Visible and invisible bordering practices

The EU-African migration conundrum and spatial mobility of borders

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Abstract

Purpose – Despite enacting numerous legislations, policies and practices accommodating third country nationals, Europe continues to erect a fortress against foreigners. The recent migration crisis on the shores of the Mediterranean seem to validate this view. As Europe searches for optimal solutions to the migration crisis, recent media and humanitarian organisation reports of surging African and Middle Eastern refugees and migrants bring into sharp focus and test these immigration measures. For this cause, the purpose of this paper is to interrogate European Union (EU)-Africa relationships on international migration issues.

Design/methodology/approach – Located in the evolving field of border studies, the paper employs the concepts of displacement and humanitarianism in an effort to frame the EU-Africa relations on migration in the context of borders, boundaries and frontiers. A thorough review and critical analysis of relevant legislations, literature and media reports on the Africa-Europe migration interface is also conducted.

Findings – The militarisation, securitisation, restrictive and, sometimes, draconian immigration regimes do not provide sustainable solutions to the migration crisis facing Europe. A rethinking around the integration and inclusion of immigrants into Europe's socioeconomic fabric, and addressing fundamental and structural weaknesses in EU-Africa relationships and respective economies is essential.

Originality/value – Theoretically, the paper attempts to understand better, the way the EU and Africa engage each other on international migration issues, in the context of border studies. Empirically, the paper positions itself in policy engagements and the quest for practical solutions by the two continents in view of the migration crisis currently facing Europe.

Keywords Migration, Social inclusion, Social exclusion, Borders, EU-Africa migration interface, Fortress Europe

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

We interrogate European Union (EU)-Africa relationships on international migration issues and argue that the EU's handling of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and, especially, Africa on the Mediterranean Sea does not provide a sustainable solution. The hive of activity on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea seems to suggest an enduring migration challenge, confronting the EU and Africa, and their respective borders and frontiers. The EU theoretically appears to have a relaxed immigration regime. In practice the regime is, however, restrictive, as there are calculated attempts in the EU to exclude refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East, among others.

This has forced the migrants to engage in desperate attempts to illegally and/or through the services of human smugglers, migrate to Europe. Some of these migrants make it into Europe, only to be arrested and deported. Due to unsafe conditions and overcrowding on

the modes of transport (such as boats) that are used by these migrants, some of them meet painful deaths occasioned by drowning. Such scenes are played out on the Mediterranean Sea and in places such as Ceuta, an autonomous Spanish city on the northern coast of Africa bordering Western Morocco. By deploying the concepts of borders, borderlands and frontiers, we argue that the EU's approach towards refugees and migrants from the Middle and especially Africa is not sustainable. We posit that erecting a "Fortress" around the EU countries with the express purpose of keeping out and excluding refugees and migrants from regions like Africa will only lead to a persisting migration challenge on the EU borders, as is currently and the continuing case on the Mediterranean Sea. It also ignores fundamental sustainable development principles relating to the integration of such migrants and refugees into EU countries. Refugees and migrants may benefit both receiving and sending countries by contributing to economic development and the uplifting of standards of living and the general betterment of the human condition.

After this introduction, the rest of this paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 provides the contemporary and contextual background of the migration challenge around the Mediterranean Sea and presents the research question and objectives of the paper. Section 3 frames the theoretical and conceptual context for achieving the purpose of the paper through a consideration of the literature and debates in the field of border studies. The attempt is made to contextualise EU-Africa relations on international migration issues around the concepts borders, boundaries and frontiers and to understand better, the way the two continents engage each other on these issues. Section 4 applies the realities of borders to migration and policies. It positions itself in policy engagements and the quest for practical solutions by the EU and Africa, in view of the migration challenge currently facing Europe. Section 5 concludes with a call for a rethink around the integration and inclusion of immigrants into Europe's socioeconomic fabric and the suggestion that addressing fundamental and structural weaknesses in EU-Africa relationships and respective economies is essential.

2. Background

Between January and November 2015, approximately 1.5 million migrants illegally crossed the EU's external borders into the EU (European Commission, 2015a, b). There is evidence that migrants from Africa are also among the increasing numbers of people who migrate (legally or otherwise into Europe). For example:

> […] data released by the UNHCR showed that nearly one million people reached Greek and Italian territories through sea crossings. More than 2200 people were rescued in the Central Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and Italy. About 400 people tried to overcome the border to the Spanish city of Ceuta in Northern Africa on the 25th of December. More than 180 people succeeded to reach Ceuta, either by climbing over the border fences or by swimming around them. However, two people died and twelve others were injured, some severely[1].

