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ONLINE MEDIA COVERAGE OF DEPORTATION OF GAMBIANS FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Gambians are peaceful people and Gambian migrants are hardworking and law-abiding people. Many Gambians have relocated abroad to in search of better living conditions due to the economic hardship and poor human rights under successive governments. Many of these Gambian migrants have irregularities in their existence in their host countries. With the improvement in Gambian politics, the European Union struck a deal to deport Gambians whose asylum applications were not successful and many Gambians have been deported as a result. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the coverage of these deportations by Gambian online television stations. The study anchors on the agenda setting and framing theories and employed Discourse Analysis as a methodology. Fourteen entries were selected from three online television stations for analysis and the results show that only one of the three selected online television stations provided extensive coverage of the deportation of Gambians. The other online television stations focused more on other political events as which they deemed more important than the deportation of Gambians. The study concludes that Gambians in the diaspora contribute to the economy growth of the Gambian and deporting them back to the country will have negative effects on The Gambian economy. The online media is recommended to provide a daily and full coverage of deportation of Gambians as it is a continuous trend and the online media should tap all the hidden areas in this field.

Keywords:
Deportation, Migrants, Agenda Setting, Framing, Online Media, European Union and Discourse Analysis.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Introduction

Since ancient times, individuals, groups, clans, villages, city states and nations have depended on one another for survival and advancement. This is a testament to the notion that no man can survive in isolation. This explains why alliances are struck through marital and trade relations. In the present age, nations depend on one another to individual and collective growth. This explains why human and natural resources are exploited across national borders. Humans have perennially sought opportunities for better lives and adventure in foreign lands and the global knowledge of the world as we have come to know it was heavily influenced by travelers, explorers and migrants like Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, David Livingstone, Edward Francis Small, and Christopher Columbus among others (Nilson & Thorell , 2018).

The present racial constitution of countries like Egypt, Turkey, France, Brazil and the United States of America are evident of the age-long practice of migration. Migrants have contributed immensely to the development of their new homes and they have brought glory to such lands. For instance, the legends like Mohammed Ali, Mike Tyson, Ben Johnson, Yohan Blake have brought glory to the United States of America through sports. Similarly, Great Britain has been honored by the sporting exploits of Mo Farah who was smuggled into the United Kingdom as a child. The legend revealed recently that Mo Farah is not his birth name. Teenage football sensation Ansu Fati migrated illegally from Guinea Bissau to Spain with his family as a child. His precocious talents led him to famous Barcelona Football Club where he has broken many records. His Spanish citizenship has been fast tracked along with those of his family members because of his talent. The teenager is a member of the Spanish national team to the Qatar 2022 World Cup. It is important to note that for every Ansu Fati or Mo Farah granted accelerated citizenship of European countries because of their talents, there are thousands facing ridicule, rejection and deportation from these same European countries. The exploits of immigrants (especially Africans) in the diaspora indicate that the Africans have limitless potentials in given the same opportunities as their counterparts from developed countries.

Gambia is a country renown for peace and Gambians in the diaspora have made positive impacts of their host countries and their native land. Gambians in the diaspora rarely appear as subjects of bad press in Western countries unlike their counterparts from Nigeria, Cameroon, DR Congo among others. It therefore becomes worrisome that the European Union proposed a deal to the Gambian government for the deportation of Gambians living in European Union member states.

Although the deal was proposed during the reign of Yahya Jammeh, the Gambian government signed the deal which was titled "Good Practice Document" in 2017. The document sought to deport Gambian illegal immigrants in the EU member states while protecting the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and queers (LGBTQ) living in the Gambia. Following the signing of the agreement in 2017, the mass deportation of Gambians happened in 2019 to the displeasure of large sections of the Gambian public.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Most of the deportees had fairly settled lives in their host countries and they were law-abiding albeit illegal residents.

The mass deportation sparked protests in the Greater Banjul region and the government placed a moratorium on the deportation agreement and the moratorium was followed by discordant tunes from government quarters on the issue. It is widely believed that the government is normally economical with facts. However, a lot of things have been said about the deportation issue and many of them were said without clear information from the government. The government is getting involved in the drama of not being sure of what to tell the people and top government officials appear to be putting up comical acts in the theatre of advance misinformation. It was reported in the Point Newspaper that the former Minister of Interior. Yankuba Sonko told lawmakers that the government of the Gambia had signed a "Good Practice Document" with European Union in 2017 to repatriate Gambians who failed their asylum application. Contradicting his assertion, the government spokesperson released a press statement debunking what the minister said. The president told the commonwealth in 2018 that there is a lot of misunderstanding about migration and "Europe is overloaded with migrants. That being the case, it has become a burden to Europe and they are looking for ways of returning them (Gambia, 2018). Therefore, the citizens become the victim of government's double speaking.

