John K. Akokpari

Globalisation and Migration in Africa

Abstract

The paper argues that there is a growing interconnection between globalisation on the one hand, and migration (both intra- and interstate) on the other. In general migration in Africa is largely informal and undocumented, making accurate data on the phenomenon extremely scant. This notwithstanding, there is evidence of the phenomenal increase in the wave of migration on the continent. The conventional causes of migration, including conflicts, political oppression, economic crisis and environmental factors, have in recent years been reinforced by globalisation which unleashes fresh pressures that either facilitate or compound the already huge and seemingly unmanageable migration problematique on the continent. The paper demonstrates the various ways by which globalisation impacts on migration. Among other things, it notes the unencumbered movement of capital accompanied by capitalists across state borders, the formation of regional trading blocs as a logical response to the imperatives of globalisation, which promote the free movement of people within regions, and the deepening of disparities between countries, which spawns the movement of people from the poor to the more affluent countries. Further, the paper analyses the impact of globalisation on Africa's already fragile environment and argues that there is a growing tendency for diminishing environmental resources to generate conflicts between user constituencies. Such conflicts displace people and exert migratory pressures. It is argued further that, while globalisation promotes greater migration, most African states, especially the relatively affluent, are increasingly closing their borders to immigrants because of a variety of reasons, including the fear of emigrants engaging in criminal activities. The paper concludes that the imbalance between increased migration and shrinking immigration opportunities leads to the adoption of informal alternatives by emigrants to get to their destinations.

Introduction

A curious connection, often unobtrusive, exists between globalisation on the one hand, and migration (both intra- and inter-state) on the other hand. Although accurate figures on migration in Africa remain elusive mainly because it is often informal and undocumented, the indications are that this is

on the increase with little prospects for its abatement or reversal. The increasing trend in the incidents of migration is partly attributable to the phenomenon of globalisation, which not only weakens the state, but also renders its borders irrelevant. The conventional causes of migration in Africa – conflicts, political oppression, economic crisis and environmental factors – have, in recent years, been reinforced or complicated by the force of globalisation which unleashes fresh pressures that either facilitate or compound the already huge and seemingly unmanageable migration *problematique* in Africa. Yet, while globalisation theoretically breaks down state borders facilitating the free movement of goods and capital, African states are increasingly closing their borders to labour.

Thus, as Africa gets increasingly caught in the web of globalisation, two apparently contradictory processes have emerged. While on the one hand migration patterns expand with attendant implications for the fledgling and the over-burdened economies of the region, there are on the other hand orchestrated attempts by potential receiving countries to stem the flow of labour by tightening immigration regulations. This imbalance between increasing migration and declining opportunities for migration leads to the use of informal routes by migrants that create further challenges for the receiving country. At a practical level, globalisation worsens the already vast economic disparities existing among African countries and accentuates migration from poorer to richer countries.

Drawing examples and illustrations mostly, but not exclusively, from South Africa, which simultaneously exhibits strong 'pull' and 'push' migratory factors in an era of globalisation, the paper attempts to grapple with the dynamics of migration in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular. The first section offers some conceptual clarity on the notions of globalisation and migration. For globalisation, which has become a highly contested concept devoid of any clear-cut and universally accepted definition, the paper identifies some of its visible attributes relevant to the discussion on migration. In explaining migration, on the other hand, the paper highlights its forms and typologies. Next, the paper identifies the extent to which globalisation affect migration. It argues that consequent on its intrinsic logic, globalisation facilitates rather than mitigates pressures on migration in Africa. The paper further suggests the reasons for the restriction on the movement of labour in the face of the free movement of capital and goods. The conclusion recapitulates the main arguments and observations.

The contested meanings of globalisation

Arguably, globalisation is the subject of intense debate among intellectuals regarding its meaning and consequences. It is viewed by some as a purely economic phenomenon that involves the spatial reorganisation of production and the expansion of trans-border financial flows in ways that defy state borders.

The linkages between national economies have been profusely intricate that the world has become a 'global village'. Others perceive it as a socio-cultural process, involving not only a diffusion of cultural ideologies (McGrew, 1992), but also a diffusion of tastes, exemplified in the phenomenal spread of the fast food industry (Shaw, 1999). Yet, globalisation also has a political component involving an emphasis on the dismantling of authoritarian political structures, the building of western-styled democratic institutions and the erosion of state power. These facts evoke the temptation to make globalisation synonymous with Westernisation, or more specifically Americanisation, for the simple reason that, the West and in particular the US are the leading advocates of economic liberalisation and political democratisation as twin global creeds. In this sense, moreover, globalisation is perceived not as a tool of analysis, but as an ideology – a western ideology reflecting a complete system of ideas, values and orientations (Ahmed, 1999). This perception is underscored by the fact that neo-liberalism, the dominant element of globalisation, became a hegemonic international force only after the abatement of the cold war and the demise of the communist ideology. Thus, as one observer argues, 'the on-going debates on globalisation are less sophisticated, less theoretically developed and more an arena of ideological posturing, and stone-throwing, highly diverse and occasionally indulgent in the assessments they evoke' (Nederveen, 1997: 30).

Notwithstanding the ideological posturing and political pretensions, globalisation exhibits certain obtrusive and incontrovertible characteristics, including:
- the integration of financial markets across the world;
- the increasing power and outreach of international corporations;
- increasing international communications through technological innovations such as the Internet;
- high mobility of capital unencumbered by state restrictions;
- a rise in the power of capital vis-à-vis social entities, including the state and labour; and
- the rise to hegemony of the neo-liberal ideology which emphasises economic and political liberalisation and a curtailment of state power.

(Mengisteab, 1998:2; Marshall, 1999:259).

