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MEDIATIZING MIGRATION DISCOURSE AS CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE ESCALATE IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Migration was one of humanity's ancient itineraries. It dates far beyond times of ancient civilizations. Even in the ancient history of Israelites as could be seen from Scriptures, people migrated. People are still migrating especially from slums of Third World countries in search of greener pastures to Europe and America. However, in 21st Century, at the face of fierce wars, violence, terrorism, climate change, bad governance coupled with widespread poverty bringing untold hardship to millions of people across the globe, migration which is their resultant effect has met aggressive borders, and perhaps, equally, unfriendly media coverage. Of course, across continents, discourse on migration is ongoing. But often, this discourse is either championed by the media or is ongoing through the media. Thus, like every other mediatized issue, the discourse on migration could be made or marred by the media. This article evaluates media coverage of migration discourse even as challenges of climate change are escalating the volume of migrants across the globe. To do this evaluation, conceptual analysis is deployed to arrive at a conclusion that projects human rights and dignity and hospitality as values to be adopted in media framing of the migration discourse for a more civilized world.

Keywords: mediatizing, migration, climate change, human dignity, Christian hospitality.

1. Introduction

The issue of migration did not start today. Humans have always emigrated, migrated and immigrated. Migration is nothing new in human history. It is an agelong engagement of mankind. As a matter of fact, there is likelihood that humans began migrating thousands of years ago from Africa to other parts of the world – between 60,000 to 80,000 years ago (Manning & Trimmer, 2013 quoted in Lohman, 2017, p. 12). As Lohman (2017, p. 12) notes, migration has been on increase for the past 50 years. According to her, 2015 statistics recorded 244 million migrants across the world. That is to say that, as at 2015, migrants form about 3% of world's population (Intl. Org. for Migration, 2015 quoted in Lohman). Though migration has been an agelong human event, its volume has been on the rise since the past 50 years. It is not out of place to wonder why the sustained increment over the past half a century.

Surprisingly, the same reasons why people migrated centuries ago remain the same reasons why they migrate today, namely, to be united with family; to search for greener pastures and for security in the face of oppressive regimes, violence, war and other forms of insecurity (Lohman, 2017, p. 12). In the 21st Century, humanity is witnessing an expansion of the third reason of migration, dealing with the issue of security. It is already swelling up the number

of migrants today: it is the issue of climate change. The changes escalate insecurity of lives and properties across the globe. However, the daunting challenge that migrants face today is the role of the media as they cover migration discourse. Several media reports dehumanize migrants; paint gory images of them as miscreants, and thus, dislodge the world from solving a perennial humanitarian problem. This article, therefore, takes a critical look on media coverage of migration discourse even as challenges of climate change is escalating the volume of migrants across the globe.

2. Conceptual clarification of terms

2.1. Mediatizing

The media offer societies platforms of interactions. In so doing, they provide avenues for public discourse over societal challenges. In this discourse, media playing a leading role since they are the ones mediatizing discourses. To lead in such discourses, they construct and reconstruct realities to their audiences, more often than not, tend to see those realities from the perspectives of the media. In this work, mediatizing is seen as that role whereby the media presents realities to their audiences from media construct.

2.2. Migration

At the introductory part of this work, it is pointed out that humanity has continued to emigrate, migrate and immigrate. In this work, the term migration has been used to refer to all those different formats of human movements – in keeping with contemporary parlance. Therefore, migration discussed here includes refugees even though the latter term is used less frequently than the former.

3. Mediatizing migration discourse

3.1. Mediatizing

The term *mediatizing* is a gerund of the verb *mediatize*. It indicates an ongoing action; while the verb *mediatize* or the noun *mediatization* stems from the noun *mediation*. *Mediation* in dictionary explanation is to go between; to intervene between two ailing friends; to provide agreement or solution for peace between two warring communities; or in a passive form, for something to positively or negatively cushion the effect of a subject on an object (Longman Dictionary, 2000). It is from the last option of the noun *mediation* that the notion of mediatization of the media grew in the media savvy 21st century. This is in greater recognition of the mediating role of the media over virtually every issue of our human life today.

