Migration Impulses and the Making of Diasporan African Persona

Eric Omazu[1], Rakiya Mamman-Simpson[2,] & Chuks Odiegwu-Enwerem[3]
Department of Philosophy[1], Department of Development Studies[2],
Department of Mass Communication[3]
National Open University of Nigeria

Corresponding Author: eomazu@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Why do people migrate? Scholars who have attempted to answer this question focus on the broad, mainstream reasons why people decide to leave their country or place of residence for another. There are a few studies on why people who visit a country for different reasons decide later to immigrate. This paper adopts an auto-ethnographical and sociogenic methods of study to investigate into why people who visit a country for another reason decide to transit permanently as immigrants. Also, few studies have considered the effect of migration on the migrating/migrated individual outside the economic reconfiguration of their status. Using African migrants to the United States as examples, this paper equally examines the effect of migration experience on the identity of African migrants. It examines the various forces that drive migration whether as a centrifugal or as a centripetal force and considers their effects on the migration subject. The paper is an experiential description of the reality of migration.

Keywords: African Diaspora, Circumstantial Migration, Identity, Immigrant, Migration impulses

Impulsions migratoires et construction de l'identité diasporique africaine

Résumé

Pourquoi migre-t-on ? Les chercheurs qui ont tenté de répondre à cette question se sont principalement concentrés sur les raisons générales et courantes qui poussent les individus à quitter leur pays ou leur lieu de résidence. Cependant, peu d'études ont exploré les motivations de ceux qui, après avoir visité un pays pour d'autres raisons, choisissent de s'y installer définitivement. Cet article adopte une approche auto-ethnographique et sociogénique pour examiner ces motivations. De plus, peu d'études se sont intéressées à l'impact de la migration sur l'individu migrant, au-delà de la simple reconfiguration économique de son statut. À travers l'exemple des migrants africains aux États-Unis, cet article analyse l'influence de l'expérience migratoire sur la construction de leur identité. Il examine les forces motrices de la migration, qu'elles soient centrifuges ou centripètes, et leurs effets sur le migrant. Ce travail offre une description empirique de la réalité migratoire et de ses implications sur la perception de soi et la construction identitaire dans un contexte diasporique.

Mots-clés *: Diaspora africaine, Migration circonstancielle, Identité, Immigrant, Impulsions migratoires*

INTRODUCTION

By migration impulses, we mean the immediate, on-the-spot influences that either propel or repel the transition of a foreigner from a visitor status to a permanent immigrant. In this sense, one can speak of positive and negative migration impulses. Migration impulses are also factors of migration. The inquiry is about factors that drive circumstantial migration. These factors differ from mainstream factors, which are prevalent in migration literature. Anetor and Anetor, for instance, itemise twelve common factors which they call drivers of migration. They include (1) bad governance (2) human rights denial/exploitation (3) economic/greener pasture (4) social & political oppression (5) agricultural failure/famine (6) environmental/climate change degradation (7) insecurity/war (8) liberation movement (9) quest for better education-golden fleece (10) religious persecution/ ethnic cleansing common in many third world countries (11) abhorrent cultural practices (12) medical tourism.[1] The pitfall of the listed factors is their tacit assumption that migration is a one-way phenomenon entailing a global South-North migration. Thus, migration impulses differ from the above points. Apart from also accounting for South-North migration, they equally account for what is generally referred to as North-North migration, that is, they explain why individuals from well-developed, stable countries not experiencing any of the negative factors listed above abandon their visitor status to transit to immigrant status in another well-developed country. They also explain North-South migration, which is the movement from a developed and stable country to an underdeveloped, unstable one. They equally account for why many individuals from disadvantaged countries spun the idea of transit and return to their countries of origin. Gillespie, Mulder and Eggleston observe that "it is no simple task for migration researchers to collect the information on migration motives that they seek."[2] The observed difficulty is somehow ameliorated by the fact that two of the researchers[3] were on a visitor visa and experienced firsthand the effect of migration impulses. Thus, the paper is an ethnographical study and leverages the authors' experience with migrants and returnees.

