

POLITICS AND MIGRATION

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Abstract

Politics is the set of activities associated with the governance of a country or an area. Migration is the movement of people from one place to another to achieve a goal. This study is on the influence of politics and migration on each other. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher finds out that there is politics of migration. The researcher also discovers that war, political instability, lack of political liberty and state policies which discriminate against particular group of citizens who oppose those in power are some of the political reasons for migration. Hence, politics has a lot of influence on migration. The researcher therefore recommends that all hands ,i.e. government, private individuals, entrepreneurs etc be put on deck to reform the political and economic sector in order to create more job opportunities and promote political stability.

Keywords: Politics, migration, political stability.

Introduction

Man by nature they say is a political animal (Aristotle). Hence everything man engages in is political in nature as every human society be it primitive or modern engages in political activities to either authoritatively allocate resources and values, or exercise control over the state. This political activities always has an impact on the governed, these impact could be positive or negative depending on the political policies of the government of the day. When these governmental policies are favorable and political stability ensured, an improved standard of living is attainable, the peace that comes with political stability will therefore encourage local and foreign investment which will create more jobs opportunities and further increase the country's wealth. In a situation where reverse is the case, the country goes into economic depression and other

problems that come with bad governance thereby forcing its citizens to flee the country (migrate) legally and even illegally.

Migration is as old as man himself, it has been a long existing phenomenon in human existence for centuries; people often travel in search of what is tag to be greener pasture or favorable economic, political, social and environmental atmosphere. Migration can be either forced on people or be done willingly. Migration is seen to have taken place even from the biblical perspective where the first man, Adam, was cast out (forced to migrate) from the Garden of Eden due to his disobedient to God (Genesis 3: 23-24). In the same vein, Abraham who is biblically referred to as the father of all nations was also directed by God to leave his father land to a place where He (God) will show him (Genesis 12:1). A critical examination of the historical background of developing or developed parts of the world shows an unbalanced utilization of resources which ultimately lead to unbalanced distribution of population. The implication of these is the movement of people from an under developed territory to a developing or developed one. By doing so, their home and host country have been greatly affected. The movement of people from one region to another has both positive and negative impact on their place of origin or home country. Improved economic condition and improved standard of living ranging from greater accumulation of wealth such as land, houses, cars as well as improved educational and social status are some of the positive impacts of migration on the migrants' home countries when the migration is from an underdeveloped region to a developing or developed region. The negative implication of these on the migrants' origin is a laggard economic development which is as the result of the shortage of quality human resources which equate shortage of labor as it is mostly the young, strong and talented working force that migrate.

The Concept of Politics

The word 'politics' is derived from a Greek word polis, meaning 'city-state'. Ancient Greek society was divided into a collection of independent city-states, each of which possessed its own system of government. In view of this, politics can therefore be referred to as the affairs of the polis (city-state) i.e. what concerns the city state. The study of politics is basically the study of government and its exercise of authority. Thus, David Easton (1979.1981) defined politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values'. Depicting that politics entails the series of governmental activities through which it responds to demands and pressures from the particular by allocating benefits, rewards or penalties. 'Authoritative

values' in this context is however referred to those norms and practices that are widely accepted in society, and are considered binding by the citizens. In this view, politics is associated with 'policy' that is, with formal or authoritative decisions that establish a plan of action for the community.

Politics, according to Crick 1962 is the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and the survival of the whole community. The key to politics is therefore a wide dispersal of power. Accepting that conflict is inevitable, Crick argued that when social groups and interests possess power they must be conciliated; they cannot merely be crushed. This is why he portrayed politics as 'that solution to the problem of order which chooses reconciliation over violence and coercion'.

Marxist in the Communist Manifesto ([1848] 1967) referred to political power as 'merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another'. Marx view politics as a tool used by the bourgeoisies (the few rich or capitalist) to exploit the proletariat (the poor or the workers). For Marx, politics, together with law and culture, are part of a 'superstructure' that is distinct from the economic 'base' that is the real foundation of social life. Nevertheless, the inescapable presence of diversity and scarcity ensures that politics is an inevitable feature of the human condition.