The media are perceived to have the power to influence people's lives. The media is considered as protector of public interest in the power relations between political office holders and the masses. Taking a position between government agencies and the public, it is argued that several media outlets (print, broadcasting or otherwise) are part and parcel of government therefore, cannot, and will not, play any role that is not supportive of the government. it is perceived that a strong and independent media, together with other organs of civil society, can play mutually reinforcing roles to exert pressure on governments to support democracy and socio-economic development (Yüksel, 2013).

In light of the shortcomings of the traditional media (radio, television and newspaper) in the protection of public interest, citizens often fill the emerging void through the social media expressions. This trend has led to the emergence of online media organizations. Traditional terrestrial stations have also sought to maximize their visibility and patronage by creating and running online platforms for their contents.

There are many studies about the deportation of Gambians but a thorough evaluation of online media coverage of the deportation of Gambians is missing. The type of deportation information society consumes is too often understudied and overlooked, although it has a great deal of impact on people's lives. There are numerous studies about the deportation of Gambians, but no studies have been conducted to evaluate the influence of online messages of the deportation of Gambians in the diaspora. This is the gap that the study aims to bridge.

Literature Review

Deportation is a construct seen from a variety of lenses by different people. It is synonymous to exile and banishment. While its meaning may slightly differ according to contexts, it nonetheless means the forceful removal of a person from a geographical

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

territory which is the domain of a state, by that state or agents of the state (Draper, 2021). Deportation could also happen "voluntarily" to avoid the use of force by the state.

Deportation is often motivated by the obligation of states to protect their citizens and their rights to self-preservation and self-determination. These rights and obligation largely fuel the prevention of unwanted migration into their geographical sovereignty and the forceful or coercive removal of illegal immigrants (Brock, 2020). Nevertheless, the deportability of aliens is not based only on the aliens' legal status but also intolerable actions of the individuals "such as moral behavior, political ideology, criminal conviction" (Hasselberg, 2016).

It is important to note that deportation (coercive or voluntary) has the potential to shape social fabric. For instance, Australia was a British detention camp for undesirable elements of the British society at some point. These elements were either sent to prison or banished to Australia. However, they and their offspring reorganized themselves and adapted British norms and values to their new environment. They eventually got independence from Great Britain. The repatriation of slaves of African descent to Monrovia and Freetown by the American and British governments respectively is arguably a form of deportation. This is because the repatriated slaves had outlived their usefulness as the industrial revolution in Europe and America had made slave labor redundant. Therefore, there was a need to remove the slaves from the western societies and return them to Africa where they could arguably expand the market for western industrial products by having more kids and cultivating raw materials for the western industries (Farfán & López-Uribe, 2020).

Through the threat of direct deportation, the logic of self-deportation took hold after the individual deportation system was created. Self-deportation was the first indirect approached used by American colonists to chased freed slaves by making life hard for them. Many illegal aliens practiced self-deportation due inaccessibility of jobs, education, housing, and driving a vehicle, this was an intentional action "adopted to remove Indian. States and municipalities embraced self-deportation to keep blacks out of their jurisdictions and drive out the Chinese" (Park, 2019).

The perspectives provided on deportation above are indications that deportation and migration are Siamese twins concerned about the improvement of living standard. While a migrant emigrates in search of greener pastures, the political authority in the new home would welcome the migrant if he/she holds the potential to add value to the society which the political authority oversees. However, if the migrant holds no potential value for the new land, he/she would be received with hostility and the possibility of deportation is high. Although deportation seems like an inhumane act, it must be said that authorities deporting aliens do so in fulfilment of their obligations to their citizens. This is because uncontrolled immigration leaves strains on the social amenities and natural resources obtainable within the boundaries of sovereign states (Thompson, 2013).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Migration

Migration plays a huge role in the development of countries as migrants move with different skills, talents, and knowledge that have a positive impact in both the host country and the country of origin. These benefits fuels "growth, innovation and entrepreneurship" and migration creates opportunities, increases living standards and income. Western countries are where they are today because of migration, this can be traced back during the era of slavery. Slaves were exported basically to developed the west and up to today the western countries need migrants as the EU predicts "a massive shortage of workers of 45 million in the next 50 years as the working age population will drop" (IOM, 2014).

Immigration has a substantial benefit to the economic growth of the host countries as migrants take up the labor market and implementing their knowledge, skills, and talents to the labor force and this contributes hugely to the development of the host country's GDP. "Monetary transfers that a migrant makes to the country of origin, including investments made by migrants in their home countries" (Ouass, 2021). Similarly, as migrants work and earn they also invest in their country of origin contributing to the economy growth of their country of origin (Jaumotte, Koloskova, & Saxena, 2016). In the Gambia for instance, Gambians in the diaspora contribute 62% to the GDP which shows that the weight of the Gambia's GDP is on the shoulders of Gambian diasporas (Sowe, 2022).

