

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA OF ENSLAVEMENT AND GREENER PASTURES: THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICA'S SIXTH REGION

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Abstract

This paper examines the African Diaspora of enslavement and greener pastures: The emergence of Africa's sixth region. This paper explores the experiences of Africans during their Diaspora of enslavement. It also examines the Diaspora of greener pastures, emphasizing that economic instabilities and the quest for better economic prospect inspired such migrations even in the midst of obvious risk and uncertain future. In the same vein, it stresses on the opportunities and benefits that these Diaspora have given the people of Africa and the continent. It reveals the contribution that African Diaspora both to the world and the African continent. The paper used the historical method of qualitative analysis of primary and secondary sources. The finding of the paper revealed that although Africans faced numerous challenges, individuals of African descent may still find themselves ensnared in contemporary forms of enslavement, particularly through the pervasive issue of human trafficking. Furthermore, it also showed that the African Diaspora has significantly enhanced the living conditions of Africans, both on the continent and in communities outside of Africa. And that economic impact is the fundamental rationale behind the establishment of the sixth region, termed the African Diaspora, by the African Union (AU). Ultimately, the paper concludes that the African Diaspora serves as a crucial asset to the people of Africa.

Keywords: African Diaspora, Enslavement, Greener Pastures, Sixth Region

Introduction

The term "African Diaspora" encompasses communities of individuals of African ancestry who have either been forcefully displaced or have consciously chosen to migrate from Africa to various regions, including Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Asia, spanning from the 7th century AD to the contemporary period. These movements have occurred through various means, including the Trans-Saharan, transatlantic slave trade, voluntary resettlement, economic migration, and voluntary resettlement. From 15th to 19th Century, Africans were sold into slavery. However, Africans from the 20th century have continued to willfully migrate to other part of the world, notably, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

The Diaspora of enslavement started from the 15th century ¹ to the 19th century. These movements began with the capturing of Africans and selling them to the Europeans, who took them to Arab world, later to Europe and to the New World and resold them for plantation and mines labour in what is known as the transatlantic slave trade.² This trade is a joint venture between the Europeans and Africans. While the African Diaspora of greener started from the 20th century to the present. It was the voluntary migrations of Africans out of the continent in search for better living. Within this period under discussion, economic and political factors have caused many Africans to willfully migrate, particularly to Europe, North America, and the Middle East. This Diaspora even though it had its own risk associated to it, and shared some risky characteristics of the Diaspora of enslavement to an extent, however, Africans have continued to venture into it because of its better prospects.

The African Diaspora has been instrumental in social and political movements for civil and racial equality. The people of Africa and their leaders embrace and have continued to benefit from the African Diasporas proceeds.³ The African Union in consideration of the political and economic contributions of the African Diaspora in 2003 created the Sixth Region known as the African Diaspora. The purpose of its establishment is to give

¹ Benjamin Keen, *A History of Latin America: Ancient America to 1910* Vol1 (Boston, Houston MiefelinCompany, 1996).

² Ade A. International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa (UNESCO:1998), 305-315.

³"Introduction to the African Diaspora across the World," accessed 3 July, 2027,<https://www.experience-africa.de/index.php?en/the-african->

structural and organization backup to the African Diaspora. It is hoped that the Sixth Region of Africa may encourage the people of African descent to continue to support in the development of their ancestral continent. Many articles have been written about the subject matter but none has addressed the issue of the sixth region of Africa and what led to its creation, this and other glossed salient issues are what this paper intends to address in historical context. To this end, the discussions revolve around conceptual clarification, Diaspora of enslavement, the Diaspora of greener pastures, and the contribution of the Diaspora community and the sixth region of Africa.

Conceptual Clarification

The term "Diaspora" has its roots in Greek, deriving from the words "spora," meaning seed, and "speira," meaning spree. In ancient traditions, it was primarily utilized to describe the distribution of Hellenistic communities throughout the Mediterranean region.⁴ The word "Diaspora," until 1960s, was strictly used to describe the experiences of the Jewish people. The Diasporic experiences of the Jewish people started in about 6BC with the killing and exiling of the Jewish people of Samaria and reached its zenith with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army led by General Titus in 70AD. This military campaign led to the killing of many Jews, the exile of their elites and leaders and the selling into slavery of the majority of the inhabitants.⁵

In 1965, George Shepperson, attached the word "the Diaspora" to African experience by coining the phrase "African Diaspora." He observed a close parallel between the Jewish Diaspora and the dispersal of the Africans as a result of slave trade.⁶ However, irrespective of the coinage, the phrase "African Diaspora" did not at that time gain the immediate attention among the scholars and in the public domain. To explain this attention laxity, Edward opines that:

Despite Beachays (the first scholar to apply Shepperson's idea to his work), the concept African Diaspora did not generally catch on in the scholarly literature until about a decade after Shepperson coined it. This time lag is what Beaman calls, Ten-Year Adoption, since it reoccurs in the history of other disciplinary adoption and adaptation of Diaspora.⁷

In addition, many other scholars made efforts to make the phrase African Diaspora a normal name for the African experience, the following books *Black Homeland, Black Diaspora: Cross Current of the African Relationship* by Jacob Drachler in 1975; *The Africa Diaspora: Interpretative Essay* by Martin L. and Robert R. in 1976, and *African Documentary History of Black Diaspora in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean* in 1977.⁸ Each of these books contributed in bringing to limelight the legitimacy to the concept of African Diaspora within spheres of black studies and the wider audience.