Giaxoglou & Döveling (2018, p. 2) quote the explanation of Esser & Strömback about mediatization as "a meta-process on a par with other transformative social change processes such as globalization and individualization". According to Esser & Strömback mediatization talks more about "a social change process in which media have become increasingly influential in and deeply integrated into different spheres of society" (Esser & Strömback, 2014, p. 4 – quoted in Giaxoglou & Döveling 2018, p. 2). In other words, the media consantly intervene in all these different human situations to influence the understanding their audience have over such issues. In other words, such understanding often leads to social or policy change in the society.

While discussing surface and underlying meaning in content analysis, Van-Dijk states that the media could create and replicate realities or ideologies in society. The media create and

reproduce reality or ideologies by what they choose as topics of their discussions or coverages, by their pattern of citation and what they quote from what people have said. Their choice of words and patterns of strategies in their coverage are all ways they fashion ideologies or create media realities that may go forth to influence media users (Van-Dijk, 1993, p. 279, quoted in Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 5).

In media construction and reconstruction of realites, evaluation of what are the interests of the audience and that attracts them are of importance to the media. The media evaluate what would be of primary interest of the audience, as well as evaluate what would be of great audience attraction to media products both in newspaper, radio and television. It is from this perspective that the media end up broadcasting something (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004, p. 6). Where a media organ pays attention to only these two elements: interest of the audience and audience attraction, it tends to produce just what the audience wants.

If such audience is a homogenous community, it might be afraid of becoming a heterogenous or a multi-ethnic community, and as such, they would be unwelcoming to migrants. In seeking the interests of such a community, a media organ may just carry negative stories about migrants. And as Spoonley & Trlin point out, such media publications project onto the citizens images of "invasion, waves and flooding" (2004, p. 7) which may further lead them to agitations against migrants. On the other hand, the media only concern themselves with interests of audience and audience attractions about mediatizing migration discourse, it will surely put migrants as invaders, and will continue to estrange them to their host communities or nations. On the other hand, mediatizing has its root in mediation, then, the media should also have concerns of migrants at heart in the coverage of their stories. Often times, giving migration stories a humanitarian slant is favourable to both migrants their host communities or nations.

3.2. Migration

The term *migration* is a noun describing the act of one leaving a place to reside in another place or leaving one's country of origin to be resident in another country. A migrant is one who is in migration. According to United Nations, the term migrant is ascribed to someone who is on the move or has already crossed the shores of his/her own country of origin to another country. Such a person is seen as a migrant irrespective of his/her standing under the law, motive of movement to be self-chosen or caused by external circumstances like war, violence, etc., and how long this person is resident in the said country (UN, 2019). Thus, migration is a common human phenomenon. As we read from the Bible even Israelites migrated as they went to the Lord's "promised land". Even the American continent is largely inhabited by migrants and generations of their descendants.

Over thousands of years, the basic three reasons for migration, as noted above, have persisted. There has only been expansions of what falls within categories of each of them. The trend of movement of migrants has also persisted: from war-stricken places to peaceful ones; from worst places to best ones; and developing countries to developed parts of the world. For instance, Martin (2009, p. 18) observes that about 56 million of migrants go to Europe, while about 41 million go to North America. But then, United Nations data show Asia now has high number of migrants.

However, as the data from United Nations indicate, there are more migrants now than it was in the past. By 2010 there were about 221 million migrants across the globe. But by 2019 the data rose to 272 million migrants all over the world. In other words, there is an increment of about 51 million migrants within 9 years. From the 2019 data, migrants make about 3.5% of the world population. This shows a 0.7% increment to 2.8% that it was by 2000 and 2.3% that it was by 1980 (UN, 2019).

