Sub-Saharan "Illegal" Renegade 'Communities': A Metaphorical Shift from Transnationality to 'Transition-ality'

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Abstract

The category of "Illegal" immigrants, in which the present article is interested, is conventionally referred to in the discourse of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as 'large scale influx'. To differentiate it from the UNHCR collective designation, I refer to it as "sub-Saharan Renegades". By this nomenclature, I intend that this "transition-al" congregation of individuals' who should be conceptualized neither as independent subjects with a certain agency and a certain personhood, nor merely as a mass of human influx, tend to disrupt the widely accepted narrative that Globalization and its Western neo-liberal transnational economic models empower underprivileged sub-Saharan countries. The on-going plethora of literature produced in probing the "illegal" immigrant problematic risks to be a set of rich and various, yet distracted attempts to answer the challenging questions raised by the chaotic alienation of these transitional communities, stranded between an overpowering competition-based individualism, and a dwindling sense of native African communalism. This diasporic category mandatorily transforms into an invisible community during the risky and life threatening desert-crossing. Figuratively, they migrate out of the dictates of the high echelons of world powers and the deleterious offshoots of their imposed political and economic orders, only to seek to cross to Europe in a boomerang effect to the world wherefrom globalist financial policies in sub-Saharan Africa have originally emanated. During the long "illegal" immigrants' crossing to Europe, and on account of their limited resources, the 'renegades' inform and update one another about the do's and don'ts of the precarious border-crossings, share food, maps, crucial information about traffickers, do translation work, sell goods, etc. My focal point here is that there is an overwhelming consensus that the precarious crossings of the desert and the other multiple transitional populated geographies (fraught with danger, violence, abuse, disorientation, and possibly death) is quasi unendurable outside these informally organized temporary communities.

It would be helpful to debate on what scholarship and academia can make of the ephemerality and instability of these communities in transit, and to what extent these communities reflect the crises in postcolonial studies, cosmopolitan ideals, nationalist ideologies, and neo-liberal economies, all at once. To what extent are these renegade communities' transition-ality a tool to debate one of the crises of celebrated transnationality? Asked differently, are these communities in transit not a paradigm of globalization's economical transnationality an account of cultural transition-ality? Is the 'renegade communities' phenomenon a metaphor of how cultural fusion and tolerance could effortlessly be improvised among multi-national, multi-ethnic groups without the supreme guardianship of academia and authoritative institutions? or is it a metaphor of the gradual demise of the sub-Saharan communal social fabric under the neo-liberal order?

Keywords: Transit migration, Neo-liberalism, Transnationality, Globalization, Border-crossing.

At home, they hide the risks involved. Nobody will tell you what's inside this journey.
Alpha, Gambian migrant.

Through migrants, the whole of Africa is humiliated.

Aminata Traore

Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to bring to the forefront the intimate –but somewhat inadequately investigated- relationship that exists between Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants' *transitional* mode of existence and Globalization's neo-liberalist *transnational* mobility of capital. Undoubtedly, critical attention has been allotted to the sociopolitical violent dynamics that are at work within the mutually interactive neoliberal global mobilization of capital and forced migration. Loeper, for instance, succinctly abridged the issue in his argument that there are worldwide "parallel developments between the increase of "migration flows" and "flows in finance, goods and services" [and that] whenever there is an intensive flow of money and goods between countries, there is also a major flow of illegal immigrants" (736).More critical attention should, nonetheless, be invested in probing the various correlations between the dynamics of Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration and globalization "associated with increasing social conflict, loss of identity, dislocation, unrest and dissatisfaction" (Gaikwad, 2; Rehren 7).Concurrently, this paper will attempt to propose a narrative of the Sub-Saharan immigrants' violent, invisible, and figurative but unaccounted for human subject's "transition-ality" in a world of highly celebrated modern transnationalism.

Since the seventies, globalized financial policies and transnational mobility of capital have invoked severe North/South power inequities more than they promoted any substantial financial and socio-political mutuality of benefit.Placed in the Sub-Saharan African context, these unequal power relations may be appreciated in the fact that

> most Africans are unequal participants in contemporary globalization, not only because of present power inequities, but also because of the material and epistemic violence wrought by the Western imperialism of the past. Perhaps nowhere is this power inequity more entrenched, yet overlooked, in academic discourse, than in the area of international migration… the gap between Africa and the Rest continues to grow, creating opportunities for transnational airlines, telephone, internet, and money transfer companies, among many others, to take undue advantage of Africans at home and abroad. (Mensah 47-48)

Within the logic of mainstream research, which will be sketchily cited in the following section, final conclusions concerning the major instigators of forced migration are a summation of a classical contemplation of internal push factors. The most frequently cited among these are: unemployment, *coup d'états,* and ethnic and civil wars. While these factors may not be easily dismissed as concrete push factors, mainstream research on "illegal" immigration has, on the other hand, given scant attention to external factors such that "the relationship between US- led World powers' violent military and economic 'globality' and its direct effects on 'forced nomadism'" (Joxe 192). The fact is the heavily referenced violent political and social dynamics are themselves objective upshots of the hard core hegemonic Western imperialist globalist economic policies and the neoliberal ideology, which, as Dixon claims, has constantly shown "hostility to collective ideologies … grounded in its unequivocal commitment to the absolute

supremacy of individual liberty, private property, the free market, and to the assignment of personal responsibility" (5). As such, neoliberalism is a clear antithesis of the overall African longstanding sense of communalism in which "the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately"(Mbiti 108). For this, the temporal and spatial peripatetic mobility of the desert crossing "illegal" immigrants is reflected in their being stranded between an overweening universally promoted individualism that they cannot cope with, and a native African weakening sense of communalism that they are leaving behind. Paradoxically, as will be detailed later, they simultaneously keep carrying that sense of communalism throughout the desert-crossing journey. With this at the background, the problematics such as the ones to which Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants' call our attention, complicate the various constant attempts that are being made to probe the "illegal" immigration problem. The "illegality" of the immigration to Western Europe, with all its limited resources, and the precarious desert and other multiple transit populated geographies, scattered all the way to the final Mediterranean crossing to the European Eldorado carries with it a boomerang effect to the world wherefrom devastating globalist financial policies that are impoverishing Africa have emanated.