Similarly, opinion is divided on the consequences of globalisation. One perception led by the United States and its western allies, along with the dominant Bretton Woods institutions, argue that globalisation with its intrinsic free market principles offers incredible opportunities for development. This perspective is consistent with the old modernisation assumption that sanctifies international free trade as the engine for growth and development. This view implies that the liberalisation of global trade ensures the free movement of labour, capital and technology, which become available to countries that lack them. For Africa, private investments create jobs for the unemployed millions

(*The Economist*, cited in the *Sunday Times*, 5 March 2000). This perspective is sharply controverted by critics who see the acclaimed potential benefits of globalisation as nothing more than 'myths' (Akilagpa, 1999). Drawing on the challenges which neo-liberal economic policies posed to Africa in the past, these critics opine that rather than ameliorating, globalisation rather compounds Africa's developmental crisis by reversing the few gains it made during the cold war years, and exposing the continent 'to the profit maximising greed of western corporations' (Tandon, 1998:3).

Indeed, some observers have not only expressed caution in celebrating whatever opportunities globalisation might offer, but have also been critical on the very analogy of the 'village' used to describe the integrative power of globalisation. The inequitable distribution of gains and pains by globalisation among regions and countries stands in stark contrast to the life of a typical village. According to Hamelink (1994:1),

> the authors of [the village imagery] know very little about village life. In the village most people know what is going on and know each other. The opposite is true in the real world: there is more going on than ever before, yet most of us know very little about it and the majority of the world's citizens have little knowledge or understanding of each other. Even in relatively smaller regions such as Western Europe, there are myriad cultural differences that often obstruct meaningful communication.

Similarly, Yearley (1996: 23) argues that even within industrialised countries such as the United States and United Kingdom there are marked differentiations, which have been deepened in the last fifteen years. He notes, therefore, that 'a global world is not a uniform world'. Indeed, rather than promoting a uniform world, globalisation is rather exacerbating the disparities between regions and countries. The deepening of these disparities stems mainly from the varying abilities of states to confront the challenges or tap the opportunities offered by globalisation. The situation is more confounding in sub-Saharan Africa where, with the exception of South Africa, globalisation creates major developmental challenges and anxieties, reflected in the region's inability to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or make significant strides on the path to development (Makoa, 1999). In his famous Reith Lectures on globalisation, Giddens (1999) observed that the share of the poorest fifth of the world's population in global income dropped from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent over the past 10 years. At the same time the proportion taken by the richest fifth has risen from 70 percent to 85 percent. He noted further that 20 SSA countries now have lower incomes per head than they did two decades ago. For SSA, the asymmetry in the distribution of benefits under the current orthodoxy and in particular the tendency for multinational corporations (MNCs) to control its resources depicts globalisation more as promoting global 'pillage' rather than establishing a global 'village'. As well, vast differences have been visible between the urban centres and the rural areas caused or accentuated by

globalisation, and it is these differentials that, in most cases, explain the dynamics of migration in Africa.

The nature and typologies of migration

Conventional definitions view migration as the movement of people from one country to another for settlement that is often permanent. Thus, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines an emigrant as 'a person coming to live permanently in another country' (Hornby, 1989). For the purpose of this study, however, the definition of migration is broadened to encompass the movement of people from one location to another within and beyond a country of normal residence. This intra- or inter-state migration can either be permanent or temporary. Permanent migrants are those who intend to live in their new destinations without wanting to return to their original places of residence. The decision to migrate permanently may be spawned by unfavourable economic, political or environmental conditions prevailing in the home country. And although there is a strong attachment of the emigrant to the home country and relatives, the net benefits of permanent migration are generally considered to outweigh the advantages of not migrating. Temporary emigrants on the other hand, are those who consider the attachment to their relatives and home country strong enough to outweigh any potential advantages migration may offer and thus demonstrate desires to return home when conditions that precipitated their initial movement have stabilised.

A further dichotomy in the migration discourse is whether the movement is voluntary or forced. In general, voluntary migrants are those who relocate within or beyond their countries of origin at their own discretion rather than for uncontrollable factors. This form of migration can be permanent or temporary. Voluntary migrants mostly, though not always, include people seeking better social and economic opportunities in other regions or countries. This category of emigrants is often referred to as economic refugees and includes professionals who see the salaries and working conditions in their home countries as incommensurate with their expertise. In recent years growing economic adversities have also compelled unskilled individuals to take economic refuge in relatively affluent countries where they engage in unskilled jobs or more generally in the informal market. Involuntary or forced migrants on the other hand are those who relocate either proactively or reactively because of conditions beyond their control. This is the category of migrants conventionally referred to as refugees. The 1969 OAU definition, which is an extended and improved version of the obsolete UN Convention of 1967, defines a refugee as

> Every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality. (OAU, 1969).

The international requirement 'to seek refuge in another place outside [one's] country of origin or nationality' in order to attain refugee status has been queried since it excludes people who are displaced by wars and natural disasters. Africa's experience with disasters shows that the ordeal of displaced people is often similar to, if not worse than, the plight of conventional refugees. It is thus imperative to revisit the existing multilateral definition of refugees, which has clearly become anachronistic (Akokpari, 1999: 75-76).

A key question facing host countries in recent years is whether to consider economic refugees as forced migrants. This issue has become central in the migration debate because of the advocacy of NGOs and human right organisations fighting for the rights of migrants. The issue has assumed a higher level of polemics given that migrant rights activists draw no distinctions between the various categories of migrants when issues of right arise (*Migrants Rights Bulletin*, no.2, January-February 2000). Thus, two main contrasting views can be discerned on this. The first view, consistent with prevailing international orthodoxy, posits that economic refugees are not covered by international protocols. According to this view, migration caused by declining economic opportunities is purely voluntary since existing international instruments do not classify economic crises among the phenomenon or events that may 'seriously disturb public order' and therefore warrant migration. In this wise, economic refugees who fail to procure the relevant migration documentation are often referred to as 'illegal'[1] emigrants by the host country precisely because in terms of the immigration laws these are unauthorised entrants. This category of emigrants is often, sometimes wrongly, associated with criminal activities and become the objects of pursuit by the security establishment of the host country. A second view, antithetical to the conventional position, depicts economic migrants as refugees. This perspective equates the absence of propitious economic conditions in a country to a violation of the basic human rights of the citizens. Thus, like wars, which threaten the right to peace and life, economic hardships are seen as equally threatening the right to employment and descent living. For this view, then, deepening economic crisis dramatised in astronomical inflation, unemployment and declining standards of living are sufficient causes for forced migration. However, as noted earlier, international conventions do not so far recognise migration based on economic adversities as forced and people who migrate on this reason without formal documents often risk harassment from immigration and law enforcement authorities of the host country. The contention, however, is that in whatever form or type migration takes, it is sparked or facilitated in recent years by the force of globalisation. The central question then is how does globalisation affect migration? This linkage is the subject of the next section.

