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### A Conceptual Study of Africans on the Web of Globalization and Migration

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#### **Abstract**

The achievements of the developed nations are incomparable to the ones recorded by the developing nations of Africa. The latter suffers these setbacks in spite of her high religious, moral and cultural inclinations. Through technological revolution, economic liberalization, democracy and culture, globalization (making the world a global village) seeks to bridge the gap between the former and the latter but in the process of achieving this enormous task, globalization unavoidably propels migration which has been and will continue to claim the lives of most Africans in an attempt of scouting for greener pastures in foreign lands, and thereby causing also security challenges to both African migrants and the receiving nations. Those Africans who eventually made it to foreign lands have unfortunate stories to tell as they suffered from modern day slavery in the hands of foreigners- racial discrimination, rejection, dejection, degradation, menial job undertaking, psychological trauma, identity crisis, deportation, imprisonment etc. This triggers the following questions: Are globalization and migration truly helpful or harmful to Africans? Does globalization and migration offer the best viable option for the developing nations of Africa to equate themselves with the developed nations of the world? What is the way forward for Africans out of their present predicament? Adopting analytical method, the paper discusses the intertwined concepts of globalization and migration in relation to African predicament and proffers a way forward with the view that if only African nations can effectively utilize her available natural and human resources, their autonomy and greatness will be guaranteed.

**Keywords:** African, Diaspora, globalization, migration, Trojan horse.

### **Introduction**

During the Scramble for Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, European powers staked claims to virtually the entire continent. At meetings in Berlin, Paris, London and other capitals, European statesmen and diplomats bargained over the separate spheres of interest they intended to establish there. Their knowledge of the vast African hinterland was slight. Hitherto Europeans had known Africa more a coastline than a continent; their presence has been confined mainly to small, isolated enclaves on the coast used for trading purposes; only in Algeria and in Southern Africa had more substantial European settlement taken root.<sup>1</sup>

History has it that Africans have suffered greatly from the hands of colonial masters, that is, European powers such as Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy. They drained Africa of its natural and human riches or resources to the point of complete nothingness. But the year 1960 was a remarkable turning point for most African nations as they bagged their independence with pride. In spite of this achievement, Africans are still under the dictates of foreign power via neocolonialism, and in order to liberate them from Western influence completely, and at the same time promoting and preserving African identity and unity, there was “the march for African nationalism, which seemed invincible. Africa, so it was thought, once freed from colonial rule, was destined for an era of unprecedented progress. African leaders even spoke of building new societies that might offer the world at large an inspiration.”<sup>2</sup>

The founding fathers, the first generation of nationalist leaders- Nkrumah, Nasser, Senghor, Houphouët-Boigny, Sékou Touré, Keita, Olympio, Kenyatta, Nyerere, Kaunda and Banda, all enjoyed great prestige as they “personify the states they led and swiftly took advantage to consolidate their control.”<sup>3</sup> But

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1 Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*, (UK: Simon & Schuster, 2011), Pg.1.

2 Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 141.

3 Meredith, *The State of Africa*, Pg.162.

their political theories in their respective countries collapsed with time. However, African and Pan-African organizations were formed in order to provide Africans with a better tomorrow and to solidify African regional integration.

To mention but a few of the African organizations that were established are: African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Development Bank (AFDB), The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and United Nations for Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The Pan-African organizations formed, to mention but a few are: Pan-African Institute for Development, African Cultural Institute, Global Pan African Movement, and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) etc. It is saddening to say that the objectives of the preceding organizations have not fully been achieved because the problems facing Africa are enormous and perennial- unstable government, hardship, unemployment, lack of healthcare facilities etc.

Globalization promised Africans a better offer both home and abroad in terms of white collar jobs, scholarship, quality education, profitable business connections, advanced information technology and militarism, security, economic growth and development etc. Most Africans therefore deemed it fit to seize this golden opportunities and migrate either legally or illegally to foreign countries in order to secure a better future for themselves. At this juncture, one may ask: Of what impact does globalization and migration have on Africans in salvaging their ugly situation?