This heightened migration has intensified the desire by the EU to strengthen a restrictive immigration regime. For instance, there is a call for EU countries to set up a European Border and Coast Guard Agency that will secure and protect the EU border against the flood of refugees and migrants (European Commission, 2015a, b). In this light, the European Commission President, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, declared in the State of the Union Address on 9 September 2015 that:

> A united refugee and asylum policy requires stronger joint efforts to secure our external borders. Fortunately, we have given up border controls between the Member States of the Schengen area, to guarantee free movement of people, a unique symbol of European integration.

But the other side of the coin to free movement is that we must work together more closely to manage our external borders. This is what our citizens expect. The Commission said it back in May, and I said it during my election campaign: We need to strengthen Frontex significantly and develop it into a fully operational European border and coast guard system[2].

Further, on the 30 December 2015, "the EU and Turkey agreed on a deal to deter refugee movements from Turkey into EU territory. In exchange for 3 billion Euros from the EU and the promise to facilitate visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, the Turkish Government agreed to prevent refugees and migrants from leaving the Turkish shores to reach the Greek islands[3]". Several EU countries have unilaterally declared that refugees and migrants are not welcome in their territories. The French prime minister, for example, declared that "Europe cannot welcome more refugees. It is not possible[4]". Other European countries were generally tightening their borders in line with intensifying their border regimes too[5], with countries like Germany asserting that a "sensitive reduction" to the flow of refugees in Germany[6] was imminent. Such a stance had led to serious levels of suffering as refugees and migrants attempt to cross into Europe[7]. Similar responses and approaches towards immigrants are exhibited by the French Government. Actually, the negative response of the French Government to immigrants is traceable to several years ago, as relates to the Sangatte transit camp, for instance, which was located in Northern France. The camp existed since 1999, as a post for immigrants en route to other European countries (Fassin, 2012). However, a new French Government that assumed power in 2002 was opposed to immigrants and even the setting up and management of facilities for immigrants in transit. Thus, Nicolas Sarkozy, the Minister of Interior at the time, visited the camp in 2002, after which it was closed.

The Cambodian registered ship carrying 900 immigrants en route to other European countries that sank on the French Riviera on 17 February 2001 serves as an example too. Although the condition of immigrants after the shipwreck generated various sentiments in French society, the government used the humanitarian situation of immigrants on board the ship to show the bad and inhumane criminal nature of illegal immigration. This was done in order to clamp down on the immigrants by resorting to "compassionate repression" (Fassin, 2012, p. 135). In other words, repression was good to the extent of preventing incidents of a similar nature, in the future. The point we are making here is that several EU countries individually and/or collectively adopt stringent immigration regimes against immigrants.

The refugees and migrants that use the Mediterranean Sea as a route (through Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, etc.) into Europe originate from both Africa and the Middle East. (BBC News, 2014; UNHCR, 2015; Hammond, 2015; *The Economist*, 2015) African refugees and migrants taking the journey to Europe originate from several countries in West Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Gambia and Mali) as well as the Horn of Africa (e.g. Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea), travelling through the Sahara Desert to Libya (Hammond, 2015; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015).

While EU member states in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation alliance are known to wage military campaigns in migrant sending countries of the Middle East such as Syria, we are unaware of similar diplomatic initiatives there between the EU and migrant sending countries that are similar to the Valletta summit on migration, which brought together leaders and representatives of the EU and African governments. The Valletta summit was held on 11 and 12 November 2015 in Malta, amidst surging numbers of refugees and migrants risking the journey across the Mediterranean Sea for Europe.

The summit discussed migration, economic development and the need to strengthen cooperation and address the challenges and opportunities of migration. The political declaration and action plan adopted by the leaders at the summit resolved to, among other things, address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement from Africa; enhance cooperation on legal migration and mobility; reinforce the protection of migrants and asylum seekers; prevent and fight irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and work more closely to improve cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration. (European Council, 2016) The summit also agreed to implement 16 agreed on concrete measures by the end of 2016 and, further, launched the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa). (European Council, 2016) The Trust Fund aims to provide additional funds that would support the implementation of the summit's action plan. Accordingly, in a bid to address the root causes of destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development, the Trust Fund would benefit various countries across Africa that encompass the major African migration routes to Europe including, among others, those in the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa and the north of Africa (European Commission, 2015a, b). Noble as they may be, the resolutions and measures drawn at the Valletta summit suggest that the EU is continuing with its political agenda to contain migration from Africa and repatriate the migrants from there that are already in Europe. (Garavoglia, 2015) Among the EU's tools that attest to and are employed to accomplish the EU's political agenda are the Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPPs), EU Directives and EU Action Plans[8].

