

# **“Imagine migration” - the migration process and its destination Europe in the eyes of Tanzanian students**

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## **Abstract**

Only a small fraction of the emigration of Tanzania heads towards Europe, but the wish to migrate there permanently or temporarily is quite popular among Tanzanians. This wish stems from an image of Europe that convinces the potential migrants that it would be sensible to undergo a migration process in order to achieve a higher social status. The images of Europe and the migration process derive from and are perpetuated by information from various sources, some of which the potential migrants are aware, like mass media, and other sources of which they are unconscious. The latter include stereotypes and values that are transmitted to them by their socialization and social environment.

## **Introduction: Migration in a global society**

The rate of emigration from Tanzania is very low and does not exceed one percent of the 35 million inhabitants of the country. The wish to migrate, however, is shared by large parts of the society. The number of people who intend to migrate but are not yet in a position to do so constitute the migration potential. According to Hans-Joachim Hoffman-Nowotny's theory of global migration, the vast number of potential migrants results from the emergence of a global society. He argues that the migration potential is determined by two macro-social factors: firstly, by a structural factor, i.e. the development differentials between nations or world regions; because of the development differentials, potential migrants may regard migration as “a specific strategy of social upward mobility” (Hoffmann-Nowotny. In: Kälin 1989, 30); secondly, by the cultural factor, which is the homogenization of values; it leads to “*joint visions* of prosperity, welfare, social justice, human rights etc. [which] are the only reason that the international system's structure, i.e. the therein existing inequality of living standards and chances, is perceived by the individual consciousness”

(Hoffmann-Nowotny 1991. Cit. in: Müller-Schneider 2000, 57; Italics by Hoffmann-Nowotny).

The homogenization of values mainly affects more privileged social groups as they have, first of all, better access to the various information sources that transport these values. Secondly, they live under comparable circumstances to the respective social groups in Western countries. According to Hoffmann-Nowotny (In: Kälin 1989, 33), the homogenization of values particularly applies to “the urban class, which has access to the various stages of the education system but who must regard themselves as unemployed or underemployed or at least as underpaid if they compare their situation to that of the corresponding class in the developed countries.”

Information sources play a significant role in forming the extent and the composition of the migration potential since they enable their recipients to compare their living situations with those of the population of Western countries. Information Sources include mass media, as well as other sources of information, like the education system, transnational networks, or collective knowledge. Media can contribute to the global homogenization of values, and they can provide information about the economic, political, legal, and social situation of potential regions of destination.

The potential migrants have certain images about their preferred region (or regions) of destination as they choose it consciously to improve their status within a global society. This image may or may not be accurate, but as long as it portrays substantially better chances compared to those in the country of origin, the image of a certain destination can be seen as an important incentive for individuals to migrate. In order to comprehend this early stage of the migration process, it is crucial to understand the picture that potential migrants have of the respective preferred destination.

In order to examine images and constructions of Europe that influence the migration potential, I conducted a survey among Tanzanian students. Hoffmann-Nowotny’s theory of global migration applies best to this specific group of urban, young and highly educated persons in Tanzania as they are the ones who are socialized by educational institutions which to a large

extent correspond to those of developed nations, thereby already sharing certain norms and values. Secondly, information about other regions of the world is easily accessible to them, either because it is part of their studies, or because the necessary resources of information are provided at university. Besides, some students' migration from their rural origins to urban centers, where universities are located, might have loosened their ties to their original communities already. They enjoy certain independency since the social control imposed by their communities is reduced.

The sample on which this investigation was undertaken consisted of 23 students from the University of Dar-es-Salaam and the University College of Lands and Architectural Studies, and 97 students from the public Azania Secondary School and the private Biafra Secondary School, all of which are located in Dar-es-Salaam. They were interviewed between August 2003 and January 2004. The research was designed to examine the images of Europe expressed by well-educated young people, to find out about their anticipation of their own integration into the potential society of destination, and to explore the sources of these assumptions, especially regarding the role of mass media.