Watson considers globalization and regionalization as interrelated processes among other things. He believes that globalization is interpreted as a social and technological transformation not simply in the way in which states and markets now operate, but also in the way that individual human beings themselves interact.<sup>4</sup> He also ponders on the question: Is globalization a force for good or a force for evil? Curtin cites social, political and economic factors as the reasons

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<sup>4</sup> Alison Watson, *An Introduction to International Political Economy*, (London, Britain: Continuum, 2004).

for the recurrence of migration in Africa. For him, the most consistent reason for migration within Africa, in and out of Africa was the possession of technological advantage.<sup>5</sup>

Stichter addresses the issue of migrant labourers in east, west and southern Africa, and interprets it from a political economy perspective. Male migrants' experiences with forced labour, recruitment systems, advance payments and compound controls are described as well as different character of women's migration. The development of migrant worker's consciousness and forms of resistance was considered. The persistence of migrancy in South Africa today is contrasted to the decline of labour migrancy in other parts of the continent.<sup>6</sup> Koser considers the descendants of those who left Africa as part of the slave trade to North America. Diaspora consists of legal, illegal, professional, low-skilled, asylum seekers and economic migrants. There are diasporic communities springing up from African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ghana, Senegal and Somalia to address the neglected differences based on gender, class and generation in the process.<sup>7</sup>

Indubitably, globalization is a spur to migration and as such, it becomes imperative to examine globalization and migration as African-Trojan horse.

### **Conceptualization of Globalization and Migration**

Globalization and migration are central issues dominating world political discourse. Globalization is evident in all the principal sectors of social activity - economic, military, technological, legal, ecological, cultural or social. Globalization, so to speak, is the process which involves much more than simply growing connections or interdependence between states. It can also be defined as a "historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of

5 Philip Dearmond Curtin, *Why people move: Migration in African History*, (Waco, Tex.: Markham Press Fund, 1995).

6 Sharon Stichter, *African Society Today: Migrant Laborers*, 1st publication, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

7 Khalid Koser, *New African Diasporas*, (London, Routledge, 2003).

human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents.”<sup>8</sup>

This is quite different from the processes of internationalization (growing interactions between national states) and regionalization (growing inter-dependence between geographically contiguous states).

Simply put, globalization is “the integration of the world economy.”<sup>9</sup> For Scholte, globalization is the “deterritorialization or the growth of supra-territorial relations between people.”<sup>10</sup> On his part, Oatley x-rays globalization as an outcome and a process. As an outcome, globalization is a world economy in which government poses few barriers to, and technology enables, cross-border economic transactions. As a process, globalization is the flow of goods, services, people, capital and technology that arise within this single world economy and the transformations of national economies that these flow produce.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, globalization is viewed as a secular historical process, occurs in three different distinct waves, viz. first, second and third waves. “The first wave, the age of discovery (1450-1850: The European expansion and conquest decisively shaped globalization), the second wave (1850-1945: A major expansion in the spread and entrenchment of European empires) and the third wave (1960 on: A new epoch in human affairs where today the microchip and the satellite are icons of a globalized world).”<sup>12</sup> In the last wave, “three inter-related factors are identified, viz. technics (technological change and social organization), economics (markets and capitalism) and politics (power, interests and institutions).”<sup>13</sup> For Bhagwati, globalization is the “integration of national economies into the

8 John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Pg.24.

9 Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), Pg.364.

10 Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Macmillan, 2000), Pg.46.

11 Thomas Oatley, *International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy*, 3rd ed, (UK: Pearson, 2008), Pg.361.

