

AFRICAN MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL FUTURE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

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Executive Summary

The conundrum of African predicaments has created a general despair in the populace. This situation now catalyzes incessant migration of many Africans to the Western and Asian countries. African migration is the mass movement of indigenous Africans out of the continent in search of conducive environment necessary for fruitful economic ventures and better living conditions. This phenomenon has become unprecedented in recent time and its increasing wave is being propelled by the popular Nigerian slogan Japa. Why then are there persistent African predicament and unconducive environment in Africa, hence the surging migration? Could it be that African continent is now becoming uninhabitable and unsuited for Africans? Are there other factors in African continent catalyzing the present surging migration of the inhabitants? Is this unprecedented surge in African migration of any benefit to Africa and the migrants? Are African governments making enough effort to control this unprecedented phenomenon? What are the intentions of African migrants amidst their migration (japa) to America, Europe or Asia? What implications does the present African migration (japa) hold for the global future? In critical response to these questions, this paper, using the method of phenomenology, interrogates the increasing migration of Africans to Western and Asian countries (popularly called japa) to determine their rationale, implications and what the phenomena hold for the global future. The study as well accesses the impact of African migration on African continent and in the host countries. The discourse finds that African migration is a posteriori outcome of human needs. Along the ultimate search for these needs are African migrants confronted by

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actual needs expectation versus actual needs satisfaction. The widening gap between these needs now underscores scholars' conclusion that African migration may appear lucrative, yet it maximizes loss of human capital/resources, creates human dissatisfaction, despair and attitudes akin to 'already made situations.' The study also finds that the increasing African migration (japa) is now a phenomenon that feeble the morale of the African; indisposes him or her to attitude necessary for autochthonous venture or development or for staying behind and joining in developing his or her country. The study then opts for controlled migration, and notes the need for good governance that would create a conducive environment for better human living condition and fruitful economic ventures.

Key words: Africa; Global Future; Japa, Migration; Needs satisfaction

Introduction

There is a deep-rooted need in human psyche that strikes far beneath other needs and interests. This is the need to feel comfortable and at home in this universe (Burt, 1970). Inadequacy of this need in Africa is occasioned by poor governance, harsh economic condition, insecurity, poor social welfare, incentive, and unconducive environment that are now the foundation of poor human condition that catalyzes the increasing African migration. As such, many Africans now “want to escape the economic hardship they face in their home countries into a better land” for a better life (Isife, 2022:6). This increasing escape among Africans has recently found expression in the popular Nigerian slang *japa*; which connotes a quick, anyhow, but permanent escape to Europe, America or Asia without coming back to Africa (Ayandayo, 2022). This phenomenal escape (*japa*) results from a greater number of African citizens' dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the continent; hence ‘*japa*’ (to escape or run) is a disavowal of patriotism and a new cultural personality as well as a trigger of the current mass migration of Africans to Europe, America or Asia (Dayo, 2022). Consequently, African migration records an increasing rate of 5% per annum in 1951 and 1953, 8% in 1963 and now to an unprecedented percentage (Ajaegbu, 1976). Between 2000 and 2019, the number of African migrants then swelled “from 15.1 million to 26.6 million” (Hovy, Laczko, Kouassi, Vidal, Iturralde and Bel-Aube, 2019:16). This increment plunges African migration to the relative increase of 76% more than migration from the other continents of the world (Hovy, et al, 2016). Responding to this unprecedented increment, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2017) reports in Achieng, El Fadil and Righa (2019:1) reveals “that there were about 41 million international migrants moving from Africa; where 17 million were residents outside the continent.” Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019:2) congruently responds that, there were 36.3 million African migrants in 2017, amounting to 2.9% of Africa's population. African migrations represented around 14% of the global migrant population... In 2017,

the top ten migration flows from Africa...the EU hosted 9 million African migrants, 5 million from North Africa and 4 million from sub-Saharan Africa.

Indeed, many Africans now migrate in droves to countries in Europe, America and Asia “believing that life is better lived in those countries” (Isife, 2023:129). This is evident in the large number of Africans crowding western and some Asian countries’ embassies in quest for visas as well as the irregular large number of Africans risking the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea to cross to Europe. Adu (2018:88) observes that this increasing regular and irregular African migration is among the reasons Africa is “portrayed as the continent with the most mobile population in the world.” This mobility however appears to be encouraged by the leadership of African countries, who appears to be less interested in quality of governance and on improving human living condition that could check migration, but are more interested in the increasing migrants’ remittances that lead to increased government revenue and economic advantage (Ratha, Mohapatra and Scheja, 2011). Yet, these much-vaunted remittances come at substantial costs to the migrants and their families. Along with this is the brain drain of unimaginable magnitude that draws many agents of development out from African continent. Counted among these factors are the challenges of integration of these African migrants faced by the host countries.

