

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FORCED ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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ABSTRACT

The post-colonial experience of Nigeria has been marked by missed opportunities, truncated development and frustrated hope. The failure of governance manifests in poor socio-economic performance, causing suffering and unfulfilled expectations as well as facilitated insurgency, conflicts and political instability. The involvement of multilateral development agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the management of the nation's economy further aggravated the development challenges. These conditions have led to massive migration of trained professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers and academics to developed countries in Europe and North America and increasingly to emerging countries in Asia and Latin America, a situation conceptualized in this paper as forced economic migration. Contrary to the prevailing notion that the migration of skilled professionals is voluntary and good for the sending countries in terms of brain gain, brain circulation and remittances, the sending countries lose more as they are deprived of the expertise and services of these migrants, which is critically important for their development. The paper concludes that Nigeria must re-orient her development strategies toward ensuring that the conditions that necessitated the forced economic migration of professionals are mitigated such that when people migrate, it will be done on a voluntary basis. Also, in view of the current reality that substantial numbers of Nigerians now work as professionals outside the country, deliberate efforts must be made by the government to creatively engage this Diaspora population toward achieving the much needed development goals.

KEYWORDS: *Forced economic migration, Political Economy, Good Governance, Skilled Professionals.*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populous black country, with an estimated population of 160 million people (PRB 2011). The country has become an epicenter of various crises comprising economic social and political dimensions over the past three decades. The country has witnessed unprecedented incidences of economic doldrums, societal dislocations and political upheavals. Due essentially to the mono-cultural nature of the economy which depends on oil as the main earner of foreign exchange and the bad management, Nigeria's economy experienced serious macro-economic difficulties in the 1980s. This situation, which necessitated the intervention of the Bretton Woods Institutions –the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to impose the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) as a way out of the economic malaise, laid the foundation for more problems. Evidence abound that the failure of SAP led to the closure of many industries, resulting in loss of employment, eradication of the middle class and erosion in the purchasing power of an average worker. (Onimode 1988, Mkandawire and Soludo 1999, Ninsin 2000).

Similarly, and flowing from the economic problems enunciated above, conflicts, violence and wars gained ascendancy during the same periods as various ethnic groups rose up against one another. Politically, the Nigerian state has virtually lost its legitimacy and failed to meet the expectations of the people. Consequently, from 1966 to 1998, coups and counter coups became a normal phenomenon while political instability became the rule rather than the exception. This tripartite trajectory has accentuated the massive movement of people within and outside the country. The failure of governance and the inability of the state to contain insurgency have further

threatened the continued existence of the country as a corporate entity. The current spate of violence unleashed on the country by the radical Islamic sect known as Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatih wal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad or Boko Haram) has further aggravated socio-economic economic conditions as well as the safety of the people, especially in the Northern part of the country.

While it is true that migration within the country dates back to the pre-colonial era, the colonial policy deliberately encouraged the movement of people to the cities, to increase the prospect of earning wages for the payment of taxes, which by then had become compulsory. Although the concept of forced migration is predominantly used to describe the movement of refugees, asylees, and internally displaced persons (Castles 2003), this paper conceives of the Diasporization of Nigerians due to economic constraints as an instance of forced migration. There are several perspectives about the effects of migration on the development of sending countries. This paper contributes to this debate by examining the implications of forced economic migration and the effects on Nigeria's development. With a focus on the emigration of skilled professionals from Nigeria to other countries such as United States of America, Canada, and Europe, we contend that for Nigeria to become relevant in the twenty-first century, the circumstances that warrant forced economic migration must be clearly examined and meaningfully addressed.

Against the prevailing tendency to justify economic migration as a necessary feature of development, we argue that Nigeria must ensure that the conditions that force people out of the country and continent must be frontally tackled so that trained professionals are retained to contribute their own quotas to the development of country. This paper is divided into four sections. Section I deals with the conceptual and theoretical framework, section II contains a

survey of the causes, dimensions and effects of forced economic migration on Nigeria and the third section attempts policy oriented advice through which Nigeria can minimize the disruptive effects of forced economic migration, while maximizing the gains. Section four concludes the paper.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Migration is as old as human civilization. Human beings have always moved from one location to the other in search of better opportunities. While many cases of migration are voluntary, some such as movement on account of wars, conflicts, natural disasters and economic hardship are involuntary. In recent times, interest on migration has received increased scholarly attention.

