

PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF RETURN MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA

¹Kennedy Eboraka and ²John Lekan Oyefara (PhD)

¹Department of Sociology, University of Lagos, Nigeria

[¹kennedyeborka@gmail.com](mailto:kennedyeborka@gmail.com)

²Department of Sociology, University of Lagos, Nigeria

[²oyefara@yahoo.com](mailto:oyefara@yahoo.com)

Abstract

In recent years, there has been increase in the number of Africans, with particular reference to Nigeria, moving into countries in Europe and North America, and lately to the Middle-East and parts of Asia. This study is an attempt to examine the patterns of international migration and the dynamics of return movements in Nigeria. The paper tried to understand migrants' coping strategies in destination places and their mode of return. The study adopted the non-experimental research design and used In-depth Interview (IDI) to capture important nuances, impressions and anecdotes from thirty eight respondents in Lagos. Data gathered were analysed through manual content analysis. Results revealed a high level of irregular movements and the bulk of return migrants is involuntary. It was further observed that the ability to acquire useful skill is linked to migrants' status, while the mode of return tends to affect migrants' ability to establish on return.

Keywords: Nigeria, deportation, destination, irregular, migrants, returnees, Lagos.

Introduction

Migration, conceptualized as the movement of people from one place to another involving a change of usual residence, has occurred all through human history; though varying in patterns and scale from country to country and at different periods. For instance, in Nigeria, archeological evidence suggests that different human groupings had move from one place to another inhabiting new territories and intermingling with people in almost all the regions for several thousand years before colonialism (Mgbeafulu, 2003; Sadik, 1998). In fact, this phenomenon is said to be one of the greatest processes that facilitated the transformation of mankind.

Earlier interests in migration in Nigeria attempted to create distinctions of migration history in the country viz., Hausa transnational links through trans-Sahara trade route on pilgrimage to Mecca, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, migration within Nigeria during the colonial period, intra-regional migration within Africa, and international migration of Nigerians across the continent of Africa to North America and Europe (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). Thus, as a phenomenon, migration has always been a part of the Nigerian reality, varying only in trends and degrees.

Initially, the fifth aspect in the foregoing distinctions (i.e., international migration) coincided roughly with the late colonial era and early independence period, with the flows or movements directed towards the United Kingdom (UK) and some to the United States of America (USA). With regard to these periods, record suggests that the current was low, and those who travelled then went for the purpose of further studies and many of which returned to participate in the nation-building process of the country after their studies (Kalu, 2008). Also, it was easy at the time to identify their contributions to national development as they quickly took up positions in public service, including the nation's educational system.

However, this pattern was to change a few years later. A number of economic, political and social conditions combined to ignite unprecedented waves of international migration in Nigeria. This period marked the beginning of the tendency of many Nigerians to shun home coming. Many young people in Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria, left their countries in their large numbers for Europe and North America, and the tendency to remain abroad became intensified (Hernandez-Coss and Bun, 2007). According to estimates by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), over 15 percent of Nigeria's population left to settle abroad

between 1980-2005 (UNDP, 2009; see also Kalu, 2008). Not only that this trend has had unprecedented quantitative consequences on the nation's population in terms of the massive flight of human population from the country, it has affected public life and development efforts in the country in several ways.

At the other end, this alarming waves of international migration ignited concerns about the social cum economic implications of massive population influx in destinations countries. In response, many host countries introduced tough immigration policies and tightened border security to discourage indiscriminate mass inflow. Rather than abating the currents of inflow, these measures have led to the diversification of destination countries, the development of illegal routes and the prevalence of migrants smuggling: a form of 'trade' in migration movements in which smugglers who specialize in transporting migrants surreptitiously through complex and dangerous routes, convey their "clients" to destination countries without valid documents. Those who make it to Europe (because records indicate that many do not survive, while some settle in Maghreb countries out of frustration) become undocumented migrants with all its associated consequences (Eborka, 2014; Maja-Pearce 2009; Lucas 2005).

Furthermore, public attention is currently moving towards the phenomenon of return migration in recent time. There is an assumption by many developing countries that return migrants constitute significant agents of change and development in origin countries (Findlay, 2001). Such understanding in Nigeria inspired the establishment of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO) and the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) in year 2000 (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010). Beyond this assumption, very little is known on the dynamics and forms of return migration in Nigeria. This paper attempts to fill this gap.