Globalisation as a catalyst for migration

The impact of globalisation on migration is often proximate but sometimes the direct connection between the two processes is palpable. The linkage between the two derives from the inherent characteristics of, and contradictions in, globalisation. As noted, one of the key features of globalisation is the rapid expansion of capital and its unfettered penetration into various regions of the globe. As a rule, capital does not move in isolation; it is accompanied by capitalists whose main motive is the maximisation of profits. The present global trade regime under the hegemony of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) offers incredible opportunities for the free movement and relocation of capital investments. WTO's offshoot, the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), which was originally negotiated among the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and subsequently offered to the developing countries, among other things, compels member countries to relax restrictions on imports and exports. African countries, which have traditionally been starved of capital, have had to open up their economies to foreign investment and business. In this wise, capitalists are able to move freely unencumbered by state restrictions. Consequent on the demolition of trade restrictions, for example, post-Apartheid South African businesses have re-located in nearly every country of Africa, including Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire, Tanzania and war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The movement of capital implies the migration of capitalists.

Apart from African industrialists, extra-African business are making inroads into Africa, albeit slowly and cautiously. Indeed, compared to other regions of the world, FDI to Africa has decline over the last two decades (Callaghy, 1994). This has been due mainly to declining investor confidence caused by Africa's incessant political turmoil and insecurity for as Strange (1991) correctly notes, often 'it is the search for security more than the pursuit of profit that motivates firms to engage in international production'. Despite the political uncertainties and the consequent hesitation of external investors to come in, African leaders have been trying to demonstrate the continent's conviviality and its investment potentials. This, they do by a variety of means, including organising agricultural, industrial and technology shows as well as visiting western capitals for the sole purpose of drumming up investment opportunities in their countries. The visit of Thabo Mbeki, the South African President, to England, Germany and Denmark in May 2000, was aimed among other things to invite private capital and development assistance into Africa and South Africa in particular (*Sunday Times*, 11 June 2000). One implication of these state initiatives is to cause the migration of western business people into Africa. But while the imperatives of investment woo capital into Africa, the vicissitudes in the global market cause retrenchments and migration on the domestic scene. Since 1990 the price of gold, for example, has plummeted considerably forcing the industries in South Africa and Ghana to respond with

massive retrenchments. Over 2,000 migrant workers, comprising Basotho, Mozambicans and Malawians have re-migrated to their respective countries after almost permanently settling in South Africa (Matlosa, 1996; Chirwa, 1999). Similarly, hundreds of retrenched workers from Ghanaian mines have returned to their rural villages (*Africa Recovery* 13(2-3), 1999).

A visible trend under the current economic orthodoxy is the formation of new regional economic groupings and the strengthening of old ones. The post-Cold War era has seen the division of the world into major trading blocs based on Europe, the Americas and East Asia (Asante, 2000). The formation of these trading blocs is essentially to insulate regions from the unhealthy competition engendered by globalisation and simultaneously enhance the capacity of the member states to maximise benefits from the global market. Thus, threatened by isolation from the world markets and further weakness in the global economy, Africa responded to the imperatives of regionalism with the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the revised East African Community (EAC). The formation of these regional trading blocs has implications for international migration in Africa. Almost all these regional economic formations have protocols relaxing or abolishing visa requirements for visits not exceeding 90 days for citizens of the community, thus guaranteeing the free movement of people within their respective sub-regions. Under such protocols, not only do signatory states open their borders to citizens of member states of the common market, but they are also legally bound to offer maximum protection to the nationals of the community. Consequent on the ECOWAS protocol on free movement, there has been an influx of Nigerians into Ghana in recent years possibly in response to the former's incessant political turmoil and economic decline. This, however, represents a dramatic reversal in the direction of migration from the mid-1970s to early 1980s when, in the wake of severe economic adversities, thousands of Ghanaian professionals and non-professionals as well as nationals from other countries in the sub-region migrated into Nigeria in search of better economic opportunities. However, as Nigeria's economic crisis veered dangerously out of control, it expelled these emigrants in 1982/83, most of who lacked valid residential authorisation.

A similar protocol in the EAC has enhanced the movement of people in the East African sub-region. This trend has been facilitated by the cultural and linguistic similarities existing among the countries of the region. The situation in the SADC region is not different. The protocol on movement has ensured the relaxation of restrictions thereby facilitating cross-border movements within the region. Consequent on the SADC protocol and perceived as the new centre of economic attraction on the continent, South Africa has, since the dawn of the new political dispensation in 1994, had to deal with a massive influx of people coming from both within and without the SADC region. The bulk of the

post-apartheid migrants to South Africa are, however, from the SADC countries. Mozambique, classified among the poorest countries in Africa, is the leading supplier country. The uncontrolled influx of Mozambicans has become a constant menace in the eyes of both the South African police and the Department of Home Affairs. Indeed, not even the erection of an electrified fence by the South African authorities on the border with Mozambique has been sufficient to deter determined Mozambicans to reach what they consider the land of opportunities. In perspective, the influx of skilled and unskilled labour to post-Apartheid South Africa is not an accident of history. Rather it is the direct consequence of the wide development gap existing not only between South Africa and SADC countries, but also between South Africa and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa's vast infrastructural development has become a point of attraction to foreign investors. With its strong economic base, and generating 71 percent of SADC's GNP (Lee, 2000), it was by 1997 receiving a net FDI of $1,705 million representing 54 percent of total FDI to Eastern and Southern Africa (UNDP, 1999: 45). In other words, the unequal capacity of countries to tap the advantage offered by globalisation or meet the challenges it poses largely explains the movement of labour from disadvantaged to affluent regions. Yet, globalisation not only confer advantages on certain countries at the expense of others, but it also deepens the existing inequalities between the poorer and the richer countries as well as between various social classes within countries (UNDP, 1997).

