

The Antinomies of Globalization: Causes of Contemporary African Immigration to the United States of America.

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Some people think the world population problem is over, ... No. This is a long-term issue and it's a very complex symphony - you have some countries declining, you have other countries growing rapidly, and you have some staying the same. When you add those up, you have a very complex world. [\[1\]](#)

The U.S. lures black immigrants by telling them they'll be welcomed, that they are different from African Americans, who refuse to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps.' &But no one immigrates to the U.S. to become part of a racially oppressed group, so it takes long personal experience with racism for even black immigrants to see that they are viewed as 'niggers' [\[2\]](#)

Introduction

Over time, the nature, form and process of African immigration to the US have changed remarkably. Beginning with early African migration, which intensified in the period after the second world war, and during the period of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle for independence, until today, when many US consulates in African countries are swamped with Africans seeking rapid and immediate exit from their respective countries, there are identifiable economic, political, and social push and pull factors that move people to the US from the African continent. These push and pull factors are manifested on the African continent in terms of the emergence of the Structural Adjustment Programs and Democratization projects, which in combination, have generated both negative and positive forces that drive the unending desire for Africans to migrate, immigrate, and seek political asylum in the US. The most significant among these forces is the phenomenon of globalization, encapsulated in the concept of the New World Order. The United States and the other Group of 8 countries are implicated in the process of constructing, and perpetuating this new world order, as the primary architects and the main beneficiaries.

A consideration of scholarly literature in two different fields reveals a veritable chasm which can only be bridged through the utilization of methodologies derived from interdisciplinary approaches to the study of African immigration to the US. International Relations scholars who work on immigration issues understand and often stress the importance of globalization as a causal factor, but they do not consider that other areas of the world could possibly influence Western countries in terms of creating conditions that generate changes in immigration policies. [3] Other fields similarly assume an automatic position that Africa has very little to contribute to the constitution of the world, or that its contributions are negative. [4]

This work responds not only to the field of immigration studies, but also to international relations, international political economy, history, sociology, and subfields such as slavery studies, women's studies, and to African studies in general. In essence, it is interdisciplinary. It emerges out of the observation that explanations of phenomena that relate to the study of Africa and Africans are grossly inadequate in these fields. Africa in scholarly thought still remains essentially the "other", an exotic antithesis of the West, its history, its trajectory of development, progress, and culture. Compared with the glowing records of the history of Western achievement within the world, Africa is presented as either absent or anomalous, and the African as either the object of scholarly inquiry, or the poor, wretched being in need of massive doses of assistance in order to be either pulled into the mainstream of world consciousness, or otherwise, force-marched into recognizing her own potential. [5] Once this goal is achieved in the judgement of the West, such reborn Africans are put on display for all to see - behold thus, another Western success at improving on the work of the creator or nature - a new, progressive, "sharp as nails" African who would spearhead the liberation of her own people to the eternal glorification of her new maker, the West.

The study of African immigration enables the study of some of the antinomies of globalization within the contemporary world system. To describe African immigration as part of the antinomies of globalization is to acknowledge that there are fundamental contradictions integral to the process of globalization. On the one hand, it is clear that many scholars assume that the process has positive consequences, paradoxically, there is clear evidence of its having negative consequences on the lives of many people who live marginal lives in the impoverished countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, the

Caribbean, and even in Western Europe and North America. Further, the negative and positive consequences of globalization often relate, one to the other in a dialectical manner. As it were, there is a crisis of being, that presents existentially and materially, affluence in the intended country of immigration, and widespread poverty in the home country. Attending the poverty are serious political and socio-economic crises that make departure and immigration all the more attractive.

Antinomies are an integral part of the process of globalization because of the peculiar circumstances of having the same process cause radically opposite effects, with each effect occurring as a logical consequence. It is as normal, for instance, for globalization to produce wealth in some parts of the world, as it is to produce poverty in other world regions. Access and exposure to technological innovation is as much a consequence of globalization, as is the lack of access to technology. It is as much a consequence of globalization that whole areas of the third world are no more than labor reserves for the advanced industrial, more affluent countries, as it is for other areas of the world to be magnets that draw migrants and immigrants that seek an end to the problems of unemployment and underemployment.

How does an analyst of contemporary global political economy explain the phenomenon of African immigration to the United States of America given the remarkably changed terrain of global relations, and of the nature of African immigration itself over time? After the Second World War and during the period of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle for independence, Africans who came to the U.S. can be better described as migrants who sought education, or traveled for business or leisure. These migrants returned to their home countries once their objectives had been accomplished. Today, US consulates in African countries are swamped with Africans that seek rapid and immediate exit from their respective countries. Many do not have any plans to return home, except for brief visits, if at all. Some cannot even return anytime in the near future because they lack the visas that would enable them to travel back home once they had left. There is indeed a qualitative difference between the African migration that intensified in the period after the Second World War, and today's immigration from the African continent.

Properly designed, a good study of African migration and immigration to the United States will interrogate old norms and theories, develop new theories, and to make concrete, useful policy recommendations on African migration and immigration to the United States of America and the home countries of the African immigrants and migrants. This paper cannot do justice to all these objectives, but

will show the causal linkage between globalization and population movements from the African continent.