Of this number of migrants, 48% of them are females and 52% are males. While about 38 million are children, those who are within 20 to 64 years of age and can actively engage in work are about 164 million. Migrants are going all over the world, but some parts of the world have higher number of migrants than others. For instance, of the worldwide population of migrants, 31% are residing in Asian countries, 30% are living in European countries, 26% are living in American countries, 10% are living in African countries, and 3% are living in Oceania (UN, 2019).

With all the challenges migrants are facing, United Nations member states have made more commitments to uphold the human dignity of migrants which is often neglected. These commitments are known as "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants". The Declaration points to the need for nations to have "comprehensive approach to migration". It also sees migrants in a positive light – knowing that they could contribute in building a "sustainable and inclusive development" not just in their host nations but all over the world. The Declaration "commits to protecting the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status" (UN, 2019). In mediatizing migration discourse, therefore, it should be relevant to consider the interests of migrants instead of just the interest of their host communities.

3.3. Migrants through media

One of the challenges migrants face in mediatizing migration discourse is the fact that they are not known by the media of their host communities. If they are not known by media of their host communities, what will the media say about them? This is why Spoonley & Trlin hold that "The competency of those preparing reports and of those deciding what will appear in the media are critical in the portrayal of immigrants, and will reflect the news and production values of the organisation as well as those of the individual and professional groups concerned" (2004, p. 10). Apart from not knowing the migrants and their stories, they are also "misrepresented", "underrepresented" and stereotyped as bad people even before people of their would-be-host communities ever interacted with them. Often migrants are presented as posing enormous dangers to their host communities (Spoonley & Trnlin, 2004, p. 10; see also Cottle, 2008, p. 8) when in reality they may not.

Thus, in mediatizing migration discourse, it is clear the media wield enormous powers – considering their role in the construction and reconstruction of realities. Making use of dominant imageries, signs, symbols, languages, and in fact, cultures, they shape the conversations. Often times, people just see what the media project; and they have influenced this discourse as subsequent reports demonstrate.

3.4. Media coverage of migration

For a better evaluation of how the media cover migration and understand well the effects mediatization, an evaluation of media coverage in destination countries of Europe is

important. For want of space, a brief evaluation of media migration reports on Italy and Germany are reviewed herein:

3.4.1. Media coverage of migrants at select destination countries

3.4.1.1. Italy

Italy has been a frontline country on issues on migration. It has been both a destination and transition country on migration over the years. Migrants come from all over. Some come from few European countries, Asian and African countries into Italy either as their port of destination or as route to other destinations. As a matter of fact, Lampedusa, a Mediterranean island in the region of Sicily is one of the hotspots for migrants in Italy. This is to say that Italian media have been covering migration issues over the years, for instance, Lampedusa is often on the news with stories on migration. Though most of views of the coverage were focused on immigration politics especially on the faceoff between Italian government and European Union, the coverages toed political divide between the right and the left.

According to Masera media houses toeing leftwing are a little positive on migrants, and those on the rightwing like *Libero* and *Il Giornale,* for instance, are more negative. In fact, the rightwing media see the arrival of migrants and refugees as "invasion" of their country. However, after series of drowning of migrant ships on the Mediterranean Sea with several of them happening in 2016, then the story of migrants was not only brought to the front burner, but also approaches on their coverage began to change. Some Italian parents became agitated about the effects of those horrible images on their own children. Leaders of these Italian media bodies – *Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine dei Giornalisti*, and the *Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana* solidified efforts with press proprietors, academia policy experts to ameliorate media reports on migrants. Nonetheless, it was only 3% of the cases reported that had migrants tell their own narratives by themselves (Masera, 2017, pp. 47-50).

3.4.1.2. Germany

Germany, in recent times, had its peak of an enthusiastic, sometimes advocative and very positive media coverage of migrants from summer of 2015. This was a resilt of a tragic capsizing of the boat carrying migrants at the Mediterranean in summer 2015. It saw German media torn between doing humanitarian acts to the migrants and doing their work as journalists. Of course, a couple of other humanitarian incidents led to the positive coverage of migrants. Amongst several others, those incidents include: discovery of 71 migrant corpses abandoned in a human trafficking lorry on a highway near Parndorf on 27th August 2015; and the discovery of the body of a 3 year old Syrian Kurdish boy washed off the Mediterranean on 2nd September 2015 within the Turkish town of Bodrum while his parents tried escaping with him. All these swayed journalists to the side of positive coverage and advocacy for migrants (Mueller, 2017, p. 31).

