

## **The US DV Visa Lottery Program and the African Experience: Cultural mediation or brain drain?**

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### **Abstract**

*This article discusses the pros and cons of the US State Department-sponsored DV Visa lottery Program (DLVP) for the poor countries and its role in shaping perceptions of Black African immigrants in the US territory (the cultural potpourri). Using the brain drain, assimilation and ethnic hegemonic models and sporadic references to historical and cultural experiences of Africans' immigration to North America, it presents the impact of the exportation of 'African' human capital on the capacity for poor African countries to implement their own development agenda for long-term, sustainable development. The article also attempts to show how cultural disparities among Black immigrants living in America through the DVLP could be causing more harm to the African family, while financial success is sporadic and limited to individual immigrants. It then describes conditions under which culture shock and assimilation mitigate the sense of cohesiveness and communal lifestyle germane to the traditional African family life. It proposes approaches for the State Department to collaborate with African states with respect to the DV Visa Program and its subsequent result, burgeoning demand for cheap Africa's human capital in the US.*

**Key words:** *immigration, Black immigrants, assimilation, brain drain, familism, cultural dissonance*

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### **I. Introduction**

#### **A Brief overview of US Immigration History and the path to Citizenship**

Known as the nation of immigrants, the United States of America (U.S.) has historically negotiated a large proportion of newcomers within the past century. According to the (US) Presidential Task Force on Immigration, some 14.7% of newcomers were admitted into the US in 1910 compared to 12.9% in 2013 (2013 p.113). The US is among postindustrial countries that have been experiencing significant growth in immigration in the past four decades, following the end of World War II and the Cold War and their increased focus on economic empowerment. Africans migration to US citizenship dates back to the first explorers and the establishment of the First Amendment of the US Constitution in 1776. Former Rutgers University Africana Studies Professor, Ivan Van Sertima may have considered Africans the earliest immigrants. In his groundbreaking albeit controversial work, *They Came before Columbus*, Guyana (South American)-born Ivan Sertima (1976) describes ancient Egyptians and Nubians as the first foreigners to reach the Gulf of Mexico around 1200 BCE and

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800 BCE. If that thesis is considered, we may argue that African immigrants, not Europeans, do not need to be subjected to stringent visa requirements and luck-based programs such as the DVLP, because Black Africans have a longer history of immigrating to the U.S. and other ethnic groups. Based on anthropologic-cultural documents that describe African gods interacting with Native American and Mexican gods in the American territory in the early 15 Century and other African Studies (Sertima, 1983), we may gather that the British immigrants are not newcomers. Whatever the argument, Black Africans from the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, and other regions have a long history of immigrating to the U.S., although fewer blacks from the African continent have been admitted since the slave trade era, compared to Blacks from Jamaica and other South American nations.

According to *Migration Information Source*, a reference on global organizations and governments who make their data and research available online, 1 million immigrants have entered the United States legally each year since 2013. The country currently hosts more than 1.1 million Black African immigrants, comprising at least 3 percent of the total US foreign-born population. Randy Capps, Kristen McCabe, and Michael Fix of the Migration Policy Institute in Washington D.C. have found Black Africans to be among the fastest-growing groups of US immigrants, increasing by about 200 percent during the 1980s and 1990s, and nearly 100 percent during the early part of this millennium. Most Black Africans are admitted through family reunification channels; but Black Africans are much more likely than other groups to be admitted as refugees or through the diversity visa program (Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2011, p. 1). This also presents the DVLP as a path for transmission and flow of human capital into the US.

Within the political and media discourse in the US, immigration has been framed as a social problem requiring a clear solution (Suarez-Orozo *et al.*, 2011). Congressional meetings and arguments by Democrats and Republican parties have called for a decisive response to the immigration situation-- stringent immigration policies. Some lawmakers have called for an end to the US Diversity Visa Lottery program claiming that can make the lives of Americans insecure by providing citizenship status to persons from countries that breed terrorists and anti-American sentiments. We assume that the US DVLP is a magnet for attracting useful human capital to the U.S. for its domestic markets and to enhance its domination in the world. It is a cost efficient way of exploiting human capital from politically fragile states with fragile economies, and investing such capital for long term socio-economic empowerment of the US, with minimal returns for the states exporting human capital.

Sponsored by the US State Department, the DVLP now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year in operation has brought almost 1 million legal immigrants to the United States (including the relatives and friends of lottery winners with US citizenship status), from poor, politically challenged developing countries with rich cultural fabrics. While some return to their country of origin, driven by nostalgia and their inability to cope with the demands of American capitalism and socio-cultural differences, the majority of the immigrants stay within US borders and become assimilated by the American culture.

## II. Methodology

Using the cultural hegemony model, this article analyzes conditions under which culture shock and assimilation mitigate the sense of cohesiveness and communal lifestyle germane to the traditional African family life. As we know, hegemony is the process by which a dominant culture maintains its dominant position (Donaldson, 1993, pp. 643-957). Within that framework, an institution can seek to formalize its power by extracting resources from a vulnerable source just as a population can inculcate the ideals of the hegemonic group through its propagandistic messages, constant advertising or publication of influential information without being given the opportunity to challenge such ideals or the means to replicate them for its own benefits. Hence, the unilateral flow

of a carefully crafted infomercial such as the DV Visa lottery program on the US State Department's world wide web is an example of cultural hegemony because it offers poor and politically weaker nations the opportunity to transport human capital to the US with a view to sustaining the US economy and its political dominance in the world. The program does not offer a plan for the lottery winners or *future US citizens* to redistribute financial and political gains to their country of origin.

Understanding the impact of the DV program warrants a review of some existing immigration-related theories and examination of the characteristics of the program itself, particularly the following factors: (1) what makes Africa the main attraction for brain drain programs such as the DV Visa Lottery? (2) What are the Program's general selection criteria? (3) What are the known qualifying processes and eligibility criteria for the visas; and (4) What is the nature of the social condition of the new immigrants including intra cultural dissonances within the cultural potpourri of the host country?

### III. Context

The preceding arguments are based on assimilation, which refers to a variety of adaptive experiences that contemporary immigrants inculcate upon becoming incorporated into a host society (Zhou, 1997, pp. 975-1008). Susan K. Brown and Frank D. Bean of the University of California, Irvine (2006) have stated that through assimilation, also known as integration or incorporation, the characteristics of members of immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble one another. Immigrants, with their characteristics, efforts, and adaptation styles merge with those of the receiving society who through space and their institutions must interact with newcomers. The interaction between the two determines the direction and ultimate outcome of the integration and adaption of immigrations. In fact, intercultural communication scholars have found that immigrants experience different patterns of adaptation; some are easily assimilated in the socioeconomic trappings of the materialistic society, and quickly become a part of the "American dream" while others follow a downward mobility. Adaptability has to be a key factor to be considered by DVLP sponsors each year that they launch the campaign, because the foreign nationals eventually admitted into the US have to co-exist with Americans.

