

**Migration trends in West Africa: An analysis of  
labor migrants and the determinants of  
Migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan,  
Abobo Municipality**

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## ABSTRACT

Migration is a complex phenomenon that continues to shape societies worldwide. Despite the challenges of significant poverty, rapid urbanization, and limited job opportunities, the municipality of Abobo in Côte d'Ivoire remains an attractive destination for migrants. This enduring appeal suggests strong motivations and potential advantages associated with migration. Consequently, this master's thesis examines migration dynamics, determinants, and experiences within the Abobo municipality.

This study employs a case study framework and a qualitative research strategy to tackle the research problem and explore the research questions. By employing these methods, the study seeks to accomplish its research objectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the motivations, experiences, opportunities, and challenges encountered by migrants in the Abobo municipality. Through a multi-level analysis encompassing macro, meso, and micro factors, the study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between various elements that shape migration characteristics in the municipality.

At the macro level, migration theories such as the push and pull framework and the Neo-Classical economic theory are employed to explore the motivations and determinants of migration. The analysis reveals that the migrant respondents were attracted to the Abobo municipality due to the perceived availability of higher-paying jobs, improved work conditions, and business opportunities compared to their countries of origin. The push factors, such as unfavorable economic circumstances and limited job prospects in their home countries, drove the migrant respondents towards seeking a better life in Abobo.

At the meso level, the study examines the social and economic conditions that influence regional and community migration patterns. It highlights the role of social ties and networks for labor migrants in Abobo. The findings demonstrate that migrants rely on strong and weak ties in their networks for decision-making, employment opportunities, and housing. However, the study reveals barriers to well-paid work, including corruption and lack of documentation, underscoring the complex nature of migration and indicating that social networks alone are insufficient to overcome these obstacles.

Furthermore, the study uncovers the importance of social capital formed among migrant respondents in Abobo. These networks serve as vital sources of support and help mitigate the risks associated with migration, aligning with the principles of social capital theory. Nevertheless, the study emphasizes the need to address structural factors and systemic issues within the municipality to improve job opportunities and overall development for migrants. At the micro level, the study explores individual elements that influence migration decisions. It provides a valuable understanding of the factors that drive migrants to choose Abobo municipality as their destination, moving beyond economic reasons. The findings demonstrate that economic factors, social networks, policy frameworks, and migration laws shape migration decisions. The study highlights the role of the entire household in decision-making as migrants seek to enhance their own and their family's financial situation.

Moreover, the study uncovers the opportunities and challenges faced by migrants in the Abobo municipality. It reveals that while employment opportunities in Abobo are perceived as advantageous compared to migrants' countries of origin, access to well-paid jobs is contingent on possessing legal identification/documentation. Unfortunately, the majority of migrant respondents lack such documentation. The study also highlights the challenges associated with employment in the formal sector, where legal documentation is crucial but often inaccessible to migrants. Consequently, many migrants are compelled to seek informal sector jobs, which offer less stability and lower wages. The study underscores how poverty among respondents further hinders their access to well-paid jobs and perpetuates their limited ability to obtain required legal documents.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

**ECOWAS** Economic Community of West African States

**OECD** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

**RGHP** Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat

**PDCI** The Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire

**IOM** International Organization for Migration

**ILO** International Labour Organization

**RGHP** Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat, *General Population and housing census*

**NELM** New Economics of Labour Migration

**AU** African Union

**AGEPE** Agence d'Etudes et de Promotion de l'Emploi

**SIGI** Social Institutions and Gender Index

**ICT** Information and communication technology

**SPC** Socio-professional category

**GCM** Global Compact for Migration

**FGDs** focus group discussions

**NSDs** Norwegian Centre for Research Data

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

Migration is one of globalization's oldest, most visible, and most significant effects (Goldin et al., 2012; Tacoli & Okali, 2002). Today, an estimated 281 million people, approximately 3,6 percent of the world's population, live outside their country of origin (OHCHR, 2023). Within African borders, most migration occurs on the continent, described explicitly as Intra-African Migration. Intra-African Migration has been an inseparable part of labor migration and the subsistence of the African continent for numerous years (European Union, 2020). Around 21 million Africans are estimated to live in other African countries, presumably an undercount given that many African nations do not track migration (ACSS, 2021). West Africa is one of the regions on the continent that has long been known for high levels of inter-regional cross-border mobility movements facilitated by the Free Movement Protocol signed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (ICMDP, 2022).

Côte d'Ivoire is the most popular migration corridor in West Africa and hosts the highest number of migrants in the region; estimated numbers are over 2,5 million people (Migrants Refugees, 2023), which generates 9.7% of the entire state's population (OECD, 2021, p. 2). Despite challenges related to political instability, lack of infrastructure, economic downturns, wars, and conflicts, the country has a long history of welcoming migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Since independence from France in 1960, and potentially even during the era of colonialism, Côte d'Ivoire has garnered recognition as a nation distinguished by its significant immigration patterns, primarily attributable to its intentional and systematic approach policy to embracing foreign labor (OECD, 2017; IOM, 2020; IOM, 2009) However, the economic downturn in the 1980s and the subsequent conflict in the 2000s significantly impacted immigration patterns in Côte d'Ivoire (OECD, 2017), with immigration flows declining while emigration flows increasing.

After independence, Côte d'Ivoire and the wider West Africa region experienced rapid economic growth from export crops. However, this heavy reliance on agricultural exports proved detrimental when global markets collapsed, leading to a decline in income. The challenges were compounded by falling raw material prices, drought, and the 1973 oil crisis (Ammassari, 2006). These economic crises had a significant impact on Côte d'Ivoire, as well as other countries in the region, resulting in high unemployment and underemployment (N'Diaye, 2007; Ammassari, 2006). Moreover, the first civil war was rooted in political and ethnic tensions in which thousands died and were displaced, and it ended with a peace agreement in 2007 (Leraand, 2019). The second civil war broke out in 2011, quickly becoming a full-scale military conflict between the prior president Laurent Gbagbo and the present president Alassane Ouattara (Leraand, 2019), resulting in many casualties and widespread displacement of individuals. A final turning point occurred with the restoration of peace in 2011 and significant economic growth in succeeding years (The World Bank Group, 2023; OECD, 2017). The development of the country's economic growth, infrastructure, and political stability has drawn labor migrants from the neighboring countries, where ECOWAS has contributed to facilitating migration flows to the country (Migrants Refugees, 2023).

Furthermore, migration significantly impacts urbanization (Owusu, 2018; Awumbila, 2014; Teye, 2018), and Côte d'Ivoire is currently experiencing a rapid and consequential urbanization process (Martin, 2018). Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire, is among the top three migration hubs on the African continent, attracting a significant number of internal and international migrants drawn to the city to pursue improved economic opportunities and enhanced living standards (Traoré & Torvikey, 2022). The city's vibrant economy, marked by diverse sectors, including commerce, industry, and services, has positioned it as an appealing destination for labor migrants seeking employment opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures (Traoré & Torvikey, 2022; Joshi et al., 1975). Nevertheless, the surge of migration to Abidjan has presented substantial challenges.

In 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was the least urbanized country in West Africa, while today, it ranks among the most urbanized nations in the sub-region (Martin, 2018). The rapid pace of urbanization and the influx of migrants have placed significant strain on the city's infrastructure and public services, resulting in issues such as overcrowding, insufficient housing options, challenges related to employment and restricted availability of basic facilities, particularly in certain areas (Traoré & Torvikey, 2022; Joshi et al., 1975). One of the specific areas affected by these issues is Abobo, one of the 13 communes - a municipality located in the northern periphery of Abidjan (UN-Habitat, 2012).

Abobo, a densely populated municipality, has traditionally served as a settlement area for migrants, with limited urban planning, inadequate infrastructure, and a scarcity of social services (UN-Habitat, 2012; SOS- barnebyer, 2023). The living conditions in Abobo are challenging and characterized by high poverty rates (Martin, 2018). The municipality faces significant obstacles in addressing the basic needs and improving the overall well-being of its population. Difficulties such as degraded earth streets and the lack of proper drainage systems exacerbate issues related to sanitation and managing rainwater and wastewater from economic activities and households, contributing to local population hazards (Martin, 2018). The consequential urban poverty has prompted the local population to develop informal economic initiatives (UN-Habitat, 2012; Martin, 2018). Abobo is predominantly driven by the informal sector, which includes commerce, transportation, and crafts (UN-Habitat-2012). This sector dominates the local economy, accounting for approximately 80% of employment opportunities (UN-Habitat-2012). However, the commune encounters limited job creation, urban space management, and transportation infrastructure challenges (UN-Habitat-2012). Moreover, Abobo is renowned for its diverse artisanal activities, spanning disciplines such as building construction, metalworking and mechanics, woodworking, textiles, clothing, leatherwork, artistic craftsmanship, and electronics. These artisanal practices contribute to the local economy, providing employment opportunities for skilled individuals across various trades and crafts (UN-Habitat-2012).

Several studies indicate (OECD, 2017; Konan, 2009) that economic factors are the primary motivation for migrants choosing Côte d'Ivoire as their destination, although social factors also play a significant role. The country's economic growth and the potential for higher earnings compared to their home countries attract migrants mainly from the neighboring countries (OECD, 2017). Furthermore, network effects have a significant impact on migration patterns. Migrants tend to settle in countries with a high concentration of their community members (OECD, 2017). *Diaspora communities* often establish support measures that reduce the costs and risks associated with migration. These measures include assisting newcomers in finding employment and housing and providing psychological support through associations and cultural activities (Shaw, 2007; OECD, 2017, p.53).

Despite high urban poverty rates and difficult living conditions, Abobo remains an attractive destination for internal and external migrants from neighboring countries. The municipality provides economic prospects, predominantly within the informal sector, which serve as compelling reasons for individuals seeking to improve their quality of life and pursue economic betterment. However, at the national level, Côte d'Ivoire lacks a comprehensive migration strategy that effectively addresses the complexities and implications of migration (OECD, 2017, United Nations, 2015). Efforts to establish a national migration policy strategy have been in progress since 2014 (OECD, 2017). The government has not yet adopted the finalized document, indicating a gap in the country's migration management. The lack of a comprehensive migration strategy, policies, and practical migration frameworks in Côte d'Ivoire poses significant challenges in addressing the specific needs of migrants and effectively managing migration flows (OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015). It additionally may hinder the state's ability to provide adequate support and resources to migrants and the local population of Côte d'Ivoire (OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015).

### 1.1 Background and rationale of the research study

Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by various push and pull factors. There are many factors as to why people migrate. For many, the lack of economic power and labor opportunities in the country of origin is a significant push factor for why people migrate. In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, economic prosperity is one of the main reasons for the high level of immigration in the country (OECD, 2021). Economic prosperity provides migrants with more job opportunities, which contributes to the significant amount of immigration in Côte d'Ivoire

(OECD, 2021). Inter-regional migration in the area also provided this chance for people to move freely inside the region and have the right to reside within the system of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) (OECD, 2021).

Migration can have a mixed impact, both positive and negative, at several levels in both the originating and receiving nations. Migrants' labor and skills, investments, and taxpaying can, for instance, be an advantage for the host nation (OECD, 2017). In addition, money transfers and goods dispatched to the countries of origin, as well as expertise, knowledge, and skills acquired abroad, can positively affect the countries of origin (OCED, 2017). However, various factors can undermine migrants' contributions to the host country's economy and society. According to OCED 2017,' can high levels of underemployment and low education rates – which are symptomatic of poor integration – and discrimination in access to education, health, and social services, undermine their contribution to their host nations (OECD, 2017). Lack of integration into the host country's socioeconomic systems may contribute to hardships such as finding suitable employment, accessing education and healthcare, and participating in the host nation, leading to underemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. In turn, it may adversely affect the migrants' well-being and their ability to contribute to the host society.

Furthermore, significant cultural and communal differences exist between communities in many parts of Africa, including West Africa and Côte d'Ivoire. Apart from the geographical borders that separate African nations, this boundary relates to migration and separates West Africa between locals from the host nation and migrants from the origin country (Moyo et al., 2021, p. 201), which is a cause of serious concern (Moyo et al., 2021, p. 200). These cultural and communal boundaries can be a significant factor in shaping migration patterns in the region. It relates to barriers to integration into the local community, which can limit migrants' access to essential services and well-being, and their ability to contribute to the receiving nation's economy. In addition, migration management and national and regional migration frameworks can play a significant role in determining the well-being of migrants. Hence, policies in both the destination and origin countries must promote integration and maximize the benefits of migration to development.

Migratory flows and movement to Côte d'Ivoire have historically been decisive for Ivorian development and economic growth (Migrant-refugees, 2023). However, migration is often associated with poverty (IMF, 2009: Migrant-refugees, 2023). Nevertheless, unemployment and

rapid urbanization in host states has become a more common challenge. The influx of migration flows to Abidjan, Abobo municipality may have decreased in line with migration trends nationally, but poverty, unemployment, and rapid urbanization remain an issue. Internal migration movements in terms of the ECOWAS policy framework allow people to move freely within the region. However, national attention to migrants and their poor living conditions has always been insufficient (United Nations, 2015). With pressure from the international world, the Presidential Emergency Program did announce in April 2011 a possible immigration policy in a more in-depth manner than before, with a specific focus on migrants' poor living conditions (JICA, 2014, p. 11). Nevertheless, migration-related issues, such as immigrant rights, may receive less attention than they should. Over the past decade up and till this day, Côte d'Ivoire still needs a comprehensive national migration policy framework (Devillard et al., 2015, p.136; OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015). Migration-related debates are a central issue in Ivorian politics, which goes beyond policy regulations of migration movements, migrants' entry and stay regulations, and access to labor markets (Devillard et al., 2015, pp. 132-134). The discussion involves rights of opportunities such as access to land ownership, access to political rights, and challenges concerning identification, naturalization, and citizenship (Devillard et al., 2015, pp. 132-134).

This study investigates the multifaceted nature of migration and the factors that drive people to migrate. In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, economic prosperity and labor opportunities are significant pull factors that attract migrants to the country (Migrants-refugees, 2023). Nevertheless, underemployment, low education rates, and discrimination in accessing essential services hinder migrants' integration and undermine their contributions to the host nation's economy and society (OECD, 2017). Cultural and communal differences also pose barriers to integration and limit migrants' access to services and their ability to contribute to the local economy (OECD, 2017). Additionally, the lack of comprehensive migration policies and frameworks in Côte d'Ivoire has resulted in insufficient attention to the rights and living conditions of migrants.

Furthermore, the rationale of this research study is to challenge the dominant narrative that emphasizes migration from Africa to Europe. In recent years, European politics and policy, Western media, and Western-dominated literature have focused on the challenges associated with migration from the Global South to the Global North. However, the study aims to highlight



the importance of studying migration within the African continent and understand the complex relationship between migration policies, management strategies, and development within African borders. This study aims to deepen our understanding of African migration dynamics by comprehensively analyzing migration in Abobo municipality. By exploring the unique context of Abobo, valuable insights can be uncovered that draw attention to the formulation of future migration management strategies and policies. The study seeks to shed light on the specific challenges encountered by migrants in this region and advocate for increased attention and support to address their needs. By highlighting the experiences, struggles, and opportunities of migrants in the Abobo municipality, the study aims to contribute to informed decision-making and develop more inclusive and effective policies that promote the well-being and integration of migrants.

Moreover, most African migration occurs within the continent (Gandhi, 2018; International Organization for Migration, 2020; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). Côte d'Ivoire attracts numerous migrants from neighboring countries and shares its borders with five other African countries (Fn-sambandet, 2023). Liberia to the west, Guinea to the northwest, Mali to the north and northeast, Burkina Faso to the northeast, and Ghana to the east (Fn-sambandet, 2023). Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso are among the poorest in the world (The world bank group, 2023) and many people from these countries migrate to Côte d'Ivoire for better employment opportunities (OECD, 2017; IOM, 2009; 2020). Furthermore, few studies examine the complex relationship between migration and development within African borders (Tonah et al., 2017). By analyzing and examining migratory processes within the African continent help us better understand how migration should be governed and managed. It additionally may enhance the challenges and issues associated with migration within the host countries and for the migrants themselves. Without a robust academic and research infrastructure in the field, a lack of necessary knowledge and evidence-based reach may limit access to develop effective migration policies and practices in Côte d'Ivoire. Ultimately, a more nuanced understanding of migration within Côte d'Ivoire is essential for developing policies and practices that promote inclusive economic growth and development, protect legislation of the rights of migrants, and may contribute to enhancing social cohesion within host communities.

## 1.2 Problem statement

Migration has played a fundamental role in Ivorian history. Since Côte d'Ivoire independence in 1960, the nation has been characterized by substantial migratory patterns, partly attributed to adopting a relatively liberal migration policy. Migration undeniably continues to shape and define the social and economic landscape of Côte d'Ivoire. However, while migration holds the potential to bring positive socioeconomic outcomes to Côte d'Ivoire, it is crucial to recognize the significance of developing a well-defined and comprehensive strategy to capitalize on these potential benefits fully.

Migrants are primarily drawn to Côte d'Ivoire due to economic factors, including economic growth and the potential for higher earnings than their country of origin (OECD, 2017). However, the economic crisis that struck the West African region had lasting effects, leading to persistently high unemployment rates that continue to afflict the region today (Ammassari, 2006). This surge in unemployment, in both formal and informal sectors, resulted in a decline in household living standards and an increase in poverty levels, a trend not limited to Côte d'Ivoire but prevalent across West Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (Ammassari, 2006, p.15). Additionally, the rapid pace of urbanization and the influx of migrants have placed significant strain on Abidjan's infrastructure and public services, giving rise to issues such as overcrowding, insufficient housing options, employment challenges, and limited access to basic facilities (Traoré & Torvikey, 2022; Joshi et al., 1975).

Among these challenges, Abobo municipality in Abidjan faces similar circumstances. Despite high poverty levels, rapid urbanization, and limited job opportunities, migrants are still drawn to the municipality for various reasons, indicating a continued attraction and potential benefits of migration (OECD, 2017). Nevertheless, the absence of a comprehensive migration strategy exacerbates the hardships faced by migrants in the Abobo municipality. Without a well-defined and comprehensive approach to address migration-related issues, including job opportunities, social integration, and support systems, the struggles of migrants may persist and even worsen over time (OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015).

Therefore, it is imperative to conduct research that enhances our understanding of the factors driving migration to Abobo municipality and explains the reasons behind the continued attraction of migrants. This research study aims to investigate the main push and pull factors that influence the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, explicitly focusing on Abobo municipality in Abidjan. By exploring the motivations and decision-making processes of these migrants, the study aims to provide insights into the factors that shape their migration choices and assess how they weigh the associated costs and benefits.

Additionally, the research study examines networks' role for labor migrants in the Abobo municipality. By investigating how labor migrants use their networks to find employment opportunities and participate in community networks, the study will clarify the significance of social connections in facilitating job access and overall well-being.

Lastly, the research will address job opportunities and challenges faced by migrants in the Abobo municipality. By exploring the types of jobs available to migrants, identifying barriers and challenges they encounter in accessing employment, and understanding the specific employment-related difficulties they face, the study aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the employment landscape for migrants in the municipality.

Ultimately, the findings of this research study will explore future policy recommendations and interventions aimed at better addressing the struggles faced by migrants in the Abobo municipality.

### 1.3 Research questions

The identified research problem gives rise to two primary research questions and one sub-question that will be investigated in this study:

**R1: What are the main push and pull factors influencing the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and how do they weigh the associated costs and benefits in their decision-making process?**

**R2: What is the role of networks for labor Migrants in Abobo municipality?**

#### 1.3.1 Sub- Questions

**1. What are the job opportunities for migrants in the Abobo municipality, and what are the challenges they face in terms of employment?**

### 1.3.2 Research objectives

The main objective of the research study is to analyze the deterrents of migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire by examining labor migrants in Abobo municipality, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The study will pursue the following objectives to address the research questions and sub-question;

**O1: Examine the main push and pull factors shaping the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and investigate their assessment of the costs and benefits involved in the decision-making process.**

Macro- level objectives:

- Analyze broader factors (economic, political) that contribute to migration from the neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire
- Analyze broader factors (economic, political) that drive migration to Abobo municipality
- Assess the impact of national, regional policies and intergovernmental agreements on migration patterns

Micro level objectives:

- Identify personal motivations of individual migrants in choosing to migrate to Abobo municipality
- Examine the individual cost-benefit analysis of migrating
- Identify the economic, social, and political factors that contribute to the decision of young men to migrate to Abobo from neighboring countries
- Understand individual experiences and reasons for young men migrating from neighboring countries to Abobo municipality
- Investigate the impact of individual factors such as age, education, risk aversion and personality traits

**O2: Examine the role of networks for labor Migrants in Abobo municipality.**

Meso- level objectives:

- Examine how labor migrants use their networks to find employment opportunities in Abobo municipality
- Investigate how labor migrants participate and from networks within their community in Abobo municipality

- Identify types of migration networks that labor migrants rely on
- Assess the impact of networks on labor migrants' access to job opportunities, working conditions, and overall well-being.
- Explore social/ household factors that influence individuals' migration decisions
- Identify different types of migration networks and how they influence individual migration decisions

All research questions and objectives are interconnected, and the micro, meso, and macro-analysis will overlap in several places during the study. The research will investigate various aspects of migration on these three levels. On the micro level, the study will explore individual experiences, personal motivations, and factors such as age, education, risk aversion, and personality traits. On the meso level, it will examine the social and household factors that contribute to migration decisions, as well as the types of migration networks migrants rely on. Lastly, on the macro level, the research will examine broader economic and political factors that drive migration and assess the impact of national, regional, and intergovernmental agreements on migration patterns.

**Sub-question objective: Explore the employment landscape for migrants in Abobo municipality by investigating job opportunities available to them and identifying the challenges they face in accessing and securing employment.**

- Identify the types of jobs that are available to migrants in the area
- Identify barriers or challenges labor migrants in Abobo municipality they may face when accessing jobs
- Understand how migrants access employment
- Explore the potential of labor migrants and well-paid/ secure jobs
- Identify the specific employment-related challenges that migrants in Abobo municipality face (discrimination, lack of legal documentation, low wages)
- Understand how certain challenges impacts labor migrants' ability to access employment opportunities
- Understand and examine potential management solutions/ interventions that could help overcome these challenges

Additionally, based on Sub-question objective, the research will explore job opportunities and employment-related challenges for migrants in the Abobo municipality. The study aims to identify the types of jobs available to migrants, the barriers they may face when accessing jobs, and the specific employment-related challenges, such as discrimination, lack of legal documentation, and low wages. The research will also examine potential management solutions or interventions that could help overcome these challenges.

#### 1.4 Geographical context

After comprehending the study's purpose and historical context, this section will define the subject of the study within a geographical context. Fundamental details regarding Côte d'Ivoire and more precise data on Abobo municipality, Abidjan.

Côte d'Ivoire was colonized by France from 1884 until it gained its independence in 1960 and became La République de Côte d'Ivoire (Knutsen, 2008, p.158). It is geographically situated in West Africa, shares borders with Ghana to the east, Burkina Faso and Mali to the north, Guinea and Liberia to the west, and is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the south (Fishpool, 2001, p. 219). The nation features two primary geographical areas: the northern savannah and the southern forest region (Knutsen, 2008, p.158). Coffee, cocoa, and palm oil are the predominant commercial crops in Côte d'Ivoire, constituting over 50% of the country's revenue (Fishpool, 2001, p. 220). Also, through maintaining deep connections with France and promoting overseas investments, Côte d'Ivoire has evolved into one of the most affluent nations in sub-Saharan Africa (Knutsen, 2008, p.158).

Moreover, agriculture significantly contributes to Côte d'Ivoire's economy, accounting for 23 percent of its GDP and employing almost 45 percent of the workforce (The World Bank, 2019, p.12). Additionally, this sector substantially contributes to the country's exports, making up nearly two-thirds of the total (The World Bank, 2019, p.1). However, the poverty rate experienced a significant increase in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 20.2% of the population struggling to live on less than \$1.90 daily (African Development Bank, 2023).

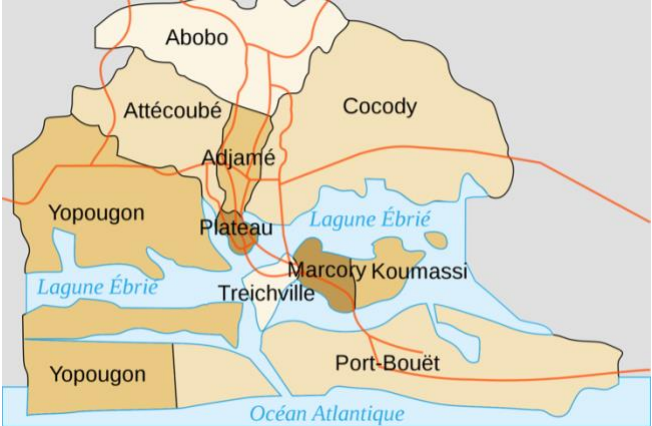
Concerning the country's language, Côte d'Ivoire is regarded as one of the most linguistically varied nations in West Africa while being considered among the most French-speaking countries in the area (Knutsen, 2008, p.158). Basically, in Côte d'Ivoire, French is recognized as the only official language, and Ivorian languages are not granted any legal status (Knutsen, 2008, p.158).

According to current estimates, the total population of Côte d'Ivoire is around 28,873,034, consisting of 60 indigenous ethnic groups and a significant number of economic migrants and refugees from neighboring countries (Fishpool, 2001, p. 220; UN, 2023). Most of the population identifies as either Muslim (39%) or Christian (30%) (Knutsen, 2008, p.158). The country has an annual growth rate of 6.7% in 2022, one percent down from 2021 (World Bank, 2023). Despite Yamoussoukro being the official capital, Abidjan is the nation's primary center for commerce and administration, housing 3 million residents (Knutsen, 2008, p.158). Regarding Population distribution, areas in Abidjan are more densely populated than others. Regarding this, Abobo municipality is one of the ten municipalities in Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire, with the most inhabited (Fishpool, 2001; Marcel et al.,2021). The municipality of Abobo is located in the north of Abidjan (Marcel et al.,2021). Abobo is bordered to the north by the commune of Anyama, and the communes of Bingerville and Cocody lie east (Diby, 2018, p.31). Also, from the south, it borders Banco Forest, forming a natural border with the communes of Attécoubé and Adjamé, and on the west side, it is bound by the Subprefectures of Songon (Diby, 2018, p.31). Abobo, in a word, means 'the goto, village of the Bobos' (Konaté,2017, p.331). Briefly, the goto means village, and Bobos, a subset of the Tchaman group (also referred to as Akan or Ebrié), are settled in two neighboring villages: Abobo Té and Abobo Baoulé, alternatively known as Abobo-to (Konaté, 2017, p.331). Based on the 2014 census, the commune of Abobo is reported to have a population of 1,030,658, which accounts for 23.4% of the city's total population (Konaté,2017, p.330).

Additionally, it is recognized for its high population density and prevalence of poverty, making it one of Abidjan's most crowded and poor communes (Konaté,2017). The poverty rate has increased to a greater extent in Abidjan, with a surge of around 50%, compared to other towns that have experienced a comparatively modest increase in poverty, with a rate of just below 20% (IMF, 2009, p.16). Living conditions in Abobo are highly challenging and unsanitary for its inhabitants (Diby, 2018, p.33). The community's streets severely deteriorate and are unpaved, lacking essential infrastructure for the drainage of rainwater and wastewater produced by households and commercial activities (Diby, 2018, p.33). Poverty is multifaceted, impacting nearly every aspect of the city's economic life, with its effects reaching even the city's inhabitants (Diby, 2018, p.33). The rate of joblessness is around 24.74 percent, which is the worst among males (Diby, 2018, p.33). The multifaceted nature of poverty in Abobo is reflected in its urban

context, encompassing a range of dimensions including material, monetary, social, cultural, managerial, spatial, and environmental aspects (Diby, 2018, p.33). Due to this impoverishment and limited opportunities for a stable and well-paid job, informal economic activities like street vendors and small-scale trading are common for people, especially migrants, in the municipality.

Figure 1: Location of Abobo municipality in Abidjan



(Source: Wikipedia, 2022)

Figure 2: Location in Côte d'Ivoire



(Source: Wikipedia, 2022)



## 1.5 Thesis outline

The study is structured into eight chapters.

Chapter one presents an introduction to the thesis and consists of the study's background, the research study's rationale, the problem statement, research questions and sub-question, an overview of the geographical context of the study area, and the outline.

Chapter two presents a comprehensive overview of the national and institutional migration policy frameworks in Côte d'Ivoire. The chapter explicitly emphasizes key periods in Côte d'Ivoire's migration policy, providing an in-depth understanding of the country's approach to managing migration over time. The chapter also examines the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rules and regulations and their interaction with national migration policy. It also explores intergovernmental agreements, including legislation focused on protecting migrants.

Chapter three reviews the empirical literature on migration, examining the origins of migrants and the gender-migration relationship. The chapter also concentrates on determinants of migration at three different levels: Micro, Macro, and Meso, in addition to characteristics of labor migrants in Côte d'Ivoire.

Chapter Four discusses the theoretical framework that was employed for the study. It discusses five theories at the three levels: Micro, Macro, and Meso. The theories include the push and pull theory, Neo-Classical economic theory, New Economics of Labour Migration, Social network theory, and social capital theory.

Chapter Five presents the research methods used in this thesis. The research design, the study population, sources of data, sampling and sampling techniques, methods of data collection and analysis, validity and reliability of the study, ethical considerations, and challenges encountered during the fieldwork.

Chapter Six demonstrates the actual research finding in accordance with the field data. The presentation is based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, factors responsible for migration, types of jobs migrants do, as well as the costs and benefits of analysis of migration, the role of networks in job-finding and living in Côte d'Ivoire, and an overview of migrant communities.

In chapter seven, the findings are discussed and analyzed in the context of the theoretical framework, research questions and objectives. The chapter explores the factors responsible for migrating and the migration decision-making process, the impact of lack of documentation and inequalities on migrants' job types, the rules and regulations of ECOWAS in practice, migrant protection legislation, and the rights of migrant workers under Ivorian labor codes.

Lastly, chapter eight summarizes key findings, suggests future strategies and policy recommendations, and concludes the study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LABOR MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICA AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE

### 2.0 Introduction

Studies consistently demonstrate that there is a close interconnection between migration and development. Migrants have the potential to drive development by sending money back to their home countries and can contribute to poverty alleviation and better living conditions (Latek, 2019, p.1; King & Collyer, 2016). However, this relationship between migration and development is intricate and marked by subtle nuances (Latek, 2019, p.2; King & Collyer, 2016). This signifies that migration can positively affect development by increasing the labor force, fostering cultural exchange, and facilitating remittances, which can alleviate poverty and bolster local economies (Latek, 2019; United Nations, 2017). Conversely, on the other hand, migration can negatively impact development through brain drain, possibly hindering a country's progress (Latek, 2019). Moreover, countries' government policies can also shape these relationships by promoting or restricting specific migration types (United Nations, 2017). Hence, the nature of this relationship varies based on migration type and the particular circumstances of the involved countries. As stated by a report published by the Development Center of the OECD and the International Labor Organization, the migration phenomenon could benefit numerous economic

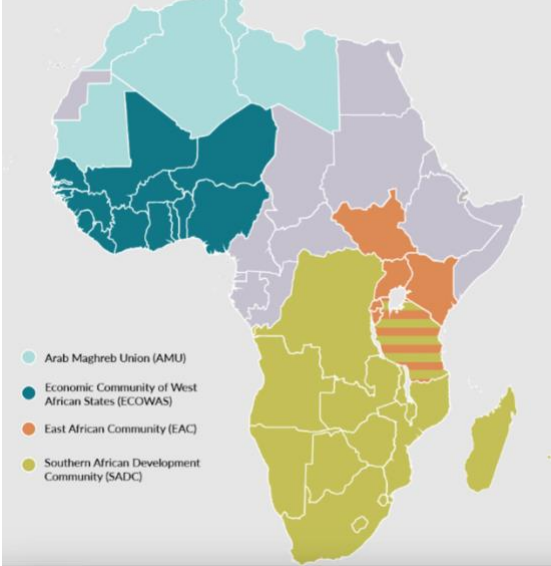
facets of developing nations (IOM, 2023). Migrants help boost the economic progress of their host country by effectively assimilating into labor markets and making noteworthy contributions in the form of goods and services (IOM, 2023). In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, migrants have made noteworthy contributions to the country's economic progress through various means, such as the labor market, entrepreneurship, businesses, skills and knowledge, and remittances (OECD, 2017).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that while migration to countries with higher income levels than one's home country generally increases income, individuals often have to endure poor working conditions in the jobs they obtain or may be limited to unskilled and unfavorable occupations (IOM, 2023). A range of factors could account for this phenomenon, one of which could be that many developing nations are confronting significant demographic challenges, inadequate and substandard labor demands, and elevated rates of precarious and unprotected employment (OECD, 2017, p.74). In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, addressing the presence of a significant population of immigrants from neighboring countries can pose considerable difficulties and present a challenge that is not entirely manageable. Meanwhile, poor management of migration policies in the country and inadequate attention to the welfare of migrants and their situation, in general, could result in a lack of valid documentation and paper that would allow them to seek higher-paying employment opportunities.