From the 1950s to the current time, there has been a radical shift both in the magnitude and geographical pattern of international migration (Clunies-Ross, Forsyth and Huq 2009). By the 1990s, Europe, North America and Oceania had become large scale recipients of immigrants up to approximately 2.5 million per annum. The sending countries are African, Latin American and the Caribbean (Clunies-Ross, Forsyth and Huq 2009; 671). Pritchett (2003) stresses that there are economic, technological, and demographic reasons for increased labor mobility and migration flows across borders.

Scholars have tried to explain the causes of migration from various perspectives. Some see forced economic migration as a consequence of the pre-capitalist state's response to the penetration of the European merchant capital. In this view, the colonial administration in most African states introduced taxation which made it imperative for able bodied-men to migrate to the cities to work in order to earn enough money to pay taxes (Ake 1981, Zegeye and Ishemo 1989).

As Ake (1981) notes, this pattern of migration caused a serious disruption in the indigenous production processes because able bodied men left the rural areas for the cities. Consequently, agriculture, in which the colonized countries had comparative advantage, was neglected. Others see migration as a normal phenomenon with socio-economic benefits. It is common knowledge that before the European colonization of the African continent, the movement of people was a regular occurrence. However, colonization and later, neo-liberalism accentuated this phenomenon both in pattern, structures and outcomes (Amin 1974, Toure and Fadayomi 1992). During the colonial era, a lot of migrations took place both at the regional and international levels. Also, the pattern of migration was a reflection of the development policies of the colonialists which was focused on exploitation of raw materials and seeking market outlets for manufactured products.

The colonial administration in Nigeria deliberately emphasized the development of specific cities, usually near ports of shipment, to further its mercantilist cause of procuring raw materials for its industrial production in the metropole. A classic example is the Lagos port to which all the railway lines from Nguru to Kaura Namoda, Kano, and Oshogbo, among others have direct links. However the nature of migration during the colonial era remains mainly within Nigeria and other African countries and it can be categorized as rural-rural, rural urban, urban-urban and urban-rural (Amin 1974). Ayittey (1999) in his book, *Africa in Chaos: A Comparative History*, shows how the European government balkanized the various nations in Africa and caused massive disarticulation into the indigenous economies of these countries and oriented them towards the metropolises. He contends that the disarticulations in the indigenous economies are today partly responsible for the food crisis and other poor showing in economic performance.

There is a perspective that international migration is undertaken to eliminate disparities in wages in the sending and receiving countries. As de Haan (2007, 273) argues in regard to this

perspective, ‘there is an assumption that the movement of labor would lead to the elimination of disparities and equalization of development’. In other words, migration is mutually beneficial, especially to the sending countries. The import of this assertion is that through international migration, particular disparities in wage differentials will be minimized. As Ozdeh and Schiff (2006) argues:

The principal cause of south-north migration is, in most cases, the difference in the present value of expected real wages, adjusted for migration costs. These costs increase with the distance between source and destination countries, and decline with social networks in the destination country...Migration would be expected to rise with the difference in expected real wages and decline with migration costs (cited in Clunies-Ross, Forsyth and Huq 2009; 678).

While earlier theories of migration tried to explain the colonial basis of this phenomenon, the most important theoretical starting point for migration studies since the 1960s has been the model by Todaro (1969), Harris and Todaro (1970). In her analysis of this model, de Haan (2007, 287) states that “in the Todaro model, a prospective migrant is expected to weigh the difference between the expected earnings from formal sector urban unemployment and the expected earnings from the village.” She argues that while this model has been criticized by many, empirical analyses have shown that the model has certain predictive value. More recently Lucas (2002) provides a theoretical model of rural-urban migration based on Todaro-Harris, emphasizing the increasing skill levels in urban areas and widening gap with agricultural workers. While the 1960s migration theories are situated in discussions of structural changes, the focus of Todaro-type of

analysis has been on individual incentives and remittances. It is this orientation, which holds that migration benefits the sending countries that motivate some scholars to advocate for more migration of people from regions of low economic growth to the developed economies. For instance, Moses and Letnes (2004) estimate through an applied equilibrium model that liberalization of international migration would lead to an efficiency gain of US\$774 billion for the sending countries over a specified period.

The international political economy of migration and remittances has been conceptualized in the context of advantages for global capital and richer nations. This is problematic for developing countries in the first place, because the sending countries are gradually being deprived of the best of their human capital to the benefit of the advanced countries. This is even more puzzling when one examines the huge cost that the struggling economies of Africa incur in the process of educating her citizens. As Okeke (2008, 129) submits 'African countries generally fund the education of their nationals, only to see them end up making contributions to the continual growth of the advanced and developed economies with little or no return on their investments. For instance, it costs about USD40,000.00 to train a Doctor, and USD 10,000-15,000 to educate a University student.'

