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International Students Migration (ISM): Group Formation, Networks and Emerging Practices in Africa

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Abstract:
The phenomenon of international student migration has come to stay in contemporary world affairs. Recent trends indicate that international students' mobility is largely from the developing countries to the developed economies of Europe and America where international students easily form groups and social networks that enhance continuity in IMS and favors international capital flow and enhances remittance to their social networks back home. South East Asian countries like China, Korea and India, for example, have also received their fair share of international students in recent years. But, the trends are not static as they continue changing in terms of structure, sex and age composition which makes it difficult to assess the implications of ISM on destination and departure countries/continents. The reasons for the shift in paradigm has not been sufficiently explained by scholars, though, a cursory review of available empirical literature suggest amongst other things that improvement in technology and creation of networks in the diaspora and home/foreign policies options for tertiary and higher education now favors ISM more than before this century. The central hypothesis of this paper is that ISM is enhanced by networks of group formation that have significantly favored ISM in many developing countries in recent years. The paper further argues that ISM is enhanced by other factors like the use of social media where networks that benefits from the sending and receiving countries are created. To underscore the recent trends and the outcomes of this phenomenon, the paper adopts a mixed methodology of study, but its application leans on the historical approach to present and analyze the trends and dynamics of ISM, the benefits, and constraints faced by international students in the "wilderness' or diaspora and the strategies they use to overcome them. The paper concludes that despite the visible challenges, IMS appears to be a veritable source of remittances for many families in Africa, especially south of the Saharan Africa.

Keywords: *ISM, networks, Diaspora, Europe and America*

1. The Background and Socio-Historical Context of the Study

The phenomenon of international student migration is recurrent and still making headlines on the news and televisions and focus on professional migration policy centers worldwide is not, however, a recent phenomenon in the world. Students' Youth mobility dates back to the earliest times in history, but it only became a subject of intense academic debate after the Second World War (K. Tremblay, 2005; S. Eric, 2014). A recent study conducted by Scott Eric (2014) also reveals that international student migration began in the United States of America in the 20th century. In fact, since the cessation of the cold war, economic motivations became eminent and the numbers of students who study out of their home countries have amplified tremendously in the present century (Human Migration Guide (2002; Fact Sheet, 2014).

A contemporary publication of the Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that 4.1 million students enrolled in tertiary education trainings outside of their countries of origin in 2002, up from about 1.8 million in 2002. This progression was confirmed in 2007 following a remarkable increase of 2.8 million and 3.3 million in 2011 respectively (*Ibid*). Scholarly research and analyses of ISM phenomenal changes, indicators, and manifestations around the world seems to align with the growing demands for international students to the economic and academic benefits that states and host universities and other institutions of higher learning acquire from their conspicuous presence in those receiving countries (M.Kritz, 2006; T. Mazzarol, 2002; J. Nzabamwita, 2015; Human Migration Guide, 2002)

Contemporary migration studies generally reveal that most of this category of migrants ismoving from developing or economically least advanced world to the industrialized European countries through the influence of established networks and peers who formed social groupsas well as exploited already established networks either in Europe, America or Australia (A.A.Mohamoud and M. Frechaut, 2006; F. Maphosa, 2007; P. Levitt, 1998; S. Kerzner, 2009; C. Karooma, 2014; IFAD, 2007).

In the context of Africa South of the Sahara, South Africa is distinguished as both a target of African immigrants and source of transmittals to other African countries. Since the collapse of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, many immigrants from countries African countries such as Zimbabwe, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Cameroon found South Africa as safe haven for social and economic activities (Nzabamwita, 2015). South Africa has since the late 1990s and the early 2000s attracted both lawful and unlawful, trained, and unskill fulmigrants (including international students)

as well as refugees from different countries around the continent of Africa (Ibid)migrate into the 'rainbow nation' for different purposes.

Arguably, South Africa appears to be a favorable destination for immigrants because of the protracted social, economic and political crunch or catastrophe that have affected many Africa countries such as Nigeria, Congo, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Ghana and a host of others (D.R, Agunia 2006; J.S. Afaha, 2011; J. Chisasa, 2014). The frequent conflicts in many countries led to the high intensity of immigrants seeking freedoms, greener pasture and political asylum in South Africa (Fact Sheet, 2014; N.Konica and R.K. Filer, 2005). Among these immigrants are obviously international students seeking admission into South African schools especially universities and specialized medical and diplomatic institutions. After completion of their studies, many continue to live there as illegal or lawful migrants, while others seek ways of migrating to countries like Canada, USA, Belgium, Germany, Denmark and Britain for the purpose of making more money and acquiring higher living standards.