With a strong industrial base and enhanced capacity to find niches in the increasingly competitive global market, South Africa has successfully concluded a free trade agreement with the European Union. The negotiations preceding the agreement, however, excluded the SADC of which South Africa is part. Among other things the SA-EU agreement provides that 'South Africa will liberalise its markets to 81 percent of EU agricultural production and 86 percent of its industrial sector, and the EU will do so for 99 percent and 61 percent of South Africa's industrial and agricultural products respectively' (Sidiropoulos, 2000: 12). This provision has long term implications for international migration in the SADC region. As Lee (2000) has argued, within 12 years the EU will flood the South African market with goods that are certain to cross its borders into the region on account of SADC's free trade policy. By virtue of its superior technology and production techniques, the EU's products will predictably out-compete locally produced goods and consequently suffocate industries both in South Africa and in the SADC countries. Retrenchments will be inevitable and unemployment will spawn migration as the relaxation of restrictions facilitates the movement of retrenched labour from one country to another in search of employment. Indeed, we might see a situation where, in contrast to the current trend, retrenched South Africans move to other comparatively less developed countries in the region in search of employment.

At national levels, globalisation has deepened the disparity between the traditionally advantaged urban areas and the deprived rural communities. This has in turn facilitated the migration of the rural folk to the urban areas. This trend is not unexpected. The few employment opportunities and social amenities existing are to be found mostly in the urban areas. Liberalisation and the expansion of the free market, which are central doctrines of globalisation, have also rendered farming, the predominant occupation of rural dwellers, an non-competitive and a generally unattractive enterprise as imported agricultural products have become cheaper than the locally produced. This is in turn a direct consequence of the ubiquitous de-subsidisation policies, which affected agricultural inputs, including fertilisers.

Further, the liberalisation of the currency market has caused massive devaluation, whose pauperising effects have hit the rural sector most. Thus, as globalisation and liberalisation compound the economic despondency of the rural folk, they migrate to the urban centres in search of non-existent employment opportunities. Rural-urban migration is, in recent years, also partly attributable to Africa's debt and its repayment obligations, which have escalated under the economic liberalisation regime. Specifically, debt repayment has seriously incapacitated the state to provide basic amenities. For example, Cameroon spent 36 percent of its national budget on debt servicing during the 1996/97 fiscal year compared to only 4 percent on basic social services. Similarly, Tanzania's debt payments were four times what it spent on primary education and nine times what it spent on basic health during 1996/97 (*Africa Recovery*, 13(4) December 1999: 3). The deep cuts in public spending place rural communities, which have had less than a fair share of the national cake, more at a disadvantage. Hence the temptation to migrate to the urban centres.

A further response to general economic austerity and shrinking formal employment opportunities under the liberalisation regime has been the phenomenal expansion in the informal sector, including cross border economic activities. As Muzvidziwa (2000: 8) notes of Zimbabwe, the dire economic conditions created by the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) were such that 'crossborder trade [became] the one single strategy for climbing out of poverty'. These transactions, involving a wide variety of merchandise, including drugs and narcotics, facilitate informal migration. Attempts by African governments to control such informal cross border economic transactions may remain an insurmountable task. Borders between countries are vast which, along with shrinking resources, make African governments unable to procure the necessary equipment for effective border patrols. Such activities are, moreover, difficult to control because of the artificiality and porosity of Africa's borders, which have in many cases divided ethnic groups. The presence of kinsmen and tribesmen across the border makes it easy to engage in such informal economic activities while evading security and custom officials (Brown, 1995: 230). Also, cross border smuggling has become lucrative

because the evasion of custom duties means the maximisation of profit outside the country. Thus, as such cross border economic activities increase in response to the pressures of globalisation, so is the increase in the number of informal migrants.

On another level, the porosity of borders has facilitated the international trafficking of arms and general gangsterism. Indeed, one adverse consequence of the information super highway is the promotion and facilitation of organised crime. The ubiquity of cellular phones and proliferation of cyber communication systems means that instant linkages can be made across countries without conventional phone booths. These innovations in information technology seriously undercut the efforts of law enforcement agencies to track down criminals. South Africa is perhaps one of the leading countries facing the threat of organised criminals operating across its border. Most European countries believe that South Africa has become a conduit for the importation and exportation of drugs and narcotics to and from other countries *(Electronic Mail and Guardian* 18 February 2000). Internally, the escalation in the wave of crime and violence in South Africa, largely the result of unemployment, is causing the emigration of the many mainly white professionals who feel a growing sense of insecurity. The South African Central Statistics Service estimated conservatively that 8,000 professionals, comprising of teachers, doctors, engineers and accountants, emigrated from the country between January and September 1996 alone (Edmunds, 1997). Many more have continued to emigrate in the face of a deteriorating security situation. South Africa's creeping economic crisis is not helping the situation either. Inflation has soared since 1994 causing a depreciation of the Rand against major international currencies. This, along with the ever-threatening menace of HIV/AIDS, could become a strong incentive for emigration.

