

What Can We Learn from Lampedusa? The Migration from Africa to Europe in the Context of Political Erosion and Collapse of the Sub-Saharan Countries

Abstract

The aim of the article is to discuss the reasons and results of migration from Africa to Europe. In the beginning, the migration routes of the Mediterranean Sea, with Lampedusa as a key transit point, are described. Then, the EU's immigration policy and its public criticism are analysed. In the central part of the text the aetiology of the departures of Africans in the context of the political erosion and the collapse of the African states is discussed. In addition the outline of the African diaspora in Europe and the problem of ritualisation and stereotyping of migration in Africa are given.

Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, Lampedusa – a small Italian island located between Libya, Tunisia, Malta, and Sicily – has become one of the key transit points on the migratory route from Africa, the Near East and the Middle East to Western Europe. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it is one of the deadliest migratory trails in the world.¹ In March 2016, after an agreement between the European Union and Turkey had been concluded to limit the migration on the Turkish-Greek route, the Italian (North-African) route with Lampedusa as its critical point once again became the main migration route to Europe.

Lampedusa drew the attention of the international public opinion in March 2005, when the Italian government, acting in accordance with a secret agreement made with Muammar Gaddafi, faced strong objections from the European Parliament and numerous human rights organisations after it deported 180 immigrants to Libya. In 2011, the island returned to the spotlight of the European and global media, when, as a result of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, 50,000 people arrived in Lampedusa in just 8 months between January and August. In July 2013, the island was put in the spotlight again when Pope Francis set off on his first journey outside Rome and called on Europeans to show solidarity with the refugees in his speech about the “globalisation of indifference”. There was as much debate over Lampedusa, if not more, in October 2013, when a boat with 500 people sank on its coast. Over 360 of them, predominantly Somalians and Eritreans, drowned and their bodies were being recovered for a week after. This number is still staggering, despite the shock value of the reports about the deaths of the Mediterranean boat people,² as well as the victims of the wars in Libya and Syria wearing off.

The Lampedusa incident has many names. Some journalists, commentators and politicians called it an “unfortunate accident.” Is this the appropriate form of narration? An “accident” is unex-

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¹ Only between January and April 2015 1,600 people died *en route* from Libya to Lampedusa. See Cf. Deborah Ball, ‘Hundreds of Migrants Believed Dead in Shipwreck Off Libya’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 April 2015, www.wsj.com/articles/about-700-believed-dead-in-shipwreck-off-libya-says-unhcr-1429432174? (accessed 25 August 2016).

² Michael Pugh, ‘Mediterranean Boat People: A Case for Co-Operation?’, *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2001, pp. 1–20.

pected, it shocks and frightens. The tragedies near Lampedusa occur repeatedly.³ Thus, can they be called “accidents”? Who is responsible for them? What can we learn from the tragedies near Lampedusa? The complex aetiology of the departures of Africans is worth exploring, in the context of the political erosion and the collapse of the African states. The analysis of the intra-African condition should be complemented with the evaluation of the scale of risk of the European Union’s migration policy, the geopolitical circumstances, and the consequences of migration from Africa to Europe.

Mare Nostrum

Lampedusa is a small, 11 km-long and 3 km-wide island with 6,000 inhabitants. It is the southernmost part of Italy, located 200 km southwest of Sicily, as well as being the closest European territory to Libya – the island lies only 300 km away. The nearest land, Tunisia, is 115 km away. “The whitest island”,⁴ as it has been called in the past, once a harbour for the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs, became a symbolic gateway to Europe for thousands of Africans. However, for many people its waters became a tomb, a no man’s land dividing the rich North and the poor South. The Mediterranean Sea, called *Mare Nostrum* by the Romans, is transforming into the “European Sea”, yet another jealously guarded wall, which are often built at the borders of civilisations.⁵

A few meters from the rocky shore of the island stands a monument called “the Gate of Lampedusa – the Gate of Europe” (*Porta di Lampedusa – Porta d’Europa*) erected in 2008 by Domenico ‘Mimmo’ Paladino, one of the main representatives of the Italian transavantgarde movement. The simple installation is primarily made up of shoes and bowls invoking the items fished out by the Italian fishermen – the objects left behind by the immigrants who have perished at the sea. The work seems unfinished, as though the artist had left the audience to decide whether to close and wall the gates or to throw them wide open.

The majority of the immigrants reach Lampedusa on boats called *gommoni* (rafts) or *scafi* (little boats) by Italians.⁶ The name of this form of migration – ‘pirogue migration’ – is related to this aspect as well.⁷ A motorboat ticket costs between several hundred and several thousand euro, depending on the middleman, the place of departure, negotiating skills and sometimes the national and ethnic origin of the migrant. Usually, entire families have a whip-round to buy a ticket for a migrant.⁸ Stefano Liberti, an Italian journalist, compares these businesses to savings cooperatives and investment funds.⁹ He points out that the transit is organised both by the migrants themselves

³ Even before all the bodies of the victims of the tragedies of 3 October, and 11 October were retrieved from the water, another boat with immigrants sank 120 km away from the island. At least 34 people died.

