Migrating For Freedom, Migrating into Slavery: 21st Century Ironies

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Abstract

Migration has been part of the natural dispositions and existential manifestation of humankind. And it has been part of the history as well as a fundamental tool in the making of the histories of nations and peoples. However, in recent times, there has been an increase in global movement of people, especially from the less industrialized economies of the Global South to the more industrialized economies of the Global North. This upsurge has made migration a central global issue for policymakers and scholars of diverse fields in the 21st century. The paper examines the various causes of the migration surge in the 21st century and the different restrictive measures employed especially by the economically prosperous countries of the Global North to cut the flow of immigration into their countries. The paper discusses how so many people from the less economically prosperous countries, who leave their countries of origin in search of freedom and the opportunities thereof, end up either in physical slave camps in countries like Libya and Mexico, or in virtual slave camps in dehumanizing conditions in Europe, North America and other parts of the world.

Keywords: Migration, Migrating, slavery, freedom

Introduction

Migration is part and parcel of the natural dispositions and existential manifestation of humankind. And it has been part of the history as well as a fundamental tool in the making of the histories of nations and peoples. However, in recent times, there has been an increase in global movement of people, especially from the less industrialized economies of the Global South to the more industrialized economies of the Global North. This upsurge has made migration a dominant and perennial news item and a central global issue for policymakers and scholars of diverse fields in the 21st century.[1]

While the push and pull for migration may be attributed to factors as diverse as survival and security, health and wealth, education and tourism, the ultimate explanation for migration may be traced to the innate desire for freedom in every human person. The many

factors that propel migration may be read as manifesting the various faces of the yearning of the human heart for the freedom to fully realize the humanity of the human person in themselves as individual migrants as in the many dependents and consequent beneficiaries of their migration journeys. However, an irony of the 21st century migration scenario is that instead of realizing the desired freedom, many migrants end up in different forms of slavery. And what is more ironic, and indeed bordering on the paradoxical, is that some of these migrants, caught in the web of these unsavory conditions, would seem to prefer their conditions than go home to their countries of origin. Another characteristic of the current upsurge in migration is the avalanche of negative perceptions, impressions and presentations of migration championed especially by the dominant media of the economically prosperous countries in the global north who construct pictures and narratives of invasion by armies of migrants crossing into their borders from the less economically prosperous countries. These negative presentations have in turn inspired draconian policies and punitive actions aimed at cutting down on both regular and irregular migration flows. These global scenarios also play out in microcosmic proportions in the migration relations of individual countries even within the global south depending on the perceived economic wherewithal of the sending and receiving countries.

 Expectedly, this has spurred civil society organizations to the advocacy that "migration is a natural phenomenon with massive development potential rather than a 'problem' to be solved, for the sending, the transit and the receiving countries.[2] This massive response has generated a reorientation of programs and actions aimed at creating awareness on the harrowing experiences of migrants, particularly irregular migrants who more often than not find themselves in positions of extreme vulnerability.[3]

This study will be contributing to the mounting global efforts to harness the potentials of migration by using global mobilization not only to counter the misinformation that drives irregular migrants pushing the 21st century upsurge in the global south-north migration crisis but also to counter the misconception that drives the hostile policies in responding to the global south-north migration flows.

The paper examines the various causes of the migration surge in the 21st century and the different restrictive measures employed especially by the economically prosperous countries of the Global North to cut the flow of immigration into their countries. This dovetails into examining some of the consequences of these extreme migration measures. One of these consequences is the increase in trafficking and smuggling in persons and the attendant human rights abuses. In this context, the paper discusses how so many people from the less economically prosperous countries, who leave their countries of origin in search of freedom and the opportunities thereof, end up either in physical slave camps in countries like Libya and Mexico, or in virtual slave camps in dehumanizing conditions in Europe, North America and other parts of the world.[4]

Finally, this study explores the possibilities of managing the ongoing global migration crises. Three recommendations were made in this regard: encouraging regular migration, deploying more robust multilateral economic efforts to bridge the income inequality between regions and countries; and funding an international sensitization campaign not only on the dangers of making the perilous journey of irregular migration from less to more economically prosperous countries – particularly from Africa to Europe – but most importantly, deflating the bubble that arriving in the economically prosperous countries automatically opens the door to wealth.[5]

The Migration and Mobility Debate and the Politics of Class, Discrimination and Exclusion

Many scholars have called for the reconceptualization of migration because, it is argued, the dominant understanding of the term was developed in the 19th and 20th centuries which were not characterized by globalization and fluidity of boarders as we have today.[6] In this context, the 21st century is seen as a period of fluidity and openness, in which changes in transportation, communication technology and culture are making it normal for people to think beyond borders and to cross these borders frequently for many reasons[6] so that older ideas on migration are thought to be restrictive and no longer applicable.[7]