In spite of these scholarly efforts, the phrase African Diaspora was still trailed with the controversy of acceptance. The phrase had a rough ride to its current status of displacing the Jewish application of the word. Its journey for acceptance, sparked intellectual debates, and the first of these debates was the First African Diaspora Institute held at Harvard University in 1979. In this institute, the semantic of the word was subjected to intense scrutiny and debate. Those against the usage of the phrase frowned at how another historical experience will be named after a unique one. They questioned why the word "Diaspora" which was used to describe the experiences of the Jews should be used to describe that of Africans, and demanded that since it has no place in African experiences that the word should be exunged from African vocabulary.⁹ Tony asserts that:

The term Diaspora be deleted from our vocabulary, because the term African Diaspora reinforces a tendency among those writing our history to see African people always in terms of parallel in white history ... We should do away with the expression "Africa Diaspora" because we are not Jews. Let us use some other terminology, let us speak of African Dispersions, or Uprooted Africa as somebody suggested or Scattered Africa.¹⁰

This response shows the extent of resentment that Tony had on the usage of the word and needed a word or

⁴J. Gaillard and A-M. Gaillard, "Fuite des cerveaux, retours et diasporas", *Futuribles*, No. 228, 1998:41.

⁵Elezar Dael, "The Jewish People as the Classic Diaspora: A Political Analysis". Retrieved May 10 2017, <http://en.m.org/wiki/jewish>⁵"Introduction to the African Diaspora across the World,"

⁵ Deuteronomy 28:64. See also NIV Study Bible; ⁵"Introduction to the African Diaspora across the World,"

⁶ Shepperson G., "The African Diaspora: Interpretative Essay," (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 17

⁷ Edward A. Defining the African Diaspora, A paper presented to the Centre for Comparative Social Analysis Workshop at the University of California, Los Angeles, on October 25th, 2001.

⁸ Jacco D, *Black Homeland: Black Diaspora: Cross Current of the African Relationship* (Port Washington NY: Kennikat, 1975); Martin L. and Robert, *The African Diaspora: Interpretative Essay* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1976); Graham w., *African Abroad: A documentary History of the Black Diaspora in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean During the Age of Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977)

⁹ Edward A. Tony Defining the Africa Diaspora, A Paper Presented to the Centre For Comparative Social Analysis Workshop at the University of California, Los Angeles, on October 25th, 2001.

¹⁰ Edward Tony.

terminology that sounds African, that is original, and could uniquely describe the African experiences.

In the same vein, Michael Echeruo re-echoed Tony's stance thus, "in a major sense, we have appropriated both the language and the theology of another historic discourse, without fully addressing, much less acknowledging, the consequences of the appropriation."¹¹ Consequently, Joseph Harris in 1966 used both term "Diaspora" and African "Scattered Children."¹² Considering the view of both the opponents and the proponents of the usage of the word, it is plausible to note that if semantically the word Diaspora is not of Jewish origin rather of a Greek origin used to refer to their unique experience that it is wrong to attack its usage in a similar experience especially when it has been used by the Jews. Chances are that the word could still be used for other people's experiences in the future. However, for the facts that with the overt displeasure by some scholars and the suggestion of alternative term was ignored for Diaspora, and have continued to be used by scholars, signifies that scholars are comfortable with it as a term that best depicts the African experience.

At this point it is important to explain the meaning of the phrase as it relates to the African experiences and its characteristics. Joseph Harris, defined African Diaspora as:

The global dispersion (forced or willful) of Africans throughout history; the emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social condition; and the psychological or physical return to homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African Diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, continuous, and complex phenomenon stretching across time, geography, class, and gender.¹³

This definition if critically viewed is all encompassing. This is because it attempted to portray all the features of African Diaspora both from a broad sense and from strict sense. Palmer Colin described the modern Africa Diaspora thus:

At its core, consists of millions of peoples of African descent living in various societies who are united by a past based significantly but not exclusively upon "racial" oppression and the struggles against it; and who, despite the cultural variations and political and other divisions among them, share an emotional bond with one another and with their ancestral continent and who also, regardless of their location, face broadly similar problems in constructing and realizing themselves.¹⁴

Palmer gives a vivid description of the subject matter of this discussion "African Diaspora of Enslavement and Greener Pastures. On the Characteristics of African Diaspora," Palmer states that:

Diaspora communities, generally speaking, possess some outstanding characteristics, which regardless of their location, members of a Diaspora share an emotional attachment to their ancestral land, are aware of dispersal, oppression and alienation in the countries also tends to possess a /sense of "racial" ethnic or religious identity that transcend geographical boundaries and a desire to return to their original homeland.¹⁵

African Union (AU), defined Africa Diaspora as "consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union"¹⁶ This AU definition from a careful look is too narrow or a self-centered one for lack of terms. In the sense that it ignored the past experience (which is one of the salient aspects of the term.) and only considered the assistance or benefits accruable from African Diaspora communities. Simply put, African Diaspora is the sum-total experience of Africans forcefully dispersed to different parts of the world, willfully migrations of Africans outside the continent, and their relationship with Africa.

