The U.S. Diversity Visa Programme and the Transfer of Skills from Africa

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ABSTRACT

The Diversity Visa (DV) programme is designed to improve the multicultural composition of the U.S. “melting pot” beyond the traditional source countries in Europe. In pursuit of this objective, the basic eligibility requirement for participation in the programme is a high school diploma. Despite its salutary objective and design, the programme’s implications for the African brain drain may not all be benign. The “tired, poor, huddled masses” from Africa are defined in more restrictive terms, and the obstacles they face are more economically and administratively onerous than those encountered by their early European counterparts. The costs of transforming a lottery win to an actual diversity visa and Green Card are so high that only Africans in well-paying jobs, who are likely to be professionals rather than mere high school graduates, are likely to be able to afford the full costs of programme participation. In this sense, the programme has an in-built, skills-selective mechanism. The main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the DV has facilitated the movement of professional, technical and kindred workers (PTKs) from Africa to the United States, and some of the economic and policy implications of the process.

INTRODUCTION

The itinerancy of Northern capital in its quest for cheap, often unskilled and semi-skilled Southern labour is one of the recognizable attributes of the current global order. Labour has also become increasingly more mobile as migrants from the South, including Africa, are investing significant amounts of time, money and personal safety in search of employment in the developed North. Migration from Africa to the North has etched its own signature on the global migration map: a westward route traverses the Atlantic, Cape Verde, the Canary Islands and Morocco to Spain, Portugal and Italy; while a longer, more circuitous, eastward route is said to make its way through Asia and the Caucasus to western Europe and North America (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6978629.stm>, various; Carling, 2007a,b).

Despite the “fortress” passion reflected in public outcry against immigration, and in spite of the xenophobic fervour that may have helped to bring anti-immigration proponents such as Nicolas Sarkozy to the French presidency, immigration policies in the North are not

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completely stringent. Quite to the contrary, many policies are deliberately schizophrenic: designed at one and the same time to hinder entry of the unskilled while facilitating the entry and absorption of the skilled (sometimes referred to as “professional, technical and kindred workers”, or PTKs) to the lucrative Northern labour markets. France’s Co-Development and Co-Management policy, for example, simultaneously restricts general African immigration while making it possible for African PTKs to enter the French labour market. Similar selective mechanisms are in place in Denmark and Sweden (Martin et al., 2007; White, 2007). The success of the U.S. “Green Card”, another skills-selective mechanism, seems to have motivated the European Union (EU) to consider implementing its own “Blue Card” to attract specific high-end skills to the European labour market (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6978629.stm>, 12 November 2007). In addition to the “Green Card”, the United States (U.S.) has also in place a “Diversity and Lottery Program” (DV), which is designed to improve the multicultural landscape of the country. In its pursuit of multiculturalism, however, the DV also has the potential to attract certain education and skill levels from Africa and other Third World regions to America.

The main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the DV programme has facilitated the movement of PTKs from Africa to the U.S. and some of the economic and policy implications of the process. This objective informs five specific research questions. (i) What are the stated policy objectives of the DV programme? (ii) What are the main countries of *origin* of labour migrants in Africa for the DV? (iii) How is PTK migration in the DV situated in globalization discourse, especially in terms of the role of international trade in mediating the underlying factors responsible for the wage slope between Africa and the U.S.? (iv) Are trends in the DV consistent with theoretical explanations that PTKs from the poorest African countries are likely to be the greatest participants in the DV? (v) Finally, what policy options might be available to African governments to tackle the continued haemorrhage of skills from their countries? These questions are pursued by reviewing recent trends in the DV from Africa, including the proportional contributions of the DV programme to total African migration to the U.S., and the relationship between PTK emigration and the level of economic development (GDP) of the main African countries of origin.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE DIVERSITY VISA PROGRAMME

The Diversity Visa programme of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has its legal bases in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952. Since 1952, the INA has witnessed several amendments and revisions, one of them being Section 203, which deals with the DV. According to this provision:

[e]ach year 50,000 immigrant visas are made available through a lottery to people who come from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. None of these visas are available for people who come from countries that have sent more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States in the past five years ... Anyone who is selected under this lottery will be given the opportunity to apply for permanent residence. If permanent residency is granted, then the individual will be authorized to live and work permanently in the United States. [US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menu-item>]

The DV is designed to improve the multicultural composition of the “melting pot” beyond the traditional migrant countries of *origin* in Europe. Despite this salutary objective, the programme’s implications for the African brain drain may not all be benign. For example,

migrants from Africa, who fit the category of “tired ... poor ... huddled, masses” described in Emma Lazarus’ poem, *The New Colossus*, are defined in more restrictive terms, and the obstacles they face are more economically and administratively onerous than those encountered by their early European counterparts (see Hatton and Williamson, 1994). As Ghandnoosh and Waldinger (2006: 727) put it; “[w]hile the neoliberal state could follow the motto inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, it is equally free to keep immigrant numbers as close to zero as practicality will allow”. In the case of the DV, practicality seems to suggest that even while Liberty beckons, only a fortunate few of the African lottery winners are likely to be able to afford the full costs of programme participation, and that most of these are likely to be PTKs.

