



Acculturation Imperatives and Language Shocks in Virtual Sub-Saharan Migration Narratives

Authors

**Adebayo
Abidemi
Olufemi
& Onmoke
Esther
Avosuah,**

Affiliation:

Department
of English,
Redeemer's
University,
Nigeria



Abstract

This study is an appraisal of the hurdles that sub-Saharan migrants encounter in the contemporary Diaspora space in the Global North. The question of the ever-changing migration rules and the current deplorable trends about the welfare of African migrants are so topical that they have attracted the attention of meaningful stakeholders in the African social affairs. These include social media vloggers. The study employed the Progressivist theoretical principles as guide. The research is also qualitative and interpretative in mode. The vloggers have featured live interviews with some migrants in the West who have lamented some social improprieties as social shocks in their acculturation process in the societies they have relocated to in the Occident. Such include restricted job access, language impediment, revalidation of learning as well as exorbitant taxes and bills. These are being put in place by the host government as protectionism. This is because of a number of allegations against the sub-Saharan migrants. These include the commercialization of migration by many Africans. Also, Africans schemes to obtain permission to stay in the West as seen in such phantom claims as pseudo-marriages. Many African also engage in illicit activities including drug peddling. The migrants' lament their ordeals and opine that African governments should put machinery in motion by ensuring good governance. Such can manifest in the elimination of avarice in the official quarters, institutionalization of strong institution, and apolitical jurisprudence. This will lead to even distribution of commonwealth and discontinue the humiliation of African citizens in the Global North.



Keywords: Sub-Saharan migrants, protectionism, African vloggers, Acculturation, Migration Narratives

Introduction

One of the worrisome new-normal phenomena in the contemporary time in Africa's social system is voluntary migration especially Westwards to the Global North. This phenomenon bears certain characteristics. The first is that it is massive. It is also common among the youth. It bears a desperate spatial aura in Africa's social system. It is largely fraudulent in planning. It is economically self-centered. It is intended to be permanent in the new location. It is regarded as a means of earnings, and it is used as a means of social power and superiority within the Africa social system. All these features connect asymmetrically in the ultimate when the topic of the Africa's mass migration is being discussed. It is incontrovertible that African economies and the social system have declined especially in the present time seen in economic downturn in many countries on the continent¹. In the same vein, insecurity situation is frightening on the continent of Africa.²The youth consequently feel that their future is not secure in Africa and this has led to massive outward movements of the vibrant demographic of her population to take up menial jobs in the West. Migration is not a strange phenomenon in Nigeria as it has a history dating back to the slavery age.

However, there have been conversations on the potential of the African continent and its people and this has gained momentum in the recent years. This is particularly in relation to the mass exodus of Africans out of the continent. That is the question of migration outward Africa towards the Occident as an indicator of non-utilization of the endowments of the continent is currently a tangible social and socio-economic topic in Africa today. It is common knowledge in the world these days that many Africans have resorted to leaving their home countries for Golden Fleece especially in the developed countries in the Western Hemisphere of the globe. Many scholars of social affairs in Africa have opined that the mass outward movements of Africans from the continent are motivated by the deplorable economic, political and general social degeneration of the countries in Africa. In

¹ Krantz, Sebastian. Africa's Great Moderation. *Journal of African Economies*, 33(5), 2024, 515– 537, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejad021>

² Andrews, Nathan & Obi, Cyril. A New Era for *African Security*: Sustaining and Expanding Opportunities for Sustained Scholarship and Inclusive Excellence. *African Security*, 2024. 1-9
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2024.2386815>



addition to these, one other complementary reason for the preference of Africans to relocate to the west is that such is a source of social pride, empowerment and enhancement of social status. This topical social situation is worth studying because of a number of sequels. The first is that, the age-long movement has resulted in certain controversies. Another situation is the government of Africa's recourse to the Diaspora for sustainable growth. And the third phenomenon is the complicated social identities of the Diaspora Africans as could be seen in transnational marriages, dual or multiple citizenships and the sense of superior disposition of the Diaspora African nationals to the continental Africans. Although the conversations on migration out of Africa have been held in many strata of the African society, however, the social media discussion of the phenomenon is indeed of immense significance. The choice of the social media is for effectiveness and impact, because social media is an efficient and dominant means of mass communication in the modern world.³ The dominance and efficiency can be attributed to the universal inclusivity and the real-time nature of social media, unlike other strata such as radio, town halls, tete-a-tete as well as conferences or workshops. The mass outward movement of Africans bears a link to the despicable social degeneration in most parts of the continent.

