

THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRANTS: WOMEN AS BEAST OF BURDEN IN OUR TODAYS WORLD

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Abstract

One of the challenges of migrants is securing permanent residency. Illegal migrants are worst hit by the problem of residency permit-green papers. Women especially the elderly are used as a springboard to secure green cards. Vulnerable personalities who need a solution to their needs meet themselves but the unfortunate gender becomes beast of burden. Exploiting/benefiting someone's vulnerability is a problem that is trivialized today. Although many researchers have detailed the problems of detention and deportation of illegal migrants, few have explored the problem of women as arbiters to secure permanent stay and then dumped thereafter. Thus, the study explored the challenges of migrant and women as a beast of burden. Explanation of the operative variables is anchored on fire, functionalist, Conflict and exchange theory. The research setting was selected communities in Edo and Delta, Nigeria. The research was exploratory. Method of data collection was through a questionnaire, key informant and in-depth interview. Data were content analyzed and through simple percentage with the use of statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 15). Responses revealed that marriage of convenience exists in the west and women are mostly the beast of burden.

Keywords: *Beast-of-burden, migrants women, and challenges*

I. Introduction

One of the major challenges of migrants is shelter and permanent residency –green papers. Although gender exploitation has not gained popularity even though it exists, there is evidence that victims are worse off than they were before the gender transactions. This is because of the unfair and unjust gender relations. Thus, in recent years, granting green papers to migrants has generally declined. This has resulted in large numbers of people who spend years in detention. Many of which are later deported to their country of origin (Anguita Gonz and Mez-del-Mi 2019). To avoid situations like this, many migrants get attached to any available space and personalities. As the situation gets tough in developing countries, the quest to travel abroad increased amongst its populace (Adelaja

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2015, Anguita *et al*2019, Eze 2018, Oltman 2017, Shobola 2010 and Teitelbaum 1984). Thus. over 500,000 people migrate towards the west every year in search of greener pastures(Adelaja 2015 and Anguita *et al*2019). Because many do not have the document to travel abroad or gain “green papers”-permanent residency permit on arrival, they depend on women or traffickers to continue to stay abroad. They get attached while pursuing higher income, unconventional career advancement and better education.

Following this, many have promised their love birds marriage just to use them to secure their stay. According to the Marxists, this gives credence to the assertion that women are accepted and exploited for financial gain, sexual gratification and other non-legitimate purposes (Bindu and Grumbine 2020). The situation is not different for female migrants. Many illegal migrants travel abroad and start co-habiting with a westerner, drug baron or a female trafficker. They move in with them to relocate when they have acquired their papers. Although the preponderance of exploitation, used and dumped is higher among men, women are also involved in the saprophytic relationships.

Contrastingly in the past, green paper was automatic. Today, the sojourners -green pasture seekers end up as strangers in a foreign country. Their movement and business are restricted. They shield themselves in order not to be spotted by the cameras. Life becomes unbearable. To escape deportation, they get attached to any woman who needs a man. They promise the woman marriage and move in with her even if she is above childbearing age. As time progresses and they set what they want, they navigate in search of a younger maiden with whom they will spend the rest of their life. By this, they tag the older woman as "old cargo". She is discarded like a bunch of cards. She is treated less human. They extort money and other valuables and get established at home. They stylishly sever their affair with the woman that harboured them. They, therefore, move in with the new “chassis”-“tear rubber”-younger maiden.