As a result of sustainability, migration alleviates the effects of shrinking population and ageing. Migration increases the number of workers and replaces the retired worker. It also increases the population of the host country as they build families. This trend promises "future benefits not only to their families, but to the … economy overall" (Sherman, Trisi, Stone, Gonzales, & Parrott, 2019). Low-skilled migrants are most of the time perceived as not useful to the host country but contrary, they contribute to the European economy the usually occupy jobs that are "undesirable by natives". Some low-skilled migrants learn on the job and develop themselves which eventually lead them to acquire valuable skills that boost their living standards and it benefit their origin of origin as the give back (IOM, 2014). It has been observed that migrants "tend to be more mobile than the native-born population, willing to move to areas with more job openings" (Minier, 2017). This is because they have a greater perception of opportunities than native-born who might have lived in the area all their lives.

Migrants make an impactful contribution to the sociocultural development of the host country as the come along with new ideas, expertise, and innovation. This includes the increment of "food diversity, the creation of new music and sporting achievements". Migrants often introduce new food into the cutlery of their host country's kitchen which turn some of them to be chefs serving and working in different restaurants or hotels. Akon for instance is a migrant who contributes a lot in the development of the American music industry and a Venezuelan immigrant in Dominican Republic created an orchestra

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

to contribute to the social structure of his host community. A well renown footballer Sadio Mane from Senegal signed a contract with international football teams to contribute to the development of the sport (Astles, 2020). Immigration has greatly contributed to sports development in developed countries. For instance, the French World Cup winning team of 1998 largely comprised of "immigrants" like Zinedine Zidane, Youri Djoarkef, Marcel Desaily, Christian Kamrembeu and Lilian Thuram. Others are Thiery Henry, David Trezeguet and Patrick Viera. These players went on to win the European nations' cup in 2000. The French national team repeated the feat 20 years later at Russia 2018 World Cup. Immigrants like Kylian Mbappe, Paul Pogba, Ngolo Kante, and Blaise Matuidi were the spine of the 2018 French team. The current German and France 1998, French team to Russia 2018, Italian national team, German and English national teams also have key members from the immigrant communities. Arsenal's Bukayo Saka is a key member of the British team while Jamal Musiala, Leroy Sane, Serge Gnabry, Kareem Adeyemi and Antonio Rudiger are some of the members of the German national team at the Qatar 2022 World Cup. Similarly, the Swiss national team to the 2022 World Cup is dominated by immigrants like Manuel Akanji, Granit Xhaka, Xerdan Shakiri, Noah Okafor and Breel Embolo. Interestingly, Breel Embolo scored the only goal for Switzerland against Cameroon which is the land of his birth. It is important to note that his parents still live in Cameron.

Immigration Brands the World as a global village by maintain and influence natives culturally. The intermarriage between natives and immigrants create a strong tie between the host country and the country of origin. As families are built it increase the population of the host country and this rekindle the hopes of the aging group of people and the country at large. "Immigration Makes the World More Connected. "It's become a cliche, but the world becomes more interconnected each year as people share cultures, engage in global commerce, and develop friendships with people from different backgrounds" (McCarthy, 2018).

Despite its countless benefits, migration has numerous effects that delay the development of the host country and the country of origin from all sectors. As the country of origin lose some relevant and valuable citizen as migration tempts highly educated and skilled citizens to move to another country and this eventually stifles the macro development in the country of origin. On the other hand, the receiving country rejoice as they welcome educated elites that will contribute to the development of their countries, they in turn face numerous challenges to pay the price as the immigrants consequently compete with the natives for the limited resources within the domain of the receiving country. (Dodani & LaPorte, 2005; Docquier, 2014; Bionyi, 2016; Schlein, 2018; Ouass, 2021; and Leighton, Frick, Schmitt, & Klemmer, 2021). Many sub-Saharan African migranyts have been sold to slavery in Libya in their quest for improved living conditions in europe. Many have also lost their lives after their enslavement (Njie L. , 2019).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Agenda Setting Theory

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw gave birth to the agenda setting theory during the 1968 U.S. presidential election when they were conducting a survey amongst electorates in North Carolina. Their study was directed at finding out people's thoughts about important issues and "what the mass media reported as the most critical" (Alvernia University, 2018). Their main focus was "awareness and information" whilst experimenting the agenda setting theory to gauge the relationship between electorates' perception and media content" (University of Twente, 2022). They later concluded that the media exercised an important role in influencing the electorates' way of defining major issues. Similarly, the manner in which the media craft deportation stories has a great influence on the masses.