To appreciate Americanism and the reason behind the State Department's success in attracting many DV Lottery Visa applicants from Africa, we need to mirror the history of African immigration to that hemisphere.

#### i. Guiding frameworks

The paper makes the following assumptions that would be supported or negated in the analysis:

- Immigrant families typically spend the majority of their time working to earn a living in America and to support families in the countries they migrated from, and pay less attention to highlighting the American principle of having a just society and exercising human rights.
- We expect people to exploit the resources to which they have access.
- People become assimilated by practicing the culture of the indigenous group. They receive, learn, and inevitably emulate of the beliefs, norms and values of the host society because they co-habit with the latter. Since group members' thought processes and action modes are influenced by their exposure to a new environment, it follows that those immigrants in America are puns in the larger American society. If we agree with Barnett and Lee (2002) that culture is a property of a group rather than an individual because it is a group's shared collective meaning system through which a group's collective values, attitudes, customs and

thoughts are understood (p. 277), we may as well admit that immigrants are the property of America.

- Immigrants (like African blacks) who are racially distinct from the majority are at greater risk of experiencing discrimination than those who are not (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Liebkink & Jasinskaja-Lahn, 2000).
- The DVLP aims to feed the sociopolitical and economic interests of the American private sector by draining the brains of Africa's intellectuals.
- Some civic organizations may be noticing a parallel between the DVLP and African slave trade that forced migration of black Africans to American plantations. For the former, the American neighborhood in which the lottery winner must stay may be the *plantation* of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Conversely, research on the effects of enclave participation on immigrants' economic outcomes brings mixed conclusions as to whether enclave effects are positive or negative. Xie and Gough's (2011) comparison of the economic outcomes of immigrants working in ethnic enclaves with those of immigrants working in the mainstream economy have found that for some immigrant groups, ethnic enclave participation actually has a negative effect on economic outcomes. Others have tested the effects of healthy behaviors among Hispanic and Chinese immigrants living in enclaves in four US cities, and have also learned that living in the immigrant enclave is not monolithically beneficial and may have different associations with different health behaviors, fewer recreational exercise resources, lower social cohesion, and lower neighborhood-based civic engagement (Osypuk, Roux, Hadley, & Candula, 2009). We can assume that the same characteristics determined in their experiment would be discerned because immigrant families typically spend the majority of their time working to earn a living in America and to support families in the countries they migrated from.

#### IV. Analyses

##### a. The Beneficial Brain drain theory

Brain drain is perceived as having a negative connotation, irrespective one's gender, cultural, racial, or ethnic orientation. Bhagwati and Hamada, (1974) see it as the negative externality on the population in the source country, while some European economists maintain that a beneficial brain drain (BBD) emerges when the average level of human capital is higher in the economy opened to migrations than in the closed economy. This holds true for DV Lottery winners and other legal African immigrants living in the U.S. who come from poor, developing countries to serve in American learning institutions and employment sectors. They contribute knowledge to the existing American culture through day-to-day interactions with their classmates, neighbors, and co-workers. The immigrants also quickly gain productive cultural knowledge about the American market system. For example, individuals with a good credit history and no-criminal background are eligible for bank loans, irrespective of the economic weakness of their country of origin or the corrupt nature of the regime. Similarly, people from countries with material wealth also add to the educational richness of the host country through their stronger engagement in academic activity. Migration prospects foster investments in education because of higher returns abroad (Bein, Docquier, and Rapoport, 2001). When migration occurs in large numbers, the immigrant community typically experiences cultural educational and economic gains. It is also well known that better opportunities for employment and income in other countries attract people looking to increase their individual potential for financial and emotional security (Bookman, 2002).

While migration has a positive effect on human capital formation in the migrant's new adopted country, the same cannot be said about the economy of countries targeted by the DV Visa Lottery Program for there is an inadequate growth potential and the return to human capital is likely to be low. For Bein and colleagues (2001, p. 276), it would lead to limited incentives to acquire education, which is the engine of growth. But other studies reveal negative effects of assimilation, particularly acculturation, on certain outcomes for immigrant adolescents. For example, assimilation is reported to be related to risky sexual behavior (Upchurch *et al.* 2001; Harris 1999; Landale and Hauan 1996). This suggests that immigrants are more vulnerable to deviant social behavior with prolonged stay outside their familiar original surroundings. The deviant behavior could be due to their exposure to media-mediated messages. The picture is not entirely bleak. In fact, Peri and Mayr (2009) have found that, for Eastern and Western Europeans, the possibility of return migration combined with the education incentive channel turns the brain drain into a brain gain. People who migrate to a capitalist country are expected to work in order to exert a downward pressure on wages and thereby increase their own profits (Meyers, pp. 1247-1248). Consequently, class-based political processes should shape immigration policies (Beard & Beard, 1944; Marx, 1973; Miles, 1986).

#### **b. Marriage between Marxism and the DV Lottery Program**

The preceding analysis is based on the assumption that people should get what they deserve in a just world and that the DV Lottery Visa program is a capitalist tool used to encourage migration between countries of uneven socioeconomic development status. The images of a just world are seen through the lens of the media, particularly Western and American media structures that preach free expression, a world where good triumphs over evil and influence worldviews. Psychologist, Melvin Lerner (1980) has succinctly stated that the human experience is populated with good and ill will but humans invest mainly in scenarios where the need to see good prevail (p. 15). Other social psychologists agree. Lazarus, Speisman, Mordkoff & Davison (1962) as well as Stotland (1969) and Cahn (1949) reveal that entitlement and justice are principles that underlie the human nature. Entitlement and migration are interlocking principles when it comes to examining the lives of immigrants in the United States. The underlying notion of mobility is that in the just world, people typically migrate to find freedom as well as educational and economic opportunity. Though we may accept the stance that large numbers of people like to migrate to industrialized countries for political and economic reasons (Meyers, 2000, p. 1245), it is in fact the policies of the receiving countries that determine if movements can take place and of what kind (Zolberg, 1989, p. 406). People are entitled to enjoy what they have earned.

Indeed, the neoclassical economic theory, unlike the Marxist and Engelian school, does hold that people will enjoy what they have earned if given the opportunity to operate in a free market economy. Tied to this *sententia* is the view that people are valuable to the nation's progress, and if they produce for the state, then they are useful props. Neoliberalism and the DV Visa Lottery program's (DVLV) rationale are interrelated in that they promote the notion of fair share and equal opportunity for all, irrespective of social and economic status, ethnic or cultural orientation, race, or country of origin.