Africa Diaspora of Enslavement

The Diaspora of enslavement is traced from the Arab slave trade that started around the 7th AD to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. In East Africa and the Sudan, many Africans were captured by the Arabs Islamic slave raiders and sold them outside Africa. This is known as the Arab' slave trade, while the European shipment of African slaves to Europe started in 1441 when the Portuguese took 10 African slaves from Rio de Oro in the Northwest coast of Africa to Portugal. The process by which these Africans were forcefully taken away from Africa was through warfare, trickery, banditry and kidnapping.¹⁷

¹¹Michael Echeruo."An African Diaspora: The Ontological Project, "The African Diaspora: African Origin And /zew World Identities.(Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999)3.

¹²The report of The International Congress Held at Da res Salam in 1966,In this congress Joseph Harris chaired a Session.

¹³ Joseph Harris. "Introduction," *Global Dimension of the African Diaspora*,2nd Edition (Washington: Howard University Press, 1993),3

¹⁴Colins Palmer, "Defining and Studying the modern Africa Diaspora: Perspectives," *American Historical Association Newsletter*,36 (September 1998), 8

¹⁵Palmer, "Defining and Studying the modern Africa Diaspora: Perspectives."

¹⁶ "Definition of African Diaspora," accessed 11th December 2016, <http://www.au.int/en>.

¹⁷ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Undeveloped Africa* (Abuja, Panat Publishing, 2005),109

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade in Africans was initiated by the Portuguese who made their way in the fifteenth century and later, other nations (England, France and Holand) from Europe joined. The trade in African slave took a different dimension when the lands of Americas and the West Indies engaged in mines and plantation work, and at the behest of Dominican Priest Bartholomew De Las Casas. Considering the high mortality rate among the West Indies Pollution as a result of foreign diseases and the hard plantation labour, made the native Africans slaves to be imported to ease the suffering of the West Indies. In order to obtain more slaves to meet the America's plantations and money demand.¹⁸ European traders involved brought to West Africa products which the local African traders cherished. They include gun and gunpowder, cheap cloth, beads and gin. And in exchange for these, African middlemen sold their fellow Africans to the Europeans. The motivations that led to the displacement of Africans from their homeland, namely slavery and imperialism, bear resemblance to the circumstances that dispersed the Jewish population. Consequently, it is easy to comprehend the prevalence of the term "the African Diaspora" as it pertains to the significant migration of individuals of African descent, which one estimate suggests resulted in millions being relocated to the Americas. From 1511, when the first fifty African slaves entered the West Indies to 1888, down to the abolition of the slave trade, the Caribbean, North, South and Central America was filled with peoples of African origin.¹⁹

African Diaspora of Enslavement Waves: A lot of scholars have attempted to outline the types of the African Diaspora, and notable among them are Ali Mazrui, Palmer Collins, and George Shepperson. Ali Mazrui identified two distinct categories within the African Diaspora: the earlier African Diaspora resulting from enslavement and the more contemporary Diaspora linked to colonization. He characterizes the Diaspora associated with colonization as individuals of African ancestry who were scattered across Europe and other regions of the world due to the effects of colonization and its subsequent consequences.²⁰ Collins Palmer delineated five significant waves of Diaspora that occurred at various historical intervals and for distinct reasons. The initial wave of the African Diaspora emerged approximately a century ago, stemming from substantial migration both within and beyond Africa. The second wave began around 3000 BC with the migration of the Bantu-speaking populations from what are now Cameroon and Nigeria. The third notable wave can be characterized as a trading Diaspora, encompassing the movement of traders, merchants, enslaved individuals, soldiers, and others to parts of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia during the fifteenth century.²¹ During this historical period, Muslim traders and slave merchants engaged in commerce throughout Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions. This commerce facilitated the establishment of communities comprising individuals of African descent in various locales, including India, Portugal, and Spain, as well as in the Italian city-states and other parts of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, long before Christopher Columbus embarked on his transatlantic voyages. Notably, Frank Snowden asserted that "the precise number of Ethiopians (Africans) who entered the Greco-Roman world due to military, diplomatic, and commercial activities is challenging to ascertain... all available evidence indicates a significant African presence, particularly within the population of the Roman world."²²

