

## Chapter 26

# THE REASONS FOR MIGRATING TO A FRENCH-SPEAKING BLACK AFRICAN POPULATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study is part of a research program aimed at understanding the reason why French-Speaking Sub-Saharan African citizens decide to settle in Europe and particularly in France. We created an anonymous questionnaire to collect data on the construction of the migration process. All participants (N: 316) are French-speaking Africans, citizens of Sub-Saharan African French-Speaking countries. For the analysis, we created two groups: participants who reside in their home country, and the migrant population. Participants were contacted through social networks and professional and personal relationships in Europe and Africa. The group analysis shows a predilection for economic reasons to migrate and to settle; the return is explained in terms of economic stability, and the ability to provide knowledge and the means of development in the home country. In term of the key factors that determine the migration process, these results confirm the ones showed in our first study. Despite the progress, this study remains one based on a mixed approach, which does not seek to establish generalities applicable to all Africans wishing to migrate or in a migration process. Rather, it is to understand the reason a specific population has to migrate, allowing access to underlying psychological phenomena.

*Keywords:* social representation, migration, motivation, Africa, Europe.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: FOREIGNERS AND IMMIGRANTS IN FRANCE

The National Institute of Statistics, *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* [INSEE] (2014), estimated the French population at 65,821,000 inhabitants on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014, which is divided into three groups: French citizens, foreigners and immigrants.

According to the latest population census, there should be 56,271,000 French Citizens by birth (equivalent to 89.73% of the total population) and 2,789,000 French Citizens by acquisition of nationality (4.4%). According to data from INSEE (2014), 11% of French citizens (6,500,000) are direct descendants of one or two immigrant(s), and among the children of immigrants aged between 18 and 30 years old, every second one has African origins (Borrel & Lhommeau, 2010; INSEE 2014).

Foreigners represent 5.80% of the French population (3,817,562), with 13% of them (441,477) from sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, there are 5,514,000 immigrants, corresponding to 8.38% of the total French population. Information by country of birth shows that 2,362,099 people (42% of immigrants) come from Africa. More specifically, 13% of immigrants (719,156) are from African countries excluding Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (which represent the main countries of African immigrants in France).

Although since 1974, a diversification of migration has been observed, it is difficult to quantify the black population in the French territory. This is due to the desire by the French Republic to integrate all citizens regardless of their origins, in accordance with the constitutional principle of equality, and the decision of the Constitutional Council of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007 declaring “unconstitutional” the ethnic statistics (Conseil Constitutionnel, 2007)

However, in the study of relations between Blacks and Whites, it is important to consider two elements: the past of colonization of a large part of Africa, and the differentiation between metropolitan France and the overseas (DOM-COM). Indeed, in the view of “being black” in metropolitan France, “black” is a salient category and theories of social categorization may suggest that the risks of discrimination are real.

## 2. THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In the study of cultural psychology of immigration, relationships between members of the host society and immigrants have been particularly studied. From identity strategies in France (Camilleri, 1996; Camilleri et al., 1990) to acculturation (Berry, 2005) in Canada, mutual adaptation of populations led to extensive researches. However, immigration refers to processes that are not limited to this phase. It is subtended by a set of decisions involving their motivations.

### 2.1. Acculturation: The relationships in the host country

Camilleri's Studies (Camilleri, 1996; Camilleri et al., 1990), on the identity strategies of migrants, is considered in French context as a key element to understand the relationship between two people or groups of different cultures.

His theoretical model, in the case of unequal social relations offers two fundamental issues: a) questioning the unity of meaning and b) the social devaluation.

Strategies proposed by Camilleri (1996) are established in a continuum between an ontological pole, marked by the idea of preserving the culture of origin without change, and a pragmatic pole, in which the original culture disappears in favor of the appropriation of the culture of the host country. Between these two poles, intermediate strategies allow compromise and balance to the individual. The most beneficial equilibrium situation is found in the identification of representations and values that are part of the identity of the individual, while allowing it to match with its environment (Jumageldinov, 2009).

On the Canadian side, acculturation can be understood as “dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p. 698). This process involves changes in the behavior of the individual but also changes in social practices and structures.

Berry model includes two axes<sup>1</sup> enabling the identification of four acculturation strategies for the minority group (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization) and for the majority group (multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation and exclusion) (Berry, 1997, 2005).

More recently, researchers from the University of Almeria (Spain) (Navas Luque, García Fernández, & Rojas Tejada, 2006; Navas Luque, Rojas Tejada, García Fernández, & Pumares Fernández, 2007) have extended the model of acculturation Berry, offering the Relative Acculturation Extended Model: RAEM .