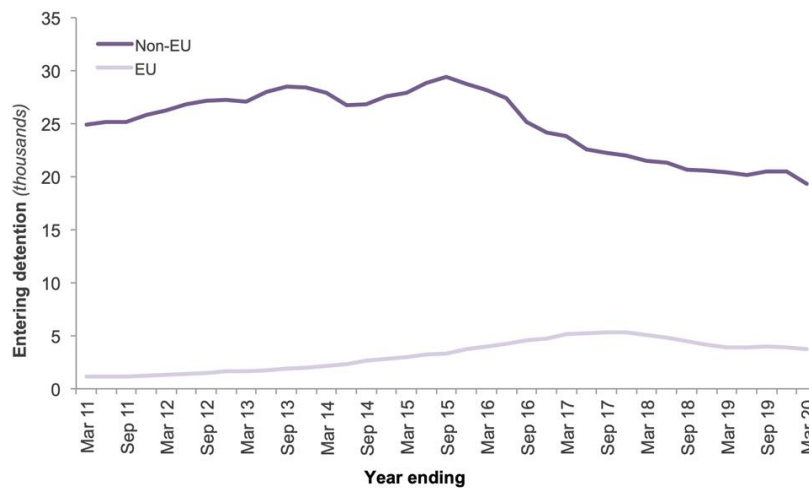
With time the foreign countries have now realized this emerging scenario. The united nation laws frown at sexual and financial exploitation. Thus, they instituted a situation where the newlywed will sign a treaty with the woman. This has been further strengthening by a situation where the about to wed goes to the home country of the man to seek information from the local government before proceeding to marry each other. In most cases, the marriage is contracted in the home town of the man. This is because it has been discovered that most migrants have wives or fiancée whom they married or intend to marry before sojourning for greener pastures (Anguita *et al*2019).

This un-reciprocal gender relation will continue as most women are eager to have their husband travel abroad for greener pastures. The man sends in money and materials on the interval to the family. Most women prefer to enjoy the spoil from the abroad union rather than to stay with their husband in a poor state and suffer. Some instances had it that the wife prefers to answer as the sister of the man in the presence of the foreign woman. They prefer to be called his sister, not the wife in order not to destroy the arrangements. All these are tolerated to continue to enjoy the right (government official document) that stipulate permanent residency permit.

Immigration and Foreign policy

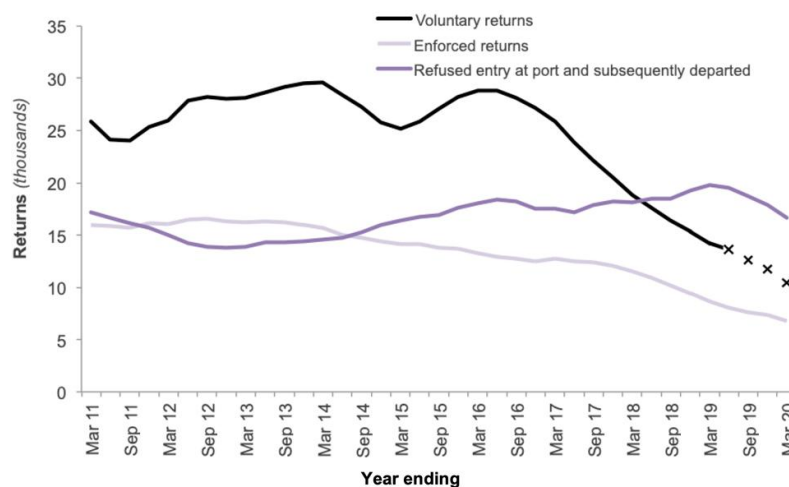
It is generally perceived that harsh policies predispose many migrants towards offending the law. In 2019 over 19,000 persons were deported. Out of this 21% of the deportees were citizens of African and South Asian countries (Anon 2020). Over 25,000 that end up in detention, 19,000 were deported (Ibid). The figure gives a vivid explanation of the detention and deportation of migrants. From figure 1, 25,000 people that were detained, over 17,000 were forcefully deported. This is indicated in the figure(2):

Figure 1: People entering detention under immigration powers in the UK by nationality, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2020



Source: Immigration detention-Det D01

Figure 2: Returns from the UK by type of Return, Year Ending March 2011 to year ending March 2020



Source: Return-Ret D01

From figures (1) and (2), it is clear that to escape residency law, detention and deportation, many migrants get attached to any available sex (probably opposite). They contract marriage and promise to live the rest of their life with their partner. This does not always hold true and through as many partners reflect a miss-match. The older woman is tagged as "tokunbo" (fairly used). They are scorned and treated harshly just to sway the woman into terminating the marriage. In an attempt to correct this, the victim gets other younger partners who they genuinely and unconditionally desire for the rest of their life. But things do not remain the same as the law eventually catches up with the defaulting partner. They are reported and stripped of their belongings. They are later thrown into detention from where they will be deported to their country of origin.