This political agenda is, despite the fact that European countries have over the years enacted numerous legislations, policies and practices that welcome and accommodate third country nationals (TCNs) in the EU. In contrast with this, for instance, the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) position on migration, from which the majority of African migrants travelling to Europe originate. Through its regional benchmark policy paper on regional and international migration – the 2008 ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration – informed by ECOWAS' objective to establish a link between migration and development, the Common Approach also adds an external dimension and refugee issues to ECOWAS's internal free movement of persons policy framework (Nshimbi and Fioramonti, 2013). As concerns the EU, the Common Approach emphasises the importance of free movement for regional integration and focuses on promoting regular migration to third countries, among other forms of movement, and the value that this holds for ECOWAS, for irregular migration, for migrants' rights, for women migrants and for trafficking (European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), 2010). Through the Common Approach, ECOWAS commits to attaining coherence in policies involving regional agreements and bilateral agreements with third countries such as the EU. The Common Approach further commits to establishing, and making operational, a regional fund to finance cross-border cooperation along with the launch of a regional territorial strategy aimed at developing new growth and development areas. Also outlined in the Common Approach is the harmonisation of development and policies related to migration, and the strengthening of dialogue between ECOWAS, transit countries and host countries. In adopting the Common Approach on Migration, West African countries clearly reflect a commitment to a comprehensive regional approach to migration and management, all of which seems to be at odds with the mentioned EU political agenda. Against this backdrop, this paper brings into sharp focus and tests the EU's immigration measures

particularly in the context of EU-Africa relations around issues of migration, as Europe searches for optimal solutions to the migration crisis. Concerning the EU and its relations with Africa and in view of the stated purpose of this paper, the question is therefore asked: whither the fortress around the Mediterranean and Africa?

We address this question and seek to achieve the purpose of this paper by framing it in the field of border studies. We thus deploy the concepts of borders, borderlands and frontiers and posit that erecting a "Fortress" around the EU with the express purpose of keeping out and excluding refugees and migrants from regions like Africa only yields a persisting migration challenge for the EU that is akin to the current situation in the Mediterranean Sea and its shores. It also ignores essential keys to sustainable development such as the integration of economically active migrants into the EU and member countries. In terms of methods, a thorough review and critical analysis of relevant legislations, literature and media reports on the Africa-Europe migration interface is also conducted.

3. The context of EU-Africa relations on migration: some conceptual and theoretical considerations

Discussion of EU-Africa relations *vis-à-vis* the movement of people and the Mediterranean Sea invokes the notions of borders, boundaries and frontiers. For purpose of this paper, borders are defined as regions or lines which divide or separates countries. Examples of borders include the Canada-US border, US-Mexico border, Sino-Russian border, Afghan-Pakistan border. Boundaries can be defined as other lines within and between countries based on, among other things, ethnic, cultural or economic criteria. For example, the Asia free trade zone's extent can be regarded as an economic boundary between the countries which constitute this block and those which do not.

We conceptualise a frontier as an "unexplored" zone between countries, such as the Sino-Siberia zone, Alaskan region or the no-touching-zone between the Canada-US border. In this respect the Mediterranean Sea would be regarded an ideal natural geographic boundary in which human beings cannot settle (Semple, 1911). Moreover, the sea presents a frontier, which, naturally, presents itself as a challenge for humans to cross. This border effect has, however, all the more become negated with the advent of and advancements in transportation and information and commination technologies (Castells, 1996). Critical questions that arise regarding the EU-Africa migration interface, include the extent to which a border, boundary or frontier actually exists between the EU and Africa. With this, is it even sustainable to attempt to cut off migrants from Africa headed for Europe? To attempt to engage with these clearly difficult questions, the following section considers the migration conundrum currently besetting the EU regarding migrants from the Middle East and, especially, Africa.

