

# **LIFE ACROSS BORDERS:**

**A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN  
IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA.**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(PHD) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**



**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**June 2021**

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## DECLARATION

I, Sunday Israel Oyebamiji declare that:

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature and Date

## **DEDICATION**

*To my mother Mrs Abigail Olajumoke Oyebamiji;  
Today your dream of over forty years has become a reality.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I recognize the fact that this thesis became a reality; not only by my own efforts but by the assistance of several other people who have been of immense support in various capacities be it morally, financially, and academically from the beginning to completion of my doctoral program.

My sincere gratitude goes to my dear supervisor, Professor Kalpana Hiralal for her advice, support, encouragement, guidance, suggestions and understanding throughout the various stages of this work amidst her tight schedules. Her careful and thorough supervision of this study has considerably improved the outcome.

Again, my profound gratitude goes to Professor (Apostle) Vivan Ojong for her motherly love and affection toward me. I have profited greatly from the support and her priceless advice and invaluable contributions towards the successful completion of this study.

I owe a special thank you to the Association of African Universities (AAU) for awarding unto me Small Grants for Theses and Dissertations: 2017/2018 Academic Year for the successful completion of this study.

Without mentioning the following people, my appreciation would be incomplete; thus my regard goes to colleagues and friends who had contributed in diverse ways to the success of this study. This includes Kabir Abdulkareem (Kaybee), Mzolo Goodman, Temitope Ige, Michael Omoge, Samuel Umoh, Ola-Oluwa Folami, Alhaji Daribri and many others that I could not mention names here. I thank you all.

To the tireless staff and senior colleagues from the School of Social Sciences, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Suzanne Francis, Drs. Bheki Mngomezulu, Gabisile Mkhize and Biniam Misgun, Mr Godon Fakude and David Nzimande, amongst others. I must confess that your diverse intellectual output and input enhance my academic achievement to this level.

I must not fail to express my amiable and assiduous administrative officers at the School of Social Sciences: Mr Memela Nqobizizwe, Nonhlanla Radebe, Akona Mbeje and Paula Christison. I am saying here that I cannot thank you all enough for your numerous supports.

My sincere thanks and appreciation also go to my spiritual father, Pastor Emmanuel Moses for his constant prayers and spiritual guidance during this study. Also, I am incredibly grateful to all my research participants, whom, without them, this study would have had no base; your responses have contributed in no small measure to the success of this endeavour.

I cannot end this page without mentioning the main man behind the scenes, my benefactor. The man whom God used for me to actualize my dream, the Nigerian Controller of Custom, Seme Border division, Mr Victor Dimka, I cannot thank you enough for all your financial support rendered to my family and me. May God be with you, sir and uphold you in all areas of your life.

To my beloved wife, Ayomi; my son Samuel; and my daughters Princess and Praise Oyebamiji, you occupy a special place in my heart. You have always been there, supporting and praying for me. You are very special to me. Thank you very much.

Above all, my ultimate gratitude goes to Almighty God, the unquestionable, who has been helping me over the years and who will continue to help me in the days ahead and in my post-doctoral career.

**Sunday Israel Oyebamiji**

## ABSTRACT

Using Nigerian Immigrant Women in Durban as a case study, the work contributes to the existing literature on emigration, with appropriate consideration for contemporary complexities in Africa, including split families due to migration. By concentrating on this relatively micro-community, the study acts as a probing ground for the verification of already established propositions and theories of migration at the macro-level. For instance, it re-examines the traditional theories, the push-and-pull within the Nigerian-South African context. The study is problematised from this perspective and the intricacies and complexities surrounding the current increasing rate of women emigration into South Africa from other African states. The theories of intersectionality and gendered geographies of power are employed to examine and the challenges of these women immigrants in the context of gender and migration. This study utilises, in addition to secondary sources, carefully conducted oral interviews of selected Nigerian women immigrants in Durban. Among others, the study reveals that the essential and underlying element in the migration of these women is a new development in grassroots communities resulting in a change of lifestyle and transformation, which the “push-and-pull” theory alone cannot totally explain. It reveals an immigrant lifestyle is sustained by coping mechanisms, which include entrepreneurship, resilience, reception of financial and psychological support from immigrants’ homeland, and a dedicated culture of remittance. These are primarily in response to challenges emanating from limitations posed by habitat, ethnicity, language and race. It recommends that the Nigerian-South Africa emigration scene can be improved upon and challenges of immigrants minimised through the adoption of the approaches identified and discussed under conclusion.