Secondly, the advanced countries of the world have a gradually ageing population, which in effect constitutes a veritable threat to the sustainability of their economies, particularly given the commitment of the state to maintain stable social security benefits for pensioners and the unemployed. It is therefore necessary for these countries to devise ways of recruiting skilled people from the Third World to augment the shortfall in their labor demand. This is currently manifested in various visa and lottery programs introduced by various countries both in Europe and North America. It is interesting that these countries are not looking for illiterates or semi-

skilled people to emigrate to their countries. In effect, there is a subtle replication of the interpretation of “Mathew Effect” (the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, derived from Matthew 25:29)-a term used to decry a situation where the advanced countries are so far ahead of the Third World countries in all ramifications of development that Third World countries lose what they have and the advanced countries gain more.

Two sets of theoretical innovations known as the “new economics of migration” have taken migration studies beyond the individual incentives central to the Todaro-type model. Here the family is conceptualized as a coalition vis-a-vis the rest of the world. Family members share costs of and rewards of migration. Migration is seen as a form of portfolio diversification by families, in which they enter into chosen contractual arrangements, and remittances exemplify the inter-temporal contractual arrangement between migrant and family with families investing in migrants, migrants in families and both expecting returns from that (Dustmann 1997).

This type of contractual arrangement is very common in Africa since the cycle of economic crises after the mid-1970s, where most families both from the rich and poor social strata are of the opinion that it is imperative for at least a member of the family to be a resident abroad. Many families pressure their members to migrate as a means of escaping grinding poverty, which is prevalent at home. There is even more pressure if a classmate or a contemporary of a family member had earlier migrated abroad and is sending money home. To actualize the objective of having a representative abroad, families contribute money and in extreme cases sell valuable assets to accumulate enough money for the travel requirements and initial cost of settlement. This is done in anticipation of refund and compensation through remittances. To this extent, we uphold the theoretical orientation of the ‘new economics of migration as explicated above.

World Systems theory leads us to believe that that the socio-economic characteristics at the periphery are not conducive to the economic capacity and optimal productivity of many professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers, academics, sportsmen and women, artists, among others who are mostly underpaid and under-employed and under-appreciated. The loss of policy autonomy by the states at the periphery has also created a situation in which the opinions of many of the professionals are neither sought nor appreciated by policy makers who act as agents of the transnational capitalist class (Robinson, 2004). In contrast to countries at the core of global capitalism that have well developed political institutions, countries in the periphery operate a kind of democracy that promotes primitive accumulation by the ruling elites but disempowerment for the people (Ake 1996). The resultant socio-economic conditions in the periphery and the better opportunities that are available for skilled professionals at the core of global capitalism such as United States of America, Europe, Canada and Japan have created conditions that accentuate migration flows from the periphery to the core.

While it may be argued that the conditions at the sending countries facilitate th migrations of technical and skilled professionals, it can also be argued that the ageing population at the core countries as well as their wide industrial bases and sophisticated services sector have led to the design of various programs to attract skilled professionals to these countries. Although some of these countries such as United States of America give the need to diversify the nationalities of their population as the reason for devising diversity lottery, evidence abounds that the migrant populations are needed in the labor force and are contributing significantly to the US economy. The number of immigrants in the civilian labor force is presented in the table 1 below:

Table 1. Occupations of Employed Workers in the Civilian Labor Force Age 16 and Older by Gender and Origin, 2009.

	African born		Foreign born (total)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Number of persons age 16 and older employed in the civilian labor force	547123	369167	13,143,161	9,377,865
Total (percent)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Management	12.5%	9.0%	10.7%	10.5%
Information technology	4.4%	1.2%	4.2%	1.9%
Other sciences and engineering	5.1%	1.5%	4.0%	2.2%
Social services and legal	2.9%	4.0%	1.1%	2.0%
Education, training and media, entertainment	5.3%	8.2%	3.5%	7.3%
Physicians	2.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%
Registered nurses	1.4%	8.2%	0.4%	3.6%
Other health care practitioners	3.5%	5.9%	1.1%	3.2%
Healthcare support	3.3%	13.9%	0.7%	5.6%
Services	15.1%	18.7%	18.5%	26.5%
Sales	10.7%	9.0%	7.8%	10.3%
Administrative support	7.4%	13.1%	5.3%	14.2%
Farming, fishing, forestry	-	-	2.7%	1.0%
Construction, extraction, transportation	15.9%	1.8%	24.5%	3.0%
Manufacturing, installation, repair	9.7%	4.1%	14.2%	7.8%

Source: US Census Bureau. 2009 American Community Survey.