The Concept of Migration

Migration is not a recent phenomenon; it has been a feature of human existence for centuries. Over the years, socio-political, economic and ecological factors have been the main factors influencing migration. People have always migrated either as individuals or groups to gain freedom from war and conflict, religious crisis, political repression, to find new economic opportunities and employment and sometime to trade and tour the universe. Leaving behind everything that is familiar to one in order to start over in another country is a leap of faith. That leap has been taken by approximately a quarter of a billion people who have left their birthplace and now live in another country where they hope to build a better life. While conflict has forced some of them to flee their homes, the vast majority move across borders voluntarily. Individuals who move from their home countries because of natural disaster or civil disturbance may be referred to as a refugee or a displaced person. Migration can however be divided into humanitarian and economic migrants. A person seeking refuge from political, religious, or other forms of persecution is described as an asylum seeker.

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Numerous causes impel migrants to move to another country. For example, the incorporation of the world into a global village has increased the demand for workers in order to sustain national economies. Thus the economic category of migrant emerges; this category of migration is generally made of migrants from underdeveloped or slowly developing countries that migrate to obtain sufficient income for survival. Such migrants often send some of their income home to family members in the form of economic remittance. People may also move or are forced to move as a result of conflict, human-rights violations, violence, or to escape persecution. Other reasons people migrate may include to gain access to opportunities and services or to escape extreme weather.

The Impact of Migration on host or home Countries of Migrants

The inflow of people into a country comes with great benefits such as increase labor due to increase in human resources. This increase in human capital enhances the economic growth of the host country due to the supply of labor by the immigrants who in turn enjoy career opportunities enabling them to earn a much higher income than they would have back in their country of origin. This helps host country to utilize the available cheap labor and become more competitive. Migration helps to increase cultural diversity; as people are introduced to newer cultures and customs which they adapt over time. It is also a fact that there is an acute shortage of highly skilled labor in certain parts of the world from the US to Europe. Immigration enables these countries to get highly skilled labor in the form of doctors, engineers, scientists and much more. Despite these long-term benefits, the short-term challenges can be significant. To some citizens of destination countries, migrants represent competition for jobs and scarce fiscal resources or even a potential threat to social cohesion. There is growing opposition to immigration, particularly in developed economies facing slow growth, rising inequality, and structural changes in their labor markets. In some places, there is heated political debate about accepting immigrants, even in economies that could benefit from the labor, innovation, entrepreneurial energy, and dynamism they can bring.

While the host country enjoy availability of cheap labor due to its increase in human capital, the home country suffers brain drain as it is mostly the young and the extremely skilled who choose to migrate, the implication of these is that the nation or region lose out on young and talented people whose skills could have come in handy in developing the nation further. This is similar to what the US did to Germany at the end of World War II when it managed to entice most

of the German scientists to immigrate to the United States. Another negative, this could however be of little advantage to larger nations like India. But when it comes to smaller nations like the Maldives, the impact is skewed demographics which is not good for the nation in the long run. Migration also results in family breakup. For those who have been part of a close-knit family unit, such breakups can cause extreme emotional distress and may even lead to a breakdown. Depending on the size of the nation, scarcity of human capital as most of its able bodied population migrate to other countries willingly or under compulsion depending on the reasons behind the migration, the result is slow economic development as home country loses a reasonable number of her labor forces to host countries.

Politics of Migration

The same migration which tends to benefit most countries both home and host countries has been used as a political tool by some political leaders of the world. This is evident in the political/governmental policy of President Donald Trump of America whose foreign policy objective tends to centre more on migrants, the closure of border and building of border walls, which nationality is permitted or not permitted to move into America, which religion to permit and which to ban. The political atmosphere however became tense when President Trump upon assuming office threatened the deportation of all Africans from the USA especially Nigerians. It was understood that the Nigerian government retaliated and also threatened to send all whites packing from her country. The ban includes restrictions against five majority-Muslim nations – Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. North Korea and Venezuela are also on the list. Three other majority-Muslim nations, including Chad, Iraq and Sudan were however removed from the American ban list. The reasons cited for the ban includes; poor cooperation with U.S. officials, terrorist activity and technical hurdles to properly document their own travelers as reasons for the iteration of the ban. While the text of the order does not mention religion, critics say the policy reflects anti-Muslim prejudice – with North Korea and Venezuela added as window dressing. Seven months after Chad was added to a controversial and expanded travel ban, the Trump administration announced that citizens of Chad will be able to receive visas for travel to the United States. Depicting that “Chad has improved its identity-management and information sharing practices sufficiently to meet the baseline security standard of the United States,” the central African nation which was said to be included in the list due to significant terrorist

