

Good Governance as the Panacea to Irregular Migration Across the Mediterranean Sea: Evidence from Sub-Sahara Africa

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Abstract

This paper assessed the role of good governance among African states in stemming the tide of illegal migration. Data was obtained from secondary sources including-books, journals, magazines, periodicals, the internet, etc. Analysis was by the technique content analysis while the theory of Migration by Bauer and Zimmermann (1999) was adopted as its theoretical framework. Results from the data analyses showed that bad governance often associated with African and other developing nations, is the root cause of the tendency of youths to migrate in search of the golden fleece which are presently difficult to access in foreign lands. It is therefore, suggested that democracy should be entrenched in these states as this system of government offers the best opportunities for good and effective governance. This is the only way to guarantee meaningful and enhanced livelihood amongst the citizenry.

Keywords: *Good governance, the Mediterranean Sea, Sustainable livelihood, European authorities, Irregular migration*

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Background to the Study

The forced and voluntary settlement of nomads, recurrent wars in the Sahel (i.e the zone between the Sahara Desert to the north and Sudanian Savannas to the south) and droughts, have provoked two forms of mobility since the seventies and eighties (1970s and 1980s). To begin with, impoverished nomads and traders like the Tuareg, migrated as a means of survival, finding work at construction sites and the oil fields of southern Algeria and Libya. Secondly, the recurrent warfare in the Sahel provoked the exodus of thousands of refugees who then settled in the towns and cities of Libya, Algeria, Mauritania and Egypt. This migration was often welcomed as these migrants' filled local labour vacancies and fitted in with national policies aimed at revitalizing under populated regions.

After the 1973 oil crisis, Libya and to a certain extent Algeria, witnessed an increasing number of migrants crossing the border from neighboring countries to find work in the oil fields where local population often refused to work. In a bid to impose itself as a regional power, Libya opened its labor market to Chadian and Nigerian workers and other African nationals. Apart from this, other more recent factors have helped in shaping the pattern of African migration. Some of such factors include ethnic, religious and political conflicts in the nineties. Indeed, statistics from the refugee camps that were set up in Tunisia during the 2011-12 Libyan crisis show that the bulk of the flow originated from the horn of Africa (Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia).

The European media within the last two years and especially during the most recent months of 2015, has been saturated with images and commentary relating to the so-called 'migration crisis which poses a great challenge for Europe. Over the past two years and particularly since the beginning of 2015, there has been a marked rise in both the number of people crossing European border via irregular, and often risky, means. This is in addition to the number of persons claiming asylum in European states:

Although accurate statistics has not been easy to obtain, data on border apprehensions reveal almost four-fold increase in the number of people found crossing into Europe irregularly between 2012 and 2014 (Frontex, 2015a, P. 12 P 5-6) and the number of migrants recorded crossing the Mediterranean to reach Europe increased from 22,500 in 2012 to 219,000 in 2014 (UHHCR, 2015a, p.5 502).

Statement of Research Problem

The international response to the issue of migration following the increase in deaths particularly of women and children across the Mediterranean is applaud able. Also, worthy of note is the effort of some European countries to tighten border control mechanisms. However, it has been observed that, "Tightening border security in southern Europe has resulted in a proliferation of new migration routes across the Mediterranean" (de Haas, 2011b, P.561, 50-4). For instance, as border controls between Libya and Italy increased in 2009, irregular migrants into Europe moved to Greece via Turkey. "More recently, as security at the Turkish border with Greece has been increased, more migrants have been using sea routes entering via Bulgaria" (Kusch minder, et al., 2015, p.52 55-4). Again, de Haas (2011, p.26 (-3), holds the view that, "while tightening border security may change migration patterns, migration policies are unlikely to influence the volume of people migrating". (Zaika and Hobolth, 2014, p.19 50-4) report that.

While increasing the restiveness of asylum policy appears to reduce the number of asylum applications, it also appears to increase the number of people migrating irregularly to the extent that the deflection effect may balance out or even exceed the deterrence effect. Mbaye (2014, p.14 p5-7), believes that, “restrictive immigration policies may be less effective in staring off illegal migration and can incite potential migrants to turn to illegal methods”.