#### **V. The Diversity Visa Lottery program (DVLV)**

The Diversity Visa Lottery program (DVLV) was created to provide a means of immigration to those foreign nationals (especially from poor African countries) without employment sponsorship or family ties in the United States" ([www.rockefeller.edu](http://www.rockefeller.edu) 12/11/13). It is among more than five special visa programs that significantly facilitate legal entry of foreign national to the U.S. and shorten their

road toward obtaining U.S. citizenship. Mandated by the Congress through the Immigration Act of 1990, it is an annual event that makes visas available to persons meeting the simple, but strict, eligibility requirements to become US Citizens. The DVLP allows applicants from six geographic regions in the world to be randomly selected, and given an opportunity to live and work in the United States of America. According to the Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), ([http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/T1026V-DV-2010bulletin \(3\).pdf-retrieved 07-07-12](http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/T1026V-DV-2010bulletin (3).pdf-retrieved 07-07-12)), a maximum of 55,000 Diversity Visas are available each fiscal year to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. The State Department randomly draws some 50,000 names from the computer out of more than fifteen million entries for U.S. visas, as part of the Diversity Visa Lottery Program.

The DVLP also aims to increase population flows from underrepresented countries by allowing immigration of individuals without a formal job offer, admission to a learning institution, invitation from a U.S.-based group, or strong family ties in the United States. The Program has four main stages leading to U.S. citizenship: (1) application; (2) selection and interviewing of winners; (3) maintaining residency or green card status; and (4) path to citizenship.

- *Application and Eligibility features for qualifying applicants-*

The eligibility requirement is that applicants hold a high school diploma or have a job that requires at least two years of training, and the lottery is only open to natives of countries that have sent fewer than 50,000 migrants to the U.S. in the past five years (Kremer, 2011). Only one entry is allowed per individual. According to the State Department), “entrants will be required to go to the E-DV website. Entries are processed to eliminate improper applications before entrants are selected through a computerized, random draw and DVs are then issued to selectees meeting eligibility requirements and their eligible family. Entrant Status Check using the unique confirmation number saved from their DV-2014 online entry registration to find out whether their entry has been selected in the DV program” ([http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV\\_2014\\_Instructions.pdf](http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV_2014_Instructions.pdf)). Interestingly, applicants are required to provide information on where they live and their highest level of education on the electronic form. Application time has been reduced from 60 days to 30, but many Africans do not have frequent access to the internet or electricity, which means fewer persons eventually play the lottery. Many applicants rely on internet cafes when applying, and in some cases, the computer literate ones charge nominal fees to assist others in submitting their application online. This may increase fraud. While, no comprehensive data exists on the percentage of “assisted” winning candidates by others, inaccurate data input may be among the growing number of problems associated with the application process.

Candidates have a 30-day window to apply. For efficient information sharing, the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State allows candidates to monitor the progress of their application. The age-range of the applicants, the high percentage of lottery winners with relatively strong technical skills, and the lack of cultural adjustment programs in the Union (US) to ‘acclimatize’ or familiarize the selected (lottery winning) immigrants with American way of life upon their arrival, are among other concerns development experts and philanthropists involved in development programs in, may be concerned about. Given that only electronic submissions are accepted, poor countries and those with scarce electricity supply or internet facilities, and no money to pay application fees are denied the chance to try their luck. The majority of them are located in sub-Saharan African countries. If anyone wins the lottery without fulfilling the educational or skill requirement, his or her application is nullified. Money therefore becomes a potential barrier when applying for the DV lottery because the only way someone can apply for the DV Lottery is through

the Internet, which requires spending money. After winning the DV Lottery, the recipient also needs money for visa processing and transportation (Hailu *et al.*, 2012, p. 12).

- *Selection criteria-* Interviewing and processing for Residency in the US (Green Card)

Often, some countries are not eligible to apply through the DV program when they have surpassed their quota for sending their citizens to the US. For example, for 2014, the State Department has eliminated more than 20 countries that have sent more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States in the previous five years. They include Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, the United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, India, Peru, the Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam. Winners are screened and interviewed in their respective countries about their civic background and basic knowledge of the US. Lottery winners with criminal convictions or infected with the HIV Aids virus are eliminated. Proof of financial support is needed to allow winners to travel to the US. Winners receive documents permitting them to travel and live legally in the US.

- *Residency/Green card and citizenship*

After spending at least five years in the US, residents and their families with no criminal background are eligible to apply to become U.S. citizens. During this time, they can work in the US or travel to their home country with the option to return to the US. Candidates must maintain their status as residents by keeping a clean record—they must not commit crimes although minor traffic offenses can be excused depending on the circumstances and the defense lawyers' arguments.

According to the State Department, winners with residency status or Green Card qualify to apply to become US citizens by fulfilling the following criteria:

- Be 18 or older at the time of filing
- Be a green card holder for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing the [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#)
- Have lived within the state, or USCIS district with jurisdiction over the applicant's place of residence, for at least 3 months prior to the date of filing the application
- Have continuous residence in the United States as a green card holder for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application
- Be physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application
- Reside continuously within the United States from the date of application for naturalization up to the time of naturalization
- Be able to read, write, and speak English and have knowledge and an understanding of U.S. history and government (civics).
- Be a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States during all relevant periods under the law (<http://www.uscis.gov> retrieved 01/22/2014)

Clearly, the process of becoming a US citizen requires significant temporal and financial investments within the US—immigrants are expected to live in the US, pay taxes, and work, thereby investing in the growth of the US economy. By default, they also contribute to the cultural understanding in the communities in which they live through their sartorial behaviors (dressing); as well as verbal and non-verbal communications. People leave their home countries legally and voluntarily and enter the

U.S. legally under the program. They have a choice to apply for or reject US citizenship. Thus, the perception that the lottery immigrants are lured into the country by the prospects of better opportunities and better chances of economic freedom, leading to a more secure future rather than being pushed through any other form of persecution (Hailu *et al.*, 2012, p. 2) is false. The act of giving every person the opportunity to live, work, and practice own religious-cultural freedom defines America and probably accounts for the ever increasing global interest in the American lifestyle.

Generally, temporary legal residents in the United States including highly skilled workers such as H-1B, L-1 holders may be questioning the fairness of the DV Lottery program. Those law-abiding immigrants in the US with temporary visas contributing to the economic advancement of the country by paying income taxes for decades with no clear path to becoming permanent residents may be wondering why thousands of people are picked around the world every year, and handed permanent resident status, while their future stay remains uncertain.