The most obvious financial demands of the DV are the cost of a ticket to the U.S. should the interview end positively and the lottery surcharge required of each participant. These costs, likely to be beyond the income range of many Africans, are exacerbated by the absence of a U.S. embassy in some countries. In order to pursue the DV, therefore, some lottery winners may have to bear the additional costs of a round-trip ticket to a nearby country with a U.S. embassy, and board and lodging while attending the interview. The prohibitive nature of these costs for most potential African DV participants is underscored by a 2007 increase in the application fee for permanent residency from \$275 per person to \$930 per person (plus an additional \$80 fingerprinting fee for all applicants aged between 14 and 79 years).

Some of the cost difficulties associated with the programme are aggravated by its educational and professional restrictiveness. The application form for the lottery states that applicants must have a minimum educational attainment of a secondary school diploma. The USCIS describes the education eligibility criterion in the following way:

You must have a high school diploma or the equivalent, defined in the United States as successful completion of a 12-year course of elementary and secondary education; OR you must have two years of work experience within the last five years in an occupation that requires at least two years of training or experience to perform. (USCIS; <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem>)

The minimum educational criterion for the lottery is very permissive at face value, but it is unlikely that many African high school graduates will be in jobs that will provide them with the financial wherewithal to participate in the programme. A more likely scenario is that an African with only a high school diploma will be either employed in a low-paying job or unemployed. For most Africans, the main avenue for participating in the programme is likely, therefore, to be through work experience. The eligibility requirement is based on the “job skills zone” classification outlined in Table 1. According to this information, job skills are classified into five zones. The requirements to qualify for the DV within this framework are captured in the following statement:

To qualify for a Diversity Visa on the basis of your work experience, you must, within the past five years, have two years of experience in an occupation that is designated as Job Zone 4 or 5. (DHS (Department of Homeland Security), Diversity Visa, List of Occupations)

Zones 4 and 5 require experience with “considerable to extensive preparation” and a minimum educational attainment of a 4-year degree (Table 1). These requirements seem to undermine the more permissive education requirement because, as noted earlier, Africans with only a high school diploma are also unlikely to hold positions in zones 4 and 5. The litmus test for programme participation would then seem to be based on the following logical sequence: (i) Africans who can bear the full costs of programme participation must have a good paying

TABLE 1
U.S. CLASSIFICATION OF SKILLS ZONES

Skills zone	Education	Classification	Job training	Example of job type
Zone 1	High school diploma or GED	Little or no preparation needed	No previous work-related skill, knowledge or experience needed	Counter, retail, sales clerk
Zone 2	High school diploma, vocational training, associate degree	Some preparation needed	From a few months to a year of training	Telephone operator
Zone 3	Vocational school, associate degree, related on-the-job training	Medium preparation needed	1–2 years of training or work-related experience	Tugboat mate
Zone 4	4-year bachelor degree	Considerable preparation needed	2–4 years of work-related skill, knowledge or experience	Teacher
Zone 5	Minimum is a bachelor degree, but many require graduate or professional degree	Extensive preparation needed	Assumes that the person already has the required skills, knowledge, work-related experience and/or training	Professor

Source: Compiled by the authors from USCIS, Occupational Information Network.

job; (ii) in Africa, such jobs often require more than a high school diploma; (iii) *ergo*, Africans who are likely to be able to participate in the DV to its conclusion must have post-high school qualifications. If this logic is accepted, one is also forced to conclude that the DV has a built-in mechanism for skills and educational selectivity. These conclusions are supported partially by the findings of some authors (e.g. Chiswick and Taengnoi, 2007; Fennelly and Palasz, 2003) regarding the links between skills, English proficiency and occupational access for highly skilled migrants in the U.S. Based on these analyses, a high school diploma can hardly provide many Africans with sufficient language and skills competency to perform in jobs attributed to zones 4 and 5 (for the analogous Australian case, see Khoo et al., 2007). The idea that the DV may be inherently skills-selective is also supported by significant anecdotal information from lottery participants. Their experiences suggest that the path from a lottery winner to an actual DV is a long one controlled by consular officers, who possess immense latitude for interpreting the educational and skills requirements of the programme. In some cases, college graduates have been rejected because their professional background was inconsistent with the expectations of consular officers. Even in the absence of educational information on DV participants, globalization explanations tend to support a case that DV participants from Africa are more likely to be PTKs (see also Law, 2002).