⁴ Gabriel Giorgi and Karen Pinkus, ‘Zones of Exception: Biopolitical Territories in the Neoliberal Era’, *Diacritics*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2006, pp. 99–108.

⁵ Cf. Paola Zaccaria, ‘New Faces, Old Masks: Borders and Confinements between the Desert and the Mediterranean Sea’, *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, Vol. 5, 2007, pp. 305–318.

⁶ David Forgacs, ‘The Words of the Migrant: Tales of Contemporary Italy’, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol. 76, 2008, pp. 277–297.

⁷ María Hernández-Carretero and Jørgen Carling, ‘Beyond “Kamikaze Migrants”: Risk Taking in West African Boat Migration to Europe’, *Human Organization*, Vol. 71, No. 4, 2012, pp. 407–416.

⁸ Elie Goldschmidt, ‘Storming the Fences: Morocco and Europe’s Anti-Migration Policy’, *Middle East Report*, No. 239, 2006, pp. 36–41.

⁹ Stefano Liberti, *Na południe od Lampedusy: Podróże rozpaczy* [South of Lampedusa: Journeys of Despair], translated by Marcin Wyrembelski, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2013.

and extensive networks of criminals. A precise valuation of a ticket is problematic, and the estimates given by various organisations monitoring the scale of the phenomenon differ greatly.

According to the UNHCR, between 1999 and 2013, more than 200,000 people reached Lampedusa from different locations in the south.¹⁰ The majority of them are Eritrean, Somali, Egyptian, Libyan, Malian, Afghan and Syrian. Some of them have looked for a job on the island, however, finding an employment there, even as a waiter, is nearly impossible. Some of them have been provided with aid and shelter by the inhabitants of Lampedusa. Others have tried camping out in cramped shelters built near the caves by the beaches. The presence of the immigrants has scared off as much as half of the tourists who used to travel to Lampedusa strictly to spend their holidays,¹¹ not least because of its beaches, considered the most charming in the world.¹² However, the presence of the immigrants is seen as a tourist attraction by some tourists. Perhaps some of them are familiar with the controversial notion of slum tourism.

Immigrants, under the escort of the Italian *carabinieri*, reach the Reception Center (CDA) of Lampedusa, an accommodation centre for immigrants. The facility, created in 1998, was designed to provide medical attention and first aid to 200–300 people. Despite this, it has been accommodating more than a thousand people for years.¹³ Its living conditions have led to regular, albeit ineffective, protests by the UNHCR and human rights groups, as well as the immigrants themselves. Some of them have protested against the facilities, but also the Italian and European asylum policy in general, on the main square of the city. Others decided to undertake more dramatic steps – in 2009, 2011, and the last time in May 2016, it was supposedly the migrants who set the facilities of the Reception Center on fire.¹⁴

It is estimated that in the past three decades, over 20,000 Africans have drowned by the shores of Lampedusa – every tenth migrant who tried to enter Europe. During the Arab Spring alone 2,000 people fleeing the wave of violence in the Maghreb have perished.¹⁵ Every month, new, nameless graves fill the cemetery in Cala Pisana.

¹⁰ Michał Wilgocki and Justyna Suchecka, 'Znowu utonęli imigranci' [Immigrants Drowned Once Again] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, No. 239, 2013, p. 10.

¹¹ Ewa Tuz, 'Lampedusa – między rzeczywistością a doniesieniami medialnymi' [Lampedusa: Between Reality and Media Reports], *Biuletyn Migracyjny*, No. 32, 2011, p. 9.

¹² In this context, the irony can be seen in the fact that at the beginning of 2013 Lampedusa Rabbit Beach has been voted the most beautiful beach in the world in Trip Advisor ranking. Cf. *TripAdvisor Announces 2013 Travelers' Choice Beaches Awards*, https://tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i5762-c1-Press_Releases.html (accessed 26 August 2016).

¹³ Cf. e.g. Jarosław Mikołajewski, 'Grób nieznanego uchodźcy' [The Tomb of the Unknown Refugee], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, No. 239, 2013, p. 20; *Lampedusa migrant centre conditions 'desperate' after rescues*, 17 February 2015, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31501782 (accessed 2 September 2016).

¹⁴ 'Migrants Set Fire to Lampedusa Migrant Shelter in Protest', 17 May 2016, www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-shelter-fire-idUSKCN0Y82P6 (accessed 3 September 2016). Then the immigrants are transported to a larger facility in Italy, from where they are deported or referred to the centres for asylum seekers. It should be added that for many years prior to the agreement between the EU and Turkey on migrants from 2016 EU politicians called for an expansion of regional protection zones and transit processing centers outside the EU. Humanitarian groups protested against these projects. Cf. Rutvica Andrijasevic, 'Lampedusa in Focus: Migrants Caught between the Libyan Desert and the Deep Sea', *Feminist Review*, No. 82, 2006, pp. 120–125.

