

ECONOMIES OF MIGRATION AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

KANU, Ikechukwu Anthony
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Tansian University, Umunya
Anambra State
ikee_mario@yahoo.com

Abstract

Recent scientific studies focus on finding the connections between two or more variables within a given economy of reality. The discovery of such connections has had implications for policy making, and thus, the discovery of solutions to major problems in society. As a research within this parameter, this paper is concerned about discovering the relationship between migration and poverty in Africa. A cursory glance at the state of affairs shows that the faces of greater percentage of Africans register destitution, frustration and despair. In recent times, Sub-Saharan Africa has attracted a global publicity as a result of the high degree of poverty among its people. Sub-Saharan Africa has, in fact, become synonymous with poverty, and Nigeria, with more than 180 million population hosts the largest population of poor people in the region. In studying the relationship between migration and poverty, this paper discovers that most migrations from the African, is a movement for the search for better opportunities to improve life, therefore, a coping strategy at moments of economic distress. The method of research employed in this paper is the historical and hermeneutic methods of investigation.

Keywords: Poverty, Migration, Economy, Africa, Nigeria, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

One of the most obvious phenomena that have attracted the attention of scholars, governments, etc., is human migration. By human migration it is understood as the movement of people, as individuals, families or groups from one place to another with the intention of settling, permanently or temporarily at a new location. The movement is often over long distances and from one country to another. However, there is also internal migration which consists in the movement of people from one part of the country to another. This movement could be conditioned by a couple of factors, ranging from the search for asylum to the search for greener pastures, thus, it could be forced or voluntary, depending on the reason for movement from one place to another. The concept

of migration here employed does not include nomadic movements, temporary movements for the purpose of travel, tourism, pilgrimages, which are begun with the intention of returning back to one's home. Migration involves movement to another place with the intention of living and settling in the new place.

According to the United Nations report on Migration in 2017, the number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow over the past seventeen years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 248 million in 2015, 220 million in 2010, 191 million in 2005 and 173 million in 2000. Between 2000 and 2005, the international migrant stock grew by an average of 2 per cent per year. During the period 2005-2010, the annual growth rate accelerated, reaching 2.9 per cent. Since then, however, it has slowed, falling to around 2.4 per cent per year during the period 2010-2015 and to 2.0 per cent per year during the period 2015-2017. In 2019, the percentage has moved beyond 2.0 per cent. While studying the issue of migration, this work carves its niche by focusing on the influence of poverty on the reality of migration. It, therefore, studies the relationship between migration and poverty, with the aim of determining the degree of this influence. And for the purpose of this study, the African society is studied with more emphasis on Nigeria, which is the giant of Africa. The multidimensional method would be employed in the understanding of poverty and migration as realities that are multifaceted.

Understanding Poverty

The word poverty comes from the old (Norman) French word *poverté* (Modern French: *pauvreté*), from Latin *paupertās* from *pauper* (poor). Poverty simply means not having enough for a person's needs or a pronounced deprivation in well-being, which comprises many dimensions. It includes, but not exclusively, low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. When poverty is absolute, it means that the person in question does not have the means necessary to meet his or her basic need. When it is absolute then it is a complete lack. Poverty could also be relative, that is, when the person in question cannot meet the minimum level of living standard compared to others in the

same place and time. If it is related to persons around the person in question, it would mean that relative poverty would vary from one place to another.

The 2019 Global Poverty Multidimensional Index looks beyond income in her effort to understand how people experience poverty in multiple and simultaneous ways. It identifies how people are being left behind across three key dimensions: health, education and standard of living, comprising 10 indicators. People who experience deprivation in at least one third of these weighted indicators fall into the category of multidimensionally poor.

Dimensions of Poverty	Indicator	Deprived if living in the household where...	Weight
Health	Nutrition	An adult under 70 years of age or a child is undernourished	1/6
	Child mortality	Any child under the age of 18 years has died in the five years preceding the survey	1/6
Education	Years of schooling	No household member aged 10 years or older has completed six years of schooling	1/6
	School attendance	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which he/she would complete class 8.	1/6
Standard of living	Cooking Fuel	The household cooks with dung, wood, charcoal or coal	1/18
	Sanitation	The household's sanitation facility is not improved (according to SDG guidelines) or it is improved but shared with other households	1/18
	Drinking Water	The household does not have access to improved drinking water (according to SDG guidelines) or safe drinking water is at least a 30-minute walk from home, round trip	1/18
	Electricity	The household has no electricity	1/18
	Housing	Housing materials for at least one of roof, walls and floor are inadequate: the floor is of natural materials and/or the roof and/or walls are of natural or rudimentary materials	1/18
	Assets	The household does not own more than one of these assets: radio, TV, telephone,	1/18

		computer, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike or refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck	
--	--	--	--

This perspective from the Global Poverty Multidimensional Index provides an understanding of poverty beyond the box of income. It is a perspective that could be described as a wholistic or complementary understanding of poverty.