The phenomenon of African immigration to the US is conceptualized as being composed of near-equal amounts of action and reaction from Africa and the Africans and the US and its peoples. The phenomenon of globalization, when used as the independent variable, enables the profound understanding of immigration and migration as specific historical phenomena which have changed over time in response to new push and pull factors that are thrown up by the manner in which the world system is constantly being re-constituted. Although only the late 20th and early 21st Centuries will be explored in this paper, the following phases are identifiable:

- * Africa before the 15th Century
- * 15th Century Africa: the period of trade and missionary activity.
- * 18th to 19th Century: The slave trade
- * 19th Century: "Legitimate"/Unequal trade.
- * Late 19th Century to mid 20th Century: Formal colonization of the continent; Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Decolonization
- * Late 20th and early 21st Centuries: "Fooling with Development", Neocolonization, Recolonization - The era of "The New World Order"
- * The future.

One methodology that is particularly useful draws from the theoretical analysis developed by Fernand Braudel, [\[6\]](#) the annales method that endeavors in a recording of history, to capture the complex, and elementary facts of material life that had hitherto been excluded from accounts of European history. It differs from Braudel's methodology to the extent that it takes seriously the contention that Africans have corpus of knowledge from which the world can learn. African immigrants thus have much that is both worthwhile, and valuable to contribute to the knowledge pool of the various disciplines within the academy, their home countries, and most importantly, their communities of settlement in the US. Unfortunately, the African experience in material life remains excluded, and/or omitted from scholarly discourse. This study attempts to make sense of contradictory accounts of the reality of the immigrant experience in scholarly literature, and particularly, media accounts, which have traditionally excluded the experiences of the Africans, preferring to present them as helpless, hapless, souls who have nothing to offer to the US, and are so powerless in the scheme of things,

as to be a liability to the socio-economic systems.

To cope with the exclusion of whole classes of people from recorded scholarly accounts of history, Braudel developed a methodology that emphasizes the existence of constantly evolving multiple realities, including the shadowy aspects of life, which together, made up material civilization. This study draws extensively on Braudel's methodology by probing underneath orthodox presentations of reality to get at the essential elements of how African presence in the US has changed over time, what the consequences are on the continent and the US, and what the implications are of these changes. However, unlike Braudel, it draws upon African knowledge systems to build a unique, but concrete presentation of reality that takes as its premise that the African immigrants in the US, whether humble or learned, are experts at negotiating the social, economic, and political realities of the immigrant experience, and that the knowledge they bring with them from the continent enhances their expertise.

The more the interest in studying and documenting the experience of African immigrants, the more the information that is often available informally become widely disseminated. As a case in point, in 1997, the Smithsonian Institution, from June 25-29, to July 2-6 organized a "Festival of American Folklife" on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in which African immigrants featured prominently. The resulting publication records diverse cultural expressions among African immigrants in the Washington, D.C. area. [7] Sylvianne Diouf wrote an informative paper that makes a significant contribution to the documentation of the presence and impact of Francophone African immigrants in New York City, [8] and Joel Millman includes a chapter on Francophone African immigrants in a book on the impact of immigrants on the US social system. [9] These studies and the few others that have been done on African immigration contribute to the development of our understanding of why Africans emigrate to the US, and the consequences.

In this paper, I define immigrants as people whose move from their home countries to the U.S is permanent. Migrants move and settlement is temporary. Exiles are those pushed out of their country of origin by official decree or for political reasons. Refugees are defined using the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees parameters. Thus, they are those who flee from their country of origin because of "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling

to avail himself of the protection of that country." In essence, refugees are those seeking refuge from war, political, religious and other persecution. [\[10\]](#) The above identified categories will be considered at greater depth, along with those classified as Professional, Technical, and Kindred (PTK) in the section on the demographics of African immigrants.

Causes of African Immigration

Africans migrate from their countries of birth for much the same reasons that other immigrants do. Broadly categorized, these reasons include the economic, social or political motivations that either pushes immigrants into leaving their countries of origin and settling in a new country, or those that pull them into seeking immigration to a given country. Push factors that stimulate migration from Africa include low pay, the lack of employment, underemployment, the absence of family members due to prior migration, and exposure to endemic violence, persecution and oppression. Pull factors of course include the possibility of earning a higher income, finding employment, joining family members and hope for freedom from violence, persecution and oppression.

The argument on whether push or pull factors generate immigration can also be framed in other ways. The contentious debate on whether domestic or international factors spur the desire to emigrate is one such example. According to Myron Weiner, global trends determine the pattern of migration. In this view, there are identifiable changes in the patterns of international migration which are linked to other international flows, including the movement of trade, capital, investment and information. The crux of this argument is that international immigration is only a part of "a larger network of interstate relations." [\[11\]](#) Thus, when international flows of exchange increase, as has happened over time, immigration flows also increase. For Weiner and others who share his perspective, the predominant cause of international migration is the change in the immigration policies of countries in response to global changes. This argument, in essence posits that pull factors generate immigration. One such example is the change in the racial composition of migration when colonialism ended, and worldwide trade and investment increased after the Second World War. Scholars, who argue, on the other hand, that domestic factors generate the urge to migrate, make a push factor argument.

