



CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE PERSPECTIVE ON AFRICA-EUROPE ASYMMETRIC PARTNERSHIP ON MIGRATION CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

Complex interdependence, as a theoretical perspective, challenges the earlier notion and fundamental assumptions of classical and structural realism. For realism, military and economic issues dominate and determine the behaviour of states. Complex interdependence goes further to emphasize the relevance of transnational actors on the state's behaviour and issues of significant concern in international relations. The paper set out to provide an understanding of the growing importance of migration crisis as necessary security and economic concern, which also acknowledged the willingness of states to engage in cooperative alliance or collaborative partnership to control migration crisis. It focuses on the asymmetric Africa-European Union partnership since 2000. It provides an assessment of multilevel and multilateral framework for effective control of mass migration to Europe from Africa, even though the annual stock of African migration to Europe has reduced since 2016. However, complex interdependence lacks the teleological interpretation of structural exploitation and marginalization of weaker actors in the partnership to control migration. Hence, the need for a hybrid or an alternative paradigm to complement complex interdependence.

Keywords: Complex Interdependence, Migration Control, Europe-African Partnership, Asymmetric Relations, Immigration Policy

INTRODUCTION

The relations existing between the EU and Africa on migration had its origin in the transatlantic slave trade when European merchants were moving young productive Africans to Europe as slaves to work on plantations and construction sites. With the industrial revolution and mechanization of agriculture and production, those African slaves were freed and returned to Africa. It was as a result of a shift in demand for human labour to raw materials to feed emerging industries. Colonialism only ensured political and economic exploitation of Africa by European powers. Neocolonialism maintained imperialist mode of trans-nationalization of economic institutions that continue to drill African resources for European advantage.

The spillover effect of these decades of asymmetric economic relations is the mass African migration to Europe due to poor infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, and insecurity that has bedeviled Africa. The inter-regional partnership around migration control makes a good case for complex interdependence. The logic of partnership for global migration governance follows the liberal assumption of supranational actor's relevance; where migration crisis becomes an important aspect of "high politics." It also espoused the necessity of interdependence and collective action for collective security (Filippo, 2017). The externalization of the EU migration control reflects the

model of two-level games championed by Robert Putman (1988), which explains interstate relations and global actors' interaction as simultaneous dual policy actions and reactions at domestic and international level. EU negotiates at the domestic and trans-institutional level on only issues that favour the domestic constituencies; the primary interest lies there. For African states, it reflects the view that international institutions and multilateral agreements always influence domestic policy-making and the context in which policy is made and reacted upon at domestic level for individual states and AU at the regional level. Globalization has created mass interdependence among global actors. It has eliminated the traditional conception of security and given way to a transnational web of collective mutual interest in economic and security exchange (Keohane and Nye, 1977). The institutional dimension targets negotiations and partnership that could produce sub-optimal outcomes, despite the shared interest in interstate cooperation (Keohane, 1984).

The number of African migrants continues to increase by the flow of almost one thousand asylum applicants between 2010 and 2017, based on a Pew Middle evaluation of information from Eurostat, Europe's statistical bureau. The socio-economic dynamics in African migration reflected over time, the main perspective of the EU concerning African immigration directed primarily on security and prevention (Kohnert, 2007). Africa-EU Partnership on migration was launched at the second meeting of Africa-European Union summit attended by Heads of States and Government in Lisbon in December 2007. As adopted, the partnership aims to provide dialogue and cooperation on migration issues as a framework between the European Union and the African nations. Africa Union is to act as the primary conversational partner. Framework with participation by the African states and that of the Southern Mediterranean nations (Latek, 2018).

