

# When displacement becomes an opportunity: Refugee preference for third country resettlement revisited

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Refugee Law Initiative, School of Advanced Study,  
University of London

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21 – 23 June 2023

# INTRODUCTION

- “The problem with the resettlement programme is that sometimes even those with legitimate reasons to get political asylum are denied, so you have to lie in order to get through. [...]. You have to tell JVA what they want to hear. The truth has nothing to do with it. [...].” (Dick, 2002:47).
- Overwhelming preference for third country resettlement (Agblorti, 2016; Agblorti & Grant, 2019, 2021)
  - Potentially offers better socio-economic opportunities
  - Limited third country resettlement opportunities

# Migration in West Africa

- A sub-region on the move
- Dynamic nature of migrant flows from the sub-region
  - Regular
  - Irregular
  - Forced Migration
    - IDPs
    - Refugees

## Factors: (Adepoju, 2005)

- Population pressure
- Poverty
- Poor economic performances
- Protracted conflicts

# Migration in West Africa cont'd

- Over a third of adults in the sub-region intend to migrate some time in the future (OECD, 2015)
- Proportion higher among young adults: Over half (OECD, 2015)
- A mismatch between potential migrant population and migration opportunities in key destinations (Europe, US, Canada and recently Asia)
  - Leading to unfulfilled dreams of migrating
  - Irregular movements
  - Trafficking in humans

# Theoretical Framework

- All human behaviour is constrained and enabled by the structuration process (Richmond, 1988, 1993)
- Degrees of freedom of choice are limited
- Saturation Model (Richmond, 1988, 1993)
  - Reactive
  - Proactive

# Methods

- Qualitative
  - IDI
- Study area – Egyeikrom Refugee
  - Camp, Ghana
- Purposive sampling
  - Migrated before
  - Had the intention to migrate
  - All before becoming a refugee



# Findings

- **“I will stay in the camp till I get the resettlement.** [...] As refugees, we cannot also go back to our country because there is no peace there. We can say the situation has calmed but who knows what will happen when we return. I cannot risk my life for the second time again. **I will stay in the camp till I get the resettlement.**
- “Ghanaians received us warmly during the war. [...] But for me personally, I am not prepared to stay in Ghana at all. **Ghana is just another African country with so many hardships and difficulties.** [...] The way they took care of us, we are grateful **but we are all targeting third country resettlement.** [...] Going back to my country is not an option now. So, I will stay here [camp]. I have lost everything because of the war so I do not have any intention of going back. [...]. I prefer to go somewhere I can have a **good job** and peace of mind”.

## Findings Cont'd

- “Yes, if UNHCR cannot help me, I will find my own means of going. I do not have the money to go on my own accord. **It is because of this reason that I am still in Ghana** here hoping that a door will open for me. I do not have the money to travel”.
- “There is no money to travel. I am a cassava farmer. When will I gather enough money before going to another country? **If I want to travel, I want to go to a developed country where within two to three years, I will be able to work and recover all the things that I lost in the past ten or eleven years since I became a refugee**”.



# Conclusions

- Implications for durable solutions:

- Other durable solution options – voluntary repatriation and local integration – could be rejected
- Protracted refugee situations

## Implications for theory:

- Migration binary (Voluntary vs Involuntary)



**Thank you**