12 Baylis and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, Pg.28.

13 Baylis and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, Pg.27.

international by flow of goods, money, people and technology."<sup>14</sup>

Still excavating the concept of globalization is the concept, migration, a long-term movement of people and their interests with the primary aim of looking for a living abroad. At this juncture, one may query, are commuters migrants? Commuters whether intended or not, daily, weekly or seasonal are not migrants because migration means to stay where you have moved to, at least for some years. Looking at the historical and economic perspectives of migration therefore, there are two historical accidents of mass migration attributed to recent African migration. The first one, African outward migration; a violence-driven migration to America in the early days of globalization (i.e. sixteenth to eighteenth century) and the second one is economically forced migration (structural violence African emigration), which is poverty driven mass migration from Europe during the nineteenth century. Exenberger submits, "Globalization forces strongly affect both movements, and the most economically active part of the population (young males) was affected by the said two movements."<sup>15</sup>

In economic perspective, migration is seen as the permanent movement of the production factor labour across borders. It is therefore argued that migration complement trade as evident in the factors of labour mobility between countries, differences in skill levels, costs of and constraints in financing migration to the standard trade model. In the same vein, Ravenhill holds that migration is of "growing significance to the globalization of labour markets and economic activity more generally."<sup>16</sup>

According to Schiff:

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14 Jagdish Ghagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), Pg.3.

15 Andreas Exenberger, Migration from Africa to Europe in the Age of globalization: Historical and Economic Perspectives. *Africa and Fortress Europe: Threats and Opportunities*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), Pg.110.

16 John Ravenhill, *Global Economy*, 2nd ed., (UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), Pg.292.

While trade liberalization aid and investment may reduce migration pressure from the already developed East of Europe, it may fail to do so in the case of Africa and may even worsen the skill composition, because empirically, the higher migration costs, the tighter migration constraints and the lower the average skill and income of migrants, the more likely trade and migration are complement.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, globalization and migrated are related concepts and realities. They complement each other and have dense impact on migrants especially Africans.

### **Globalization: A Catalyst for Migration**

If one defines globalization as an extent of internationalization at a level where boundaries are blurred or appear close, where networks and solidarities are communicating, where interdependencies are increasing, we can consider that migrations have entered this process today as well. It is a global phenomenon-one that is political, economic, social and cultural which challenges the Nation State and leads to the birth of multiple networks, transnational or transcontinental, but also regional or local, bringing migrations into the main world stakes.<sup>18</sup>

Globalization is a force for the global good. In this light, the United Nation itself observes that globalization directly contributed to migration [and the accompanying phenomenon of growing racism] by weakening the ability of 'southern' countries to generate employment for most of their population, to invest in basic infrastructure and support their own industry, and to allocate resources for health, education and social security.<sup>19</sup> Globalization contributes to a long-term settlement into mobility of more and more various people, turned towards

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17 Maurice Schiff, *South-North Migration & Trade: A Survey*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 1696 (Washington: The World Bank, 1996), Pg.44.

18 C. W. de Wenden, *Pour un autre regard sur les migrations. Construire un gouvernement mondial*, (Paris, La découverte, 2008), Pg.125.

19 United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, 2002.

a well-being that is not only economic but also social, political, religious, cultural. Germany and the United States are the first two to welcome countries in the world during these last years, followed in relative terms (proportion of legal entries in the foreign settled population) by Japan, Norway, and United Kingdom.

Migration for family reunification (including marriage) is the most factor of settlement, in spite of the rise of asylum-seeking and migration for employment. 150 million of migrants and displaced persons all over the world, among them one third of family migration, one third migration for work and one third of refugees, 2.8% of the world population but around 15% millions illegal. It is not much but in a low regular progress, in the spiral of globalization. Although the overwhelming majority of the world population does not move, the number of departure and welcome countries always increases. More than 60% of migrants never leave the southern hemisphere and three-thirds of refugees are settling in third world countries, as their neighbors.<sup>20</sup>

Wenden characterized asylum as a high progression of flow towards the United States, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and France. Five welcome countries have received 58% of the total of asylum seekers; the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, the Netherlands and Belgium in 2000. The new comers are Afghans, Iraqis, former USSR nationals, former Yugoslavs, Sri-Lankans, Algerians, Somalis, Sierra Leone, Congolese, Colombians. But the number of statutory refugees is very stable.<sup>21</sup> Refused asylum-seekers often stay in immigration countries, forming an irregular population of neither legalizable nor expendable people, although some of them are coming back home once the conflict has ceased (alike in Bosnia and Kosovo).