Furthermore, intra- African Migration has long represented human mobility within African borders, where West Africa, in the past decades, has been the primary destination region for migrants in Africa (Moyo et al., 2021: OECD, 2009). Intra- African Migration flows within West Africa significantly benefit the region's growth (labor markets, economic growth, and public finance), contributing to the development of the state of origin and host state (European Union, 2020). In addition, Côte d'Ivoire has been one of the leading destinations for international and intra- regional migration movements (OECD, 2009), which has contributed to a rapid population increase in recent decades (from the 1960s) (JICA, 2015). The massive Migration flows have contributed to the country's economic structure, which has naturally associated itself with a significant degree of urbanization. Around half of the migrants have been absorbed into the urban informal sector, mainly in Abidjan (JICA, 2015, p.143). However, since the beginning of the 1990s till this day, Migration flows to Côte d'Ivoire has slowed down rapidly due to an

unstable national economy, a declining income differential between Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries, and Civil wars and conflicts (JICA, 2015, p.27).

Figure 3: Regional economic communities



(Source: Okunade, 2021)

Over time, various African subregions have put forth proposals and policies to promote the free movement of people, goods, and services within their territories (Okunade, 2021). The provided figure illustrates the established regional economic communities within the borders of Africa.

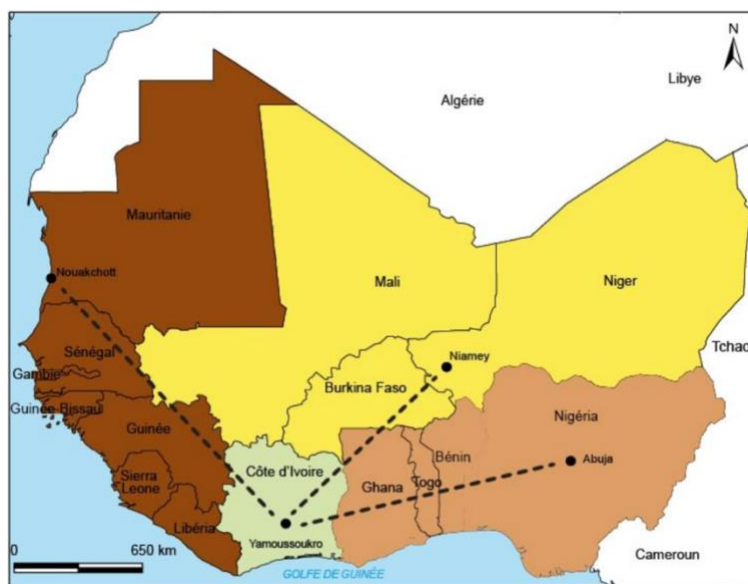
Figure 4: African migration corridors (2017)



(Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017)

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019), migration corridors within and from Africa are primarily driven by geographic proximity, historical ties, and displacement (IOM, 2019, p. 58). A significant portion of these migration corridors is within the African continent itself, and one of the most essential corridors is between Burkina Faso and neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, which the figure illustrates. Additionally, the IOM has identified Abidjan, Johannesburg, and Nairobi as the main migration hubs on the continent (European Parliament, 2020). Regarding intra-African migration, South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda are highlighted as the top destinations (European Parliament, 2020).

*Figure 5: Central positioning of Côte d'Ivoire in relation to West African emigration areas*



(Source, IOM, 2020)

Furthermore, the figure illustrates the geographical map of West Africa, where Côte d'Ivoire occupies a central position. Côte d'Ivoire occupies a central position in West Africa, between the west coast and the coastal plain extending from Mauritania to Nigeria (IOM, 2020). It is centrally located between Burkina Faso and Mali on the northern axis. This geographical centrality is evident when tracing lines from Abidjan or Yamoussoukro to the capitals of neighboring countries (IOM, 2020). Additionally, Côte d'Ivoire serves as a convergence point for communication routes. Abidjan, the former political capital and the economic hub, acts as a crossroads for roads and air links (IOM, 2020). A paved road, including a 250 km motorway, starts from Abidjan, passes through Ouagadougou (the capital of Burkina Faso) on the border, and extends to the Sahelian countries in the north (IOM, 2020). Burkina Faso and Mali are

connected via Ouagadougou and Bamako, respectively. Despite not sharing a border with Côte d'Ivoire, Niger also benefits from this dynamic due to its shared borders with Burkina Faso and Mali (IOM, 2020). Thus, most of Côte d'Ivoire's road traffic in northern West Africa passes through these three countries (IOM, 2020).

### 2.1 The national and institutional policy framework on migration in Côte d'Ivoire

The legal national migration framework in Côte d'Ivoire consists of various laws and regulations that guide the entry, stay, and exit of migrants in the country. The government of Côte d'Ivoire controls the legal framework; however, it involves the coordination and collaboration of multiple institutions and stakeholders (OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2009; 2016). The institutional framework on migration in Côte d'Ivoire directs the policies, procedures, and practices arranged by the government institutions responsible for managing migration matters to implement the national legal framework (OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2009; 2016).

Côte d'Ivoire lacks an accurate migration policy encompassed within a comprehensive framework (IOM, 2009, p. 20). Nevertheless, components of recent migration strategies can be identified in authoritative speeches from the nation's leadership, legislative documents addressing the entry, identification, and residence of foreign nationals in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the establishment of dedicated public institutions, each tasked with overseeing specific facets of migration management (IOM, 2009, p. 20). The migration policy of Côte d'Ivoire is integrated within national, regional, and international collaborative efforts. In fact, the Ivorian migration policy prioritizes a regional approach to addressing migration concerns, as the national framework proves insufficient to mitigate the full range of challenges associated with the movement of individuals (IOM, 2009, p. 20).

The institutional framework encompasses the requisite organizational structures, administrative processes, and human resources needed to address migration-related matters competently (IOM, 2009). In terms of this, the Ivorian institutional structure for overseeing migration has been established across multiple ministries, each with distinct responsibilities and areas of focus (IOM, 2009, p. 21). Therefore, the involved ministries include the Ministry of State, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Family, Women and Social Affairs, Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of African Integration (IOM, 2009, p. 21). However, as a result of these various

engagements, some degree of interference can be observed in the jurisdictions and competencies of specific organizations (IOM, 2009, p. 21).

## 2.2 Migration in Côte d'Ivoire: An overview of the national policy framework and institutional practices

Côte d'Ivoire has a long history of welcoming migrants worldwide, predominantly labor migrants from countries in the West- African sub-region (IOM, 2020). For centuries, Côte d'Ivoire has been the scene of external and internal migration movements. We can find the roots from the 14th to the 18th century in the waves of migration of individuals at the Origin of the settlement of Côte d'Ivoire (IOM, 2020, p.11). Estimates from the 2014 Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat (RGHP) estimate the number of 2,290,700 (10.10%) external migrants of the Total Population, with a majority of men (57.7%) compared to women (42.2%) (IOM, 2020, p. 2). The 2014 statistics from RGHP still stand today; however, it is essential to note that the estimates may involve significant hidden numbers. There is a high representation of migrants from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). By country of Origin, 61.5% of external migrants come from Burkina Faso, 17.4% from Mali, 4.7% from Guinea, and 4% from Niger (IOM, 2020, p. 2).

The regulation of migration-related matters is a central issue within Ivorian politics, encompassing various aspects of migration management. The historical determinants of migratory movements in Côte d'Ivoire can provide valuable insights into the factors that have shaped migration patterns and characteristics, such as migration flows, attitudes, and governance. Understanding these historical determinants may help to contextualize contemporary migration patterns, practices, and policy in Côte d'Ivoire and provide insights into the broader socioeconomic and political dynamics that shape migration in the country. Migration management in Côte d'Ivoire paradoxically remains characterized by the absence of an explicitly developed migration policy despite the long history of immigration in the country (IOM, 2020, p. 4). It is possible to divide the migration phases in Côte d'Ivoire into four stages;

- The policy of coercion (1928-1946),
- The policy of voluntary service (1946-1958),
- Liberal policy (1960-1990),
- Restrictive policy (1990-present).

These four phases reflect the changing political, economic, and social contexts in Côte d'Ivoire. The following sections identify and analyze these critical periods in Côte d'Ivoire's history that have influenced migration patterns, policy, and the country's approach to migration.

### 2.2.1 Colonial migration policies schemes

#### **The Policy of Coercion (1928-1946)**

At the beginning of colonization, the colonial authorities implemented a forced labor policy by finding the labor force necessary to exploit resources in the territory to meet the labor requirements of the colonial economy (IOM, 2020, p.75). Inhabitants were forcibly sent to work under harsh conditions to meet the labor demands. The policy of coercion was heavily criticized. Despite the criticism, the labor demand continued to outstrip the available workforce because of the rapid growth in the colonial economy, which required an increasing labor supply (IOM, 2020, p. 75-77). The colonial administration, therefore, had to discover an alternative resource of labor to fulfill the labor demands of the colonial economy. One solution was to use migrant labor from neighboring countries such as Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and French Sudan (now Mali) (IOM, 2020, p. 75-77). The new approach helped fulfill the labor demands of the colonial economy; however, with criticism, with arguments regarding forced labor and exploitation.

#### **The policy of voluntary service (1946-1958)**

The second phase of colonial migration policy refers to a period that began in 1946. The French colonial authorities implemented various policies to recruit migrant labor from their African colonies. One of the most significant policies was implementing the voluntary service law, also known as the Loi Houphouët-Boigny, introduced in 1946. Loi Houphouët-Boigny is named after Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who later became the first president of Côte d'Ivoire. The law initiated from 1946 to 1958 facilitated by paying a poll tax, providing workers to migrate, which increased migration rates (IOM, 2020, pp. 76-78; ILO, 1961, p. 83). In 1951, SIAMO (Service d'Immigration d'Agence Maritime de l'Ouest) was created by a group of colonist planters to ensure the recruitment of labor migrants after the colonial authority ceased its direct involvement in the process (IOM, 2020, pp. 76-78). Hence, SIAMO significantly recruited workers from Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta) and Mali (then French Sudan) for employment in the Ivorian agricultural sector.

These historical migration patterns and policies have laid the foundation for migration movements to Côte d'Ivoire today. The proximity of Côte d'Ivoire to neighboring countries, such



as Burkina Faso and Mali, contributes to migration flows from these regions. Economic opportunities, improved transportation (*which figure 5 illustrates*), and cultural ties play significant roles in contemporary migration to Côte d'Ivoire. These factors, combined with the historical context, shape the migration dynamics observed in the country today.

### 2.2.2 1960-1990: The liberal Migration Policy in Côte d'Ivoire

After Ivorian independence from France in 1960, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny continued the colonial practice of recruiting labor migrants from neighboring countries and northern regions (Whitaker, 2015, p.5). The Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stayed in power for the following thirty years. During this period, Houphouët-Boigny's politics was commonly considered a massive success regarding developmental progress and economic growth. Houphouët-Boigny drastically expanded the country's economy with foreign investments and labor migration while nurturing a strong relationship with France (Bah, 2010, p.601). Labor Migrants from neighboring countries and northern regions usually came to work on coffee and coca plantations in the South. In line with Houphouët-Boigny's famous statement in 1963, "the land belongs to those who cultivate it," migrants and non-nationals were allowed to participate in Ivorian politics and with a national attitude from the government, the aim was to integrate the non-nationals into the Ivorian society. Migrants were encouraged to grow coca and were granted access to land ownership. Additionally, labor migrants and non-nationals were given the right to vote in elections, they were integrated into all economic sectors and were provided essential social services (Bah, 2010, p.601; Whitaker, 2015, p.5; IOM, 2020, p.24). With a hospitable immigration policy, the line between Ivorians and non-Ivorians blurred out continuously, and till 1990 the foreign-born Population rose to 25 percent of the total (Bah, 2010; Whitaker, 2015, p.6).

The government of Côte d'Ivoire encouraged the migration of foreign workers, mainly from neighboring countries (Silué, 2019). The government's policy promoted foreign labor migrants based on the idea that there was a labor shortage in the country and that immigrants would help boost the economy. Côte d'Ivoire saw wage labor as a stimulating factor for massive migration. In that period, migration was essential to support the infrastructure of agricultural development and for the flexibility of the investment code (IOM, 2019). The period from 1960 to 1990 is widely acknowledged as a time of political stability, development, and remarkable economic growth, often referred to as the "Ivorian miracle" (Whitaker, 2015). This period is also one of the

most critical determinants of migratory movements in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the death Houphouët-Boigny in 1963, the collapse of the plantation economy in the 1980s, and the introduction of multiparty competition in 1990 formed new dynamics and attitudes in Ivorian society (Whitaker, 2015; IOM, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Migration policy since the 1990

In the 1990s, attitudes towards migrants and migration policies changed markedly. Henri Konan Bédié and his PDCI party (Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire), took over the presidency of Côte d'Ivoire when Houphouët-Boigny died in 1963 (Whitaker, 2015). Bédié introduced a controversial policy referred to as 'Ivoirité.' The concept of 'Ivoirité' is often referred to as an ultra-nationalist concept or ideology where those who could not prove they were "true" Ivorians were being excluded. The ruling party (PDCI) used Ivoirité as a political tool to maintain its hold on power by excluding certain ethnic and religious groups from participating in the political process. According to Akindès (2004) is;

*Ivoirité the set of socio-historical, geographic, and linguistic data that enables us to say that an individual is a citizen of Côte d'Ivoire or an Ivorian. The person who asserts his 'Ivoirité' is supposed to have Côte d'Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic group's natives to Côte d'Ivoire (Akindès, 2004; Almås, 2005, p.13).*

The rhetoric of Ivoirité, which promoted a narrow definition of national identity, was associated with Christianity and specific ethnicities. The rhetoric used by the President justified radical changes in the country's citizenship policy (Almås, 2005, p.14). Bédié and his political party (PDCI) used the rhetoric of Ivoirité to justify the concerns of Ivorians and that the foreign presence threatened to upset the socio-economic balance in the country (Curdiphe, 2000, p. 65). Furthermore, Bédié reasoned that the large number of foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire, linked to a high rate of immigration and a high birth rate, occupy a preponderant and sometimes hegemonic place in the Ivorian economy (Curdiphe, 2000, p. 65).

A robust regional divide was developed between the Muslim-dominated north and the Christian-dominated South (Bah, 2010, p.601). The policy towards migrants (non-nationals) changed drastically in 1990, and migrants and non-nationals, predominantly Muslim north, were targeted by the rhetoric of Ivoirité. Throughout the 1990s, hostility towards non-nationals increased, and the government restricted the right of migrants to own land in the 1998 Land Law. The 1998 law also prevented children of immigrants from naturalizing and expelled as many as a million

migrants, mainly migrants from Burkina Faso (Whitaker, 2015, p.6). Bédié was in power until he was overthrown in a coup d'état in 1999, followed by a controversial election in 2000 where opposition leader Laurent Gbagbo became President (Whitaker, 2015, p.6).

Since the 1990s, the Ivorian authorities have aimed to transition from a liberal phase of migration management, which lasted for over forty-four years (1946-1990), to a more restrictive approach to managing internal and external migratory flows (IOM, 2019). The intention was to have a more regulated and controlled migration system. However, the policy management of labor migrants has faced numerous difficulties, primarily due to the lack of a coherent migration policy in Côte d'Ivoire. The literature (United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2019; IOM, 2009; IOM, 2020) demonstrates that Côte d'Ivoire lacks a comprehensive national migration policy to this day. This lack of a coherent policy has hindered the development of appropriate strategies, regulations, and mechanisms to handle migratory flows in the country effectively. The lack of a proper migration strategy in Côte d'Ivoire has not only led to uncontrolled migratory flows but has also contributed to issues such as irregular migration and inadequate protection of migrants' rights (IOM, 2019).

*Table 1: National migration policy framework (1960-2023)*

Policy framework/ legislation	Description
Law No. 90-437 of 13 May 1990 regarding Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire	<p><b>Stay exceeding three months:</b> The law introduced a unified one-year stay permit for all foreigners, including nationals of ECOWAS member states.</p> <p><b>Article 11</b> specifies specific categories of foreigners who are granted the stay permit automatically, such as those married to Ivorian nationals, foreign parents of Ivorian children residing in Côte d'Ivoire, spouses, and children under 21 years old under the family reunification scheme, and foreigners who have resided regularly in Côte d'Ivoire for over ten years. This provision ensures stability in their stay in the country, except for family reunification cases where the status of the spouse and children depends on the initial migrant.</p> <p><b>Article 15:</b> The law includes provisions for the deportation of foreigners who enter or stay in the country without the required documentation.</p>
Law No. 2002-03 regarding Identification of Persons and Stay of Foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire	<p>This law introduced additional safeguards for the stay of foreigners, allowing for extending the stay permit for up to five years.</p>
Law No. 2004-303 of 3 May 2004 modifying the Law No. 2002-03 of 3 January 2002 regarding Identification of Persons and Stay of Foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire	<p>The law distinguished between nationals of the ECOWAS Member States, who were granted a residence permit, and other foreigners required to apply for a stay permit.</p> <p><b>Article 15:</b> It is considered a criminal offense to have an irregular stay, which is punishable by imprisonment for one to five years and a fine. Foreigners who threaten public order can be expelled, and individuals involved in criminal activities can be banned from the country for five years or, in the case of repeat offenses, for life.</p> <p><b>Article 16:</b> Assisting or facilitating the stay of foreigners in an irregular situation and enabling them to engage in any civil activities is also a punishable offense, carrying the penalty of imprisonment and a fine.</p>

Ordinance No. 2007-604 of 8 November 2007 regarding the Suppression of the Stay Permit	Art. 2 states that ECOWAS Member States' nationals are no longer requested to obtain a residence permit. To reside legally in Côte d'Ivoire, they now only need to hold "documents of identification delivered by their country of origin or their consular representation".
Law No. 2010-272 relating to the Prohibition of Child Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor	<p>The 2010 Law provides a comprehensive framework for addressing child trafficking but does not explicitly address the trafficking of adults, as indicated by its title.</p> <p><b>Articles 18 to 34:</b> Offenders involved in trafficking are liable to penalties, including a maximum of 20 years of imprisonment and fines.</p> <p><b>Article 40:</b> The state and local communities have the responsibility to protect victims of trafficking by providing essential support such as food, shelter, healthcare, psychological assistance, reintegration services, and, when applicable, repatriation.</p>
The Personal Data Protection Law of 2013 Law No. 2013-450	<p>While not explicitly focused on migration, this law has implications for handling personal data, including data related to migration.</p> <p>The law provides regulations for collecting, utilizing, and storing personal data, including data obtained during visa and immigration procedures. Its objective is to safeguard individuals' privacy rights by establishing guidelines for collecting and processing personal data by both public and private entities.</p>
Law n° 2018-571 of June 13, 2018, on the fight against the smuggling of migrants.	<p>The law introduces the criminalization of human trafficking and associated crimes, encompassing forced labor and sexual exploitation. It sets forth measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, focusing on victim protection, offender prosecution, and fostering international cooperation.</p>

(Table inspired by Devillard et al., 2015; MGSOG, 2017, p. 16-17; United Nations, 2015).

### 2.3 Overview of ECOWAS

At the beginning of the 1970s, West African authorities realized that regional integration was crucial to their country's overall integration into the world economy (Adepoju, 2005, p. 5). Their initial plan was to achieve socio-economic cooperation and integration in Africa, which could only happen through establishing sub-regional and regional organizations. Therefore, on May 1975, in Lagos, the agreement was signed called the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and a wide range of economic activities was covered by that (Adepoju, 2005, p. 5). The member states of the protocol include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea- Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo (Dick & Schraven, 2019, p. 3). The establishment of ECOWAS was a remarkable attempt to revive the type of homogeneous community that was once relatively common and visible in the sub-region (Adepoju, 2005, p. 5). A homogeneous society might imply that in the past, the region's countries may have enjoyed stronger cultural, economic, and political bonds, accompanied by superior living conditions and equitable income distribution (Adepoju, 2005). Therefore, the leaders agreed that regional economic integration would likely achieve some of their goals more quickly (Adepoju, 2005, p. 5). These goals included improving their citizens' living circumstances, equal income distribution, reducing inequality, keeping and boosting economic stability, enhance the interaction between member nations, which all will help the growth of the continent of Africa (Adepoju, 2005, p. 5; IOM, 2020).

After the signing of the ECOWAS treaty in 1975, Article 27 outlined the long-term objective of establishing automatic community citizenship for residents of all member countries (Devillard et al., 2015, p.37). Thus, the concept of Community Citizenship was established in the additional protocol A/SP3/5/82 and signed by Côte d'Ivoire in the same year (Devillard et al., 2015, p.37; Konan,2009, p.79). In 1979, all the ECOWAS member states ratified the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment of Citizens within the region (Dick & Schraven, 2019, p. 3; Devillard et al., 2015, p.37). There were three phases to the implementation of this protocol. The first phase, which, by the middle of the 1980s, had been fully executed, was the elimination of the requirements for visas for entry and reside for up to 90 days for ECOWAS members (Dick & Schraven, 2019, p. 3; Devillard et al., 2015, p.37). The second phase, around 1986, was the right of members to live in another member state of ECOWAS for looking and accepting job positions (Dick & Schraven, 2019, p. 3; Devillard et al., 2015, p.37). Phase three, under the title of community citizen, intends to increase the members' access to the market by allowing them to conduct business freely in other ECOWAS member states. However, this phase has not yet been enforced (Devillard et al., 2015, p.37).

#### **Right of entry, the 1985 Supplementary Protocol**

The right of entry allows each member of the ECOWAS to travel to member states without a visa for up to 90 days as long as they have a valid form of identification and an international health card (Devillard et al., 2015, p.38). ECOWAS developed two methods to encourage increased cross-border movement. Firstly, in 1985, the ECOWAS protocol introduced standardized travel certificates that were initially valid for two years and could be extended for an additional two years. Secondly, in 2000, the ECOWAS passport was introduced (Devillard et al., 2015, p. 38). Besides the right of entry for community citizens and the freedom of mobility within the region, the protocol also establishes several guidelines to ensure that repatriation and expulsion are conducted under international human rights principles (Devillard et al., 2015, p.38). Expulsion and repatriation orders must be informed to the ECOWAS executive secretary by member nations, who must also pay the associated costs, return the migrant's possessions to them, give them enough time to leave the country and provide the opportunity to appeal (Devillard et al., 2015, p.38).

#### **Right of residence, the 1986 Supplementary Protocol**

The 1986 Supplementary Protocol addresses the right of residency of Community members to search for and accept employment that generates income (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39). The right to reside ensures that immigrants from member states and local residents are afforded equal treatment when seeking employment or pursuing a profession. Regarding job security or the likelihood of finding new employment when the old position is canceled financially, immigrants and locals should be treated equally (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39). ECOWAS nationals will be chosen over other newly admitted foreign workers in this circumstance. Moreover, access to social, cultural, and medical services should be equally accessible to all community members, and they should have an equal right to education for themselves and their kids (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39). The protocol stipulates some ways to make these rights easier, including an ECOWAS resident card or a visa issued by the member state of the host country.

### **Right of establishment, the 1990 Supplementary Protocol**

The regulations concerning the right of establishment ensure that all nations and community members are treated equally, similar to the right of residence. Member States must treat citizens and organizations from other members without discrimination and cannot issue orders for the expropriation or seizure of capital or property based on discrimination (Devillard et al., 2015, p.40). If so, the member states should pay reimbursement if the property is seized or nationalized. Concerning motivating community residents to engage in economic activity on ECOWAS territory, member states must implement policies to promote intracommunity commerce (Devillard et al., 2015, p.40). For instance, these policies include organizations that provide export finance and credit guarantees, a system for payments in the region, and a unification of national laws, governing procedures, and rules that control the marketing and defense of assets (Devillard et al., 2015, p.40).

Nevertheless, despite what we have stated about ECOWAS protocol regulations, each member nation of the Ecowas ratified and applied some of the laws rather than all. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, individuals do not need to obtain an ECOWAS travel certificate or a residency permit. Possessing an identification document is sufficient (Devillard et al., 2015, p.45). Additionally, Côte d'Ivoire has signed several multilateral agreements, most notably ILO conventions 138 and 182, which address the legal age of employment, the restriction of child labor, and the need for quick response to end this (Konan,2009, p.79).

The following are the significant ECOWAS agreements that Côte d'Ivoire has signed and those it has not:

1. Additional Protocol A/SP2/5/90 relating to the execution of the third phase (right of establishment) was not ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan, 2009, p.79).
2. Additional Protocol A/SP1/7/86 relating to the execution of the second phase (right of residence) was not ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan, 2009, p.79).
3. Additional Protocol A/SP2/7/85 on the code of conduct for applying the protocol on the free movement of persons, ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan, 2009, p.79).

*Table 2: ECOWAS migration policy framework*

Policy framework/ legislation	Description
On May 1975, in Lagos, the agreement was signed called the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The protocol had three phases.	ECOWAS protocol gave the rights of Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence, and the Establishment of citizens within the region to the member communities.
First phase: Right of entry, the 1985 Supplementary Protocol (Fully executed in 1980s).	The right of entry allows each member of the ECOWAS to travel to member states without a visa for up to 90 days (about 3 months) if they have a valid form of identification and an international health card
Second phase: Right of residence, the 1986 Supplementary Protocol (Conducted around 1986).	The 1986 Supplementary Protocol addresses the right of residency of Community members to search for and accept employment that generates income.
Phase three: Right of establishment, the 1990 Supplementary Protocol (this phase has not yet been enforced).	The regulations of the right of establishment guarantee that all nations and Community members are treated equally, similar to the right of residence.
1. Additional Protocol A/SP2/5/90 relating to the execution of the third phase (right of establishment) was not ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan,2009, p.79).	This additional protocol was signed on 29 May 1990. However, it was never ratified.
2. Additional Protocol A/SP1/7/86 relating to the execution of the second phase (right of residence) was not ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan,2009, p.79).	This additional protocol was signed on 1 July 1986. However, it was never ratified.
3. Additional Protocol A/SP2/7/85 relating to the execution of the first phase on the free movement of persons, ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (Konan,2009, p.79).	This additional protocol was signed on 6 July 1985, and it was also ratified later.

(Source: Konan, 2009, p.79; Devillard et al., 2015)

## 2.4 Migrant Protection Legislation and Rights of Migrant Workers in Ivorian Labor Codes

Migrant discrimination and exclusion globally have necessitated the establishment of a specialized legal framework that strengthens and expands existing human rights (IOM, 2020, p. 81). Concerning the protection of labor migrants, human rights encompass the intrinsic entitlements of all individuals, as acknowledged in a diverse array of international, regional, and



bilateral legal instruments, such as agreements, statements, rules, suggestions, and criteria (IOM, 2020, p. 81). Nonetheless, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the cornerstone for all inspired rights (IOM, 2020, p. 81). This Universal Declaration, established by the United Nations, was acknowledged by Côte d'Ivoire on March 26, 1992 (IOM, 2020, p. 82). Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses migrant labor rights and outlines four key aspects to consider:

1. the right to fair employment with just and favorable conditions,
2. the right to receive equal pay for equivalent work,
3. the right to equitable and favorable compensation for oneself and one's family,
4. the right to establish or participate in trade unions to protect interests (IOM, 2020, p. 82).

After the United Nations' declaration on human rights, African leaders established the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which contains articles that indirectly or directly relate to migration issues (IOM, 2020, p. 83). Article 12 of this Rights outlines five key aspects concerning migration rights, encompassing:

1. the right to move and select one's residence within a state, subject to legal regulations,
2. the right to depart from and return to one's country, barring national security, public order, health, or morality concerns,
3. the right to seek and obtain asylum in foreign nations when facing persecution, adhering to each country's laws and international agreements,
4. the lawful expulsion of a foreigner from a state party's territory only through a legally compliant decision, and
5. prohibition of the collective expulsion of foreign nationals (IOM, 2020, p. 83).

Côte d'Ivoire signed the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on January 6, 1992, and ratified it on August 30, 2005 (IOM, 2020, p. 83). Following Côte d'Ivoire's 1992 signature, several instruments dedicated to migrant rights have been established, including one international Convention under the United Nations, as well as regional agreements under the protection of Economic Community of West African States and West African Economic and Monetary Union treaties on the free movement of Persons (IOM, 2020, p. 83).

### **The United Nations International Convention (1990)**



The Convention called for the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families. The Convention was adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 1990, and focused on the well-being of migrants (IOM, 2020, p. 84). Drawing inspiration from ILO Convention 97 and its 1949 recommendations, it encompasses a comprehensive scope of human rights for migrant workers and their families, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights (IOM, 2020, p. 84). Targeted at governments, the Convention emphasizes their accountability in addressing challenges, particularly employment-related ones. The Convention Concerning Migration for Employment No. 97 of 1949 and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No. 143 of 1975, both issued by the International Labour Organization, have not been ratified by Côte d'Ivoire (IOM, 2020, p. 84; IOM, 2015, p.145).

Côte d'Ivoire has formally endorsed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its Protocol that deals with trafficking in persons. However, the country has signed but not ratified the Protocol that addresses the smuggling of migrants (IOM, 2020, p. 84; IOM, 2015, p.145). Furthermore, the country has neither signed nor ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) (IOM, 2020, p. 84; IOM, 2015, p.145).

Moreover, Côte d'Ivoire has few formalized bilateral migration agreements, with its main agreement being with France, which was established in 1992 (IOM, 2015, p.145). This agreement offers some exemptions to standard French immigration laws, such as family reunification provisions and a shortened requirement for a 10-year residence permit (IOM, 2015, p.145). A social security agreement was also made with France in 1985. A 1960 agreement with Burkina Faso addressing migrant worker hiring and job placement was discontinued in 1974 owing to non-adherence to specific terms (IOM, 2015, p.145).

### **Rights of migrant workers in Ivorian labor codes**

The Ivorian labor codes, classified under the labor migrant protection category, demonstrate a set of labor laws in Côte d'Ivoire specifically designed to protect and advance the rights of all workers, with particular emphasis on migrant workers (IOM, 2020). These labor regulations encompass various employment-related matters, ensuring migrant workers receive equitable treatment and protection in the workplace (IOM, 2020). Currently, Côte d'Ivoire has continually formulated three labor codes in 1964, 1995, and 2015 (IOM, 2020, p.87).

Initially, the labor code, instituted by Law No. 64-290 on August 1, 1964, modified the 1952 colonial legacy for an independent Côte d'Ivoire. As the metropolis focused heavily on agriculture, infrastructure, and industry, the country experienced an ongoing influx of foreign labor (IOM, 2020, p.87). This phenomenon, in turn, shaped the content of the labor code to address the prevailing circumstances (IOM, 2020, p.87). Upon defining the worker like the 1952 code, the legislation explicitly eliminates the colonial remnant of forced labor by imposing a complete ban (IOM, 2020, p.88). The labor code is further characterized by an expanded content that encompasses all contractual workers, irrespective of gender and, notably, nationality (IOM, 2020, p.88). In terms of the nationality aspect, the code acts as an expansion of its colonial antecedent, reflecting the demand for immigrant labor during Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth (IOM, 2020, p.88). As a result, the legislation integrates crucial provisions concerning enhanced wage conditions and legal safeguards for the workforce (IOM, 2020, p.88).

Unlike the initial labor code, which was established during a time of economic prosperity and provided ample opportunities for foreign workers, the second labor code, enacted as Law No. 95-12 on January 12, 1995, came into effect during a period of recession characterized by reducing raw material prices and increasing manufacturing expenses (IOM, 2020, p.88). Implementing financial reform policies in response to these economic challenges contributed to joblessness, affecting Ivorian workers more significantly than foreign individuals employed in the informal sector (IOM, 2020, p.88). Regardless of these circumstances, the 1995 labor code preserves the fundamental equal treatment between domestic and foreign workers (IOM, 2020, p.88). However, in response to the complaints of Ivorians, authorities introduced employment initiatives focused on safeguarding their citizens, such as the "Ivorization" campaign for managers, which sought to prioritize the recruiting of nationals (IOM, 2020, p.88).

The effectiveness of these measures, intended to support Ivorians, has been limited (IOM, 2020, p.88). It was due to weak implementation and because employers often favored foreign workers, who tended to be more involved, submissive, and less assertive regarding their rights (IOM, 2020, p.88). Therefore, according to the principles of recruitment and visa fees for non-national employees on February 19, 2004, Côte d'Ivoire agreed to implement these decrees as follows:

- I. Any available jobs should be reported to the AGEPE (Agence d'Etudes et de Promotion de l'Emploi) and advertised for one month in a nationally recognized

newspaper. If no national is employed during this period, the employer can hire any eligible candidate who satisfies the job requirements (IOM, 2020, p.89).