Quite a several tragedies within the Mediterranean called for another round of summit in 2015 by the European Council to talk about migration problems together with key African nations involved. European and African leaders implemented a common political concern for a measure that will address the sudden rise in refugees flow, irregular migrants and asylum seekers coming from Africa to Europe. They arrived at a Joint Action Plan on five priority areas in various summits since 2000:

- Ways to curb or uproot the causes of migration that are irregular and forced
- To open legal channels for those qualified to migrate
- To ensure the protection of refugees and those displaced
- To fight human trafficking and smuggling
- To establish acceptable channels of migrants' return, readmission and their reintegration. (see Africa-EU Partnership Goal)

The implementation of these agreements was accompanied by founding a trust fund to manage issues raised. It was precisely designed to manage the root causes of destabilization, forced irregular migration and displacement, by encouraging equal access to economic opportunities, development



and security. Due to operational and conceptual limitations, this paper focuses on the assumptions put forth by Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye on international cooperation and shift in security concern of the states. As applied to migration control between the EU and Africa, it will primarily focus on the partnership between Europe and Africa at an asymmetric level.

The primary aim is to make a critical assessment of the parlance of complex interdependence theorist about the EU –Africa partnership on the control of migration. The objective is to measure the strength and weaknesses of complex interdependence perspective as a theoretical explanation to the EU-Africa partnership on migration control. It will be limited to the partnership based on various agreements at the multilateral and bilateral level of Africa and EU effort to curb migratory tendencies. Relevant literature on complex interdependence and African migration, especially the work of Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (1977), provides the essential ingredients of analysis.

How best can complex interdependence provide a theoretical explanation to EU – Africa partnership on control of migration? How limited is complex interdependence in explaining EU – Africa asymmetric partnership on control of migration? Are there alternative explanations? These are questions that would guide a critical assessment of the complex interdependence theory as applied to migration control between Africa and Europe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration is a positive thing for the world, but we need to do it in a regulated way. It is a global, complex phenomenon, it concerns the EU as much as countries of transit or origin ...Our approach is a new one, based on a win-win partnership. (Federica Mogherini, High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission, Strasbourg – 7 June 2016). The African Union and European Union promote a constructive and multidimensional approach to migration that complements existing dialogues and frameworks. The key objectives in this area are to deepen Africa-Europe cooperation and dialogue on migration and mobility and to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement..... to maximize the development potential for both Africa and Europe. (Africa-EU Partnership Goal)

In most general cases, people migrate to new places as an outcome of wars or insecurity, economic deprivations and political persecution. African women and men risk almost everything, such as their lives, to undertake the perilous journey throughout a large number of borders and also consequently the treacherous waves on the Mediterranean Sea in an in-depth exploration of a better living. Some migrants die while on the perilous journey across the desert and the Mediterranean Sea, while a few are turned back to their country of origin or transit. Moreover, with jobs that are few as well as dim prospects at home, millions of young adults and youths in Africa choose to migrate, frequently clandestinely. Nevertheless, another aspect which tends to make people depart the

continent is the narration about the provision of job opportunities abroad. Precisely what the adventurers do not understand is the fact that there are documents required for work procedural, that they distinctly do not have. When it comes to the majority of scenarios, work opportunities are usually not sufficient for all the citizens, not to speak of undocumented immigrants.

International organizations and transnational corporations are key structures that drive this premise. According to Keohane and Nye (1977), the world is in an era of interdependence, where the nature and dynamism of interstate relations has taken the path of mutual interdependence. It occupies central part of the neoliberal school of thought.

International relations have created a web of complex interdependence among actors in a more advanced network of relations on issues that are now becoming part of "high politics". "Complex interdependence provides a better understanding of changing security concerns of the states" (Huseyin, 2004:133). What used to be high politics, according to realism, have been dominated by other issues like migration. EU relations with Africa used to be mainly political and economic but recently, the migration crisis has become a crucial component of their relations. Migration has become a key security concern for Europe to manage inflow. It is a result of a high number of immigrants in Europe states. The alarming rate of the number and internal reactions led to political decisions by individual European state to manage the influx through policy restrictions. The EU, as an umbrella body and important actor in international relations, adopted it as a regional policy by extending the collaborative partnership with the African Union and even individual African states. The application of national pressure on the institutional body to collectively create global interdependence to advance intercontinental partnership on the control of migration, mainly from Africa to Europe, led to a series of partnerships.