Of particular interest in this study regarding the social media discussion of migration of Africans is the viewpoint that Africans should remain in the continents as Africa has the potential for development. This is considered along the declaration that the Western society is hostile to migrants especially migrants from Africa. This focus is cardinal in the study and to ensure the actuality and authenticity of the statements for thorough analysis, the testimonies of African migrants have been considered appropriate for the study. The experiences of African migrants expressed in social media interviews are explored to come to conclusions on these curious concerns. This study also examines the contradictions in the claimed viability of Africa's potential in the context of governments' clamour for Diaspora investments in African economy as a sustainable pathway for the growth of the continent. The study interrogates the feasibility or otherwise of the returnee-migrants and their hosts on the social media vlogs that African is home as a result of the claimed draconian immigration rules in the developed countries.

³ Baruah, Trisha Dowerah. Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(5), 1-10, 2012 www.ijsrp.org



Methodological approach

This study has been carried out employing certain methodological guidelines. The first of the methodological guidelines is the use of social media as a stratum of African society which is hosting migration conversations. This has been necessitated by the ubiquitous and universal tendencies of social media. Such makes it global audience to access the data for the study. Social media also makes the inferences and conclusions from the study to have unrestricted reach and access. In the same vein, the interview model of information gathering has been employed. This is because the personal experiences and testimonies of African migrants go a long way to assert the authenticity of claim on Western zeitgeist. The testimonies are by African migrants who are both still living in Diaspora and those who have returned to African homeland.

Theoretical Framework

This study has been carried out by employing New Progressivist theoretical framework. This theory has been considered because it bears relevance to growth agenda as the core goal of the study. For example, New Progressivist theory leans towards reforming the society. The essence of the social reform is to project the socio-economic and political condition of citizens. New Progressivists advocate innovation in technology, investment, education, global trade, research and communication, according to.⁴ When these situations are considered as the cores of the New Progressivist Theory, there is a connection to the development of Africa. This is in the context of the fact that the central concern of the interview on the relocation migration of Africans to the West is the social degeneration on the continent. The interviews also seek the reversal of this trend by advocating a concerted effort in inspiring the development of Africa in the areas of public and political administration, science, technology, economy as well as education and all of these are matrixes of progress in a society. The Choice of Social Media for the Study

It has been stated in the research that social media platforms have been selected as the stratum of the African society hosting conversations on migration. This is because of the peculiar peculiarities of social media which social pundits and academics have addressed.

⁴ Rosevear, Evan, Trebilcock², Michael, Prado, Mariana Mota. The New Progressivism and its implications for institutional theories of development *Development Policy Review*, 39(4), 2020, 644-664



For example,⁵ (2024) emphasize the power and efficiency of social media in the area of enhancement of the digital life of the people around the world. They opine that the necessity of a digital lifestyle emerged during emergency, particularly the Covid-19 crisis. The chaos highlights the need to improve the digital lives of individuals as this has to do regarding remote working and learning. Digital lifestyles as a culture and practice have provided opportunities for skilled individuals and businesses originations to improve their experiences using the internet. This view on the power and characteristics of social media is similar to the assertion of⁶ that social media has universal characteristics which have improved interactivity inclusivity among the global population. Varga therefore sees social media as an enabler of interaction of people from anywhere in the world because of the ubiquitous nature of social media. The importance of the culture of digital and virtual communication among the people is seen in the rise of the users from millions to billions of users worldwide. The usefulness of social media from its commercial potency, highlighting certain benefits of the digital platform in the process has been looked at as follows.⁷

Social media is not only used by companies as a marketing medium, but is also used to access information about their market, competitors and customers as a tool to improve business performance and innovation. Furthermore, social media is an external means of communication in customer relations.

Furthermore, social media has been utilized as a tool for efficient learning in the contemporary time. In the opinion of ⁸:

It should be noted here carefully that if such communication technology would be followed with

⁵ Mohamed, The role of social media in enhancing adolescents' digital life quality- survey study in the UAE. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 29(1) 1-13 <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2024.2358081>

⁶ Varga Elena-lulia, 2018. The Importance of social media. *Annals - Economy Series, Constantin Brancusi University*, 6, 80-91.