**Keywords:** Immigrants, Migration, International, Women, Durban

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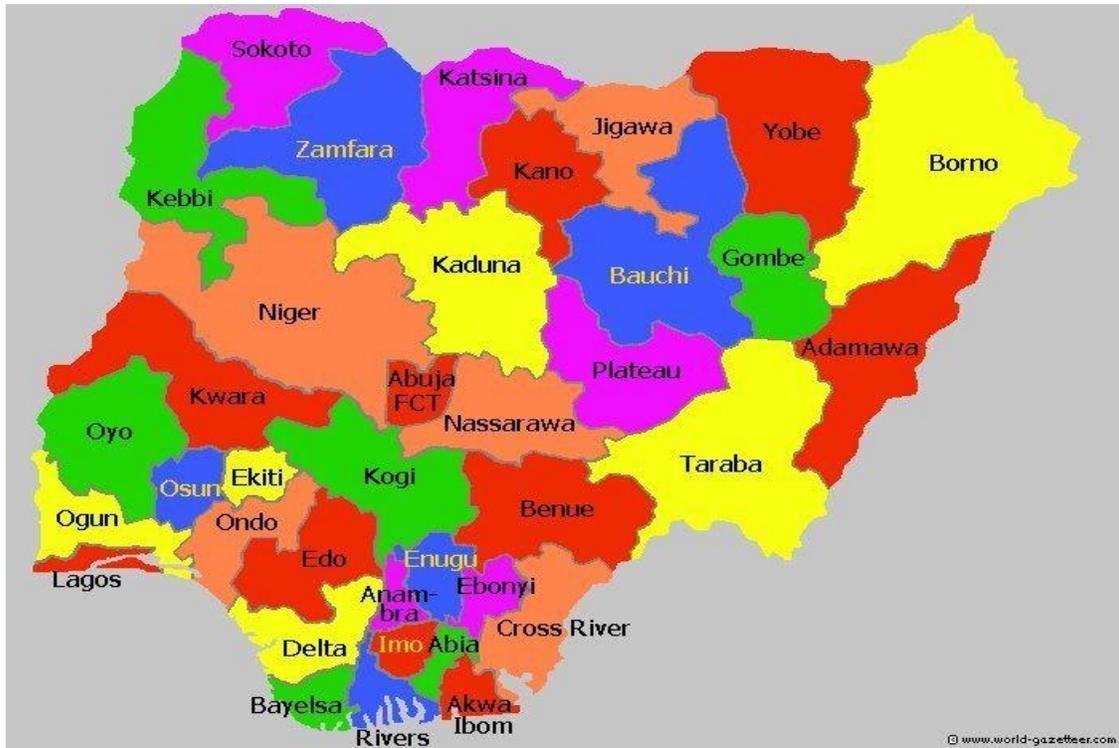
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**Map 1: Map of Nigeria:** Nigeria’s population strength has once made foreign states describe her as the giant of Africa, but her available resources are probably insufficient for the growing population as its borders are now known for regular outflow of migrants.



Source: Olanrewaju, Sulaiman, (2018), ‘Nigeria-map-people (1)’ *Nigeria Press Review*  
<http://www.nigerianpressreview.com/13-2-million-nigerian-kids-out-of-school-by-sulaiman-olanrewaju/nigeria-map-people-1/>

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the study**

Migration is currently a dominant issue in global politics, and this is also making it attract significant attention in the formulation of economic policies at global, regional, and national levels. The history of migration in Africa, even before colonisation embraces the movement of people both locally and across borders. Elements of this, therefore, abound in the contemporary and colonial history of the continent. For instance, among the early migration patterns in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region is the movement of men to the mining industry and farmland of South Africa, particularly from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (de Vletter, 1985; Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1990; Adepoju, 1990). It must be noted that since most of these ventures were controlled by colonial agents, they became platforms for exploiting the migrants. The long-term impact of this on their wives and the family was challenging and, in the long run, has introduced a new character into the pattern of gender relation, all of which have become focal issues in policy formulation and contemporary scholarship. At the same time, the difficult task of living up to expectations in the contract jobs of the mining industries and farmlands in South Africa prevented the affected men from being flexible. However, this was not restricted to the SADC region as men in the other areas of the continent also had different reasons for embarking on similar forms of migration (Adepoju, 1990). As explained under ‘Gender in International Migration’ in Chapter Two, the growing number of women who became rapidly involved in independent movement demonstrates their response to this socio-economic condition predominantly from the second half of the 1980s. Yet this gathers more momentum in later years and becomes a factor in the analysis of issues in gender relations as women found that migration could answer some of their challenges as a gender group.

This study focuses on women migration within the platform of bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa. It is, therefore, an attempt to contribute to the contemporary theme of migration in the context of international relations. To some extent, migration has become a factor in unravelling the complexities surrounding the various patterns and affiliations in intra and inter-African foreign relations (Holmes, 2012) just as the intricacies

of international relations now affect some patterns of migration (Boswell, 2002). Key studies on the way forward in Africa's effort to define its position in contemporary international relations (IR) about the prevailing trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have revealed that there could hardly be any significant headway on the issue in policy formulation and otherwise until the intricacies introduced by migration into the entire scene is given the attention it deserves (Cornelissen, et al, 2012). The significance of migration in modern African IR has been underscored by the need to look at the link between migration and developments at the grassroots level. It is believed that this will enhance our understanding of changing world politics. This is the key argument of Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni in his analysis of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa (cited in Cornelissen, et al, 2012). In the same volume, Darshan Vigneswaran and Loren B. Landau's re-assessment of the experience of immigrants in South Africa amidst the challenges of xenophobia and other limitations outlines a similar trajectory. In addition, Alfred Zack-Williams reveals that the nature of the interaction of immigrants with interests outside their host countries is a factor in migration that contributes to the complexities of new dynamics in the pursuit of IR (Cornelissen, et al, 2012).

The structural pattern of international relations among the countries in a region can also be a critical determining factor of the rate of migration across borders (Johnson, 2017). Even in pre-colonial societies, the pattern of inter-state relations was among the determinants of the scale of cross-border movement. But contemporary international relations is mainly based on the tenets of neoliberal theories and with more emphasis on reality (Johnson, 2017). This has contributed to the development of new structural intricacies such that migration could also be among the factors at play in the pattern of bilateral relations between two states (Hollifield, 1992). In the case of Africa, there exist several bilateral and multilateral agreements promoting cordial relationships among the existing regions and countries. This is partly because the African Union (AU) and the supporting regional organisations strongly believe that such a structure is necessary to address the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment facing most countries of the continent (Landsberg, 2007). Historically, Nigeria has always been interested in the affairs of South Africa, even before the commencement of democratic government in 1994. For this reason, it played a crucial role in the fight against apartheid, and since the regime of Nelson Mandela, South Africa

has also tried to reciprocate this (Bello & Hengari, 2013). Even when Mandela decided to sever diplomatic relations with Nigeria during the Sani Abacha regime, he was only against the tyrannical rule of Abacha and not Nigeria as a state.