Revisiting Mainstream Research Trends: A Preamble

Of the trends that have taken over current research on Sub-Saharan migration are the self-reflexive political and economic instability factors (mainly the military coups, the civil wars, and political corruption[1]). As Augustin Fosu points out these instability factors are "observed to be growth-inhibiting in developing countries" (290). Researchers unanimously acknowledge that this condition has been the primary trigger of the last two decades' staggering increase in the flux of both documented and undocumented immigration to Western Europe. Current Research trends have also intently turned to the smuggling and human trafficking[2] such as, according to Aderanti Adepoju, the women and children who are "trafficked to Europe (Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands) for commercial sex" (10). Other areas of research that can be identified are death toll statistics across inland and (Atlantic and Mediterranean) sea borderlines. *The Deaths at the Border Database*, for instance, confirms to have collected information about a little less than 4150 dead bodies on the Mediterranean borders alone in ten months only (Last, Mirto, et. Al, 701). These "'Border deaths' include drowning in shipwrecks, dying of dehydration and hypothermia on boats or in rural or wild areas near land borders, and instances of direct (e.g. shootings) and indirect (e.g. landmines) violence[3]" (Last, Mirto, et. Al, 693). Newer research trends may also be identified, such as the transit hubs during the temporary (short and long) stays in the countries south and north of the Sahara Desert. Unprecedented phenomena have surfaced such as the expansion of these transit geographies that now include some European countries themselves[4]. Other trends are illustrated

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[1]For a clearer idea on one of the most recent statistics on this issue, refer to the Pew Research Center's report "At Least a Million Sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010", at http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/03/22/at-least-a-million-Sub-Saharan-africans-moved-to-europe-since-2010/

[2]This mainly occurs in the Nigerien town of Agadez, one of the most notorious meeting points wherefrom irregular migrant groups dispatch cross the desert routes.

[3]The statistics concern only the dead bodies to which a death certificate has been issued.

[4]Seeing the various ways and the various Sub-Saharan points of departure and the multiple transitory geographies from which southern European borders have been crossed for the last 20 years, would it be legitimate to revisit the term "border crossing" and have it unpacked to approachable segments from the point of view of the Sub-Saharan multiple invisible borders crossed on the way. Is the term "crossing" as stable as it sounds or does it coercively accommodate more problematic motions such as the complex successive recurrence of "infiltration" and "transit" modes happening through different borders? Are the transit locations home to mere fleeting transits, or are they

by a category of immigrants who would "not be interested in going to Europe at all, and would rather stay in the transit country[5]" (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 91). Several of these researches designate other urgent issues, namely the gender sensitive border-crossing experiences of single women who "are vulnerable to abuse and social exclusion because they are facing triple discrimination as undocumented foreigners, poor and black women" (Stock 15). The security measures devised by both African and Western European authorities restructuring power relations and inequalities are also dominant. The 'Single Border Approach' agreement, for instance, reached through a series of protocols meant to reduce the "illegal" crossing, has designated massive deterring measures as part of the responsibilities of the Maghrebin countries[6] bordering Europe to reduce the "illegal" south/north "illegal immigration flow. Whether these measures have been effective remains debatable. For the record, the responsibilities of the Maghreb countries are control-bound; they consist in:

- Better control and reduction of the exits from their territories towards the north.
- Attempts to keep as many irregular Sub-Saharan migrants as possible on their territories.
- Better control and reduction of people entering through their southern borders[7]. (Lahlou 123)

The latter research trends are mostly relevant to the detention centers which are today housing thousands of Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants after they have arrived to Western Europe.

This paper also acknowledges the importance of the narratives that the Sub-Saharan

gradually being approached by the crossing subjects differently? What geopolitical and international economic instabilities affect the ways these transit geographies evolve from simple passageways to blurred surrogate promised lands bridging over an old fashioned and essentialized exporter of unstructured and under-developed manpower towards an essentialized "reluctant" importing wealthy employer host?

[5]The intention to transit in Morocco, for example, may not be regarded as stable. Reports have elaborated sufficiently on the idea that Morocco as a transit point needs a little more consideration at least in regard to the duration of the stay which has recently been upgraded to medium instead of short term. Many trends maybe observed in this typical medium term stay, one of which is the differences in the periods of time of stay which between southern and northern cities, and the jobs undertaken to survive the transit. Sub-Saharan migrants, therefore, either fleet through southern cities mainly by begging in front of mosques and in the roundabouts where the traffic is dense, or stay for a relatively longer period and make a living from selling goods, gizmos, mobile phones, etc.

[6]Morocco, a strategic partner of the EU as regards the management and control of the tides of irregular Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants hitting the southern shores of the Mediterranean is hooked onto extensive criticism of its exaggeratedly robust policies regarding the implementation of migration laws, as well as the tricky almost unsolvable socio-cultural complications wrought by the overall 'xenophobic' local population. Hence, an overwhelming majority of the narratives produced by the migrants and reported by researchers regarding the final perilous phase of these migrants to the "promised" lands of Western Europe are getting louder and more indicting.

