

# A Philosophical Meditation on the Phenomenon of Brain drain/gain and ‘Afro loss’: A Case Study of the Domain of African Music in University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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## Abstract

Movement from a distance to another is one of the very important activities of humans. By moving from one location to another, wherein humans cross-pollinate ideas, expand the boundaries of their wisdom to what obtains elsewhere, make comparisons for growth and development, exchange goods and services and so on. Nevertheless, when this movement degenerates to migration, it calls for a rethink. Given that a country's true strength is its people, it arrives at a loss and an outright deprivation when the highly talented and developed persons of a country migrate to another country to sustain the green economy of their host country instead of joining hands to re-green the yellow economy of their native terrain. This is what brain drain entails and unfortunately is the language that Africa speaks today in her economy and somehow in her musical environment. This study adopted a qualitative and survey design. The methods used were historical, descriptive, and critical. This research tries to establish that brain drain as a phenomenon of survival is a strong arsenal that impoverishes African countries but in the area of music, our research evidence is even predicative of more of a brain gain than just a brain drain especially given the current spate of globalization. The work therefore recommends that measures should be applied by African leaders to recall, re-establish, maintain, and sustain her experts in different fields of life who scale up the economic strengths of other developed countries with their endowments to the detriment of their poor African countries of origin. But beyond this, more symbiotic relationship between Africa and the Global North is encouraged to ensure more gain than drain on both sides and to avoid the tendency of African Youths resorting to cyber-crime as another form of ‘payback drain.’

Key words: Africa, brain drain, brain gain, migration, globalization, payback drain.

## Introduction

The bizarre experiences of COVID-19 pandemic suggest that the world is alive and meaningful when there are activities involving movements from one location to another. Without movement, life is stifled. In short, human history has often been determined by a series of related movements which together can be seen as a single major migration, a massive movement of peoples. Obviously, the migration of people leads naturally to the migration of ideas, spirit and resources. To Africa's dismay, the continent continues to suffer a brain drain where the highly educated and skilled leave for greener pastures to other Western and European countries. When Berthwell<sup>1</sup> observed that humans are nomads always looking for greener pastures and better experiences, he efficiently captured the picture of Africans in hasty movements to other non-African countries. According to him, “brain drain refers to an international transfer of resources in the form of human capital that is not recorded in any official balance of payments statistics.” Brain drain is also simply described as “human capital flight.” Regrettably, this capital flight is one of the most fundamental of all the problems that fan Africa cold in the face of development especially in their indigenous music.

Opinions vary on why Africa has the majority of her countries in the third world list among all the continents of the world. While some opine that bad leaders in Africa stifle their economies, others aver that African experts suffer low remunerations for the enormous works they do in their different fields of specialization. Many scholars affirm a ‘push-pull theory’ holding job scarcity, low wages, bad leadership, insecurity, political recession, poor education among many others as variables contributing towards these migrations (Elkhawas 2004,

<sup>1</sup> Berthwell, Interview with Authors, January 18, 2016 at 5:51 pm.

38). Unfortunately, the chain reaction of this capital flight is that those African leaders as well as other individuals of a class, who are the architects of this migration, look for these Afro-experts in the foreign countries to source for assistance in their profound areas of expertise. This is not without some pecuniary demands ranging from transport to bills and finally to shopping; no thanks to African bourgeoisies.

In other words, African resources which should have been spent in Africa with their developmental effects are moved to other non-African countries in the process of looking for the same people ejected from the African soil. And this is exactly what we describe as 'Afro-loss' in the phenomenon of brain drain or capital flight. Put in the words of (Elkhawas 2004, 56), 'African countries have placed themselves between a rock and a hard place.'

It is therefore the objective of this paper to reappraise the concept of brain drain in the wider context of globalization to encompass brain gain/ brain circulation and attempt to generate a re-orientation platform on the ideological framework of how best to take care of the African labour force as a panacea to undue migrations to other non-African countries in search of greener pastures.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative and survey design. Data were sourced from books, journals, periodicals, internets, oral and video interviews. The data were analysed using the historical, descriptive, critical, and survey methods. The historical method was used to trace the submissions of varied literatures on the concept of brain drain. The descriptive method was used to dissect the various anchors of the subject matter in order to understand in details the texture of its content and its implication to African economy especially in the area of African music. The critical method was used to weigh the texture of the subject matter in an economic scale, in order to assess its effects on the economic growth of Africa, as well as her entire growth as a continent. Finally, survey method was used in making research inquiries through online and direct interview of resource persons.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### **Conceptual Analysis of Brain Drain**

Brain drain as a phenomenon refers to the departure of highly skilled individuals from organizations, industries, and educational institutions. Despite the low level of technical and knowledge skills in Africa, the countries in the continent have continued to suffer brain drain. Each year, hundreds of thousands of highly skilled Africans seek greener pastures to the USA, Europe, Arabian countries and other developed lands. It is very unnerving to observe that many African economies lost a considerable part of their highly skilled labour force due to migration to developed countries. It is observed that while there appears to be deep and growing concern for the brain drain from Africa, lack of adequate data has so far prevented a comprehensive analysis of its magnitude and its impact on source countries.