All accounts hitherto presented tend to suggest that the worrisome tendency of increasing number of irregular migrants' in spite of measures from foreign lands of destination may require an approach from their countries of origin. This is more so as insecurity at home, poverty, unemployment, civil strife, war etc. have often been cited as root causes of migration. The only platform by which these issues can be addressed is through good governance. It is for this reason that this study makes a case for the need for good governance in sub-Sahara African states as a panacea to irregular migration across the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study seeks to identify and assess the causes of illegal/irregular migration across the Mediterranean sea by Africans and the need for good governance in the sub-Sahara region of the continent. Its specific objectives would therefore include-

- a. Examine the causes of the irregular migration of sub-Sahara Africans across the Mediterranean.
- b. Assess the need for good governance as the only way to stem the spate of irregular migration across the Mediterranean Sea by sub-Sahara Africans.

Research Questions

The study will provide answers to two questions which include:

- a. What are some of the root causes of the irregular migration of sub-Sahara Africans across the Mediterranean?
- b. Does the sub-Sahara Africa require the introduction of good governance to stem the tide of increasing migration across the Mediterranean Sea?

Literature review

Conceptual Clarification

Migration: This is a very complicated global issue for which no consensus definition has been given and accepted.

However, to make the concept clearer, various scholars have volunteered some definitions. For instance, Clarke (1965, 123), lamented that, 'there is no unanimity over the meaning of migration' though many consider it as movement involving a change of residence of substantial duration. Based on this definition, one should exclude the constant movement of pastoral nomads, the temporary movement of tourists and the daily movement of commuters. Trewartha (1969) placed emphasis on distance, human will and change in permanent residence in migration. He underscores the point that 'migration' as a term has various shades of meaning. Most commonly, migration involves a movement some distance, which results in a change in permanent residence.

Irregular Migration: The International Organization for Migration (IOM), “irregular migration” is the term which is able to describe the movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries (IOM, 2011). Thus, from the point of view of the destination countries, it is the entry, stay or work consequences in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under that country's immigration regulations. On the other side, it is the point of view of the sending country, the irregularity of the movement is seen in actions in which a person is led to an international border-crossing without a valid passport or travel document or does not meet the administrative criteria for leaving the country.

Good Governance: It is a concept, “governance” is not new but as old as human civilization. In very simple terms, “governance” means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The term may be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance vary depending on the level of government that is under discussion. In rural areas for instance, other factors may include influential land lords, associations of peasant farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions, political parties, the military, etc.

In recent times, “governance” and “good governance” are being increasingly used in development literature. Bad governance is being increasingly perceived as one of the root causes of all evil within the society. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms which ensure “good governance” are undertaken.

Good governance has 8 major features. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the society. According to Grindle (2004), “the relevance of getting good governance comes precisely from its relationship with the development of a country and the reduction of poverty” Empirical Literature: This section presents past and current works on migration across the Mediterranean Sea in a tabular form as follows:

Table 1: Past And Present Works on Migration

| Surname of Researcher (s) Title/year of Study, Time frame of research | Geographical content and scope covered | Data sources and analytical tools | Results/Findings/Conclusion |
|--|--|--|--|
| Kassar, H. & Dourgnon, P. (2014): The big crossing: illegal boat migrants in the Mediterranean. Time frame not specified | North Africa especially Mediterranean Tunisia. The article explores illegal migration routes, and how they changed during the years. Sea migrants, nationalities, socio-economic and demographic statistics. | Secondary materials from studies earlier undertaken in Tunisia and Morocco. They proposed an analytical framework which was not disclosed. | Boat migration represents only a little fraction of illegal migration to Europe, it raises humanitarian as well as ethical issues for European and North African countries, as a non-negligible number of them end up in death tolls of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean sea. Moreover, existing statistics indicate exponential increase of illegal trans-Mediterranean migration. |
| Zaker, F. & Altrogge. J. (2017). The politics of migration in the Gambia | Eight (8) sub-Sahara African countries including Gambia and neighbouring Senegal. It focused on the emigration of skilled, low-skilled migrants and refugees. | The study was based on 31 semi-structured interviews with members of the New Gambian government, policy makers and civil society activists and diaspora leaders as well Gambian refugees, policy and academic experts back in Germany, in addition the researchers conducted one focus group with Gambian returnees from Libya. Fieldwork took place in the Greater Banjul area between May and June 2017. | The paper finds that Gambian migration cannot be solely government from within the country and needs be addressed regionally and internationally. |