It is not surprising that President Buhari paid a visit to South Africa in the second half of 2019, following the explosion of the xenophobic crisis. He appealed to the citizens of both nations on the need to rekindle and sustain this long-established cordial relation. Such peaceful bilateral relations have encouraged Nigerian businessmen and women, professionals, scholars, students, and even skilled artisans to see South Africa as a country to explore for the advancement and utilisation of their skills and career (African News Agency, 2019). As we shall see in the course of this study, while it is true that a host of factors give rise to migration, this issue plays a prominent role in the Nigerian-South Africa cross-border trip. It is, therefore, a theme that should receive due attention in an empirical study of factors at play in the cross-border life between both countries.

Yet other themes deserve equal attention to the Nigerian-South Africa migration scene. In the first place, most African countries, including South Africa and Nigeria, are now victims of one form of violence and crisis or the other. Therefore, if there are Nigerian migrants in South Africa who regard crisis as one reason for migration when the host country is also engulfed in crisis in another dimension, then there is a gap somewhere that needs to be addressed, even if migrants cannot have access to first-hand information at the time of migration. Moreover, generally, the study of Nigerian women immigrant in Durban would also constitute an investigation into the intrinsic nature of the perception of movement and its benefits and pitfalls by the nationals of these two African countries. For instance, an inquiry into the impact of women migration on the family back home is significant considering the challenges of separation in many families in modern African societies due to migration (Lefko-Everett, 2010). An objective analysis of these and related issues should consider the socio-political and economic background of the country, Nigeria, vis-à-vis the characteristics and culture of her people from historical and contemporary perspectives.

In the Nigerian context, the structure and pattern of international migration up to the 1980s, from official records, tend to portray it as more of a liability to national development

(Nigerian National Planning Commission. NNPC, 2004). This is largely because it was a venture dominated solely by the political elite involved in money laundering, which they transfer abroad in the name of international migration for investment purposes that end up enriching the economies of foreign countries at the expense of their homeland. It is observed that the country has been a victim of large-scale capital flight, in which much of its oil windfall is transferred to foreign bank accounts and invested abroad (Nigerian National Planning Commission NNPC, 2004:4). On the contrary, the emigration of people from the lower cadre of the society since the 1990s is considerably rated higher in terms of an asset to national development, mainly through remittance at the micro-level and a corresponding reduction of poverty (Nigerian National Planning Commission, 2004). In particular, large scale female emigration from some states in the southern part of the country, with Edo State recording the highest figure, is said to have established the veracity of this claim (Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011).

Therefore, until recently, rural migration remains the primary focus in policy formulation for socio-economic development in Nigeria. The existing facts and figures on the developmental impact of migration in Nigeria are still scanty. But based on the government official sources, the contribution of internal migration perhaps has been more positive than that of international migration. However, internal migration is believed to have contributed to social vices like urban prostitution and the problem of “waste management in the major towns and cities” (NPC. 2004:37). This is because international migration was conceived as a channel for transferring hard-earned currencies into foreign accounts and, therefore, directly or indirectly slowing down the rate of national development at home (De Haas, 2006:13-14). In different circumstances, no critical effort was made to incorporate international migration into the reasonable subject of national development. This was because it has been generally perceived as a wrong impression, especially up to the 1980s, as an instrument of perpetrating illegal trafficking of youth for the acquisition of illicit wealth, forced child labour, and child prostitution (De Haas, 2007). In this context, emigration was seen, at least officially, as counter-productive in many respects, with its positive contribution to development mainly been measured only in connection with *return* migration (De Haas, 2006:14). This study is therefore of key importance because it falls within the horizon of the impact of international migration on development. It, thus,

provides the opportunity for a critical assessment of pre-existing assumptions and hypotheses on the issue in Nigeria. Moreover, the general official preconceived notion about international migration in Nigeria is that it impacts negatively on development (Nigerian National Planning Commission, 2004). This study fills a gap as it is set to make available some facts and figures on the developmental effect of international migration from the perspective of Nigerian women immigrants in South Africa with an analysis of how this trend has impacted the family back home.

However, the established belief in the developmental potency of internal migration explained above may be linked to the general trend in West Africa concerning its positive impact on the sub-region in terms of development. This is particularly true about female migration. The contribution of female migrants to the 20<sup>th</sup> century socio-economic changes in the sub-region is indisputable even if there is controversy surrounding the concept of 'development' concerning its application to the socio-economic scene of 20<sup>th</sup> century West Africa (Sudarkasa, 1977). It has been observed that female migrants were among the groups that consistently served to diffuse innovations throughout the West African region through their occupational activities and their interpersonal relationships (Sudarkasa, 1977).

Female migrants have been significantly involved in the small-scale distribution of foodstuff, imported household items, including their paraphernalia, clothes, footwear, and similar items in West Africa Akin (1972:189). In the process, they featured prominently in facilitating the flow of information concerning the marketing of commodities and the network system created to extend the benefit thereof to numerous communities within a sub-region. As the West African woman penetrated the migration scene in the 1970s, she became instrumental in creating a platform for risk-sharing as she handles some segments of the trading venture while the husbands manage others. This enables the family to invest in different categories of goods such that it could be sustained by-products that were in high demand even if some could not yield any profit at certain seasons of the year (Oppong, 1974).