II. Before being employed, the foreign worker must have an approved employment agreement or a letter of employment endorsed by AGEPE designed explicitly for this goal (IOM, 2020, p.89).

III. Every request for a contract of employment or visa extension is evaluated based on the employment conditions prevailing in the relevant sector (IOM, 2020, p.89).

In addition, the visa issuance fees for workers demonstrate that for African employees, if they have a fixed-term contract, they will receive half of their total salary (base salary and additional compensation). If they have a permanent contract, they will receive three-quarters of their salary (IOM, 2020, p.89). However, Non-African workers with a fixed-term contract will receive a one-month salary, while those with a permanent contract will receive one and a half months' salary per worker (IOM, 2020, p.89).

Despite all of these, Côte d'Ivoire tried to demonstrate its commitment to preserve the rights of migrant laborers through its labor codes, such as those from 1964, 1995, and 2015, and related regulations, notably the interprofessional collective agreement of 1977 and the provident code of 1968 (IOM, 2020, p.89).

#### 2.4.1 Transnational agreements alongside national policy

Achieving a delicate balance between prioritizing national security or other domestic priorities and maintaining regional commitments can present challenges. The case of Côte d'Ivoire provides an example of potential contradictions that emerged in the 1990s between the "ivorité" policy and the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol. ECOWAS member states (1975) agreed to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services across national borders, meaning that citizens of ECOWAS member states have the right to travel and work in other member states without needing a visa or work permit. However, the objectives of Ivorité aimed to promote a policy of exclusion and nationalism that excluded the influence of foreign cultures. It underlines the tensions between national sovereignty, regional integration, and cooperation in managing migration. While national governments have the right to prioritize national security or other domestic priorities, these policies can negatively affect regional integration and cooperation (Bailes & Cottey, 2006). To promote inclusive migration policies that balance national sovereignty with regional commitments to free movement, it is essential for national

governments to work closely with regional organizations such as ECOWAS and to develop comprehensive national migration policies that prioritize the protection of migrants' rights while addressing concerns such as irregular migration, human rights violation, child trafficking, and national security.

Moreover, another significant factor when addressing national and regional governance and policies is how the legislation functions in practice. Due to various factors, Côte d'Ivoire's implementation of migration-related policies can sometimes fall short of anticipation even when national policies are aligned with regional commitments (United Nations, 2015; IOM, 2019; IOM, 2009; IOM, 2020). A clear policy framework is therefore needed. Without a clear policy framework, various stakeholders may have different interpretations of the objectives and priorities of migration management (IOM, 2020). For instance, The International Organization for Migration (IOM), The African Union, and The International Labour Organization (ILO) (ILO, 2005; 2007; IOM, 2020; 2023 African Union, 2018) have developed guidelines and recommendations for managing migration policies and practices. Côte d'Ivoire recognizes the significance of the guidelines provided by these institutions and seeks to align its policies with these established principles in various arenas. By doing so, Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates a devotion to enhancing its migration management strategy and has shown improvement in various areas. The country recognizes the matter of fair and humane treatment for migrant workers, and by obeying the guidelines and recommendations of institutions such as the IOM, the ILO, and the African Union, the country aims to strengthen its policies in this regard. Côte d'Ivoire's efforts to better manage migration are evident in several aspects, where the aims are to;

- To develop a migration strategy framework for migration governance that aligns with internationally recognized norms and standards (OECD, 2023; OECD, 2017).
- Engage in regional and international collaboration and partnerships to address migration challenges (OECD, 2017; Traoré & Torvikey, 2022).
- Moreover, actively engage in regional and international collaboration and partnerships to address migration issues (OECD, 2017; Traoré & Torvikey, 2022).

However, it is essential to acknowledge that Côte d'Ivoire also faces specific challenges concerning labor migration management. These challenges require focused attention and targeted strategies to ensure effective and equitable labor migration management within the country. The following challenges in Côte d'Ivoire include;

**Fragmented migration governance:**

Labor migration management in Côte d'Ivoire faces challenges due to its fragmented approach involving various ministers and public institutions (United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2017). The lack of coordination among institutions and ministries results in inconsistencies and inadequate policies and practices, posing challenges in effectively addressing migration-related issues.

**Absence of a comprehensive national migration policy:**

A comprehensive national migration policy is necessary to implement coherent strategies (United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2017). Without a proper strategy, it may result in ad-hoc approaches to migration management, which may lead to inconsistencies in the application of procedures and divert effective management and regulation (IOM, 2002).

**Informal nature of labor migration:**

A significant portion of Côte d'Ivoire's labor migration is informal (Zeclab, 2021). It can expose migrants to hazardous working conditions and vulnerability, resulting in challenges such as poor living conditions, exploitation, unfair wages, and long working hours (Silué, 2019).

**Irregular migration and undocumented migrants:**

Irregular and undocumented labor migrants present notable challenges to the effectiveness of migration management in Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations, 2015). Moreover, this situation compromises the overall well-being of migrants as it exposes them to exploitation and limits their access to essential services like healthcare and education (Silué, 2019; OECD, 2017; United Nations, 2015).

**Lack of clear guidelines and procedures:**

In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, the absence of explicit guidelines and standardized procedures for labor migration management hinders the consistency in policy application (United Nations, 2015). This lack of clarity degrades the effectiveness of migration management efforts and can lead to confusion and unequal treatment of migrants.

**Inadequate protection measures:**

There is an imperative for more robust safeguards to safeguard the rights and well-being of migrant workers in Côte d'Ivoire (Silué, 2019). It involves, among other things, ensuring access to legal assistance, health services, and social protection and establishing mechanisms to handle complaints and ensure fair treatment in working life (Silué, 2019).

While Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to enhancing migration management is evident, developing a proper framework to address the existing challenges is crucial. By implementing a comprehensive strategy, fostering regional and international collaboration, and implementing targeted interventions, the country can overcome these challenges and achieve a more balanced practice.

## 2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of migration dynamics and regional integration in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly emphasizing the historical context of migration in the country. The chapter explores the historical determinants of migration in Côte d'Ivoire, emphasizing the country's central location and historical status as a migration destination. It starts by highlighting migration's fundamental role in Ivorian history, driven in part by the country's relatively liberal migration policy since its independence in 1960.

It then examines the national policy framework, institutional coordination, and challenges associated with migration management, underscoring the need for an accurate migration policy and effective coordination among ministries. Regional integration efforts within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are discussed, focusing on the organization's objectives and goals. Furthermore, the chapter investigates the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons within ECOWAS, which aims to facilitate visa-free travel, right of residence, and right of establishment among member states. It also explores the legal framework protecting migrant rights and the rights of migrant workers in Côte d'Ivoire, including the evolution of labor codes and the protections provided.

In summary, this chapter provides an overview of migration, regional integration, and the policy framework in Côte d'Ivoire. It highlights the importance of historical and geographical factors in influencing migration patterns, emphasizes the need for a clear migration policy and effective institutional coordination, and underscores the significance of regional integration efforts within ECOWAS. By examining these aspects, the chapter establishes the foundation for addressing the research questions and offers valuable insights into migration dynamics in Abobo municipality.

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.0 Introduction

The phenomenon of migration is complex, and each migration is unique. Historically, humankind has always been on the move (United Nations, 2023; McNeill, 1984), and migration numbers have considerably increased over the past decades (United Nations, 2023). O'Reilly 2019' describes contemporary international migration trends as a typical feature of modern societies, as a global phenomenon of flows and counter-flows; geographical fluidity rather than population shifts; ongoing daily processes, not unique events (O'Reilly, 2019, p.2). No universally accepted definition for 'Migrant' exists, and the differences among categories differ (United Nations Migration, 2023). IOM describes migrants as;

*“Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her/[their] habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is”* (IOM, 2019).

In short, 'migrant' is an umbrella term that describes a person moving away from their usual residence, temporarily or permanently within a country or across an international border, for various reasons (IOM, 2023).

According to de Haas (2011), it is essential to examine the view of migration as a more comprehensive process of social and economic development that requires a firm embedding of migration theory into more general social scientific theory (de Haas, 2011; Bonfiglio, 2011, p.2). To analyze various migration processes such as push and pull factors, the role of migrant networks, individual motivations, management approaches, and the challenges and opportunities for migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, the thesis is based on various theories and approaches, and evidence-based reports and literature. In addition, secondary data is a relevant source of information that will effectively support the research study on migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire's Abobo municipality.

Understanding migration in a broader sense is rooted in examining different theories, approaches, and concepts. Scholars usually divide international migration theories into three classifications, which are not mutually exclusive (Boswell, 2002, p.3). Understanding macro-level trends and conditions of push and pull factors is crucial for explaining migration. Macro-level migration theories emphasize the structural, objective conditions which act as "push" and

"pull" characteristics for migration (Boswell, 2002, p.3). However, macro-level theories lack accounting for the persistence of voluntary migration despite transformations in economic conditions and legislation in host countries (Boswell, 2002, p.3). Nor can macro-level theories explain different migration trends in various nations. Meso-theories can, therefore, help explain these discrepancies by rejecting the macro-level focus on push and pull factors and encountering migration flows within a complex system of state relations (New economic and dual/segmented labor market theories; Migration systems and networks theory) (Boswell, 2002, p.3). Micro-level migration theories focus on characteristics influencing individual decisions regarding why people migrate by analyzing how potential migrants weigh the various costs or benefits of migrating (Neoclassical economic theories) (Boswell, 2002, p.4).

Furthermore, wrong beliefs about Africans' intercontinental migration to Europe led to a lack of proper management for controlling immigrants in the African continent, which West Africa is currently facing (Moyo et al., 2021). Managing Intra-African migration is a challenging problem, as apart from physical borders, there are sociocultural and economic boundaries (Moyo et al., 2021, p.203). However, migration management can be defined as the utilization of policies, methods, and programs designed to maximize the advantages of migration but at the same time minimize its negative impacts as well as responding to the human and other needs of migrants (Moyo et al., 2021, p.6).



### 3.1 Where are the Migrants coming from?

Côte d'Ivoire is a destination of substantial migration inflows from neighboring countries, including Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria (Adepoju, 2005). These countries are ECOWAS member countries that comprise most of this migrant population. To begin with, Burkina Faso is an arid Sahelian nation characterized by its low-income status and lack of abundant natural resources (The World Bank, 2023). According to the World Bank's assessment, the GINI index of the country is 47.3 as of 2018, and over 40% of the population resides below the poverty line (The World Bank, 2023). The limited availability of employment opportunities within Burkina Faso significantly contributes to the migration of individuals to Côte d'Ivoire, motivated by the desire to improve their economic situation. Consequently, it is observed that individuals from Burkina Faso tend to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire to seek employment in the agricultural sector predominantly.

Comparable circumstances also apply to countries such as Mali and Guinea. The economy of Mali, which is situated in the Sahel region and is geographically extensive, is characterized by a low-income and undiversified nature, leaving it exposed to instabilities in the pricing of items (The World Bank,2023). The combination of the security crisis and the pandemic led to a sharp rise in extreme poverty, which escalated to 15.9% in 2021 (The World Bank,2023). The following year (2022), the situation deteriorated further, and the poverty rate rose even higher, reaching 19.1%. This increase affected everyone, but the vulnerable groups felt the most significant impact (The World Bank,2023). In 2020, inhabitants of the region faced a range of challenges in diverse areas, such as health, safety, social, and political spheres, collectively resulting in a 5% escalation in poverty rates (The World Bank,2023). Similarly, Guinea has experienced similar challenges, including high youth joblessness and inflationary pressures (The World Bank,2023). The combination of these factors prevalent in these countries has led to a notable increase in the number of individuals who decided to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire.

Furthermore, countries such as Nigeria and Ghana possess large and diverse economies (The World Bank,2023). However, they are confronted with significant economic and social challenges, including high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality (The World Bank, 2023). For instance, in Ghana, the poverty rate increased in 2020 (The World Bank,2023). Therefore, many Nigerians and Ghanaians migrate to Côte d'Ivoire for economic opportunities and improved living standards (Adepojou, 2005; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018). One of the principal drivers of migration to Côte d'Ivoire is the abundance of national resources present in the country, which demands a substantial workforce. Given that the domestic population is disinclined towards strenuous or precarious employment, labor migrants seeking work can more readily avail themselves of employment opportunities in the country.

### 3.2 Gender and Migration

The interplay between gender and migration can be complex. The essential point is that in the contemporary world, migrants, regardless of gender, confront substantial obstacles such as subpar working conditions, demanding work environments, discrimination, sexism, and labor market inequality (Day, 2001). Furthermore, female and male migrants often sacrifice adequate living conditions, healthcare, nutrition, and education opportunities (Day, 2001). Hence, comprehending the gender-specific trends and experiences associated with migration can facilitate the establishment of policies and initiatives that advance the rights and welfare of all migrants, regardless of gender.

Furthermore, gender and migration are closely interconnected, as women and men experience migration differently. Understanding the differentiation in gender roles and identities, such as femininity and masculinity ideals, and how gender intersects with notions such as social class, social norms, or cultural and religious beliefs play an essential role in the understanding of the interconnection between gender and Migration (Crenshaw, 1991; Kleist & Setrana, 2022). Much of the literature addressing West African migration fails to acknowledge the gender dimension of migration. It tends to focus on women as 'gender while men are portrayed as unwittingly, neutral, or un-gendered (Kleist & Setrana, 2022, p.57). However, men and women migrate, and the traditional notion of men as 'breadwinners' has predominantly changed in the gender and migration discourse.

A breadwinner can be described as a person who is financially and materially providing for one's household/ family or 'breadwinning' (Chesley, 2017). Over the last decades, and in the context of

West Africa, the proportion of female migration movements has continued to grow, and an increasing number of women migrate to fulfill their personal and autonomous economic well-being (Adepoju, 2005; Awumbila & Torvikeh, 2018; Kleist & Setrana, 2022). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its protocol relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment has played an essential role in the migration flows/movements of both men and women in the region. Migrants in Côte d'Ivoire reflect the statistics of the African continent (men 55%, women 45%), where women make up 48 percent, while men make up 52 percent of migrants in the country (Zechlab, 2021, p. 3; Kleist & Setrana, 2022).

Understanding the gender dimension of migration is very important, and this study does not undermine the importance of this, in addition to recognizing that both men and women can be described as breadwinners. Nevertheless, the research study focuses on men as labor migrants (20-40 years) and therefore takes as its point of departure of the 'male breadwinner.

### 3.2.1 Gender Dynamics in Migration: Influences and Implications

The decision to migrate and the makeup of migration flows are significantly influenced by gender, which has implications for the integration of immigrants (Pedraza, 1991, p.321). As a fundamental and long-standing force in human life, gender forms both migration processes and the experiences of migrants (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p.812). Despite its importance, gender has often been neglected in academic studies of international migration over the last century (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p.812). Recognizing the pivotal role of gender in migration and its impact on migrants' lives is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of this complex issue (Pedraza, 1991; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). The migration experience varies significantly between males and females (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). More representation of women in international migration research must accurately reflect the true nature of global migration patterns (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p.814). In actuality, women exhibit a migration pattern on the international scale that is comparable to that of men. Analyzing global migration trends shows that women constitute a substantial portion of recent immigrants (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p.814). A deeper analysis of internal migration patterns reveals that, in Africa, men are more likely to migrate to urban areas. At the same time, women typically stay in rural regions to cultivate the land (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). These disparities are mainly attributed to the prevailing land tenure systems and agricultural management schemes (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). It is essential to acknowledge that external or individual factors can influence the decision to migrate, and these

factors may have varying impacts based on gender. For instance, factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, social class, and sexuality influence and regulate individuals' capacity to migrate and their perspectives on the concept of migration (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p.823).

Furthermore, government policies may lead to unequal migration patterns by imposing legal restrictions on the movement of either men or women, as exemplified in Lesotho (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). Wilkinson (1983) presented the implications for women in Lesotho due to the neighboring South Africa's influx control laws that excluded them (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). This led to a migration pattern characterized by a male-dominated workforce crossing the international border of Lesotho to work in mines (Pedraza, 1991, p.310).

Additionally, it motivated a female-dominated internal migration toward Lesotho's urban centers, giving rise to remarkable gender disparities (Pedraza, 1991, p.310). Regarding the individual factors mentioned above, the factors driving migration for women often differ from those for men, as they are formed by distinct gender-related limitations in their home communities and disparities in possibilities and chances within their intended destination communities (Lingyan, 2021). The distinctions between genders manifest in the internal migration patterns of women and men and in the types of employment secured by female and male migrants upon reaching their destinations (Lingyan, 2021). These factors can be because of gender migration patterns that have become common in some societies. Historically, inside the nation, women have tended to migrate over shorter distances compared to males, leading to a higher frequency of women engaging in rural-to-rural migration or relocating within the same region (United Nations, Economic, and Social Council, 2008; Lingyan, 2021).

Specific research has also indicated that, in some instances, gender-specific migration can be attributed to occupations that necessitate either male or female labor (Pedraza, 1991). Alternatively, it may be due to a given society's social and cultural conditions, where employment conditions and the nature of work are more suited to or accepted by one gender than the other. The United Nations provides an example in which young women frequently pursue employment and are favored over males in urban domestic work, manufacturing businesses, or plantations. This preference is based on the perception that women are better suited for repetitive duties, more compliant, and more amenable to accepting Lesser earnings (United Nations, 2000; Lingyan, 2021). However, there is another perspective: Men predominantly migrate due to

economic factors and employment opportunities, while women's migration for economic reasons is typically family dependent (Bouchoucha, 2012).

### 3.3 Determinants of Migration: The level analysis

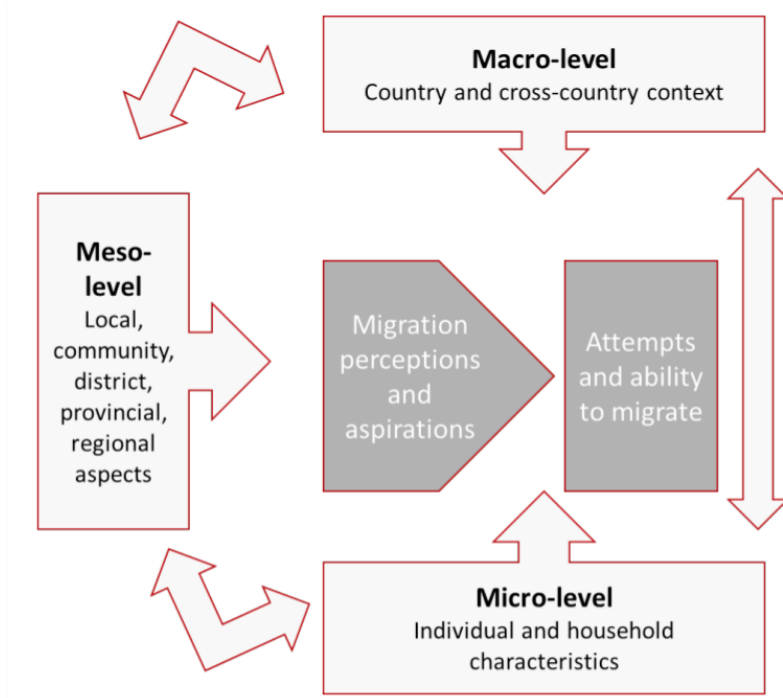
Evidence demonstrates that Migration and Migrant decisions are complex processes dependent on multiple factors and different characteristics. When examining the push and pull factors of international migration, researchers (de Haas, 2008; Lee, 1966) often focus on macro-level factors such as Migration governance and policy, economic contexts, or environmental drivers (Khunt, 2019; Van Mol et al., 2017). When examining meso-level characteristics and factors, scholars (Massey et al., 1993; Granovetter, 1973; Putman, 2000) often refer to Migration Networks. Lastly, when examining individual motivations for migration, scholars (Massey et al., 1993; Lee, 1966) often analyze individual characteristics such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, or educational background (Khunt, 2019; Van Mol et al., 2017).

*Table 3: Overview of Migration levels, factors and theory*

<b>Micro-level</b> <i>Migration causes</i>	<b>Meso-level Migration</b> <i>Migration causes/ perpetuation</i>	<b>Macro-level Migration</b> <i>Migration causes/ perpetuation</i>
Individual characteristics of decision-making/ values/ desires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Improving well-being</li> <li>▫ Survival</li> <li>▫ Wealth</li> <li>▫ Age</li> <li>▫ Educational level</li> <li>▫ Gender</li> <li>▫ Risk aversion and personality traits</li> </ul>	(Social/Migrant) Networks/ Collectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Social relationships</li> <li>▫ Culture, networks information</li> <li>▫ Geography and infrastructure</li> <li>▫ Technology</li> </ul>	Macro-level structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Economic structures,</li> <li>▫ Organizations,</li> <li>▫ Institutions,</li> <li>▫ Nation-states</li> <li>▫ Poverty and development</li> <li>▫ Migration governance and policies (Regional, national, local)</li> <li>▫ Economic opportunities and security</li> </ul>
<b>Theory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Neoclassical economics theories</li> <li>▫ Lees ´s (1966) push and Pull theory</li> <li>▫ New Economics of Labour Migration</li> </ul>	<b>Theory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Network Theory</li> <li>▫ Social Capital Theory</li> </ul>	<b>Theory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Lees ´s (1966) Push and Pull theory</li> <li>▫ Neoclassical economics theories</li> </ul>

(Source: Table inspired by Faist 1997; Massey et al., 1993; Kuhnt, 2019, p.5).

Figure 6: The three levels: Determinants of Migration



(Source: Timmerman et al 2014; Kuhnt, 2019, p.5).

Carling (2002) considers migration a socially and culturally constructed project shaped by the social, political, and economic context at both micro and macro levels (Kuhnt, 2019, p.4). Timmerman et al. (2010, 2014) developed a framework that constructs upon Carling's (2002) definition of the emigration environment, which considers the social, political, and economic context as influencing factors on migration decisions at micro and macro levels (Kuhnt, 2019, p.4). The framework extends these ideas by including meso-level determinants and highlights that perceptions and migration aspirations are shaped within this emigration environment (Kuhnt, 2019, p.4). The figure presents a visual representation of the different factors and characteristics that influence migration decisions and how they are categorized based on different levels of analysis.

### 3.3.1 The Macro Level: Push and Pull factors

The macro-level contains the traditional determinants of voluntary and forced migration that are conceivable to influence migration decisions, the political and economic context, migration policies, and Governance or environmental drivers. It encompasses the political and economic context, migration policy, and social and ecological (environmental) drivers (Kuhnt, 2019) that influence migration patterns. These are all Macro-level factors that can affect an individual

aspiration or decision to migrate from one place to another, and in the context of the topic, from a neighboring origin country to Côte d'Ivoire. However, it is essential to note that the factors should be analyzed in their interrelated complexity and not as distinct elements but as reinforcing or impeding each other (Kuhnt, 2019, p.6).

### **Economic Oppurtunites:**

Research suggests that economic opportunities are a powerful driver of migration (Engler et al., 2020; OECD, 2014; Kuhnt, 2019). Inequalities in economic opportunities, such as wage, labor, and employment differentials, drive people to move from their origin country for better job opportunities and higher wages (Kuhnt, 2019). The analysis of economic opportunities and migration lies in the paradigm of neoclassical migration theory (de Haas, 2008; Todaro, 1969; Harris & Todaro, 1970) and in the push and pull model of migration (Lee, 1966), which will be addressed further in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, these approaches highlight individuals as rational cost-benefit actors who consider the existing wage gap between the country of origin and the country of destination, where they assume that the country of destination offers more profitable economic opportunities, which is considered the decisive factor for migration from the country of origin (Kuhnt, 2019). The research study investigates the relationship between employment, wage differentials, and migration between Côte d'Ivoire and the neighboring countries, specifically why males between the ages of 20 and 40 migrate to Abobo municipality in Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire has experienced significant economic growth and poverty reduction in recent years, with a real GDP growth rate of 7.7% in 2017 (The world bank group, 2023). Compared to some neighboring countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali, or Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire has a relatively more diversified economy with a more significant focus on industrial, agriculture, and service sectors (The world bank group, 2023). This diversification may have contributed to increased economic opportunities and job creation in these sectors, attracting migrant workers from neighboring countries seeking better job opportunities and heightened wages.

### **Migration governance and policy**

Migration policies in origin, transit, and destination country or region can influence migration movements (Kuhnt, 2019). According to De Haas (2007), restrictive migration policies increase guest workers' difficulties obtaining a permanent stay while decreasing circular and return migration (De Haas, 2007; Kuhnt, 2019, p.12). Côte d'Ivoire is a popular migration destination

where ECOWAS significantly contributes to more effective and coordinated migration governance and policy in West Africa, where member states can move freely across the borders. However, part of this research study investigates ECOWAS's influence on migration in Côte d'Ivoire. The research study examines the role of ECOWAS's migration policies in regulating and influencing migration in Côte d'Ivoire. The study seeks to understand how these policies work in practice and their impact on individual decision-making regarding migration. Additionally, the study desires to identify the consequences of poorly regulated migration policies.

ECOWAS has faced many effects and criticisms, and its intervention in Côte d'Ivoire has been controversial due to the lack of an exhaustive migration framework (United Nations, 2015). The absence of clear and effective migration policies on national and regional levels can have significant consequences. Throughout this thesis, the research study will address these consequences further and investigate the policy gap in migration legislation in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is essential to point out that the primary data collection can give a different point of view on what one interprets from existing literature regarding the relationship between ECOWAS and Migration in Côte d'Ivoire. The information gathered throughout this research demonstrates that the practical implementation of ECOWAS regarding labor migrants differs from what is commonly described and discussed in numerous studies. A comprehensive examination of this discrepancy will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Contemporary literature suggests that other factors, such as networks or migrant agents, support the further movement of people irrespective of migration policies (Kuhnt, 2019, p.12). Hence, migration can become self-reinforcing (Cummings et al., 2015; Czaika & de Haas, 2013; Kuhnt, 2019, p.12).

### 3.3.2 The Micro level: Individual characteristics

Micro-level migration analysis examines individual-level migration, where it is essential to consider individual characteristics. Individual migration decisions can, for example, be segmented by gender, age, educational level, marital status, or own well-being and personal gains. However, individual characteristics are not the primary drivers but factors that significantly influence migration decisions and lead to the self-selection of migrants (Kuhnt, 2019, p.19). The micro-level analysis lies in the paradigm of Lee's (1966) push and pull framework, the New Economics of Labour Migration theory, and the neoclassical theories.

#### **Age and Gender**



Age is a crucial factor when analyzing migration patterns and movements. Literature and statistics show that most migrants are of working age (Kuhnt, 2019). According to migration researchers and literature (Dasgupta et al., 2014; Lauby & Stark, 1988; Schwartz, 1976), working-age migrants are most likely to be able to overcome the burdens they may encounter before and during the journey and holds the best opportunity of achieving a sustainable living at the destination (Kuhnt, 2019). It is often part of a household risk diversification strategy, which will be discussed in the next chapter under The New Economics of Labour Migration theory.

Furthermore, gender is another significant factor that influences migration patterns and movements. Migration studies suggest that women are less likely to migrate than men as they seem more sensitive to migration costs (Beine & Salomone, 2010; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Kuhnt, 2019, p. 20). Women assess risk outcomes more than men and are often limited by a lack of financial means (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Donato & Patterson, 2004; Kuhnt, 2019). As a result, the women rely on household networks to migrate instead of themselves (Kuhnt, 2019). However, in Côte d'Ivoire, statistics show no significant gap between men and women migrating to the country (Zechlab, 2021). Men make up 52 percent, while women make up 48 percent of the migrants in the country (Zechlab, 2021, p. 3). Migrants in Côte d'Ivoire are young on average, with an average age of 32.9 years old, where men are 34.1 years and women are 31.6 years on average arrival (Zechlab, 2021, p. 23).

### **Education**

Education is a significant factor in migration patterns, both in terms of the reasons for migration and the outcomes for migrants at their destination. Concerning traditional labor migration, the inability to find labor that fits their education and skills is a significant motivation for educated migrants to leave their homes (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Kuhnt, 2019, p.19). However, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, statistics show that migrants have a low level of education. More than half (56%) of these have no level of education, and 20% only have primary education (Zechlab, 2021, p. 24). Migrants are, therefore, poorly educated, especially compared to Ivorian/ native citizens, of whom only 18% have no formal education and 27% have primary education (Zechlab, 2021). In countries with dense migration networks, in addition to irregular migration, migration seems to be dominated by individuals of lower education and skills (Beine et al., 2011; Bertoli, 2010; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2010; Mbaye, 2014; Kuhnt, 2019, p.20).

### **Personal characteristic and attitudes**

Everyone possesses unique qualities that set them apart from others, encompassing diverse perspectives and opinions. This concept also applies to migration decisions, where one person may choose to migrate while another may not, based on their distinct values, personalities, characteristics, and aspirations. The motivation and intent to migrate represent crucial factors that interplay with various external forces driving migration, ultimately shaping the final decision to proceed with the act of migration (Castelli, 2018, p.5).

The term "migration aspirations" is commonly used to explain the belief that departing from one's current location offers a more favorable outcome than remaining in the same place (Alpes2014; Carling 2002; Castles, de Haas, and Miller2014; Creighton2013; Crivello2015; de Haas2010; Carling & Collins, 2018, p.915). This expression has become well-established in migration discussions (Carling & Collins, 2018, p.915). The social foundation of aspirations and desires encompasses personal viewpoints on migration that are inherently intertwined with the prevailing social context (Carling & Collins, 2018, p.916). The aspiration to migrate signifies the potential for transformation through migration, suggesting that this envisioned change is perceived favorably by the aspiring emigrant and is also entrenched within institutional structures (Horváth, 2008; Timmerman, Hemmerechts, and Marie-Lou De Clerck 2014; Carling & Collins, 2018, p.916). Aspirations and desires can concurrently influence youth's opportunities for adaptation through migration and the initiatives undertaken by their homeland to keep them (Carling & Collins, 2018, p.917). An individual's decision to migrate is influenced by unique plans, values, and preferences, such as prioritizing personal freedom and human rights, which may lead them to select a destination country that resonates with these values (Carling & Collins, 2018).

### 3.3.3 The Meso level: Networks

There is a strong consensus among migration researchers that networks are an essential determinant of migratory planning and choice of migrant destination. Meso-level migration networks refer to the social relationships and networks at the country, community, societal, and household levels that strongly impact individuals' migration aspirations and decisions (Kuhnt, 2019). Furthermore, as noted, at the meso-level, interdependencies, and interconnection between factors exist while they simultaneously connect to determinants at the macro- and micro-level (Kuhnt, 2019, p.15).

## **Religion & Culture**

The religious factors influencing migration decisions are too broad and intricate to discuss comprehensively (Castelli, 2018, p.5). Throughout human history, numerous large-scale population transformations have resulted from religious discrimination or the pursuit of a location where individuals could openly practice their beliefs (Castelli, 2018, p.5). Nonetheless, such population shifts frequently stem from political motivations, as exemplified by the contentious migrations of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs across the newly established borders (Castelli, 2018, p.5). In numerous cases, religion has justified ethnic oppression and forced displacement (Castelli, 2018, p.5). Meanwhile, some people may pursue a nation that provides increased religious liberty, enabling them to engage openly in religious activities without any constraints or restrictions on expression (Sadiddinet al., 2019; Castelli, 2018). For example, such challenges frequently occur in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan West Africa (Castelli, 2018, p.5). These circumstances may contribute to individuals' decisions to leave their countries. In addition to religion, culture also significantly influences migrants' choices when moving to a different country. Indeed, migrants often prefer to reside in countries where their community of origin is already well-represented in that society (OCDE, 2017, p.53). In short, they favor living in countries and societies that remind them of a sense of homeland, thereby avoiding the discomfort of cultural shock (OCDE, 2017, p.53). This process enables them to create their own migration culture, which is deeply tied to the existence of migration networks (Kuhnt, 2019). The overflow in migration from a specific country or locality maintains these networks, such as having the same religion or another social construct (Kuhnt, 2019, p.15). In turn, it cultivates a culture of migration and translocality (Kuhnt, 2019, p.15).

## **Migration networks and Technology**

Migration networks can be described as "complex webs of interpersonal connections that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination regions, encompassing familial, friendship, and communal ties (Lundquist & Massey, 2005, p. 42). Networks reduce costs and risks for migrants, provided by accessible resources through information. For instance, migrants can gain information from their networks regarding job and housing opportunities (Cummings et al., 2015; Kuhnt, 2019). Evidence suggests that migrant networks are essential before, during, and upon arrival at the destination (Kuhnt, 2019). Simultaneously, migrants can

communicate knowledge and information back home, informing the migration decision (Kuhnt, 2019). Since migration networks are crucial to the migration analysis for this research study, and in general, it determines a vital part of primary data collection.

Furthermore, technology has significantly affected migrant networks, enabling communication and coordination among migrants across regions and countries. Information and communication technology (ICT) contributes to migrants maintaining solid ties with household members and friends in their origin country while helping to forge new ties, which is helpful during and in the organization and facilitation of the migration process (Kuhnt, 2019).

Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors at different levels. Understanding the interconnectedness and complexity of these factors is crucial for comprehending migration patterns and decision-making processes. To gain a comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics, it is necessary to examine the interplay between macro, micro, and meso level factors relevant to the specific study.

#### 3.4 Characteristics of Labour Migrants in Côte d'Ivoire

The critical characteristics from migration studies define the labor migration process in West Africa as temporary or circular (Konseiga, 2005, p.29). Regarding international labor migration, West Africa is considered one of the most significant regions, including migrations between rural and rural areas and between rural and urban areas (Konseiga, 2005, p.29). In migration studies, particularly in West Africa, the main focus is seasonal and return migrations, as the migratory population is believed to remain tied to their homeland (Konseiga, 2005). International organization migration (IOM) investigates different types of migration, such as long-term, short-term, permanent, and seasonal (Schürmann et al., 2022, p.1). Seasonal migration is defined as laborers who migrate only during certain times of the year and rely on particular seasonal conditions (Schürmann et al., 2022, p.1).

One of the significant causes of migration, particularly labor migration in West Africa, is the visa-free ECOWAS protocol and cultural links throughout the region (IOM, 2022, p. 33). Labor migration commonly occurs by seasonal, temporary, and permanent workers from nations like Niger and Mali to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (IOM, 2022, p. 33). According to IOM, the definition of labor migration is the process of moving people from their homeland to another country in order to find a job (IOM, 2008).

Literature on the background characteristics of migrants within Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates that, historically, Côte d'Ivoire has been regarded as a first-choice destination for migrants in West Africa mainly because of its economic potential (IOM, 2020, p.7). Côte d'Ivoire has the most foreign migrants in West Africa (IOM, 2020). Based on the International Organization of Migration (IOM), Over 2.5 million foreign migrants were living in Côte d'Ivoire as of 2019, making up almost 10 percent of the entire population (IOM, 2020, p.7). Rural and urban areas of Côte d'Ivoire have a similar number of migrants. According to migration studies, almost half of the migrants reside in rural areas, and half choose to live in urban areas (Zechlab, 2021, p.21).

A few studies have investigated the characteristics of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, such as migrants' level of education, migrants age, and their nationalities. Among those, study show (Zechlab, 2021; Konseiga, 2005) that regarding migrants' ages, most are young men between the ages of 15 and 34 (Zechlab,2021, p.23; Konseiga, 2005, p. 30). In terms of education, many immigrants have little or no education, so their educational backgrounds are weak. At the same time, based on international agreements that the International Organization of Migration (2020) mentioned, every state is responsible for educating all the people residing on its territory (IOM, 2020). Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire, a nation with high levels of immigration, seems not to distinguish between a child of a citizen and a child of a migrant regarding their access to education (IOM, 2020, p.35). However, no study has shown whether, in practice, immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire have equal educational opportunities or not. According to the 1986 Supplementary Protocol having an equal right to education should be accessible for all immigrants and their kids who are part of community members of ECOWAS (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39). Nevertheless, the failure to implement and ratify the 1986 Supplementary Protocol in Côte d'Ivoire may be one of the causes of the poor level of education among immigrants.

Existing studies and literature regarding migrants' nationalities show many ethnicities among the migrants in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the dominant population is from two countries; Burkina Faso and Mali (Zechlab, 2021, p.24). In addition, male migrants from these two countries are more likely to come to Côte d'Ivoire than women. Nevertheless, migrants come from other countries, such as Benin, Guinea, and Nigeria (Zechlab, 2021, p.24). All these countries are member states of ECOWAS. Thus, nearly all migrants in Côte d'Ivoire are nationals of ECOWAS countries (Zechlab, 2021, p.24). Most migrants in Côte d'Ivoire are Muslims. Their nations of origin describe the significant dominance of Islam among migrants, mostly Burkina

Faso and Mali, two nations whose people are predominately Muslim (Zechlab,2021). These findings are essentially the same for both males and females and urban and rural populations (Zechlab, 2021, p.25).

Job-related motives mainly drive immigration to Côte d'Ivoire. The country has relied heavily on migrant labor since being colonized by France (Bruni et al.,2017, p.31; Devillard et al., 2015), especially from Burkina Faso and from countries which has an abundance of labor (Bruni et al.,2017, p.31; Devillard et al., 2015). Many foreign laborers in Côte d'Ivoire are working in low-skilled positions in the agricultural sector, informal trade, household work, fishing, and livestock (Bruni et al.,2017, p.31; Devillard et al., 2015; IOM, 2022, p. 33). Predictably, immigrants who live in rural areas work in agriculture more than in cities (Zechlab,2021, p.27).

Agricultural workers frequently migrate throughout harvest time and off-season harvest (IOM, 2022, p. 33). It is worth noting that in the 1980s, commercial and public education institutions hired thousands of highly skilled immigrants briefly, but it has since diminished and is no longer prevalent (Bruni et al.,2017; Devillard et al., 2015). Regarding migrants' salaries, the monthly average income in Côte d'Ivoire among migrants in urban and rural areas is meager (Zechlab, 2021). These low-paid salaries demonstrate that migrants mostly lack the skills, education, and social networks to access better employment, like management work (Zechlab, 2021). In Côte d'Ivoire, informal hiring of labor is more prevalent than formal hiring (IOM, 2020). Most migrants do not depend on private recruiting agencies to secure employment opportunities. In simpler terms, migrants are not acquainted with individuals in positions of influence who can directly offer them formal sector jobs (IOM, 2020).

Hence, labor migrants to find jobs in Côte d'Ivoire are more likely to rely on family, friends, social networks, and informal ways, like being residents from neighboring ECOWAS countries (IOM, 2020, p.7). Therefore, the role of migrant networks and being members of ECOWAS to find employment in Côte d'Ivoire is essential.

### 3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provides an overview of migration determinants and the interconnected nature of factors at different levels of analysis. It begins by discussing the historical context of migration and the lack of a universally accepted definition of a "migrant." The migration patterns in Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, are examined, emphasizing economic factors and employment opportunities as drivers of migration from countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Nigeria, and Ghana.

The chapter highlights the gender dynamics of migration, emphasizing that women and men experience migration differently. It explores the changing role of men as "breadwinners" in West African migration and discusses gender disparities in migration patterns. The influence of gender on migration decisions and the impact of government policies on gender-specific migration are also examined and concludes by stressing the importance of understanding the gender dimension of migration.

Furthermore, a crucial aspect of this research study involves analyzing the determinants of migration at three distinct levels: macro, micro, and meso. At the macro level, migration governance, policy, and economic contexts shape migration push and pull factors. Economic opportunities and migration policies are specifically examined in the context of Côte d'Ivoire and its neighboring countries. At the micro level, individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, and personal attributes influence migration decisions. Age, gender, and education are explored as key factors in migration choices, with a focus on Côte d'Ivoire statistics and trends. The meso level considers migration networks complex interpersonal connections that facilitate migration by providing information and reducing costs. Social relationships, cultural influences, and the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on migration networks are discussed.

It is crucial to recognize the interconnectedness of the three levels of analysis. Factors at one level can shape and be influenced by factors at other levels, indicating the interdependencies within migration processes. For instance, macro-level factors like migration governance and policy can affect the availability of economic opportunities, influencing individual migration decisions at the micro level.

We must define the scope of our study and select the relevant characteristics and factors aligned with the research questions to ensure focused and valuable insights into specific aspects of migration. We recognize that the characteristics chosen for our analysis may vary depending on the specific topics under investigation. By acknowledging the interconnected nature of the different levels of analysis and the context-specific nature of research characteristics, we can effectively contribute to understanding migration processes in Abobo municipality, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 4.0 Introduction

Migration is a complex process interlinked and influenced by factors at different levels. Migration theories can be classified according to the level of analysis in focus. The first research question concerns macro-level push and pull factors influencing migration patterns. At the macro level, theories and approaches analyze the broader social, economic, and political forces that drive migration patterns. Macro-level analysis often considers (external) forces such as globalization, environment, wars, and conflicts essential to migration analysis (De Haas, 2021; Kuhnt, 2019).

Moreover, the first research question also concerns the factors that influence the decision of individuals to migrate from their country of origin to Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality. At the micro level, migration theories and approaches focus on individual elements influencing migration decisions. These factors may include age, gender, education level, or individual decision-making characteristics, values, and desires (Farist, 1997; Massey et al., 1993; Kuhnt, 2019, p.5).

The second research question relates to social and economic conditions affecting regional and community migration patterns. Meso- level theories and approaches analyze the role of social structures and institutions that can contribute to shaping migration movements. This level of analysis addresses factors such as the household, community, social networks, or labor markets.



Migration theories aim to explain and help us understand these underlying factors that drive migration movements and patterns. The research study seeks to use migration theories to substantiate the validity of the primary data (collection) during the analysis to answer and discuss the research questions and objectives. In the upcoming chapter, we will investigate a theoretical exploration that examines migration patterns and their intricate process and associated features. It will be accomplished by using relevant migration theories to provide a comprehensive analysis.

#### 4.1 The Macro level

##### **The macro level push and pull framework**

The push and pull theory of migration was first introduced by Lee (1966) (Abreu, 2012). It is related to factors that push individuals to migrate from their current situation and factors that pull them toward a new destination (Abreu, 2012). In this classification, the push factors relate to unfavorable conditions that encourage individuals to migrate. These are factors such as ecological disasters, economic crises, war, and conflicts. In contrast, the pull factors relate to positive factors that attract individuals to a new destination due to the influence of societal issues. A primary motive of migration is usually connected to a lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, and poverty. Lee (1966) argues that migration occurs by viewing the comparison between the country of origin and the destination (Abreu, 2012, p. 50). He also predicts that in most cases, the variables linked to the region of origin are more likely to be more significant than the factors related to the destination regions (Lee, 1966).

At the macro level, for example, push factors, such as poverty in the African continent, lack of job opportunities, and pull factors, such as employment possibilities that exist in Côte d'Ivoire, better life conditions, and free movement in the region, encourage individuals from the neighboring countries to move to Côte d'Ivoire for making a better life. The Economic Community of the West African States, known as the ECOWAS protocol, ensures visa-free travel for Community nationals into the Member States for 90 days while allowing for freedom of movement, residency rights, and the right of establishment. This protocol aims to promote peoples' right to move freely and attempts to establish a region without borders (OECD, 2009, p. 18). Another aim of this approach is to encourage regional collaboration, which might help advance the genuine creation of an economic union in West Africa (OECD, 2018). ECOWAS is an ideal example of regional cooperation, aiming for better living conditions through the policy

of free movement in the West African region. Due to various push factors, the organization may be seen as a mediator for people who want to emigrate. Using Lee's push and pull framework in the data collection phase, the research study gained vital insight into the complex motivations of why labor migrants from the West African region migrate to Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, and the factors that influence their decision-making.

### **Neo Classical economic theory**

Geographer Ravenstein introduced neoclassical macro migration theory in the nineteenth century (De Haas, 2008, p. 4). This theory frame migration as a component of economic development (De Haas,2008). Neo-classical macro migration theory is deeply rooted in "developmentalism" modernization theory, founded on teleological perspectives that perceive development as a continuous, universal procedure comprising various stages (De Haas, 2008, p. 5). The reason behind internal migration is the variation in the supply and demand of labor between the traditional agricultural sector in rural areas and the modern manufacturing sector in urban areas (De Haas, 2008, p. 4). This approach does not only see migration based on rational choice models of human behavior; the role of supply and demand in this process is significant (Triandafyllidou, 2016, p. 26).

From a macro perspective, this economic concept of migration is based on a knowledge of personal activities within the context of the worldwide supply and demand for labor in worldwide markets (De Haas, 2008, p. 4). According to (Lewis, 1954; Ranis & Fei, 1961), the fundamental model that emerged from trade theory postulates ideal markets and an excess of labor in the traditional agricultural sector assimilated by the modern sector (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 6). The modern sector's development is facilitated through capital accumulation and labor recruitment from the traditional sector, often achieved by offering higher wages and better working conditions (De Haas, 2008, p. 4; Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 6). For instance, countries with higher salaries and more job opportunities entice laborers from nations with lower earnings and fewer job positions (Triandafyllidou, 2016, p. 26; De Haas, 2008, p. 4). In such models, migration happens until wage equalization is achieved, as individuals are forced to migrate due to attractive employment opportunities (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). The initial objective of the model was to elucidate the paradoxical occurrence of persistent rural-to-urban migration in developing nations, despite escalating urban unemployment (De Haas,2008, p. 5). However, the macro perspective in Neoclassical economics theory was later criticized as inadequate since it only

considered one factor, such as the economic reason for migration (Chabala, 2014, p. 13). Despite its limitations, this theory enabled us to address and dissect our first research question, which aimed to determine the main push/pull factors for young men migrating to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, from neighboring countries. Many labor migrants who decide to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, might possess no viable options other than migration considering their unfavorable financial circumstances and limited employment prospects. This observation aligns with aspects of the Neoclassical Economic Theory.

## 4.2 The Micro level

### **Neo classical economic theory**

The neo-classical migration theory was expanded in a broader context by Borjas 1989 at the micro level (Chabala, 2014; Massey et al., 1993). From this perspective, migrants will be seen as rational individuals who make decisions based on cost-benefit analysis (De Haas, 2008, p.5). Despite factors such as urban unemployment, migration continues to occur due to the anticipation of higher income opportunities (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Migration is not a risk-free decision, as there is no guarantee that a migrant will secure a job upon arrival in the destination country (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Therefore, migrants will likely consider the costs and benefits of migrating consciously. This viewpoint discusses the cost-benefit in migration processes to make the decision precisely rational.

At the conceptual level, neo-classical micro-migration theory sees the process of migration as an investment in human capital (Massey et al., 1993, p. 434). Based on a cost-benefit analysis, individuals decide to migrate to where they can be most productive and receive more salary, considering their level of skills (Massey et al., 1993, p. 434; Chabala, 2014, p. 14; De Haas, 2008, p. 4). Individuals seeking higher wages associated with greater labor productivity through migration must make particular investments before achieving their desired income levels. (Chabala, 2014, p. 14; De Haas, 2008, p. 4; Massey et al., 1993, p. 434). These investments or costs can be various items, such as the expenses associated with travel, the costs of sustaining oneself during the process of relocation and job searching, investing time and energy in acquiring a new language and adjusting to a new culture, facing challenges in adapting to a new job market, and dealing with emotional distress due to severing previous relationships and establishing new ones (Massey et al., 1993, p. 434). Borjas 1989 debated the immigration

market, meaning individuals consider almost all other factors before decision-making that influence their migration process. The factors include;

- Differences in global income levels,
- The regulations and guidelines of departure and arrival nations,
- and people's financial situation (EASO,2016, p.11).

Based on the aforementioned theoretical discourse, it is evident that the whole Neo-classical economic theory (micro-macro level) was relevant to the thesis. These perspectives demonstrate that individuals decide to migrate based on economic incentives or by evaluating the potential benefits of relocation against the associated costs to search for places that present higher potential advantages, such as the ability to improve their quality of life and increase their income levels, than the present locality of their homeland (Gubhaju & De Jong, 2009, pp. 34, 35; Massey et al., 1993, pp. 432, 434). The factors mentioned above significantly influence the migration decisions of laborers from neighboring countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ghana to Côte d'Ivoire. These individuals migrate for improved living conditions, prioritizing a better quality of life and higher income opportunities over their current circumstances in their home countries.

### **The micro level push and pull framework**

Neo-classical theories often fail to explain why some individuals with roughly the same background migrate from the same region or country of origin, and others do not (Massey et al.,1993; Reniers, 1999; Anggoro, 2019). Furthermore, neoclassical theories fail to describe why individuals migrate between specific locations in a spatial cluster in a concentrated, typically non-random manner (Anggoro, 2019, p. 3). Therefore, using spatial migration models may be helpful in a migration analysis. Lee (1966) also introduced the push and pull theory on the micro level. He described migration in a push and pull framework by looking at the supply and demand side of migration on an individual level (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 9). Positive and negative factors at the origin and destination exert a push and pull effect on migrants, influencing their decision to (not) migrate (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 9). However, this migration process can be hindered by intervening factors such as migration laws and policies or limited resources, which are further influenced by personal factors and how migrants perceive these circumstances. The push-pull factors influencing the individual decision to migrate may include circumstances such as poverty, discrimination, or unemployment in the origin country. The pull factors include access to employment, higher wages, or a desire for a better standard of living in the destination

country. The push and pull factors operate differently at the micro and macro levels. However, the frameworks are both considered essential in understanding individual decision-making of migration and the broader factors influencing them.

Besides push-pull factors, intervening obstacles also impact migration (Lee, 1966). These barriers can include physical distance, transportation costs, and personal concerns that people typically encounter when migrating (Lee, 1966, p. 51). Individuals with various personality types are affected differently by the positive and negative factors in origin and destination regions (Lee, 1966, p. 50). Lee (1966) states that migration may not be entirely rational as the process is unpredictable, and immigrants may not be aware of all the factors that should be considered before making a choice (Lee, 1966, p. 51).

Furthermore, Lee (1966) sees migration as selective, concerning the individual characteristics of migrants because people respond differently to “plus” (positive) and “minus” (negative) factors at origins and destinations. Migrants, therefore, have different abilities to cope with the intervening variables (Reniers, 1999, p. 681; de Haas, 2008, p.9). Thus, migrants rarely represent their community of origin (de Haas, 2008, p. 9). Nevertheless, this framework has been criticized for being too general and narrow as it only focuses on the individual level. Looking at migration processes from different levels and considering different factors when analyzing them is essential. As mentioned in the literature review, this process should consider all three levels.

### **New Economics of Labour Migration**

Traditional migration approaches usually focus on aggregate migration movements or people making migration decisions (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 12). They thus assume that individuals independently decide on the decision to migrate. However, the New Economics of Labour Migration approach (NELM) emerged in the 1980s as a critical response to and for improvements of the neo-classical migration theory (Anggoro, 2019). NELM places the individual behavior of migrants in a broader societal context by assessing not only the individual but the family or the household as the most pertinent decision-making unit (Anggoro, 2019, p.3). According to the NELM theory, the members as a whole in the household make decisions for the well-being of the household. Households do not migrate together but send some family members off to migrate (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Labor migration has conversely been seen as an economic benefit to the family members left behind through remittances (Démurger, 2015). Moreover,

according to the literature, young men between 20 and 30 are the ones who usually leave their homes.

Among migration approaches, NELM stands out as the sole framework that establishes a connection between the migration decision and the impacts of migration, specifically through the pivotal role of remittances as the linking factor (Taylor & Fletcher, 2001; Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p.14). The NELM theory argues that a household, rather than the individual, maximizes joint income and status and minimizes risk (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p.14). The analysis of the consideration of risk is also fundamental in the NELM theory. The fundamental premise is the view of migration as a risk-sharing behavior of households. Households can diversify their resources, such as labor, to minimize income risks (Stark, 1991; Anggoro, 2019). NELM is ultimately based on the assumption that households are rational actors engaged in long-term economic optimization (de Haas, 2021).

In the context of the West African region, in addition to the research objectives, the NELM theory may provide insight into the role of social norms, social networks, and cultural values that shape migration patterns. For instance, social networks heavily influence migration patterns, as migrants often depend on support from family and friends before, during, and after arrival in their host nation. Similarly, migrants may be encouraged to send remittances back home due to cultural values or social norms prevalent in their community that place importance on providing financial support to family members.

### **NLEM and Inequality**

The act of relocating is a stark indicator of international disparities in income, job prospects, or quality of life (IOM,2023). Numerous individuals choose to change their location based on the belief that they can achieve a more prosperous existence in a different place, thereby diminishing the gap between their current situation and that in relatively wealthier regions (IOM, 2023). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that not everyone has equal access to the opportunity to make such a move, as highlighted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023). Disparities might even emerge due to migration (IOM, 2023). Migrants might encounter an uneven distribution of rights and societal assets, such as the ability to request safety, particularly those escaping war situations, aggression, and victimization (IOM, 2023). It is indisputable that global migration strongly represents the disparity among nations (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.2). Adhering to the widely recognized and thoroughly studied neoclassical

perspective on migration (as proposed by Harris & Todaro in 1970), which suggests that income differences between origin and destination countries fuel migration, such an expectation would indeed be reasonable (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.2).

The perspective of inequality within societies of origin can stimulate more migration if individuals think that migrant families are in a better position than non-migrant families (as suggested by Lipton, 1980), be it in a real or perceived sense (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3). Nonetheless, the neoclassical model views disparity primarily through an economic lens, focusing on variations in income or earnings (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.2). Consequently, it predicts that migratory flows would typically move from areas of lower income toward regions of higher income (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.2).

The theoretical counterpart to this understanding, known as the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) theory, proposes that the additional benefit derived from payment depends not just on personal earnings but also on the earnings of the whole family (Czaika, 2013; Stark & Bloom, 1985; Stark & Taylor, 1989; Stark & Yitzhaki, 1988; Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3). In other words, a person's decision to migrate may not solely be based on enhancing their total income but also on elevating their earnings compared to others in their community or nation (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3). Multiple pieces of research, such as (Czaika, 2013; Hyll & Schneider, 2014; Kafle et al., 2018; Liebig & Sousa-Poza, 2004; Quinn, 2006), have validated this supposition (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3). These researchers discovered that in many different countries, relative poverty, or the feeling of being in a poorer condition compared to others, plays a significant role in promoting migration (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3). Hence, it can be inferred that nations witnessing greater levels of disparity or feelings of relative impoverishment are more prone to substantial outflows of migration (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022, p.3).

The research demonstrates that those individuals who decide to migrate, often driven by poverty in their home country and the pursuit of higher income, persistently face inequality and poverty even after their migration. It is particularly evident in various aspects of their lives, such as wage disparities, challenges securing high-paying jobs, and accessibility to various social services.

### 4.3 The Meso level

#### **Social network theory**

Social network theory can be a valuable framework for comprehending the patterns and dynamics observed in labor migration, precisely, the function that social networks fulfill in enabling or hindering the movement of migrants (Gërxhani & Kosyakova, 2020; Rainer & Siedler, 2009; Van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013; Liu al., 2017). According to social network theory, the labor migration process is influenced by a multifaceted interaction between personal motivations, structural impediments, and social connections (Poros, 2011). Researchers who study migration generally agree that social networks have a significant role in determining migration plans and destination choices (EASO,2016, p.18). At the Meso level, Network theory states that migrant networks are the relationship that links migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination places through bonds of kinship and friendship (Massey et al., 1993, p. 448; Ryan et al.,2022, p.4). These networks give various information and support to members of a society who had similar experiences in the migration process. Information may be regarding career opportunities and labor force requirements in various nations, housing, and feedback on the different experiences (EASO,2016, p.17).

According to Massey et al. (1993), these relationships within social networks make the migration process more manageable by reducing the costs and risks of moving since they give newcomers the information and assistance they need (Massey et al., 1993, p. 449). Therefore, these networks are crucial in increasing or decreasing migration in the destination areas (Arango, 2004). The interrelated nature of personal and social networks represents a crucial Meso level between micro and macro migration framework (Faist, 1997; Goss & Lindquist, 1995). This level of analysis surpasses the impartial mechanics of gravity and push-pull migration theories, providing the opportunity to establish a link between the individual and socio-structural factors that drive migration (Faist, 1997; Goss & Lindquist, 1995). Some studies concentrated on the robustness and compactness of familial networks (Faist, 1997; Goss & Lindquist, 1995; Massey et al., 1993).

However, Granovetter (1973) categorized social networks into two types: strong ties and weak ties. Strong ties refer to connections that demand considerable time, energy, and emotional involvement, such as relationships involving a partner or parent-child interactions (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Thus, people anticipate receiving monetary and practical help from these robust



and secure ties. Conversely, weak ties refer to familiar strangers or distant relatives who usually hold a less critical role in an individual's social life (Granovetter, 1973). Weak ties may be formed according to shared cultures or nationalities, through brief friendships among migrants in vulnerable situations, or through the mutual experiences of collaborating and cohabitating (Sha, 2021, p. 7). However, it is vital to recognize the essential role of weak ties in easing the migration process, as emphasized by Granovetter (Giulietti et al., 2018, p. 2). Indeed, Granovetter emphasizes the power of weak connections, referring to a secondary circle of contacts linked to networks outside one's immediate network, thus presenting fresh data sources regarding job prospects (Giulietti et al., 2018, p. 2).

Nonetheless, Granovetter (1973) highlighted that weak ties are prone to function as a new data source compared to strong ties (Granovetter, 1973). This phenomenon is because close companions typically associate with similar social groups, acquiring information that frequently corresponds with the knowledge of others (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1362).

On the other hand, information is transmitted through social links, and social contacts who are not strongly interconnected to each other are more likely to have access to new and unique data (Burt, 1992; 1995; 2001). People who establish relationships that link two disjointed parts of a social network hold a connecting position, providing them with advantages such as quick access to unique, rapid, and non-repetitive Information (Burt, 1992; 1995; 2001), which can be crucial for new labor immigrants looking for job prospects and chances in a new community, country, and culture.

### **Social capital theory**

The viewpoint expressed by Massey et al. (1993) posits that migration networks are regarded as a manifestation of social capital spread across migrant regions, consequently enhancing the probability of migration (Massey et al., 1993). Social capital refers to the regulations, conventions, responsibilities, mutual trust, and confidence ingrained in a community's social associations, social frameworks, and institutional structures that empower its constituents to attain their objectives (Häuberer, 2011, p.38; Lin, 2008). Migrants can use this capital to obtain entry to job opportunities and other essential resources (Massey et al., 1993). In a social context, Putnam (2000) classified the components of social capital into bonding and bridging connections (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Bonding ties mostly happen among individuals with comparable experiences and knowledge (Putnam, 2000). Typically, these networks unify migrant groups

through bonds of friendship, kinship, and common origins within the same community (Ryan et al.,2022, p.4). It mainly points to the links among individuals within groups, encouraging social unity, uniformity, mutual exchange, and collaboration within social groups or societies defined geographically (Shin,2021, p. 330). It is also worth mentioning that the inherent quality of bonding social capital is such that it necessitates a high degree of trust among group members (Shin,2021, p. 330). The sense of camaraderie, kindness, and communal belonging that arises from these social ties can partially demonstrate why migrants remit money and other items to their families and relatives in their homeland (Mahmud, 2021).

However, networks that connect individuals from socially diverse groups are referred to as bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Bridging social capital creates connections between individuals of varying backgrounds, enabling diverse groups to exchange knowledge, data, and ideas while promoting agreement among groups with differing interests (Putnam, 2000, p.23; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). It encourages a culture that preserves values of inclusivity, variousness, regard, favor, and cross-group communication among various social groups (Shin,2021, p. 331). Putnam (2000) clarified that bonding and bridging social capital should be aligned to generate significant positive social outcomes (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). Studies have indicated that bonding social capital influences the exchange of information within a specific group, whereas bridging social capital plays a crucial role in disseminating information across diverse groups (Burt, 2000; Granovetter, 1985; Lin, 1999; Shin,2021, p. 331). Woolcock (2001) asserted that the notions of bonding and bridging should not be viewed as mutually exclusive but instead as complementary forces that work in tandem to foster the growth of social capital (Shin,2021, p. 331; Burt, 2000; Patulny & Svendsen, 2007; Rydin & Holman, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

In short, bonding in a new community and culture will help in terms of building trust and collaboration among people, and trying to create bridging can show different interests for improved communal help (Putnam, 2000). Although prominent, this theory has limitations (De Haas,2008, p. 20). Klaver (1997, p. 45) Mentioned that the theory of networks/social capital does not show the external and structural factors, as well as internal procedures that act against the forces which result in the growth of migration through networks (De Haas, 2008, p. 20).

Overall, both social capital and network theories are practical in showing how people need connections to find well-paid jobs in sectors. Consequently, we found these two theories to be

beneficial in revealing the decision-making process of migrants at the Meso level. Showing the connection between social network theory and Côte d'Ivoire's case, many labor migrants from neighboring countries, such as Burkina Faso, travel to Côte d'Ivoire to find good jobs and higher income levels. These labor migrants primarily have social ties with connections and relatives familiar with the Abobo municipality. These ties can provide migrants with essential information and assist them in adjusting to their new surroundings. The emphasis on social capital, whether bonding, bridging, weak ties, or strong, can manifest itself in this period leading up to migration and influence in what way migrants employ their social connections before and during their move to Côte d'Ivoire and these weak and strong ties in the theory of social networks to some extent indicate their role in the process of adaptation of immigrants to their new environments. Hence, as Massey et al. (1993) mentioned above, this theory minimizes the risks and costs of migrating because of the network and connection between people and the information exchanged between them.

#### 4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of migration theories and their application in understanding migration patterns and processes. The analysis was structured based on three levels of analysis: macro, meso, and micro.

At the macro level, migration theories examine the broader social, economic, and political forces that drive migration patterns. Factors such as globalization, environmental conditions, wars, and conflicts are considered in analyzing migration movements. The push and pull theory, introduced by Lee (1966), was discussed, where push factors refer to unfavorable conditions in the country of origin, while pull factors attract individuals to a new destination. At the meso level, social and economic conditions influencing regional and community migration patterns were examined. This level of analysis focused on social structures, institutions, and factors like households, communities, social networks, and labor markets. At the micro level, migration theories concentrate on individual elements influencing migration decisions. Age, gender, education level, decision-making characteristics, values, and desires affect individual migration decisions.

The chapter highlighted the significance of migration theories in understanding the underlying factors that drive migration movements and patterns. These theories are used to substantiate the validity of primary data in the research study and to answer the research questions and objectives. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of migration theories at

different levels of analysis, highlighting their relevance in understanding migration patterns and processes.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.0 Introduction

This study employed a qualitative and ethnographic research approach to better understand the migration process at different levels (Macro, Micro, Meso). According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research is characterized by its inductive, constructionist, and interpretive nature (Bryman et al., 2016, p. 374). The research methodology employed in this study utilized an inductive approach, focusing on exploring the relationship between theory and research. Relevant data and literature were collected to address the topic of interest in alignment with the theoretical framework, objectives, and research questions guiding this study. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research methodology adopted to understand the research process better.

Based on the research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework, primary data was collected from labor migrants using semi-structured interviews and group discussions. A convenience sampling approach was employed to connect with a small group of individuals directly relevant to the research case. These contacts were then utilized as references to access and engage with a broader pool of potential participants (Bryman et al., 2021). This approach allowed for a more targeted and focused exploration of the research topic, capturing diverse perspectives and experiences within the labor migrant population.

In addition to primary data collection, secondary data sources were utilized to complement and enrich the study. Secondary data, including existing literature, reports, and relevant documents, provided additional context and insights into the phenomenon under investigation. This comprehensive integration of primary and secondary data facilitated a better understanding of the research topic.

Considering the nature of the study and the need for an in-depth analysis of a specific case, a case study research design was considered the most appropriate. This design allowed for a detailed and intensive examination of the migration process, providing a rich and contextualized understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved.

The following chapter will analyze the research strategy, design, study population, sampling size, techniques, data collection methods, analysis procedures, validity and reliability considerations, ethical considerations, and challenges encountered throughout the pre-fieldwork and fieldwork phases. Addressing these key elements will thoroughly elucidate the research methodology, ensuring transparency and providing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of findings.

### 5.1 Research design

A large body of research focuses on macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors, examining the reasoning behind why individuals move across international borders. By employing the case study design and qualitative methods, the aim is to complement existing literature while complementing additional knowledge about the case of migration determinants and processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, at the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level. Furthermore, this thesis aims to exemplify how the different migration levels may be interconnected and to describe, compare, evaluate, and understand the different aspects of the research problem. On this account, the use of the case study design aims to focus on how decisions and aspirations of individuals, how the role of systems and networks, and how regional migration characteristics influence migratory movements while also considering the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant respondents in the Abobo municipality, Côte d'Ivoire.

Migration has been a feature of human existence for centuries; however, migration research is a more recent phenomenon. Research methods applied in migration studies often include qualitative methods such as ethnography or case studies and quantitative methods such as inferential statistics (Ullah et al., 2020, p.358). Considering the thesis problem statement, research questions, and objectives, using a qualitative research approach (case study) contributes to understanding migrants' behavior and a possible explanation of their movements/actions and the process of their settlement and integration into the host society. Furthermore, it provides an in-depth description of a specific phenomenon - the determinants of migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality.