These scholars would rather we talk about mobility, a term they feel is more befitting of the 21st century with its characteristic fluidity and because developed countries in the Global North, find themselves increasingly reliant on labour provided by migrant workers from the Global South.[8] International recruitment of highly-skilled personnel is generally considered a good thing, while lower-skilled migrant workers are seen as out-of-place in this argument.[9] This is linked to the hostile public climate towards migrant workers, asylum seekers and poor people from the South. The solution it is claimed is to designate movement of the highly-skilled as professional mobility, and that of the lower-skilled as unwanted migration. "Mobility is good because it is the badge of a modern open society; migration equals bad because it reawakens archaic memories of invasion and displacement."[10] To focus on migration therefore, rather than mobility, better reflects current global power relations and conflicts.

The proposed distinction or reconceptualization therefore reflects a lot of politics and discrimination especially against the poor unskilled migrant workers from the poor countries of the Global South. But even among the very highly skilled migrants as Bauman[11] observed, the discriminatory treatments and prejudices are still very high. What this show is that the post-modern utopia of a borderless world of mobility and equality of mankind championed by the rich economies in the Global North is yet to be achieved. In effect, for us in this paper, it still seems appropriate to focus on the analysis of migration as a process based on inequality and discrimination; controlled and limited by the overbearing power of the state. The right to mobility touted by neoliberal scholars is more class-specific and selective in the 21st century than ever and therefore is not expansive enough to replace or represent migration.[11] It is therefore germane to return attention to the concept of migration.

Migration: Definitions and Classifications

As would be expected, scholars have different views regarding what can be identified as migration. While there are scholars who consider any form of movement from one's place of residence to another destination migration, there are others who feel that only cross boarder movements should be seen as migration. For instance, Teevan states, "Human

migration can be defined simply as the movement of people from Africa to Europe… and transnational migration across significant boundaries for the purpose of permanent settlement."[12] Some studies use a cut-off point of six months duration to define migration[13], while others consider any movement to be classified as migratory if it is not less than a year.[14]

There is need therefore to ask: what exactly defines migration: is it just any type of movement; is it defined by cause, destination, duration or purpose? There are differences of opinions from different scholars. Nevertheless, whatever concept of migration one chooses to adopt, whether it is migration because of natural disasters, migration for greener pastures, it may meaningfully and expansively be conceptualized as the movement to new location for optimum realization of freedom. In other words, migration is the spatial movement in search of freedom. This movement may be internal or cross border. It also involves taking up residence for a reasonable duration in the place of destination.

Classification of migration is not usually dispassionate. It is rather a process that goes from pure academic engagement to dense political conceptualizations punctuated by disciplinary and political interests. One can begin by recognizing two types of migration: internal and international migration. When the migration process occurs within national boundaries of a country, it is referred to as internal migration and when it occurs across national borders it is international migration.[15] Internal migration is of four types: - rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural (return migration).[16]

Migration involves the movement from and the movement to. These two terminals of migration are: emigration and immigration. Although they semantically define migration as such, they are more regularly applied to international migration. In this context, the former entails the movement away from one's country of origin and the latter involves movement into another country. According to M. O. Nwatulu:

> Emigrating involves leaving a geo-social space of one's birth
> and travelling to settle in another region temporarily or
> permanently. 'Immigrating' entails coming into a geo-political
> territory to settle temporarily or permanently. Thus, 'migrate'

or 'emigrate' means to leave a place for another, while 'immigrate' means to come into a place to stay. Immigrating usually refer to the crossing of a foreign geographical boundary (as in transnational movement into a new country), while 'migrating' can happen within the same nation-state's geo-territorial limits.[17]

Another important category in international migration is regular and irregular migration. A number of scholars have insisted on using the official government distinction of legal and illegal migration while civil society organizations have insisted on the terms regular and irregular migration. These distinctions are both academic and political, and they also smack of the fluidity and political nature of migration and international law and relations. To say that a person is making an illegal movement implies that the movement is already criminalized. Expectedly, the next step should be to apprehend and prosecute the person. However, the change of the usage to regular and irregular introduces a neutrality of action and discourse that allows for consideration of each case of migration on merit.