I used a mix of methods, particularly face-to-face interviews with structured questionnaires, geographical maps to be filled in, and self-completion questionnaires containing both closed and open questions. The latter included a request to write a short essay on the topic. In addition to the interviews, I analyzed the representation of Europe in the newspaper that the students stated to consume most often based on the assumption that it would be an important source in regard to their conception of the European continent. Both the interviews and the newspaper articles were evaluated by applying Mayring's model of content analysis (cp. Mayring 2000).

The following article deals with the outcomes of this research. Initially, I will sketch the migration flows from Tanzania to Europe, which underscore the marginal role the country (still) plays in global migration movements. Then, I will describe the image of Europe prevalent among Tanzanian students, their ideas of the migration process, and their expectations about

their situation in the respective country of destination. In addition, the information sources from which these images derive will be covered.

### **Migration from Tanzania to Europe**

Studies of international migration within and beyond Africa were, and still are, hampered by insufficient data (cp. Gould 1985). Thus, the few literature sources and data compilations are “disappointingly lacking in direct information and insights into the phenomenon” (Gould 1985, 5). Although the situation might have slightly improved since Gould published a bibliography on African migration in 1985, comprehensive data about migration out of Tanzania are still scarce and unreliable. For the better part, they are either based on estimates and vague calculations, or are hopelessly outdated. Therefore, the extent of emigration from Tanzania can only be approximated.

The most recent official Tanzanian migration statistics refer to the years 1979, 1980 and 1981 (cp. NBS, MPEA [eds.] 1982: 79 and NBS, MPEA [ed.] 1985: 79). They state that on average around 35,000 people per year left the country. Out of these, 12,253 persons emigrated to Europe in 1980 and 9,225 persons in 1981, respectively. Although these figures are relatively low compared to other countries, they still comprise about a third of all registered emigrants during these two years. These numbers are grossly distorted by the fact that returning European tourists are covered under the category “emigrant” as well. Anyway, the figures still show that the greater part of Tanzanian emigrants stays within East Africa (cp. NBS et al. [eds.] 1994, Mlay 1983 and MPI [ed.] 2004; 04/06/27).

Furthermore, it is not possible to assess whether and how these figures have changed during the last twenty-five years. Recent net migration rates<sup>1</sup> indicate, however, much higher outflows than at the beginning of the 1980s. Still, these rates fluctuate enormously with the years and with regard to the sources they derived from. The estimated minimum emigration from

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<sup>1</sup> The net migration rate is “the figure for the difference between the number of persons entering and leaving a country during the year per 1,000 persons (based on midyear population).” (CIA World Factbook 2004. In: [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov); 04/07/01).

Tanzania, which I deducted by comparing the Tanzanian net migration rates with the minimum immigration<sup>2</sup> to the country, varies between 54,000 and 240,000 persons per year for the period from 2000 to 2003. This is approximately between 0.15 and 0.7 percent of the Tanzanian population. Out of these, only a small part migrates to Europe. According to figures given by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI 2004; 04/06/27), only 0.8 percent of all Tanzanian emigrants in 2000 and 1.3 percent in 2001 moved to the nine most important European countries of immigration<sup>3</sup> compiled by the MPI.

The low emigration rates stand in striking contrast to the popularity of the wish to migrate to Europe – and thus to the number of *potential* migrants in the country. This disparity is caused by specific structural preconditions for migration such as: urbanization, since only the cities offer the infrastructure necessary for emigration; the weakening of family ties and the decrease of social control of the community over the individual; historical ties like a colonial past; migration networks; the geographical distance between the countries of origin and destination; and the immigration policies of the (potential) country of destination (cp. Hoffmann-Nowotny. In: Kälin [ed.] 1989, 32ff). Although the preconditions determine “the direction, extent and composition” (Hoffmann-Nowotny. In: Kälin [ed.] 1989, 35) of actual contemporary migration *flows*, they do not or only slightly influence the migration *potential*.

Adepoju (1991) adds to this catalogue the vicious circle of economic decline and the outflow of graduates and skilled workers. Brain drain, to which Adepoju refers, seems to constitute a great part of the migration from Tanzania to Europe. This is due to the fact that rather people in the higher income bracket (or their children) – generally a part of society with higher education – are able to afford the expensive overseas migration. Furthermore, they are also more likely to obtain permission to enter

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<sup>2</sup> I.e. the number of refugees arriving in Tanzania, which is published annually by the UNHCR. Although this sole reliable figure indicating immigration to the country is only covering part of the actual immigration flows, it gives a certain idea about the minimum extent of immigration.