There are identifiable economic, political, and social push and pull factors that move people to come to the US from the African continent with the intent to settle

for the long-term, or permanently. The small but growing literature on African immigration to the United States allude to these. However, most scholars and analysts continue to downplay the most significant among the causes of immigration: globalization. The government of the United States first articulated its notion of globalization in the concept of the New World Order. Being the primary architect and main beneficiary, of this new world order, the United States is central to the process of constructing, and perpetuating it. However, while it has more relative ability to control its political economy than most other countries in the world, not even the U.S. is able to completely control the phenomenon of globalization. On the African side, the push and pull factors that are generated from globalization are manifested through the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and "third wave" democratization. They are also manifested in the spread and embrace of the technological innovations, the exchange of ideas that they facilitate through the media and the information superhighway, and the transformation of telecommunications. In combination, SAP and democratization have generated some of the antinomies of globalization by causing both negative and positive forces that drive the unending desire for Africans to migrate, immigrate, and to seek political asylum in the US. The rapid technological advances have also generated both positive and negative outcomes that intensify the desire for exchange, as well as the desire to emigrate.

Innovations and advancements in international communication for instance, increase the awareness of national economic differences and opportunities, and give potential immigrants information on how to achieve their goal. Through movies, television, radio, print media, facsimile machines, and currently, the information super-highway, potential migrants gather information on what to do, what opportunities exist, and where to move. One of the most recent examples is the last two US lotteries that were conducted in 1997. The information spread rapidly and thoroughly through African countries, and people responded in droves. In some cases, the government in the African country was so disgusted with the overwhelming desire of so many people to jump ship that it was alleged to have sabotaged their application process by intercepting such mail as they sent to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (USINS), and dumping them. Many intended immigrants claim that the Abacha regime in Nigeria did this to their chagrin, and detriment. Those who won in this process were those who could avail themselves of the services of the "US address for sale" centers that sprang up, or those who had friends, and family abroad, to whom they could mail their applications, for eventual forwarding to the USINS. [\[12\]](#)

While the pull - or - push factor debate is often presented as an either-or causal factor, it is clear from preliminary data on African immigration to the US that things are not so clear-cut. Push factors usually create the desire to emigrate, pull factors provide the opportunity to act on that desire. Thus, it seems to be more productive to consider push and pull factors as often acting in tandem.

To turn briefly to push factors, civil wars, human rights violations and repression also cause international migration. During the Nigerian civil war, many from Biafra migrated to Western countries, including the US. The Liberian civil war, the Somalian conflict, and the Eritrean-Ethiopian war [\[13\]](#) are other instances where increased immigration was generated as a result of war. Wars tend to create more immigration, as well as a huge refugee population, within the continent of Africa than could ever be experienced outside the continent. These population movements have tended to be the subject of most studies that address the question of African immigration. The immigration to the West, particularly to the US, remains woefully understudied. This work is directed at bridging the considerable gap that exists, as well as at generating increased scholarly interest in the study of African immigration to the West.

Human rights violations and repression also generate the desire to migrate, which is met sometimes by the receptivity of Western nations to certain categories of dissidents. In the heydays of apartheid, many anti-apartheid activists fled to the West. Similarly, dissidents have fled each and everyone of the neocolonial, one-party, or dictatorial states of Africa. Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, and more recently, Nigeria, are sources of this kind of immigration. From 1986 to 1999, Nigeria had regimes in power that dealt with opposition by sponsoring such high levels of repression that their most uncompromising opponents were forced to take to their heels. This group of immigrants keeps in close touch with political and economic developments back home, and is usually called upon to comment on current developments as they occur, particularly in the alternative media. It also draws attention to its cause by giving testimonies of escalating oppression from which they managed to barely escape with their lives before congressional committees in the US.

Labor shortages create a demand for migrant workers, to which people respond, spurring later chains of migration among friends and family, which are enabled by family unification laws and fed by the need for additional labor in migrant-owned

businesses. The immigration from Africa to France, Germany, other European countries and lately, to the US is an example of this phenomenon. To the extent that labor was in short supply in the target country that immigrants choose to settle in, particularly after the Second World War, migrant labor was welcome. Welcome, not in the sense of having any special entitlements, but in terms of immigrants' ability to get those menial jobs that the indigenes did not want. There is a similarity between this Africa to Europe flow of migrant labor and the flow from Mexico and other countries in Latin America to the United States, and more recently, African immigration to the US. The migrant laborer is usually denied the rights of citizenship, overexploited, and subjected to bigotry. The desire to rise above the deprivations experienced generate the inculcation of ethics of hard work, and sometimes, integrationist sentiments in immigrant families which in turn make the second generation more successful in the formal economy. It may also drive immigrants into the informal, or even the underground economy, generating even more discrimination and xenophobia when the self-fulfilling prophecies of nativists are confirmed. This experience could also have the effect of creating despair, and the inculcation of ethics of separationism in succeeding generations.