A critical investigation indeed reveals that those who migrate out of Africa possess some amount of wealth. Hence, they are able to fund their journey. As such, poor Africans hardly migrate at the international level. This is as their situation disconnects them from world markets, global trade, information, production networks and financial wherewithal required for migration (Taylor, Walkey and Mbokazi 2019). African migration in modern time has however become more possible for people with the required means because of the present globalization that has “narrowed the bridge that once separated nations of the world,” and enhanced interdependence of diverse sections of the world and human cross-border movement (Isife, 2022: 1-2). The increasing African migration however draws the attention of diverse African governments and right-thinking people because of the global future the phenomenon holds for humanity and Africa in particular. Unless the situations catalyzing the recent increasing African migration are quickly addressed and the phenomenon controlled, its propelling expression *japa* will continue to grab the psyche of more Africans, and African countries may eventually lose the able manpower and human capital required for the sustainable development of the continent.

Conceptualizing African migration and its propelling ‘japa’ thought

African migration is the movement of indigenous Africans from the continent to other parts of the world in search of permanent or temporal residence and greener pastures.

International Organization for Migration in Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019) Reports connotes this view, alluding to African migration as the movement of a person or a group of persons of African origin across an international border or out of the African continent. Because of the global changes induced by African migration and future implications of these changes, there is presently a constant redefinition of African migration. Thus, African migration is now understood as the movement of African cultures; traditions and customs embodied by African migrants to other parts of the world.

Contextually, African migration depicts the current mass movement of Africans to Europe, America and Asia propelled by their dissatisfaction with the affairs in African continent. With the continent deteriorating quickly in key areas like economy and security, migration to Europe, America and Asia popularly expressed as *japa* has become the dream and aspiration of young Africans who have the resources to fund it. With the 2020 popular hit-track *Japa* (meaning run, escape or relocate) by the Nigerian Afro-Pop singer, Naira Marley, suggesting the required response to the excruciating poor human conditions in Nigeria and other African countries as escaping or running to Europe, America and Asia, mass migration became more meaningful and practical in the thoughts and actions of Nigerians and Africans at large. *Japa* as a popular thought and expression thus became a trending migratory slang in the continent conveying the idea of swift and evasive action bothering on permanently relocating to Europe, Asia or America to escape the prevalent hardship in Africa. Thus, *japa* is a single word that now sums up the burning desire of many young Africans to legally or irregularly leave the continent to Europe or America without coming back to Africa (Akinwotu, 2023).

Japa is indeed a Nigerian-Yoruba word meaning ‘run away’ or ‘escape’ amidst excruciating human condition. The word has evolved and become a popular slang, expressing and inducing haste, quick and urgent escape from harsh human situation and relocation out of the continent (Ayoola, 2023). From all these meanings, one can decipher that the current African migration catalyzing word *japa*, carries not only a sense of documented (regular) migration, but that of quick, ‘anyhow’ and by all means (irregular/illegal) escape from the harsh human condition in the continent. This meaning accounts for the increasing number of regular and irregular (illegal) Africans leaving the continent *en masse*. Although used in the context of expressing intention or readiness to escape (migrate) to Europe or America, *japa* is also a migration inducing slang used playfully in pointing to migration out of Africa as the best and most important option.

Meanwhile, expression of *japais* a depiction of Africans’ response to the prevailing harsh human condition in the continent. Thus, *japa* could be said to be reflecting the

resourcefulness and adaptability of African youths in navigating challenging situations in the continent. Today, all these usages of *japa* have become frequent in African movies, music and social media conversations inducing African youths to (run) migrate to Europe, America or Asia. With its present evolvement, *japa* has now become synonymous with migration out of Africa in search of a better life (Akinwotu, 2023). Based on the fact that migrating out of the continent is now for many Africans an escape (*japa*) from harsh human conditions in Africa, a great number of African migrants often swore never to come back, while others eventually return to establish investments they will run from their base in the host countries. As these African migrants “accumulate experience abroad, their motivations change, usually in ways that promote additional trips of longer duration, yielding a rising likelihood of settlement over time” (Massey, 2003: 27). Hence, as African migration is largely fostered by search for comfort and economic achievements, the migrants undergo changes through their experiences in the host countries. This is so as living and working in the advanced, post-industrial economies like Europe and America for instance, expose these African migrants to economic cultures that inculcate new tastes, motivations and decisions that cannot be satisfied by poor economic activities at home. The easiest path to these African migrants’ satisfaction then becomes additional foreign labour and longer stay in the host countries that often snowballs into Diaspora. As African migrants then stay longer and spend more time abroad, they acquire social and economic ties with the host countries, and even begin to work for the escape (*japa*) of their friends and family members from Africa and entry into the host countries. This means that over time, African migration have a way of increasing *japa* or migration of more Africans out of the continent.

Trends of African migration

The discussions on recent African migration (*japa*) call to mind the existential question of who migrates in Africa. Hence, the concern surrounding African migration was mainly because of the very groups involved. Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019), reports that contemporary African migration (*japa*) mostly involves young and educated men and women. The foundation reports that,

60.0% of irregular African migrants are estimated to be Under 35 years old. Moreover, 27.5% of all migrants hosted in Africa, the majority of which originate from the continent, are between 15-29 years old. Almost ½ of the African migrants, are female (46.1%), contrary to common perceptions that African migrations are male-dominated...Almost 1/3 (31.5%) of young Africans have thought somewhat or a lot about moving to another country, almost twice as many as those older than 35. (2019:14 & 16).