According to RAEM, it is necessary to differentiate the acculturation strategies in seven specific areas (political, work, Economic, Social, family relationships, religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking) (Navas Luque, et al., 2007). Short of what happens during the intergroup contact, at some point the immigrant decides to migrate and must decide (once arrived in the host country) to stay there or not: s/he appeals to his/her motivation.

### 2.2. Reasons as motivation content

Motivation is not an object or a material act. Motivation is the inference of a psychological process, an abstract in connection with the “strengths” which mobilize the person towards a specific behavior.

For this study, we take the Vallerand and Thill motivation concept: motivation is a “hypothetical concept used to describe the internal and/or external strengths producing the release, the direction, the intensity and the persistence of the behavior” (1993, p. 18).

This definition of motivation suits the purposes of this research because it establishes a privileged way, a necessary time axis for understanding behavior in the medium and long term, and to the extent that the categories of this research can be treated analogously to the items listed in the definition.

However, “motivation” as hypothetical construct cannot be observed or quantified directly, because what is observable, measurable is the behavior, the consequences of the motivation, and not the motivation itself.

Thus, we will apply to identify the underlying reasons for the migration process and more specifically on the reasons for the release of the migration process and the reasons for its persistence or not.

### **2.3. Migration process**

For us, migration is understood as a process consisting of three phases: -migrating- (before the preparation and execution of the trip), -staying- (living conditions and experience of adaptation in the host country; and -returning- the issue of return or a new migration project) the design of the migration process in the long term leads us to understand the motives behind the migration process of nationals from sub-Saharan Africa in the three times previously defined.

TeO survey from 2010 establishes the panorama of differences and similarities in migration trajectories and experience, with the processes of integration and discrimination for different population groups in France<sup>ii</sup>. This survey is based on a questionnaire suggested to nearly 22,000 French residents. The questionnaire explored 17 topics, regrouped in three central axes: strategies for upward social mobility; access to various resources; identity references and obstacles to equality. Data collected may help to better understand the onset of the migration process, but also its persistence.

Indeed, this survey highlights that 50% of migrants came while they were already adult, that is to say at a time when they are free of their own decisions, and even soon after reached this milestone since 30 years old is the maximum age of these migrants. In other words, half of all migrants, triggering the migration process, do it around the majority. When migrants arrive in a country, they do not necessarily stay there. 12% of foreigners were living at least one year in another country before arriving in France; others (not included in the statistics) have shorter stays in their first host country, even if they have not decided to stay in the country encountered. There is no persistence of the installation. Finally, the possibilities of return are still present.

Although sub-Saharan migrants are the ethnic group who lives in France with the smaller score of round trips between France and foreign countries (4%); their descendants are in first position in round trips between France and others countries (21%). Also, for this group, “50% of descendants of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa who have lived for at least one year or more outside metropolitan France, were at least 6 years old at the moment of his/her first departure”<sup>iii</sup> (Beauchemin, Hamel, Simon, & L'équipe-TeO, 2010, p. 24). Everything happens as if the persistence of migration was, for some, still to renegotiation.

## **3. METHOD**

### **3.1. Objective**

This study is part of a research program aimed at understanding the reasons of French-speaking Sub-Saharan African nationals settle in Europe and particularly in France. To do this and following our conception of migration process in three times, we decided to focus on the reasons for migrating, for remaining in the host country or returning to the home country.

### **3.2. Participants**

All participants (N: 316) are French-speaking Africans, citizens of French-Speaking Sub-Saharan African countries, aged between 14 and 56 years old (M: 27.85, SD: 7.84). For the analysis, we created two groups: participants who reside in their home country (n: 166), aged between 15 and 54 years old (M: 26.54, SD: 7.42) and the migrant population (n: 150), aged between 14 and 56 years (M: 29.23, SD: 8.07). For participants who do not reside in their home country, time spent abroad is between 1 and 35 years (M: 10.08 years, SD: 9.17).

### **3.3. Pre-Study**

26 persons were consulted thanks to an opened question survey, created according to the logic of a journey and, allowing finding each of the elements of the definition of the motivation.

The sample consisted of 17 men and 9 women, aged between 17 and 52, in order to take into account several generational groups.

The participants, established in Europe or in Africa, belonged to various socio-economic groups (students, artists invited in Europe, European residents or French citizens descendants of the African immigration). Nationalities in the sample tried to reproduce the statistics on migrants' origins in France.

Two blind decoders categorized the answers, what allowed highlighting eleven categories: living conditions, Work, Money, Education, Family Relationships, personal Identity, Identity Status, Africa, Europe, Development of the country and others.