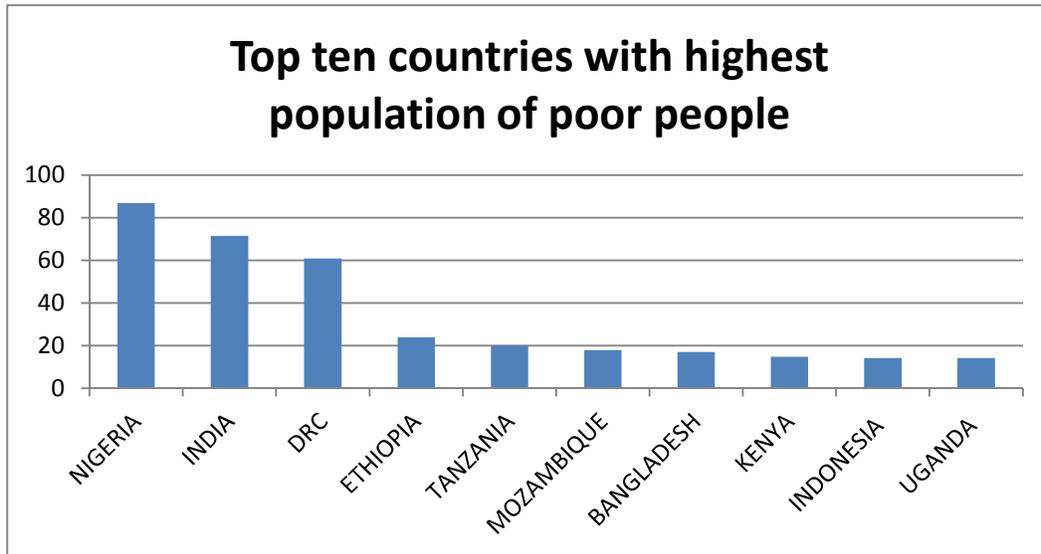
Africa and the Experience of Poverty

In recent times, Sub-Saharan Africa has attracted a global publicity as a result of the high degree of poverty among its people; according to Oshewole (2011), Sub-Saharan Africa has, in fact, become synonymous with poverty, and Nigeria hosts the largest population of poor people in the region. Nigeria is a country with more than 150 million citizens and counting. Despite earnings of more than \$300 billion from oil revenue (AFPODEV, 2006), Nigerians remain among the poorest in the world. 92% and 71% of the Nigerian population live on less than \$2 per day and \$1 per day respectively (AFRODAD, 2005). Despite several attempts by successive governments to ameliorate the scourge, the poverty situation in Nigeria is galloping and geometrically on the rise. Soludo (2003) avers that poverty is deep and pervasive in Nigeria, with about 70% of the population living in absolute poverty.

Putting the problem in proper perspective, Nwaobi (2003) asserts that Nigeria presents a paradox. The country is rich but the people are poor. Today, Nigeria is ranked among the poorest countries in the world. Notwithstanding, as Okonjo-Iweala, Soludo and Muhtar (2003) observes that the fight against poverty has been a central plank of development planning since independence in 1960, with about fifteen ministries, fourteen specialized agencies, and nineteen donor agencies and non-governmental organizations more than half of Nigerians still live below poverty line. Observers have unanimously agreed that successive government's interventions have failed to achieve the objectives for which they were established (Ovwasa, 2000; Adesopo, 2008; Omotola, 2008). The failure to effectively combat the problem has largely been blamed on infrastructural decay, endemic corruption, and poor governance and accountability (Okonjo-Iweala, Soludo and Muhtar 2003). In more recent times, with the increasing in population, poverty has deepened among African countries.