¹⁵ Tomasz Bielecki, 'Czy Lampedusa to wypadek?', [Is the Lampedusa Case of Accident?] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, No. 237, 2013, p. 12.

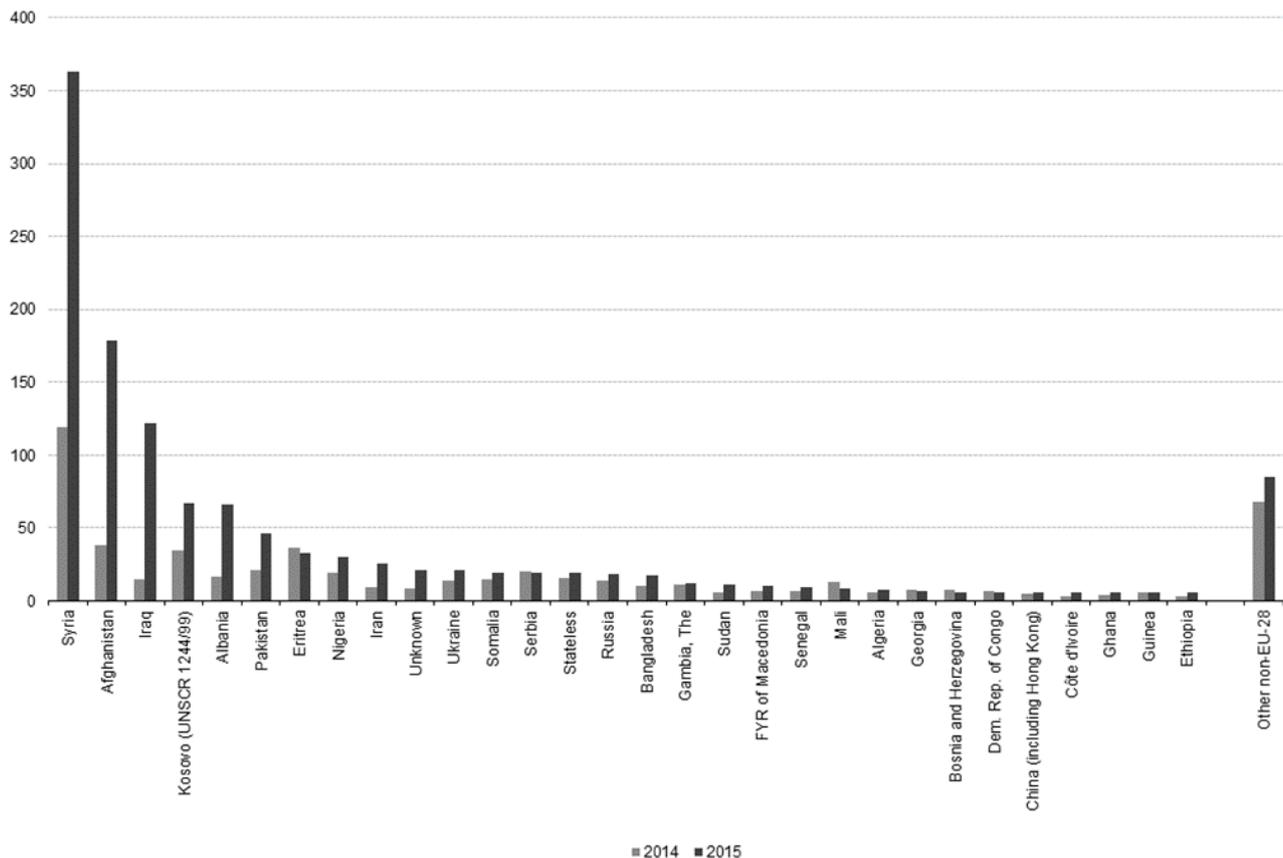


Table no. 1. *Countries of origin of (non-EU) asylum seekers in the EU-28 Member States, 2014 and 2015 (thousands of first time applicants)*, [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Countries_of_origin_of_\(non-EU\)_asylum_seekers_in_the_EU-28_Member_States,_2014_and_2015_\(thousands_of_first_time_applicants\)_YB16.png#filelinks](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Countries_of_origin_of_(non-EU)_asylum_seekers_in_the_EU-28_Member_States,_2014_and_2015_(thousands_of_first_time_applicants)_YB16.png#filelinks) (accessed 20 September 2016).

The Hypocrisy of Lampedusa

The phenomenon of pirogue migration on the one hand blurs the definition of crime, and on the other hand, as some would say, extends it to an absurdly large degree. According to the so-called Bossi-Fini law of 2002,¹⁶ a migrant who illegally crosses the border of Italy, becomes a criminal – not only the smuggler, but also the passenger of a boat. What is more, anyone helping the immigrants may be considered a criminal,¹⁷ e.g. a fisherman hurrying to the aid of a sinking boat full of immigrants.