In this region, the adoption of new machinery and some categories of food processing technologies have been attributed to female migrants, some of whom are migrants across

borders (Sudarkasa, 1977). In this regard, they were instrumental in introducing “new types of machinery, for example, pepper-grinding machines and flour mills, and to promote new techniques for getting tasks accomplished” (Sudarkasa, 1977). Some assist their sisters at home as they became objects of inspiration when they pay a visit to their rural communities for social engagement, communal development, and related issues. Thus, such help range from contributing to the cost of floating a small-scale business for some relations at home to assisting others to join the emigrant groups. Their portrait of foreign lands and city life captures both the thrills and chills and thus enables their counterparts at home to weigh the pros and cons and entire risk involved if they must abandon their business at home searching for greener pasture in another region (Sudarkasa, 1977).

From the South African scene, the central theme of this study has several issues to address. For instance, the present migration trend resulting from new development in the global economy, political insecurity, starvation, and poverty, has permeated all world regions. South Africa is no exception, and the state is confronting expanding difficulties in its effort to identify the right or ideal approach to the management of migrants. South Africa has experienced a considerable inflow of migrants, mainly from other states of the African continent, including Nigeria, contributing to a rapid increase in the existing pressures from long-established patterns of circular labour migration between rural and urban households (Ojong & Ashe, 2018). Tafur and Maharaj (2003) affirm that this has been the trend since the early 1990s. Figures compiled by Statistics South Africa (2008) indicate that among the most dominant groups of immigrants in that country are migrants from Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Somalia, Nigeria, Burundi, and Cameroon. The other predominant groups are non-African, from Europe, Pakistan, India, China, and Bangladesh. Usually, the mass emigration of people for economic reason is often perceived from the traditional conception of migration as male affairs with the men in search of new career prospects or commercial opportunities. Traditional African societies primarily known for their patriarchal culture provide the best example of this trend or perception.

Essentially, the contemporary trend is rapidly eroding this traditional conception of migration and rendering its associated theories obsolete even in the South African context.

The urban settlements in South Africa are among the areas that have attracted African migrant groups following the inflow of women into the migration terrain (Kihato, 2009; McDonald, 2002). Therefore, an empirical study of the experience of each of the migrant groups in the area, both African and non-African, will positively impact policy formulation at the national level. This inquiry into the experience of Nigerian immigrant women in the country is a contribution along this line and is expected to come out with new models and some strategies for projection into the future concerning the management of migration policies involving both countries.

At the same time, with declining economic opportunities, gradual or rapid fall in income in many countries coupled with the apparent change in the dynamics of gender roles, independent women emigration is now conspicuous in the migration trend. From the increasing global figure of female migrants, it is no more controversial to say that the traditional concept of women as lacking the stamina to withstand the rigour of migration has been overtaken by time. This global picture is also evident in the South African case. This is demonstrated by the increasing rate of female migration, an extension of developmental objectives, structural evolution of new business outfits based on the pattern of movement, and the movement of professionals in the health sector from Africa combined with trafficking in individuals and the changing trend of refugee flows. These are the key transitory arrangements that require creative examination and further inquiry since their current implication is that most countries need to synchronise their development methodologies and plans, in addition to the suitable databases, to adopt such procedures.

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the fact that there are several studies on female migration primarily due to new trends and dimensions in women's response to local and international migration (eg. Lefko-Everett 2007; Banjo 2012; Lourdes, Benería, Deere, & Kabeer 2012; Fouskas, 2014; Meier, 2014). But apart from new challenges emanating from the complexities surrounding recent trends in global migration, which justifies the need for further research, the case of Nigerian women in Durban remains a virgin area. This is more so as it would also give us some insight into the general trend in the migration of Nigerians to South Africa. As alluded to above, traditional migration studies are based on the premise that African men are the determinant of any involvement of the female folk in migration.

Therefore, even where women ever featured, they were conceived as playing a passive and dependent role and consequently, the effects of migration are explored through the world view of the male gender (Arthur, 2009). It is for this reason that Adepoju (2004) noted that generally, cross-border emigration within the African continent until the contemporary era was conceived as male-dominated.

However, since the last two decades, this pattern of migration in the continent is progressively feminised (Mordi, et al, 2004; Lefko-Everett, 2010). This is one of the issues discoursed in the study of Zimbabwe female migrants to South Africa by Lefko-Everett (2010). The idea of feminisation implies the improvement in the degree and relative centrality of women's migration in a few sections of the world (Lefko-Everett 2007). The development in women's migration is believed to be a reflection of two fundamental issues. Firstly, it has some connection with the marginalisation of several women in developing countries and the increasing rate of acute poverty among some group. The second is the need for female labour in the industrial and commercial sector of modern industrialising countries (Lefko-Everett 2007). While various women often visit their husbands around the neighbourhood or stay with them for a while, several women embark on independent migration as they dynamically move to urban areas to restructure their lifestyle. As Gugler Ludwar-Ene pointed out, “women are more than men in the urban populace of various countries” and identified three categories of female migrants in both cross-border and other forms of migration in the social configuration. In other words, they consist of agile unmarried women with little or no formal education and educated single women. All of them are prepared to earn a living through menial jobs in the host countries until they can get a better offer. Also included are divorced and separated women and poor widows in distressed conditions.