Public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media is created by the agenda setting theory, it is assumed that the media "filter and shape" reality and give attention to few issues which gives the public room to conclude that those few issues are the most important issues. In the context of this study, public knowledge and understanding of the 2019 deportation of Gambians from some European countries would depend on the amount of the reportage of the issue by Gambian media organizations. The placement of stories on the deportation as well as the amount of time given to each story by each Gambian media organizations would determine the importance attached to the issue by Gambians. Also, the coverage of the deportation by Gambian media could also be a product of the importance placed on the issue by Gambians. This importance could be evident in the social media expressions on the issue. The coverage of the deportation by online media potentially influences public perception and attitude towards deportees.

Deportation is a new dynamic in terms of media coverage and the outcome throughout the country as the online media dominate the media fraternity and gain lot attention from the masses. Online media allows us to run free from the complex psychological issues that have changed the sense of reality, "our daily lives have been digitized, tracked, and tied up in metrics. Our real selves have split into online avatars and profile pictures" (Thomason, 2016).

Framing theory

This theory came into existence as a result of the agenda setting theory. The agenda setting theory dictates people thoughts and presenting the important issues but the framing theory angles issues in a manner that suits situations. At the core of framing theory is the idea "that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning" (University of Twente, 2022). Framing issues gives people to admit one important issue over another due to the quality of communication created.

Journalists have the powers to select topics that can draw public attention and dictates people's perception in the agenda setting theory, but the framing theory empowers

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

journalists to angle and present the news base on the lenses they intend to view it. Framing the covered events by media and the way the news presentation allows the audience to make their own interpretation, "frames are abstract notions that serve to organize or structure social meanings" (University of Twente, 2022).

In relation to this study, the coverage of the deportation of Gambians by the television stations in The Gambia is done in a to form public opinion either in favour of or against the deportation of Gambians from Europe. The choice of guest, the choice of deportees and their families as well as the choice of words in the narration of the stories are capable of influencing the perception of viewers of the stations. The effect of the frames used by the online television stations on the viewers would reflect on the comments made by the viewers under the comment section of each video. It is important to note that not all viewers would comment on the videos therefore the comments of those viewers cannot be taken as the view of the general public.

Empirical Review

Despite its numerous benefits to the society, social media has its undesirable characteristics it could be abused by content creators who could influence people to violence and other "inappropriate actions. Use of social media is beneficial but should be used in a limited way without getting addicted" (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016, p. 75). It therefore becomes important for media users to evaluate media messages thoroughly before using them as behavioral templates.

Harchekar (2017), found that social media facilitates the creation of false identities and the creation of superficial connections by its users. Because it is largely uncensored, information and communication on social media arguably leads "to a gradual breakdown of social cohesion and the destruction of our traditional value systems, unless we take responsibility to ensure that our understanding of social media and its impacts are constantly evaluated with what's happening in the world" (p. 384).

Despite the intrinsic shortcomings of social media and its potential negative effect on society, its significance in contemporary society should be realized by people as it is capable of uniting the world under one umbrella. Social media facilitates easy and smooth communication among people as it drives away the traditional way of communication. Hence social media is a powerful tool in the world and people are urged no to use social media to "impress people" but to utilize it and influence "people in a positive way" (Das, 2020).

Refugees and illegal migrants are vulnerable people and as a result of their vulnerability, they lack adequate social/legal representation and their voices are consequently muffled. This reality leads to distorted and negative reportage of their lives and activities by the media (especially mainstream media). This blend of "media attacks and punitive government policy fuels the stigmatization of refugees and their social isolation, as well as actually intensifying many of the problems that the policies are allegedly addressing"

(Philo, Briant, & Donald, 2013). This resonates with the plight of Gambian migrants who experienced inhuman treatment before their deportation to The Gambia. The manner in which they were arrested from their work places or schools and jailed without any trial is illegal. The authorities continuously violate their human right by chaining their hands and leg to forcefully deport them to their country of origin, yet the media rarely report that all in the promotion of the authorities' agenda and policies.

The mainstream media has largely neglected coverage of anti-deportation campaigns led by undocumented asylum seekers and sympathetic organizations. This enables the stereotyping and negative profiling of undocumented and migrants by citizens and legal residents of their countries of refuge. The coverage provided by the media for pro-deportation campaigns gain more positivity than that of the anti-deportation and due to the negative portrayal of undocumented migrants, they are often accused of criminal activities (Patler & Gonzales, 2015).

Undocumented immigrants were faced with numerous challenges that put them and their families at risk. The frustration they experienced from immigration in the process of getting their documents and the societal discrimination as well as poverty affect their mental health. Society and media tend to ignore the mental well-being of immigrants as they were faced with interpersonal, racial, and political trauma which negatively affected them. Some immigrants that were unable to cope with the situation eventually became mentally imbalanced. It therefore becomes imperative to know that "evidence from research and clinical practice calls for increased attention to the interplay between resilience and pathology to better understand the nature of mental health challenges and intervention effectiveness" (APA Presidential Task Force on Immigration, 2012).