The process of democratisation, another key component of the globalisation process, has in the last ten years truncated, if not completely annihilated, many authoritarian regimes across Africa. This has facilitated the re-admission of diplomatically isolated dictatorial countries such as Nigeria under strongman Sani Abacha. Many, if not all, hitherto critical countries of Nigeria have not only restored diplomatic relations, but have also established direct air links with Lagos following its return to democracy. South African Airways, for example, presently has direct flights to Lagos and nearly all major cities on the continent. This has in turn eased the movement of people especially those on business errands. Moreover, most critics of the Abacha's regime forced into exile had the freedom to return to Nigeria. In the same way, opponents of the many authoritarian regimes, including Jerry Rawlings' Ghana[2], Siyad Barre's, Somalia, Mengistu's Ethiopia, Banda's Malawi, and Mobutu's Zaire, who were forced to seek political asylum in neighbouring countries all returned to their respective countries with the restoration of democratic rule. Similarly, the restoration of majority rule in South Africa has hastened its re-admission into

the community of nations. Countries, which had severed diplomatic relations with Pretoria in protest against its obnoxious apartheid policies, have restored them and have consequently validated their passports, which were previously invalid for South Africa. In the same way, South Africa has been admitted into the organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its citizens are now welcome in all the organisation's member countries. Equally important, the thousands of South Africans who fled into exile because of apartheid have re-migrated home.

Environmental decline: an intervening factor for migration

Aside from its socio-economic implications, globalisation also exerts pressure on Africa's environment, leading to the induction of migration. In various ways, globalisation hastens environmental degradation, causing proactive, reactive and, in some cases, forced migration in Africa. The impact of globalisation on Africa's already fragile environment is enormous (Akokpari, 2000). As noted already, globalisation and its intrinsic liberalisation policies have led to the impoverishment of many rural dwellers who come under strong migratory pressures. Also, the pressure to repay debts has compelled indebted African countries to increase the production of cash crops at the expense of food production for domestic consumption. Cash agriculture, however, requires an intensive utilisation of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which leads to the exhaustion of soil nutrients (Marshall, 1999). But even more germane for this discussion, as Kelbessa (2000) has noted about Ethiopia, the pressure to establish large plantations and a tea factory led the government to forcefully evict hundreds of small peasant farmers from their traditional homes in the Gumaro Abo Area, in western Ethiopia. As the peasant lands were appropriated by the state, the victims were forced to relocate and to overexploit the surrounding lands.

As well, in order to maximise revenues and to remain competitive in response to the logic of the global market, most African countries have adopted policies that deplete their natural resources. In a bid to increase export earnings, for example, Ghana increased its timber exports with dire implications for its forest reserves. It has been estimated that within the space of ten years Ghana's tropical forest shrank to just 25 percent of its original size (Nyang'oro, 1995: 203). Cote d' Ivoire also embarked on a logging spree following spectacular revenue of $300 million from timber exports in 1980. The country, however, is paying a price as its total area of closed forest has declined by 67 percent in twenty years. Similarly, Liberia's primary forest is expected to disappear within eleven years at its current rate of logging (Timberlake, 1995: 90). The experiences of Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire and Liberia reflect a generally destructive and disconcerting trend in deforestation resulting from increased timber exportation in response to demands from the global market. The depletion of the timber resource without a concomitant reforestation programme either means

unemployment for those engaged in the logging industry or their migration to new forest areas.

Diminishing environmental resources as a result of sustained exploitation also lead to violent conflicts among user constituencies. These conflicts in turn induce forced migration. The continuing tension between Shell, the giant oil multinational company, and the Ogoni community in southern Nigeria in the aftermath of the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa is well known. The seemingly intractable civil war raging in Sierra Leone between the government of Tejan Kabbah and the rebels is fed by the latter's desire to control the country's vast diamond fields (Reno, 1997). The unending Angolan civil war is also linked to competition between MPLA and UNITA for the country's natural resources (Matlosa, 1999). Similarly, the increasingly complex configuration of rebel and foreign forces fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reflects attempts to control the resources of the country. And, in a study of the on-going Sudanese war, Suliman and Omer (1994: 23) conclude that 'many of the current disputes are not being fought along traditional political borders, but most remarkably, along the ecological borders that divide richer and poorer zones'. All these eco-tensions and wars have been responsible not only for the deaths and displacement of thousands of people, but have also caused the forced migration of thousands more (Akokpari, 1998). The depletion of natural resources, including the pollution of land and water also generates reactive migration. In Ethiopia, the combined effects of drought and diminishing arable land in the north-eastern part of the country have caused a massive movement of people from drought-stricken areas to cities in the south (*Electronic Mail and Guardian*, 6 April, 2000). And nomads had to move across Ethiopia's borders to Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and Eritrea in desperate search of pasture.

In recent years the pressure to increase production for local and international markets has intensified competition for land. A major factor of agricultural production, the control and redistribution of land have become central issues of agitation by landless peasants in many countries. Many communities in various African countries have battled against each other over land, apparently because of the state's inability to amicably or speedily resolve long-standing disputes relating to its distribution. Since 1990, there has been violent clashes between ethnic Dagombas and Konkombas, Nchumurus and Gonjas, and between Gonjas and Konkombas in northern Ghana over land ownership and farming rights (Brukum, 1996). Similarly, neighbouring communities in Nigeria have skirmished over farm lands while some have clashed with state security agencies as the latter sought to establish control over forests and curb environmentally damaging practices such as poaching and logging (Obi, 1997:23). These conflicts claimed many lives, displaced thousands and caused the relocation of hundreds. The much publicised land crisis in Zimbabwe, overladen by political opportunism and culminating in the invasion and occupation of white-owned farms by war veterans between February and June 2000, reflects state failure to

address the land question. Yet as Moore (2000) argues, at a deeper level, the Zimbabwean crisis is rooted 'in the double-sided problem of primitive accumulation and state formation, put on hold during the cold war and now let loose by American unipolar global dominance and the policies of global neo-liberalism'. Where grotesque inequalities in land ownership are the rule and not the exception, such as in Zimbabwe where one percent of the population own 70 percent of the arable land, clashes between the landed aristocracy and the landless peasantry become inevitable. The situation becomes even more volatile and predictable when such imbalances are politicised and systematically exploited by the predatory state to serve its own end. Relevant to the present discussion, though, is that the continued occupation of farms and the upsurge in violence may spawn the emigration of white farmers and the white community at large which feels increasingly unsafe in the face of glaring state complicity. In various ways, therefore, globalisation directly and indirectly facilitate or exerts new pressures, which may sooner or later promote migration.