The fourth wave of Diaspora, often termed the Diaspora of enslavement, is linked to the Atlantic slave trade, which entailed the commodification of African individuals as slaves. This phenomenon took root in the 15th century and compelled approximately 200,000 Africans to relocate to various European societies, ultimately impacting around 12 million individuals from Africa to the American continent.²³ The experience associated with this diasporic movement represents the most severe iteration of the Diaspora across various dimensions. The fifth wave of Diaspora commenced in the 19th century, following the abolition of slavery, and coincided with the era of colonization. It also encompasses the migration associated with the pursuit of better opportunities.²⁴ P. Philip presents an alternative perspective regarding the time frame for defining the African Diaspora. He asserts that, while the African Diaspora possesses distinctive characteristics, certain elements of it are undeniably intertwined with other aspects of the human experience that warrant a comparative analysis.²⁵

The Experiences of the African Diaspora Due to Enslavement: These experiences typically began with an individual's capture, resulting from kidnapping, raids between communities, or betrayal by friends or family. Once taken, the enslaved person was shackled at the waist, and men were often restrained by their hands to prevent escape. Each person was connected to the next in line, initiating a harrowing journey led by ruthless slave drivers.

¹⁸ Keen, *A History of Latin America: Ancient America to 1910*.

¹⁹ George Shepperson, "The African Abroad or the African Diaspora: Emerging Themes of African History," (London: Heinemann Education Books, 1965), 152

²⁰ Ali Mazrui, *Babel*

²¹ Palmer, "Defining and Studying the modern Africa Diaspora: Perspectives."

²² F. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman World* (Toronto, Roots, 1979), 184

²³ R. Segal, *The Black Diaspora: Five Centuries of the Black Experience Outside Africa*, 1995, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

²⁴ Palmer, "Defining and Studying the modern Africa Diaspora: Perspectives."

²⁵ P. Philip, "The African Diaspora," in *Roots and Branches: Current Dimensions in Slave Studies*, edited by Michael Craton (Toronto: Roots, 1979), 7.

The enslaved individuals were compelled to walk long distances and faced severe beatings if they showed any signs of exhaustion. During this arduous process, those who resisted were killed, and those who fell ill were abandoned in the forest to perish. Upon reaching the coast, if no ship was available, they were forced to wait in makeshift enclosures until a vessel arrived.²⁶

The nightmare of the Middle Passage begins the moment the ship reaches America. This phase of the journey refers to the route taken across the Atlantic Ocean, from the coast of West Africa to the coasts of America. During this segment, a significant number of enslaved individuals often perish due to overcrowding and inadequate ventilation. The term "Middle Passage" was used because it was a segment of a triangular trade that originated and concluded in Europe. Ships departed from Europe to trade industrial goods for slaves at markets in Africa.²⁷

In a testimony before a commission, a captain of a slave ship was queried regarding the level of comfort experienced by enslaved individuals during the Middle Passage. His response was deeply unsettling, as he stated that their comfort was akin to that of a person confined in a coffin. Another surgeon aboard one of the slave vessels recounted his observations regarding the conditions of the enslaved, asserting that it was beyond the capacity of human imagination to conceive of a more horrifying and repulsive circumstance. The surgeon utilized precise terminology, referring to the conditions as dreadful and disgusting, due to the fact that the enslaved were often shackled together one individual's right foot attached to another's left foot or restrained to the deck by means of chains around their necks and legs. The individuals endured severely restricted movement, often encumbered by restrictive shackling that left them with virtually no space to move.²⁸ Christina describes the treatment given to the slave days before their arrival, thus:

Normally the captain aboard the ships would feed the slaves in the days before the arrival in the Caribbean to strengthen them for sale....To improve the slaves appearance the slaves would be oiled to make their skin shiny and wounds from whipping would be filled with hot tar in order to improve the chances of getting the best price possible for each slave.²⁹

The harrowing new epoch commenced with the arrival of enslaved individuals, who were subsequently subjected to commodification across various regions in North America and the Caribbean Islands. Following their arrival, these individuals were marked with a hot iron bearing the name of their purchaser and were promptly transported to plantations. Existence on these plantations was profoundly oppressive, characterized by the harsh treatment of merciless overseers. Ease summarized the experience of the slaves in the new world thus:

The Negro slaves were brutally treated in the new world and that the brutality which they suffered was more severe in the rice and tobacco plantations of South Carolina and West Indies, and worst in the West and English colonies of North, and bad in Brazil.³⁰

The slaves deeply resented their condition as slaves in the new world. This led to many slaves revolts against their masters. For instance, in Haiti, the slaves revolted and established themselves as masters even in Santu Domingo.³¹ The abolishment of slavery in the United States in 1833 did not end racial segregation rather it intensified it. To keep these blacks "in their place" the whites made a lot of efforts. For instance Terrorist Organization such as the Ku Klux Klan(KKK) and the Knight of Camelia, both established in 1866, were giving free hands to unleash violence or terror on the blacks.³² These cults intensified their action even when the 15th Amendment (that guarantee all men right to vote regardless of colour) was ratified in 1870. They lynched the blacks, maimed them and destroyed anything that belongs to them either through fire or other means.³³ The Blacks were prevented from buying home or property, in transportation a black person cannot sit in the front of a public bus. They were denied admission into American schools. This segregation and racism is not limited in the USA but also alive in Latin America. For instance, to stem the tide of humiliation that the blacks faced in that region, in 2003, the Federal Government of Brazil introduced the teaching of African history, Africa, and Afro-Brazilian cultures from primary to under level of education.³⁴

²⁶ J. E. Inikori, "The Origin of the Diaspora: The Slave Trade from Africa," in *The African Diaspora*, edited by A.I. Asiwaju and Michael Crowther, *Tarikh* Vol.5 No.4(1978):1-11. See also U. Esse, "African Diaspora," (Unpublished manuscript, Abia State University, Uturu).