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1 John I. Anetor and Gloria O. Anetor, "Migration and the Global Drug Crisis: Genesis, Drivers, and Societal Pathology," *International Journal of Migration and Global Studies* 3. no.1 (2023):3.

2 Brian Joseph Gillespie, Clara H. Mulder, and Corrie M. Eggleston, "Measuring Migration Motives with Open-Ended Survey Data: Methodological and Conceptual Issues," *Population, Space and Place* 27, no. 6 (2021): e2448, doi:10.1002/psp.2448.

3 Dr Eric Omazu and Dr Rakiya Mamman were on a TETFUND-sponsored fellowship to Morgan State University, Baltimore, U.S.A.

Migration impulses act on one as an individual. By acting on one, the migratory impulses reconfigure one in terms of identity. The idea that migration is *reconfiguratory* of a *persona*, or, if you like of the identity of a person, is considered by Soyinka,[4] who raises the all-important question: "Is it possible to speak of an immigrant temperament?" Soyinka demonstrates the existence of an immigrant temperament with Othello, the Moorish Shakespearean character in the play also entitled *Othello*. Beyond Shakespear's fictional character of the 16th century, Soyinka pushes us to be vigilant about "the possible traits we may expect in an immigrant."[5] The immigrant temperaments have their origin in an individual's experience of migration. The Senegalese immigrant who risks everything – life and wealth— for a one way ticket to the Western world; the Chinese or Vietnamese who risks rape, piracy, robbery, and even death in the quest to migrate to a new country; the Ghanian stowaways who were drowned by Polish ship crew with only one survivor to tell the story; were some of Soyinka's examples of transforming experiences of the immigrant. No one remains the same after such an experience.

The idea that an individual's experience is transformational of the persona of the individual is a major theme in Frantz Fanon's work. Recalling the experience of colonised Africans, Fanon declares that "the black man is not a man."[6] The statement does not feed into the racial classification of Africans as an inferior race prevalent in Fanon's era. The experienced violence of the colonial era would similarly affect the being of anyone to whom it was visited, irrespective of race. This is the context under which slaves in the ancient Greek city-states, though Greeks like their enslavers, were excluded from the citizenship of their states. For most immigrants, therefore, and as shown by Soyinka, migration is a violent process. It entails some form of uprootedness as the migrant trades the security of a familiar environment, culture, values, people and so on to the uncertainty of life in an unfamiliar environment.

Besides the objective of calling attention to the reconfiguratory character of migration, this paper also investigates the nature of the reconfigured individual. At the heart of this study, therefore, is the question: what kind of person emerges following an encounter with migration impulses? In pursuing this task, we will focus on circumstantial migration. A circumstantial migration is serendipitous in nature.[7] It exists when an individual's final decision to migrate is different from his or her

4 Wole Soyinka, "Othello's Dominion, Immigrant Domain," *The Savannah Review no.1(2014):1*.
5 Wole Soyinka, "Othello's Dominion, Immigrant Domain," 2
6 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 1.
7 Jørgen Carling, "Why Do People Migrate? Fresh Takes on the Foundational Question of Migration Studies," *International Migration Review* 58, no. 4 (2024): 1758, doi:10.1177/01979183241269445

original reason for being in the space of their migration interest. This differs from the other type of migration which is planned. In the case of the modern United States of America, partakers in planned migration could take various forms. They include immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, spouses, children, parents, family-sponsored preferences, employment-based preferences, diversity, refugees, asylees, parolees, children born abroad to alien residents, certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by U.S. government and their spouses and children, cancellation of removal, victims of human trafficking, victims of crimes and their spouses and children, others.[8] Circumstantial migration happens when a visitor to the United States, for example, decides to transit into an immigrant status. What factors are responsible for this decision to transit? And despite the acclaimed American excellence and the pull towards transition, there are also individuals, long-term visitors to the United States, who resist the pull to transit. What factors are at play in their resistance? How have these push-pull experiences of migration influenced the persona of the affected individuals?