presence in its borders and failure to adequately share of security-related information with the Americans, was later removed from the list after it has blocked Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media apps besides the BBC's news site. It was also reported that both Pentagon and state department officials reportedly opposed Chad's ban, noting that such a move risk alienating a reliable ally, especially in the face of an ascendant China which is increasing its military and economic footprint in Africa. Therefore one will not be wrong to say that Chad were only excluded from the list for the political benefit of America since America threatened border closure and the central African country decided to withhold her data base.

Politics in Nigeria has become a means of marketing where the highest bidder determines, dictates and controls the socio-economic and political affairs of the country. It has become the game of the rich taking advantage of the electoral behavior of the poor and as such they don't bother to outline manifestoes while vying for elective posts. Money politics is a global phenomenon but its incessant increase in Nigeria has risen to become an issue of worry. The selling and buying of votes has been accepted as a norm in Nigeria's political arrangement (Sakariyau, Adamu, Aliu, 2015). Money politics in Nigeria is as old as the Nigerian independence and as such cannot be termed a new concept. Money politics is simply the issuing out of money to influence or change the mind of the voter to favour the giver. It is also the use of money to get votes during election.

Political processes in the country require funding no doubt, but lavish spending for political reasons poses serious threat to the socio-economic development of the nation, as this is not farfetched from the saying that goes thus 'too much of everything is bad'. Politicians spend lavishly during electoral campaigns and this enhances vote buying and selling as Ojo (2008) has rightly observed. Former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo laments on the dangers associated with uncontrolled use of money during elections. It is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will is made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money and materialism of politics of ideas, issues and development? (Obasanjo, 2003).

The Influence of Politics and Migration on each Other

Politics and migration tend to have a great influence on each other. Politicization of religious and ethnic identities has great tendencies of causing conflict within the nation. This study has reveal that political factors such as war, civil unrest, lack of political liberty, political instability and persecution/discrimination of opposition group among others are some of the political factors that compelled individuals to migrate and to seek favorable political atmosphere. Most humanitarian migrants have been seen to be from countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Sri Lanka. These countries have in one way or the other experience series of destabilizing conflict as well as extreme human rights abuse. While migrants could be restricted from voting in the home countries, the movement of people to a particular region can determine the number of votes a political party can pull. Hence political candidate from a more populated area tend to pull more votes to the detriment of his or her opposition emerging from a sparsely populated region. Typical evidence to this assertion is the Nigeria political setting where political power has for years seem to be the birthright of the northerners. It is not a new phenomenon that a political aspirant who lacks the support of the northern region which is obviously the most populated region is on his or her own when it comes to winning the desired political office.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Increase level of political crisis, wars, bad governmental policies, poor economic condition, lack of political liberty, and discrimination against opposition and/or a particular group of people, unfavorable weather condition, and unemployment are the key factors compelling migration. Migration has effect on both host and home countries. While the host country or region experience increase in its labor force and economic growth which the benefits could come with some significant negativity ranging from higher crime, over population and job scarcity, the home country or region of migrants on the other hand may enjoy improved standard of living and acquisition of more wealth, but it is at the risk of suffering brain drain and scarcity of labor due to the transfer of migration of able working force. Having outline some of the effects of politics and migration, the push and pull factors of migration, the level at which politics is being played via migration, I therefore recommend that proper measures be taken to fight human rights discrimination against human right, each country should improve on human capital management and also create more employment opportunities for it citizens because whether we accept it or not, migrants especially blacks are being persecuted in their host countries, they are constantly living in fear, afraid to

report a crime because contact with the police could lead to deportation, and often afraid to report wage theft for the same reason because they are tagged undocumented under class. Before you doubt these, hit and surf the net and see for yourself the dehumanization, maltreatment, discrimination, painful and the unjust killings of migrants across national borders.

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