<sup>3</sup> These are (in alphabetical order) Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the U.K.

countries of the North. Students who migrate overseas to continue their studies or start postgraduate courses and then remain in the country of destination constitute a significant part of the brain drain. Figures by the OECD (2003; 04/07/06) reveal that about 1,300 Tanzanian tertiary students were studying in the United States in 2001, and approximately 2,200 in European OECD countries. Almost 80 percent of these Tanzanian students in Europe resided in the U.K. or France.

In general, all figures on migration from Tanzania to Europe remain vague. But still, they give an idea about the extent of emigration.

### **The Image of Europe**

Generally, the students I interviewed perceived Europe highly positively. They specifically emphasized its high level of development, its education system, certain aspects of the political and social situation, and the economic opportunities Europe offers. However, many of the students substantiated their high valuation by comparing the conditions in Europe with those in Tanzania, which were seen rather negatively. By migration the students attempt to overcome the structural difference between the potential region of destination and the region of origin. The desire to move to a *certain* region of destination seems to be of minor importance for them.

The interviewees were able to express their picture of Europe with great certainty, which can be explained by the fact that they often simply reversed their experience and analysis of the respective situation in Tanzania. In contrast, when trying to trace Europe on a map or naming its countries, the students often had problems. Their difficulties led to the assumption that Europe is not perceived as a geographic unit, but rather as a list of countries associated with certain features such as “high level of development”, “wealth”, “social security”, and “political power”.

Consequently, the students considered countries which show many of these features to be part of Europe. Thus, the countries which came to the students' mind most frequently when asked for European nations were the U.K., Germany, France, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. Surprisingly,

in some cases even Australia, Canada, Japan, and the U.S. were regarded as European countries.

In regard to Central and Eastern European countries the perceptions were ambiguous. Some of the students knew that countries like Albania, the Czech Republic, or Macedonia were located in Europe and therefore supposed them to possess the features mentioned above as well. In contrast, some students who thought that these countries were less developed did not regard them to be part of Europe at all. Either way, the students perceived Europe to be homogenous: the attributes named above either applied to all countries they regarded as European, or the students simply excluded countries which they did not associate with these “European” standards.

When asked what was so special about Europe, the students usually mentioned a high level of “development” first. Although they mainly used the term in an economic sense, it also applied to other fields of society, among them politics, education, science and technology, infrastructure and communication, or social services. Synonymously to “development”, the expressions “economic enhancement”, “industrialization”, and “First World countries” were used to describe European nations.

According to the interviewees, Europe’s level of development is defined by a high per-capita income and generally favorable living standards. The latter includes at least the satisfaction of all people’s basic needs. Convenient living conditions are guaranteed by a good infrastructure – concerning water- and electricity supply, transport, and housing – and a pleasant environment. Additionally, well-paid jobs exist as a consequence of a high rate of industrialization and innovation. The people’s “individual development” is further ensured by a good health system and better education facilities. Again, it becomes obvious that the students’ conception of Europe results from the inversion of those aspects of the Tanzanian situation which they perceive negatively.

The high level of development was also stated to be one of the reasons for the excellent economic conditions for virtually all Europeans: the students postulated that jobs (especially for highly skilled workers and university

graduates) were easily found, and greater economic security existed, which was due to high wages and to the provision of a certain amount of money (unemployment benefits) for those currently out of work by the government. The latter statement might refer to social insurances (which are rather the exception in Tanzania). However, the students did not seem to be aware that the beneficiaries of these systems of social security usually had contributed to them financially beforehand.

In general, economic conditions in Europe are valued highly positively. According to the interviewed university students, the chance to save a great part of one's wage was high because the average earnings were about twice as high as the average spending and the lowest income levels still exceeded the minimum costs (i.e. housing, food, taxes) by one third.

The possibility of gaining high income was – among others – mentioned as a major reason for Tanzanians in general while the interviewees mentioned this in particular in regard to work in Europe. The chance of saving part of their salaries would provide them with the opportunity to improve their living standards after returning to Tanzania, which was intended by all but two students.