⁷ Pasaribu, Johni S Social Media and Its Role in Improving BusinessPerformance. *Generation International Journal of Economics and Accounting*, 1(2) 246-254 <https://doi.org/10.38035/gjjea.v1i2>

⁸ Ansari, Jamal.Abdul.Nasir., Khan, Nawab.Ali. Exploring the role of social media in collaborative learning the new domain of learning. *Smart Learn. Environments*. 7(9), 1-118. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561->

due attention prove productive. It is essential to acknowledge that most university students nowadays adopting social media communication to interact with colleagues, teachers and also making the group be in touch with old friends and even a convenient source of transferring the resources.

This use of social media, as Ansari & Khan opine, is contrary to the general perception that social media is for entertainment purposes only. The context of social media as a tool for efficient performance of daily activities of the people in the present time is noted further in ⁹ assertion that social media is a powerful and effective forum for championing protests as well as resistance against social oppression and power abuse in public administration. From the fore-going, it is obvious that social media as an online forum performs important functions in the functionality of modern society. This has motivated the use of the social media as a platform and forum of public conversations on Africa for the study.

Africa's Request for Diaspora Investment

The governments in Africa see the possible inputs of Africans in Diaspora as vital in revamping the continent's social system. For example, the Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment manages Nigerian Diaspora fund which is dedicated to enabling Diaspora Africans to build the continent. Diaspora investments are sought after by the governments of Africa nations. In addition to this, the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) has joined in encouraging Africans overseas to make investment in Africa. This is noted in the following ¹⁰ report:

Ultimately, despite the passage of time, the setting and central query remained unchanged: how could the ties between Africa and its Diaspora be strengthened for socioeconomic prosperity? ... By realising Marcus Garvey's century-old dream of a

⁹ Chilwa, Innocent. Social media networks and the discourse of resistance: A sociolinguistic CDA of Biafra online discourses. *Discourse & Society*, 23(3) 217–244

¹⁰ UNDP. Strengthening Ties Between Africa and the Diaspora for Socio-Economic Prosperity: Building Prosperity for Africa's People – everywhere, *Africa*, August 13, 2023. Available @<https://www.undp.org/africa/stories/strengthening-ties-between-africa-and-diaspora> Retrieved January 18, 2025

true alliance between Africa and the over 170-million-person African Diaspora, the continent's boundless potential could finally be unlocked.

The crux of the UNDP's report above is to stress the importance and possibility of repatriating Diaspora funds to Africa in the process of ensuring that such contributes to the development of the continent. In Nigeria, furthermore, there is a government policy for encouraging Diaspora funds into the country. The essence is to attract dollars to the economy as a means of rescuing the declining Nigerian economy. For example, the Nigerian Government has requested that firms as well as corporate organizations should express interest in participating in the \$10 billion Diaspora Funds Initiative by Nigerian government such that Nigerians in Diaspora should provide a Fund Multi-Sector investment to grow the economy. This was announced on a by the Nigeria's Minister of Trade, Doris Nkiruka Uzoka-Anite in a social media post. She explains that the Diaspora Fund Initiative was conceived to grow the worsening Nigerian economy ¹¹. ¹²also, explains that:

Nigeria is seeking fund managers for a planned \$10 billion Diaspora fund that is aimed at attracting dollar inflows and foreign investment into the economy, a tender document showed. The fund seeks to pool together billions of dollars remitted monthly by its citizens overseas for local investments, including infrastructure, healthcare and education. Last year, Nigeria is estimated to have received in excess of \$20 billion in Diaspora remittances, according to the World Bank.

When this report is considered critical, it would be noted that the Nigerian government will gain a great deal with the funds coming into the country through the policy on the Diaspora. This has its negative implications however, as it is ruptured the taunted potential of Africa making it a mere myth. This is because these huge funds coming from

¹¹ Sahara Reporters, 2024. Nigeria Plans \$10Billion Diaspora Fund For Citizens In Diaspora To Grow Economy Through Foreign Investment. Sahara Reporters, April 26, 2024. Available at <https://saharareporters.com/2024/04/26/Nigeria-plans-10billion-diaspora-fund-citizens-diaspora-grow-economy-through-foreign>. Retrieved January 22, 2025

¹² Anyaogu, Isaac. Nigeria seeks managers for planned \$10 billion Diaspora fund. Reuters, April 6th, 2024. Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-seeks-managers-planned-10-billion-diaspora-fund-2024-04-26>. Retrieved January 20, 2025.



the Global North signify that the country still depends on the West. This typifies the situation in the entire Africa in term of the desire for funds coming from the African nationals in the West.