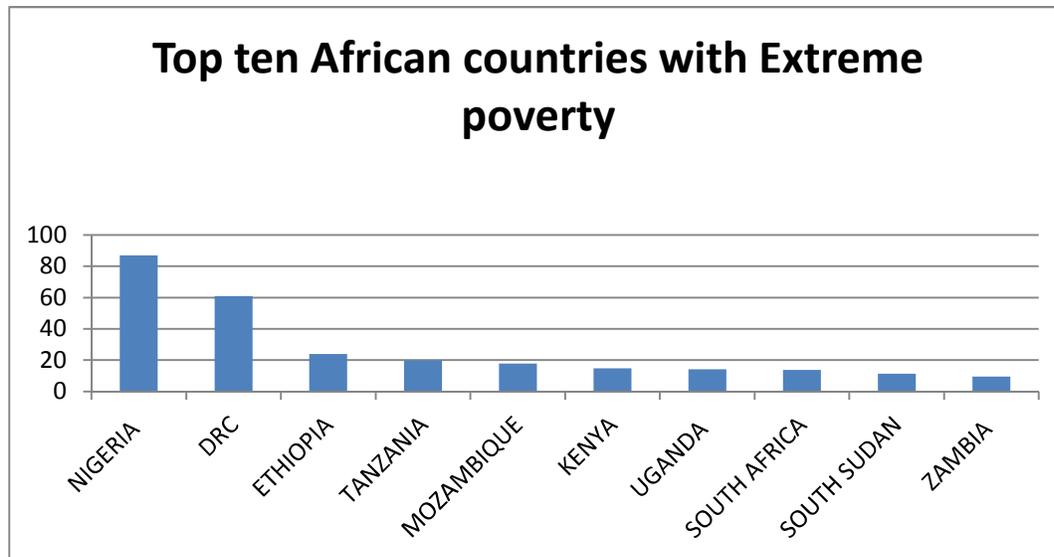
Below is a list of ten top countries with the highest number of poor people in the world. The number of African countries on the chart would help in the

understanding of the level of poverty in Africa. The chart was created based on the report of Poverty Clock in 2018.



Source- Figure 1: World Poverty Clock 2018

The above chart was drawn from the report of World Poverty Clock of 2018. It positions Nigeria, which is the giant of Africa, as having the highest population of poor people in the world. In first ten countries in the world, there are only two countries that are not African countries: India and Indonesia. However, the other eight countries are African countries, indicating that Africa has the highest number of poor people in the world. It is interesting that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty globally, even though India's population is seven times larger than Nigeria's.



Source- Figure 2: World Poverty Clock 2018

A cursory glance at the countries in top ten of extreme poverty reveals that only Ethiopia is on track to meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which looks forward to ending extreme poverty by 2030. However, beside these top ten countries, only Ghana and Mauritania are making effort at meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals target. Out of the 15 countries across the world where extreme poverty is rising per World Poverty Clock data, 13 are currently Africa countries. The consequence is that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of ending extreme poverty globally by 2030 is already at risk.