In contrast to their unequivocally positive statements about Europe's level of development and the working situation there, the students were rather ambiguous about certain other characteristics of Europe. Their description of the "social situation", "education", and the "political situation" contained both elements of approval and disapproval.

The students associated the social situation of the European population with wealth and prosperity, and the living standard of the population was estimated to be high. The equal distribution of income and chances, at least among the native population, were also mentioned as "vitu vizuri" (good things). Furthermore, they perceive Europe's social situation to be characterized by excellent, cheap or free social services. These include medical and educational facilities, an effective infrastructure, e.g. systems of water and electricity supply or sewage systems. To some extent also attitudes of the population in general add to the positive aspects of the social situation, such as hospitality, tolerance, emancipation and



individualism. The features of which the students disapproved are racism, high crime rates, sexual permissiveness and perversion.

Whereas the conditions in Europe were valued positively, the people or the effects these conditions have on the people were seen in a negative way. On the one hand, the students highly approved of political freedom and a more equal distribution of chances (among the whole population, but especially between the sexes) in Europe, a guaranteed minimum income and socially permeable educational institutions. On the other hand, they emphasized that these advantages had a negative influence on the whole population or the individual's character. Europeans were said to be selfish and mainly concerned with their own issues since the people did not have to care for each other due to well-organized systems of social security. Especially students were perceived as being spoiled and lazy because they had too much leisure time due to an efficient educational system which required little effort to study.

The position of women within the European society was a subject repeatedly brought up by the students about which their opinions differed widely. Especially female interviewees greatly esteemed the empowerment of women in Europe and the heightened awareness of sexual harassment and discrimination of women. They argued that women's empowerment creates equal chances for men and women, particularly in the education system and on the job market. On the other hand, sexual violence against women and their commercial sexual exploitation were frequently mentioned, mainly in the context of prostitution and pornography. The students' knowledge about these issues seems to derive from various pornographic sites on the internet. Since these sites mainly show white women (and men), this explains why pornography was seen as a specific "Western" peculiarity. The occasional depiction of black women was explained by stating that female African migrants were often forced to work in this metier in Europe. Sexual behaviour which the students regarded to be widespread in Europe are bestiality and homosexuality – which the interviewees disapproved of to a similar extent. European women were furthermore said to dress provocatively, which the students considered to derive from a lack of moral values.

The main drawback of Europe, however, was said to be racism, which, according to the students, stems from a lack of tolerance towards non-white people which is caused by the homogeneity of the European population. Although the students emphasized that racism is prevalent in every European country, Germany was mentioned to be most affected, followed by the United Kingdom and Italy. It was presumed that racial discrimination occurs on every social level and in all parts of society. According to the interviewees, it affects individuals, the work of organizations, social institutions, and the society as a whole or parts of it like the job market or the school system. However, although the potential migrants expressed their concern about racism in Europe and even assumed that it had a negative effect on the situation of migrants in general, they hardly considered the possibility of being affected by it themselves.

The educational system of Europe<sup>4</sup> was highly valued by the students. They often emphasized its high social permeability and accessibility for a large number of people. Its outstanding quality was mainly caused by well structured and efficient curricula, advanced learning techniques and excellent educational facilities, including modern electronic equipment like computers and TVs. Moreover, there was a high density of educational institutions in Europe. The students of European educational facilities were assumed to enjoy greater freedom and more leisure time due to special laws protecting their rights and efficiently planned timetables. According to the students, the high quality of the European education system is one of the reasons why many Tanzanian intellectuals migrate to Europe either to teach or to do research at one of the educational institutions, or to improve their qualifications. In general, education was estimated to be better structured and easier to obtain in Europe than in Tanzania. It also required less time to complete because the contents are better summarized.

Correspondingly to the students' statements about the social conditions in Europe, their analysis of the political system contains both elements of assent and dissent. On the one hand, politics and political culture prevalent in Europe are highly regarded, as long as they involve the autochthonous

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<sup>4</sup> The chance that there might be a variety of educational systems in Europe was never taken into account by the interviewees.

population only. In this context, the interviewees emphasized political freedom, democracy, peace, the protection of human rights, and opportunities for all citizens to participate, which all characterize political systems in Europe. Measures to achieve gender equality were also given as an example for favourable politics in Europe. Corruption was deemed to be a rare phenomenon.