The analysis of frequencies but also the contents of the answers allowed the construction of the final questionnaire, which follows the same logic.

### 3.4. Questionnaire, Validation of Analysis categories and Data processing

Final questionnaire consists of 12 questions: 9 closed questions with a scale of answer between 0 and 20, 1 Yes/No question, 2 opened questions<sup>iv</sup>.

However, only four questions will be taken into account for the purpose of this chapter: the reasons for departure (Q5), the reasons for staying in Europe (Q7), the reasons for going back to Africa (Q8) and the choice of destination country (Q11). For questions 5, 7 and 8, we used a 0 to 20 scale; for question 11 participants had the possibility to give all the destinations, without limit about their number or continent.

Participants were contacted between April 2011 and September 2012 through social networks and professional and personal relationships in Europe and Africa. They responded to a computerized version of the questionnaire.

The internal validity of the questionnaire was tested, by factorial analysis by Varimax rotation for question 5, 7 and 8. This procedure was necessary in these questions, due to the amount of items and the variable evoked. Table 1 shows the result of factor analysis, with indications of the factors that explain the different variables, the number of items retained by category and factor, explanatory value and the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable.

Table 1. Results of factorial analysis by Varimax rotation (question 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Questions	KMO	Bartlett	Factors	Items by factor	Explanatory % by factor	Cronbach alpha by factor
5. Departure	.879	1207.840 <i>p</i> < .0001	Economic factors	4	24	.88
			Security and Rights	4	20	.85
			War and instability	4	15	.75
			“Touristic” reasons	3	10	.43
7. Staying in the host country	.848	874.207 <i>p</i> < .0001	Economic conditions	4	20	.83
			Advantages in Europe	4	23	.83
			Disadvantages in Africa	4	22	.80
8. Going back to the home country	.847	1015.090 <i>p</i> < .0001	Stability/contribution to the home country	4	18	.80
			Insecurity/failure of the migration process	4	16	.78
			Obligations and family problems	4	17	.80
			Separation from the country and family	3	16	.81

For the questions in relation with the construction of the migratory project  $\alpha = .70$ .

We calculated Cronbach's alpha and averages. Subsequently, we performed repeated measures ANOVA in an exploration by groups.

In cases where it was relevant, we subdivided the group of migrants into three sub-groups: African residents living in a country different from their own (*n*: 48) Africans living in France (*n*: 75) African European residents living in countries other than France (*n*: 27). For data analysis, the threshold of .05 was chosen for the probabilities referring to a particular group and the threshold of .01 for the probability in relation to all participants.

Since the question 11 indicates several countries allowed unrestricted number, frequency analysis presented here takes into account only the first answer.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. The reasons for departure

In this study, three factors explain the departure: a) economic reasons and the search for better conditions for the immigrant and his/her family, b) war and instability in the special relationship with fear and perceived danger, and c) security and access to rights as the element that makes possible plans for the future. The group analysis (Migrants vs. Non-Migrants) shows a predilection for economic reasons<sup>v</sup>. The repeated measure ANOVA showed that there was no interaction effect, so we can assume that the results confirm (for each group, as well as in general) that participants associate departure with economic conditions and that it is a significant reason which is actually more important than the other two factors (economic factors:  $M: 10.58$ ;  $SD: 5.79$ ,  $F(2.632) = 162.89$ ,  $p < .00000$ ,  $\eta_p^2: .340$ ; war and instability:  $M: 5.761$ ;  $SD: 4.994$ ; and security and human rights:  $M: 9.864$ ;  $SD: 6.042$ ).

Sub-dividing migrants by differentiating them according to their respective countries of residence (African country, France, other European countries) also reveals an important role for the economic factor. It is still the main factor even if the subgroup of migrants, who resides in Africa, emphasizes the important role played by safety and rights reasons. It is pertinent to mention that the reasons related to a search for better living conditions (economic factors, security and rights) are higher in the non-migrant group. This seems to indicate a change of opinion related to the migration process itself. The reversal of the trend for war and instability reasons would therefore be affected by this change.

### 4.2. Reasons for staying in Europe

The reasons for staying in Europe were categorized into three factors: a) the advantages of living in Europe, b) the disadvantages of living in Africa, and c) economic conditions, referring mainly to the ability to plan for the future and help the family.