Certainly, these young Africans, and generally people at this age bracket are standing labour force whether in their home or destination countries. Wahba (1996:4) refers to

this group, when he stated that “in all developing countries, migration is concentrated in the 15-30 age groups; with a substantial portion in the 15-24 sub-groups.” This is so because this is the age when people are replete with life vision, strength, capability, health and willingness to pursue their dreams successfully. More so, many people within this age bracket have high morale, resolve and endurance to succeed. This explains why many of them are undaunted by their previous experience of traumatic events and awareness of the perils of their journey. As such, many African youths involved in the current surging migration are eager to bear burdens, take possible risks and conquer barriers on their journey. Also, urban and highly educated young and well-to-do Africans tend to migrate (japa) abroad (Kirwin and Anderson, 2018). Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019:16) reports concurs that “more than 1/2 of those who prepare their departure have completed secondary or tertiary education.” Explored migrants’ characteristics then corroborate that individual development; wealth and higher level of education are important determinants of African persons’ propensity to migrate (Martin and Taylor, 2019). Because human effort and worth are not well rewarded in many parts of Africa, migration is high among the educated, skilled and well-to-do Africans. Many are therefore eager to leave the continent to where their efforts and worth would be better rewarded. Part of the present African migration is also the African middle class. This is an important group necessary for every country’s sustainable development. This is as the middle class is replete with skilled men and women; technicians, specialists and professionals like teachers, lecturers, engineers, doctors, nurses, scientists, technocrats, industrialists, and business men and women. In the knowledge of this, Adu (2019:89) assents that “Africa is worst hit in the loss of educated personnel to more developed regions of the world.” This view is collaborated by Akanni (2004) who holds that almost a third of African medical personnel had migrated to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. The resourceful constituents in the middle class that catalyze development reflect in planning, redefinition and execution of social, economic and political policies. Particularly, the current migration of Africa is informed by dissatisfaction over the poor conditions and state of affairs in Africa and search for greener pastures. What migration of these Africans take then deconstructs the view that African migration is informed by poverty. Thus, poor people in Africa hardly migrate. This is as they lack the resources to fund the cost of migration. Based on their ugly experiences here, many of these migrants are so dissatisfied with Africa that they swore never to come back to Africa. Many of them who eventually come back from host countries do so either for investment, bonding with their relatives or because of some problems beyond their control.

Destinations of African migration

Central to the current surging in African migration is the question of where? This as the present African migration is not largely bound for every continent. A critical investigation reveals that current African migrants largely head to places with conducive environment and high economic prospects. Such places include Western Europe and North America; with the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy, Greece, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, etc., as the dominant destinations. There is an increased African migration to these places because of the liberality of these countries, functional democracy, large economies and belief that human services are needed and better rewarded. Friends and relatives in these destination countries also increase the attraction of these countries with their show and tales of increased income and better living conditions. It is also evident that African migrants bound to Asian countries like Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, UAE and Qatar in search of economic prospects. Among all these places, Europe is a top destination for African outbound migrants. On account of this, Mugabo (2019:146) records that “26.9 per cent (that is, 10.6 million) of the total 39.4 million African migrants worldwide live in Europe, followed by Asia (4.6 million) and North America (3.2 million).” Conversely, African migrants tend to stay away from strict Islamic states with stringent Sharia laws like Iran and Afghanistan. Despite these, Migrants’ characteristics show that individual development, wealth and higher level of education are also determinants of African migrants’ choice of their destinations (Martin and Taylor, 2019).

Catalysts of African migration

African migration is a human response to poor societal affairs, conditions and future prospects in Africa. The phenomenon is a way of responding to poor political and economic development in the continent propelled by poor governance. Thus, socio-political and economic reasons have always been at the front burner of human migration. This is because of their direct link with human living condition. Congruently, Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019:2) maintains that “almost 80% of potential African migrants are driven by the hope for better economic or social prospects.” The poor living condition in many African countries induced by non-masses-oriented politics, devaluation of currencies and egoistic economic policies maximize poverty from time to time among the masses. This is coupled with the consumer economy, thoughtless government policies and spending, and importation that plunge many African states into endless economic crisis and a future that is bleak. African migration therefore happens in socio-political and economic contexts. The existent poor socio-political and economic contexts in the continent therefore give the recent phenomenon of African migration (japa) some socio-political and economic explanations. These explanations are evident in the fact that African poor socio-political and economic

contexts; systems and interactions are the consequences of the increasing human poverty, suffering, and poor living condition that catalyze the present surging migration in the continent. This is as these poor socio-political and economic systems deprive the masses of economic incentives, economic opportunities, economic resources, social welfare, adequate security and conducive environment necessary for human survival and quality life.