On the other hand, European politics were criticized for tolerating or even fostering racism, which was also referred to as “colour segregation”, “Fascism” or “Apartheid”. The students were furthermore critical about how Europe sometimes imposes its politics on other nations and regions. Moreover, Europe’s (neo-)liberal trade policy was said to undermine the LDCs<sup>5</sup> economic development. If necessary, European countries would even implement and perpetuate their trade policy by use of military forces. In this context, development aid is seen as obligatory compensation for the damage caused by past or present negative interventions which disturbed or prevented Africa’s development. Secondary school students perceived foreign aid positively, while university students criticized it as being rather beneficial to the donor than to the receiver.

Thus, while the (white) population in Europe is depicted as a homogenous society of peace, equality and low social and political tensions, its relationship to dark-skinned people and to other countries is characterized mainly by aggression and (economic) exploitation.

Concerning their own plans to migrate, however, the students did not regard politics as important for the decision since none of the students considered the effects politics might have on the situation they will find themselves confronted with.

### **Ideas of the migration process**

The students expressed rather vague ideas about the steps to be taken in order to migrate. The plans for their own migration and their general ideas about the migration process stand in sharp contrast to their vivid image of

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<sup>5</sup> Least Developed Countries. A definition of the term is given by Nohlen (2000, 467).

the overall situation in Europe. This leads to the assumption that they have only limited access to information about the migration process. Moreover, most of the interviewees admitted that they had not sought for precise information on the subject yet, which also indicates that their migration preparations were on an early stage. Correspondingly, none of the interviewees had made practical arrangements (besides the unsuccessful application for scholarships and the organization of a passport by a small part of the sample). Not even the financing of the journey had been planned – a preparation which most of the university students deemed to be crucial for their emigration.

The majority of the interviewees planned to stay in Europe only temporarily. The intended period ranged from one to five years – usually just long enough to finish the university courses that the majority of them wished to accomplish. An appropriate time to depart would thus be after they finished their current education, both for the secondary school and the university students. However, regarding the students' early stage of preparations, their aim to migrate within the next six months to five years seems to be rather unrealistic.

Asked for the general preparations that were necessary, those interviewees who answered the question (only about 60 percent of the sample) rather focused on preparations concerning their departure from Tanzania. Arrangements connected to their arrival in the country of destination seemed to be of minor importance to them. Thus, most of the students focused on bureaucratic procedures in Tanzania: they emphasized, firstly, the necessity to get a passport, secondly, the need to ensure financial support from a sponsor (usually scholarships or family members), and thirdly, the requirement to obtain a visa for the respective country.

Knowledge of the language(s) spoken in the intended countries of destination was considered to be of minor importance. This is due to the fact that the students believed that English is used in Europe to an extent similar to that in Tanzania. Although they knew that English is not the main language in most European countries, they regarded it to be crucial as medium of instruction, official language in business and administration, and even in common social interaction. Besides, they considered it to be

more sensible to learn the language during their stay in the country of destination than beforehand.

Although the students were aware of the importance of finding a sponsor for their migration and stay abroad, they actually did not know how to accomplish this. They seemed to be highly uncertain how to find potential sponsors or information about the existence of sponsorships and scholarships, or the overall costs and the single cost factors. Expenses mentioned by the students included air fares, money spent for applying for a passport and visa, and costs which will have to be met after their arrival in Europe, i.e. accommodation, tuition fees for the chosen university, and the cost of living. However, their statements about the amount of money that is needed to meet these costs are highly incongruent. The overall expenditure ranged from US\$ 2,712 to US\$ 80,000 for a period of two to five years. Students with more definite plans tended to assess the costs to be higher, which might reflect their greater knowledge about the migration and the region of destination. Institutions which are expected to provide the required money or part of it are European and Tanzanian governmental funds, NGOs, the church, private companies, and the students' social networks in Tanzania.