According to Yanki Djamba, the old European colonizers of African countries were originally the more favored destinations of immigrants. [\[14\]](#) Thus, France, the United Kingdom, and other Western European countries were the most significant receiving countries. The United States became the first preference of African immigrants when immigration policies became more restrictive and punitive in these countries. Since US immigration policies also became more liberal in the post-1965 era (1965 Family Reunification and Refugee Law), more English speaking Africans chose to come to the United States. By the end of the 1980s, with France deporting illegal immigrants and denying automatic citizenship to the offspring of immigrants that were born in within its borders, and the French decision to cease shoring up the currencies of its West African allies, the effects of the economic malaise that beset the African continent were now intensified in the CFA zone as well. [\[15\]](#) In January 1994, France devalued the CFA franc, a currency that is used in 14 West and Central African countries. Nigeria immediately became overwhelmingly attractive to immigrants from West and Central African currencies for whom its currency was now worth 50 percent more because it was pegged to the U.S. dollar. Curiously, in the same years, Nigerians were hell-bent on leaving their country if they could because the devaluation of the Naira (the Nigerian currency) had also down-graded their standard of living and quality of life.

There is scholarly agreement that the political economy of Africa as well as the globalization of the world economy generate the urge for Africans to leave their home countries for other lands. One should expect an increase in the number of African immigrants to the United States due to the stringency in immigration laws in old colonizing countries like Great Britain and France. [16] When examined more critically, these hypotheses indicate the persistence of insufficient understanding of the linkage between the processes of democratization and structural adjustment and globalization, therefore, many scholars still fail to see that the population movements are part and parcel of the experience of globalization and not external to the phenomenon. Since by most assessments, globalization will intensify rather than decrease in effect, one should expect population movements to increase as a consequence of globalization.

Additional causes of immigration include war in immigrants' countries of origin - a factor that generates refugee flows both within and without the African continent. Currently, the heaviest refugee flows come from countries like Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Angola. Some of these countries have been involved in long-term political upheaval, which in the case of Mozambique was compounded by a natural disaster in 2000 just when the country seemed to be headed for recovery. For many countries in Southern Africa, a lengthy drought in the summer of 2002 creates similar problems.

Political persecution within an immigrant's country of origin also generates the flow of refugees, and/or exiles. Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and Liberia are recent examples. Religious persecution contributes to its share of refugees. The Copts of Egypt are a case in point, as are Jews from Ethiopia and Eritrea. The end of apartheid and white minority rule in Southern Africa led to a flow of exiles from among the ranks of those who felt that they could not possibly live under majority rule, when the expression of the will of the majority brings living, breathing, black people into government.

Globalization and Immigration

Currently, the concern for, and discourse on globalization and its attendant effects on all parts of the world preoccupies many scholars of the international system. Those at one extreme of this debate consider the current manifestation of globalization no different from previous experiences. Others identify distinctive

qualities and elements of the current wave of globalization that set it apart from previous other experiences. [17] In this view, while the world had in the past, interdependent states, currently, globalization has created a virtual village where actions taken in one part of the world system has almost instantaneous effects on other parts. Immigration in this perspective, is generated as a consequence of push or pull factors that have world systemic origins. The effects are likewise, system-wide. This is a near-accurate depiction of the process of globalization, and its consequent effects on Africa and the Africans. However, these accounts either tend to consider Africa and Africans as the adjuncts in this process, or as totally irrelevant, hence, the arguments about the marginalization of Africa. [18]

The actions and reactions of Africa and Africans lie squarely within the globalization process. They influence, and are influenced by the process, and are as much as any other actors, a significant part of the world system that has developed since the 15th century, until the present. They will also feature prominently in the future. I agree with Ake then that reports on the marginalization of Africa therefore, obfuscate much more than they explain. Extensive bibliographic search reveals that very little is written thus far on population movements that do not involve mass movement of refugees from one African country to other neighboring ones, or otherwise, the movements of migrant workers, particularly from Francophone African countries, to France. This is spite of the existence of a huge immigration studies literature.

Globalization shapes many of the changes that are observable in the patterns of African immigration to the US. According to Alassane D. Ouattara, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund , "In most basic terms, the globalization of the world economy is the integration of economies throughout the world through trade, financial flows, the exchange of technology and information, and the movement of people." [19]

The movement of people from the African continent to the United States is an instance of some of the specificities of globalization. The phenomenon of globalization involves an agglomeration of individual, state, corporate and other collective intentions within the United States, the deployment of these intentions on the African continent, mostly through the use of technology. The effect of the phenomenon of globalization is to generate similar responses in the African continent where people use information that is at their disposal to determine the time and destination of emigration from any country that is experiencing political

or economic turmoil to one that is thriving in both respects. African immigration is thus conceptualized as both pushed and pulled by globalization. A causal analysis that is based on American action and African reaction is limited in both explanatory power, and theoretical relevance. Action and reaction emerge from both the sending and receiving countries. Moreover, there are both intended and unintended consequences of these dialectical deployments of intentions and consequent actions and reactions that will be presented in a manner that explains the nature, form and types of African migration and immigration to the US and the consequences therefrom for the African continent and the US.

While as mentioned earlier, scholars have in the past, identified push and pull factors that stimulate or generate migration and immigration, and have identified these factors as the economic, political and social [20] leading one to believe that African migration and immigration differs very little if at all, from other varieties and waves to the US over the years. This apparently accurate conclusion is grossly inadequate because it tells us nothing about African immigrants, or what both separates and encompasses African immigration to the US from other peoples' immigration - the phenomenon of globalization. If globalization is taken as the independent variable, it becomes clear that African migration and immigration to the US can be constituted in one sense as the human response to globalization over time. These responses in turn set in motion, the processes that define the nature of the world at given times and places, the thoughts and machinations of the powers that be both on the African continent and in the West, and the responses of the governed, which again, reconstitutes the world as we know it, setting in motion, other changes, and counter pressures. Conceptualized in this manner, it is possible to take a historical long view on matters of African immigration to the US, to consider this phenomenon as part of a world systemic progression from the first contact between Africa and the West to the present moment.