Brain drain is a major development constraint in terms of development opportunities and lost investment. Brain drain is quite different from low-skilled and migrant workers stealing their way to other lands. However, both have similar results because in both cases excellently healthy and able bodied (those that could have been most useful in the workforce) are involved in the human flight. Thus, Africa losing her strong human capital that took enormous resources to nurture and produce represents a significant loss and a major shift of paradigm. Any country with outflow of emigrants loses critical human capital in which it has invested resources through education and specialized training and for which it is not compensated by the recipient country because there is no bilateral agreement on the transfer. This absence of bilateral agreement on the capital flight is the most unnerving of all the effects of brain drain. A country's sincere efforts to impart knowledge on her citizens, is parasitically harvested by another country without compensation or remuneration. It is even worse when we talk of 'brain waste'. According to the United Nation's Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 'In the context of international labour mobility, brain waste refers to the fact that some immigrants can only find jobs in the host country which are below the skills corresponding to their educational level. This happens for instance when medical doctors work as nurses or University graduates work as taxi drivers (UNCTAD 2012, 17). Unfortunately, African leaders who gaze at these ugly occurrences choose to be latent probably because they practically lack nothing.

Therefore, brain drain is a major factor that contributes to the impoverishment of Africa that stares us to the face today. Three categories of 'internationally mobile talents' have been identified: 1. Directly productive talents (consisting of entrepreneurs, executives, managers and technical engineers), 2. Scientific talents (consisting of academics, scientists and international students), 3. Health and cultural talents (physicians, nurses, artists, musicians, writers and media-related people). (UNCTAD 2013, 87). We shall be taking a case study of the last category especially the area of musicians and musicologists who sojourn for one reason or the other to Europe and America. Olumide and Ukpere (2012, 4) argue that since majority of Africans are still battling with 'deficit needs', using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of need's phraseology, the 'drainer -countries', many of which have stabilized

economically, now place more attention on 'self -actualization/being needs' such as arts, music, sports, show-biz and other entertainment facilities. They therefore tend to scout for talents in these areas from Africa. According to Samson Eze,<sup>2</sup>'They run Africa dry by hosting such events as music competitions, mouth-watering fully funded music scholarships, music awards including Popular Music annual awards, and so on.'

We also underscore the fact that migration is not only beneficial to Europe because they are no longer producing enough children to take care of their labour capital needs, it is also beneficial for some African countries because of the 'sizeable remittances that migrants send home to their native countries' (Elkhawas 2004, 42). Some scholars like Peter Sylvanus<sup>3</sup> have argued critically against the whole question about brain drain or gain. His contention is that 'Globalisation makes it impossible to argue for brain drain and or gain. The free flow of ideas and materials for re – or deconstructing knowledge means that the concept of brain drain /gain now needs another leg to stand on'. In the area of African music for example we shall present more evidence of gain than drain strictly speaking.

### **Factors behind Brain Drain**

In the face of the joys expressed by Africans when one is issued a visa to leave one's country and the depressions that arrest others who are denied such visas, people often raise a lot of rhetoric on why there should be this craze by a good number of persons to move from one country to another or from one organization to the other. Apparently, reasons are evident in Africa both on the general and on the particular poles. On the former, one should realize that the ugly activity of the capital flight is still within the simple chain of demand-supply and with the action-reaction processes. Human migration is often caused by the prevailing social environment of the source country forcing a population shift. For example, the source countries may lack opportunities for employment, prone to political instability or oppression, enmeshed in economic depression or other risks. Conversely, the host countries usually offer rich opportunities, political stability and freedom, a developed economy and better living conditions that attract talents. Some of those factors could be discussed under the following headings:

**Unemployment:** We cannot hide it that unemployment is a reoccurring decimal in the African polity. Graduates from different fields of learning roam about the African countries in search of jobs and finally end up in frustration arising from either not getting a job at all, or finding the meanest of the menial jobs that cannot take care of their basic needs. Others in the same gab of frustration do all kinds of work that are unconnected with their areas of specialization just to make ends meet. Unfortunately, this decay which should keep a leader awake in search of solution is not the concern of so many African leaders. And this carefree attitude of the African leaders to the looming population of unemployed youths in their individual countries is the bane of brain drain as we experience it today.

**Political Leaders:** Also, the democratic system of government which we experience in Africa is sometimes worse than any known military regime anywhere in the world. For America and other European countries to place a ban on some African countries during President Trump's regime and particularly some Nigerian political leaders is to say it all that the African democracy is alien to the known democratic processes practiced in and by different countries of the world. These leaders enrobe themselves in a kind of immunity that the voices of the masses effect no change to their illegal positions or projects. They live above the law and go as far as wasting human lives if attempts arise to call them to order or to lead them legally. From their campaigns to their elections, manifestations of brutality are imminent. And when they finally elbow their ways to the government houses, they practically turn to beasts, selling their consciences to everything evil. Consequently, they manifest these evils in their selfish amassing of wealth through looting, rating high among the richest men in the world, while their people shiver under the cold of poverty and malnourishment. They also waste human lives and property in their aggressive projects and thus pronounce insecurity to their citizens. In the face of such a government as we see in Africa, capital flight is expediently irresistible. To labour for years in order to become a name in the society, only to be wasted by the incapacities of a bad leader would constitute a continuous tension in any reasonable life. Of course, majority in the workforce would seek a country where the security of life and property is the priority of the government. Bad government in Africa therefore is one of the major factors that conduct brain drain phenomenon in the African soil.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with authors, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Nsukka. Samson Eze is a first-class graduate of the Department of Music University of Nigeria Nsukka and currently a lecturer in the same department.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with authors, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Nsukka. Peter Sylvanus is a first-class graduate of the Department of Music who did his Master's and Doctorate Degree at City University United Kingdom and is currently the Head of Department of Music, UNN.

