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The Role of Social Security and Migrant Welfare in Recentering the African Diaspora: The Export of Ugandan Labor to the Gulf and Cooperating Implications for Global Development

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Abstract
The study's objective was to determine the processes by which labour externalisation takes place and how it impacts Uganda's economic development. A survey was conducted of 806 migrants who had returned from the GCC countries using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data were collected using a computer-assisted in-person interviewing technique (CAPI). There was a descriptive level of analysis as well as a multivariate level of analysis. At the multivariate level, a probit, a logit, and finally a complementary log-log (clog log) are estimated.

The study's findings revealed that, despite some disruption brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has reportedly been a rise in demand for Uganda's export of inexpensive migrant labour to the GCC nations during the previous 10 years. The highest growth has been seen in the category of domestic employees, who are mostly young women. Higher rates of underemployment and unemployment in Uganda are the key factors causing labour externalisation. These have driven workers to relocate through unregistered and unlicensed enterprises to the Middle Eastern countries.

According to the report, the government should thoroughly regulate the externalisation industry by registering and issuing licences to businesses that me*et al*l standards, open embassies in the target nations, and sign labour export agreements with all Middle Eastern nations that export workers.

Keywords: Middle east countries, uganda, remittances, migrant labourers and labor export.

Introduction

The world's oldest approach for eradicating poverty and promoting human development is labour migration (UNDP, 2015). When the Migration Policy Framework for Africa was created in 2006 and its implementation was approved in January 2015, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) acknowledged the significance of migration for the development of the African continent. Remittances have climbed globally, according to data from the World Bank, from $613 billion in 2017 to the record-breaking $689 billion in 2018. The worldwide remittances industry was expected to reach $49.49 billion in 2019/2020, however the COVID-19 pandemic upset this trend (Arenas-Arroyo *et al*., 2020; World Bank, 2020). This increase can be attributed to a number of factors, including an increase in migration to wealthy nations, a decrease in transfer fees as a result of UN pressure, the growth and adoption of mobile payment platforms, and the popularity of non-bank remittance providers like MoneyGram and Western Union (ILO, 2018; World Bank Group, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). In addition, there has been a worldwide increase in urbanisation and the number of refugees. With the exception of Mexico, which remitted $31 billion annually, migrant workers from India, China, and the Philippines sent the biggest percentage, amounting to $69 billion, $64 billion, and $33 billion correspondingly. This has helped these nations' economies grow in tandem (Gaudecker *et al*., 2020; UN Women, 2017; World Bank., 2020) [14].

According to a research by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, in 2017, it was projected that close to 70,000 Ugandans were working in the Middle East, while 50,000 had relocated on their own terms, 64% of whom were young people (UPFYA). Remittances to Uganda were estimated to be Sh4.6 trillion ($1.6 billion) in 2016, Sh7 trillion ($2.0 billion) in 2017, and they have remained on an upward trend despite being hampered by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The safety of migrant workers, facilitating their mobility, and making it simpler to recognise their skills were recognised as priority for the continent by the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP). In order to develop rights-based and sector-specific labour migration policies, tripartite consultations are being held at the national and sub-regional levels in a number of African nations and RECs (such as SADC, EAC, IGAD, Morocco, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania). The BLA, which the Ugandan government is presently considering, would allow for the placement of one million men and women in Saudi households over the course of the following five years, demonstrating the continued progress of cooperation between African nations and the Gulf States. Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi have already signed such BLAs, while talks are currently taking place between Madagascar and the Republic of Comoros and the Gulf States. Additionally, Ethiopia has BLAs with Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. The Externalization of Labor Bill was introduced by a private member of the Ugandan Parliament on February 28. This came after multiple reports detailing the exploitation of Ugandan migrant workers, particularly in the Middle East, in both social and mainstream media. This came after Uganda adopted a labour externalisation policy in 2005 to reduce the nation's oversupply of workers and the unemployment that had ravaged the nation for years. Despite being lucrative for the players, the sector lacks real oversight, which has led to the maltreatment of migrant workers from Uganda into Middle Eastern countries.