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20 Wenden, Pour un autre regard sur les migrations, Pg.125.

21 Wenden, Pour un autre regard sur les migrations, Pg.125.



### **The African and the Reasons for Migration**

Chukwudum submits, "If the African is to win his current battle for progress and development or hopes to overcome his psychological, social and political predicament, he must, it seems to me, equip himself with genuine self-knowledge and self-understanding."<sup>22</sup>

Responding to the question: What does it mean to be African? Chukwudum is of the view that irrespective of the African location, ontologically, the African is not just a being but a being-with.<sup>23</sup> The African as a being-with-others is both micro and macro dimensional. The former is when the African being-with is restricted only to his extended family system, which is, feeling involved-with-others, existing with and for others through participatory living while the latter is when he extends his relation to all realities-material and spiritual, visible and invisible.

Wade notes that migration is "the function of inequality since the fastest way for a poor person to get richer is to move from a poor country to a rich country."<sup>24</sup> This triggers the question, Are riches the only reason that makes Africans migrate? On his part, Adepaju categorizes the determinants of African emigration under the headings of labour force growth, economic decline and debt, ethno-political conflict and ecological deterioration. In this context, emigration is seen as "a survival strategy by individuals and families."<sup>25</sup> On his part, Solimano (2001) identifies both economic (unemployment, meager career etc.) and non-economic (war, family connections, ethnic discrimination etc.) reasons why people migrate. He therefore put it this way:

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22 Barnabas Okolo Chukwudum, *What is to be African? Essay on African Identity*, (Enugu, Nigeria: CECTA, 1993), Pg.2.

23 Chukwudum, *What is to be African? Essay on African Identity*, Pg.6.

24 Robert Hunter Wade, "Is Globalization reducing poverty and inequality?" *World Development* 32, no. 4 (2004): 567-89.

25 Aderanti Adepaju, *Trends in International Migration in and from Africa, International Migration: Prospects and Policies in a Global Market*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Pg.59-71.

Most of the time, people migrate abroad in search for better economic opportunities for the migrants and their families offered by foreign countries compared with the economic opportunities found at home. In fact, unemployment, low wages, meager career, prospects for highly educated people, significant country risk for national investors in the home country are all factors that propel people to emigrate abroad. In addition, there are non-economic reasons to emigrate such as war, ethnic discrimination, political persecution at home, etc.... In addition, the choice of the country of immigration is often dictated by the existence of a network of family, friends and connection that have previously migrated to the specific country.<sup>26</sup>

### **Globalization and Migration as African-Trojan horse**

First and most importantly, "Trojan horse" is a story from the Trojan War about the subterfuge that the Greeks used to enter the independent city of Troy and win the war after a fruitless 10-year siege. The term "Trojan horse" could also mean any kind of deception or trick to lure an opponent, enemy or someone into a trap. The same is applicable to the issue of Africans on the web of globalization and migration. Globalization and migration look promising, catchy and harmless, but they could be a deathtrap in disguise.

Globalization and migration are realities affecting the human population. Through globalization, many opportunities are made available to people irrespective of their nation, background, education, race, religion, sex etc. and Africans are not exempted. One cannot but query, of what benefit are globalization and migration to Africans? Are globalization and migration helpful or harmful to Africans? Are globalization and migration a cure or a curse to Africans? Are they interdependent or imperialistic? In response, two schools of thought emerged, viz. optimist and pessimist.

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26 Andrés Solimano, *International Migration and the Global Economic Order: An Overview*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 2720, (Washington: The World Bank, 2001), Pg.7.