EU - Africa approach to migration control focuses on a framework of cooperation designed to provide both parties with a shared understanding of the need to ensure effective control measures to regulate irregular migration. A joint Africa - EU strategy was put in place to provide coherent African policy commitment within institutional instruments to implement the joint agenda (Pirozzi, 2010). However, mixed reactions reflect on the African commitment to the partnership. It was EU induced partnership; its main agenda is to protect European interest. The interest of Africa was passively considered but has not been given substantive consideration. Scholars like Lavenex (2008), Gangly (2009), and Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2009) saw the partnership between EU and Africa as an externalization of European migration governance. A deliberate policy framework to reduce the pressure of immigration in the EU through dependence on Africa states to regulate the rate of flow to Europe. Little has been achieved in this direction due to a certain level of incompatibilities of interest between the EU and Africa.



Countries like Cameroon, Nigeria, Mauritania, Libya and Algeria usually happen to be the primary places for stop-overs by migrants in which it is a lot easier to get menial work, like bricklayers, tailors, shoemakers, merchants, security guards, domestic workers and cleaners. Also, individual migrants find themselves settling in these kinds of areas as fixed workers, smugglers or entrepreneurs (Crawley & Blitz, 2019). There seemed to be a shift from by some European countries permissive immigration policy, especially in Germany, France and the Netherlands, to a restrictive control policy (Fielding, 2000). The modification to a restrictive plan as well as the reassertion of state control did not radically replace the understanding of immigrants itself. However, the restrictions have been encouraged by a wish to defend the economic and social rights of the home-based workforce (Blotevogel, & Wood, Mullerter Jung, 2000).

There is a high flow of migration in Africa consisting of intra-regional migrants, nomads, frontier, refugees, and an increase in high skilled professionals. The conditions followed because of economic, political, ethnic and social contexts (Adepoju, 2002). The movements undocumented through frontiers, promoted by a collective culture, language and familiarity of colonial rules, evident in Africa both West and East Africa, and both at the frontier migration labour, and blurring between migration: internal and international, as with regular and irregular migration within a region. By contrast, Jørgen Carling (2007; 2011), in his work, migration unauthorized through Africa to Spain, he said that on an average at least three hundred and fifty African migrants with boats are regularly apprehended majorly through the Spanish shores on a weekly basis. A rapid growth in population and unemployment has been a strain in the regions development process, thereby making migration possible. There is a rapid deterioration in the socio-political and conditions of the economy as well emigration stirred up. As cited by Adepoju, in a prevailing circumstance, the push poverty is persuasive for Africans as the pull enriched living conditions within the Northern nations.

The central discourse on the return of migrants indicates the preferences of EU as regards control of migration; while the securitization policy only emphasizes the European agenda. It also indicates a shift in responsibility to African states to take charge of dealing with human traffickers and smugglers in the new partnership. Thus, the partnership between Africa and Europe has been given critical Interpretation judging it to have created asymmetric relations instead of a contractual pattern of cooperation to address the mutual problem (Kotsopoulos & Mattheis, 2018). In the practice of migration governance, Franzisca Zanker (2019:2) shows that EU policies are more focused on security than the acclaimed mutual partnership for development. He submits that what is apparent is a divergence between the policy-oriented discourse on humanitarian and developmental partnership and what is in practice through restrictive actions. The presence of huge gap exists between rhetoric and practices just to serve the interest of European states while beating the drum of a partnership between the EU and Africa. Eugenio Cusumano (2019) further expounds on this 'gap'

that is so glaring in the EU-Africa partnership, the neglect of humanitarian rhetoric and but the commitment and operational conduct to just curb irregular migration in the middle of a humanitarian crisis.

Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas (2016), said it is the drawing on data sources, for the evolution of African migrations from 1960-2010. Exploring development roles and explaining trending policies and forms of migration. The analysis is contradicting African emigration primarily driven by poverty. There is, however, a confirmation of the "migration transition theory", that development of the economy relates to restoration leading to emigration. Wages, schoolings as well as information, on the other hand, makes people journey because of aspirations and capabilities. African emigration is explaining the development processes and the social transformation that makes young Africans migrate through "capabilities and aspirations" continue to trend. There are many fatalities, and as well as migrants suffering while transiting, a sacred political obligation towards external borders of Europe reinforced is vital for migration dynamics understanding of unauthorized entry. Jorgen Carling noted (Carling, 2007) that more research is necessary for an understanding of migrant's processes and choices, interaction amongst smugglers, and control measures consequences.