The analysis of group averages presents the economic conditions<sup>vi</sup> ( $M: 11.90$ ;  $SD: 5.87$ ) as the most frequently mentioned factor to justify the establishment of the migrant in the host country for the two groups. It is the same for the three subgroups that constitute the migrant group with values above average (for African residents:  $M: 11.270$ ,  $SD: 6.684$ ; for residents in France:  $M: 10.468$ ;  $SD: 5.825$ ; and European residents living in a country other than France:  $M: 10.572$ ,  $SD: 6.505$ ).

The analysis for all participants shows that the difference between factors is significant ( $F(2.632) = 257.32$ ,  $p < .00000$ ,  $\eta_p^2: .448$ ), in comparison to the other two factors: the advantages in Europe ( $M: 7.127$ ;  $SD: 5.838$ ) or disadvantages in Africa ( $M: 6.109$ ;  $SD: 4.876$ ). However, the ANOVA showed interaction effects. These interactions seem not to address the reasons for the factor “economic conditions”, but the other two factors.

Indeed, considering our results in a temporal perspective, the two factors “advantages Europe” and “disadvantages Africa” seem to be two sides of the same situation at different times of the migration process. Thus, we consider that it may be a change of reference point which would serve to focus on the benefits of being a foreigner (non-migrant) or the disadvantages of staying in the home country (migrant).

In addition, we consider the hypothesis that for the migrant participants, these results represent the expression of a certain disillusionment produced by the gap between the expectations, the stereotypes about Europe (widely shared in developing countries), and the reality of the migration process, which is subject to more restrictions and control by the European authorities.

### 4.3. Reasons for returning to the home country

The reasons for going back to the home country were explained by four factors: a) stability and the possibility of contributing something to the home country, b) insecurity and the failure of the migration process, c) obligations and family problems, and d) separation from

the country and family. Within the two groups, the results explain the return in terms of economic stability, the ability to provide knowledge and the means of development in the home country. For migrants, this is considered as the only valid option for going back home. In detail, the averages for each subgroup are also higher for this factor than the others. Overall, return is considered by the participants as a possible contribution to the stability and the development of the home country ( $M: 13.20; SD: 5.19; F(3,948) = 110.65, p < .00000, \eta_p^2 = .259$ ) in a significant way. It is more important than the other reasons: distance ( $M: 8.636; SD: 5.468$ ), insecurity and failure ( $M: 8.635; SD: 5.624$ ) or family ( $M: 8.793; SD: 5.517$ ).

However, the ANOVA data on this issue shows an interaction effect, which limits the progress of our study. This interaction can be explained mainly by the overlapping factors “obligations and family problems” and “separation from the country and family”.

Indeed, these two factors can express a change related to the temporality of the process that makes possible a differentiated way of considering the contact with the family. For non-migrants, it would be appropriate to discuss the responsibilities and the need to count on the support of the migrant as a reason for requesting the presence of the people living abroad. For migrants, being abroad, it seems more useful to interpret the same situation as a desire to go back (not an obligation), while affirming their commitment to their family and the feelings of lack produced by the migration process.

#### 4.4. Choice on destination country

The results show that 74.1% of residents in their home country choose a European country as the first destination, against 54.67% of migrants who choose the same continent.

The mixed results of the participants of the migrant group is mainly due to participants residing in Africa, who choose a European destination (89.58%); while residents in Europe, divided between the choice of a European country (38.23%) and an African country (36.27%), mainly associated with the return to the home country. Table 2 presents the results for the most cited European countries.

Table 2. Results for the most cited European countries chosen by the participants ( $\geq 4$  answers).

Country	Not Migrants	Migrants	Africa	Europe
France	57	45	78	24
Belgium	14	10	18	6
Spain	13	1	13	1
Switzerland	13	3	15	1
UK and Ireland	13	11	21	3
Germany	4	6	8	2
All the European Answers	123	82	167	39
Total Answers	166	150	214	102

Finally, concerning the spoken language of the countries chosen by the participants (who have chosen a European destination countries as first answer); 67.07% of the residents in Africa prefer a French-speaking European country<sup>vii</sup>. Residents in Europe are more categorical, choosing to 79.49% French-speaking destinations.

## 5. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to determine the reasons that explain the migratory movement of sub-Saharan Africa citizens at three different stages: planning to travel and departure, settling into the host country, and finally the possibility of going back. These three stages, which we call the migration process, constitute a whole. It allows us to advance in the understanding of the evolution of the reasons for the migration behavior.