**Economy:** Following from the bad government in Africa, their economic strengths fail to take care of her citizens. While those employed are either underpaid or not paid as and at when due, a good number of the unemployed are terribly starved of the basic amenities of life. The resultant effect of this malady is the birth of corruption which is unavoidably employed into the whole system of the country. The underpaid look for a means to make up their salaries such that it can at least take care of their families; those whose salaries are denied intermittently or not paid when expected, struggle by all means-good and bad alike-to fill the gaps of their denied or delayed payments. Man becomes wolf to man in such a scenario with a chain reaction of people losing their lives in their search for a living. A couple of years ago, Anyanwu (1999, 132) observed in utter disappointment that, "the present state of African economy is not in any sense an inspiring prospect." For him, "African economy is in quagmire with mounting external debts, widespread diseases and malnourishment." He finally averred that, "it is quite regrettable that Africa seems to be the only continent where poverty and underdevelopment are expected to continue." Hence, it is evident that the bastardized economy of a great number of African countries has left most of her citizens to seeking greener pastures elsewhere.

Aside these general causes of capital flight are some particular reasons too that spank brain drain:

**Family Pressure:** In Africa, to travel abroad (for a greater number), is akin to making it in life. Even if this person abroad begs to feed, it is immaterial; the important thing for most families is that a family member speaks from overseas. For this, some families motivate their children to travel sometimes against the wish of those children. But to make the family 'famous,' all plans made in view of the progress of the family cannot exclude a flight of one of the members to overseas. In most cases, those sent out are the most gifted and talented whose departure is only a disadvantage to the source country. So, family influences contribute much to brain drain in Africa.

**Personal Preferences:** In another slide, some African youths prefer to die beggars overseas to being rich men in Africa. The kind of fire in them to spend the rest of their lives outside Africa is unquenchable. It is on record that some African youths die under the scorching heat of the Sahara Desert in their attempts to cross over to other non-African countries by foot through the desert. This is consequent upon some personal preferences, the motivations of which are known to such individuals alone. While some are disgusted by the occurrences in their source countries, others are simply in love of identifying with these host countries. So, one can aver strongly that personal preferences constitute some of the factors that steer brain drain in Africa. Nevertheless, though an individual decision, some communist-based countries often halt the movements of their citizens when they need the workforce. But as Moore (1986, 142) would observe in the contrary, "oppressive political and social culture produces societal dispossessions, estrangement, and insecurity, which push victims to go in search of organic structures that protest against the status quo."

**Career Ambitions:** Another factor that necessitates brain drain in Africa is career ambitions. Most African universities are not well equipped as to satisfy a serious researcher. The resultant effect is that some serious researchers who hanker after good results by using better equipped laboratories leave to other universities outside Africa to come out with a result that they can defend and be proud of. A good number too leave for countries that offer some courses they heap much interest on and which are not offered in any of the universities in Africa. Unfortunately, these talented Africans find it difficult to come back again to the African land for so many reasons. While some feel so much at home in the host countries, others are attracted by their salaries which when compared with what obtains in Africa fans cold the zeal to come back to one's fatherland.

Summarily, it could be understood therefore that the factors behind brain drain is bi-directionally anchored; namely, the general (when the lacks in a country generate the urge for capital flight), and the particular (when the constraints of an individual factor in the decision to change location). Nevertheless, the underlying element linking the two factors is the frustrating lacks in both the country and the individual. These constraints as we saw above and more constitute the spank for brain drain.

#### **The Impact of Brain Drain on the African Continent (the Afro-loss)**

In Africa we can argue that brain drain has significant negative impact on our development. It certainly has highly significant detrimental effects arising from the loss of some of the brightest minds from the continent, thus weakening our capacity for development. The impact of intellectual, talented, creative, and highly trained employees migrating from organizations has produced quite negative results in the process. A little benefit arising from brain drain is the possibility of a temporal improvement to the social economy life of only the individual families that migrate for better pay if such families would ever return and return with their incomes. It may also create a source of foreign income for the communities suffering brain drain. In all, one can see the impact of brain drain with a bi-directional sight. It may be particular (as it concerns the migrating individual), or general (as it concerns the nation or organization from where the expert-individual migrated).

