

The state of the determinants of international migration in Cameroon

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Abstract

This paper Pierre Kamdem analyses the determinants of international migrations in Cameroon, by exploring Cameroon's position with regard to one of the major areas of concern, specifically from the perspective of a country of departure, focusing on the major factors at work.

The paper is based on a synthetic presentation of the context of Cameroon that highlights the differentiated effects of labor markets on the push and pull factors of migration, also revisiting the effect of structural transformations, environmental impacts and other policies as migration factors. Finally, the article will consider the prospects that emerge in terms of the dynamic change of migration factors in the future in Cameroon, as well as the major recommendations applicable for optimizing the quality of migratory departures, in order to further enhance the impact of migration on the development of the country.

keywords: Cameroon, Migration, Determinants, Job Market, Urbanization.

1. Introduction

Along with Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa Republic, Chad and Sao Tome and Principe, Cameroon is one of the seven countries that constitute the migration system of the Central Africa sub-region, showing two specific modes of operation. A first mode mainly influenced by continentality, and a second affected by the coastline. In this context, Cameroon displays a certain number of peculiarities. It is the only country sharing a land border with all the states of the sub-region (except Sao Tome and Principe); therefore, it is crossed by all the influences affecting the sub-region in terms of migration. In addition, one of the additional arguments is that of the demographic weight of Cameroon, which gathers more than 45% of the population in the sub-region, thus weighing quite strongly on the whole of the sub-regional migration system.

From this point of view, and in view of its character as a country of departure, transit and host in migration, it becomes an interesting case to question two aspects. First, the theories and models proposed in international migration literature; second, and above all, the concerns of the High Level Group on Migration with regard to Africa, both from the point of view of its attachment to

global objectives and values and that of the mobilization of migration for development in a context of international cooperation.

In this sense, this paper plans to explore Cameroon's position with regard to one of the major areas of concern, specifically from the perspective of a country of departure, focusing on the major factors at work.

The paper is based on a synthetic presentation of the context of Cameroon that highlights the differentiated effects of labor markets on the push and pull factors of migration, also revisiting the effect of structural transformations, environmental impacts and other policies as migration factors. Finally, the article will consider the prospects that emerge in terms of the dynamic change of migration factors in the future in Cameroon, as well as the major recommendations applicable for optimizing the quality of migratory departures, in order to further enhance the impact of migration on the development of the country.

2. The situation of migratory departures in Cameroon: a continuous growth of migration

Located at the crossroads of all the countries of the Central Africa sub-region, Cameroon also offers a connection with the western part of Africa, thanks to its long border with Nigeria, the largest country in that region, which has a considerable impact on migration issues in that area. This sub-regional centrality reinforces the elements resulting from a long migratory practice, marked by a rather atypical colonial past with strong repercussions on the migratory profile of the country in general, and more particularly with regard to the "tropisms" of departures. With a stock of emigrants estimated at 2.7% of its total population in 2015, the Central Africa sub-region is confronted with the contemporary phenomenon of international migration, following the adoption of the 1956 Framework Law, establishing the breakup of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) under the impetus of Gaston Defferre, then Government Minister of Overseas France, led by the Prime Minister Guy Mollet. This area, consolidated since 1910, suddenly fragmented, generating four unequal and autonomous territories, which subsequently achieved their respective independence, that is tantamount to sovereignty marked by new borders, defined on the basis of economic and strategic considerations. This fragmentation gradually led through specific (geostrategic) segregation to the establishment of two distinct migratory sub-systems.

Cameroon offers a migratory specificity marked by its ability to connect the two sub-systems of the sub-region. Its main characteristics revolve around its geographical position, that offers an advantageous interface and is the prominent

factor relating to its status as the main demographic load of the sub-region, of which it shelters more than 45% of the total population. Its main reference elements consist as much in the combination of all the characteristics of the two sub-systems (grip of continentality in its northern part and influence of the coastline in its southern part), as its relative political stability since its independence, obtained in 1960.

These general characteristics underline some migratory peculiarities which are summarized in the following main points:

- Strong migratory dispersion: presence of Cameroonians on the five continents, with a strong concentration in Europe, where their presence is recorded in all the countries of this continent.
- Strong anchoring in migration to extra-African destinations: creation of diasporic movements in the main areas of destination, association movements, etc.
- Migration and multifaceted cooperation: an intense dynamic in the process of decentralized cooperation (Kamdem, 2015) - Programme de la Route des Chefferies (Kamdem, 2018)

This process is based on a few specific explanations. While the territorial framework during the colonial period was based on a principle of direct and legitimate command of the colonizing power throughout the French-speaking space in Africa, Cameroon was among the countries enjoying a special status: League of Nations trusteeship mandate based on the Treaty of Versailles (1920). One of the consequences of this special status was the establishment of a migration system based mainly on issues of training and studies. After independence in 1960, the country benefited from the effects of global growth, boosted by the Thirty Glorious Years, to outline an internal transformation placed under the constraints of the Cold War and the establishment of the Cameroonian diasporic migratory base, crossed by protest movements.

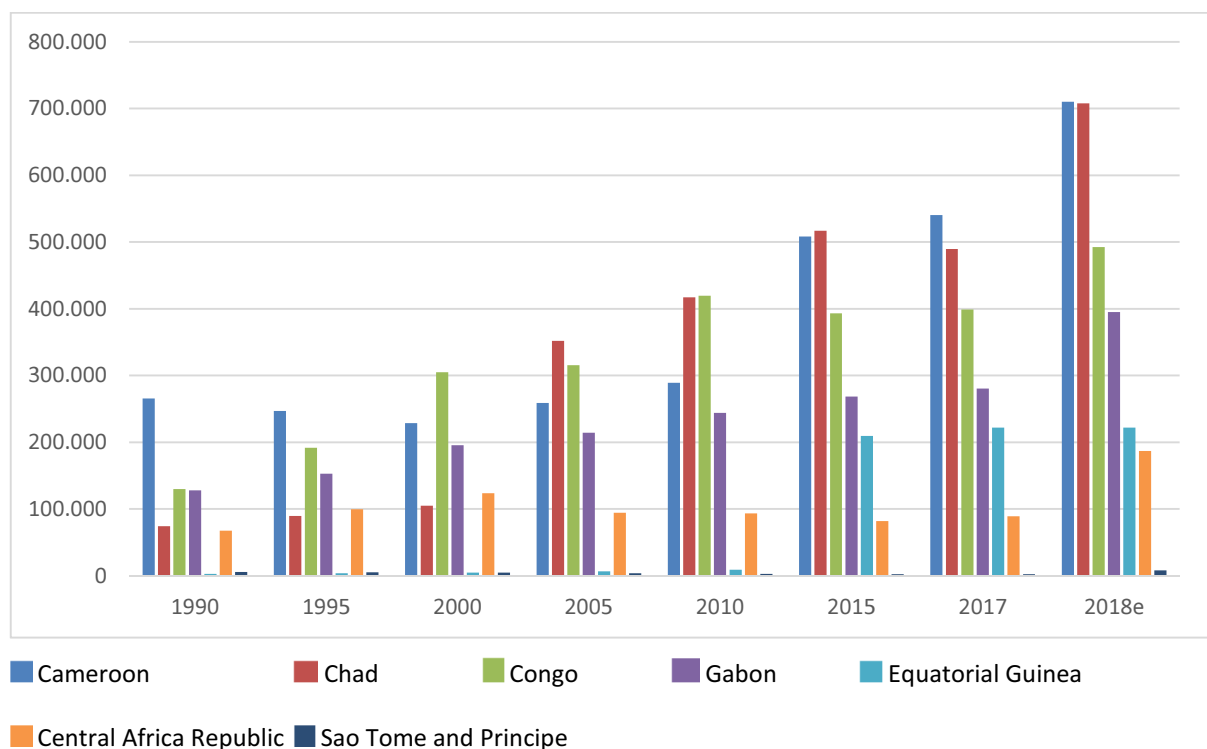
This internal transformation primarily takes into account educational and social issues, in a context of political blockage as an extension of the colonial system, with the specific effect on migration: the progressive “endogenization” of the entire educational path (creation of the University of Yaoundé in 1962, and numerous vocational training schools), the closing of borders (restrictive nationality code in 1968) and the reinforcement of control measures on the movement of people (double visa - for exit and entry - required for any border crossing by a Cameroonian citizen).