Migration towards Europe, changed European nations face, with rising levels of ethnic diversity becoming typical on the rise. However, far-right parties on the rise and anti-immigrant sentiments in these nations are evident. The challenges of European societies on immigration and integration were institutionalized through immigration laws and integration policies (European Parliament, 2017). The Mediterranean is an entry point for the migrants to Europe, a risk-filled journey. By the first three quarters in 2017, at least 2,600 and migrants died as well as missing in the Mediterranean Sea, of which 94 per cent crossing to Italy through Libya. Schuster, in 2011 noted that some migrants turn into undocumented migrants because of policies of the EU member states (Robila, 2018). The European Border and Coast Guard Agency or FRONTEX becomes operational as border security agency to patrol the Mediterranean Sea. From 2005, FRONTEX became a new agency aimed at strengthening border security by fostering coordination among member states in measure implementations in regards to the control of external borders.

Theoretical Overview: Assumptions and Application

In theoretical and practical terms, complex interdependence provides an explanatory model of long time relations between Europe and Africa. It has been a relationship of unequal through slavery, industrial revolution, colonialism, neocolonialism, and now security and migration concern. There has been a sustained complex web of interconnectedness and interactions between the two poles. In the 21st century, control of migration is now at the top of the agenda of EU - Africa's relations leading to discussions and agreements or rather partnership at an institutional level to collectively curb the ugly trend in mass migration from Africa to Europe. It is a spillover effect of long-time



lopsided socio-economic relations between Europe and Africa. Centuries of relations between Europe and Africa has rendered Africa and Africans host to Europe and European development (Ogu, 2017).

Complex interdependence theory sees international institutions as a means to an end. International organizations provide a cooperative avenue to wade away anarchical forces in the international system. Powerful institutions such as the EU operate as supranational with established norms and values. EU has structures and constitution that shape the behaviour of each member state and how it relates to other actors.

Multiple channels of communication represent the feature of the international system, particularly after the Cold War era. The emergence of multiple actors in international relations create sub-units and multiple levels of interaction between and among actors. This explains the involvement of other actors such as civil society organizations, big corporations, employing expatriates and nation-states in the control of migration by the EU. Other actors in the migration crisis are the syndicates involved in trafficking and smuggling of persons from Africa to Europe. These are non-territorial actors that have well-coordinated activities across various states.

Secondly, is the absence of a hierarchy of issues. According to the complex interdependence theorist, in foreign policy and domestic policies, the agenda of the state are not hierarchically prioritize. Military and security issues are not always placed on top of the agenda of a state. Every issue has the probability of being given more priority at a given time and under different circumstances. The migration crisis is now topping the agenda of the EU policy direction and foreign policy towards Africa.

The third signifies non-use of military force in interstate relations because the application of military capability is unattractive as a tool of foreign policy. State cooperate at different levels of interaction to promote mutual relation. Mutual economic relations help to eliminate hostility and conflict because incompatibilities are resolved through bargaining and interdependence. However, any political power accompanied by economic strength empowers the bargaining power of a state.

The fundamental assumptions of complex interdependence theory as given by Keohane and Nye (1977) borders on the existing character of the international system. They place interdependence in economic, communication and human aspiration as an important factor in international relations. The existence of multiple actors besides nation-state and less military security and multiple issues of high priorities to the state. This does not mean that the state is irrelevant, but other actors such as international organizations and multinational corporations are also very active in shaping the international system. Also, the state priority on military security is taking a new dimension, where issues like immigration problem, climate change and diseases outbreak may at times become the number one security challenge to the state, not military. In migration control,

economic issues tend to be discussed and proposed as the only solution in the partnership to uproot the leading causes of migration from Africa to Europe. This informed the idea of aid, good governance and development programmes. However, recent development saw the use of aggressive approach through FRONTEX in the Mediterranean Sea and European borders.

Asymmetry in Partnership: A Critical Analysis

Various antecedents that unfolded and kept evolving in a relationship between 'two worlds', developed and developing, manifest many outcomes that tend to define the nature and pattern of their co-existence. This section will take a critical look at the complex interdependence perspective on the nature and pattern of relations between the EU and Africa that now focuses on collective agreement to control migration flow. The attempt here is to address some of the fundamental questions that drive research on this paper to give an alternative explanation.