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The accelerated momentum of labour migration from Africa and other Third World regions over the past few decades has occasioned mounting politicization of immigration issues in the North. In response to public outcry over the imminent socio-economic crises perceived to be associated with an influx of foreigners, many Northern countries have put in place a variety of “shut gate” measures to curb immigration (Cline-Cole and O’Keefe, 2006). Anti-immigration sentiments have been influenced further by what Ibrahim (2005) terms, in post-9/11 discourse, the “securization of migration” – a general circling of the wagons to keep “them” out. As a concrete manifestation of this ideology, the U.S. Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 makes provision for physical barriers to deter immigration from southern and central America (Carbaugh, 2007; Ghandnoosh and Waldinger, 2006). Ibrahim (2005) argues further that the discourse, which seeks to link migration to the risk of terrorism in the U.S., often represents apologetics for institutionalized racism, since such sentiments are directed even at countries from which the threat of terrorism is low. Haubert and Fussell (2006: 489) seem to agree with Ibrahim that the politicization of immigration *cum* terrorism is a right-wing ideology that is not shared in the U.S. by “... cosmopolitans – people who are highly educated, in white-collar occupations, who have lived abroad, and reject ethnocentrism ...” (for comments on immigration politics in the U.S., see also Fetzer, 2006; Wells, 2004). Ideology aside, immigration politics have become grounded in the social and economic realities of globalization; realities that tend to pit the rich against the poor, the North against the South, the “us” against the “them”. Perhaps the most important of these realities is the influence of global capital and international trade on Southern poverty and, thus, on the potential for PTKs to emigrate.

The relationship between global capital, international trade and Southern poverty has excited much debate in economic development discourse (Basu, 2006; Bhagwati, 2005; Schuftan, 2003; Stiglitz, 2003; Williamson, 1997). Although the main issues surrounding these debates remain largely unreconciled, there is some agreement that globalization is partially responsible for accelerating international labour mobility by magnifying regional economic inequalities (Beverstock and Boardwell, 2000; Rodriguez-Pose and Gill, 2006;

Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The DV can be situated within these broad discussions in terms of the role of capital in creating income, career and professional gaps between Africa and the U.S.; the impacts of these factors in reinforcing the income slope between the two labour markets; and the apparent inability of international trade to rectify these differences.

Okome (2006a: 1) refers to the impacts of globalization on North–South disparities as one of the “antinomies of globalization”. The dialectics that Okome depicts in this characterization is the ability of globalization forces to create conditions that simultaneously intensify and reduce the North–South income and professional divides (Campbell, 2007; Okome, 2006b:). In the context of these dialectics, the DV may be seen to inform and be informed by a circularity through which capital and research opportunities are concentrated in the U.S. at the same time as economic development in Africa is being undermined. These processes lead to an oversupply of PTKs in Africa and a simultaneous increase in demand for their knowledge and expertise in the U.S., thereby sustaining a wage slope between the two regions, which has become increasingly steep over time (Campbell, 2007; Gaillard, 2003; Wade, 2004).

At the same time that globalization forces exacerbate regional disparities, they also increase the ease with which African PTKs can be incorporated into the organizational culture of the U.S. Meyer (2000) points out that the cultural dimensions of globalization have led to the standardization of operations and working processes of schools, hospitals, businesses and government institutions. Although working conditions in the U.S. are clearly different from those in most African countries, the globalization of occupation-specific cultural processes (e.g. professional certification and accreditation) helps to reduce the obstacles faced by African PTKs (perhaps more so than their unskilled counterparts) as they assimilate into the U.S. workforce.

It is often suggested that one way of easing North–South labour bottlenecks is to allow free movement of labour, which would make it possible for PTKs to migrate to the country that offers them the best benefit package (Rodriguez-Pose and Gill, 2006; Sjaastad, 1962). In more contemporary expositions of this human investment explanation, free movement of labour is viewed to have the added benefit of contributing to improved standards of living in the countries of *origin* through remittances (Adams, 2003; Adams and Page, 2005; Rees 2006; Stalker 2004). Critics of unrestricted labour movement, on the other hand, claim that immigrants depress wages in the destination countries and worsen employment conditions for citizens. They also argue that as immigrants improve their standards of living, rather than remit substantial amounts home, they adopt high consumption habits that stress resources in the host country and contribute to a widening North–South gap. Remittances are viewed to worsen these difficulties by encouraging high birth rates, which intensify poverty in the countries of *origin* (Daly, 2004).