In the same vein, efforts to improve health and food conditions have taken place, contributing to demographic change and fueling the massive rural exodus, a precursor to the dynamism of international migration already timidly underway. This dynamism took shape in the early 1990s, thanks to an international thaw

context marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall.

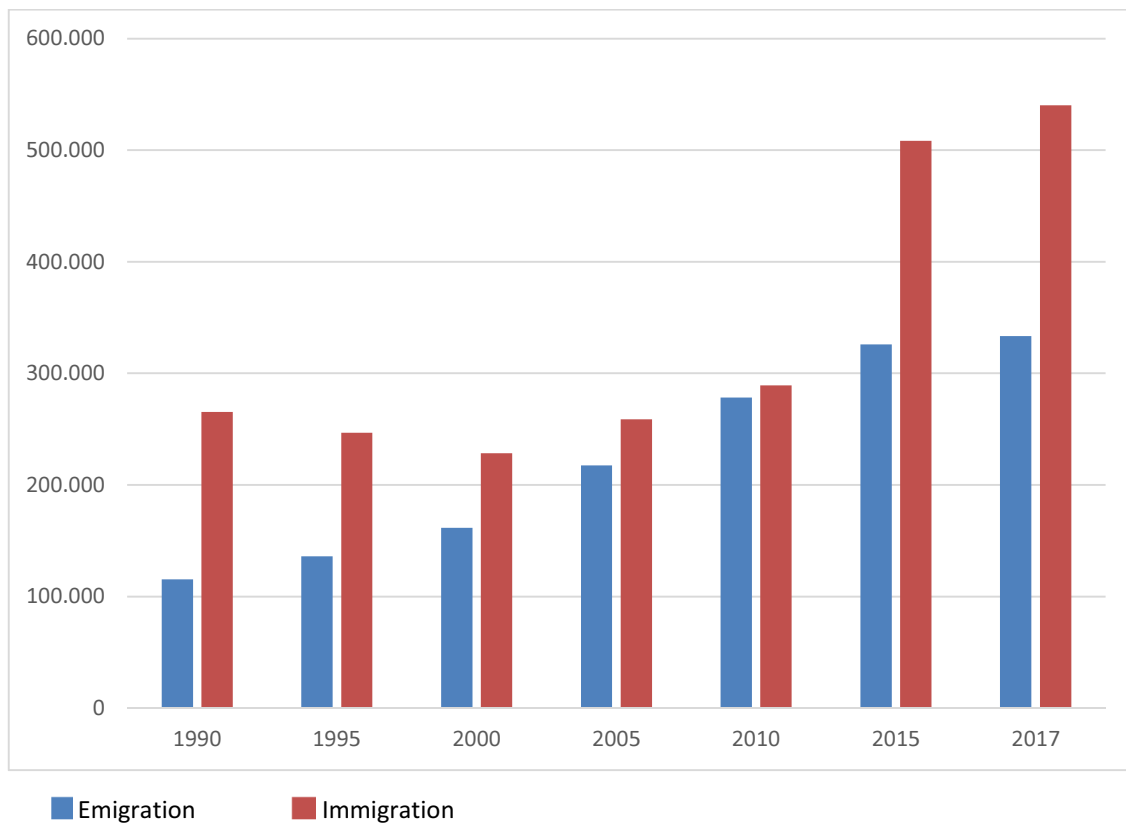
International migration then took a specific turn, in Cameroon as well as in the sub-region in general, entering a phase of continuous expansion until then. The country has established itself over time as a veritable migrant-receiving sub-regional area (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Evolution of migrant stocks by country in the Central Africa sub-region from 1990 to 2018



Sources: P. Kamdem, 2018. Data from United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision, United Nations database, (POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017). 2018e: The World Bank estimates.

This phenomenon mainly concerns African populations, with a strong presence of sub-regional nationals from countries crossed by multifaceted crises (Central African Republic and Chad), but also from West Africa composed among others of Nigerians, Malians and Senegalese. The migratory dynamics observed at the arrival is also recorded from Cameroon during this take off phase of Cameroonian emigration (Figure 2).

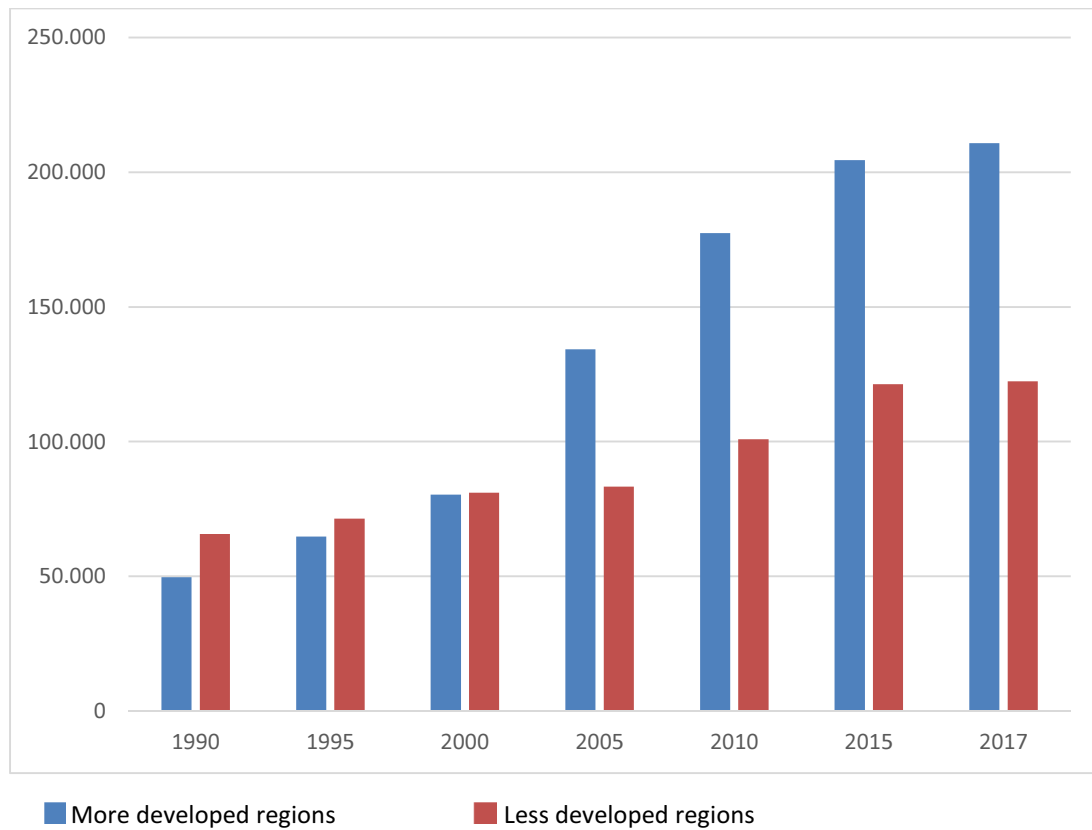
Figure 2: Migration and immigration in Cameroun from 1990 to 2017

Source: based on United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017)

Continuous departures from the country then experienced an intense dynamism, which is not sufficiently and easily found in the available data: many procedures, such as naturalization in the host country (Kamdem, 2015) or changes in status in connection with the thorny issue of the irregularity, both at the stay and at the entry stage, remain without indication (Kamdem, 2007; De Haas, 207, 2010).