According to Jordan and Düvell, while irregular migration entails "international movement or residency in conflict with migration laws", regular migration involves "crossing borders with proper authorization, or without violating conditions for entering another country."[18] There are two categories of irregular migration: those who left their countries without proper travel documentation and enter destination countries improperly and those who entered properly but overstayed their visas or who take on jobs that are not covered by their visas.[19]

However, the line between regular and irregular migration are very fluid. First, it is useful to make a distinction between irregular *entry* and irregular *stay*. Many irregular migrants enter destination countries regularly, but subsequently overstay their visas, or engage in work not covered by their visas and thus relapse into irregular migrant status. On the other hand, migrants entering or residing in a country irregularly can acquire regular residency through marriage or through the normal regularization process. In the case of overland migration from West Africa, migrants cross many countries, some of which do allow their

entry and some of which do not. The result is that a migrant moves in and out of formal regularity and irregularity.[20]

The next category in the migration classification is voluntary and involuntary migration. This classification is what will start us out on the discourse of the transition of the journey of migration from freedom to slavery. Voluntary migration refers to when the choice to migrate is taken by the intending migrant while involuntary migration is when one is forced to move. The question however, is how voluntary is what we call voluntary migration today? When a person from a poverty-stricken country moves to a more prosperous country, is that decision really voluntary or is it compelled, impelled or propelled? When one decides, chooses or moves under duress, would that be considered voluntary or involuntary?

Social and economic factors play significant roles in human mobility, in particular migration. The existing inequality in the level of socio-economic development, resources, and opportunities between places and regions, which has led to the classification of places and people into deprived, disadvantaged and underdeveloped, is a significant determinant of migration. Based on this, it is not often easy to have a clear distinction between voluntary and forced migration. For instance, while the concept forced migration is mostly used to describe the movement of refugees, asylees and internally displaced persons,[21] J. O. Udenta, et al., see the migration of Nigerians due to economic challenges in the country as an instance of forced migration.[22]

The distinction between voluntary and forced or involuntary migration dovetail into classifications of smuggling and trafficking. This later classification lies at the heart of the discourse on freedom and slavery in migration. While voluntary and involuntary are not co-terminus with smuggling and trafficking, the levels of referential overlap of the terms are significant. The term "trafficking in persons" is usually restricted to situations in which people are deceived, threatened or coerced into situations of exploitation including prostitution, debt bondage and forced labour. In the case of "human smuggling", on the other hand, a migrant is usually presumed to voluntarily engage the services of smugglers

to circumvent immigration restrictions. Such migrants are not seen as being victims of deception or exploitation.[23]

As underscored above, it is difficult in practice to distinguish between clearly between trafficking in persons and human smuggling. However, policymakers, NGO activists and academics who regard trafficking as a meaningful concept typically emphasize two main sets of differences between trafficking and smuggling. The first difference is temporal. Trafficking is held to involve a relationship that continues during and after the migrant has arrived at the country of destination, whereas "smuggled persons are generally left to make their own way after crossing the border."[24] According to Bales et al, "In cases of trafficking, the act of smuggling is just a prelude to and conduit into enslavement." Smuggling and trafficking are thus perceived as processes that may overlap at the stages of origin and transit, but become clearly differentiated at the point of destination.[25] It is apropos to underscore here that what started as smuggling might transform into trafficking while what started as trafficking cannot at any time become smuggling.

The second distinction between smuggling and trafficking is epistemological or extent of knowledge or ignorance of the migrant. The trafficked person is kept in ignorance of the process and purpose while the smuggled person is an informed and willing partner in both process and purpose of the migration. While trafficking therefore involves use of coercion and/or deception, smuggling involves collaboration and cooperation between the smuggler and the smuggled person.[26] To the two identified sets of differences, we must add a third, the ethical or moral distinction: the question of voluntariness. From the discussions so far that, barring the circumstances of acting under duress, it would seem that while the migrant in the case of human smuggling acts voluntarily, the trafficked migrant is forced and so does not act voluntarily.

The assumption of an either/or distinction between forced and voluntary migration is reflected in the kind of obligations that the states are deemed to have in relation to the two categories of migrants involved. Though still limited, states' obligations towards victims of trafficking (VoTs) are more extensive than they are towards smuggled persons.[27] This gradation and prioritization of the rights of trafficked persons over those of other

categories of irregular migrants is often endorsed by anti-trafficking campaigners from NGOs and human rights lobby groups. For example, Sheila Jefferys, a member of the Coalition against Trafficking in women, states that:

> Whilst smuggling of migrants can be seen as a crime against the state and involves a mutual interest between the smuggler and the smuggled, trafficking is a crime against the person trafficked. Persons who are smuggled are generally left to fend for themselves in their destination countries, having already paid off the smugglers. They have physical freedom and if not apprehended are able to search for means to survival. Trafficked persons are usually in debt slavery to the traffickers…. Smuggled people are not delivered to slavery in the way. Trafficking is a human rights crisis for the trafficked.[28]

As well as sharing assumption that the social relationships generated by smuggling end on arrival in the country of destination, Jeffreys fails to consider that having been complicit in what is deemed to be a crime against the state, people's opportunities to fend for themselves are usually heavily restricted, and this in combination with fear of losing their physical freedom and/or being deported if apprehended, can lead them to accept, and/or be unable to retract from, hugely exploitative and sometimes violent employment relations and extremely poor working conditions. Meanwhile, her emphasis on debt as one of the key mechanisms by which traffickers secure control over their victims is found much more widely in dominant discourse on trafficking. However, as J. Bhabha & M. Zard argue, closer inspection of the complex realities of regular and irregular migration shows that the line between smuggling and trafficking is often very difficult to draw.[29]