Although the students regarded the latter to be fairly important to the migration process, networks of emigrants in the countries of destination play a subordinate role in the potential migrants' considerations. While about half of the interviewees stated to have relatives living in a European country (mainly in the U.K., the U.S. [sic] and Sweden), most of them assumed that these networks would not be willing to provide any kind of material help. The only support which the majority of the students expects from their people in Europe is the provision of information, especially about the general situation in Europe. The marginal relevance of Tanzanian networks in Europe for the students might be caused by a lack of contact with emigrants in the intended countries of destination. For Tanzanians in general, long distant transnational networks may be relatively unimportant as only a small number of Tanzanians have actually migrated to Europe so far.

### **Migrating to the society of destination**

Regarding the interviewees' early stage of migration preparations, it is not surprising that their individual reasons for migration, as well as their choice of the country or countries of destination depended on rather general assumptions. Accordingly, the description of their situation in these countries remained unspecified.

For about 80 percent of the whole sample the most important reason to migrate was to get access to higher education, followed by not further specified motivations such as "self-fulfilment", experience, good living conditions, or a change of one's living situation. Correspondingly, the students thought that studying would be their main occupation in Europe, maybe occasionally accompanied or followed by (part-time) work. Remittances, which were frequently stated as secondary reasons, play a fairly important role in the students' motivation to migrate. They comprise material and immaterial support of the society of origin. A kind of non-material remittances the students mentioned could be brain gain, i.e. that the students return to Tanzania after they have received higher education and learned special skills in Europe.

The most attractive country of destination to the majority of students was the U.K., followed by other Western European or North American countries. Most of them had either been colonial powers, or give foreign aid to Tanzania, like Sweden, the U.S., Italy, Canada, Germany, Australia, and the Netherlands. The reasons for choosing a certain country were usually related to the nation's wealth and highly developed economy and the assumed socio-political implications, such as access to pensions, systems of social security, or to the health system. To a third of the sample, the high quality of education was crucial for the choice of a certain country.

Asked for countries where the students did not want to migrate to, about half of the potential migrants did not reject any European country. Usually, they justified this by emphasizing the similarity between the European countries for their purposes, or by stating that their choice of a certain country depended on factors they could not influence anyway, like the existence of scholarships for the respective country. Those students who

stated an unattractive country often mentioned Germany, mainly for fear of racism. For the same reason, the U.K., France, Norway and the U.S. were rejected by some of the potential migrants. Other reasons for avoiding a country were that they were involved in wars or politically insecure or unstable, such as Russia, the U.S., Iraq and Afghanistan [sic!]. Besides being politically insecure, Russia and other Eastern European countries were excluded because of their “underdevelopment”. Migration policies or other factors related to the migration process were mentioned only by one of the 110 interviewees. This either allows the conclusion that the students had only basic knowledge about migration procedures and thus did not actively aim for or exclude certain countries, or that they assessed the chances of entering a certain country to be more or less equal in the entire Europe.

Once in the country of destination, the students expected to find decent living conditions and to stand the chance to further extend their education, to find well-paid work according to their qualifications, and to fully participate in the social interaction of the native population. In order to achieve these aims, especially the university students emphasized the importance – and never doubted the feasibility – to integrate and to assimilate into the new society<sup>6</sup>. Surprisingly, the students did not regard it necessary for their assimilation to learn the country’s official language. This was due to the fact that they wrongly assumed English to be the most important means of communication in every European country.

Therefore, fears about a potentially hostile environment solely concern social interactions: a lack of contact to other people, the absence of family members, or racism on an individual level. In contrast, they were convinced that their economic situation would be highly favourable since they assume their income to be high enough both to live according to the average living standard and to save or remit money.

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<sup>6</sup> The use of the terms integration and assimilation is in accordance with Hoffmann-Nowotny’s definitions, stating integration as taking part in the status structure, e.g. work, education, the legal system, income and accommodation, and assimilation as adoption of the majority culture of the destination society, concerning language, values, etc. (cp. Treibel 2003; Humpl 1996).

This assessment of the students own situation in the country of destination stands in contrast to how the majority of students assumed the situation of migrants in general to be. Most of the interviewees presumed that other migrants mainly wished to migrate in order to profit from Europe's economic opportunities both for skilled and unskilled labour. However, most students doubted that the greater part of migrants in Europe stood good chances to get a job with decent working conditions. Especially the secondary school students mentioned the necessity for many migrants, among them mainly women, to work either illegally, in precarious jobs, or in sectors with a low reputation, e.g. as prostitutes or in any kind of criminal activity. This divergence in the assessment of other migrants' and their own anticipated situation in the country of destination might result from the different socio-demographic features the students ascribe to "average" migrants: they were assumed to be mainly poorly educated young people from the lowest social strata. Nevertheless, none of the students doubted that all of the migrants were economically successful due to the high payment for all kinds of jobs in Europe.