These debates are rather inconclusive, partly because supporters on both sides assume that personal income is the most important motivation underling the PTK’s decision to migrate. Empirical studies of African PTKs and their potential to emigrate suggest that the overall national socio-economic environment may be more important than personal income in the decision-making process. In a study of the potential of University of Zimbabwe professors to emigrate, Logan (1999) concludes that professors who express a desire to emigrate are no worse off in terms of personal income than those who express a desire to stay home. The study indicates that the geographical proximity of a potential destination, kinship ties with a potential destination, the marital status of the potential emigrant, the number of children that the potential emigrant has and the field of study of a potential emigrant are more indicative of a potential to emigrate than income. A more recent study by Tevera (2005) revealed that even though 78 per cent of Zimbabwean students believed it was their duty to use their skills and talent for the growth of the country, 70 per cent of them were looking forward migrating abroad within 2 years of graduation. Their decision to migrate was mostly explained by high

levels of dissatisfaction with economic conditions and the lack of optimism regarding the possibility of improvements in the economy. Chikanda (2005) argues that similar factors increase the desire of Zimbabwean health-sector professionals to emigrate from the country.

Campbell's (2007) study of the potential for PTKs to emigrate from Botswana also concludes that prioritizing personal income as the motive factor would be oversimplifying PTK decision-making. More recent studies point to other confounding considerations, ranging from proficiency in the language of the destination country to issues of perceived psychological and mental comfort, especially if PTKs expect that their jobs at the destination would be humiliating, of low status and professionally inferior to their jobs at home (see also Akresh, 2006; Beiser et al., 2003; Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2002; Fennelly and Palasz, 2003; Lev-Wiesel and Kaufman, 2004; Rooth and Ekberg, 2006).

Globalization discourse suggests further that if free PTK movement is not practical (or desirable), North–South factor bottlenecks can be eliminated through economic development in countries of *origin*. This logic is framed around the notion that free(r) international trade would create economic development and dampen the need for PTK emigration (see Boswell, 2003; Volger and Rotte, 2000; Welford et al., 2003; White, 2007). This position underlies recent EU migration policy (see Boswell, 2003) and was, perhaps, first laid out explicitly at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, with its focus on strategies by which "... developing countries could accelerate development to make emigration unnecessary ..." (Martin et al., 2007: 8; see also Adepoju, 2006; Al Khalifa, 2006; Carbaugh, 2007; Portes and DeWind, 2004).

If the free trade argument is correct, free international commodity movement and free PTK movement are realistic substitutes under two contrasting scenarios: (i) by improving economic conditions in Africa, free trade makes immigration control unnecessary in the U.S.; (ii) restrictive trade increases international income gaps, motivates migration and makes stringent immigration control necessary in the U.S. In this conceptual framework, immigration control becomes unnecessary in an efficient trade regime and stringent immigration control becomes necessary only under sub-optimal, restrictive trade conditions.

The available evidence would suggest that trade under globalization has not translated itself into reduced labour mobility from Africa. This suggests one of two contrasting possibilities: either international trade is not "free" (so that regional inequalities continue to spur international migration); or trade is free and has reduced regional inequality, but the behaviour of African PTKs is inconsistent with theoretical expectations. Without going into the several debates on international trade, a common view is that the existing global trade regime orchestrated under the WTO is not "free" (see Cline-Cole and O'Keefe, 2006; Ghandnoosh and Waldinger, 2006; Grynberg and Silva, 2006). Instead of economic prosperity, the trade instruments of globalization have contributed in several ways to worsening balance-of-payments scenarios, huge debts, high debt service conditionalities and poverty in Africa (Welford et al., 2003). The failure of the 2007 EU–African Summit in Lisbon to rectify these difficulties is instructive. The frustration faced by African leaders over Northern agricultural subsidies prompted the following headline from the BBC: "Trade row mars EU–Africa Trade" (<http://news.bb.co.uk/2/hi/Europe/713494.stm>, 10 December 2007). Other analyses of the talks from the media indicate that African leaders are frustrated with the details of a strategic action plan that would force African countries to reduce import taxes on EU products to Africa in return for similar action by the EU for African products to that region. African leaders express the fear that these terms will relegate the continent to primary production and that EU goods will undermine fragile African industries. These conditions suggest that by underscoring North–South disparities, international trade has not been a successful strategy for stemming PTK emigration (for the Moroccan case, see de Haas, 2007; and for the case of female Nigerian experts in Chicago, see Reynolds, 2006).

Focusing these discussions on the DV, there are at least two problems with relying on free trade as an antidote for PTK emigration. The first is that politics, not economics, often drives U.S. trade and migration policies (Hix and Noury, 2007). A second and related factor is that U.S. policy is often based on the sub-optimal model, which seeks to restrict trade and migration simultaneously. Boswell (2007) describes this policy model as being guided, on the one hand, by public outcry against immigration and, on the other, by business agitation against unrestricted trade (see also Bigo, 2002; Castles, 2004). As Ghandnoosh and Waldinger (2006: 721) put it, “[w]hat doctrine prescribes, however, states don’t necessarily follow. The reason being that theory is not always consistent with pragmatic policy.”

