

THE EFFECTS OF ILLEGAL MIGRATION ON HUMAN SECURITY OF AFRICANS IN EUROPE, 2009-2019

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the effects of illegal migration on the human security of Africans in Europe, 2009-2019 and the strategies adopted to check such migration. Illegal migrants, most of whom are Africans have defied the adverse weather condition during winter and a staggering 400,000 people are estimated to reach mainland Europe by sea from 2000 to 2005. Sadly, unfriendly economic conditions, hunger, political and religious persecutions, civil strife and in some cases war have made a good number of African flee their home countries. Most African migrants, though familiar with travel requirements in their home countries do not properly migrate or seek asylum when they cross national borders into other countries especially in Europe for sundry reasons. The Study adopts the secondary method of data gathering using content analysis. The world system theory as propounded by Wallerstein, Immanuel was used as the theoretical framework. The findings of the study show that poor living condition; the quest for greener pastures in Europe, though through illegal means; bad leadership from African leaders and political conflicts and instability are core factors responsible of illegal migrations of Africans to Europe. The study recommends amongst others that developmental policies and programmes should be set up in African countries to set the continent on the path of speedy recovery from poverty and deprivation to create an environment suitable for young aspiring Africans to thrive.

Key Words: African, human security, illegal Migration

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations Humanitarian Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (EUAFR, 2016 p. 44), illegal migrants, most of whom are Africans have defied the adverse weather condition during winter and a staggering 400,000 people are estimated to reach mainland Europe by sea from 2000 to 2005. Unfriendly economic conditions, hunger, political and religious persecutions, civil strife and in some cases war have made a good number of African flee their home countries. Most African migrants, though familiar with travel requirements in their home countries do not properly migrate or seek asylum when they cross national borders into other countries especially in Europe for sundry reasons. This is why they face very harrowing conditions and treatments from the receiving countries. While some pay the ultimate price in the process, some lucky few grapple with various degrees of inhuman treatments including jail terms and extreme immigration laws which cannot be compared with the conditions they were exposed to in their home countries before their sojourn. Strict visa requirements have left African migrants with alternatives other than legal conventional visa applications to patronizing migrant smuggling cartels to gain entry into European societies. Germany, for instance, recorded the highest number of immigrants during the period under review and only less than fifty percent of the immigrants actually declared to seek asylum in Germany. Though, German immigration policies are considered more migrant-friendly than those in places like Italy and Spain

as this study would reveal, factors relating to human security and well-being of African illegal immigrants in European societies during the period between 2009 and 2016 have proven to be a major concern to this study.

HISTORICIZING 21ST CENTURY ILLEGAL MIGRATION OF AFRICANS TO EUROPE

Illegal immigration is defined according to the United States Immigration Services (2000) is seen as the movement across national borders in a way that violates the immigration law of the destination country. An illegal immigrant is a foreigner who either has illegally crossed an international political border or a foreigner who has entered a country legally but then overstays his/her visa. Illegal immigration is not a new phenomenon. Soon after World War II, and continuing through the 50s and 60s, clandestine immigration to France from Spain and Italy took place alongside with legal migration. Attempts to migrate illegally have always been dangerous, e.g., in a similar scenario to what is occurring now in the Mediterranean Sea area, any post-WWII migrants in the Pyrenees perished in the snow trying to cross the mountains.

Nevertheless, it is also true that illegal immigration in the last decade has known an incredible expansion, particularly with the emergence of globalization as well as bilateral free trade agreements which emphasize regional disparities. For example, the large gap in economic welfare between North and South Mediterranean countries or between the United States and South American countries generates growth in illegal immigration at a worrying rate. In addition to economic reasons, persecution and ethnic cleansing and other causes like weather-related disasters also result of increased immigration. Meanwhile the consequences of the illegal immigration fluctuate from beneficial to disadvantageous aspects depending upon the situation in both source and destination countries.

The causes of illegal migration differ from individual to individual and from community to community. If someone asks, why people migrate out of their origin in favour of places that are not familiar? The reasons will vary with causes found in such diverse factors as ecological pressure, economic incentives, psychological motivation, politics situations etc.