A minority of the interviewees, namely students with more concrete plans to migrate, stated that most of the Tanzanian migrants to Europe were highly educated and prosperous. They were migrating mainly temporarily in order to gain higher education and thus to increase their chances in their country of origin – a view which is corresponding to their anticipation of their own situation. However, they still assumed the situation for the poor and less educated among the migrants to be highly unfavourable.

Regarding the different levels of the interviewees' migration preparations, the information about other migrants' situations in Europe does not increase when the plan to migrate becomes more concrete. Instead, those students who had more definite plans for migration than the others interpreted the single features of the perceived situation, especially working conditions and social circumstances, differently and more positively. Thus, the expectations about the living conditions of oneself and other migrants in the region of destination raise the more concrete the migration plans become. Furthermore, only those who are firmly convinced of the feasibility of making their fortune in Europe take actions to achieve their goal.



### Information sources

The origins of the pictures and ideas which the potential migrants have about Europe are difficult to trace. Their formation is a multi-causal process which involves, firstly, sources which the potential migrants might not be aware of, and secondly, sources which they might not want to reveal. This means that the interviewees tend to answer certain questions in a socially desirable way in order to “reduce personal or social discomfort or to make as good an impression on other people as possible in an interview situation” (Koschnick 1993, 1473). Interviews or a media analysis can therefore only detect some of the sources that contribute to the potential migrants’ image(s) about Europe; the greater part, however, remains undiscovered. It includes popular images, stereotypes and prejudices, or collective impressions.

In order to trace the students’ evaluation of their use of media, I both requested them to fill out questionnaires and analyzed their respective statements during the interviews. According to the questionnaires, both the university and the secondary school students regarded television to be their most important information source. To the school students the internet, newspapers, and the radio are furthermore of major importance. Besides TV, the university students explicitly named books, educational institutions, national newspapers, and European exchange students. However, when the university students referred to certain information sources to underpin one of their statements about the availability of scholarships, European universities, or Europe in general, they mostly named the internet. In contrast to their explicit statements about their media use, they did not mention books, school, or (their) university. Instead, they frequently referred to different “experts” or authorities, including friends who had been to Europe and other returnees, as well as Europeans in Tanzania, or pen pals in Europe.

These different kinds of media served the students for different purposes: Television and information sources other than mass media (friends, returnees, etc.) provided the students with general information about Europe and its countries, including their level of economic development, the weather conditions, or all sorts of “breaking news”. The internet,

embassies and other authorities, as well as different types of print media, e.g. newspapers, journals and books, were used by the students to inform themselves about specific topics which they deemed relevant to their intended migration. From these sources, they especially sought information about scholarships, the existence of jobs in the field they are interested in, and about bureaucratic affairs in the countries of destination.

Regarding the single media products, only few conclusions can be drawn because the students' specifications rather mirror social desirability than their actual use of media. To give some examples, they rather explicitly named high-quality newspapers published in English than mid-market papers or tabloids in Kiswahili, international newspapers and magazines instead of national ones, internet sites with socially approved content (e.g. news or search-machines) instead of disapproved sites (e.g. pornographic sites). However, they referred more frequently to the less valued information sources during their statements concerning other subjects.

Thus, an analysis of the high-quality newspaper "The Guardian", which the university students reported to read most often, did not reveal strong similarities between the picture of Europe presented in the paper and the image the students expressed. One of the few resemblances between the newspaper issues and the students' statements was the frequencies in which the countries were mentioned: the U.K. was reported on most often, followed by Australia, Europe in general, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. However, the subjects that were brought up by the articles in connection to these countries completely differed from the topics emphasized by the students. While only two of the interviewed students mentioned sports in their description of Europe, a relative majority of the articles dealt with this issue. Furthermore, economic matters, crime and development aid were extensively covered, whereas education and the job situation, which are the subjects the students mentioned most frequently, were either reported on rarely or not at all. However, the students' opinions and the articles' connotations showed clear similarities concerning certain subjects: "Economy and Development" and "Education" were associated mainly positively by both the students and the authors of the respective articles, whereas "International and Foreign Politics" was seen rather negatively. Thus, it is possible that the newspaper's coverage on these issues

exerted a certain influence on the students' images of Europe. However, it is more likely that other sources of information have a greater influence, especially concerning those topics which "The Guardian" does not cover.