### 5.2 Study population

Most immigrants to Côte d'Ivoire come from member countries of the ECOWAS community (IOM, 2009, p.67). According to Bryman (2012), the population indicates the larger group of individuals or units targeted for a specific study. This study consisted of young male labor

migrants who migrated from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire and currently live and work in the Abobo municipality. Young in this context refers to individuals aged between 20 and 40. This demographic was deemed the most relevant for our research as studies have revealed that this age group almost constitutes the largest population of immigrants (Zechlab, 2021, p.23; Konseiga, 2005, p. 30). To be eligible, migrants had to have lived in Côte d'Ivoire for a minimum of seven months, as the length of stay was essential for capturing their experiences with their occupation, understanding their challenges and opportunities in a new country as a labor migrant, and more importantly an examination of their perception of the migration process, including an analysis of the costs and benefits they have experienced concerning their move to this country so far. Abidjan, Abobo municipality was chosen as the study location because being a popular destination for migrants from neighboring countries in order to gain a deeper comprehension of people's reason for migrating here, as well as the problem regarding migration policy programs through a case study research design and a qualitative research strategy.

### 5.3 Sample size and Sampling Techniques

Ethnography is variable and contested, often overlapping with qualitative research such as case studies (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.3; Oreilly, 2012, p. 2). Ethnography usually involves small-scale research undertaken in everyday contexts. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (2007), ethnographers participate in people's daily lives for an extended period by watching what happens, listening to their words, asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artifacts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.3; Oreilly, 2012, p. 2). In this research study, the employed techniques and strategies encompass an *iterative-inductive* approach. According to Oreilly (2012), an inductive research approach is one where the researcher initiates with as open a mind and as few prejudices as possible, allowing theory to materialize from the data (Oreilly, 2012, p. 29). Oreilly (2012) further claims that the nature of ethnographic research is iterative-inductive. Iterative-inductive is a practice of doing research informed by a sophisticated inductive-ism, in which data collection, analysis, and writing are not discrete phases but inextricably linked (Oreilly, 2012, p. 30).

Furthermore, concerning sampling, Brown (2006) clarified that a sample is a component of the population, and sampling refers to the procedure of choosing a sample from the overall population (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Divakar, 2021, p.326). Bryman (2012) also noted that sampling is comprehensible as selecting a representative set of cases from a much larger set

(Bryman, 2012). After an in-depth review and study of Bryman's (2012) research regarding sampling, it was identified that selecting the proper and sharp sample concerning our respondent group is vital for acquiring a broader perspective on labor migration. As a result, in this study, the sample is centered on young male labor migrants from neighboring countries, such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Mali, and Guinea, who have migrated to Côte d'Ivoire and now reside in Abobo municipality of Abidjan. The choice of these respondent groups was predicated on the supposition that, in Abidjan, the predominant demographic comprising the majority of the immigrant population consists of male labor migrants from the aforementioned neighboring countries. Choosing this sample assured us that it could lead us toward the intended result. As mentioned, the study used interviews, focus group discussions, and snowball sampling to gather data. The participants for the interviews were selected precisely to minimize the possibility of any errors.

Regarding sample size, Bryman (2016) defines that, in qualitative research, it is crucial to ensure that the sample size is adequate and manageable (Bryman, 2016, p.417). Therefore, a total of 24 participants took part in this research study. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) also stated that for the research to be as transparent as possible concerning the choice of topic, problem, and research questions, the study should have specific criteria for the sample categories. Thus, the study set explicit requirements for the sample categories such as Labor Migrant, Male, and Age (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, it should be emphasized that these requirements did not include the laborers' nationalities, ethnicities, citizenship, and work position.

Snowball sampling was used for the selected 24 participants from the labor migrant sample population. One of the reasons for choosing the snowball sampling method was because it is deemed valuable due to its potential to handle delicate topics perceived as sensitive and private by most participants (Bryman et al., 2021). However, we knew that snowball sampling might lead to heterogenous sample participants; therefore, some individuals could be excluded (Oreilly, 2012, p.44). Hence, in this thesis, besides using snowball sampling, the researchers also explored the possibility of employing another sampling technique for selecting respondents, such as purposive sampling.

Bryman (2016) states that purposive sampling chooses participants based on their familiarity and understanding of the research questions. This sampling method was also utilized to obtain a sample of participants with varied characteristics. Moreover, Bryman (2012) highlighted that it is

significant to target a diverse group of individuals through interviews, who might hold varying opinions and viewpoints based on their backgrounds and context. Regarding this, Oreilly (2012), states that purposive sampling ensures diversity (Oreilly, 2012, p.44). Consequently, the sample was consciously picked to include migrants of diverse family backgrounds, religious backgrounds, levels of educational attainment, and economic statuses to eliminate any prejudices that could result from only interviewing individuals from limited demographic groups.

### 5.3.1 Semi- structured Interviews

Semi- structured interviews were employed as the primary method of gathering information from migrants. These interviews aimed to understand better the participant's perceptions, thoughts, and experiences related to labor migration, including the challenges, opportunities, and motivations behind their migration to Abobo municipality. In addition, interviews were chosen as the method of data collection because they provide flexibility, enhance focus, and offer the potential to gather rich, detailed, and in-depth information (Bryman, 2016, p.467). Due to its flexibility as a reference, the use of a semi-structured interview guide ensured that each area of the study, such as research questions, was thoroughly covered during the interview process. The study was primarily focused on male labor migrants, whose perspectives played a crucial role in answering the research questions. Hence, interviews were conducted with this group to gain insight into their attitudes, motivations, and opinions regarding the migration process, obstacles, migration policy in Abidjan, and employment possibilities.

Before gathering data, a practice test was carried out using the interview guide to ensure the questions functioned adequately and were comprehensible to prospective participants. The practice test involved a small number of potential answerers in identifying any issues with the question types, clearness, and, most notably, the effectiveness of translating the content from English into French with the help of a translator for the interviewees' comprehension. Following interviews with two labor migrants on the street, we determined that some questions might be unclear and required French rewording. Hence, based on their feedback and the translator's assistance, a finalized version of the interview guide was developed and employed for data collection in the thesis.

Before commencing each interview, informed consent was obtained from the respondents, and they were apprised of their rights, the study's objectives, content, and an overview of the



interview procedure. In addition to recording, a notebook was always ready to be utilized, if necessary, to capture some significant details of some interviews meticulously.

The semi-structured interview guide for labor migrants consisted of four sections. The initial section included questions regarding their demographic features. The second and third sections covered inquiries into their reasons for migrating to Côte d'Ivoire, the type of employment they secured and their salary, the factors that led to their decision to migrate and those who influenced it, their perspective on ECOWAS's role in this regard, and their methods for finding job opportunities, including the role of networks and job search strategies they had, as well as the cost and benefit of their moving process. The last section examines their challenges and opportunities as labor migrants in Abidjan and how they see their future there.

### 5.3.2 Focus group discussions

The study included individual semi-structured interviews and two focus group discussions. Each group was interviewed two times. Focus groups are a promising technique in migration research since they provide a space for "public thinking" and give researchers a deeper understanding of the experiences of migrants (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018, p.191; 206). Therefore, we considered conducting focus group discussions with labor migrants crucial to comprehend the participants' attitudes and conceptions. These group discussions facilitate an environment where participants can express themselves more freely in a group on specific questions instead of simply as individuals (Bryman, 2016, p.501). In addition, based on Bryman (2021), focus group discussion lets researchers jointly analyze possible solutions and investigate more profoundly the motivations behind each participant's decisions and debates (Bryman et al., 2021). Focus group interviews were scheduled to collect information from these groups who were male labor migrants. The arrangement of the focus group discussions (FGDs) was founded on the demographic characteristics of the participants, allowing various groups to show their emotions and opinions without restriction from the presence of other groups.

Before conducting the focus group discussions, it was necessary to address specific ethical considerations, mainly since the topics discussed were sensitive. Focus group discussions are not typically used when discussing sensitive topics because people may feel uncomfortable discussing their concerns in a group setting (Smithson, 2007). However, the approach was selected because combining individual semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions provided a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. Furthermore, the

researcher cannot guarantee that all discussions in this context will remain confidential (Smithson, 2007). Therefore, various measures were implemented to guarantee the safety and comfort of the participants during the discussions. These included maintaining the confidentiality of the data, allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time, and requesting that participants respect each other's confidentiality and not repeat what was discussed in the group (Smithson, 2007).

It should be noted, however, that the latter can only partially be enforced (Smithson, 2007). We used open-ended questions to ensure the discussions were free flowing, allowing for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. The participants were encouraged to freely share their thoughts and experiences without feeling restricted by the researcher's questions or interview guide.

#### 5.4 Secondary data

The research study required primary and secondary data, as each data type has different advantages and limitations. Primary data was collected directly from the research participants, while secondary data was collected from existing sources such as literature reviews and publicly available data. Due to limited resources such as time and costs, secondary data was used to complement the primary data in this research study (Bryman et al., 2021). This approach provided a more comprehensive understanding of the general topic and helped build a solid foundation for the study. The research study examined the thesis problem statement in greater depth using secondary data sources such as national migration reports, intra-African migration reports, internet research, books, and journals on West-African migration, providing additional insights into the phenomenon of interest. However, it is essential to be conscious of the limitations of secondary data, such as the potential for bias or outdated information. Thorough consideration of the quality and relevance of secondary data sources was essential to ensure that the research findings were accurate and reliable.

Using primary and secondary data in the research study strengthened the credibility and validity of the findings. Including multiple sources of information helped reinforce the study results. The primary data provided firsthand insights into the research participants' experiences, perspectives, and lived realities. It offered a detailed understanding of their motivations, challenges, and aspirations regarding migration. On the other hand, secondary data supplemented this knowledge

by providing a broader contextual framework, facilitating comparisons, and identifying patterns across different populations or regions.

In summary, the research study benefited from integrating primary and secondary data, as each data type contributed unique insights and perspectives. The use of secondary data expanded the research scope, provided historical and comparative context, and supported the development of a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

### 5.5 Methods of Data Collection

The primary data for this research study was collected between January and March 2023. Due to the study's sensitive topic, it was three intensive months with a final product of 24 respondents. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The research study strictly followed NSDs (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) privacy protection principles to ensure privacy protection and that all personal data processing was predictable for the research participants. Each interview was recorded through the Dictaphone app on a smartphone, and the recordings were sent to *Nettskjema.no*. *Nettskjema* is Norway's most secure solution for data collection for research. During the interviews, the tapes were immediately encrypted on the phone, and for security reasons, one cannot listen to recordings in the mobile app (uio, 2022). For that reason, one must log in to *nettskjema* to access the audio recordings. The data were collected in three stages. The first stage included twelve individual interviews. The second phase included two group discussions, and the third phase included a second round of group discussions with the same two group respondents. The group discussions were divided into groups of five and six people. These methods allowed an in-depth qualitative understanding of individuals' migration decisions and internal and external factors regarding the research questions and objectives. The semi-structured interviews provided an understanding of how the respondents interpreted and made sense of ongoing issues and events related to the topic (Bryman, 2012).

### 5.6 Validity and reliability

Evaluating the quality of research often involves assessing its validity and reliability, which are two essential criteria (Bryman, 2016; O'Reilly, 2012). According to Bryman 2016, the validity of research involves examining the credibility of the conclusions generated from it (Bryman, 2016, p.41). Likewise, O'Reilly 2012 explains that the concept of validity should assess whether the research effectively measures its intended targets and whether there is adequate evidence to

bolster the argument (Oreilly, 2012, p. 226). The importance of validity lies in its role in identifying the right sorts of tests to be used. It guarantees that the methods utilized by researchers are ethical and effectively measure the targeted concept or form (Bryman, 2012).

Conversely, reliability focuses on the repeatability of the results obtained from a study (Bryman, 2016, p.41). Concerning these considerations, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced four criteria to establish rigor and assure the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Bryman, 2016, p.44). These criteria included credibility, transferability, dependability, and Confirmability. Credibility means accurately presenting the firsthand experiences of participants whose data has been collected and presented (Bryman, 2016, p.44, 384).

Moreover, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the transferability criterion encompasses the compatibility of qualitative research outcomes for use in different contexts beyond the original study, equivalent to the generalizability concept in quantitative research (Bryman, 2016, p.44, 384). Dependability concerns reducing the impact of personal interpretations and beliefs in data analysis, similar to reliability or replicability in quantitative analysis (Bryman, 2016, p.44, 384). Alternatively, Confirmability was defined as the extent to which the researcher's biases and motivations shape the way data is interpreted, which corresponds to the objectivity in research (Bryman, 2016, p.44, 386). This thesis utilized multiple data-gathering methods to assure reliability and validity. For instance, before collecting the data, the tools were pre-examined doubled to confirm that the participants comprehended them correctly to provide an accurate answer to the research questions. According to Oreilly (2012), a sample is taken due to the impossibility of interviewing or surveying every individual in a population. However, this sample must illustrate the broader population in significant ways so that the conclusions from the sample can be generalized to the entire population (Oreilly, 2012, p. 225).

Therefore, it has been crucial throughout this research to select participants from diverse backgrounds to gain a broad knowledge of the condition of labor migrants. In this thesis, it is recognized that the small sample population could raise questions about the comparability of the study area population. Nevertheless, complementary techniques enabled a comprehensive and diverse examination of the data.

### 5.7 Ethical considerations (After fieldwork)

When conducting qualitative research and conferring the ethics of social research, scholars often take different stances when discussing ethical issues (Bryman et al., 2021). Migration scholars,

for instance, are often confronted with ethical problems that other researchers do not need to consider. Migration policies are hotly debated in the Ivorian context, and collecting reliable information from our participants was challenging.

Migration researchers often work on sensitive, vulnerable individuals and hard-to-reach individuals (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2019), and protecting the participants is essential when carrying out migration research. As the study involved human participants and addressed their personal lives and issues, it is critical to be aware of any potential harm to them. In this regard, we, as researchers, focused entirely on building a robust relationship of trust and respect with the participants' aspirations, conditions, and limitations. Therefore, concerning moral principles during the research process, various ethical considerations have directed this research.

According to Diener and Crandall's Ethical principles (1978), four main areas should be considered. These steps, which were followed thoroughly in the conduct of this study, contain informed consent, where participants willingly agree to be interviewed and participate in the research after being adequately informed, avoiding acts of deception, and assurance of privacy and confidentiality by preserving the subjects' identities and generating precise reports of the research results (Bryman, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, as researchers, it is crucial to conduct ethical research that preserves the moral rights of the participants. Moreover, in this regard, guidelines from The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (Etikkom) relating to ethics self-assessment illustrate that the truth norm is an intrinsic ethical standard for conducting research, emphasizing the importance of having superior and trustworthy research (Etikkom, 2022). To ensure a reliable study, Etikkom has classified the fundamental ethical principles that prioritize human dignity into three distinct categories - *respect*, *beneficence*, and *justice* (Etikkom, 2022, p.5). Ethical issues can be categorized into internal and external ethical considerations.

Concerning internal ethical issues, Etikkom (2022) outlines that they involve difficulties associated with ethical guidelines designed to regulate the research community and establish criteria for "*good scientific practice*" (Etikkom, 2022, p.5). One internal ethical challenge during the study was an objective and transparent research process and preserving impartiality. The approach to address these challenges aligns with the principles established by Etikkom in 2022. One clear example is that measures have been taken to refrain from disclosing personal opinions on immigration policies in Côte d'Ivoire to the study participants in order to maintain an

impartial stance. Hence, our beliefs and perspectives were kept independent during the research method and data collection to address these challenges.

On the contrary, external ethical issues have focused on our relationship as a researcher, participants, and society (Ettikom, 2022). Our strategy for addressing these challenges has included demonstrating respect for labor migrants, preventing potential physical or emotional harm, and protecting their right to privacy. Firstly, as the labor migrant topic might be sensitive, it was essential to demonstrate the study's intent and goals to the participants and obtain their consent before starting any interviews (Bryman, 2012; 2016). Therefore, the researcher gave the participants a comprehensive and straightforward understanding of the research's objective and procedure. Mutually, the participants also were aware of their right to leave the research at any moment if they believed it necessary or decline to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable.

Furthermore, the respondents were guaranteed that the personal data they gave us would be used exclusively for academic goals and would not be revealed to any other parties. Thus, when reporting the findings, the ages and genders of the respondents are disclosed, and name codes are employed instead of actual names, preserving the confidentiality and anonymity of the informants. Consequently, all these implemented measures addressed the ethical considerations of the research.

Moreover, regarding interviewing and contacting people during the Covid- 19 pandemic in Côte d'Ivoire, as researchers, it is essential to consider safety first for the participants and then for us. Consequently, prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, our vaccination process had been completed. Nevertheless, it was known that both transmission and contraction of COVID-19 could occur, especially in a population where the number of people vaccinated is deficient. Therefore, according to government-initiated recommendations, all the infection prevention measures were carefully followed during the stay and fieldwork. A strategic plan was also created in case of an outbreak, including wearing a mask and keeping a distance of two meters. It is worth noting that, although adherence to these regulations was optional during the fieldwork, they were carefully observed to minimize potential risks to the participants.

## 5.8 Fieldwork

Since Migration research often includes work on sensitive, vulnerable individuals and hard-to-reach populations (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2019), good planning is essential before, during, and after fieldwork for better primary data quality. It is correspondingly vital for the protection of the respondent and the researcher. In addition, several challenges were encountered during fieldwork, which it is important to address to avoid and prepare for better strategies in future research.

It was vital to gain knowledge of migration research (Abobo municipality), considering that it was not isolated from political conflicts and controversies (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2019). In addition, gaining knowledge on migration flows in Abobo municipality from available literature was a helpful strategy. It made the study aware that the researchers may encounter irregular migrants, and precautions were crucial regarding harm and risks for both participants and researchers.

Furthermore, investigating and comprehending migrant-related differences, including ethnic dilemmas and ethnic definitions within Ivorian society, emerged as a crucial step in the research preparation. The researchers recognized that tensions between residents, migrants, and the government could significantly impact the research process and participants' accessibility. Consequently, classifying and categorizing ethnic groups within the Ivorian community played a significant role during the preparatory phases. This approach fostered a sense of critical awareness and self-reflection, enabling the researchers to navigate potential sensitivities and complexities in their interactions (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2019).

By engaging in thorough preparatory work and addressing these challenges proactively, the researchers aimed to enhance the reliability and validity of their study. By acknowledging the multifaceted nature of migration research, they sought to ensure their research's ethical conduct, protect the participants' rights and well-being, and contribute to a better understanding of migration dynamics in the Abobo municipality.

### 5.8.1 Challenges during fieldwork

Several challenges were encountered during the collection of the primary data. Migration research is often considered complex due to a so-called hard-to-reach population and is often classified as a sensitive topic to research. Behalf of this statement, during fieldwork, the researchers soon realized that this was true. In the beginning phase of the fieldwork, it took much

work to reach respondents who wanted to participate in the research study. One of the primary reasons behind this was the topic's sensitivity and tensions about the topic within the community. However, with the use of the snowball sampling strategy, the researchers were able to contact individuals through other respondents.

Furthermore, the interview set period and the respondents' availability presented significant challenges. As a result of late working hours for all respondents, the planning of interviews was limited. Almost all respondents only had Sundays off and worked until late at night the rest of the week. Therefore, planning and finding safe and stable places for the interviews was a challenge. In addition, some of the interviews were often postponed. The reason was partly due to late working hours and heavy traffic, which the capital is characterized by, which made it almost impossible to carry out the interviews. Therefore, the researchers actively chose to cancel interviews if it got too late in the evening for the safety of both the participant and the researchers.

Another problem was the language barrier between the researchers and the local community. Although the actual interviews with the interpreter went relatively easy, it was difficult to get in touch with the local population through an interpreter. It was, therefore, difficult to get in contact with participants through a third person.

Several challenges were encountered during the data collection process that added complexity to the study. Migration research is known for its intricate nature, often involving a so-called "hard-to-reach" population and being classified as a sensitive topic for investigation. Consistent with this assertion, we quickly realized the reality of these claims. In the initial stages of fieldwork, considerable effort was required to establish contact with respondents willing to participate in the research study. This difficulty originated primarily from the sensitivity surrounding the topic and the underlying tensions within the community. However, by implementing a snowball sampling strategy, we could avoid these obstacles by using existing connections and reaching out to individuals through referrals from previously engaged respondents. This approach proved valuable in expanding the participant pool and overcoming the initial challenges faced in data collection.

In addition, the language barrier between the researchers and the local community emerged as another significant issue during the research study. Given that the researchers were not proficient in the native language of the community under investigation, effective communication posed a



significant obstacle. While the actual interviews conducted with the assistance of an interpreter proceeded relatively smoothly, establishing initial contact with the local population through the intermediary of an interpreter proved to be a challenging task. Consequently, reaching out to potential participants became considerably more complex and long-lasting.

The researchers faced the complex challenge of relying on a third person, the interpreter, to facilitate communication and connect with prospective participants. Although an interpreter was necessary to ensure that the interviews were conducted with linguistic accuracy and understanding, it added extra complexity to the research process. The language barrier created a sense of unfamiliarity and distance between the researchers and the local community, making it challenging to establish initial engagement and build bonds. The researchers also encountered difficulties in effectively conveying the purpose and significance of the study and addressing any concerns or reservations that potential participants may have had.

The language barrier also limited the researchers' ability to investigate the complex details of participants' experiences. Translations may sometimes overlook or weaken the slight cultural detailed essential for fully capturing the richness and complexity of individuals' migration experiences. This potential loss in communication highlights the importance of direct engagement with participants and a shared linguistic framework for facilitating comprehensive data collection and analysis. Efforts were made to mitigate the impact of the language barrier on the research process. The researchers collaborated closely with the interpreter to ensure accurate translation and interpretation of interview questions and responses. Preparatory measures, such as providing the interpreter with relevant background information and clarifying the research objectives, were undertaken to enhance their understanding and facilitate effective communication. However, the inherent challenges and limitations imposed by the language barrier necessitated careful consideration and adaptation in the research methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data.

Before we arrived in Côte d'Ivoire, as researchers based in Norway, thorough preparations were made to ensure the availability of an interpreter for our research project. Consistent and regular communication with the interpreter several months before our arrival in Côte d'Ivoire gave us a positive impression of their language proficiency, particularly in English. The ongoing exchange of information and discussions allowed us to develop confidence in the interpreter's abilities. However, upon the initial round of participant interviews, it became evident that the interpreter's

English proficiency was not adequate. This deficiency in communication between the researchers and the interpreter had a detrimental impact on the interview process, resulting in unsatisfactory outcomes regarding information gathering and overall interview flow.

Moreover, the interpreter's failure to adhere to agreed-upon schedules became a recurring issue, significantly losing valuable time in the field. Recognizing the need for a resolution, a decision was made to replace the original interpreter. The interpreter who followed, whose native language was the same as English, demonstrated exceptional language skills, which greatly aided effective communication during the interviews. Moreover, the newly assigned interpreter consistently arrived on time and familiarized himself with the study objectives and interview questions. This smooth integration of the interpreter into the research process significantly contributed to the overall success of the study.

## 5.9 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research methods used to conduct this study based on the research questions. The chapter discusses the rationale for using a case study design and qualitative methods to complement existing literature and comprehensively understand migration at macro, meso, and micro levels.

The chapter primarily introduced the design and strategy of the research, briefly emphasizing their significance concerning this thesis. The study's demographic and data sources concisely outlined that most labor migrants in Côte d'Ivoire come from ECOWAS member countries, with Burkina Faso being the largest group. The population of interest for the research includes young male labor migrants aged between 20 and 40 who migrated from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire and currently reside and work in Abobo municipality.

Sampling techniques and size were explained using snowball sampling and purposive sampling. The aim is to select a sample representing the larger population of labor migrants in the study area. The sample size comprises 24 participants, chosen to ensure diversity regarding family backgrounds, religious backgrounds, educational accomplishments, and economic status. Following this, the methods for selecting participants and the processes for gathering and analyzing data were thoroughly explained, including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data sources, such as national migration reports and existing literature, are also utilized to complement the primary data collected.

Additionally, explanations were provided regarding the issues of reliability and validity, as well as the ethical considerations, ensuring an understanding of these essential aspects. Lastly, the difficulties faced during fieldwork and the researcher's contribution in tackling them were discussed in depth.

## CHAPTER SIX: PRESENTATION OF DATA

### 6.0 Introduction

The research study consists of two main research questions in order to be able to examine the thesis problem statement; 1) *What are the main push and pull factors influencing the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and how do they weigh the associated costs and benefits in their decision-making process?* And 2) *What is the role of networks for labor Migrants in Abobo municipality?*

Primary data was collected from research participants through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions to answer these questions. These models allowed the researchers to collect data through open-ended questions and discussions, which resulted in a deeper exploration of the respondent's perspectives and experiences related to the research questions, problem, and objectives.

The following chapter presents a description of data collected during fieldwork. The first section provides the socio-demographic characteristics of the research respondents. In this section, the data presented is displayed in tables, charts, and graphs provided by the introductory questions in the interview guide at the beginning of the individual interviews and group discussions. The second section involves a more in-depth presentation of data collected from the respondent's perspectives and experiences during interviews and group discussions. The chapter provides rich and detailed data, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic that can be analyzed in depth with the secondary data, theories, and perspectives.

### 6.1 Socio demographic characteristics

The background characteristics (profile of the migrant respondent) are arranged in separate tables throughout the first section of the chapter and represent 24 respondents. It is essential to emphasize that the migrant respondents are settled in urban areas of Côte d'Ivoire and represent residents of Abobo municipality, Abidjan. The analysis of the findings must be understood within these circumstances, as the experiences and perspectives of migrants in urban areas may differ from those of rural Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, the data collection represents males between the ages of 20 and 40. This limitation must also be considered during the analysis of findings and when concluding, as the attitudes, viewpoints, and backgrounds of other categories of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire may differ from those in this research study. Socio-demographic characteristics refer to the characteristics of a population (Aubagna, 2020). When conducting social research, it is essential to assess the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, as these characteristics can influence individuals' behaviors, experiences, and attitudes (Aubagna, 2020). Furthermore, it provides valuable insight into understanding the challenges related to the complex relationship between the different variables of the migrant respondents.

#### 6.1.2 Age

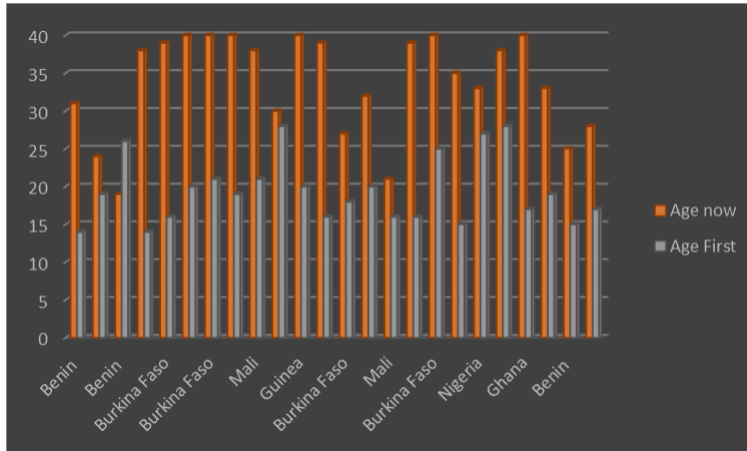
Evaluating the age distribution of participants is vital in discerning potential variations in experiences, attitudes, and behaviors among diverse age groups. The age categories of

respondents in our study were 20-40. Notably, most migrant/respondents in Abobo municipality, Abidjan, were predominantly within these age categories. In-depth, the migrants' average and median age were determined to be 19 years when they first migrated to Côte d'Ivoire. At the time of the interviews, the average age of participants was around 34, and the Median was 37. It is evident why individuals within the 20-40 age group are more inclined to migrate to the study area than older individuals. One possible explanation is that these young people carefully weigh the costs and benefits of pursuing a better life, often seeking employment with higher payment. Furthermore, the interviews disclosed that the participants might possess no viable options other than migration due to their unfavorable financial circumstances and limited employment prospects. Consequently, they are compelled to provide monetary assistance to their families by remitting funds to their country of origin.

*Table 3, Age now, Age upon arrival*

	<i>Age now</i>	<i>Age upon arrival</i>
<b>Median</b>	<i>37</i>	<i>19</i>
<b>Average</b>	<i>34</i>	<i>19</i>

Figure 7: Age now, Age upon arrival



### 6.1.3 Country of Origin/ Nationality

Addressing the respondents' nationality is essential in the context of the research question and objectives. Firstly, assessing the respondents' nationality can help ensure that the sample is representative of the population examined and that the data collection findings are representative of the population as a whole. Secondly, assessing the respondents' nationality was essential for comprehending national and regional migration policies impacting the target population. Thirdly, in research studies related to immigration, assessing nationality may be a vital factor for understanding individuals' legal-political contexts, such as work permits, residency, or citizenship. Lastly, nationality can be an indicator of cultural background, and it provides the researchers with an awareness of cultural diversity and its potential impacts on an individual.

The table indicates the country of origin and nationality of the interviewed respondents. Most respondents were from Burkina Faso (33%) and Benin (25%). Furthermore, the following figures estimated migrant workers from Mali (12.50%), Guinea (12.50%), Ghana (8.33%), and Nigeria (8.33%).

'Country of origin' and 'nationality' were part of the introductory questions in the interview guide. The researchers used both terms to avoid stereotypes or injustices and for the respondents to identify themselves. However, it is vital to note that the term nationality may pose potential ethical considerations and limitations.

Table 4: Country of Origin/ Nationality

		Frequency	Percentage
Country of Origin/ Nationality	Benin	6	25%
	Burkina Faso	8	33.33%

	Nigeria	2	8.33%
	Ghana	2	8.33%
	Mali	3	12.50%
	Guinea	3	12.50%
		n-24	100%

#### 6.1.4 Permit status/ Documents possessed by the migrant

Understanding the residency circumstances of immigrants is paramount, as their residency status plays a decisive role in determining the employment conditions to which they are subject. In this research, permit status and documentation possessed by male labor migrants are categorized into different groups, including Ivorian Passport, Passport from the country of origin, Ivorian identity card, Work permit, residence permit, and Paperless/stateless. Regrettably, a significant portion of the migrant laborers lacks the necessary documentation or proof of residence to demonstrate their legal authorization to work across various sectors—these categories of migrants are identified as either Paperless or stateless, estimated at (37.93%). Subsequently, (17.24%) of the migrants had a work permit, indicating their legal status to reside and seek employment across various sectors in compliance with the host country's regulations. Following that, three separate groups, which all represented (13.79%) of the sample, held distinct forms of documentation: passports originating from their home country, Ivorian identity cards, and residence permits. Meanwhile, only a few (3.45%) had Ivorian Passports.

*Table 5: Document possessed by the migrant*

Document possessed by the migrant	Frequency	Percentage
Ivorian passport	1	3.45%
Passport from country of origin	4	13.79%
Ivorian identity card	4	13.79%
Work permit	5	17.24%
Residence permit	4	13.79%
Consular card	0	0%
Paperless	11	37.93%
<b>Total</b>	(n- 29)	100%

### 6.1.5 The Socio-professional category (SPC) and Sector of activity of the migrant

The Socio-professional category (SPC) and the Sector of activity of the migrant is an essential socio-demographic characteristic that helps us analyze the migrant patterns and their effects on migration. The Socio-professional category (SPC) is the classification used to categorize individuals based on their occupation and social status (Guedel et al., 2013). By evaluating the SPC, we can analyze the connection between socioeconomic status and the potential effects on factors such as income and education. For instance, 58,33% of the study respondents were self-employed/ own account workers. This information can provide insights into the resourcefulness and entrepreneurial spirit of the migrant respondents. The study demonstrates that the self-employed/own-account workers faced different challenges than those in other categories. For instance, they had more irregular job security, meaning their work schedule was fluent, leading to unstable income. 28,8% of the study respondents were categorized as skilled worker employees. Skilled employees are individuals who work in occupations that require specialized knowledge or training. It involves professions such as building, mechanics, and taxi driving. Compared to self-employed/own-account workers, the study results demonstrated that the skilled workers had a more regular salary and higher income. However, most respondents in this categorization were not permanently employed, which suggests that these individuals also faced job insecurity and challenges related to employment status, even when they had specialized skills and training. Only 7.4% of the migrant respondents were categorized as boss/manager. It involved owned businesses such as selling car parts or owning a store. The study results demonstrated that owning a business provided a more secure income than the migrant respondents in the other categories. Owning a business can provide flexibility and independence. However, it also comes with the risk of income insecurity. Businesses depend on customers, and the study results demonstrated that fluctuations in demand or competition could lead to income instability also for the respondents in this category.

*Table 6: The Socio-professional category of the migrant*

<b>The Socio-professional category of the migrant</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Skilled worker employee	8	28.8 %
Self- employed/ own account worker	14	58.33%
Boss	2	7. 4%
Unemployed	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	n-24	100%



*Table shows the distribution of migrants according to the socio-professional category of in the main job. Note that most migrants (58, 33%) are self-employed.*

#### 6.1.6 Occupation/main source of livelihood in origin country

A thorough examination of the employment conditions of migrants before their relocation is essential for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of their occupational preferences and the circumstances in their country of origin that may have contributed to their decision to migrate. The respondents' occupations before migrating to Côte d'Ivoire were grouped into the following categories: agriculture, student, small jobs, self-employed, and business. As shown in the table, a significant proportion of the participants (41.67%) were predominantly self-employed before their migration, followed by (25%) of migrants who had small jobs. A minor segment of the respondents (8.33%) was engaged in business-related activities, while (16.67%) were students before their migration. The rest (12.5%) of the respondents engaged in the agricultural sector before migration.