Although it is true that most of these migrants are not international students such as asylum seekers, economic migrant, victims of trafficking, refugees, and stranded individuals. Historically, these classes of migrantshavebeen using various channels to remit either goods or money to their home governments. The remittances now constitute a significant source of local development to their families and originating communities or countries (F. Maphosa 2007).

Available statistics indicate that International students' migration has witnessed an upward surge in recent years. This is an indication that many young people in Africa and Asia have taken interest in international studies outside their home countries. Thus it can be argued that international students' migration is fueled by 'push' and 'pull' factors (P. Levitt, 1998; S. Kerzner, 2009; IFAD, 2007; Konica and Filer, 2005). Upon arrival in their targeted destination countries these migrants obviously form social groups and networks which they exploit as long as they remain in the foreign countries. These social groups or networks facilitate their social and economic survival abroad.

It has become a tradition that while abroad, international students form alliances and social networks which favor their interest and existence in the different receiving or destination countries abroad (IFAD, 2007; P. Levitt 1998; C. Karooma, 2014; F. Maphosa, 2007; S. Kerzner 2009). Obviously, this has become one of the survival strategies that international students employ in order to live a stable 'student-life' outside their home countries. The opening up of new university institutions coupled with the dissemination of scholarship opportunities across international borders by the different networks, has certainly made international student migration to experience a significant increase.

There are indications that the figures are expected to double vividly in the nearest future due to positive transformations that are taking place across the world. Though it is not easy to have accurate figures, available regional statistics in South Africa indicate that there is an upsurge in the number of international students studying already in South Africa and many European countries.The questions which this paper tries to answer are, who is an international student? mobility of international students (international student migration) and how has international student migration has favored capital investment in the sending and also receiving countries in various ways constitute the key issues for discussion in this paper.

1.1. Historizing International Students' Migration (ISM): An Overview

According to Megarrity (2007), prior to the Second World War, undertaking tertiary international education was an opportunity opened only to a very limited number of peoples especially in Africa and Asia. In fact, even within the marginal numbers that could readily afford tertiary education at the time outside their home countries or continents, — a larger percentage of these were inclined to studying in European and North American countries whose educational systems were seemingly well established at that time.

Historical evidence suggests that towards the end of the war in 1945, international education began to develop progressively alongside international student migration (ISM) to Europe and America, as well as within certain areas in north and eastern Africa like Egypt, Morocco and Ethiopia. For instance, the first group of West African intellectual elites such as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (of Ghana), DrNnamdiAzikiwe (Nigeria) and Jommo Kenyatta (Kenya) sought and obtained the opportunity to study in the United States of America and Britain during this era (K.B.Owubiko, 1972; W. Rodney 1972; V.J. Ngoh, 2004; A. Su, 1991).

The development of international education and tertiary system brought about the formation of international associations or groups and networks that sought to galvanize Africans together (Human Migration Guide, 2002; Fact Sheet, 2014; IMF, 2003). For instance, international student mobility fostered the creation of the West African Students' Union (W.A.S.U) which spearheaded nationalist movement in Africa after the Second World War in 1945. Through WASU, African students in Britain and the United States of America reminded the Secretary of States for Colonies that "it is the desire of the people of West Africa to become, remain, and form a definitely distinct and integral political unit."
Again, in the USA, West African students there formed the African Students' Association of the United States and Canada as early as 1941 (Owubiko, 1972: 336). This is to contend that international students' mobility is not a recent phenomenon and has witnessed changes in scope and sociological dynamics over time (Human Migration Guide 2002; UNESCO, 2015; X. Han; G. Stocking; M. Gebbie and R. Appelbaum 2015).