Apart from the humanitarian incidents, the positive temperament and committed leadership style of German Chancellor Angela Merkel provided bolstering spirit for positive journalistic reports of migrants and their challenges. Angela Merkel was among the very few Western leaders who opened their doors to migrants at the time migration was escalating to its appex. She led the German people cum media to positivism on immigration through her concept and slogan "we can do it" (Muller, 2017, p. 29). With Merkel's positivism, thousands of articles were written in support of migrants. Newspapers like *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel* and *Bild* were at

the forefront – promoting enthusiasm for migrants even when half of the society were in opposition. In fact, *Die Zeit* ran headlines that adopted and modified Angela Merkel's "we can do it" to "Of course, we can do it". Even when the German President Joachim Gauck decried the ills of "dark Gernany" characterized by racial hatred, and praised the goods of "bright Germany" characterized by openness to migrants, a news magazine called Spiegel made a graphic of it on their cover page.

Unfortunately, all those enthusiasm and positivism crashed following the 13th November 2015 terrorist attack in Paris. In fact, by 25th November 2015, a German daily newspaper called Die Welt framed a headline that linked migrants to terrorism which the paper alledged will be the end of Germans and their high living standard. With this publication and similar ones, more and more media reports began playing down on reports on migrants till very little is now said about them (Muller, 2017, p. 31).

3.4.2. Media coverage of migrants at select originating countries

3.4.2.1. Egypt

Egypt is an originating, a destination and a transition country for migrants. As mentioned earlier, even the Child Jesus in his human history on earth, was a refugee in Egypt as his parents sojourned there to avoid his being killed by Herod (Matthew 2: 13-23). Of course, over the centuries, migrants have been in and out of Egypt, but in recent history, Egypt has spike in migration because of security issues in the region. Major insecurities like the 2003 invasion of Iraq by USA and their allies; and the 2011 outbreak of civil war in Syria: those wars upturned security in the region, leading to overflow of migrants to Egypt. Of course, the 2010 – 2013 Arab spring which became series of antigovernment protests that ran through Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain had huge impact on migration in the region.

El-Shaarawi & Elsamni report that, though, Egyptian media have always toed the path of their governments on issues regarding migrants, they have been very positive in reporting migrants' stories. They observe that there were some discrepancies in terms of number of migrants that came into Egypt. For instance, by 2016 UNHCR statistics of migrants who were resident in Egypt were given as 115,000 whereas Egyptian media following their government claimed there were 5 million migrants at the time (2017, p. 75). In other words, though Egyptian media was reporting positive news on migrants, it tried to maintained government positions, and showed tendency to become rubber stamps for government positions and policies.

El-Shaarawi & Elsamni further report that government media covered migrants from the perspectives of the Egyptian government. They tried to represent the interests of President Abdel Fatah El Sisi whose concerns were mostly getting support from international community to subsidize the financial burden of combating illegal migration. In their framing Egyptian journalists focused more on migrants coming into Egypt. They appeared unmindful of the fact that some migrants use Egypt as a connecting country. Besides, reports on Egyptians who migrate to Europe are rarely carried. The ship that capsized off the coast of Rosette Italy on 21st September 2016 carrying 450 migrants mostly Egyptians is an evidence of Egyptians migrating to Europe (2017, pp. 75, 76).

3.4.2.2. Nigeria

Nigeria, at face value, looks solely like an originating country for migrants. One would think the story about migration in Nigeria is all about some citizens eager to leave the shores of their country to other and better parts of the world. Much as that is true, it is also true that Nigeria is a destination country for many African migrants. The May 1979 agreement of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of which Nigeria is a member, facilitated movement of persons within member states. This made movements a lot easy for people. But violence and high tensed insecurity within the African subregion have generated lots of migration within the region and Nigeria in particular.