On the one hand, the optimists see globalization as a helpful phenomenon as it helps to break down traditional divisions of humanity between races, nations and cultures that are barriers to peace, prosperity and justice through the promotion and encouragement of open societies, open economies, free exchange of goods, services, knowledge and ideas. Francis Fukuyama for instance, perceives globalization as universalization of western values and therefore proposed the celebration of a global world. The optimists are of the view that globalization is interdependence as it impacts positively on the people from different perspectives be it technological, economic, political or cultural. It is a process of increased integration of national economy. It reduces the abuse of human rights, eradicates social and economic injustices by national government etc. According to Watson, globalization is "a positive force, providing not only a system that is more economically stable but one that is more politically stable and thus less conflictual too."<sup>27</sup>

The optimists also are of the view that globalization is the rational endpoint of human development as man is seen as an end in itself. Economic liberalization is the best economic system and as such, there is no reason why a country that wants development and increased standard of living for her people should not grace globalization. Globalization creates and encourages global citizens who assign loyalty to the common interests of all peoples.

On the other hand, the pessimists consider globalization as harmful as it breeds unpleasant things such as global disease and threats to local job security and as such, it is a force to be resisted. They therefore hold that Globalization is imperialistic, exploitative and capitalistic in nature. Man is seen as a means to an end. Globalization encourages unhealthy competition between states as they retain the allegiance of their citizens and ensure their own national security. Globalization creates an unequal distribution of benefits between the developed and developing/underdeveloped states or nations, between skilled and unskilled workers.

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27 Watson, *An Introduction to International Political Economy*, Pg.65.

With respect to Africa, through globalization the developed countries are extending beautiful offers to African nations and Africans, in order to liberate themselves from their ugly situations, migrate to developed nations either legally or illegally but many have lost their lives, properties and identities (modern day slavery - e.g. the recent human trafficking in Libya) in the process.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic and the Re-awakening of African Self-reliance**

According to Garfin, Silver and Holman, "The 2019 Novel Corona Virus (Covid-2019) has led to a serious outbreak of often severe respiratory disease, which originated in China and has quickly become a global pandemic, with far-reaching consequences that are unprecedented in the modern era."<sup>28</sup> On January 30, 2020, Covid-2019 outbreak was designated as a "public health emergency of international concern."<sup>29</sup>

Covid-19 pandemic has brought even world leaders down on their knees, and it has threatened the existence of both religious and cultural beliefs. The pandemic also exposes the helplessness of African nations. Thus, there is need for Africans to have "self-reliance" which is not the same as "self-sufficiency" but rather it is the principle or philosophy of "do it yourself", not to be dependent. US for instance, was dependent on China for food, medicine and defense before Covid-19 pandemic but saw the need to be self-reliant for its own survival during the pandemic.<sup>30</sup> It is one thing to realize a mistake and it is another thing to correct the mistake made by acting. Can this be said of Africans?

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28 Dana Rose Garfin, Roxane Cohen Silver, and E. Alison Holman, "The Novel Corona Virus (COVID-2019) Outbreak: Amplification of Public Health Consequences by Media Exposure." *Health Psychology*, March 23, 2020, Pg.1. Advance online publication. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/hea0000875>.

29 World Health Organization, (2020), Pg.1.

30 Brigitte Gabriel, "It's time to bring back Made in the USA", Video Clip, [www.ACTforAmerica.org](http://www.ACTforAmerica.org).

### Conclusion

The plight of Africans in Diaspora especially Nigerians so to speak is too great in the sense that being a Nigerian alone is a crime in itself but that does not mean Nigerians are blameless. Globalization creates the conditions that are promoting large-scale migration from poor to richer countries but African nations are bedeviled with perennial problems (mismanagement, corruption, inferiority complex etc.) in spite of her abundant human and natural resources. This has really destroyed African self-reliance and productivity. If through nationalization, importing limitations, promotion of domestic and manufactured goods, the Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) were able to have buoyant economies, African nations too can do same but if only they can put to death their perennial problems once and for all or, better still, minimize them.

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