

# The persuading factors of migration from sub-saharan Africa “mitigation and alternatives”

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**ABSTRACT**

The legion of unemployment and insecurity are the major and leading factors of the mass migration of Africans within and outside the continent. Thousands of young Africans risk their lives en route to Europe or elsewhere for better living conditions, socioeconomic opportunities or seeking peace and stability. Therefore, to curtail and carefully curb this risking adventure and detrimental movement that is being desperately engaged by tens of thousands of Africans, the governments and their local and international development partners (the United Nations with its concerned specialised organs, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union, the African Union and the rest) have to effectively and strategically collaborate and coordinate to trim the alarming unemployment rate and address security concerns on the green continent. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine some determinants of unemployment and insecurity as persuading factors for the mass migration of Africans. It also aims at providing some workable options, solutions and policy alternatives to tackle

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this humanitarian crisis, economic and security issues that the continent is being threaten and confronted with. The work adopts a pure qualitative research method, where it relies on observation and previous data for the subject to explore different issues as a tool achieve the objectives of the paper. The paper concluded that encouraging entrepreneurship, improving infrastructures, attractability of the private sector could play a major role in solving and mitigating unemployment problems, transparency, good governance and leadership and fighting corruption and so forth are some ways forward to regulate and lowering the risk of migration from the Continent.

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## INTRODUCTION

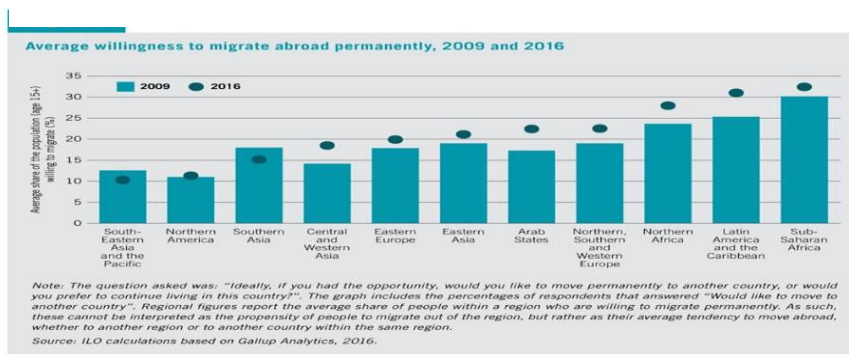
Migration has been a social phenomenon of any age and era. It is an old age practice as it has been in the existence since time immemorial. As the population grows, the economic situation deteriorates, insecurity becomes a concern and migration becomes a more socioeconomic problem. That is, these and other related-factors have been the main causes for the people to move from one place to another. According to (Adepuju, 1995) “ various forms of population movement in response to political, economic, religious and security situation and demographic factors have been recorded from early time”. However, Africa has been marked over several decades as the continent of migration due to colonial imperialism and post-independence socioeconomic fluctuation, instability, scarcity of job oppoturnity and reliance on foreign aids . The United Nations estimates that the total number of international migrants from Africa increased from nine million in 1960 to 16 million in 2000 (United Nations, 2003). Besides Between 2000 and 2017, Africa experienced the largest relative increase in the number of international migrants who had originated in that region (+68%), followed by Asia (+62%), Latin America and the Caribbean (+52%) and Oceania (+51%) (Nations, 2017). Statistically, low-income countries under which many African States fall constitute only 10% (25) of the international migrant. (United Nations, 2016). Further, the vast majority migrants come from middle -income countries as they stand at nearly 65% (157m) of the overall while nearly 17% ( 42m) come from high-income industrialized countries according to the United Nations’ 2015 report (United Nations,

2016). However, it has to be noted that low-income countries migrants are the ones take lives -threatening adventures to reach their destinations. This is evidenced by midettereanien sea’s every-day migrant tragedies.