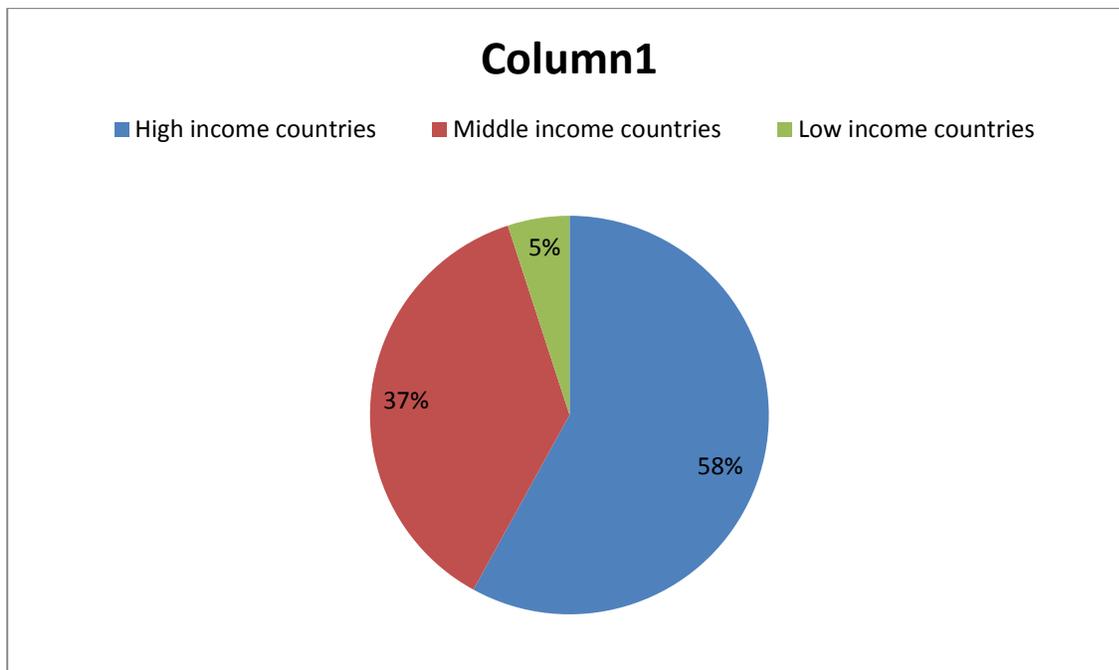
Relating Poverty with Migration

The question looming at the horizon of this work is: what is the relationship between poverty and migration? As a result of the presence of abject poverty in most African countries, many Africans migrate to countries outside of their own for the purpose of survival and living under dignifying conditions. Thus, Africans move to high income countries, with very little, if any, of people from such countries migrating to Africa. The United Nations International Migration Report in 2017 observed that high-income countries host almost two thirds of all international migrants. As of 2017, 64 per cent of all international migrants worldwide -equal to 165 million international migrants -lived in high-income countries. Thirty-six per cent -or 92 million -of the world's migrants lived in middle-or low-income countries. Of these, 81 million resided in middle-income countries and 11 million in low-income countries. The difference points to the

influence of poverty on migration. High-income countries have absorbed most of the recent growth in the global population of international migrants, gaining 64 million of the 85 million migrants added worldwide between 2000 and 2017. As a result, the rate of growth of the migrant population was highest during 2000-2017 (2.9 per cent per year) in high-income countries. The average growth rate in low-income countries was around 2.4 per cent per year.

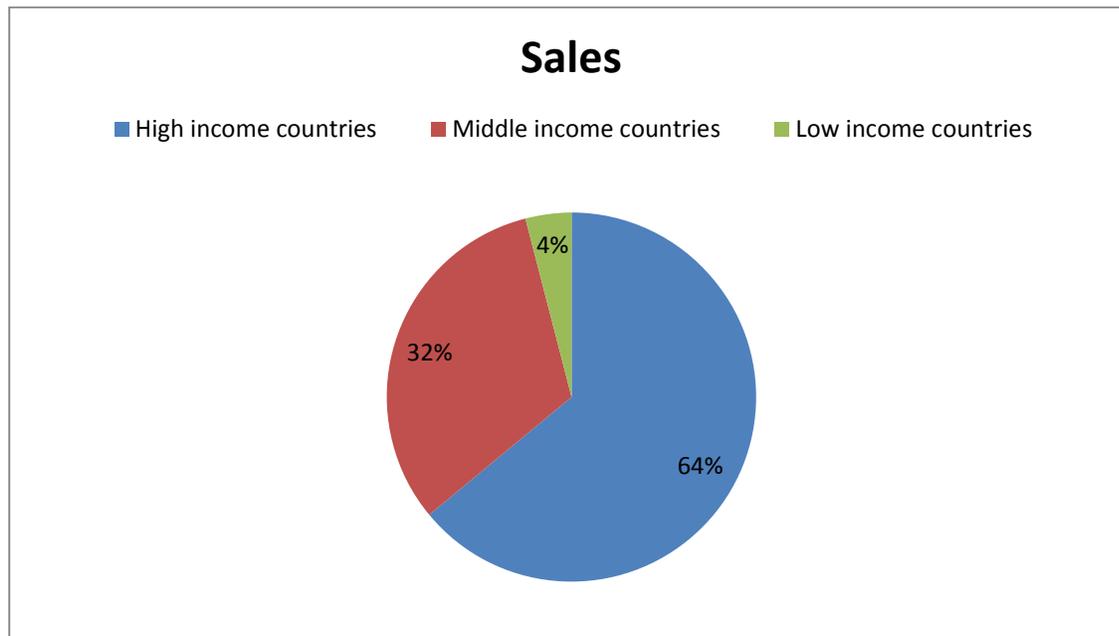
Most of the world's migrants live in a relatively small number of countries. In 2017, more than 50 per cent of all international migrants in the world were living in just ten countries or areas, while only twenty countries or areas hosted 67 per cent of the global number of international migrants. The largest number of international migrants resided in the United States of America: 50 million, equal to 19 per cent of the world's total (figure 3). Saudi Arabia, Germany and the Russian Federation hosted the second, third and fourth largest numbers of migrants worldwide (around 12 million each), followed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (nearly 9 million), and the United Arab Emirates (8 million). Of the twenty largest countries of destination of international migrants worldwide, nine are located in Asia, seven in Europe, two in Northern America, and one each in Africa and Oceania.