Although the vessels used by the people migrating through the Mediterranean Sea to Europe are unseaworthy and overloaded boats that are the least representative of state-of-the-art means of transport (Lutterbeck, 2006), the border effect of the Mediterranean Sea is further erased by a borderless world created through increased flows of labour, capital, goods and services – or heightened globalisation. Thus Castells (1996), for instance, argues that with globalisation, the "space of places" is usurped by the "space of flows". Arguments along this line go on to suggest that the erosion of borders is an indication that the nation-state, as it is known in the Westphalian sense, is at its end (having lost its role as a significant participant in the global economy to markets – represented by flows of factors of production – multinational corporations, etc.) (Ohmae, 1996).

According to Jan Aart Scholte (1996, p. 49), globalisation dissolves territoriality insofar as globalisation is a dimension of social relations and represents the emergence and spread of a supraterritorial dimension of such relations. These relations are "circumstances without distance and relatively disconnected from particular location. Globalisation has made the identification of boundaries – and associated notions of 'here' and 'there', 'far' and 'near', 'outside' and 'inside', 'home' and 'away', 'them' and 'us' – more problematic than ever. To this extent, a new, non-territorialist cartography of social life is needed."[9].

While the literature and, especially, public media blow up the fact that the refugees and migrants flowing to Europe are fleeing poverty, war and conflict in their countries of origin, we also see considerable consistency in the neoliberal economic laws of supply and demand at work, especially with regard to the so-called economic migrants. According to Brunet-Jailly (2005), flows of goods, capital and migrants limit the influence of central governments and modify their local culture. In relation to culture, migrants do form networks in which, among other things, information is shared. Studies on borders have shown that culture – including language, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and place of belonging – may have one of the two effects on borders (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). When the culture of communities on either side of a border differs, they, on one hand, enhance the effect of dividing territory (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). On the other hand, where similarities or a shared culture exist between communities or the peoples on either side of a border, the situation effectively bridges an international boundary. Through this would flow information regarding opportunities for work, notwithstanding whether that work is legal or illegal. In a study of six Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries including France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the USA, investigating the sectors in which "most illegal immigrants [are] employed", the OECD was able to identify seven core sectors in which such people worked (Garson, 1999).

The seven sectors included agriculture, building and civil engineering, small-scale industry, tourism, hotels and catering, and services to households and to businesses. Among the reasons that the report cites behind these sectors attracting undocumented migrants are, the willingness by such people to perform arduous and intensive work; the constant effort by employers to minimise costs and enhance labour flexibility; a rise in employment in sectors like agriculture, whose share in gross domestic product is declining; activities in those sectors such as sanitation, cleaning and school education that are shunned by nationals, etc.

The question arises, how does information about employment opportunities in such sectors reach the would be migrant in Africa? Even more, in view of this reality, and contrary to the EU political agenda to not only contain migration from Africa but also return those migrants that are already in Europe, the argument that borders, boundaries and frontiers are human creations grounded in various ethical traditions (Brunet-Jailly, 2005) seems valid. If this is the case, it means that borders can be hardened to keep out people considered not to be the appropriate stock of migrants or softened to achieve the opposite effect.

Actually, a different view to Jan Aart Scholte (1996) and others who posit dissolving territoriality with globalisation (see, e.g. Ohmae, 1996), presents borders as static markers of sovereign jurisdictions and socially produced and reproduced institutions (Novak, 2011). Indeed, the border studies literature characterises borders as, among other things, existing to demarcate the physical limits in which respective states exercise jurisdictional authority. Borders are also institutions that determine inclusion

and exclusion as they "create (or reflect) difference and constitute the separation line not only between states and geographical spaces, but also between the 'us' and 'them', the 'here' and 'there', and the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Newman, 2006, p. 148). This implies that borders provide an "inclusionary basis for democratic citizenship" (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999, p. 598) and thus serve as markers of citizenship rights. Because borders fulfil this inclusionary and exclusionary function, they regulate the movement of "aliens and citizens", capital, goods and services between states (Wilson and Donnan, 2012).