[7]To what extent do studies that deal with "transit migration" focus mainly on anticipated problems incurred within the EU while consequently overlooking the other "invisible" sub-Mediterranean transit stations? Asking the same question differently, but taking into consideration these transit spots being themselves emitters of problems of migration, how do these double faceted transit points (as emitters and receivers of migratory waves) figure out only as sources of migrant populations?

interviewed "illegal" immigrants chronicle in mainstream media. The several self-reflective Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants' testimonies, broadcast on various European and African media outlets do contribute to the ongoing research on Sub-Saharan immigration as well as back up the multitude of measures taken to discourage potential immigrants from the "illegal" border crossing[8]. I contend, however, that these paradigmatic testimonies are more often than not metonymic repetitive samples that treat each case as just another instance of the failure of the "illegal" crossing endeavor (or is it?). As is clear, old and new strategies devised to curtail the Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration output seem to have fallen short of bringing the desired results.

The overwhelming conceptualization of the "illegal" migration-related literature is coordinated by the insights of the neo-classical theory of migration, which –we should admit- "offers an excellent explanation on one of the causes of the irregular migration of Africa's economic migrants to Europe, especially with regard to the wage differentials between poor African countries and the wealthy European countries" (Ogu 52). This -and likewise dominant theories- albeit their legitimacy- however tend to overlook the economic and geo-political circumstances that are antecedent to the (second hand) mainstream explanations. This paper's interest will, therefore, not be invested in any of -or similar to- the above prevalent government-supported quantitative public policy researches. Nor will it turn to the literature of the associations and centers of deportees, or UN funded relief NGO groups, though it will intermittently cite or footnote some of them. I presume that the dominance of the above mentioned quantitative research trends tend to commodify the "illegal" immigration issue. They even blur the fact that the constant growth of "illegal" immigration to Western Europe is a symptom of the concomitant growth of the reasons that provoke it. The extensive concentration of migration-related literatures on these trends and associated concerns seem to keep ruling the migration research field despite the limited effects of the various mandates they have constantly legitimized.

Invisible Route Check-ins: Unstable Trends

The immigrant category in which this paper is interested is the desert-crossing Sub-Saharan African male and female "illegal" immigrants with an age range between 20 and 45. They are those who are "denied of a fair share in the distribution of the fruits of global growth, [and who] are no longer willing to passively suffer immoderate increases in the development gap between rich and poor as in this case those of Africa which continue to grow" (Ayenagbo, et.al 11058). These immigrants, who hail from different Sub-Saharan countries, social classes, religions, cultures have decided against their will to congregate in invisible border-crossing

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[8]It is quite interesting that Morocco asa transit hub is gradually finding out that the "African" migrants are staying longer periods in Morocco than they had wished. The long periods that these migrants are taking to reach Europe are traced back by some to the rigid security policies that the Moroccan authorities have implemented recently together with their European partners. Others find better explications in Morocco's offering opportunities that are as meager as those that the European economic sector has recently been able to offer, despite the survival of the myth that says that Europe's riches are an accessible pick.

transitional *'communities'*[9] after having been *individually* jettisoned by the international mobility of transnational capital and the various anti-national economic interest and political conflicts it is liable to provoke. This category of "Illegal" immigrants is officially referred to in the discourse of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)[10] as 'large scale influx'. To differentiate it from the UNHCR collective designation, I will -as of now- refer to it as Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities'. By this nomenclature, I intend that this "transition-al" congregation of individuals should be conceptualized as "a clear illustration of how the self is shaped by the ubiquitous neoliberal ideology of globalization" (Ashcroft 60).Of the sampling that may be applied to the monolithic mass of human influx, the renegade 'communities' mostly disturb the comfortable claim that globalization and its neoliberal economic philosophy empowers underprivileged countries (Koyuncu and Unver 27).

The 'community' in question is quite particular. It has its members ooze in from different regions of Africa, collapsing different religions, different languages, tribes, social, marital, and multi-levelled educational categories only to congregate in what is a hidden type of forced nomadism. Their transitional activities (read temporary and transitional amongst the various desert trajectories) keep going in complete detachment from the international community. It is a community which lives on the margin, but has its own maps and, certainly its own codes of conduct, and mini-social survival kits. This diasporic category, which mandatorily transforms into an invisible 'community' during the life threatening desert-crossing, migrates out of the dictates of the high echelons of world powers, and the violence of their imposed political and economic orders. They transmute into organized short-lived 'communities', which inform and update one another about the do's and don'ts of the precarious desert/border-crossings; they share food, maps, crucial information about traffickers, do translation work, sell goods, etc. It is a matter of sheer common sense that the inland desperate desert-crossing is fraught with danger, violence, abuse, disorientation, and possibly death. It is, therefore, quasi unendurable outside these informally organized temporary 'communities'[11].

Some migrants choose to travel inland from Agadez through Algeria towards Ceuta and Melilla, while others travel westward to the various neighboring countries cruising through at least four counties (Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea or Liberia, and finally Sierra Leone)

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[9]They should be distinguished from asylum seekers and/or refugees. The latter are generally classified as a category of immigrants who have been -among other- expelled of their homes by massive military operations, or accidental natural disasters.

[10]Such as in the "Protection of Asylum-Seekers in Situations of Large-Scale Influx" No. 22 (XXXII) – 1981 report which can be found at:

http://www.unhcr.org/excom/exconc/3ae68c6e10/protection-asylum-seekers-situations-large-scale-influx.html.

In the report concern is expressed regarding "the refugee problem [that] has become particularly acute due to the increasing number of large-scale influx situations in different areas of the world and especially in developing countries".

