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Perpetuating Crises at the Source?: (Inter)Regionalism and Normative Incoherence for Sustainable Migration in Africa

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ABSTRACT

In response to the 2015–2016 migration crisis, the European Union established the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa that aimed ‘to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management.’ This article questions the logic of this approach to migration management by asking whether African regions can ‘better manage migration.’ The article examines the normative bases of migration policies amongst the African Union (AU) and six regional economic communities (RECs), as well as the normative bases of the development strategies pursued by the AU and these RECs. The article proposes normative policy coherence for development as an approach to better understand the relationships between regional integration, sustainable development and migration management in Africa.

Introduction

This article is a comparative analysis of migration and development policies amongst Africa’s regional economic communities (RECs). The article compares their declared policy objectives in relation to transformative development. The roots of this analysis are found in the 2015–2016 ‘migration crisis,’ during which almost two million migrants/asylum seekers entered the European Union (EU) (European Commission 2016) and 8470 people drown in the Mediterranean Sea (International Organisation for Migration undated). The EU’s only unified responses were the reinforcement of border controls and the provision of large-scale funding for transit states and sending countries for the securitisation of migration (Moldes-Anaya, Aguilar, and Bautista 2019). The most ambitious investment was the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa that aimed ‘to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management.’ This article questions this logic by asking: Do African regions promote sustainable migration management? which would be a necessary element of the EU’s claim. This article addresses this question through the lens of normative policy coherence for development (PCD) defined as the alignment of policies with core values on which democratic political systems are established, such as human rights, democracy, gender equality, etc. (Koff and Maganda 2016; Häbel 2020). Normative PCD examines non-development policy arenas and their impacts on the normative objectives of sustainable development strategies. These norms are codified in

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constitutional treaties, yet they are rarely transcribed into migration policy frameworks (Koff 2017b).

Since the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, all world regions are meant to be pursuing transformative development defined as providing for the needs of local populations while addressing power imbalances at the supranational level (see Martens 2015). The Goals state: 'We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind' (United Nations n.d.). Regions are specifically mentioned throughout the document as identified facilitators for the achievement of sustainability along with member states. For example, Article 21 states:

We acknowledge also the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. Regional and sub-regional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at national level. (United Nations n.d.)

This article comparatively analyses migration and development policies amongst Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) and compares their declared policy objectives in relation to transformative development. It contends that the development pursued by African RECs undermines sustainable migration systems because it does not normatively promote transformative development as defined by the SDGs. Even though regions do not implement policies in many sectors, such as health, education and social services, they do establish guidelines for member states which are meant to guide development processes.

The article is divided into five parts. Following this introduction, part two reviews the literature on regional integration, migration and development in Africa. Part three then introduces the notion of normative policy coherence for development within this context. Part four analyses the migration regimes pursued by Africa's RECs and discusses them within the framework of transformative sustainable development. This section then compares the economic models promoted by RECs in Africa and discusses their impacts on migration systems. Finally, part five presents the conclusions.

Methods: research design, data collection and analysis

The research presented in this article examines the migration management and development strategies of seven African regional organisations: the African Union (AU); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); East African Community (EAC); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). A list of member states of each regional organisation has been compiled in the appendix. The Arab-Maghreb Union and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the two remaining African regional economic communities, have not been included in this study for two reasons. First, these organisations have largely been dormant in recent years and they have not adopted any concrete migration instruments. Second, due in part to their current conditions, policy information is not publicly available.

This article is based on a review of policy documents and websites of African regional organisations as well as secondary literatures on migration and development collected from academic libraries and the websites of regional think tanks. Official documents from the EU and United Nations agencies, such as the International Organisation for Migration have also been consulted to complement those collected from African regional organisations. Data was collected from these sources on migration policies, as well as seven key sustainable development policy sectors: security, trade and economic development, finance, infrastructure, natural resources, social protection, agriculture and food policy. According to the logic of normative policy coherence for development, transformative development objectives should permeate both development and non-development policy arenas. For sustainable migration management to occur, transformative development objectives need to be pursued not only in migration affairs, but also in complementary policy dimensions (see Deacon and Nita, 2013). Consequently, data was analysed by comparing stated policy objectives to the normative framework presented in the SDGs. This is explained in detail below.

Literature review: migration and regionalism in Africa

Africa is widely recognised as a continent characterised by mobility and migration (see Degli Uberti et al. 2015; Espinosa 2013). Scholars and international organisations, such as the International Organisation for Migration and the World Bank have noted that, like other regions, up to 70% of international migration from sub-Saharan countries occurs on the continent (World Bank 2010). According to the 2017 United Nations Population and Vital Statistics Report, 19 million people have migrated between African states (United Nations 2017). Degli Uberti et al. (2015, 77) argue that ‘being mobile’ is not an exception but rather a ‘way of life’ for millions of Africans who share a certain ‘culture of migration.’