Regarding the states regulation of movement, and the relationship to refugees and migrants, Hammar and Rodgers' (2008) engagement with the notion of displacement highlights a couple of issues that give important insight into the ways in which refugees and migrants understand their own circumstances and perceive state-craft. This has relevance for the goings on in the Mediterranean Sea area and especially informs EU and African authorities and policy makers. According to Hammar and Rodgers (2008, pp. 358-359), beyond armed conflict, millions of Africans are forcibly resettled by their own governments because of large-scale infrastructural development projects or ideologically driven settlement programs. Although they have clear beneficiaries, such evictions are massively destructive and cause extreme impoverishment, forcing displaced people (whether internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees or legal or illegal migrants) into "treacherous conditions and perpetual uncertainties" (Hammar and Rodgers, 2008, p. 361). On their part, refugees and migrants tend to individually and collectively find creative ways in which to economically, socially, psychologically and physically survive, in the wake of displacement. Indeed, when "dislodged from predictability" and place they "move from experience to new thinking" (Guyer, 2008, as cited by Hammar and Rodgers, 2008, p. 362). That is, "even under the most restrictive conditions, people […] strategise their survival and recovery, reflected through 'movement' that is multiple, non-linear and sometimes filled with contradictions and trade-offs" (Hammar and Rodgers, 2008, p. 363). As Hammar and Rodgers show, empirically engaging with the complex life of displacement brings profound depth to issues affecting refugees and migrants such as their official status (or lack thereof) as refugees, asylum seekers or IDPs, language/cultural barriers, class, gender, race, etc. We do not delve into these issues in this paper, however, and rather focus on the macro inter-state/continental relations and policies at this level, in relation to the EU and Africa.

Concerning the global arena, states and migration, therefore, Hammar and Rodgers note the intensification in constraints on asylum in the post-9 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA. This is forcing asylum seekers to use other means of seeking protection from persecution through regular and irregular migration routes. However, states in current global debates over the migration-displacement relationship are increasingly reconfiguring what was previously understood as refugee movements to be migration. This can be clearly seen in current trends to deny undesirable migrants access to "Fortress Europe" (Hammar and Rodgers, 2008, pp. 362-363). On the other hand, this does not suggest the absence of legislations, policies and practices in the EU that are accommodating to migrants. The EU has enacted numerous such legal instruments.

An example of such legal frameworks is the Schengen Agreement and Schengen Convention of 1990, now involving 22 EU member states and three associated non-members. The agreement is primarily designed to control and effect border regulations on the periphery of participating EU states while abolishing

internal border checks, to allow free circulation within the region for citizens of the participating states. However, the agreement also considers procedural matters in the handling of refugees and people seeking asylum from outside, in the EU. It allows TCNs free movement of up to 90 days to other Schengen participating states. TCNs seeking employment can only work in the country where they originally have a work permit while the EU principle of the free movement of workers caters for those TCNs who lawfully reside in a EU member state (Nshimbi and Fioramonti, 2013). However, Nshimbi and Fioramonti (2013) report that TCNs pose a challenge to the EU, in view of the increasing abolition of internal border controls since Schengen in 1985. The increasing relaxation of internal EU border controls further raises the question whether TCNs have the right to work in new member states of the expanding region, among other things. This, however, only applies to lawfully resident TCNs. Apparently, the EU's agenda continues to seek to contain migration from Africa and repatriate the refugees and irregular migrants already in Europe, through programmes and legal instruments like the RDPPs and EU Directives, as discussed in Section 2.

Moreover, FRONTEX, or the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU, effectively regionalises participating EU member states' borders into a unit that is insulated from territories that are outside the Union. As FRONTEX (2016)clearly states, it uses member states' border resources at the EU's external borders (*vis-à-vis* non-members)– land, sea and air – in joint operations with the border control authorities of non-EU/ Schengen countries and, mainly, those identified as source or transit routes of irregular migration. This, according to FRONTEX, is in line with the EU's general external relations policy.

On the African side, only Cape Verde has signed an agreement with the EU on readmission of its citizens from Europe. Challenges remain on the continent ranging from identification procedures of would be returnees to policies regarding their handling when they return to Africa. The African Union's (AU) position on migration as reflected in existing continental legislation and policy frameworks exhibits a weakness and reluctance to deal effectively with the issue in ways that can benefit the continent. While recognising that migration is critical and the importance of continental exploitation of Africa's (skilled) human resources for a vibrantly integrated Africa, challenges in implementing the provisions of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (see e.g. Articles 6 and 71) are exacerbated by the non-binding nature of the two key policy frameworks that define the AU's approach to migration. The 2006 Migration Policy Framework for Africa provides principles and guidelines to which AU members can refer for the management of migration and harnessing it for Africa's development. African regional economic communities and AU member states can borrow useful and applicable issues to their respective migration situations from the nine key issues included in the framework. The 2006 African Common Position on Migration and Development on the other hand raises 11 priority migration-related policy issues and recommendations for national, continental and international action. These frameworks consider migration in the long term and thus appear less able to provide for knee-jerk reactions to emerging migration-related challenges in the way the Valletta Summit did. This leaves the EU and Africa (in their intercontinental interactions on migration issues) faced, still, with the question we raised regarding the hardening or softening of borders to bar undesirable stocks of migrants. Along these lines, the next section considers the sustainability or otherwise of attempts by the EU to fence off migrants from Africa.

