



# Migration coverage in the African media, a literature review

MUYANGA. I. ZIBA | OCT. 2023



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# CoMMPASS

## Communicating Migration and Mobility

### E-Learning Programs and Newsroom Applications for sub-Saharan Africa

is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union,

coordinated by the Erich-Brost Institute for International Journalism at *Technische Universität* Dortmund (Germany)



and implemented by ISCTE, *Instituto Universitario de Lisboa* (Portugal), Makerere University (Uganda), Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (Malawi), *Université Thomas-Sankara* (Burkina Faso), *Université Joseph-Ki-Zerbo* (Burkina Faso), University of Livingstonia (Malawi) and Uganda Christian University (Uganda).

[www.commpass.org](http://www.commpass.org)

CoMMPASS is an Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Editorial coordination: Michel LEROY, Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism, TU Dortmund, [michel.leroy@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:michel.leroy@tu-dortmund.de)

Author: Muyanga ZIBA ([mziba@unilia.ac.mw](mailto:mziba@unilia.ac.mw)), University of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, Malawi

Cover logo: Nestor Yougabre

Recommended citation: CoMMPASS. 2023. Migration coverage in the African media, a literature review. Research report. Dortmund: Erich-Brost Institute for International Journalism

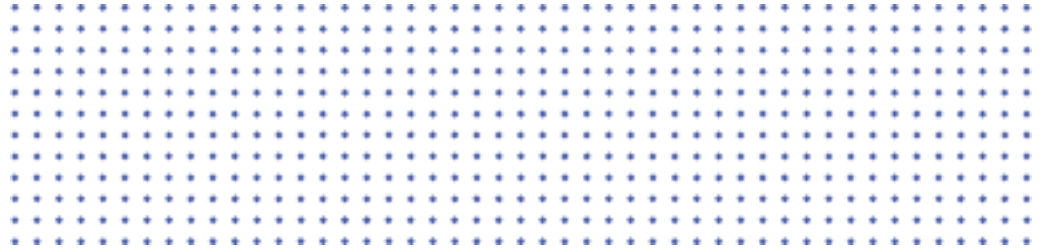
© CoMMPASS, 2023

# **MIGRATION COVERAGE IN THE AFRICAN MEDIA, A LITERATURE REVIEW**

**MUYANGA INNOCENT ZIBA**

LECTURER, UNIVERSITY OF LIVINGSTONIA, MALAWI

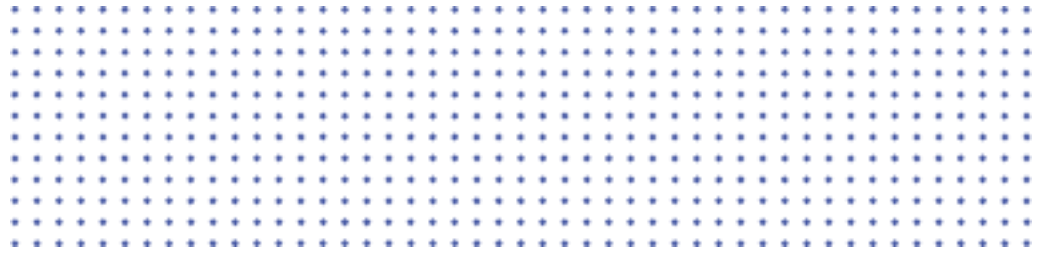




# TABLE OF CONTENT

|  |    |
|--|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....                                      | 9  |
| INTRODUCTION .....   | 9  |
| RATIONALE & DISCUSSION.....                                  | 11 |
| Definition of migration and its concepts or typologies ..... | 12 |
| Migration patterns and trends.....                           | 15 |
| Trends of migration within Africa.....                       | 15 |
| Causes of migration: push-pull factors.....                  | 17 |
| Trajectory experiences of migrants .....                     | 18 |
| Benefits of migration .....                                  | 19 |
| Media, politics, and migrants/refugees .....                 | 20 |
| Relationships between media, migrants, and the audience..... | 21 |
| Gaps in reporting migration .....                            | 22 |
| Journalism training on migration and mobility .....          | 24 |
| CONCLUSION .....   | 26 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 27 |





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Literature provides that the large numbers of migration have political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights consequences to the movers and the countries of origin, transit and destination. Although the movers may be exposed to brain gain and improved living standards, chances of facing uncertain reception in form of torture, detention and other human rights violations are very high. Against the common gain of cheap labour, destination or host countries mostly suffer social, and economic burdens.

Definition of migration and its concepts or typologies are key. It is often referred to migration as “the relocation of people within space that involves their permanent or temporary change of residence.” Regular migration is the term which is used where movers possess proper travel and residence documents. Some scholars use the highly debatable and controversial labels of legal and illegal migration to refer to regular and irregular migration. International migration is subdivided into immigration and emigration. Emigration is the movement of people out of their own country, while immigration is the movement of people into a country that is not their own. The ease in mobility communication and transportation has also resulted into a new migration typology called transnational migration. In summary, it should be noted that the types of migration tend to be interconnected.

Migration, from the location basis, takes the forms of internal, international, immigration, emigration, host, destination, transit and home or origin forms. Literature shows that these forms play an important role in explaining the patterns of migration. Besides the existence of the historical colonial push-pull African migration model, literature also reveals that Europe is not the only preferred destination for Africans and reports an increased presence of Sub-Sahara Africans in South and Central America, the Middle East and Asia. Scholars explain that the shift in migration pattern signals that global migration has become complex compared to the past patterns where migration was concentrated in a few bilateral corridors following historical links.

Within Africa, literature indicates that intra-continental migration in Africa is characterized by a mixture of voluntary, involuntary, circumstance, internal and intra-continental forms of migration. UNCHR estimates that, Sub-Sahara Africa hosts more than 26 percent (over 18 million) of the world's refugees, whose number increased, partly due to the ongoing crises in the Central Africa Republic, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, South Sudan and Burundi.

The trends and patterns in international migration in sub-Saharan Africa are shaped by many pull and push factors. The factors that influence people to leave a place are called push factors, and the factors that influences a mover to go to a particular place are called pull factors. Conflict- and disasters mostly induce forced migration. In terms of voluntary internal, trans-continental and cross-continental migration among Africans, other push factors are mentioned by scholars: rapid population and labour force growth, persistent economic decline, retrenchment of public sector workers in response to structural adjustment measures,...



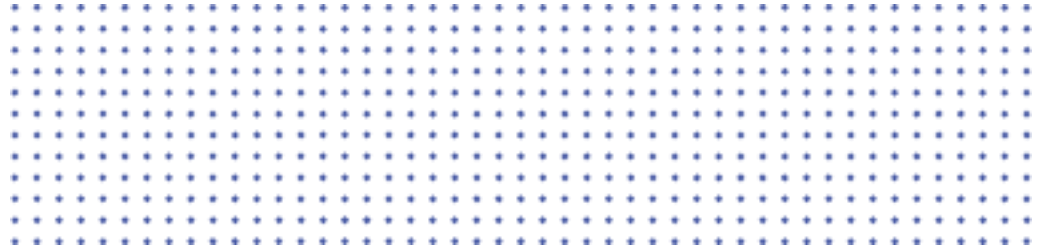
Literature also indicates that the unstable economic situation and lack of good harvests, have drawn many sub-Saharan African cities into back-and-forth migration. It should also be noted that communication via journalism and social media-driven personal communication among migrants and the general community act as a cross-contextual factor for informing people.

Migration can also have benefits that mostly revolve around advancement of development. The anticipated development is expected to come through: remittances made by migrants, knowledge or brain gain that comes when migrants return or interact with people from their home countries through transnational migration, increased donor support as a way of making the pull factors available in the home countries and redistribution of human resources or capital. Mindful that some rich countries have low birth rate and a reasonable ageing population, the young and energetic migrants assist in the redistribution of world human resources. Policy makers, in their quest for countries to benefit more from migration, are now emphasising the potential benefits of international migration for both sending as well as the receiving countries, with a focus on migration management. The challenge now is to make increasing globalisation work to maximise the opportunities of migration and minimise its drawbacks.

As part of doing politics, politicians are supposed to track and act on the push-pull factors being considered by the migrants or the would-be migrants. The media which also exists to promote the interest is supposed to moderate the exchange of the push-pull factors or likes and dislikes between policy makers and the citizens or the potential migrants. Where the authorities seem uninterested in the concerns of the people, the media is supposed to influence immigration narratives among authorities and the people. The media also aids the migration process by informing would-be migrants and other migration actors on the push and pull factors existing in their community. The few studies done in Africa also show that coverage and framing of migration issues is even more sporadic and often negative. It is also observed that both the coverages of African and European media houses ignored the causes and context of migration.

The consulted literature shows that stories about migration are severely underreported in African countries. The studies further show that migration reporting suffers from one-dimensional and self-centred perspectives in Europe. It has also been shown that negative reporting dominates and that Africa reporters tend to mirror the European news agenda whenever a chance to write a migration story emerges.