Over and above that, Nigeria has suffered terrorist attacks from Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen who have killed and maimed thousands of Nigerians from 2009 till date in 2020. This has dislodged hundreds of thousands of Nigerians; and created Internally Displaced People (IDP) across the country. A good number of these IDPs join to regular Nigerians frustrated about lives and livelihoods in Nigeria to go in search of greener pastures outside the country. Unfortunately for Nigerians, as Vincent Obia, (2016) points out, most of the terrorists invading Nigeria come from the porous borders of the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. These states share borders with Cameroon, Chad and Niger. From those entrants, terrorists have infiltrated into the country, and thus, dislodging people and created refugee-situation in Nigeria.

No doubt, Nigerian media do carry stories on migration. However, such migration stories are occasional stories. They are usually occasioned by following incidents: deportation of Nigerians from other parts of the world; expositions of human trafficking cartels; and invasions of foreign-groomed terrorist groups like Boko Haram and their horrific effects on Nigerians. At such occasions, Nigerian media – print, broadcast, and social media might go agog with such migration stories, but no sooner than that, everything will subside.

However, Ate avers that the issue of migration is beginning to attract attention of the Nigerian media more (2020, p. 58). Thus, to make sure this attention is sustained, on 29-30 August 2019, the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized a masterclass on migration reporting. The aim of the masterclass was targeted at improving media coverage of migration in Nigeria (Opportunities for Africans, 2019). According to these Guardian Newspaper Reporters "A survey conducted by WSCIJ shows that only 275 migration stories were published across 10 media outlets monitored between June and July 2019, out of which 230 were just news items. And out of 435 editorials of those 10 media outlets, only six were dedicated to migration" (Mwantok & Godwin, 2019). Though the survey spans through only two months in 2019, it presents a clear Birdseye view of media reporting on migration in Nigeria.

Be that as it may, it is pertinent to mention this groundbreaking report from a foreign media on migration stories on some Nigerians attempting to migrate into Europe. It was an investigative journalistic inquiry into migration that turned into "slave trade" by Elbagir, Razek, Platt, & Jones Nima Elbagir of the Cable News Network (CNN). Their investigation was triggered by an earlier video clip of auction sales of humans in Tripoli, Libya. Nima Elbagir and her group undertook this investigative journalism that was bound to unearth

human trafficking/slave trade cartels in Libya. Some unfortunate Nigerians in search of greener pastures who ventured out of the shores of the country, became victims of a series of human trafficking cartels. When they left Nigeria – going to Europe through Libya they never knew what fate had in stock for them over there. At the end, they were auctioned at the cost of 600 Libyan dinars equivalent of 400 US dollars (Nima Elbagir et al, 2017). It was CNN's media reporting that led to full government investigation and the crushing of those cartels.

4. Climate change escalating migration

Climate change is a global issue. It has global effects across continents, though some continent might suffer it more than others (Moss & Morton, 2018). Africa is one of the continents prone to the effects of climate change. As the second largest continent with a population close to one billion people, and already suffering the scourge of escalating population in the midst of prevalent poverty, Africa is on the line for the catastrophic effects of climate change. Of course, forest burning and excess grazing are damaging Africa's ecosystem whereas about 70% of Africans rely on subsistent farming for their livelihood. In other words, forest burning and over grazing are pushing the extermination of plants and animals which will lead to widespread poor agricultural products; which will in turn lead to malnutrition, and to eventual rapid exposure to communicable diseases; and this will continue to trigger off migrations (Gilman, 2019).

Much as the effects of climate change are already showing their ugly faces, not many world leaders are convinced about it. However, there are world leaders who are rallying the world to stand up to the challenges of climate change. That is why *Laudato si* of Pope Francis is making tremendous wave across the globe. Yet, the truth is that, if climate change is unattended, it will have unprecedented, massively negative impacts on the world. Whether these impacts are on the environment, the economy, or distribution of goods, as Pope Francis affirms, all those are bound to have grave impact on humans. Once an environment is uninhabitable, it triggers off migration from there to other places and even to other countries. If, at the end of the day, all calls to save our planet go unheeded, it portends many ills for humanity. Pope Francis brings this out more succinctly:

> Changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. (Francis, 2015, n. 25).