**The general effect:** Africa is arguably the least developed continent in the world, even though it was the cradle of civilization. Africa is the third world's Third World, which is why comments on Africa by Euro-centric scholars

reflect the continent's underdevelopment and the contempt non-Africans have on her. In their writings, the euro-centric scholars comment that the massive emigration of Africans to their host lands is a reflection of the continent's underdevelopment. In utter contempt, M.T Herskovits (1963, 36) once wrote that Africa has "fallen behind in the world's progress march with ways of life akin to early stages of human evolution and civilization." Towing the same line of contempt, another scholar J.D Omer-Cooper (1966, 168), represented Africa as "static and stagnant, developing if at all with infinite slowness and needing the impact of outside influences to break out of its ossified shell of countless years of tradition." Even though these comments justify the fact that brain drain is a slap to African dignity, Rodney (1972, 316) on the other hand in his survey of the economic condition in Africa, reports that Africa is well endowed with mineral and primary energy resources. With an estimated 9 percent of the world's population, the region accounts for approximately 28 percent of the total value of world mineral production and 6 percent of its crude petroleum output. In recent years, its share of the latter is increasing. Of sixteen important metallic and non-metallic minerals the share of Africa in ten varies 22-29 percent of the world production.

**The particular effect:** No doubt, the effects of brain drain wing in both the individual on migration, and the source country or continent of the migrant. In our particular concern on the migrating individual, we observe a number of effects. In the first sense, the migrating individual suffers a kind of alienation and a somewhat deprivation from his or her African family ties. This is in respect of the fact that one of the values which an African carries to wherever he or she goes is the communitarian life-style. Digging deeper into the communitarian life-style of an African, Nnamani (2015, 333), relates a similar experience to that of Cooper that, "the human being is not just an individual but essentially a community, a composite of body and soul. In his communitarian worldview, the African feels a strong bond existing between him or her and the community. In a contrary view to the Western individualistic views about man, (Okere, 2005, 4) maintains that, "one exists, not just because one thinks (Descartes), but because one belongs to a relational network. In African setting, man is therefore relationship, connectedness, communion, community." Communitarian worldview equally leads to a high sense of belongingness to a family, a belongingness that defines the identity of the African person. One belongs, not just to his nuclear family, but to the extended family, which goes on expanding till it embraces the entire clan and incorporates the ancestors.

Unfortunately, migration practically deprives an African individual this rare value. The cold grip of such an alien terrain, expresses itself more on the individual especially when he or she finds himself or herself in a solitary environment where sometimes he or she is segregated against. Face to face with this cold fact, the African loses an immediate touch of the family warmth that he or she enjoyed prior to his or her migration. To make up for this lack, he or she engages in intermittent, ceaseless and unending calls with his or her relatives or friends in Africa. Disappointedly, such distant calls do not adequately supply for the warmth of the roundtable chats, discussions and plays. The costs attached to those international calls are still unnerving. The Western cultural texture with regard to this communitarian world-view is almost non-existent. Hence, the migrating African cannot deny the pains of this communitarian loss.

Another significant value which an African migrating individual is deprived of is spontaneity. Nnamani (2015, 334) observes that, "the average African is spontaneous in movement and in the use of words. He articulates his joys and sorrows setting his entire being in motion, with dance and songs. When he is excited, he expresses his emotions with gesticulations, laughter and shouts of joy. When he is angry, he easily breaks into dance and songs to vent his anger." The black African is indeed in love with oral expressions. This might explain why there was much delay in the development of written forms of expressions. According to Egbulem (2003, 19), "The word in African thought encompasses the entire system of communication. This is what is generally referred to as oral tradition in African life, and it includes communication in music, song, dance, poetry, proverbs, storytelling, art and ritual." It is crystal clear that the Western environments to where most Africans migrate see this value as incongruous in their system. The cold terrain, coupled with 'be-on-your-own' syndrome obtained in the West, fan this salient value cold in the nerves of the African migrant. This too ranks a very serious blow on the African who may end up engaging other Africans at home in order to express his or her feelings at that material point in time, the cost notwithstanding.

Furthermore, a good number of Africans serve slavery in their host countries in order to make ends meet. With less or no hesitations at all, they subscribe to the meanest of the menial jobs that nothing would have made them do in their source countries. As a means of livelihood, migrating Africans engage themselves in all sorts of dehumanizing jobs in the Western world so as to foot the bills of each service rendered by the government. A good number of them, who are home-sick already, refuse to come back because of the shame of an empty pocket to which they are victims. In short, the impacts of migration on the migrating Africans are no hidden facts. Therefore, the 'Afro loss' theory is the theory of the effects of migration on the African continent generally, and on the African migrants particularly. These effects swing between two poles of the negative and the positive camps; between the 'brain drain and 'brain gain' respectively. Let us consider these effects on African music using the University of Nigeria Nsukka as a case study.

**Brain Drain versus Brain Gain in African Music: A Case Study of University of Nigeria, Nsukka**

The contentious issues of brain drain, brain waste, brain gain, brain circulation and the contemporary issues of globalisation and glocalisation<sup>4</sup> beautifully crystallise in the domain of African Music. And the choice of the area of arts for the contextualisation of this global discourse lays credence to our earlier observation that the First World countries have gradually left the deficit or survival needs (unlike African countries) to give more attention to the artistic needs, the being needs, the self-actualisation needs. As this study tends to contextualise more in the area of African Music, the story becomes more of good news since our findings reveal that majority of those African musicians /musicologists who sojourned to Europe and America to study music have contributed more positively than negatively to the growth and development of African Music. Front burner issues of our discourse here would be issues about periodisation, ideological schools, musical hybridizations that come as a result of inculturation and acculturation, temperamental conflicts, ideological tensions and all the variable indices of growth that have led to the decolonisation of musical arts in Africa today (Agbo, 2020).