As mentioned earlier, since 1990, the number of women immigrant in South Africa has increased considerably. However, the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) review shows that except for Zimbabwe, temporary migration in the SADC is still male-dominated. Women immigrants, however, may not necessarily belong to the category of migrants who are searching for work solely for monetary reasons. Some sex workers among migrants may be thinking of different means of survival, including payment in kind arising from the

creation of some element of trust between them and those who patronise their services. According to Lefko-Everett (2007), generally, female immigrants are more prepared in terms of vision and focus. Also, they are often married and sometimes likely to have received more education than their male counterparts. Women immigrants are motivated by various social factors, including the search for a source of income and general self-development for career acquisition. However, they are more hesitant to search for formal businesses than males (Lefko-Everett 2007). Like other countries, there has been a considerable rise in the figure of migrants from Nigeria who reside in Durban as their new home and appear to constitute the dominant migrant group from sub-Saharan Africa in the area. The impact of this new structure on the migration trend and its likely impact on the policies of both Nigeria and South Africa are among the issues that need proper empirical analysis and therefore, among the focus of this work. This is more so as a micro-study of this nature has a role to play in unravelling the peculiarity of a particular group apart from acting as a probing ground for assessing the veracity of generalised data.

### **Statement of the problem**

The current inflow of women across the borders into South Africa from other African countries is introducing new developments regarding the management of migrants and appropriate policy formulation. These complex issues are now of interest in the existing literature on migration studies and related fields. But a scholarly study of these issues at the grassroots level would help us to understand the peculiar situation and challenges of each micro-group. This would give us a clearer insight into policy formulation and developmental programmes. But concentrating on such issues only at the national level is bound to create a problem of over-generalisation and the neglect of useful initiatives from various interests and micro-groups at the grassroots level. The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban is among such micro-groups whose study can help to fine-tune some scholarly insights in the existing literature in addition to sharpening migration policy initiatives for national development.

In the first place, the perception of migration by the average South African citizen about citizens from other African states as competitors in the utilisation of scarce resources has

led to the adoption of strategies that can minimise the inflow of migrants (Ojong, 2018). However, despite population growth, the influx of migrants has become an important asset in contributing to the socio-economic development of the Republic of South Africa (Ellis, 2011). Considering the motivating factors behind the migration and African perspectives on the entire scene, there is a need for more concrete facts and figures on the mass movement of refugees and other migrants. New paradigms, dimensions and empirical approaches are required for the emergence of proactive but result-oriented policy response to new trends in migration. This is particularly important for South Africa, and given the government release of the Green Paper on Migration 2016 (DHA, 2016), new perspectives of this nature are particularly significant in the search for new models in addressing the challenges of migration. The theoretical and practical relevance of this study to South Africa concerning the challenges of gender issues and migration can hardly be overemphasised. This is justified by the search for modalities that can facilitate the integration of female immigrants into the social life and economic activities of the nation.

The 2011 report by the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) identified several national challenges concerning the effective utilisation of the initiatives and potentials of women. According to this agency, the emerging social norms imply that women's pioneering prospects and “abilities to be executives are being undermined and this is even more prevalent among the ever-increasing migrant community in South Africa”. This study explores migration policy in the context of the experience of Nigerian women immigrant, including an often-neglected aspect of the life of immigrant women – the obstacles to the realisation of their dreams as they are confronted with the quest for survival in a foreign land. The study evaluates the limitations faced by Nigerian immigrant women; also examine the impact of xenophobia vis-à-vis the issue of exclusion and identity among them. Based partly on interviews with immigrant women, the work will bring to our knowledge the findings of cutting-edge research across the area of study.

Moreover, the impact of cross-border migration on global politics and inter-state relations is gradually attracting the attention of scholars. This arises from complex bilateral and multilateral agreements and their resultant effects on migration (Njiwa, 2013; Adepoju, et al, 2007). For example, as explained earlier, the cordial relations between South Africa and

Nigeria since the inception of democracy in 1994 has a significant positive effect on the pattern of cross-border migration between both states. When the President of Nigeria called for the sustenance of peaceful relations between both countries after the last xenophobic crisis in Johannesburg, he was considering the nature of migration between the two countries in particular and between the ECOWAS and SADC regions in general (African News Agency, 2019). The present study is therefore also problematized to embrace this inter-regional framework and how it can be utilised to generate policies for management of the entire migration system and projection into the future.

### **Research questions**

In the light of the statement of the problem and the gap the study intends to fill, the following fundamental questions are crucial to a precise analysis of the primary issues at stake.

1. What were the factors responsible for the migration of Nigerian women to South Africa in the context of prevailing gender issues amidst prevailing socio-economic trends?
2. How did race, gender, class, ethnicity, language and regional location impact the heterogeneity of the women's experiences?
3. To what extent do their coping strategies reflect the dynamics of contemporary intricacies in gender relations vis-à-vis the pattern of relations among the different South African identity groups?
4. What lessons can be learnt from the study of the Nigerian women concerning gender, identity and migration within the African context vis-à-vis the search for new paradigms, models, and theoretical perspectives?