Theoretical framework: The theory of migration by Bayer & Zimmermann (1999)

The neoclassical theory understands migration to be driven by differences in returns to labor across markets. According to this theory migration is driven by geographical differences in labor supply and demand and the resulting differentials in wages between labor-rich versus capital-rich countries. The central argument of the neoclassical approach thus concentrates on wages. Under the assumption of full employment, it predicts a linear relationship between wage differential and migration flows (Baner and Zimmermann, 1999, Massey, 1993; Borjas 2008). “More than 30% wage differential has been set as necessary for the gains of migration to override its costs”. (Mansoor and Quillin, 2006; Krigor and Maitre, 2006). In the extended neoclassical models, migration is determined by expected rather than actual earnings and the key variable is earnings weighted by the profitability of employment (Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999; Massey, et al, 1993).

Other adjustments and empirical tests to the model found that the linearity relationship in the wage migration tandem does not hold and that both the degree of wage differential and the level of the country income matter.

Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive analysis of the migration crisis in Europe with the aim of proffering solutions to the crisis. Data was sourced secondary materials including books, journals, newspapers, the internet etc. The analysis is by the technical of content analysis which runs in the following sequence:

Research Question One (1): What are the causes of irregular migration of sub-Sahara Africans across the Mediterranean Sea?

Europe has long been a favored destination for African migrants due to its geographical proximity and the promise of safety and a better life. Hall (2000), observes that, “For centuries, merchants, craftsmen and intellectuals crossed the continent to practice their trades or start new lives”. Also, Hall (2000) observes that, “irregular migration across Europe has largely increased over time, given the contemporary economic downturn and lack of jobs for youths in the continent.”

It is also important to underscore the fact that though the transatlantic slave trade has come and gone, its trails are still very much with us here in Africa. A critical look at Africa's irregular migration to Europe, its magnitude, dynamism and phenomenon reveal that it appears like a re-enactment of the illicit trade in humans where Africans were trafficked to Europe and the Americas and subjected to inhuman treatment and forced labour in their various plantations and mining fields.

Evidence from some studies conducted with respect to Africa, Mbaye (2014) “indicate that the major factor pushing the Senegalese youths out of Senegal is the economic factor and the great expectations which they have about Europe”. Finally, in a very recent study, Ogu (2017), observed that, “this desperate but dangerous journey (otherwise called the backway syndrome) is believed to have been motivated by a number of factors, mainly economic, political and socio-cultural and as such has led to innumerable losses of lives and resources”. Thus, the author concluded that, the harsh socio-economic and political conditions in Africa, the great expectations which African youths have about Europe and the global factors are among the major factors that have driven them out of Africa to Europe. Until Africa is made conducive to its people, this ugly phenomenon cannot be effectively curbed.

A survey on why West Africans migrate by the duo of Kirwin and Anderson (2018) showed data from Burkina Faso, Cote d' Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, the number of people who would migrate if given the means and opportunity varied considerably across these countries. Aspiring migrants ranged from a low of 11% in Niger to a high of 50% in Nigeria, and about one-in-four in Burkina Faso, Cote d' Ivoire and Senegal. Not all West Africans who want to migrate aim for Europe. In general, most African migration is intra-continental. The survey further revealed that:

a) Economic opportunities pull West Africans' desire to migrate. According to the data gathered, West Africans who would migrate if given the means and opportunity were far more likely to cite economic benefits as their primary motivation (better jobs, pay and the opportunity to send money home) than to mention gaining personal freedoms, furthering their education, or escaping insecurity. Unsurprisingly “the younger and better educated tended to be much more interested than others in the prospect of migrating, which is further contributing to brain drain in the region” (IMF, 2016). To further buttress the fact that insecurity is not a driver of the desire to migrate among Nigerians, the study observes that,

There is sub-national variation in Nigerians' desire to migrate that is worth noting. For instance, North East Nigeria has been, by far, the region most deeply affected by Boko Haram violence, yet desire to migrate is comparatively low and at par with levels in North West Nigeria, a region that does not face high levels of insecurity. This suggests that insecurity is not necessarily a key driver in desire to migrate (Kirwin and Anderson, 2018).

b) The study also observed that economic development does not discourage migration.