Activities of African Migrants in Host Countries

African migrants have peculiar experiences and undertake certain activities in the developed countries hosting them. It needs to be stated that the primary motivation for the migration of Africans to the developed nations in the global North is economic. They leverage on the high exchange rate of the currencies in the host countries to the respective home currencies to acquire wealth. However, the grass in the Occidental nations is not as green as envisaged by the migrants especially by illegal migrants, those with skewed processes of entrance. The migrants have designed several strategies for survival in the host Western nations. For examples, some migrants resort to pseudo-marriage with locals for citizenship by marriage. Some also get involved in crimes as could be gleaned from ¹³ disclosure that there is a negative connection between immigration or migration and violent crimes as he states that in recent time, migration scholars have documented findings to affirm that many migrants do perpetrate crimes domestically in the country of host. There are reports of drug peddling and addiction by black migrants in the host nations and this is because most African migrants undertake transnational relocation illegally. It has been noted that there are organized crimes along the Mediterranean irregular migration route which is the regular routes for illegal migrants to the West.¹⁴ In addition to this, citing the data by its agency, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), it has been corroborated that there is massive irregular migration along the Central Mediterranean, stating that:¹⁵

17 October 2024 - Migrant smuggling increased significantly in 2023 compared to 2022 along the

¹³ Wortley, Scot. Introduction. The Immigration-Crime Connection: Competing Theoretical Perspectives. *Journal of International Migration & Integration* 10, 349-358, 10:349-358 DOI 10.1007/s12134-009-0117-9

¹⁴ Molobe, Ikenna Daniel and Odukoya, Oluwakemi Ololade. The prevalence of drug use and illicit trafficking: A descriptive cross-sectional study of irregular migrant returnees in Nigeria. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 3, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2021.100034>

¹⁵ United Nations. (2024). Migrant smuggling along Central Mediterranean route worth between US\$290 and \$370 million in 2023, according to update from UNODC. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2024/October/migrant-smuggling-along-central-meditarrearan-routhe-worth-between>



Central Mediterranean route, according to a new update from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The total financial value of migrant smuggling by sea on this route is estimated to be between US\$290 and \$370 million.

It is important to state that the unconstitutionality of irregular migration is a potent facilitator of crimes in the host countries. This is because, since the migrants do not have the backing of the law, it is usually very difficult, indeed, impossible, for them to secure legitimate careers, jobs, or any other means of livelihood. This makes them resort to crimes. Such sabotages the efforts of the government.

Discussion: Analysis of the Research Social Media Videos

At this juncture of the study, engagement is the discussion of the social media conversations on the situations of African migrants in the host countries investigating the phenomenon of Back-to Africa campaign. Specific attention is paid to the testimonies of the African migrants' interviews and the interpretations and reports of the travel vloggers in social media. This is considered a veritable means of assuring the authenticity of claims as one hears from the horse's mouth on the critical subject of the plight of African migrants in the contemporary time when it comes to migration dialogues. A number of YouTube videos across social media hosting interviews with African migrants are considered forth.

Tayo Aina's Why Everyone is Leaving for the UK

The Tayo Aina's YouTube video titled "Why Everyone is Leaving for the UK" is the vlogger's inquiry into the mass exodus of Nigerians outside of the country. He therefore travelled to London to interview Nigerian migrants who gave a number of reasons. These include lack of structures, insecurity, deficient health sector, as well as lack of economic opportunities. All these have resulted in the desire for a better life, economically. However, are the lives of the migrants testified to be better in the UK? In this video, this is not so as could be gleaned in the decoration of the Nigerian migrants interviewed thus: According to Kingsley Ojemba "When I got on the plane the first night in 2002, I thought to myself, in six months, I will be building mansions in Nigeria. I will be buying cars. But I got here and you see the reality of life. It takes a year or two before you even settle". In the same vein, Oluwatosin Godfrey-Eze testifies thus: "My husband and I found it very difficult you know to look after ourselves. And you can imagine with three kids; that was like ... the most horrible thing". Towards the end of



the video, Tayo Aina asserts that "With good governance and improved infrastructure, Nigeria could harness this potential domestically rather than exporting its most valuable assets ... and until the root causes are addressed this story is doomed to repeat itself". The interpretation of these revelations by both the migrants and the vlogger is that life in the UK is not as easy as most African migrants conceive it to be. What militates against the migrants according to Paulo is high cost of living. Paulo affirms further: "The economy of this country is not designed for people to be rich... It's designed to work and put back into the system". This is especially so in the context of the conception of migration by Nigerians to the extent of Japa migration ideology which designates desperate relocation desires of many Nigerians Westward for economic opportunities.¹⁶