The evolution of international Students' migration has created networks of mutual cooperation between students of common historical backgrounds and colonial experiences in Africa (K. Tremblay 2015; M. Kritz 2006; T. Mazzarol and G. Soutar 2002; Scott Eric 2014; Nzabamwita 2015). Such bonds were instrumental tools in the fight against colonialism, slavery and slave trade in Africa. Other groups that were formed did not only influence the ousting colonialism, but also worked hard in fostering local development and strengthening economic, social, political institutions back in Africa

through fiscal, ideological, knowledge and technological remittances(Nzabamwita 2015; Maphosa 2007; IFAD 2007; Levitt 1998).

Available literature on international student migration seems to reveal that the number of countries providing international education services to foreigners has significantly increased over time. Also, the numbers of students studying outside of their countries had tripled in recent years (B. Chiou, 2014: 15; Mazzarol and Horse, 1999). The increase in international students studying or aspiring for international studies abroad could be explained by many factors to which political stability, presence of sound tertiary institutions and award of scholarships to students from developing nations to destination countries in western and auxiliary countries in Africa. Nzabamwita (2015) also points out that the presence of networks and social groups in Europe and elsewhere in Africa has made the increase or phenomenon of international student indispensable in recent years. In fact, African students wherever they find themselves abroad, they form exemplary associations and through this network they are able to contribute to the development of their homeland through economic and social remittances.

Generally speaking, some of the factors include 'pull' and 'push' factors. But before examining in details the 'pull' and 'push' forces of international students' migration it is seminal to underscore the meaning of an international student in order to put the study in its proper context. In doing so, one will better appreciate the trends and dynamics of international students migration and its socio-economic and political underpinnings. This will enable us appreciate the developments linked with international student mobility and the attendants benefits.

1.2. Who Is An International Student? : Regional and International Meanings

It is often difficult to provide an accurate description or definition of an international student (s). This is because there are a myriad of perceptions, interpretations and worldview of who international students are. The misunderstandings surrounding the meaning international student within the context of international education thus require details analysis. In brief, international educational requires the presence of international students. International students who constitute the subject of migration studies are, to be precise, 'persons travelling outside their home countries to acquire tertiary education' (UNESCO 2015), [either on scholarship, private-sponsorship or grants, emphasis is mine]. According to Naidoo (2007), they may also be called'foreign students', 'overseas students', 'full-fee-paying students', (FFPS). Obviously, these terms are interchangeably used in many studies to describe students studying in the diaspora or outside homeland.

A 2015 UNESCO report also defined an international student as an: 'individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the central objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin' (UNESCO, 2015).

Based on available literature on the subject, it is clear that there are many overlapping conceptualization on the term 'international student.' studies show that since 2015, UNESCO, OECD and EUROSTAT, the European Union's Statistical Office have accepted to adopt this definition of 'internationally mobile students'(*ibid*). Amongst other things, the current definition captures the most important group of international students: those in a foreign country for educational reasons only (*ibid*). the definition also takes into account those studying for higher degrees and whose duration of studies abroad is often more than one year and above of stay.

In addition to the above classification of international students, other criterions are used to delineate international students from others. They are not only designated variously by scholars of migration studies and policy, but host countries also look at international students under different lenses. According to Verbik and Lassanowski (2007), foreign students in Canada were in 2002 exempted from obtaining a study permit if their course was less than six months' duration. One can ascertain that foreign students in Canada during the stated period above were specified as temporary residents who had duly obtained clearance from the immigration department to study a course for duration longer than six months.

As far as Britain is concern, international students are well-known by the address of their homes. Consequently, a British passport bearer might also be classified as an international student if he or she is living in any country outside of the European Union (EU). Similarly, in the United States, a foreign student is someone who is neither US citizen, immigrant nor refugee when enrolling in a course at an education institution(Chiou, 2014). Taking the above into cognizance, any student or group of students without long-term or permanent resident status will be regarded as international students (Website of US embassy, Yaounde, Cameroon, 20/03/20, UNESCO publication, 2015).

Elsewhere, in Australia, citizenship and residence status were used to determine whether a student was a domestic or an international student. Thus international students are considered as all others studying outside their countries of origin such diplomats or their dependents. There are, however, some exceptions to the above definitions. For these reasons some additional attempts have been made to supplement the existing definitions by institutions and organizations. For instance, in 2006, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had proposed the term — "Internationally Mobile Student" and urged host countries to use this description to differentiate domestic and international students.

