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Building Resilience in Sustainable Development in a Changing World

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Human Migration, Conflict, Security and Sustainable Development

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Introduction

Migration has increasingly become a way of life circulating people and ideas in different directions. Virtually no country is spared either as a destination, sending or transit zones in the new global migration stream. Human migration is not new in history. It has accelerated due to the dynamics of the global economy, grinding poverty and inequality, lack of opportunities in the context of neo-liberal reforms, bad governance, communal conflicts, urban violence, civil wars, climatic change and family histories. The processes of globalisation and technological advancement in communication and transportation promoted human migration. This paper discusses issues on the development impact of migration; new immigration policies in the wake of massive migration as security threats; insecurity and racism encountered by migrants and the role of migrants in rebellions or insurgencies.

Migration and Development

Migration and development are mutually reinforcing. History has shown that sustainable development in one region or country could serve as a pull factor attracting diverse categories of migrants. On the other hand, underdevelopment could be a push factor provoking migration. The global competition for skilled labour continues to widen the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries. In the 'brain gain' and 'brain drain' debate, it is clear that most underdeveloped countries lost some of their skilled labour to industrialised societies.

Migration produced globalised ethnic groups who formed diaspora communities in different parts of the world and contribute to the development of their homelands through remittances. Indeed, migration has become "a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (Appadurai, 1996:4).

Migration involves numerous preferences but the decision to migrate is often overwelmingly economic. Migrants also seek adventure for "opening one's eyes" or *Olaju* (modernity in Yoruba) or *ganin duniya* (in Hausa meaning, seeing the world). The cultural dimension of migration is highly crucial because for many societies, migration contributes significantly to development. In the words of Youngstedt (1993: 150), "Migration functions…as a sort of rite of passage through which an individual achieves prestige and self-respect through the demonstration of his courage to leave home and find success in the city, expecting to return home and fulfil his obligations…" As such, Youngstedt argues that most migrants dream of the day when they will triumphantly return home with lavish gifts of money, clothes, cultural capital such as new job skills, proficiency in other languages and experience of "staying in the world." Youngstedt (2004: 95) notes "…migrants strive to maintain dignity and struggle to make sense of their lives in extraordinarily difficult conditions."

Battistella and Asis (2003:1) argue that some groups in Asia have traditionally regarded journeying as a cultural motif. In the past, male status in Southeast Asia "derived from the cosmopolitan knowledge that men gleaned from their national and international journeys." (Margold, 2002: 230). This is not different from the Soninke society where migration forms part of the ideal life trajectory envisioned for a young Soninke man. As Jonsson (2008, 28) demonstrates "Migration is really what turns a boy into a man. Migration and generally, mobility, is integral to the hegemonic masculinity in (Soninke society)." In Ghana, it is assumed that if a bird stays in one tree for too long, it can expect a stone to be thrown at it. This implies that, if a person does not look for new opportunities, he/she could become a burden and be sanctioned by the society (Manuh, 2005 : 7). Therefore, migration involves reinvention and reconstruction of selfhood, family or community.

My presentation starts from the premise that since the end of the Cold War, conflicts and lack of sustainable development are principal forces driving contemporary migration. Africa has produced a significant number of migrants within the continent and beyond due to grinding poverty, lack of opportunities in the context of neo-liberal reforms, communal conflicts, urban violence and civil wars. However,

migration challenge today is that of circular movement of people: Americans look towards China, Europeans look towards America and China, West Africans look towards Nigeria and Nigerians look forward to global opportunities. It is also interesting that Chinese migrants could be found all over the world. There is hardly an international flight without Chinese passengers, sometimes travelling in groups. As noted by Battistella and Asis (2003:1), Southeast Asia beckoned to Chinese migrants in search of opportunities that eluded them in their homeland. Out of an estimated 26-33 million ethnic Chinese outside mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, about 80 per cent of such Chinese (20.2-25.7 million) live in Southeast Asia. Chinese migrants account for five per cent of the total population of Southeast Asia (Bolt, 2000: 21). On the other hand, from the 1970s, Asia became part of the global migration when the oil-rich nations in the Gulf attracted labour migrants. In this process, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia launched overseas employment programmes to take advantage of employment opportunities in the Gulf Region. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration set an annual target of one million deployments and actively involved in "marketing" Filipino migrant workers in the global labour market (Baggio, 2008: 113). By the 1980s, inter-regional migration accelerated in East and Southeast Asia following the rise of new industrialised countries in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei. Malaysia and Singapore recruited workers from Bangladesh; India also exports workers to Singapore.