Because there is so much human movement on the African continent, many scholars have contended that generalised migration paradigms that have emerged in Western literatures do not apply to Africa. For example, Gagnon and Khoudour-Castéras argue that assimilation and multiculturalism, two concepts that guide Western integration debates, cannot be applied to African contexts due to the porous nature of African borders, the limited economic benefits of African welfare regimes and the presence of simultaneous identities amongst African populations (Gagnon and Khoudour-Castéras 2012). Similarly, African scholars of migration, such as Oucho (2013) have noted that the word ‘crisis’ in association with migration has different meanings on the continent than it does in the EU and the United States.

Regional integration is a key theme in the literature on migration in Africa. Specifically, the literature on African migration and regional integration focuses heavily on the right to free movement. In fact, all of the major regional economic communities in Africa officially support the right to free movement amongst their development strategies but operationalising this right remains a challenge. By definition, the AU has not implemented the right to free movement because the AU does not apply law directly, it defines supranational norms that guide the RECs and their member states. Consequently, when the RECs do not implement policies, such as the right to free movement, AU norms remain conceptual with limited policy impact.

The literature on RECs and immigration provides three explanations for the lack of implementation of the right to free movement. First, scholars have linked this inaction to the general structural weakness of RECs in Africa's governance systems. Nita (2013) for example, comparatively analyses the right to free movement amongst eight RECs in Africa and she documents how this right is integrated into all regional legal frameworks on the continent. However, Nita (2013) also illustrates how the 'right to employment' is not operationalised by any RECs or their member states, which fundamentally undermines the right to free movement. Various case studies of specific regions reflect this conclusion. Oucho (2013) contends that the EAC should provide a blueprint for the implementation of the right to free movement because it is the oldest REC in Africa with the most developed regional system. He documents how attempts to implement the free movement of people have led to xenophobia and other unintended consequences. In his study of Central Africa, Nono (2013) shows how the right to free movement is disrupted by numerous systemic failures of the ECCAS including lack of infrastructure networks, insecurity, poverty, supply-side weaknesses in basic social services, weak economies, and the egotism of some leaders who are opposed to the opening of their borders to neighbouring countries. Adeniran (2014) and Eriksson (2013) document similar problems in ECOWAS. Abebe (2017) details how overlapping regional organisations and the multiplicity of memberships undermines the operationalisation of 'the free movement of people' principle more generally. Compton (2013) and Iroanya, Dzimiri, and Phaswana (2018) examine the ineffectiveness of regional human rights systems in Africa. Crush and Pendleton (2004) discuss the 'lack of regional consciousness' in SADC as an obstacle to free movement in that REC.

Building on this literature regarding the structural weakness of REC governance, the second group of studies in this field introduces a normative element to this scholarship. For example, Hujo (2013) contends that regional governance mechanisms for migration need to be supported by activity in related policy arenas, such as labour market policies and social protection. She shows how this has not occurred in Africa because RECs have not fully adopted principles, such as equal treatment and non-discrimination, which expand social contracts beyond national borders. This has been prevented by (1) nationalist backlash which has interrupted the consolidation of African regions, (2) practices and funding commitments that lag behind legal rights and standards and (3) de-prioritisation of the 'social question' which has not been adequately integrated into policy agendas and development strategies. Likewise, Moore (2013) has shown how regional integration and social cohesion remain disconnected on the African continent.

This point is further developed by Deacon, Fioramonti, and Nita (2013) who argue that access to social security, social assistance, health and education services are the keys to facilitating free movement within regions. Moreover, they contend that social provisions by all cross-border movers within a region is the key to achieving real regional social integration. The authors demonstrate how this has been prevented by the 'no recourse to public funds for migrants' discourse in South Africa and SADC in general. The emergence of welfare chauvinism in Africa has also been documented by Nhengu (2020) whose study demonstrates how migration policy design from micro to macro levels does not align with ratified international protocols on health, resulting in multiple vulnerabilities of female migrants.

Finally, a third body of scholarship has examined the lack of integration of migration/free movement in sustainable development strategies on the African continent. Bakewell (2007) specifically recognises a 'sedentary bias' amongst development actors in Africa. He shows how programs pursued by development agencies promote a sedentary model of development that aims to enable people to achieve a better quality of life at 'home'. Migration is actually considered to be an indicator of policy failure within this logic which is antithetical to the right to free movement. Awumbila (2017) examines migration in Africa in terms of urban growth and the negative social impacts of migration on African cities. Flahaux and De Haas (2016) study the drivers of migration in Africa and they contend that rising capabilities amongst migrants push inter-regional migration to Europe. In turn, this negatively effects the link between intra-regional migration and sustainable development.