Problem Statement

Just between January and April 2015, more than 1,800 African migrants (many of which are from Nigeria) trying to cross to Europe perished in Mediterranean ship mishaps, while about 8,500 people were rescued (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2015). This did not include movements to the Americas, Asia and the Middle East; the latter two constituting some of the new destinations in international migration flow from Nigeria (Eboraka, 2014). When these movements and records of preceding migration flows before April 2015 are included, it would not be difficult to understand the massive population flight from Nigeria cum other African countries. This trend is said to have immeasurable social, economic and demographic consequences. The Guyanese activist and historian, Walter Rodney, attempted to capture the developmental consequences of massive population outflow on society in his classic work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, whereby he painstakingly articulated how the depopulation of African nations by forcible removal of able-bodied men and women liquidated the continent's capacity for development (Rodney, 1976). Now, the problem is: why are many Nigerians moving in droves to other countries? Why do they continue to move and ready to take risky routes out of the country? What can be done to minimize the scale of emigration in Nigeria?

Social-demographic research is also unequivocal on the impact of the prevalence of able-bodied men and women of reproductive age in emigration flow. Besides the likelihood of distorting the demographic balance in a society, it tends to deplete the population of the workforce and reduces a nation's level of productivity as Rodney (1976) demonstrated. Furthermore, there is a near unanimity in migration literature that migration, especially international migration, has implications for families and societies. The phenomenon separates family members and tends to

affect their integration (Gilbson, Mckenzie & Stillman, 2009;). In addition, many migrants-sending countries experience serious labour shortages of skilled and unskilled manpower at both the family and community levels. Such a situation, studies indicate, had forced some families to resort to child labour at the expense of the health and safety of the children (UN, 2010; Gilbson et al., 2009; Bertoli, 2008; Miluka et al, 2007; Taylor et al., 1996; UN, 1982; Tapino, 1981).

Other less regularly emphasized social-demographic consequences include the tendency to engender the fall of marriages (as a result of separation, which sometimes leads to infidelity in either or both partners). This means that many children are likely to grow up without adequate parental care in what has been described as “social orphanhood” among children whose parents are living (UNDP, 2009:19). Scholars have noted that this situation tends to affect the rearing of children and have dire consequences for their future and the society at large (Gilbson, Mckenzie & Stillman, 2009; Tapino, 1981). In addition, many of the elderly are left without proper care; especially as the society does not have effective institutional care for the elderly. Thus the condition of these senior citizens is likely to worsen.

In all events, the unprecedented emigration of the more active elements in the population has reinforced the arguments on the phenomenon of “brain-drain” which is said to reduce the speed of a country’s drive to development. Some authors have argued however that the “brain-drain” phenomenon is counterbalanced by “brain-gain”. The beat about brain-gain is the belief that those who travelled abroad come back with the skills and expertise they acquired to fuel the course of national development (Mayr, & Peri, 2008). References are sometimes made to China, Turkey, Korea, India, Israel, Singapore and Somaliland as examples; theorizing that whenever

and wherever migrants returned, homeland development is an inevitable consequence (Farrant, Macdonald and Sriskandarajah, 2006; Lucas, 2005).

The veracity of this assertion has been challenged with the argument that not all forms of return migration are instrumental in propagating development in home country. Cerase, for instance, opines that the kind of return migration with the potential to stimulate progress and national development in the country of origin is *the return of innovation* (Cerase, 1974; cited in Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010). Cerase' postulation was contended by Owasanoye (2012) who argued that, the development-igniting aspect of return migration is to be understood within the context of *circular migration*. In Owasanoye's reasoning, circular migrants are potential engines of growth and development due to their transfer of learned ideas, technical skills and networking. The author laments however that the contribution of circular migrants to development has not been robustly captured beyond data on remittances to home country (Eborka, 2014; Owasanoye, 2012).

Objective of the Study

There are still varying and inconsistent perceptions on the nature, directions, scale, causes and consequences of international migration as reflected in public opinion. This study is an attempt to contribute to clarifications on patterns of international migration and the dynamics of return migration in Nigeria. It attempts to investigate the relationships between international migration and components of human development such as poverty, education/skill acquisition and employment, as well as its overall impact on migrants and the society at large. It attempts to shed more lights on migrants' coping strategies at places of destination, reasons for migration and

living situation in destination countries. Attention was equally given to an understanding of the patterns of return migration and living situation on homecoming.

Key Research Questions

1. In what way does international migration affect migrant's ability to acquire skill?
2. How do migrants cope in their destination country?
3. What means of migration are migrants adopting?
4. What is the mode of return migration among migrants?

Brief Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In its modern technical sense, migration is conceived of as a form of geographical or spatial mobility between one geographical entity and another generally involving a change in usual residence from the place of origin or place of departure, to the place of destination or place of arrival (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010; Van de Valk, 2010). It is regarded as international migration if the movement is across international border. There is however time dimension to the definition which means that not all movements across international border are qualified as migration. Some studies use a cut-off point of six months duration (Oyekanmi, 1999; Pressat, 1984), while others recommended that for any movement to be classified as migratory, it should not be less than one year (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010).