Although the proportion of other foreign-born to African immigrants is high, the figures for Africans in the various categories are significantly high. With a total working population of 916, 290 in the survey, African migrants are a significant part of the civilian labor force.

The shrinking economic space could simply not afford to accommodate the growing population of trained professionals, hence the need for the professionals to seek alternative destinations for the utilization of their skills. This view was forcefully reinforced by Egbe and Ndubuisi (1997). They contend that during the decade of the 1970s, tens of thousands of

Nigerians entered the United States of America to study. The overwhelming majority of those students came on students visas, with the expectation of returning home after their studies. However, the end of the oil boom and the associated disarticulations in the economy led them to stay back. This trend has continued up till now as many people who travel out for higher education never contemplate coming back to the country because the conditions abroad are more conducive while the remuneration is far more rewarding than what an average professional earns in any African country. According to (Obom-Egbulem 2010), there are more than 5,000 Nigerian medical doctors practicing in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. When compared with the estimated 39,210 doctors practicing in Nigeria (with an estimated population of 160 million people), this is a huge number!

As Okeke (2008) has poignantly elucidated, forced migration is a reaction to certain push and pull factors, which are stated below:

Low and eroding wages and salaries, poor and unsatisfactory living conditions, lack of good transportation system, inadequate housing and accommodation, under-utilization of qualified personnel, coupled with unsatisfactory working conditions, low and discouraging prospects of professional development, lack of research fund and research facilities, including support staff, continuous decline in the quality of the educational system, including an unstable academic calendar, which is often disrupted as a result of strike actions by staff unions, violent student demonstrations, cult activities and general break down of law and order reinforced by political instability, discrimination in appointments and promotions, which results in frustrations among qualified and skilled personnel; and the vexed issue of bad governance and corruption among many African countries.

The above factors create major problems for leadership and governance, with the attendant policy inconsistencies, which further create an incommensurable working environment for skilled professionals who have no option but to look elsewhere for more conducive conditions.

Contrarily, the external push factors include the following: Higher remuneration and standard of living, more favorable working conditions, including job and career opportunities and professional development, substantial and readily available research funds, advanced technology, modern facilities and availability of experienced support staff, assured political stability that encourages a modern educational system coupled with the prestige of advanced training and presumed emphasis on meritocracy, transparency, hard work and intellectual freedom.

However, as de Haan (2007) contends, the above reasoning falls under Marxist perspectives on migration, which seems to be unduly fixated on economic factors (of exploitation). But it is incontrovertible that migration processes can best be understood as the outcome of interaction of a diversity of factors, including social-cultural influences and economic forces, gendered norms, and rules, and how migration in turn alters these, and the interaction of structures and agency. Consequently, it is imperative that multidisciplinary perspectives are integrated into the understanding of the causes of forced migration. Sociologically, the massive emigration of African professionals to the developed economies can then be located within the context of the various conflicts, crisis, violence and wars that have ravaged the continent since gaining independence from colonialism. From Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Sudan reverberated echoes of wars and societal disorder. This unfortunate scenario has resulted in forceful uprooting of millions of people from their land of nativity to other environments.

Paradoxically, in most of these crisis areas, the professionals were not spared as they and other unarmed groups in the various societies became internally displaced persons and/or refugees in their own countries. The political economy trajectory of this scenario is underlined by the fact that problems are essentially caused by unbridled competition for access to the resources of the state. As politics is perceived as a sure avenue to instant wealth and capital accumulation in the continent, the struggle for public office became a winner-takes-all zero-sum game. In this process, a do-or-die orientation to political contestation became an overt strategy for capturing political power. This, itself, manifests indiscriminately in electoral violence, rigging, and other breaches of constitutional provisions for the conduct of a free and fair election.

Other than the above, Litchfield and Waddington (2003) have argued that different migrants may have different motives for migrating. These scholars' research on Ghana and India showed that while half of the population of Ghana may be categorized as migrants, the reasons for migration are very diverse, and only a small part of the population movement is directly related to work. Similarly in India, the largest proportion of migration (particularly), short distance as registered in the census may be for marriage because most women move to their husbands' house and outside their village of birth.