Generally, when people talk about climate change, the impending effects sound futuristic – like something that will happen later. But those adverse effects are already harming humanity. For instance, sea levels are rising in some places resulting to more flooding which destroy lives and properties and dislodge human survivors. That is one of the adverse effects of climate change. For another instance, in Nigeria, more often than ever before, Fulani herders are now common sights along roads and farmlands in Southern Nigeria. It was not common two decades ago. That is happening as a result of adverse effects of climate change that have created more aridity in the northern part of the country.

5. Theoretical framework

To critically analyze this role of the media on migration, this article is anchored on the "framing theory" by Goffman. Framing theory holds that how the media present stories, incidents, events and so on to their audience determines how the audience perceive those stories, incidents, events and all that. It was Goffman who originated the idea that frames help in arranging fragments of an information to make meaning to media audience (McQuail, 2009, p. 318).

From the perspective of the originator, framing is using a perspective of interpretation that enables a person "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21) stories, incidents, events and so on from the person's perspectives. This is to say that people see reality and interpret it from their own perspective; they interpret according to how they understand such reality given their perception of things. Reflecting further on the thoughts of Goffman, Robert Entman brings some modifications on mediatization. For him, "to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or a treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, quoted in Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017, p. 80). This is to say that, media framing does not just perceive reality, it goes further to promote certain values of the said reality to make those values more eminent and relevant to the audience. Therefore, the audience sees the reality from the perspective of the media.

From the views of Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, among other things, framing theory could be applicable to issues related to terrorist activities like Boko Haram (2017, p. 83) and its accompanying effects; and as such, it could be applicable to issues involving migrants, refugees and immigration in general. When framing stories on migrants, refugees and immigration in general, the media could promote humanitarian values that could make their audiences see migrants and refugees as human beings. Humanitarian values that could make media audiences see the migrants as their fellow humans should be extoled. Values to be promoted while framing stories of migrants may include human rights, human dignity, accepting them as fellow humans, listen to their narratives, empathizing with them, and loving them.

6. Christian hospitality as trailblazer on migration

According to Pope Francis, from Judeo-Christian background, the earth was there before man came into being; and subsequently given to man by God so that man could exercise "dominion" over it (Gen. 1: 28). But this "dominion" as Pope Francis points out does not mean an uncontrolled domination over earth and creatures of the earth because God went further to mandate mankind to "till and keep" the earth (Gen. 2: 15). Pope Francis remarks that "'Tilling' refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving" the earth. Thus, he argues that while humans are taken care of by the earth since they live on the proceeds of the earth, they should in turn take care of the earth because it belongs to God who entrusted it to them. Pope Francis argues further with the strength of Psalm 24: 1 and Deuteronomy 10: 14 which state that the earth, with all that is in it, belongs to God; and therefore, "God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: [as God states in Leviticus 25: 23] 'The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me'" (Francis, 2015, n. 67). If no human being ever

came into the world with a preexisting patrimony other than what is bequeathed to him through his family lineage and nation, then, human beings are sojourners in a world created by God. If human beings are sojourners in the world, obviously, migrants too are entitled to make their livelihood wherever they sojourn.

The above reasons that God created the world and entrusted it to man as a caretaker, and as such humans are sojourners on earth, and the very fact that even Christ in His earthly life, as a toddler, was taken into refuge in Egypt (for security purposes) form the basis for Christian hospitality. Security is still one of the reasons for migration today. In looking at this sojourn of Christ in Egypt, Pope Pius XII sees the Holy Family as the prototype of migrants:

> The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil (Pope Pius XII, 1952).