These criteria appear to have generated some controversies, for as Bilsborrow, Oberai and Standing (1984) noted about three decades ago, such procedure may have some analytical implications as some categories of migrants might be excluded, especially if the six months cut-off point should be adopted. Such criterion, it seems, will pose a definitional challenges for those who travel abroad for short-term courses or training of less than six months, even though such

experience would have affected the status and skill level of the mover. Furthermore, it has been noted that in some cases, international migratory movements proceed in phases among those initiating the moves from the rural areas. In that sense, there is chain migration involving rural-urban movement and subsequently, urban-abroad movement. Thus, for many international migrants, internal migration is often the step (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010).

In Nigeria, the phenomenon seemed to have received some research attention especially by scholars interested in interpreting the consequences of migratory movements on the economic and socio-demographic statuses of sending and receiving communities in terms of population-size-effects. Such issues include those of loss of labour and decline in productivity in sending communities, on the one hand; and increase in population and productivity as well as the associated negative consequences it creates in receiving countries, such as increase in crime, on the other hand (Campbell and Barone, 2012; Adepoju, 2010; Adepoju and Van der wiel; 2010; Oucho, 2010; Gray, 2009; Bertoli, 2008; Miluka et al, 2007; World Bank, 2007; Iversen, 2005; Jokisch, 2002; United Nations, 2001; Mochebelele & Winter-Nelson, 2000; Lucas, 1987; Bilsborrow et al., 1984; Udo, 1984). Other authors (e.g. Oyekanmi, 2004) tried to look at the impact of migration on fertility and mortality by inspecting the nature of fertility and mortality differentials by migration status.

There is an indication in the literature that international migratory movements in Nigeria experienced a dramatic departure from what it used to be prior to the 1980s. Rather than the usual movements in which those who travelled went for the purpose of further studies (with many of them returning afterwards), the country began to witness a semblance of massive

disappearance of the nation's active population with no specific idea on when to return. Some attempts at explaining this unprecedented movements theorized that the movements were provoked by the growing economic hardship ignited by the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) and the attendant economic policies in the 1980s (Kalu, 2008; Oyekanmi, 2004; UN, 2001, 1982). Although records indicate that many of these migratory movements were directed towards the more industrialized countries of Europe and North America, there is evidence to suggest that some international movements settled within the African continent, especially in West Africa and Central Africa (De Haas, 2008).

As these movements intensified, a number of host countries concerned about the negative consequences of continuous influx of migrants began to tighten their immigration policies to discourage mass inflow. However, rather than abate the trend altogether, it led to the diversification of destination countries (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2012). This diversification has reconfigured the directions and patterns of international migration, with many Nigerians migrants moving into countries that were hitherto outside destination bloc, including countries in Eastern and Southern Europe, the Gulf countries and North Africa, as well as Southeast Asia (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2009).

On the Scale of International Migration

Poor registration process and ineffective collection and management of migration data in Nigeria result in inconsistent information on the scale of international migration in the country. This tends to make it difficult to obtain reliable information and data on emigration. Thus, there is lack of agreement on the scale of international migration in emigration literature of Nigeria. However, it is estimated that over 15 percent of Nigeria's population left to settle abroad

between 1980-2005 (UNDP, 2009; Kalu, 2008). According to Gordon (2003), approximately fifteen million Nigerians were living abroad in 2000. On the other hand, Adepaju and Van der Weil (2010) note that the number of Nigerian emigrants in 2005 was 836,832; while Nworah (2005), following reports from other sources, estimated that about fifteen million Nigerians live abroad. Notwithstanding this apparent lack of consistency in these reports, evidence suggests that the number of Nigerians outside the country is indeed monumental.

Miscellaneous Distinctions on Mobility Status Typologies

Of no less importance in this review is the attempt by Bilsborrow et al. (1984) to provide miscellaneous classifications, or conceptual distinctions, in mobility categories. This has the advantage of providing further insights on the motivating factors and impulses that propel migration. According to Bilsborrow et al. (1984), miscellaneous classifications of mobility categories range from active versus passive migrants, through innovative versus defensive migrants, to reversible versus non-reversible migrants. Active migrants are referred to as pioneer movers, those whose movement was not coordinated with that of other migrants; while a passive migrant is one who depends on earlier migrants to select destination. On the other hand, migrants are classified as innovative if they moved in order to alter their socio-economic status. Those who migrate in order to retain or get back what they have lost are described as defensive migrants (Bilsborrow et al., 1984).

While this categorization remains relevant for identifying migrants according to certain migration behaviours, the authors cautioned about their wholesale adoption in migration analysis. However, they remain very useful in furthering our understanding of migration

processes, and reduced the confusion associated with migration analysis, especially for classifying movements that the more generalized categories (such as circular migrants, temporary or permanent migrants and so on) have not been able to capture.