# INTRODUCTION

**M**igration is now one of the key challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the most vulnerable countries and especially in Africa. In order to raise awareness and empower citizens to counter the misinformation and disinformation often associated with these issues, media coverage is therefore crucial.

From 2023 to 2026, the EU-funded Erasmus+ CoMMPASS project (“Communicating Migration and Mobility - E-Learning Programs and Newsroom Applications for sub-Saharan Africa”) aims to build a distance learning platform on this topic for journalists and future journalists in Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Malawi, before expanding to other African partner countries. The online course will be available in English, French, Portuguese, and Swahili.

Project partners from six African and two European universities will jointly decide on the structure, content, and technology of this distance learning facility. They share their specific competencies for the common good, and all partners benefit through mutual knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Numerous interviews and reports have highlighted the gaps and shortcomings in this area, but there are very few specific academic studies. In a series of workshops with leading African journalism educators, several members of the CoMMPASS project have jointly identified specific challenges that need to be addressed in higher journalism education and newsrooms in African countries when it comes to covering migration: The issue is severely underreported in African countries (Assopgoum, 2011; Jaiteh, 2015; Chinje, 2016) or the same frames used by Western media are used (Harber, 2015; Serwornoo, 2018).

Against this background, the proposed online course should be equally useful and applicable to newsrooms and the media industry in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to local NGOs and other media institutions. Given the current drastically changed conditions for education and training due to the Covid-19 crisis and the move towards digitisation to cope with the massive influx of new students, the need for such an online tool has become even more urgent, as has the need to build bridges between academia and industry.

Given that no academic curriculum for journalism training offers a substantive and interdisciplinary introduction to the analysis of migration issues, the design of this programme was considered in the light of four state-of-the-art reports.

The first report set the stage by reviewing the literature on migration and mobility, with a focus on sub-Saharan and North African narratives in countries of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. It includes good practices in reporting on migration and mobility and lessons learned.

The second maps best practices, methods, and techniques of e-learning curricula. It includes the results of a large-scale baseline study of potential beneficiaries in the six African universities that will be targeted initially, detailing students' needs and constraints in relation to e-learning.



The third report focuses on the needs of mid-career journalists for training in migration reporting: it includes the interests of journalists and media houses, the incentives expected from an e-learning platform and an assessment of lessons learned (both successes and failures) from previous experiences. It is based on interviews with editors, media managers, journalists, and other stakeholders.

Finally, the fourth step recommends the most relevant technological solutions for the platform to be developed. These are based on a consideration of the digital divide and the technological environment in sub-Saharan countries, derived from interviews with experts and students.

These four reports function as a coherent whole, not only to highlight the extent to which African media have so far failed to tell the “African story” of migration. More importantly, they aim to provide solid, cross-referenced, and balanced data so that the next generation of media content producers can be trained and capacity building and empowerment can have a real and sustainable impact.



# RATIONALE & DISCUSSION

In 2009, when welcoming participants at the second conference on migration, “Migration and Displacement in sub-Saharan Africa” in Bonn – Germany, Michael Stückradt said that: “there has always been migration throughout the history of mankind. Looking for work, getting away from war, persecution, or disasters, searching for a good place to live, the desire to enjoy freedom of worship form some of the reasons people leave their homelands.” This statement agrees with Mafukidze (2006, p.103) who defines migration as “the relocation of people within space that involves their permanent or temporary change of residence”.

Although migration can be regarded as a normal happening in human societies, literature shows that excessive migration to a particular society brings more negatives than positives. On excessive migration that the world is facing, statistics indicate that in 2019, 272 million people, an increase of almost 120 million people since 1990, had migrated from their areas of residence (Migration Data Portal, 2020). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019b, p 2), this number of movers surpasses some projections for the year 2050 which were in the range of 230 million. United Nations (2017) recorded 258 million people in 2017 as international migrants: people residing in a country other than the one in which they were born, corresponding to 3.4% of the world's 2017 population. In 2021, Fengler, Lengauer and Zappe (2021, p. 1) cited UN data indicating that international migrants constituted 3.5 % of the global population, compared to 2.8% in the year 2000.

In 2020, France received 238 000 new immigrants on a long-term or permanent basis and they included 27% immigrants benefitting from free mobility, 18.4% labour migrants, 35% family members (including accompanying family) and 11.6% humanitarian migrants. Most of these immigrants came from Algeria and Morocco, among others. Among the top 15 countries of origin, Guinea registered the biggest increase (1 000) and Morocco the largest decrease (-5 100) in flows to France compared to the previous year. The year 2021 saw an increase of applicants by 27% to reach around 104,000 (OECD, 2022).

Reality and literature provide that the large numbers of migration have political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights consequences to the movers and the countries of origin, transit and destination. Although the movers may be exposed to brain gain and improved living standards, chances of facing uncertain reception in form of torture, detention and other human rights violations are very high. Additionally, many movers, who use irregular routes endure risks such as being subjected to criminal human traffickers, dangerous journeys and even death. Against the development ingredients of remittances and brain gain reaped from former migrants, sending countries may suffer brain drain and, in some cases loss of hard-earned money due to repatriation facilitation. Against the common gain of cheap labour, destination or host countries mostly suffer social, and economic burdens. In the context of a South-South migration, Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann (2009, p. 7), observed that:



Migration increasingly impacts developing countries' stability in various ways:

- ◆ Migration may threaten the sovereignty of a host country with uncontrolled mass migration violating border control and sovereign territory.
- ◆ Migration threatens host countries' economies. High immigration is a burden to a country's infrastructure and increases competition for local resources (land, fuel, water). It can even cause conflict and thus hamper development.
- ◆ Extremist immigrants may abuse receiving countries as safe havens for planning assaults, with radical immigrants even recruiting support in their host countries.
- ◆ Migrants may also be perceived as a threat to cultural identity. In closed ethnicities, migration may lead to the discrimination and suppression of minorities.

People are at the centre of migration and all its attendant aspects that include the above-listed effects and reasons for migration. Therefore, every human being – the movers, people from the countries of origin, transit, and destination – deserves a thorough understanding of migration, its reasons or causes and effects for proper making of decisions, policies and other interventions. Communication, done through journalism and other forms, is a critical tool in enabling people to understand the concept of migration, its causes, effects, and remedial interventions. This state-of-the-art literature report seeks to impart journalists and other communicators, who are partnering in the CoMMPASS Project, with an understanding of the concept of migration to facilitate proper decision-making and handling of migration by all concerned migration actors. The review does this by reviewing relevant literature and giving insights on the typologies or forms, causes, and effects of migration; media portrayal or reportage of migration; gaps in the migration reportage and remedial interventions.

## Definition of migration and its concepts or typologies

It is important to refer to commonly agreed-upon definitions – notably those of IOM and UNHCR. Mafukidze (2006, p.103) defines migration as “the relocation of people within space that involves their permanent or temporary change of residence”. Ate, Egielewa and Hasan (2019) describe migration as the movement of people from one place to live in another.

Collyer and de Hass (2010, p. 470) classify migration using bases of location (where), time, cause, or circumstance (why) and state perspective. The location or direction (where) basis considers whether a person or a mover has crossed country borders or not. The cause or circumstance (why) basis considers the reasons for a mover's migration. Generally, it considers if one's movement is voluntary or involuntary or forced (Collyer and de Hass, 2010, p. 470)<sup>1</sup>. The time basis considers if a mover is staying at a place for more than one year (permanent migration) or less than one year (temporary migration) (Collyer and de Hass, 2010, p. 470). The state perspective considers the mover's satisfaction of requirements for migrating and staying in a place of destination. Such requirements include documentations such as visas<sup>2</sup>. Regular migration is the term which is used where movers possess proper travel and residence documents; irregular migration is the term which is

---

<sup>1</sup> The IOM 2008b, p.18) identifies six differences between forced and voluntary migrants: (i) while voluntary migrants choose to move, involuntary migrants never want to move in the first place and have no intention to do so until circumstances dictate their moves; (ii) involuntary migrants maintain a greater commitment to their place of origin to which they eventually wish to return, while voluntary migrants do not; (iii) involuntary migrants are more likely to be in a state of emotional and physical stress because of losing family friends and facing up to uncertainties of the future, which compromise their adjustment at their destinations; (iv) involuntary migrants are less likely to bring with them to the destinations belongings, money and other economic assets than do voluntary migrants; (v) first-wave involuntary migrants are less likely to have established linkages with people and institutions at their destinations than voluntary migrants who often move whenever these conditions apply; and (vi) involuntary migrants are more likely than voluntary migrants to be moving to a destination in which the dominant language, culture, food and so on is different from their own. These differences between involuntary and voluntary migrants underline their moves, adjustments and links with their origins.