While many unauthorised migrants encountered deportation or imprisonment in many countries, the Philippines government in 1995 offered an amnesty programme called Alien Social Integration Act of 1995, which allowed irregular aliens who had arrived in the Philippines on or before 30 June 1992 to apply for legal residency. By June 1997, a total of 14,447 irregular aliens had applied for amnesty (Battistella and Asis, 2003: 37).

In West Africa, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) free movement protocol reinforced shared history, geography, culture, ethnicity, social networks and economic ties to promote migration in the sub-region. In 1979, almost four years after the establishment of the union, member states adopted Protocol on Free

Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment. This affirms members' fortitude to place the free intra-regional movement of persons at the centre of the regional process. Thus, mobility within the ECOWAS zone was considered a vital component of regional integration, which is a prerequisite for West African economic integration into the globalisation process. Migrants from the sub-region are now regarded as Community Citizens and not aliens. This was because ECOWAS is an economic community. New imigration tend to integrate to create a wider market and for diplomacy. The current trend is to see migration as a tool for development.

At different historical periods, migration was an integral part of the development process. The West African sub-region has historically been an area of high population mobility, exchange and transfers. Globally, about 7million out of 191 million migrants are of ECOWAS origin. In the last three decades, regional integration was recognised to foster productive economic enterprise that profits the citizens of member states. ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons places citizens of the Community at the centre of economic integration.

ECOWAS Members states relying on the orientations of the Tripoli Declaration of November 2006, re-affirm a direct link between migration and development. For almost two decades, the issue of how the gains of intra-regional mobility can be promoted and how can free movement within the ECOWAS zone can be guaranteed were addressed. As such the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment within the ECOWAS zone was emphasised. According to Article 59 of ECOWAS Treaty, "Citizens of the community shall have the right of entry, residence and establishment and Member States undertake to recognise these rights of Community citizens in their territories in accordance with the provisions of the Protocols relating thereto."

ECOWAS Member States are now committed more ever than before to take the appropriate measures to remove all hinderances to the free movement of persons and ensure the issuance and security of ECOWAS travel documents. It should be noted that, West Africa is a vast territory, endowed with huge development potentials that are

largely unexploited. West African citizens constitute one of the world's most mobile populations. The ECOWAS sub-region harbour's approximately 7.5 million migrants from other West African countries, about three per cent of the regional population. Member states of ECOWAS launched a process to establish a regional economic zone.

Nevertheless, migration is generating conflicts and diplomatic rows in West Africa. In May 2012, Ghana Immigration Service threatened to deport unauthorised migrants who were attracted to the country by the robust economic growth and political stability. A task force was set up by the Ministry of Trade to deport Nigerians, Chinese and other migrants who set up shops in Accra's Central Business District. Most of the immigrants are engaged in retail business and illegal gold mining while others have targeted oil services, irking many locals who accused them of stealing their jobs. On May 16, 2012, Ghana Immigration Service officials arrested two Chinese for engaging in commercial activities contrary to the country's regulations. Act 478 of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) Law stipulates that, "the sale of anything whatsoever in the market, petty trading, hawking or selling from a kiosk at any place is a wholly reserved activity for Ghanaians."[1] This brings back the echoes and memories of the 1969 deportation in Ghana (Olaniyi, 2008b).

Compared to other regions of the world, Africa's share of the world's migrant stock declined from 12.1 % in 1960 to 9% in 2005 (Zeleza, 2007: 35). In 2005, there were 200 million migrants globally, representing 3 percent of the global population. African migration to developed countries is marginal. In fact, the vast majority of African migrants move to other African countries. In 2004, there were 7.2 million officially identified African migrants in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, representing 13 per cent of immigrants from non-member countries. They include 3.8 million North Africans and 3.4 million West Africans.

