

NAME AND POSITION OF APPLICANT:

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**INSTITUTION TO HOST THE MOBILITY AND THE SENIOR SCIENTIST
RESPONSIBLE:**

Institution

Department of social sciences « Globalization and Political studies » of the University of Kassel.

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MOBILITY PROJECT

As a doctoral student at the Institute d'Etudes Politiques of Bordeaux, I apply to become a visiting research scholar at Kassel University, Department of Social Sciences « Globalization and Political Studies », for a period of 6 months as from November, 2008.

Apart from strengthening the links between Sciences Po Bordeaux and the Kassel University, this mobility aims to be beneficial to JERP 5.3.4 « Gender, Space and Global Governance » and JERP 5.1.3 « The EU and Africa ».

At Kassel University, I will undertake research on Gender and Co-development perspectives between EU and Africa. This research project constitutes an extension of my doctoral research. My PhD work on the politics of co-development between France and West-Africa will be used both as a theoretical and methodological source of inspiration as well as my professional experience in an international NGO based in Paris.

Research Proposal:

Gender and transnational perspectives on the EU and ECOWAS's countries

The proposed research aims at developing the reconfiguration of gender relations inside women from ECOWAS¹ in the EU. It will focus primarily on integration of these women at the regional level and will also consider how they were organized in development associations which cooperate with NGOs and European local collectivities for transnational development. The main purpose is to analyse and understand in which way the trend towards transnationalisation of gender relations has the potential to challenge traditional gender roles inside these communities. A second complementary purpose is to understand the role of the European Union in supporting and promoting its « Co-development policy »² towards the countries of origin and how it enters in congruence with the development projects initiated by women from ECOWAS in the EU. Women from ECOWAS in France, Italy and Germany will be our case studies. The empirical part of this study began this summer in a pro-migrant NGO based in Paris, during my training period.

Relations between EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries had been framed within the commitments of the 1975 Lomé Convention and its modifications. The Convention expired in February 2000 and a new agreement was signed in Cotonou (June, 23rd, 2000); the issue of migration in a globalized world has become one of the priorities in ACP-EU agenda, and it was decided in this agreement that «The issue of migration shall be the subject of in-depth dialogue in the framework of the ACP-EU partnership»³. Working for

¹ ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States) is a regional group of sixteen countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Coted'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinée, Guinée-Bissau, Libéria, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sénégal, Sierra-Léone, Togo). ECOWAS was founded in 1975 and its mission is to promote economic integration in all fields of economic activities, particularly industry, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters.

² EU co-development's policy promotes decentralized aid practices to institutions below the level of the state, especially local authorities, and stress the importance of involving institutions in both North and south. It also stresses importance in projects that include migrants and their associations in conjunction with Northern and Southern local authorities and NGOs, in order to develop « home countries ».

³ The Cotonou Agreement, Cotonou, 23rd June, 2000; Article 13.

greater gender equality in migration not only benefits women migrants but also increases the development impact of migration, moving us closer to meet the Millennium Development goals.

The aim of the proposed research project is to analyse this reconfiguration of power in these ECOWAS's communities traditionally dominated by men. We will also analyse its real impact on the redesigning of institutions, the decision-making and policies formulation. We will study also in which way the EU migration policy is in congruence with these developments. The theoretical interest of this approach is that it allows us to use transnational perspectives, which highlight the sustained connections between emigrants and their countries of origin. A transnational perspective challenges the rigid notion of emigration and return. Instead it focuses on the processes that take place within the transnational social field that is shared by migrants and non-migrants (Jorgen Carling, 2005). Daniel Bach has argued that trans-state networks "instil and stimulate specific patterns of regionalization", "(whereby) the dynamics of networking usually associated with transnational interactions coalesce with a capacity to instrumentalize interstate relations and state policies through the treatment of public office as opportunities for private interactions" (Bach, 2003:23).

Actually, the literature on Gender, migration, and development are hardly taken into account Gender in transnational perspective. Until the late 1970s, most writings on African migration in the EU focused explicitly only on male migrants (usually conceived of as workers) or seemed to assume implicitly that most migrants were male (Manchuelle, 1997). In order to fully comprehend gender migration from ECOWAS, it is pertinent to set the migration configuration in its historical context. This region is characterised by a precarious economy, a population pressure, repeated droughts and the deteriorating of socio-economic conditions which contribute to «push-factors» (Daum, 1992, 1998 & Quiminal, 1995b, 1997, 2000). Traditionally, in the West African culture, migration was a male preserve. The public sphere is regarded as male, while the private sphere is a female domain. However, since the late 1970s, the participation of women in the labour migration flows to developing countries has been increasing (United Nations. 2002. *International Migration Report: 2002.*)

In the EU, it turns out that most sub-saharan Africans come from West-Africa, because of colonial history and recent globalization (Robin, 1996 & Wihtol de Wenden 1999, 2005). The choices of France as a case study depends on colonial history and the *co development* policy in the context of globalization; In Italy, some sociologists take a celebratory view of the break with *assistenzialismo* and emphasise to entrepreneurship and transnational potential for immigrants in the age of Globalization (Minardi, 1996; Grillo & Riccio, 2004). Germany is today, one of the three most important immigration countries worldwide. In this country, the dynamics of immigration was different ("*Aussiedler*", "*Ubersiedler*", guest workers, asylum seekers and refugees).

In France, throughout « *les trente glorieuses* » immigration from ECOWAS's countries was a marginal issue in French political life. Immigration was largely the business of a few government ministries and agencies in consultation with key employers, trade unions and the West African governments. During this period immigration was largely depoliticized and seen as an essentially economic matter. Moreover, it was widely assumed that the migrants, who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s from West Africa, would return home after having earned some money in France and that their residence would be short-term.