In this sense, Cameroon is part of a counter-model of the African migratory system, with a progressive preference of its nationals to migrate outside the continent. While only 43% of them settled in the most developed regions in 1990, their workforce continuously increased to more than 63%, or almost two out of three Cameroonian migrants.

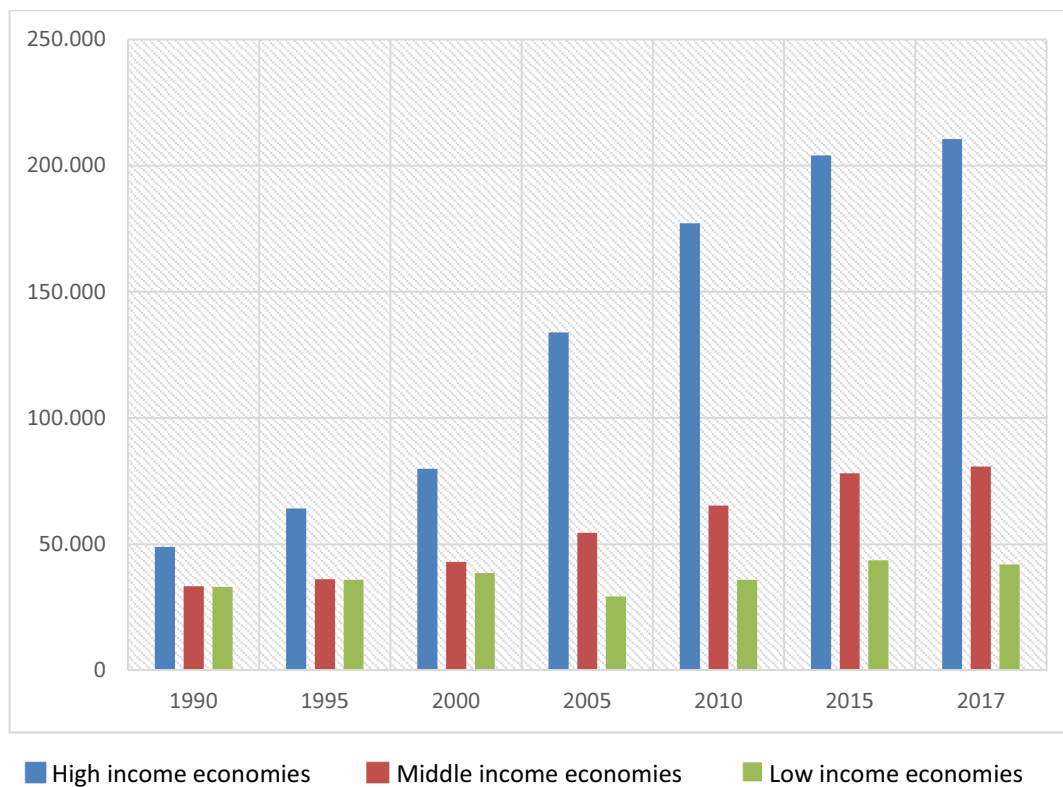
Figure 3 - Cameroonians in the world, by region, according to the level of development from 1990 to 2017



Source: based on United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017)

The OECD countries are their main destinations with, in order of importance, France, the USA, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain. We should not underestimate the importance of Cameroonians who migrated in search of specific training structures, despite the “endogenization” efforts above mentioned. This observation is also highlighted by the income level criteria, as Cameroonian migrants showed a stronger propensity to move to countries with very high income levels than other migrants from the Central African sub-region.

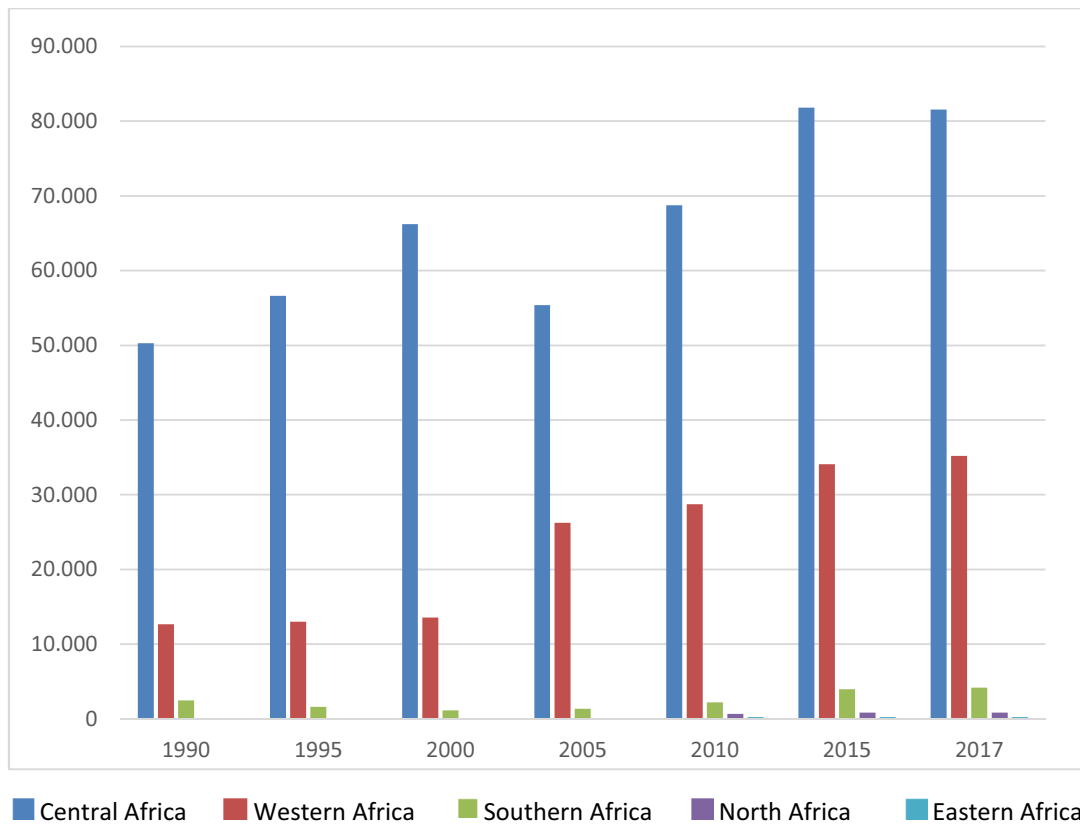
Figure 4 - Main destinations of Cameroonians according to income levels of countries, from 1990 to 2017



Source: based on United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017)

For those of Cameroonians migrants who decided to stay in Africa (around 37%), the choice has always been focused on settling in neighborhood areas and communities. They are primarily moving to a country in the sub-region, although this preference has declined slightly in recent years, from just over four in five Cameroonians in 1990 to just two in three of them in 2017.