Under the Bossi-Fini law, identification centres were created in order to detain asylum seekers and accelerated procedures of examining the asylum applications were introduced. This raised the concerns of many human rights groups, which stressed that the rules on detention of the immigrants may be breaching international law, and that the new rules may conflict with the fundamental rules of the international refugee law, such as the right to asylum or the non-refoulement principle,

¹⁶ The name of the Act comes from the names of the applicants – Gianfranco Fini and Umberto Bossi. For more on the effects of implementation of the immigration law of 2002 see: Alessandra Ballerini and Alessandro Benna, *Il muro invisibile: Immigrazione e Legge Bossi-Fini* [Invisible Wall: Immigration and Bossi-Fini Law], Genova: Fratelli Frilli Editori, 2002.

¹⁷ Tomasz Bielecki, 'Czy Lampedusa...'

which prohibits returning or expelling asylum seekers to a country in which they may face human rights violations.¹⁸

After the tragedy in Lampedusa, the Italian immigration law turned manifestly sarcastic. All the drowned immigrants were posthumously awarded Italian nationality, were given official state funerals and the day itself was declared one of national mourning. Meanwhile, under the Bossi-Fini law, those who survived could have been deported to Libya at any moment. In this context, Mary Dejevsky commented on the ‘hypocrisy of Lampedusa’: “[b]ut such measures are grotesque and will only reinforce the idea, among would-be refugees and their advocates, that a dead migrant is preferable – at least in the eyes of the receiving country – to a live one. Will the Italian authorities, I wonder, be so keen to grant the survivors citizenship? Or even allow them into the country?”¹⁹

In July 2013, Lampedusa was visited by Pope Francis – it was his first journey outside Rome since he had taken the papal seat. According to Vatican experts, it was a penitential pilgrimage, a symbolic journey to the periphery of Europe, which is filled with the suffering of those from outside Europe. The pope tossed a wreath of white and yellow chrysanthemums off the deck of a coastguard patrol boat as a tribute to the victims. He then celebrated a Mass near a pile of refugee boats called a ‘boat graveyard’. In his homily, Pope Francis, the first non-European pope, pointed out the “globalisation of indifference” affecting Europeans and other nations of the rich North, who downplay the problem of the migration from the poor South: “The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles, which, however lovely are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business! [...] Lampedusa is a beacon. May this example be a beacon that shines throughout the world, so that people will have the courage to welcome those in search of a better life”²⁰

Pope Francis’ “message of solidarity of continents, religions, and nations”²¹ draws attention to the ideological context of the European immigration policy. The answer to the question whether Europe should host refugees is not exclusively linked with the diagnosis of the moral condition of the Old Continent. Because of its scale, the migration of Africans has become one of the major challenges facing Europe, closely related to both security policy, as well as a question of the ideological future of the European welfare state.

African Diaspora in Europe

The African diaspora in Europe is very diverse. It consists of both the people who have been there for generations, as well as the new immigrants – legal and illegal alike. The latter are often

¹⁸ *Amnesty International Report 2006: The State of the World’s Human Rights*, London: Amnesty International, 2006, p. 151.

¹⁹ Mary Dejevsky, ‘The Lampedusa hypocrisy: Italy prefers its migrants dead on arrival’, *The Spectator*, 10 October 2013, www.blogs.spectator.co.uk/2013/10/the-lampedusa-hypocrisy-italy-prefers-its-migrants-dead-on-arrival (accessed 25 August 2016). NGO activists point out that the concept of irregular migrants, replicated in EU documents, conceals a hidden fear of non-Europeans.

²⁰ *Homily of Holy Father Francis*, given on 7 July 2013 on ‘Arena’ Sports Camp, Salina Quarter of Lampedusa, w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html (accessed 26 August 2016).

²¹ Mikołajewski, ‘Grób nieznanego uchodźcy...’

willingly smuggled, or they are trafficked against their will for cheap, or frequently, free labour.²² France is inhabited by 5 million Africans, the United Kingdom by 3 million, and Germany and Italy by a million each.²³ The governments of each of these countries are trying to work out a strategy of controlling the influx, reception, and integration of the newcomers. They are frequently portrayed as culturally, ethnically and religiously “alien” – both in the media and in political discourse and those of them who follow Islam, are portrayed as terrorists. This stigmatising discourse is often adopted by populist nationalists, who, trying to exploit the social discontent, turn the European fear of the unknown into political capital. For instance, the campaign slogan of one of the Italian politicians reads: “Difendi il tuo futuro: fuori i clandestini” (Defend your future: Out with the illegal immigrants).²⁴ With such statements, politicians deny both the history of colonial relations, as well as the well-established tradition of the flow of people between metropolitan areas and the periphery of the old empires.