The discussions in this section have been used to explore some conceptual manifestations of globalization on factor mobility, trade and the Africa–U.S. gap in PTK income and professional opportunities. One U.S. policy response to the labour bottlenecks created by the restrictive trade – restrictive labour model is to use the DV to relax labour movement rather than address the more cumbersome issue of relaxing trade (see DeVoretz, 2006). The following sections are used to link these arguments to the empirics of DV migration by weaving several key themes together: that DV migration as a percentage of total African migration to the U.S. has been increasing since 2000; that PTKs as a percentage of total African migration to the U.S. have been increasing in line with DV migration; that in the absence of educational data on the DV, these two coincident trends can be used to support the argument that the DV is being implemented as a skills-selective mechanism in Africa; and finally that, consistent with theoretical expectations, poorer African countries seem to be bigger losers of PTKs to the DV than richer African countries.

TRENDS IN THE DIVERSITY VISA PROGRAMME

As an initial caveat, it must be stated that the analyses in this section represent only a first approximation, because of the sketchy nature of the available data. The data we use are the best data on the DV and are based on annual tabulations of immigrant flows by type of admission, compiled in the official statistics of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), available for the period 1997–2005. These data have a number of limitations, the most important of which is the absence of socio-demographic information, which would make it possible to identify the occupational and demographic characteristics of DV immigrants. The GDP data obtained from the World Bank Indicators Data Base (World Bank, 2006) are also, at best, generalized “guesstimates” from which only broad patterns can be gleaned. Given these data limitations, the empirical analyses paint a picture with a broad brush that permits a general assessment of DV dynamics.

Lobo (2001) indicates that African immigration to the U.S. increased by over 100 per cent between 1988 and 1998; however, a significant proportion of this increase occurred only after the DV was introduced in the 1990s (see also Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006; Law, 2002). Prior to the 1990s, only a small number of Africans applying for U.S. visas actually received them, because a successful application depended almost exclusively on the extent to which an individual could demonstrate proof of financial worthiness to U.S. consular officers (Arthur, 2000; Ungar, 1995). The DV’s shift from financial status to educational and professional credentials represents a redirection of U.S. policy that has provided African PTKs with an effective, legal conduit for emigration.

Actual trends in the regional origin of DV immigrants from 1996 to 2005 are presented in Figure 1. In absolute terms, the majority of DV immigrants arriving in the U.S. are from European countries, especially from the former Soviet bloc (e.g. Clark et al., 2007). Apart

from Europe, the African region is the most important region of origin of DV immigrants. In fact, while the number of DV immigrants arriving from Europe has experienced several peaks and troughs over the past 9 years, the corresponding trend for Africa has been relatively stable. Although the number of DV immigrants arriving from African countries declined slightly between 1996 and 1998, by 2004 Africa had replaced Europe as the leader in DV migration. Additionally, while DV migration from the Caribbean, Central America, Asia and other North American countries has been relatively flat since 2003, there has been consistent growth in the African trend.

Figure 2 captures trends in the number of DV immigrants by region of origin as a percentage of the total number of DV immigrants arriving in the U.S. These data show that Africa has consistently accounted for over 25 per cent of the total number of DV immigrants entering the U.S. since 1996. Again, this contribution ranks second only to Europe during the period from 1996 to 2003. The graph shows that the African contribution experienced the highest levels of growth between 2000 and 2004, a period during which the contributions of

FIGURE 1

TRENDS IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DV IMMIGRANTS BY REGION OF ORIGIN

Source: Data compiled from the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* for the respective years.

FIGURE 2

TRENDS IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL DV IMMIGRANTS FROM VARIOUS REGIONS OF ORIGIN

Source: Data compiled from the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* for the respective years.

European countries declined twice. During this same period, the trends for other regions were, at best, flat.