Migrants and Gender Experiences

Migrants and gender relation is most often dominative and non-inclusive. At arrival, many migrants look forward to attaching themselves to women. Also, women look forward to prostitution or getting attached to a trafficker who links them with men. They satisfy the emotional needs of their clients and their madam gets paid. They are exploited as a commercial sex worker. Some contract disease and die of this act. Some who are fed up and become disenchanted with the trade decline and they are thrown out of the house. They are arrested, detained and later deported to their country of origin.

Just the same way, men lookout for a promising woman without a husband, they start by striking a business deal. In an exchange for what you want and what I need, this culminates in an affair that is supposed to last forever. They promise the woman marriage. The majority go as far as contracting court marriage that is binding on both partners. With this, the woman opens her treasury only to be disappointed after some years of courtship or marriage. They abandon the woman and move on with their life having mastered the terrain. Some go as far as relocating to other neighbouring countries just to stay away from the woman.

This act has left many women in a bad mental state. Some become mentally imbalanced. The majority suffer more setbacks and health challenges. They never recover from the loss and emotional breakdown. While the stronger sex (men) withstands the effects of separation, women are easily broken. It, therefore, calls for careful examination, awareness and dissemination of information. This will save many who would have fallen as victims since human right sees this exploitative affair as repugnant (Olomjobi 2013).

Migrants and Ethnic relations

Ethnic relation among foreigners and migrants are some worth unfriendly (Anon 2020). The Eurocentric struggles and life philosophies make its citizens appear ethnocentric (Adebayo 2001). Deportees see foreigners and their laws as discriminatory. Never the less, each imbibes their ancestral myth and relate in tandem with others (Adebayo 2001). There is the enormity of evidence that the foreign policy and its citizens are harsh towards

migrants. Conversely, migrants love foreigners but in most cases, they are trained to relate better with people who are of the same origin with them (Adebayo 2001). This they carry into relationships and marriage. While many foreigners do not want to relate with migrants unless is on the ground of business or relationship, most migrants on the other hand are only ready to relate based on his or her needs. The exploitative and exchange kind of relationship thus exists among disgruntled parties (Adebayo 2001). On a rare case will you find a genuine union based on true love. That is if true love truly exists.

The relational transaction analyses according to Eric Berne (1964), is that the wrong and exploitative intention individuals bring into a relationship are a question of life experiences and historical development (Adebayo 2001). Most people from the developing countries have the notion that they can depend on opposite gender to scale through in the west. Before embarking on a journey, they have already tabled their options and choices. This phenomenon is existent because they believe and see others do it and succeed. They bring this wrong life position into relationships. This stance hurt those who may be genuine in their relational affairs. On the other ground, significant others either support or sway their relations. Inter-tribal relations are perceived to be discriminatory. Ninety-nine per cent of inter-tribal relations are often exploratory and exploitative. This has continued unabated because of lack of awareness. Gender relations differ across nation. In developing countries, men dominate women. They used them like a beast of burden. This ideology is imported into relationships in the West. Coupled with the fundamental interpersonal orientation, they treat their partners like a waste. This is not permitted in a foreign country where women are treated as equal citizens.

II. Theoretical Framework:

Firo, Functionalist, Conflict and Social exchange theory

Firo stands for *fundamental interpersonal relation orientation*. This theory was formulated by Schutz (1955). It explains inter-personal gender behaviour in terms of people's orientation. The orientation each group had follows them into relationships. We have three major types of orientation manners, these are inclusion, control and affection. People inclusively relate with people of the same origin. Thus, they display genuine affection that lasts longer. On the other hand, people exclude and control-dominate or rather discriminate against those who are of different ethnic groups. This situation cut across all ethnic groups although some are more pronounced than others. Amongst migrants, their ulterior motives deprive them of inclusive and affectionate relationship. They control-dominate the affair until they are thrown out of the country.