The relatively lower cost of international migration is another contributory factor to increases in immigration. Discounted airline tickets can be obtained with a loan from a family member who migrated earlier. It is possible to repay such a loan after working for a few months. In addition, a service industry has developed to enable immigrants to surmount bureaucratic barriers.

The most compelling reasons for African immigration to the United States at the present moment are those related to the dislocations caused by the economic and political changes being undertaken throughout the continent. This gives credence to

the Weiner argument that global trends drive population movements. The economic and political changes going on in Africa today are themselves caused by global factors such as the worldwide economic depression, negative terms of trade for African countries, consequent upon their involvement in international trade, huge international indebtedness, and the involvement of multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, IMF and external creditors in proposing solutions to African economic and political problems.

In this complex world, Chamie sees a "new order" developing where immigration becomes an essential part of the policy calculus for the poor countries that cannot feed their people and rich countries that are undergoing population declines but need a labor force. One would think that the world that Ben Wattenberg, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute commented on was not the same one that Chamie described. Challenging "potentially misleading" estimates of population growth that indicate that the world faces a veritable population explosion, he claims that there is a decline in the fertility rate that makes current projections on increases untenable. In essence, Wattenberg questions the extent to which the richer countries will become dependent on a labor force that is supplied by the poorer countries, and warns of dire consequences therefrom.

The relevance of globalization is not only demonstrated by the presence of African immigrants in the United States, or by their preference for this country as one of their preferred destinations. In very radical opposition to the laudatory accounts that tout its ultimate superiority to other historical processes, the problem for many that experience it in the third world is that globalization presents a predatory face that is congenitally asymmetrical, devastating and abusive. Both political and economic relations of power are negatively impacted. There is an implied positivity and goodness assumed to be part of the concept of globalization that is not necessarily borne out by the realities of most people's day-to-day existence. The decision to immigrate therefore is for most, a desperate move from the familiar into the terrain of the unfamiliar. Most immigrants console themselves and shore up their confidence by thinking only of the positive outcomes. As a result of some of the communications breakthroughs that have drastically reduced the cost of obtaining up-to-date information, knowledge of what to expect in the intended country of origin is apprehended almost instantaneously by those with access to internet and worldwide web technology, and/or access to the international media's increasingly global information dissemination network.

Second, once a host country changes its immigration policies, other countries notice, and formulate and implement policies in response. Probably to combat the ascendancy of the influence of the United States in Africa, and to stem the erosion of French influence, in a 1977 speech, newly elected French president Chirac announced plans to ease the restrictions on African student visas in France. He also promised better educational opportunities. Although Chirac denied that new French initiatives were due to "globalization" or the ascendancy of US influence. Paradoxically, by so doing, he successfully acknowledged both that no country can be totally immune from the influences of globalization, and also that the US was becoming increasingly influential, and even supplanting the French in some of their old stomping grounds in Africa. For African immigrants in France, there is yet another spin to this posturing. Immigrants from North, Central and West Africa populate the banlieue, which is the French name for the, overcrowded, crime-infested locales with substandard housing and ill-equipped schools that are reserved for immigrants, who also are plagued with high unemployment, crime, and segregation from mainstream French society. [21] Potential immigrants also consider host countries' immigration policies before making the final decision on moving from their country of origin or settlement. The relative availability of opportunities for economic advancement in the United States as compared with France, as well as the more relaxed immigration laws prior to September 11, 2001 acted as a pull for some Francophone immigrants from Paris to New York City. [22] Such changes as were undertaken by France have become virtually impossible due to the successful integration of the Western European region.

Immigration policies are also changed as a result of events that have a global reach, and while individual countries within a regional body such as the European Union have less flexibility to change policies, they do so as a bloc. After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., the United States introduced tougher immigration laws, spurring the consideration of similar measures by European Union countries. [23] The European Union also considers immigration to be one of the top priority issues. Della Plana, in an analysis of Race and Immigration in Europe traces the evolution of a joint EU immigration policy to the 1985 Schengen Agreement, which established common European policies on "immigration, amnesty, and the policing of borders. It eliminates many barriers between countries of the European Union while making it much harder to immigrate to an EU country from outside. &Schengen also establishes the elaborate Schengen Information Service that tracks criminals, migrant laborers, and "undesirables" throughout the member countries."