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of this study.

i. To discuss factors that drive circumstantial migration.
ii. Using African migrants to the United States as an example, to demonstrate the relationship between migration experience and the identity of migrants.
iii. To show the nature of the relationship between migration and identity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is a combination of two research methods, namely ethnography and sociogenic methods. The ethnographic method relates to the way data for most of the research is obtained. Thus, the materials for this research were sourced mainly through observation, interactions and personal engagement with African immigrants in the United States of America. Some other materials were sourced from the library and the internet.

The sociogenic approach to the study relates to the way research data were interpreted. The sociogenic method was developed by Frantz Fanon, who established a connection between an individual's lived experience and identity. Using African migrants as

[8] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, "DHS Immigration Statistics Dashboard," accessed October 29, 2025, https://dhsstatistics.org/.

examples, the paper pursues an argument that migration experience affects the identity of migrants.

RESULTS

The paper establishes the following:

1. That a set of different factors (migration impulses) determines circumstantial migration
2. Those factors that affect the identity of the migrants

DISCUSSION

We define migration impulses as the immediate, on-the-spot influences that either propel or repel the transition of a foreigner from a visitor status to a permanent immigrant. We regard propelling influences as positive migration influences and repelling influences as negative migration influences. Our discussion, therefore, focuses on how the positive and negative migration impulses drive circumstantial migration. It also examines how migration impulses could influence the identity of migrants.

Positive Migration Impulses

In September, 2021, two of the researchers left Nigeria and landed at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport, U.S.A., as part of a 17-member team of TETFUND-sponsored exchange visitors to Morgan State University, Baltimore. During an orientation programme organised by the international office of the university, they were briefed on the need for cultural immersion as an important aspect of the exchange visitor program. Nigerians and other Africans living in Baltimore and the greater parts of Maryland became the springboard of their quest to fulfil this important requirement of the exchange program. It was in the course of interaction with these Nigerians and other Africans at first and Americans and citizens of other nations, later, that they experienced the push-pull effects of migration impulses.

African diaspora networks, comprising successfully settled African immigrants in the United States, provided the first experience of migration impulses. Whether they were met in their places of worship or in their homes, they were, as a rule, very welcoming and quick to provide tips on how to transition into immigrant status. Names and addresses of lawyers who could help smooth things were thrown into the mix. Any suggestion that one would return to Africa at the end of one's mission, whatever it

was, was met with disapproval. “What are you going back there to do?” “Oh, you just arrived.” “Perhaps, you need more time to change your mind.”[9] Their pressure to transition was tied to the deplorable conditions of African countries. Poverty, human rights abuses, tribalism, bad leadership, non-functional social systems and so on were some exemplifications of these conditions. In the main, their reasons were no different from the common drivers or factors of migration as highlighted by Anetor and Anetor. What is different is that they, the African diaspora networks, and this is also true of Asian and North American ones, have become and are therefore an instance of migration impulses. Individuals who buckle under the pressure of their weight take positive steps to transition.

Economic pressure associated with living in a foreign country can also serve as an important pull towards permanent migration. Visitors to a country are often excluded from the economic life of their host country. A foreign student finds out sooner or later that stipends from his or her country no longer meet his or her daily expenses. This could be because of the huge gap between the home country and the host country’s currencies. With time and given all the legal strictures placed on holders of student visas, the student discovers that transitioning to an immigrant status will help to ameliorate the financial difficulties which he or she now faces. In the United States of America, for instance, there are conditions for transitioning from an F-1 visa to an immigrant status. One of these conditions is marriage to an American citizen. Many foreign students have exploited this as a pathway to permanent immigration and economic freedom.