21st Century Upsurge in Global Migration

In the long history of mankind, every age is often characterized using the dominant element(s) prevalent in that age. For instance, history has had the Stone Age, the Iron Age, the Jet Age, the Atomic Age, the Computer Age, the Information Age, etc. Following this tradition of characterization, many scholars have come to believe that the most befitting

characterization of the 21st century should be the Age of Migration.[30] Jason, Gagnon, in this regard described migration in the 21st century as "The talk of the moment."[31]

According to the IOM, "there were 170 million migrants in 2000; today, there are roughly 281 million;"[32] which is an increase of more than one hundred percent. In fact, scholars argue that there has been a "globalization of migration" which is "the tendency for more and more countries to be crucially affected by migratory movement at the same time."[33] But, the question is, why this surge or boom in migration?

Understanding the Upsurge in 21st Century Global Migration

Human beings will always flee from natural and man-made disasters and move from a place of scarce resources to a place of relative abundance. Therefore, "migration is inevitable."[34] However, the spectacular nature of 21st century migration, especially from the poor countries in the Global South, to the rich countries of the Global North has elicited a lot of interests on the possible drivers of 21st century migration. Also, scholars have always drawn lines of relationship between migration and slavery; however, the migration trend specifically associated with slavery in the 21st century is predominantly South-North migration flows. Hence, the specific drivers of migration that are of specific interest to this discourse are the factors responsible for South-North migration. Our discussion will therefore focus on such factors.

Globalization

The globalization of transportation, communication and mobility generally means that the borders have become as fluid as they can be. The ease of communication say between family members in Europe and America and those back home in Africa has made it easier to know when the boarders are open, when visa applications are more favorable and the type of opportunities available in the destination countries. These are occasioned by globalization and are part of the basic drivers of the upsurge in 21st century migration.[35]

Global Economic Inequality

This is at the heart of the global north-south surge in migration. It is also part of the reason why migration has earned the negative toga it wears in the 21st century because the economically advanced countries of the world today see migration as a form of invasion of their territory by citizens of the poor countries of the world. Thus, migration is treated as a security problem which must be handled selectively and where these rich countries are the ones determining who should migrate and how and to where.

Between 1960 and 1990, migration among the poor countries of the Global South was stable. However, a lot of changes have taken place since the 1990s. The number of migrants from the Global South who are living in the Global North has increased by 85%—more than double the increase in the global migrant stock as a whole (38%). South-South migration increased by 22%, followed by North-North migration (26%); North-South migration has undergone very little change. Thus, in 1990, international migrants who were born in the South and residing in the South (60million) outnumbered international migrants born in the South and residing in the North (40million) by 50% by 2010, this picture had reversed, with South-South migrants (74million) outnumbering South-South migrants (73million).[36]

One of the major factors identified as responsible for the global south-north migration surge in the 21st century is the income inequality or imbalance in global income distribution.[37] Comparing the contribution of class and location, Milanovic estimates that in the early 19th century, 35 percent of differences in income was due to differences between countries, while some 65 percent was due to within country differences. In the early 21st century, the proportion was more than reversed, with 85 to 90 percent due to differences between countries and 10 to 15 percent due to within-country differences.

Over the same period, the overall level of global inequality grew from a Gini index to 43 (slightly more equal than the 45 Gini index for the United States) to a Gini index of 70. This is a hiher level of inequality than the 65 Gini index in South Africa which is among the highest in the world.[38] Acemoglu and Robinson, in their book, Why Nations Fail; also demonstrate how country and regional differences explain world inequality and income differences between individuals.[39]

Thus, throughout history there has been inequality within every country but today's inequalities are overwhelmingly determined by national divisions. In such a world, it should come as no surprise that people try to move to areas where they will get better deal. The phenomenon is worldwide, and especially pronounced wherever wealth and poverty coexist in close proximity: Africans from around the continent find their way to South Africa, South Asians and Africans find work in the Middle East, Mexicans and Central Americans cross the border to the US Southwest. People risk their lives on small boats from Africa to Europe, or from the Caribbean to Florida.[40]

Migration: From Freedom to Slavery

The governments and citizens of many countries in the global north feel that the 21st century surge in South-North migration has made matters worse for them. Thus, they have taken a number of restrictive measures to curtail it. These perceptions affects political popularity: politicians and political parties are tempted to use selective, mostly negative aspects of the migration to rally the electorate around national identities. Political opposition to migration occurs despite a consensus of data that the economies of both sending and receiving countries benefit economically from migration. Even though the sending countries may experience labour and brain drain, they benefit from remittance flow from their diaspora; similarly, the receiving countries get a boost of human capital and growth in vital sectors of their economy. [41]