[11]Despite my interest in the sense of communality that is crucial for the renegade 'communities' to successfully go through the desert-crossing trip, several types of violence are recurrent. Several types of victims of these violence may, accordingly, be recorded. These include the "'passive migrants' or what one could potentially call the side-effect of migration flows – spouses or children that travel along with the head of the family, but then due to an unlucky incident, are stranded and left on their own. Unable to go back, they are bound to continue the journey wherever the particular flow of irregular migration is taking them" (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 91). Sexual abuse and prostitution among single and destitute women is also widely spread.

before getting to the Atlantic coastline to sail to the Canary Islands. Other migrants from Ghana, for example, travel across Togo, Benin, Nigeria then to Niger/Agadez, then back from Agadez southward through Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea or Liberia, and finally Sierra Leone, instead of Ivory Coast, to Liberia to Sierra Leone from their original country Ghana. The ones who hail from Somalia go through Ethiopia, Sudan, and then cross to Lybia. Under the circumstance of unsuccessful crossing, and because of the lack of repatriation agreements, migrants are mainly brought to the southern areas bordering the neighboring countries: Rosso, near the Mauritania-Senegal border; Oujda, near the Morocco-Algeria border; and Tinzaouatine near Algeria–Mali and Guezzam Algeria-Niger borders, respectively. Despite the fact that the routes from Agadez in Niger to Lybia have become a less prevalent Sub-Saharan migratory trend after the recent political upheavals, the present paper is as concerned with the Agadez-Lybia migrant routes cruising up north towards Italy as it is with the other different routes leading to Morocco. All the routes that these "illegal" immigrants take are various scars of the chaos triggered by the neoliberal order. Their apparent randomness is subversive. They conceal the powerfully structured renegade 'communities' diverse categories that have constantly been able to work off-track of the formal international transnational transport routes.

Neoliberalism: Both a New Imperial Logic of Economics and a New Economic Logic of Imperialism

According to the prevalent on-record studies concerning the direct factors that have over the years invigorated the "illegal" border-crossing, an overwhelming number of the mediatized and normalized testimonies of the young Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrants', as has been stated, focus on the mainstream narrative[12]. This narrative rarely provides explanations outside the triadic civil war, poverty, and political corruption framework. It, therefore, tends to overlook the mention of the power inequalities and the interrelated violence that are provoked by the internalization/globalization of capital in the African countries' fragile and underdeveloped key economic infrastructures. Critical perspectives that try to draw attention to the serviceability of "illegal" Sub-Saharan immigration to both European as well as Maghrebi and Sub-Sahran countries are compelling. Hein De Haas points out that besides the fact that in Europe "in a context of extraordinarily low fertility, labour market segmentation and high economic growth in sectors such as agriculture and construction, migration is a fundamental resource for economic development" (1314). The author goes on to argue that the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan countries, too,

> have little genuine interest in curbing migration, because for them migration serves vital political and economic interests and constitutes a potential development resource. Emigration relieves pressure on internal labour markets and generates a substantial and rapidly growing flow of remittances. While having a fundamental interest in continuing emigration of their own nationals, governments of Maghreb countries also have little genuine interest in stopping migrants from transiting to Europe. (De Haas 1316)

Global Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration -same as the internal migration- is an offshoot of the same type of displacement wrought by liberal economic dysfunctions. Akokpari observes that

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[12]Testimonies such as the following are abundant: "before you've got another customer, you've had to spend what you earned the last time"Ohioyah, 31. "It's better that I die here than I go back to Nigeria,"' or "'[p]eople are still dying there of hunger or sickness because they have no money for food or hospitals, or "somebody who sold his house for $3,000 to go to Europe can't go back to his country. It's better he kills himself than goes back."'

"as globalisation and liberalisation compound the economic despondency of the rural folk, they migrate to the urban centres in search of non-existent employment opportunities. Rural-urban migration is, in recent years, also attributable to Africa's debt and its repayment obligations, which have escalated under the economic liberalisation regime" (Akokpari, "Globalisation and Migration in Africa" 81). In likewise forward terms, Alain Joxe states:

> Today, there is a form of servitude in all Third World factories that weighs on the free labor of prosperous countries. People without freedom are inexpensive. But they can't be had without waging a slave-gathering war by depreciating agricultural knowledge, destroying country life, increasing influx to urban centers and turning the masses of agrarian popular classes into delinquent plebes. (102)

The truth is the renegade 'communities', who are anathematized from underdeveloped Sub-Saharan African countries, are the descendants of the old victims of the internal and external scourges that have plagued Africa over the last century. Today, however, they are especially the victims of a neo-colonial globalist and neo-liberalist economic era where "new ways of domination are instrumented, whose innovation consists in the economic strangulation of the least developed, particularly of the African countries…"(Ayenagbo, et.al 11058).This tightly structures with Founou-Tchuigoua's assumption that "the Neoliberal Plan has been imposed in Africa in its entirety and has produced the predicted disastrous results. The people of all the demographically sizeable countries face the impossibility of possessing power and/or an administration that orchestrates the economic revolution and the appropriate social reforms"(13). This neoliberal order is both a ubiquitous premise and a lawful reflection of "colonialism's artificial borders, racism and ideological control, ethnic 'divide-and-rule' strategies, land acquisition, labour control, suppression of competition from indigenous sources, military conflict (independence struggles), [etc]…" (Bond, "The Sociopolitical Structure of Accumulation and Social Policy in Southern Africa" 199-200).