Inclusion means the need to associate with others without ulterior motives while control is the need of an individual to dominate the other (Adebayo 2001). When two persons are interacting, they enact the behaviour they have learnt from childhood. This is what is obtainable in most inter-tribal/continental affairs. Some are thought the reciprocal compatibility, many interchange compatibility and majority originator compatibility. Interchange compatibility does not often exist in parties with a hidden agenda who long for different needs. Life has shown that

when a party satisfies their need, the curiosity to continue with the union declines. This has been the problem of migrants (Anon 2020). It is often observed that the originator (most migrants) and the receiver have different motives. There is hardly reciprocal compatibility for parties looking for short term shelter and the other looking for long term marriage. Gender relation between migrants and EU persons is often exploitative (Marx 1818). Because each individual is seeking for its highest benefit, one is exploited and treated unfairly to the detriment of the other. This leaves the exploited worse than they were before the contact. Although disjunctive, this is functional as could be seen below.

Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown were the first scholars who postulated 'the functional unity of society' (Ritzer 2010: pp 253). All dreams and intent of different people are functional in stabilizing the parties as well as the system in general. This 'postulation holds that all standardized behaviours, dreams and aspiration are functional for society as a whole (ibid). The individual looking for a stay and the gender seeking emotional comfort are all involved in a selfish relationship. The smarter genders cleverly undo the other. This act is repugnant and is an offence punishable by the law. This implies that all individuals as units of a social system must show some level of integration, not exploitation. Thus, Parson argued that divergent aspirations are functional for the whole societies. This applies to developing and more developed societies. Consequently, Malinowski and a host of other functionalist theorists argued that co-habiting or marriage of any kind across is functional. In that, parties do not have to worry about their shortcoming. This contradicts what is obtainable in reality. Exploiter does not have such genuine intent. Truth and genuine intent is the sole of life especially marriage. If people must come together, it must be on mutual ground. Deception should be jettisoned

Another functional pre-requisite is the indispensability of gender exploitation. That is women and men exploiting one another are unavoidable. The argument here is that saprophytic union is a 'standardized aspects of society'. They not only have a plausible function but are culturally indispensable for the smooth running of society. This opinion suggests that the culture of dependency is functionally necessary for people across all society. All need to be alert and discerning. Otherwise, according to Marxists and the popular slogan "mugu"-fool fall, guy man wack'. Thorough scrutiny may save each party from an exploitative relationship (Gender exploitation).

Thus, for exchange theorists, Thibaut and Kelly (1959) postulated that two people are involved in a transactional relationship for mutual benefits. This is based on the fact that migrants and foreigners exist only on the bases of participation and satisfaction of individuals who are involved in mutual relationship. Thus, putting partner off after satisfying oneself signifies exploitation (Marx 1818). An act that is punishable by law. Abiding by the mutual interest while partners maintain terms of association is paramount. The relationship is a mutual one in which they share risks and benefits. People with different goals that are compatibles come together to share their dreams and aspirations. Unfortunately for many, this does not hold true and through in most cases. The deceiving gender

plays fast on their partner. People have other motives which they import into relationships. They work tirelessly towards an expected end which is unknown to the other party. Women in most cases are victims of such exploitative and unrequited love.

After a very long period of cohabitation, most men begin to exhibit nonchalant attitudes-characters. They begin to act funny and wish to move out of the apartment. They frustrate the effort of the woman. Nothing she does go well. She is rebuffed and scorned. Out of frustration and unrequited affection, they back out of the affair. The exploiter is thrown out of the luxury which they enjoy. This has resulted in the detention of many and their subsequent deportation.