Together, these three approaches to regional integration, migration and sustainable development in Africa highlight the disconnect between migration policies and transformative development as promoted by the SDGs. This normatively undermines the sustainability of African migration systems. Drawing on previous research conducted on other world regions, this article articulates this position through the conceptual lens of normative policy coherence for development.

Conceptual approach: normative PCD

PCD has been established by the global development community for the purpose of promoting development through international organisations and their member states. It has evolved significantly since it was first proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee in 1991. The EU adopted PCD shortly afterward, in 1993 through the Maastricht Treaty. During this initial period, PCD was defined as

working to ensure that the objectives and results of a government's (or institution's) development policy are not undermined by other policies of that same government (or institution), which impact on developing countries, and that these other policies support development objectives where feasible. (OECD 2005, 28)

Today, the context surrounding PCD has evolved. It has received significant international political attention for its central role in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Graham and Graham 2019). PCD is part of Target 17.14, focusing on governance of sustainability partnerships for achievement of the SDGs. For these reasons (among others), PCD has moved from the margins to the forefront of sustainable development debates and it has become a pillar of the 2030 agenda.

The definition of PCD has broadened as well. According to the newest OECD definition, PCD is

an approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policy-making. Its objectives in the context of the 2030 Agenda are to advance the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda by: 1) Fostering synergies and maximizing benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas; 2) Balancing domestic policy objectives with internationally recognised sustainable development goals; and 3) Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries. (OECD 2019)

As international organisations have worked to implement PCD as a pillar of the SDGs, academic perspectives have been very critical of the implementation of the concept. Earlier studies of PCD (Forster and Olav Stokke 1999; Hoebink 2004) aimed at classifying this term through typologies and understanding its role in development cooperation. Empirical studies examined implementation of PCD (or lack thereof) in specific policy arenas such as security (Picciotto 2004), trade (Grabel 2007), agriculture (Matthews 2008), etc., often with highly critical evaluations of donor policies. Grabel (2007) has indicated that PCD is a concept that has been abused by international organisations.

Often, PCD has been criticised as an empty political discourse that is rarely implemented by powerful donor states and regions (notably the EU) (Häbel 2020), or an instrument for controlling poor countries through coordinated policies (Thede 2013). Other studies have raised important analytical questions about the concept. Carbone (2008) correctly contended that PCD can be viewed as both a decision-making process and a policy outcome. More recently, Carbone and Keijzer (2016) argued that the EU has in fact pursued the development of institutional reform over policy effectiveness. Häbel (2020) has studied EU policy communities in-depth and she contends that PCD is often undermined as a normative tool because policy communities do not interact and their policy objectives diverge. Moreover, Häbel contends that key EU norms, such as gender equality, human rights, political freedom, etc. are undermined by political interests or economic exchanges. Similarly, Koff, Challenger, and Portillo (2020) highlight PCD's institutional character which limits its normative impact due to an absence of avenues for citizen participation.

In the field of migration studies, the literature on PCD has been equally critical of the normative contributions that this tool has made to transformative development. Nyberg-Sorensen, Van Hear, and Engberg-Perdersen studied the coherence between 'relief, recovery, development and conflict prevention' (2002, 3) in relation to migration through a comparative analysis of PCD in both development and humanitarian aid which criticised the coordination of migration policies with these peacebuilding objectives. More recently, Nyberg-Sorensen has integrated security into her discussions of PCD and migration. In 2012, she identified policy incoherence resulting from the intersection of: (1) rising poverty and insecurity in the South; (2) the continuous demand for cheap labour in the North; and (3) border enforcement initiatives that increase risk and vulnerability in migration regimes (Nyberg-Sorensen 2012). Broadening this perspective, Koff (2017b) has comparatively examined the securitisation of development aid by both the EU and the United States as a means 'to address migration at its source'. He contends that these postures have undermined normative PCD in global migration affairs. Koff has also illustrated how these policy positions have normatively impacted diaspora philanthropy (2017a) which has affected development finance in many sending states.

Despite these critical narratives, other authors observe significant value of PCD for developing/emerging countries and regions, especially those in Africa. Zeigermann (2020) contends that PCD provides a basis for the promotion of human security in fragile states because it addresses policy interlinkages and unintended consequences, thereby resolving development-security challenges. Mbanda and Fourie (2019) contend that South African policymakers have emphasised the need to prioritise the SDGs' targets in terms of national priorities, thus highlighting the need for normative coherence in the application of PCD. Building on this argumentation, this article empirically examines

normative policy coherence between migration and sustainable development within the African Union and Africa's RECs.