This inequality-plagued world economic atmosphere is, as it were, coercive on the political level as well. From within the African corrupt systems, this order is guaranteed control over state power dynamics and resources through political continuities from past to present which include among other "international political and cultural relations with colonial powers, and especially class alliances involving compradorism (local elites working in league with international oppressors)" (Bond, "The Sociopolitical Structure of Accumulation and Social Policy in Southern Africa" 200).Personal-benefit driven concessions are made by government officials and nation-state leaders to ambit their personal assets more than defend national interests. Across the political spectrum, corruption in several post-colonial African countries is not subject to any kind of negotiations. It is well-known that

> rather than according equal opportunities to the various constituencies within its boundaries, the state either promotes its own agenda (which in most cases is synonymous with the interests of some constituencies), or becomes an overt executive instrument for furthering the interest of a particular constituency. Examples from Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa may suffice to illustrate how state partiality has been responsible for conflicts and the induction of emigrations and refugees.(Akokpari, « The Political Economy of Migration » 78).

These local government networks, business corporations and the neoliberal transnational capitalist class elite groups, according to Carroll and Sapinski

own and/or control (the flow of) capital within an expanding transnational field [and exercise] structural power molecularly, in a multitude of market-mediated, profit maximizing decisions that add up to a (shifting) verdict on particular places, states and industries. Once capital has attained unparalleled mobility and transnational reach, capitalists can play one national workforce, or local government off against another, bidding-down wages, taxes, labour standards, regulations and social programs in what can be described as a 'race to the bottom'. It is no coincidence that these are the stuff of neoliberal policy. (26)

From this perspective, the neoliberal economic ideology and subsequent financial policiesseem to be a violent provoker of mobility in all its forms, from the hegemonic mobility of capital, to the collective mobility of the underprivileged human subject. It is the push factor rallying the shift in political and economic structures as well as ideology, consciousness, and social order. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), for instance, is one of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's neo-liberalist devastating systems of financial assistance provision for debt-soliciting countries. The Structural Adjustment Programs' most fundamental policies for debt payback were imposed through "their classical/neoliberal features. They … pushed for private sector and free market development, controlling budget deficits, privatising public sector companies and services, dissolving parastatals, eliminating subsidies and cutting public support for social services"(Heidhues and Obare, 58). Akokpari maintains that

one of the effects of SAP was to cause a phenomenal expansion in the informal economy. As economic opportunities declined and prospects for formal employment shrank, the informal economy became the alternative for economic survival. Accordingly, informal economic transactions have increased not only within countries, but also across borders and spelling critical implications for cross border informal migration. ("The Political Economy of Migration''83-84)

Other policies include raising interest rates, and opening up bigger spaces for foreign investment through reducing tariffs and import taxes. This-AsadIsmi postulates- hasfashioned a global economic logic where

the World Bank and the IMF have forced Third World countries to open their economies to Western penetration and increase exports of primary goods to wealthy nations. These steps amongst others have multiplied profits for Western multinational corporations while subjecting Third World countries to horrendous levels of poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy and economic decline. The region worst affected has been Africa. (5)

On a micro-economic plan, the SAP considerably distresses the "household expenditures on health care, and the ability to meet major health care expenses dwindled... A dramatic decline in employment status had a negative effect on disposable income, time utilization and food purchasing. Other symptoms of neoliberal policies such as urban drift and migration contributed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic"(Bond and Dor, "Uneven Health Outcomes and Neoliberalism in Africa"1). This precarious condition is being exacerbated by the implementation of world economic forums as well as dictations and protocols of world financial giants -such as has just been mentioned- the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).This condition had been in effect up until African countries regrouped under the Nepad (the New Partnership for Africa's Development) to counterbalance the neoliberal negative socio-economic effects on the African countries. "Nepad suggests that the continued marginalization of Africa from the

globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its peoples constitute a serious threat to global stability" (Bond and Dor 12). The exponential growth of the Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration throws serious doubts on the success of this undertaking. The global neoliberal ideology continues to deter the post-colonial Africa's political and debt-laden economies take off. The result is the clear slow-motion development rates, the decline in social and health services, the mediocrity of employment opportunities, and the massive financial disempowerment of the youth category.

Thus, the Sub-Saharan young border-crossing 'communities' mediatized testimonies are the result of their first hand socio-economic experiences with political corruption, scarcity of job opportunities, poverty, civil wars, etc. If these are not straightforward offshoots of the neoliberal policies in Africa, they certainly at least aggravate their effects. For most of these immigrants, the only escape from suffering the resulting violence, trauma, socio-economic inequalities and the widening gap between the rich and the poor is "illegal" immigration. In an easily technology-mediated world in which social media networks "can be both an attraction and a deterrent for irregular migrants' destination choices" (Kuschminder, De Bresser and Siegel 58), the escape to Western Europe remains the only prominent solution. Western Europe's alluring Eldorado is the crystal anti-thesis of a poor and corrupt Africa—"the least developed continent in the world, as evidenced by the low per capita income of many countries that compose it" (Ayenagbo, et.al 11058).