Host countries' new tough stance on immigration

Yet as intra- and inter-state migration expands as a result of globalisation, governments of the potentially attractive countries are tightening immigration regulations and border controls, making them inaccessible to especially unskilled and voluntary migrants. As noted earlier, South Africa has faced an influx of migrants since 1994. According to estimates of the Pretoria-based Human Science Research Council (HSRC), between 5 and 6 million immigrants, mostly informal, had entered the country by December 1996 (*Africa Today* March/April 1997: 35). To contain this large influx the South African government resorted to arrests and summary deportation of undocumented immigrants. Between 1992 and 1995, approximately 50,000 undocumented immigrants were deported annually (de Vletter, 1995: 27). In recent months, the Department of Home Affairs, together with the South African Police Service, has repatriated hundreds of undocumented immigrants mostly from Mozambique and Zimbabwe every week. Half the number of the deportees are reported to find their way back into South Africa within days of their repatriation (Khadija, 2000).

In general countries are getting increasingly tough on voluntary immigrants not only because they impose additional strains on the existing resources and infrastructure, but also because they are frequently suspected of engaging in criminal activities, including the importation of illegal merchandise, currency trafficking and drug peddling. South Africa, for example, suspects that undocumented Nigerian immigrants are at the centre of the country's booming drug business (Amupadhi and Commandeur, 1997). Globalisation has created propitious conditions for the perpetration of crime in various subtle ways. Notable among these is the use of cyber communication technology to defraud

financial institutions and clients. Economic fraud has become a global scourge and both developed and developing are expending a great deal of resources in the fight against this practice. And not a few African governments have realised that many of the professed foreign investors are anything but genuine. Restrictions on immigration are sometimes aimed at preventing the entry of such defrauders and dubious investors. In recent years, in the face of mounting economic difficulties in home countries, economic migrants have developed new techniques and attained higher levels of sophistication with which they outwit unsuspecting immigration officials. They may possess fake travel documents or engage in impersonation, involving the use of another person's name, certificates or travel documents to facilitate entry into the host country or the acquisition of a job. In a few cases they are suspected of spreading HIV/AIDS as desperation forces most female immigrants who fail to secure formal jobs to engage in the booming sex trade as an alternative survival strategy.

There is also a growing concern that immigrants will take jobs away from locals. This concern, which applies to both skilled and unskilled jobs, is widespread in South Africa. In a sense, these sentiments are justified. The peculiar history of South Africa in which the majority black population was denied education means that the disadvantaged are seriously incapacitated from competing in the job market. This category of citizens is therefore at a serious disadvantage if immigration is not controlled. At the same time, the ability to successfully make the risky journey from the home to the host country means that informal immigrants are resilient and creative. They can endure hardships, including going many days without food and have evolved ways of circumventing or surmounting the numerous obstacles on their way to their destination. Since most people migrate out of desperation, they are often prepared to enter into menial jobs or accept lower remuneration. It is not uncommon, for example, for a university professor from Nigeria to accept the position of lecturer in Botswana or South Africa. By their readiness to accept lower pay, immigrants easily out-compete and thus displace their host competitors. With this apparent advantage on the side of immigrants, disadvantaged and less competitive citizens of host countries often pressurise their governments to tighten immigration laws to curtail the entry of foreigners suspected to be potential job seekers.

Further, the fear of competition generates tensions between locals and immigrants, especially in cases where the latter have become successful. Even in cases where immigrants have successfully integrated themselves into the host society, racial, ethnic and religious differences have occasionally generated tensions between the two communities. For example, although Hausa-Fulanis from the north have lived peacefully with Yorubas and Ibos in the south of Nigeria for years, violent conflicts have erupted between these communities since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. These conflicts, which have claimed the lives of nearly 2000 people, have had cyclical effects. Attacks on

Southerners living in northern Nigeria almost always sparked reprisals on Northerners living in the south, leading to an endless cycle of retributions and destruction. (Cunliffe-Jones, 2000). In both northern and southern Nigeria, these sectarian conflicts and their attendant insecurity induced the emigration of large numbers of members from minority communities.

In some cases host communities have become envious of refugees because of the latter's receipt of assistance in the form of food, clothing and shelter. In some countries, envy of immigrants has translated into full-scale xenophobia, the intense dislike or fear of foreigners. As Anyangwe (1999), has correctly noted, xenophobia represents a contemporary form or manifestation of intolerance and discrimination. It creates a desire to cause both physical and psychological mischief to immigrants and leads to the blatant violation of migrants' rights. Xenophobia is generally known to be on the increase in South Africa where the hatred discriminates neither between skilled and unskilled, nor between documented and undocumented immigrants. But, to be sure, xenophobia is normal in every country as another expression of nationalistic sentiments. However, xenophobia becomes an anathema and a disgusting phenomenon when it becomes institutionalised and expressed in official circles or when uninformed politicians try to score political points by creating an unnecessary hysteria about immigrants and playing on the sentiments of the populace. Politicians who depict immigrants as liabilities often fail to appreciate the contribution of the latter in creating informal jobs (*Electronic Mail and Guardian*, April 28, 2000). The South Africa state presently seems to be in a perplexing quandary in trying to down-play xenophobia in tandem with sanctioning police raids on premises and night clubs in Johannesburg and its suburbs in pursuit of 'illegal' immigrants (*Electronic Mail and Guardian*, March 24, 2000).