Over the decades the views of Pope Pius XII have become trailblazers as they have crystallized how migrants ought to be seen in the light of the gospel especially joining his teaching to that of Pope Francis about human beings being sojourners in earth.

While many nations are worried about migrants and possibilities of losing jobs to them, the Church holds as an ideal that: "Access to employment and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination: men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants" (CCC, n. 2433).

With rise in media usage, the world is more and more becoming a virtual village; and there is no time in human history that the need for mutual dependence has become as important as it is in our contemporary society. This mutual interdependence has continued to be a call for the common good of humanity.

> This [common] good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education, . . . and certain situations arising here and there, as for example . . . alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families" (CCC, n. 1911).

To governments belong the responsibility of judication over migration issues, for instance, whether to accept migrants or determining responsibilities of migrants to their host nations, but in doing this overall interest for humanity's common good would be of paramount importance. On the other hand, "immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens" (CCC, n. 2241). This is to say that situations where migrants end up as terrorists, criminals, drug dealers, and their likes are highly detestable.

From a Christian perspective, every human is an imago Dei because every human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 27). Thus, migrants as humans are created in God's image. Saint Pope John Paul II brings it out more succinctly in his address to participants at the assembly of the Council of the International Catholic Migration Commission when he talked about the mission of this Commission which is not different from the mission of the Church as: "to see Christ in every brother and sister in need, to proclaim and defend the dignity of every migrant, every displaced person and every refugee. In this way, assistance given will not be considered … alms from the goodness of our heart, but an act of justice due to them … The soul of your work is a vision of human dignity which is based upon the truth of the human person created in the image of God" (John Paul II, 2001, nn. 2, 4). Because migrants too are created in the image and likeness of God, they should be accepted by their host communities, and mediatizing their stories should be from done from humanitarian angle.

7. Critical evaluation of mediatized migration discourse

Media framing theory is used here to evaluate mediatized migration discourse. The basic tools of this theory are identification, perception, labeling, and promotion of salient values. Those are the elements involved in framing theory which are being applied here as tools to evaluate mediatized migration discourse. In identifying certain values are perceived of migrants which lead to labeling and eventual promotion of such values. From foregoing reports, migrants have been labeled as invaders, terrorists, and so on. Such values have been promoted of migrants – leading to their rejections. If migrants are "perceived" by the media as humans rather than profiled as invaders, terrorists, and so on, the media will "promote" those perceived realities and make them "salient" to their audience. The realities to be perceived of migrants as humans include their human dignity, right to justice, freedom of movements, equality, right to decent shelter, right to education and so on. Those are human realities that are to be made "salient" by the media for better narratives about this human phenomenon – migration.

Certainly, migrants are human beings. Hence, they should be accorded those inalienable rights appropriate to humans. Leaving the shores of their countries do not make them less human. "The principles of human rights were drawn up by human beings as a way of ensuring that the dignity of everyone is properly and equally respected, that is, to ensure that a human being will be able to fully develop and use human qualities such as intelligence, talent and conscience and satisfy his or her spiritual and other needs" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010). Migrants are inclusive in the human rights declaration because they too are humans. According to the United Nations they should not be discriminated against – though they are foreigners, they are humans (UDHR, Art. 7). They too have rights to be protected under the law (UDHR, Art. 12). Though they are in foreign lands, they too have rights to appropriate living conditions that guarantee shelter, food, clothing, good health facilities, and other necessities of live (UDHR, Art. 25 number 1).

The other side of the coin is that, when migration is covered by the media, rarely do they consider the fact that many migrants are forced to leave their country by some natural, political, social, security – war, violence, insurgency, terrorism, etc. reasons that are beyond their control. In fact, UN High Commissioner for Refugees states that "By the end of 2019, 79.5

million individuals were forcibly displace worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations" (UNHCR, 2020). As displaced human beings, they have to find alternative ways of making a living; and therefore, they have to migrate.