Over 78% of Uganda's population is under 30 years old, making it one of the youngest and most populous countries in the world. Despite this growth in the working-age population in Uganda, both the skilled and unskilled labour markets are virtually contracting. This has made it hard for the 500,000 young people who enter the work force each year in this country. Due to the high rates of unemployment, many young Ugandans are turning to labour export as a realistic source of income. One of the main drivers of labour externalisation is globalisation, which has conceivably led to the integration of international markets and economies, resulting in the flow of both labour and knowledge between industrialised and poor countries. The phenomenon of labour externalisation is not unique to Uganda; many other nations, especially developing nations, adopted labour export as a band-aid solution to the widespread unemployment that ravaged most of those nations in the early 1990s. This was particularly evident in Asian nations like India, China, and the Philippines, and those countries have since reaped the benefits of their efforts. One of the most profitable industries in the world, the labour exporting sector is thought to be worth more than US $613 billion globally. Remittances from Ugandans working abroad made up 4.5% of the country's GDP in 2017, up 1.7% from 2016 (BoU, 2020 [8]) (BoU, 2018), and rising to over 2% in 2020. (BoU, 2021 [7]; MoFPED, 2021 [19]; World Bank, 2020). Despite these advantages, labour externalisation has encountered numerous difficulties. For instance, the government of Uganda stopped exporting labour to the Gulf Cooperating Countries in 2016 because of abuse, mistreatment, non-payment, and human trafficking (Atong *et al*., 2018; Bisong, 2021; Bwowe, 2021 [9]; Namaganda and Laiboni, 2019 [20]; UNICEF, 2021) [26]. The government suggested a regulatory framework in 2018 to safeguard the Since the framework's implementation, however, little is known about the GCC countries' labour externalisation pathways or their development ramifications, such as how Uganda is faring in this regard. In order to maximise the benefits of labour externalisation to the GCCs, this research will offer relevant intervention methods and examine the pathways of labour externalisation and the development implications for Uganda. There is little evidence for labour migrants in the GCCs, but studies on migration have generally concentrated on migrants to the developed world. This essay contends that since 2003, a new diaspora has emerged in the Gulf States, including Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, which includes skilled and non-skilled labour. This trend is expected to continue, despite the fact that traditional classical destination places for Ugandan labour migrants were previously known to be the UK, USA, South Africa, and Kenya. Thus, we investigate the means through which labour can be externalised to the Gulf Cooperating Countries (GCCs) and the effects on Uganda's development.

Motivation

Even so, it's still uncertain how many Ugandan migrant workers are actually employed in the GCC nations. Over 31,859 Ugandans, according to data from the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD), are believed to have gone to the Middle East in pursuit of employment between 2016 and 2018. (Namaganda and Laiboni, 2019) [20]. Furthermore, it is expected that 12,000 Ugandan migrants seek jobs each year in the GCC countries, and this figure has been rising since 2010. (Bwowe, 2021) [9]. According to some more reports, this number will exceed 100,000 from 2016 to 2018. (MoFPED, 2021 [19]; Ssonko, 2020) [24].

According to UN estimates, over 620,000 Ugandans may reside and work abroad, particularly in the Middle East, East Africa, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The variation in the actual numbers of Ugandan labour migrants may be caused by a lack of data on this subject as well as human trafficking across porous borders (Nattabi *et al*., 2020) [21].. There are currently 140,402 externalised workers in the GCC, with 98% of them working as casual labourers, 0.2% as professionals, and 1.8% as semi-professionals. One of Uganda's main exports today is labour, which helps to absorb the country's plentiful labour supply while also generating opportunities and raising remittances to Uganda. The primary draws for migrant workers to the Middle East are the higher wages for both unskilled and semi-skilled workers, with salaries ranging from $300 to $1000 depending on the sector and job type. In 2019 Ugandan remittances from the Middle East stood at over $500m, increasing to over $1.3b in the subsequent year according to the Bank of Uganda (BoU, 2020; Nattabi *et al*., 2020) [21]. However, this momentum was slowed down by the outbreak of the pandemic.

Review of Literature

Challenges Faced By Migrant Workers in Accessing Social Protection

In terms of their access to social security in general and the mobility of social security benefits in particular, migrant workers face considerable obstacles on a global scale. The fundamental issues facing ASEAN and the rest of the world are concisely outlined in Tamagno's (2008) conclusion.

Workers who migrate to and from Africa, especially those who go to Gulf nations, are subject to legal stumbling blocks because they are frequently legally barred from receiving social security. This can be due to their particular immigration status (e.g., they might be migrant workers without documentation), which normally disqualifies them from receiving benefits. Most contributory social security programmes are typically only available to permanent residents or long-term migratory workers in various nations. As an alternative, a social security law may expressly exclude migrant employees in general or in particular categories, as well as migrant workers' families. The majority of non-contributory social security benefits are only available to citizens and, on occasion, permanent residents. Nationality limitations are so frequently placed on migrant workers. Additionally, people might need to have lived in a nation for a specific amount of time before becoming eligible for some social security payments. Also, social security policies might not be applicable outside of a nation's borders due to territoriality limits. The most recent AU Report on Labour Migration Statistics made note of this.