Since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2007 and enforcement of new immigration laws in the EU, migration among

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[1] Francis Kokutse, "Illegal Aliens to be Kicked out of Ghana" *The Citizen* (Tanzania), Monday 21, May 2012, p. 33.

African youths has taken a "southern turn." The bulk of African migrants go to other African countries seeking improved living standards. The ambition of some of the migrants was to migrate to Europe, when such ambition failed, they decided to explore opportunities in other African countries. Indeed, the underdevelopment characteristic of Africa provoked massive intensification of labour migration in the continent. Labour migration exists on an immense scale in West Africa (Freund, 1981: 74). Without education and capital for business, it was difficult for most of the youths to survive in their own countries. Jango Ceesay, Gambian gemstone dealer in Ibadan declared, "I cannot make it in my country." In most of these countries, it was the responsibility of the young men to supplement their family income through remittances.

It is important to examine migration and development disconnect in many third world countries. What is the development impact of remittances ? Or, what is the economic benefit of migrants' remittances at both macro and micro economic levels ? From the 1990s, it has been claimed that several billions of US dollars are remitted to third world countries through migrants. In many countries, it is not clear if remittances contributed to easing the foreign debt burden and taming national inflation or boost the Gross National Product.

The new interest on remittances stems from the attempt to transform 'brain drain' or 'human capital flight' that is, the departure of highly skilled and educated persons from developing countries to industrialised countries in search of better remuneration and conditions of service to 'brain gain.' This because, as Zeleza (2007) argues, brain drain represents not only the loss of human capital, nurtured, and produced at great public cost ; it also deprives the sending countries of the cultural and social capital for democratisation and progress. Under the brain gain discourses, the resource loss under brain drain 'can be converted into a long-term resource profit ('brain gain') for the developing country (Adebayo, 2011 : 71).

There is no evidence to show individual or collective remittances to government agencies and improve domestic economy in most third world countries. In fact, despite the new engagment, there is often

distrust between the government and citizens in the diaspora. At the micro levels, families of migrants have benefitted significantly on remittances for investment and consumption. Some communities, schools and socio-cultural organisations have benefitted from remittances. However, many recepients of remittances have developed the culture of dependency. Many societies, families and individuals are groaning due to massive exodus of their members or partners. Migration has led to the separation of family members and constitutes a threat to family stability.

Two issues are central to the migration and development disconnect : the statistics on migrants and social cost of migration. According to Haas (2006: 8), reliable data on Nigerian migration is absolutely lacking. This is because Nigerian authorities do not estimate emigration, which presumably reflects the low level of interest in the issue. Also, receiving country statistics are incomplete, as many countries do not include naturalised and second-generation Nigerians in immigrant statistics. There are several undocumented migrants as well. The statistics are staggering and lack empirical basis. For example, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) estimated that more than 2 million highly educated Nigerians emigrated to Europe and USA. Other sources claim that at least one million Nigerians live in the USA and UK; 500,000 in Germany and Canada; and about 10,000 in the Netherlands(Haas 2006: 8). There are claims that nearly 15,000 Nigerians enter Europe and North America annually. (Haas 2006: 9; Black et al, 2004:19). According to the 2001 UK census, 86,958 Nigerians live in the UK with about 80 per cent living in greater London. This figure excludes undocumented migrants and UK citizens of Nigerian descent. In Adebayo's analysis, the Nigerian Consul-General in Atlanta admitted that the Consulate does not have an accurate number of Nigerians in the USA in 2010 (Adebayo, 2011: 69).

Even though scholars and development agencies draw conclusions and generalisations from small samples, there is no accurate record of African migrants in the USA or anywhere in the world. Zeleza (2007: 35) suggests that although the number of migrants from the global south to the global north are fewer than is often claimed, their growth play an increasingly important role in the politics of state

renewal, national memory and forgetting, and social mobility and control.

This lack of reliable data on Nigerians living abroad has implications on the amount remittances. It must be noted that many immigrants from Nigeria are undocumented who invariably affected unrecorded flow of remittances into the continent. In some African countries, monetary regulations created challenges to the flow of remittances and investment possibilities which further pushed such transactions into informal networks.