Regional development policies and migration in Africa

As mentioned above, this article derives from the EU's contention, through the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (amongst other measures) that migration can be better managed at its source. Of course, the key concept to be questioned here asks, what does 'better management of migration' mean? There is a vast literature on EU migration strategies that illustrates the organisation's commitment to securitisation of migration (see Barana 2017; Hintjens 2019; Koff, Akashi, and Okabe 2018). However, given the commitments that regional organisations have made to sustainable development and more particularly to the implementation of the SDGs, the notion of 'better management of migration' should be linked to the transformative development pursued by the SDGs. Even though there is no migration goal specified amongst the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development normatively integrates migration as a transversal phenomenon that is pertinent to all of the SDGs. More importantly, the 2030 Agenda's core principle stating 'leave no one behind' includes migrants and migration is primarily referenced in this agenda through target 10.7 aimed at facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people. This target is part of Goal 10 that aims to reduce inequalities.

African regions have adopted strong positions in support of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. These regions have made normative commitments to the SDGs with particular focus on inclusive development and the fight against poverty. For example, according to the African Union's Agenda 2063:

Africa is expected to show improved standards of living; transformed, inclusive and sustained economies; increased levels of regional and continental integration; a population of empowered women and youth and a society in which children are cared for and protected; societies that are peaceful, demonstrate good democratic values and practice good governance principles which preserve and enhance Africa's cultural identity. (African Union n.d.)

Similarly, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), which transcribes the SDGs into SADC policy, contends that member states 'need to pay special attention to the voices of the most marginalised segments of society' (SADC 2017).

Are African regional migration management strategies normatively coherent with these development objectives? Table 1 presents migration management strategies for the AU and six RECs. This table highlights both a division and a general weakness of regional migration strategies. The division regards the divergence between the AU and the African sub-regions in migration affairs. The AU provides a normative voice linking migration to transformative development by highlighting 'safe, orderly and dignified migration' as well as the socio-economic well-being of migrants. The AU also has established regional institutional mechanisms for migration management which is symbolically important.

The African RECs included in this study demonstrate a decidedly different approach to migration management. All of them support free movement of people but only within the framework of free trade and the establishment of common markets, thus normatively

Table 1. Regional migration management strategies in Africa.

Regional organisation	Migration strategies	Objectives	Implementation mechanism
AU	Migration Policy Framework: Migration Governance; Labour Migration and Education; Diaspora Engagement; Border Governance; Irregular Migration; Forced Displacement: Internal Migration; Migration and Trade	Better migration governance as the overarching objective of the MPFA aims at facilitating safe, orderly and dignified migration. It advocates for the socio-economic well-being of migrants and society through compliance with international standards and laws. The security of migrants' rights and addressing the migration aspects of crises are key elements. Additional focus on migration and development and combatting human trafficking	The Social Affairs Department promotes the work of the AU in the area of migration, labour and employment and the Political Affairs Department is working with members states to implement the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Rights of Residence and Right of Establishment.
COMESA	The main objective of the COMESA MIDCOM is to provide a platform for informal and non-binding dialogue on issues and opportunities related to migration management thereby improving the capacity of the governments to better manage migration, network building through regular meetings, including substantial progress towards harmonised data collection systems and harmonised immigration policy and legislation.	Promotion of free movement of persons, services, labour, rights of establishment and residence in line with common market	Member states
EAC	Free movement; adoption of common border management; common standard system of issuing identification documents; common standard travel document; community employment rights; common recognition of academic and professional qualifications; harmonisation of education, labour laws and standards in order to facilitate free movement; common mechanisms for management of refugees.	Free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence of their citizens within the community.	Member states
ECCAS	Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS): promoting the common interests of ECCAS member states to facilitate consultations and intra-regional cooperation on migration issues within the ECCAS region as well as with other AU regional economic communities (AU RECs).	Free movement of persons for common market	Member states

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued.

Regional organisation	Migration strategies	Objectives	Implementation mechanism
ECOWAS	Free movement of persons within the ECOWAS; Legal migration towards other regions of the world contributes to ECOWAS Member States' development; Combating human trafficking is a moral and humanitarian imperative; Harmonising policies ECOWAS Member States are reaffirming their commitment to ensure policy coherence; Protection of the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; Recognising the gender dimension of migration	Policy Coherence at various levels: – bilateral agreements linking different ECOWAS Member States and third countries, with ECOWAS community text; Harmonise economic, trade and development aid policies of the North with migratory policies of said countries; Harmonise national migration management policies with sector development.	ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration Management (ECOWAS Commission and member states)
IGAD	Regional Migration Policy Framework (IRMPF) IGAD Refugees Programme – harmonisation of refugee policy Free Movement of Persons	Ensure migration is voluntary and legal through methods that respect the human rights of migrants and collaboration among actors, including migrants, countries of origin, transit and destination.	Regional Deliberation Platforms; Ministerial Committee on Migration (MCM) and Regional Migration Coordination Committee (RMCC) but member states implement migration management
SADC	Framed in Terms of Public Security: Simplified immigration logistical systems, which may include clearance procedures for SADC nationals (Article 3.4). Institutional frameworks that facilitate unimpeded access and travel between Member States in order to support regional development corridors.	Free Movement of People and Prevention of Cross-border criminal activity	SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security in association with member states

Source: Table compiled by author based on policy documents.

diminishing the role of transformative sustainable development in migration affairs. Only IGAD explicitly mentions human rights in its platform and the EAC has adopted a common refugee policy. SADC, on the other hand, has forwarded a management strategy that openly securitises migration and pursues border controls through the justification of addressing cross-border criminal activities.