UNESCO considers internationally mobile students as people who do not possess permanent residence in the host countries for the purpose of studying. Other organization such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2006), has been using the term 'international student' to define students 'who expressly cross-borders with the intention to study." The above definitions seems to represent the views of many developing countries like Cameroon whose ministry of higher education classify all international students as people with foreign passports documents and naturally cross-international borders (MINESUP, 2001).

Apparently, these definitions helps to establish a better distinction of who an international student is; nonetheless, the adoption of whatever definition will depends on the host country's policies. While a variety of definitions have been suggested by different authors and institutions, this research will use the term in its broadest sense to refer to people (students) who have obtained a study visa to study in a particular host country outside their homeland.

Afterobtainingstudy-visas, international students can then migrate abroad for study purposes where they easily create new networks and revive old ones. Such networks enhance their mobility or migration in and out of their home country any time. Preceding the above discussions, we turn our attention to migration of international students which is our next focus.

1.3. Factors Favoring International Students Migration (Ism)

Over the years, the mobility of international students has been acknowledged as a progressively more relevant aspect of the international migration system (Chiou, 2014; Akman, 2014). According to OECD (2013) in 2011, there were about 4.3 million tertiary students studying abroad. Sources maintain that of this number, Asian students constituted the highest and accounted for over 53 percent of international student mobility throughout the world. The same is true of the mobility of international students from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and America and within the continent itself, South Africa tops the chart with the highest numbers of international students from within the continent of Africa living, studying and working there (Nzabamwita 2015, IFAD 2007, Karooma 2014; IOM, 2003, IMF 2003). Generally, a plethora of factors stimulates the decisions of international students to immigrate abroad for studies(Ibid).In this paper, the researcher is concerned with factors that favor ISM, but intermittent allusion will be made on the global trend on youth migration outside Africa to Europe and America. In order to fully comprehend the dynamics of international student migration, it is pertinent to mention some useful migration models which are relevant to discussions on ISM. In this light, McMahon (1992) 'Push'-'Pull' theory will be adopted to the study for a better analysis.According to the 'Push'-'Pull' theory suggested that overseas students are 'pushed' out of their home countries on the one hand 'pulled' to a particular study destination on other (Ibid).

The 'push' factors underlie a student's motivation to study overseas because their home countries were unable to meet the demands for higher or tertiary education. The mobility of international students to developed countries was often attributed to lack of adequate education capacity and opportunities in developing countries (Akman, 2014; Kah, 2019). Sources reveal that many students migrate overseas for educational purposes either because they were refused admission in the domestic educational establishment or because they were unable to obtain entry into their anticipated local institutions of their choice. Others are naturally inclined to moving abroad because of protracted conflicts, economic and political instability as well as natural disasters that instigate the decision in them to migrate outside their countries.

According to Altbach, (2004), Yang (2007), other factors like social trend of studying abroad may have motivated international student decision to study abroad. It should be noted that such decisions might have been facilitated by networks created by the anticipated early immigrants abroad or at home. Kah (2019) contends international youth mobility from Africa which is currently witnessing an upsurge could be attributed to social, economic, political and environmental factors which have obviously reinforced their decision to migrate to Europe or other advanced countries for better educational and other opportunities. For instance, political instability and poorly developed curriculum and learning institutions may as well pushed or trigger international student mobility abroad. Tables 1 below suggest the prevalence of countries that records the highest rate of sending students abroad.

Country	Quota Scheme of Students	Quota Scheme in Percentage (%)
Ethiopia	292	20.32
Ghana	271	26.46
Tanzania	202	39.84
Uganda	166	36.56
Zambia	86	35.83
Kenya	54	16.36
Cameroon	35	8.56
Sudan	64	20.13
Malawi	38	44.19
South Africa	25	14.04
India	41	4.78
Nepal	123	8.37
China	254	6.24

Table 1: List of Some Top Sending Countries for the Quota Scheme Students in Norway 2005-2011
Source: Scott Eric Basford, "International Student Migration for Development: An Institutional Approach to the Norwegian Quota Scheme" (Master Thesis, University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2014), 7

The decision to migrate for study purposes, however, this does not apply to youths migrating through the Sahara Desert with the sole objective of making wealth in European countries like Italy, Greece, and Belgium, Germany, Spain, and France, for example. These categories are not migrating for academic pursuits, but to rather search for job opportunities. Regrettably, many of those adventuring through the 'bloody' trans-Sahara and Mediterranean routes across Libya have

seen their hopes dashed through interception of criminal gangs and many either drowned in the Mediterranean or killed in the process by traffickers (Kah, 2019).