4. EU borders: sites of closure and contradictory logics of migration, neoliberalism and development

There are several cases, where various EU countries have, unilaterally, directly or indirectly attempted to erect "fences" and "walls" so as to keep away African migrants. For example, between the 23 and 29 November 2015, the Spanish Government returned Moroccan migrants. This was after around 100 people attempted to enter Spanish territory by scaling the fences of Melilla. These migrants were "brought down from the fences by ladder into Spanish territory". They were "immediately returned to Morocco, without being identified, given the chance to claim asylum, or being given an interpreter. Spain claims it was not in contravention of human rights, because people can claim asylum at the places provided for this purpose at the border posts. People from Sub-Saharan Africa are not permitted to enter these spaces"[10]. Spain undertook this action notwithstanding the regional and supranational influence of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights over member states of the Council of Europe "in the area of immigration, residence and integration of aliens through a generous application of the principle of proportionality and a liberal interpretation of provisions of the ECHR" (Lambert, 2007 as cited in Nshimbi and Fioramonti, 2013). In this regard, Nshimbi and Fioramonti cite a BBC 2012 report about the 23 February 2012 European Court of Human Rights order to Italy to pay €15,000 each to 13 Eritrean and 11 Somali migrants, after ruling that Italy had violated Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) and Article 4 of Protocol 4 (prohibition of collective expulsions) of the ECHR, when it sent the migrants back to Libya.

The determination to send African migrants back as seen in Spain's actions has not deterred the migrants, as there are reports that African migrants still cross at Ceuta, "hidden under cars"[11]. Due to the rigid border controls at Ceuta, some African migrants have attempted to use the Canary Islands to cross-over to Europe, which has attracted "police raids around El Aaiún in Western Sahara, where people attempt to cross. Many of those arrested were taken by bus to Rabat". Despite this, other African migrants still managed to cross to Europe, for instance, between the 6 and 7 December 2015. A significant number of African migrants crossed the Strait, amid claims that on 8 December 2015 "Moroccan coastguard recovered the bodies of 11 people whose boat capsized"[12].

At Ceuta, there are many tales of African immigrants attempting to cross into Europe. Some succeed such as those who successfully reached Ceuta by boat on the 19th December 2015[13]. Some were pushed back as suggested by the case of deportations to Tiznit in Southern Morocco, which have "become the norm"[14]. Some are injured by barbed wire or die as illustrated by the case of drownings. Actually, international humanitarian non-governmental organisations such as the UNHCR (2015) reported that 2014 had seen the highest level of worldwide displacement of people ever since records began. The year after (2015) worsened, while the situation had not changed, but expected to worsen even farther, at the beginning of 2016[15]. Yet others suffer unimaginable conditions and atrocious treatments[16]. Regarding, treatment or ill treatment of African migrants, one report captured it thus: "Routine of persecution the unbearable conditions of sub-Saharan migrants in the north of Morocco". This report shows that:

> Due to the dramatic situation at the eastern external borders of the EU, the Moroccan-Spanish setting tends to be eclipsed. But West and Central African migrants in the north of Morocco still suffer oppression and racist violence on their way to Europe. The city of Tangiers in the

north of Morocco can be seen as an example for the developments of the EU and Moroccan migration policies. Here, the current political agenda is most visible: Integration programs for sub-Saharan migrants financed by the EU to decrease illegalized border crossings in exchange for an easier access to Schengen-Visas for Moroccan citizens. Meanwhile, since 2015, it has become next to impossible to get a legal residency for people from Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire[17].