Africa has extremely accelerating population growth which influences both for internal and external migration due to the population pressure in connection to this Hance (1971) identified areas suffering from population pressure and some indicators are: poverty, soil deterioration, degradation or outright destruction, Use of excessively steep slopes and other marginal lands, Declining crop yields, Changing crop emphases, Breakdown of the indigenous farming system, Food shortages, hunger, and malnutrition, Land fragmentation, disputes over land, landlessness, bad traditional cultures.

Household decision-making is mostly common for predicting illegal migration in less developed societies like Nigeria because they expect short-term migration, circulation and the common practice of remitting income home. Awareness of different ways in which migration and the flow of remittances bring or fail to achieve the benefits of development programs and can provide a new perspective on development difficulties and lead to new direction options. Social, economic and non-economic causes are many and varied within countries that include defeat in war, a desire for material gain or food, the search for political or religious freedom, etc. Migration takes place when the benefits of migration are assessed by the migrants interims of comparative advantages. The other basic reason for migration is that urban areas in destination area are relatively confers of power and privilege. Hence, people migrate from their homeland areas for the demand of better necessities and due to the attractiveness of facilities and concentration of resources in the cities. These facilities and resources pull the migrants to abandon the countryside for the towns legally and illegally.

One can take into account the inefficiencies of markets in many developing settings, eventually placed the push-pull factor. Rather than producing adjustment and equilibrium, migration has spurred the growth of the informal sector as rural origin persons settled, at least temporarily, for wages and employment chances below the hoped for formal sector offering (Michael, 1999). Basically when the information from the departed family or neighbor is relatively better, the migratory movement spreads and many more individuals follow for no other reason than the fellow feelings which unite families or friends to leave the original area and there may be an enthusiasm for something new for new tasks to undertake as sentiment which animates many of those who venture to migrate.

In 2007 alone, almost 6,500 Nigerian citizens were apprehended in the European Union for illegal immigration. This number represents – after Senegal – the largest population among the countries of the ECOWAS region. The large majority of apprehensions were carried out in Italy (2,523) and Spain (1,243). In the same year, 1,422 Nigerian

citizens were removed from the European Union. As in the case of apprehensions, removed Nigerians represented the largest number – after Senegal – in the ECOWAS region, although the figure had decreased from the 2,113 carried out the previous year (CIREFI, 2009). Internal apprehensions refer to the illegal presence of aliens in the territory of the European Union.

The concept of illegal migration entails people breaking immigration laws and border controls of other sovereign countries to either reside temporarily or permanently over a period of time either without the requisite authorization to reside and earn a living there or with such authorizations that may have expired. On most occasions, however, the reasons for illegal migrations can be said to be overwhelming on the migrant. This is explained by the decision to migrate to a country considered safer to take refuge in times of war and political persecution or the large movement of persons from a region considered less-economically friendly like Africa to escape the very harsh effects of extreme poverty and in some cases hunger and drought to a more industrialized Europe to enjoy the basic amenities of life, not minding the consequences of embarking on such migrations without the requisite valid documents and knowledge of the immigration laws in such countries. This is the reality of Africans who migrate to Europe for the reasons listed above and sundry other reasons and they have constantly been victims of various inhuman treatments either by governments or citizen of the host countries. This study examines such migrations and the patterns they take and various treatments meted on Africans by the host countries and why they do so. Migrants have also been reported dead either by natural forces of nature while trying to make it across deserts and the Mediterranean to evade arrest by immigration officials or get killed by criminal elements along their paths. Europe is the preferred destination for the fact of a more assured economic stability. These forced displacements also makes 2015 the deadliest year for migrants as people perish or go missing while trying to make it across international borders.

The envisaged focus of a migrant is to find work or better living condition. How he decides to go about this focus, therefore, lies in the socio-economic background of the migrant's home country and the pre-disposing conditions present in the state he is visiting. The conduct of the migrant in his new environment would either impact positively on the visiting state or pose a threat to the well-being of the state (Neal, 2016, p. 22).

Migration has been made easier with the advent of globalization, which as a concept prescribed the opening up of national frontiers for socio-economic gains thereby making the world a global village. It is important to note that migrants usually flow towards the more industrialized regions of the world for obvious reasons of finding jobs and enjoying better conditions of living. This has made Europe (mostly Western Europe) and North America record high frequency of migrations than other regions of the world.

According to Cable News Network (CNN) report (2015, p.6), African and Asian migrants, travel through well – established migrant smuggling routes, enduring very harsh conditions of desert crossing, mountain climbing, risks of kidnaps and robberies, swindling or being left stranded in order to achieve the dream of leaving the shore of their countries in search of the 'good life'.