Return Migration

The same problem of ineffective registration and management of migratory movements affecting accurate knowledge of Nigerians leaving the country, appear to be plaguing accurate knowledge of return migration in Nigeria. This situation precludes the presentation of a comprehensive data on the scale and ramifications of return migration in the country. What exist in the literature can only amount to fragments of the entire process. They however indicate the existence of return migration and provide some insights into its nature and scale, no matter how inaccurate.

Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010) suggest that the scale of return migration in Nigeria may well be around half of the migration flows: the movement of people between countries of origin and destination over a defined period usually 12 months. The authors theorized that even among migration groups which intend to settle in a new country, a significant number return. They based their submission on Laczko's work in which the author claimed that between one-quarter and one-third of all Europeans who emigrated to the USA from 1908 to 1957, returned home again (Laczko, 2005; cited in Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010). If Laczko's work was the basis of Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010) assertion, their submission must therefore be accepted with some level of caution, as some studies appeared to have indicated otherwise. Adepoju and van der Wiel themselves acknowledged Findlay's (2001) work on return migration in the UK. It was shown that the rates of return are relatively low in the UK, and that between 1995 and 1998, only

one highly skilled migrant in some Commonwealth countries departed for every four professional and managerial migrants who arrived. It is possible that the difference in time between the 1908 and 1957, and 1995 and 1998, might have made the change possible; but until there is further clarification on that, more recent evidence suggests the contrary.

Be that as it may, Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010) observe that among migrant students, return rates are still relatively low. Citing examples in the USA, the authors note that only a fraction of overseas' science and engineering graduates leave after their studies. Stay rates were observed to be highest among graduates from developing countries. The study showed that inter-country variation in stay rates is wide. For instance, it was revealed that only 15 percent of Koreans in the sample stayed, while 91 percent of Chinese and 87 percent of Indians stayed.

Furthermore, evidence suggest that some Nigerians who traveled abroad return (whether voluntary, involuntary or voluntary by compulsion); even though the scale of return in Nigeria is difficult to establish. The media, for instance, is replete with news of Nigerians deported and those awaiting deportation from different parts of the world. In addition, the IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme claims that since the inception of AVR in 2001, over 2,000 Nigerian labor migrants have been returned (IOM, 2008). Between 2003 and 2004, IOM in Nigeria, working with their UK and Switzerland offices, coordinated the return of about 134 migrants from UK and 103 from Switzerland to Nigeria (IOM, 2012). In 2011, IOM-Nigeria provided voluntary return assistance to over 600 migrants returning from countries of destination or transit including the UK, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Morocco and Yemen. Beyond these

reports on return migration in Nigeria, little or nothing is known of the inner world of migrants. This study attempts to fill this gap in knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

The historical realization of the significance of migration in the life of a society made attempts at theoretical elucidation of its propellants inevitable. One of earliest efforts at theoretical systematization in the field of migration theory was by the German geographer, Ernst George Ravenstein (1889) and pursued further by Everette Lee (1966) who inspired the formulation of the “pull-push” factors of migration. The premise of this argument is that the migration process is governed by negative and positive factors with peoples’ expectation as the intervening variable. That is, the decision to migrate tended to be based on the rational calculus of the individual on the conditions or opportunities in origin places relative to conditions and expectations in the prospective destinations. Essentially, this theoretical approach, represented as the classical school, holds the view that push-factors such as poverty, lack of opportunities and unemployment in origin places push people to leave such area. On the other hand, pull-factors such as the existence of opportunities with potentials for social economic enhancement in other places pull or attract people to such areas.

While this submission had been lauded for pointing out the role of lack of opportunities in origin places as propellant factor for emigration and outmigration (Abreu, 2010), it appears to have been silent on the forces propelling certain category of migrants. If it is the lack of opportunities for social and economic enhancements that pushes people to leave an area, people from apparently established socio-economic background and high social standing are not supposed to

be pushed out. But observational findings and anecdotal evidence indicate that a significant number of the emigration flow from Nigeria involve people who, by virtue of their backgrounds, are not lacking opportunities. Nonetheless, the push-pull hypothesis held sway in migration theorizing until the emergence of the historical-structural school.

The historical-structural approach to migration represents a body of theoretical pronouncements that emphasizes structural demand for migrants' labor in advanced capitalist societies, as well as the interpretation of the migration-inducing effects of the penetration of capitalism in peripheral socio-political formations (Sassen 1991; Massey, 1988). The approach still suffers similar limitation observed in the classical school such that both can only explain an aspect of the migration process. To that extent, the adoption of the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) and Campbell and Barone's (2012) personality perspective of migration is imperative to supplement the explanatory strengths of the classical and historical-structural schools.