THE IMPACTS OF FORCED ECONOMIC MIGRATION ON NIGERIA

There is an increasing concern over the effects of forced economic migration on Nigeria and other African countries. Notwithstanding the paucity of data on rural-urban migration within the continent, the effects of this phenomenon are visible everywhere. Importantly, the agrarian nature of the African society has accentuated the impacts of massive flows of able bodied men on

food sufficiency. In the same vein, urban conurbation and associated crimes from unemployed youth remains a central concern for African policy makers.

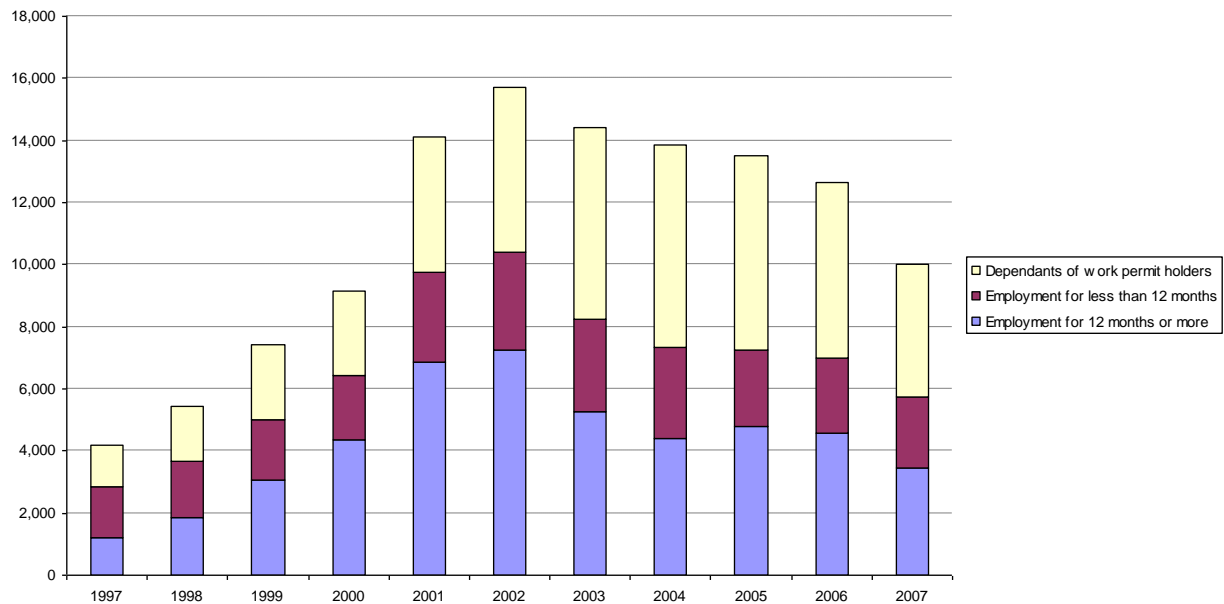
As David (1995) has found out, in the labor-scarce West African environment, the absence of able-bodied men was keenly felt and led to a “labor gap”; women have to work longer and harder in their compounds’ communal fields and had less time to work their own lands. However, in his study of England in the eighteenth century, Thirsk (1991) found out that migrants appeared to have played important innovative roles in the modernization of agriculture. Such positive impacts are contingent upon many factors like the seasonality of movements, educational levels, length of time spent away, assets and social structures and institutions, allowing women and others to pursue activities previously reserved for men and household heads. We agree with Thirsk’s study that migrants can significantly contribute to the development of a particular community if the necessary conditions are in place.

Perhaps, the most deleterious effect of forced economic migration is its latent manifestation at the international level. There has been significant concern about brain drain for many decades. Although hampered by data availability and quality, recent analysis has considered the issues involved (de Haan 2007). According to statistics made available by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Africa has already lost one third of its human capital, and has continued to lose its skilled personnel at an ever increasing rate. An estimated 20,000 doctors, University lecturers, engineers and other professionals have left the continent annually since 1990. There are also currently over 300,000 highly qualified Africans in the Diaspora, out of which about 30,000 have Ph.D.s (IOM 2007 cited in Okeke 2008). The breakdown of IOM’s statistics shows that, in Ethiopia, over the past 10-15 years, about 50 percent of those who went abroad for training did not return after completing their studies. Again, Ethiopia lost about 74.6 of

its human capital from various institutions between 1980 and 1991. This was the period of war between that country and Eritrea, a veritable testimony to the fact that political conditions in the sending countries do foster sporadic migration.

