



African Heritage Institution

2018 Conference

Theme:

The Political Economy of Migration
in Africa



28-29
June
2018

Submission: All submissions and enquiries should be sent to
conference@afriheritage.org



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Call for Conference Papers

Theme: The Political Economy of Migration in Africa

Although migration is as old as human history, it has increasingly attracted more attention in contemporary times. Clearly, this is connected to emergent human security issues bordering on personal safety and economic concerns. The rapid spread of global terrorism (and the apprehension it has generated) and the more competitive and difficult national economic circumstances across countries within the global arena have informed a growing hostility towards foreigners (even in hitherto immigrant-friendly countries) in the Western world. Poor economic performance and prospects, which have increased unemployment and other socio-economic challenges and disruptions -- especially after the global financial crisis -- further contribute to negative patterns of changing attitudes towards migrants who are often accused of taking jobs and exacerbating criminality. Thus, the world is gradually experiencing an upsurge in a trend of neo- and ultra-nationalism that have popularised anti-immigration politics and policies, with increasing threat on trends towards globalisation. The success of the BREXIT votes in the United Kingdom in 2016, which shocked the world, and the emergence of the Trump's presidency in America, characterised by a whole range of anti-immigration rhetoric and policies, epitomise the reality of a radical change in migration issues across the world; a reason for its centrality in modern political discourses.

The rising phenomenon of irregular migration and associated numbers of casualties has also made the topic of migration a headline issue in the contemporary world. Increasing conflicts and economic dislocations due not only to bad policy and other factors such as changing climatic conditions, particularly in the developing world, have necessitated an exponential rate of desperate and illegal migration to the developed countries for safer environment and better economic opportunities. Climate change is an often overlooked key factor dictating the migration patterns of Africans. Extreme weather conditions, such as drought and flooding, have disrupted established farming patterns in many communities across the continent, leading farmers to migrate to other rural areas in search of more favourable climatic conditions or to the cities in pursuit of a different profession. For example, in parts of West Africa, desertification in the north has pushed nomadic Fulani herders further south into predominantly farming communities and the battle for grazing and farming rights has been snowballing into full-blown conflicts in many cases.



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Global South to Global North migrations have often dominated news feeds, larger numbers of irregular migration actually take place within the Global South. For instance, the quest for better economic opportunities has dispersed Africans all over the continent. Large diaspora of other Africans may be found in countries across the continent from Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, etc. to Benin Republic, Mozambique, Nigeria, and South Africa. While there is a crisscrossing of nationalities across the continent, some countries – such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, and Ethiopia -- seem to have especially large groups of their citizens outside their home countries. The nationalities notwithstanding, the resultant increases in competition for economic resources often generate frictions between migrants and members of their host communities. In 1983, the government of President Shehu Shagari expelled over 700,000 Ghanaians from Nigeria on the heels of the country's dwindling oil fortunes, in a bid to open up more employment spaces for Nigerians. Xenophobic attacks on other African immigrants (Ethiopians, Mozambicans, Malawians, Somalis, Nigerians, Zimbabweans, etc.) by South Africans have been on the increase in recent times, with the locals blaming the draining of economic resources for the attacks.

The increased flow of remittances from the Global North to the South is also a notable factor that will continuously motivate irregular migration to more developed countries. This is despite stricter immigration policies and global awareness of the dangers inherent in illegal routes to the destinations of the migrants. Of all the routes, the most reported and most dangerous has been the Mediterranean route, which is popularly used by African migrants aiming to migrate to Europe for greener pastures. Since the 2000s, troubling numbers of deaths of African migrants aiming to cross to Europe are recorded on the journey, either on the Saharan Desert or the Mediterranean Sea. Between 1997 and 2001, 3,285 dead bodies were reportedly discovered on the Straits of Gibraltar alone (Schuster, 2005). United Nations reported that an estimated 33,761 died or were declared missing on the route between 2000 and 2017 (UN News Center, 2017). The route has even become more deadly for fleeing migrants following the conflict ravaging post-Gadhafi Libya, which represents a major link to Europe from Africa. Increasingly, cases of kidnap, sexual violence, forced labour, illegal detention, and slavery seem to have become regular phenomena in Libya. In 2017, worrying images of deformed humans, stranded and kidnapped migrants, in highly inhuman conditions in the detention camps of Libyan rebels attracted a global outcry following media reports that revealed a slavery market thriving in the conflict-ridden country.