The economic growth of any nation can be fueled by migration. However, a poor management and control of migration could lead to pressure on the economy and social services. In the process of helping member countries to overcome migration challenges, the European Union developed and implemented the Common European Asylum System for the effective management of migration into the European Union. Based on the neoclassical theories people migrate because of socio-economic, cultural political, or environmental reasons. States were not legally obligated to give asylum or prosecute migrants by the UN Convention but it is made clear that immigrants should not be deported to a land where their security or freedom is at risk, "on that note, the Gambian migrants cannot be given asylum status because the threat has been neutralized since 2017 and the Gambia is back to democratic rule once again" (Danso & Soeparna, 2020). This provides theoretical and contextual argument in favor of the deportation of Gambians by some European Union member states.

Hasselberg (2016), explored the consequences of deportation on the social realities of undocumented migrants and concluded that deportation puts a big burden on undocumented migrants as governments carry it out without notifications. She concluded that although "deportation policies may be justified by public authorities as

measures responding to anxieties over migration, they also bring out uncertainty and unrest to deportable migrants and their families" (p. 38).

While sub-Saharan Africans have lamented the rate of deportation from Europe, some European proponents of deportation have argued that European nations have not done enough to enforce deportation and discourage illegal immigration. They claim that European countries have not deported up to half of those issued with deportation order. They urge European Union member states to increase the rate of deportation in order to retain their credibility. This position overlooks the financial and material implications of mass deportation on the countries carrying out the act. The cost is unsustainable "in the long-term, especially in view of the emerging socio-economic crisis caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic, the policy may very well fail to achieve its goal, whilst using precious resources that would be better directed elsewhere" (Jones, Kilpatrick, & Gkliati, 2020).

Despite their failure in securing asylum in their host countries, Gambian migrants preferred to stay in Europe than to return to their country of origin due to the unfriendly economic conditions in The Gambia. This is an indictment on past and present Gambian administrations. The Gambian government accepted a deal with the European Union to return these undocumented migrants and this created public disaffection towards the Gambian government. This forced the government to temporarily halt the deportation in order to ease the tension. While the Gambian government claimed that it placed a moratorium on the deportation in order to protect Gambians seeking asylum in Europe, the deportation continued quietly. This indicates that the Gambian government fooled the Gambian public on the issue.

Zanke and Altrogge (2022), claimed that the Gambian government was not actively involved in the deportation of its citizens from Europe and they suggested that the deportation was hugely unpopular among Gambians because they took place in the buildup to the 2021 general elections. However, reports from the field and public discourse indicate that the public outcry against the deportation of Gambians transcends the electioneering period.

Undocumented migrants are always targeted by the authorities who are consistently hunting them to deport them to their country of origin. The activists and migrants often challenge the identification of deportees, embassies cooperation and all kind of deportations to protect these undocumented migrants. These undocumented migrants were viewed as illegal because of societal concepts and "the problem is the way in which deportation, borders and immigration law frame noncitizens as targets of control, instead of full members of society or political subjects" (Korvensyrjä & Osa, 2022).

After the 2016 presidential elections, The Gambian polity transitioned from a dictatorship to a democratic state and this political change affected the immigration policies of European countries towards Gambians asylum seekers and economic migrants. The immigration policies changed in favor of the European Union and to the detriment of the

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Gambia as undocumented Gambian migrants were deported back to their country of origin. The number of deportation was vague as the actual number is not certain. The Gambian government had been silent over the issue of deportation since its inception "the regime shift has not only diversified the actors and claims regarding forced return but also the solutions proposed and the frames to justify the actor's positions" (Cham & Adam, 2020).

Female irregular migrants are more vulnerable to be taken advantage of during the process of migration or deportation, most of them are subjected to undignified treatments that violates their rights and affects their health. Therefore, the existing policies should be look at to protect women migrants and the need to also embark on "sustainable community projects that would minimize the number of women who have to migrate in search of better livelihood prospects" (Matose, Maviza, & Nunu, 2022).

The fear of deportation causes psychological stress on the lives of families. Therefore, the need to determine family fear of deportation with time can assist to examine the influence of immigration policies on immigrants and the manner in which the society accommodate immigrants. The fear of deportation had a negative impact on the youthful population and "further professionals serving immigrant families could screen youth for high levels of family fear of deportation and connect them to mental health professionals to help process their concerns and fears" (Cox, et al., 2022).

