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INTRA-AFRICA IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A BORDERLESS AFRICA

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper aims to conceptualize intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship and provide evidence of its impact on intra-African trade and economic development. Immigrant entrepreneurship is often regarded as a key driver of international trade and economic development around the world; yet very little is known about intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship and its role in intra-African trade and economic development in Africa.

Methodology: This paper applied a systematic review of literature methodology to provide insights into the role of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship on trade and economic development of both host and home countries. Recommendations on how intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship can be used to promote intra-African trade and economic development are reviewed.

Results: Policy guidelines that may increase the positive impact of immigrant entrepreneurs within the context of intra-African trade include immigration policies that attract high impact entrepreneurs, non-discriminatory support for high impact immigrant entrepreneurs as well as policies to strengthen the role of free trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Conclusion: We conclude that African regional integration to promote intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship development is a conduit for Africa's long-term and sustainable economic development. Evidence of the positive impact of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development is scant. At the same time, the notions of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship are not well documented in the literature. This paper provides arguments for the promotion of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship as a tool to increase intra-African trade and economic development.

Keywords: Economic development, intra-African trade, intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Many countries around the world have seen increasing growth of immigrant entrepreneurship (Dheer, 2018; Kerr & Kerr, 2018). At the same time, the role of immigrant entrepreneurship is held in high regard especially in developed nations (Desiderio, 2014; Kerr & Kerr, 2018). In the United States of America, immigrant entrepreneurship accounts for over 25% of all firms (Kerr & Kerr, 2018) with over 51% of all start-ups worth over US\$1 billion having been started by immigrants (Anderson, 2016). Similarly, Desiderio (2014) noted that many developed countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States recognize the value of immigrant entrepreneurship as drivers of economic competitiveness and innovation. As a result, these countries have taken deliberate steps to attract productive immigrant entrepreneurship. For example, special visas and entry requirements to attract immigrant entrepreneurs have been established (Anderson, 2016; Desiderio, 2014). Drawing on the lessons from developed nations, Africa could benefit from immigrant entrepreneurship.

Immigrant entrepreneurship has been reported to benefit both host and home countries (Desiderio, 2014; Tengeh & Nkem, 2017). Tengeh & Nkem (2017) opine that immigrant entrepreneurship provides a conduit for economic development through tax contributions and creating employment opportunities for both immigrant entrepreneurs themselves and the natives. Besides, immigrant entrepreneurs have been hailed for producing useful products and services that benefit local customers and improve efficiency of local companies. For example, companies such as Uber have transformed travel in many cities, while other companies such as AppDynamics, Cloudera, CloudFlare, Tanium, Actifio, Mu Sigma, and others help U.S. companies to maintain strong information technology systems to compete in the global marketplace (Anderson, 2016). Furthermore, high-skilled immigrants contribute to innovations and introduce new products to the host economies.

The over-representation of immigrants as founders of high-impact companies, patent applicants, and biotech companies is an indication of enormous contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship in economies around the world (Fairlie & Lofstrom,

2015). In South Africa, studies such as Kalitanyi & Visser (2014) revealed that immigrant entrepreneurs transfer their entrepreneurial skills to the native South Africans, hence increasing the pool of entrepreneurial activity in the country. Furthermore, Berghoff (2020) confirmed that the intercultural experiences and knowledge as well as the high pressures to succeed in a foreign country stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation among immigrants. Consequently, immigrants have been noted to be highly entrepreneurial, contributing to economic development and innovation to the benefit of both their host and home countries (Lofstrom & Wang, 2019; Ngota et al., 2019). This is an indication of how valuable immigrant entrepreneurship is to the progress of economies.

International trade is another area that has been reported to benefit from immigrant entrepreneurship (Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015). Immigrant-owned businesses tend to have higher levels of exports than other firms because they are tied into business networks in their home countries. Furthermore, due to international language proficiencies and other cultural ties with businesspeople in their home or other countries, immigrant entrepreneurs can expand into international markets. Fairlie & Lofstrom (2015) observed positive contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs towards exports that flow to their co-ethnic networks in other countries. These co-ethnic networks promote bilateral trade by providing market information as well as by supplying matching and referral services. As a result, both the host countries and the home countries stand to benefit from immigrant entrepreneurship.

Given the significant benefits of immigrant entrepreneurship, Africa could benefit enormously from intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship by containing its benefits within the boundaries of the continent. Therefore, intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship may play a role in promoting the much-needed intra-African trade and economic development (Tralac, 2019). Against this background, this paper provides arguments for the promotion of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship as a tool to increase intra-African trade and ultimately economic development.