<sup>2</sup> In affirming the critically of proper travel and residence documents, Collyer and de Hass (2010, P. 471) advance that a positive or negative response to a visa application now governs everything about the possibilities of migration and subsequent residence in wealthy countries. Individuals who choose to travel with no documentation are separated from their documented counterparts at every stage of the journey and often for many years afterwards. They travel by different modes of transport on different routes; they must live in different places and they have different access to basic services; they take up different employment or the same employment for different rates of pay. It is of course possible to shift categorizations, through a variety of means, but in the context of migration to wealthy countries, the opportunities enjoyed by individual migrants are now significantly determined by their relationship with states.

used where movers do not possess proper travel and residence documents. Some scholars use the highly debatable and controversial labels of legal and illegal migration to refer to regular and irregular migration (Collyer and de Hass (2010, p. 471).

Location migration which involves crossing country borders is defined as international migration<sup>3</sup> (Naudé 2009, p. 21). Moving within a country is called internal migration (Collyer and de Hass, 2010). International migration is subdivided into immigration and emigration. Emigration is the movement of people out of their own country, while immigration is the movement of people into a country that is not their own (Ate, Egielewa and Hasan, 2019, p. 2). Staying in a country which is not one's own is also described as host country migration; moving within one's country or moving to one's country from another country is also labeled as home migration (Collyer and de Hass, 2010, p. 471). When the elements of a mover's intended country or direction of destination and country of origin are involved, the terms origin migration, destination migration and transit migration are applied. Destination migration occurs when a mover arrives in his or her desired country of destination; origin migration occurs when a mover is returning to his or her country. Where the intention is to paint a picture of the pattern of migration, it is also used to refer to the country where an immigrant is coming from (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023). The term transit migration is used where a mover stops in a certain country before arriving in the destination country (Simon, 2005).

The ease in mobility communication and transportation has also resulted into a new migration typology called transnational migration (Oiarzabal and Alonso, 2010). Literature defines transnational migration as belonging to two or more societies at the same time (Radoli, 2019, p. 6). Oiarzabal and Alonso (2010) note that this form of migration is possible due to advancements in communication and transportation – aspects which facilitate quick links between humans, cultures, economy, and society. As it may be seen below, the concept of transnational migration plays a critical role in sending imaginations – positive or negative – of migration. As observed by Salazar (2011), these imaginations heavily influence the choices of migrating or not migrating. Where the choice is to migrate, the imaginations also influence the direction of the migration.

In summary, it should be noted that the types of migration tend to be interconnected. For instance, internal and international migration is all cause or circumstance related. From the time perspective, internal and international migration can be temporal or permanent. Permanency and temporariness of migration can also occur in forced and voluntary migration. In international migration, movers may or may not have proper travel documents. The interconnectivity between the forms of migration is also manifested when describing or labelling movers. For example, forced or involuntary internal movers are called internally displaced people (IDPs). International movers whose refugee status is yet to be determined are called asylum seekers, and movers who migrate voluntarily are called migrants (Lengauer, Lengauer and Zappe, 2021, pp. 36, 38)

## Migration patterns and trends

As highlighted above, migration, from the location basis, takes the forms of internal, international, immigration, emigration, host, destination, transit and home or origin forms. Literature shows that these forms play an important role in explaining

---

<sup>3</sup> Internationally, the Population Division of the United Nations (1982, 1998) identified four categories of both voluntary and involuntary migration as permanent; labor, refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented (clandestine migration). Over the years, migration scholars have refined these categories. For instance, Appleyard (1991) categorizes four types of international migration as permanent settlers: (i) settlers and naturalized persons; (ii) labor migrants including temporary contract workers and skilled/professional temporary transients; (iii) refugees and asylum seekers; and (iv) various categories of clandestine/illegal migrants. Bilsborrow et al. (1997) on the other hand, identify five broad categories: (i) immigrants comprising settlers with indefinite stay (permanent residents) and those moving because of family reunification; (ii) foreigners designated as frontier workers or project-tied, contract and temporary as well as established highly skilled or business travelers; (iii) asylum migration, which includes conventional refugees and those granted humanitarian admissions or stay of deportation; (iv) unauthorized, irregular migrants; and (v) return migration to countries of origin.

the patterns of migration. Literature also indicates that the bases of time, cause and state perspective support in explaining and clarifying the migration patterns generated by the location basis.

Oucho (1997) states that, in the sphere of internal migration, four types of both voluntary and involuntary migration have included rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-urban and urban-rural (including return) movements.

In what could be termed as a subtle agreement to Croll (2009) who disclosed that more than two-thirds of all migrants from sub-Saharan Africa migrate to other countries within sub-Saharan Africa (approximately 16.3 million), Kebede, Goujon, & Lutz (2019) state that the volume of south-south migration<sup>4</sup> occupied the top position, with 38%. Doris Witteler-Stiepelmann (2009, p. 6) observes that this is particularly true for migration between African countries, who take up more migrants than their northern neighbor Europe. According to Kebede, Goujon, & Lutz (2019), this was followed by south-north migration<sup>5</sup>, with 35%, north-north migration<sup>6</sup>, with 22%, and north-south migration<sup>7</sup>, with 6%. In terms of the type of people who are on the move, analysts have estimated that out of the number of migrants on the move in Africa, the majority of them are young people with 20 percent between age 15 and 24 and they constitute 54 percent of the total labour force (Nwalutu and Nwalutu, 2019). Given the story of Alyan, the two-year Syrian boy who was washed away in the surfs of a Turkish holiday resort (BBC 2016 cited in Radoli 2019), children also comprise this group. In terms of mobilizing resources for migrating to Europe, it has also been noted that families and successful migrants could contribute towards migration to Europe and other preferred destinations (Kisang, 2017, p. 6; and Baloshadun, 2018 cited in Jammy and Ijeoma, 2019, p. 127). Analysts predict that by 2050, 25 percent, 1 in every 4, of people of working age in the world, will be an African (Adepoju, 2019).

Mindful that this state-of-the-art literature report seeks to provide journalists and other communicators, partnering in the CoMMPASS Project, with an understanding of migration and its causes, implications and possible remedies to sub-Saharan Africa and the global community, it would be incomplete to end this section without highlighting extra-continental migration involving Africa and countries from other continents.

On migration from Africa to other continents, Connor (2018) reveals that ‘the number of emigrants from Sub-Saharan countries grew by 50% or more between 2010 and 2017, significantly more than the 17% worldwide average increase for the same period’. It is estimated that more than one million sub-Saharan Africans might have migrated to Europe since 2010, with numbers rising since 2015/16 (Connor, 2018).

During the same period, the number of emigrants around the world that came from Sub Saharan Africa grew by 31% (Pew Research, 2018).

Migration scholars such as Kohnert (2007), Lessault & Beauchenim (2009), de Haas (2009), Ratha et al., (2011) agree that the flow of movers from Sub-Sahara Africa is heavily directed by colonial ties as African tend to migrate to their former colonisers. For example, in the past migrants from Senegal tended to migrate to France (De Clerck, 2015, p, 274); and people from Guinea Bissau easily migrate to Portugal their former colonial power (Lengauer, 2021); and Odipo et al (2015, cited in Radilo, 2019) attributed the extensive migration of Kenyans to the United Kingdom to the longstanding colonial ties that Kenya and the United Kingdom share since the 1880s.

---

<sup>4</sup> South-South Migration denotes migration within or across developing countries.

<sup>5</sup> South-North migration refers to migration from developing countries to developed countries.

<sup>6</sup> North-North migration describes moving within or across developed countries.

<sup>7</sup> North-South migration refers to moving from developed countries to developing countries.



Besides the existence of the historical colonial push-pull African migration model, literature also reveals that Europe is not the only preferred destination for Africans. Although the numbers are not as huge as those that flow to Europe mostly following the colonised-and-coloniser model, literature reports an increased presence of Sub-Saharan Africans in South and Central America, the Middle East and Asia. Some of the receiving countries include: Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Turkey, China, Japan, Burma, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand (Bertopncello & Bredeloup 2007; Bodono 2010; Freier 2012; Haugen 2012; Marcelino & Cerruti 2011; Minvielle, 2010; Pelican & Tatah 2009; Schans, 2012; and Zubrzycki, 2012 cited in De Clerck, 2015, p. 273). Scholars argue that this new migration trend, which is attributed to increased literacy and education as well improved access to global information, has increased people's awareness and aspirations of opportunities in previously unknown countries (Schapendonk, 2012, p. 22 cited in De Clerck, 2015, pp 273-274).

In adding to the narrative on Africans' moving to non-traditional destinations, a 2018 survey done by the Pew Research Centre revealed that Ghana, with 75%; Kenya, with 54%; South Africa, with 51%; Senegal, with 46%; and Tanzania, with 43%, were the sub-Saharan Africa countries which had supplied most migrants to the United States of America (Bellnaija 2018, cited in Jammy and Ijeoma, 2019, p. 126).

Czaika and de Haas (2013) explain that the shift in migration pattern signals that global migration has become complex compared to the past patterns where migration was concentrated in a few bilateral corridors following historical links.