As may have been inferred from the above, this paper is built on the premise that Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration and its epidemic breakout is rooted in economic neoliberalism and the socio-political damage it has caused to underdeveloped countries since its incipience in the 1970s. Despite its universalist optimistic claims of reducing poverty, neoliberalism goes on impoverishing third world nation states, and manufacturing economic stumble blocks for their nascent economies. It does not only denounce collective ideologies, it also seems to be the least concerned with social welfare. Established and vehement neo-liberalist proponents themselves confirm this claim. The Noble prize winner in Economics Milton Friedman, for instance, asserts that corporate executives' responsibilities are to the owners of the business, not to society. He further proclaims that the businessmen who claim that business has a certain 'social responsibility', and may contribute to social welfare are "preaching pure and unadulterated socialism. … [they] are unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades"[13] (1).On a broader interstate economic level, and in discussing world trade, investment, and finance shares in the globalist neoliberaleconomy, Ray Kiely argues against globalization's widely circulating myth that the interdependence of world

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[13]Friedman elaborates on this issue and raises a few intriguing questions: What does it mean to say that the corporate executive has a "social responsibility" in his capacity as businessman? … it must mean that he is to act in some way that is not in the interest of his employers. For example, that he is to refrain from increasing the price of the product in order to contribute to the social objective of preventing inflation, even though a price increase would be in the best interests of the corporation. Or that he is to make expenditures on reducing pollution beyond the amount that is in the best interests of the corporation or that is required by law in order to contribute to the social objective of improving the environment. Or that, at the expense of corporate profits, he is to hire "hardcore" unemployed instead of better qualified available workmen to contribute to the social objective of reducing poverty (2). This magnificent example of the extent to which the neoliberal order can go is compelling. It shows that collective interest (even those that concern critical themes such as preventing inflation, reducing pollution, and reducing poverty) come second to the corporate business owners' interests.

trade ispositive and productive. He provides statistics as to how Africa's share, for instance, has drastically dropped from 5.3 per cent in 1950 to 1.5 per cent in 1995 (127). In the same vein, likewise critical perspectives point out that "the developed nations are the beneficiaries of the strategies of globalization to a certain degrees as their share of world trade and finance have been expanded at the expense of developing countries in general and in particularly of African countries. Thus, the process exacerbates inequality between the world's regions and poverty in the developing world" (Ayenagbo, et.al 11058).

Neoliberalism and Competition as the New Regime of Truth: Communality on the Demise

The new 'escalavage' of Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities' from beginning to end confirms Foucault's argument that modern financial regimes (especially, neo-liberalism) constitute a set of "diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of 'biopower'"(The History of Sexuality 140). For Foucault, the power of "competition" is at the core of the violence inherent to the neoliberal economic model. He postulates that

> for the neo-liberals, the most important thing about the market is not exchange, that kind of original and fictional situation imagined by eighteenth century liberal economists. The essential thing of the market is elsewhere; it is competition. …It is the problem of competition and monopoly, much more than that of value and equivalence, that forms the essential armature of a theory of the market. On this point, therefore, the ordoliberals do not depart in any way from the historical development of liberal thought. They take up this classical conception and the principle that competition, and only competition, can ensure economic rationality.(119)

Foucault conceptualizes the neoliberal ideal as a new regime of truth, and a new way in which people are made subjects. The Homo Economicus (the economic subject) is fundamentally a subject that is structured by different motivations and governed by different principles. It is different from the Homo-Juridicus (the subject of right), or the legal subject of the state (Foucault 276). Neoliberalism constitutes a new mode of "governmentality," a manner, or a mentality, in which people are governed and govern themselves. The operative terms of this governmentality, as Foucault states in the quotation above, are no longer rights and laws. The new terms are: interest, investment, and competition. The neoliberal order in some African countries, in which the institution painstakingly strives against the overpowering tribal systems, on the one hand, and the installed post-colonial corrupt political and economic regimes is transforming and breaking communities into individuals migrating not only from one territory to another, but also from collective communities to autonomous –in Foucauldian terms- subjects of "human capital."

It should be clearly underlined that neoliberalism cannot be limited to economics, corporate conglomerations, and the politics of financial mobility only. It has a powerful cultural impacy to it, which, as David Harvey points out, "has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world"(3).In the same stroke, such as in his reading of Foucault's critical perspective on neoliberalism, Jason Read argues that neoliberalism is "an ideology that refers not only to the political realm, to an ideal of the state, but to the entirety of human existence. It claims to present not an ideal, but a reality; human nature… a new understanding of human nature and social existence"(26).

The grouping of the economical with philosophical perspectives of neoliberalism will help us understand how the renegade 'communities' are catapulted subjects from their own countries. The movement from exchange to competition is stark. The transformation from the communal subject to a subject of 'human capital' is seen through the fact that under the auspices of the neoliberal order, human relations are defined economically. For this, the renegade 'communities', in their individualistic testimonies to the media usually reiterate the same obsessive wish to be able to overcome the economical inconveniences, and to eventually be able to send money back home. This can evidently easily qualify the "illegal" immigration endeavor as an attempt to fit in the worldwide prevalent economic competition. Besides its capacity to complicate the "illegality" of the endeavor, it confirms that both the immigrant and his/her family back home are stranding in a ruthless neoliberal order which destabilizes communality and exposes the poor uncompetitive family as well as the resistant immigrant to the neoliberal violent new regime of truth.