This paper is structured as follows. Firstly, we provide theoretical perspectives in which we provide

a systematic review of the notions of immigrant entrepreneurship to provide a basis for our characterization of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship. Theoretical perspectives on intra-African trade and economic development are also explored. We then explore the relationships between intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship, intra-African trade, and economic development. The paper then closes with concluding remarks and directions for further research.

2. Methodology

This paper presents a systematic review of literature to synthesize and compare empirical evidence from multiple studies that have investigated intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship with a view to ascertaining the nature of its impact on trade and economic development. Snyder (2019) describes a systematic review as a research method and process for identifying and critically appraising all relevant empirical evidence with the primary aim of answering a particular research question(s) or hypothesis. There are three fundamental questions we seek to address using this approach: Firstly, while immigrants are generally perceived to be relatively more entrepreneurial and therefore contributors of job growth, economic growth, and development in both sending and receiving countries, we seek to evaluate the consistency of this positive impact of migrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development. Secondly, we seek to discover peculiarities or variables that have a significant positive effect on migrant entrepreneurship in the African context. In the process of review, we identify constraints that retard the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs, and most importantly, discover areas for further analysis. Therefore, the following research questions guided our systematic literature search and review.

- What are the dominant perspectives in the literature regarding immigrant entrepreneurship?
- What is the potential impact of immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development?

- What are the factors that can enable and those that hinder the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa?

Various peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, working papers and official reports such as the World Development Indicators (WDI), International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) reports were consulted. The following key words were used to search for the literature on Google Scholar:

- Immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa,
- Immigrant entrepreneurship, intra-African trade, economic development, and
- Contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa.

The literature search was filtered to cover a period of 10 years, i.e., only articles published in the period 2011-2021 were considered, and the preferred language of publication was English.

3. Results

The findings of this study seek to address the fundamental questions in this paper. This includes the perspectives on the nature and the role of immigrant entrepreneurship, the impact of immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development and the variables that constrain and enable immigrant entrepreneurship in the African context.

3.1 Immigrant entrepreneurship in perspective

There are four major themes that could be identified following our systematic literature review of perspectives in immigrant entrepreneurship. These are classified into perspectives on conceptualization of immigrant entrepreneurship, motives for immigrant entrepreneurs, contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship, and challenges of immigrant entrepreneurship. Table 1 below provides a summary of the findings on the perspectives on immigrants, followed by explanations.

Table 1 Perspectives on immigrant entrepreneurship

Perspectives	Major arguments/dominant views	Sources
Conceptualization of immigrant entrepreneurship	There are multiple conceptualizations of immigrant entrepreneurship; however, the common defining characteristics relate to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> immigration status, business activity in countries besides one's own country of birth, and time frame for business activity. 	Aaltonen & Akola (2014) Khosa & Kalitanyi (2015) Tengeh & Nkem (2017)
Motives for immigrant entrepreneurship	The motives for immigrant entrepreneurship are mainly explained in terms of the push and pull factor theory, and the dominant motives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pursuit of economic opportunities in other countries (pull factors), and political and economic hardships in home countries (push factors). 	Musara & Nieuwenhuizen (2021)
Contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship	The major contribution of immigrant entrepreneurship can be classified into the following three main themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge and skills transfer, social and economic gains in terms of the introduction of new products, employment creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth, and remittances that benefit home countries in a circular manner. 	Griffin-EL & Olabisi (2018) Kerr & Kerr (2020) Charmaine & Piper (2012) Kalitanyi & Visser (2014) Musara (2019) Ngota et al. (2019)
Challenges of immigrant entrepreneurship	In addition to common challenges facing entrepreneurs, immigrant entrepreneurs experience the following unique challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> immigration restrictions, discrimination, cultural diversity, language barriers, and general business challenges. <p>These challenges inhibit their full potential contributions.</p>	Tengeh & Nkem (2017) Musara & Nieuwenhuizen (2021)

Source: Authors

3.1.1 Conceptualizations of immigrant entrepreneurship

There are multiple conceptualizations of immigrant entrepreneurship in the literature (Aaltonen & Akola; 2014; Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2015; Tengeh & Nkem, 2017). In these multiple definitions, the key features defining immigrant entrepreneurship relate to persons moving from one country to another, business activities by these persons in a country other than their own country of birth, and the time frame for business activities in the host country. For example, Tengeh & Nkem (2017) defined an immigrant entrepreneur as a newly immigrated individual who set up a new business in the host country for the purpose of economic survival and their sustenance. Similarly, Aaltonen & Akola (2014) defined an immigrant entrepreneur as a person who has immi-

grated to a new country and started a new business. What can be deduced from these definitions is that immigrant entrepreneurship relates to the process in which foreign-born business owners establish businesses in another country. Therefore, an immigrant entrepreneur is an individual who has migrated from their country of origin (home country) to settle or do business in another country (host country). In other cases, an immigrant entrepreneur does not settle in the host country but may establish and run their business remotely while settled in their home country or elsewhere in the world.