Danielle Munchies's Testimonies on Migrants' Conditions: the Instance of Switzerland

The testimonies of Danielle Munchies on the perception of Africans and the huddles that migrants encounter in the specific instance of Switzerland are considered germane to this study on two conditions. The first condition is that knowing outsiders' perception of Africans based on their social and economic situations is useful to making valid view in this study. In addition to this, Munchies' testimonies are generic views on third world black communities. The first of the testimonies is contained in a video on YouTube titled "Being Black in Switzerland A Personal Experience". In the video, Munchies discloses thus:

Good morning ... I want to talk about what it looks like to live in Switzerland as a black person. There are things that we as black people need to be sensitized about before we move to a place. ... For us, an African is poor, was hungry. It was always some charity, begging for money in Africa. That was my perception of Africans.

It needs to be stated that this perception about Africans is true. This accounts for the desperate migration of Africans to the West. However, many African migrants tend to relocate to the West blindly as they are not aware of or usually ignore the internal economic dynamics of the home country concerning migrants. This dynamic

¹⁶ Okunade, Samuel .Kehinde, Awosusi, O.E. The *Japa syndrome* and the migration of Nigerians to the United Kingdom: an empirical analysis. *Comparative Migration Studies*11 (27). 1-19<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023->



often reflects in policy reforms to favour their citizens. Such conditions and huddles are hinted in this testimony:

As a black person, I struggle to gain meaningful employments here in Switzerland. There are certain jobs that no problem you can get easily. For example, cleaning jobs, or work in a restaurant; those are the jobs you get without a blink an eye. Anything more meaningful, if you did not grow up here ... it is very hard. The thing with the job market here is it is favourable to Swiss and Europeans.

The crux of the excerpt above is the effects of the protectionist policy of the Swiss government. It could however be inferred that Munchies is lamenting shock at a different turn of events. As stated earlier, most Migrants have the misconception that they can just move to a Western region of the world and just take advantage of the economic endowments of the host Western countries. That is why she refers to menial jobs such as cleaning as un-meaningful. This is particularly because the primary goal of the migrants is the take up the corporate jobs or the highly lucrative employments. This situation and turn of events have implications which manifest most palpably in economic incapability of the migrants. This consequently weakens their financial prowess to lift their families back home and the expectations of their government for Diaspora financing as a veritable source of lifting their poor nations out of poverty.

The Sensitization Revelations by Chioma at 'Life with Chioma'

Life with Chioma also addresses the crucial issue of the prevalent social and economic conditions in the Occidental nations which are protectionist, but which migrants consider unfavorable, even inimical. The vlogger's testimonies are a corroboration of Munchies' disclosures earlier. In a video YouTube video titled "You may Regret Moving to Australia if You are One of these People". In the sermonizing monologue, the YouTuber observes thus:

Today's video is all about people who may end up not enjoying their relocation experiences. Some people end up regretting coming to Australia. Australia is not for everybody... Career professionals ... who are established in their ... having to face the prospect of abandoning everything ... or in some cases are even able to get back on their careers ... I

have seen people who have packed and left as a result of that frustration.

The frustration that Chioma alludes to in the excerpt stems from the local protectionist economic policy as these policies prevents the migrants from taking up the jobs which local professionals should take advantage of. This deprives the migrants their economic target. This situation limits their high expectations. Such limitations also thaw the chances of high financial accumulation enough for their respective aboriginal societies to gain from in such abundance as to lift such societies out of squalor.