## VI. DISCUSSION ON THE PROS AND CONS OF THE DVLP

### a. Africa as a rich marketplace

Some of the criteria for applying to the lottery program have skeptics wondering whether there is a secret plan to select the best and brightest ones, and deprive draining the least developed countries of their intellectual capacity. Statistics show that more eligible African countries have had a higher propensity to winning the lottery than those in other continents, as the table below shows. There is no surprise Africa has the highest percentile of winners since the largest pool of applicants come from that region. This is a flattering result for those who see the US as the melting pot for all cultures.

**Table 1:** *Winning chances per year, per continent, per legitimate entry, DV-2007 through DV-2012.*

Region	DV-2007	DV-2008	DV-2009	DV-2010	DV-2011	DV-2012	DV-2013
Africa except "special countries"	1.31%	2.40%	2.30%	2.19%	2.06%	1.69%	1.84%
Asia	0.48%	0.63%	0.64%	0.61%	0.68%	0.84%	0.93%
Europe except "special countries"	1.26%	1.85%	1.94%	2.10%	1.75%	1.63%	1.31%
North America	0.61%	0.64%	0.38%	0.69%	0.47%	0.4%	0.5%



Region	DV-2007	DV-2008	DV-2009	DV-2010	DV-2011	DV-2012	DV-2013
Oceania	4.13%	4.57%	4.62%	5.49%	4.63%	5.28%	6.22%
South and Central America and the Caribbean	0.65%	0.84%	1.05%	1.69%	1.07%	1.08%	1.05%

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity\\_Immigrant\\_Visa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity_Immigrant_Visa) retrieved, 12/10/13

The DV Visa Program gives countries facing major economic challenges a rich farmland for harvesting talent and skills to feed America's growing markets and influence on the world stage. This is because of widespread poverty, inept governmental institutions, massive corruption in public and private sectors, insecurity in the cities and rural areas, and very low employment.

With high poverty levels and the average GDP rates consistently below 5% since the inception of the DVLDP in 1991, high unemployment rates for college graduates following implementation of the World Bank's structural adjustment programs in the 90s, and high infant mortality rates above 50% for Sub Saharan countries, it should surprise no one that Africans are among the highest number of lottery applicants. Weak governments and very slow-moving America-style democracy in francophone, Arabic and English countries have, since they declared independence from European rule in the 1960s, instilled a sense of worthlessness in many Africans, leading to mass illegal exodus to neighboring countries, Europe and North America in search of a good life. With the decision makers having failed to deliver economic and political autonomy promised to companies and their people since independence from Western colonial powers, educated Africans have been seeking opportunities for a better life abroad. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Associated Press (AP), Agence France Presse (AFP), Chinese news agency (Xinhua) reports and other major news outlets continue to show large numbers of Africans illegally emigrating to other countries either due to natural causes (like draught, famine), human circumstances (war, political upheavals, disease outbreaks) or financial hardship (extreme poverty, massive unemployment). Thus, the US government's decision to create the DV Visa Lottery program is seen by some as a blessing in disguise.

**b. *The DVLDP as an economic Enabler***

Scholars have pondered the overall impact of immigration on the US economy, with some suggesting a reduction in the number of those migrating for employment. The notion that immigration and employment are analogous twins should surprise no one, as the flow of people with skills from a different socio-cultural environment to a new one is bound to displace those persons with no skills in the old environment. Similarly, skilled immigrants are not guaranteed jobs just because of their status; they must compete for jobs, demonstrate competency in serving in the workplace and follow the code of conduct in that environment. Hence, the preconceived notion of the US as the place for free enterprise may be misleading. As Lerner (1980) has himself stated, there are distinct ideologies that provide often-contradictory rules for determining who deserves what from whom. Drawing from political framework of Western societies, Lerner has argued that in spite

of the amount of resources and skills we have we are limited in the number of accomplishments we can have (p. 19). This philosophical stunt suggests that the creation and management of programs aimed at increasing the volume of America's economic prowess vis-à-vis other countries, such as the DV Lottery program does not make America a "just world", rather it promotes the elusive idea that imported skills have long term benefits to the country's economy. If the US were to review the more than \$500,000 wired to Africa on a regular basis (Ngwainmbi, 2005), and the number of new businesses being set up there by African immigrants particularly DV Lottery winners, its foreign the State Department might start rethinking continuance of the program.

### **c. Impact of the DVLP on Africa's population**

To estimate the impact of the DVLP on the population of Africa one has to consider the historical factors, beginning with European invasion of the sub-Saharan African region to exploit human capital and later its other natural resources. Historically speaking, North American merchants have made large earnings by importing humans from Black tribes to work in their factories. For example during the slave trade North American merchants only spent on transportation when they moved some 195,000 Africans to their plantations. The economic gains for the merchants from that activity is definitely astronomical today if we attempt a tabulation of the contributions of millions of blacks living in America since the slavery and slave trade period. Some economists mention that the monetary reparation due to single Black slave descendant living today in the USA is estimated at \$1.5 million. Rancourt's (2013) calculation includes only the money due ancestors and their descendants, in terms of the stolen actual labor counted in person-hours, based on a minimal economic value of that labor, adjusted at a lowest reasonable rate of interest.

The fact that one country can keep its borders, already being flooded by illegal immigrants from Mexico, the Caribbean and other Latin American countries to more than 50,000 immigrants per year to share space and compete for jobs with more than 300 million Americans and minorities, particularly Blacks and Hispanics, highlights the democratic spirit of the lottery program to give the underprivileged ones the opportunity to relocate to improve their lives. Because of its health and economic infrastructures as well as human rights policies America offers a better standard of living than their current country. Certainly, the US is a farm for the nurturing of careers, peace, peaceful relations and cultural plurality. While business institutions stand to yield returns in the long term for investing in human capital from Black African states, the latter cannot make the same claim.

The estimated investments made by the American government through the 23-year old DV Visa Lottery program can be detected not only in the increasing number of Black African immigrants living in the US but the large revenue they may be generating that is bolstering the American economy. Ironically, the states they left behind could have been the real beneficiaries had the lottery winners been mandated to live and work in their own country of birth while applying the privileges of an American citizen. This is because poor countries need more investment from external sources, especially the US whose currency exchange rates are usually more lucrative ninety-eight percent of the local currencies that cannot be exchanged inside in the US.

Further, given the scenario, one can make the following claims: (i) the program aims to feed the sociopolitical and economic interests of the American government while 'massaging' its international image; (ii) It recruits Africa's intellectuals by making a high school diploma a condition for eligibility; (iii) the diversity program may push sympathizers to reminisce about the slave trade and forced migration of black Africans to American plantations, and the American neighborhood in which the lottery winner must stay as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century plantation.