Knowing the emerging trends and patterns of migration is critical for analysing and ensuring completeness when discussing and giving the public a complete picture of the state of the contemporary state of migration. This knowledge would be vital in checking the completeness of any migration narrative.

It should also be noted that where Africans are irregularly moving to Europe, the tendency is to use countries such as Libya, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Cape Verde, Egypt and Senegal as transit countries (Guanah and Ijeoma, 2017; Reitano, 2015; and Schapendock, 2012).

## **Trends of migration within Africa**

Africans do not just move to destinations outside the African continent. To the contrary, Croll (2009, p 4) revealed that only 1.5 percent of all sub-Saharan Africans, living outside their country, live within the European Union. He further disclosed that more than two-thirds of all migrants from sub-Saharan Africa migrate to other countries within sub-Saharan Africa (approximately 16.3 million). Intra-African migration accounts for 70% of all African Migration, and this percentage rises to 80% for sub-Saharan Africa (AfDB, 2019 cited in Fengler, Lengauer and Zappe, 2021, p. 198).

Literature indicates that intra-continental migration in Africa is characterized by a mixture of voluntary, involuntary, circumstance, internal and intra-continental forms of migration.

In terms of forced trans-continental migration, Tayeebwa (2021) and the Migration Data Portal (2020) indicate that, with a population of 1.4 million refugees, Uganda is the African country which hosts the largest number of refugees. Literature shows that these refugees are mostly from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, South Sudan, Burundi and Somalia. Hosting refugees displaced people is also reported for countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Cameroon.

As of November 2020, UNHCR (2020a) reports around 2 million persons of concern in Cameroon, including over 430, 000 refugees from conflict-riddled countries of Central African Republic (310, 000), Nigeria (117, 000) and Chad (2, 000). Callamard (1994 and Makhemo, 2009) reveal that Malawi started welcoming refugees in 1970s but its biggest tests were seen between 1986 and 1993 when it hosted more than 1.2 million Mozambican refugees fleeing from their war-torn country. Their en-masse coming to Malawi was problematic to the effect that Malawi Government started welcoming them

without vetting. Eventually, Malawi enlisted UNHCR assistance, and camps were established in all the districts bordering Mozambique (Dzimhiri, 1993). Malawi is still hosting a number of refugees and asylum seekers at Dzaleka camp and other places. By December 2020, there were approximately 77, 000 refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi; around 30, 000 from DRC; 11, 000 from Burundi; 7, 000 from Rwanda; and 29, 000 from other countries (UNHCR, 2020b). Literature also reports that Kenya, through refugee camps in Kakuma and other places, hosts large numbers of refugees from Somalia and South Sudan.

In fact, hosting of refugees appears to have been done by many African countries. According to Oucho (2009) the “World Refugee Survey 2008”, reported that as of 31 December 2007, there were 40,800 Angolan refugees in Zambia; 13,300 DR Congolese in Angola, and 291,500 in Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda and other countries; 20,800 Ethiopians in Sudan; 300,700 Sudanese in the neighboring countries of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and other countries; 85,200 Liberians in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and other countries, 20,200 Mauritians in Senegal; 12,300 Sierra Leoneans in Guinea, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire; 418,400 Somalis in Kenya and Ethiopia<sup>8</sup>; 331,900 Burundians all in Tanzania; and 21,200 Rwandans in Uganda. Notable features in this distribution of refugees are the refugees’ flight to neighbouring countries where they easily fit and feel at home and the exchange of refugees between several countries.

UNCHR estimates that, Sub-Sahara Africa hosts more than 26 percent (over 18 million) of the world's refugees. According to this UN report, the number of refugees has increased significantly over the years, partly due to the ongoing crises in the Central Africa Republic, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, South Sudan and Burundi. While the disturbances were mostly in the Horn of Africa, refugee camps are now getting established in all other sub-regions, especially in West and Southern African Region. The reasons for this trend include conflicts, civil unrest, environmental disasters, oppressive regimes and concomitant abuse of human rights as well as economic issues to get a better life elsewhere. While old causes of refugee flows remain the same, new ones have emerged to aggravate the already fragile situation in hosting countries while a search for sustainable solutions by governments remain far off (Adepoju, 2019).

From the internal migration perspective, IOM estimates more than one million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Burkina Faso, while the country faces further challenges due to “large flows of incoming and outgoing migrants including both regular and irregular migrants with concomitant challenges such as counter-trafficking, migration and development, migration and health, border management, etc.” (IOM, 2022).

In terms of moving trans-continentially based on labour or economic circumstances, South Africa hosts the largest number of labour or economic migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Tarisayi and Manik 2020, and Moyo and Mpofu, 2020, p. 7). These migrants mostly come from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Nigeria, DRC, Kenya as well as Uganda, among others (Bekker, 2015, Worby et al.,2008).

In recent years, Botswana has become a major country of immigration. This has been a result of its being a prosperous, stable country with rapid economic growth. It is in this context that it has attracted highly skilled professionals, who are in short supply, from Ghana, Zambia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya. Most of these people work in the private sector or at the university, taking advantage of the relaxed laws on residence and entry that were introduced in the early 1990s. However, a new policy of localisation of employment, especially in the education sector, entails replacing expatriates at the university, creating job insecurity for foreigners (Lefko-Everett, 2004; Campbell, 2003, p86).

---

<sup>8</sup> In the interest of accuracy, some of these Somalis were also reported to be in Yemen.



It should also be noted that for reasons of further transiting to Europe and other destinations, North African countries of Morocco, Libya, Algeria Tunisia and Egypt have the largest number of African migrants and refugees (UNHCR 2020c, cited in Fengler, Lengauer and Zappe, 2021, p. 205).

## Causes of migration: push-pull factors

The trends and patterns in international migration in sub-Saharan Africa are shaped by many pull and push factors. The factors that influence people to leave a place are called push factors, and the factors that influences a mover to go to a particular place are called pull factors (Ate, Egielewa and Hasan, 2019). Generally, push factors are the negative things or happenings which include unemployment, war, famine, flooding and other disasters, droughts, poor harvests due to degraded and, absence of resources and poor services in the areas of education, health, security and others. On the other hand, pull factors are the expectations which attract people to a new place. Pull factors are generally positive things which may include better job opportunities, higher standards of living and ease of doing things, peace and better education and healthcare (Ate, Egielewa and Hasan, 2019).

Conflict- and disasters mostly induce forced migration (Oucho, 2009). Ate, Egielewa and Hasan (2019) state that the common push factors for involuntary or forced internal, trans-continental and cross-continental migration among Africans are: outbreak of war, natural disasters such as flooding, drought and outbreak of communicable diseases.

In terms of voluntary internal, trans-continental and cross-continental migration among Africans, Kalu (2016) advances the following common push factors: rapid population and labour force growth, persistent economic decline, retrenchment of public sector workers in response to structural adjustment measures, poverty and – not least – environmental deterioration.

The need to secure a better life by moving to areas with peace, better weather conditions, and better employment opportunities, arable land and water and properly functioning governance and service delivery systems are some of the common pull factors for migration (Adekanye, 1998; and Kalu, 2016).

Literature further states that the significant determinants of migration – be it voluntary or involuntary – are armed conflict and lack of job opportunities. Conflicts have been prominent in many countries which produce most immigrants. Burundi and Somalia, as well as Mozambique, and Sudan have long histories of violent conflict. Over the period from 1960 to 1995 Burundi experienced seven years, Somalia 18 years, Mozambique 24 years, and Sudan 19 years of violent conflict<sup>3</sup>. Conflicts in Mali, Nigeria, Morocco, Syria, Eritrea have been attributed to increased causes of migration. The conflicts, which are mostly in form of war, also result into reduced economic growth. Projections show that an additional year of conflict is estimated to raise emigration by 1.7 per 1,000 inhabitants, while an additional 1% reduction in relative growth is found to reduce emigration by 1.5 per 1,000. Demographic and environmental pressures are found to have a less important direct impact, although they may have an indirect impact on migration through conflict and job opportunities (IOM, 2022).

In addition to the reasons cited above, literature also indicates that the unstable economic situation and lack of good harvests, have drawn many sub-Saharan African cities into back-and-forth migration. Many who migrate no longer adhere to classic geographic patterns but explore a much wider set of destinations and go as economic immigrants to areas where traditional seasonal work can be found. New migrations include Senegalese, Malians and Nigerians to Zambia, and more recently, to South Africa, Botswana and the USA. Due to unstable government, some are now migrating to Libya and Morocco en-route to Europe (Adepoju, 2006d). This is a response to the limited opportunities for migration to the traditional labour-receiving countries of the North, where regular labour migration, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled persons,

has been virtually closed except for family reunification purposes. Consequently, the Gulf States have become particularly attractive as destinations for highly skilled professionals.

Finally, it should be noted that communication via journalism and social media-driven personal communication among migrants and the general community act as a cross-contextual factor for informing people on the push and pull migration factors.