The Theory of Regional Diversification in Modern Migration and the Matters Arising at Official_JannetKenya

JannetKenya's hypotheses on the conditions of the migrants in Europe center on the relocation strategy by the black such that black African strategize by beaming search light on other Western countries apart from the English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, Britain et cetera. This is because these countries are congested. However, in carrying out the relocation diversification, certain considerations are being ignored, and this has led to a number of matters arising. Two of these are identified by JannetKenya in a YouTube video titled "Things I Wish Somebody Told Me Before Moving to Europe". In this video, JannetKenya identifies language learning and recertification as limitations which could be interpreted as inimical to the Golden Fleece aspirations of black migrants because these limit r5their chances of accessing the wealth of the host country to the detriment of the local professionals. JannetKenya lamentation thus:

I just want to do a video about things no one told me about moving to Europe. Or things someone should have told me before I moved to Europe...If somebody told me if I came to Germany. I would take my whole energy, my entire brain to study German for parts of my life. Studying Dutch can drain you. If somebody told me I was coming to take my entire time to study language before I can manage to get into the system, I could have just stayed in Kenya and enjoy Swahili and English. No 3, I wish somebody told me I have been studying my entire life to start all over again. I studied Business Management in Kenya... but when I came here, they told me it is not enough.



This testimony by the Kenyan vlogger is replete with lamentation and regret as signified in the constant use of the expression "If somebody told me". It is obvious that her inability to communicate in German has a negative economic implication. The certificate she holds too is not recognized for the kind of job she wanted which could cater to the financial needs that pushed her out of Kenya in the first instance. The implication of this is that random migration of Africans from regions that have historical or linguistic affiliation with their homelands is counter-productive.

The Instance of Citizen TV Kenya and Yvonne Amolo's Swiss Migration Recount

Citizen Tv Kenya is a YouTube platform. An edition of the platform features migration affairs especially as these concern Kenyans' defying odds abroad. In line with the goal of assessing the real migration issues in the West particularly as they affect Kenyan Diaspora, the platform hosts Yvonne Amolo, a Swiss Member of Parliament of Kenyan origin, on an edition on the platform. The featuring of Amolo is to shed light on the current migrants' conditions in the West. Amolo's testament on the hurdles of black Diaspora is similar to Jannet Kenya's earlier on the basis of language restriction to economic opportunities which black migrants experience in the West. This is contained in a YouTube video titled "Defying Odds Abroad Yvonne Apiyo Brandle Amolo is an MP in Switzerland". In the actual words of Amolo on the language factor in migrants' access to economic opportunities in the West:

I am in the German-speaking part. When I first came... I had to learn German because everybody was speaking German. I did not learn it for the first three years so I was very lonely. ... I thought to myself if it goes on like this I would not survive in this country. What am I going to do? ... I learnt how to Yodel. That helped a lot. I got a really good job... It was a good paying job.

The Amolo's disclosures in the excerpt echo the consequences of black migrants' foray into another region of the West where a different world language apart from the world language spoken as a national language in their African homeland is spoken. Amolo was not able to get a job in Switzerland until she learnt German and Yodel. However, it needs to be stressed that the Amolo's eventual success is possible because she was married to a Swiss man. Many other Africans are



usually not able to survive the language hurdle and consequently miss opportunities of even the menial job available. The end-result of this is loss of financial accumulation because of which the migrants are in the West in the first instance. The study has noted that the choice of non-English-speaking part of the West is a demonstration of the migrants' misguided orientation on the multiculturalism of the West and the need of the home government to protect their citizens, primarily.

Migrants' Hurdles in the West and the Nativity Theory: A Critical Perspective

The YouTubers whose social media travel videos have been interrogated in this study have raised and addressed vital issues in contemporary Africa. These issues as have been highlighted in this research essay include lack of standard structure for good governance, justice and fundamental human rights, insecurity, deficient health sector, and dearth of job and economic opportunities. These have led to abject poverty on the continent and been identified as being responsible for the mass exodus of African migrants in the West. They have also hypothesized through their guests and interviewees that high-paid jobs are preserved for the local in the Occident; that migrants encounter re-education and language barrier as hurdles to accessing economic opportunities in the West. The YouTubers and their guests also advance the cause of African self-sufficiency. On the basis of this, the guests and the YouTubers opine that return to Africa is the most viable means of developing the continent. These critical hypothetical comments require further analysis so as to weigh their extent of feasibility.