Back to the point, it was the hope for the people of the African Continent to limit massive external migration especially to Europe where many of their ancestors were extrajudiciously and inhumanly taken to. Nevertheless, that hope seems to be daymare and nightmare due to the weakness in the Contitinent’ socioeconomic institutions and ability to keep its people in by providing decent job oppoturnities and reliable sources of income .

Furthermore, the 21<sup>st</sup> century-mingration of Africans could be characterized as the worst form compared to what happened in colonial eras. That is true, because, people were forcibly taken and out of their wills to other parts of the world, mainly to Europe and the Americas. Nevertheless, in the recent situation, the risk is seen yet the youths are more determined by risking their on the Midetterean Sea to Europe. All of these take place because of hopelessness, joblessness, senseless civil wars and insecurity coupled with the failure of public and private institutions to economically cater the people through providing enabling environments for job creation and oppoturnities and peaceful societies. In addition, based on the recent report of the International Organization of Migration, 5080 died before reaching their destinations from January and November 2017. Astonishingly, the majority of the identified dead migrants came from Sub-Saharan Africa (International Organization for Migration, 2017).

**Figure 1 Average willingness to migrate abroad permanently 2009-2016**



Source ILO <http://tinyurl.com/jqjcgmk>

Moreover, due to several determinants such as unemployment, insecurity and other related and persuading factors of the massive and unprecedented migration have made a considerable percentage of Africans to have a tendency to migrate and flee their home countries. According to the International Labour Organization’ report on the World Employment Socio Outlook “ Over the coming decade, the number of international migrants

may increase further. In fact, between 2009 and 2016, the share of the working-age population willing to migrate abroad permanently increased in almost every region of the world, except Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific”. Further, the Sub-Saharan African Region tops the list as it stands at 32.1 percent of the overall of those with inclination *per* region to permanently move. (International Labour Organization ILO, 2017). See Figure (1)

### **PERSUADING FACTORS OF MIGRATION**

Anthropologically, people migrated in the past for several reasons. Some are still valid in the current migration situation in Africa while some had been varnished and eliminated. Therefore, this study concentrates on unemployment and insecurity as the main factors that lead to the massive outflux of migrants from their original domiciles to other countries and continents. It is, however, imperative to note that all of these two major causes are mainly institutional-made. That is; the continent is rich in its natural resources and its huge demographic potentials and human capital are highly promising but bad governance, (Farah & Otondi, 2015) and lack of an equitable distribution of wealth had led to rising unemployment rate, rising political instability which is the genesis of civil violences and wars in many parts of the continent. According to Dr Josephuse “ Using recently developed model of the overall prevalence of civil wars in about 170 countries between 1960-1999, with special reference to Africa, shows that the relatively higher prevalence of war in Africa is not due to the ethnolinguistic fragmentation of its countries rather to high levels of poverty, failed political institutions, economic dependence on natural resources and most importantly absence of a community of a shared mankin” (Gray, 2018).

It is true and empirical fact that most of violences and civil unrests take place on the African continent are attributed and results of abject poverty resulted from high rate of unemployment and under employment and of course, these are outcomes of the failed governance system and not by diversity of the people of the continent.

#### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is being the major challenge that is confronted with Africa’s growth and development. skills are being provided and capacities have been built as thousands of young Africans graduate from universities, technical and secondary schools every year ( within the continent and abroad). Yet, it is being very challenging for the job-market to absorb many of those people with dreams and aspiration. It could be debated and argued that the alarming unemployment problem should always be attributed to the lack of skills and required technical-know-how in the African labour markets. This might be relatively true in some special cases, but it should not be the only excuse to taint the problem. It is a fact that Africans in the diaspora occupying highly technical, scientific and managerial portfolios extremely perform well. Equally so, local universities on the continent have been producing highly

components graduates, but most of them have been left with no jobs for years. At times, the situation may lead and end up them doing something, which is not their areas of pedagogy, as a result, they will be lack of job satisfaction and feel psychologically depressed. Arguably, it is assumed that there is a mismatch between skills and the market in Africa, but there are certain opportunities, which are capital intensive such as agriculture sector, mining industries etc and yet unemployment is still high in many economies in Africa, which heavily rely on these capital-intensive industries. For instance, Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leon and the likes. Meanwhile, the issue is debatable (Amare, 2014). However, the point here is that the more unemployment rate is high the massive migration is likely to occur and hard to be brouth under control.