The socio-economic and political crises that forced many highly skilled Nigerians into 'self-exile' or diaspora still subsist. Misgovernance and corruption is still rampant at all levels of government. Many Nigerians in the diaspora are patrons of ethnic associations, which further raises questions on their commitment towards nation-building. They are first and foremost committed to the welfare of their families and communities than the nation at large. Some are partisan in their political interests which undermined their cooperation with government over development issues. There were also cases where some Nigerians in the diaspora aided money laundering and capital flight perpetrated by the political class. Studies have shown that identification on the basis of national identity is a subjective issue among Nigerians in the diaspora. According to Henry and Mohan (2003), in a civilised society such as the United Kingdom for example, a large number of Nigerians' associations are formed on the basis of ethnicity rather than on national identity. Nigerians in large cities in Europe have a tendency to organise along ethnic lines than those in smaller towns who identify themselves in national terms (Singh and Sausi, 2010: 63). Ethnic associations are more involved in investment remittances than the broad based umbrella associations. This process is refer to as 'Bilateral Diaspora Ethnicity' which according to Pire-Hester (1994) implies the strategic use of ethnic identification with an original overseas homeland to benefit that homeland, through relations with systems and institutions of the current actual homeland. Tijani (2007) uses the concept of 'Bilateral Diaspora Ethnicity' to study the development activities of Eko Club International (ECI) in Lagos state since 1999.

Migration and Security

It is crucial to examine the nexus between human migration and security. As many EU countries were inundated with collosal debt and economic recession as well as counter-terrorism, government policy on immigration became increasingly restrictive. Contemporaneously with the global competition for skilled labour, Europe and other developed countries grapples with the influx of immigrants (Olaniyi, 2009a : 140). Right wing politicians advocated for strict control over immigration because the influx of poor people without skills or "excess human beings" is considered dangerous to the society, economy and culture of the European countries (Olaniyi, 2009a : 141). Thus, migration has become a contentious issue in the EU as anti-immigration parties are on the rise. An European observer said, "our civilization is losing its substance. Our moral values are disappearing. Immigration compromises our civilization and ruins our economy." In 2011, Arab Spring highlights the fluidity of transition between immigration and emigration configurations. Muammar Ghadafi wrote to the Hungarian Presidency of the EU on February 20, 2011 that, "If the EU continues to support the protests, Libya will stop cooperating with it on illegal immigration." *La Republica*.[2] An Italian daily, La Stampa wrote that the threat was worrisome, for "if the Libyan dam breaks, tens of thousands of Africans who are working as slaves or being held in detention centres in Libya will lead an exodus of Biblical proportions."

Subsequently, migration from and through North Africa has put relations with European nations under considerable stress. EU attempted to "externalise" its restrictive immigration policies through putting North African states under pressure to adopt restrictive immigration laws and regulations and to intensify joint border controls. According to Olaniyi (2009 a: 147), this period characterised by turbulent international migrations and the notion of "illegal immigration as a threat" has been followed by "isolationist walling off policy." The new border regime and fortress Europe has the prominent features of "closed, highly selective and only conditionally permeable external boundary of the European Union-the Schengen border, a new kind of 'wall around the west.'" (Zimic, 2004: 11). The stringent immigration policies, especially against unskilled women, inadvertently

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[2] "EU-Libya : High Noon with Gaddafi" 21 February, 2011 http: www.presseuro.eu/en/

made trafficking a lucrative business for syndicates (Olaniyi, 2011: 111-131). In order to discourage influx of immigrants from Muslim countries, construction of Mosques and wearing of religious dresses in public are being outlawed in many parts of the EU.

In April 1984, Nigeria closed her land borders as a result of security problems posed by organised smuggling, drug and currency trafficking, influx of migrants amongst others. In 1988/1989, the security of ECOWAS sub-region was undermined as armed conflicts between Mauritania and Senegal resulted from accusations that the nationals of the countries were being singled out for attacks by the other. Accusations of racism in Mauritania against black citizens resulted in the attacks on Mauritanian migrants in Senegal and vice versa.