²⁷ Inikori, "The Origin of the Diaspora."

²⁸ U. Esse, "African Diaspora,"

²⁹ P. Kristina, "The Middle Passage: From Africa to America," UNESCO ASPnet Projects, 2007.

³⁰ Keen, *A History of Latin America: Ancient America to 1910*, 80

³¹ Keen,

³² Walter Ibekwe Ofonagoro, "The African Present in North America," in *The African Diaspora*, edited by A.I. Asiwaju and Michael Crowther, *Tarikh* Vol.5 No.4(1978):56-78.

³³ H. Vincent, *We Changed the World: African Americans 1945-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 27.

³⁴ Law 10.639/2003

Diaspora of Greener Pastures

Diaspora of the Greener Pastures refers to Africans that on their own volition migrated out of Africa in search of better economic opportunities as a result of poverty and economic instabilities or uncertainties in the continent. Colonial period was the base of Diaspora of the Greener Pastures. This period witnessed the introduction of Western culture and most Africans wished to have one of their own trained in the white man countries (in either Europe or North America). The greener pasture started with the quest to acquire education. However, at the course of time economic advancement became the motivation. The frustration, poverty, and the hopelessness that engulfed Africans after the colonial period and upwards, increased the quest for greener pasture increased. Pamela Bridge water rightly declares that:

This second wave of the Diaspora (of enslavement) has come to the United States to fulfill their dreams not those of the slave traders or plantation owner. But too often, they have come here because they felt their dreams could not be fulfilled at home in Africa due to the strife, corruption and misrule that has marked too much of Africa's post-colonial history. While the second wave of the Diaspora represents the fulfillment of many individuals' dreams for greater prosperity and freedom, the magnitude of the exodus of Africa's best from the continent in many ways marks a failure of governance on the African continent.³⁵

Pamela words described the reality on the state of affairs regarding the Diaspora of greener pastures. More than 40,000 Africans with a Ph.D. work out of Africa, and for every 100 professionals sent overseas for training from Africa between 1982 and 1997, only 65 returned to Africa.³⁶

Experiences of the African Diaspora of Greener Pasture

In most cases, this Diaspora journey is comfortable for people who can afford it and with good preparation or arrangements such as where to stay, ready job or school. However, just like the risky nature of the Diaspora of enslavement, there are also risks associated with Diaspora of greener pasture, it is not always bed of roses. Africans from a very poor economic background are majority of the victims of these ugly experiences. Internet and Information Technology have created huge appetite of poor Africans to migrate. These images of life in the developed world (often heavily distorted) have spread wider, the information or misinformation about new economic opportunities, either real or imagined.³⁷ The promises of free sponsorship to these developed countries have ensnared many Africans.³⁸ There are many risks and experiences associated with the Diaspora of greener pasture. This part of the discussion will be human trafficking, stowaway and the Sahara Desert/ Mediterranean crossing. Human trafficking represents a grave infringement on human rights, characterized by the exploitation of individuals through methods such as coercion, deceit, or violence. This phenomenon manifests in various forms, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, and the trafficking of organs. A comprehensive examination of human trafficking experiences reveals several key categories:

1. Forced Labor: Individuals are coerced into working against their will in sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and domestic services.
2. Sexual Exploitation: This form entails the coercion of individuals into prostitution or other types of sexual exploitation.
3. Child and Organ Trafficking: This includes the exploitation of minors for both labor and sexual purposes, as well as their recruitment as child soldiers. The illegal trade in organs involves the coercion of victims to relinquish their organs.

Additionally, traffickers frequently target vulnerable populations, which encompass individuals living in poverty, refugees, and migrants. Women and children are particularly susceptible to trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Traffickers employ various strategies to exert control over their victims, which may include physical violence, psychological manipulation, debt bondage, and threats to the victims or their families. Victims are often misled with false assurances of legitimate employment, educational opportunities, or improved living conditions. The operations of human trafficking involve intricate networks that function both at national and international levels.³⁹

³⁵ Pamela E. Bridgewater, *The African Diaspora and its influence of African Development*, accessed 28, May 2017, <https://2001-2009.state.gov>

³⁶ Bridgewater, *The African Diaspora and its influence of African Development*

³⁷ Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diaspora: The mass Exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*, (London: International Limited, 1998), 2

³⁸ Many of the people interviewed are of the opinion that poor economic background could led them taking any risk and even victims echoes the same feeling.