#### **d. The DV lottery as a Conduit for Satisfying America's Socio Economic Interests**

Historically, governments have imported human capital from nations with weak political and economic structures and volatile financial markets in order to strengthen their own institutions. According to Bhagwati (1976), developed countries (DCs) made the emigration of skilled people from the less developed countries (LDCs) their priority when they started losing their own skilled labor to other DCs. That issue has been discussed in international forums with a myriad of resolutions made at the United Nations Assembly spearheaded by the U.S. and its allies inter alia other rich, developed countries. Today, emerging economic powers like China and South Africa that were classified as poor countries by the IMF and World Bank are importing skilled labor from other parts of the world to feed their industries, without using the lottery visa approach. Nurses, miners, teachers, and scientists from West Africa are being employed in institutions and factories in South Africa since the early 1990s when apartheid ended and foreign companies moved there. The South Africa government offers work permits with no guarantee for citizenship to the immigrant workers. This approach brings medium term benefits to the host country in that the immigrants have the option of taking their skills to another country that is willing to offer them citizenship status. Thus, the DV Visa lottery policy that provides direct citizenship to skilled people gives the US the capacity to retain and invest the knowledge resources for the long term.

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of Black African DV lottery winners who successfully complete the medical requirements and migrate to the US trade their citizenship for that of the US and remain in the US as part of the working class. Most of them handle low paying jobs and eventually become part of the lower-middle and middle class, thereby contributing to the sustenance of the US economy. But Black Africans have had mixed feelings about the program, including high expectations after immigrating to the U.S. But they experience difficulties with having access to learning and training opportunities (Hailu, Mendoza, Lehman, and Richard, 2012). However, to continue to claim that the DV lottery program has always been a fishnet for gathering low cost labor to protect America's social and economic interests is to ignore some of the long-term benefits on the family. The DVLP serves as a potpourri of world cultures, a vehicle for making America the medium by which foreign –born people share their customs and values and negotiate terms for a set of hybrid subcultures. New York, Chicago Atlanta, Los Angeles and other major US cities are the world's mirror because they have more employment opportunities than the rural areas, and attract both low and high skilled immigrants who must interact daily, and consciously or unconsciously learn about each other's culture. This is the case because citizens of various countries live in the cities where it is easier to find jobs, schools for their children and business opportunities.

Black African immigrants' are among the fastest-growing groups of US immigrants with a population of 1.5 million making 4% of the country's 38 million immigrants (Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2011, p. 5). However, their earnings lag behind those of Americans, despite their higher levels of human capital and their strong English skills. Further, the wealth gaps between the US and Africa continue to widen as the DV lottery program continues to draw some of the best and brightest scientists, teachers, medical doctors, nurses and other trained persons from African towns and cities. The fact that immigrants of the program are screened for educational attainment and infectious diseases, and required to pay fees averaging a full year's salary by their country standards, may explain why skeptics and social scientists are becoming increasingly concerned.

While this (DV) program has given many persons in some of the world's poorest and politically distraught countries the opportunity for a better life, it is feared that continued implementation of the program could have a backlash on the development aspirations of the least developed countries. In fact, the exodus of the human capital from regions across Africa has taken place over the last six centuries, depleting the continent's ability to sustain its own intellectual capital

and producing world-class inventions and innovations. It can be argued that the exportation of African intellectual resources and labor capital started during the transatlantic slave trade era and continued through the 1950s and early 1960s when American missionaries and peace corps volunteers infiltrated African indigenous lands and sponsored Blacks in American academic and religious institutions, to learn with the hope they would return to their homelands to help their own people. In the well-documented book, *The Human Cost of African Migrations* (2007), Toyin Falola, Niyi Afolabi, and a compendium of African scholars discuss the socioeconomic impact of the migration of Africans to the West, stressing the econometrics of globalization on the exportation of African health professionals.

A scholar has complained that developed countries actively recruit health professionals from major labor exporting countries to compensate from shortages arising from inadequate programs in their own country (Aginam, 2007, p. 74). But the US must not take all the blame for importing African talent. South Africa has a history of attracting professionals from East and West Africa, following the abolishment of apartheid. There is what is known as the South-South poaching wherein some well-to-do African countries like Botswana and Kenya launch ads in major media outlets to recruit top class professionals in medicine, health and business. However, with constant political problems in their own countries and the attractive salaries and stronger currencies in Western countries (particularly the US, UK, Australia, and Canada), experienced professionals have been leaving those countries. The political scientist, Lewis (2005, p. 47) considers it a deplorable practice, but he fails to offer a solution. The same concern about exodus of African professionals to America has also been decried. In a news release of September 18, 2013 posted at <http://news.vanderbilt.edu/2013/09/brain-drain> Akhenaton Tankwanchi's study found that, in the 1980s and 1990s, earlier émigrés arrived in the United States eight years after graduation, on average, compared to 2.4 years for the later émigrés. He further contends that the sharp decline in the number of years served prior to emigration foretells the challenges of stemming the medical 'brain drain' in an era of increased globalization.

#### **e. Africa's contributions to US socioeconomic wellbeing**

It can be argued that Africa has made significant contributions to the growth of the US cultural richness and its economic strength. The contributions can be traced beginning with a history spanning five hundred years of Blacks labor market from the arrival of tobacco salesmen, through the period of slavery and integration of Blacks in resource-generating initiatives such as the affirmation action plan, black enterprises, reparation programs, black owned and operated businesses, and the Black Congressional Caucus. There are also joint African and African American initiatives that involve repatriation of African Americans to Africa. Some countries have new trade policies that allow US citizens to set up companies in African landscapes (Ngwainmbi, 2000, 2005a, b). This has led to Africans with US citizenship repatriating to Africa and setting up family businesses. We cannot ignore Black scholars, artists, and academicians who continue to produce books and movies, and scientific findings.

Further, since the start of the DV Program, the transfer of funds may only have improved Africa's overall economy at a rate of 5% or less, due to a number of persistent, interlocking socioeconomic conditions. First, the lack of actions by the African Union Commission, (the governing body for African countries) to entice educated, talented and skilled persons in African countries to remain at home or policies that could dissuade them from seeking safe havens and opportunities to live abroad is the reason why most Africans enter the DV Lottery Program.

## VII. The DVLP as a Globalization tool-confluence and dissonance

The activities of powerful governments and rich international companies have compromised and devalued local space, indigenous values, and group dynamics (Ngwainmbi, 2007; 2004), and non-dominant peoples are being assimilated into dominant societies either within societies or internationally (Berry, 2008). Further, it is also the process of globalization when rich countries continue to apply immigration policies that attract foreign nationals with skills and talent to replenish their industries and institutions. The DVLP is an attempt to globalize the US and make the country a world citizen. If we consider citizenship the practice of admitting and tolerating people from different countries and cultural backgrounds, then we are admitting that rich countries can potentially erode national sovereignty of poorer states (Ngwainmbi, 2013). US foreign policy has been viewed as a set of concerns and actions in relation to foreign governments and societies, focused on the goals of security, prestige and economic well-being (Mitchell, 1992, p. 6). That same concept governs immigration policy, described as a set of concerns and actions about expectations of persons from foreign countries when they enter and/or remain in the US, and the terms under which they will be permitted to do so (p. 7). So, by virtue of the legal Black immigrant families staying in the US and getting exposed to American wealth and technology (a type of culture), we can say that Black DVLP winners and their families are world citizens.