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Given such developments, many governments in the sub-Saharan African countries, working in collaboration with international organizations/agencies began the process of repatriating their citizens trapped in Libya. For example, Nigeria – with the largest number of trapped migrants in Libya – repatriated over 3,000 of its nationals in 2017 alone. In December 2017, the African Union worked to repatriate 20,000 of the stranded migrants from Libya over a six-week period (AFP, 2017). While there have been increased revelations about the dangers associated with the journeys, many Africans still aspire to embark on the ultra-risky adventure of trying to cross over to Europe – perhaps, an indication of the desperate or hopeless conditions in some countries. Indeed, some repatriated migrants or 'returnees' have expressed willingness to try the route again given the existing socio-economic conditions in their home countries.

Clearly, the discussion thus far underscores the reality that the issues of regular and irregular migration are so complex that they raise very serious questions that beg for answers. For instance: what are the key causes of population movements in Africa? In other words, why do people migrate? What are the main drivers or trend of population movements in the African continent from the earliest period to the present? How does migration affect the security architecture of African countries? Has migration undermined or enhanced the economic and socio-political development of African (host or source) states? What is the role of the international legal system in controlling or enhancing migration? What is the relevance of key international Conventions/Covenants such as the ICESCR, IBHR, UDHR, and ICCPR? To what extent have domestic immigration laws within African countries impacted on population movements within and into the continent? What is the relationship between migration and nomadism? Are both concepts governed by the same laws and statutes? Under what circumstances are migration laws relaxed? In what ways does emigration from Africa affect the continent?

Clearly, researches on such issues are needed to engage such questions with a view to inform not only government policies and policy directions, but also theoretical frameworks on migration in Africa. The present attempt, therefore, is a step to produce meaningful scholarly research, based on different perspectives, on the phenomenon of regular and irregular migration in Africa. It is expected that this project will not only contribute significantly to the literature concerning migration but also stimulate important policy responses towards addressing associated issues and challenges.



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On the basis of the foregoing, therefore, we welcome abstracts that include, but are not limited to, the following sub-themes:

- Migration: Theoretical and methodological issues
- Migration and development in Africa
- Trends and geography of migration in African countries or across regions
- Migration and issues of national security
- Refugees, internal displacement and migrant issues in Africa
- Neo-nationalism and politics of migration
- Africans in Diaspora and new immigration policies in the West
- Migration and the problems of brain drain in Africa
- The economics of regular and irregular migration
- Psycho-social contexts of migrancy
- The sociology of regular and irregular migration
- Migration and the environment in Africa
- Migration, labour and the market
- Migration and nomadism
- Migration and the dislocation of the social fabric
- Immigration and influence on cultural values
- State responses to migration in Africa
- Migration, conflict and security dimensions
- The African Union and other regional bodies approaches to addressing irregular migration
- Migration and regional integration in Africa
- The nexus between migration, immigration and emigration
- Migration and the international legal system
- Case Studies – West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, and Southern Africa
- Reintegration of returnee migrants

Other perspectives are welcome

Interested persons are requested to send an abstract of no more than 200 words on issues relating to any of the sub-themes to conference@afriheritage.org. The abstract should contain five keywords, title of the paper, author(s) name(s), institutional affiliation(s), email address and phone numbers. Completed papers should be no more than 6,000 words, Times New Roman, double spaced and conform to Harvard Referencing style.

Venue: TBA, Enugu, Nigeria

Date: June 28 – 29, 2018

Critical Timelines/Dates

Last Date for Submission of Abstracts:
7 March, 2018

Notification for Accepted Abstracts:
15 March, 2018

Last Day for Submission of Full Manuscripts:
31 May, 2018

Submission:

All submissions and enquiries should be sent to conference@afriheritage.org

Contact Person:

Emeka C. Iloh
eiloh@afriheritage.org
+234(0)8064879666