Research Question Two (2): Do sub-Sahara African states require good governance to stem the increasing tide of irregular migration to Europe?

The obvious inconsistencies in the statistical data on irregular migration notwithstanding, it is clear that these immigrants continue to increase in their numbers in recent times as they attempt to enter Europe via irregular means. The first research question in this study triggered on analysis which reveals a combination of conflict, political instability and economic insecurity as the major driving forces behind the urge to move out of town. Also, it clear that asylum-seekers and economic migrants choose to make the dangerous journey to Europe are often similar and a person may fit both of these categories at the same time. Adikhari (2013); de Haas (2011b); Loschmann and Siegel (2014); Zimmermann (2011), all believe that, “the need for secure livelihood opportunities is at the centre of the motivation to migrate”. The provision of security and general welfare of citizens anywhere is the primary responsibility of any government. It takes responsible good governance to own this responsibility and discharge them to the best of its ability. This is why the migration to Europe, its magnitude, dynamism and phenomenon reveal that it appears like a re-enactment of the illicit trade in humans where Africans were trafficked to Europe and the Americans and subjected to inhuman treatment and forced labour in their various plantations and mining fields.

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The harsh socio economic and political conditions in Africa, the great expectations which African youths have about Europe and the global factors are among the major factors that have driven them out of Africa to Europe. Until Africa is made conducive to its people will this ugly phenomenon be effectively curbed.

Addressing and reducing the spate of irregular migration to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea is a problem of government and governance. To quote Poros, “Policy-makers (and researchers), might do well to focus more on the effect social networks can have on migration flows” in this rapidly evolving context” (Pros, 2011 1-2).

In his study, Adepoju (2011), expressed the view that, Emigration pressure is fueled by unstable politics, poverty and rapidly growing populations. In general, remittance have been rising steeply and are an important source of income for many poor countries and serve as lifeline to pay for basic services, healthcare, education of siblings and children and to enhance agricultural production.

The paper came to the conclusion by stressing the need for rich countries to help poor African countries foster local development, reduce poverty and create employment in the spirit of co-responsibility. This by implication points to the need to help poor countries live up to their responsibility of good governance.

Findings

Data obtained in this study shows that:

- a. Statistical data indicate that migration continues to increase in recent times as more people attempt to enter Europe through illegal means.
- b. The major driving forces of the irregular migration of sub-Sahara African over the Mediterranean include the combination of conflict, political instability and economic insecurity.
- c. Europe has long been the favored destination for African migrants due to its geographic proximity and promise of safety and better life.
- d. Africa's irregular migration across Europe has largely increased over time, given the contemporary economic down turn and lack of jobs for youths in the continent.
- e. Transatlantic slave trade has come and gone, however, its trails are still very much with us here in Africa.
- f. Sub-Sahara Africa needs good governance and good government to usher in an era of improved living standards and enhanced livelihood opportunities. This guarantees employment for the youths which discourages emigration.

Conclusion

Migration is a familiar phenomenon and may not on its own, hit the newsstand across the pole. However, it turns news when it is unwholesome, irregular, illegal with consequences such as are now associated with movement from Africa to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Whereas the incidence of trans-national migration remained about the same on a global scale since the 19th century, its structure and direction have changed significantly. A cursory

examination of the African-European migration phenomenon quickly reminds one that, Africa's economic history is a narrative of large population movements driven by variety of large population movements driven by a variety of reasons-notably, slave-trade and colonialism, violent conflicts, poverty, ecological degradation, population pressure and a certain cultural propensity of some ethnic groups for outward orientation. Till date, most of the continents teeming population live under conditions of extreme poverty and insecurity. Hence, it is difficult to stop these people from seeking greener pastures elsewhere no matter the cost. It is against this background that one is inclined to believe the only way out is through good governance, good government and responsible leadership.

Suggestions

This study made the following suggestions based on its findings:

1. Effort should be intensified to ensure the institutionalisation of civilized practices and procedures for good governance. Until this is achieved, African will remain the Dark Continent which it is at the moment.
2. Governments in power must ensure the issue of poverty, security and life opportunities are addressed with every sincerity of purpose.
3. The advanced and industrialized nations should intensify their financial and technical support for the poorer nations especially those in sub-Sahara Africa.
4. Any good governance in Africa must begin with the re-orientation of the youths to learn to believe in themselves and their countries.

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