Other typical problems are the cultural discord people face, and separation of family unit that created communication interference, particularly the loss of oral traditions. To determine the extent to which the cultural fabric of Black immigrants is disrupted we have to go back to the period of the transatlantic slavery when men, women and children from different tribes with strong, multivariate customs were off rooted from their milieu without bringing along their artifacts used in practicing their traditions. Separated from their siblings and distributed in different plantations, they were unable to mediate, share conversation, or maintain the practice of customs familiar to each other. That enslaved men and women were assigned to work in the cotton fields or homes of their owners while others were constantly sold in dreary market sites across the vast American land, permanently removed from their own relatives and hometown people and unable to speak their own language and without the chance to plan to escape the torture. Further, by not being allowed to read and write or be taught, the slave population constituting the largest assembly of Blacks on American soil lost traditions due to programs set up by their owners to keep them separated. They were deprived of the opportunities to preserve customs and cultural practices that could be replicated by subsequent generations of Blacks, including African immigrant families.

Proverbs, dirges, praise songs, panegyrics, story -telling, gongs, and talking drums known for promoting cultural education have faded with the separation and relocation of the Black families. Even the roles played by traditional priests, healers, and native doctors in sustaining the hopes and dreams of the people evaporated with the decisions to launch the DVLP. Although the US Constitution allows religious expression, immigrant communities do not have the resources to practice their customs. Given the strict rules being imposed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the borders over the importation of plants and relics used by African priests and traditional doctors to treat the mentally ill and boost self-confidence, some immigrant families may be stifled. Those psychological and emotional scars experienced by latter generations of Africans in America may also be faced by Black immigrants who are bound to move and live in the US after winning the DV lottery.

The DVLP lures them away from their local psychiatrists, psychic readers and deprives them of the physical environment that contain artifacts and other relics required to continue practice of their customs and obliged to inculcate the ways of life of the host environment. Intercultural research has documented that, in order for people from different racial and ethnic groups to interact

successfully, they need to be conversant with the cultures of people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Mafela, 2013, p, 124). Mafela has further stated that customs practiced by a group help shape the language used to communicate with others (p 126). Similarly, language used by people from any culture has its own set of meanings that sets the group apart from others (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992; Dunn & Goodnight, 2003).

Since, as humans, our culture identifies us and that continuity in the practice of the same types of customs strengthens interpersonal, family relations and promotes cohesiveness in a community, which can be harnessed to bring positive social change, we must question the rationale behind the DV Lottery Program requirement that individuals and their families must relocate to the United States within a certain timeframe after receiving their winning letter or forfeit the chance for a green card. If indeed the DV Program aims to give people opportunities to improve their social and economic condition, why are they not given the option to stay in their own country and use privileges of US citizenship to seek their own economic opportunities? The notion that observance of a country's laws in another country could compromise sovereignty and bring conflicts in the citizen's ability to obey national and US laws simultaneously cannot be ignored. However, the US State Department can negotiate laws and policies with the African Union, the governing body that oversees governing issues of all African countries.

### **VIII. Key Arguments Against Continuing the DV Lottery Program**

On September 21, 2007, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report to the House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security of its study of the DV program (GAO-07-1174). In a report in 2003, the State's Inspector General raised concerns that aliens from countries designated as state sponsors of terrorism (Libya, Morocco) are allowed to apply for diversity visas. The report mentioned a possibility that terrorists or criminals might use the DV program to come to the US through fraud. To date, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia have been cited as countries with terrorists, also deemed a risk to US national security. Further, more than 20,000 persons from those counties have obtained permanent residency in the United States through the program. Although there is no comprehensive report that DV lottery immigrants from those countries in question posed a terrorist threat in the US, it would make sense if citizens express concern over the presence of immigrants from those countries in the neighborhood. The fact that some of the most devastating terrorist incidents in the US are homegrown, with rampant serial shootings and bombings in public places, begs the question.

Some experts have questioned the logic behind establishing the lottery program. Originally thought to have been set up to improve the multicultural composition of the US by allowing in the US territory people from other countries, experts are beginning to see the lottery as an attempt to recruit people with varied skills into the American economy, a development that has resulted in brain drain in most African countries (Ketefe, 2013). The Program has been criticized for its racist and xenophobic history, and in recent years for the increasing rates of fraud and other security issues. It has been subject to a number of Congressional attempts to end it despite its other valuable attributes. Kothari (2012) agrees that the program is flawed in its design and execution; and rightly argues it is a valuable program that can and should be redesigned rather than eliminated, with more stringent Internet protocol, security measures, and background checks to reduce fraud and other threats. DV lottery eligible countries have, in recent years, been named as state sponsors of terrorism such as Somalia and those with well-documented terrorist activity and anti-American sentiment like Mali, Niger Libya, yet the State Department continues to issue visas to winners and to grant them access to US citizenship. Critics say that the DV program serves as a threshold for

promoting more threats to homeland security by allowing persons in those countries with anti-American views to enter and live in the US.

The DVLP is, for some winners, a one-way ticket for some Africans to have similar opportunities in America as those foreign nationals who have been entering their native land for the last two decades (with the advent of globalization) and setting up companies and homes, while others may see it as an opportunity for Africans to have access to better social and economic standards validate the rationale for continuing the immigration program. Whichever observation post we have elected to stand from, several conditions stand out; the DV lottery program changes the communication pattern and tradition culture of the immigrants; and creates a psychological scar and social void, scar that will never be healed or filled.

The DV program does not support the nation's traditional immigration goals for providing needed workers (skilled or unskilled), since any high school graduate is eligible regardless of whether US employers would need him or her to work for them. The DV program does not support America's traditional goals of uniting families, since no US family ties are required for eligibility.

There is also the problem of acculturation and assimilation. While the America prides itself as the world leader in civil liberties, and protection of human dignity, it does not restrict media's ability to unleash content capable of influencing and changing the behavioral customs of other nationals. Empirical studies show that high-skill emigration need not deplete a country's human capital stock but this does not only hold for European countries where political structures have sustained peace much longer than African countries that have been struggling to find the right approach to good governance.