Partnership or Hegemony?

The EU-Africa partnership to control migration is based on the principle of cooperation between international actors, at states level and regional institutional level, to curb the crisis associated with the irregular movement of people across the boundary of the two partners. However, a critical look at the documents, principles, and implementation of the agreements indicate a systematic dominance and hegemony of the EU over Africa. The partnership documents were drafted and presented to Africa to sign as partners. The document made Africa be committed and bond by a pact that they never design or understand the implication of its content and application. On principle, the partnership only reflects European interest with little or no consideration for the migration interest of African brain drain. Even at the implementation level, the EU went ahead to create FRONTEX and imposing security measures on the sea. Leadership and intelligence sharing are only for European states benefit to ensure effective enforcement of the migration governance framework.

Interdependence or Dependence?

The partnership between Europe and Africa on the control of migration have resulted to an agreement on critical areas involving exchange and return of migrants; investment in Africa to improve job opportunities and poverty reduction; development aid to provide necessary improved infrastructure for better livelihood. Complex interdependence theory is assumed to provide a good explanation on closer trade and investment relations between and among actors in international relations. Every state has a comparative advantage over other states which calls for more interdependent relations. At the level of security, nation-states form alliances or cooperation on collective security. The EU has achieved internal interdependence and security, and also pursues external interdependence and security with Africa on the need to control migration (Meng, 2015). It became clear that Europe alone cannot control migration flow into Europe; the assistance of Africa must be sort.



The point of convergence between the EU proposal for control of migration and Africa demand for more European trade and investment in Africa resulted in a policy improvement in development aid. Development aid becomes another option for development in Africa with the hope that it will create more job opportunities, better infrastructure that can contribute to uprooting the roots of migration in Africa.

The EU-Africa partnership ended up making African states beggars and dependent on EU development aid with the wrong assumption that aid can eliminate the 'push factors' for migration. Through the European Commission, Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (ETFA) was established by the EU with an estimated €2.38 Billion for disbursement to selected African states (Africa-EU Partnership Goal, 2016).

Human Security or Human Rights Abuse?

Part of the migration partnership agreement is to save the lives of African migrants that are attempting to reach Europe through the desert and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as curbing human trafficking and smuggling. The EU-Africa pact saves the lives of desperate African migrants on a perilous journey to Europe, mostly through irregular channels, without authorized documents. "Between 1993 and 2003, according to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (2004) in Vienna, more than 10,000 migrants and refugees died in and around the Mediterranean while trying to reach the EU" (Hansen & Jonsson, 2011:264). This formed part of the reasons for the partnership agreement to fight human traffickers and smugglers, with the ultimate goal of protecting human rights and security for all. But, the record has shown that many African migrants continue to lose their lives. Also, some have been forced into modern-day slavery at detention camps managed by militia groups in Libya. African migrants trying to cross illegally through the European border were shot by security agents (Crawley & Blitz, 2019). For those migrants that were smuggled into Europe ended up as sex slaves or highly underpaid labourers. There have been reported cases of extortion, kidnapping and abuse of many irregular African migrants at transit camps created and financed by the EU in Libya and Morocco for migrants caught attempting to cross over to Europe (Crawley & Blitz, 2019). International organization for migration tried to check and regulate these ugly incidences. However, the activities of militias in these countries keep compounding the problem, thereby creating a syndicate of human rights abuses.

Win-win or Winner-takes-all?

Even though "complex interdependence highlighted the mutual relations of both symmetric and asymmetric actors" (Huseyin, 2004:152), in the case of EU - Africa relations, asymmetric pattern dominates and only leads to widening gap between the two parties. Rather than interdependence eliminating the root causes of migration, it ended up causing more push factors. This goes contrary to the win-win principle of interdependence and migration partnership. Exploitation in different

dimension through a systematic selection of only skilled workers from Africa and blocking unskilled migrants' entry into Europe leads to draining Africa of its best brains and denying the unskilled the privilege to find opportunities for skills development in Europe.