3.1.2 Motives for immigrant entrepreneurship

The reality in the current global world is that people are constantly on the move, placing internation-

al migration as a key feature of the modern open society (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013). This constant movement of people across international boundaries for one reason or another gave rise to, among others, the concept of immigrant entrepreneurship, a source of socio-economic vitalization (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013). There are several motivations for the rise of immigrant entrepreneurship. In our review of the extant literature, we observed that these motivations can be categorized into two main themes, namely pursuit of better economic opportunities and a push by political and economic hardships in home countries (Musara & Nieuwenhuizen, 2021).

3.1.3 Contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship

Increasing recognition of immigrant entrepreneurship and its contributions to socio-economic growth and regional developments spawned a plethora of publications dealing with immigration, ranging from participation in labor markets, their employment creation through creating new businesses, skills, and knowledge transfer, as well as the expansion of markets (Khosha & Kalitanyi, 2015). The role of immigrant entrepreneurship is held in high regard among various scholars (see, for example, Charmaine & Piper, 2012; Kalitanyi & Visser, 2014; Ngota et al., 2019; Musara, 2019). Ngota et al. (2019) postulated that immigrant entrepreneurship plays a critical role in intra-African trade, skills transfer, and therefore economic development. Similarly, Kalitanyi & Visser (2014) provide evidence of the important role of immigrant entrepreneurship in terms of entrepreneurial skills transfer and the resultant increase in the much-needed entrepreneurial activity on the African continent.

Ngota et al. (2019) pointed out that, despite a wide range of literature related to entrepreneurship in general in both developed and developing countries, the peculiarities of immigrant entrepreneurship have not been studied. Similarly, Devine and Kiggundu (2016) call for studies on the role of intra-Africa entrepreneurship as well as intra-Africa diaspora entrepreneurship, those who move from one African country to start a business in another. Collectively, these studies (Devine & Kiggundu, 2016; Ngota et al., 2019) are a clarion call for extensive investigations into the role of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship.

To address this literature gap, Ngota et al. (2019) focused their study on how African immigrant entrepreneurial skills can be transferred to their lo-

cal/native South African employees. Charmaine & Piper (2012) investigated the challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs and the various opportunities that can flow from supporting immigrant entrepreneurs. In another study, Musara (2019) investigated the business models of successful immigrant entrepreneurs to facilitate the transfer of such knowledge and business model skills to native South African entrepreneurs. These studies (Charmaine & Piper, 2012; Musara, 2019; Ngota et al., 2019) suggest the need for the development and support of immigrant entrepreneurship to achieve a positive collective continental development trajectory.

3.1.4 Challenges of immigrant entrepreneurship

A plethora of literature confirms that immigrant entrepreneurs are not immune to the common challenges facing entrepreneurs in general. These common challenges include access to finance, access to markets, crime, corruption, bureaucracy, and lack of skills, among others. However, due to their foreignness, immigrant entrepreneurs experience additional challenges such as immigration documentation, discrimination, xenophobia, cultural and language barriers (Khosha & Kalitanyi, 2014; Musara & Nieuwenhuizen, 2021). However, studies such as Musara & Nieuwenhuizen (2021) observed that some successful immigrant entrepreneurs use their resilience and international experiences to overcome both common challenges and unique challenges facing immigrant entrepreneurs. This implies the need for further in-depth studies to uncover insights into the coping mechanisms of immigrant entrepreneurs dealing with both common challenges and additional challenges they face. Understanding these coping mechanisms will not only benefit native entrepreneurs, but also increase our understanding of how to develop a broader entrepreneurial ecosystem for the benefit of the host nations and the African continent at large. While the role of immigrant entrepreneurship around the world has been extensively explored in the Western world, very little is known about intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship and its relations to intra-African trade and economic development.