Lifestyle has been identified as a reason for migration. Unmet cultural expectations in the home nation or cultural fulfilments experienced in the host country can serve as serious motivations for someone to transit to migrant status. Evan Edinger,[10] an American who planned to return to the United States of America after his studies in London but ended up becoming a permanent immigrant in the United Kingdom, is a perfect example of a lifestyle migrant. His decision to transit is due to the cultural differences between his home country and host nation. Brian Hoey, while describing the motivation of life-style migrants, holds that: “the choice made of where to live is consciously, intentionally also one about how to live …’[11]. Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly, couch the issue of lifestyle migration as “the search for a better way

[9] They represent the concerns of the African diaspore community.

[10] Annie Reneau, "American shares his 9 realizations about the U.S. after 13 years abroad and it's eye-opening," *Upworthy*, October 28, 2025, https://www.upworthy.com/american-in-europe-realization.

[11] Brian Hoey, "From Pi to Pie: Moral Narratives of Noneconomic Migration and Starting Over in the Postindustrial Midwest," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 34, no. 5 (2005): 615.

of life."[12] However, in the context of circumstantial migration, which interests this paper, it is more of the discovery of a personally preferred way of life rather than a search for a better way of life. Thus, Benson and O'Reilly's value judgement about ways of life is contentious and should be viewed from the prism of personal preferences. This is because a way of life regarded as better by an individual can be considered otherwise by another person. For example, during the lead author's sojourn in the Baltimore area of the United States, his love for water and speed boats was an alluring lifestyle, unavailable in the rocky city of Abuja, which would have influenced transition. Also, there are female African migrants of certain age brackets, 55 years and above, who peg their lifestyle reasons for their transition to sexual freedom. Unlike in Africa, where advances are limited for older women and marriage ties are tight, such women are enthused by the discovery that they can command the advances of American men. As a result, a sizable number of them utilise the various dating apps in America in search of interested men, a practice they were more unlikely to engage in while in Africa. The same is true of members of the LGBTQ+. Most African governments describe their life choices in negative terms, whereas the United States gives them the freedom to live according to their lifestyle.

The next instance of migration impulse is culture-disconnect. Culture-disconnect takes place when, after years of sojourn in a foreign country, a returnee discovers that his or her way of life no longer aligns with that of people in their home country. As a result, the returnee decides to immigrate permanently to the country from which he returned. Many American-trained African permanent migrants to America fall into this category. They began their journey with the desire to acquire degrees and return home to help their countries. Many of them who returned in the 1980s and 1990s easily found out that there is now a big disconnect between them and the people they returned to work within their home countries. Their efforts to contribute to bettering their countries were resisted. A Kenyan returnee-migrant, for instance, explained that his effort to introduce change was rebuffed: "This is not America." "Those ideas of yours are not meant for Kenya." In the absence of job satisfaction in his home country, he returned to the United States. In a discussion with a permanent Ghanaian returnee-migrant to the United States of America, he said, "I give you two years to find your way back here. Those people in your country will fight you. They will find all reasons to do so. Only very few strong people have survived them. They are there and have run the whole place down."[13] The phenomenon of culture-disconnect is not restricted

[12] Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly, "From lifestyle migration to lifestyle in migration: Categories, concepts and ways of thinking," *Migration Studies* 4, no. 1 (2016): 22, doi:10.1093/migration/mnv015

[13] Unnamed Ghanian returnee-migrant

to public spaces. In private spaces, it manifests itself in the form of snide remarks against the returnee. His moves, mannerisms, and so on are scrutinised. Those who could not withstand this find their way back to the country from which they returned.