The negative perceptions, the political hype and anti-migration policies have made it more difficult for regular and especially for irregular migrants from the Global South many of whom have lost their lives why making the journey to countries in the Global North. It has also created a slave like condition for those who are already in the North as they now have to live and work under harsher conditions occasioned by the restrictive measures put in place by the Global North.[42]

As Ndiokwere reported, some Nigerians have attempted suicide when they learnt about the type of job they have come to do in especially Europe. According to her, many of the women who believed that the middle men were helping them to further their education in Europe

and America are shocked when they learnt about the type of job that is awaiting them. A case in view is a medical student who was in a group of recruited would-be prostitute, who according to Ndiokwere, violently pleaded with the police and Italian immigration officials in Rome to send her back to Nigeria. With the help of the Nigerian Embassy in Rome, the student and a couple of other decent women in the group were flown back to their fatherland.[43]

This was all the more confirmed by a 2009 report from the Punch Newspaper that "Eleven suspects accused of forcing 150 young Nigerian girls into prostitution in Europe after helping them to enter the Netherlands as asylum seekers went on trial in a Dutch court. These 11 persons will have to answer to charges of human trafficking and being members of a criminal organization.[44]

What is common from most of the stories told by many migrant girls is that a good number of them come from very humble backgrounds. They receive promises either to be sent to school or engaged in one form of domestic work or another. But not all of the girls belong to this group. There are others who migrated through contacts or arrangements by friends already in the business and who gave them information on its lucrative nature and assisted them to migrate to join in the business.[45]

However, the fundamental question remains, have these difficulties and slave-like conditions discouraged people from traveling or aspiring to travel to countries in the global north? Why are people still rushing to migrate, even irregularly, even when they are informed of the perilous journeys and the slave-like living conditions? This brings us to the crux of the matter. The perplexing scenario of what, for lack of better description, may be termed 'option for slavery' in the 21st century. A number of those who travelled and suffered these dehumanizing experiences still prefer remaining or returning to such conditions rather than returning home because they argue that it is still better out there. What are the factors responsible for this perplexing situation? What are the factors that would make someone prefer slavery to freedom? Or is it possible that the conditions at home may be even more enslaving than the deplorable conditions in the destination

countries? Or are there global dimensions and structures to all these? Let us examine some factors that may answer to some of the foregoing queries and quandaries.

The increasing Pauperization: Local and Global

The first reason why global south migrants apparently accept the slavery that travelling and living in the global north entails is the increased pauperization of countries in the global south. This has created a situation where the person who is enslaved seems to prefer his slavery - seems because the issue of voluntariness is still an issue here.

The Utopia and its Elixir

Another factor that fuels the movement is the utopia and the consequent elixir. This has to do with seeing the global north as an Eldorado; once one arrives there, one picks money on the streets or pluck from the trees. Thus, even those who are supposed to be informed still fall by this utopia sold by the traffickers and their networks. The obsession is also reinforced by the lifestyle of the few that return 'having made it'. These few come back to their pauperized communities and, at every opportunity, seek to flaunt their wealth; literally, they 'spray cash'. And many young persons would want to 'spray cash'. So the utopia grows and the elixir intoxicates even the more.

"Once I get to Europe, I will become rich."[46] Chijioke, a 30-year-old Nigerian, proudly announced to the delight of his young family and parents. Much as this statement betrays a speaker uniformed about Europe, it expresses the popular belief of nearly all African irregular migrants to Europe. Like many other Africans, Chijioke had hoped to enter Europe irregularly. After many years of failed attempts, he returned home to Nigeria, ghostlike, totally spent and penniless. According to M. F. Asiegbu, who told this story, Chijioke did not go beyond Algeria. The source of his expectations lies in the presumably abundant, accessible job opportunities in Europe.

Many migrants, completely ignorant of the socioeconomic conditions in Europe, entertain the idea of Europe as an easy-to-go environment, a paradise on earth. While they may not be completely on Europe being economically more viable than their home countries in Africa, they merely have their heads in the clouds about Europe of their dreams –a utopic Europe. Their idea of Europe derives from the impact of the consumer society. As a result

of joblessness and poverty, the migrants perceive a ray of hope in the bright future that the European consumer society seems to offer to them. Tied in with the belief of a very rich Europe is the assurance that they will receive a just wage for their labour. Thus, in the service sector, cleaning jobs, stacking supermarket shelves, menial jobs in the factories and farms, and some other odd jobs which do not yield any meaningful means of livelihood in Africa, takes on, for the migrants an entirely new meaning and attraction for Europe.