## Trajectory experiences of migrants

Depending on possession of requisite travel documents and requirements for staying in the destination country and adequate money to meet travel expenses, migrants travel to preferred destinations using maritime, air and land routes (Sorensen, 2006). Consequently, their experiences during travel and on arrival in the destination countries vary greatly.

Regular migrants rarely face extreme experience during travel and settlement in destination places or countries because they mostly travel by air. However, irregular migrants and those that breach residence requirements by overstaying and other breaches face most of the noteworthy experiences. Because of this background, literature mostly discusses the travel experiences of irregular migrants or migrants without proper travel and residence requirements for the host country.

In line with this report's goal of providing journalists and other communicators partnering in the CoMMPASS Project with an understanding of migration and its causes, implications and possible remedies to sub-Saharan Africa and the global community, this section focuses on travel experiences of migrants from or within Africa.

As stated earlier, widely available literature on the movement and settling experiences for migrants is for irregular migrants. Sorensen (2006) advances that irregular migrants tend to use the cheap and predominantly open or unrestricted maritime and land routes. In the travel from Africa to Europe and, where applicable, to proceed to other continents, the irregular migrants cross through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. Jammy and Ijeoma, (2019), and Ate, Egielewa and Hasan (2019) observe that the many of these irregular migrants have died in the process of their travels and that some get abused, duped and raped. They also state that others have fallen into the hands of merciless human smugglers, human organ harvesters, crook traffickers or slave traders. In April of 2015, more than 1,300 irregular migrants drowned. More than 5200 people are estimated to have died between 2012 and mid 2015 (Reitano 2015, p. 2). According to IOM, 3279 died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea in 2014, and an estimated 1750 died in the first six months of 2015. In April of 2014, more than 200,000 refugees and migrants fled for safety across the Mediterranean Sea.

It should also be realized that dying due to using unsafe travel means also happens in trans-continental migration. On 19 October 2022, a mass grave containing 25 bodies of irregular migrants from Ethiopia was found in Malawi. It was suspected that the immigrants had suffocated due to traveling in a closed van.

Kisang (2017) states that the death of the irregular migrants goes against Article 3 of the Universal Declaration (UDHR) which says that: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Other troubles that manifest during transit of irregular migrants include torture in form of being detained and, in some cases, sold. On November 14, 2017, the Cable News Network (CNN) showed immigrants being auctioned off as slaves in Libya for US\$400 each. Following the Libya save saga, Opeyemi (2018) reported that, as of May 2018, about 7, 831 Nigerians who were stranded in Libya were rescued by the IOM. It was also reported that Nigeria's Federal Government identified 5 000 more Nigerians who were trapped in Libyan detention camps. Detention of irregular migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia is also common in Malawi. Strict border controls, aimed at preventing entry of irregular migrants are also common in European countries such as Italy, Spain, and Malta.

Literature also states that migrants, especially irregular migrants from Africa, continue to face challenges when they arrive in destination countries. Where the destination country is in Europe, Nwalutu and Nwalutu (2019) identify supra-surveillance, discrimination for asylum consideration and long detention as some of the challenges. Excessive surveillance and detentions are also common in cases of within-Africa migration. For example, South Africa regularly checks, detains and deports irregular migrants which includes overstayers. From May 17, 2023, the Malawi Government, has been arresting and repatriating to Dzaleka Refugee Camp refugees staying outside the refugee camp. The Government justifies this action by saying that the law requires refugees and asylum seekers to reside in refugee camps, not wherever they want.

Literature also shows reports of uncondusive working conditions for migrants who travel to countries in Asia. Following reports of abuse of Kenya migrants in Gulf countries, Murangiri (2016) did a study on print media coverage of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan Migrants in Gulf Countries. Best (2019) and Thorogood (2019) notes that human rights violations and crime against African migrants in the Gulf are still underreported.

Besides Kisang, Best and Thorogood, other scholars have also argued that detaining and subjecting irregular migrants to the other above-cited treatments violate Articles 13<sup>9</sup> and 14a<sup>10</sup> of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Apuke and Tunca, 2020). However, in an attempt to justify these seemingly discriminatory treatments, Collyer and de Haas (2010, p. 471) argue that having or not having a visa or any requirement demanded by a host country now governs everything about the possibilities of migration and subsequent residence in wealthy countries. Individuals who choose to travel with no documentation are separated from their documented counterparts at every stage of the journey and often for many years afterward. They travel by different modes of transport on different routes; they must live in different places and they have different access to basic services; they take up different employment or the same employment for different rates of pay. It is of course possible to shift categorizations, through a variety of means, but in the context of migration to wealthy countries, the opportunities enjoyed by individual migrants are now significantly determined by their relationship with states.

## Benefits of migration

Literature shows that migration has benefits that mostly revolve around advancement of development. The anticipated development is expected to come through: remittances made by migrants, knowledge or brain gain that comes when migrants return or interact with people from their home countries through transnational migration, increased donor support as a way of making the pull factors available in the home countries and redistribution of human resources or capital.

Migrants, who succeed in the destination countries, have a tendency of sending money or remittances to families or relatives left in the home countries. Remittances account for a substantial amount of foreign currencies that developing countries acquire. The current upsurge as well as interest in migration by many stakeholders can be directly related to the fact that migrants' remittances to developing countries increased substantially from 2006: the official estimate of US\$206 billion is more than double the level of US\$96 billion in 2001. It is in this context that remittances have become a major source of external development finance, overtaking overseas development assistance, in some instances (Ratha, 2007). Remittances sent home by migrants, therefore, continue to represent a substantial share of the national GDPs in many African countries (KNOMAD, 2018).

---

<sup>9</sup> Article 13 of the UDHR states that: a) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; and that b) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

<sup>10</sup> Article 14 of the UDHR states that: a) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Mindful that some rich countries have low birth rate and a reasonable ageing population, the young and energetic migrants assist in the redistribution of world human resources. Apart from allowing the destination countries to maintain productivity, this development also reduces wastage of human resources through unemployment. History of international migration supports this view through narratives of slave trade where energetic youth were taken to work in plantations and industries in developed countries. Relatedly, De Haas (2008) observe that sub-Saharan migrants living in North Africa have played a great role in revitalizing desert towns.

It should also be noted that developing countries are also benefitting from the current excessive migration through projects being received under “stay-at-home” development initiatives. As one way of curbing migration, migrant sending countries and some humanitarian NGOs have advocated for stimulating development through aid and trade, which is believed to remove the need to migrate. For example, in the aftermath of the migration crises in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in northern Morocco, Spain joined Morocco in calling for a “Marshall Plan” for Africa in the hope that it will stem the flow of migrants to Europe (De Haas, 2008, p. 3).

Education is one of the main reasons for migration. Upon acquiring the education and returning home, these migrants greatly assist home countries with the delivery of improved services. The same scenario also applies when migrants return or interact with people from origin countries. This development is called brain gain.

Policy makers, in their quest for countries to benefit more from migration, are now emphasising the potential benefits of international migration for both sending as well as the receiving countries, with a focus on migration management. The challenge now is to make increasing globalisation work to maximise the opportunities of migration and minimise its drawbacks.

The migration gains that accrue to sending, transit and receiving countries demand that migration management systems must be developed and anchored in a manner that optimises the benefits and minimises the adverse effects of migration to the sending, transit and receiving countries. It is in this context that the International Organization for Migration and the East African Community were launched with the aim of comprehensively studying on regional integration in the East and the Horn of Africa to promote socio-economic development in their region through harnessing benefits in migration and mobility. Communication ensures effective sharing of understanding and knowledge in this process. Among others, this can be assisted by programmes to train journalists who can inform and educate people properly by tackling the necessary issues and frames migration.

## **Media, politics, and migrants/refugees**

Any occurrence of migration sends a message of what people desire (pull factor) and what they do not desire (push factor). As part of doing politics, politicians are supposed to track and act on the push-pull factors being considered by the migrants or the would-be migrants. The media which also exists to promote the interest is supposed to moderate the exchange of the push-pull factors or likes and dislikes between policy makers and the citizens or the potential migrants. Where the authorities seem uninterested in the concerns of the people, the media is supposed to influence immigration narratives among authorities and the people. The media also aids the migration process by informing would-be migrants and other migration actors on the push and pull factors existing in their community (Ate, Egielewa and Hasan, 2019). As one of the migration actors, politicians must champion the process of forming interventions on the push factors prevailing in a society.

Following the sharp rise in migration, it is not a surprise to see the media shaping the citizen's perceptions on migration through news stories. It also does come as a surprise to see political parties that have prioritized migration on their agenda gaining popularity and votes. Ate, Egielewa and Hasan (2019) observed that political parties that listened to the anti-migration calls of people made political gains in Europe and Africa. In Britain, France, Greece, Austria, and Germany most far right-wing populist parties had won elections partly due to the anti-immigration sentiment in Europe as people, especially those that experienced a bad patch in their economies, blamed the foreigners running away from wars, bad economy of their countries as well as civil strife, among others. People blamed these immigrants for snatching their jobs, housing, their security while others did not want immigrants to be in their midst. This was picked up by the media in Europe and it mirrored the sentiments of people.