3.2 Intra-African trade and economic development

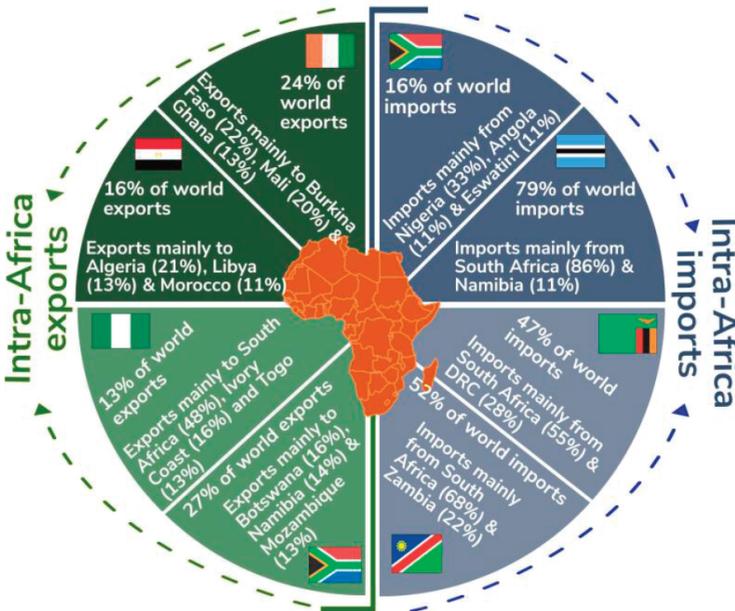
While conceptualizing intra-African trade is straightforward, economic development in the African context remains an elusive concept. Gumede

(2020, p. 13) pointed out that “*The pursuit of development in Africa has been informed by conceptions and endeavors undertaken by other regions. Permutations of development and underdevelopment are often viewed through Eurocentric lenses*”. Such permutations of development have been criticized for their pursuit of development by underdevelopment, in which Western countries have pursued development of their own countries by the exploitation of the African continent’s resources. The Eurocentric concept of development centered on the Western-imposed metrics of good governance and respect for human rights have been used to judge the level of development in Africa (Gumede, 2020); yet Africa collectively shares a fundamentally different social and economic history that is far from the Western countries. Acknowledging that the characterization of development in the African context is elusive, controversial and an ongoing debate, for the sake of this paper, we view African development from the broad lenses of Amartya Sen’s capability approach (Dalziel et al., 2018), which views development in terms of general improvements of the quality of lives on the African continent.

Calls and suggestions for the pursuit of an African-centered development trajectory are inexhaustible

in the literature (see, for example, Parshotam, 2018; Rogerson, 2019). One of such calls that resonates with the objectives of this paper is a call for the promotion of intra-African trade as a conduit for intra-Africa development (Parshotam, 2018). The AfCFTA was established in response to these calls (Anyanwu, 2014; Parshotam, 2018). Disappointment with the progress of multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) gave birth to increasing interest in African regional integration and trade negotiations (Anyanwu, 2014). Thus, the establishment of the AfCFTA at the 10th extraordinary Summit of the AU Assembly on 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, exhibits Africa’s commitment and efforts to promote intra-African trade (Obeng-Odoom, 2020). While the current state of intra-African trade paints a bleak picture (see Figure 1), scholars such as Mold (2018) and Obeng-Odoom (2020) are confident that the AfCFTA has the potential to boost intra-African trade. Such an establishment provides avenues for addressing the underdevelopment challenges facing the African continent. This flows from classical and neoclassical theories of trade generating a common view that free trade benefits all through trickle-down economic growth (Obeng-Odoom, 2020).

Figure 1 2018 Intra-Africa exports and imports



Source: Tralac, 2019

The African continent needs more intra-African trade to facilitate continental economic development (Tralac, 2019; African Export-Import Bank, 2018). Thus, promoting intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship provides an impetus for more intra-African trade that will be beneficial to the broader continent through trickle-down economic growth. Gumede (2020) argued Africa's development requires "patriotic entrepreneurship" which applies the creation of pan-African enterprises, thus suggesting intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship. At the same time, Okafor and Udibe (2020) support the view

that intra-African trade through intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship can foster a new and positive paradigm for Africa's collective development. Thus, intra-African immigrant entrepreneurship can play a significant role in the implementation and achievement of the goals of the AfCFTA.

3.3 *Intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship, international trade, and economic development*

Drawing from the extant literature, we formulated six (6) hypothesized relationships related to the notions of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship, intra-African trade and economic development.