In terms of implementation, the normative significance of regional integration has also been limited due to the aforementioned weakness of African regional institutions. Only ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC have established regional organs for migration management and all three are characterised by shared responsibility with member states. In the case of IGAD and ECOWAS, regional bodies normatively pursue sustainable migration strategies but member states dominate the governance relationship and they often prevent the implementation of these regional policies. In SADC, the regional body that addresses migration is the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security which securitises migration rather than embedding it in regional sustainable development programs.

Of course, migration policies are not formulated in a vacuum. The EU's argument that migration can be better managed at its source assumes that African governments are well-positioned to pursue sustainable development in general. Tables 2 through 4 question this assumption. [Table 2](#) compares the defining characteristics of seven African regional development strategies in seven key policy sectors. These sectors were chosen because normative coherence for development examines the interaction between development and non-development policies and key norms. Some policy arenas, such as natural resource management, social protection and agriculture and food policy are generally considered more relevant for sustainable development. Security, finance, trade and economic policy and infrastructure are usually viewed as 'non-sustainable development policies' at the regional level even though they have been incorporated into the SDGs.

[Table 3](#) introduces a scale for the measurement of normative policy coherence for development. The scale examines whether the normative bases of policies mutually reinforce or clash with transformative sustainable development norms as defined above. It is based on the work proposed by Nilsson et al. (2018) which maps the interactions between the SDGs. In order to adapt this scale to norms, policies are analysed in terms of intentional/unintentional and direct/indirect impacts. In cases where policies intentionally and directly reinforce transformative development norms, +3 is assigned. When policies intentionally and directly undermine transformative development then -3 is assigned. The values in between represent mixed relationships as explained in the table.

[Table 4](#) implements empirical analysis through the application of the scale described in [Table 3](#) to the regional policy characteristics described in [Table 2](#). The table clearly highlights a limited normative commitment to transformative sustainable development among African regional organisations. Only ECOWAS and the EAC demonstrate positive normative commitments to transformative sustainable development in their general policy frameworks. Similarly, even though African regional natural resource management, social protection and agriculture and food policies generally promote sustainability, these synergies with transformative development are undermined by economic and trade policies, finance, infrastructure and security. Consequently, it would seem paradoxical to expect African regions to promote sustainable migration management, as the EU does, when their policy frameworks do not normatively align with the SDGs. In other words,

Table 2. Defining characteristics of African regional development strategies is seven key policy sectors.

	Security policy	Trade and economic development	Finance	Infrastructure	Natural resources	Social protection	Agriculture and food policy
African Union (AU)	Implement a dialogue-centred approach to conflict prevention and resolution of conflicts and establishing of a culture of peace and tolerance nurtured in Africa's children and youth through peace education	African Continental Free Trade Area: intra-African trade and boosting Africa's trading position in the global market by strengthening Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations.	The creation of African Continental Financial Institutions aims at accelerating mobilisation of resources and management of the African financial sector. African Investment Bank and Pan African Stock Exchange; the African Monetary Fund and the African Central Bank.	The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) which provides a common framework for infrastructure necessary for more integrated transport, energy, ICT and trans-boundary water.	African Commodities Initiative: Transforming Africa from a raw materials supplier by enabling countries to add value, extract higher rents from commodities, integrate into global value chains promote diversification anchored in value addition and local content development.	AU's strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) to ensure the inclusion of women in Africa's development agenda.; Continental Education Strategy for Africa; nutrition levels on the continent and has undertaken specific activities such as the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study	The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) aims to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development. Great Green Wall (GGW) initiative the AU aims to end or reverse land degradation, loss of biodiversity in African drylands and to ensure that ecosystems are resilient to climate change
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	Issues of peace and security are addressed in order to reinforce COMESA primary objective of strengthening economic integration and development	Promote self-sustained and balanced growth; Increase the availability of industrial goods and services for intra-Common Market; Establishment of Special Economic Zones to attract FDI:	Create an enabling legal, regulatory and institutional business environment to attract FDI: Promote diaspora resources in the industrialisation drive,	Effectively address constraints related to the improvement of infrastructure and services in the region in order to reduce the cost of doing business and also and to enhance competitiveness,	No regional initiative	Mainstream gender as a crosscutting issue; Mainstream cross-cutting issues such as HIV and AIDS in order to control such epidemics.	Public and private sector investment policies, incentives and regulatory frameworks to enhance priority livestock value chains; Enhance environmental health and ecosystem services; Manage climate change and variability risks; Support sustainable fisheries
East African Community (EAC)	Sectoral Council on Interstate Security was established to address: Illicit Drug Trafficking Small Arms and Light Weapons; Co-	Rationalise investments and the full use of established industries so as to promote efficiency in production, as well as harmonise and rationalise investment	The integration of the EAC stock exchanges; Develop common automated trading and clearing platforms; Cross-list shares to increase private capital	Coordinating, harmonising and complementing transport and communications policies; Improving and expanding the existing transport and communication links; and	Key priorities of the sector include Climate Change adaptation and mitigation, natural resource management and biodiversity	Five standing Technical Working Groups responsible for handling detailed health matters: Medicines and Food Safety; Control and	The Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy outlines the strategic interventions identified for the acceleration of agricultural sector

