

Regional cooperation on migration in Africa

A comparative perspective on the IGAD and ECOWAS regions



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1. Analyzing regional migration governance



Relevance

- Context of “broadening and deepening of regionalism” (Börzel/Risse 2016) since the 1990s
- Normative and institutional gaps in an evolving global migration governance architecture; pluralization of actors
- Migration is mainly happening within world regions - West and North-Eastern Africa are paradigmatic in this regard

Our aims and approach

- “Thick description” and understanding regional migration regimes
- Eclectic; inspired by different schools of thought in international relations and regionalism literature

2. Analyzing regional migration governance



The framework

CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA	RATIONALE
Foundational factors	Role migration played in RO's foundation, development of that role over time, reason for change	Relevance of migration for institutional/regional identity
Institutional structures and processes, actors	Degree of formalisation of decision-making and operations, main aims and tasks, migration budget and its origin, dominant MS and external actors, data management	Evidence on functioning and scope of action of RO with respect to member states and external agents
Normative approach	Subscription to international and continental norms, dominant narrative(s) on migration, attention towards diverse types of migration	Assessment of content-related orientation
Translation into policies and practices	Influence of normative agenda on regional, national and sub-national (written) policies and procedures, degree of harmonization of domestic migration legislation/procedures	Assessment of policy- and implementation-related effects and effectiveness of RO

3. Insights from the case study regions



Foundational factors

- IGAD: Relatively recent focus on migration; historical focus on drought and development (IGADD, 1986) and peace and security (IGAD, 1996); migration programming only started in 2010
- ECOWAS: Migration agenda with Free Movement Protocol (1979) almost as old as the organization itself (1975); historical importance of intra-regional migration and trade; strongly related to regional (economic) integration agenda

3. Insights from the case study regions



Institutional structures and processes, actors

- IGAD: Secretariat's Migration Programme main operational structure; no mandate for decision-making; asymmetrical influence of member states ("*Ethiopia is running the show*"), importance of informal processes (RCPs, other meetings), high donor influence (Khartoum Process)
- ECOWAS: Relatively strong formal powers; since 2005 Secretariat has become a Commission with higher enforcement and implementation competencies; leadership role by Nigeria, smaller influence of European migration agenda on MIDWA/RCP and Rabat Process; EU directly conflicting with regional approaches

3. Insights from the case study regions



Normative approach

- IGAD: Main strategic documents (Regional migration policy framework and Action Plan) indicate comprehensive approach; aligned with continental migration framework, historical focus on confronting humanitarian crises -> forced displacement
- ECOWAS: Free Movement Protocol with three subsequent phases (visa-free entry, right of residence, right of establishment); Common approach to Migration and Development (2008) included migrants' and refugees' rights and addressing irregular migration into agenda

3. Insights from the case study regions



Transfer into policies and practices

- Most **commonalities** of ROs in this regard; significant implementation gaps in both regions
- In the case of **IGAD** little cascading-down of regional policies to domestic migration policies and management -> weak national migration policy frameworks in almost all MS
- In the case of **ECOWAS** third phase of free movement protocol faces difficulties concerning implementation; occasional breaches by MS; limited awareness and appropriation by citizens

4. Conclusion and outlook



- Regional migration governance in the two African case study regions manifests in dissimilar institutional forms and approaches
- ECOWAS: internal drivers -> strong formal processes, priority of liberalisation of mobility and trade
- IGAD: external drivers -> more informal processes, focus on forced displacement
- In spite of important differences between the two regions certain commonalities; most important being implementation challenges
- EU policy agenda rather exacerbates than alleviates them, counteracts facilitating positive aspects of migration

Thank you very much for your attention!

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