Although the scope of our discussion is as wide as globalised Africa, we shall be taking a case study of the University of Nigeria Nsukka - a foremost citadel of learning situated in the South East, Enugu State of Nigeria, a University which stands like the mother of all musicological studies in Nigeria, and by extension in Africa. Further investigations have also shown that nearby countries like Ghana with leading names in the area of African Music such as Kwabena Nketia and Kofi Agawu have little or no different stories to report.

On the issue of periodisation, we will like to discuss the music graduates from the University of Nigeria in 3 categories of 3 generations, looking at the concept of generation within a span of 10 to 20 years, taking note of those who taught the others and the influences exerted by such student - teacher mentorship. We shall also identify about 4 different schools of study which could translate, willy nilly, into ideological schools of learning such as the Belfast School, the American School, the German School and the Pretorian. Christian Onyeji<sup>5</sup> observes the delicacy of such exercise of periodisation and wants us to take note of the fact that although a particular musicologist may belong to one generation or school by mere historical configuration yet he/she may ideologically be thinking ahead of that generation as can be observed even in the history of Western Musicians like Mozart or Mendelssohn. We would finally examine the ideological tensions, conflicts and convolutions that sometimes contributed to the migration resulting in brain loss/drain and the harmonious synthesis of thoughts that have on many occasions engendered more of the brain circulation that we seem to have enjoyed in the area of African musical studies, especially in Nigeria.

**The 1st Generation (The Foundation Period, 1960s - 70s)**

The story of music education in Nigerian tertiary institutions began in 1961 with the establishment of the University of Nigeria Nsukka as the first autonomous University in Nigeria to establish the first college of music in Africa (Adeogun, 2018). Interesting changes in the growth of African Music began in Nigeria when some Western trained musicians like T. K. O Phillips, FelaSowande, William Wilberforce Echezona and Akin Euba began focusing 'national and scholarly attention on the treasures of Nigerian Music' (Okafor 1988, 13). The first Head of Department was Dr Edna Edet who worked together with other expatriates like Allen Gets, Nutting and EleodanToffolon (Adeogun, 2005). The first narrative here was a case of brain gain because the first Nigerian musicologists employed by the University of Nigeria (UNN); W. W. C Echezona, Sam Akpabot and Laz Ekwueme were all trained abroad. Echezona received his earliest musical education from the Trinity College of Music London and was sent to Michigan State University USA where he did his doctoral studies and became the first Nigerian to have a PhD in Music in 1963 (Adeogun 2018). Similarly, Akpabot had his earliest musical studies on Performance, majoring in trumpet at the Royal College of Music and Trinity College of Music London but did his doctorate degree at Michigan State University, USA. He spent most of his years however, teaching music in US.

Laz Ekwueme obtained a bachelor of Music (B. Mus) degree at the University of Durham a Master of Music (M. Mus) from the Royal College of Music London in the early 1960s and taught in UNN between 1964 and

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<sup>4</sup> Glocalization emphasizes the development of local ideas/concepts unlike globalization that emphasizes the widening of one's intellectual horizons.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with authors, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Christian Onyeji is a Professor of Music, an alumnus of the Department of Music UNN and currently a lecturer at the same University.

1966 from where he went over to University of Lagos. Adebowale Adeogun<sup>6</sup> identifies him as the first evidence of what we can call 'complete brain gain' for Nigeria in the area of African Music. He earlier identified Akin Euba, in a sense, as the first major case of brain drain which we can locate in the history of Nigerian musicology. Although he played an active role in the organization of the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 1977) as the composer of its anthem, and helped in the establishment of the department of Creative Arts in both University of Lagos and Ife, he left Nigeria for greener pastures in Germany, working for the University of Beirut and later University of Pittsburg USA where he dissipated a lot of his intellectual energy before he died in 2019. However, his could be said to be more of 'brain circulation' than 'brain drain' because even while he lived abroad, he continued to be relevant to the growth and development of musicological studies in Nigeria through his many writings on trends like African Pianism and other aspects of 'creative musicology' (Onyeji 2011, 15).

Still on the pioneer generation of Nigerian musicologists, the department of Music of the University of Nigeria Nsukka admitted in 1961 MekiNzewi, Sam Ojukwu, Mich Okoye and Bertrand Osuagwu who later changed course to another department. In 1965, MekiNzewi, Sam Ojukwu, Mich Okoye and Felix Nwuba (who joined them through a direct entry admission later) were the 1st set of indigenous music graduates in Nigeria and by 1967, the University produced more music graduates like Adolphus Ahanotu, Gabriel Fasina, AzubikeIfionu and AchinivuKanuAchinivu. MekiNzewi and Achinivu were two great giants of the foundation period who struggled to fine-tune the educational foundations of the department of Music in the 80s although with a lot of ideological conflicts as we would later underscore. Most of the above-mentioned scholars had their doctoral studies abroad but have worked more or less in Nigeria and registered their intellectual impacts locally and globally. Others like Sam Ojukwu who studied in Nigeria have continued to contribute their intellectual gains to the growth of musicianship in Africa.