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued.

	Security policy	Trade and economic development	Finance	Infrastructure	Natural resources	Social protection	Agriculture and food policy
	operation in Police Matters.	incentives with a view to promoting the Community as a single investment area.	flows within the region.	establishing new ones as a means of furthering the physical cohesion of the Partner States, so as to facilitate and promote the movement of traffic within the Community.	conservation, disaster risk reduction and management, and pollution control and waste management.	Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS; Control and Prevention of Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases; Health Research, Policy and Health Systems Development; and, Reproductive, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition; Mainstreaming gender social Cooperation in welfare, employment, poverty alleviation and working conditions; Education; Social integration	development: Improving Food Security; Accelerating irrigation development; Strengthening Early Warning Systems; Research, Extension and Training; Increasing Intra and Inter Regional Trade and Commerce; Physical Infrastructure and Utilities
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Security Council in Central Africa (COPAX) with three key instruments, the Commission for Defence and Security, the Central African Early Warning System and the Central African Multinational Force.	Given the foundation of ECCAS, trade and market integration is its core objective.	Strengthen tax policy by raising indirect tax rates (value-added tax and excise duties) and reduce direct taxation; Improve public expenditure	ECCAS Consensus Blue Print on Transport in Central Africa: linking capitals in short-term and people and goods in long-term; Consolidated Transport Development Plan for Central Africa (PDCT-AC), which includes 14 priority projects including all transport infrastructure that supports the international trade of States in the region; Central African Energy Pool (PEAC) – regional energy market	Green Economy; Eco-security – role of natural resources in conflict; Pursues the overall objective of enhancing the value of natural resources in order to increase their contribution to the economy of the States and improve decision-making; The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) is the world's largest and most important conservation and sustainable management body for the forest and savannah ecosystems of the Congo Basin.	No relevant regional policy	Regional Investment Programme for Agriculture, Food and Nutrition; Security as part of the regional CAADP process, the Regional Programme for Food Security, the Regional Cotton-Textile Strategy and the establishment of a Regional Animal Health Centre

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	While Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) is a key component of conflict prevention, ECOWAS recognises that SSRG should also be part of a broader reform agenda on promoting human rights, the rule of law, peace-making, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development. .	ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Programme designed to increase intra-regional commerce, raise trade volume and generally galvanise the economic activities within the region in such a way as to positively impact on the economic wellbeing of ECOWAS citizens:	ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme (EMCP); Monetary Integration incomplete-	Transport, Telecommunication and Energy. The Transport programme oversees the implementation of multimodal transport infrastructure and policies to promote physical cohesion among Member States and to facilitate the movement of persons, goods and services within the Community; Support to Member states in the process of adherence to the sustainable energy initiative for all.	Strengthening of Environmental Governance (setting up of a subregional mechanism) and promotion of capacities to that effect: Promotion of sustainable management of the Resources for the improvement of the sub-regional economy in an environment-friendly manner; Prevention of environmental pollution and nuisance, urban waste and for the control of transboundary movements of hazardous waste. sustainable development of natural resources and environmental protection, and encourage and assist efforts of Member States to collectively combat drought and other natural and man-made disasters and their consequences;	Employment regulation and unemployment benefits regulated at regional level; General Convention on Social Security: invalidity, old-age and survivors' benefits; Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy; ECOWAS Tripartite Social Dialogue Forum	Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF); ECOWAS is actively involved in the agricultural and food self-sufficiency of citizens of the Region; Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP): Promotion of strategic projects for food security and food sovereignty
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Promote peace and stability in the region and create mechanisms within the region for the prevention, management and resolution of inter-State and intra-State conflicts through dialogue; Peace and Security; and Humanitarian Affairs;	Promote joint development strategies and gradually harmonise macro-economic policies and programmes in the social, technological and scientific fields. Harmonise policies with regard to trade, customs, transport, communications, agriculture, and natural resources and environment, and promote free movement of goods, services, and people within the region.	Create an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic trade and investment;	Develop and improve a coordinated and complementary infrastructure, in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy in the region;	Public Health Initiatives: Knowledge Systems; Cross-border disease	Initiate and promote programmes and projects to achieve regional food security	

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued.