In the case of Nigeria, the estimates from the Presidential Committee on Brain Drain set up by the Babangida Administration, showed that between 1986 and 1990, Nigeria lost over 10,000 academics from tertiary institutions alone. It is also estimated that over 30,000 highly skilled personnel left the country, including the public and private organizations. This period also coincided with the massive collapse in the economic and social infrastructure in the country, which in itself was the fallout of the ill-advised Structural Adjustment program. Nigerian migrants to the United Kingdom have continued to increase from the 1980s to the present moment. In a recent study by David Owen of Warwick University in the UK, it was found out that in 2006-2007, the number of Nigerian migrant workers to the UK was 12, 500 based on the number of National Insurance authorization issued (Owen n.d., 12). The graph below shows the number of Africans and their dependents that were allowed to enter UK from 1997-2007.

Figure 1. African Migration (Work Permit holders) to the UK 1997-2007



Source: David Owen. "African Migration to the UK." University of Warwick, UK

What is obvious from this graph is the gradual increase in the number of migrants and their corresponding employment status from 1997 to 2003 in the first instance and then from 2003 to 2007. In tandem with the central proposition of this paper that the feasibility of getting job abroad is a strong motivation for the emigration of skilled professionals, the graph shows that on average those who migrated from African countries to the UK got jobs within the first 12 months of relocating. Of course it is important to state that the ability to secure jobs is one of the considerations for being selected under the UK's Highly Skilled Immigrant Program.

Table 1: Emigration of Skilled Africans to Industrialised Countries (*Based on IOM and ECA Estimates*)

Time Period	Average Annual Rate	Total Number
1960-1974	1800	27000
1975-1984	4000	40000
1985-1989	12000	60000
Since 1990	20000	-

Source: Brain Drain in Nigeria: Facts and Figures.

Ironically, while the developed countries keep attracting the best of African human capital, it is increasingly becoming a disturbing pattern to see semi-qualified personnel dubbed as ‘experts’ taking very critical and important positions in lucrative sectors such as oil and gas as well communication companies in most African countries. These ‘experts’, who are usually paid in hard currencies (such as dollars, Euros and British pounds), create a disincentive to the development of indigenous human capacities in African countries because they are made to occupy positions that are otherwise supposed to be occupied by Africans.

As we stated earlier, the developed countries have established different programs to attract more qualified Africans to migrate. The justification for this is the tenuous argument that international migration has some beneficial effects on the sending countries. Such beneficial effects could include remittances, return migration, creation of trade and business networks and incentive effects on human capital formation at home (de Haan 2007). The question of remittances is central to much of the thinking on the impact of migration. However, it is very difficult to have accurate data as conditions for making remittances have a tendentious effect on the certainty of the remitted amount. Apart from the uncertainty in estimates of remittances, assessments of impact

need to be sensitive to the complexity in which these financial flows are embedded. As de Haan further argued, such assessment need to take account of the fact that this considers only successful migration, and there is a possibility that many migrants have not remitted despite having invested heavily in relocating (de Haan 2007). In addition, with the ongoing global economic crisis and the resultant deceleration in the rate of growth in developed countries, the possibility of migrants securing jobs looks unpromising. No jobs implies fewer remittances.

It is also important to state that with regards to brain drain, remittances need to be offset against the (public) investment in education and other forms of publicly funded investment, This is because, regardless of the amounts being remitted, the sending countries remain at a very strong disadvantage in other areas of potential benefits like taxation, mentoring, leadership development, patriotism and other dimensions of contribution which the skilled personnel would have made to the economies. The scholars that have vigorously argued in favor of migration as a sure means of facilitating development have tried to justify their position by providing figures of remittances. For instance, Papademetriou and Martin (1991), Durrand et al. (1996a, 1996b) show income from migration stimulates economic activity, both directly and indirectly and that it leads to significantly higher levels of employment, investment and income. For extremely poor people, very small amounts of remittances can be vital for food security.

Notwithstanding the above arguments, we contend that the negative effects of forced economic migration both at the domestic and international level far outweigh its positive contribution to the development of the sending countries. Docquier and Rapoport (2004) contend that international migration has increasingly become selective. According to them, detrimental effects of migration include international inequality, particularly if migrants are disconnected from those left behind at home. As we mentioned above, the consistent depletion of the skilled

workforce of African countries is affecting the potential for the development of the continent, in a negative way. In the health sector for instance, the high percentage of the medical personnel that have migrated abroad could have been available to render high quality service to the people, thereby contributing to the improvement of the health sector. Also, given that most of the skilled personnel that have migrated were trained with public money, it amounts to loss of investment, and at best, a negative return, for people to migrate without giving back to the society, which has invested in them. In the same vein, the income redistribution effect that the presence of the skilled professionals that have migrated could have had on the sending countries is conspicuously missing.

