



ISSN: 0976-3376

Available Online at <http://www.journalajst.com>

ASIAN JOURNAL OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Asian Journal of Science and Technology
Vol. 13, Issue, 08, pp.12177-12181, August, 2022

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIOECONOMIC COSTS OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION FOR THE REGION OF ORIGIN OF MIGRANTS: CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF DALOA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25th May, 2022
Received in revised form
19th June, 2022
Accepted 14th July, 2022
Published online 30th August, 2022

Key words:

Local Authority, Irregular Migration,
Socio-Economic Costs, Local
Development

ABSTRACT

Irregular migration is a major challenge for sub-Saharan African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire. According to IOM (2018), 10,000 Ivorian migrants arrived irregularly in Italy in 2017. This places the country in third place in arrivals on the central Mediterranean route, after Nigeria and Guinea. The majority of the literature notes the costs of this tragic migration, or remittances, as well as the many benefits that migrants' countries of origin can derive once they settle. This article is intended to be a counterweight to previous contributions, by analysing the socio-economic costs of irregular migration on the country, in particular on the region of origin of migrants. To do this, we conducted a documentary review, supported by a qualitative survey using an interview guide among returning migrants and those who intend to leave for the municipality of Daloa. The study shows that the departure of irregular migrants is a heavy burden for the region of origin, for the family and for the migrant himself. The costs of departures are not only economic but also socio-economic, such as debt, labour shortages, job loss, brain drain and social stigma that impede socio-economic integration.

Citation: OUANTCHI Honoré, 2022. "Socioeconomic costs of irregular migration for the region of origin of migrants: Case of the municipality of Daloa.", *Asian Journal of Science and Technology*, 11, (08), 12177-12181.

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INTRODUCTION

Côte d'Ivoire has long been one of the main destinations for West African migrants (OECD/CIRES, 2017). A large majority of immigrants to Côte d'Ivoire come from African countries, particularly from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. According to statistics, people born in Burkina Faso represented about 60% of immigrants in the country in 2013, followed by immigrants from Mali, 16% (World Bank, 2017a). Due to the relatively open immigration policy introduced in the 1960s, strong economic growth and high demand for labor in the agricultural sector, countries with similar agricultural work were attracted by the opportunities and the better wages in Côte d'Ivoire. However, with regard to emigration, there are few detailed statistics on its size, evolution and characteristics. This is still a relatively recent phenomenon in Côte d'Ivoire, but it has gained momentum over the past two decades of socio-political unrest in the country (Dozon, 2011). Emigration, according to the World Bank are people born in Ivory Coast, but living in another country for political reasons, military-political crises, studies, work, estimated at more than 850,000 people in 2015 against 173,000 in 1980 (DESA, United Nations, 2015).

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Alongside this, there is the phenomenon of rapid irregular migration, which is paradoxical to the most dynamic economic growth in West Africa, standing between 7% and 8% in the same period. The economic upturn in Côte d'Ivoire does not seem to have transformed the country into an El Dorado for Ivorians. This migration is defined according to the IOM (2011) as a "movement that contravenes the regulations of the countries of origin, transit and destination". In 2018, according to the IOM, 10,000 migrants "declaring themselves" Ivorian, whose age varies between 14 and 24, arrived in Italy irregularly in 2017, compared to 13,000 in 2016. Ivorian asylum seekers in France in 2017 were just over 3,700, twice as many as in 2016. How to understand why more and more young Ivorians are taking the risky bet of irregular migration to Europe and other destinations? For some observers, the sectors that today propel growth in Côte d'Ivoire are not really providers of local employment. For many economists, Ivorian economic growth is "driven by construction and foreign direct investment, without much impact on local economic activity, such as the creation of businesses and wealth". On analysis, socio-economic factors, the search for well-being, by improving living conditions underlie the logic of migrating to Europe illegally. However, alongside the socio-economic factors, there are socio-economic costs generated by irregular migration in the territory of origin of the migrants. What are these costs and their nature? How do these costs impact the region of origin/departure of the migrant, particularly in