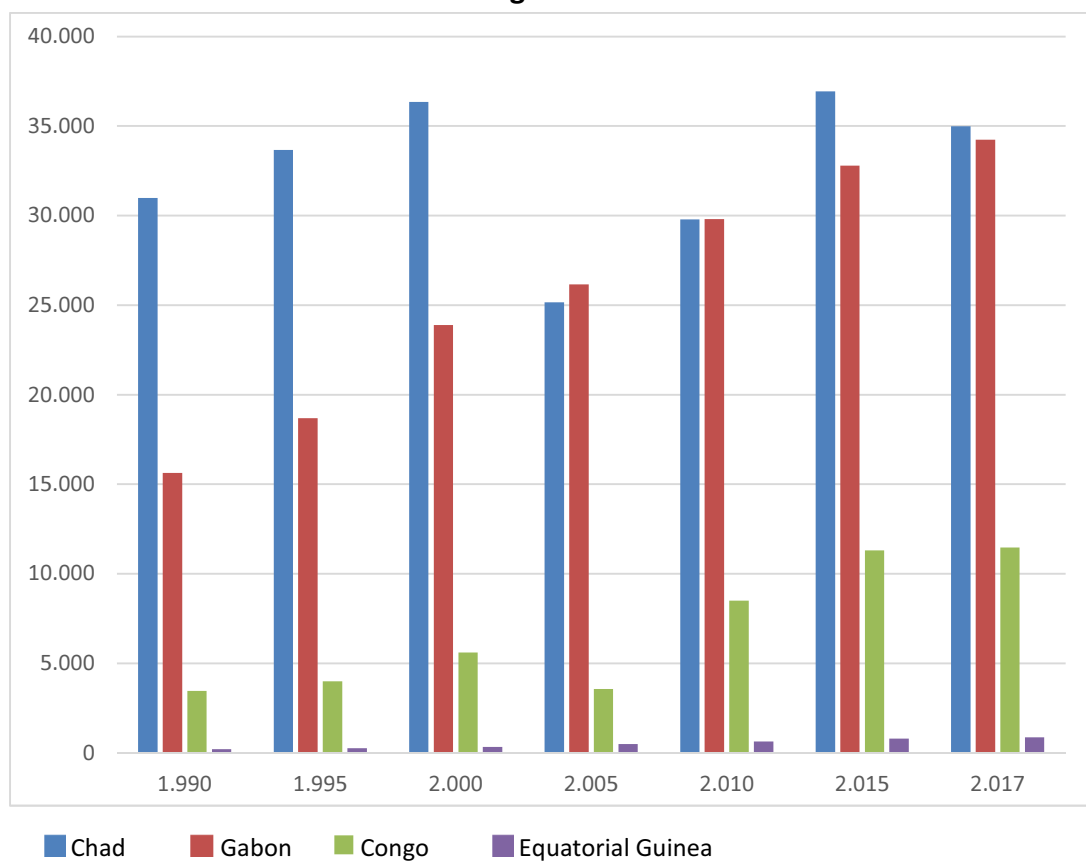
Figure 5 - Cameroonian presence in Africa by sub-region between 1990 and 2017



Source: based on United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017)

This decline caused by the gradual strengthening of the Cameroonian presence in West Africa confirms the increasing concentration in Nigeria in recent years, with a gradual increase in their presence in Mali. The fact remains that this population still strongly favors proximity to the multifaceted links already established for a long time. In this sense, three countries are home to the entire Cameroonian community in the sub-region: Gabon, Chad and Congo. This distribution of the Cameroonian population in the sub-region highlights the spatial divide isolating the two migratory sub-systems operating in the sub-region, marked by continentality for one (Chad and Central African Republic) and by the coastline for the other (Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea).

Figure 6 - Presence of Cameroonians in the countries of the Central Africa sub-region from 1990 to 2017



Source: based on United Nations (2017) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017)

These multifaceted imbalances presented by the Cameroonian migration system as a whole raise questions about the deep nature of the key migration factors of these populations, and therefore on the overall configuration of the migratory context in Central Africa.

3. Differentiated effect of the job market structure on departures of Cameroonians to their main destinations

i. Skilled Migration to OECD Countries

With regard to the analysis of data reflecting the migratory destinations of Cameroonians in the world, it is clear that the most advanced economies are their priority anchoring areas. The role of the job market thus seems questionable, due to the high level of qualifications found in these populations (Kamdem, 2007), where the majority has a secondary education level, with a strong fringe attaining post-secondary education. Hence, the labor needs of advanced economies seem to offer an outlet for a migratory flow whose original motive happens to be linked to studies and training. This argument finds a justification in the efforts of endogenization mentioned above, as evidenced by the high schooling rate out of phase with the realities of the Cameroonian economy, which is dependent on raw materials and, therefore, structurally unable to absorb all of the qualified human resources placed on the labor market (Ela, 1998).

The ability to reorient themselves (Kamdem, 2009) thanks to the support of migratory networks previously established in the destination countries (Kamdem, 2007, 2008) continues to represent the driving force for migration in Cameroon, the associative fabrics and the networks of economic nature (Ma Mung, 1996) proving to increasingly effective in terms of support generally to regular migration. In this sense, in these advanced economies, Cameroonians are found in almost all sectors of activity, at various and varied levels, thus constituting a source of information and guidance for safe and regular migration to those who aspire to emigrate. The migrating Cameroonian cultural and sports network plays the same role (Kamdem 2015) in attracting young people, as much as it comes up against employment problems and various aspirations in terms of freedom and human rights.

An additional factor of migration in Cameroon also lies in the ability of the diasporic network to be more structured around matrimonial strategies, by exploiting legal and administrative devices such as the family reunification procedures that are regulated through the issuance of visa, like the French visa for "private and family life". This system, which is ongoing in the advanced economies and prompts migrations from the middle and upper classes, is also applicable to intra-continental destinations, as it is favored by some of those who remain in the country, generally belonging to the lower and lower-middle classes. The former are mainly oriented towards Gabon, where they devote themselves to various businesses such as, in some cases, the transport of people

and goods and, in other instances, the integration into the public service, particularly in the education sector, health and personal services. The same profile is found to a lesser extent in Congo and Equatorial Guinea.

In African destinations with a middle income economy, particularly those located on the seafront of the Gulf of Guinea, the appeal for migration is related to the opportunities offered both by the ample availability of natural resources and by the effects of the demographic differential, which plays strongly in favor of Cameroon. Such differential is often put forward by these host countries as a justification for their reluctance to agree on free movement in the sub-region. Consequently, intense migratory activities are ongoing on the borders of both countries with Cameroon, whether in the area of the Ambam-Abebiyin-Kye Ossi triangle, or by the Atlantic coast. The various tensions which result from this situation contribute to an intensification of irregular migration, to which the different authorities very often respond by means of multiform expulsions (Loungou, 2010), generally under the constraints caused by the price volatility of raw materials, on which their economies are fully dependent.

Migration flows are facing an additional difficulty in this economically better-off zone, namely the ethno-demographic tangles along the borders inherited from colonization, indiscriminately crossing homogeneous ethnic groups thus fragmented across the three countries. This last characteristic is also noted in the economically poor areas constituting the second destination of Cameroonians in the sub-region, namely the area of the Lake Chad basin.

ii. Forced migration around Lake Chad

Contrary to the previous zone marked by voluntary migrations with high irregular flows linked to the institutional tensions on the borders, the zone of the basin of Lake Chad receives mainly Cameroonian migrants fleeing from both climate change and natural disasters, as well as various forms of violence (terrorism by Boko Haram, and abuses by road cutters and cattle looters). These forced departures particularly concern the fishing populations of Lake Chad, whose surface has shrunk by 90% over the past three decades. The result has been a drastic reduction in fishery resources which has freed up fragile cultivable areas, which are seriously threatened by climate change, and unleashed as well ambitions and conflicts among the surrounding populations (herders against farmers), while keeping on the alert the four border countries around this lake, namely Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger. Their regrouping within a regional economic community imposed by this lacustrine link (the Commission of the Lake Chad Basin), struggles to contain these ambitions and

conflicts, of which the Island of Darack is one of the symbols (Hilarou, 2008).