Table 2 *Tabulated synthesis of hypothesized relationships between immigrant entrepreneurship, international trade, and economic development*

Hypothesized relationships	Selected sources	Supported / Not supported
Migration financial flows support economic development.	African Development Bank (2021) World Bank (2019) Akoutou et al. (2015)	<i>Supported</i> Migration financial flows are the largest source of external financial flows to Africa exceeding official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI). In Lesotho, financial inflows from migration are close to 30 percent of GDP (Akoutou et al., 2015). These financial flows are relatively more stable and less volatile in comparison to private debt and equity flows. Home countries in particular benefit through increased financial flows, investment, trade, and transfer of skills and technology resulting in poverty reduction. In the context of intra-regional trade, these benefits circulate within the region thereby promoting Africa as a whole.
Financial flows from IE and migration are more generally correlated with development indicators.	Akoutou et al. (2015)	<i>Supported</i> Financial flows are positively correlated with increased household investments in education, entrepreneurship, and health, all of which have high social return in most circumstances. They also contribute significantly to poverty reduction and to other SDGs. However, there is evidence that remittances can assist and have assisted many African countries in ensuring the availability of hard currency, improving countries' credit worthiness for external borrowings, and increasing internal aggregated demands.
Migrant entrepreneurs have potential to contribute to the development.	Naudé et al. (2017)	<i>Supported but not automatic for all</i> The authors argue that different entrepreneurships have different success rates and different kinds of entrepreneurship therefore have different implications for development. There are no automatic mechanisms by which they lead to the development, particularly when the context of country heterogeneity is taken into account.
As the innovative force behind the object of exchange, entrepreneurship is the key factor in international trade.	Lungu (2020)	<i>Supported</i> Entrepreneurs are key players in international trade since they are the creators of the exchange object. Considering this view, we are modest to propose that local entrepreneurship, if augmented by innovative and high impact immigrant entrepreneurship, generates relatively more gains to intra-African trade and regional development.
	Alemayehu (2020)	<i>Supported</i> Contrary to adoption of blanket entrepreneurial policies, Alemayehu (2020) advocates for a shift towards high impact entrepreneurship (HIE) policies to stimulate the capacity of Africa to produce high value and quality products and services with emphasis on diversified offerings. This focus on HIE would allow member states to source differentiated products and services from fellow member countries at relatively low cost, cementing thereby interdependence of African member states.

Hypothesized relationships	Selected sources	Supported / Not supported
Beyond removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, entrepreneurship is the critical factor needed to foster regional integration and sustainable regional development.	UNCTAD (2019)	<i>Supported</i> Entrepreneurship was among the factors identified by UNCTAD as critical requirements beyond preferential tariff liberalization. Given that infra-Africa trade is lowest in comparison to other regions in the world, we submit that emphasis should be directed at promoting regional trade while scaling down external trading partnerships. In its place, overreliance on external trading partnerships must be carefully substituted with promotion and support for highly innovative African immigrant entrepreneurship at national and regional levels.
Entrepreneurship promotes international trade via the innovation channel.	Hessels (2007)	<i>Supported</i> We hypothesize that IE promotes IT via the innovation channel with varying levels of impact which are dependent on the extent of innovation orientation of IEs. Hessels (2007) found a positive feedback loop between innovation and international activity. Their study found that innovative SMEs are more likely to export and import than non-innovative SMEs.

Source: Authors

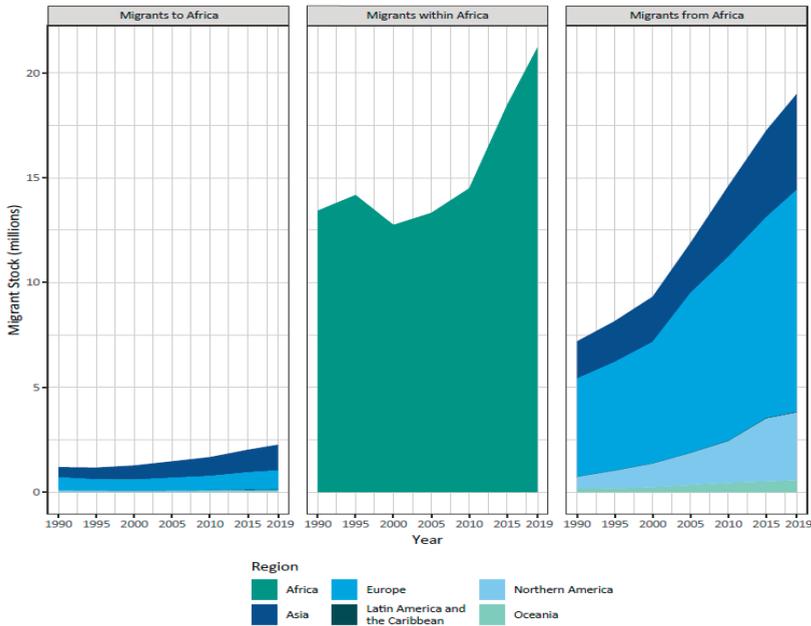
Lungu (2020) asserts that although economic literature did not explicitly approach the role of entrepreneurship in international trade, it is not to imply a neutral or minor role. The author connects entrepreneurship to economic growth by suggesting that economic growth levels are relatively higher in the fields where entrepreneurs cooperate, and concludes that entrepreneurship, international commerce and economic development are interconnected variables which explain the current state of international trade. In keeping with this view, we therefore submit that the gains to intra-African trade and hence regional development are relatively more pronounced where the culture of immigrant entrepreneurship is promoted at national, international and regional levels.