To begin with, it should be emphasized that the social ills and vices in Africa are endemic, and may take decades to be subdued. It is also uncertain if the political class in Africa is willing to abide by the standard ethical principles in public administration. This is because when the ethical principles are followed in Africa public administration, wealth will go round, there will be justice, and the subaltern will be empowered. This translates to social disempowerment of the political elite. Furthermore, the lamentation of the interviewees in the social media videos used in the research is a metaphor for the demonstration of the frustration and desperation of African migrants in the West. This frustration is to the extent of ignorance and perversion of rationality. It behooves African migrants that protectionist policies of a host country in a migration scenario are no racial profiling. The interest of the locals and citizens of a country is



first priority to a government.¹⁷ Indeed, it has been averred that such priority manifests in the form of "... citizen surveys, interaction on social media, and ... citizens' participation in government policy making and implementation".¹⁸To this end, there should be no legitimate cause for African migrants to lament the host governments' priority care for their citizens as this is a protectionist policy.

Similarly, sub-Saharan migrants need to come to the realization of the dynamism of immigration rule. These rules are susceptible to change and modification as time passes by. Some factors are responsible for this. The first is that inordinate influx of immigrants which needs to be curtailed. This is especially so because there are many illegal migrants who cannot be accounted for in Western countries,¹⁹ leading to a rise in asylum seekers and this posed a huge challenge for EU nations.²⁰ Such a challenge includes how EU governments would safeguard the interests of the citizens of the concerned EU nations and protect their economies from collapse. Another factor which has necessitated modifications in immigration laws in the West is the misadventure and vices that migrants, especially undocumented ones generally, perpetrate, particularly in the USA.²¹ And yet related to this factor is the scheming of many Africans to acquire the citizenship of the Western countries especially that of the United States. These scheming include, for example, a pregnant woman's travel to the USA in the third trimester so as to give birth in the USA for American citizenship for

¹⁷ Monsoor, Mahnaz (2021). Citizens' trust in government as a function of good governance and government agency's provision of quality information on social media during COVID-19. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38 (4) 1-14 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2021.101597>

¹⁸ Holum, Marthe. 2023. Citizen Participation: Linking Government Efforts, Actual Participation, and Trust in Local Politicians. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 46(13) 915-925 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2022.2048667>
¹⁹ Andersson, Ruben. (2016). Europe's failed 'fight' against irregular migration: ethnographic notes on a counterproductive industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(7), 1055-1075. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1139446>

²⁰ Kobata, Monika & Jacobs, An. (2022). The 'migrant other' as a security threat: the 'migration crisis' and the securitising move of the Polish ruling party in response to the EU relocation scheme. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(4), 1223-1239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2146072>
²¹ Adelman, Robert. M., Yang, Yulin., Reid, Leslie. Williams., Bachmeier, James. D., & Maciag, Mike. (2020). Using estimates of undocumented immigrants to study the immigration-crime relationship. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 44(4), 375-400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2020.1819375>



the child.²² All these and many more put stress on the economies of the West and constitute a menace in their cities. To avert this, immigration policies have to change such as the current President Donald Trump's deportation of undocumented immigrants in the USA. This also aligns with the modification that Kemi Badenoch, a Tory leader, is putting in place in order to curb the parasitic stratagems of immigrants especially the irregular ones. Migrants who are on work visas and who are claiming State benefits have to be barred from settling permanently in the UK, under the Tory leader's major policy announcement in her capacity as a Tory leader.²³ Zeffman and Nevett stress further that Badenoch has said the period before any migrants can obtain indefinite leave to remain for the purpose of British citizenship is extended from five years to 10 years. All these are administrative necessities which migrants need to come to terms with.

On the Africa's sufficiency advocacy by the migrants interrogated in the study, it is opined in this study that Africa still needs the rest of the world to attain the level of a Utopian society seen in the narrative rhetoric in the videos. The nativity theory and return to Africa advocacy need to put into perspective some critical imperatives. This is because when the different sectors of the African society are considered, it becomes clear that Africa needs collaboration with the developed parts of the world in order to attain prosperity. To begin with, the economic development of Africa depends essentially on the exploration of its natural resources. To access these resources, Africa needs the engineering and technology of the West. African countries store and manage their reserves in the West. There is no global currency among African currencies for international trades. Critical infrastructures in Africa are being installed, run, and serviced by companies in the West. For example, the internet infrastructures such as laying of submarine internet cables conveying internet to Africa are still being supplied and serviced by developed nations especially in the West.²⁴ This makes Africa need the West more. The return-to-Africa dialogue not be on the framework that Africa is buoyant and prosperous already. Rather, the campaign should be hung on the ideological vision that returning to Africa is to build concerted efforts which also affords the