Janusz Tazbir, a Polish historian, in his paper dedicated to the concept of the bulwark of Christian Europe (*antemurale christianitatis*) noted that politicians often do not see the ease with which the myth of defence against the “Alien” degenerates into a claustrophobic conviction of one’s own uniqueness, combined with stigmatisation of “Others”.²⁵ Over the last several years, the stereotype of Arabs, Africans and Muslims taking jobs from Europeans and fuelling the black market, while simultaneously not assimilating has been increasingly reappearing in the EU’s public debate.²⁶ This prejudice, like every stereotype, has little basis in facts. A significant part of the immigrants indeed does work in the hidden economy, does not pay taxes and lives in ghettos, interfering with the (often questionable) aesthetic of European suburbia. Is such an attitude represented by some people, however, reason enough to tighten the immigration policies concerning all immigrants?

According to many media outlets and politicians, some immigrants conceal the real reasons for their journey, which are economic.²⁷ For this purpose, they exaggerate the level of threats in their home country and accentuate the “theme of martyrdom” of their journey, in the hope that EU officials recognise them as political refugees and not as illegal economic immigrants. The effects of this distortion or coercion are reflected in the increase in xenophobic sentiments in Europe, which the successive waves of immigrants are experiencing more and more.²⁸

The Collapse of Countries and the Crisis of the Political Elites

In characterising the psycho-social attitudes of the migrants, Stefano Liberti noted that “[t]hey do not abandon their dreams; they crave Europe, they catch onto every tiniest piece of information which helps them remain under their dreamlike illusion. From a distance, their struggle

²² Ruben Andersson, ‘A Game of Risk: Boat Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe’, *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 2012, pp. 7–11.

²³ Julia Choe, *African Migration to Europe*, 10 July 2007, New York: Council of Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/world/african-migration-europe/p13726 (accessed 10 January 2014).

²⁴ Forgacs, ‘The Words of the Migrant...’

²⁵ Janusz Tazbir, *Polskie przedmurze chrześcijańskiej Europy: mity a rzeczywistość historyczna* [Poland as a Rampart of Christian Europe: Myths and Historical Reality], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1987.

²⁶ Hein de Haas, ‘The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 7, 2008, pp. 1305–1322.

²⁷ Sara Hamood, *African Transit Migration through Libya to Europe: The Human Cost*, Cairo: AUC, 2006.

²⁸ Paola Zaccaria, ‘Medi-terranean Borderization’, *Signs*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2011, pp. 10–18.

may seem insane, however, in reality, it is often their only weapon”.²⁹ This poetic description shows the desperation of the Africans heading for Europe. Researchers of this phenomenon, especially sociologists and demographers, point out that the decision to migrate rarely has only one cause, and usually its reasons are political and economic, as well cultural or familial. When building models designed to explain the phenomenon of migration, many of them use a typology of push and pull factors. Evaluating which of them have a greater impact on the decision to migrate can bring us closer to the answer to the question of who is to blame for the tragedy near Lampedusa and where to look for solutions to the migratory problems.

Many politicians, but also some journalists, researchers and public opinion, think that the main cause of migration from Africa to Europe is the terrible quality of governance, the crisis of the post-colonial elites and the collapse of states in sub-Saharan Africa – factors which force their citizens to consider migration for survival.³⁰ The crowning argument in these discussions is the Failed States Index.

The Failed States Index was established in 2005 by the analysts of *Foreign Policy*, a periodical founded in 1970 by Samuel Huntington and Warren Manshel, and the representatives of Fund for Peace, a non-governmental organisation based in Washington. A decade after its founding, the number of indicators of the Index varied. The authors of the successive reports suggest that this was influenced by the dynamics of geopolitical relations in the era of globalisation. This statement, a typical example of political science empty talk, conceals the conviction that the growing importance of the countries of the South in the international arena constrains an adjustment of the indicators of the condition in these countries. Initially, the FSI was based on the analysis of uneven development, the legitimacy of state authority and the risks associated with demographic trends. Over time, the list was extended to a degree of control over the territory of the country, the level of internal security, access to basic social services and the existence – understood in the Weberian sense – of a state monopoly on the use of force. Another change was related to recognising the role of corruption, seizure of power by the elites, ethno-religious divisions and the lack of the rule of law. At the end of the first decade of this century, the list was expanded to include evaluation of the instruments of crisis management.

Currently, the index is based on an evaluation of 12 indicators: demographic pressure, the number of refugees (including internal refugees), the functioning of groups of victims, the movement of people, development disparities, poverty, economic recession levels, legitimacy of state authority, quality of public services, respect for human rights, security of citizens, divisions among the political elites, as well as external aggression.