To the extent that entrepreneurship is a key contributing factor in stimulating economic growth and hence development locally, we hypothesize that innovative immigrant entrepreneurship, if supported sufficiently by all concerned stakeholders, is a critical enabler of international trade, regional growth and hence development. This view is supported by UNCTAD (2019) asserting that African regional integration, which merely emphasizes removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, cannot deliver on the regional goals of sustainable development. Among other factors, the UNCTAD report identified entrepreneurship as a critical requirement beyond preferential tariff liberalization.

While people migrate for a variety of reasons ranging from political, economic, environmental, and social, Ravenstein's (1889) laws of migration state that the major reason why people migrate is economics, that is, migrants move to seek better jobs and better financial and entrepreneurial opportunities at a place different from their home location. Vandor and Franke (2018) state that in many countries immigrants are more likely to become entrepreneurs than their native counterparts. The authors argue that by nature immigrants are likely to be more risk-taking than the native-born population since immigration itself is a risky undertaking.

Digging into migration literature reveals an imbalance in the volume of intra-African studies relative to other regions in the world. We find that a repertoire of studies on immigrant entrepreneurship is relatively more concentrated on non-African regions, predominantly in the US, Europe, and East Asia. When it comes to Africa, South Africa dominates in terms of research that has been conducted on the current subject for obvious reasons, given its progressive economy and position in the region. An important reason germane to this study is the fact that South Africa remains the most significant immigration destination with about 4 million international immigrants estimated to be currently living in the country (IOM, 2020).

Figure 2 Migrants to, within and from Africa 1990-2019



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), 2019

Table 3 Intra-Africa migration directions

Region	Number of outgoing migrants	Main areas of destinations
East Africa	6.9 million	Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda
West Africa	6.1 million	Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria
Southern Africa	4 million	South Africa
Central Africa	3.1 million	DRC, Cameroon, Angola
Northern Africa	1.6 million	Libya, Egypt

Source: European Commission (2018) as cited by the European Union (2020, p. 6)

The intra-Africa migration outlook shows that within the African continent, East and West Africa account for the majority of countries of origin for the largest number of outgoing international migrants as well as the most frequent destinations for incoming international migrants. In Southern Africa, South Africa is the main destination for immigrants from neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Eswatini, Lesotho and Zambia, including other destination countries such as Botswana, Zambia and Angola. The migration data portal (2021) identified industrial developments, mining sectors and oil wealth (in Angola)

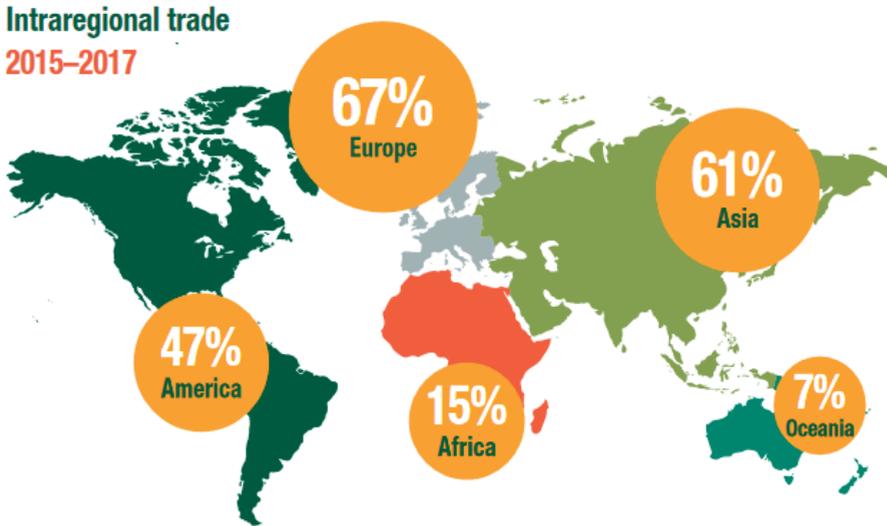
as the main pulling factors for both unskilled and skilled labor migrants in the Southern African region in particular.