The NELM posits that migration, particularly international migration, is part of the household's economic strategies. In other words, while it does not deny the existence of structural constraints implied in the pronouncements of the classical and historical-structural schools, it supposes that in recent history, international migration in many cases is embarked by individuals as a strategy arising from family decision to counter conditions that pose threats to family's socio-economic standing and wellbeing (Stark and Bloom, 1985). On the other hand, Campbell and Barone postulate that certain personality type, what they called the *mobio-centric* personality type: people who value action and motion, and are always on the move, and always prone to be on the move, are more likely to migrate. Therefore, according to Campbell and Barone postulate, some

individuals are inclined to always be on the move (migrate) because of their personality characteristics (2012).

While the last word on the propellant factors of migration might not have been said, the synergy and eclectic theoretical orientation adopted in this study, no doubt, has illuminated some blurred areas that would have continued to puzzle theoretical imaginations had the paper not adopted a multi-dimensional theoretical approach.

Materials and Method

This study was carried out in Lagos State, Nigeria. The state is one of the 36 states in Nigeria and is located in the Southwest geopolitical zone which is dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group. The state has twenty constitutionally recognized local government areas, with thirty-seven local council development areas (LCDA) created by the government of the state. Lagos State represents the commercial hub of Nigeria and was the country's capital until 1991 when Abuja became the country's capital city.

The study adopted the non-experimental research design, under which In-Depth Interview (IDI) was utilized to gather qualitative data from respondents. The study population consisted of return migrants in the country. The non-probability sampling technique was adopted for the selection of study participants. This essentially involved purposive, referral and snowballing sampling techniques. The latter meant that the researcher was unable to exercise absolute restriction on where to conduct IDI for respondents selected through snowball. In some cases, an encounter with a purposively selected respondent would snowball into the selection of another participant who might be residing in a different local government area. The study chose forty participants as

its sample size, but only thirty-eight of the respondents selected were eligible for inclusion in the study. This represented about 95 percent response rate which is quite reasonable. Eligibility criterion for return migrants included those respondents who have been around for up to one year (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010; IOM, 2012). Thus, those who have not spent up to one year on return, and those who might have spent up to one year, but did not spend up to one year abroad, were not included in the study. In all, twenty-three males and fifteen females were interviewed during the study. Qualitative data generated from the study were analyzed through manual content analysis, and necessary transcriptions are made verbatim.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were strictly emphasized throughout the fieldwork. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent; consequently, respondents were at liberty to discontinue their participation at any time during the exercise. Confidentiality protocols were observed throughout the process, and opinions regarding questions observed as intruding their privacy were respected.

Study Results

Patterns of migration

Emigration by Nigerians began to intensify in the early 1980s. Many reasons had been adduced for this unprecedented flight of Nigerians to other countries. For Oyekanmi (2004), this surge in emigration flow was as a result of the growing economic hardship provoked by the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in the 1980s. Others noted that the movements were stimulated by globalization and increasing flow of information from the more developed

industrialized countries to the developing countries, which made it clear that there are disparities in opportunities and inequalities between regions. However, though many Nigerians who travelled out of the country did so by regular means¹, anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant number of others who left the country adopted different kinds of schemes and irregular devices to beat visa protocols. The study sought to gain insight into the patterns of migration from the perspectives of returnees. There were divergent responses from the study participants to this question, especially with reference to the period. While the majority of those who travelled in the 1980s and early 1990s show that they processed their visas without recourse to irregular measures, many of those who left the country beginning from year 2000 revealed that they adopted irregular means to avoid being granted visas. Yet, others noted that they resorted to irregular means because they could not bear the cost of regular route. For instance, a female returnee respondent who travelled to Italy in 1988 revealed:

When I first travelled, I just submitted my document to the office of the High Commissioner, and I was called after to come and pick my visa when it was ready. During that time, they don't use to suspect people travelling so much. But when many young girls from Nigeria started to troop to Italy with many of them involving in improper trade, visas became less easy to get. (IDI/24/08/15/returnee for Italy).

¹Following the normal or legitimate process and tendering honest and authentic documents and information; as against irregular means which involve employing various guises including tendering forged documents, fake contract marriages to citizens of envisaged destination country and disguising as tourists, students and conferences; and sometimes through complex and dangerous routes especially across the Maghreb.

Nonetheless, a male returnee who travelled in 2002 revealed that the process of his travelling was handled by an agent² who did everything and only told him what to say if he is asked certain questions. According to the respondent:

Well, I did not know anything about the visa process. I wanted to travel, and somebody introduced me to an agent here in Lagos. They will charge you some money, and asked you to pay some part of the money; when the visa is out you pay the balance. That was how I got my visa after I failed in my first attempt.
(IDI/20/08/15/returnee from Spain).