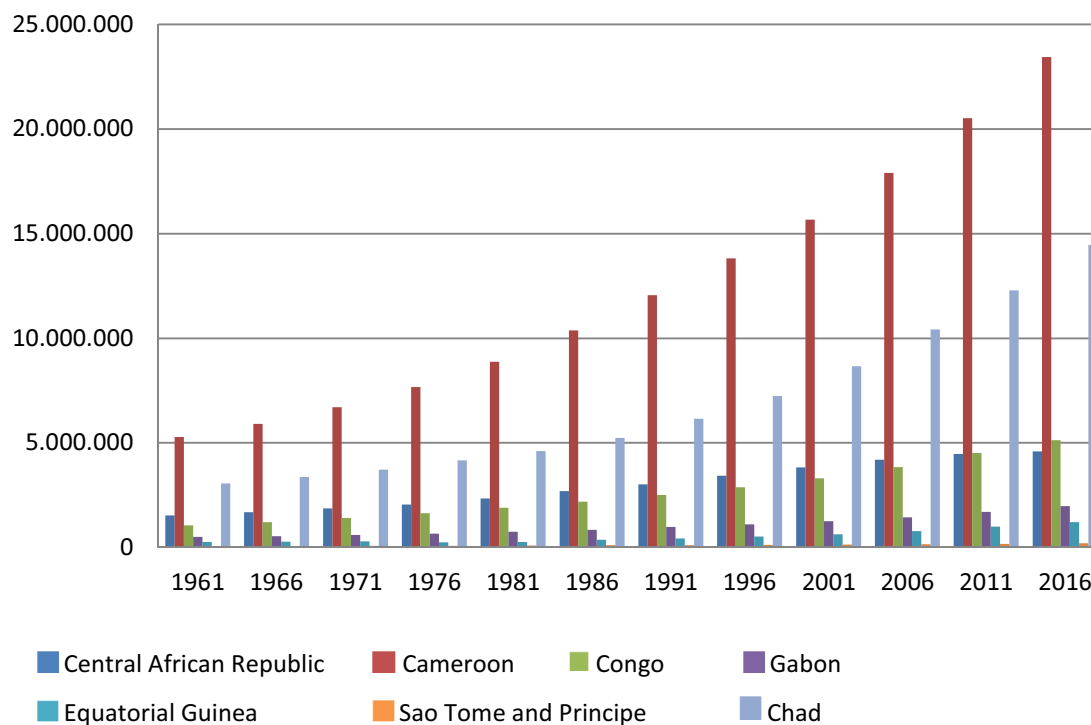
Some additional parameters contribute in shaping migration in this Cameroonian migratory fringe, under the influence of its continentality: these are the structural transformations underway in Cameroon's migratory spaces, considering both a socio-demographic point of view and urbanization criteria.

4. Structural transformations as factors of migration in Cameroon

Regarding the socio-demographic parameters, two criteria act intensely in the migration to Cameroon, i.e. the rapid population growth coupled with a spatial distribution marked by increasing urbanization.

i. Rapid population growth with a constantly changing structure

Demographic growth in Cameroon is proving to be rapid and regular (2.7% per year between 2000 and 2016 according to the World Bank), even if it remains close to the sub-regional average, similar to the African average (2.7% for the same period). The population is very young, with a 42% belonging to the age cohort from 0 to 14 years in 2016 (World Bank, 2017). It is therefore a population with a strong demographic dependence, which in fact complicates the task of the public authorities in terms of social and economic policies. Therefore, it constitutes an important pool of potential candidates for migration.

Figure 7 - Demographic evolution in central African countries from 1961 to 2016

Source: Elaborations based on The World Bank 2018 dataset.

Table 1 - Population growth indicators in central Africa from 2000 to 2016

	Total population (million)		Average annual growth (%)	Population by age group in 2016 (%)		
	2000	2016	2000-2016	0-14	15-64	65 et +
Cameroon	15,3	23,4	2,7	42	54	3
Chad	8,3	14,5	3,4	48	50	2
Central African Republic	3,8	4,6	1,3	39	57	4
Congo	3,2	5,1	2,9	43	54	4
Gabon	1,2	2	3	37	58	5
Equatorial Guinea	0,6	1,2	4,3	39	58	3
Sao Tome and Principe	0,1	0,2	2,3	42	55	3

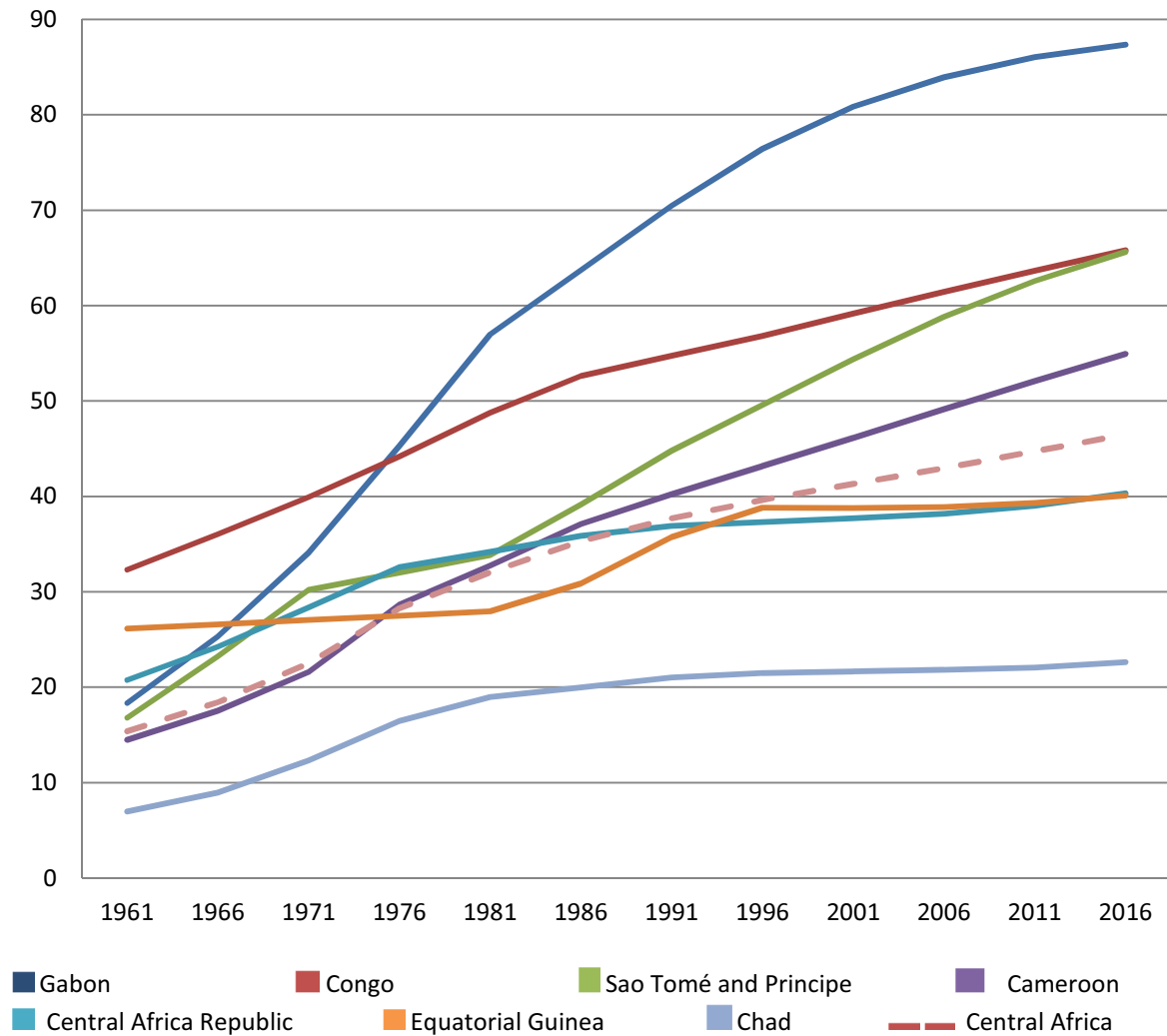
Source: Elaborations based on The World Bank 2018 dataset.