Contribute to this high spate of migrations to other parts of the world, including Europe, are political instability, prolonged insecurity, extreme poverty, sexual violence and other serious human rights violations, lack of access to basic needs such as food, medical services, healthcare and livelihoods (Paul, 2017, p.7). If the down-to-top migrations occasioned by the above factors can be excused and understandable, the growing trend of migrations from sub-Saharan African countries to Europe, which grew to an alarming proportion since 2009 leaves so much to be desired. There is a dangerous movement of people across borders from less privileged African countries to better privileged countries across the industrialized Europe.

Jonathan Slatger in an article in www.migrationpolicy.org notes that a significant share of the European Union's illegal migrant population comes from sub-Saharan Africa. Even though an accurate population figure is difficult to arrive at due to the fact of illegal migrations by Africans amongst whom unfortunately are unaccompanied children who require special attention due to their vulnerability, prompting the commission to work tirelessly to ensure that adequate child protection measures are taken, resident unauthorized population of Africans in Europe grew up to over 3 million between 2000 and 2010. Of this population, Nigeria alone accounts for about 13 percent, Senegal 8 percent and Eritrea seven percent. Although, these challenges have prompted the formulation of return policies of the EU, which required migrants without proper documentation be returned to their home states. The success of such policies is not the focus of this study, but the fate of the migrant who first suffers some maltreatment in the host

country once apprehended before being returned to face the realities of those very conditions which made him flee at the first instance.

There were several migrant crises in the European societies already. 700,000 asylum seekers that Europe had to deal with after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Browne, 2015, p.48). While hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers travelled through EU's borders, EU leaders found themselves divided – some of them shouted of the need for extraordinary measures, others threw accusations for not finding a solution at each other. At the same time concerns of human rights protection, asylum and counterterrorism had to be taken into account. Indeed, tensions concerning human security had to be managed whereas rumours that terrorists were arriving in the EU together with the wave of the asylum seekers escalated. Although no evident connection between asylum seekers and terrorists was discovered (and even though evidence stating the contrary were provided by the representatives of the United Nations) hostile attitudes towards the incoming asylum seekers emerged in the separate Member States leading to the internal division within the EU. EU thus struggled to find a cohesive, long term solution (Ernst & Young, 2016, p. 1). Following complicated negotiations between Member States the Commission only came up with several ad-hoc solutions to cope with the crisis. Among other things, it proposed an emergency relocation of 160,000 refugees from Greece, Hungary and Italy, creation of permanent relocation mechanism for all the Member States, creation of common European list of safe countries of origin,⁵ making return policy more effective, addressing the external dimension of the refugee crisis concerning the resolution of the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Libya (Brown, 2015, p.6).

In their content, neither one of the proposals addressed additional safeguards of the rights of the asylum seekers while waiting for the procedures to be completed. On the contrary, part of the solution was meant to decrease the number of asylum seekers that EU had to deal with (i.e. creation of the list of safe countries of origin, increasing the effectiveness of the return policy). The other solutions concerning relocation were only intended for logistical redistribution of people. By their very nature, these were the short-term solutions primarily aimed at making it easier for the EU and the Member States, but certainly not for the actual asylum seeker or illegal migrant who to some extent should have some level of protection.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT AND HUMAN SECURITY NEXUS

The illegal immigrant from the African origin face several human security challenges in Europe. Many are subjected to physically, psychologically and structural violence. Human security is a people-centred security. “Since 1990, particularly after the collapse of the Cold War, there was a paradigm shift in the scope of ‘securitisation’” (Ogele, 2020a, p. 1761). The purpose of the human security concept is to broaden security along several dimensions. National Security was “shifted from nation-states to that of ‘people’, and to be ‘people-centred’ was to be ‘concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or peace’” (UNDP, 1994.p. 23). Hence, security includes various kinds of threat from different sectors emanating from economic insecurity, food insecurity, the environment insecurity, health insecurity, personal insecurity, community insecurity, among others. However, illegal immigrants lose their human dignity and are subjected to all forms of maltreatments by those countries. Based on the General Assembly of the United Nations resolution 66/290, 10th September 2012, paragraph 3 agreed on “the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, particularly vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential...”(United Nations, 2016, p.6).