The EU is not talking about the return of trained and skilled Africans working to develop Europe. The pact between the EU – Africa on returns and readmission of irregular migrants (unskilled) without the regular migrants (skilled Africans) shows that the deal was unfair to Africa. It widens the development gap between Europe and Africa. The little well trained and skilled persons are attracted by the 'pull factors' to Europe's better working condition, but the unskilled are restricted from entering Europe.

Thus, contrary to the notion of having a framework that ensures equity for all parties, the whole acclaimed interdependent relationship on the control of migration provides Europe more advantage and successful exploitation of African skilled manpower. This only contributes to Africa's backwardness.

Pluralism or Populism?

The EU – Africa partnership may look like an institutional interdependent cooperative model of global modernity of the western liberal assimilation and integration of all racial and cultural diversity. But the real motive behind the aggressive containment measures of immigration in Europe is the growing populist movements. Populist movements and their far-right political parties have produced political leaders like Nicolas Sarkozy, whose mission in the EU – Africa partnership represents the core European populist objective of homogeneous identity leading to anti-immigration movements. Tony Blair (2018) once said that the immigration issue was a critical factor that determines votes and drive populist movements in Europe.

Critiques

Realist scholars see international relations as basically insignificant because European states and also migrants countries of origin remain the real determinants of migration control. Despite a common migration policy, each state decides what to do with any irregular migrant in terms of regulation and return of irregular migrants. Like the case of asylum seekers, some European states welcome and some reject. It is not the EU that determines the faith of migrants but individual European states. Similarly, the effort of EU is meaningless without the effort and commitment of key states like Germany, France, the Netherlands, etc. If those states relax their policy towards migration, it will automatically affect EU policy.

Critical theorist, especially from the dependency school, criticized complex interdependence because it could not provide a better explanation to the historical asymmetric relations and exploitation of Africa by Europe since the 17th-century era of the slave trade. Thus, complex interdependence



perspective lacks the teleological explanation to the causes of asymmetric relations between the two continents.

In addition, the outcome of recent interdependence partnership between the EU and African states on migration control undermines the core values of liberalism, that establish International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to promote fundamental rights of migrants against inhuman treatment. Some of the activities of FRONTEX, security agents and use of militia in places like Libya contravene the principles of liberty. Some migrants were shot in an attempt to cross the European border by border security agents. Some migrants were left to die in the sea and some subjected to all forms of abuse in the name of restricting irregular migration (Sarkin, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Critiquing the Critiques

Migration is ultimately the European Union top policy agenda. Keohane and Nye work on complex interdependence "contributed to the explanation of the shift in security concerns of the states" (Huseyin, 2004:132) to migration crisis leading to the Joint Africa-EU Action Plan implemented to fight trafficking in persons and manage irregular migration. Given the contemporary reality of globalization, increasing agreements by states in multilateral and bilateral forums, the active role of international institutions such as EU and AU, shifting relevance of security priority, and understanding of the benefit of cooperation among states, complex interdependence will remain a very relevant theory in understanding, explaining and predicting global issues like the partnership between EU and Africa on the control of migration.

Despite some limitations and criticism presented in the main body, complex interdependence has been able to provide an explanation on the role of international institutions, states and community of migrants as important actors in international relations. It has also given an interpretation of the various channels of communication and interconnectivity between and among actors at individual, institutional and collective/partnership levels of analysis. There was an absence of the hierarchy of issues, even though migration dominated the discussion, security, economic, human rights issues form essential components.

Finally, non-application of any coercive means in the partnership agreements and implementation process against any actor to control migration makes complex interdependence suitable and compatible tool of analysis. Thus, complex interdependence remains a relevant tool of analyzing EU-Africa partnership effort to manage cooperative and joint migration crisis. New Interdependence Approach (NIA), as advocated by Ferrel and Newman (2016), attempts to revive the traditional interdependence arguments with support from the modern reality of advanced technology; where the internet has created a more interdependent world in many areas beyond the economic drive to

social, transportation, education, etc. It also gives a new dimension to migration pattern and dynamics.

However, the theory cannot give a holistic explanation and interpretation of all issues of the partnership on migration at the same time, which may give room for other theories to contribute.

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