The next cohort - made up of the 15-64 age group - is that in which the active population is located. It represents 54% of the national population, which implies a large pool of labor to which the national job market must be able to respond. However, its structure, dominated by a rudimentary primary sector and a continuous development of the informal sector, constitutes a challenge for the country, which is severely exposed to the demands of globalization, particularly that of the mobility, even the hyper-mobility of people. Global technological leaps, such as those of mobile telephony, allow firms, communities, families and individuals to access certain mobility processes, more specifically those processes consisting in differentiating spaces through access to the necessary information. This further accelerates one of the determinants of international migration in Cameroon, namely the rural exodus, fueling a rampant and anarchic urbanization.

ii. Differentiated growing urbanization impacting migration factors

Urbanization is another factor of differentiated migration for Cameroonians. This is a phenomenon with the strongest continental expression in Central Africa: in Gabon, almost 9 out of 10 people live in urban areas. We can thus find here one of the justifications for voluntary migration flows to head towards Cameroonian destinations, especially since the country is also experiencing growing urbanization of the population, 55.5% of which lived in cities in 2017, compared to 13.9% in 1960 and 39.6% in 1990 (World Bank, 2017).

Figure 8 - Evolution of the rate of urbanization in Central Africa from 1961 to 2016 (%)



Source: Elaborations based on The World Bank 2018 dataset.

This phenomenon specifically characterizes the southern part of the country, where the three main cities of Douala, Yaoundé and Bafoussam form the national migratory triangle feeding voluntary migration in the oceanic and the intercontinental subsystems.

This is not the case for the continental subsystem, deploying in areas under more or less strong constraints, where rurality prevails, like in Chad, where nearly four out of five people still live in rural areas and depend heavily either on slash-and-

burn agriculture, with very low yields, or on nomadic pastoralism, with increasingly rare pastures. This is the case for the Mbororo populations (Seignobos, 2008), whose nomadic areas still ignore the state borders inherited from colonization, and which are the source of many conflicts. These nomadic populations are continuously sinking into the peri-forest and forest zone, sometimes resulting in bloody conflicts with farmers (Kamdem, 2015). This highlights how the environmental factor is influencing the migration of Cameroonians.

















5. The environmental impact of migration in Cameroon

The environmental criterion is considered here from two angles, taking into account the anthropic environment, on the one hand, and the natural environment, on the other.

On the anthropic level, the migration of Cameroonians appears as one of the responses to the vicissitudes of a difficult socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural environment (Chouala, 2002). Obstacles to the various human rights are at this stage a main driver of the intentions to migrate animating the potential candidates. Despite the signing of numerous international instruments in the field, it remains to be noted that these tools are difficult to domesticate by the Cameroonian public authorities, which are still plagued by certain faults such as corruption, nepotism and many abuses of authority at various levels of Cameroonian society. Many NGOs such as Amnesty International (2017), Human Rights Watch (2017), Transparency International, the Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa have criticized this, pointing to abuses emanating from the Cameroonian public authorities, in the form of political restrictions (Mbogning, 2002) and administrative abuses. These restrictions and abuses are often also blamed on the fight against the insecurities variously carried by the independence movements (Ambazonia and the English-speaking problem) and religious extremists (Boko Haram and Islamist terrorism), other powerful factors of forced migration to Cameroon.

This is also the case with regard to the very narrow economic prospects (Table 2) and the cultural burdens, which contribute to the intention of many applicants to emigrate. Part of these shortcomings that are fueling migration desires appear to originate from natural environmental constraints, paradoxically brought by certain international NGOs like WWF, recently called into question by the NGO Survival International due to the abuses of its eco-guards (Le Monde Africa, 2018).

Table 2 - Ranking of Central African countries in the 2016 and 2017 editions of the economic freedom index

	Central Africa		Africa		World	
	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
Gabon	1	1	14 	15	103 	105
Sao Tomé and Príncipe	2	2	26 	23	124 	120
Cameroon	3	3	37 	29	150 	130
Central African Republic	4 	5	38 	45	151 	168
Chad	5 	4	42 	44	162 	164
Equatorial Guinea	6	6	48 	46	174 	170
Congo	7	7	51 	47	177 	172

Source: Data elaboration based on <http://www.agenceecofin.com/gouvernance/2704-46918-classement-des-pays-africains-dans-l-edition-2017-de-l-indice-de-liberte-economique>; consulté le 25 août 2017

These various abuses tend to promote forced departures for the most vulnerable, in the context of the numerous internal displacements affecting more than 250,000 people (IRC, 2017) and the recurrent requests for asylum in neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2017). Many of the less vulnerable opt to embark on the perilous paths of clandestine migration, whether by land (via conventional trans-Saharan routes), sea or air. These choices are fostered by the dysfunctions of the civil status services and the difficulties of obtaining regular travel documents, directing a good number of candidates towards the use of false documents that allows the ambient corruption in the issuing services, or to unscrupulous smugglers (Bell, 2018).

As for the natural environment, it also lends itself to migration or its deterioration, as we have already mentioned with reference to the continental migratory subsystem. A point in case is that of the drastic climate change experienced around Lake Chad and the Sahelian edge, that demonstrates how development sometimes may give rise to practices conducive to migration. In the best of cases it is that of the protection of the forest environment, that often deprived the local and riverside populations of certain resources on which they

depended. Sometimes it is pure and simple exactions aiming at abruptly modifying certain social practices deemed incompatible with the objectives of protecting nature, and paradoxically vital for certain populations dependent on these environments (Le Monde Afrique, 2018). In the worst case, it is often a matter of enhancing the natural environment in the context of major development works (Lom Pangar dam), and farming (APHP, SOCAPALM and others). This latest scenario contributes to the transformation of the role of agricultural areas either by production objectives targeting distant markets, or quite simply non-food purposes (production of biofuels), to which these lands are redirected in a context of food deficit, thus opposing food security of the populations and financial security of the investors (Gerber, 2008).

6. *Political measures affecting departures in international migration to Cameroon*

Overall, different actors of migration initiated some steps and measures in order to rationalize the factors of migration in Cameroon. Many of these long-standing measures have produced encouraging results. This involves, for example, the progressive application of international legal instruments for the protection of Human Rights to which the country is a party, like the various conventions aimed at protecting the rights of women, children and other vulnerable categories. One tangible sign is the emerging role of women in migratory flows from Cameroon, following the measures taken in 1990 in application of article 13.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own”. In the aftermath of this measure, which led to the abolition of exit visas that constrained the obtaining of entry visas in third countries, texts were also adopted abolishing levirate and sororate, which further restricted regular migration departures of Cameroonian women. This allowed women to become one of the major components of Cameroonian migration (Kamdem, 2015).

Likewise, more recent measures are also helping to rationalize the driving factors of migration into Cameroon. These include, for example, the numerous coordination efforts for the management of migratory events by the public authorities, which pay increased, although still insufficient, attention to them. There are also the numerous supporting initiatives for actors in the field of migration, particularly on the consular plan and in terms of help to Cameroonian organizations of international solidarity of migrants, through integration into events aimed at a multifaceted mobilization of migrants and their support structures (various forums such as DAVOC, FORECDIA, FODIAS, FOTRAC).

In addition to these coordination efforts, Cameroon has taken a proactive

approach to managing migratory flows. This involves the gradual inclusion of migration issues in sectoral development challenges through the development of multi-sectoral public policies in this area. These include, for example, the gradual inclusion of the management of forced migration in territorial policies, like in Decree No. 2011/389 of 28 November 2011, establishing refugee management bodies, and Decree No. 2016/373 of August 4, 2016, organizing the rationalization of the system of identification of refugees and migrants in Cameroon. However, these efforts are struggling to be clearly part of a sub-regional dynamic and therefore require support and reinforcements likely to come from bilateral and multilateral international cooperation, both at intra-community and extra-community level.