### **The objectives of the study**

The study explores the activities of Nigerian women in Durban, South Africa, with a particular focus on their search for self-actualisation and their impact on the growth of the

South African economy. The concepts of “assimilation, language barriers, xenophobia, unemployment, domestic violence, cultural barriers/differences, family isolation, and deportation” have been explosively discussed regarding some other migrants to South Africa (Tevera, 2013). There is a need to attempt a precise but critical analysis of these challenges as they apply to the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban based on their collective and individual experience. The existing works on the theme have not given any specific attention to Durban. Again, there are still several issues surrounding the trends and coping mechanisms of women migrants who need further inquiry. This study seeks to fill these gaps. Therefore, its primary objectives are to:

1. To conceptualise, analyse and critically discuss factors that shaped and defined Nigerian women migration to Durban. This includes shifting narratives from the ‘push and pull’ theory to examine more complex factors that explore gender intricacies.
2. To examine and explain the complex and dynamic migration-related challenges in the context of livelihoods, xenophobia, assimilation, domestic violence, language barriers, immigration laws, familiar isolation, deportation and cultural barriers.
- 3 Identify and explain how race, gender, class, ethnicity, language and regional location impact their immigration experiences. These factors played a significant role in how women assimilated and accommodated their identity in their new environment.
- 4 To examine the coping strategies of Nigerian women in the context of gender and gender relations among the different South African identity groups.
5. Identify and examine the lessons that can be learnt from the narratives of the Nigerian women about gender, identity, and migration in the African context vis-à-vis the search for new paradigms, models, and theoretical perspectives.

### **The motivation for the study**

As a research student of Nigerian origin at a South African University, I am deeply convinced about the need to give the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban a focus in

empirical studies. This is partly because amidst a negatively tainted perception of Nigerian immigrants, especially in the media, mainly in connection with drugs dealings and internet fraud, there exists a dynamic group of Nigerian immigrant women who live a simple, peaceful life without involvement in any unscrupulous activities. Also, the media portrait of Nigerian immigrants has played a significant role in the formation of public opinion among South Africans and foreigners alike. Yet, a number of the impressions created by the media require empirical verification. Therefore, for objectivity and empirical focus, there is a need to corroborate and complement the media's effort by looking at the other side of the coin through questions like what are the potentials and virtue of the Nigerian immigrants in South Africa? How reliable is their portrait in the media?

I have therefore developed a strong passion for the study because women involvement in the economic sector of African societies and their indispensable role in the emotional and cultural upbringing of youths are issues that deserve intellectual focus at both micro and macro levels. In the light of contemporary development in gender relations, the search for new approaches and intricacies surrounding the study of recent trends in the field constitutes new motivating factors. It is significant to note that women migration is among the key issues that must be given due attention in the ongoing effort to unravel new complexities in gender as a new field of study and analyse the dynamics surrounding migration in the context of international relations.

### **Limitation**

This study was initially structured to embrace all female immigrants in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. But finance was among the first limitation as it compelled the author to restrict the collection of data, documentary and oral information, as well as other source materials and, overall, the entire work to Nigerian immigrant women in Durban alone. Most of these women were drawn from the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria, and they reside in South Beach, otherwise called 'The Point'. This area is recognised for its high concentration of migrants from Nigeria and other African nations.

Moreover, the authenticity of some source materials is questionable partly because some data were fragmentary and needed thorough scrutiny, as they could still be helpful in the assessment of the veracity of other source materials. Therefore, there was a need for the author to scrutinise them by devising different approaches. In the process, there was a need to go back to the field and even have a second look at the drawing board to make up for the lapses because some had to be left entirely out. This constituted a limitation to the writing of the thesis at the initial stage, especially since going back to the field has its challenges in terms of extra time and even fund. However, by redrawing of timetable and modification of related schedules, this turned out to be tentative.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms in the migration study are defined according to their usage in this work:

**Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR):** It is a programme to support and encourage naturalised migrants to return to their home countries despite their legal immigrant status.

**Internal apprehensions:** It is a synonym for the term “illegal aliens” among member states of the European Union.

**Irregular Migrant:** An individual who migrates to another country without legal and official procedures, especially one without the relevant documents.

**Outbound mobility ratio:** This refers to the ratio of immigrant students from one foreign state in the tertiary institutions of a host country to that of all students in similar institutions of learning in the same country.

**Removed aliens:** These are illegal immigrants or some category of foreigners, particularly in the European Union, sent to another country by the host country, rather than being repatriated (also see CIREFI, 2009).

**Soft power diplomacy:** peaceful means of convincing other nations to accept the principles, ideologies, and preferences of another state as opposed to the use of coercion through military threat and economic sanctions.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The study attempts an empirical portrait of female migration in the context of bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa based on the general framework of inter-state relations and intra-continental cross-border movement within the African continent. This itself is linked to complexities surrounding current issues in gender relations polarised by new trends in the social configuration of grassroots institutions at the micro-level, which are among the primary focus of a micro-study of this nature. Since other overlapping dynamics are now influencing the intricacies surrounding gender relations in terms of race and new ideologies from different social classes based on the modality for sustaining their existence and well-being, the intersectionality theory is employed to analyse Nigerian immigrant women in Durban. Until recently, migration has largely been explained within the structural framework of the “push and pull” theories, whose replication had admittedly stood the test of time in all regions of the world. But there is now the development of new trends and perspectives in the migration terrain beyond the horizon of this traditional theory. Moreover, the present study addresses issues at the micro-level, and there is a need to embrace a horizon that transcends the “push and pull” theories because at this level, many issues creep in when reflecting on the gender perspective. These are interlocking with a host of identity makers like class, religion, domestic violence and even sexual orientation, issues that are best captured by the intersectionality theory. However, the study shares the view of Bakewell, (2010) that no single theory can sufficiently explain a trend or theme in migration. In particular, this view holds more significant weight in the study of migration at the micro-level. This involves a host of issues embracing social institutions and their dynamics as well as their impact on contemporary gender relations. The fact that the “push and pull” factors have often been there and did not trigger off the cross-border movement of some category of people implies that what happens in the grassroots communities of some African states transcends this horizon and best reflected upon through new trends and perspectives in transnational emigration paradigm, part of which is captioned by Selvin (2016:12) as “disjunction, dislocation, displacement, disengagement, disconnection and the dismantling of the old stabilities, knowledge, conventions and identities” in his analysis of contemporary paradigms in transnational migration. This is partly a product of new waves of liberalism through an evolving global village penetrating the grassroots with a new