³⁹ Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diaspora*:

Human trafficking just like the era of enslavement is an organized crime that involves many stakeholders. These stakeholders provide finance, authorities maneuvering strategies, and clandestine legal support. Furthermore, most Africans on their own out of desperation undertake the pains to travel out of Africa through the Sahara desert, and the Mediterranean Sea, and stowaway⁴⁰ away just to escape from the miseries in Africa. In this desperation, a lot of preparations are made for this uncertain journey to a better life. Family, friends, and even well-wishers financially and morally support these out-of-Africa movements. These supports are provided in anticipation of future gratification from the sponsored person. In fact, it is a kind of investment that is expected to yield returns in cash or kind. Should the sponsored one fail, it is seen as a lost investment, and in most cases such a one is stigmatized as a failure.⁴¹

To elucidate the significant urgency among Africans to seek opportunities beyond the continent, Chidiebere Onuoha recounts a personal experience as follows:

My elder brother and I grew increasingly disillusioned with the living conditions in Nigeria, which prompted us to seek a better life outside Nigeria and Africa. To facilitate our journey, we enlisted the assistance of Mr. Enos, an employee of the Nigerian Port Authority situated at Port Harcourt Wharf, to arrange for our stowaway passage. In preparation for this endeavor, we undertook extensive financial and material preparations and garnered support from friends. The vessel we intended to board originated from Ukraine and was in the process of unloading steel cargo. We stealthily acquainted ourselves with the crew while keeping our intentions confidential. Notably, some crew members practiced Buddhism and were pleased to learn of our interest in their faith, subsequently providing us with literature to enhance our understanding. On the designated departure day, we awoke early and proceeded to the Wharf; however, we were dismayed to learn that the ship had departed at 2 AM that morning. Our feelings of disappointment were profound, leaving us unable to articulate the extent of our dismay. We returned home in a state of despondency, lacking any desire for food.

Upon hearing about our experiences, our friends affectionately dubbed us "the Ukrainians."⁴²

It is worthy of note that in all our preparation for this journey, we were careless about our lives and safety, all that mattered to us was escaping the life of misery in Nigeria. Many Africans undergo more desperate measures than the one described here in bed to escape hunger and embrace promises or desired life outside Africa unfortunately become preys. The Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean route are also routes that people from mostly sub-Saharan Africa uses when other contacts failed. And only few Africans make it alive. Report has it that "in 2017, one in 36 migrants died attempting to cross the Mediterranean, and since 2014 16,850 migrants have died during the crossing."⁴³The fortunate few that crossed the desert and the sea huddles and arrived at Europe were also greeted with harsh economic realities. Consequently, they will be hiding from the authorities until the either get their papers or granted asylum but should either of these conditions failed, they were deported.

Contributions of the Diaspora Communities

The African Diasporas have amidst their challenges made a lot of contribution around the world in general and in Africa. In recognition of this, Winwood Beade warned that;

He who writes the history of the world, must not neglect to observe and describe this black stream of humanity which had poured into America from the Sudan. It has fertilized half of the continent with its labour, and set a world on fire with its wrongs; it has influenced the progress of commerce, culture and morality in Europe, and transformed a federation into a nationality.⁴⁴

The global Diaspora communities encompass nearly 800 million individuals of African descent residing on the African continent, with an additional estimated 100 million individuals living in various regions worldwide. The largest concentration is found in the United States, though significant populations are also present in Brazil, the Caribbean, Canada, and parts of Western Europe. In the United States alone, there are approximately 35 million citizens of African descent, collectively possessing a purchasing power estimated at \$450 billion annually. This financial capacity positions them as one of the 15 largest economies if treated as a singular entity. Furthermore, African immigrants in the United States represent an increasingly vital segment of the Diaspora, exhibiting some of the highest educational achievements among immigrant groups. Currently, there are over 250,000 scientists and physicians of African descent practicing in the United States. This number is based on 2003, if this numbers are made to reflect 2017, it will give a staggering number of economic contributions made

⁴⁰ In the past Africans were kidnapped and sold to the slave merchants against their volition, in Diaspora of Greener Pastures Africans willingly risk everything and even clandestinely hide in the ship to escape Africa.

⁴¹Chidiebere Onuoha, *This is my Story: My life Diary* (Contains unpublished Manuscript of the author's life experience).

⁴²Onuoha, *This is my Story: My life Diary*.

⁴³ "From Nigeria to Libya and Europe: The Risks on the Journey," <https://www.themgratproject.org/migrants-nigeria>

⁴⁴ Winwood, R. *The Africa Sketch-Book* (London: 1873);511-512.

by the African Diaspora community. And when it is multiplied with African Diaspora contributions in other part of the world the result will be huge. More specifically, these are the contributions of the Diaspora community.

More, specifically, two broad types of contributions are addressed namely outward and inward contributions.