In spite of global measures put in place to restrict such illegal youth migration from Africa (North Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, and West Africa), the figures have continue to double exponentially in recent months and years as thousands have reportedly lost their lives in the Mediterranean sea in an attempt to enter Europe through Greece or Italy. While this phenomenon of illegal immigration is pre-occupying, the case of international student immigration, though, not recent has its fundamental forces and features quite distinct from the illegal migration flows from Africa to Europe and the USA (Kah, 2019).

Taking the above into account, one can consider the following 'push' factors that trigger international students' decision to embark on studies abroad. Let us mention a few here: (a) academic attainment goals like looking for an internationally acclaimed institutions and the pursuit of graduating with a professional/ academic qualification; (b) seeking to acquire social and cultural advantages such as individual development through intercultural rediscovery, international exposure, cultural awareness and cross-cultural experiences.

It is pertinent to mention that, through cultural exchanges and international exposures, international students are exposed to a number of externalities (opportunities created abroad by some of their new or old networks) in the form of students associations whereby they identify themselves as a people of a common background who share similar experiences. In this connection, the possibility of group formation and stimulating homeland nationalism easily crops up and strengthened (Human Migration Guide, 2002; IOM, 2003; Levitt 1998).

It was under this kind of identity constructed and group formation atmosphere that the post-World War II African nationalists were nurtured. As students in a foreign land, they sometimes formed cultural and development association which enhanced the development of their communities through remittances and other forms of assistances. In summary, 'push' factors are generally linked to economic, educational, social and political situations within the homeland of the anticipated international student migrant.

On the other hand, the 'pull' factors are those elements associated with salient characteristics of the study destination or country (Chiou 2014; Yang, 2007; Mazzarol, 2002). 'Pull' factors are those features of the study destination that appear attractive to the overseas students and certainly determine his or her choices in relation to country, training programs, language, socio-economic ties, and colonial background, and bilateral agreement between the destination and home countries can all influence the overseas students' decision to migrate to a particular country over other choices (Konica and Filer 2005; Karooma 2014; IFAD 2007; Mohamoud and Frechaut 2006; Altbach and Knight 2007). However, these are not the only known sources of information for the international students, the use of the internet by students and their co-host have also favored their insertion into universities abroad.

Secondly, pre-existing networks that the overseas students had exploited may assist in modifying his decision positively. Such networks may act as mediators between the overseas students' prospective institutions and play host to the incoming students. Above this, they also provide information and other tertiary services such insurance and collateral security to the students. These are some of the 'pull' factors that greatly favor the international students' destination.

Also, international students may be enticed by recommendations from their networks either at home or abroad. Karooma (2014) avers that such recommendations have the potentials of influencing the candidate's choices directly or indirectly. Recommendations may be by words of mouth, family members, friends, parents, and other reliable avenues like previous teachers and government/civil society/departments. This leads us the comparative cost advantage factor whereby the overseas student may want to consider time and relevant costs and benefits linked to the destination area.

In general, cost consideration include time and economic factors prior to and during studies like tuition, living expenses, work-study opportunities, the fees and time taken for visa application and how long it would take to complete the course (Karooma, 2014). Because international studies are generally sensitive to economic consideration like currency exchange rates between countries, this may also influence their decision or choice of country to study in and at given period of time.

Again, language is another vital determinant of international student migration from developing countries to the advanced world or even within the sub-region. This is a serious consideration especially as countries give preference to issues of bilateral agreements or cooperation between developing and developed world. In this light, African countries under the *Africophonie* and Commonwealth of nations have different preferences which relates to their colonial experiences (Altbach and Knight 2007). Thus African countries of the Commonwealth of Nations are opened to scholarships and other advantages associated with their being members of the Commonwealth. First, the objective is to promote the common wealth values through scholarship training and cultural exchanges. This also applies to *Africaphonie* countries of French Equatorial African countries.

Such considerations and colonial heritage are often taken seriously when scholarships are offered to international students. This obviously favors the choice of an international student's mobility as a result of the advantages associated with studying in a given country, especially where the question of colonial heritage is fully exploited by the immigration departments. Like globalization process, ISM has its drivers and outcomes, while the drivers have been partially identified above, the outcomes will form the substance of next heading.