The strong participation of Africans in the DV may be interpreted in one of two ways: either the programme is fulfilling its multicultural mandate to help Africans of every skill level to migrate to the U.S.; or the programme has provided a mechanism that facilitates PTK migration specifically. Both processes may be at work, but the possibility that the latter may be stronger is supported by the data in Table 2, which compare trends in the number of immigrants admitted to the U.S. as part of the DV programme with those for immigrants admitted under “employment preference” categories. The data show that Africa’s share of the global total of immigrants entering the U.S. under “employment preferences” is quite small, fluctuating around 3.5 per cent annually. Africa’s share of the global total of DV immigrants, on the other hand, ranges between 36 per cent and 40 per cent. While the absolute number of African immigrants admitted under “employment preferences” declined between 2001 and 2004, the respective number admitted through the DV programme during this same period increased by about 30 per cent. In fact, the number of African DV immigrants consistently exceeded the number of Africans admitted through “employment preferences” at least by a factor of two during the period. The data illustrate, further, that the African trend is not replicated by other regions. For example, migration from Central America through both the DV and “employment preferences” declined between 2001 and 2004. Similarly, even though the number of Asian DV immigrants increased between 2001 and 2004, immigration through other employment categories was still more important for that region.

Since most “employment preference” migrants are PTKs, what insights might the contrasting trends between this category and the DV programme provide regarding the effectiveness of the latter in recruiting African PTKs? The data suggest that “employment preference” visas might not be easy for African PTKs (perhaps with the exception of South Africans) to obtain. One explanation for this is that it is often necessary for an “employment preference” applicant to already be in the U.S. to facilitate the application and interview processes for jobs that would qualify under this category. Additionally, “employment preference” visas require employer sponsorship, together with Labor Department and Justice Department clearance. Unless an African applicant, still in Africa, is extremely gifted, most U.S. job sponsors are likely to seek European, Asian, Australian and other regional alternatives, for which the immigration process may be less demanding. By comparison, the DV does not require a U.S. sponsor and – as shown earlier – its eligibility criteria favour the African PTK over his or her unskilled counterpart. Unless one assumes that there has been an overall dramatic drop in PTK emigration from Africa to the U.S., the decline in “employment preferences” for the region (when South Africa is omitted) suggests that the DV has provided African PTKs with an alternative immigration avenue. This conclusion is supported by U.S. immigration data, which show significant increases in African migration between 2000 and 2004 in several skills categories, including: professional specialty and technical; executives, administrators and managers; sales; administrative support; and artists and entertainers. The only category in which Africa’s representation during the period is weak is “gifted workers”. Lobo’s (2006) observation on these trends is that African PTKs who might have been forced to enter the U.S. by inappropriate visas or illegal means are now taking advantage of the larger pool of employment visas granted through the DV programme to gain admission to the U.S. In short, the DV programme acts as a conduit for the voluntary, legal migration of skilled African labour. The discussions in the next section explore whether poorer African countries are more likely to suffer from this process than richer African countries (for a discussion of this relationship, see Hatton and Williamson, 1994, 2002).

TABLE 2
IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED BY SELECTED CLASS OF ADMISSION

	Employment preferences				Diversity visa programme			
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004
Europe	28,481	26,623	10,898	22,046	17,952	16,867	19,162	18,781
Asia	106,322	107,063	51,758	95,918	5,958	7,175	8,131	8,092
Oceania	1,373	1,384	675	1,160	675	533	555	712
North America	24,800	22,448	10,460	18,362	728	589	394	471
South America	11,207	10,923	5,151	12,091	1,131	1,310	1,544	1,588
Central America	4,159	3,344	1,584	2,443	84	23	41	42
Africa	6,665	6,234	3,113	5,338	15,499	16,310	16,503	20,337
Nigeria	807	937	581	685	2,688	2,279	3,121	2,959
Ethiopia	125	124	59	—	2,194	3,994	3,382	4,517
Egypt	804	699	290	556	1,125	1,161	923	1,643
Ghana	224	216	149	222	1,122	1,217	1,578	1,152
Somalia	18	16	7	D	295	233	114	69
Morocco	245	187	107	222	2,083	1,494	1,601	2,251
South Africa	2,423	2,251	957	1,925	231	238	302	184
Kenya	425	308	234	362	751	1,297	1,541	2,730
Liberia	56	79	38	72	417	382	391	548
Sudan	63	40	33	45	719	629	420	351
Sierra Leone	77	47	39	52	766	818	323	211
Cape Verde	8	14	5	—	2	1	—	D
Total	179,195	174,968	82,137	155,330	42,015	42,829	46,347	50,084
Africa as percentage of total	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.4	36.9	38.0	36.0	40.6

Source: Logan (2009).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DV PROGRAMME, PTK EMIGRATION AND POVERTY IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Figure 3 reflects the relationship between DV immigrants as a percentage of all African immigrants, on the one hand, and estimates of the GDP per capita of the country of origin (World Bank, 2006), on the other. The downward slope (left to right) of the scatter points suggests that an inverse relationship does exist between national income and emigration through the DV. In other words, the percentage of the total immigrants arriving through the DV programme is lowest among African countries with the highest incomes and vice versa. The large variation in the percentage contribution of DV immigrants by poorer African countries may be explained by factors such as civil conflicts and other forms of instability in countries like Sierra Leone and Somalia, which provide other avenues for emigration (e.g. asylees and refugees). Despite these variations, the DV accounts for upwards of 25 per cent of the total number of immigrants among countries with a GDP of \$4,000 and below.