Daloa?. Based on these questions, a qualitative survey of a dozen migrants was carried out in Daloa, one of the strongholds of irregular migration in Côte d'Ivoire, in order to identify the socioeconomic costs. The article proposes to analyze these costs, induced by the departure of migrants to the region of origin. Specifically, it will be a question of i) identifying the various socio-economic costs, ii) evaluating the costs on the region, the family and the migrant himself. The review of scientific literature on migration is rich and varied. Several writings approach it more the phenomenon of immigration, less than that of emigration under its factors and its effects for the countries of origin and reception (Merabet, 2006; Konan, 2009, (De Vreyer et al., 2010a) (Cissé and Fall, 2007) (Shaw, 2007), (Piché, 2013) (Dabalén and Paul, 2012) Adams and Page (2005), (Konan and Kouakou, 2011) (Ahouré and Kimou, 2014) (Ratha et al, 2011) (ICMPD and IOM, 2015). It is rare to address the issue of migration, particularly irregular emigration, from the angle of loss for the regions of origin.

Development: Based on a case study of the Daloa region, the analysis of the cost of irregular migration for the region of origin of the migrant will be articulated around three main axes which are i) the temporality of irregular migration, its causes, its overall consequences, ii) the identification of socio-economic costs, iii) the evaluation of the costs of departures from the region of origin.

Irregular migration: temporality, geographical scope, causes and consequences. In an interview with Ibrahim Sy Savané (2017), he says this about the temporality, the geographical scope (the routes taken, the countries of stopover and destination), the causes and the consequences of irregular migration:

“The influx of so-called “migrants” is not new. But as Italy was a passage to other European countries, it was less visible. There was a kind of regulation that took place. However, now, with the closure of all the other doors, newcomers stay much longer on site and in deteriorating conditions. For the rest, Côte d'Ivoire continues to welcome many “migrants”. But insofar as the West African space is in the process of being integrated, can we still qualify this as migration? There will always be movements towards regions which, even if they are no longer an Eldorado, still retain their attractiveness through the opportunities they offer”. (Ibrahim Sy Savané, 2017). “I don't know in what exact proportion they (Editor's note: irregular migration) have accelerated. But, on the one hand, the demographic pressure is greater and, on the other hand, precisely this relative prosperity means that the costs of departures are within the reach of a greater number of young people. There is a psychological factor that is sometimes understated: the fact of having been isolated during the crisis period may have acted as a kind of call from the sea. The attractiveness of the exterior did not diminish during these years of crisis, quite the contrary. And the need to achieve, even less. Those who returned after the crisis with more substantial means, if only in appearance – God knows if that counts – give additional reasons for others to go to Europe”. (Ibrahim Sy Savané, 2017). Regarding the routes and destinations of irregular migration, he states:

“Some go to Agadez in Niger, then to Libya. Others reach Morocco and Tunisia by plane and all of them obviously

dream of Europe...the Gulf countries are also a destination. Some Ivorians go to the Gulf countries hoping to find employment in construction and public works, unaware of the fierce competition with the lumpenproletariat from the Indian subcontinent. Young girls are particularly attracted to Gulf countries known to offer high-paying domestic jobs. However, vigilance in these countries has increased and the barriers there are now higher...”. (Ibrahim Sy Savané, 2017). Through this interview and the one carried out with the migrants of Daloa, there is a convergence with regard to the temporality, the causes and the consequences as well as the routes of irregular migration from the Ivory Coast. Indeed, the phenomenon has increased over the past two decades. Migrants leave for Europe (Italy, France, Spain, etc.) via Mali, Niger and Libya as stopover countries. Others go through Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia in the hope of returning to Europe through “smugglers”. The root cause of this irregular migration is purely economic, according to the survey. Migrants believe that there are no sustainable jobs in which they can prosper and live with dignity. They have many burdens to bear (cost of living which is only rising, the burden of parents including children, etc.) and they can only turn desperately to this “uncertain path” to improve their living conditions. and those of their relatives. In addition, they are greatly influenced by friends and acquaintances who have succeeded in their crossings through videos of success stories and images of Europe that make you dream. Through this interview and the one carried out with the migrants from Daloa, there is a convergence with regard to the temporality, the causes and the consequences as well as the routes of irregular migration from the Ivory Coast. Indeed, the phenomenon has increased over the past two decades. Migrants leave for Europe (Italy, France, Spain, etc.) via Mali, Niger and Libya as stopover countries. Others go through Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia in the hope of returning to Europe through “smugglers”. The root cause of this irregular migration is purely economic, according to the survey. Migrants believe that there are no sustainable jobs in which they can prosper and live with dignity. They have many burdens to bear (cost of living which is only rising, the burden of parents including children, etc.) and they can only turn desperately to this “uncertain path” to improve their living conditions. and those of their relatives. In addition, they are greatly influenced by friends and acquaintances who have succeeded in their crossings through videos of success stories and images of Europe that make you dream. However, the disillusion is total when migrants embark on this uncertain adventure, especially for women. They come up against many obstacles and especially the deceit of the smugglers. No longer able to prosper for lack of means, they become sex slaves, handlers in transit countries in the pay of their creditors or smugglers. At this level, the risks of disease, trauma and post-traumatic stress are high; for those who are unlucky, they perish at sea during crossings or live in conditions of “inhuman detention” in transit countries. And when they manage to come back, it is very often bloodless and damaged in their moral and physical integrity...