Consequently, as shown in the data, self-employment and small jobs with higher percentages were principally the main prior occupations of most migrants. Notably, for respondents who identified themselves as self-employed, their job may have contributed to their mobility and flexibility in relocating.

*Table 7: Occupation/main source of livelihood*

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Occupation/main source of livelihood</b>	Agriculture	3	12.5%
	Student	4	16.67%
	Small jobs	6	25%
	Business	2	8.33%
	Self employed	10	41.67%
	<b>Total</b>	n-24	100%

### 6.1.7 Material status

Most of the migrant respondents were married (62.50%). Single people represented 33.33% of the target group, and 4.17% were widowed. Material status among the migrant respondents is essential to examine because it reflects individuals' socio-economic position within society. Marital status may affect income, education, and employment (Crimmins et al., 2004). For instance, married individuals may have higher household incomes and more stable occupations than unmarried individuals. However, as a household (e.g., a married couple with children), there are also more people to nourish/provide for, which can affect one's financial position. In addition, marital status can affect health outcomes, such as social isolation and limiting or increasing access to social support networks (Crimmins et al., 2004).

*Table 8: Material status*

		Frequency	Percentage
Material status	Single	8	33.33%
	Married	15	62.50%
	Widower	1	4.17%
		n-24	100%

### 6.1.8 Education

The greatest social attribute distinguishing migrants is their marked deficiency in educational attainment, with the majority relatively being poorly educated. The respondents in our research were classified into five education categories: No Education, Primary School, Secondary School, and University education. Most respondents (41.67 %) had a Secondary School, followed by (37.5%) who had no education. A smaller percentage of respondents (4.17 %) had a university degree, and (16.67%) had primary education. Hence, the evidence indicates that the predominant demographic among labor migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire is those with substandard education levels; only (4.17 %) of labor migrants have advanced education, like university degrees.

Notwithstanding, it is crucial to highlight that the study solely focused its sample on the male labor migrant population in Abidjan, Abobo municipality, not the whole population of immigrants who come to Côte d'Ivoire. Among the individuals who received secondary school, the majority attributed their discontinuation of academic pursuits to insufficient financial help and prevailing poverty in their countries of origin, as revealed through the interviews. Consequently, it can be inferred that these reasons have significantly impacted their decision to terminate continuing education and migrate to Côte d'Ivoire.

*Table 9: Education*

Education	Frequency	Percentage
No Education	9	37.5%
Primary School	4	16.67%
Secondary School	10	41.67 %
University	1	4.17 %
<b>Total</b>	n- 24	100%

### 6.1.9 Beliefs

Beliefs play an essential role in the context of the research study topic. Belief or a person's religion can shape how individuals and society perceive and understand migration, and it can affect the migrant and destination society in distinct ways. It was important for the research study to ask questions about matters that deal with religion and cultural differences. Religious affiliations influence migration patterns in Côte d'Ivoire. Today, the country's northern regions are Muslim-dominated, and the southern regions are Christian-dominated, which can be an important factor in where people migrate. However, religion and beliefs can also be a source of tension and conflict between different ethnic and religious groups, which has been the case in Côte d'Ivoire in the past decades.

Most respondents were Muslims (75%), 20.83 % were Christians, and 17% had other beliefs. The country of origin may explain the high predominance of the Muslim religion among the migrant respondents. These include people from Burkina Faso and Mali, Guinea, and Benin, where populations mainly practice Islam as their religion.

*Table 10: Beliefs*

		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Beliefs</b>	Muslim	18	75%
	Christian	5	20.83%
	Other Beliefs	1	4.17%
		n-24	100%

### 6.1.10 Mother tongue

The study results demonstrated that language was a significant barrier for some of the migrant respondents in the study. French is the official language of Côte d'Ivoire. Mother tongue refers to the language that a person has learned from birth or a language a person learns at a very young age. 16.67% of the migrant respondents had English as their mother tongue, and 83.3% had French. French is spoken extensively in other West African nations, such as Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, the primary countries of origin for most respondents. However, the migrant respondents from Nigeria or Ghana had English as their first language. The language barrier

created challenges for the migrant respondents in accessing employment opportunities, connecting with locals, and their social life. Therefore, the migrant respondents in the study quickly learned French right after their arrival.

*Table 11: Mother tongue of respondents*

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Mother tongue</b>	English	4	16.67%
	French	20	83.3%
		n-24	100%

## 6.2 Job activities of the migrants' respondents

In addition to analyzing the sectors in which labor migrants are employed, it is also important to examine their specific job roles. It is particularly noteworthy as many labor migrants often occupy low-income positions, earning just enough to cover essential expenses such as rent and food. Consequently, many of these individuals live below the poverty line, struggling to make ends meet. Therefore, in this section, we aim to explain the specific types of occupations in which migrant workers are engaged within the Abobo municipality. Through interviews conducted with migrants, a diverse range of small-scale jobs emerged as the most common forms of employment. These include working in the cemetery, selling and repairing shoes, collecting scrap metal and plastic from the streets, building construction, driving taxis, conducting grave prayers, working as barbers, and engaging in street vending. In some cases, migrants also become shop owners, running businesses such as car workshops, material shops, motor spare parts shops, and mechanic services.

### 6.2.1 Types of Jobs Engaged in by Migrants

The informal jobs mentioned above are typical in Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, as labor migrants need to make money. As such, they will engage in any activities that will bring income. The respondents faced barriers in securing formal employment with higher wages because of their limited access to formal education, legal documentation, and professional skills. One of the respondents provided insight into his job's circumstances as follows:

*" I work at the cemetery, and I sell and fix shoes in the street. I do not know what to say, but the money I make is not enough as I must also help my old mother by helping pay for food and electricity bills. I lost my phone a few months ago, and I cannot buy a new one because no money is left for me. I have multiple jobs and I must work a lot to pay my rent. If I only had one job, I would not survive. I should not complain too much because of God "* (Labor migrant, aged 34).

Based on the statements of most interviewees, the research findings indicate that, due to migrants' meager earnings, they frequently resort to working double shifts or maintaining multiple jobs. Despite these efforts, some still struggle to generate sufficient income for their livelihoods. Another respondent described his working and income conditions as follows:

*"I have been picking up old irons and plastic bags from the floors and street for 20 years now. I have a big bag that is sometimes dirty and old. I am unsatisfied with the job as it is not easy and the money, I get is insufficient. I do hard jobs and get little money. Everything is expensive, and I can only pay for food and rent and sometimes, I cannot. But that is living, it is what it is"* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

In a similar situation, another migrant mentioned:

*"It is almost 25 years that I have been working in construction work. However, I do not have a stable job. You can have a contract today and be without a job for two weeks or sometimes more. So, your life will be difficult when the money you earned from the previous contract finishes. I must feed my children, pay the rent and transportation. Sometimes I have nothing by the end of the month"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

The respondent's experiences indicate that their jobs are physically demanding and challenging. The results also reveal a lack of job security as many labor migrants in Abobo municipality do not have stable employment and may go weeks without work. For instance, another migrant stated as follows:

*"I come to the cemetery to pray on the grave of dead people because I am a Muslim. That's what I am doing for a living. My job is very different; it is not like I earn a specific amount of money. Sometimes I get some cash, sometimes I don't. I have faith; that's what matters"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Another labor migrant stated the following concerning the difficult job-related circumstances;

*"I am a barber for a living. I cannot say that I am a good barber, but I know how to cut hair. I don't have a barber shop, but I cut people's hair cheaply. However, I do not get customers daily, which is a struggle. I struggle with earning money"* (Male labor migrant, aged 38).

In addition to the previously mentioned occupations, the respondents highlighted other popular job roles within the migrant community. Street vending, working as mechanics, and repairing and selling motor spare parts were among the notable occupations. These particular jobs often provide greater flexibility and the potential for higher and more stable earnings than some previously mentioned positions.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the respondents faced challenges in accessing better job opportunities. The most common issues mentioned were intense competition within the job market and the requirement for official documentation or specialized skills, which hindered their chances of securing more favorable employment options. These obstacles posed significant difficulties for the respondents in pursuing better job prospects.

### 6.3 Factors responsible for migration

Migration represents a sophisticated global event governed by many factors that prompt individuals to depart from their country of origin and pursue enhanced prospects in alternative locations (IOM, 2020). Factors influencing migration can be generally classified into two categories: push factors, which induce individuals to depart from their place of origin, and pull factors, which entice people toward a new destination. To thoroughly comprehend the primary push and pull factors that impact the migration of male labor migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, it is essential to examine their motivations for migration and the intricacies of their migration journey. The labor migrant's motivation can be either Individual or household decisions. However, it is influenced by broader economic conditions, such as poverty and labor markets, that pull individuals to migrate. The collected data reveal that the impetus for labor migrants' relocation from neighboring countries to the examined region was at three different levels micro, macro, and meso. At the micro level was the pursuit of economic factors which promise improved prospects for financial security and advancement in their economic status. At the macro level, it was due to poverty and the lack of a labor market in the country of origin. Lastly, at the meso level, the availability of networks within Abobo municipality played a crucial role in their decision-making process. In addition to these factors, the data findings will demonstrate how labor migrants evaluate the costs and benefits of their migration journey to Abobo municipality. By examining these factors, a more comprehensive understanding of labor migration patterns and decision-making processes can be achieved.

### 6.3.1 Push and Pull Factors: Macro-Level Influences

Lee (1966) was the first to introduce the push-pull migration theory at the macro level. This theory highlights various push factors, such as ecological disasters, economic downturns, wars, and conflicts, which are perceived to be instrumental in prompting migration decisions in the country of origin. In this research, we found compelling evidence suggesting that economic crises within the countries of origin were deemed the primary reasons inciting labor migration. Labor migrants believe these economic hardships lead to extreme impoverishment within their homelands, compelling them to seek opportunities elsewhere.

In practical terms, these labor migrants believed that economic crises cause extreme poverty in their country of origin, necessitating migration. They explained that this devastating economic condition put them into massive unemployment, depriving them of essential resources, including adequate nutrition and other essential needs. Consequently, these circumstances left them with no choice but to consider migration a survival strategy.

Numerous labor migrants have expressed their impoverished circumstances and unfavorable situations in a variety of manners. One such respondent said as follows:

*"I understand poverty with all my heart and cells. There were days when I only ate one meal because we had nothing else at home, and my siblings were also hungry. I had to migrate to find work and earn money; otherwise, we would all starve"* (Male labor migrant, aged 28).

Similarly, another migrant said:

*" My father passed away from limited resources. He was old, and our income was little. We are five children. He sacrificed a lot so that his family would not go hungry. He had to find small jobs every day and make money. I did not want this to happen to my sisters and my mother. I had to migrate here to find work and earn money, as I have heard there are more job opportunities in Abobo"* (Male labor migrant, aged 25).

Labor migrants conveyed their impoverished conditions as the primary factor for leaving their country and family. The urgency to support themselves and their families, warding off hunger and deprivation, was a clear motivator for them.

In this context, the pull factors became particularly determining for them within Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire. Such factors encompass improved employment prospects, the potential for enhanced financial earnings, and the chance to ensure survival for their family and themselves.



### 6.3.2 Push and Pull Factors: Micro level influences

Numerous responses revealed that migrants' relocation decision was predominantly motivated by the aspiration to enhance their financial well-being. A key factor mentioned by respondents for migrating to the area under study was the pursuit of job opportunities and overcoming poverty. During an interview, one participant concisely expressed the circumstances concerning his employment in his hometown as follows:

*"My living situation was hard and challenging, so I decided to achieve economic gains because I was not satisfied with my salary in my hometown, and I heard from a friend that Côte d'Ivoire was better"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Another migrant similarly characterized his situation with the following statement:

*"I had nothing in my home country, and I was struggling with poverty. I migrated here to find a better job with a higher income, as I had a job that I was unsatisfied with"* (Male labor migrant, aged 27).

This signifies that employment is a crucial factor influencing the decision to migrate, primarily due to a scarcity of job opportunities in the country of origin. In addition to seeking employment in Côte d'Ivoire, some labor migrants were motivated by the prospect of earning a higher income than what they could potentially attain in their home country. Indeed, pull factors in the destination country, such as the prospect of earning higher wages and securing improved job positions, encouraged individuals to consider immigration.

In addition, some migrants relocated to Côte d'Ivoire to pursue improved business or employment conditions, resulting in higher income and enhanced prospects. This could demonstrate that certain individuals opted to migrate due to the absence of a favorable labor market for their trade or profession in their home country. In this regard, one of the respondents expressed his situation:

*"In terms of job opportunities in Africa, there are not many good opportunities. But in terms of business opportunities in Abobo, Côte d'Ivoire, it is ok to work. So, if you can do small business, you should come here, and you can do better, earn more, and have fewer challenges here"* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

Similarly, another participant said as follows:

*"I came here to start my own business from the beginning. I did not want to work for anyone, so I heard from my fellow citizens that if I want to have my own business, it is better to come to Abobo, Côte d'Ivoire, and start it here "* (Male labor migrant, aged 27).

Hence, the finding of push and pull factors, based on individual decision-making, demonstrates that migrants consciously decided to migrate to enhance their overall quality of life and in some cases develop their own business.

As mentioned above, the primary motivation for most migrants to begin the journey of migration stems from their pursuit of an enhanced quality of life and the prospect of increased income at an individual level. However, another factor influencing migration decisions is the concept of household decision-making, which contributes significantly to the overall migration process. Regarding this, for instance, one respondent mentioned his decision to migrate as follows:

*" I went to school in my hometown, but my parents were so poor, so I decided to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire to do crafty jobs such as mechanics, glass jobs, or taxi driving, as it is much work here in Abobo. Then I could make money and send it back to my parents to help them to live a better life"* (Male labor migrant, aged 31).

Similarly, another participant noted that:

*" When I was in my origin country, I went to school, but after my father died, the situation became tough, so I was obliged to immigrate somewhere and work to make money and help my mom and sisters. I decided to come to Côte d'Ivoire because I have heard that in Côte d'Ivoire, there are many jobs"* (Male labor migrant, aged 38).

Another migrant, facing a remarkably similar situation, characterized his circumstances by explaining the following statement:

*" I am the only son in the family. After my father died, I had to leave school and find a job to help my mother and sister. With my mother's decision, I came here to earn money and send it back to them"* (Male labor migrant, aged 24).

While numerous immigrants independently select to undertake the immigration process, many lacks a determinative role in these circumstances. Indeed, a few of the interviewees were students prior to immigration; however, as a consequence of financial difficulties within their families and extreme poverty, they were forced to abandon their academic pursuits and proceed with the migration. Thus, migration is not invariably a matter of individual decisions but may also encompass a collective household decision.

The study's findings demonstrate the interconnected nature of push and pull factors at both macro and micro levels in labor migration. It highlights the influence of push and pull factors on labor migration at both macro and micro levels. The pull factors played a crucial role within Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire. Economic difficulties played an essential role at the macro level, resulting in widespread poverty and high unemployment rates in the migrants' countries of origin. The pressing need to support themselves and their families obliged them to consider migration a means of survival. At the micro level, the respondents were compelled to respond to these macro-level conditions by making migration decisions based on their circumstances, aspirations, and perceptions of potential benefits. Furthermore, micro-level factors show that the ambition of the respondents to enhance financial well-being was a primary motivation for labor migration. Migrants looked for job opportunities that would provide them with higher earnings and enable them to improve their living conditions.

### 6.3.3 Networks: Meso-Level Influences

Migration networks can play an essential role in migration before, during, and at the destination of arrival. Many respondents depended on (social) networks and relationships to facilitate and support the migration process at all stages. In contrast, the findings revealed that not all respondents had 'good' support networks, affecting their situation regarding well-paid work, housing opportunities, and social ties. Before migrating, some respondents relied on their existing networks to gather information about Côte d'Ivoire's job opportunities and living conditions. Most respondents used their (personal) networks, such as family or friends, to collect necessary information before migrating. During migration, some respondents depended on their networks to find transportation and places to stay during their movements. Upon arrival, many respondents relied on networks to find employment and housing opportunities.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that good networks are essential for employment in Abobo municipality. Good contacts of networks assist in identifying job opportunities and navigating hiring processes. However, the findings reveal that several migrant respondents lack good networks and relations in the labor market in Abobo municipality, which is a significant barrier to finding work. One of the respondents stated as follow:

*" It is hard to get a job, because if you are not Ivorian, there are so many places you cannot work. You know – public functions -, you cannot work there because you are not Ivorian. The truth is that you have to have good relations to have a good job. Good relations are key. You*

*don't really need a diploma if you have good relations. That's how it is here. Good networks equal good jobs "* (Male labor migrant, 34).

The respondent's experience highlights the importance of having good relations and networks when finding a job in Abobo municipality. In addition, the respondent mentioned that as a non-Ivorian, finding employment in specific sectors is challenging. Furthermore, the findings indicate that many of the migrant respondents in Abobo municipality are only able to find small jobs, such as small-scale trading, cleaning jobs, taxi driving, and street vending. It implies another recurring theme in the findings and highlights the challenges migrants in Abobo municipality face regarding accessing higher-paying and more stable employment opportunities. Another migrant facing a remarkably similar situation stated the following;

*"All the business is done by the migrants, and we consider the Ivorian people as "lazy" people. They don't do small jobs. They only want to sit in the office. All the small jobs are done by the migrants. For me, I suggest giving the migrants an easy life here. Don't give them a hard time with papers. Access to papers is a big issue in terms of jobs"* (Male labor migrant, aged 29).

Another respondent stated the following:

*"There is no future here, apart from the crafty jobs and small jobs. Most of the young people here have no money in their bank accounts. It is much poverty here"* (Male labor migrant, aged 31).

Similarly, another migrant respondent characterized his employment situation with the following statement:

*" When I arrived, I started driving a taxi and wanted to create my own business. I started working on my business, but the government shut it down. Today, I work in small jobs, such as cemetery cleaning, with mechanics, and as a builder"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Migrants face various risks during migration and may be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse during the migration process. In some cases, networks provide support and protection for migrants. However, the findings revealed exposure to criminal elements, such as human trafficking and corruption of public agencies. Regarding this, one of the respondents states as follows:

*How long has he been working in his job?*

*"It is now three years that I have worked as a cleaner in the cemetery, seeing that someone helped me to travel to Côte d'Ivoire from Burkina Faso. I am now working at the cemetery to get money to pay back the person who sent him here "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

*So, you owe money to the person who helped you migrate?*

*"Yes. They said they would help me migrate to Côte d'Ivoire and help me continue school. Now I owe them a lot of money "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

*Who were these people?*

*"I now understand that I have been trafficked by someone who works with illegal migration. They told me I had to work to repay what I owed them. They said I should be allowed to go to school, but that was not the case when I arrived "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

Migration networks play a vital role in all stages of migration, but not all respondents have strong support networks. Good networks are crucial for finding employment in Abobo municipality, but some migrants lack them, limiting their job opportunities. Many migrants are restricted to small jobs, facing challenges accessing higher-paying work. They also face risks such as human trafficking. Some respondents found themselves indebted to individuals who facilitated their migration, which, in turn, contributed to unmet expectations for some of them.

#### 6.3.3.1 The lack of documentation

Many respondents encounter difficulties due to a lack of documentation required by the Ivorian government (See table 5). The issue of documentation scarcity has persisted in Côte d'Ivoire, affecting multiple generations of long-term migrants, highlighted by Freedom House (2023). As discovered in the findings, without documentation, many migrant respondents face challenges in finding employment, housing, and access to social services. During an interview, one respondent expressed the circumstances concerning proper documentation as follows:

*Do you have an Ivorian passport?*

*“No, I have a passport from Benin” (Male labor migrant, aged 34).*

*Follow up question: Do you stay here on a permit?*

*“As a migrant, I must have a consulate card and a resident certificate. However, it's not easy to get a resident certificate because it is expensive. So, I have never paid for that. When I migrated, and the police checked my ID card, I gave him 1-2000 CEFA (20-40 Norwegian kr) to be free. Or else they would oblige me to pay for the resident certificate” (Male labor migrant, aged 34).*

*Follow-up question: Is the system a bit corrupt?*

*“Yes, it's corrupt. Very corrupt” (Male labor migrant, aged 34).*

*Follow-up question: Do you think this involves other migrants here?*

*“Yes, it affects all immigrants. We don't live here legally. We live like people who don't have documents because it is so expensive” (Male labor migrant, aged 34).*

Another migrant similarly characterized the lack of documentation as challenging:

*Is there anything you would like to elaborate on concerning immigration in Côte d'Ivoire?*

*“It is important to mention again the challenges of not having papers. When you come to Côte d'Ivoire and grow up here at the age of 18, 19, or 20, for example. It's challenging to get the proper papers. And if you don't have any documents, you cannot have a sufficient or stable job. It is an eternal vicious circle for us migrants” (Male labor migrant, aged 34).*

The findings reveal significant documentation challenges of the migrants, which significantly impact the migrant's ability to find employment opportunities because of a lack of work permits or residence permits. Furthermore, the challenges related to corruption were prevalent in our findings. Some of the migrants encountered corruption when seeking documentation or permits, as bureaucrats demanded bribes or other forms of unethical behavior in exchange for providing the necessary documents.

One respondent stated as follows:

*“When I was trying to get a work permit in Abobo municipality, I faced a significant hurdle due to corruption within the system. I met an official who held the power to process my application. It put me in a tight spot because I didn't have much money. But I had no choice but to scrape together whatever I could to meet his demands. It ended up with me needing to find extra money and then come back to him, give him the extra money, and get my papers. I do not have the paper anymore as it is expired, and it's too expensive for me to renew it, as I need a better job”* (Male labor migrant, aged 28).

The barriers the migrant respondents face in accessing better jobs are evident. However, whether this is because of a lack of documentation, discrimination, or lack of formal qualifications or experience is challenging to confirm. Overall, good networks are essential for employment in Abobo municipality. The findings demonstrated that social networks helped the respondents to secure jobs in Abidjan. Hence, a lack of networks can be a significant barrier to finding work, particularly for migrants facing additional challenges, such as socioeconomic difficulties, language barriers, cultural differences, and discrimination.

#### 6.4 Migrant Communities

Many respondents stated that within Côte d'Ivoire, each nationality forms its own community composed of individuals who have migrated from the same country, consisting of individuals from Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and other nations. These are distinct communities where some individuals hold various leadership ranks.

The purpose of these migrant communities is to provide support and a network for migrants in Côte d'Ivoire. According to the respondents, the leaders within these migrant communities are supposed to offer guidance and assistance to new migrants, help them navigate the local environment, and connect them with resources and opportunities.

Based on the findings, these migrant communities serve as support networks for the individuals residing in Côte d'Ivoire, where people can seek guidance on housing, employment, education, healthcare, and other aspects of settling into a new country. These communities often encourage a sense of belonging and solidarity among their members, as they share similar backgrounds and experiences.

However, it is essential to note that respondents had varied experiences with these migrant communities. While some expressed satisfaction and gratitude for their support, others expressed disappointment and frustration, as they felt that the communities did not fulfill their expectations or provide adequate assistance. For instance, one respondent expressed;

*“I sought guidance from the community for many years, but they did not help me. I live on the street and have been doing it for many years. I also had to find my own job. From what I’ve observed, it seems like the community is just a way for a few people to have power and make money from it”* (Male labor migrant, aged 35).

Another migrant similarly explained his view on the migrant communities;

*“From my experience, the community exists, but it is not for people like me. It is for the people with money and pleasant houses”* (Male Labor migrant, aged 39).

It's important to acknowledge that individual experiences within these communities can vary. While some individuals may have had positive and supportive experiences, the respondents in our study expressed dissatisfaction. They believed that the community was primarily suited for those with more financial resources and education, excluding those less privileged.

### 6.5 Costs and benefits

Based on the conclusive findings thus far, it is evident that critical economic factors, such as unemployment and poverty, are the primary and most influential drivers for labor migrants selecting Côte d'Ivoire. Whether motivated by individual or household considerations, these decisions are strongly influenced by prevailing economic conditions. However, in addition to the underlying motivations affected by broader migration conditions and the migration process, the interviewees maintained that to achieve the benefits in this way, they were required to pay the cost. These costs can be both financial and emotional. In this regard, one of the respondents summed up both the cost and benefit of this process as follows:

*“In terms of cost, I miss my daughter, mother, and other people in my homeland, and I left them behind to make a better situation in my life. I gained many things, like electricity and a higher salary. The things here are much cheaper, such as houses, rent, and food. Here, we have light electricity. So, it makes everything work for me ”* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

Similarly, many participants also mentioned:



*" Before I moved to Côte d'Ivoire, I did leave behind my family and senior brothers. I came here to live life; It is better here compared to my country. It is hard and has gotten more challenging over the years, but it is still better here because of the opportunities and higher salaries. I do not want to return to my country because if I earn money here, I can also help my family by sending the money back to them "* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Consequently, a vast majority of the respondents expressed the viewpoint that migration entails both gains and losses. Despite recognizing the potential sacrifices, these individuals have chosen to start this journey in pursuit of improved quality of life. They comprehend that overcoming the challenges associated with migration is an essential step towards achieving a richer and more satisfying life.

## 6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter detailed a comprehensive examination of the field-collected data. The explanation was structured around the principal themes from the collected data. Initially, the demographic characteristics of the migrants were demonstrated to offer a basic understanding of the group from which the data was gathered. This demographic included the migrant's age, country of origin, nationality, permit status, socio-professional category, the primary source of livelihood in the country of origin, material status, levels of education, beliefs, and mother tongue.

The motivations prompting the migrants' movement from their homeland to the study area and the decision-making process involved in such moves were also explained. These reasons were classified into push and pull factors at both macro and micro levels, responding to research questions 1 and the existence of networks under the meso level, which answered research question 2. The chapter then presented data on the types of jobs migrants engaged in Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire. Regarding this, the study illustrated that due to a lack of formal education, documentation, and professional skills, labor migrants often resort to informal and low-paying jobs to earn money. Some common jobs mentioned include working in cemeteries, selling and fixing shoes on the street, picking up old irons and plastic bags, construction work, barbering, street vending, and working as mechanics. Finally, the chapter ended with information about migrant communities in Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire and the costs and benefits associated with migration. According to the respondents, migrants from different countries form distinct communities within Côte d'Ivoire. Concerning this, the findings highlighted the importance of migrant communities as support connections for migrants in Abobo municipality.

They also emphasize the costs and benefits associated with migration, with individuals making sacrifices in pursuit of a better life.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 7.0 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to understand the push and pull factors behind the migration of young men (20-40) to Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire from neighboring countries. Further, the study investigated how individuals weigh the costs and benefits of migrating and identify the opportunities and challenges migrants face in Abobo municipality. The study also sought to examine the role of networks for labor migrants in Abobo municipality and explore the motivations of individuals who migrate to the municipality.

The main research questions were;

1. *What are the main push and pull factors influencing the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and how do they weigh the associated costs and benefits in their decision-making process?*
2. *What is the role of networks for labor Migrants in Abobo municipality?*

By addressing these research questions, the study aimed to provide insights into the dynamics of migration and examine the determinants of migration patterns in Côte d'Ivoire and the experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality.

The sub-question was;

1. *What are the job opportunities for migrants in the Abobo municipality, and what are the challenges they face in terms of employment?*

The sub-question aimed to investigate the experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality, focusing on the opportunities available to them and the challenges they faced. The objective sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality, including their access to employment opportunities, social networks, and day-to-day challenges. The analysis aimed to provide data for forthcoming recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance the living conditions and integration of migrants in

Abobo municipality. These recommendations will be further discussed in the final chapter of this study.

## 7.1 Macro Level Analysis

### **The push and pull framework on macro level**

Concerning research question 1, the results from data analysis demonstrate that the primary motivation for individuals in our study to migrate from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire is the pursuit of employment opportunities to enhance their economic status and alleviate poverty. According to Afsar (2003), the prospect of securing higher-paying jobs is the significant factor driving most migrants (Afsar, 2003). Despite the diversity in demographic characteristics among the participants, their overarching objective for migration is to increase their income and surmount the challenges associated with poverty. The experiences shared by the male labor migrants in finding can be associated with the push and pull factors theory, a framework utilized to examine the underlying causes of migration between different regions.

This theory proposes that specific unfavorable conditions in the country of origin (push factors) compel individuals to leave while appealing attributes in the destination country (pull factors) attract them (Lee, 1966; Abreu, 2012). For these labor migrants, the driving forces behind their decision to leave their home countries (push factors) predominantly stem from their unfavorable economic circumstances, including poverty, insufficient salaries, and scarce job opportunities. Such factors motivate migrants to pursue an improved life in a different location, like Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, and Abobo municipality.

Conversely, the pull factors that attracted these migrants are the perceived availability of higher-paying jobs, enhanced work conditions, and promising business opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire. These factors entice them to consider relocating to Côte d'Ivoire to pursue a higher standard of living. Hence, as Lee (1966) argues, migration occurs by comparing the country of origin and the destination (Abreu, 2012), which illustrates the influence of push and pull factors in guiding people's decisions to migrate and their aspirations for a better future.

### **Neo-Classical economic theory on macro level**

Furthermore, another theoretical perspective presented in Chapter Four was the Neo-Classical economic theory at the macro level. This theory posits migration as an integral element of economic development and identifies economic factors as the primary drivers for individuals to migrate (Chabala, 2014; De Haas, 2008). It clarifies that countries offering higher wages and abundant job opportunities attract laborers from nations with lower incomes and limited employment options (Triandafyllidou, 2016; De Haas, 2008). Regarding this, Côte d'Ivoire is a country that attracts many labor migrants due to the presence of numerous natural resources within the nation, necessitating a significant labor force. The Ivorians tend to avoid demanding or unstable jobs, which helps migrant workers in search of employment more easily access these job opportunities in the country.

One respondent said,

*"I was unemployed in my own country and had no income, but I heard from many people that they migrated to Côte d'Ivoire and could find jobs and have a better income. Many people go to Côte d'Ivoire to work, and I also took this risk and came. We do things here that the locals do not like, sometimes because of the low pay or the hard work"* (Male labor migrant, aged 27).

Our research findings verify this statement, demonstrating that labor migrants are driven by the belief that the economic prospects in Côte d'Ivoire are better, offering higher wages and an abundance of job opportunities. This conviction arises from their anticipation of a transformative change in their lives, primarily through an enhanced financial status.

Many migrants explained that their decision to migrate was driven by their preconceived ideas about the employment prospects in Côte d'Ivoire, specifically in Abobo municipality. Many respondents agreed that their primary motivation for being here was to secure employment opportunities. One of the respondents explained this factor as follows:

*"I am still young, and I can use this opportunity to do many things to earn money. However, unfortunately, this possibility was not available in my country because there was no job that I could pursue. That is why migration was the best decision I could make for my life"* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

Regarding this circumstance, another migrant said:

*"I had a job in my country, but the salary I received was little. I heard from people who migrated here that they can do more and make more money. I migrated here because I wanted to have these situations like them"* (Male labor migrant, aged 35).

The respondents believed the labor market could act as a main pull factor, influencing their migration choice. The absence of suitable employment opportunities and stable job positions had made life challenging for many of them.

From what is mentioned above, this theory at the macro level shows a connection with the finding in the study, and it applies entirely to a substantial percentage of the surveyed respondents from neighboring countries, migrating to Côte d'Ivoire in search of employment and capitalizing on other advantageous opportunities.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the push and pull framework and the Neo-Classical economic theory on a macro-level provide valuable insights into the motivations of young men migrating to Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality. The pursuit of employment opportunities to improve economic conditions and alleviate poverty emerges as the primary motivation, aligning with the fundamental principles of both theoretical perspectives. These findings highlight the role of economic factors in shaping migration patterns and aspirations for a better future among the respondents in the study. However, while economic factors undoubtedly hold significant importance in explaining the migration decisions of the respondents in the Abobo municipality, it is crucial to acknowledge that these theoretical frameworks overlook the multifaceted nature of motivations and experiences that underlie individual migration choices. Depending solely on economic factors oversimplifies the complex dynamics of migration. It ignores the diverse causes and experiences shaping individual migration decisions. Migration is influenced by numerous factors beyond mere economic grounds. Hence, to undertake a comprehensive survey encompassing labor migrants in the Abobo municipality and explore the various characteristics associated with their migration, adopting a better understanding that considers the interplay between multiple factors is crucial. This approach, encompassing a three-level analysis, recognizes the significance of exploring the multifaceted aspects of migration and avoids undermining the complexity of the determinants of migration in the study context, which will be further explored in this chapter.