III. Methods

The research is descriptive and exploratory. The research employed an in-depth interview and key informant in data gathering. The questionnaire was also used to elicit information that was not covered by the interview. Data were analyzed using simple tables and verbatim extraction of thematic responses. Because the world is large and would be strenuous to cover within a short period, selected communities and airports in Nigerian were chosen as research setting. These communities and airports are typical and results are generalizable to other communities and beyond where women are used to securing a stay and are dumped thereafter. Research respondents were those age 40 and above. Those age <30 and who are likely to be ignorant of the problem were excluded from the research.

IV. Research setting

Nigeria was chosen as the research setting. This is because of the preponderance of the phenomenon under study in Nigeria amongst other developing nations. Nigeria is located in West Africa. Nigeria is bordering Niger in the North, Chad in the Northeast, Cameroon in the East and Benin in the West. With 'an area of 923,768km² the country is almost four times the size of the United kingdom or slightly more than twice the size of the United States of America'. It is found around the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. The federation comprises 36 states with its federal capital territory at Abuja. Nigeria is home to a large number of ancient and indigenous kingdoms and state over the millennia. Nigeria originated from British colonial rule in the year 19th century. The Northern and Southern protectorate was amalgamated in 1914. Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa owing to its large population and economy. With over 186 million citizens, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Nigeria is considered a multinational state as it inhabits over 250 ethnic groups with varied cultures. The largest ethnic groups are Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. Islam (41%) and Christianity (58%). They speak mainly Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. The official language is English.

Ebu Illah (Delta state) and Benin city, Egor (Edo State) was chosen as the research settings. This is because they have many accounts of returnees. Ebu is located in Oshimili North, Delta Nigeria. Its coordinates are 6° 29' 0" North, 6° 36' 0" East. Ebu Kingdom is located in Oshimili North LGA in Delta state and is made up of eight villages Ekpechor, Okwuru, Achebe, Aganike, Iyagoshimi, Ugbolo, Ogor and Amamaugelo. Ebu people migrated from Idah in today's Kogi state to Edo state and their current settlement now in Delta state.

Edo state is a state in Southern Nigeria. Its capital is in Benin City. It is made up four major ethnic groups, namely the Bini, Esan, Owan and Etsako. It is bounded by Kogi state to the northern and east Anambra, Delta to the south and Ondo to the west. Other research setting comprised, Murtala Mohammed International Airport Lagos, Benin airport, Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Asaba airport, Osubi airport. Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport and Murtala Mohammed International Airport is located in Abuja and Lagos respectively, Nigeria. Asaba and Osubi Airports are located in Delta State, Nigeria. The research collected data from these spaces as many travellers who are vast in the problem under research were randomly accessible. They were contacted and interviewed.

V. Method of data collection and Data Analysis

Data was generated with the aid of a questionnaire. A 40 item questionnaire was constructed and distributed across 480 eligible respondents in the study areas. Also, an in-depth interview was used to explore in detail, the challenges of migrants and women as a beast of burden. Data were analyzed with the use of statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 15). Simple percentage and thematic extraction of responses were used to analyze data.

Data Analyses and Discussion

Table 1. Migrants and gender relations

	Variable label	Percentage
1.	Marriage of convenience exists	45%
2	Women are used as a ticket to obtain green papers	34%
3	Women are not used	2%
4	Women are used and dumped	13%
5	Both enjoyed it	6%

	Total	100%
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From table (1), (45%) respondents revealed that marriage of convenience does exist. Most migrants use women as a ticket to obtain green papers. From table 1. Also, (34%) respondents obliged that apart from squatting with significant others, women are used by migrants to shield themselves on arrival in the western world. They according to respondents are used to obtain green papers. These respondents also revealed that women especially the elderly are means of securing permanent residency. They contract marriage of convenience with the opposite gender but things do not seem right always as one or both parties intention are clouded with ulterior motives. Thus, from the table (1). 13% of respondents obliged that (45%) of the women who enter relationship/marriage of convenience are dumped by their partners. Nevertheless, (64%) respondent out of the (98%) above reported that the women enjoyed it while it lasted. From table (1)., responses revealed that (2%) are rather unaware or oblivious of the fact that marriage of convenience exists. But all the participants revealed that one of the problems of migrants is the problem of residency. And one of the ways of resolving this problem is getting attached to the opposite gender. A total of (6%) revealed that both enjoyed the relationship while it lasted. Following this, many gave an account of their knowledge on the subject matter.