Our intention is not to provide a catalogue of the treatment or lack of it regarding African migrants attempting to cross into Europe, a catalogue of which has been done better elsewhere, but to show that erecting borders against African immigrants may not be sustainable in the long run. For instance, even if the migrants are ill-treated, deported and others drown, die or some are later rescued and returned to their countries of origin, this does not deter them from continuing migrating to Europe. The cases outlined in the previous sections clearly indicate that such African migrants continue to attempt to migrate to Europe, even if others succeed, others fail and still others die. Not even funds donated to African countries in the name of improving conditions in migrant sending countries with a view to stemming flows to Europe are, in our opinion, sufficient to achieve such ends.

What this clearly shows is that the issue of implementing a draconian and exclusivist immigration regime by EU countries against African refugees and migrants will not promote human dignity and development, but only work and succeed in violating human dignity, rights and escalate deaths. The cases at Ceuta clearly show this. The efforts at Ceuta are not isolated with respect to failed attempts to curb the flows of African migrants into Europe. Libya, for example, is the prime hub through which majority of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea reach Malta, the Italian Peninsula and Greece, where they are detained and processed. Hammond (2015) asserts that strict detention policies in Europe are sometimes alleged to have been unlawfully maintained as a mechanism for deterring would be migrants. The effect of such measures and stricter border security measures has at best fuelled illegal methods of entry and changes in migratory routes in the Mediterranean Sea, according to Hammond. Clearly, the draconian and exclusivist measures by EU countries designed to curb migration from Africa are an antithesis of the spirit of sustainable development.

Against this background, it is imperative for European countries to understand that globalisation and development in transport and technology has led to spaces of flows (Castells, 1996). This leads one to consider the effects of migrants on, among others, the economy of European countries. Research suggests that migrants in the UK have positively impacted on the economy. Referring to London specifically, "two distinct positive effects of migration are its qualitative impact on the London labour force and economy, through diversity, flexibility, international experience and skill sets; and its quantitative contribution through expanding labour supply and thus enabling employment growth and reducing upward wage pressure" (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2007, p. 3).

The Guardian (2013) carried similar reports, which show that the UK has generally benefitted from migration. The Guardian cited Professor John Salt and Dr Janet Dobson, from University College of London's migration research unit, who argue that the call by the UK to reduce migration was "neither a useful tool nor a measure of policy effectiveness" (The Guardian, 2013). Another report also showed that "the government's plan to cut net migration will damage Britain's economy, weaken the public finances and reduce people's take-home pay" (O'Connor, 2014). Add to this the cited OECD study (Section 3) that reported on the sectors that undocumented migrants fill in the listed

European countries and in which (sectors) nationals are not willing to be employed. While it is not our intention to obfuscate any negative impacts that migrants may bring to a host country or city (such as the risks and threats associated with the spread of terrorism), it seems migrants do make meaningful contributions. It is thus possible to argue that the EU countries are frustrating the flow of people and their development potential, which could be harnessed for development in this age of globalisation.

In order to ground this discussion on cross-border interactions, boundaries and frontiers, it is worth going back to the case of Ceuta, which we extensively referred to in the previous sections. We argue that whereas culture can be an important variable in a strong political clout, it is by no means the only factor. In the case of Ceuta, the contested region between Spain and Morocco, it seems economic cross-border activities transcend culture. If this is the case, it can be suggested that based on the cross-border economic activities across Ceuta, barring African migrants may have negative economic consequences given that the cross-border interactions between Ceuta and Europe have existed over a longer period of time. In terms of cross-border economic interactions and sustainable development, this does not provide the best course of action to follow. The argument is not that the "border" should not exist, but that cooperation between European and African countries should be strong so as to foster sustainable development.

To demonstrate this point, we refer to other examples elsewhere. Evidence exists that despite increased interaction and cooperation across borders, this may not always wither away the border. For example, Germany and Austria have maintained their sovereignty despite harmonisation and increased cooperation at the German-Austrian border (Brunet-Jailly, 2008). However, the case of the US-Canadian border interactions seems to suggest that the very nature of the borderland is fundamentally changing. For instance cross-border interactions between Cascadia and the Great Lakes region in the Canada-US border illustrates that functional linkages in this area are changing the nature of the borderland (Brunet-Jailly, 2008). Actually, the interaction in these areas suggests that there has been a realignment of socio-cultural and ideological values and orientations on the basis of cross-border activities. This shows that markets and functional linkages may transform the nature of the cross-border interaction to form a "new" borderland, predicated on new found values and identities. We see the possibility of this in areas like Ceuta. This may provide the basis for sustainable development and not border fences and walls, from the point of view of migratory cross-border interactions.