MosunmolaOmibiyi -Omibidike and Tunji Vidal were two Yoruba music students of UNN who had to withdraw during the Nigerian civil war for obvious reasons. They completed their music studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Omibiyi has spent most of her years impacting her knowledge in the Ibadan Music School where she earned herself the title 'Mama of African Musicology' (Idolor 2014, 3). Hers is another good example of complete brain gain for African Music. This period is characterized by scholars with enormous Western influence but many of who including Uzoigwe and Dan Agu who graduated in 1979, were quite innovative and contributed in setting the foundations of University music scholarship in the University of Nigeria.

### **The 2nd Generation (The Exploration Period, 1980s - 90s)**

The 2nd generation of Nigerian musicologists can also be said to have a history of delivering more of brain gains than losses. This generation contributed a lot to the creative and explorative dimensions in African musicology, having digested well the intellectual resources from the foundation generation of Nigerian scholars, many of who were their teachers and mentors. With the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970, the favorable economic conditions that prevailed in the country exacerbated by the oil boom of the late 70s, saw the increase in the number of music graduates and 'the growing demand for qualified academic musicians and the return of some Nigerian music graduates from abroad led to the expansion of departments of music in Nigerian Universities' (Adeogun 2018, 8). The Department of Music UNN continued to expand its academic frontiers and produced intellectual firebrands in the likes of Bode Omojola, Onyi Nwankpa, Adebowale Adeogun, Ndubisi Nnamani, Christian Onyeji and many more others. Bode Omojola did his 1st degree in UNN in 1981 and did his Master's degree in Ibadan under Akpabot as mentor. He went out to University of Fiesta London where he did his doctorate and came back to lecture at the University of Ilorin. He however did not stay long in Nigeria. He is another example of a Nigerian Art Musician produced in UNN that has spent majority of his time teaching and working abroad in what can be termed 'brain drain' in a sense.

Adebowale Adeogun<sup>7</sup> reports that in 1984, or thereabout, some 4 Graduate Assistants were sent out from UNN for training abroad but until now have not returned back to Nigeria. They are; Jack Njoku, Isaac Meme, Omotola and Iwoto. This is another typical case of temporary brain drain in African Music since whatever knowledge they had gained in Nigeria have not yet been given back. Yet all hope is not yet lost since they can come home in future and we may begin to benefit from their musical exposures abroad. Whether their migration is as a

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with authors, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Nsukka. Adebowale Adeogun is a first-class graduate of the Department of Music UNN and currently a lecturer in the same department.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with authors 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Nsukka.

result of economic insecurity, academic insufficiencies, ideological tensions or sociopolitical strangulation cannot be ascertained for now.

Onyi Nwankpa and Ndubisi Nnamani are examples of those who studied in Canada and for over ten years now have come back to the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria where they have continued to give back what they have gained from their overseas studies for the benefit of African Music scholarship. Adebowale Adeogun and Christian Onyeji studied in UNN, did their doctorate in University of Pretoria South Africa and for over 10 years have been in their Alma mater UNN giving back their knowledge in full force. Some of their contemporaries like Isaac Idamoyibo, EmurobomeIdolor and many others have remained in other Nigerian Universities and Colleges of Education to contribute their quota to knowledge. The story is categorically therefore more about gains than losses. One significant preoccupation of this generation of musicologists is the exploration of creative elements in ethnomusicology such as African pianism, African musicology, ecomusicology and theo/sacred musicology (Adedeji 2014).

### **The 3rd Generation (The Contemporary Period, 2000 - present)**

The 3rd generation has been characterized by economic recession in Nigeria, the growth of popular music and the era of globalisation. The difficulty of obtaining overseas scholarship and the high exchange rate have grossly reduced the number of musicologists who study or relocate abroad. It is also a period marked by online intellectual exchanges, international conferences and all forms of globalisation. Globalisation has brought many scholars of different generations and localities rubbing minds together in world class conferences and journals such as African Music, Black Perspectives in Music, International Journal of Music Education, Ethnomusicology and many others. And even in this period of COVID 19 pandemic, scholars have continued through webinar seminars to symposium ideas in the area of music.

The Department of Music UNN has however records of some of her graduates who have travelled abroad and are still there while some have returned. Peter Sylvanus did his Masters and Doctorate degrees in City University London and has since 2018 returned fully to continue lecturing in the Department of Music UNN. Others who belong to this generation like Stephen Oko (working and residing in the United States), Nduka Echezona (studying in the United Kingdom), Jude Nwankwo (studying in the United States), InnocentOkechukwu (working and residing in Dubai) and many others are still abroad with the intention of coming back sometime to give back their knowledge for the benefit of their home country. Nduka Echezona<sup>8</sup> spoke of his exploits in the UK and America giving piano recitals with special predilection for African compositions. His concerts are available through Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms. We can therefore no longer in this generation, strictly speaking maintain the language of brain drain but what we have now is more of brain circulation.