Although (Documented) migrant workers may be granted labour rights protection via bilateral labour agreements (BLAs), such as MOUs with African nations, social security is infrequently included. 8 With a few exceptions, other factors that contribute to the legal exclusion of African migrant workers include the absence of bilateral social security agreements between African countries and GCC countries, as well as frequently between African countries. When it comes to access to the social security benefits covered by the agreement, such agreements usually provide equal treatment for nationals and non-nationals. Additionally, they typically include provisions for benefit portability and other social security coordination concepts, such as enabling migrant employees to complete the necessary qualifying periods for entitlements by adding up all of their periods of contribution. However, where bilateral and multilateral social security agreements exist, they tend to cover only migrant workers in formal employment, leaving migrants working in the informal economy without any significant level of protection.

Other drawbacks include difficulties with administrative procedure, immigration law, language limitations, and similar impediments. Authorities frequently demand a passport or other nationality registration document, neither of which are always readily available to foreign employees. If they are eligible for membership, migrant workers might also need to register as members and make payments before they are eligible to receive benefits from a social security programme. Additionally, there may be limitations placed on migrant workers' capacity to switch employers, a practise that is already common in many countries of destination, particularly some Gulf nations. The larger problem that migratory workers whose employment contracts have ended frequently have to depart the destination country within a short period of time is closely related to this argument. Due to timing restrictions, these workers frequently miss out on receiving social security payments even in situations where they could otherwise be eligible for them. This demonstrates the need for improved coordination between immigration law and policy and social security protection on the one hand.

When leaving the nation, migrant employees who may be entitled for benefits may take lump-sum withdrawals of accrued pension contributions in some countries with retirement provident fund schemes and occasionally in those with pension plans as well. It should be noted that this offers only a minimal level of security because lump sum payments do not guarantee monthly pension payments. 10 A lengthy time of payments is typically required to get long-term benefits (such pensions), which effectively disqualifies many foreign employees. According to research done from an African viewpoint, "Unlike nationals, migrant workers frequently fail to qualify for benefits under contributory social insurance schemes, due to shorter periods of employment and residency or due to their status as non-nationals. The lack of bilateral or multilateral agreements may prevent migrant workers from continuing to receive benefits when they move from one country to another. This is particularly true of long-term benefits (e.g. invalidity, old age and survivors' benefits) for which the qualifying periods are often considerable

In many nations and areas, coverage is insufficient, according to the AU Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa (2020). Only 45% of the world's population, according to the ILO's 2017 estimate, is protected by at least one social benefit (relevant to SDG indicator 1.3.1). This percentage is much lower in Africa, where it is 17.8%. In general, social protection coverage in Africa is substantially lower than the global average. Since migrant workers face more barriers to obtaining social protection, statistics on the social protection coverage of migrants and their families are typically scarce or nonexistent. However, coverage is likely to be significantly lower than for the rest of the population.

Because they receive less social protection both at home and in the host nation, migrant workers are at a double disadvantage. Despite contributing to the home country's economy through labour, consumption, and taxation, they are frequently left out of tax-financed programmes in destination nations, such as social assistance or pension plans. Several nations have taken action to make up for this shortage among their frequently sizable labour populations working overseas after becoming aware of these difficulties. Still, the large majority of migrant workers "do not have the option of enrolling in their own national social security systems or that of the host country, or they cannot transfer the accrued contributions or entitlements between social security systems (see also the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157))

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, which was signed in 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco, outlines a number of guiding principles as well as specific actions to be taken in the areas of border control, documentation, migrant services, building state capacity, consular protection, skill recognition, transferable mechanisms, and creating environments that allow migrants and diasporas to be development actors.

Other policy measures include the National Migration Policy of 2016 (NMP). Additionally, the 2016 National Migration Policy specifically highlights the need to maximise emigrants' potential for development; to develop incentives to keep Ghanaian professionals; to provide a framework for emigrants' financial contributions to national development goals; to encourage and facilitate skilled emigrants' returns through brain gain initiatives like reintegration packages; and to increase research and data collection on emigrant issues. It also advises creating a database of Ghanaian expatriates, establishing micro-level support for activities in the diaspora, and registering all expatriates with the National Identification Authority.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional mixed-methods approach with an 806 returnee survey carried out in Kampala, Uganda, to gather data. The major labour industry experts, knowledgeable people, and practitioners participated in key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) as part of a qualitative questionnaire that was used to supplement the quantitative data. Both descriptive and multivariate levels of analysis are performed.