Identification, profile of irregular migrants: In general, there is a lack of a real study on emigrants, various sources give estimates of the number of emigrants (IOM, 2020). Thus, for the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), this population is estimated at 176,692 over the period 1995-2005. The number of Ivorian emigrants in 2008 is estimated at 62,649 according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) and at 240,900 according to the consular register database of the General Directorate of Ivorians Abroad (DGIE). The main host countries are France (51%), in the lead, followed by Italy and the United States with an equal percentage (15%). These figures being relative, do not take into account irregular emigrants. Obviously, by definition, it is because they are irregular that these migrations are difficult to quantify. The figures we put forward are extrapolated from the number of arrivals and not departures. According to the 2017 Ivorian migrant profiling report (IOM Côte d'Ivoire 2018), 10,000 migrants claiming to be Ivorians arrived in Italy irregularly in 2017 (compared to 13,000 in 2016, an increase of 230% compared to 2015). This places Côte d'Ivoire in third place for arrivals from West African countries on the central Mediterranean route, after Nigeria and Guinea. As of 6 April 2018, the Ivorian authorities had contributed, with the assistance of IOM, to the voluntary return of 1,676 migrants to Côte d'Ivoire. 70% of Ivorian returnees carried out a remunerated activity before their departure. From the above, we can say that the profile of irregular migrants is a profile of the "normal" citizen, who has a professional activity, economic or not, raised/student, belonging to a biological family, living in a cohabitation or single. Witness the words of Ibrahim Sy Savané (2017):

"The movement mainly affects the younger generations. Schooled or not, graduates who fail to integrate properly. Even young workers on whom there is strong family or social pressure and who dream of other prospects. Migration also concerns women of course, to a lesser extent" ... "If the phenomenon cannot be reduced to an ethnic group or a region, we cannot sweep away the structural invariants which still shape the matrix of migrations" (Ibrahim Sy Savané 2017). The survey revealed that irregular migrants are young people whose age varies between 17 and 37 years and mostly men. They are mostly single and cohabit. As a socio-professional category, they are, for the majority, in the exercise of "small trades" i.e. sewing, welding, apprentice driver, hairdressing, trade in food products. For some, they are managers of "cybercafé" opened on their own account or they are employees. Pupils/students are a minority. Out of ten people interviewed, there was one student and nine working in a trade; two women and eight men.

Evaluation of the costs of departures from the region of origin of the migrant: After drawing up the profile of the irregular migrant (young single person in economic activity with or without children), the study assessed, on the basis of the data collected, the costs and damages suffered, linked to these departures on the region, the family and the migrant himself. Through the survey, an identification and classification of socio-economic costs were made. In other words, how much does irregular migration cost?. Indeed, the budgetary cost alone is not representative of the costs associated with irregular migration, especially for the country or region of origin of the migrant. There are therefore a large number of costs that escape this accounting reality. For our part, we have classified the costs into two main categories: socio-economic costs and socio-psychological costs. This analysis proposes a taxonomy of the socio-economic costs of irregular migration on the region of origin of the migrant and will therefore present some psychological social costs that remain to be deepened. It should be noted that the socioeconomic costs take into consideration all the costs borne by the economic agents, which are, among others, the

migrants, their respective families and the region. For the purposes of the study, the socio-economic costs analyzed can be classified into five assessment categories. These are: employment, labor, savings, debt, cost of migration. The box below presents the transcripts of the interviews on the global costs of irregular migration. Their statements have been grouped into units of meanings, the content of which is as follows:

Box 1 / Respondents 1-10

- Cost of the trip (F.CFA): 500,000, 650,000, 650,000, 700,000, 770,000, 950,000, 1,000,000, 2,000,000, 2,800,000.
- Psychological cost: Feeling of anguish, sadness among loved ones, melancholy and loss of joie de vivre in relation to the migrant's departure; feeling of sadness also in the migrant not knowing if he will return one day after his departure, separation from his family, feeling of illusion, disillusionment and withdrawal into oneself, post-traumatic disorder, victim of physical and sexual violence .
- Social cost: Dislocation, family separation with consequences on the education of the migrant's children; family conflicts between the migrant's parents (others agree, some disagree with regard to the departure), multiplication of ritual sacrifices (loss of individual confidence), effect of the migrant's departure on the health of his parent, due to the strong emotion for example of the diseases like the tension, loss of moral guarantee of the parents with respect to the migrant, effect on the health of the migrant...
- Socio-economic cost: Indebtedness of the migrant, indebtedness of the migrant's family; loss of savings, loss of employment (dressmaker, shopkeeper, telephone salesman, etc.) of the migrant when he decides to leave, illusion of El Dorado wastes time on objectives, sale of family assets, sale of work equipment to be able to cover the cost of the trip; growing poverty if the trip fails.
- Cost for the region: Loss of skilled/unskilled labour, brain drain, low competitiveness of local businesses, lack of vitality of the local economic fabric (businesses that break up, economic disintegration in favor of immigrants who repatriate capital in their countries of origin, tax loss, etc.)

Source: survey data, 2022

The economic cost of migration is undeniable and detrimental. Says Ibrahim Sy Savane (2018): "Of course it has a cost. But it all also depends on the model chosen, or rather who is offered. In this case, chance and necessity cohabit permanently. Those who embark on these routes alone leave with a small nest egg that melts under the sun of the route or in the outskirts of transit towns. It is still a journey that lasts months or years. As for the smugglers, some claim between two and four million CFA francs. But it is well known that smugglers organized into networks do not hesitate to abandon poor buggers who, by dint of changing interlocutors, no longer know who to confide in. It is the smugglers, canvassers and other intermediaries of various ilk who profit above all from the phenomenon". The socio-economic costs of irregular migration are first assessed under the category of the financial cost, the pecuniary cost of travel. It appears from the interviews that the trip is expensive. The cost per migrant, per individual varies from 500,000 FCFA to 2,800,000 FCFA. The overall cost for the ten interviewees is estimated on average at more than 10,000,000 FCFA. If by hypothesis, we retain that a migrant spends 1,000,000 FCFA to make the crossing, this means by analogy that the 10,000 registered migrants "calling themselves" Ivorians who arrived irregularly in Italy in 2017, spent around 10 billion F. CFA per year, or 100 billion spent in 10 years of practice. This financial windfall is a dead loss for migrants and their families for the benefit of smugglers and their intermediaries. The region of origin is also being robbed of this windfall which could have been used for several local investments. Next comes the second socio-economic cost associated with debt. Indeed, migrants and their families contract debts to be able to pay for the trip. The high cost of travel and the unforeseen hazards of the road encourage migrants to resort to borrowing from a