Perspectives on Reasons for emigration

Some factors have been adduced in migration literature and impressionistic evidence as reasons for emigration by many African migrants, with particular reference Nigeria. Some of the most regularly cited reasons include lack of employment opportunities, political persecution and social conflicts (Adepoju and Van der Wiel, 2010; UN, 2009; Oyekanmi, 2004; Lucas, 1987; Bilsborrow et al., 1984; Udo, 1984). This still leaves the questions on the motivating factors for migration among those with good employment before migrating; or migrants from established socio-economic background. Nonetheless, the responses from the majority of the study participants tend to corroborate a segment of existing thinking pointing to the need for the improvement of economic condition as a major reason for migration; even among migrants from economically established backgrounds.

² These are individuals who specialize in processing foreign entry visas (many of which involve in forgery) on behalf of applicants or clients at specified fees.

For instance, one double deportee, first from Germany and then Belgium, revealed thus:

After I graduated from university, I spent five years without any job. To survive, I picked up Okada³ and was able to raise some money. It was the money I spent to travel to Germany; but I was deported after spending about a year and some months in Germany. While I was in Germany, I had no paper⁴ so I could only do night work and was able to send some money back to Nigeria before I was deported. And as soon as I came back to Nigeria, I used the money I have been sending to do another visa and travelled to Belgium, but I was also deported after six months from Belgium. So, when you see people leave Nigeria, is because of frustration. (IDI/28/08/15/returnee from Belgium).

When asked why he did not use the capital generated from *okada* to invest in Nigeria instead of travelling to Europe, the respondent stated as follows:

There is no hope in Nigeria. The country is too frustrating for small businesses to survive. What are you going to invest in without enough money? Things are too expensive; before you pay for shop, with all kinds of illegal charges⁵ landlords

³ Use of motorcycle as a means of transportation, now a major means of livelihood among many Nigerians.

⁴ Legal documents permitting a migrant to stay in host country.

⁵ In some cities in Nigeria, especially Lagos, getting accommodation space either for residence or business involves very huge cost for many low income earners. Apart from the relatively high costs of accommodation and the demand to pay for upwards of two year, tenants and prospective tenants are charged numerous indiscriminate fees such as damages (for yet to be possessed space), agreement, disproportionate commission and even electricity arrears owed by past occupants of the space. This constitutes serious challenge and frustrates many accommodation seekers. ,

collect; settle Area Boys⁶, and do other necessary things, the money for the actual business would have reduced seriously or finished. My plan was to travel, work and raise enough capital and come back to invest in hotel business. But unfortunately, it didn't work out as planned. (Ibidem).

However, there is evidence to suggest that not all who migrated were pushed by lack of employment. This suggests that there are possibly other reasons outside lack of employment opportunities that motivate people to migrate. Hear one returnee from the United Kingdom:

I was working in a bank in Nigeria before I travelled. My initial plan was to relocate abroad. But when I got there, it was difficult to find a good job like the one I had in Nigeria. When I saw that things were not the way I expected, I quickly applied to take a Master's degree and return to Nigeria thereafter. (IDI/03/0915/returnee from the United Kingdom).

Perspectives on skills/capital acquired in destination countries and mode of return

It is assumed that international migration is intrinsically positive in relation to migrants' development in terms of skill acquisition, capital accumulation and overall improvement of migrants well being (Farrant et al., 2006; Lucas, 2005). However, the forms of responses suggest that the ability to acquire new skills depends on the circumstances migrants find themselves in host country, intention for emigration and destination's region. There is evidence to indicate or

⁶ A ubiquitous group of street urchins and gangs found in almost every town in Nigeria who live by intimidating residents unchallenged. They pose serious security challenges and operate freely in many areas in Lagos State; while the Policy and government authorities don't seem to do anything to check this social menace.

show that, as noted by Adepoju and Van der Wiel (2010), the status of irregular migrants in destination countries puts them in a state of conflict with immigration law which makes living a settled life difficult. This condition is not conducive to the acquisition of useful and new skills. A male returnee from Germany revealed thus:

Life in destination country is difficult without legal permit to work and move around. Before you can be able to learn a new skill, you must be free to move around and look for where to get new skills. Some of us know what we went through because of lack of permit when we have overstayed our visas. You cannot come outside without paper, otherwise if you are caught, you are repatriated. To survive, the person you are staying with can help you get a sponsor⁷ who can help you get underground⁸ job until you are able to get your papers. (IDI/30/08/15/returnee from Germany).