Immigrant entrepreneurship as a subject of academic discourse and policy debate has gained importance and interest among academics and policy analysts in recent years. The first reason is that intra-Africa migration has been increasing significantly since 2000 as illustrated in Figure 2. In 2019, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020) reported an estimated 21 million Africans living in another African country, an increase of 2.5 million people compared to a total of 18.5 million

recorded in 2015. Secondly, IOM (2020) noted that international migrants as entrepreneurs and investors create job opportunities and promote innovation and technological change. This view is supported by a study conducted by Wadhwa (2009),

which analyzed US data spanning the period 1995-2005, who found that immigrant-founded tech businesses created 450,000 jobs and generated \$52 billion in revenue.

Figure 3 Intra-regional trade (2015-2017)



Source: UNCTAD, 2019

As illustrated in Figure 3, relative to other regions, Africa remains a marginal player in global trade. However, UNCTAD (2019) pointed out that there is evidence suggesting that the volume and value of intra-African trade are likely to be underestimated due to the prevalence of informal trade. There is hence a possibility that intra-African trade can reverse the current trend illustrated in Figure 3, in which Africa trades more with the rest of the world than it trades with itself. According to UNCTAD (2019), intra-African trade was estimated at around 15% during a three-year period spanning 2015-2017 compared to Europe (67%), Asia (61%), America (47%) and Oceania (7%). Africa needs to trade more with Africa to boost intra-regional trade, and increase cross-border trade to ensure that African skills and technologies are utilized internally, and the benefits of trade are reaped within the continent.

Promotion of intra-African trade and immigrant entrepreneurship catalysed by the implementation of the AfCFTA holds great potential to accelerate employment and economic growth, diversify the sources of growth and thus create livelihood op-

portunities for many Africans. A critical tenet of the AfCFTA is centred on removing tariffs and trade barriers to free trade and deepen intra-African trade and regional integration (African Export-Import Bank, 2018). This is particularly important under the current circumstances to guarantee and speed up economic recovery of African countries given the magnitude of economic collapse caused by COVID-19. One study conducted by UNCTAD (2018) using computable general equilibrium (CGE) modelling estimated a 1.2% increase in employment that may result from the adoption of the AfCFTA. In support of a similar notion, Naudé et al. (2015) argue that removal of discriminatory barriers against migrant entrepreneurs holds great potential in promoting development in both sending and receiving countries. In South Africa, an empirical study by Chaskalson (2017) revealed that a 1% increase in immigration had a positive effect of between 0.003% and 0.01% on employment, suggesting that immigrants possibly create job opportunities where they settle. We are therefore convinced that success of economic reconstruction and recov-

ery of African economies is partially dependent, among other things, on collaboration and integration of Africa in economic trade and on mobilising efforts towards a borderless Africa.

Kimenyi et al. (2012) state that although intra-African trade is not the only panacea for development, it remains important for several reasons. It can boost the volume of exports and imports within the region and therefore lift economic growth. It can improve economies of scale, enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and terms of trade. Given 2020 economic events of commodity and energy price volatilities on global markets triggered by COVID-19, intra-African trade may provide an important buffer against global volatility and exogenous

shocks. Citing the example of Kenya, the African Export-Import Bank (2018) claims that intra-African trade acts as a mitigant against harsh external shocks. Moreover, given projections of significant future shortfalls of tax revenues predicted for Africa, promotion of immigrant entrepreneurship to increase intra-African trade through removal of trade barriers and discriminatory obstacles targeted at immigrants may just be the solution to boost government revenues and achieve the much-needed development in Africa.

4. Summary of major findings

Table 4 presents a summary of the findings of this paper.

Table 4 Summary of the findings related to the research questions

Research question	Findings
What are the dominant perspectives in the literature regarding intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa?	Our review of literature revealed that there are mixed perspectives (both positive and negative) regarding the role of immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa. The negative perspectives relate to the challenges that immigrant entrepreneurs experience, while the positive perspectives point at enormous contributions that immigrant entrepreneurs can bring in terms of skills transfer, employment creation as well as social and economic gains related to employment creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth. Most of the articles point at the positive impact, and even greater benefits can be achieved if more immigrant entrepreneurship is supported at international level.
What is the impact of immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development?	As evidenced by studies from other parts of the world, such as Kerr & Kerr, (2020), Naudé et al. (2017), among others, immigrant entrepreneurship could have a potential positive and sustainable impact on intra-African trade and economic development. The potential positive gains of intra-African trade and economic development could be contained within the African continent if favorable trade and immigration policies are in place. There is a concern that the gains could be threatened by other international bilateral trade agreements that could function as leakages.
What are the constraints that retard the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa?	Immigrant entrepreneurs experience additional challenges which retard their potential contributions to both host and home countries. The challenges experienced by immigrant entrepreneurs such as discrimination, xenophobia and restrictive immigration, and international trade laws have a potential impact on collective economic development of the African continent.