Encouraged to apply and win a chance to relocate to the US, without providing applicants the benefit of fully understanding the social consequences of living in a culture where respect for human rights is believed to be the highest in the world, qualifying applicants metaphorically leap into the dark when they arrive in the US. In a study about experiences encountered by lottery winners living in the US (Hailu *et al.*, 2012) have found that participants encountered so many problems when they immigrated to the U.S. during the first few months to a point where they felt frustrated and caused them to regret coming (p. 15) . These negative experiences could have been minimized or avoided, and their experiences made pleasant if they had had enough information and if there had been some help guiding them in getting jobs and familiarizing them to the overall environment. Although hard work and willingness to do any job are definite assets, their talents have been lost in the assumptions surrounding immigrants and their abilities. This is reminiscent of the time when the assimilation of immigrants in the late nineteenth century proceeded without much conscious direction due to the limited similarity of their cultural traditions to those of the native born, the species of *laissez faire* view held by most countries to Americanization (Drachler, 1920).

## **IX. The Advantages of the DVLP for Africa**

### *i. Brain gain*

One can also argue that that the transfer of African skills through the DVLP also brings some latent benefits to families of the expatriates. The extended stay in the US has made them world citizens and more enlightened about human nature, a skill needed in a globalized world where practical knowledge of multiple cultures allows the individual to easily exchange information and negotiate business and other investments. The American citizen's easy access to socio-cultural education gives him/her a psychological advantage over the citizen in countries where one culture and political style has incredibly stifled innovative reasoning and free enterprise. As mentioned, Black immigrants

(lottery winners) have been transporting such intellectual resources to Africa thanks to laws that facilitate immediate re-entry of African diasporans to their native country. More US-based professionals and families are building retirement homes and setting up companies in their country of origin. This puts into context the adage once advanced by ancient Roman Author, Gaius Polonius Secundas, that home is where the heart dwells. While Ethiopia South Africa and Kenya among others, allow persons with US passports and Green Cards to obtain a visa for temporary stay at the port of entry, Ghanaian-born nationals with US passports retain Ghanaian citizenship and hence they have greater opportunities. So, there is great potential for skills developed in the US to be transported back to African countries in the future, whenever they establish political stability.

Further, the psychological scar from nostalgia may be another blessing in disguise for the immigrants. The notion that people do not see the importance of indigenous values until they are deprived provides the manure for the nourishment of Afrocentric thinking. The Harlem Renaissance brought about by culturally isolated black writers yearning to express their Black heritage, the spirit of decolonization that flourished in Africa in the early 1960s; and the nostalgia among Africans living in France in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that produced a literary movement called Negritude remind us that psycho-cultural isolation engenders a new way of life. Because absence and distance create a sense of abandonment, hence a yearning for belonging, Black immigrants in the US may be more appreciative of their traditional customs. Many may also become motivated by feeling nostalgic about the families and landscape they left behind, the longer they live in a foreign land.

Other brain gain factors are the following:

- Lottery winners and their families have been transporting intellectual and material resources to Africa such as CDs, building equipment, vehicles, and healthcare and beauty products with the American brand. More immigrants are setting up American-style apartments near local universities. Some employ locals, build retirement homes, or set up training centers, computer labs and internet cafes loaded with data about the United States.
- Some countries have laws that allow their nationals to have dual citizenship (e.g. Ghana)
- More African experts in the US being are now employed by foreign companies and intergovernmental organizations in Africa than since the inception of the DVLP.
- Ethiopia, Kenya, Cameroon, and Tunisia provide entry visas to US citizens at their borders.
- More African governments are discussing the feasibility of offering dual citizenship.

Generally, those activities generate jobs and strengthen the respective countries' economy. One can also argue that the introduction of American culture through the use of such services and interactions may be enlightening the citizens of those countries about the American way of life. The citizens inculcate American culture without incurring the financially and psychological cost of relocating to the U.S.

## ***ii. Economic impact of DV Lottery Program to Africa***

African DVLP winners may consider their stay in the US an early Christmas present when it comes to discussing the financial benefits to their families in Africa. In fact, they have so far transferred millions of dollars to their families back in Africa through Money Gram, Western Union, Nedbank and other financial markets. With online products and fairly easy lending opportunities made available to the new US citizens by the banks, more Black immigrants are reportedly shipping



products to and from the US, setting up companies and service-based businesses in their home towns, or importing skilled labor from their countries to work in their business in the US. The remittance factor itself cannot be ignored as banking and money transfer services such as Western Union have also earned millions of dollars through transaction fees. With Money gram, an average of 5,000 transactions is completed per day at a cost of \$9 per transaction- its operations cost -with an estimated \$500,000 being wired. Up to \$10,000 can be sent at a time. While the primary beneficiary is the sender and receiver or the family members or business associates in both continents, the US bank records a net gain of \$90,000 in this instance.

Massive unemployment among more post-high school graduates is another factor. With an ever-increasing population of the world's poorest, who have no authority to influence the allocation of resources ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) 12/22/13), the DV Visa lottery program to those countries offers an escape route from economic despair. In this sense, brain drain induces positive effects such as remittances, return migration, and Diaspora externalities. There is anecdotal evidence of these positive effects (Oyelere, 2007). Overall, the relocation of foreign companies to Africa in recent years, the expansion of existing local enterprises, and the overall changes to the environment such massive floods and draught brought about global warming suggest a may require the employment of persons with local and international knowledge such multi-nationals and Diasporans.

### *iii. Social benefits to Africans in the US*

Black DVLP immigrants must actively learn to co-exist with Hispanics, Americans, Jews, and other nationalities as long as they remain in the US. The DV lottery (immigrant) families' exposure to other cultures and multivariate communication patterns through daily their interactions with persons from other countries could provide them with skills to survive in a globalized world. However, before they move to the US, they are not debriefed on what to expect in cosmopolitan environments (American cities) that harbor people with multiple cultural backgrounds. Coming from a monolithic cultural setting, most African immigrants find it difficult to cope with the fast-paced lifestyle in American cities.

After receiving notification, winners are expected to begin making preparations to leave their country without having made proper arrangements for the transition with their families, loved ones, employers, and business co-workers. Failure to complete preparation may disqualify them. Some abandon lucrative careers with the hope of enjoying 'greener pastures' in America, the ultimate dream 'home' as promoted by media propaganda, the Peace Corps volunteer programs in Africa and other American structures in Africa such as its cultural centers, embassies and universities (Ngwainmbi, 2006). Sadly, the DVLP has no joint program with those structures, a measure that could have better prepared the immigrants' transition to American culture prior to their arrival in America. The culture shock winners experience upon arrival clearly hinders their progress. Hailu *et al.* (2012) have observed also observed that their early experiences make their stay in America uncomfortable for some time.