In 2014, the name of the index was changed: the term “failed” was replaced with the word “fragile”, which in this context means “unsteady”, “weak” or – according to some political scientists – “predysfunctional”.³¹ The Fund for Peace pointed out that even though the term “failed” drew the attention of the public opinion, it also became a distraction from the point of the Index, which is to encourage discussions that support an increase in human security and improved livelihoods.³²

²⁹ Liberti, *Na południe od Lampedusy...*, p. 71.

³⁰ Martin Baldwin-Edwards, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: North Africa as a Region of Emigration, Immigration and Transit Migration’, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 108, 2006, pp. 311–324.

³¹ Błażej Popławski, ‘Failed States Index – państwa kruche czy upadłe?’ [Failed States Index: Fragile or Failed States?], *Kultura Liberalna*, No. 287, 2014.

³² *Renaming the Failed States Index*, 28 May 2014, www.library.fundforpeace.org/blog-20140528-fsirenamed (accessed 28 August 2016).

This statement may conceal the belief that the term “failed” has acquired an overly pejorative connotation, both in the eyes of politicians and the public, and thus, it has ceased to be useful in the scientific description of reality, thereby dismissing the chances for understanding and a constructive discussion. “Failed” and “collapsed” were becoming less and less meaningful, and these terms gradually started causing annoyance, whereas for some politicians and the public, especially those from the “fragile states”, they were insulting or at least politically incorrect.³³

	Fragile States Index 2016	Total	Demographic Pressures	Refugees and IDPs	Group Grievance	Human Flight	Uneven Development	Poverty and Economic Decline	Legitimacy of the State	Public Services	Human Rights	Security Apparatus	Factionalized Elites	External Intervention
1	Somalia	114,0	9,7	9,7	9,4	9,5	9,3	9,0	9,5	9,0	9,7	9,7	10,0	9,5
2	South Sudan	113,8	9,9	10,0	9,9	6,6	9,0	9,3	9,7	10,0	9,7	10,0	9,7	10,0
3	Central African Republic	112,1	8,7	10,0	9,3	7,2	9,9	8,6	9,8	10,0	9,9	9,2	10,0	9,5
4	Sudan	111,5	9,0	10,0	9,8	9,1	7,6	8,7	9,8	9,1	9,3	9,2	10,0	9,9
4	Yemen	111,5	9,5	9,6	9,5	7,5	8,4	9,4	9,4	9,3	9,4	10,0	9,5	10,0
6	Syria	110,8	8,4	10,0	10,0	8,6	7,4	7,8	10,0	8,9	9,8	10,0	9,9	10,0
7	Chad	110,1	9,9	9,8	8,5	8,9	9,3	8,0	9,2	9,8	9,3	9,1	9,8	8,5
8	Congo (D.R.)	110,0	9,1	9,7	9,7	6,8	8,9	8,1	9,3	9,7	10,0	9,2	9,8	9,7
9	Afghanistan	107,9	9,5	9,5	8,6	8,4	7,5	8,5	9,1	9,6	8,7	10,0	8,6	9,9
10	Haiti	105,1	9,2	7,9	6,7	9,0	9,5	8,9	9,4	9,4	7,7	7,9	9,6	9,9
11	Iraq	104,7	8,1	9,4	9,8	7,9	7,5	6,8	9,2	7,8	8,9	10,0	9,6	9,7
12	Guinea	103,8	8,9	8,4	8,8	7,5	7,4	9,4	9,8	9,2	7,9	9,0	9,9	7,6
13	Nigeria	103,5	9,1	7,7	9,4	7,4	8,8	7,7	8,8	9,4	9,1	9,7	9,9	6,5
14	Pakistan	101,7	8,9	8,9	9,7	7,3	7,0	7,4	8,3	8,2	8,2	9,3	8,9	9,6
15	Burundi	100,7	9,5	9,1	8,1	6,5	7,4	8,2	9,0	8,2	8,5	9,0	8,5	8,7
16	Zimbabwe	100,5	8,6	8,7	7,5	8,1	8,2	8,3	8,9	8,5	8,4	7,8	9,8	7,7
17	Guinea Bissau	99,8	8,3	7,5	5,4	8,3	8,7	8,5	8,9	9,5	7,5	9,1	9,6	8,5
18	Eritrea	98,6	9,1	8,5	6,6	8,0	7,5	8,3	9,5	8,6	9,1	7,4	8,1	7,9
19	Niger	98,4	9,5	8,0	7,7	7,2	8,2	8,0	7,8	9,2	6,7	8,9	8,9	8,3

Table no. 2. Fragile States Index 2016, www.fsi.fundforpeace.org/rankings-2016 (accessed 25 August 2016). 0 is the lowest and 10 is the highest rate.

The results of the subsequent FSIs do not leave any doubt. Africa is the continent with the biggest number of existing fragile or failed states. This ‘plague’ is present to the greatest extent to the south of the Sahara, especially in Central Africa, the eastern part of the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa. The most fragile countries of the world are: Somalia, South Sudan (also the youngest country in the world), the Central African Republic, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Other countries among the top 20 often include Guinea, Nigeria, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea, Niger, and Kenya. Of the 50 states with the highest degree of dysfunctionality, two thirds are African countries.