Source: Authors

Several good practices emanating from integrating migrant entrepreneurs in other African economies are identified in the literature. For example, the practice by immigrant entrepreneurs of partnering with local entrepreneurs is cited by Mouelle and Barnes (2018) as an important practice that is beneficial to both parties in terms of transferred knowledge and entrepreneurial expertise and com-

petences, reduced operating costs and access to government funding. Furthermore, visa regimes that are conducive to immigrant entrepreneurs and support mechanisms such as access to finance and other resources could be established to attract and promote the growth of immigrant entrepreneurship (Anderson, 2016).

5. Implications for research, practice, and society

Through the lens of a systematic literature review methodology, this study sought to highlight the dominant perspectives in the literature regarding the nature and role of immigrant entrepreneurship and its potential impact on intra-African trade and economic development, as well as to identify enabling factors including constraints that inhibit contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship in Africa.

The finding that entrepreneurship, and in particular immigrant entrepreneurship, has a potential impact on international trade and economic development deserves the attention of scholars, immigrant entrepreneurs and policy makers alike. For scholars, this is a call for further empirical investigations to reveal the extent to which immigrant entrepreneurship contributes to intra-African trade and the ultimate potential towards economic development.

For immigrant entrepreneurs and other practitioners, an exposition of their impactful contribution should serve as motivation towards the approaches and kind of entrepreneurial activities they ought to focus their attention on. Thus, efforts towards high-impact immigrant entrepreneurial activity should be encouraged. It is envisaged that immigrant entrepreneurs and other practitioners will be inspired to do more for the betterment of their nations and the African continent at large. The lack of African context-specific empirical data on the impact of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development should however not deter policy makers from giving attention to the notions of immigrant entrepreneurship. Evidence from other countries such as the USA, Australia, and Canada (for examples, see Desderio, 2014; Kerr & Kerr, 2020) could be used to guide policies to support intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship.

6. Areas for further research

Investigations of the nature and scope of immigrant entrepreneurship that have an impact on intra-African trade and economic development are required. In pursuit of generating empirical data on the hypothesized relationships formulated in this paper, we envisage to conduct a series of multi-staged Delphi studies as part of a more comprehensive research project. The envisaged project involves collection and analysis of both quantitative

and qualitative data from a panel of experts, immigrant entrepreneurs and selected policy making bodies. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be conducted to track the long-term impact and direction of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship on intra-African trade and economic development.

7. Conclusion

There are important considerations that can be drawn from our assessment of intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship, intra-African trade and intra-Africa development. We therefore recommend several policy guidelines that may augment the potential impact of immigrant entrepreneurs within the context of intra-African trade and development. Of particular importance is the realization of the potential positive effect of removing discriminatory barriers against immigrant entrepreneurs in promoting development in Africa for both home and host countries. Based on the best scenario evidence we have examined, we have demonstrated and are convinced with reasonable confidence that immigrants create economic opportunities for their countries of origin as well as for those in which they settle. However, in the interest of collective benefit and a broader objective, we are motivated that the gains of intra-African trade, whichever direction they take, whether in favor of home or host countries, will be localized within the African region.

Secondly, an inclusive approach is needed, one that is non-discriminatory against immigrants in providing start-up capital and ongoing credit facilities to immigrant entrepreneurs. This is corroborated by various African studies that identified lack of financial access to be among the key obstacles slowing the progressive impact of immigrant entrepreneurship. This is further supported by initiatives such as the AfCFTA and BIAT (Boosting Intra-African Trade), which call for removal of tariffs and trade barriers in Africa.

We conclude by arguing that industrial development and trade policies that foster intra-Africa immigrant entrepreneurship are critical if the African continent is to achieve its collective development agenda. African continental integrations through intra-Africa entrepreneurship, intra-African trade and collective development efforts are unavoidably necessary for sustainable socio-economic development. A borderless Africa that trades with itself to achieve the collective gains of its internal riches is therefore imminent.

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