Outward Contributions: These consist of the contributions that are the African Diaspora communities are making in their respective host countries. In the political realm, the Diaspora encompasses individuals such as Barack Obama, the former President of the United States, Michaëlle Jean, who previously served as the Secretary General of the Francophonie, and Christiane Taubira, a former Minister of justice in France, and many others who have powerful positions in the world. Economically, the Diaspora are economically active in their host countries. They are in every field of life and contributing to the economic development of the places. Their economic contribution is so huge that it cannot be measured. Culturally, the African Diaspora went with their culture and their gods which the host inhabitants also imbibed. They have also imposed themselves in the field of music etc.⁴⁵

Inward Contributions: This category encompasses the contributions made by African Diaspora communities to the African continent. It includes both direct and indirect remittances. Remittances from the African Diaspora refer to the funds transmitted by individuals of African descent residing outside the continent to their families or communities in their countries of origin. These financial transfers are instrumental in bolstering the economies of numerous African nations, serving as a vital source of foreign exchange and financial assistance for millions of households. Specifically, African migrants have remitted a minimum of \$40 billion in financial support to African countries in 2010 and these figures have continued to increase yearly.⁴⁶ Remittances are commonly utilized to fulfill fundamental requirements such as education, healthcare, housing, and investments in business. They significantly contribute to alleviating both the prevalence and intensity of poverty. By enabling households to diversify their income streams, remittances also serve as a vital source of savings and capital for investment. Furthermore, there is a correlation between remittances and increased household investment levels. Each year, the African Diaspora remits approximately 65 billion dollars to the continent, a figure that surpasses the total amount of international aid received, constituting substantial financial gifts to families.

In terms of trade and investment dynamics, the African Diaspora demonstrates a preference for goods and services from their countries of origin, thereby fostering "nostalgic trade" in ethnic products. More critically, migrants play a role in facilitating bilateral trade and investment exchanges. Additionally, they can contribute to the transfer of skills and technology to firms in their home countries, often through professional associations such as the Ghanaian Doctors and Dentists Association based in the United Kingdom temporary placements of skilled expatriates in their countries of origin, remote teaching initiatives, and the temporary return of emigrants who possess enhanced skills. Moreover, international migration positively influences the domestic skill level, as the aspiration for well-paying jobs with favorable working conditions abroad motivates citizens to pursue education in professional fields.⁴⁷

The "Fighting for Africa Continent Course" highlights the significant contributions made by the African Diaspora in relation to Africa, which extend beyond their efforts in the abolition of the slave trade. They played a crucial role in the decolonization of the continent as well. The concept of pan-Africanism can be traced back to the African Diaspora, as it originated as a unique political movement predominantly initiated and directed by its members. In 1900, Henry Sylvester Williams convened a conference in London to address the appropriation of land in the colonies, racial discrimination, and other pertinent issues affecting the black community. This gathering resulted in the drafting of a letter directed to the Queen of England and other European leaders, urging the elimination of racism and the granting of independence to the colonies.⁴⁸ As a result, a total of five additional pan-African conferences took place following the inaugural event. These conferences occurred in Paris in 1919, in London and Brussels in 1921, again in London and Lisbon in 1923, in New York in 1927, and finally in Manchester in 1945. Through these conferences, along with various other platforms, the African Diaspora fostered the emergence of nationalism, which gained momentum across the continent starting in the 1940s, ultimately leading to the independence of a majority of African nations and the creation of sixth region.

Sixth Region of Africa: The African Diaspora

In acknowledgment of their exemplary achievements and contributions globally, the African Union (AU), a prominent intergovernmental entity, has formally designated the African Diaspora as the sixth region of the African continent. The AU has urged individuals of African descent to actively participate in the developmental progress of Africa. Historically, the concept of the Sixth Region existed solely in theoretical discussions, lacking concrete organizational structures and tangible manifestation. However, the necessity to

⁴⁵From the Diaspora to the Sixth Region <https://thestateofafricandiaspora.com/the-6th-region/>

⁴⁶Dilip Ratha and Sonia Plaza, "Harnessing Diasporas," *Finance Development* Vol.28 No.3(2011):49

⁴⁷ Ratha and Plaza, "Harnessing Diasporas."

⁴⁸J. Frick, *History Learner's Book* (South Africa: New African Books, 2006), 235

institutionalize this recognition, transitioning the Diaspora from a mere de facto status to an officially recognized de jure status, has catalyzed its establishment. This initiative was notably supported by Ghanaian President John Kufuor⁴⁹ Kufuor was the first African leader to promote the realization of the Diaspora Africa Forum's concept, establishing it as a vital link between Africa and its Diaspora. He donated a portion of land at the historic W. E. B. Dubois Compound for the establishment of the inaugural Embassy for the Sixth Region. With the backing of the global Diaspora community, the embassy was constructed and formally inaugurated. The event was attended by notable African-American figures, including Reverend Jesse Jackson and Ambassador Andrew Young, alongside numerous Africans from across the continent. Kufuor further demonstrated his commitment to the Diaspora by being the inaugural country to grant full diplomatic status to the Diaspora African Forum (DAF).