Furthermore, due to the inability of the African institutions; both public and private to absorb skilled and unskilled workers, migration has been regarded as the best and most preferable options for many Africans with skills and expertise. Ben Barkar the Assistant Director of UNESCO for Africa views that “Statistics on the brain drain from Africa are scarce but troubling” (Barka) Accordingly, the International Organization for Migration ( IOM) and the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa ( ECA) provided that the continent's skill migration is on the rise from 1800 annually in the 1970s to 20000 in 1990s and more beyond (Barka) & (Smith, 2007) . However, Table (1) illustrates emigration of skilled Africans between 1960-2000.

Moreover, according to the International Labour Organization (2017), Africa still has 38.3 million unemployees in 2017. However, it projected for this figure to rise to 39.4 million by 2018. Further, the venerable unemployment rate is estimated to climb from 275.7 million in 2017 to 283.3 by 2018. (International Labour Organization ILO, 2017) Table (2) illustrates the trend of the unemployment in the continent from 2016-2018.

Table 1 Africa's Unemployment Trend 2007-2018

Unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty trends and projections, Africa, 2007–18						
Country/region	Unemployment rate, 2007–18 (percentages)			Unemployment, 2016–18 (millions)		
	2007–2015	2016	2017	2016	2017	2018
Africa	8.0	8.0	8.0	37.1	38.3	39.4
Northern Africa	12.1	12.0	11.9	9.0	9.1	9.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.2	7.2	7.2	28.0	29.1	30.1
South Africa	25.9	26.0	26.3	5.4	5.5	5.6
Vulnerable employment rate, 2007–18 (percentages)						
Country/region	2007–2015			2016–18 (millions)		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Africa	62.6	62.5	62.4	268.2	275.7	283.3
Northern Africa	32.4	32.1	31.8	21.2	21.5	21.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	68.0	67.9	67.8	247.0	254.2	261.6
Extreme working poverty rate, 2007–18 (percentages)						
Country/region	2007–2015			2016–18 (millions)		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Africa	29.3	28.2	27.1	125.3	124.1	122.8
Northern Africa	5.3	5.3	5.2	3.5	3.5	3.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	33.6	32.3	30.9	121.9	120.6	119.2
Moderate working poverty rate, 2007–18 (percentages)						
Country/region	2007–2015			2016–18 (millions)		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Africa	28.3	28.7	29.0	121.2	126.4	131.6
Northern Africa	18.6	18.4	18.0	12.2	12.2	12.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	30.1	30.5	31.0	109.0	114.1	119.4

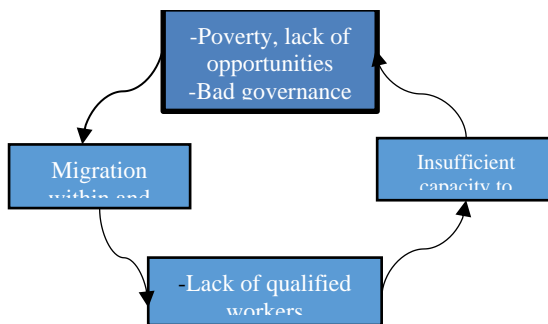
Note: Vulnerable employment rate is defined as the share of all own-account workers and contributing family workers in total employment. Moderate and extreme working poverty rates refer to the shares of workers living on income or consumption per capita between US\$1.90 and US\$3.10 per day (PPP) and less than US\$1.90 per day (PPP), respectively.

Source: ILO Trends Econometric Models, November 2016.