Negative Migration Impulses

The concern here are the various on-the-spot-factors that repel individual from transitioning from visitor status to permanent migrant. Why do some long-term visitors choose to return to their home countries despite the pull of positive migration impulses? The first of the negative migration impulses is home countries' cultural values. These are intangible elements of culture which one lived by in one's home country before sojourning to a foreign country. The Nigerian poet, Gabriel Okara, captures the full force of cultural values in determining the decision of the sojourner to return home in his poem, "The Call of the River Nun."

> I hear your call!
> I hear it far away;
> I hear it break the circle of these crouching hills
>
> I want to view your face
> again and feel your cold
> embrace; or at your brim
> to set myself and
> inhale your breath; …[14].

In the cultural values of the Igbo of Nigeria, for example, a successful journey is expressed in an Igbo saying: *e je ana bu isi ije.*[15] Thus, the Yoruba concept of *jalo* does not exist in the Igbo lexicon. It is an abnormality for an Igbo not to return from a journey. When such happens, the Igbo say the person is lost. Every living Igbo desire to be buried among their ancestors. Failure to actualise this is interpreted as the ultimate loss of a person. Cultural practices and values systems of home countries, therefore, can be a big push against permanent migration.

Xenophobia has been on the increase in recent times. From South Africa to Nigeria, to the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe, negatively charged members of host nations have risen against strangers in their communities. Koster and

[14] Gabriel Okara, "The Call of the River Nun," *Literature PADI*, April 3, 2024, accessed November 10, 2025, https://www.literaturepadi.com.ng/2024/04/03/poem-the-call-of-the-river-nun-by-gabriel-okara/.

[15] E je ana bu isi ije is translated to mean that the crown of every journey is the ability to return home at the end.

Reinke link the phenomenon of xenophobia to the practice of criminalisation of strangers. In their cited case of London's Evil May Day anti-foreigner riot of 1517, Italian, Flemish and German traders "were accused of ruining the local economy and harassing women and girls."[16] This type of conflict is also found in racialised societies. It is worth recounting the palpable fear and feats of jerking exhibited by a native American girl with whom we (two black men) went into a restaurant filled with celebratory white persons. "Let us leave here." "They will kill us." She spoke from hundreds of years of inter-racial experience that led to grand-scale genocide against her people and could not bear to see herself in any secluded environment where whites constitute the majority. Racial violence or promotion of it is not in any way one-sided. In such a charged society, and to get even, everyone becomes an enabler of violence. Amiri Baraka who painted the humiliation and killing of black men in his poem, "Black Art," called for outright violence against the racial others.

> We want "poems that kill."
> Assassin poems, Poems that shoot guns.
> Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
> and take their weapons leaving them dead
> with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland. Knockoff
> poems for dope selling wops or slick halfwhite
> politicians Airplane poems, rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
> rrrrrrrrrrrrrr . . .tuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuhtuh . . .
> rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr . . . Setting fire and death to whities ass.[17]

The experience of this inter-group hate is bound to drive the visitor away and therefore serve as a negative migration impulse.

The African diaspora anti-migration police is another example of a negative migration impulse. These unofficial police consist of other early migrants who, for one reason or another, discourage immigration. One of their reasons is the claim that the United States of America is being saturated by new immigrants. The immigrants are blamed for the shortage of jobs, the inadequate health system, rising housing costs, crowded classrooms and so on. Another of their reason is that African immigrants are

[16] Margo De Koster and Herbert Reinke, "Migration as Crime, Migration and Crime," *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 21, no. 2 (2017): 65, https://journals.openedition.org/chs/1793.

[17] Amiri Baraka, "Black Art," in *Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1979), accessed November 10, 2025, https://www.poetrypedagogy.com/uploads/8/9/3/8/89385582/black_art_by_amiri_baraka.pdf.

responsible for brain drain, which African countries suffer. As a result, they discourage and resist attempts by African visitors to migrate permanently.