1.4. Outcomes and Practices of International Student Migrants

The improvement in information communication technologies (ICTs, the increase in the educational opportunities and "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way and vice versa" (Giddens 1990:63-78, quoted in Nkwi 2014:98). Improvements in information technologies and other forms of technologies have

greatly enforced human mobility especially international students' migration from developing countries south of the Sahara (Nzambawita, 2015). Youth mobility is generally from areas of greater social and economic needs that push them to areas with better offers like schools, health facilities and promising job openings (Human Migration Guide 2002).

Making a more convincing case for outward student migration and the attendant outcomes for Africa, Adepoju (2010) holds that the upsurge in international student migration is also due to improved access to education and training opportunities, at home and abroad making international students graduates resourceful both locally and internationally upon completion of their studies.

International students often create lasting links with their host countries which is exploited diplomatically by their home countries. For example, Cameroon and China had established diplomatic ties as far back as 1971 and as a result of this relations Cameroonian students were granted scholarship to study in China and got employed there; While, Chinese students visited Cameroonian institutions to study either French or English languages on bilateral basis. This practice further intensified the bilateral relations between both countries and this has continued to benefit both nations economically, socially and politically over time (Afaha 2011; Delgado 2013; IFAD 2007).

In the early 1990s, many Cameroonians students were trained in specialized fields like medicines, agriculture and information and communication technologies which now form the backbone of most developing economies today (*ibid*). These areas are vestiges of the outcomes and practices of international student migration that certainly paved the way for economic development and progress in the mutually beneficial countries.

Skill formation, cultural reformation, revival of industrialization, acceleration of democratic culture and good governance are also core values imported by international students to their home countries after their studies. A survey conducted by Akman (2014) indicates international students are among the highest remittance of revenue and knowhow to the home countries through regular and irregular financial flow channels and goods (Levitt 1998; Maphosa 2007; Mohamoud And Frechaut 2006). They also contribute significantly to the gross domestic product of their home countries through different investments like creation of schools, firms, and industries (Levitt 1998). They are noted for skills development in the home countries and are vocal in promoting democratic principles at local and international levels.

Recently collected data has confirmed that international students have contributed to political transitions in many governments in Africa. According to documentations by Africabarometer and a publication of the African Leadership Center (ALC), in Kenya (2010-2016), scholars at the different institutes in Europe and America and those enrolled in pilot training centers in Africa (like the Thambobeki Center of Excellence, Good Governance and Democracy, the Kwame Nkrumah institute of peace and conflict studies in Ghana, the united nations institute for peace in Ethiopia and the pan – African universities) have not only proposed solutions to protracted power tussles and conflicts arising from post-electoral litigations and violence against bad leadership, but through learned initiatives they have deconstructed criminal gangs, armed groups and supported peace and dialogue reconciliation in many parts of Africa.

This does not, however, suggests that international students are not involved in heinous criminal activities. There are records indicting international students in crimes against humanity as well as defrauding states of billions of dollars through internet scam which seems to have gained grounds among many international students worldwide. Records of the international criminal police and other security sources have blamed Nigerian international students for being fugitives (researcher's private telephone communication with Cameroonian associations of students in Belgium, France, Britain, Norway, and USA, December 2020).

Some Cameroonians international students have participated actively on social media by clamoring for change of power. For example, a recently formed Cameroonian pressure group in France called Brigarde Anti-Sardina has been very radical against the regime in power in Cameroon. They blame the regime for their tribulation in the diaspora and for clinging tight to power. Similarly, activists of the pro separatist movements in Cameroon in the diaspora are largely made up of students who seem to have vowed to create a new state they call Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), (ibid).

The group has evidently contributed to sustaining the crisis in Cameroon by various means—financial donations, medical kits to refugees in neighboring Nigeria, and intellectual manifestoes to the international community in an attempt to popularize the much talked about "Anglophone problem" in Cameroon (Ngoh 2018). However, this is not to claim that all Cameroonian international students are supporters of protest movements or other radical movements. Manysuccessful international students have continue to invest back home for economic recovery programs as well as ensure the development of, and political acceleration for their countries in order to violence and poverty.