Transnationality and Transition-ality: An Artificial Dissimilarity

In relation, and in order to explain what I intend by the metaphorical shift from transnationality to "transition-ality", I would like to refer to Bill Ashcroft, (who coined the term 'Transnation')and his insights on the matter. Ashcroft stipulates: "the concept of the transnation I am proposing is composed not only of diasporas, but of the rhizomic interplay of travelling subjects within as well as between nations" (79). I am especially interested in his notion that "[t]ransnation is the fluid, migrating *outside* of the state that begins within the nation. This 'outside' is geographical, cultural and conceptual" (italics in origin) (73).I suppose that, as far as the renegade 'communities' are concerned, the application of Ashcroft's notion of "transnation" makes it the closest to "transition". That is, the Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities', starting from the point they decided to 'escape', had already initiated a conceptual (not geographical) crossing of the boundaries of the state and all its formal establishments (and that's probably why this migratory act is dubbed "illegal"). This, as Ashcroft observes, begins within the nation. On their leaving the conceptual borders of the state, the renegade 'communities' simultaneously carry with them the deep identification with the nation and the reflective relevant codes of conduct. This sense of shared passive rebellion against the state, the collective act of leaving it behind, and the simultaneous deportment of the profound identification with the nation, is what seems to allow for the maintenance of a communal spirit among these renegade 'communities' while crossing the desert. This transnationality is unofficial. It closely replicates Ashcroft's notion of "'transnation' [as] extending beyond the geographical, political, administrative and even imaginative boundaries of the state, both within and beyond the boundaries of the nation, [where] we discover it as a space in which those boundaries are disrupted, in which national and cultural affiliations are superseded, in which binaries of centre and periphery, national self and other are dissolved" (73).This is what makes the renegade 'communities' as concretely "transition-al" as they are unofficially transnational.

A correlation between Ashcroft's distinction between State and nation, and Foucault's differentiation between the Homo-Economicus and Hom-Juridicus may be useful. The dejection from the state boundaries, or from the subjecthood of the Homo-Juridicus, is paralleled with a likewise migration from a seemingly optimistic 'transnation', which is governed from beginning to end by the stubborn economic interest in human capital. Foucault's insights on this particular

issue are helpful. He cautions that from a theoretical and historical perspective, the Western policy of growth will focus precisely on

> one of the things that the West can modify most easily, and that is the form of investment in human capital. And in fact we are seeing the economic policies of all the developed countries, but also their social policies, as well as their cultural and educational policies, being orientated in these terms. In the same way, the problems of the economy of the Third World can also be rethought on the basis of human capital.(Foucault232)

The dynamisms that act out the Homo-Economicus's transitionality have roots in theneoliberal forms of transnationality. These forms are governed by a globalist cultural sense of self-assessment of skills and future aspirations that are rooted in economic value. Within this neoliberal transnationality, the African subject, who paradoxically constantly refers to the sense of communal welfare, is individually taking in charge the risks and the financial burdens of exporting his brain, his body, and his skills to sell them out in Europe. In this condition of permanent "transition-ality", the sub-Saharan "illegal" immigrant's culture has little chances to survive the trauma and the violent transition from an inherited communal understanding of national welfare to the new initiation of global welfare plunged in amorphousness. In his book *Europe: the Faltering Project*, Jürgen Habermas suggests that "the painful transition to post-colonial immigrant societies" within Europe is occurring alongside "the humiliating conditions of growing social inequality" (65), associated with the pressures of globalized commodified labor markets. This will introduce us to the various tropes of ambivalence by which I mean to complicate essentialist designations such "large scale influx", illegality, border crossing, and the other relevant mainstream appellations.

To begin with, the communal sense that is transported through the desert is paradoxically borne to survive the trip to *individuality*. The neoliberal order is coercing the renegade 'communities' to shift the meaning of communality from a permanent social system to a transitional tool of survival. Paradoxically, this survival strategy will span exactly the cruising and crossing of borders towards a cultural realm in Western Europe where individualism in its most pronounced forms was born and adopted. Besides globalization persecuting these subjects out of communality into individualism, it paradoxically also uses them to confirm its far-reaching access to the gray unknown desert zones between the various souths and the various norths cruised or crossed by these transitional communities all the way to the Mediterranean borders. While the Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities' are among globalization's primary indicators of its violence and of the secondariness of their humanness in contrast to their primariness as 'human capital', the latter are also the main visible traces that connect the vast unpopulated areas to the populated geographies. The mass movement of a congregation of nationalities, allegedly "illegal", across the unnamed borders of the desert is itself quite telling of how the neoliberal ideology in Africa contributes to the spread of an unauthorized form of transnationality. On the one hand, it endows the individuals within these communities with multiple identities (national and monolithic) as well as individualistic such as "illegal", beggars, irregular, clandestines, undocumented, refugees, etc.) On the other hand, it does not isolate the desert as a distinct, untrodden geography. It includes it within the transnational frame as an un-ramified zone from its global consequences.

The desert, as the first site of "transition-ality", is suggestive of how the renegade 'communities' introduce newer stances of the current transformations in previously unmapped

geographies. Today, the desert is a site of "transition-ality", which is preceded by temporariness (while waiting to run away) for those who argue that Europe is Sub-Saharan migration's final destination. It preserves the terms as a site of "transitionality" also for those who contend that the factors behind the massive sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration are not singularly economic. Julien Brachet, for instance, contends that "if global media reports are to be believed, every person who leaves their home country in Africa is heading for Europe. That's simply not true. 80% of Sub-Saharan migrants are merely moving between countries on the continent" (1). From the perspective of both poles, the forms of temporariness running through the transit trajectories may be reaffirmed whether the move is up to or down from the final destination (i.e. Western Europe). The perpetual sense of unbelonging rests unchanged. The desert, the unnamed, the precarious, and the hostile, geographical site of 'betweeness'(between a concrete point of departure left behind, and an imaginary point of arrival), is an indicator of the conceptual betweeness that the Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities' will constantly be entangled in. For this, it is ostensible that the desert trip lying between the two poles of neoliberal economies (an emerging African versus a dominant Western European version of it), should be ambivalent and worthy of an African Robinsonade. It showcases the survival skills of the Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities', but also dumps them in meaninglessness that stems from the futility of the whole migratory endeavor. It is futile, first because their conditions may not improve when they arrive to Europe; second because the same neoliberal inequities that have violently catapulted these 'communities' out of their villages, tribes, countries, and values will itself receive those who survive among them alone, vulnerable, and especially ready to serve the bigger neoliberal constant need for cheap labor.