Source ILO. <http://tinyurl.com/jqjcgmk>

As stated in the above, emigration of Africans has been largely caused by the high rate of unemployment or underemployment. Therefore, it is pertinent to outline factors and influencing drives for the Brain Drain ( BD), which is another form of migration from the African Continent. Besides, poverty, bad governance, lack of the rule of law, lack of meritocracy, low quality of living standards for working class, underemployment, political instability and others are the main reasons migration occurs in Africa. The process and the effects of BD have been explained by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in the following figure ( Figure 2).

**Figure 2 Main factors in the Brain Drain Process**



Source: MIDA, IOM

[http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mida\\_en.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mida_en.pdf)

### **Insecurity**

It ought to be noted that insecurity in this context denotes the state of conflicts, political uncertainty, and instability without a physical war, natural disaster, hunger etc. In other words, anything or situation that forces and compels residents of a specific habitat to search a safer place regarded as more protected than their original homes characterizes as insecure. However, there are quite a number of literature on this due to its being the major factor for the people to flee their homes and seek migration in other places. It is argued that human security provides a more effective approach to many of underlying problems and threat related to the mass movement of people in migration than traditional state-security model (Viett & Scribner, 2013). That is; the nation might be traditionally peaceful with no physical war or conflict, but poverty, lack of freedom and civil liberty and other forms of insecurity against citizenries are the large proportion through which migration occurs. The article further suggests that both local and international authorities should address this concerns in order to minimize forced migration and create opportunities for migration by choice, not by compulsion or coercion (Viett & Scribner, 2013).

In addition to what has been mentioned above, physical conflicts and natural disasters constitute other determinants and persuading factors of migration “Migrants escape from war usually go to other neighbouring developing countries, often as the first step in seeking asylum. (Ratha & Shaw, Causes of South-South Migration and Its Socioeconomic Effects, 2007). Hence, this has been witnessing in many African nations. For instance, from 1989 to 2003, (the period of the Liberian Civil War) the longest and one of the most destructive civil violence in West Africa Region in the 1980s which led at approximately 600000 Liberians to be uprooted from their homes within the country or fled across international borders (Schlecht, 2003); Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, the USA, Europe and elsewhere.

### **NEXUS BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY**

It is indisputable fact that both unemployment and insecurity causes for one another. The high rate of joblessness can fuel violence and the volatility and vice versa. That is; if a country is not safe and extremely fragile, there will be less concern about job creation in the first place. It often said that “The idle hand is the devil’s workshop”; if the majority of people are out of the job market and are not productive, the situation will be doubtlessly engulfed by so-called idle hands and subsequently engender high insecurity menace for the State (Adesina, 2013). Therefore, the continent, which youths estimated at 70% of the population and majority of whom are out of the job market needs to intensify the effort to manage this issues (Africa Development Bank, 2015). Else, it is a set of a basket of grenades in a crowded place which explosion could cause many casualties. “There are all kinds of issues that happen when the infrastructure to create employment breaks down” (Escarra, 2014). Further, whether the combination of unemployment and insecurity or either of them, the situation had made millions of Africans to leave their home countries. These two concerns are the most serious threats that hinder the economic growth and shared prosperity on the African Continent. It is also obstacle of turning its demographic stress to a demographic dividend. Unless, they are addressed by governments, international development partners, and private institutions, migration will hypothetically likely to continue at a high speed and exponentially increase.

### **EFFECTS AND IMPACTS OF MIGRATION**

Migration as an old socioeconomic phenomenon in human habitat cannot be one-sidedly labelled as negative social or economic movement of people. Nevertheless, if the causes are established and drivers are instituted then, the judgment can be drawn on migration. That is, migration can yield economic and social dividends and it can also result in futility. For instance, migrants to a host nation where they find jobs and build skills. According to ( Ratha, Mustapha & Scheja 2016) “The welfare implications of migration on the origin country are most often, though not always, sizable and positive. The main channels through which migration alleviates poverty