The Social Condition of an Immigrant

The French Revolution of 1789, which supplanted the ancient regime in France, is monumental in many respects. One of the respects is in its capacity to universalise citizenship rights for all French natives. The ancient regime in France, like its counterparts in other parts of Europe, limited citizenship and its dependent rights to a few individuals. Thus, the enjoyment of citizenship was a form of "economic and political privileges held by a small and wealthy minority of the population."[18] The fate of foreigners living in France was worse than that of the non-citizen French natives. Until its abolition in the 1760s by Louis XIV, the right of escheat? ensured that a foreigner could not inherit a property in France. Therefore, a dead foreigner without a French heir has his or her property appropriated by the king. The Revolution brought further change and granted equal citizenship to all native French and resident foreigners alike. Thus, Peter Sahlins holds that "the new citizenship, that of Rousseau and the French Revolution, was more inclusive and democratic, founded on subjective and universalist principles, requiring a formal equality of its members or associates and representing itself as the source of national sovereignty and state legitimacy."[19]

The Revolutionaries were not steadfast in their magnanimity towards foreigners. Olivier Faron and Cyril Grange hold that threats from abroad, fear of spies, and deteriorating relation with neighboring countries forced the Revolutionaries to "backtrack and to break with the dogma of the equality of Frenchmen and foreigners resident in France."[20] With this came the regime of policing and monitoring foreigners. Today's migrant, who, despite all the odds, arrives in a foreign land, discovers immediately the many restrictive conditions that inhibit his freedom on all fronts: social, political and economic. In the gradation of inhabitants, it is citizens first before migrants. In the United States of America, for instance, there is a lengthy list of well-funded welfare packages. These include programmes in health, education and childcare, food and nutrition, housing, and energy. While some of these programmes are available for everyone, the majority of them are not available for new migrants.

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[18] Peter Sahlins, "The Eighteenth-Century Citizenship Revolution in France," in *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Interwar Period*, ed. Andreas Fahrmeir, Olivier Faron, and Patrick Weil (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 11.

[19] Sahlins, "Eighteenth-Century Citizenship Revolution," 12.

[20] Olivier Faron and Cyril Grange, "Foreigners in Eighteenth-Century Paris," in *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Interwar Period*, ed. Andreas Fahrmeir, Olivier Faron, and Patrick Weil (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 40-41.

On the political front, the new immigrant lacks all rights to political participation. In Aristotelian terms, the migrant is not a *zoon politikon*. A *zoon politikon* is a political animal that can rule and be ruled. In the past, some migrants have forcefully seized political power. This was the case in most colonised societies across all the continents. However, in modern democracy, the migrant has no immediate route to political participation. He cannot vote and cannot be voted for. Decisions that affect him directly are made by other people, some of whom are even anti-migration.

The migrant is also excluded from economic participation. In the United States of America, for instance, bureaucratic controls ensure that foreigners are kept from certain jobs. A new migrant to the United States of America, for instance, discovers immediately that the jobs available to him, if any, are the ones rejected by citizens and resident permit holders.

Migration Impulses and the Persona of African Migrants

Migration impulses, which we have mapped above, act on the migrants. By acting on them, the migratory impulses reconfigure their identity. The idea that an individual's experience is transformational of the identity of the individual is a major theme in Frantz Fanon's work. The question at issue now is how migration impulses affect the identity of the migrant. In the main, we are investigating two things. The first is how the migrant comes off in the eyes of others, given the circumstances surrounding his migration? The second is how does the migrant conceive himself? Thus, while identity is about the nature of a subject, it is multidimensional[21] and malleable.[22] This multidimensionality accounts for the differences in the conception of identity. Adelaida Reyes problematises the problem of multidimensionality of identity when he asks: "How much of identity then is objective … How much of it is subjective?