As Amuwo (2009: 50-51) demonstrates, in order to deal with worries about the brain-drain monster, French authorities only issue visas to immigrants whose countries have a "co-development" agreement with France or, alternatively, if such immigrants agree to return "home" after six years. The skilled immigrant has to demonstrate commitment to contribute to the development of France and country of origin. Amuwo argues that the "great Paris riots" of 2005/2006/2007 were a reminder that racism, anti-semitism and xenophobia are deep-seated in France. Bolaji Agboola, a Nigerian in Germany shared his experience on how life as an African immigrant in Europe is not rosy:

> It was like a gold rush. When we came to Germany in the 90s, there were many of us. It wasn't easy. I had a really bad experience from the beginning...It was like having a room full of people and all of a sudden, slowly, slowly, everybody started departing, or were being deported or being put in jail or some people went crazy...I know a lot of Nigerians that went crazy because of the challenges they faced.[3]

Many Nigerians were traumatised due to the "home factor." Some were scared of being considered as failures by their families and friends back home.

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[3] Anthony Akaeze, 2011, "Their German Experience" in *Newswatch*, September 12, 2011, pp. 42-43.

Olaniyi (2009b: 111) is of the view that in many parts of the world, identity politics and "nativist" narratives link migration to crime by making mobility a contentious political issue. Popular stereotypes corroborated by political authorities claimed that most Nigerian (legal and unauthorised) immigrants in South Africa engage in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, organised crime and prostitution. In contrast to this stereotype and symbolic narratives, many Nigerian immigrants in South Africa were targets of criminals and preyed on by ordinary citizens. African immigrants in South Africa are popularly referred to as, *Makwerekwere* which implies unwanted immigrants in an attempt to prevent South Africa from becoming overcrowded. The May 2008 riots in South Africa show how xenophobia is racialised with African immigrants, the main targets of stereotypes, crime, extortions and attacks.

With the exemption of highly professional migrants, most receiving countries close their borders against migrants without skills. In another scenario, since 9/11 period, receiving countries are wary of admitting migrants from countries classified as "axis of evil" or "terrorist enclaves." Migrants are criminalised as drug traffickers, internet fraudsters, armed bandits etc. In the context of national security challenges such as Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, trans-border migrants also suffer. Many Nigeriens, Malians, Senegalese Muslim migrants have been deported from Nigeria or killed in an attempt to crush Boko Haram. In the Libyan uprising, many Africans were killed or robbed by Libyans who considered them as mercenaries. Of course, some Africans were used as mercenaries by Ghadaffi but majority of African migrants in Libya were labourers, artisans and petty traders.

From the late 1980s, many Africans who experienced state collapse or fragile economies migrated to other African states. Many Congolese and Rwandans migrated to Tunisia and Uganda. Refugees from the Liberian and Sierra-Leonean Civil wars moved to Ghana and Nigeria among others in search of commercial opportunities as well as means of livelihoods.

While Nigeria hosts various international migrants, there is virtually no country of the world without a Nigerian community. It is estimated that the highest number of Nigerians in the diaspora reside in Sudan, predominantly Hausa farmers.

Finally, the unfolding crisis in Mali reinforced the claim that the diaspora often contribute to insurgencies and political instability in their homeland. Olaniyi (2012) demonstrates how returnee Tuareg migrants in Libya intensified rebellion in Mali with sophisticated weapons, money and military training to declare Aswad state.

Conclusion

Massive migration facilitated by the processes of globalisation, endemic underdevelopment and conflicts resulted into undesirable political, cultural and economic consequences in the recipient countries. New border regimes frustrated many potential migrants, some of who lost their lives in the bid to improve their socio-economic well-being and contribute to the development of their communities. State control over migration issues has changed dramatically since the September 11, 2001 attack in the USA and acts of terrorism in other parts of the world. The contributions of migrant communities to development are often ignored in order to criminalise them as terrorists, agents of instability, armed bandits, drug traffickers and so on. In some countries, xenophobic attacks and indiscriminate arrest and deportation of immigrants occur on daily basis. Most of the countries chasing out immigrants also groan due to underdevelopment.

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