[24] For many immigrants, the category of "undesirables" could apply for doing nothing other than being undocumented. It is one of the hallmarks of the neo-liberal New World Order that while there is a free trade in finances, goods, and services, the door slams shut in the face of many desperate economic refugees who flee from the devastating consequences of globalization such as unemployment, political upheaval, and endemic economic crisis. At the same time, a welcome mat is rolled out to the most educated, most skilled workers from the same countries, many of whom are aggressively recruited, well-paid, and given the very best fringe benefits. [25]

Globalization, Trade, and Immigration

It cannot be over-emphasized that globalization is a process ridden with antinomies. Thus, involvement in the global political economy has differential consequences for each region, and each nation. It is as much a consequence of globalization that the weakness of African states vis a vis the Group of 8 countries who tend to be the major beneficiaries of globalization's bounties causes the relative inattention that is paid to African states' analysis and recommendations as compared with the extensive coverage and attentiveness to the thought of G8 leaders. It is also a reflection of the weakness of developing countries that they are unable to convince their more developed counterparts to give concessions that guarantee market access for their goods. As well, while many G8 countries continue to grant agricultural subsidies, Third World countries that are indebted are expressly forbidden to do so by the IMF, World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, (WTO.) The discontinuation of subsidies drives struggling farmers out of circulation, generating poverty, misery, and the abandonment of farming as an occupation. Immigration often becomes the only viable option for many of the dispossessed. Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika clearly articulated these problems when he maintained during a press conference at the 10th United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Bangkok on February 2, 2000 that the time is ripe for genuine fairness and more interdependence in the global system. President Bouteflika spoke in his capacity as head of state. He also spoke as President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) For Bouteflika, globalization is meaningless if it does not serve the cause of humanity.

According to Bouteflika, thus far, the global system is fundamentally unfair because the world continues to fall short of the ideals of interdependence. A cynic would even go so far as to say that the world will forever be unable to achieve

these ideals. Africa's experience in the global system has been a conglomeration of inequalities, caused by the assumed inevitability of unmediated globalization in human society. In contradistinction, the richest countries live affluent and comfortable lives while blaming the poverty, and precariousness of the existence of most of the world's poor on their own ignorance and on the ineptitude of their leaders. Emerging from such an ideology, it is no wonder that most of the world's rich support the idea of the universal efficacy of the market system without any consideration of the needs of each country. For Bouteflika, "the mechanisms of international relations should be directed towards the reduction of inequalities, the elimination of misery and backwardness, hearths of frustration and as such of potential violence," The management of the global system according to principles of social justice and equitable distribution of wealth is the only long-term safeguard against enduring threats to the world's collective security because the depth of inequality between an affluent, technologically and militarily dominant North and an impoverished raw material producing South maintained that is ever subjected to the vagaries of the international market forces would at best, drive those able to escape from the misery to do so by emigrating. At worst, political upheaval and increases in preventable tragedies will proliferate, again stimulating the push to leave impoverished parts of the world and seek better opportunities or refuge where these can be found.

What globalization has meant for Africa and Africans is also that there have been drastic restrictions on the right to self-determination and to meaningful participation in making decisions on how to properly manage the world's economy. A strict application of the logic of the market may facilitate the efficient exchange of goods, services, and investments. The world may even generate more wealth in consequence, but Bouteflika's observation that "a new card of the world has been drawn, where a whole continent as Africa is purely and simply erased", ought to be given very serious consideration because of the danger of excluding those who are least able to compete within the unfettered market system from the global bounty from which citizens of Northern countries at least stand to benefit. Unfortunately for these workers, globalization does not necessarily have even effects within national boundaries. Hoogvelt points out that there are significant antinomies of globalization in operation in the North's labor markets, where the skilled, highly educated "cream of the crop" is pampered while those in the bottommost rungs become part of the informal economy, subjected to part-time piece work, lacking benefits and security, and often under-paid. [\[26\]](#) It is within these ranks that most immigrant workers, including those from Africa get integrated. The nativist

backlash that they suffer often arises out of the frustration of this downtrodden stratum of workers about their uncertain fate, and the fierce competition for the opportunities that exist from workers who would accept lower pay and low to no benefits.

The perception among African leaders is that while they have made significant effort at great cost to their citizenry, to follow the imperatives of the logic of the market, the promise of economic recovery will remain "illusory as long as the continent shall continue to undergo the effects of a world environment contributing more than in the past to worsen its backward movement and its difficulties, and to perpetuate the major causes of perversions resulting from it." From the initial stages of the attempt to create a new world order and develop the principles that undergird globalization, scholars, government officials and analysts in Africa tended to attribute the economic crisis that descended on, and took hold of the continent to exogenous factors . In this view, the downward swing of the terms of trade against the interest of African countries came about because of the vagaries of the international market as it affected raw materials producers. While Africa as a whole lost approximately 2.5% of its expected GDP from commodities sales in 1998, the expectation that foreign investment would flow into countries that implemented the structural adjustment packages recommended by the World Bank and IMF remains elusive. The 54 African countries only captured 1% of the world's foreign investments and approximately 5% of investments in developing countries. This is while the external indebtedness of most African countries imposes crushing debt burdens on their already overtaxed citizens, creating a situation where African countries have become net exporters of capital, thus "by a cruel paradox, to financing the rich by the poor." [\[27\]](#)

Participating in the global economy extracts costs from majority of the citizenry of African countries. This majority suffers losses in income, employment, upward mobility, health, hope, their options are significantly reduced. However, a minority gains most of the benefits of globalization by virtue of having the desired profile for success. The potential immigrants are drawn from both groups. The latter, as mentioned above is desired, while the former is resented and deterred from entering the labor markets of the developed nations. However, the desperation of living a life where most options are foreclosed means that such immigrants will persist in seeking better economic opportunities elsewhere.