The negative association between levels of economic development and PTK loss from African countries is intuitive. Adepoju (2000, 2003) has pointed out that less favourable economic factors in poorer African countries, including unemployment, lack of infrastructure and low salaries, now motivate PTKs from those countries to migrate not only to the North but also to wealthier African countries such as South Africa. Dei and Asgharzadeh (2002) suggest that both intracontinental and northward migrations from Africa are underpinned by economic vicissitudes such as structural adjustment programmes, which weakened African economies and accelerated the brain drain. Record and Mohiddin (2006) add that sub-optimal economic performance in countries with lower levels of GDP contributes generally to higher levels of unemployment, which leave university graduates in these countries unemployed or underemployed, and provide a rich pool of potential migrants to the North (see also El-Khawas, 2004).

The data in Table 3 show the top ten sub-Saharan countries in terms of the percentage contribution of the DV programme to total immigration between 2000 and 2005. The United Nations (UN) has ranked five of these countries (Togo, Nigeria, Niger, Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire) among those with the lowest levels of human development in the world (UNDP, 2002). For sub-Saharan countries, therefore, the effects of the DV programme appear to be

FIGURE 3

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DV IMMIGRATION AND GDP PER CAPITA IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Source: Data compiled from the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* and the *World Development Indicators* for the respective years.

TABLE 3
THE TOP TEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF DV IMMIGRANTS TO TOTAL IMMIGRANTS

2000	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
Country	% DV	Country	% DV	Country	% DV	Country	% DV	Country	% DV	Country
Togo	74.5	Togo	65.6	Togo	73.8	Togo	84.2	Togo	87.8	Togo
Sudan	65.5	Morocco	64.5	Ethiopia	61.2	Algeria	59.8	Ethiopia	61.8	Morocco
Algeria	62.1	Algeria	47.8	Algeria	52.9	Ethiopia	55.0	Morocco	56.9	Ethiopia
Morocco	59.4	Sudan	46.0	Morocco	46.3	Morocco	53.3	Congo, Republic of the	49.0	Algeria
Congo, Republic of the	56.8	Congo, Republic of the	45.1	Sudan	42.5	Congo, Republic of the	51.2	Algeria	48.9	Congo, Republic of the
Cameroon	54.0	Ethiopia	44.0	Cameroon	39.6	Nigeria	40.7	Cameroon	44.7	Cameroon
Côte d'Ivoire	47.8	Cameroon	42.5	Congo, Republic of the	37.5	Cameroon	39.9	Burundi	35.7	Egypt
Botswana	42.5	Côte d'Ivoire	36.3	Côte d'Ivoire	36.1	Sudan	36.8	Sudan	34.9	Nigeria
Ethiopia	42.2	Nigeria	33.7	Nigeria	30.0	Liberia	34.9	Liberia	34.8	Sudan
Mauritius	41.5	Liberia	27.4	Niger	28.7	Côte d'Ivoire	33.9	Nigeria	32.1	Liberia
										18.4

Source: Based on data compiled from the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* for the respective years.

intricately related to low levels of human development. Surprisingly, francophone countries, which traditionally do not send immigrants to English-speaking countries, seem to be significant participants in the DV. For example, in 2004, about 89 per cent of all Togolese immigrants entering the U.S. arrived as part of the DV programme. The significant francophone participation in the programme points to two conclusions: first that, true to its stated objective, the DV has targeted non-traditional countries of origin; and, second, that the DV has been effective in making the U.S. competitive for PTKs over whom the French labour market has traditionally had a monopoly.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study set out to investigate the impacts of the DV on the migration of African PTKs to the U.S. The discussions reveal that the DV has been successful in that part of its mandate, which is to increase African immigration to the U.S., especially from non-traditional countries of *origin*. The programme's success in this regard, however, may have been achieved at the expense of accelerated PTK migration. The available data indicate that the enormous costs involved in translating a lottery win to an actual DV dictate that only a few well-placed Africans, typically PTKs rather than mere high school graduates, are likely to be able to afford to participate fully in the programme. As a consequence, in its actual implementation, the DV may be a skills-selective mechanism that has made it possible for the U.S. and African PTKs to accomplish a number of goals that are not directly related to multiculturalism. On the one hand, the programme has made it possible for the U.S. to become more competitive for PTKs from non-traditional African countries of origin, including francophone countries. On the other hand, African PTKs benefit from a programme that is biased towards them, and that provides them with a more direct avenue to America than other existing mechanisms such as the "employment preference" visa. PTKs from poorer African countries, who might also have migrated to less poor African countries as a "second best" destination, are now able to migrate directly to the U.S.