In Kenya, for instance, Uhuru Kenyatta used the blockade of refugees and immigrants from Somalia as a slogan to win elections, against a blockade by the High court that ruled this as unconstitutional. He suggested that the rise of terrorism had prompted this as a campaign strategy. This helped him win the elections (Wara, 2016; Whitaker, 2019). In South Africa, the Democratic Alliance Political Party used the same strategy to improve its vote percentage to 20.77%. The party had a slogan of 'secure our borders' (Squazzin, 2019). It can, thus, be seen that the press has been influential in telling voters what to think about (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p.177).

Another role that the media can play in the media, politics and migration mix is to advocate for action of politicians and other stakeholders in dealing with the situations that bring the push factors that are resulting in deaths and the inhumane situations that African migrants are facing when heading for Europe and America (Voellinger, 2017).

## Relationships between media, migrants, and the audience

Salazar (2011) states that nowadays people hardly journey to places that they do not virtually know through the widely circulating images about them (the places). Similarly, Morley (2000) notes that empowered by mass-mediated images and discoveries and discourses, such imaginaries have become global and have changed the way in which people collectively envision the world and their own positions and mobilities within it. These statements outline the critical role that the media or communication plays in influencing migrants' preferred destinations. Researchers argue that media salience influences audiences' perceived importance of (McCombs, 2005) and knowledge about the objects of coverage (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, Eveland & Scheufele, 2000). In the context of migration, the media is crucial in delivering verified information, informed opinions as well as balanced and inclusive narratives. The way the media covers migration will affect the range and quality of information received by the public, particularly migrants, as well as how societies perceive and relate to the issue. Thus, encouraging professional and ethical media reporting, can greatly help to strengthen media responses and foster diversity of content, audience, sources and systems (UNESCO, 2021).

The reviewed literature also reveals that most of the stories which are used to examine the reportage on migration are written by European media outlets. Literature indicates that several studies on the role of the media in migration have focused on irregular migration. No well-known studies have been done on regular migration.

Despite acknowledging that the media plays an important role in influencing perception on migration, the studies reveal a negative relationship between media coverage and attitudes towards migrants. A 2013 report by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, revealed that the most common word used in relation to "migrants" was "illegal" and these included headlines like eight-fold increase in the number of illegal immigrants entering Europe. On the other hand, the word "failed" turned out to be the most common descriptor of "asylum seeker". In addition to these, words such as "terrorist", "sham" were the commonly used. Such frames when used criminalizes migrants who often cross borders in vulnerable circumstances and in life risk journeys across the Mediterranean Sea (Danilova, 2016).

The exodus of undocumented immigrants who travel to Europe using dangerous routes is another issue that has received extensive media attention. With the mass media reporting of massive refugee flows and ‘boat migration’ as well as turning the Mediterranean Sea into a mass grave because of sinking of a number of boats, the media has, thus, led a discourse in Europe and an image of very desperate Africans fleeing poverty in their home countries in search of better opportunities in Europe. Analysts believe that the media influences people’s perception towards the refugees. Results from the Eurobarometer data that was conducted in March 2018 revealed that ‘65% of Europeans have positive attitudes towards intra-EU migration and at the same time, only 41% accept immigration from outside the EU. Such attitudes vary greatly across member countries, with Swedish citizens reporting relatively positive immigration attitudes overall, versus people in the United Kingdom holding rather negative attitudes (Eberl et al. 2018).

The few studies done in Africa also show that coverage and framing of migration issues is even more sporadic and often negative. Jaiteh (2015, 6) finds that migration coverage is “limited, and stories about the hardships that migrants endure rare. Jaiteh also notes that self-censorship, where reporters do not want to offend either their media employer or the government, is also an issue. Ate, Egielewe and Hasan (2019) attribute the minimal and negative coverage of migration to the media landscape prevailing in Africa. The three scholars observe that:

Media reporting of migration issues in Africa have always been faced with many challenges, not least because most African Governments consider the reporting of emigration as a dent on their performance and an indirect vote of no confidence on their administrations. African governments, therefore, did not want too many questions asked (by the media) as to why numbers of people, mainly the young, were leaving their countries. One direct implication of such tensions is that most media in Africa are not free and under serious political pressure they undertake self-censorship. In many cases, journalists are targeted and politically persecuted (Ate, Egielewe and Hasan, 2019, p. 3).

In a tone that may appear to support the government’s desire to crackdown on irregular or undocumented migrants, the media in Malawi and Burkina Faso generally refer to migrants as “people who wander aimlessly without direction”, thus structuring the public narrative on migrants in deleterious terms (Nakitare, 2018).

Although irregular migrants from Africa rarely feature in the migration stories in both European and African Media, it should be noted that the migrants have been using personal and social interactions via media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Tiktok to interact and share information with relatives, would-be migrants and friends.

The concerns over minimal inclusion of migrants in the mainstream media despite the migrants’ use of personal and social communication as alternatives signal that the mass media perform a crucial role in the public representation of unequal social relations and the play of cultural power. It is in and through representations, for example, that members of the media audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who “we” are in relation to who “we” are not. Therefore, it seems imperative that university level courses on media and migration are offered in these exemplary sub-Saharan African countries affected by all aspects of migration, enabling a new generation of journalists and media practitioners – as key multiplier in African societies - appreciate the multifaceted issues that relate to the topic.

## Gaps in reporting migration

Firstly, research has identified that coverage of migration is dominated by stories on European domestic issues of security and migration policy. It was also noted that the few stories on migration from Africa were even more negative. A content analysis that retrieved 1512 articles that appeared in 2015 as well as 2016 revealed that coverage of news in European countries was dominated by domestic issues in their countries which included security as well as migration policies, among others. The study revealed that out of 1512 articles, only 175 articles were found in African news outlets. Coverage was even more negative as it mostly centred on disasters at sea. For instance, many studies focus on negative frames, for



example, they mostly report on immigrants as a threat to security, economic or cultural orientation of their respective countries while some report immigrants as delinquents or criminals (Balch & Balabanova, 2016; Breen, Haynes, & Devereux, 2006; Meeusen & Jacobs, 2017).

It was also observed that both the coverages of African and European media houses ignored the causes and context of migration. African and European fail to cover salient elements of migration and mobility such as: the migrants in question (whether they are male, female or children, refugees, asylum seekers or migrants); reasons for their migration; conditions along the way to their destination; their rights as migrants; and the role of their governments, among others.

Eric Chinje, one of the continent's renowned journalists, argues: As long as migration is not adequately covered in African countries, one might never see a critical constituency that fights for policies to effectively address root causes of (illegal) migration. Moreover, According to African Media Initiative's analysis, African media coverage of migration overlooks the economic and socio-political realities driving people to migrate from Africa to Europe.

Chinje (2016) adds that many African journalists also fail to produce effective migration stories because of not knowing the seriousness of the issue of migration. Similarly, some reporters observed that the publication of limited stories on African migration is also attributed to lack of knowledge about the dimension and cross-cultural aspects of the migration story. The reporters emphasized that they need more resources for investigative research and better support from editors to follow up critical stories' (UNESCO, 2021, p.5).

Lack of voices of the migrants is another contextual gap spotted in African Migration stories. Telling the 'African migration story' would also imply that coverage in Africa starts to include the actual migrants as main actors. Similarly, the actual African migrants interviewed by Bastian et al., (2018) state that migration is mostly "a forgotten story" in the local media.

Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) summarized the above-listed gaps by saying that:

Many of the media organisations and journalists were unprepared to cover such events and there is little evidence of European media initiating systematic training for their staff on how to deal with the events and the sensitive issues involved. Such training opportunities have been scattered and exceptional. Furthermore, media coverage of "the crisis" was inevitably interacting with political decision-making and popular opinions. Thus, the mainstream political narratives, which sometimes promoted hostility and sometimes solidarity towards newcomers, were inevitably reflected in the press coverage. However, questioning political decision-making and engaging critically with the narratives of the "crisis", which is a responsibility associated with independent journalism, was very uneven across Europe. It is important to note that we observed no singular and direct link between national frameworks associated with freedom of expression and hostile coverage of refugees (e.g., Serbian press was more sympathetic towards refugees vis-à-vis French media). However, we observed that in countries where hate speech is not always tackled systematically (e.g., Hungary, France), hostility and dehumanisation of refugees in the media was more widespread. (p. 12)

Jaiteh (2015) finds migration coverage "limited, and stories about the hardship migrants endure rare. Apart from lack of resources due to weak infrastructure of African media outlets (Asante, 2013), Ate, Agielewe and Hasan (2019) attribute the limited coverage of the African Migration story to self-censorship, where reporters do not want to offend either their media employer or the government, is also an issue" (p.6).