Globalization, Debt, and Immigration

One of the demands of African countries is that the debt cancellation initiatives that are currently available only to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) should be extended to medium income African countries as well. The rationale for this is that whether HIPC or otherwise, all African countries labor valiantly under the burden of debt, and experience the negative backwash effects to their citizenry and economies. The use of political conditionalities as the stick that enforces the imposition of the untrammelled market system is also criticized. As Bouteflika appropriately noted, it is questionable at best, if African countries ought to "continue posing good governing as a preliminary to the best dealing with the problems of development, while sapping, by policies of structural adjustment, the minimum of social harmony which supposes good governing."

While the focus here is not to assess the viability of the HIPC initiative, it is prudent to be wary of initiatives that do not critically consider the long term relevance of policy options. According to an internal memo from the World Bank that was circulated by Jubilee 2000, [\[28\]](#) Senegal would end up with a larger debt by 2018 than today because like other highly indebted countries, the new debt that Senegal incurred to repay its old debts was \$332.4 million and rising. The most curious part of the problem is that the HIPC initiative is presented as having a positive impact on Senegal, whose total debt fell from from \$2.5b to \$2.1b, and the IMF and World Bank expect that HIPC would facilitate the restoration of Senegal's "debt sustainability." The complexity of the problem is not immediately obvious. One would have to know that the assessment of Senegal's debt as "sustainable" is dependent on the assumption that it will successfully attract foreign capital, and further, that the World Bank itself reported that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Senegal has declined from \$56 million from 1993-1997 to \$40 million in 1998. Curiously, the Bank and Fund make the prediction that FDI into Senegal will increase to \$88million over the period 1998 - 2008, and as such, the country can afford to sustain its debt ad infinitum. To the contrary, according to the international rating agency, Standard and Poor's, Senegal, is at "a low level of development, with per capita GDP of less than \$500, and deficiencies in the social and physical infrastructure. Low educational standards, high poverty, and other weak human development indicators reflect the subsistence nature of Senegalese agriculture, which employs more than one half of the labour force". [\[29\]](#) Senegal paid \$173.6 million in debt service in 2001. 25% of the monies went to the IMF and World Bank - \$21.9 million to the African Development Bank and \$35.9 million to other multilateral organizations. The country's debt service is three times

as much as the \$47 million spending on health care, and almost as much as the \$175 million spent on education. According to the Jubilee report, "In order to get Senegal to a level of "sustainability" the World Bank will provide \$149 million over the next eight years - enough to cover 50% of Senegal's debt service - to the Bank. This year (2001) Senegal will pay \$29.87 million to the World Bank - and receive \$14.39 million in "relief" from the Bank. [\[30\]](#) The IMF too will "assist" Senegal by providing \$51m of relief over eight years. In return for this "favor," Senegal will pay the IMF \$183.3 million over that time. In 2001, the IMF gave Senegal \$4.7 million in "relief" while also collecting \$26 million from the country in debt repayments. The end result is that Senegal, one of the world's poorest countries, made a net transfer of \$21.3 million to the IMF. [\[31\]](#)

Senegal is not alone in being so poor, having to make net transfers to the IMF and other creditors. All indebted African and developing countries have to do the same. With economies in the doldrums for over two decades, and no change in sight, with the heavy burden of debt and no appreciable relief, is it any surprise that Senegalese, African, and Third World immigrants are so plentiful in France, the U.S., and other Group of 8 countries? To the extent that the antinomies of globalization continue as in the recent past and present, the flow of the world's economic refugees will continue from embattled economies to relatively flourishing economies. Neither Fortress Europe, erected after the establishment of the European Union to keep undocumented immigrants out, nor harsher anti-immigrant regimes in the US will succeed in keeping out those who respond to the imperatives of globalization, whether they are the desired (skilled) or the despised (undocumented) immigrants. Nothing short of a restructuring of the world economy would turn the tide. Such restructuring however, is impossible without the restructuring of the world's politics. Despite the concerted efforts of the anti-globalist activists, the likelihood that this would occur in the near future is remote.

Globalization, Labor, and Immigration

African governments, organized labor groups, and leftist political parties differ in their assessment of the impact of the globalization on African political economy. While for the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, Nigeria and Ghana's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) would result in more unemployment, collapse of industries, and social unrest, the governments of African countries expressed the belief that the WTO was beneficial to their countries and the continent, and called for the

implementation of the already agreed upon terms. The South African Communist Party agrees with Oshiomhole's perspective. At its meeting of September 13-16, 2001, the party declared its support for the Congress of South African Trades Union's (COSATU) anti-privatization strike action, characterized globalization as imperialism, and as damaging to the political economy of Third World nations.

[32] However, according to African governments, what is needed is for developed countries to live by the rules of the World Trade Organization. Thus for them "the most important issue remaining from the Uruguay Round is the failure of the developing countries to open their markets to products from the south." Majority of African countries still face discrimination against their products in the very areas that they are advised to concentrate upon by the World Bank and IMF, those areas in which they have comparative advantage such as agriculture, labour, textiles and apparel. [33]

The negative economic ramifications of the protectionist discrimination against African countries' products include unemployment and underemployment.