What determines such a ranking for the African countries in the FSI? In short, the post-colonial heritage and the condition of modern political elites. African countries – speaking *en bloc* –

³³ At the same time, it can be argued that the term *failed* was exaggerated, since many countries that were in the end of the list a few years ago, such as Sierra Leone, have recently shown a strong increase in GDP (which rarely translates, however, to a reduction of the economic stratification).

are characterized by the lowest level of economic development and education, and the highest rate of poverty in the world, as well as vehement tribalism, which – according to political scientist Robert Kłosowicz, a specialist in dysfunctional countries – leads to atrophy of state institutions and the world's largest number of armed conflicts.³⁴ It is necessary to include the socio-political reasons on this list: the lack of professionalisation of elites, delegitimation of state authority, corruption and clientelism devastating the public sphere, the slow emergence of a middle class, the lack of an institutional base of civil society and difficulties with development of the identification of the state. Demography also plays an important role: a progressive age structure, a very high population growth, the lowest life expectancy, highest mortality rate and the largest number of people infected with HIV. It is frequently overlooked that the lack of demographic balance, marginalised in the short term, often has a direct effect on the long-term political stability of countries.

It seems that when analysing the problem of disintegration of sub-Saharan countries, the authors of the FSI, as well as some European political scientists, do not pay due attention to the impact external actors have on the stability of the political systems of these countries. The policies of the former colonial powers, as well as the emerging powers such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), do not contribute to the strengthening of statehood in African countries. This can be seen not only on the example of predatory investment, but also of some peacekeeping and stabilization missions conducted under the aegis of the UN.

According to many commentators, from its foundation the authors of the FSI have been laying increasing emphasis on how states should operate, rather than on the causes of falling states. Sceptics accused them of excessive universalism, paternalism, or Westernism, and argue that the concept of failed states has become a tool in the creation of post-imperial U.S. policy. Some of them may be referring to Noam Chomsky, who, in his book *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (2006), pointed out that the American classification of the countries as areas of increased security risk, is in fact a manipulation, and leads to abuse of international law. Proving the collapse of a country has often been used to justify American interventions and “righteous wars” at the periphery of the world usually concealing the desire to appropriate new resource centres. As Radosław Rybkowski, an Americanist at the Jagiellonian University, writes: “[t]he question – who needs failed states? – must lead to a surprising answer in the modern world. There are many groups to which failed states, both as a phenomenon and concept, are very useful. The concept of failed states, becoming part of the discourse, convinces people of the rightness of political decisions in developed countries. It also contributes to the generous support of non-governmental organisations' activities by private persons. [...] [The notion of failed states] is useful for too many institutions and people in achieving their own goals – including the scientists, who can thus describe the subject of their research”.³⁵

Recognising lists such as the ranking of failed states as objective tools for comprehensive assessment of the causes of migration from Africa to Europe may therefore be controversial. In turn, the advantage of these types of conceptual frameworks is that they draw attention to the fact

³⁴ Robert Kłosowicz, *Państwa dysfunkcyjne w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej* [Dysfunctional States in Sub-Saharan Africa], in *Państwa dysfunkcyjne i międzynarodowe wysiłki zmierzające do ich naprawy* [Dysfunctional States and International Efforts Towards Their Improvement] Robert Kłosowicz (ed.), Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2014, p. 14.

³⁵ Radosław Rybkowski, *Komu potrzebne są państwa upadłe?* [Who Does Need the Failed States?], in *Problem upadku państw w stosunkach międzynarodowych* [Problem of the Collapse of States in International Relations] Robert Kłosowicz and Andrzej Mania (eds), Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2012, pp. 21–22.

that Africans will continue leaving their continent until the situation in their home countries does not improve and the rulers will not take full responsibility for the ruled. However, this conclusion should not encourage Brussels to seal the borders, but rather direct its attention to supporting African leaders in their efforts in implementing structural reforms. Migration can be reduced or at least regulated if the basic needs of Africans will be able to be covered in their own countries. From this perspective, development assistance directed to the countries of origin of the immigrants becomes an important component of European migration policy.³⁶

Ritualization and Stereotyping of Migration in Africa

For many Africans, migration to Europe has evolved into a popular initiation ritual, a confirmation of maturity and independence. As Liberti claims “[s]welling with pride and cultivating their desire for revenge, the candidates to Europe [...] never felt defeated. They developed an inclination to willingly take the most difficult challenges, what is more – they were delighted with the potential obstacles in their paths. In other words, the final value of success increased correspondingly to the difficulty of achieving it. The trip to Europe was becoming an initiatory journey. [...] Additionally, it was associated with an element of revenge – for many people emigration was a compensation for wrongdoings, a type of African revenge on Europe, which first exploited it and then left it to its fate”.³⁷ Klaus Brinkbäumer, a German reporter, also invokes the interpretation of the phenomenon of migration in the perspective of a rite of passage by writing that: “[migrants] cannot turn around, they are not allowed to. They would be rejected by their families and ridiculed in the village. Maybe a mother would even hug them, but – stained by failure – they would feel shame. They would be like dead men alive”.³⁸