## 7.2 Micro Level Analysis

### **The micro level push and pull theory in the context of Abobo**

Similar to the Neo-Classical economic theory, which is predominantly centered on supply and demand dynamics, the concept of push and pull factors on a micro level, as proposed by Lee (1996), provides a framework that acknowledges both supply and demand aspects of migration at an individual level. Lee's theory clarifies why some people, despite having comparable backgrounds, choose to leave their homeland. In contrast, others decide to stay- a phenomenon that the Neo-Classical economic theory has failed to explain sufficiently. Notably, Lee's approach acknowledges that the decision to migrate is persuaded by many factors extending beyond just economic considerations.

A marked difference exists between the Neo-Classical economic theory and Lee's theory. While the former primarily attribute migration to economic reasons, Lee's theory underscores that intervening variables such as migration laws, policies, or resource limitations can impede migration. Furthermore, these factors are influenced by individual characteristics and how migrants perceive their circumstances, thereby adding slight complexity to the understanding of migration behavior.

Our empirical findings substantiate that the respondents' migration decision-making process was not exclusively dependent on economic factors. In contrast to the assumption of a primarily economic rationale, our research outcomes demonstrate that prospective migrants incorporate a broad range of considerations before deciding to relocate. These contain economic prospects and social networks - including familial or friendly connections in the Côte d'Ivoire. Importantly, they also evaluate potential destination countries' policy frameworks and regulations. Thus, our findings highlight the multi-dimensional essence of the migration process, illuminating the broader range of factors beyond the economic lens that underpins migration decisions.

To illustrate this point more explicitly, we can draw upon a particular interaction with one respondent.

*"Was Côte d'Ivoire your first destination?"*

the respondent provided the following answer:

*"Yes, but I first wanted to migrate to Europe. However, after much questioning from others, especially my brother's advice, I realized that because of the regulations (such as in ECOWAS), it would be easier for me to come to Côte d'Ivoire and stay here until I found a job"*

(Male labor migrant, aged 31).

Similarly, one other respondent regarding migration to Côte d'Ivoire said:

*"I was traveling to Côte d'Ivoire but got stopped on the border in 1998. However, I did not get into the country because I did not have my papers and money to pay for them at the borders, which delayed my migration. A couple of years later, I gave some officials money at the border, and I got my papers so I could get into the country. But today, I don't have my papers anymore, because you must review them once a year or something, I don't have the money for that, and I don't want to go back home either"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Hence, corroborating Lee's proposition (1996), migration can indeed be constrained by many factors. Furthermore, the migration decision-making process can be shaped by many elements and not confined to a singular determinant. This highlights the imperative of adopting a multi-faceted perspective in examining the migration process, allowing for a better analysis at different conceptual levels, thereby enabling a broader comprehension of the complexities of migration.

### **New Economics of Labor Migration**

The findings from the data indicate that some migrants migrate to enhance their household's financial situation. For a few migrants in the study, family circumstances and the responsibility toward their families were the impetus for migration. These experiences can be theoretically linked to the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory, which posits that individual motivations do not only drive migration decisions; the household decision also determines migration (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). The primary incentive for these migrants to leave their countries of origin is to pursue an enhanced standard of living and higher earnings, with the difference that this time not only for their benefit but also for their family members' benefit. Hence, the determination is reached through a collaborative process involving the migrants and their families.

The results conclusively demonstrate that these labor migrants have assumed the duty of providing for their families, frequently due to a parent's death or extreme poverty, impelling them to undertake the migration process. This process of migration signifies that the choices made by migrants to move to Abobo municipality are shaped by the aspiration to generate income and assist their families in their home countries by remitting funds. To sum up, this underscores the collective dimension of migration decision-making, as the determination to migrate stems from the necessities and welfare of the entire household rather than just the individual. Referring to this perspective, one respondent said:



*"If I had not migrated, my whole family might have died from hunger and poverty. I may not have a high income, but at least they have something to eat and live on. Sometimes you cannot just think about yourself; you must have a broader viewpoint"* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

This example of a labor migrant effectively illustrates our above discussions on push and pull factors in the context of household decisions. It demonstrates that migration decisions are not always centered around the individual alone. Often, the well-being and circumstances of others, particularly family members, significantly influence their decision to migrate.

Many of our participants believed that migration might be the only feasible choice due to their homeland's challenging economic conditions and limited job opportunities. As a result, they find themselves obligated to financially support their families by sending money back to their home country. This finding correlates with aspects of both the Neoclassical Economic Theory and the New Economics of Labour Migration. Regarding this, De Haas (2010), Hagen-Zanker (2008), Massey et al. (1998), and Taylor (1999), who have conducted studies in this context, illustrate that individuals choose to migrate to locations where they can maximize their productivity and receive higher wages, taking their skill levels into account. Meanwhile, the New Economics of Labour Migration posits that households do not migrate as a unit; instead, they send select family members to migrate; hence they can receive remittances from the migrants, which benefits the whole family.

Additionally, regarding research question 1, the statements provided by the labor migrants and all the findings and results correspond strongly with the cost-benefit analysis notion in the New Classical Economic theory at the Micro level, which asserts that individuals make informed decisions by evaluating the costs and benefits of various alternatives (De Haas, 2008). This theory in a broader context by Borjas 1989 addresses the costs and benefits immigrants encounter during their migration journey. By conducting a cost-benefit analysis, individuals choose to migrate to locations where they can maximize their productivity and receive higher remuneration, considering their skillset (Massey et al., 1993; Chabala, 2014; De Haas, 2008). This entails examining the potential advantages and trade-offs of departing from their home country and moving to a new location, like Côte d'Ivoire.

The migrants in the finding recognize that the migration process entails a combination of costs and benefits. The costs involve the emotional impact of parting from their family and partners, social circles, and familiarity with their home environment. In contrast, the benefits include the potential for enhanced living standards, increased income, and more significant opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire. The decision-making process of these migrants represents a rational assessment of the potential costs and benefits linked to their migration. They comprehend the need to withstand the difficulties and sacrifices involved in departing from their home countries to attain an improved quality of life in Côte d'Ivoire. Despite facing challenges, they are convinced that the advantages of migration surpass the costs, justifying their choice to start the migration process.

The data clearly show a high percentage of immigrants that consider the benefits and costs of this way as much as possible and immigrate to a place with higher potential benefits than their own country. Therefore, by associating these migrants' experiences with the cost-benefit analysis inherent in the Neo-Classical Economic theory, the rational decisions they undertake during the migration decision-making process are more understandable. From the participants' point of view, in a migration process, if they are going to lose something, they should gain something in return. For example, staying away from the family should be in return for higher income and more prosperity in the destination country.

On the micro level, Lee's push and pull framework highlights the influence of both push factors (unfavorable economic conditions, limited job opportunities) and pull factors (higher-paying jobs, improved work conditions) on migration decisions. The New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory complements the findings, emphasizing the significance of household considerations and collective decision-making in migration. Additionally, the study aligns with the Neo-Classical Economic theory on the micro level, as migrants assess the costs and benefits of migration to maximize their productivity and income.

The study's findings reveal a comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics, considering individual motivations, household factors, and economic opportunities through micro-level theories. However, it is crucial to acknowledge their limitations in the study context.

While the push and pull theory acknowledges migration dynamics to a lesser extent than neoclassical economics, it still presents limitations. This framework tends to oversimplify the complex nature of migration by predominantly emphasizing economic factors while neglecting the role of other influential aspects, such as social networks and personal aspirations. The NELM theory, while recognizing the collective dimension of migration decision-making, may only partially capture individual agency and motivations. Similarly, the Neo-Classical Economic theory overlooks the role of social networks and community ties in shaping migration decisions.

### 7.3 Meso Level Analysis

#### **Social network theory**

Concerning research question 2: *"What is the role of networks for labor Migrants in Abobo municipality?"* The data findings suggested that the study's respondents depended on networks to varying degrees before and during migration. The results indicated that strong and weak ties are essential for the labor migrant respondents in Abobo municipality. In social network theory, strong ties, such as family members or close friends, demand considerable time, energy, and emotional involvement (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Thus, individuals anticipate receiving emotional support and assistance from these ties. Conversely, weak ties can be described as less frequent interactions with less intimacy, which may be formed according to shared cultures or nationalities through mutual experiences (Sha, 2021, p. 7).

The results demonstrated that strong ties played a significant role in providing information about Abobo municipality during the decision-making migration process. Most respondents relied on family members during the decision-making process, particularly on their family members, for information concerning job opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire. One respondent stated as follows;

*"I was having business and money problems back in my country. My senior brother, who is now passed, told me I should come to Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality, and join his car business. He helped me to plan my travel route. My first destination was actually Benin. However, I only stayed there for a short period "* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

The interview example and overall findings are consistent regarding social network theory, which suggests that strong ties provide high-quality support and information about migrants' decision-making processes, such as job opportunities and how to facilitate migration movements. However, the result revealed that while strong ties provided high-quality and valuable information about Côte d'Ivoire as a travel destination, weak ties were more effective in facilitating employment and housing opportunities in Abobo municipality.

Literature suggests that social networks are essential in transmitting information about job opportunities and finding employment (Giulietti et al., 2018). Correspondingly, the study results indicated the importance of weak ties when finding employment and housing for migrant respondents. Most respondents found employment through secondary/temporary associations, such as brief friendships or migrant communities. For instance, one respondent stated as follows;

*"When I first came to Côte d'Ivoire, I heard I should contact my migrant community from my homeland. I had lost all my papers and asked them to help me fix them. The community did not help me with my papers, but they guided me to find a small job through the contacts in the community "* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

In line with the social network theory, the results reveal that weak ties are more effective when assessing job and housing opportunities for migrants. Granovetter argues that weak ties are superior to strong ties in providing support in getting a job (Granovetter, 1973, 1974, 1983; Giulietti et al., 2018). Moreover, Granovetter (1973, 1974, 1983) emphasizes *the strength of weak ties involving a secondary ring of acquaintances who have contacts with networks outside the ego's network and therefore offer new sources of information about job opportunities* (Granovetter, 1973, 1974, 1983; Giulietti et al., 2018). In a close network, provided by strong ties, information sources are quickly broken down, making the network quickly redundant concerning access to new information (Giulietti et al., 2018, p.2).

Overall, understanding the role of social networks and the strength of ties is crucial for understanding the experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality. However, despite the importance of networks, the study identified several underlying factors that prevented respondents from accessing well-paid work. Factors such as corruption, lack of documentation among the respondents, and prejudice/ discrimination against non-Ivorians contributed to the lack of well-paid work and job opportunities for the migrant respondents. These factors highlight the complex nature of the migration process for the migrants in Abobo municipality and indicate that social networks alone may not be sufficient to overcome the barriers that migrants face.

### **Social Capital theory**

So far, we have examined the networks of immigrants in Abobo municipality of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The primary sources of information for these migrants were friends and family who had previously migrated to the region. In contrast, a minority of participants had no straightforward or secondary ties with any individual in Côte d'Ivoire before their migration. Nevertheless, the narratives from interviewees reveal that upon arrival, these individuals seek out members of their origin country or other migrants with different nationalities. These established migrants then assist newcomers and, in some cases, help them find small jobs. One of the interviewees described:

*"I call this municipality a cosmopolitan municipality. For example, you cannot tell or know where someone is coming from, someone can be from Nigeria, Mali, or Burkina Faso, but we are all together, we work together, we speak together, we do everything together, and we always help each other because we are all migrants and need each other's help "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

Similarly, another respondent explained that:

*"Here where I live, I know so many people from my hometown and the same village I lived in before. Those people all came or continue to come to Côte d'Ivoire, Abobo municipality. So, we found each other and can now consider ourselves a local group; we help each other and share all our experiences in this way. However, when I first came here, I did not know anyone, and I was alone, but little by little, I found people from my country of origin, and I knew how hard it was, so I tried to take care of newcomers, we all help each other now "* (Male labor migrant, aged 35).

What is clear here is the connection between these findings and social capital theory. These networks among migrants often function as crucial social capital, mitigating any potential hazards or expenses associated with migration. According to social capital Theory, Putnam (2000) categorized the components of social capital into bonding and bridging connections (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Through contact and information exchange, these migrants who previously came to Côte d'Ivoire help newcomers by sharing information and experiences, which can be a sign of bridging; as mentioned by Putnam (2000), Bridging social capital creates connections between individuals of varying backgrounds, enabling diverse groups to exchange knowledge, data, and ideas while fostering agreement among groups with differing interests (Putnam, 2000, p.23; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Harmonizing bonding and bridging social capital is essential to produce beneficial social effects (Putnam, 2000). These findings can also be correlated with the research conducted by Garip (2008) found that in some cases, resources from weakly tied, such as community members or local groups, have a more significant impact on migration than resources from strongly tied within the family or among relatives (Garip, 2008).

The findings from the study align with the concepts within the social network theory and social capital theory. Social network theory highlights the importance of strong and weak ties in offering support and information throughout migration and integration. Strong ties provide emotional support and valuable decision-making information, while weak ties facilitate job and housing opportunities. On the other hand, social capital theory highlights the role of networks as a form of social capital that helps migrants overcome migration risks and challenges. The networks established by migrants in Abobo municipality serve as crucial social capital (networks, relationships, and social connections), fostering cooperation and knowledge exchange within the community of Abobo municipality.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that social networks alone cannot overcome the obstacles migrants encounter when seeking higher-paying jobs. Factors such as corruption, lack of documentation, and prejudice against non-Ivorians contribute to the challenges faced by migrant respondents in Abobo municipality. These findings suggest that while social networks play a significant role, structural factors and systemic issues must be addressed to enhance job opportunities and overall development for labor migrants in Abobo municipality.

#### 7.4 Lack of documentation and Inequalities

Concerning the sub-question: *What are the job opportunities for migrants in the Abobo municipality, and what are the challenges they face in terms of employment?*. The results suggested that despite the job-related opportunities that exist in the Abobo municipality, the findings demonstrated that migrants often face challenges in accessing well-paid jobs. According to the study's respondents, factors such as a lack of documentation possessed by the migrant, cultural inequalities, and discrimination were the most prominent factors that contributed to the inhibition of higher-paid jobs.

### **Lack of documentation possessed by migrant**

The study results suggest that having legal/ identification documentation is essential for migrants in Abobo municipality to access well-paid jobs. However, most migrant respondents lack such documentation (see Table 5: Document possessed by the migrant), restricting their ability to secure higher-paid jobs. According to International Organization for Migration (2023), a person without an adequately registered identification document becomes imperceptible to the state and risks becoming isolated or stateless from legal and administrative frameworks to protect individuals' rights (IOM, 2023). It also includes that proper identification documents are necessary for the study respondents to gain access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and employment. These challenges faced by labor migrants in Abobo municipality highlight the importance of ensuring that the migrants have access to legal documentation to facilitate their integration and access to essential services.

As many as 37.93% of migrant respondents were paperless, meaning they live in Côte d'Ivoire without proper documentation or legal status. The findings suggest that the labor migrants without documentation have either lost their documentation or never received it. The latter often involves a lack of money to pay/obtain either permit fees or identity cards. For instance, one migrant shared the following experience;

*" I want to continue my job as a mechanic and start working for my business, but I have a paper issue. I had an identity card from Burkina Faso and an Ivorian working permit. However, I lost both of the papers. So, for now, I need to continue working at the cemetery"* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Another migrant shared his experience as follows:

*" I do craft jobs, such as selling items and washing cars. I do it to survive. I cannot get my papers; it costs money, and I must work hard. I want the Ivorian government to give us migrants' Ivorian nationality. I want the government to have empathy. When I say empathy, I mean being more cool or relaxed about giving us papers "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).



Obtaining and applying for legal documentation can be expensive, especially for impoverished people. Poverty among the respondents is a barrier that makes it difficult for them to comply, obtain, and renew the required legal documents. None of the respondents had a fixed income, and several could barely afford necessities such as food, housing, and paying rent; not having legal documents limits access to well-paid jobs, contributing to poverty for the migrant respondents in Abobo municipality.

The Ivorian government has implemented legislation concerning the identification of persons and permits. According to Ordinance No. 2007-604 of 8 November 2007 regarding the Suppression of the Stay Permit, ECOWAS Member States' nationals are no longer requested to obtain a residence permit. To reside legally in Côte d'Ivoire, they only need to hold "documents of identification delivered by their country of origin or their consular representation (United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2017, p.61). Ordinance No. 2007-604 sought to reduce the burden on migrants and simplify the process of obtaining legal documentation. However, the study results demonstrated that, in practice, many migrants still face difficulties obtaining and renewing their identification documents. It may attribute to a lack of administration between the origin country of the migrants or their consular representation and Côte d'Ivoire.

Further, there may be issues with verifying the authenticity of documents issued by the country of origin or a lack of communication between the organs that administrate legal documents. Improving administrative processes, enhancing communication, and fostering cooperation within Côte d'Ivoire can effectively tackle these challenges and facilitate the acquisition of necessary legal documentation for migrants. It may also enable migrants to engage and participate in their host society fully. As the experiences of 37.93% percent of the respondents in Abobo municipality demonstrate, the current migration management system does not work for everyone. Therefore, more comprehensive policies are needed to consider the complex realities of migrants in Abobo municipality.

Furthermore, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), an intergovernmental agreement adopted in 2018 by Member States at the United Nations General Assembly (IOM, 2023), was adopted to promote international cooperation on migration. The compact incorporates 23 objectives that aim to ensure migration in a safe, orderly, and regular manner and that the rights of migrants are protected (Global Compact for Migration, 2018). As a member state of the United Nations and a signatory to the GCM, Côte d'Ivoire has committed to implementing the objectives outlined in the agreement. Côte d'Ivoire does not have a clear action plan for implementing the GCM; however, the country has made progress in managing migration through strategic interventions related to the management of migration, as included in the national strategic documents and driven by the government entities (IOM, 2021; United Nations General Assembly, 2019).

According to the IOM report (2021), Côte d'Ivoire has significantly advanced in managing the 23 objectives aligned with the GCM. However, the report's findings suggest that despite Ivory Coast's efforts to implement the related policies and guidelines established in the GCM, respondents' experiences indicate that there is still room for improvement. For example, the study found that some objectives did not align with the experiences of some of the migrant respondents;

**Objective 4:** Ensure all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation,

**Objective 5:** Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration,

**Objective 6:** Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work,

**Objective 8:** Ensure that all migrants have access to basic services,

**Objective 17:** Address the specific needs of vulnerable migrants,

**Objective 15:** Provide access to basic services for migrants,

**Objective 17:** Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

The study results suggest that Abobo municipality faces a significant challenge in implementing and complying with national and institutional migration policies and guidelines. Consistent examples clearly show a need for more implementation in Abobo municipality. The interviews highlighted the lack of awareness among labor migrants regarding their rights under these frameworks. Furthermore, the study findings indicate that migrants without proper documentation face numerous challenges, including limited job opportunities, inadequate access, and vulnerability to exploitation. The absence of legal status may contribute to hindering migrants' rights and exacerbates their marginalization and exclusion from society. Furthermore, the lack of documentation among migrant respondents in Abobo municipality perpetuates a cycle of inequality, as it restricts their access to fundamental rights and additional resources.

### **Structural and horizontal inequalities**

Côte d'Ivoire is ethnically diverse, and migration significantly contributes to this diversity. While diversity can bring many advantages, the study results reveal that it also creates challenges for migrant respondents, including discrimination based on national origin. Inequalities, such as discrimination based on country of origin, pose significant challenges for migrants in Abobo municipality in accessing higher-paid jobs, according to the respondents. The study results indicated horizontal inequalities among the respondents, mainly regarding access to higher-paid jobs. Horizontal inequalities can be explained as severe inequalities between culturally defined groups, where certain groups are systematically excluded from opportunities (Stewart, 2016; Langer, 2004). According to the respondents, one of the reasons why they do not have access to higher-paying jobs is that they are not Ivorians. The fact that discrimination based on ethnicity or origin country can limit migrants' access to higher-paid jobs is an indication of horizontal inequality, which occurs when certain groups are systematically excluded from opportunities, leading to disparities in outcomes between groups (Stewart, 2016; Langer, 2004). The results suggest that migrants from the neighboring countries in Abobo municipality face discrimination that limits their access to higher-paying jobs. At the same time, Ivorians have higher opportunities related to well-paid jobs. One migrant shared the following experience;

*"I have lived just outside Abobo and worked in Abobo for years. Throughout my years, I have had several jobs and gained a lot of knowledge over the years. Even with my skills in the building business, I continue to face challenges in receiving fair wages for my work".* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

Another similar described his situations as follows;

*"When I first came to Côte d'Ivoire, I started working as a taxi driver to earn enough money to start my own business. I managed to create a business, but the government came and shut it down. At that time, they did not allow me to start my own business because people saw me as a competition, and today, I am making a living from small jobs."* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

These cases illustrate the manifestation of horizontal inequalities within the labor market context. The labor migrant respondents encountered various challenges, particularly concerning receiving equitable wages and accessing enhanced economic opportunities.

Furthermore, in the theoretical chapter, we reflected upon the correlation between inequality and the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory. Numerous studies have confirmed that poverty, or the perception of being economically inferior, can significantly stimulate migratory patterns in various nations. Therefore, it can be posited that countries exhibiting detectable levels of inequality or perceived relative poverty are more exposed to considerable immigration. In a way, this theory reflects the essence of the push-pull factor theory, suggesting that individuals are compelled to leave their countries of origin driven by the aspiration for improved living conditions, given the challenging circumstances in their homelands. These unfavorable conditions may encompass poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

However, this research illustrates that these adverse conditions remain even after migration, which reflects horizontal inequalities. Migrants believe they face these inequalities as they are immigrants and foreigners. This disparity continues to be a frequent issue in their lives, considering they do not possess citizenship in their host country. Although migration may primarily be generated by poverty and inequality, this inequality persists and displays in another form in the destination country. Hence, there is a tangible connection between migration and different forms of inequality.

Moreover, the study results demonstrated that the respondents' experiences were structural rather than personal inequalities, resulting from a more extensive societal system of structures that creates these inequalities rather than individual acts of discrimination. Structural inequalities can be defined as a condition where one category of people has attributed an unequal status concerning other categories of people (ESCWA, 2020). This affinity is perpetuated and reinforced by unequal relations in roles, functions, decisions, rights, and opportunities (ESCWA, 2020). Structural inequality concerns the systemic and institutionalized disparities that offer an unfair or prejudicial distinction between different population segments in a specific society (Artic Centre, 2023). Such an unjust distinction is rooted in social practices, laws, regulations, and government policies (Artic Centre, 2023). Horizontal and structural inequalities are closely related. Structural inequalities can take the state of horizontal inequalities between different social groups and relate to factors such as income, education, and employment opportunities (House, 2007). These inequalities are linked to social categories such as ethnicity, race, gender, or religion. Horizontal inequalities can reinforce and perpetuate structural inequalities, leading to the reproduction of social orders (Artic Centre, 2023). The study results demonstrate that the migrant respondents experience structural inequalities embedded in larger societal structures. For instance, the study results suggest that the respondents faced challenges in accessing higher-paying jobs, education, and employment opportunities. These challenges resulted from structural inequalities in the larger societal structures of Côte d'Ivoire.

One migrant stated as follows;

*“I am starting to get old now, but what can I do? Even if I have much experience, I cannot get a higher-paying job. The system I build up like this, I am glad to be alive, and I thank God every day”* (Male labor migrant, aged 38).

Another similarly shared his experiences as follows;

*“Abobo is a good city, the people are friendly, and we all live alongside each other as brothers and sisters. I can only speak for myself, but Abobo is no good regarding significant job opportunities. Yes, you can get a job as a builder or a mechanic or something, but you will never get a “good” job here. This involves all the people here, the locals and us migrants. Our opportunities are limited in Abobo”* (Male labor migrant, aged 32).

The study results highlight the existence of structural and horizontal inequalities concerning migration and job opportunities in Abobo municipality. The interview examples presented throughout this chapter further underscore and substantiate these findings. The NELM theory suggests that migration is often driven by the aspiration for better living conditions due to poverty and inequality. However, even after migration, migrants in Abobo municipality continue to face inequalities, such as discrimination based on nationality and limited access to higher-paying jobs. These inequalities are not personal but rooted in larger societal structures. However, the final interview example highlights the limited job opportunities available for both locals and migrants in Abobo. This observation may indicate a structural imbalance in the distribution of employment opportunities, reflecting a broader pattern of inequality within Abobo's social and economic structures. The experiences of migrants in Abobo demonstrate the challenges they encounter in accessing better economic prospects, indicating a broader pattern of inequality within the municipality social and economic structures, which can also be related to the local population.

**7.5 Migrant protection legislation in context of the respondents in Abobo municipality**

Côte d'Ivoire is a destination and transit nation for migrants from adjacent West African countries (IOM, 2015,2019, 2023; Brou & Charbit, 1994). To regulate migration and safeguard the rights of migrants, the government has implemented many laws and policies addressing these matters (IOM, 2015,2019, 2023; Brou & Charbit, 1994). This section will explore the regulations and intergovernmental agreements, focusing on migrant protection legislation in Côte d'Ivoire. Additionally, it will investigate the experiences of migrants concerning regulations that we see as relevant to our context. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is essential in facilitating migration from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire. As such, the institution bears significance concerning our research context, particularly migration movements, rights, and protection. Consequently, we consider it crucial to incorporate the respondents' experiences with ECOWAS, despite the absence of a direct alignment with our research questions.

Côte d'Ivoire has signed various laws and regulations, one of which includes the Economic Community of West African States, known as ECOWAS. As mentioned previously, based on the ECOWAS regulation, all the member countries have the right of entry, residence, and establishment. However, later, they added three phases to implement this protocol. In addition to the rights about entry, residence, and establishment that migrants possess, there are supplementary rights to which migrants are entitled. These other laws include immigrants from member states, and residents shall be accorded equal treatment for seeking employment or engaging in professional pursuits. Concerning job security or the probability of securing new employment in the event of previous positions being terminated due to financial considerations, immigrants and residents must be treated on an equal condition (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39). Moreover, access to social, cultural, and medical services should be equally accessible to all community members, and they should have an equal right to education for themselves and their kids (Devillard et al., 2015, p.39).

Nevertheless, empirical evidence from the data findings demonstrates that a significant proportion of the respondents are either uninformed about the existence of ECOWAS or, even if they possess knowledge of it, they have not availed themselves of any of the services offered. For instance, one respondent stated as follows;

*"I have heard about ECOWAS but am not satisfied with it since they do not play their roles. I never got something from ECOWAS; many other migrants also barely know about it. For example, when I immigrated here with my children, they had to drop out of school, and my children could never go to school here. Regarding this issue, ECOWAS has not provided any benefits or help to us"* (Male labor migrant, aged 34).

Similarly, another participant noted that:

*"It is not easy to move here as a migrant. In every barrier, you must pay money, and, in some cases, this situation is not the same for the local people. ECOWAS did nothing for me or other migrants, as far as I know. Not everything here is the same for everyone, it is always different "* (Male labor migrant, aged 34).

Furthermore, numerous migrants responded that they had never heard of ECOWAS and had no knowledge of this.

Consequently, in practical terms, the additional protocol incorporated into ECOWAS has not been executed, and immigrants have not reaped the benefits of any services designed explicitly for them under ECOWAS provisions.

Additionally, in terms of treating equally with migrants when finding work or engaging in a profession, one respondent stated as follows:

*"There is always less opportunity for us as migrants. There are places where we go for a job, but when they notice that we are migrants or strangers, they just reject us immediately. When you are born here and you are local everything would work differently for you "* (Male labor migrant, aged 39).

In a similar situation, another respondent explained:

*"Finding jobs are so hard because if you are not Ivorian, there are so many places you cannot work and think of. One of these places can be public sector jobs, like an office job. You can never work there because you are not Ivorian. As a migrant, you might feel a lot of inequalities everywhere, especially in finding jobs"* (Male labor migrant, aged 30).

Hence, based on the empirical findings of this study, the supplementary protocols of ECOWAS about the execution of the second phase (right of residence) have not been implemented in Côte d'Ivoire. The country has only signed and implemented ECOWAS, which is essentially about entry, residence, and establishment rights.

The empirical evidence gathered in this study, along with the experiences shared by the interviewees, reveals that most respondents possess insufficient knowledge and information regarding their fundamental rights. This situation can be attributed, to a certain extent, to the widespread poverty and limited access to technology among the participants. For instance, according to the convention signed by each party involved, immigrants should be entitled to equal rights for commensurate work, fair employment, and favorable conditions, in parity with local individuals. However, the interviewees frequently expressed concerns about the disparity between their income and the work they do daily.



Furthermore, other respondents noted that conditions in Côte d'Ivoire are highly inequitable, particularly in employment opportunities, and that there is a significant degree of discrimination between migrants and native-born citizens. The findings of this study indicate that the prevailing system in Côte d'Ivoire is functioning inadequately. In this context, the term "system" refers to a state of disarray so severe that adherence to even the most fundamental regulations is unattainable. Additionally, in numerous instances, the government demonstrates an insufficient capacity to enforce these laws effectively (Human Rights Practices, 2021, p.40). For example, the government does not furnish data regarding reported employment discrimination or disclose measures undertaken to manage such discrimination (Human Rights Practices, 2021, p.40).

Another example concerns the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Côte d'Ivoire has signed and ratified. This declaration includes the right to receive equal remuneration for equivalent work. Nevertheless, the legislation does not explicitly mandate equal pay for equal work, resulting in wage discrimination (Human Rights Practices, 2021, p.40).

Nonetheless, according to the finding revealed in this study, the impact of migrant workers' rights within the Ivorian labor codes, as applied in Abobo municipality, differs from the description provided here.

For example, *“since February 19, 2004, Côte d'Ivoire has agreed to enforce specific decrees, one of which states that any job vacancies must be reported to the AGEPE (Agence d'Etudes et de Promotion de l'Emploi) and advertised for one month in a nationally recognized newspaper. If no national candidate is employed during this period, the employer may hire any qualified candidate who meets the job requirements”* (IOM, 2020, p.89).

However, this decree does not apply to unregistered small and informal jobs. Such positions are often the only employment opportunities available to labor migrants. Furthermore, Côte d'Ivoire only reports higher-paying jobs, resulting in migrants becoming excluded from society as their needs and concerns are overlooked. Regarding this, some of the respondents agreed and described this situation as follows:

*“ I have never found a job in a newspaper or on the internet that I could go and apply for. Usually, to get the job, you must have the network and be introduced to that job, or you should go and find them by yourself ”* (Male labor migrant, aged 40).

Migrant workers, often perceived as a vulnerable segment of society, cannot access many high-income job opportunities. Consequently, their rights are overlooked for the above reasons, and they become marginalized within the community. Therefore, despite numerous laws in Côte d'Ivoire concerning the protection and employment of immigrants, their enforcement remains inadequate and incomplete.

#### 7.6 Chapter summary

The chapter provided insights into the dynamics of migration, the determinants of migration patterns, and the experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality. The findings contributed to three different levels macro, micro and meso. The Theoretical frameworks examined were the push and pull factors theory, the new classical economic theory, the social network theory, the social capital theory, and the new economics of labor migration theory. The study comprehended the push and pull factors behind the migration of young men to Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire from neighboring countries, examined the role of networks for labor migrants, and explored the motivations of individuals who migrate to the municipality. It also investigated how individuals weigh the costs and benefits of migration and examined the opportunities and challenges faced by migrants in Abobo municipality.

Furthermore, the study identified challenges faced by migrants in Abobo municipality, such as a lack of documentation, inequalities and discrimination. Many migrants lacked legal identification documents, hindering their access to well-paid jobs. The study emphasized the need for improved organizational processes and communication between countries to address this issue. It also highlighted horizontal inequalities, such as discrimination based on country of origin, which limited migrants' access to higher-paying jobs. Briefly, the personal experiences shared by respondents illustrated the manifestation of horizontal inequalities within the labor market context. These challenges included receiving fair wages, limited access to economic opportunities, and barriers to starting their businesses. Both structural and horizontal inequalities exist in the context of migration and job opportunities in Abobo municipality. Despite the initial motivation for migration being the pursuit of better living conditions, migrants in Abobo continue to face inequalities.

The results of this study highlighted a strong correlation between the findings and the research questions.

Regarding research question 1, push and pull factors, the findings were revealed at two macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the primary reason for migration was the purpose of employment opportunities to enhance economic status and alleviate poverty. This aligns with the push and pull factors theory, which indicates that migrants are driven by unfavorable economic circumstances in their home countries (push factors) and attracted to better opportunities in the destination country (pull factors). At the micro level, the evidence we have gathered supports the idea that the choice to migrate made by those surveyed was not solely based on financial considerations. Rather than supporting the assumed notion of primarily financial motivations, our study results show that potential migrant's factor in various elements before deciding to move. These include financial opportunities and social ties, such as existing family or friends in the intended destination country.