Migration and immigration are options that are pursued, sometimes as a last resort by workers who lose their jobs, or are unable to provide for their families. As Oshiomhole explained, "Our two movements therefore, in our enlightened self interest, need to strategise on the challenges posed by this new phenomenon called globalisation under which Africa is a net exporter of jobs and even capital through unrestrained imports and divestment. &In another word, unemployment, collapse of industries and the attendant social unrest are our main gains from our membership of WTO" [34] Poverty, diseases, conflicts, HIV/AIDS and wars have beset African countries, saddling its labor unions "with the enormous task of ensuring fairness, social justice in our respective countries often under hostile political and economic environment." Although richly endowed with human and natural resources, Ghana and Nigeria, like many other African countries, "are struggling under the weight of mass poverty caused by inequitable distribution and reckless squandering of the nation's huge resources." [35] Foreign Affairs Minister, Sule Lamido identified as the "boldest initiative so far in addressing the under-development and poverty in Africa," the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) - a joint initiative of President Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdulaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, Abdulaye Wade of Senegal and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. According to Lamido, NEPAD is a "home-grown response to the challenges of poverty, human deprivation and marginalisation of the continent in a rapidly globalising world that seeks to promote and maintain peace and stability." Oshiomhole instead canvasses a "critical look at the root

causes of prevalence of wars and conflict situations occasioned by ethnic and religious crises and its resultant effect of poverty and diseases that have continued to trail the sub-region in the last decade. [\[36\]](#)

Indicative of the divergence on problem identification and solutions offered is the fact that while both African and European countries supported the notion that there was need for a dialogue on the future direction of Euro-African relations, particularly on the question of globalization, according to President Bouteflika, "The more Africans emphasised their interest for economic issues, i.e. partnership, commercial co-operation, the transfer of technologies and other capital flows, the more the European Union emphasised its interest for political issues, namely good governing, democracy, pluralism and human rights", Thus, the military and economic weakness of African countries vis-a-vis the more powerful actors within the world system makes them so vulnerable that their expressions of opinions that contradict those of the "powers that be" is regarded as questionable, at best. When African countries maintain that they would much rather prioritize economic and social development, European countries maintain the overwhelming importance of good governance and the further integration of African countries into the world economy. The consequence is that those who are negatively affected often seek extra-national solutions by taking advantage of the opportunities that globalization offers for those with needed skills in the more affluent parts of the world to emigrate. Most of those who are unable to emigrate eke out a living however possible. Some also look to the underside of the global economy, becoming drug couriers, sex workers, domestic servants and undocumented aliens in the larger cities of the West.

Nativism, Xenophobia, and Immigration

Confronted with a never-ending flow of immigrants that is ever ready to go to work for wages that are patently unacceptable, Indigenes that find the immigrants a threat respond by mounting nativist, xenophobic attacks that discredit and vilify the immigrant as a drain on the economy, the cause of unemployment and the driving down of wages. Immigrants are also blamed for rising crime rates, over-crowding in the urban centers, and virtually any undesirable aspects of social life. Vicious attacks against immigrants are encouraged and driven by such hate-mongering.

The negative ramifications of nativism could shape the immigrant's decision to avoid some countries and favor others. For example, the knowledge that

immigrants are fair game for racist attacks in certain countries would make such countries unattractive destinations for immigrants and refugees, which probably falls in line with the racists' desires. There is evidence of nativism in many European countries. In Germany, Portugal, France, and other European countries for example, there have been reports of vicious attacks on African Immigrants. [37] Those who argue against the nativist position contend that there is nothing intrinsically negative about immigration. Some go to the extent of advocating that the same standards be applied to the movement of individuals across international borders as are applied to goods and services by the free-traders. [38]

Conclusion

Studying the causes of African immigration, if done properly, enables the conduct of research that draws a picture of the complexity of life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is because the population has both highly educated people as well as struggling vendors in the informal economy, entrepreneurs and overexploited, underpaid delivery persons, large numbers of women as well as men, refugees and exiles as well as those for whom immigration is less attached to the immediacy of survival, whites as well as blacks, Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone populations who also speak their own indigenous African languages. Such a picture can then be compared with the same phenomenon as manifested in the past to enrich our understanding of the world as we live it. Finally, there is an insight into the manner in which African immigration to the United States and other economically buoyant states both shapes the experience of globalization in the African continent, and is shaped by it.

Globalization is a phenomenon that is rife with antinomies. In the complex relationship of trade, production, exchange, labor movement, economic, social and political integration, there are losers as well as gainers. Some countries gain population while others lose. Some of the population movement is highly desired and actively courted. Others are resented, repelled, criminalized and quarantined. The population gain and loss again arise from the way in which trade under the regime of globalization produces deleterious returns for some countries, and bountiful gains for others. The losers are also laboring under massive debt burdens while the gainers have more buoyant economies. People who are able to move from the struggling economies do so, moving to the economic powerhouses like the United States. It is also part of globalization that production relations are in a state of flux, with industrial jobs moving to the less developed countries and the post

industrial high technology jobs located in the developed countries. For these jobs, and for the provision of necessary social services like health care, and elder care, developed countries continue to pull the most skilled and able from developing countries including those in Africa as immigrants.

The consequences of these population movements are profound. They will be addressed in a second paper titled: "The Antinomies of Globalization: Consequences of African Immigration to the United States of America."

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