At the intra-community level, some timid, frequently questioned bilateral cooperation is emerging between the states of the sub-region, like the High Ministerial Summits on Long-term Refugees between Gabon and Congo, or the Joint Commission Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea set up on January 1, 1970, or the Cameroon-Equatorial Great Commission Mixed Commission initiated on November 06, 1980. Major structuring projects of a cross-border nature also accompany this desire of the states of the sub-region to collaborate, like the Chollet cross-border dam project on the Dja river, between Cameroon and the Congo, or the TRANSAQUA project, involving Chad, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo to restore Lake Chad. These are all cooperation programs capable of settling the many disputes that underlie both voluntary and forced migration.

It is at the level of multilateral cooperation that the dynamics tackle head-on the questions of international migration in Cameroon in the same way as inside the sub-region. Indeed, the first milestone implemented in the sub-region consisted in the creation in 1959 of the Economic Customs Union (UDE). It is made up of the four new countries resulting from the breakup of French Equatorial Africa (AEF), namely Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic and Chad. Cameroon joined in 1962. This organization successively became the Customs Union of Central African States (UDEAC) in 1964 and then the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) in 1994. The major challenges raised by this collective project are part of the consideration of mobility as a vector of development. Consequently, it implements and supports the promotion of free movement in order to achieve free installation for a complete sub-regional integration, as a prelude to the culmination of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda. This last level of cooperation is firmly anchored in the international dimension of an extra-community nature, in the search for the optimization of factors driving migration into Cameroon.

At the extra-community level, Cameroonian cooperation articulates bilateral and multilateral levels. It proceeds as much through the creation of bilateral

concertation structures, such as the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission of November 10, 2002, as through the establishment of economic fairs (Nigeria-Cameroon). Bilateral dynamics, often based on specific criteria such as historical ties, underlie other forms of bilateral cooperation, such as the concerted management agreements for migratory flows signed with France in connection with its solidarity development policy (formerly co-development).

Multilateral extra-community cooperation, for its part, seems to be difficult to regulate, due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, the differentiated multi-membership of the Cameroonian State in several Regional Economic Communities (CEMAC, CEEAC, Common Wealth, *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*); secondly, asymmetrical negotiations of agreements with grouped entities, such as the agreements for the concerted management of migratory flows negotiated and signed in partnership with the European Union, as well as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The numerous initiatives in which Cameroon participates (Rabat Process, 2006, various EU funds) confirm this observation, in view of the mixed nature of the results obtained with regard to the rationalization of migration outflows. Hence the need to participate in global initiatives in terms of rationalization of migratory facts and harmonization of political discourse and practices like the process of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, initiated by the General Assembly of the United Nations dated September 19, 2016 in New York. As such, some perspectives linked to the long-term evolution of the factors driving international migration to Cameroon are worth considering.

7. Perspectives of determinants of international migration in Cameroon

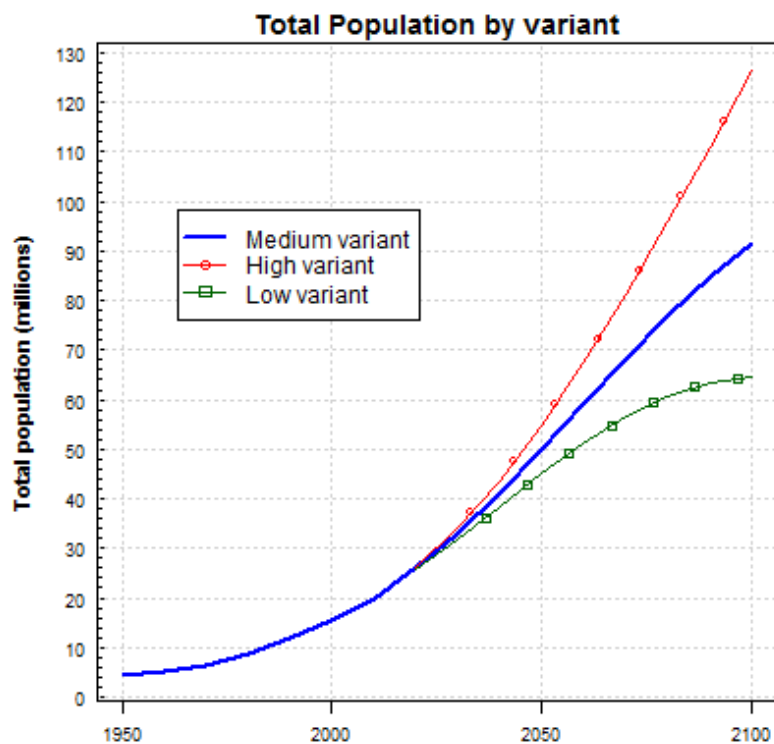
The analysis of the scenarios referred to the determinants of international migration in Cameroon requires taking into account the demographic question in its growth and spatial distribution dimension, and the structural requirements that such a question imposes, both at the political and strategic as well as environmental levels.

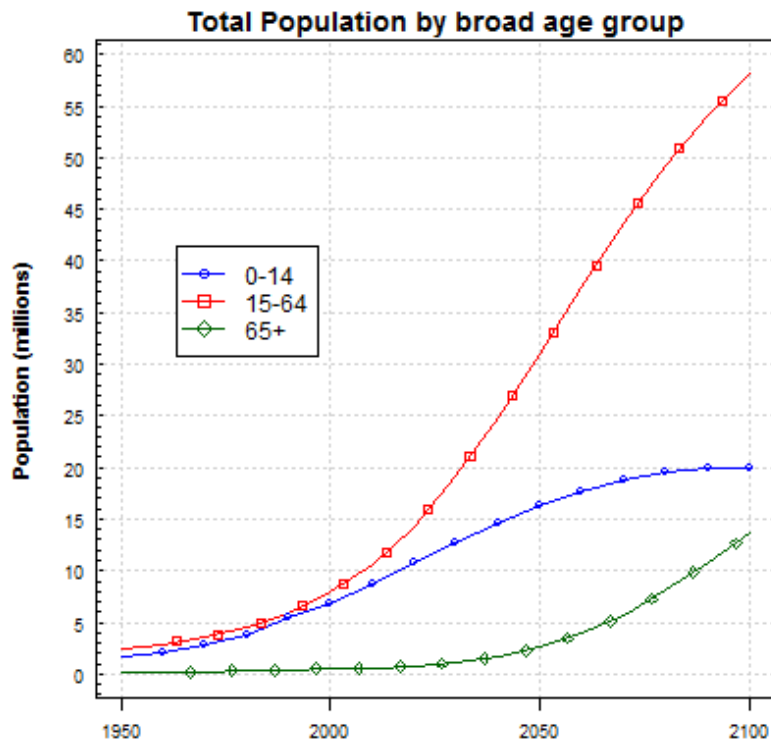
i. Determinants of migration linked to projections of strong demographic growth

Population growth is one of the main barometers for assessing the determinants of international migration in Cameroon. In this sense, the estimates of the United Nations population division reveal an almost exponential demographic growth in

the years to come. The country will multiply its population by four at the end of this century, after having already doubled it by 2050. It is therefore a major strategic challenge that indicates the classic theory of push and pull factors of migration as pertinent to the case of Cameroon. The trend towards structural reduction of demographic dependence by the end of the century is envisaged through the increase in the share of the working population in Cameroonian society. At the same time, the two dependent age groups, 0-14 and 65 and over, will see their share drop sharply, from nearly 42% today to around 37% at the end of the century.

Figure 9 - Demographic trends of Cameroon by 2100





Source: UN Population Division.

<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/>

This structural change in the population will certainly lead to the amplification of a related phenomenon already linked to the determinants of migration, namely the rural exodus leading to urban massification. It is therefore a real urbanization challenge looming for the country whose urban dynamics are still struggling to meet the increasingly growing urban aspirations, thus nourishing the desires of departure for migration.