Notably most young people like Chijioke, from the Global South, faced with poverty and unemployment and lack of hope from their countries, are eager to try their luck in what may appear to them at first sight as their El Dorado. Many of them struggle to reach it, in utter disregard of the involved risks by all means regular or irregular.[47]

From Negative Perception to Punitive Restrictions

The negative perception of migration projected by the leading media of the economically rich countries of the global north and their political elites affects attitudes of governments and citizens and results in xenophobic responses and punitive restrictions. Mainstream Western media and popular discourses present the world, especially Europe and North America as confronted with unprecedented level of migration crisis. The dramatic images of African migrants massively scaling the tall border fences separating the Spanish enclave of Ceuta and Melilla on Morocco's Mediterranean coast, the attempts to cross the Mediterranean in small fishing boats, the arrival of large number of African migrants on the shore of the Canary Island, and the recent discovery of slave markets of African migrants in Libya, all reinforce the perception of mounting African immigration pressure on Europe's South-West borders.[48]

All these create one massive picture: swelling masses of desperate migrants, particularly, Africans, fleeing poverty and war at home and trying to enter Europe irregularly.[49] The desperation is further reflected in the deaths at sea in the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and the Gulf of Aden, and in the burning sands of the Sahara desert and the desert along the US- Mexican border.[50]

The media, politicians, and scholars have often portrayed this migration as 'new', 'increasing' and 'massive.' Media reportage and popular discourse give rise to an apocalyptic image of a 'wave' or 'exodus' of 'desperate' Africans fleeing poverty and war at home in search of the 'El Dorado', crammed in long-worn ships barely staying afloat.[51] Millions of sub-Saharan Africans are commonly believed to be waiting in North Africa to cross to Europe, which fuels the fear of an imminent invasion. These migrants are commonly seen as economic migrants although perhaps masquerading as refugees.[52]

In recent years, the EU, its member states and other countries in the Global North have prioritized the issue of migration. According to William Minter:

> Anti-migrant sentiment, leading to restrictive legislation, official abuses against immigrants, and in extreme cases xenophobic violence, is widespread in countries as diverse as South Africa, Libya, Italy, Switzerland and the United States. Migrants are widely blamed for crime, for taking 'our jobs', and for threatening national identity. Empirical evidence to the contrary had relatively little impact on public opinion.[53]

Therefore, starting from the 1990s, states in the Global North have mainly responded to migration, particularly, irregular migration by increasing the strictness of their visa regimes and by intensifying border controls. This involved the deployment of military forces and hardware in the prevention of migration by sea.[54] When groups of migrants started to push their ways into Ceuta and Melilla, fences were erected in the year 2000 to keep them off.[55] Over the past decades, Spain has attempted to seal off its borders. Besides erecting fences at Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish government installed an early warning radar system (SIVE or Integrated System of External Vigilance) at the Strait of Gibraltar, a system that has recently been extended to the Canary Islands.[56] For the same reason, the US government under Donald Trump not only tightened its visa regime but started building a security wall on its border with Mexico. The implication of this is that a number of young

people transmute from regular to irregular migrants thereby exposing themselves to the whims of the traffickers and their networks.

The 'Voluntary' Pacts between the EU and Some African Countries

Another point that constitutes this movement from freedom to slavery is the 'voluntary' pacts between the EU and a number of African countries. The EU countries have attempted to externalize border controls towards the Maghreb countries by transforming them into 'buffer zone' to reduce migratory pressure at EU's southern border.[57] They have done so by pressuring a number of North African countries to clamp down on irregular migrants, tighten immigration laws and readmit irregular sub-Saharan migrants from Europe and then expel them from their own territoritories.[58]

These pacts and agreements are usually laced with development aids and financial and material support for joint border controls. Particularly in Italy, a limited number of temporary works permits for migrants from such countries constitute part of the inducements.[59] Facing the recent increase in trans-Mediterranean migration by migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Italy and Spain, in particular, have recently concluded similar agreements with sub-Saharan countries. Since 2003, Spain and Morocco, as well as Italy and Libya, have started to collaborate in joint sea patrols and readmission of migrants in exchange for aid. According to Hein de Haas, in 2006, Spain received limited support from Frontex, the new EU external border control agency, to patrol the routes between Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verda, and the Canary Island by airplanes, helicopters and speed boats. Frontex also plans to coordinate patrols involving Italy, Greece and Malta to monitor the area between Malta, Italian Island of Lampedusa, Tunisia and Libyan coasts.[60]

While the EU leaders call these agreements with African leaders bilateral, it is questionable how bilateral they are. In the pact between unequal parties, freedom of choice is significantly questionable. The scenario of African governments entering into pacts with European leaders to patrol the borders and restrict Africans from migrating to Europe with the promise of development and financial aids smacks of lack of freedom.

This lack of freedom caused by the pauperization of the global south not just by the global north but by the leaders of the global south has taken away from the global south the capacity to choose both as nations and as individuals such that even the choices we make for freedom could be termed choices in slavery for further self-enslavement.