It should be recalled that this is not the first time we are seeing international students contributing in various ways to the socio-political development of their countries or continent. Apart from contributing to the growth of early universities in Africa like the Ibadan School of Oriental Studies, the Makerere University, and a host of other institutions that became pacesetters of knowledge laboratories in Africa in the early 1960s, they contributed enormously to nationalist propaganda in Africa and in the decolonization process after the Second World War in 1945 (Ngoh 2018).

In terms of practices, Nkwi (2014) has opined that, Cameroonian, Nigerian and Ghanaian students, for example, developed skills and formed networks after their studies abroad. The first batch of African educated class founded pivotal political pressure groups and associations that led many African states to their political independence. The growth of political parties and students' unionism like the West African Students' Lobby (Union) was the byproduct of students' activism on the homeland. Most of these associations were resilient and fought extremely hard to silence imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa. Today, without undermining different form of support coming from international students, the greatest form of assistance is of course social, technical, and fiscal remittances. To these could be added knowledge production, values transmission and trans-generational discoveries and dialogue which is promoted by mutual inter-correspondence and collaboration among them.

2. Conclusion

The phenomenon of international students' migration has evolved greatly with trends showing that youth mobility will remain unchanged for so many years. The mobility of overseas students from developing countries south of the Sahara to economically balanced or advantageous western world by either families or individuals was motivated by the desire to take advantage of existing social and economic climate that favors the development of tertiary education for many schools going youths. The availability of training institutions in countries like Belgium, France, USA, Britain and Italy, for example, and coupled with the stupendous scholarships and employment opportunities that avails themselves to overseas students have combined as factors greatly motivating and encouraging them to immigrate to the west.

Historically, between 1990s, when the economy of Cameroon and most African countries experienced a sharp melt down, and in the early 2000s, when there was significant improvement in communication technologies, the numbers of international students' migrants from West Africa, Southern and Northern Africa traveling to the western world for studies have risen markedly in recent years. This increase in the numbers of international students from Africa to either Europe or the USA was partly facilitated by several pull factors, notably, changes in the ICTs, the use of the internet and mobile phones, low cost in airfare, impact of globalization on trans-national relations, reforms in the tertiary education sector, reduction of visa restrictions between north-south countries and exploitations of networks created between families and friends of early migrants abroad.

Arguably, many international prospective students took advantage of this and have become breadwinners of their families today. However, some international students from West Africa and Southern Africa used some emerging Asian countries like China and Korea as their springboard to migrate to western and eastern European countries either for studies or to look for jobs there. Our sources maintains that China, Korea, Japan, and India were among the famous destinations in the mid-1990s and by the mid-2000s, most of these early African international students were already leaving for countries like Britain, USA, Canada, and southern Europe for studies and search for greener pastures there.

The choice of Europe was obvious because these countries lacked unskilled labor force and had a huge aging population. Consequently, visa restrictions were not tightened and this favored mass youth mobility into Europe and the USA. Again, many foundations offered scholarships to students from economically less developed countries like Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria which were hard hit by structural adjustment programs and devaluation (CODESRIA fellowship programs for African students, chevening scholarship, Fulbright scholarship, African Leadership Fellowship for African Scholars (ALC), German Exchange Training Program (DAAD) Scholarship, Common Wealth Excellence Scholarship, and the Mandela Washington scholarship among others. In addition to this, the US Diversity Visa too, facilitated movements of Africans to the United States with relatively less constraint.

A good number of smart youths took advantage of the opportunities outside their countries and hastily made some gains that later transformed their families positively. Many of them, who returned home upon completion of their studies abroad built modern houses, educated their siblings, and acquired new gadgets like cars, electronics appliances, and hence distinguishing themselves from their counterparts at home.

Needle to mention that because of their mobility abroad and their encounter with other cultures in the outside world, they did not only form a new status and identity class, but created a comfortable zone of theirs. All of these evidently tell us of the outcomes and practices that emerge with international student migration at continental and inter-continental levels. Taking this into account, I conclude that international student migration is likely to witness another dimension in the near future especially as countries are constantly putting in place policies and reforms that favor international students' migration worldwide. However, there are two big threats to growth of international student industry. These include: xenophobic tendencies and the rise of pandemic like covid-19, and Ebola, that are causing many countries to shutdown not only schools but their international borders to international travellers.

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