The societal institutions that control the entire population derive from politics; and their contents, continuous existence and mode of operation are synthesis of their dialectics with politics (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013). As such, African migration is a consequence of bad politics and socio-economic systems. This is as bad politics devastates functional institutions, political/economic structures; give rise to detrimental policies that foster hash economic practices, inflation and poor living conditions that set the larger population with no wherewithal to access better economic opportunities and living conditions. The non-masses' oriented policies also further the demise of systems and structures that ensure stability and development in the continent. In Africa therefore, politics have created weak economic institutions, leaving the citizenry with the option of migration to other continents. As political and economic systems reduce people's access to means of livelihood and investment; they pave way for high unemployment, unhealthy environment, poor health services, poor education, mass poverty, hash living conditions and dire changes in people's material comfort zone.

The failure of socio-political and economic systems in African continent indeed breaks the resolve of many Africans to stay behind and join in building their countries. Consequently, there is spate of African migration (japa) in which search for safety, economic opportunities, good living condition, quality education and health care system has become paramount. African migration is however not only tied to the poor rhythms of political and economic systems. Migratory pressures in Africa is not as well only tied to the glaring disparity between labour force growth and job creation (under and unemployment) and their resultant human deprivation and poor living conditions. Some African migrants are asylum seekers who have their lives threatened in their countries for one activism or the other.

Rationale behind the increasing African migration

Despite the viable welfare scheme, most developed countries are laden with racism in which Africans are largely the victims. As these host countries are yet to satisfy the needs of their citizenry, they are evidently replete with social problems like unemployment. Aware of these social and economic obstacles in the host countries, the World Bank (2006) is baffled that over 180 million people or three percent of the world population still migrate to these places in search of better lives. Why then are Africans

migrating to these countries *en masse* despite their awareness of these odds? A critical study however shows that the social, political and economic odds facing man in African continent appears far worse than those prevalent in the host countries. Africans therefore migrate (japa) because of the assumed benefits which presumably exceed their private costs and outweigh the benefits at home. In view of this, Massey (2003:24) argues;

Standards of living are low in structurally transforming societies and high in the developed, capitalist world, and by moving between the two regions migrants can expect to realize a net gain in their material well-being. In practical terms, migrants are assumed to make a cost-benefit calculation that weighs the projected costs of moving against the expected returns, monetary and otherwise, from living and working in a developed country. Since this balance is large and positive for most people outside the nations of the OECD, they rationally choose to emigrate.

Apart from this, contemporary African migration arises from the attraction of developed countries in Europe, America and Asia, and the lucrative social, political and economic prospects around them. Thus, African migrants are attracted by better access to quality public services; electricity, clinics, schools, education and big differentiated labour markets, economic opportunities, incentives, prospects and better life believed to be available in the host countries. Indeed, the gap in social development as well as economic prospects between African continent and many other parts of the world with functional democracy is glaring. As such, the increasing African migration predicates on this perceived inequality. On this ground, Hugo (1998) advances that African migration is spurred by disparity in levels of income, employment, working conditions and social wellbeing visible in many other parts of the world. This disparity supports the view that African migration shares a link with development; hence this migration predominantly arises from failed development in the continent. Along this lane, Africans perceive that stable and people-oriented government policies and gainful employment that ensure viable economic opportunities, human quality life, human rights and freedom abound in the developed world. This perception even informs the neoclassical economic theory which tenders the main cause of migration (from low to high wage economies) as human efforts to maximize incomes (Borjas, 1989). Constituting these pull factors towards migration are also religious, marriage, and family unification purposes. African female migration has along this lane also become dominant in recent time. Adu (2018:89) attests that this is “due largely to the fact that there is an increasing demand for service, provided by women working for example, as domestic workers, nurses, teachers, and even as sex workers.”

It then stands that the increasing African migration (japa) is mainly occasioned by quest for better economic earnings and human living conditions. Apart from this, it is obvious

that some Africans also migrate for adventure, sightseeing, recreation, entertainment, solidarity, knowledge acquisition, and actualization of personal dreams and freedom. One can from these rationales infer that behind African migration are the push factors that abound in the continent and pull factors that draw migrants to the host countries. Among the push factors are the poor governance occasioning civil strife, inter-communal/religious conflicts, instability, insecurity, terrorism, poor economic conditions, low income, mass poverty, endemic corruption and poor human living condition. People also migrate because they are “fugitives avoiding the consequences of their actions, whereas some migrate based on community sanctions which mandate them to leave their town permanently or temporary due to their anti-social behaviours” (Chinweuba, 2019:388-389). Adding to these push factors is the increasing population density in many parts of Africa, which is putting pressure on many indigenous people to leave the continent to other countries. In this regard, Achebe (2012:58) asserts that population density among Igbo Nigerians compels “their ultimate migration” to other parts of the world. Congruently, Abbas (1993) cites that human migration sequentially rose from 20 million in the year 1931 to 32 million in 1952/53, 56 million in 1963, 88 million in 1991 and more than 180 million currently. With the increasing population density in African continent therefore, the need for survival runs paramount, especially as many African countries are characterized by corruption, political instability, religious/ communal crises, some undemocratic practices, exploitation of the masses, poor economic condition and harsh and harmful economic policies. These conditions are aggravated by governments’ recklessness, interventions and breach of human rights visible in thoughtless land grabs and demolition of private properties for projects that often remain uncompleted. Frustration brought by these state interventions often leaves the well-to-do victims with the lone choice of migrating to other continents. In the knowledge of this, Bonat and Abdullahi (1989) write that up to 30% temporal African migrant workers are landless in their countries and more than 90% permanent African migrant workers are landless in their countries of origin.