Multivariable Level Analysis

The empirical approach uses a rather broad context to model labour externalisation and its effects on development. The first step is to establish labour externalisation as a binary variable based on respondents' future expectations for migrant workers' travel to the GCC. The possibility of future migration of employees from Uganda to GCC nations was used to measure externalisation. While the impact of labour externalisation on development was measured by whether a migrant worker had ever made investments in Uganda using GCC funds as well as if they had ever sent remittances home. Due to the binary nature of the outcome variables, a binary logistic model is performed after a probit model. The difference between these modeling techniques lies in the assumptions made about their respective error terms (Baltagi, 2021 [3]; Hsiao, 2007 [15]; Wooldridge, 2002) [27]. i.e. probit model follows a normal distribution while the logit model follows a logistic distribution function.

The binary outcome variables that we are interested in are the perceptions of future migrant workers in the GCC by returnees, as well as two indicators of development: whether the migrant worker sent remittances while in the GCC and if remittances were invested. Considering that y jarare the three outcomes we are most interested in;

Results and Discussion

To gain a sense of the data, a descriptive data analysis is performed first. The results are shown in the tables below as summary statistics of the main study variables.

Table 1: Summary statistics of respondents

Characteristics	Percentage	Number of Respondents
Region of Origin		
Central	60.1	484
East	17.3	139
North	1.7	14
West	21.0	169
Sex		
Male	21.3	172
Female	78.7	634
Age		
18-24	20.5	165
25-39	75.6	609
40-50	4.0	32
Marital Status		
Never married	37.6	303
Married/Cohabiting	41.8	337
Widowed	0.9	7
Divorced	0.7	6
Separated	19.0	153
Education Level		
None	1.5	12
Primary	18.5	149
Secondary	63.4	511
Diploma	11.0	89
University	5.6	45
Religion		
Catholic	25.6	206
Anglican	21.0	169
Muslim	33.8	272
Pentecostal	18.2	147
Others	1.5	12
Total	100.0	806

Source: Authors own compilation from survey data

According to the descriptive statistics, the central area, which accounted for 60.1% of those leaving for the Gulf nations seeking employment, was the biggest contributor. The west and eastern regions came in second and third, respectively. Since working abroad is a very expensive endeavour that occasionally necessitates selling family assets like land and cattle, the larger numbers in the centre are caused by its closeness to information and labour exporting enterprises. In other areas, like the North, these resources are hard to come by. Due to the fact that the majority of occupations in the Gulf region are internal, such as those for maids, cleaners, chefs, and other household staff, while the majority of male employment is in the security and transportation industries, there is a particular focus on female youth. When age is taken into account, individuals between the ages of (25-39) make up the majority (75.6%), followed by those between the ages of (18–24) at 20.5%. Due to the nation's high unemployment rates, married people have been compelled to look for work in Gulf nations, where they make up 41.8% of the population, outnumbering the category of never-married people (376). The degree of education captures the quality of the labour Uganda exports to the Gulf nations, for example, the secondary (63.4) and primary (18.5) levels of education were the most prevalent levels of education recorded in this survey. Such low-skilled manpower attracts low pay and also faces mistreatment by their employers. This explains the rampant cases of exploitation and mistreatment that these workers have reported over the years. Although religion does not feature significantly, Muslims seem to be more than other religions among the individuals moving to the Gulf countries for work.

Discussion

The study's findings showed that, although the COVID-19 epidemic has caused some disruption, there has been a reported increase in the demand for the export of cheap migrant labour from Uganda to the GCC countries over the past ten years. Most domestic workers are young women, and this group has seen the highest growth. While there has been a little growth in other categories. Higher rates of unemployment and underemployment stand out as the two main driving forces behind labour externalisation in Uganda. As a result, workers are being forced to take drastic measures in their search for work, even risking their lives by travelling to Middle Eastern nations through unregistered and unlicensed companies. In their investigation into the export of Ugandan domestic workers to the GCC, Nagaanda and Laiboni (2019) [20]. Reported a finding that is very similar to this one. The majority of reported cases of mistreatment of migrant workers have been related to work, salary withholding, non-payment, and charging of exorbitant costs by local exporting firms. Salary paid, travel costs, and hours worked also feature as factors influencing labour externalisation among migrant workers. The necessity that migrant workers have sponsors or employers before obtaining work permits in order to work in the GCC countries gives employers much too much influence over migrant workers' lives, including their income, welfare, and working conditions. This exacerbated the mistreatment and exploitation endured by Ugandan migrant workers, ranging from mild punishments such as beatings, sexual harassment, non-payment of salaries, and work overload.