radical approach to human rights perspectives and an aura tending towards creating semi-transnational grassroots communities (Selvin, 2016). Thus, these are the core issues that can help us understand the nature of contemporary changes in grassroots institutions and their attendant social dynamics. These are issues that are directly or indirectly linked to the larger society vis-a-vis new trends and perspectives in migration, to which this study belongs, issues that the “push and pull” theory cannot provide an adequate explanation.

This is therefore polarised by the nature of bilateral relations between both countries because, in some regions of the world, this has influenced the pattern of migration politics in international relations, and the Nigeria-South Africa axis is not quite an exception (Seteolu, 2016). This in itself is an issue whose intricacies are hardly amenable to the operative realm and intellectual analytic horizon of the “push and pull” theory. It is for this reason that the gender dimension of this new trend of migration in the context of the area selected for this case study is explored through the lens of Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler’s theoretical model termed “gendered geographies of power”, for capturing “our understanding that gender operates simultaneously on multiple *spatial and social* scales (e.g., the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains” (Pessar & Mahler, 2001:445). Pessar & Mahler (2001:445) refers to this model as "geographic scales." It has its implications in the migration terrain, and according to the exponents, “it is within these social settings or transnational spaces that gender identities and gender relations can be reconfigured or re-affirmed” (Pessar and Mahler 2001:445; Dahinden 2005). This theory, therefore, intersects with the intersectionality theory in the conceptualisation of critical issues in this study encountered in unravelling the complexities surrounding gender in the context of female migration.

Both theories are easily replicable and capture a broad intellectual horizon in the analysis of micro-units in the type of social settings explored in micro-studies to which the present work belongs. They, therefore, constitute one intellectual platform for a critical assessment of the major issues at stake in the exploration of the complexities and intricacies of the South Africa situation concerning Nigerian female immigrants in Durban. By its conception of women as breadwinners for sustaining the family units in the immigration process, the theory provides a tool for exploring the coping mechanisms employed by the Nigerian

immigrant women in the host country, South Africa. Both approaches capture critical gender complexities of the migration-trafficking nexus as it affects women. This also includes characteristics that have been widely acknowledged as global phenomena in the migration trend, namely, the 'feminisation' and 'legalisation' of labour migration in the context of gender relations (Lefko-Everett 2007).

Intersectionality, also called intersectional feminism, asserts how different aspects of social and political identity discrimination overlap with gender. There is no doubt that the complexities surrounding gender issues in any society are in one way or the other influenced by nationality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age and other sectional interests. Intersectionality demonstrates that this can be replicated both historically and geographically and thus defines it with a theoretical focus. This theory is central to the scholarly and practical understanding of the experience of the Nigerian women immigrant in Durban because their migration trends ranging from propelling factors at home to the constraints and coping mechanisms in the host country have a strong gender undertone, beclouded at one stage or the other with the sectional interests listed above, e.g. xenophobia and different brands of 'Africanity' in the host country (Ojong, 2018). Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) anti-racist world view informed her liberal orientation to the complexities surrounding new trends in gender dynamics vis-à-vis its intersection with other social issues like race, migration, race, religion, crisis and domestic violence (Crenshaw, 1991). But more importantly is the ability of the theory to avoid semantic and institutional norms that tend to underestimate intrinsic aspects of women's experiences (McCall 2005; Ludwig, 2006:246).

Considering its broad perspective that helps to bridge the gap between two central themes, gender and migration, the theory is therefore relevant to a study of this nature with a focus on the experience of Nigerian women immigrant in another African nation. In a nutshell, its rhyming approach with Pessar & Mahler (2001) "geographic scales" in addressing specific social issues of this category makes both relevant to a theme of cross-border migration in the context of immigrant women response at the micro-level. Overall, the work adopts these two theories for their intersecting relevance to the understanding of some intricacies surrounding gender issues in the context of migration, drawing on different disciplinary

perspectives and underlying models affecting women migrants concerning the subject of this thesis.

They are also adopted to align with the neoliberal and realist theories and concepts in the realm of international relations from which this study derives its focus and methodological drive. For instance, these realist and neoliberal theories explain the changing relationship pattern between Nigeria and South Africa with its direct or indirect effects on cross border migration (Agbu, 2010; Seteolu, 2016). Moreover, since the second decade of this century, such effects could be rightly said to be vice-versa, such that the complexities surrounding emigration compels the President of Nigeria to visit South Africa in September 2019 for dialogue and sustenance of peace, protection, and security of his county's immigrants. But with the nature of contemporary migration configuration and the increasing involvement of women in the phenomenon, the gender intricacies emanating from the terrain thereof and its structural implications for socio-economic development are issues within the intellectual horizon of the theories of intersectionality and "gendered geographies of power" (African News Agency, 2019). It is, therefore, not surprising that this runs through the analytic framework and concluding sections of all the chapters in this work.