A similar situation is observed from the responses of a male returnee who travelled to the United States of America (USA) in 1988. According to him:

I wanted to go to school, but things were not easy with me in the USA. It was difficult to get my paper which could have enabled me to stabilize myself. All I

⁷ A term used to describe citizens of host country who are into job racketeering whereby they collaborate with some companies looking for cheap labour and usually exploit undocumented migrants through the agency of so-called sponsors who recruit this category of immigrants for them. Usually, the immigrant and the sponsor agree on a certain percentage that will go to the sponsor from the wages of the immigrant.

⁸ To work under the cover of darkness (usually at night or in hidden areas) to avoid arrest by immigration authorities in host countries.

could afford were menial jobs such as in restaurants. In 2004, I was detained and deported after some months by the US Immigration and Custom Enforcement.(IDI/02/09/15/returnee from the USA).

However, specific intention to upgrade or acquire new skill as reason for emigration tends to play positive role in skill acquisition among international migrants. That is, those who emigrate with the original plan from origin to go acquire specific skills appear to be able to get new skills. But whether all return is not clear. For instance, a male returnee from Ukraine, who serves as a consultant to companies revealed as follows:

I travelled specifically to study computer science. Even if they had given me permanent stay, I wouldn't have stayed. I know that with my experience and qualification, I should be able to earn a reasonable living in Nigeria. Immediately after my course, I came back to Nigeria. Today, I have my own firm and render consultancy services to several companies. (IDI/26/08/15/returnee from Ukraine).

Furthermore, patterns of responses from study participants suggest that the ability to build capital for investment in homeland is related to circumstances in destination and mode of return. Majority of those who were deported (involuntary returnees) after incarceration for various immigration offences had little or no capital to invest on return. For instance, a male returnee from Germany noted as follows:

I was in the Western world for seven years. I was detained after two years of arrival and subsequently deported. I did not come back with anything. The situation in Europe is bad when you have no paper. Once you are found, you are

not allowed to pick anything you have acquired there, unless you have been able to send things home. I found casual job after three months of arriving in Germany. The job was not stable, so I had to do whatever came my way to survive and sent some money and items home. But I was later arrested and detained. I thought they would leave me after all the time I spent in detention, but the next thing was deportation. When I returned, even the little money and items I sent could not be accounted for. That was another frustration. My people mismanaged everything. What saved me was that I have a BSc. Degree in History in Nigeria before travelling. That is what I am now using to teach at a private school. If I knew, I would have stayed back in Nigeria and further my education, instead of going to Europe where my life was almost wasted. (IDI/18/08/15/returnee from Germany).

There are however evidence from the responses among voluntary returnees to suggest that some remittances had been made with which they invested in the country of origin on return.

Perceptions of returnees on condition of homeland

There is a near unanimity among the study respondents on the inhospitable socio-economic and political environment back home in Nigeria. Even responses from returnees who suffered detention and maltreatment in their various destination countries, before being repatriated, indicate that they would have preferred remaining in their host countries had they been able to obtain permit. According to one of them:

Nigeria is not organized. There is too much suffering in this country; when you get to Europe, you will not like to come back to this country. No, the difference is too much. The only problem is getting your paper and you can be sure that you can change your life positively if you are ready to work. (IDI/28/08/15/returnee from Belgium).

Discussion of Findings and Policy Implications

The present article is an attempt at in-depth understand of the patterns of international migration and the dynamics of return migration in Nigeria. The paper focused on investigating the patterns of emigration, reasons for emigration and migrants' ability to acquire new skills and raise capital in destination countries. Attention was also given to migrants' mode of return (i.e., whether return was voluntary, involuntary or voluntary by compulsion) and migrants' perceptions on condition of homeland on return. Data from the study were generated from an in-depth interview conducted among thirty-eight return migrants across nine local government areas in Lagos State. The local governments involved in the study were not predetermined, but were included in the course of sampling procedure. Selection of respondents was purposive, and sometimes based on referral and snowballing.

Findings from the study demonstrate that there is a time dimension to the pattern of international migration. It shows that irregular migration appears to be more prevalent among later-day migrants who left the country from the late 1990s onward; while the majority of those who travelled in the 1980s and early 1990s were less likely to resort to irregular means of migration. It could be inferred that the need to resort to irregular means was in response to the introduction

of stiffer immigration and visa policies adopted by many destination countries to counter the large influx of immigrants. In the light of the revelation from the study on the crisis-prone nature of irregular migrants in host countries, there is need for sensitization of the public and would-be migrants on the dangers of irregular migration. Some of them are unable to move around, cannot get stable job, hide from authority to avoid arrest and tend to live an unsettled life. Many of these irregular migrants were misled by bogus migration agencies (whose interest is primarily the migration fees) into believing that abroad is El Dorado.