relative or friend. Indeed, the debt is proportional to the price of the trip (see financial cost analysis) and according to the income saved for the trip. Even being on the territory of transit, the migrants appeal for funds to supplement their income or pay the additional costs of the crossing. The third socioeconomic cost is associated with savings. Indeed, irregular migrants carrying out "small trades" before their departure, were able to build up savings of between 250,000 and 500,000 F.CFA. Thanks to the immigration project, they take all the savings. Savings being insufficient, they seek aid, support or debt. This capital can be around for the ten migrants between 2,500,000 and 5,000,000 F.CFA. By drawing or depleting this capital, it is obviously the migrant's investment capacity as an economic agent that decreases as well as the accumulation of wealth and the economy of the region of origin of the migrant. This situation can alter the normal functioning of the local economy with the flight/loss of capital. The fourth socio-economic cost is associated with labour. Migrants undoubtedly constitute an important workforce for their country and region of origin. Their departure creates a void that can hardly be filled. According to the 2014 population census, those aged 18 and over are estimated at 142,428 inhabitants (RGPH, 2014). If this population, apart from the elderly and the disabled, is reduced by 5 to 10%, there will be a drop in production and services, especially in the primary and tertiary sector of the region. Labor is a productive force as K. Marx says. It must therefore be maintained and maintained. Finally, the fifth socioeconomic cost is associated with employment. The profile of the irregular migrant suggests people in economic activity, exercising "small trades" or working on their own account. When these people decide to go on an adventure through irregular migration, they de facto lose their jobs, their trades. Lost employment means loss of income for the migrant, loss of support for the family, loss of wealth and value added to the region's GDP. We are witnessing a socio-economic disintegration of the agent and a disintegration of the local economy through the relations of production, distribution and consumption. The purchasing power of the families supported by the migrant is also in freefall. In a nutshell, the local economy is at half mast.

Table 1. Socioeconomic costs by sphere of impact

	Migrant region	Migrant's family	himself
The high financial cost	Inflation	Massive outflow of currency	outflow of currency
Debt	Slows down economic activities	Family debt	Individual debt Stigma/social marginalization in case of non-repayment
Dissaving	Capital flight/loss Lower local investments Hinders wealth accumulation process	Reduction of investment capacity Breakdown of family savings Reduced family investment capacity	Breaking of individual savings Reduced individual investment capacity
Labor	Shortage of labor Reduced production and services Delayed	loss/disability of a family member	Disability/trauma due to physical abuse,
Employment	Unemployment Downturn in local GDP	Loss of purchasing power	Loss of employment, income Loss of purchasing power Withdrawal on oneself Individual unemployment Economic disintegration

Conclusion

Irregular migration, which has not been the subject of abundant studies because of its "clandestine" nature, has suffered from the lack of reliable statistics. This article aims to assess the socio-economic costs of irregular migration on the migrant's region of origin for two reasons: not only to give visibility to research in this field and also to draw attention decision-makers, local elected officials on the losses that irregular migration can cause for their regions. While estimating the costs of irregular migration poses a large number of methodological problems, a quantitative measurement remains necessary for the decision to intervene, as well as to guide economic policies when the phenomenon increases. When an irregular migrant spends an average of one million CFA francs to cross the Mediterranean "empty", it is the region or the country that loses the million CFA francs. When there are more than 10,000 (for those who have been able to count) to do so, more than 10 billion are lost per year by their region of origin. Faced with these realities, the importance of having quantified data on socio-economic costs (employment, labor, savings, debt and even beyond these categories) clearly appears in order to understand the costs of irregular migration to the region of origin of the migrant. Moreover, the very exercise of evaluating the cost of irregular migration makes it possible to assess its social and psychological costs. They translate for the latter by the feeling of anguish, sadness among his family, melancholy and loss of joy of living in relation to the departure of the migrant; the feeling of sadness also in the migrant not knowing if he will return one day after his departure, disillusionment and withdrawal into oneself, post-traumatic disorders linked to physical and sexual violence. For the social costs, these are the dislocations of family units, with consequences for the education of the migrant's children; family conflicts between the migrant's parents (divided between agreement and disagreement with respect to the migrant's departure), loss of individual and collective trust in the region, increased beliefs in witch doctors and marabouts for ritual sacrifices to succeed, the effects of the migrant's departure on the health (e.g. illnesses such as blood pressure) of the parent, due to the strong emotion, the loss of the moral guarantee of the parents vis-à-vis the migrant, the deterioration of the health of the migrant. Finally, when migrants return voluntarily or not, the interest in measuring socioeconomic costs does not end. It is important to have estimates that are as reliable as possible on the long-term repercussions of irregular migration and thus to be able to pursue appropriate economic policies. In particular, the care of victims abused during the trip through economic recovery through IGAs, reparations, treatment of post-traumatic syndromes, illnesses, suicide prevention, etc. still represent an important challenge for local development and public health.

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