Overall, this is an important challenge on both the employment front and that of the various services expected by these increasingly urbanized populations. The various public and private actors are responsible for building proactive responses, particularly with regard to the factors leading to migration and, consequently, the potential contribution of migration to the country's development efforts. In this sense, it is still necessary to point to the concrete efforts already initiated by the various actors operating in this field, particularly in terms of good practices such as:

- The implementation of the Reception and Return Integration Program in Cameroon (*Programme d'Accueil au Retour et à l'Intégration, PARIC*) of the National Employment Fund (*Fonds National pour l'Emploi, FNE*).

- The actions of the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM) of the German GIZ related to the multifaceted transfers of the diaspora and to the processes of reception and integration upon return.
- Cooperation between the French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office Français pour l'Immigration et l'Intégration*, OFII), the Cameroonian National Fund for Employment (*Fonds National pour l'Emploi*, FNE) and the Inter-professional Council of Cocoa and Coffee (CICC), to strengthen the integration of returning migrants, by signing the partnership agreement in Yaoundé on April 25, 2017.
- The emergence of local civil society actors specializing in diaspora issues (Welcome Back Cameroon - WBC, *Solutions pour le Migrations Clandestines* - SMIC, *RESPECT Cameroon* etc.).

These efforts are an indication of the magnitude of the task ahead and, consequently, new strategies in terms of structuring political and economic offers. It is also a question of addressing the implications of the various actors in different layers of the society, particularly those related to migration issues. In order to effectively respond to the challenge posed, issues of participation are to be addressed, both in the private sphere, where awareness and accountability must be promoted, and in the public sphere, where the role of each actor must be recognized, preserved and supported, which seems not always to be the case in Cameroon, according to the recriminations of the civil society. A real in-depth reform of Cameroonian society is essential if the country expects to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030 and the prospects of the African Union's Agenda 2063, particularly with reference to the driving factors of the international migration. In this regard, in view of the prominent role of public authorities in the management of international migration, some recommendations can be formulated with a view to address the determinants of migration.

8. Recommendations to address the determinants of migration in Cameroon

In order to effectively address the determinants of migration in Cameroon, mainly with regard to emigration flows, a list of concrete actions can be recommended to the country's public authorities. This requires both the creation of structures and procedures for the management and the effective implementation of migratory dynamics that are currently lacking, as well as the harmonization and strengthening of already existing measures.

i. Recommended actions to create structures and procedures for a better management of the determinants of migration in Cameroon

Given the current Cameroonian migration context and the challenges it poses in the long term, particularly with regard to migration outflows, the establishment of a certain number of structures and procedures is urgent. First of all, centers of academic excellence should be created combining research, training, application and dissemination of endogenous knowledge on international migration. This step is required in order to clarify the migration-development nexus and get out of the totally misleading commonplace that is inadequate to explain this link . This first step should give rise to the creation of a national observatory on migrations, in resonance with the ongoing global processes, in order to better adjust the specificities of the country to those of the various partners in the matter. Additionally, this would make it possible to proceed rationally to the concerted creation of migratory corridors, pledges of optimal security for migrations, which are mutually beneficial, both for the various public authorities and for all the other actors concerned, including the migrants themselves and their families.

ii. Recommended actions to strengthen existing structures and procedures for a better management of the determinants of migration in Cameroon

In addition to the creation of these various structures and procedures, the effective application of the devices and tools already available for the management of migratory flows, particularly in its departure dimension, constitutes one of the key recommendations to Cameroonian public authorities. Indeed, although Cameroon has signed the vast majority of international instruments targeting international migration and has transposed many of these norms into the country's legal and administrative systems, specific efforts still need to be made. In particular, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), and those rules recommended by the International Labor Organization and the United Nations about the rights of migrant workers should be adopted and implemented. These measures also include the requirement for an effective application of the protocol for the free movement of people and goods, negotiated in the CEMAC zone, and which is going to be implemented, with many contrasts, at the expense of Cameroonian migrants who are particularly active in this area of destination.

In the same vein, the context demands that the Cameroonian public authorities urgently proceed to the strengthening of the existing systems, measures and procedures. The reliability of civil status should thus facilitate full access to travel documents; other instruments include the strengthening of specific

training for emigration and immigration staff, coupled with other effective and concrete emergency measures, such as the strengthening of penalties related to migration issues, in synergy with the increased fight against corruption in this area. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these measures requires a strengthening of the technological, technical and operational capacities of the actors in charge of migration management, especially those of civil society working to protect the rights of migrants. It is also linked to an accentuation of the training of peoples about the culture of integration, in particular by multiplying specific programs in the media and in-school training. This last awareness-raising component imposes the need to improve what is already working well at this stage.

iii. Recommended actions to improve existing structures and procedures

The improvements that are likely to positively affect the migration of Cameroonians concern political, economic and social governance issues, currently in progress in Cameroon following the recent introduction of several reforms (decentralization and various constitutional reforms), as well as other questions related to the awareness, both in the media and the population, about the various realities related to migration.

In the same order of requirements, the Cameroonian public authorities must promote and encourage multifaceted cooperation around questions of international migration. A cooperation in terms of both circulation of information between the various actors in the territories concerned by Cameroonian migration, as well as improvements in the dialogue between the various stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Lastly, it is not an understatement to say that the work of international migration in Cameroon, particularly with regard to the factors inducing the departure of Cameroonians, is only at its beginning. It is necessary to tackle it with the firmest resolution, with regard to the key and challenging perspectives that the country faces in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

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Annexes**Table 1 - Evolution of migrant stocks by country in the Central Africa sub-region from 1990 to 2017**

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Cameroon	265 344	246 864	228 383	258 737	289 091	508 357	540 266
Chad	74 342	89 584	104 825	352 062	416 924	516 968	489 690
Congo	129 597	191 635	305 002	315 238	419 649	392 996	398 890
Gabon	127 980	152 972	195 571	214 123	243 992	268 384	280 197
Equatorial Guinea	2 740	3 629	4 517	6 588	8 658	209 611	221 865
Central African Republic	67 234	99 712	123 529	94 449	93 466	81 598	88 774
Sao Tome and Principe	5 582	4 936	4 365	3 433	2 700	2 394	2 293
Total	672 819	789 332	966 192	1 244 630	1 474 480	1 980 308	2 021 975

Table 2 - Migration and immigration in Cameroun from 1990 to 2017

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Cameroonians abroad	115 311	136 161	161 419	217 615	278 383	325 831	333 316
Foreigners in Cameroon	265 344	246 864	228 383	258 737	289 091	508 357	540 266

Table 3 - Cameroonians in the world by type of region according to the level of development from 1990 to 2017

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
More developed regions	49 649	64 720	80 335	134 273	177 449	204 464	210 864
Less developed regions	65 662	71 441	81 084	83 342	100 934	121 367	122 452

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Table 4 - Main destinations of Cameroonian according to income levels of countries, from 1990 to 2017

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
High income economies	48 942	64 125	79 875	133 898	177 175	204 141	210 527
Middle income economies	33 349	36 165	43 012	54 516	65 351	78 058	80 794
Low income economies	33 020	35 871	38 532	29 201	35 857	43 632	41 995

Table 5 - Cameroonian presence in Africa by sub-region between 1990 and 2017

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Central Africa	50 294	56 634	66 195	55 373	68 741	81 828	81 569
Western Africa	12 681	13 016	13 575	26 267	28 726	34 092	35 220
Southern Africa	2 478	1 603	1 134	1 347	2 237	3 967	4 186
North Africa	135	109	92	110	674	859	849
Eastern Africa	10	13	18	66	243	252	254

Table 6 - Cameroonian presence in the Central Africa sub-region, by country, between 1990 and 2017

	1 990	1 995	2 000	2 005	2 010	2 015	2 017
Chad	30 992	33 673	36 353	25 156	29 790	36 938	34 988
Gabon	15 636	18 690	23 895	26 161	29 811	32 792	34 235
Congo	3 464	4 003	5 614	3 570	8 502	11 300	11 469
Equatorial Guinea	202	268	333	486	638	798	877