It is worth noting that for decades many African countries have led pro-emigration policies treating it as a tool for reducing unemployment and social tensions.³⁹ Paradoxically, some of them have fuelled emigration to Europe in order to obtain additional EU funds designed to stop mass migration to Europe. With successive waves of migrants from Africa, the highly skilled professionals, who could have contributed to the development of the middle class or the replacement of the political elites, have escaped their countries. Many African countries experienced a brain drain.⁴⁰

The decision of migrating to Europe often arises from the belief that the promised land lies on the other side of the Mediterranean. Brinkbäumer writes: “[w]e cannot even fathom the depth of the belief about money paving European streets. How powerful the myths are: sadness is black, good is white”.⁴¹ Mass culture plays an important role in strengthening this topos – it willingly

³⁶ W.R. Böhning, ‘Helping Migrants to Stay at Home’, *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 534, No. 12, 1994, pp. 165–177.

³⁷ Liberti, *Na południe od Lampedusy...*, p. 120.

³⁸ Klaus Brinkbäumer, *Afrykańska odyseja* [published in English as: *The Dream of Life: An African Odyssey*], translated by Joanna Czudec, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2009, p. 155.

³⁹ Philippe Fargues, ‘Arab Migration to Europe: Trends and Policies’, *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2004, pp. 1348–1371.

⁴⁰ Mohamed A. el-Khawas, ‘Brain Drain: Putting Africa between a Rock and a Hard Place’, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 2004, pp. 37–56.

⁴¹ Brinkbäumer, *Afrykańska odyseja...*, p. 107.

capitalises on the image of the rich North contrasted with the poor South.⁴² In fact, not least because of the crisis affecting Europe for many years now, particularly the border states (Greece, Spain and Italy), the hopes of many Africans, based on this topos, turn into a painful delusion. Therefore, the question arises: how to overcome similar cognitive scripts that linger in the minds of Africans and other inhabitants of the South? Certainly, education plays an important role in this respect. In short: if they learn in schools that Europe does not offer food, a job, and a roof over their head, then as an adult they will not be so keen to migrate.

Conclusion

Every year, hundreds of thousands of asylum applications are filled across the European Union. Two-thirds of them are rejected.⁴³ Tightening the EU's immigration policy means an increase in spending on border surveillance system run under the aegis of Frontex (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union).⁴⁴ *De jure*, Frontex is meant to reduce the number of illegal immigrants, prevent their deaths, and counter organised crime.⁴⁵ *De facto*, the system of the so-called smart borders includes the establishment of a number of instruments of surveillance and control. However, various parties keep questioning the validity of such tools. Opponents of this approach point to the enormous costs, which are additionally disproportionate to the results, but also the fact that every action provokes a reaction – as they argue, the extension of the system of border protection on a given stretch of the border of the European Union will only lead to a change of transit routes, directing immigrants to another section of the border.⁴⁶

An analysis of actions of the EU institutions and Member States shows that the European Union is still looking for its identity, choosing between the project of nation states with ageing demographic structures and the project of cosmopolitan organisms forming a (allegedly) harmonious structure of cooperation.⁴⁷ Successive waves of migration from Asia and Africa can be seen as a test of risk, which is inscribed in the functioning of every institution. So far, the results of this test indicate the instability of the politics and the lack of consensus at the European level and confirm ungovernability crisis in many African countries.

⁴² Gregory White, 'Encouraging Unwanted Immigration: A Political Economy of Europe's Efforts to Discourage North African Immigration', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1999, pp. 839–854.

⁴³ Michał Kokot, 'Tysiące pukają do bram Unii' [Thousands Knock at the Gates of the Union], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, No. 187, 2013, p. 8.

⁴⁴ *Rozporządzenie Rady (WE) nr 2007/2004 z dnia 26 października 2004 r. ustanawiające Europejską Agencję Zarządzania Współpracą Operacyjną na Zewnętrznych Granicach Państw Członkowskich Unii Europejskiej* [Council Regulation (EC) no. 2007/2004 of 26 October 2004 Establishing a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union], *Dziennik Urzędowy Unii Europejskiej*, L 349/1.

⁴⁵ Dominik Jankowski, 'Po „arabskiej wiosnie” – „zima” dla europejskiej obrony?' [After the "Arab Spring" "Winter" for European defense?], *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, No. 18, 2011 p. 58.

⁴⁶ Liberti, *Na południe od Lampedusy...*, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Lisbeth Aggestam and Christopher Hill, 'The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1, 2008, pp. 97–114.