are increased incomes from remittances, ability to smooth consumption, access to finance for starting a new business, as well as tapping on to the knowledge and resources provided by the international community to migrants diaspora. Besides pure monetary gains, migration and remittances allow for higher investments in healthcare and education. Yet, not all impacts are positive: exploitation of migrants by unscrupulous recruiters or employers is reportedly widespread; separation from family can be stressful for migrants, and large-scale immigration can pose serious challenges to a nation's identity and sovereignty" Besides, It has been reported that 2016 witnessed \$430.5 billion remitted by migrants to their nations (World Bank, 2016). Furthermore, tapping on to new skills and technology is another positive impact of migration, especially to advanced and industrialized nations.

Nevertheless, migration has some set of effects on the migrants' homes such shortage of skilled workers in some highly-demanded and critical areas of professionalism. For instance, health workers' migration poses a serious threat on the healthcare industry in Africa ' migration has further weakened fragile health system" (Connell, Zurn, Stilwe, Awases, & Braichet, 2007). However, it has been also argued that the consequences of migration, especially brain drain are less obvious in the source countries. (Beine, Docquier, & Rapoport, 2008). In addition, among the negative ramification of migration is what can usually be as a result of unregulated movement of the people or what is termed as an 'illegal migration'. For example, in the African context, thousands of migrants have lost their precious lives striving to get in Europe for better living conditions and otherwise. It is equally so, that recent report from Libya on trading in stranded African migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea is not only a violation of human rights laws, but it is another dark side of migration. According to the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, the report demonstrates "the most egregious abuses of human rights" (Roth, 2017).

### **SOLUTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES**

Having discussed some leading drivers and factors of migration in Africa and underlined some of its positive returns and dark consequences, it is, therefore, pertinent to point out some workable remedies for the dark side of migration in Africa. It is also, relevant to argue that migration has been a human activity since time immemorial, which can never be totally distasted today. However, it can be further regulated by providing some alternatives that can make a glooming side of bright human civilization. Hence, below are some options to and solutions for the mass movement of people in form of migration. Nevertheless, jobs with honour and prid in a form of reasonable minimum wage and employment incentive will be very effective to curtail and mitigate the mass migration from from the Continent.

#### **Youths Employment**

As stated *supra*, many youths risk their lives through an unregulated migration due to lack of employment opportunity or it is being slime in



their home countries. Thus, doubling the efforts to tame the legion of youth employment by the African countries along with their development partners will considerably help a lot in resolving the migrants' crisis on the continent. However, it is crucial to accentuate the relevance of goal eight of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is 'Decent Work and Economic Growth'. That is job creation alone without decency and economic imperative cannot help bringing the current migration situation in Africa under control (Olubunmi & Dey, 2017). Opportunities with quality have to be regarded.

### **Effective Poverty Reduction Strategies (EPRS)**

Abject poverty and anti-poor remuneration schemes and policies align with globalization and urbanization, which have been experiencing by many African economies need to be critically reviewed as a way forward to manage the migrants' crisis on the Continent. It is obvious for the people to migrate if the returns of the labour in their home countries cannot answer their basic needs and wants. This has been the challenge for the job market in many economies on the Continent as described by the ILO 2017 report on World Employment and Social Outlook "Meanwhile, despite marginal decreases in extreme working poverty (i.e. individuals who live on less than US\$1.90 per day), the region – driven by trends in sub-Saharan Africa – is performing poorly with regard to moderate working poverty (i.e. those living on between US\$1.90 and US\$3.10 per day)." (International Labour Organization ILO, 2017) see table (2). Therefore, minimum wages laws and policies have to be in constant adjustments to address this impediment in the labour market. It is a reality that in most emigrant-producing nations, employment opportunities are scarce or salaries are unsatisfactory as detected by the ILO report thus, this situation obliges people to seek migration to more attractive labour markets in other continent in Europe, Asia and Americas as the best alternative. (Mutume, 2006).