Returnees gone through lot of inconveniences in building a new life in their host countries as they get little or no socio-economic resources and are desperately in need of job, shelter, and health care. Going through these unfortunate challenges, many of the immigrants built family along the line but the family they built ended up separating as a result of deportation "with New Zealanders leaving behind children in Australia that they will not be able to visit again. There is a deeply affective and relational element to this punishment, which has also been used against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" (Smith, 2022).

The Latinx immigrant families are drained by the deportation and discrimination threats on a regular basis and deportation can tear their families apart. As the authorities constantly practice deportation, "Latinx families reporting a higher frequency of deportation fears revealed increases in youth and maternal depression symptoms" (Arreola, et al., 2022).

The deportation of migrants is motivated by a basic interest for the host country as the act of deportation arguably reduces the crime rate and limits competition for scarce economic opportunities. European countries have displayed little interest in the protection of the lives and rights of undocumented migrants. This is evident in their use of coercive methods to deport irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Draper, 2021). Although the European Union has developed programmes to cushion the effects of the deportation on returnees and reintegrate them into their societies, many of the deportees are omitted from the programmes and the few who are captured are

discontented with the training and compensation packages given to them. The programmes are largely Eurocentric and deportees often resort to illegal activities to maintain their previous standards of living while they were in Europe. This amounts to security threat to their countries of origin (Sylla & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2021).

There are many sad stories of undocumented migrants who braced human and natural odds in their uncertain quest for improved living conditions in Europe. These migrants are often framed as desperate cowards seeking better living conditions but unwilling to create those conditions in their own countries. These narrative fails to demonstrate that "migration -especially under the adverse conditions of forced and undocumented- are acts of heroism and a resolute position and decision to overcome dire straits" (Galhardi, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to portray migration using positive narratives which glorifies the desires, motivations and agency of migrants. The great impact of migration on the success and development of nations like the United States of America, Australia, France, Great Britain and Germany are examples of the migration narratives that should be promoted.

The arrest and detention of migrants triggers lots of emotions among friends and families. The detention is often followed by deportation and some of the migrants are often kept in confinement for days or weeks under inhuman and chaotic conditions. Many of them who have started families in their countries of refuge are sent back to their countries of origin thus causing forceful separation from their families. This reality could have negative psychological effects on the family members and it could ultimately cause other societal challenges (Abramson, 2022).

No deportation notification is given to the migrant by the authorities before sending them back to their country of origin. the sudden arrest of migrants had created lots of push and pull between authorities and the migrants as many migrants refused to be arrested and detained and this commotion lead to the authorities to put the migrants on chain. The silence of authorities over "deportations feeds into a strategic disadvantaging of migrant individuals, increasing uncertainty" (Borrelli, 2021).

The worry for deportation had created a lot of disturbance as migrants were not unable to concentrate and many of them became frustrated and some were faced with insomnia. This often affected their mental health as "many mental health issues were reported across the section of mental health criteria" (Manek, Santamarina, & Sales, 2022).

Deportation is an outcome of a complex bureaucratic process which is characterized by legal, racial, nationalist, gendered and administrative reasoning. The outcome of this complicated process based on the aforementioned primordial paradigms of thought is dependent on the time and location (Wissink, 2021). This explains why some governments officially invite certain categories of immigrants into their countries periodically. Large developed countries like Canada, Australia and the United States of America have periodic permanent residency programmes aimed at drawing foreigners to fill areas of their socio-

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

economic needs. These programmes are either discontinued or altered according to emerging realities in the countries.

Kalir, (2022) concluded that deportation becomes the only choice of states that lost hopes in their security. The deported migrants are often neglected as "their vulnerability and potential for being targeted for arrest and eventual deportation by the police" (p.20). He further argued that a change needs to be done in terms of implementing the policies governing deportation to accommodate these undocumented migrants otherwise "illegalized migrants will keep carrying their deportability as a mark of Cain, inadvertently reaffirming their culpability in the eyes of police agents who operate in an arena dominated by institutional racism and anti-immigration sentiment" (Kalir, 2022).

Schmid, (2021) argued that the human rights framework covering through Justice for People Move failed to explain "when and why" deportation is considered "impermissible". He therefore suggested that impermissible deportation is clear in human rights framework in many cases, hence states continuously deport migrants in a manner that often tamper with their human rights and "human rights language and human rights norms have proved immensely effective in motivating diverse actors to strive for a better world" (p.109).

Social media dethrone the traditional media as it attracted the attention of the world. This change has lots of negative and positive impact in people's daily activities as it influences them regularly. Change is inevitable as long as man lives but it comes at a price "discounting positive impacts does not hurt in the long run, nearly as much as negative ones do" (Amedie, 2015).

The traditional media institutions cooperated with the new technologies as a result of the effects of globalization. The new technology made the world a global village and made access to information easy and fast, "media outlets could broadcast in real-time foreign latest news, which arrived via news feed from agencies to which institutions are subscribers" (Tasențe, 2010).