## **X. Proposed Alternatives to the DV Program**

### **a. Greater engagement of meaningful bi-national programs**

Before offering any alternatives to the DVLP program, we need to identify US initiatives in Africa that may have motivated Africans to develop great interest in the Diversity Visa Lottery Program. These are the peace-based interventions and technical assistance initiatives like the John J.

Kennedy's Peace Corps Volunteer program, Jimmy Carter's Guinea Worm disease eradication program, the Clinton Global Initiative, George W. Bush's Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon program, a public-private partnership to save women from cervical and breast cancer in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Mosquito Net Project, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Those programs are aimed at promoting humanitarian support, providing financial assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working directly with the poor, and reducing suffering among the masses and they have been well endorsed by local governments and the local media.

The parliamentarians can work with the Black Congressional Caucus, the International Multicultural Shared Cultural Organization (IMSCO)<sup>5</sup>, and other NGOs, to establish a dual citizenship program for African Americans and implement an agenda that fosters strategic socio-economic and political growth between the African American community and Africa.

### **b. Promotion of Dual Citizenship**

Dual citizenship requires following the laws of both countries that are enforceable only when the individual travels to the other country. It may be more difficult for African-born U.S. citizens to relate to easily adjust to political way in his/her country of origin since the democratic climate in both countries is unbalanced. African governments should not be criticized for not allowing their own people who have acquired citizenship abroad to enjoy the same privileges as the local citizens. The primary reason for this is, African peoples accustomed to dictatorial regimes are just beginning to experience Western models of democracy that subscribe to freedom of expression—a practice they are not accustomed to and which requires responsible and accountable behavior. Hence, the respective government needs to ensure loyalty as part of the nation building activity, which involves having control of the demographic composition of the country and implementing laws that target those within the country who are not of African origin. For example, the current citizenship law in Malawi stipulates that “*Every person born in Malawi after the 5th day of July, 1966 shall become a citizen of Malawi on the date of his birth if one of his parents is a citizen of Malawi and is a person of African race where a person of African race is defined as a person "who is a member of one of the indigenous peoples of Africa south of the Sahara"* (<http://dualcitizenshipmalawi.blogspot.com>, retrieved June 11, 2014). Clearly, the purpose of this law is to include those Malawians who have citizenship status in Europe, Canada and the US and to promote national unity in the newly formed state. Dual citizenship allows the individual to have greater control of his/her freedom and wealth; no single country can control the individual's wealth.

In general, dual citizenship for African Americans could have massive economic benefits for African immigrants in the U.S. and African countries, and protect the power and influence of African Americans in both continents. According to the IMSCO, dual citizenship interaction will enable African people as well as African states to rewrite all Bilateral Trade agreements and end economic apartheid (<http://www.imsco.org/dual-citizenship-program>). The NGO argues that dual citizenship granted to African Americans would offer ‘true democracy’ and enable IMSCO to strive to give any African American the right to be issued a passport of the African country of his or her choice; (2) monitor the process of the passport application; (3) give African American the right to own land and/or a business to invest safely; (4) live under the Dual protection of both the United

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<sup>5</sup> The IMSCO is a *charitable Non-Governmental Organization certified by the United Nations, determined to lobby governments and private sector organizations to assist IMSCO in its mandate to provide education that leads to accessible resources and job opportunities for the poor and under privileged. Its mission is “to link opportunities through education and culture to help promote equal rights in political awareness, resource sharing, and co-development projects to help end poverty and injustice”* ([www.imsco.org](http://www.imsco.org)). The organization has had working relations with Sudan, Egypt, Zambia, Cameroon, Rep. of Congo, & Zimbabwe

States and Africa; and (5) have the right to vote in both the United States and Africa, among others ([www.imscoglobal.org](http://www.imscoglobal.org)).

If the IMSCO's could give African Americans access to dual citizenship the latter would have unfettered access to Africa's landscape and ideoscapes. The entire experience would unleash a new pan African way of life that is quite different from what Kwameh Nkrumah<sup>6</sup> or leading Afrocentric scholars Molefi Asante and Cheikh Anta Diop ever envisioned. Besides creating a new cultural order that is un-African and not necessarily global but perhaps a hybridized, computerized version of Afro-euro-Americanism, dual citizenship for African Americans could lead to the massive transfer of economic resources, desperately needed in Africa. The organization's plans are buttressed by the US. State Department's rule that individuals who are granted citizenship in another country do not lose their U.S. citizenship, unless they actively seek and gain citizenship there.

## **XI. Conclusions**

Based on the existing structure and purpose of US DV Lottery Visa program, it is unclear whether African immigrants are an asset or an economic liability for the US. What is clear is that the DVLP continues to be implemented despite evidence that Africa's skilled labor is being depleted. However, the exodus of the human capital from regions across Africa has taken place over the last six centuries, depleting the continent's ability to sustain its own intellectual capital and producing world-class inventions and innovations. DVLP has long term negative economic effects, long term positive social effects on the US and short term positive overall effects on Africa.

Further, there are potential benefits for African countries and a way to halt the economy-boosting DVLP (or brain drain), if African leaders engage pan-African governmental and non-governmental groups in the reverse flow of economic and human capital by granting interested and qualified African Americans citizenship in all African countries.

## **XII. Next steps**

If the US expects that the diversity program will only attract more capital investment to its shores, it would be ignoring an existing process that has the potential for depleting America's socio economic returns in the medium to long term, such as the breeding of terrorist groups in poor countries. The fact that those countries have limited resources to combat terrorism within their borders means the US must revisit at least the lottery application process.

Visible collaboration is needed between the US State Department and the African Union Commission—the governing body of all fifty-three African states. To ensure greater transparency, accountability and meaningful results, the following actions are needed:

- African Union Commission should set up a law that allows lottery winners from all African countries to have dual citizenship status as this would increase access for fast economic growth in each country. Such US citizens should be given unfettered access to other African countries, to spread their wealth.
- The US and African leaders should take steps to rework the lottery entry/qualifying policy and make application rules more stringent as this would allow young Africans to explore other alternatives for external means of survival that include the DV lottery.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Ghanaian born- statesman is an influential 20th-century advocate of Pan-Africanism and a founding member of the Organization of African Unity*

- A Memorandum should be signed between the DVLP sponsor and African countries for financial compensation to the latter for 'ownership' of the African talent that migrates to the US. The MOU should be signed before they apply for the DVLP.

As long as Africans utilize new and existing information products they will continue to be exposed to the trappings of American social livelihood, and the DVLP will remain the most lucrative opportunity for them to move to the U.S. Thus, African governments and companies located in African countries should establish measures that dissuade Africans from leaving their borders.

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