Moreover, the costs and benefits of migration, the results indicated that individuals weighed the costs and benefits of migration by conducting a cost-benefit analysis. They realized the sacrifices involved in leaving their home countries but believed that the advantages of migration, such as improved living standards and increased income, outweighed the costs. This corresponds with the cost-benefit analysis concept in the New Classical Economic theory at the micro level, which signifies that individuals make rational decisions based on evaluating potential costs and benefits. In addition, at the macro level, the research findings support this theory, showing that labor migrants in Abobo municipality were motivated by the anticipation of improved economic prospects. Many respondents mentioned that their primary reason for migrating was to secure employment opportunities, as their home countries lacked suitable job options.

Concerning research question 2, the role of networks at the meso level, the study highlighted the importance of social networks for labor migrants in Abobo municipality. Strong ties, such as family members, provided valuable information during decision-making, while weak ties reduced employment opportunities in the municipality. These findings align with social network and social capital theory, emphasizing the significance of strong and weak ties in supporting migrants during their migration journey.

Lastly, the chapter explained that implementing supplementary protocols within ECOWAS has been inadequate. Migrants have insufficient knowledge of their rights due to poverty and limited access to information. The study highlighted the gap between migrant protection legislation and the actual experiences of migrants in Abobo municipality. Despite existing laws and regulations, migrants face challenges in accessing job opportunities, experiencing wage discrimination, and receiving adequate protection of their rights. Implementing and enforcing these laws is described as inadequate, leading to the marginalization of migrants within the community.

All in all, the macro, meso, and micro analyses emphasize the interconnected essence of the findings. Structural inequalities at the macro level influence the implementation of migrant protection legislation at the meso level, which, in turn, shapes the experiences and perceptions of migrants at the micro level. The broader social, economic, and political factors provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and interplay of various forces that contribute to the challenges faced by migrants in Côte d'Ivoire.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND FUTRE RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.0 Introduction

After thoroughly analyzing and discussing the findings, this final chapter outlines potential areas for future research, presents policy recommendations, and draws conclusions based on this thesis. The first section critically examines the key findings and limitations of the study to offer strategic insights and policy recommendations for the future. The second part summarizes the key findings of this research comprehensively, providing a conclusive overview of the study.

### 8.1 The lack of a comprehensive migration strategy in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken significant actions at the political level concerning migration (OECD, 2017, p. 61). At the national level, Côte d'Ivoire has created several ministries and bodies with extended powers in managing certain aspects of migration (OECD, 2017, p. 61). At the sub-regional level, the most influential effort was the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence, and Establishment (1975). Understanding the legal and institutional framework currently governing migration in Côte d'Ivoire and the strengths and weaknesses presented by current migration trends is essential to provide future recommendations for migration governance. It includes national and regional laws and regulations and transnational agreements to which Côte d'Ivoire is a party. As previously mentioned, Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken efforts to develop a national migration policy strategy since 2014. However, it is noteworthy that the government has not yet officially adopted the document (United Nations, 2015 OECD, 2017, p.61).

Developing a national migration policy strategy is crucial to improve migration governance in any country. The fact that Côte d'Ivoire has been operating on a national migration policy strategy since 2014 indicates a recognition by the government of the importance of addressing migration-related matters. However, the delay in adopting the strategy means there may be challenges in finalizing and implementing the policy. The latter may have something to do with the fact that migration management in Côte d'Ivoire is carried out by separate ministries and public institutions with little coordination (OECD, 2017). The current institutional system is built around several ministries with specific attributions related to handling migration (OECD, 2017). The absence of a comprehensive national migration policy framework has resulted in inadequate coordination among institutions (United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2017). This deficiency hampers efficient migration management, leading to fragmented approaches and challenges in addressing migrant needs in Abobo municipality and throughout Côte d'Ivoire.

The necessity for structural changes in the Ivorian migration management system is well-documented, as highlighted by various reports (IOM, 2009; IOM, 2016; IOM, 2019; United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2017). Effective migration management or strategy will enhance Côte d'Ivoire's development (OECD, 2017) and the implementation of effective migration management strategies in terms of labor migration is vital for two primary reasons.

Firstly, it can contribute to the economic growth and development of Côte d'Ivoire, given the significant role migrants play in Ivorian society (OECD, 2017). By implementing effective migration strategies, the Ivorian government can utilize vital factors such as the skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial spirit of migrants to drive economic growth and development, which can lead to job creation, increased productivity, and the stimulation of various economic sectors, ultimately benefiting migrants and Ivorian society (OECD, 2017; IOM, 2023)

Secondly, it can enhance the well-being of migrants by addressing issues related to poverty, inequality, and income disparities (IOM, 2018; OECD, 2017). Addressing poverty, inequality, and income disparities is crucial in ensuring migrants fully benefit from their contributions to Ivorian society (OECD, 2017). By implementing policies that promote fair and equitable treatment, access to social services, and opportunities for upward mobility, the government can improve the living conditions and overall well-being of migrants (OECD, 2017; IOM, 2023)

## 8.2 Future strategy recommendations

In light of the need for an enhanced migration strategy framework in Côte d'Ivoire, this section presents recommendations to address the issues identified in our findings, focusing on the context of Abobo municipality. These recommendations target the challenges encountered by migrants' respondents concerning structural and horizontal inequalities, lack of awareness of migrant rights among the labor migrant population, limited access to well-paid jobs, and inadequate documentation.

### **Structural inequalities and horizontal inequalities**

The migrant respondents experienced inequalities due to structural and horizontal factors. A significant number of the respondents experienced inequalities in terms of access to well-paid jobs. Many of the inequalities experienced by the migrants were attributed to horizontal factors, such as discrimination based on nationality, where non-Ivorians were excluded from specific job opportunities. Furthermore, unequal opportunities between the migrant and the native-born population in Abobo municipality can be related to structural inequalities inherent in Ivorian society. The structural inequalities included economic disparities, specifically related to an income gap. In essence, the distribution of wealth and income is not exclusively determined by individual effort but is influenced by larger social, political, and economic structures.

ILO has introduced a comprehensive and integrated strategy to reduce and prevent inequalities in the world of work (ILO, 2022). The framework strategy aims to reduce and prevent inequalities

in the world of work from 2022-2027 (ILO, 2022). In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, this strategy can be implemented with specific considerations.

To tackle the disparities in the world of work, it is crucial to emphasize the key principles and recommendations presented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022);

**Attention to root causes:** Target the underlying structural factors contributing to inequalities, such as discrimination, wage-productivity decoupling, and weak labor market institutions (ILO, 2022). In the context of Abobo, attention to root causes is highly relevant as it helps identify and address the underlying factors that contribute to inequalities the labor migrant faces, including the local population. For instance, as demonstrated in the findings, discrimination is one of the many factors that may limit employment opportunities and fair treatment of migrants in Abobo municipality.

**Addressing distribution and redistribution:** Combine efforts to distribute resources more equitably through taxes and transfers while addressing inequalities within the labor market (ILO, 2022). Addressing the distribution and redistribution of resources is directly relevant to the context of Abobo as it focuses on ensuring a more equitable allocation of resources and addressing inequalities within the labor market. As the research demonstrates, the migrant respondents in Abobo experienced disparities in income and wealth.

**Fundamental principles and rights and international labor standards:** Uphold relevant international labor standards and ensure fair practices and equal opportunities in the global and national economies (ILO, 2022). Maintaining these standards helps to ensure fair practices and equal opportunities for all individuals, including the labor migrant respondents in Abobo municipality.

**Social Dialogue and Tripartism:** Engage social partners in designing and implementing strategies, fostering collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure tailored interventions and sustainable outcomes (ILO, 2022). For instance, engaging social partners in decision-making processes in the context of Abobo may contribute to ensuring that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the municipality.

**Interconnectedness, integration, and monitoring:** Take a comprehensive and coordinated approach to policy action, considering the interconnected nature of inequality drivers. Establish robust monitoring systems to track progress and evaluate policy effectiveness (ILO, 2022). As the study results demonstrated, inequalities in the world of work were influenced by various

factors, such as discrimination and lack of documentation. These factors are interconnected and can reinforce each other, making it crucial to take a holistic view when designing and implementing policies (ILO, 2022).

**Country-specific approaches:** Tailor strategies to each country's specific needs and circumstances, recognizing that inequality levels and forms vary across contexts. Maintain an understanding of interlinkages among the priority areas (ILO, 2022). For future research concerning labor migration in Abobo municipality, one important factor to acknowledge is that in Abobo, unique characteristics may contribute to inequalities in employment opportunities. Factors such as local economic conditions, demographic characteristics, and cultural norms all contribute to the understanding of the specific context of Abobo, in which policymakers can design strategies better suited to the municipality specific challenges and opportunities.

Furthermore, to reduce inequalities in the world of work and foster inclusive growth, the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022) highlights the importance of prioritizing seven corresponding thematic areas. Implementing these measures may help reduce inequalities, promote inclusive growth, and improve the well-being of individuals in Abobo municipality, including the locals and the migrant community. Key policy measures in each area include;

**Employment creation:** Implementing a gender-transformative macroeconomic framework, enhancing digital infrastructure, facilitating a just transition, and promoting employment opportunities for vulnerable groups (ILO, 2022).

**Equal access to quality education and training:** Enhancing the quality and relevance of education and skills development, providing non-traditional career guidance, and ensuring access to quality public services and social protection (ILO, 2022).

**Adequate protection of all workers and a fair share of the fruits of growth:** Promoting fundamental principles and rights at work, ensuring minimum wages, establishing collective bargaining systems, and strengthening labor market institutions (ILO, 2022).

**Transition to the formal economy:** Developing tailored strategies to address informality, facilitating the transition to decent work opportunities, and removing barriers to formal employment (ILO, 2022).

**Gender equality and non-discrimination, equality for all, diversity and inclusion:** Eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, ensuring equal treatment and opportunities,



addressing gender-based violence and harassment, and promoting the equitable division of unpaid care work (ILO, 2022).

**Trade and Development for fair globalization and shared prosperity:** Collaborating with international bodies to ensure stable trade, incorporating fundamental principles and rights in trade agreements and supply chains, and encouraging responsible business practices (ILO, 2022).

**Universal and adequate social protection:** Expanding social protection systems to cover those lacking adequate coverage and establishing comprehensive and sustainable social protection throughout individuals' lives (ILO, 2022).

The policy approach (ILO, 2022) acknowledges the need to address structural and horizontal inequalities in Abobo's workforce. It emphasizes fair practices, equal access to resources, social dialogue, and tailored strategies. By fostering inclusive work conditions, it aims to benefit Ivorians and migrant workers, promoting a more equitable society.

**Lack of awareness of migrant rights within the labor migrant population**

In this study, findings and substantiated data procured through comprehensive interviews with migrant laborers in the Abobo municipality led to the conclusion that a prevalent issue within the migrant worker population is the inadequate awareness of their fundamental rights and entitlements. The deficiency in understanding these basic rights can be attributed to various factors. Such factors encompass the absence of requisite resources for migrants to access basic information relating to their rights and insufficient dissemination of information by the government concerning these rights.

One factor highlighted relates to the limited access to information encountered by labor migrants. Based on our findings, the living conditions of migrant workers in the Abobo municipality fall below the poverty line. As the research data illustrates, these individuals are required to work incessantly from morning until night. As a result, the combination of poverty and the absence of basic facilities, such as internet access and virtual communication devices, such as computers and mobile phones, may serve as the primary explanation for their severely restricted access to information. The concluding factor that has been cited concerns the inadequacy of the government and the society in which migrants reside to inform them about their rights.

To enhance the circumstances experienced by the labor migrant community in the Abobo municipality, this study seeks to offer several recommendations. The proposed solutions ought to be systematically arranged and structured to address the identified barriers and elevate the knowledge and consciousness of these migrants. However, all relevant groups must contribute to implementing these recommendations successfully. This encompasses many stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, community leaders, and various international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Moreover, in the context of raising awareness among migrants about their rights, an additional aspect that the government can emphasize and prioritize is the creation of targeted information campaigns designed for migrant workers.

IOM strongly demonstrated that the efficacy of a communication campaign hinges on its capacity to convey simplistic and intricate information in readily comprehensible formats (IOM, 2016, p.8). Concerning this, IOM (2016) introduced a program for migrants called the public communication campaign (IOM, 2016, p.8). The information transmitted through this communication campaign to the intended audience is through a strategy that guarantees the message is assimilated, comprehended, accepted, and acted upon (IOM, 2016, p.8).

If the migrants live in extreme poverty and cannot access the Internet and other means of communication to update themselves, the least that the government of that society can do is to update them about all their fundamental and significant rights through a physical method, like creating information campaigns with the presence of knowledgeable people to clear the doubts for the labors and give them the necessary information.

Thus, in collaboration with other relevant organizations, and community leaders, the government of Côte d'Ivoire can initiate information campaigns nationwide to educate migrant laborers about their rights and the national labor protection laws. These campaigns could be conducted in both English and French, address any queries or concerns migrants may have in this regard, and offer support to them in this direction. Given that migrant workers, irrespective of their gender, are viewed as a vulnerable segment of society, this program could significantly aid in augmenting their awareness and comprehension of their fundamental rights.

Another thing that would be advantageous for labor migrants and can protect their rights in the Abobo municipality is that the government should approve and ratify essential international conventions connected to the protection of migrant workers, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families (1990) (IOM, 2020, p.20). The ratification of these conventions is instrumental in safeguarding migrant workers and their families in Côte d'Ivoire generally and Abobo municipality (IOM, 2020, p.20).

### **Well-Paid Jobs and Lack of Documentation**

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that migrant workers typically struggle to secure well-paying jobs. They often end up in positions that provide just enough income for subsistence and cover necessities. The primary reasons for this predicament include insufficient networking opportunities, prevalent discrimination, and in numerous instances, the absence of valid or legal documentation due to irregular migration. In response to this challenge, we aim to suggest a few recommendations that may contribute to improving the circumstances for migrant workers.

The ILO has a distinct definition for irregular migrants who lack proper documentation. An irregular migrant worker is an individual who does not possess the necessary legal authorization to work in the country they currently reside in, as mandated by the respective laws governing entry, stay, or employment (ILO, 2005, p.96). Irregular migration poses a protection issue as migrant workers in irregular status are susceptible to human and labor rights violations (ILO, 2005, p.98). Their status prevents them from obtaining legal employment, often resulting in low-paying jobs with minimal social protection or, in some cases, no well-paying job (ILO, 2005, p.98). They are frequently exploited by local mafia or criminal bands, receive subpar wages, and risk losing unreceived earnings caused by deportation (ILO, 2005, p.98).

According to the finding of this study, in Abobo municipality, around 37.93% of labor migrants were paperless or stateless due to a lack of necessary documentation or proof of residence to demonstrate their legal authorization. Furthermore, the lack of legal documentation for many such laborers often resulted in their inability to find well-paying and stable employment opportunities across various sectors.

Concerning this matter, the processes of documentation and regularization are integral components of the African Union's general approach to regulation (ILO, 2022). In the context of the Abobo municipality, a regularization process has already been initiated. However, a potential reason for the lack of documentation among many respondents could be that this system was not yet implemented when they migrated to the Abobo municipality. Consequently, this situation may explain why some are stateless or without official documents. However, the Ivorian government can enhance its approach by concentrating more on the documentation and regularization procedures for these labor migrants to improve their circumstances.

However, according to ILO advice, the government must adhere to specific guiding principles for this process to be effectively executed. ILO states that *an efficient regularization process is most successful when it is simple and accessible* (ILO, 2005, p.104). Overly demanding, time-consuming, or expensive requirements can deter many eligible migrants from participating (ILO, 2005, p.104). Regularization should be a straightforward procedure and implemented at the most basic level of administration (ILO, 2005, p.104). It should require minimal documentation and not require legal assistance or involve the judicial system (ILO, 2005, p.104).

Another measure that the government could consider for paperless migrants is implementation of a system to identify and register undocumented migrants (IOM, 2019). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed this guideline. It acknowledged that identifying and registering undocumented migrants could serve as an effective management strategy, ensuring their protection and access to services (IOM, 2019). For instance, establishing registration systems for overseas citizens allows their home countries to communicate with them during emergencies and supply necessary assistance information (IOM, 2019, p.220). IOM also recommends that all countries implementing this guideline should respect the privacy of all gathered data, maintain confidentiality, and safeguard the security and well-being of migrants (IOM, 2019, p.220).

Therefore, the Ivorian government can implement the steps above. Besides that, it can cooperate with local entities, community groups, and various stakeholders to aid and simplify the regularization process for irregular migrants (ILO, 2005).

The next obstacle for the respondents who could not get well-paying positions was the issue of discrimination. This research's results indicated that almost all our respondents in Abobo municipality had faced discrimination at least once in different situations, like finding jobs or getting services as foreign migrants. International organizations have been striving to eliminate discrimination against migrant workers. They have established various definitions to counteract discrimination; for instance, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) asserts that:

*“Each human, irrespective of age, ethnicity, color, nationality, language, status, religion/faith, political or other opinions, cultural or social origin, disability, birth, or any other status, is deserving of equal protection and rights”* (IOM, 2016, p.15).

There are several measures that the government can take to tackle discrimination issues against labor migrants. A primary approach is implementing equal opportunity training (ILO, 2005, p.60). This type of training is introduced by ILO and is designed to diminish discrimination by educating a broad spectrum of government officials who interact with migrant workers' affairs (ILO, 2005, p.60). Besides this training, the government can also enhance public awareness regarding the discrimination issues that foreign workers face in Abobo municipality and promote integration campaigns related to this issue (ILO, 2005, p.91; ILO, 2021). It is essential to guarantee that these measures align with other national policies, including those related to employment and immigration (ILO, 2021). International organizations, like the IOM and ILO, should also regularly monitor and evaluate if Côte d'Ivoire is implementing these actions.

It is worth noting that addressing or enhancing the issue of discrimination is connected to migration management in Côte d'Ivoire. Ensuring border management is mindful of protection necessities is paramount (IOM, 2017, p.4). It is also critical for Côte d'Ivoire to have comprehensive systems established that ascertain the rights of migrants are not breached and that migrants with protection issues, such as migrants without valid documents or suspicious cases, are promptly recognized and guided to the suitable service providers (IOM, 2017, p.4). Most importantly, the provisions against discrimination should be incorporated into laws that govern all procedures at international borders (IOM, 2017, p.4).

### 8.3 Conclusion

Despite high poverty levels, rapid urbanization, and limited job opportunities, the Abobo municipality in Côte d'Ivoire continues to attract migrants, indicating an enduring appeal and the potential advantages associated with migration. This problem statement served as the impetus for comprehensively examining the migration dynamics, determinants, and experiences within the Abobo municipality. Throughout this master's thesis, the study addressed the research questions and objectives, leading to significant insights into the motivations, experiences, opportunities, and challenges encountered by migrants in the Abobo municipality. By employing a multi-level analysis encompassing macro, meso, and micro factors, this study enhanced the understanding of the contextual factors and migration dynamics within the municipality.

At the macro level, this study employed migration theories that explored the broader social, economic, and political forces that shape migration patterns in the Abobo municipality. By analyzing these macro-level factors, significant insights were gained regarding the study respondents' motivations and determinants of migration to the municipality. According to the push and pull factors theory, adverse economic circumstances and limited job opportunities in the migrants' origin countries (push factors) motivated them to seek an improved life in Côte d'Ivoire (pull factors).

The perceived availability of higher-paying jobs, enhanced work conditions, and business opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire acted as pull factors that attracted the migrant respondents. Furthermore, the comparison between the country of origin and Côte d'Ivoire influenced the respondents' migration decisions, as they aspired for a more promising future. Moreover, the Neo-Classical economic theory emphasized the role of economic factors in migration. Côte d'Ivoire offered higher wages and abundant job opportunities, attracting migrant respondents from the neighboring countries with lower incomes and limited employment options.

The study's findings aligned with these theoretical perspectives and demonstrated that the primary motivation for the migrant respondents in Abobo municipality was to secure employment opportunities and enhance their financial status. The absence of job opportunities in their home countries pushed them to migrate. However, it is essential to acknowledge that many factors beyond purely economic grounds influence migration decisions. While economic factors hold significant importance, the study demonstrated that a comprehensive understanding of migration requires considering the interplay of multiple factors.

At the meso level, the study examined the social and economic conditions influencing regional and community migration patterns. This examination provided insights into the role of social ties and networks for labor migrants in the Abobo municipality. The findings indicated that migrants relied on strong and weak ties in their networks before and during migration. Strong ties, such as family members, provided valuable information during the decision-making process, while weak ties facilitated employment and housing opportunities in the municipality.

We discovered that the findings aligned with Social Network theory, emphasizing both ties' importance. Weak ties, mainly, were influential in finding employment through secondary associations like migrant communities. These findings are consistent with existing literature on the significance of social networks in job search and employment. However, the study also identified barriers to well-paid work, such as corruption, lack of documentation, and discrimination against non-Ivorians. The study discovered the complex nature of the migration process and suggested that more than social networks alone are required to overcome these barriers.

Moreover, the study's findings demonstrated that the networks established among the migrant respondents in Abobo municipality serve as essential social capital. These networks play a significant role in providing support and reducing the risks associated with migration, aligning with the principles of the social capital theory. While social networks and social capital are crucial for migrants in Abobo municipality, we discovered that managing structural factors and systemic issues within Abobo municipality is necessary to improve job opportunities and overall development for the labor migrant respondents.

At the micro-level, the study focused on individual elements influencing migration decisions. Through this analysis, valuable insights were obtained into the factors that drive individual migrants to choose the Abobo municipality as their destination. These insights clarified the individual motivations and aspirations of the migrant respondents, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of the micro-level dynamics of migration in the municipality. It highlighted the limitations of the Neo-Classical economic theory, which primarily focuses on economic reasons for migration, by demonstrating the influence of non-economic factors on migration decisions. The study found that migration decisions were not solely based on economic factors but also social networks, policy frameworks, migration laws and regulations in Côte d'Ivoire.



The examples of respondents showed how migration could be constrained by various factors, leading to decisions shaped by a combination of considerations. Aligned with the New Economics of Labour Migration, the study results demonstrated that migration decisions involve the entire household, with migrants seeking to enhance their and their family's financial situations. Furthermore, the push and pull framework proposed by Lee (1966) examined the individual motivations, aspirations, and circumstances related to migration. This approach unveiled a comprehensive understanding of migration from multiple dimensions of emigration to the Abobo municipality.

In addition, findings aligned with the Neo-Classical Economic theory's cost-benefit analysis, as migrants evaluated migration's potential advantages and disadvantages. The study indicated that many migrant respondents recognized the costs of leaving their home country but believed that the benefits, such as enhanced living standards and increased income, outweighed the costs. The study highlighted the rationality of migrants' decision-making and pursuit of higher potential benefits in the destination country.

Moreover, the study identified the opportunities and challenges faced by migrants in the Abobo municipality, enabling us to understand the migrant experience in the municipality context comprehensively. We recognized that employment opportunities in Abobo municipality were perceived as a significant advantage compared to the respondents' countries of origin. However, the findings also uncovered the importance of legal identification/documentation for accessing well-paid jobs. Unfortunately, the majority of migrant respondents were found to lack such documentation. Despite the Ivorian government's efforts to simplify the process of obtaining legal documentation through legislation, the study results showed that many migrants still face difficulties obtaining and renewing their identification documents.

While there were opportunities to find formal jobs, a significant finding of the study was the challenges associated with employment in the formal sector. The formal sector, characterized by regulated employment, provides better job security, benefits, and higher wages than the informal sector. However, the lack of legal documentation hindered migrant respondents from securing formal sector jobs, restricting their access to these advantages. Consequently, many migrants were compelled to seek employment in the informal sector, where jobs may be less stable and offer lower wages. Poverty among the respondents further hindered their renewal of required legal documents, perpetuating their limited access to well-paid jobs and poverty.

Lastly, in line with the second part of the research problem, which highlights the absence of a comprehensive migration strategy and its impact on migrants in the Abobo municipality, the research findings revealed that this problem significantly affected the well-being and experiences of migrants. The study's findings demonstrated that the absence of a well-defined and comprehensive approach to addressing migration-related issues directly impacted job opportunities in the municipality, as uncovered explicitly in the research.

Overall, this master's thesis has comprehensively examined migration dynamics, determinants, and experiences in Abobo municipality of Côte d'Ivoire. Through an analysis of macro, meso, and micro-level factors, the study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities and interplay of various forces that shape migration patterns and outcomes in the municipality. The findings emphasize the need for targeted policies and interventions to address the challenges faced by migrants and to harness the potential benefits of migration in Abobo municipality.

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## Attachments

### ATTACHMENT I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LABOR MIGRANTS IN ABOBO DISTRICT (Semi- structured interview) (Translated to English)

#### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Age now
2. Age when you migrated to Cote d' Ivorie
3. Origin Country
4. Religion
5. Marital status
6. Citizenship status
7. Permit status
8. Main source of livelihood in origin country?
9. Main source of livelihood in Abobo district?
10. How long have you been in Abobo district? When did you arrive?
11. Was Cote d' Ivorie your first migration destination? If not, where was your first destination?
12. Where do you stay? e.g., house, organizational housing, homeless

#### KEY QUESTIONS 1:

1. Why did you migrate from your origin country to Cote d' Ivorie?
2. How did you arrive at the decision to migrate?
3. Did you travel with anyone to Cote d' Ivorie?
4. Who did you leave behind in your home country?
5. What are your networks in Abobo district? Family, friends etc.,
6. What are the job opportunities in Abobo district? (In general)
7. What job do you do in Abobo district? Do you have more than one job?
8. How did you get the job?
8. How is your work schedule? (Hours, days a week)
9. What is your salary?
10. What do you use your salary on?
11. Are you satisfied with your job? Why, why not?

#### KEY QUESTIONS 2:

1. What made you choose Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan as your immigration destination?
2. Do you encounter any challenges in your job? If so, what kind of challenges?
3. Did you encounter any challenges finding a job? If so, what kind of challenges? / Was it simple for you to find a job? If not, what issues have you faced?
4. How do you see the role of ECOWAS? Did it have an impact on your choice to immigrate here? If yes, how?
5. Has anyone guided or helped you in your migration process to Abobo? If yes, what was their role, and how did they help you?
6. What did this migration process cost you (what did you leave behind), and what did you gain in return?
7. What are the costs and benefits of Migrating to Abobo municipality compared to your homeland (village)? Eg., Access to hospitals, labor markets, healthcare systems, development, living standards

#### FINAL QUESTION/ SUMMARIZING

1. What do you think are the opportunities for migrants in Abobo municipality?

2. What do you think are the challenges for migrants in Abobo municipality?
3. Over time, how does your experience compare to what you expected?
4. How does your future look like? Are you planning on staying in Abobo municipality? Why/ why not?

### **FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS**

1. 'What do you mean about that?'
2. 'Could you say some more about that?'
3. 'Please, elaborate.'

ATTACHMENT II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LABOR MIGRANTS IN ABOBO DISTRICT (Focus group discussion, I) (Translated to English)

### **INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:**

2. Age now
3. Age when you migrated to Cote d' Ivoire
4. Origin Country
5. Religion
6. Marital status
7. Citizenship status
8. Permit status
9. Main source of livelihood in origin country?
10. Main source of livelihood in Abobo district?
11. How long have you been in Abobo district? When did you arrive?
13. Was Cote d' Ivoire your first migration destination? If not, where was your first destination?
14. Where do you stay? e.g., house, organizational housing, homeless

### **KEY QUESTIONS 1:**

1. What is your current job?
2. How did you get the job?
3. Upon your arrival in Côte d'Ivoire, how has your social network contributed to your capability to find jobs?
4. How did the locals welcome you when you first arrived? How do they welcome you now?
2. Have you witnessed or experienced challenges because you are a migrant? (I.e., Culturally challenges, religion challenges, ethnicity challenges)
3. Would you encourage people from your home country to travel to Abobo district? Why, why not?
4. Do you have any recommendations on future management policies/ strategies that may help improve the challenges labor migrants face in Cote d'Ivoire?
5. What are the costs and benefits of Migrating to Abobo District compared to your homeland (village)? Eg., Access to hospitals, labor markets, healthcare systems, development, living standards

### **KEY QUESTIONS 2:**

1. Could you elaborate on the influence of your social network in your decision-making process when choosing to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire for work purposes?
2. Do you participate in local groups or communities focused on migrant workers? Why/ Why not. If yes, please elaborate about the advantages you have received.
3. How do you communicate information concerning employment opportunities within your social network? (What do you mean about that)

4. In your perspective, how crucial is it for labor migrants to have a robust (social) network in Côte d'Ivoire? And what measures can be taken to enhance such networks?

**FINAL QUESTION/ SUMMARIZING**

1. Is there anything you would like to elaborate on concerning immigration in Cote d'Ivoire?

**ATTACHMENT III: NTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LABOR MIGRANTS IN ABOBO DISTRICT  
(Focus group discussion II) (Translated to English)**

**INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:**

1. What is your current job?
2. How long have you been working at this job?
3. Was it easy getting this job?
4. Are you satisfied with your job?

**KEY QUESTIONS 1:**

1. Have you faced any issues or disadvantages related to your social network as a labor migrant? If yes, could you say some more about that?
2. Have your social networks helped you solve any challenges related to your jobs? Why/ Why not
3. Have you encountered any language barriers? If so, how have you overcome them?
4. How have you maintained connections with your family and community back home since migrating?
5. Have you experienced any challenges or barriers in building new social networks in your new community?

**KEY QUESTIONS 2:**

1. Have your social networks helped you to find employment or other opportunities in your new community?
2. Have you been able to connect with other migrants or members of your own ethnic or cultural community since arriving in this country?
3. Did you consult with friends, family members, or other individuals before making the decision to migrate? How did their opinions or advice impact your decision?
4. Did you have any concerns or reservations about migrating? If so, how did you address those concerns?
5. How have you managed to maintain connections with family members who remained in your home country?
6. Did your household make the decision to migrate together, or was it an individual decision?

**FINAL QUESTION/ SUMMARIZING**

1. What advice would you give to someone considering migrating to this country?

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN TAKING PART IN THE REASERCH PROJECT**

*” Migration trends in West Africa: An analysis of labor migrants and the determinants of Migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality”?*

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the primary purpose is to understand the situation of labor migrants and the determinants of migration processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality.

In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

**PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

We want to investigate migrants' current situations, the opportunities and challenges of labor migrants, and the individuals' decisions to migrate to the Abobo municipality.

We aim to answer the following research questions with the help of your contributions.

*1. What are the main push and pull factors influencing the migration decisions of young male migrants from neighboring countries to Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and how do they weigh the associated costs and benefits in their decision-making process?*

*2. What is the role of migrant networks for labor Migrants in the Abobo municipality?*

*Sub- Questions*

*1. What are the job opportunities for migrants in the Abobo municipality, and what are the challenges they face in terms of employment?*

We happily invite you to participate in our research project by sharing your experiences and insights.

All your contributions will be handled with utmost care and used only for our research project. If you have any questions about our research project or your participation, please feel free to ask us your questions at any given moment.

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REASERCH PROJECT?**

The Department of Global Development and Community Planning at the University of Agder (Kristiansand, Norway) is responsible for the project.

**WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Because you are a labor migrant between the age of 20-40, located in Abobo municipality, and you fit into our research target group.

**WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE FOR YOU?**

If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve you will take part in two interviews.

It will take approx. 45 minutes each time. The interview includes questions about labor migrant's living situation, current challenges, and opportunities in Abobo municipality.

*Your answers will be recorded electronically.*

**PARTICIPATION**

**IS**

**VOLUNTARY**

**Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.**

**YOUT PERSONAL PRIVACY – HOW WE WILL STORE AND USE YOUR PERSONAL DATA**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation

(the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). We will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data, you will store the data on a research server, locked away/encrypted, etc.

*The only people have access to your interview contributions are;*

*Fatemeh GOLI: [Fatemehg@uia.no](mailto:Fatemehg@uia.no) (researcher)*

*Martine Amena Eriksen KOUASSI: [Makouassi@uia.no](mailto:Makouassi@uia.no) (researcher)*

***You will not be recognizable in our thesis to any extent.***

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- *access the personal data that is being processed about you*
- *request that your personal data is deleted*
- *request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified*
- *receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and*
- *send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data*

## **WHAT GIVES US THE RIGHT TO PROCESS YOUR PERSONAL DATA?**

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *the University of Agder*, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

## **WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?**

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

*Fatemeh Goli: [Fatemehg@uia.no](mailto:Fatemehg@uia.no) (researcher)*

*Martine Amena Eriksen KOUASSI: [Makouassi@uia.no](mailto:Makouassi@uia.no) (researcher)*

Yours sincerely,

Fatemeh Goli and Martine Amena Eriksen KOUASSI

## **Consent form**

I received and understood information about the project migration trends in West Africa: An Analysis of Migrant Workers and the Determinants of Migration Processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan, Abobo municipality, and had the opportunity to ask questions.

I hereby agree;

- Participation in one or more interviews
- I understand and accept my own rights, given in this letter
- I authorize the processing of my personal data until the end of the project date, approx. 6 months

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(Signed by participant, date)



