowerment.

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