In addition, receiving countries are getting tougher on immigration because of the concern and suspicion that migrants may pose security threats or strain their relations with the home government. The latter concern is legitimate in instances where immigrants have committed crimes against humanity or have been implicated in serious economic crimes in their home countries. In such cases, receiving countries want to dissociate themselves with the crime by denying entry to such suspects. It is precisely for this reason and also to demonstrate its antipathy for destabilisation and war lordism that South Africa deported the wife of Fodey Sankoh, the Sierra Leonean rebel leader, within 24 hours of her arrival in the country in late May 2000. In addition to destabilising the democratically elected government, Fodey Sankoh's rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), is widely known to have committed widespread atrocities against the civilian population of Sierra Leone (*Sunday Times*, 4 June 2000). Ethiopia has also been critical of Zimbabwe for giving sanctuary to former dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam who abdicated in 1991 following protests against his regime's grotesque human right abuses. Relations between

the two countries have deteriorated following Harare's refusal to extradite the former Ethiopian strongman to stand trial. Also, between 1994 and 1997, Zaire's relations with Rwanda deteriorated as the latter accused the former of aiding Hutu refugees in Zaire planning to topple the new Rwandan government. And concerns that the war might spill over into the country led Sierra Leone to close its border to Liberian refugees at times in 1990 (Sorenson, 1994: 179). In sum, countries may have various reasons for curtailing immigration but essentially these include the desire to preserve the security and good international image of the country as well as the desire to maintain cordial relations with the supplying countries.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to demonstrate the extent to which globalisation informs migration in Africa. It has suggested that globalisation creates considerable 'pull' and 'push' factors that promote both voluntary and forced migration. To be sure, the logic of globalisation has weakened state borders and has facilitated the cross-border movement of goods, capital and labour. The capacities of countries to meet the challenges of globalisation have been varied. While some countries like South Africa have been able to manage globalisation to its advantage, reflected in its continual attraction of FDI and its competitiveness in finding a niche in the global market, the rest of SSA has been largely marginalised and faced with challenges rather than opportunities. This fundamental difference between the capacities of South Africa and the rest of SSA to confront globalisation largely explains the direction of migration from the latter to the former.

Also, as suggested, the pressure to form regional common markets and trading blocs as well as the tendency to relax immigration regulations for citizens of a given community, has promoted migration within those trading areas. Furthermore, the democratisation project, which intensified in the wake of globalisation, also affected migration in the sense that many political exiles were able to return home after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes that drove them into exile. As noted, globalisation also had profound implications for Africa's fragile environment which, in turn, induced migration. The pressure to maximise revenue from the exportation of raw materials implied the excessive exploitation of these resources. Finite as these resources are, their depletion means the migration to adjacent regions of those engaged in the affected industries. The depletion of resources also means scarcity and the logical intensification of competition for these resources by user constituencies. In some cases keen competition translated into violence and full-scale eco-wars that displaced people or induced forced migration.

Yet while globalisation creates pressures towards migration, opportunities are closing for immigration. South Africa, for example, is getting increasingly tough on immigration because of a confluence of reasons, including an attempt

to stem the entry of criminals and non-credible migrants. The tension between pressures to migrate and declining opportunities for migration is set to lead to a new scenario. As the 'push' factors in the host countries remain and become even more critical under the weight of globalisation, migrants may devise alternative ways of reaching their destinations. Thus we should expect a rise in the incidence of undocumented migration into receiving countries. This development will in turn require additional resources from the host countries to contain informal entries, or in remote cases, to integrate the immigrants into the society. Either case exerts additional strains on the resources of the host government. Ultimately, unless the gains of globalisation are uniform, efforts by affluent countries to successfully stem formal and informal migration will remain a permanent nirvana.

Notes

1. Conventionally, illegal migrants are people who enter another country without proper documentation. NGOs, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and some human rights organisations are, however, concerned with the application of the term 'illegal' to migrants without proper documents because the term is derogatory and tends to depict this category of migrants as criminals. Migrant right activists argue that this category of immigrants are not necessarily criminals, hence they prefer to use the more benign and less harsh term like 'informal' or 'undocumented'. In this essay, 'informal' and 'undocumented' are used interchangeably to refer to migrants without proper documents.

2. Under domestic and international pressure, Jerry Rawlings, then leader of a military government since 1981, was forced to accede to multiparty elections in 1992. Transforming his revolutionary organs into a political party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Rawlings contested that year's presidential elections, which he won and thus became a civilian president.

Bibliography

Africa Recovery, (New York), various issues.

Africa Today, (Denver), March/April 1997.

Ahmed, Hassan E.I. 1999. 'Globalisation and National Security in Africa'. Paper presented at the Sixth Congress of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), White Sands Hotel, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 24-28 April.

Akilagpa, S. 1999. 'Globalisation and Social Sciences in Africa' *African Sociological Review* 3(1): 1-19.

Akokpari, J.K. 1998. 'The State, Refugees and Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa' *International Migration* 36(2): 211-231.

Akokpari, J.K. 1999. 'The Political Economy of Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa'. *African Sociological Review* 2(1): 75-93.

Akokpari, J.K. 2000. 'Globalisation and the Challenges for the African State'. (Forthcoming in Luc Sindjoun (ed.) *Globalisation and the Future of Nations and States in Africa* (Harare: AAPS Books).

Amupadhi, Tangeni and Miepje Commandeur. 1997. 'Blame it all on the Nigerians'. *Electronic Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), April 18.

Anyangwe, Carlson. 1999. *'SADC at risk of Premature Demise', Southern African Human Rights Review,* Issue 3, July: 20-24.

Asante, S.K.B. 2000. 'Towards an African Economic Community'. Paper presented at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) 40th Anniversary Conference on the theme: 'United States of Africa?' CSIR Conference Centre, Pretoria, South Africa, 30 May-2 June.

Brown, M.B. 1995. *Africa's Choices: After Thirty Years of the World Bank* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).

Brukum, N.K. 1996. 'Fifteen Years of Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana: an appraisal'. Paper presented at the Canadian Association of African Studies Conference, McGill University, Montreal, 1-5 May.

Callaghy, T.M. 1994. 'Africa falling off the map?' *Current History*, 93, January: 31-36.