Furthermore, the adverse effect of climate change on human environments and subsequently on humans are rarely considered too when the media cover migration. As noted above, climate change is already affecting developing nations where there are these incessant wars, terrorism, and dislodgments of humans. Some regions are already either not getting rains when they should, or getting excess of them, and thus, leading to flooding, loss of lives and propeties, and so on. If climate change is unattended, it will surely escalate the number of migrants across the globe. Meanwhile, it has added significantly to the number of migrants in the world today.

In addition, it is pertinent to note that, negative media coverage of migration which is often the case in host countries leads to antagonization of migrants with their host countries and undercuts human efforts towards globalization. According to Medina & Sobel when scientists and technologists promote globalization for the benefits it portends to humanity, those who come against free flow of trade, work, and above of all, of migration, undercut it; and they make humanity lose the gains of globalization (Medina & Sobel, 2009, p. 100). This will tantamount to humanity shooting itself on the foot.

8. Conclusion

In mediatizing migration, the media have taken central role in this discourse. They have charted a course that defined migrants; and government policies. As mentioned in this work, their positive coverage led to the rescue of thousands of migrants on the Mediterranean. However, from the reports reviewed in this work as well, it is obvious that, media coverage of migrants has, largely, put the latter in dark lights as undocumented, unwanted, invaders, terrorists, and so on. Thus, putting migrants in this dark light, mediatizing this discourse has tended to scrape them of human rights and human dignity.

Migrants are, first and foremost, humans. The fact of their inalienable rights as humans should not be lost in framing their stories. Their human rights and dignity should be upheld in mediatizing migration discourse. They maybe in foreign lands as migrants, but they are still in the land, from Christian perspective, God created and gave to mankind. Therefore, they are not foreigners, and media coverage of their discourse should not estrange them. Above all, when a higher percentage of refugees or migrants migrate because they were dislodged by natural disasters, wars, violence and so on, their circumstances should not be further compounded by labeling them as invaders.

9. Way forward

To abate the rising tide of migration and for a better mediatized migration discourse, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. **Solve causes of migration:** Security which is one of the three causes of migration has become a major challenge escalating migration. It is imperative for leaders of nations to find both short-term and long-term solutions to security challenges in their countries and subregions. To give a lasting solution to any problem demand tackling

it to its source. In their agenda setting roles, media organs are to be pathfinders in leading to better solutions to security challenges of nations.

2. **Needs for climate change should be attended:** God put the earth under the custody of humans. He gave humans too, the ability to take care of the earth – not only to till but also to care for it. In their God-given ingenuity, scientists have discovered changes bound to be harmful to humans if adequate measures are not taken. The media are to be sure such measures are well made clear to leaders and citizens alike to lead to change of policies and change of lifestyles geared towards taking care of the earth.
3. **Globalization aligns with fluidity of human movement:** Championed by the inventions of science and technology the world is daily becoming a global village. The media age has added to it. Thus, there is a high flow of information more than ever before. There is also an adjoining high flow of movements of people than ever before. All these are by products of globalization. This high flow of movements has also affected migration in the world today. Journalists should not be unmindful of this when the cover migration issues.
4. **Mediatizing migration discourse from humanitarian angle:** By migrating to other parts of the world, migrants neither lost their human dignity nor their human rights. Humanitarian concerns should guide media framing of migration stories in such ways to engender their being recognized by governments and citizens of their host communities to be receptive them and accord them hospitality.
5. **Avoid usage of demonizing profiling:** Profiling noted above as labeling is part of the tools for framing stories. Migrants are often profiled to be undocumented, unwanted, invaders, terrorists, etc. even before their arrival to their host communities. If migrants are demonized, they surely are not welcome to their host communities. Media coverages are to be more in welcoming terms and language to accord them receptibility as humans.
6. **Integration of more peace journalistic approaches:** High percentage of migration is caused by wars, violence and clashes leading to displacement of people whose possible solution to their predicament would be migration. Unfortunately, when they migrate, they are demonized. Integrating peace journalism in mediatizing their stories, could lead to a better understanding of their cultural background, causes of the violence which caused their migration, and therefore, a lasting solution to the violence could be provided.

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