Figure 3: Percentage of International migrants by income group in 2000



Sources: United Nations 2017

Figure 4: Percentage of International migrants by income group in 2000



Source: United Nations 2017

Conclusion

The foregoing has revealed that there is a strong relationship between poverty and migration. Africa is a continent where there is huge poverty, not in the sense of lack of income, but within the context of the lack of education, access to basic utilities, health care, and security. Earning a certain threshold of income may still not be enough to meet these basic needs. According to the World Bank Report of 2018, the average poverty rate for sub-Saharan Africa stands at about 41 percent, and of the world's 28 poorest countries, 27 are in sub-Saharan Africa all with a poverty rate above 30 percent. Projections by the World Bank also show that extreme poverty is showing few signs of improvement in sub-Saharan Africa, and may keep countries from ending extreme poverty by 2030.

As a consequence of poverty in Africa, huge numbers of young men and women, not counting the increasing number of men and women above their middle age, are leaving the continent in search of greener pastures. The major factor accounting for Migration in Africa is poverty. No wonder, in the United Nations International Migration Report of 2017, in the year 2000, of the twenty countries hosting the highest number of migrants, only one African country (Cote d'Ivoire) appeared among countries like US, Germany, Russia, India, France, Ukraine,

Canada, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Australia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, UAE, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Israel, China, Japan. In 2017, when another report was made, of the twenty countries in the world hosting the highest number of migrants, no African country appeared. Rather, what we have is the distribution of Africans in different parts of the world.

References

- Adesopo, A. (2008). The poverty question and the national anti-poverty programmes in Nigeria?. In K. Ajayi (Ed.). *Public administration and public policy analysis in Nigeria* (pp. 213-227). Abuja: Panaf.
- AFPODEV (2006). *Impact of population growth on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria*. Abuja, Nigeria: AFRODEV.
- AFRODAD (2005). *The Politics of the MDGs and Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal of the Global Partnership for Development (Goal 8)*. Harare, Zimbabwe, AFRODAD.
- Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (2019). Retrieved from 8/8/2019 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2019-MPI>
- Kanu. I. A. (2012). The colonial legacy: The hidden history of Africa's present crisis". *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1. 1, 123-131.
- Kanu, I. A. (2017). Igwebuike and Question of Superiority in the Scientific Community of Knowledge. *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol.3 No1.
- Kanu, I. A. (2015a). *A hermetic approach to the study of African Traditional Religion, Theology and Philosophy*. Nigeria: Augustinian Publications.
- Kanu, I. A. (2015b). *African philosophy: An ontologico-existential hermeneutic approach to classical and contemporary issues*. Nigeria: Augustinian Publications.
- Kanu, I. A. (2016a). Igwebuike as a trend in African philosophy. *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol.2. No. 1.[97-101].
- Kanu, I. A. (2016b). Igwebuike as an Igbo-African hermeneutic of globalization. *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol.2. No.1. [1-7].
- Kazeem, Y. (2018). Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world. In Quartz Africa. Retrieved 2019 from

<https://qz.com/africa/1313380/nigerias-has-the-highest-rate-of-extreme-poverty-globally>.

- Okonjo-Iweala, N. Soludo, C. C., Muhtar, M. (2003). Introduction. In N. Okonjo-Iweala, C. C. Soludo, M. Muhtar (Eds.). *The Debt Trap in Nigeria: Towards a Sustainable Debt Strategy* (pp. 1-19). Trenton: Africa World.
- Omotola, J.S. (2008). Combating poverty for sustainable human development in Nigeria: The continuing struggle. *Journal of Poverty*, 12. 4, 496-517
- Oshewole, (2011). Poverty reduction and the attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria: problems and prospects. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*. 2, 2. 3, 1-22.
- Ovwasa, O. L. (2000). Constraints on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. *Political Science Review: Official Journal of the Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria*, 1.1, 56-80.
- Soludo, C. C. (2003). Debt, poverty and inequality: Toward an exit strategy for Nigeria and Africa. In N. Okonjo-Iweala, C. C. Soludo, and M. Muhtar (Eds.). *The debt trap in Nigeria: Towards a sustainable debt strategy* (pp. 23-74). Trenton: Africa World.