By the late 1960s this assumption began to be called into question. In the early and mid-1970s, at least in terms of political opinion and public perception, things began to change. In response to a perceived increasing number of immigrants entering the country, France began to tighten its immigration policy. The growing economic crisis from the mid-1970s onwards – war in the Middle East and the resulting oil crisis in 1973 leading to a recession that hit all the major Western economies and which, of course, spelt an end to *'les trente glorieuses'* – added impetus to this process. In 1974 the French government officially stopped inward immigration, and the migrant men responded with « family reunification » which contributed to the African feminisation of migration into this country⁴ (Timera 1996)

In Italy, West African migration began mainly in the 1980s, with migrants coming initially from France. Many who had previously worked in the South and islands of Italy moved to the North. The great majority of African immigrants were men migrating as individuals. They followed paths shaped by migratory chains and were highly mobile within the Italian territory. The proportion of women grew slowly through family reunification. In Germany, registered migrants are about 7.3 million, and up to one million is unregistered, of whom about 45% are female migrants. Most migrants came in the 1960s from the Southern Europe or Turkey as so called guest workers, and their number increased steadily due to family reunification (Lenz & Schwenken, 2000). Generally, the precarious socio-economic situation of the immigrant women is related to the fact that they could not get jobs according to their qualifications.

African women from ECOWAS, progressively, took part in social, economic and political actions, flows and exchange known collectively as transnational practices. This “feminisation of migration” has gender implications, because this integral part of the migration process challenges traditional gender roles in these ECOWAS’s communities.

Female transnational communities in EU do not belong exclusively to either home or host country; they have connections with and owe allegiances to both: they are “Here” (EU) and “There”⁵ (Africa). The contributions from this diaspora to ‘home’ is largely in the form of financial remittances. Recent trends reveal that international migration in its various forms challenges important forms of social organisation (Geddes, 2003). Women migrants are increasingly drawn to the wage labour market (both formal and informal) as a survival strategy to augment family income. Among the educated, emigration of unaccompanied married females has blossomed, this being a particular and recent phenomenon inside these communities. The data shows that feminisation of migration in EU is not only for marital purposes, but for studies, work, trade and to some extent for trafficking. Most of the African women are in the lowest social strata and occupy more often than not domestic work (Schwenken, 2000). However, they also develop important activities which led to an increased focus on gender in a globalization perspectives.

African women’s associations in the EU became more visible and they are embedded in a deep sense of village and community solidarity, they have traditionally contributed to the development of their home community through transfer of funds and they have been doing

⁴ « Family reunification » : This is to explain the right to migrate to join other family members in the destination country. It is in general women who appear more likely than men to migrate in order to join other family members or to marry.

⁵ « Here » and « There » echoes the commonly french expression « Ici » et « Là-bas » to explain this transnational dynamism.

this in a more innovative and organized manner. These associations collect and channel migrant funds and use them to finance, wholly or in part, a variety of productive projects in their home communities. These women associations cooperate with NGOs in the execution of their projects, in order to benefit from their expertise, skills and knowledge. These associations are close to civil societies which aim at filling the gap of the state incapacity to provide services. The case of “Ps-Eau”⁶ and GRDR⁷ are very emblematic in this water-scarce-region. Among other things, they initiated cooperation to contribute to the development of hydraulic networks’, to improve agricultural productions, to renovate schools and to build hospitals.

In other words, these women associations stress the importance of involving institutions in both North and South so that they are all jointly engaged in development policies. European-African twinning involves European municipalities with significant populations of migrants instigating them (Petiteville, 1995:265). It is possible to consider this form of cooperation as a real accelerator of development since it reduces transaction costs by decreasing the intermediaries between the donors and beneficiaries’ .These twinning arrangements between Africa and Europe become part of a new type of decentralized cooperation. (Grillo, Riccio, 2004; Le Guay, 2002). One may think that the involved women associations sustain connections between emigrants and their countries of origin. The variety of such social, economic and political actions, flows and exchange are known collectively as transnational practices.

My primary goal, in the framework of Garnet mobility, is to define more precisely the theoretical and methodological bases of gender in political economy .It is expected that the research will benefit from the expertise of Kassel University. A complementary objective is to gather preliminary data on gender and transnational practices in the UE and to analyse other researchers’ case studies. The research will include the construction of a database on women associations in the UE. The first hypothesis to be analysed regards the integration of women from West Africa in UE .The second hypothesis highlights the reconfiguration of gender relations inside these communities through the cooperation of (Europe-based) female associations with NGOs and local collectivities of the host countries. This study hopes to feed into EU’s migratory policies.

Suitability of the host institution and added-value for the European research Area

At Kassel University, I will be hosted by the Department of Social Sciences « Globalization and Political Studies ».

While at Kassel University, I will benefit from:

- The resources of the university, such as library and office space.
- The expertise of the department, especially in the fields of gender, globalization, and regionalism.

At this university I will be in an ideal position to exchange and interact with the research staff on topics related to JERP 5.3.4 and 5.1.3.

The proposed research at a personal level will provide me an opportunity to broaden my empirical focus beyond the scope of my PhD thesis. A further personal objective on the

⁶ Created in 1984, this french NGO specialized in water and irrigation system in the Sahel area.

⁷ A pro-migrant NGO, based in Paris.

longer term is to carry on with this research in the framework of post-doctoral fellowship. In the framework of GARNET mobility, I expect that my research will be beneficial to JERP 5.3.4 and JERP 5.1.3. This will be an interesting opportunity to analyse gender and transnational perspectives on EU and Africa.

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