Persistent African predicament and the increasing African migration

The connection between African predicaments and the surging African migration (japa) is so far glaring. Why then are there persistent predicament and uncondusive environment in Africa, hence the surging African migration? Answers to this critical question are traceable to the driving forces of poverty and greed subduing the resolve of many African leaders to solve African problems. Fukuyama (2012) argues that these forces of poverty and greed breed various kinds of dysfunction in people; such as financial insecurity and irrational pursuit of wealth. Because most Africans have trailing history of poverty deepened by poor masses abounding in the continent; the tendency is always to overcome this deplorable condition. This is why many people in governments of diverse African countries view their offices as avenues of looting

public coffers and making egoistic policies that yields egoistic financial returns and impoverishment of the masses. Sequel to this trend, Nwigwe (2005:49-50) reveals that in Africa,

the progressive trend and the ideological approach to forge a political economy has lost in zeal and strength. It is not only because we often do not have purposeful leadership, but mainly because the leadership we have is often that which collaborates with the imperialists against African people. Through such leadership, colonialism continually re-enters Africa through so many forms and guises.

Sadly, there is little or no transitional justice in Africa; hence successive governments get away with conscious policies that increase dissatisfaction and its consequent migration among African populace. Aggravating African predicaments and its resultant migration also are many African indigenous cultural tenets that recognize people and measure their social status and worth with their level of wealth (Ani, 2009). The desire to attain this social status, honour and recognition endears many African leaders to plunder the civic public and commonwealth. The massive dissatisfaction and frustration created by decades of these political developments in the continent catalyzes African migration.

African migration as the *a posteriori* outcome of human needs

An outstanding finding of this discourse is that the recent African migration predicates on *a posteriori* human need. Satisfaction of these motivating needs was viewed paramount, hence the surging need for migration. Along the ultimate search for these needs are the African migrants confronted by actual needs expectation versus actual needs satisfaction. Prior to migration, the African has mental prospects of his outstanding needs that are, and often not the realities on ground in the host countries. Thus, migration may appear lucrative, yet the strain, hostilities and human abuses unexpected by the African migrant are unimaginable. Jimenez (2011) captures this situation when he posits that most African migrants face frustrating human barriers to social, economic and political endeavors. These realities do not only contradict the expected needs of African migrants but increase their frustration, anger and depression (Nnadi 2012). African migrants are thus burdened by the gap between their wants, desire and anticipated prospects prior to migration and what they are actually getting in the host countries.

Among the motivating expected needs of many potential African migrants however, is increased earning, through which they hope to satisfy some other needs. Working in the advanced and industrialized economies to achieve this need exposes African migrants to consumer cultures that inculcate new tastes that cannot be satisfied at home. As such, the alternative path to African migrants' satisfaction of *a posteriori* needs then

becomes additional foreign labour and the need for longer stay in the host countries. This decision develops into what we call African Diaspora- a situation of African migrants becoming permanent settlers. Staying longer in Diaspora however avails African migrants the capacity to vie for the entry (migration) of their family members and friends into the host countries.

Impact of African migration in African continent and in the host countries

The truth remains that African migration “have made important economic, political, cultural and intellectual contributions to the development of their homeland territories and the world” (Neumann, 2008:39). In particular,

The economic contributions from the Diaspora, principally in the form of what are called “remittances,” account for the greatest proportion of financial contributions to the domestic economies of African nations. According to a 2003 World Bank working paper, remittances from the African Diaspora in the United States to African countries amount to \$12 billion annually, with about \$4 billion of that going to sub-Saharan Africa alone (ibid).

In 2011, Ratha and Mohapatra estimate the potential annual savings of “African Diaspora to about US\$53 billion, of which US\$30.5 billion (approximately 3.2 percent of GDP) is attributable to the migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries. Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019:2) validates this record arguing that African migrant’s “remittances represented 3.5% of Africa’s 2018 GDP, and more than the net 2017 ODA. The estimated contribution of migrants to local GDPs is estimated at 19% in Cote d’Ivoire, 13% in Rwanda, and 9% in South Africa.” Corroborating these estimations, African Development Bank in 2010 adds that more than 30 million African migrants living outside their countries sent home about \$40 billion on an annual basis. Based on these remittances, Docquier and Rapoport (2007:3) maintain that “skilled migrants continue to affect the economy of their origin country after they have left, be it through remittances, return migration, or participation in business and scientific networks.” Remittances from migrants which represent a large proportion of African foreign capital and financial flows are therefore crucial to the survival of African economies. Thus, remittances made by migrants constitute significant contribution to sources countries’ Gross National Products (GNP), and are major sources of income in many African nations. Because of the beneficial effects of these remittances, Hanson and Woodru (2003) and Cox and Ureta (2003) document that the migrants’ remittances of their foreign income also impinge on households’ decisions in terms of labour supply or future migration of other family members in Africa. Migration is therefore a decision that impacts on the welfare and economy of the migrant’s household, community and country.