Besides showing that migration stories are underreported, the reviewed studies also reveal that stories on migration suffer from one-dimensional and self-centred perspectives of Europe. To a considerable extent, the news agenda of African media mirrors the European news agenda, clearly demonstrating that African media so far fail to tell the "African story" of migration. This is also true for the choice of countries of coverage as well as actors, which are disproportionately often from Europe instead of Africa.

Njogou (2009), Turkson (2012), Asante (2013), and Serwornoo (2018) identify structural deficiencies in media organizations and journalism training. According to research by these African scholars, journalists in sub-Saharan African countries often lack the education and skills needed to challenge political decisions through professional reporting.

Results of the reviewed studies clearly show that journalism education in African countries needs to train the future generation of African journalists to no longer overlook the economic and socio-political realities driving people to move from Africa to Europe, and elsewhere. But no academic curriculum targeting journalism education so far provides a substantial and inter-disciplinary introduction into the analysis of migration matters.

No substantial e-learning courses are available for target groups in sub-Saharan Africa that systematically review the state of research on migration in a way that is appropriate for the target groups and introduces journalism students in a structured way to the research, reporting, ethics and editorial marketing of migration reporting, as well as best practices and strategies for audience-cantered approaches. This gap renders the CoMMPASS project, which aims to improve the quality of higher journalism education in sub-Saharan Africa, a necessity.

While journalists are committed to providing the public with quality reporting, they face hurdles when reporting about migration, refugees and mobility. Data collection 'is not only complex but also very costly, especially when longitudinal, recurrent and internationally comparable data is required (IMI, 2020).

Another problem is lack of knowledge on the concepts and best ways for reporting migration. Migration reporting is a theme or topic based. Reporting it properly requires a reasonable understanding of the concept of migration. Lack of resources to allow for detailed coverage of migration stories is another challenge. Some reporters revealed that they need more resources for investigative research and better support from editors to follow up critical stories' (UNESCO, 2021, p.5).

## **Journalism training on migration and mobility**

The consulted literature shows that stories about migration are severely underreported in African countries. The studies further show that migration reporting suffers from one-dimensional and self-centred perspectives in Europe. It has also been shown that negative reporting dominates and that Africa reporters tend to mirror the European news agenda whenever a chance to write a migration story emerges.

To minimize these gaps, a training on migration and mobility reporting is required. Such trainings can be guided by the interpretive and contextual-driven news writing frameworks such as the Ethical Journalism Network's (EJN) 2016 "Five Point Guide for migration reporting" (Ate, Egielewa and Hasan 2019, p. 5) and the "Migration Reporting Model" proposed by Ate, Egielewa and Ikeroda.



The EJA's Five Point Guide has the following five headings: facts, not bias; know the law; show humanity; speak for all; and challenge the hate. On the other hand, the Ate, Egielewa and Ikeroda proposed migration reporting model has the following six parts: the environment<sup>11</sup>; the reporter<sup>12</sup>; the message<sup>13</sup>; the platform<sup>14</sup>; the audience<sup>15</sup>; and feedback<sup>16</sup>.

It is against this backdrop that in 2022, Unesco has published in its series on journalism training a Handbook for Journalism Educators: "Reporting on Migrants and Refugees". In thirteen modules written by an international and cross-cultural group of media researchers, educators and practitioners, they are provided with a comprehensive curriculum.

---

<sup>11</sup> The environment in this context refers to the domain where the reporter is operating. We have the political, social, economic, legal, cultural and religious layers of the environment which the migration reporter must understand and design his/her message to fit into it. The environmental layers are situated under macro environment defined by Nwosu and Uffoh [33] as the "wider or more general socio-economic and political domains including the ecosystem itself whose factors, forces and actors influence the organization's internal and microenvironments or the changes/developments within these internal and microenvironments (e.g economic, cultural, political, technological factors, etc)."

<sup>12</sup> The reporter as a second component of migration reporting model is connected to the macro environment that triggers the push and pull migration factors. Cambridge Dictionary describes a reporter as a person whose job is to discover information about news events and describe them for a newspaper or for radio or television.

<sup>13</sup> The third property of this model is message which is an idea, statement, information conveyed from one person or group to another. The message could be objective (straight forward news reports devoid of the writer's assertion or embellishments) or subjective (based on reporter's feelings, opinions, coloration, or embellishments) [34].

<sup>14</sup> Platform is the fourth component of the model. As used in this context, platform referred to media outlets like social media (Facebook, X – formerly known as Twitter –, WhatsApp, Myspace, Instagram, etc), broadcast media (radio and television), print media (books, newspapers, magazines, etc) and trado media (town crier, gong man, horn man, age group, etc).

<sup>15</sup> The fifth element of this model is the audience. The audiences are the people who receive the communication messages. There are different kinds of audience. These include serious minded, sophisticated, and intelligent people who go for serious minded articles, politics, editorials, etc. There are less sophisticated people who are interested in light-hearted materials (pools betting, entertainment, etc). There are also specialized audiences like sport audiences, business audiences, etc. [35].

<sup>16</sup> The sixth element of the model is feedback. Feedback is the reaction to the message sent to the audience. Without feedback, communication will be incomplete. It is expected that the message or information which is sent by the reporter through various platforms will get to the audience and their reaction to the message will get back to the migrating environment which the reporter is connected to.



# CONCLUSION

Considering that migration reporting is theme or topic based, this review has given definitions of migration and its related concepts. To prepare writers or developers of migration stories for the required analytical way of publishing stories on migration, the review has also given the trends and benefits of migration. On the coverage of migration stories, it has been noted that most stories on migration mostly focus on irregular migration and they are written by Europeans from a narrow angle of informing people on themes of security and migration policy. In terms of gaps, it has been observed that the stories do not mostly give the context and all the background information for the audience's proper understanding and analysis of the migration story. It has also been noted that the stories tend to bracket all migrants. The stories are not disaggregated based on gender, age, and the other typologies of migration. Where the migrants have been victimized, the stories rarely discuss the human rights and other needs of the migrants. Going forward, the report recommends a training on analytical and contextual way of writing migration reports.



# REFERENCES

Agadjanian, V. (2008). Research on International Migration within sub-Saharan Africa: Foci, Approaches, and Challenges, JSTOR (online < 49/3, PP407-421, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40220076>)

Apuke O.D and Tunca E. A. (2020). Taking us to the vulnerability scene: Television news coverage and framing of internally displaced persons in Nigeria, doi: 10.1093/jrs/feaa075.

Ate AA, Egielewa P, Hasan M. Migration Reporting in Nigeria: Towards an Effective Model. *Global Media Journal* 2019, 17:32.

Balch, A., & Balabanova, E. (2016). Ethics, politics and migration: Public debates on the free movement of Romanians and Bulgarians in the UK, 2006–2013. *Politics*, 36(1), 19–35. doi: 10.1111/1467-9256.12082

Berger, G (2011). Networking African Journalism Educators, Bonding, bridging, and linking, *Global Media Journal*, 5/1 1-23 <http://doi.org/10.5789/5-1-55>

Breen, M. J., Haynes, A., & Devereux, E. (2006). Fear, framing and foreigners: The othering of immigrants in the Irish print media. *International Journal of Critical Psychology*, 16, 100–121.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, August 18). human migration. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-migration>

Burscher, B., van Spanje, J., & de Vreese, C. H. (2015). Owning the issues of crime and immigration: The relation between immigration and crime news and anti-immigrant voting in 11 countries. *Electoral Studies*, 38, 59–69. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2015.03.001

Castles, S., De Haas, H., & Miller, M.J. (2014). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Higher Education.

Carlos Arcila-Calderón, David Blanco-Herrero, María Masiola, Martín Oller-Alonso, Theodora Saridou, Sergio Splendore, Andreas Veglis. (2023) Framing Migration in Southern European Media: Perceptions of Spanish, Italian, and Greek Specialized Journalists. *Journalism Practice* 17:1, pages 24-47.

Connor, P. (2018). International migration from sub-Saharan Africa has grown dramatically since 2010, Pew Research Center (online), Migration from sub-Saharan Africa grew dramatically in 2010-2017 | Pew Research Center

Collyer M and de Haas H (2010). Developing Dynamic Categorisations of Transit Migration. DOI: 10.1002/psp.635.

Cresswell, T. 2006. *On the move: Mobility in the modern western world*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cuttitta, P. (2007). The changes in the fight against illegal immigration in the Euro-Mediterranean area and in Euro-Mediterranean relations. In Working paper. Genoa: University of Genoa.

Croll P.J. (2009). Preface: Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II Conference in Fischer C., and Vollmer R., (eds.). *Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II*, Brief 39: Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

De Clerck H. M., (2015). Europe is no longer the only 'El Dorado' for sub-Saharan Africans: the case of contemporary Senegalese migration to Turkey, *Migration and Development*, 4:2, 272-290, DOI: 10.1080/21632324.2015.1022086

de Haas (2008). The Myth of Invasion: The inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe. *Third World Quarterly* 2008 29(7): 1305-1322.