	Security policy	Trade and economic development	Finance	Infrastructure	Natural resources	Social protection	Agriculture and food policy
Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)	The Defence Sector – focused mostly on military matters – responsible for peace, stability and security; The State Security Sector – intelligence/ national security, concerned with threats against governments/ Member States; The Public Security Sector – protection of civil society – including emergency management, justice, immigration and organised crime; The Police Sector – law enforcement agencies responsible for transnational organised crimes such as drug trafficking, unlawful possession of firearms and stock/ property theft.	Trade Liberalisation and Consolidation of Free Trade Area with COMESA and EAC; Aim to establish Customs Union	Harmonising the financial and Investment policies of SADC’s Member States in an effort to build stronger regional integration and encourage the region’s economic development.; co-operation regarding taxation and related matters within the SADC region in order to attract foreign investment;	Regional infrastructure investment part of trade liberalisation and consolidation of FTA; water investments part of fight against poverty	Development, promotion and facilitation of harmonised policies and programmes aimed at achieving effective and sustainable utilisation of natural resources such as water, wildlife, fisheries, and forestry;	SADC’s mandate is to promote Investment, Efficiency, and Competitiveness in the global economy and to improve the quality of lives of the region’s population. These goals can only be achieved by fostering educated, skilled, healthy, and productive ‘human resources’.	Development, promotion and facilitation of agricultural policy harmonisation, taking into account gender equity in all strategies and programmes; Ensuring sustainable food security; Development, promotion and harmonisation of biodiversity, phytosanitary, sanitary, crop production and animal husbandry policies; Development of measures to increase agricultural output of agro-based industries; Promotion of Trade in Agricultural Products

Source: Table compiled by author based on policy documents.

Table 3. Scale for measurement of normative policy coherence for development.

Interaction	Name	Explanation	Example
+3	Indivisible	Intentionally and directly mutually reinforcing norms	Formal and substantive normative commitments to transformative development
+2	Reinforcing	Intentionally and indirectly mutually reinforcing norms	Formal normative commitments to transformative development
+1	Enabling	Creates conditions that further sustainable development	General normative discourse in favour of transformative development
0	Consistent	No significant positive or negative interactions.	Absence of normative elements in policy debates
-1	Constraining	General normative resistance to sustainable development.	General normative discourse for growth-based development
-2	Counteracting	Unintentionally and/or indirectly clashing norms	Formal normative commitments that undermine transformative development through pro-growth strategies
-3	Cancelling	Intentionally and directly clashing norms	Formal and substantive normative commitments that undermine transformative development through pro-growth strategies.

Source: Koff, Challenger, and Portillo (2020) Guidelines for Operationalising Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) as a Methodology for the Design and Implementation of Sustainable Development Strategies. *Sustainability*, 12, 4055.

coherence exists between African regional organisations' migration management and development strategies. This does not, however, represent 'policy coherence for development' as conceptualised above because African regional development strategies are normatively incoherent with the transformative development pursued by the SDGs.

In fact, the analysis presented above highlights the importance of external actors in the definition of African migration and development strategies. In terms of migration, African management policies reflect many of the positions of the EU. The EU originally included migration management as part of the aid conditionality integrated into the 2000 Cotonou Agreement which defined the EU's implementation strategies for the Millennium Development Goals and later, the SDGs. The agreement established the framework for the 2005 Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) which prioritises legal migration and 'well-managed mobility', preventing and combatting irregular migration, eradicating trafficking in human beings, and enhancing the external dimension of asylum. This language guides all EU cooperation programs with African regions, such as the Joint Valletta Action Plan and the Regional Indicative Programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO). Observers of the EU–Africa dialogue on migration such as Bisong (2019), Castillejo (2019) and Van Criekinge (2013) have illustrated how EU cooperation with African regions fulfils the former's policy objectives regarding the prevention of irregular migration at the expense of the latter's needs for free movements of people.

Similarly, despite the passage of the African Union's Agenda 2063 which represents the continent's strategic framework that 'aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development,' regional policies in Africa generally contribute to free-market economic growth which often undermines transformative sustainable development (Fioramonti 2013). More particularly, trade, finance and infrastructure policies are generally growth-based which reflect the interests of international donors more than attention to the well-being of citizens. Within this context, free movement of people is generally framed in terms of labour mobility and its contribution to growth. In this regard, the sectoral policies of Africa's regional organisations seem to normatively undermine the character of development pursued by Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Table 4. Comparative analysis of normative policy coherence for development by regional organisation and policy sector.