Consequences of 21st Century Restrictive Immigration Policies

The general intention of those in the Global North who conceive and implement restrictive immigration policies is to reduce the influx of migrants into their countries. However, some empirical researches have shown that restrictive immigration policies do not necessarily reduce immigration. For instance, as Europe tightened its admission requirements and enforcement measures, it also began to pressure North Africa and West African states to cooperate in reducing immigration. Libya, where migrants constitute at least 10% of the population by 2000, joined in stepping up deportations, driven both by popular Libyan anti-immigrant sentiment and by government policies agreed with Europe.[61] Yet according to Hein de Haas and other researchers, these measures did not alter the fundamental trends based on the need for labour in Europe and supply of labour available from Africa. They did, however, ensure that a rising proportion of migrants were forced into more risky means to reach their destinations and contribute to a misleading image of "an invasion" of destitute migrants.[62]

In addition, the claim that migration policies are ineffective has been largely confirmed by researches focusing on the US-Mexican migration borders. In this particular setting, there was clearly an acceleration of migration from the late 1970s through 2005 in the context of rising border enforcement, pointing to the limited and potentially counterproductive effects of migration restrictions. After extensive empirical research conducted on the US-Mexican border, Cornelius found that border enforcement increased migrant mortality by redirecting unauthorized migrants to more hazardous areas, raised smuggling fees and discouraged unauthorized migrants already in the US from returning to Mexico. He found that there is no evidence border enforcement significantly decreased new irregular migrants, particularly because of the absence of serious effort to curtail employment of unauthorized migrants through worksite enforcement.[63]

Angelucci observed that stricter border controls actually increased the size of unauthorized migrants between 1972 and 1986 suggesting that the return-reducing effects of the border controls exceeded their inflow-reducing effects in the short to medium terms.[64] In the same vein, Massey et al, found that the main effect of border enforcement has been a rapid decrease in circularity among unauthorized migrants.[65] They therefore concluded that post-1965 immigration restrictions for Mexicans and other Latin Americans "set off a chain of events that in the ensuing decades had the paradoxical effect of producing more rather than fewer Latino immigrants." Similar observations have been made for migration along a few other prominent South-North labour frontiers.[66]

The bottom-line is that in spite of the appeal of more restrictive measures in many destination countries, the promise of controlling migration flow is likely to be elusive. Such measures as researches have shown, definitely raise the cost and risk of migration, shift migration from regular to irregular or divert migrants from one destination country to another; but over all, they certainly increase the scale of human rights abuses against migrants. What they may not achieve is to stop the trend of migration from increasing in an unequal world, any more than internal controls have stopped rural to urban migration particularly in countries where the rural areas are abandoned without basic infrastructure.

Finally, the intersection of pauperization and negative perceptions of migration leads to punitive restrictions. The consequence of all this is that the ripples pushing more young people into irregular migration constitutes the vehicle conveying them to the Libyan and other slave markets. The 2017 CNN documentary that exposed what takes place in this slave market caused uproar around the world. Undercover video footage appeared to show sub-Saharan migrants being sold into servitude. As "smugglers become masters" the report noted, "migrants and refugees become slaves".[67] The scenes of slave auctions overshadowed the fifth summit of the African Union and the European Union that took place in the Ivory Coast a few weeks later. Several African leaders echoed the demand voiced by its host, President Alassane Ouatara to end such "disgraceful drama which reminds us of the darkest hours of humanity". The AU took far reaching decisions but like the Nigerian government 'pipeline' those decisions are still in the pipeline. Several European leaders led by the French President Emmanuel Macron, called for an end to these barbaric scenes and rapid evacuation of the enslaved.

Not only politicians reacted to the CNN report. In Pretoria, London, Lagos, Paris, Bamako, Berlin, etc. thousands took to the streets to call for political actions. Celebrities publicly declared their solidarity with the enslaved and called political leaders to rise up to their responsibility. As Maurice Stierl pointed out, the scenes of slavery caught on camera had hit a nerve. As something of the past that has no place in our contemporary world, slavery in 2017, the worldwide disbelief seemed to express, was an anarchronism.[68]

However, the harrowing experience of global south migrants making their ways to the global north and the attendant comparison of 21st century migration to slavery is not something new. Many nongovernmental and international organizations had long denounced the incarceration of thousands in inhuman conditions in Libya. It took the media broadcast of the slave auction to provoke such global reaction.

However, the Libyan slave market is just one of many instances of the story of migrating for freedom and migrating into slavery across our world today. The story of the enslavement of Africans in the Asian world is told in the book, *The Last Declaration* by Blaise Ezeokeke, a young Nigerian who travelled to Malaysia for his master's studies. The accounts of the horrendous experience of African immigrants in Malaysia and Indonesia make the horrors of the Sahara Desert movement and the Mediterranean Sea movement a child's play. However, this has not caught global attention as the Africa-Europe migration narratives.