Chirwa, W.C. 1999. 'Jailing the Voiceless: Ex-migrant workers and popular struggles in Malawi'. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 8(1): 1-21.

Cunliffe-Jones, P. 2000. 'Nigeria struggles to cope in first year of civilian rule'. *Electronic Mail and Guardian*, (Johannesburg), 25 May.

De Vletter, F. 1995. 'The Implications of Changing Migratory patterns in Southern Africa' in Crush *et al Labour Migrancy in Southern Africa: Prospects for Post-Apartheid Transformation* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town).

Edmunds, M. 1997. 'Skilled Foreigners "the solution" to...' *Weekly Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg) 21 February.

Electronic Mail and Guardian, (Johannesburg), various issues. Giddens, Anthony. 1999. 'Globalisation'. Reith Lectures online. http://news2.thdo.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/events/reith_99/week1/week1.htm (14/4/99).

Hamelink, Cess J. 1994. *Trends in World Communiucation: On Disempowerment and Self-Empowerment* (Penang: Southbound and Third World Network).

Hornby, A.S. 1989. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.* London: Oxford University Press.

Kelbessa, W. 2000. 'Globalisation and Indigenous Environmental Knowledge in Ethiopia'. Paper presented at the Sixth Congress of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), White Sands Hotel, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 24-28 April.

Khadija, M. 2000. 'Riding the Repatriation Train', *Electronic Mail and Guardian,* (Johannesburg), April 7.

Lee, Margaret C. 2000. 'SADC and the Creation of a Free Trade Area in Southern Africa'. Paper presented at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) 40th Anniversary Conference on the theme: 'United States of Africa?', CSIR Conference Centre, Pretoria, South Africa, 30 May-2 June.

Makoa, F. 1999. 'Globalisation and Democracy in Eastern and Southern Africa'. Paper presented at the Sixth Congress of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), White Sands Hotel, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 24-28 April.

Marshall, Brent K. 1999. 'Globalisation, Environmental Degradation and Ulrich Beck's Risk Society'. *Environmental Values*, 8(2): 253-273.

Matlosa, K. 1996. 'The Future of Basotho Migrant Miners in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Rethinking Lesotho's regional Identity. *Lesotho Law Journal* 9(2): 169-191.

Matlosa, K. 1999. 'Globalisation and Regional Security: Southern Africa at a Crossroads'. Paper presented at SARIPS Annual Colloquium on 'Peace and Security in Southern Africa: Challenges and Opportunities', Harare, Zimbabwe, 26-30 September.

McGrew, A. 1992. 'A Global Society?' in Stuart *et al Modernity and its Futures.* Oxford: Blackwell: 61-116. *Migrant Rights Bulletin*, no.2, January-February 2000.

Mengisteab, K. 1998. 'Dilemmas Globalisation Pose on Africa'. Paper presented at the Ninth General Assembly of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Novotel Hotel, Dakar, Senegal, 14-18 December.

Moore, David 2000. 'The Zimbabwean Crisis: An Original Twist on the Problem of Primitive Accumulation, State Formation and the Universalisation of Property Rights in an Era of neo-liberal Globalisation'. Paper presented at a Colloquium on the theme: 'Africa in the Global Economy', University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa, 25-26 May.

Muzvidziwa, V. 2000. 'Forging New Identities: Globalisation, Crossborder Women Traders and Regional Integration'. Paper presented at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) 40th Anniversary Conference on the theme: 'United States of Africa?', CSIR Conference Centre, Pretoria, South Africa, 30 May-2 June.

Nederveen, Pieterse J. 1997. 'Going Global: Futures of Capitalism'. *Development and Change*, 27: 367-382.

Nyang'oro, J.E. 1996. 'Africa's Environmental Problems', in April Gordon and Donald Gordon (eds.) *Understanding Contemporary Africa.* Lynne Rienner, Boulder: 195-219.

OAU. 1969. *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems In Africa*, Art. 1 Sec. 2, Addis Ababa.

Obi, Cyril. 1997. 'Economic Adjustment and the Deepening of Environmental Conflict in Africa'. *Lesotho Social Science Review*, 3(1), June: 13-29.

Reno, W. 1997. 'Privatising War in Sierra Leone'. *Current History*, 96: 227-230.

Shaw, T.M. 1999. 'Globalisations and Conflicts in Africa: Prospects for Human Security and Development in the New Millennium'. *Conflict Trends* Issue 3: 20-22

Sidiropoulos, E. 2000. 'Is the EU-SA Free Trade Agreement a Good Idea for SADC?'. *Traders*, Issue 1, January.

Sorenson, J. 1994. 'An Overview: refugees and development', in H. Adelman and J. Sorenson (eds.) *African Refugees: development aid and repatriation,* Oxford: Westview Press.

Strange, Susan. 1991. 'An Eclectic Approach', in C. N. Murphy and R. Tooze (eds.). *The New International Political Economy.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner: 33-49.

Suliman, M. and Omer, A. 1994. 'The Environment: a new dimension in the Sudan's political and social landscape'. *Africa World Review,* November 1993-April 1994.

Sunday Times, (Johannesburg), various issues.

Tandon, Yash. 1998. 'Globalisation and Africa's Options – Part II'. *African Association of Political Science (AAPS) Newsletter* (Harare). 3(2) May-August.

Timberlake, L. 1985. *Africa in Crisis: the causes, the cures of environmental bankruptcy.* London: Earthscan.

UNDP. 1997. *Human Development Report 1997.* New York: Oxford University Press.

UNDP. 1999. *Human Development Report 1999.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Yearley, Steven. 1996. *Sociology, Environmentalism, Globalisation: Reinventing the Globe* (London, New Delhi: Sage Publications).

John K. Akokpari, PhD, Lecturer,
Department of Political & Administrative Studies,
National University of Lesotho,
P.O. Roma 180,
Lesotho.
E-mail: jk.akokpari@nul.ls
Fax: (266) 340 000
Tel: (266) 21-3788 (w)
(266) 21-3208 (h).