ESPAS, (2018). Foresight Reflection Paper on The Future of Mobility and Migration Within and From sub-Saharan Africa, [https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/sites/default/files/generated/document/en/Foresight%20Reflection%20Paper%20Sub-Saharan%20Africa\\_V01.pdf](https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/sites/default/files/generated/document/en/Foresight%20Reflection%20Paper%20Sub-Saharan%20Africa_V01.pdf)

Electoral Commission of South Africa (2019). 2019 national and provincial elections, Electoral Commission of South Africa, from: <https://elections.org.za/NPEDDashboard/app/dashboard.html>

Esipova, N., Ry, J., Tsabutashvili, D (2015). How the world views migration? IOM, retrieved, November 30, 2020, from: [https://publication.iom.int/system/files/how\\_the\\_world\\_gallup.pdf](https://publication.iom.int/system/files/how_the_world_gallup.pdf)

Fengler S., Bastian M., Brinkmann J., Zappe A. C., Tata V., Andindilile M., Assefa E., Chibita M., Mbaine A., Obonyo L., Quashigah T., Skleparis D., Splendore S., Tadesse M., and Lengauer M., (2020). Covering Migration in Africa and Europe: Results from a Comparative Analysis of 11 countries. *Journalism Practice*, 16:1, 140-160. DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2020.1792333

Fengler, S., Lengauer, M., and Zappe, A.C. (eds) (2021). *Reporting on Migrants and Refugees. Handbook for Journalism Educators*. Paris: UNESCO.



Feinstein, A., Pavisian, B., Storm, H. (2018). Journalists covering the refugee and migration crisis are affected by moral injury, not PTSD, *Journal of the Royal Society of medicine Open*,9(3),1-7, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2054270418759010>

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (2017). How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration? A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers. Retrieved from: [www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration\\_narrative](http://www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration_narrative)

Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Christine E. Meltzer, Tobias Heidenreich, Beatrice Herrero, Nora Theorin, Fabienne Lind, Rosa Berganza, Hajo G. Boomgaarden, Christian Schemer & Jesper Strömbäck (2018) The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: a literature review, *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42:3, 207-223, DOI: 10.1080/23808985.2018.1497452

Kisang A.K. (2017). The Images and Rights Migrants in the Kenyan Media. DOI: 10.9734/CJAST/2017/32385

Kohnert, D. (2007). African Migration to Europe: Obscured Responsibilities and Common Misconceptions, *German Institute of Global and Area Studies*, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/47120/wp49.pdf>

Goldschmidt, E. (2006). Storming the Fences: Morocco and Europe's Anti-Migration Policy. *Middle East Report*, 239. [http://www.merip.org/mer/mer239/storming-fences?ip\\_login\\_no\\_cache=59647e755c00c7cc75a256aea1eb0ea2](http://www.merip.org/mer/mer239/storming-fences?ip_login_no_cache=59647e755c00c7cc75a256aea1eb0ea2).

Krüger, Franz (2022), Disrupted media—disrupted academy: rethinking African j-schools, February 2022, The Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, [https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/African-J-Schools\\_220208-002.pdf](https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/African-J-Schools_220208-002.pdf)

Malkki, L. 1992. National geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 24-44.

Moyo D and Mpfu S., (eds) (2020). *Mediating Xenophobia in Africa: Unpacking Discourses of Migration, Belonging and Othering*: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61236-8>

Naudé W (2010). The Determinants of Migration from sub-Saharan African Countries, *Journal of African Economies*, Volume 19, Issue 3, June 2010, Pages 330–356, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejq004>

Nwalutu, M. O., and Nwalutu, F. I., (2019). Media and Construction of Difference: How Media Representations work to Criminalize, Label and Induce Border-Restrictions against Young African Female Migrants in Europe. *Sociology Mind*, 9, 66-85, doi:10.4236/sm.2019.91004.

OECD, (2022). *International Migration outlook, 2022*, <https://www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm>

Oucho J.O. (2009). Voluntary versus Forced Migration in sub-Saharan Africa in Fischer C., and Vollmer R., (eds.). *Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II*, Brief 39: Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

Pew Research (2018). At Least a Million sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010, *Migration From sub-Saharan Africa to Europe Has Grown Since 2010* | Pew Research Center

Lutterbeck, D. (2006). Policing Migration in the Mediterranean. *Mediterranean Politics*, 11(1), 59–82.

Radoli O. L., (2019). Narratives of Migration and Development as Discourses in Transnational Migrant Media: The Case of Kenyan Migration to Europe: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331992869\\_Narratives\\_of\\_Migration\\_and\\_Development\\_as\\_Discourses\\_in\\_Transnational\\_Migrant\\_Media\\_the\\_case\\_of\\_Kenyan\\_migration\\_to\\_Europe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331992869_Narratives_of_Migration_and_Development_as_Discourses_in_Transnational_Migrant_Media_the_case_of_Kenyan_migration_to_Europe)

Reitano T. (2015). A Perilous but Profitable Crossing: The Changing Nature of Migrant Smuggling through sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and EU Migration Policy (2012-2015). *The European Review of Organised Crime* 2(1), 2015, 1-23

Salazar N.B., (2011). The Power of Imagination in Transnational Mobilities. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 18:1-23, 2011.

Schapendonk J., (2012). Migrants' Im/Mobilities on Their Way to the EU: Lost in Transit? *Outlook on Europe*. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-9663.2012.00735.x, Vol. 103, No. 5, pp. 577–583.

Sørensen N.N., (2006). *Mediterranean Transit Migration*. Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS: Copenhagen: [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

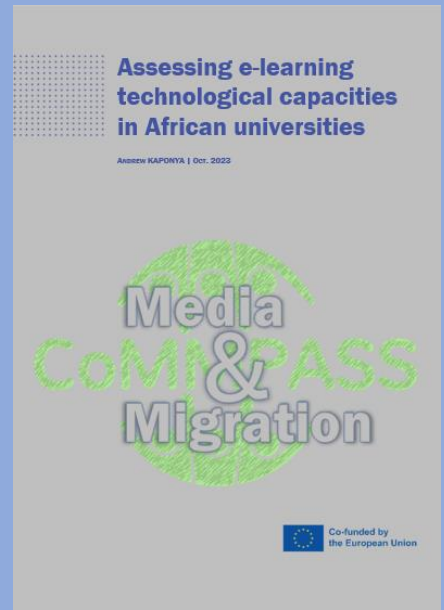
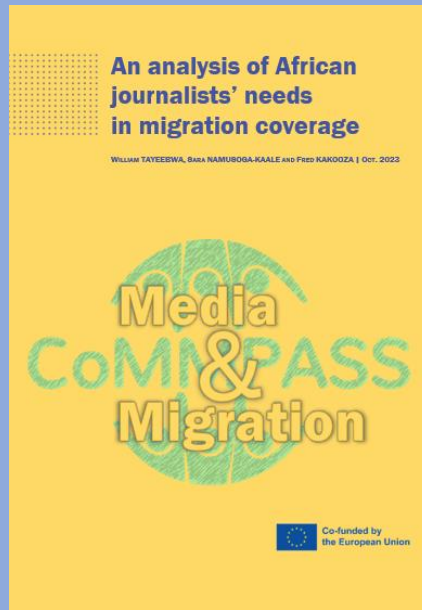
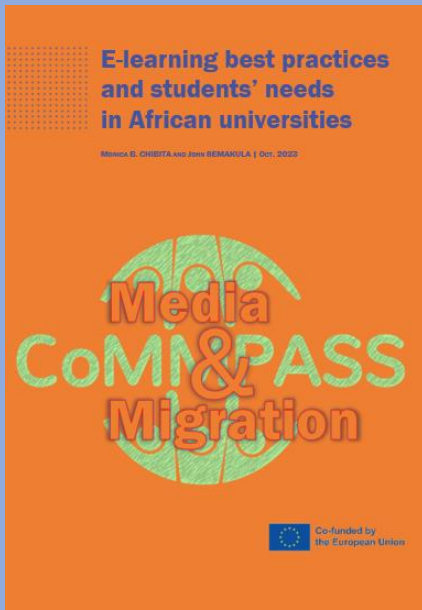
Strömbäck, J., Andersson, F., & Nedlund, E. (2017). *Invandring i medierna. Hur rapporterade svenska tidningar åren 2010–2015?* Stockholm: *Delegationen för migrationsstudier*

Wissink, M., Mazzucato, V., (2017). In transit: Changing social networks of sub-Saharan African migrants in Turkey and Greece. *Soc. Netw.* (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2017.03.005>

Witteler-Stiepelmann D. (2009). Initial Address: Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II Conference in Fischer C., and Vollmer R., (eds.). *Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II*, Brief 39: Bonn International Centre for Conversion.

Tarisayi K.S., and Manik S., (2020). An abating Challenge: Media portrayal of xenophobia in South Africa, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7;1, 1859074, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2020.1859074

## ALSO AVAILABLE



**Communicating Migration and Mobility  
E-Learning Programs and Newsroom Applications for sub-Saharan Africa**

[www.commpass.org](http://www.commpass.org)