Methodology

This study followed the qualitative paradigm. Specifically, the study adopts discourse analysis which is a method of qualitative content analysis. From all the news stories and programmes on the deportation of Gambians from January 2019 to December 2022, 14 entries were purposively selected from three online broadcast stations in The Gambia because of their high viewership and viewers' feedback. Three entries were selected from The Fatu Network, five were chosen from Eye Africa TV and six were selected from Gambian Talents TV. The stations were also purposively selected because they were the most viewed online TV stations in the Gambia during the period of this study. A self-constructed coding sheet was used to collect data for the study. Face and content validity were conducted on the research instrument.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Data Presentation

The data for this study was collected from three online television stations in The Gambia. These stations are The Fatu Network, Eye Africa TV and Gambian Talents TV. There are three (3) entries from The Fatu Network, five (5) entries from Eye Africa TV and seven (6) entries from Gambia Talents TV. Details about the entries are provided in the table below.

S/N	Date	Station	Title	Format	Duration
1	January 13, 2021	The Fatu Network	Momodou Sabally on alleged deportation agreement and more	Discussion	8 minutes
2	January, 14, 2021	The Fatu Network	Nyang Njie offers his take on drugs and deportation and more	Discussion	5 minutes
3	March 4, 2021	The Fatu Network	Deported Gambians arrive home	Coverage	13 minutes
4	November, 14, 2019	Eye Africa TV	Refugees union urges gov't to halt deportation	Discussion	8 minutes
5	March 4, 2021	Eye Africa TV	Over a dozen more Gambian migrants repatriated from Germany and the barrow gov't is blamed for the mass deportation	News	4 minutes
6	February 13, 2022	Eye Africa TV	VP Touray & Ministers meet parliament on matters of Gambians deportees	News	6 minutes
7	July 8, 2020	Eye Africa TV	Gambians facing deportation threats	Discussion	3 minutes
8	March 17, 2020	Eye Africa TV	Fewer deportation cases for Gambians in Germany	Discussion	2 minutes
9	September 2, 2022	GTTV	Undocumented Gambian migrants set to be deported from Germany later this month.	Discussion	29 minutes
10	April 9, 2019	GTTV	Who signed the deportation us deportee? Tijan Njie asks	Discussion	4 minutes
11	February 25, 2019	GTTV	20 Gambian deportees touched down at the Banjul international airport a few hours ago who is responsible?	Discussion	3 hours
12	February 7, 2019	GTTV	Full interview with the PRO of Immigration about the deportation of Gambians from Germany	Discussion	23 minutes
13	March 5, 2019	GTTV	Who signed the deportation agreement	Discussion	3 hours
14	March 28, 2019	GTTV	Lawyer Darboe denies signing any deportation agreement	Discussion	49 minutes

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

Discussion of Findings

The analyses selected from the three online media TV stations revealed that the issue of deportation of Gambians is a national issue but one online medium out of the three gave it a full coverage. The online TV stations in The Gambia are more focused on providing coverage on political activities which are likely to generate greater income for them. The State broadcast TV GRTS did not provide any coverage on the deportation of Gambians and other private online TV stations also did not or provide one or two coverage on the deportation of Gambians. The findings discovered that the deportees are all male and no female has been deported from the EU countries and both male and female migrated to Europe illegally.

i. What online media exist in the Gambia?

As operationally defined earlier in this work, online media refers to television stations that broadcast through internet platforms (especially YouTube). The online TV stations are Gambian Talents TV (strictly online and privately owned), The Fatu Network (strictly online and privately owned), Kerr Fatou (strictly online and privately owned), Voice Out Digital (strictly online and privately owned), N24 TV (strictly online and privately owned), Block TV (strictly online and privately owned), Eco TV (strictly online and privately owned), Paradise TV (terrestrial and online; and privately owned), Star TV (terrestrial and online; and privately owned), QTV (terrestrial and online; and privately owned), Eye Africa TV (terrestrial and online; and privately owned) and GRTS (terrestrial and online; Government owned).

There are twelve (12) online television stations in the Gambia at the time of the research. Eleven (11) of them are owned by private bodies while one (1) is owned by the government. While seven (7) of them are strictly online, the remaining five (5) operate both terrestrial and online platforms.

ii. How do the online media cover deportation stories?

The three selected online media cover the deportation issue in different way. The first selected online medium The Fatu Network featured the deportation stories on their daily programme "News Review" where prominent Gambians are invited to discuss national issues. The deportation of Gambians and the government stands on the issue was deliberated upon during the programme. The interaction they had with the deportees was minimal as they provide only one recorded coverage of the arrivals of deportees at the Banjul International Airport. In other words, The Fatu Network focused on the opinion of "experts" to interpret the facts and implications of the deportations of Gambians from Europe for the understanding of the Gambian public.