Another important influence which might form the potential migrants' image of Europe is the students' environment and all agents of their socialization. These might be the students' families and teachers, the European textbooks, which they read at school and university, the "Western" music videos and soap operas they watch on TV, European NGOs in the students' surroundings, or mail contacts to their friends in Europe.

Additionally, collective ideas or regional stereotypes (cp. Nicklas and Ostermann 1982. In: Aigner 1991, 12), seem to affect the potential migrants' perception of their preferred region of destination. During the interviews, the students frequently referred to them by citing "the people", "what I hear", "what our people say", or by repeating what "I heard some people say". The difference between (individual) images and regional stereotypes are thus, firstly, that the latter are embedded within the *collective* knowledge and, secondly, that stereotypes are transmitted and perpetuated in a process which is influenced by mass media, and in return affects them as well. This collective knowledge is mainly transmitted through the individuals' socialization by the relevant peer groups, the individuals' families, or the education system. Another important source of collective knowledge is – as the students state themselves – "the" people, i.e. the students' social environment, all of which is itself influenced by collective images which derive, among others, from mass media (cp. Lipiansky; 25/06/04).

## Conclusions

According to a recent IOM-study, 150 million people (including refugees) migrate every year. "Roughly, one third of such migration occurs in developing countries" (IOM (ed.) 2004; 04/07/12). The same source states that in the period between 1995 and 2000 Tanzania experienced a net outflow of over 200,000 individuals. However, only a small fraction of all

Tanzanian emigrants (probably less than 1.5 percent) actually reaches Europe.

Nevertheless, a great part of the potential migrants of Tanzania aims to move to Europe, and their number exceeds the number of actual migrants by far. It can even be assumed that the number of people who want to emigrate to Europe might increase because the two determinants of migration are likely to become more important. Firstly, the cultural homogenization between the regions is increasing. Secondly, the differentials in the levels of development (i.e. the structural difference), which might lead to the adoption of Western values, can be assumed to increase as well. In other terms: the interviewees presumed that emigration to Europe might provide them with greater opportunities of what was of primary concern to them: to receive higher education and to increase living standard.

The integration of Western values into the students' set of principles is revealed by the fact that they obviously had a quite detailed (even if inaccurate) image of Europe even if they had not (or only recently) started with their preparations for migration yet. Thus, their knowledge did not derive from the preparation process, which involves inquiring for specific and more detailed information, but from a deduction of their general knowledge about Western values, which they must have acquired before preparing for emigration.

This article shows that the migrants' choice of the region of destination is based on certain images about this particular region. The ideas behind these images might be accurate or not, but in any case they stem from different sources which often contradict each other. The pictures that emerge are rather the result of a mixture of individual assumptions and common stereotypes than of precise information. And regardless of how their images about Europe might be, the students appeared to have only a vague idea about the social situation of migrants in the region of destination and seemed to be even more uncertain how their own situation would be. In many cases, the students had not reflected certain aspects of their potential situation in the country of destination at all (especially concerning their handling of the language barrier). This indicates once more a certain lack of information about what to expect in Europe, and how to prepare for it.

Accurate and precise information about the regions of destination and the migration process, about job and educational opportunities for migrants,

about legal possibilities to migrate, and about the institutions which provide potential migrants or newly arrived migrants in countries of destination with further information would probably lead to a more realistic assessment of the feasibility of their plan to migrate.

Thus, the potential migrants would have the chance to make decisions that are not mainly based on certain clichés. It would enable them to better distinguish between useful information they have about Europe and certain wishes which they hope to be fulfilled by moving to this region and would provide potential migrants with the opportunity to come to their decision because of an opinion which is rather based on facts than fiction.

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