Since its inception, the Forum has aimed to facilitate and invigorate the emergence and engagement of various Diaspora organizations in African matters. It was established in alignment with the mission and objectives of the African Union and has acted as an umbrella organization for a diverse range of Diaspora groups. The Forum plays a pivotal role in coordinating support and disseminating information among Diaspora entities and other organizations while also conducting charitable and relief initiatives. Notably, it operates as an independent entity that has refrained from accepting funding from any governmental bodies or the African Union, asserting that the Diaspora should contribute to the African Union and its member states rather than becoming an additional burden. The Diaspora, akin to a nation, aspires to actively participate in the financing and administration of African affairs in meaningful ways.⁵⁰

Motivated by its productive collaborations with the Forum and various Diaspora organizations, the African Union took additional steps to bolster the 6th Region. This was exemplified on a momentous day in May 2012, when DAF and numerous other organizations witnessed the culmination of their extensive efforts during the African Union's Global African Diaspora Summit, convened in Sandton City, Johannesburg, South Africa. At this summit, Heads of State ratified a Declaration that acknowledged the 6th Region of Africa and launched the inaugural African Union Diaspora Program.⁵¹

Inspired by Ghana's initiatives, various African nations have implemented policies and frameworks designed to acknowledge and formalize the role of their Diaspora populations. For example, the Kenyan Government introduced the Diaspora Bond in 2014 and subsequently launched its inaugural mobile-based bond in 2018. Similarly, Senegal has developed institutions and systems that facilitate investment opportunities and electoral participation for its Diaspora citizens. Benin has been recognized as one of the early adopters of Diaspora engagement policies. Morocco has expanded its Diaspora institutions to enhance engagement efforts. Cape Verde has enacted a policy enabling citizens residing abroad to partake in national elections. Additionally, Rwanda has created a dedicated directorate within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2017, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) to further strengthen its engagement with the Diaspora community.⁵²

Notably, 41 African nations have successfully institutionalized engagement with their Diaspora populations. Additionally, 21 of these countries have implemented specific policies, while 30 have set up dedicated institutions to facilitate such engagement. These initiatives have led to the association of the term "Sixth Region" with the African Diaspora. A significant milestone occurred in 2017 in Ghana, at the historic WEB Du Bois compound, which also serves as the location for the Diaspora African Forum, where the inaugural mass swearing-in ceremony took place. On this momentous occasion, thirty-five individuals from the African Diaspora were officially sworn in as citizens of Ghana.

Conclusion

The paper addressed the African Diaspora, specifically in relation to forced enslavement and the pursuit of improved living conditions, and how these phenomena contributed to the establishment of the Sixth Region of Africa. It emphasized that the term 'Diaspora' extends beyond the Jewish context, originating from Hellenistic traditions; thus, it ought to be applied to describe analogous historical events associated with Greek dispersions. The text identified five significant waves of Diaspora, beginning with Arab slave raids of Africans in 7 AD and culminating in the 19th-century transatlantic slave trade. It analyzed the enslavement aspect of the Diaspora, particularly the Transatlantic slave trade, detailing the methods of capturing individuals through warfare and abduction, the harrowing conditions endured during the middle passage, the mortality rates involved, and the staggering number of Africans who ultimately reached American soil, as well as the severe labor, segregation, and racism they faced.

⁴⁹Dr. Bennett's question, answered by President Kufuor's suggestion to President Wade, gave rise to the concept and principle of "The Sixth Region of Africa."

⁵⁰"Brief History of the Sixth Region of Africa," accessed June, 10, 2017, www.africa.org

⁵¹Brief History of the Sixth Region of Africa,"

⁵²Brief History of the Sixth Region of Africa,"

In addition, the paper investigated the phenomenon of seeking 'greener pastures,' which emerged during the colonial era. It illustrated how, during this time and subsequently, many Africans migrated out of the continent in search of improved economic prospects due to various uncertainties. It also highlighted the inherent dangers of this Diaspora, which, similar to the experience of enslavement, included issues such as human trafficking and racial discrimination. The text asserted that both forms of the African Diaspora enslavement and the quest for better opportunities despite their formidable challenges, have significantly contributed to the economic and cultural development of both the host nations and the African homeland. It further noted that the African Union (AU) recognized these contributions in 2003 by creating the Sixth Region as a means to facilitate the overall advancement of the African continent.

Furthermore, the authors posit the existence of a conceptually "virtual" eighth continent. Distinct demographically and geopolitically from the traditionally acknowledged continents Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America, and Australia the virtual eighth continent is characterized by the diversity inherent in global Diaspora communities derived from these recognized regions. This eighth continent has the potential to exert similar influences on global development as exemplified by the Sixth Region of Africa. The collective aggregation of various continental Diaspora communities suggests the existence of this virtual eighth continent. The notion of the eighth continent has garnered recognition from reputable virtual sources in cyberspace, based on research inquiries and the findings that have emerged. According to a prominent, authoritative source, the global Diaspora may be viewed as the "eighth continent," not in a geographic sense, but as a transnational network that is culturally interconnected and politically significant, spanning multiple continents. This construct shapes identities and impacts both origin and host nations through shared consciousness, resources, and transnational relationships, fostering a collective identity and destiny that transcends national borders to form a globally interconnected community with specific cultural and political relevance.