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, there is no denying that the Middle Eastern countries' acceptance of Uganda's excess labour force has enhanced the welfare of migrant workers by raising their living standards and those of their families. We can observe that labour externalisation does actually enhance development possibilities (i.e. sending of remittances and investment of the remittances). Through groups like the Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA), the Employment Services Externalization Department of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the Ministry of Internal Affairs Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Department, the media, and local and international NGO, Uganda has developed and put into practise a number of measures to improve the situation of migrant workers in the Middle East. For instance, in 2015-2016, 200 domestic workers were relocated from the Middle East. In addition, the government put a stop to the export of labour to various Middle Eastern nations. This was done after a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed to guarantee the rights and safety of migrant workers in GCC nations. Improved monitoring and contract enforcement in the process of labour externalisation, as well as improved communication amongst MDAs directly involved in migrant workers' difficulties, have all been made possible thanks to the creation of a framework on labour migration. However, despite these improvements, Ugandans migrant workers have continued reporting cases of unlicensed job placements, extortion and overcharging of prospective migrant workers, lack of pre-departure training and orientation, lack of employment contracts, and their enforcement. Operation through numerous stages of middlemen between local recruiting companies and prospective employers in the Middle East also causes a lot of challenges.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Access to social protection in both the country of origin and the country of destination depends on a supportive institutional environment. Additionally, to the extent that the diaspora is engaged, this may have an impact on domestic politics and policies, including how the diaspora is treated in terms of social protection. The institutional framework is concerned with the assistance provided by consulates, the institutional frameworks in the country of origin providing assistance, and the potential for interest-representing institutions (for instance, parliamentary representatives elected by the diaspora; official consultative bodies); Establish migrant workers networks (such as diaspora networks or organisations for returning migrant workers), guided by the approved policies and procedures, to identify aid protocols appropriate for the destination country.

On the basis of an operational monitoring and evaluation methodology, track the MWP's performance and assess its successes. Agencies that represent migrant employees should make sure that the contract terms for externalised workers are in line with global norms, such as those included in the ILO Labour Standards. Benefits for workers such as social benefits, time off from work, and work overload should also be promoted. To promote diligence and investment and development by externalised employees, the challenge of family members stealing migrant worker remittances should be criminalised. In order to establish and maintain touch with all migrant employees who have been exported through licenced labour exporting enterprises, government externalisation labour oversight bodies should mandate that they do so. Government together with labor exporting firms should time to time intervene to rescue migrant workers facing hardships and suffering in their countries of destination. Since, generally speaking, too little is known about what works and does not work in a particular context, the success and streamlining of Country-of-Origin social protection and welfare support measures are based on an adequate evidence foundation and an expanded data environment. This calls for improved statistical capabilities, particularly in countries of origin, as well as specialised data collection and evaluation methods, such as mandatory post-program evaluation frameworks for all funded and implemented programmes and projects, mandatory labour force surveys in countries of origin and destination, and mandatory information templates for all projects and programmes.

Favorable investment prospects in public and private assets could further boost the ability of the country of origin to finance social protection. To achieve this, unique incentive mechanisms and dedicated institutional arrangements (which may be mainstreamed into national investment institutions) may need to be created. A number of nations have created incentives, such as the issuance of diaspora bonds, to draw investments from the diaspora in particular.

Given the limited success experienced with measures to assure the permanent return of highly skilled migrants to countries of origin in Africa, the integration of qualified migrants in addressing essential labour market skills shortages in countries of origin is especially important.

The study makes the following recommendations in order to improve the working conditions for Ugandan migrants who travel to Middle Eastern countries, given that the driving forces behind their migration, such as unemployment, underemployment, and higher wages for low-skilled workers, are unlikely to abate any time soon.

One is to raise general awareness among potential migrant workers about available migratory procedures and governmental laws, regulations, and policies. To help safeguard and protect Ugandan migrant workers travelling to their countries of employment, the government should establish fully operational and well-facilitated embassies or consulates abroad. These embassies should have quick response and financial aid mechanisms to assist workers in life-threatening situations. The government should evaluate the ILO convention on labour and decent work as well as employment-related laws like the Employment Act of 2006. (ILO convention 189). Health and occupational safety as well as agreement on a set minimum wage should be at the top of the agenda as the government, through the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD), begins and first trucks the processes of establishing and negotiating bilateral labour contracts, agreements, and arrangements with the major labour importing countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

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