In this generation, many competent theoreticians, composers, ethnomusicologists and performers with international exposure are cross-fertilizing ideas in what can be called the global intellectual market. Our local journals like Journal of Nigerian Musicology (JANIM), Nigerian Music Review, Journal of Nigerian Musical Education and others have remained avenues for brain circulation.

### **Ideological Schools**

It is not difficult to identify the influence of certain schools of thought and learning on many academic musicians that have passed through UNN and it is not difficult to decipher how these variant ideological blocks have led to conflicts in some cases leading to migration, flight and loss of human capital. Examples of these ideological schools that brewed our musicologists are hereby outlined;

*1. The American School;* So many musicologists from UNN such as W. W. W Echezona and Samuel Akpabot who studied at Michigan State University together with Ayo Bankole, Tunji Vidal, OmibiyiObidike, Akin Euba, Alaja - Brown, Adegbite and others who studied at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and University of Pittsburg respectively, were somehow influenced by American pragmatism which produced its own kind of American ethnomusicology. The works of Echezona on the taxonomy of African traditional instruments, the works of Akin Euba and Akpabot on African musicology all bear eloquent testimonies of this pragmatic school of thought. There are some others who belong to the 2nd generation of American trained Nigerian musicologists who studied at

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<sup>8</sup> Online Interview with authors, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Nduka Echezona is a graduate of the Department of Music UNN but is currently studying and working in the UK.



Alberta University Canada such as Onyi Nwankpa and Ndubisi Nnamani who have also exhibited some kind of intellectual thoroughness and precision that smacks of the general American educational culture.

2. *The Belfast School*; Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland has nurtured many of our pioneer musicologists such as MekiNzewi, Richard Okafor, JoshuaUzoigwe and Dan Agu. Their studies under the feet of the legendary ethnomusicologist John Blacking gave an African bent to their musicianship. He was like a grandfather who was well grounded in African Music. His influence and interest in African Music made them think home even in faraway Ireland and from the perspective of social anthropology, he encouraged people like Richard Okafor<sup>9</sup> in his studies in Igbo Minstrelsy during the course of his doctoral programme which according to him, 'took 15 months of field work in Nigeria'. Olaniyan, Dan Agu, Joshua Uzoigwe, NwokorobiaAgu and Chinyere Nwachukwu were later to e the same routes in their musicological studies. According to Adeogun (2018, 10), 'Upon their return to Nigeria, they brought Euro-American ethnomusicology to bear on Nigerian music education as the outcome of British structural functionalism'.

3. *The German School*; Our German trained musicologists like A. K Achinivu and Laz Ekwueme, who studied at the German Universities such as University of Berlin and University of Durham respectively tend to exhibit deeper theoretical strength in the harmony courses and some elements of musical conservatism arising from the background of their training. Making a comparison of the Belfast and the German School, Richard Okafor<sup>10</sup> says that 'the products of the Belfast School, as ethnomusicologists, tend to see music as a sonic fact and not just a sonic sound'. They were therefore more interested in the sociological aspects of a musical performance than in its rigid theoretical technicalities. This incisive revelation may perhaps account for the great ideological rift that existed in the department of Music UNN in the 19880s and 90s when the two 'warlords' of the above two schools of thought in the persons of MekiNzewi and A. K Achinivu could not agree to work together on sundry educational issues for so many years. The resultant effect of this disagreement is the late establishment (just about four years ago) of a doctoral programme in the Department of Music UNN.

4. *The Pretorian School*; The University of Pretoria South Africa has also exerted an immense degree of influence in molding a good number of musicologists from UNN of both the 1st and 2nd generation. MekiNzewi, at a point during the heat of this imbroglio, left UNN and migrated to South Africa and began teaching at the University of Pretoria. There, he carved a niche for some of his Nigerian students and mentees such as Christian Onyeji, Adebowale Adeogun and some others who did their doctoral studies at the University of Pretoria South Africa. This new arrangement produced a fecund generation of vibrant explorers in African Music who have hitherto, strengthened the voice of indigenization and decolonization of Nigerian musical arts through such studies in fields like African pianism (as promoted by Christian Onyeji) and Nigerian music education history (as championed by Adebowale Adeogun). This is in search of 'a Nigerian music education system that would enable modern Nigerians to globalise Nigerian musical knowledge and Nigerianise global forms of music' (Adeogun 2018, 17).

#### *Payback drain ideology*

There is however an ugly side of the brain drain story today among Nigerian Youths which we have described in this paper as 'payback drain'. As Olumide and Ukpere(2012) rightly observed the current shift of interest of brain drainer countries towards the arts, music, sports and show biz, contemporary Nigerian musicians like Davido, Flavour, Phyno, Wizkid and the rest have achieved tremendous popularity in North America and Europe. African hip-hop music has become another kind of 'cultural export' (Okafor& Okafor 2009, 13). This is making many hip-hop musicians not only very rich but very popular especially among the youths. Since many Nigerian youths are feeling frustrated by the economic situation in Nigeria, many of them have devised some crooked ways of using their brain to drain the economic honey comb of their so-called colonial Masters. What should ordinarily be seen as internet or cybercrime as perpetrated by the popularly called 'Yahoo boys' has been accepted by many Nigerian youths as intellectual prowess and so many musical celebrities are giving them some kind of social-survivalistic acceptability -a kind of situation ethics that smacks of Machiavellianism or the popular philosophy of 'the end justifies the means'. Their argument is that since the Europeans have drained our economy in the past, our youths can now legitimately use their own brain/intelligence to drain back from their economy. That is why we have called it 'payback drain ideology'. Evidence of this ideology can be seen in music albums of musicians such as Olamide's

<sup>9</sup> Interview with authors, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Enugu.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with authors, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Enugu.