African migration however “creates social, cultural and political challenges that create strong opposition and overwhelm any rational policy debate in source and destination countries” (Adu, 2018:89). The political contributions of African migrants on the other hand have continued to range from organizing and sponsoring historical mass movements towards upholding the rule of law, civil and political rights in their home countries. Such mass movements like the 2020 #END SARS# protest in Nigeria stand as a direct involvement of African migrants in the decision-making processes within their diverse countries of origin. Indeed, the march for freedom and civil rights movements of African migrants around the globe are the most prominent examples of African migrants’ political contributions to African continent (Neumann, 2008). Further contributions are visible in the works of Shirley Chisholm, Colin Powell, etc whose diasporic political capabilities at the highest level of US government had enormous impact on African affairs in the continent. These migrants’ Pan African efforts have led to historic independence of Africa, collapse of apartheid South Africa and numerous other changes in African continent.

Nevertheless, the cultural contributions of African migration are numerous prominent in artistic and musical creations, intellectual outputs, and specific religious practices. Referring to these, Docquier and Rapoport (2007) holds that skilled African migrants are outstanding contributors in their host countries; hence their migration remains a loss to the source countries. This loss is more glaring in the sense that these skilled migrants are outstanding complements with the unskilled labour in the production process within the source countries. The phenomenon of migration thus leads to substantial scarcity of skilled labour and abundance of unskilled labour in the home countries of Africa. This negative impact leaves Africa with unskilled workers’ productivity and its consequent poor economic performance. Besides, the problems arising from irregular migration, as seen in Africa, has also intensified the negative aspect of smuggling and trafficking of human beings, arms and ammunition used for various kinds nefarious activities that destabilize Africa today. The more negative dimension of the poor check of African migration and activities of these migrants abroad creates room for funding of conflicts back home.

African migration and the global future

The economic stability of the recipients of migration remittances now underscores scholars’ conclusion that African migration is lucrative. Yet, a critical survey shows that African migration also hold dire implication for the global future. Prominent among these implications is the growing attitude akin to “already made situations” among Africans and its consequent loss of human resources (brain drain) that once stood as developmental advantage for Africa. *Human capital base* has in the modern world become a core element in the socio-political and economic developmental efforts

of many nations. This is so because all the sectors and means of development are managed and driven by human capital. This human capital largely makes up the middle class that is sufficient with Doctors, Engineers, lecturers, technocrats and other professionals that stand as the tripod of sustainable economy. Thus,

mineral resources and its prospects alone are not real wealth but human capital is, because it is the professionals or technocrats; Doctors, Engineers, Lecturers, etc that effectively cure or manage the health systems, generate constant electricity and inculcates the rudiment of sustainable economic development. In fact, it is these professionals that initiate and generate the necessary production of goods and services that boost socio-economic development (Chinweuba, 2019:391).

To sustain development therefore, advanced countries focus on controlled migration in order to retain enough competitive human resources and capacity that will effectively tackle the cosmic challenges buffeting societal development in their territorial boundaries. The situation is different in Africa where the prevailing uncondusive environment is propelling the human capital out of the continent. The disconnection and imbalance resulting from African migration is already being felt in the general administration, resource management and African countries' achievement of *the* United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). Using Nigeria as instance, Adedeji and Rowland (1973:14) observe that, "in virtually all the existing urban areas of Nigeria, the level

Of basic essential services to the community is inadequate. The services are a daunting one; the scope of the challenge is enormous and some of the resources-trained manpower, technical know-how and finance-are in very short supply." With the majority of the middle class harbouring the intention to migrate, African migration could be best described as deprivation of human resources in the continent. The results of this outstanding brain drain are under- development of Africa on one hand and stable development of the host countries, due to abundant concentration of human resources, on the other hand. It is based on this deprivation that almost all African countries run a consumer economy, and had been unable to achieve the required diversified economic base necessary for development. This is how Africa became condemned to frequent food shortages, inflation and health menacing imported industrialized foods from western countries (Tinker, 1988). The situation is presently worse as most of the mineral resources (like crude oil) that count for revenue of most African countries are crashing in the international market or are being stolen and unaccountable for by the corrupt African leaders. Besides, African migration is undoubtedly among the factors eroding African cultures, traditional values and language in the modern time. This is as some of these migrants eventually return home with new ways of life that conflict with the autochthonous cultures and sever the internal equilibrium of personhood in the continent. The liberal attitude of many returned migrants towards indigenous cultures

and traditions thus breaks down values and norms that for ages bonded African communities, and then plunges the indigenous populace into crisis of personhood (Odumegwu, 2008).

The influx of African migrants in the host countries however creates a glaring insufficiency that leads to scramble over human needs like good jobs, accommodations, etc. Some of these scrambles at times lead to conflict between the African immigrants and indigenes of host countries. Shortly before the Hamas invasion of southern Israel on October 7, 2023, such African migrant-indigene clash as aired by Al Jazeera network erupted between indigenous Israeli and Ethiopian immigrants in which the migrant Ethiopians became threatened with deportation. The host countries too, face the problem of integrating the migrants which often takes tolls on their governments.