Other negative effects of migration of skilled professionals on the economies of the sending country such as Nigeria are:

- The further reduction of the already low quality of skilled manpower
- Increase in the continual dependence on foreign technical assistance
- Gradual but steady slowdown of the transfer of technology and the widening of the gap between Africa and the industrialized countries;
- The loss of money in taxable income from the skilled manpower which would have been a potential contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

We have argued in the preceding section in this paper that the high rate of migration of people in Nigeria and other African countries is a direct result of the social, economic and political conditions. These conditions have not been favorable to the majority of the citizens in the continent. Most states in Africa today are suffering from crisis of identity. As Adejumobi (2005)

observes, the content and character of globalization promote social fragmentation, disintegration and disaggregation; split groups and identities into warring factions; undermines the state by emptying it of its social content and relevance; and sacrifices the human soul for the fundamentalism of the market. These immanent tendencies erode the social basis of existence and warrant the struggle for survival at all costs, including searching for greener pastures outside the shores of one's country.

Also the deepening of poverty, social inequalities and declining social welfare under globalization, especially in the developing countries, has pushed many individuals to sectarian identities, reinforced their potency in society and made them alternative sites of political expressions and struggles, fuelling tension and conflicts in many societies. In other words, the state in Africa is under a beleaguered complexity, which has made it incapable of meeting the needs of the people. The attendant conflicts in many of the countries have been responsible for the forced economic migration of African professionals to other lands. Politically, the preponderance of the inclination toward "do or die" politics of intolerance and exclusion ensure that the wrong people acquire political power for the wrong reasons. Consequently, good governance is sacrificed on the altar of political opportunism. In the process the state lacks the wherewithal to provide the common good and effectively regulate the market. The failed expectations of the professional class, inevitably necessitate their mass exodus to advanced countries, where they can have their needs met.

THE CHALLENGE OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

We have argued that far from being a desirable option for facilitating development, migration portends a long term danger to Africa and constitutes a veritable threat to the desire of

the continent to catch up with other emerging economies in other regions of the world. In recognition of this threat, African leaders at various levels have started making arrangements to mitigate the effects of migration, while maximizing the gains. One of these strategies is the Diaspora Option. Through this initiative, African leaders have taken it upon themselves to encourage the skilled personnel outside the continent to take active part in the process of nation building.

Although the various Diaspora organizations are the initiatives of the professionals, the fact that the governments of their countries of origin now see them as partners in development, is a welcome development. This is an improvement over the previous adversarial postures of most leaders to the informed contributions of the Diaspora organizations. These organizations/people are now involved in assisting to generate foreign direct investment, boosting knowledge exchange among higher institutions of learning as well as making useful contributions to reforms agenda. Some are even returning to their respective countries of origin to take up political appointments. Examples in Nigeria were the former Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Ambassador Olu Adeniji who were working as technocrats and international civil servants, when they were appointed to work as Ministers by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration.

In the current Goodluck Jonathan administration, some of the cabinet ministers are also Nigerians who have made their marks while working as professionals in the advanced countries. Examples include Dr. Olusegun Aganga, formerly of Goldman Sachs in the UK and currently Minister of Trade and Investment and Mr. Adesina who has worked for various agencies of the United Nations, and is now the Minister of Agriculture. There is also the option of “virtual linkages”, which are independent, non-political and non-profit networks that facilitate skills transfer and capacity building using information technology. These networks mobilize skilled

Diaspora members' expertise for the development process in their countries of origin. There are about Forty-One (41) virtual networks in 30 different countries. Some of them are the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) with members in 68 countries, the Nigerian in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas (ANPA), etc. There are also contributions through virtual networks by individuals in the Diaspora. Some such linkages go beyond the virtual, and migrants come back to their country of origin as visiting scholars, investors in existing and new businesses, and also assisting in facilitating joint ventures between host and sending countries.