### **Fostering Peace and Stability**

Insecurity is one of the major determinants of migration while peace and stability on contrarily are major factors to dissuade mass migration. In other words, wars lead to poverty, low quality of life and persecution thus forcing people to flee their homes. "Most people who seek to migrate are pushed by circumstances in their home countries. War, poverty and persecution prompt people to become refugees, asylum seekers and labour migrants" (Mutume, 2006). That is, unless peace and stability get the concern of policymakers and proper modalities are put into place the legion of migration will keep escalating for decades to come.

### **Encouraging and Supporting Entrepreneurship**

Financing Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and cultivating entrepreneurship spirits in students and young people will lessen the burden on governments. Subsequently, it will constitute as a useful corridor for the job creation and income generating channels for the young people in their

countries. That is to say entrepreneurship on the African continent should play a major role in job creation, economic transformation, and building reliable and smart infrastructures (Sumaworo, 2017). It is a fact that lack of all these demanded things directly or otherwise force people to seek migration within or outside the continent.

### **Improving the Quality of Life**

It has to be admitted that infrastructural deficits in many African countries, especially the Sub-Saharan Region have been one of the main persuading factors for a large number of skilled and highly educated Africans to seek resettlement elsewhere. Further, the infrastructure in this context means lots of things such as roads, clean water, good education system, healthcare facility, and the rest. Therefore, governments and private sector along with other international development partners like the World Bank, the EU, the AU, the UN and so forth have to join hands in providing concerted efforts to answer some of these challenges as a strategy to reduce non-regulated migration in Africa.

### **Accountability and fair governance system:**

It is an empirical fact and uncontestable reality that if a country enjoys an accountable governance system, it will experience the speediest and accelerated development growth in all aspects. Thus, the likelihood of its people to migrate in a huge number will be very slim. Hence, Africa as a continent has been struggling for several decades to establish well-functioning accountable government as noted by Prof Olaniyan, 'Governance was perceived as a critical factor in accelerated and sustainable economic growth and development... Many African countries continued to rely on centralized and highly personalized forms of government and some had also fallen into an unacceptable pattern of corruption, ethnically based decision-making and human rights abuses' (Olaniyan, 2009). Besides, a fair and accountable governance means a fair distribution of wealth and fair providing of opportunities to all without any precondition but meritocracy and the merit-based selection strategy. If this happens, people from different classes will feel a sense of belongingness to the system and the migration will subconsciously change to the holidaymaking and vacation by the working class in the country. In other words, an accountable government facilitates job-creation and strives to institute security thus joblessness will sharply decline and peace will be the order of the day at the end, the people in such a country will move for adventure and holiday-making not for seeking better living standards as the case in Africa today.

Finally, an accountable governance system is achievable and attainable if policies are implemented, corrupt practices are fought, the rule of law is adhered to, nepotism and other forms political ills are uprooted. Until these

are met in Africa, it will still be a challenge to address migration crisis within and outside the continent.

### CONCLUSION

Migration in Africa has posed a serious threat and menace to the continent as it loses many of its young people who are the greatest potentials for its growth and socioeconomic transformation. Moreover, due to the inability of governments to fight the alarming unemployment rate, the situation has forced lots of productive brains, skilled and educated Africans to seek opportunities elsewhere. Besides, with no slightest doubt, this movement has its disadvantages on the Continent's economic growth and industrialization. Nevertheless, the so-called brain drain plays as well a pivotal role in reenergizing the economy of the continent in terms of billions of dollars it receives in remittance annually. Finally, migration as a part of human civilization and social norms can never be labelled as an absolute tragedy and negative practice nor absolute positive. However, emigrants-producing countries need to work hard to address some of the issues -ie. unemployment and insecurity- that often lead to the massive migration of their people for their own national interests. In conclusion, encouraging entrepreneurship, improving infrastructures, attractability of the private sector to play a role in solving and mitigating unemployment problems, transparency, good governance and leadership and waging war against corruption and so forth are some ways forward to effectively regulate and lower the risk of migration from the Continent.

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