	Security policy	Trade and economic development	Finance	Infrastructure	Natural resources	Social protection	Agriculture and food policy	Overall
African Union (AU)	0	-2	-3	-1	-1	+3	+3	-1
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	-3	-3	-3	-3	-1	+1	0	-12
East African Community (EAC)	0	-3	-3	+1	+3	+3	+1	+2
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	0	-3	-2	-1	-2	-1	0	-9
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	+3	+3	-3	+1	+3	+3	+3	+13
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	0	-3	-3	-2	+3	+1	+3	-1
Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)	0	-3	-3	-3	+3	-3	+1	-8
Overall	0	-14	-20	-8	+8	+7	+11	-16

Source: Table compiled by author.

Conclusion

Noted migration scholar Boubacar Barry recently stated the following during an interview on regional integration and migration: ‘there is another protagonist who is often forgotten by the first two [ECOWAS and its member states], they are the peoples of West Africa who have lived in this space for millennia and have their traditions of nomadism and sedentarisation, but also have their tradition of migration through this space for centuries’ (Marfaing and Barry 2013).

This article began by questioning the EU’s stated position that migration can be better managed at its source in Africa. The EU has invested billions of euros since 2015 in this logic, providing financial support for migration management programs established with the African Union, African RECs, and African states. Scholars of migration in Africa (see Dick and Schraven 2019) have illustrated how this development aid has undermined sustainable development on the continent through securitisation measures aimed at preventing migrants from coming to Europe. Consequently, this article draws upon Barry’s perspective that migration policies should reflect the development needs of African citizens rather than polities. This article supports this view by addressing regional integration and migration through the lens of normative policy coherence for development.

The research presented above has indicated normative incoherence with transformative sustainable development on three levels. First, it has reinforced the view that EU migration management strategies in Africa undermine transformative development. Second, this article has shown how African RECs have implemented policies aimed at free movement of people in support of free trade and customs unions which also seemingly undermine sustainability. The third part of this analysis is the most significant. It contextualises migration discussions by measuring the normative policy coherence for development of AU and African REC policy-making in seven different sectors indicating that regional development strategies in Africa are normatively incoherent with transformative sustainable development.

This pronounced normative policy incoherence for development contributes to a system perpetuating migrant risk and vulnerability in Africa. According to Lorenzo Fioramonti:

The current economic growth-centred paradigm in which Southern African states operate is proving harmful to the social protection of migrants. The political and economic discourse is largely based on a narrow definition of macro-economic growth, which results in a conservative understanding of social protection mechanisms. In most of these countries, social welfare policies are generally viewed as a waste of public money with no direct economic returns. By contrast, a coordinated policy of free movement or managed migration would allow certain states to address critical skills shortages and support economic integration in the region. (Fioramonti 2013)

In fact, the significance of this point goes beyond the well-being of African migrants. It also directly addresses vulnerabilities of African states and African regions. Scholars of regional integration in Africa, such as Castillejo (2019), Rekiso (2017), and Omolo (2019) have documented how regional integration on the continent has promoted free-market development strategies based on growth more than sustainability. This approach has indeed led to visible benefits. According to the African Development Bank’s (AfDB) pre-COVID-19 2020 economic forecast:

Africa's economic growth has stabilised at 3.4 percent in 2019 and is expected to pick up to 3.9 percent in 2020 and 4.1 percent in 2021 but to remain below historical highs. Growth's fundamentals are also improving, with a gradual shift from private consumption toward investment and exports. For the first time in a decade, investment accounted for more than half the continent's growth, with private consumption accounting for less than one third. (African Development Bank 2020)

Unfortunately, side effects have also occurred as these strategies have compounded poverty issues and inequality. According to the AfDB: 'The 2020 Outlook highlights, however, that growth has been less than inclusive. Only about a third of African countries achieved inclusive growth, reducing both poverty and inequality.' (African Development Bank 2020) These trends are equally present in regional integration studies. Scholars such as Faleye (2016), Adeniran (2014) and Nshimbi, Moyo, and Olorunfoba (2018) have all demonstrated how formal regional integration has been accompanied by informal processes of cross-border integration, including increases in informal cross-border mobility.

Regional development and migration management strategies in Africa are contributing to the perpetuation of parallel systems: one formal, the other informal. In doing so, African regions have demonstrated that they are not better equipped to 'better manage migration at its source' as the EU contends. African regional policy should adopt a normative policy coherence for development framework in order to pursue the transformative development promoted by the SDGs. Otherwise, their migration strategies will perpetuate risk and vulnerability and increase social costs associated with a dystopic migration system. Far from addressing migration crises, the current system seems to be perpetuating them.

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Appendix. Member states of seven regional organisations examined in this article.

	AU	COMESA	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	IGAD	SADC
Member States	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau. Kenya, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Kingdom of Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	Burundi, Comoros, Congo, Dem Rep., Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania.	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Source: Table compiled by author.