What is clear is that the magnitude and scale of the 21st century slavery can only be compared to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. We all condemn the Transatlantic Slave Trade for good reasons but the 21st century slavery bears some grave and remarkable differences with the Slave Trade. The uniqueness of the 21st century slavery is that while in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, people were taken forcefully, in the 21st century slavery, people choose to be enslaved and even when they are given the option to return many would prefer their situations of enslavement. So it is that even in cases where the persons in slavery are given the opportunity to return, they would ask: return to what? That is the uniqueness as also the irony of the 21st century slavery: that they who set out in search of freedom end up in slavery and then choose the slavery over freedom. What is the cause of this irony? How can the irony be overturned?

Addressing the 21st Century Irony

Issues such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade, colonialism, the world wars, the cold war and the arms race, etc. determined the directions of global policy and politics in the recent past. In the 21st century, migration has become one of humankind's gravest policy concerns. This is particularly true in the South-North migratory flows where migration is not just seen as a problem but a kind of invasion, a subversion of sovereignty. Following upon this perception, policy makers in the North are deploying very restrictive measures aimed at curtailing the flows. This has forced many citizens of global south countries to divert to irregular migrations, especially employing the services of traffickers and smugglers resulting in the kind of human rights abuses comparable to the experiences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and colonialism. To change this trend of human rights abuses and rather maximize the potentials of migration, the following recommendations are proposed:

The perception of migration as a problem by policy makers in the global north will have to change. Migration is a social phenomenon with potentials for good as well as for evil depending on the choices and actions that humans as rational beings make and take. As shown above, migration is principally a key driver for human capacity building and development in the 21st century not only for the sending but also for the transit and destination countries. The transition from considering migration a problem to seeing it as an instrument for human capital development will help to generate the disposition that is required to harness the potentials of migration.

Also, abundant evidence has shown that restrictive migration policies do not curtail migration; rather they encourage smuggling and trafficking in persons. Many empirical researches have shown that trafficking and smuggling in persons is one of the highest sources of fund for many criminal gangs around the world. As such, it is not only true that restrictive migration policies do not curtail migration; it is also true that they increase both irregular migration, breed human rights abuses and serve as source of funding for the operations of criminal gangs around the world. Thus, one of the ways of managing the 21st century upsurge in global south-north migration is by encouraging regular migration by opening many regular avenues for migration. This will reduce the desperation seen

currently in migrants from the global South. It will also starve organized crimes of funding and thereby help to reduce global crime, including terrorism.

Another very important way of managing 21st century migration upsurge is by making concerted efforts to reduce the income inequality between the global south and north. People predominantly migrate because they want better economic conditions. This is why mass migration is usually from areas of less opportunity to areas of greater opportunities. Furthermore, this bridging of inequality is not just a matter of managing migration but also a demand of social justice. To bridge the income gap between south and north and thereby manage the perceived migration surge, there is need to go beyond mere aids and donations to dealing with the structures that engender and sustain inequality. This cannot be a unilateral action but a bilateral dialogical engagement where countries in the global south should rise up to their responsibilities of leadership in negotiating with the global north on how to dismantle the unjust global trade structures.

The last recommendation which is directly related to the title of this paper is managing migration through awareness campaigns and dissemination of information on the pros and cons of regular and irregular migration. Because of the enormous importance that the world attaches to the issue of migration today, such mobilization has to go beyond putting up adverts in televisions and newspapers but has to be incorporated into the school system beginning from primary schools. That way, the nature, benefits, advantages, disadvantages, complexity, etc. of migration will be inculcated in children from a very tender age making them better prepared to make informed decisions on migration.

Conclusion

As has been developed in the foregoing pages, a central policy concern in the 21st century, especially for the global north countries, seems to be how to curtail the surge in south-north migration. The key effort by many of the economically prosperous countries in this regard is focused on deploying restrictive immigration policies. Nevertheless, this effort rather than curtailing the surge has produced the counter effect.

A reversal of the trend requires a change in perception. The perception of migration which leads to closing of borders thereby increasing irregular migration can be changed by increasing reorientation through sensitization and education. The resolution in the 2017 Nigerian National Migration Dialogue to mainstream migration studies into the education curriculum of the country is commendable. The consequent decision of the Senate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University to develop postgraduate academic programmes in migration studies and establish the first Centre for Migration Studies in the Nigerian University system are all actions in the right direction towards the recommended reorientation of potential migrants as well as policy makers and implementing agencies. In this light, it is also necessary to strengthen the extant laws and the agencies that enforce them. Ultimately, if inequality at the local and global levels is not addressed, the migration surge will not only increase, the transmogrification of the journey for freedom into slavery will continue.

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