*Logo Benz*<sup>11</sup> and Naira Marley's *Am I a Yahoo Boy*<sup>12</sup> or *Able God*<sup>13</sup> to mention just a few. The recent #EndSars protest of August 2020 in Nigeria, exacerbated by the 9 months strike of the Academic Staff Union (ASUU) of Nigerian Universities, is symptomatic of a condition of frustration among Nigerian Youths, many of who became direct victims of police brutality having been at home for several months.

We would like to conclude this section by underscoring the following prominent causes of brain drain in African Music; general economic insecurity which has to do with the search for greener pastures, ideological tensions usually caused by intellectual disagreements between academic musicians lecturing together in a department and other kinds of sociological strangulations such as war, tribalism, racism, bad government and so on. We reecho the fact findings from our field observations and interview that there are abundantly more cases of brain gain and brain circulation in the area of African Music than brain drain.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

One is at a wits end then to witness the underdevelopment in Africa that is winning her all her insults. In the light of this have scholars vowed to establish that Africa's menace is more external than internal. These scholars maintain that Africa has always been, to use Chancellor Williams' words, "a race under perpetual siege,"<sup>14</sup> and when a people or race is under siege, it means that it is under attack by hostile external forces. It means that things happen to the people belonging to that race instead of them getting things done. It means they are the "effect" rather than the "cause".<sup>15</sup> Hence, Africa's backwardness could be traced to when she started having contacts with the outside world. Some scholars have observed that her backwardness was due to external factors – Arab and European imperialism, slave trade, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Yet, that is not to say that Africa did not contribute to her underdevelopment. Sometime in the dim past the black African developed a very high civilization and misused that advantage to enslave and oppress his fellow men. Besides, Africans are largely responsible for bad leadership and ethnicity in Africa which have hindered the development of the continent. But, this aside, our main concern here is Africa's underdevelopment caused by her external contacts with Arab and Europe and USA, with a special anchor to neo-colonialism that manifests in further hazards on Africa by the capital human flight and the consequent brain drain that appears more replete today than it ever appeared before.

Neo-colonialism is the indirect way Europe and America control the socio-political and economic life of independent Africa. As Nkrumah puts it, Neo-colonialism acts covertly, maneuvering men and governments, free of the stigma attached to political rule. It creates client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence. In similar words, he maintained that this (neo-colonialism) is one of the diverse forms of dependent countries which politically are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence. Apart from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, brain drain is also one of the major economic instruments of neo-colonialism. In short, migration and the consequent brain drain affect development in Africa. The cost of human flight to Africa is enormous and has been a major reason for her underdevelopment and unstable society. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have lost a tremendous amount of their educated and skilled populations as a result of emigration to more developed countries, which has harmed the ability of the entire continent to get out of poverty. In a few cases expatriate professionals are employed annually by some African countries to meet part of the challenges posed by brain drain at enormous costs. Brain drain springs more from the Arab, Europe and American cunning baits with which they lure African experts – some trained in Africa, and others in the Western world to remain in servitude to these foreign countries instead of coming back to Africa with their endowed resources to develop their land. Brain Drain is harmful to development as it creates limited collection of skilled and qualified individuals (LSE, 2016). Records show that the magnitude of Africa's brain drain into developed nations has unnerved development as the continent has lost one third of its human capital and still losing skilled workers. An LSE report indicates that out of every 9 migrants, 1 has tertiary education and it continues to grow every year (UN 2013). These are made up of according to the report, nurses, doctors, teachers, technicians, doctors, engineers, professors who are always moving out prompting the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki to describe it as 'frightening' (LSE, 2016). An example is South Africa medical pool becoming scarce leading to sourcing of doctors from Zambia and Cuba as its own health professionals have left for greener pastures. In short, the nature of work and labour process impacts on every economy as the strength of a nation is determined by its people.

<sup>11</sup> Follow link to listen to the audio [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22BRI\\_SqXro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22BRI_SqXro)

<sup>12</sup> Follow link to watch video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvBZk4a871l>

<sup>13</sup> Follow link to watch video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvSylqZSzHw>

Therefore, the brain drain phenomenon has been potentially damaging for Africa's economy, it is certainly detrimental for the wellbeing of the regional poor majority, possible cause of the inequalities in all areas and making most people desperately reliant on the government infrastructure. Brain drain is real and its negative impacts are enormous. These impacts are felt in poverty and low GDP, downsizing of workforce/population, globalization/cultural erosion, low development, low investment, devaluation of currency, looting of treasury, and so on. This speaks much about the kind of development anybody would expect in Africa while in the face of these deprivations. But the good news is that in some areas like African Music, gains more than drains have also been recorded by Africa's contact with the global north.

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