African migrants and migration

Pertinent in this discourse is the situation of the African migrants and migration, hence the need for further interrogation of these phenomena. Worth noting in this context is that the disadvantages of African migration appear to outweigh its advantages on some occasions. On those odd occasions, the situation of African migrants is largely not palatable. It is mainly a situation of survival in which African migrants exercise no choice over all manner of odd jobs abandoned by the indigenes of the host countries. Sadly, some of these African migrants even go without meaningful means of livelihood for a long time; hence they hardly raise enough funds to burden the cost of living decently in the host communities or travelling back home.

Indeed, many African migrants are irregular and undocumented. *En route* Europe, illegal means and dangerous routes like Mediterranean Sea, Sahara Desert, etc, are employed by these migrants to the detriment of the continent; as loss of life of highly skilled labour migrants desperate for the greener pasture is often tremendously recorded. Kirwin. and Anderson (2018:3) record that, the movement of sub-Saharan Africans through North Africa and on to Europe has garnered intense media attention. Over

600, 000 African migrants have arrived in Italy through the perilous Central Mediterranean route since 2014, and nearly 120,000 arrived in 2017 alone according to the International Organization of Migration (IOM). The route is notoriously dangerous, with risks including making a journey through the Sahara Desert, indefinite detention in bleak conditions in Libya, and capsizing at sea...Migration through Niger and onto Libya has garnered so much attention that European governments have scrambled to slow down the movement.

Irregular migration really portends a reduced benefit to the African continent. This is as “illegal migrants are vulnerable and exploited...not able to unionize, and are exploited by unscrupulous employers” (Adu, 2018:89). This is coupled with the fact that the journey of these African migrants via Mediterranean route is direly perilous. This is as good number of these migrants perishes in the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea while other survivors are traumatized. In this insecure world, some are victimized in the different stop-over countries *en route* their destinations. Apart from the strain and abuses associated with African migration, the host countries initially view these African migrants with suspicion. The racism prevalent in some of these host countries makes African migrants to be viewed as low lives, social deviants or nuisance. Consequently, African migrants are often denied accommodation, good job and integration within the host communities.

As many of the African migrants remained vagabonds in the host countries, some others face traumatic experiences that result to complicated health problems. The unfortunate African migrants in their homelessness are exposed to harmful climatic conditions, sexual abuse, rape, and forced prostitution where they contract HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unplanned pregnancies and other health complications that compound their problems. The Aljazeera news of Wednesday, 6th March 2019 aired a contextual instance of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons’ (NAPTIP) rescuing of more than fifty Nigerian female migrants that never reached their destination (Europe) but were forced into prostitution in Mali by traffickers. As many African migrants become victims to ritual killers, racial killers, serial killers, human traffickers and human organ traffickers, others become prone to kidnappers that bait them with fake jobs abroad. These migrant victims are often subjected to severe hunger, torture, slave labour, traumatic experiences and untimely death. There were reports of some African migrants used by their hosts to attack their enemies, engage in robbery or foment other anti-social activities in which these migrants get injured, jailed or killed by law enforcement agents. A great number of African migrants abroad also face police abuse, intimidation and brutality (Usoro, 2007). As such, many African migrants trod with fear in the host countries, and are driven from one location to another where they are exposed to harsh weather condition that affects their health. Due to their wretched state, they are intimidated and abused by passersby, and this laden these migrants’ psyche with unimaginable trauma.

Functionalists’ perspective to African migration

The functionalists’ perspective to African migration focuses on its socio-economic value. In this direction, the functionalists hold that African migration often pay off despite the excruciating challenges. This is as some African migrants achieve economic prospects by gaining meaningful employment and increased income that are far better

than what are available back home. With this increased income, the functionalists argue that African migrants contribute to the development of the source countries via their remittances. Some of these migrants also send money home for investment and for the wellbeing of their relatives; thereby promoting economic development in the African continent. While African migrants are abroad, many of them are exposed to modern social, economic, political, developmental systems and industrial technology (Ajaegbu, 1976). The functionalists argue that many African migrants are likely to bring home new ideas, innovation and technology in those systems, which could initiate and generate industries, production of goods and services necessary for the source countries' economic development (Canuto, 2011).

Outstanding in the functionalists' argument is trans-nationalism that is often secured by African migrants. This is a process whereby Africans in diaspora forge and sustain socio-political and economic relations that would connect their host and home countries. Such relations could span across borders and open up possibilities for shared development that is glaring in exchange of ideas, expertise, services and technologies to the advantage of African continent. In the knowledge of this, Plaza and Ratha (2011:20) add that migrants "can be an important source and facilitator of research and innovation, technology transfer, and skills development" between the host and home countries.