CAUSES OF EUROPE MIGRANT CRISIS

The very core driving force for the illegal migration of Africans to Europe through deadly routes and means is for greener pasture. If the grass is greener here in Africa, its citizens would not be bothered to leave the country through miserable means. The low level of human security in Africa has steered people who could not succeed in business, also could not venture into a reasonable activity in Africa choose to migrate to climes where human needs are being secured. Every time there is threat of human security the people flee to where the security of humans are safeguarded. The low of human security in Africa is alarming and has been proven by the research findings to be the very reason why the migration to Europe from Africa is growing by the day. Some illegal African migrants penetrated into Europe to secure human needs and wants, they eventually become a turn on the flesh of the

Europeans. However, the European countries, despite all powerful and technological means has been unable to totally stop illegal migration. Since all methods has been exhausted, the next method to be utilize is more improved migration policy. This policy should accommodate the migrants and put them in check with policies that will separate the good migrants from the bad migrant. These policies would be an enabler to control the migrants because some of these migrants apply illegal means for different reasons and course; some are genuine and productive while some are destructive to these European countries. How they will ascertain when they are being chased away.

Underdevelopment and poverty are largely viewed as barriers to opportunity and these are seen as critical factors that inform the calculations of young people who make up their mind to embark on such migrations crossing borders and enduring cold nights on the Mediterranean

The bad leadership in African is one of the major factors of illegal migration to Europe. Political conflict and instability are a major cause of illegal migration. Ogele (2020b,p. 1413) disclosed that "... ethnic strives among political elites result in regular conflicts, particularly in fragile societies with weak institutions." It implies that the government is a major player in illegal migrates, as their activities can drive or sustain its citizens. Poor governance can drive citizens into taking illegal routes to Europe. The huge number of deportees to Africa from Europeans country clearly shows the quest in Africans in search of greener pastures, as they are ready to put their lives at risk.

SECURITY AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO AFRICANS IN EUROPE

Illegal migrants are mistreated and made to suffer undue punishment. Most of the migrants are made to go through hardship and sufferings because they are migrants. The condition they are made to go through are so severe that they die, contract different disease, starve and also made to live like servitudes. This is contrary to the life these migrants had expected, as they are even living under the worst conditions than they would have lived in Africa. Some continue to migrate from one European country to another still in their quest for a better life. Mistreatment of Africans in Europe has resurfaced the slavery nature of the Europeans. It is even worse for many of them as they could not secure their human needs and wants and could not also return to Africa. Some pray and wish for deportation, as they are tired and frustrated. This undue and unfair treatment turns these Africans into a social menace in Europe, as they continue in their quest for human security. Some of them having loss all and made to live as destitute, they become frustrated and aggression sets in. The anger of not being able to secure their human needs forces them into all sorts of vices. Europe due to this, suffers the scourge of crimes, and breakdown of law and order. The security implication is not abstract but empirical, in November 2015, the ISIS struck in Paris, France to produce fear and bring the group's crime against humanity into the heart of Europe. This introduced the erection of Razor-wire fences and barriers along borders to ward-off asylum seekers. Individual countries in the EU have also introduced internal security measures to check the activities of migrants. CNN (2015) expressed that the state of Emergency declared by Francois Hollande in 2015 in France is a very desperate security measures as the laws of that country allows it to run for just 12 days after which an extension must be justified.

Since 2015, the state of alert level has been set at 4, ensuring that crowded places, symbolic buildings, places of worship are covered by an enhanced security (CNN, 2015). Illegal migration has some security and economic implication on Africans in Europe, as they are regarded as slaves and servitudes. They do face security challenges that impede them from interacting with the environment they find themselves. Some of them live in secret apartments and do not interact with the society. Lack of migrant documentation pose some threat to the security of the migrants, which these migrants have made it hard for the Europeans countries to protect their lives and property. It has also made them live below the line in the scheme of activities in these countries. The challenge of undocumented migrants, they agree that the standard of living of the migrants is quite better than the standard of living they had in African. It implies that the human security, they search for is actually in Europe than in Africa.