The Eye Africa TV featured the deportation stories on their news featuring a Garman based Gambian activist and the arrivals of the deportees. The online TV station also provided a panel discussion on the issue.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

The Gambian Talents TV gave a full coverage to the deportation of Gambians as they provide live coverage of the deportees upon arriving home, provided a panel discussion featuring key influencers, engaged the deportees to narrate their own stories and engaged the stakeholders as the public yearn to hear from them.

Therefore, the three selected online media TV stations provided deportation coverages based on their house style. The Fatu Network did more of discussion, Eye Africa TV did more of discussion and featuring the deportation stories on their news and Gambian Talents TV provided more of live coverage, had a discussion with deportees and stakeholders.

iii. What prominence does deportation stories have on their platforms?

Deportation stories were given prominence by the selected online media overall as they are the first or second topics of discussion on the platforms of the selected online media outlets. Enough time was allocated to the issue of deportation and the people featured on the programmes are significant. The Fatu Network gave prominence to the issue of deportation as the discussed the issue with enough time and engaging prominent Gambians to talk about the issue, adding weight to the issues. Eye Africa TV gave prominence to the issue of deportation but at a point failed as they were reviewing an investigation done by the Point Newspaper which was misleading but aside from that, they treated the deportation issue with prominence. Gambian Talents TV treated the deportation issue with more prominence, time and efforts as they provided coverage from different stakeholders and authorities.

iv. What is the direction of discourse on the deportation of Gambians on the platforms?

The summative narrative of the discussion is that Gambians are right to seek greener pastures and improved living standards in Europe irrespective of the "legality" of their stay in these countries because successive Gambian governments have failed to meet the yearnings of its population. The youths risk a lot including their lives to make it to Europe so the Gambian government should not had signed the deportation agreement with the European Union to deport these youths and bringing them back to the Gambia is not a good idea as the situation of the country remains the same.

The Gambian government absolves itself from any blame in the deportation conundrum. Former and serving officials deny signing any agreement with European Union member states for the deportation of Gambians. They also claimed oblivion of the existence of a deportation agreement between The Gambia and the European Union. They argued that The Gambian government lacked the power to stop the European Union from deporting Gambians but they (The Gambian government) are obligated to receive and reintegrate these deportees.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

v. What impact does their conversation have on public perception of Gambians on deportation issues?

Comments by viewers of the programmes show a dissatisfaction with the handling of the deportation by the Gambian government. The comments extensively compared the present administration with that of former president Yahya Jammeh and they conclude that Jammeh would have prevented the deportation of Gambians. The viewers allege that the Gambian government led by President Adama Barrow is not protecting Gambians and it is not representing the interest of the nation. The feedback from the viewers suggest that the handling of the issue could lead to increased crime across the country and ultimately cause social unrest and national insecurity.

Conclusion

Migration is fundamental to the survival of The Gambia as the Gambian economy relies greatly on remittances from Gambians in the diaspora. Gambians in the diaspora remit money home irrespective of their legal status in their countries of residence. Therefore, the deportation of any Gambian would have negative effect on the deportee, his/her friends and family and the community where they live. Deportation reduces the overall purchasing power of the deportee and people within his/her sphere of influence. Consequently, this reduction in purchasing power negatively affects the Gambian macro-economy.

Countless lives of Gambian youths are lost in the process of getting to Europe and lots of young people in the country are still wishing to embark on illegal travel to Europe one day. Despite the inherent risks, Gambian youths are discovering new routes to Europe.

The Gambian government has failed to control the narrative on the issue. The government has failed to communicate effectively with Gambians and as a result, there has been an increase in the allegation that the Gambian government had been compensated by the European Union countries for the deportation of its citizens who sought asylum in Europe. Large sections of the Gambian public believe this allegation because the Gambian government has not offered plausible explanations on the issue. This is an unusual (in)action from a democratically elected government which cares greatly about public opinion and acceptance. The feedback from viewers suggests that deportees and their families are likely to make the journey back to Europe or resort to unlawful activities to maintain their standards of living. This prognosis portends danger for Gambian peace, stability and national security.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are necessary:

The online media TV station should provide a follow up story on deportation issue as it is a continuous trend and investigate the deportees after being deported, what is next for

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. S. T. Addo [GHANA]

them? The provision of deportation coverage should be on a daily basis as some Gambian migrants in the European countries are still not having legal status in the countries they are.

A thorough investigative report needs to done in the government institution that are responsible for the deportation of Gambians and how the deal came about and what did the government get in return. The online media should hold the government to account continuously. The online media should educate the viewers of the importance of national the security and they should safeguard the security of the country.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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