Regarding the reasons for leaving, this study updates what motivate the participants to leave their countries of origin: that is to say mainly the economic conditions. Three elements seem relevant to review:

a) The relationship between economic and security reasons and the access to rights, as the scores awarded by participants are similar. It is conceivable that these two elements are complementary as a reason to migrate, but our approach does not allow us to examine more closely the relationship between these two elements. Thus, these elements must be verified subsequently.

b) We note the weak results of the war and instability factor. This can be explained by a classic social desirability standpoint, as the evocation of the negative elements of one's country undermines the social identity of the migrant and

c) Finally, the highest scores for non-immigrants. This seems to indicate that the stereotypes associated with the migration process and life in Europe, have greater impact in the African continent. They are less important once the trip has already taken place.

In terms of reasons for staying in Europe, the results of this study, as well as those presented in a previous publication (Velandia Torres & Lacassagne, 2012) confirm the significant choice of economic conditions as the most important reason to settle down on the European continent. In light of the complex relationship established between the factors "the advantages in Europe" and "disadvantages in Africa", we advanced the interpretation that this dichotomy represents the two sides of a single situation, which refers to identification of the role of reference point in our study.

Finally, concerning the reasons for going back to the home country, the results strongly consider a return with the economic means and the opportunity to contribute to the country's development. This preference expressed by migrant participants seems consistent with the reasons for leaving or staying in Europe and is, as we have already noted, the only socially rewarding way to return to the home country. Responses mentioning separation from the country and family, as well as obligations appear to play a much smaller role, and could be explained as avoidance of any manifestation of weakness or return without success.

## 6. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Despite the progress of this study, the aim is not to establish generalities applicable to all Africans wishing to migrate or Africans in a migration process. Rather, it is to understand the reasons a specific population has to migrate, allowing access to underlying psychological phenomena. The results of our work provide three main objectives for future study: a) further the understanding of the contents of stereotypes (Bourhis & Gagnon, 2006; Bourhis & Leyens, 1999; Castel, 2007) about Africa, present in French society, b) determine more precisely the importance of reference point in explaining the grounds of the migration process and c) advance the understanding of relations between nationals of sub-Saharan Africa and the French population, thanks to the use of the RepMut<sup>viii</sup> questionnaire to measure racism and discrimination (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2010; Légal & Delouvé, 2008), among other phenomena.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Three factors seem important for conclusion:

a) The importance of the study on the construction of the migration project, and the evocation of the return. Often, studies on migration privilege the time of intergroup contact. even if relevant, considering only this aspect "forgets" the notion of process and an overall understanding of the migration process, which limits the understanding of this complex reality.

b) The importance of identifying representative elements in relation to the construction of the migration process. The role played by these representations in intergroup relations is undeniable in this interethnic context.

c) Finally, although our study did not determine the weight of social desirability in the responses of participants, we find the low impact of the elements on the instability and war in the responses of African participants in our study; which contrasts with its presence in the European and western stereotypes and political discourses about Africa (Giblin, 2012; Hanson-Easey & Moloney, 2009; Orfali, 2012)

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**Biographical sketch:** Marie-Françoise Lacassagne is director of SPMS Laboratory (Burgundy University-France), full professor of social psychology at the University of Burgundy and researcher at the same university. Combining the achievements of the socio-cognitive and social psychology of language, her work focuses on discrimination through an approach based on co-construction approach of this phenomenon.

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<sup>i</sup> The maintenance of heritage culture and identity, and the relationship sought among groups

<sup>ii</sup> Immigrants, immigrants' descendants born in France, people born in the overseas territories, their descendants born in metropolitan France, and the French-born descendants of French-born nationals.

<sup>iii</sup> «50% des descendants d'immigrés originaires d'Afrique Subsaharienne ayant fait au moins un séjour d'un an ou plus en dehors de la France métropolitaine avaient moins de 6 ans lors du premier départ».

<sup>iv</sup> The full explanation of variables and explanatory factors, as well as view factor analysis of the questionnaire, was published in *Universitas Psychologica* (Velandia Torres & Lacassagne, 2012)

<sup>v</sup> Economic factors include reasons touching on the seeking of the satisfaction of personal and family needs, giving the opportunity to help the family or the avoidance of problems (unemployment/unpaid work).

<sup>vi</sup> Economic conditions include reasons that correspond to opportunities for finding a job and satisfactory and stable situation, possibly with a higher standard of training, and the opportunity to help the family.

<sup>vii</sup> France, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg.

<sup>viii</sup> RepMut ([www.RepMut.com](http://www.RepMut.com)) is a tool that has been developed from the design of social partitions (Castel & Lacassagne, 2011) by a working group (Castel, Lacassagne, Mangin, Peteuil, Velandia-Coustol) from Socio-Psychology and Sport Management laboratory (SMPS). He has been a software development supported by Synerjinov. Version 2, funded by Welience is under development (<http://spms.u-bourgogne.fr/>).