The complexity of PTK migration in general, and through the DV in particular, makes it difficult to map out a comprehensive African policy response. Clearly, the recruitment of African PTKs through the DV is part of a much larger global competition for high-end labour. In this broader context, the African response could be couched in terms of two general complementary strategies. The first would advocate that African PTKs should be "kept home" – suggesting, for example, that professionals whose education has been funded by an African government should be required to engage in "national service" as a payback to society. This approach would be enabled by curricula development in African-specific needs (an agricultural economist trained in an African-based curriculum is less likely to migrate to the North than one trained in a Western-oriented curriculum). In essence, the "retain" strategy would require a re-prioritization in African capacity-building. A second general strategy would be to set policy in motion to "return" African PTKs, as part of an ongoing, vigorous recruitment campaign by African governments.

A successful framework for either the "retain" or "return" approaches (or both) will hinge on a number of things. As an initial necessity, African governments will have to consult with PTKs both at home and abroad to understand their decision-making imperatives in a more comprehensive fashion. At the same time, African governments will need to engage in comprehensive negotiations with Northern governments to align the demand-supply needs of both parties so that PTK migration can be stabilized. The U.S. J-visa, which requires PTKs to return to their country of origin for a specified number of years before they can be

allowed to seek employment in the U.S., is a case in point. In the past, South Africa has also engaged the Canadian authorities in efforts to discourage the recruitment in Canada of South African doctors. “Baseline” assessments from conversations with PTKs and Northern governments could form the foundation for strategies that will enable African governments to devise incentive structures that reward individual investments in human capital in more substantial ways, to include better conditions of service and increased possibilities for professional advancement.

Although the need for African countries to improve their attractiveness for PTKs is intuitive, it is difficult to devise concrete programmes for an improved incentive structure (otherwise, it is likely that it would have been done by now). For one thing, any programme is likely to be very expensive. Programme costs can be reduced, however, through regional or continent-wide efforts. African governments also have a strong advantage that has not been yet exploited; because of the sociocultural networks at home, most PTKs would much rather be at home than abroad. In that sense, the African incentive structure for PTKs does not have to match that of the North dollar for dollar, since many African PTKs could be persuaded to return to the continent for a fraction of their Northern salaries if they believed that professional and career opportunities (this runs the gamut from the ability to conduct research, attend meetings and interact with peers, to more mundane things such as access to electricity) would be available.

As part of, and in addition to, the “retain” and “return” strategy, an African framework must contemplate broad-based, long-term solutions. An effective approach could be based on regional and continent-wide initiatives, which exploit complementarities in human capital needs among African countries. This would require, for example, the development of a regional inventory of human capital needs and resources in which a country with an immediate need for engineers could be promoted as a suitable destination for engineers from other African countries that do not have immediate needs for such skills. Such initiatives could even be prioritized in current policy mechanisms used for migration management in Africa’s sub-regions, such as the MIDWA and MIDSA programmes (Migration Dialogue for West/South Africa). The inventory approach has been tried during the 1990s: examples include the UN’s TOKTEN programme (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals), Kenya’s DESSA programme (Displaced Engineers, Scientists and Scholars Abroad) and South Africa’s SANSA programme (South Africa Network of Skills abroad). These earlier programmes were limited in scope, especially in view of the fact that they attempted to match PTKs specifically to their countries of origin. Similar objectives are also enshrined in the aims of MIDA programme (Migration and Development in Africa), which attempts to mobilize and link African diaspora resources with the specific development needs of their countries of origin. A new vision is required that would match PTKs to needs across the continent rather than only to the country of origin.

The efforts outlined above need to be complemented by approaches based on considered evaluations of the cost–benefit scenarios associated with programmes such as the U.S. DV and “Green Card” and the pending EU “Blue Card”. The notion that PTK emigration through these programmes is necessarily a drain on African development must be assessed against the benefits that African economies can derive from the process. This policy orientation must be based on the realistic assumption that since “free” trade is as free as it is likely to be in the foreseeable future, African policy should be based on an assessment of the benefits that could be derived from “exporting” PTKs in terms of unemployment relief, remittances, return transfer of technology and skills, and return direct investments. If it is determined that these benefits offset the loss of PTKs in the first place, an overarching policy framework should be aimed at determining how best to facilitate African

participation in programmes such as the DV. A structure could be established at the regional level (through, for example, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa) to provide PTKs with financial and administrative assistance to emigrate. Of course, these efforts will require substantial investments of time and money; but in the long run they are likely to be more cost-effective than the present *laissez-faire* approach of most African countries.

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