To this end, information on various migrant programmes organized by different industrialized countries should be made available to the public to enable interested and qualified individuals and prospective migrants to take advantage of such opportunities; instead of resorting to illegitimate means. In view of the high propensity of Nigerians to emigrate, efforts should be made by the government to establish a formal structure to aid nationals migrating to other countries. Such structure can provide pre-departure training and counseling to prepare migrants better for what they are likely to meet in the destination country. Currently, nothing of such exists in Nigeria despite the high outflow of migrants.

Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of those who left the country did so as a result of lack of opportunity for self-enhancement. This finding tends to agree with an aspect of existing literature on the reasons for international migration (FRN, 2013; Adpoju and Van der Wiel, 2010; UNDP, 2009). However, there are instances to demonstrate that some people who are out of poverty cycle do move abroad. This suggests the interaction and influence of factors other than poverty, in the migration process. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to accelerate the process of socio-economic development in Nigeria in order to reduce the levels of poverty and

inequality. Thus, the current efforts of the current administration at tackling corruption and recovering looted funds are welcomed development. Despite being the biggest economy in Africa and the sixth largest oil producing country in the world, Nigerian society is reported to have over 80 percent of its population living below \$2 per day (World Bank, 2014).

Similarly, there are indications from the study's findings that the mode of return for many returnees is involuntary, involving deportation or repatriation. The distinction between the two terms is blurred. Though both concepts describe the act of sending people back to their country, it could be deduced from the contexts where the two terms had been used, that deportation might involve a greater degree of physical force or even violence; while repatriation involve some level of recognition of the individual's human rights. Instances of repatriation include voluntary return by compulsion which describes a situation when, out of frustration, migrants report themselves to immigration authorities or international migration agencies for assisted return (Global Migration Group [GMG], 2011; IOM, 2010). However, anecdotal evidence gleaned from returnees suggests that deportation is often enforced with brutality that leaves migrants materially, socially, psychologically and economically wounded. They are seized and tugged with hostilities akin to those displayed in the course of apprehending an escaping criminal facing murder charges. No opportunity is given to them to take what legitimately belonged to them. Often, this afflicts them with severe injury and makes them sink deeper into socio-economic miseries. To this end, there is need for Nigeria to enter into bilateral and multilateral agreements with host countries on the management of migration and deportation processes. Government should pursue policies aimed at protecting both migrants that are lawful residents and those in

irregular situation in foreign lands. This will help to optimize the benefits of international migration as well as ensuring the human rights and dignity of all persons.

In addition, perceptions of returnees paint a gloomy picture of origin condition. Many revealed that it would have been better to face misery with hope abroad than return to Nigeria to face misery without hope. The situation tends to discourage skilled and professional Nigerian nationals abroad to return and contribute to homeland development. Thus, efforts to encourage return of highly skilled professionals must involve measures that go beyond verbal appeals to patriotism and ersatz summits. It should encompass realistic measures that make home coming attractive. While the country has witnessed massive return of deportees, tired migrants and those with little or no skills, professionals and highly skilled returnees are in short supply. It has been noted elsewhere from the experiences in other countries such as Turkey, India, China and South Korea, that the condition of home country is positively related to rate of return of highly skilled professionals (Eborka, 2014; Farrant et al., 2006; Lucas). Therefore, if Nigeria wishes to take full advantage of the experiences of her citizens abroad, there is need to make the socioeconomic and political environments of the country attractive for home coming, rather than resorting to verbal appeals to patriotism and synthetic summits.

Conclusion

Migration implies the movement of people from one place to another involving change of usual residence over some distance and over a period of time, typically not less than six months. When the movement involves crossing of international border, it is termed international migration; otherwise, it is internal migration (Gray, 2009; Bertoli, 2008; Iversen, 2005). Although

ineffective registration and poor management of migration movements in Nigeria make it difficult to say with indubitable accuracy the scale of emigration in Nigeria, evidence suggests that Nigeria is a country with high emigration flow. It is estimated that over fifteen percent of Nigeria's population left the country between 1980-2005 (UNDP, 2009; Kalu, 2008). The initial destinations of this migration flow were the more developed countries of Europe and North America. The intensification of immigration into these countries led to the introduction of tough immigration policies to stem the tide immigration. However, rather than abate the trend, it led to the diversification or the emergence of new destinations and heightened the tendencies of following irregular and dangerous routes (IOM, 2015).

In view of its social, economic and demographic consequences, these movements have raised questions as to the social propellants of international migration, its developmental implications for the migrants and the dynamics of return migration. This article which involved revelations captured from in-depth interviews, anecdotes, nuances and impressions from migrants, has increased existing understanding on the patterns of international migration and the dynamics of return movements in Nigeria. This study provides some deep insight into the life-world of migrants from the perspective of the migrants themselves. From the findings, ideas with policy implications were raised towards an effective management of international migration for the well being of individuals and society at large.

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