There are also many efforts in various parts of the world to encourage the exploitation of the positive gains of brain drain. For instance, in 2004, the Association of for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), in collaboration with International Development Research Centre (IDRC) organized an international stakeholder roundtable which was held in Ottawa, Canada and brought together key stakeholders, including International Organization for Migration, (IOM), Canadian government agencies, African Missions, Non-Governmental Organizations and Diaspora groups to discuss brain drain in Africa and the potential strategies for mobilizing the Africans in diaspora. As Tebeje (2006) submits, the summit emphasized the importance of sustained Diaspora engagement. This will require policy and resource committed by key stakeholders, including international organizations, African governments, and the host countries. They agreed that there was urgent need for the emerging diaspora movements to become more involved in Africa's development efforts. The growing political will of African leaders to recognize the Diaspora's potential contribution and the possibilities created by information technology show the impression that brain drain, is not after all, a total loss to the African continent. It is hoped that this momentum will be sustained over time to achieve the objectives. de

Haan (2007, 280) provides some incisive analysis on the usefulness or otherwise of remittances.

She reasoned thus:

there is no doubt that remittances can have negative and positive consequences- evidences suggest that the way remittances are used depends on the form of migration, the characteristics of the migrants and those who stay behind, and conditions for use of remittances and returning migrants. This finally points to one of the complexities of understanding impact of migration: The conditions that make remittances helpful for development or poverty reduction are generally the same conditions that made migrants leave in the first place.

In other words, regardless of the quantum of remittances, if the socio-economic and political conditions are not right, there is no possibility that the much anticipated improvement in the living conditions of the people that are left behind will be better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In reacting to the inscrutable phenomenon of forced economic migration, the government of Nigeria and other countries in Africa should collate data on their skilled professionals and put in place mechanisms to pool the resources of Africans in Diaspora to boost development. In view of the growing importance of remittances, such flows should be monitored such that taxes could be deducted.

Second, the government should also leverage the Diaspora organizations to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Following the example of the South-East Asian countries as well as the

China and Japan, African countries should encourage technology transfer by tapping into the knowledge of professionals of African origin outside the continent. Diaspora Africans should be encouraged to visit home and motivated to remain if need be. It is instructive that some technical experts from these Asian countries ‘poached’ technology formulae from the western countries which they used to develop their countries. Although the regime of intellectual property rights in the World Trade Organization has made this difficult in contemporary times, African professionals in the Diaspora can replicate what they have learned and practiced in their host countries at home.

Third, the brain drain, which the emigration of skilled professionals has caused, should be turned to facilitate brain gain and brain circulation. For instance, academics of African origin in the Diaspora can form partnerships with universities in their home countries such that during summer breaks they can spend time at these universities to help in supervision of Ph.D.s and bringing in best practices to teaching and university administration. These academics and other professionals can also help to facilitate exchanges and grants with foreign universities and from corporate bodies abroad.

Fourth, it is pertinent that political elites in Nigeria and other African countries work to ensure that the conditions at home are conducive for the citizens at home and for those in diaspora who may wish to return home. It is a common saying in Yoruba language that *ajo ko le da bi ile* (living outside one’s land of nativity cannot be compared to living in one’s land of nativity). The import of this is that living or working abroad should be optional, voluntary and based on rational decision rather than involuntary compulsion.

CONCLUSION

This paper has critically examined the political economy of forced economic migration Nigeria. It has also considered the same phenomenon in a few other African countries and its impact, challenges and prospects in the yet unfolding new millennium. We have looked at the conditions that necessitated the mass exodus of African professionals from the continent from the 1970s till the present moment. Even though many scholars have tried to establish a positive link between international migration and development, we argued that, in the main, Africa is the loser both in material and human terms. With particular respect to the health sector, we contend that the implication is very grave. This is because; most hospitals in the continent lack the requisite qualified manpower to treat sick people. This invariably affect productivity and life span.

The challenge for Africa on the issue of forced economic migration is to respond in such a way as to tackle the conditions that we have stated above. In other words, the strategies to be used involve both a response and a reaction. Responsively, African political elites must ensure that they formulate policies and act in ways that can engender peace, security and development. Thus, it is necessary to avoid wars and crises which are strong factors that generate forced migration. These constitute disincentive to socio-economic development. The political systems in the continent must also be operated in such a way that inclusion, participation, adherence to the rule of law, respect for human rights, and establishment of constitutional empowerment of state institutions, which are hallmarks of liberal democracy should be entrenched. This way, good governance will be guaranteed and the state will be able to fulfill its social contract with the people. This will make access to education and opportunity for gainful employment a reality. Under this situation, only few people will have the motivation to migrate.

It is therefore pertinent for African governments to ensure that good and appropriate socio-political and economic conditions are put in place to reduce the mass movement of her trained

professionals. For those who have already migrated, a linkage should be established to leverage their intellectual, experiential and material resources to develop Nigeria and other African countries.

BIOGRAPHY

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