Towards an organized migration for African development

The growing discussion on African migration calls for a new paradigm for African migration. This paradigm has to bother on how migration can become functional stimulus to African development through exchange of new skills and ideas. The search for this paradigm exposes organized migration as programmes holding tremendous advantage for African development. Organized migration does not however come naturally. Such public order, economic and social progress and prosperity "depend on ceaseless effort and attention from an honest and effective government" (Yew, 2000: xiii). Such conscious effort begins with changing the attitudes of the citizens by improving their physical conditions, developing in them a taste for adventure, strenuous and thrilling activities, and getting them to participate fully in governance. Along this lane, African governments have to step up to the duties of creating public order, societal security, economic and social progress, and prosperity (Yew, 2000). As such, adequate social amenities, social welfare, economic opportunities, economic incentives, security and conducive environment for human ventures and better living have to be put in place. These should be followed with strict implementation of people-oriented policies that will encourage African indigenous production, exchange of goods and services. The basic infrastructures, industries, factories, government ministries and institutions especially those that hold economic opportunities should be made more

functional in order to curb migration. As such, persuasion is not enough. African countries need effective institutions that are well organized, staffed and directed to follow up government exhortations and stirring speeches that tend to harness migration. Research should at this point be encouraged in order to harvest new ideas that will encourage development while new technologies and strategic development should be introduced. These must be coupled with establishment of legislative and judicial autonomy, effective and efficient rule of law. In this direction, governments of African countries must set examples and insist on stringent measures that deter corruption. It is then that African politicians would be forced to shun corruption and embark on developmental activities in their constituencies. It is also then would the masses be spurred to rise above their lukewarmness and demand accountability from public servants without thought that they might be ignored or persecuted. Implementation of these action plans (which for Plato and Aristotle are the goals of the state) would encourage Africans to stay at home and develop their countries.

Outcome of these giant strides would indeed yield job opportunities, increased income, satisfaction of the yearnings of many Africans and reduction of migration and the prevailing *japa* thought in the continent. This is in the sense that the expected needs catalyzing the current surging migration (*japa*) would then be available at home. Availability of these needs is indeed the beginning of state control of privately sponsored and/or irregular (illegal/undocumented) migration (*japa*). This is not in the sense of restricting people's freedom of movement but in the sense of making people see the same opportunity they seek abroad at home, and then realize the importance of staying back and building their countries. The second stage of state-controlled migration in this context bothers more on state sponsoring of migration as evident among some Asian countries. This practice will consciously give birth to return migration that would turn African brain drain to brain gain, and convert African enormous human resources to real wealth. State sponsored migration policy has become the development hub of the fast-growing economies like China, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Thailand.

Consequently, students from these countries with "government scholarships are scattered in European, Australian and North American Universities where they are expected to learn one science, technology, craft, skill or the other, as well as analytic, dynamic and dialectical reasoning, with the intention of returning home" to build greater economies and sustain the development of their countries (Chinweuba, 2019 :395). The governments of these Asian countries indeed aim their sponsored citizens (students) to acquire the expected knowledge and skill at their desired level and return as full labour force for the development of their diverse countries using the knowledge and skills they acquired abroad. These Asian countries indeed rely on sponsored migrants' knowledge sources in fostering their development. In awareness of this,

Plaza and Ratha (2011:20) particularly stipulates that “the governments in these economies promoted the return of foreign-educated students or established networks of knowledge exchange with them.” Post colonial African nations like Nigeria even implemented such state-controlled migration in the first and second republics. Alas, endemic corruption in Nigeria and many other African countries rendered this policy moribund. Today, the Catholic Church in Nigeria also does the same as they send their Priests to study courses, learn arts or skills either at home or overseas and these priests return to use such knowledge for the development of their different dioceses. Such migration programme also appears to be retained by the multinational companies in Africa that send their staff for training and studies of subjects relevant to their companies. State sponsored migration programmes indeed predicate on the “awareness that University education and further studies abroad play a key role in the development of a country by contributing to the creation of a pool of knowledge and skills among those who provide vision and leadership in government, academic circles, business, and civil society” (Ndiaye, Melde and Ndiaye-Coïc, 2011:240).

The issue of state-controlled migration is thus crucial to the development of Africa. This is more so as it would avail Africa the human, physical and social capital acquired by sponsored migrants during their sojourn in the host countries. This is as it would too enhance analysis of African problems, and returned African migrants will assist in African development by sharing their expertise with their professional counterparts back home. With the increasing migration (*japa*) among Africans, it has now become germane for governments of African countries to formulate more functional development-end and migration policies, and make these action plans routine subjects of discussion for improvement in African Union conventions.

Conclusion

The increasing migration (*japa*) among Africans is making the continent more unpopular in the global committee of nations. The study therefore interrogated the surging African migration popularly called *japa* and ascertained its causes and implications for the global future. The study finds that the phenomenon of migration (*japa*) bothers on human needs. These needs revolve more on dissatisfaction over the seeming unchanging state of affairs in Africa. However, African migration (*japa*) appears not to be the business of the poor as it requires some level of funding often beyond the reach of the poor. It is however evident that African youths and the educated are more involved in the present surging migration in the continent. The incessant African migration (*japa*) might seem lucrative to the source African countries because of the remittances being made by these African migrants, yet migration draws human capital which is the real wealth out of Africa. The study therefore opts for state-controlled migration through African Governments’ provision of good governance;

human needs and conducive environment for better human living condition and fruitful economic ventures. The study again opts for state-controlled migration that would encourage return of migrants whose expertise would bear positively on African development.

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