To elaborate on this notion, I would like to propose a reading modelled on Victor Li's analysis of Robert Zemickis's movie *Cast Away* (2000). Li hypothesizes that "*Cast Away* is not a negation of contemporary globalization but a fable of its reformation… Like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Cast Away* portrays a difficult initiation into a new life" (63). I assume that the desert too, at least for the renegade 'communities', is somehow an initiation to a new life, with the distinction being the clear difference between fiction and reality on the one hand, and the individual struggle versus the communal, on the other. While the subject initiated to a new life in both fictional genres are individuals, the initiated subjects to globalizations' new life are individuals, too, but in a temporary state of communality, a temporary movement to a more solid, more authoritative regime of neoliberal economic order in Western Europe. All of which signal a continuous sense of "transition-ality". Like the Island in *Cast Away*, the desert, too is a site of reformation, initiation, and Bildung.

Transnationality and "transition-ality" may, thus, be drawn to a sense of synonymy, meaning that at its core transnation is a state of transition from belonging to one place to unbelonging to many. The renegade 'communities' home, desert crossing experience, temporary stay or stranding in transit countries, and irregularity in Western European countries, is constantly regulated by a noncompliant sense of temporariness and unbelonging. The incipient incentive for migration has itself emanated from a sense of unbelonging within the state and the home. The final Western European location continues to cater for this sense of unbelonging. This temporariness and unbelonging continue through the "illegal" immigrant's "irregularity [which] is not a stable situation, but one which is susceptible to change in space and time. The same situation may make a person regular in country A, but irregular in country B where visa requirements or labor laws are different" (Fargues 545).Negotiating a reduction of the territories

lying between transnationality and "transition-ality" make sense as soon as we think that capitalism in general, or economic and cultural neoliberalism as its most relentless regimes, thrives better when a group of people constitute separate tools of production rather solid members of a 'community' with national and cultural interests rooted in a shared history and shared aspirations of present and future communal welfare.

Conclusion

The migrant Sub-Saharan 'communities' in transit are quite particular. It is short lived 'community' that while impatiently striving to unbind into individuality in the gradually xenophobic Western Europe, paradoxically devises communal codes of conduct, mini-social structures, and temporary surviving strategies. That the renegade 'communities' desert journey augurs the demise of communalism is striking. In a globalist economic regime that remodels the human subject as human capital, the renegade 'communities' not only faithfully re-enact the basic acts of 16th century slave trade (Ogu 55), they also voluntarily and paradoxically customize communality as a surviving strategy to its diametric antithesis: Western European triumphant individualism. To the dismay of any postcolonial scholar, the conclusions that might come out of the association of Sub-Saharan "illegal" immigration with globalization shall delegate us back to the same intractable binary oppositional model that the postcolonial legacy has, for the last three decades, sought to dismantle into grayness (without much success it seems): the glorious rich West/North rises again versus the Rest, above all poor Africa/South that sinks in a pool of economic and political failures. Today, this reality is not based on research primarily. Rather, evidence of this reality comes from the countless testimonies of the African subjects, who paradoxically are being used by the media of the very countries that close their borders against them.

The unauthorized and "illegal" 'transnationality' the renegade 'communities' experience as various national, ethnic, religious, and social categories is of their own making. It is interesting to notice that this renegade 'community', which is a congregation of several nationalities is a site where state imposed differences disintegrate. Like in the desert, the boundaries dissolve, or are at least crossed unnoticed. So, what we have here is a clear indicator of our unawareness of the significance of the Sub-Saharan renegade 'communities' experience. They concretize the retreat of communality under the neoliberal order, and its casting to the desert. They concretely show that the communal is in a state of threatening transit, positioned on a fast-running industrial built, arranged to begrounded by the globalized individualistic competition-based regimes. The desert is a subversive site where this communality is made to give its last kick. With its unnamed, territories beyond all pronounced borderlines, and its renegade 'communities' coming together insouciant of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc, they reverse the official ideals of transnationality on the outside. But on the inside, it is a case of absolute panic and chaos. The renegades are crossing the geographical and conceptual borders to reach the more powerful neoliberal order they should, otherwise, seek to resist.

The call to debate on what scholarship and academia can make of the ephemerality and instability of these 'communities' in transit, and to what extent these 'communities' reflect the crises in postcolonial studies, cosmopolitan ideals, nationalist creeds, and neoliberal economies, all at once, is pressing. Questions do rise from the reconceptualization of Sub-Saharan "illegal"

immigration through the violent economical and socio-political neoliberal regimes. To what extent are these renegade 'communities' "transition-ality" a tool to debate one of the crises of celebrated transnationality? Asked differently, are these 'communities' in transit a paradigm of globalization's economical transnationality on account of cultural "transition-ality"? Is their inaccessibility to media outlets while in-transit a sign of their invisibility or a metaphor of the capacity of cultural fusion and tolerance (as was the order in pre-modern societies) to effortlessly be improvised among multi-national, multi-ethnic groups without the formal guardianship of academia and authoritative institutions, or is that invisibility simply a metaphor of the gradual demise of the communal under the neoliberal order? Does the temporariness of these 'communities' not seem to hint to globalist inherent sense of "transition-ality" and the growing capacity of the modern human subject to live in a state of transition? Aren't we too, akin to these 'communities', fast moving from communality to individualism, from stability to instability, from visibility to invisibility, from occupants of geographies with classical well-designed borders to itinerants in open territories with unnamed borders, all at the service of transnational capitalism and free trade?

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