According to respondent A " I only had a one-year residency permit. After it elapsed, I looked for one woman who has past childbearing age to move in with to secure my stay". Further probing revealed that the woman above childbearing age was sorted for to avoid giving birth to children having conceived the idea of getting another younger maiden with whom he will bear children and spend the rest of his life with. This response is in tandem with the findings of Thibaut and Kelly (1959). According to them, the social psychology of inter-tribal relations is that of unjust and unfair exploitation of the vulnerable.

The above response is similar to a key informant who revealed that "(99%) relationship with foreigners is economical". He reiterated that the majority of the migrants from developing world have this flair to relate with foreigners but relating with them as a life partner is seldom a come by phenomena. The reason is that most migrants especially those of African-Asian origin prefer to marry their fellow countryman. Countryman in this instance applies to both genders of the same origin. Thus, intimacy with a foreigner does not go beyond fun and green papers. Thus, the established relationship of convenience is to use the woman as a springboard to secure a permanent stay. This is in tandem with the findings of Adebayo (2001) and Marx (1818). According to them, the mindset individual import into dominative relationships is used as exploitative tools. In a similar vein, the responses above solidified Schutz (1955) assertions which opined that; people exclude or dominate those who are in a relationship with them to benefit more. Consequently, having satisfied oneself, the need to keep the other partner declines: they, therefore, untangle themselves. They sever the affairs and move on with their life.

According to respondent D, "I escaped deportation, immediately I got myself attached to another elderly woman who has money but out of marriage. " I stayed with her in tears. I prayed I could get out of the situation but because I was afraid of deportation, I stayed and managed the painful relationship. I always prayed that the woman should go out and never return" This is the fate of many foreigners abroad. They use the woman as an arbiter of staying abroad even though real affection does not exist.

About the above, a key informant reported that "I have the intention of surviving through any means. So, I compromised my marriage by getting other foreign women. I moved in with her. What business do I have in marriage with a foreigner? All I just wanted was a place to lay my head and secure my permanent residency". According to this respondent, he played love perfectly with the understanding of his wife and other family members who benefitted from the union. Till date, this has been the plight of many migrants.

Few foreigners have realized this fact. Consequently, according to a respondent," the white people want to wed you properly. They want to travel down to your village to perform some of the rites to ensure that you are not married at home". This they feel deter opposite gender who may be interested in their partner. But realities have shown that this does not deter either the parties who are hell-bent of marrying each other.

Thus, many people have gone ahead to contract another marriage with the woman or man of their choice. According to a respondent," I went ahead and wedded my heartthrob. " I thought I have arrived, I secretly married my wife. When the first woman realized, she conscripted all from me. I lost all and was rooming the street before the police picked on me. I spent days in detention before I was finally deported. I was unable to establish what will sustain me before she caught up with me". The respondent revealed that he was not the only one in that business. According to him, "is a way out of harsh foreign residency policies. Irrespective of the punishment, this act has remained unabated. And women continue to suffer the problem of illegal migration and fake marriages.

From the above responses, it is clear that woman is the first and final hope of many illegal migrants. Because most affairs are levelled with ulterior motives, women become the beast of burden. Gender specie to be used and dumped. But things have changed as the so-called "oyibo"-whites (westerners) have devised a means to un-robe those who are fraudulent in their emotional dealings with the opposite gender.

VI. Conclusion

The problem of illegal migration and residency permit is as old as man. The conglomeration of men using women temporarily and dumping them like a pack of cards is a problem that should border all. As far as illegal

migration continues unabated, opposite gender especially women will continue to be used and dumped like a beast of burden. Because responses have it that, that is one of the main ways of gaining green papers thus escaping deportation.

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