EFFECTS OF ILLEGAL AFRICAN MIGRANTS ON EUROPE

Organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, etc. are the very core effects of illegal migrations into Europe. Several illegal migrants have "been beheaded or brutalized in Asian countries like Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, China, Spain and other countries over drug-related offences without proper trial or investigation on the alleged offences" (Ogele and Okutalukwe,2020,p.581). Migrants who have entered through non-conventional

means, who also have criminal tendencies would ordinarily not be deterred by any factor to engage in crime of whatever magnitude. This is underscored by the very fact that they know that the system does not have any of their records to track them for any wrong doing. Illegal migrants do not turn themselves in as asylum seekers. Most of them enter with fake documents and unidentified passport; some of them are desperadoes who have to make it big by all means. This implies that whatever it takes they must make it big.

The illegal migrants from African overwhelms the social structure of Europe, increases the level of insecurity and unemployment. For instance, Unemployment causes social disaffection among the youths and propels crimes. The illegal migration of African has worsen the unemployment situation in Europe. For instance, the mass riot in the United Kingdom in 2011 that led looting of shops was attributed to the soaring rate of unemployment in the country (Ogele, 2020, p. 23).

STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY EUROPE TO CURB ILLEGAL MIGRATION OF AFRICANS

The European Union has been criticized from human rights activities for heavy-handedness and inconsistency. Organizations such as Amnesty International and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) have claimed that the EU refugee policy is so strict as to create a “fortress Europe” that barricades itself against people in need. People with \refugee status do not have equivalent rights to other non-EU nationals, and they live under the constant threat of expulsion (AP) and restrictions to free movement. Differing policies among member states have led to “asylum shopping,” a process in which asylum seekers apply to multiple countries in the hopes that the one with low standards will accept them.

There is internal disagreement in the European Union as well. In June 2007 Spain lodged a formal European Union complaint (Malta Independent) against Malta for not giving assistance to a Spanish boat that rescued migrants in the ocean south of Malta. At the same time, Justice Commissioner Frattini and members of the European Parliament have criticized EU member states for not giving help to countries such as Spain and Malta and for the lack of cohesion that has led to the immigrants’ deaths in the Mediterranean. European countries have been putting measures together to curb illegal migration and these strategies in one way or the other have failed to control the illegal migration. These measures include: the use of border patrol, building of tall walls, use of technology, and deportation. The findings of the research elicited that border closure, use of technology, patrol and deportation was not the best strategy to curb illegal migration.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that the various items in the variables are the result of the illegal migration of Africans and the human security implications in Europe had been a global issue that has threatened European countries, these mostly African migrants leave their home countries due to political instability, in search of greener pastures, poverty, bad leadership, and as a result multiplicity of risks had been recorded even death. Developed regions of the world need to do more to bridge the inequality between the developed countries, mainly Europe and the developing countries of Africa with a concerted effort to address the reasons behind poverty of states and peoples of Africa. Based on the findings, the paper therefore recommended the following:

1. Governments across countries in Africa should develop and embrace an all-inclusive system of governance in which the interests of the totality of the citizenry would adequately be protected and catered for.
2. Developmental policies and programmes should be set up in African countries to set the continent on the path of speedy recovery from poverty and deprivation to create environment suitable for young aspiring Africans to thrive and reduce incidences of down-up migration which have adversely affected African states in the form of loss of manpower and brain-drain.
3. On the security implication of Africans to Europe, the concept of security must be considered holistically to address the human security concerns of the migrants themselves as the sojourn through the dangerous waters of the Mediterranean and Sahara desert to get to their various destinations. Governments must concern themselves with how people fare while they are in such conditions and ensure that the rights of the migrants as human are preserved and protected from all forms of physical and emotional aggressions.
4. The physical security of the receiving states must also be put into consideration and structures are erected to ensure that migrants are not infiltrated by persons of questionable character. This can be further strengthened by ensuring a detailed documentation of migrants as well as their security profiles to be able to ascertain the

character of the migrant and not jeopardize the internal security of the host state. This would further deter criminally-minded individuals from getting involved in crime.

5. African migrants should be making conscious efforts to ensure that they gain entry into foreign countries through established routes having met all immigration laws of the host countries. This will make them better prepared to pick up gainful and dignifying employment in the foreign country as well as meet their aspirations of improved standards of living for them and their families.

6. As for strategies to check the illegal migration of Africans to Europe, conscious efforts be made to enact effective international laws to guard against the indiscriminate movement of persons across borders of sovereign states in a bid to arrive at their destinations. This can be further strengthened by individual states erecting strict border control measures like border walls and razor wires as already practiced in parts of Europe.

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