²² Allotey, Adoley Ada, Anarfi, John Kwasi, and Kandilige, Leander. Birth Tourism to the United States of America and its Perceived Implications for Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Geography*, 15 (1), 1-34 Doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjg.v15i1.1>

²³ Zeffman, Henry & Nevett. 2025. Tories would bar benefit-claim migrants from settling in UK. M BBC, February 5th, 2025. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c863eyvwny20> Accessed February 7th, 2025

²⁴ Nyirenda-Jere, Towela & Biru, Tesfaye. 2015. *Internet development and Internet governance in Africa*. Internet Society; Geneva www.internetsociety.org



been-tos to bring their exposure to bear in the growth cause for Africa. This is the true reflection of the social, economic, and political realities on the continent.

In addition to all these, the political class needs a lot of responsibilities to bear particularly in the area of good governance which is missing in Africa. This is why there are certain deficiencies in Africa's social system. For example, a society that is considered conducive to living must provide basic needs of its people. In Africa, there is food shortage to the extent of a crisis. It has been revealed that communities in Africa especially in Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Somalia are experiencing worst food crisis witnessed in decades.²⁵ In addition to this, decent and habitable shelter is a problem in Africa as affordable housing systems are a mirage on the continent.²⁶ These basic needs deficiencies and many more worsen the conditions of citizens in view of the fact that there is significant lack of accountable social and governmental structures such as Strong Institutions and fair judicial systems.²⁷ With these available details, it cannot be argued incontrovertible that Africa is truly conducive to meaningful living as the returnees in the social media videos have claimed.

Conclusion

Africa's renewal cause needs to be approached more pragmatically beyond rhetoric in the virtual space. Africa's expectation of development through Diaspora funds needs to be reconceptualized as the Diaspora financing is no longer as it used to be as a result of immigration policy change in the Global North. African leaders should take a number of steps to rectify the nomadic lifestyle of Africans. The first is to embrace President Donald Trump's deportation policy, which as earlier discussed is intended to enable African expertise to be harnessed for the growth of the continent. It is cheery news that stakeholders in Africa have begun to see the policy as progressive. As can be ascertained in the report that Mr

²⁵ BritishRedCross (2023). Africa food crisis: more than 150 million people are going hungry.7 December2023. Available at <https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/disasters-and-emergencies/world/africa-hunger-crisis> Retrieved February 8, 2025

²⁶ Addae-Dapaah, Kwame. (2021). Urban Housing Affordability Problem in Africa: A Search for Pragmatic Solution? *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: Real Estate, Event and Tourism Management*, 21(1), 48-62

²⁷ Ighobor, Kingsley. 2020. Africa needs strong institutions and smart policies. *Africa Renewal*, August 28, 2020. Available at <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine.august-2020/africa-needs-strong-institution-and-smart-policies> Retrieved February 8, 2025



Bola Babarinde of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in South Africa urges Nigerian authorities and other African nations to embrace Donald Trump's immigration rule modification perceived to be draconian to propel development projects on the continent.²⁸ In the same vein, African leaders should make good governance, devoid of corruption and other public administration sharp practices a culture. However, attaining good governance in Africa is daunting. Apart from the inordinate avarice of the political elite, the electorate who are essentially the subalterns in society are culpable. This is because many subaltern voters in Africa demand monetary gratification before they exercise franchise as they are of the view that that is the only benefits they can get from politicians. In other words, the political moneybags do purchase votes. The implication of this is that the electoral system in many African countries is financially transactional and this usually warrants that the politicians will first recoup the money he has spent. In any case, good governance is crucial to the attainment of development in Africa. This will curb inordinate relocation ambition of many young Africans. In its current shape, Diaspora funds to Africa are the act of milking the West for Africa. It should also be stated that because of the modification in immigration laws and rules as a result of the exploitation of the benefits accruing, by African migrants, many immigrants no longer have access to high paid jobs in the developed nations unlike before the wealth of the West. Those who do are hold nativity to the West.

²⁸ Ochogwu, Sunday. (2025). Africa should turn Trump's harsh policies to blessing – APC chieftain. *DailyPost*, February 2nd, 2025