Margo De Koster and Herbert Reinke highlight the criminal persona of the migrant.[23] It is this view that gives rise to xenophobia associated with migration. We must observe that the view of the migrant as a criminal is linked to the various legal restrictions placed on his path. To survive, a migrant may perform duties that are outside the law. In the United States of America, for instance, such migrants work in the informal sectors like small farms, restaurants, bars, construction companies and so on. Others engage in outright crime like drug dealing and child labour. Mitsunori, the

[21] Ike Odimegwu and Eric Omazu, "The Quest for African Identity in the Current World Order: Insights from Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe," in *A Holistic Approach to Human Existence and Development*, ed. Kolawole A. Olu-Owolabi and Adebola Ekanola, (Lagos, Nigeria: Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe Foundation, 2013),144.

[22] Adelaida Reyes, "Identity Construction in the Context of Migration," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 21, no. 1 (2014):106

[23] Margo De Koster and Herbert Reinke, "Migration as Crime, Migration and Crime," 63.

father of Masayoshi Son of Softbank fame, a Korean immigrant to Japan who sold liquor without a license as a 16-year-old migrant, bears witness to this. "I started making moonshine when I was 16. I knew it was illegal, but I had no work, then I stopped caring whether what I did was legal or not."[24]

The second identity of the migrant is that of an inferior being. Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte makes a powerful connection between migration and inequality.

Many of the first European immigrants who came to the colony emerged from situations in which they were struggling to evade political or religious inequality; others were brought here as social, political, and economic unequals to further serve in inequality as bondsmen on the plantations. Then came the thousands of Africans, who were brought here by force because they were defined, among other things, as racial unequals.[25]

In the case of an African immigrant, his inferiority stems from three sources. One, the developmental condition of his country of origin. Frederick Hegel, the great German philosopher, amply demonstrated in his lecture on Philosophy of History that the greatness or poverty of one's nation or race rubs off on one. Most African countries are economically poor, socially undeveloped, and politically backward. The conditions of African countries reflect on African migrants. They are looked down upon. Bryce Laporte holds that this accounts for the marginalisation which contributions of African immigrants to the United States suffer. The second source of this inequality relates to the condition of African Americans whose ancestors appeared in the New World as slaves. Today's African Americans still struggle to shake off the yoke of inferiority imposed on them by hundreds of years of slavery. Thus, African immigrants arriving in the United States inherit the already negative status of African Americans. The third source of this inferiority stems from the type of labour which the African migrants engage in. Filiz Garip links this to "dual labour market structure of advanced capitalist societies where natives filled the high-paying jobs in the capital-intensive sector and left low-paying, labour-intensive work to migrants."[26].

[24] Lionel Barber, *Gambling Man: The Secret Story of the World's Greatest Disruptor, Masayoshi Son* (New York: Atria/One Signal Publishers, 2025), 78.
[25] Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte, "Black Immigrants: The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality," *Journal of Black Studies* 3, no. 1 (September 1972): 29.
[26] Filiz Garip, *On the Move: Changing Mechanism of Mexico-U.S. Migration* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 4.

The third identity of the migrant is that of an unpatriotic citizen. This way of seeing the migrant is particularly at play in his home nation. The immigrant is viewed as someone who jumps ship and refuses to be part of the building process in his or her native country. In this age of brain drain, the immigrant is blamed for being responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa.

CONCLUSION

Migration experience affects the identity of migrants. For African migrants in the United States, this migration-influenced identity is at the initial stage expressed in negative terms. Thus, immigrants are seen as invasive, unwanted, inferior, and criminal individuals. This identity is rooted in the fact that the immigrant, in his quest for survival, operates outside the law. Whether he engages in a marriage with a citizen or works in non-formal sector of American economy where his income is not taxed or as a member of a gang of drug dealers, for examples, the migrant moves about with the mindset that he is breaking some laws. Most times, his self-assessment corresponds to the assessment of him by people in his host country. Thankfully for the immigrant, identity is dynamic. Thus, what we regard as the identity of the migrant is not fixed. Consequently, immigrants have struggled to shake off these negative personas. They achieve this through their work and positive contributions to their host nations.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest relating to this work.

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