5. Conclusion
The migration crisis, which continues on the shores of the EU (amidst respective EU member states' unilateral attempts to physically deter migrants as well as the EU providing funds to nip migration in the bud in migrant sending countries) and is manifested in areas like Ceuta suggests that African migrants will continue flowing to the EU. No amount of exclusion will deter them from migrating to Europe, as evidenced by some who are injured, while others drown and die. Others, still, manage to cross into Europe only to be arrested and deported back to their countries. In this paper, we have attempted to argue that by adopting a restrictionist and draconian immigration regime against African migrants, Europe is missing an opportunity for sustainable solutions and engagement with African countries. In a region like Ceuta, there are strong and historical cross-border interactions, which need to be strengthened farther, so that there is a positive flow of people from Africa to the EU, and vice versa. The Ceuta region presents an opportunity for the EU to test and implement immigration policies that promote an

unfettered but meaningful flow of people. The value of this paper is that it detects a problem in the way the EU engages with African countries on matters of migration and, therefore, suggests an overhaul of immigration policies that will result in the integration of migrants from Africa for the mutual sustainable development of both regions. Otherwise, in addition to cooperation and engagement at the policy level between the EU and African countries, coupled with the provision of financial support to stem migration from its source – which to us represents a pushing back by EU states of the borders with African states into Africa – some EU states implement measures including physical barriers, (military) patrols, etc. This reinforces the European fortress against Africa. However, the strength of the "space of flows" (Castells, 1996; Scholte, 1996) supersedes such efforts and suggests that the EU and Africa should devise more effective and sustainable mechanisms to deal with migration. For as long as the fortification of Europe against migrants from Africa continues, the migration crisis on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and Ceuta will continue. In other words, Fortress Europe is not a sustainable way to deal with migrants. Else the migrants will engage in dynamic and agentive (even if they are dangerous) ways to rupture the instruments of exclusion from below, which effectively undermines the fortress around the Mediterranean and Africa.

Notes

1. The end of the year approaches – Migration toward Europe continues in high numbers Weekly Alarm Phone Report, 21-27 December 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: weeks 23-29 November 2015.

2. FRONTEX, or the European Agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the member states of the European Union, was established by the European Council Regulation (EC) 2007/2004 to improve procedures and working methods of the EU's external border practitioners common unit comprising members of the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum and heads of national border control services. FRONTEX promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter applying the concept of integrated border management. See http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/ (accessed 21 March 2016).

3. Unabated migration movements in all three regions of the Mediterranean Sea, Bi-Weekly Alarm Phone Report, 23 November-6 December 2015.

4. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: weeks 23-29 November 2015.

5. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: week 23-29 November 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #11 Issue 11: weeks 7-13 December 2015.

6. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #12 Issue 12: weeks 14-27 December 2015.

7. The end of the year approaches – Migration toward Europe continues in high numbers. Weekly Alarm Phone Report, 21-27 December 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9. Issue 9: week 23-29th November 2015, unabated migration movements in all three regions of the Mediterranean Sea, Bi-Weekly Alarm Phone Report, 23 November-6 December 2015 Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: weeks 23-29 November 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: weeks 23-29 November 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #11 Issue 11: weeks 7-13 December 2015, Euro-Border Flashpoint News #12 Issue 12: weeks 14-27 December 2015.

8. See, e.g., Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in member states for returning illegally staying third country nationals, *Journal of the European Union*, 24 December 2008, pp. L 348/98-L 348/107; EU Action Plan on return, Brussels, 9 September 2015, COM (2015)

453 final; communication from the EC on EU Regional Protection Programmes, available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0388:FIN:EN:PDF (accessed 16 January 2016).

9. Italics in original.

10. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #9 Issue 9: weeks 23-29 November 2015.

11. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #11Issue 11: weeks 7-13 December 2015.

12. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #11Issue 11: weeks 7-13 December 2015.

13. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #12 Issue 12: weeks 14-27 December 2015.

14. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #12 Issue 12: weeks 14-27 December 2015.

15. New Year begins with more than 60 deaths in the Aegean Sea and in Ceuta/Spain. Alarm Phone Bi-Weekly Report, 28 December 2015-10 January 2016.

16. Euro-Border Flashpoint News #12 Issue 12: weeks 14-27 December 2015.

17. http://ffm-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Flyer-Alarm-Phone-Maroc_EN.pdf (accessed 30 December 2016).

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Further reading

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