### **Research methodology**

Mixed research methods are adopted for this study. This is in line with the approach of Cresswell (2008), who have been able to provide some empirical evidence in support of the dual or multiple methods approaches. According to them, the researcher tries to offer practical solutions to humanity's problems by analysing complex issues; and a single-method approach faces a lot of limitations in investigating tightly enmeshed phenomena of this nature. History and system analytic approach to addressing the challenges of human society has demonstrated that the fundamental problems of humanity are not mathematically tractable and therefore not amenable to the operative laws of the natural sciences, which rely solely on data and computerisation of figures. This is because they emanate primarily from the social activities of man, most of which are conceptualised in abstract form and any effort made to capture the totality of this abstract social nature of man solely in data faces enormous limitations in practical life. Therefore, human nature and reality are best understood by adopting different approaches (Cresswell, 2008).

Quantitative data have, therefore, been combined with a qualitative methodology to arrive at practical and objective conclusions. Thus, some quantitative data are analysed under the literature review. In contrast, the use of the quantitative system has enabled the author in some places to attempt a scholarly portrait of issues reflected in the experience of all members of the group in chapters Three to Six, occasionally through comparison of significant themes with the aid of data. A host of these data are compiled by specialists in statistics and are employed in different sections of the thesis. In the light of the nature of the structure and intricacies of social network in terms of the link in the relationship among the different socially organised units by the Nigerian immigrant women, a qualitative approach was also employed to explore the activities of the migrants at both the individual and family level. The qualitative fieldwork has contributed to the intellectual focus of the work concerning the collection of oral information for analysis and understanding of social events and their affiliations in different contexts. The quantitative technique may be more beneficial in capturing the accurate picture of issues that involve the large society as well as their application to theory testing (Welman, Kauger, & Mitchell 2005).

As indicated by Van Maanen, the qualitative method is an "umbrella" expression "covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world" (Maanen, 1979: 520). The qualitative method supports the narrative approach and helps us accommodate details that may appear insignificant in theory but relevant in practice (Maynes, Pierce and Laslett, 2019). It is also easier to capture the experience of individuals in a social system through this method when knowledge of such experience is required to cross-check the veracity of some other sources (Temple, 2001; Somers and Gibson, 1994). Therefore, the qualitative approach is combined with the quantitative method for a detailed discussion of each sub-theme in the context of the gap the study intends to fill. This is done in line with the adopted theoretical framework to arrive at scholarly but practical and realistic conclusions in exploring every segment of the immigrant life experience of the Nigerian women in Durban.

**Collection of Data:** The gathering of data and relevant information was through oral interviews and visits to appropriate government agencies and international bodies. In the case of oral interviews, the informants were informed some days before the actual date of the interview. The interviews were conducted with audio-recording as all the informants allowed this. However, to some extent, the exercise transcends mere audio-recording as the researcher observes other issues about the participants' response, eg, general behaviour or body language of the informant during the interaction. The questions were carefully framed and well-structured to enable the author to obtain relevant detail on the migration experience of each informant. This includes the general prevailing issues noticeable among all members of the group and the personal knowledge of the individual.

**Procedure:** The participants were provided with a letter or official document briefly illustrating the overall essence and relevance of the study, with due consideration for ethical values. This makes provision for space the informant can append her signature to indicate her interest. A convenient date and venue were decided by the researcher in agreement with the participant. These were carefully selected with appropriate consideration for safety and the absence of distractive elements that can make the interaction counterproductive.

**Sample size:** The narrative interviews analysed in the study captures the biographical detail of the individual with particular emphasis on her migration experience in South Africa. The participants consist of 25 Nigerian immigrant women – 10 Igbo women, 10 Yoruba women, and 5 Hausa women. They fall within the age group of 20 to 50 years, all resident in the Durban area. Some are married, while others are single. The English language was the medium of communication in the conduct of the interview, partly because it is Nigeria's *lingua franca*. However, other languages such as Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba were employed in a few cases where this is expected to enhance effective interaction with informants. This is partly because they are the most dominant of the over 256 languages in Nigeria (Falola, 2001). In such cases, the transcription of the oral interview was done by the researcher, sometimes assisted by other researchers on similar fieldwork that are fluent in the respective indigenous language. The duration of each interview was sixty to ninety minutes.

***Sampling Technique:*** In sampling, the work employs what is known as the “*Purposive Sampling Technique*” and its empirical devices. It is considered relevant to capturing the true picture of the social and geographical setting representing the lifestyle of the Nigerian immigrant women in question partly because it makes room for a non-random approach if this appears to be more appropriate in generating authentic facts and figures. In other words, its operative mechanism enables one to avoid over-engagement with pedantic formalities at the expense of reality and productive facts. A purposive investigating system, also known as judgment inspecting, is the intentional choice of the researcher and his research assistants to explore the content of a source as a result of its anticipated qualities. That is why it is regarded as a non-random framework that does not necessarily have to be engaged with “concealed theories or a set number of sources” (Bernard 2002, Lewis and Sheppard 2006). At some stages of the work, a deliberate effort was made to identify gaps in data and information. This was addressed by follow-up fieldwork. However, at a general level, some element of random approach was employed to supplement the purposive investigating system.

***The setting of the Study:*** Briefly, the work captures a scene of the general social structure and lifestyle of a set of people in Durban as well as their interaction with the socio-political and economic activities of the city and, to some extent, that of South Africa at large. Durban is situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, mainly occupied by the Zulu ethnic group (Myeza, 2010). It is globally known for its ingenuity in history concerning socio-economic innovations and political dynamism dated back to King Shaka the Zulu (Myeza, 2010). The modern city of Durban is a creation of the colonial system. It houses the largest and busiest harbour in South Africa, known for its commerce and industry that has, over time, attracts migrants from diverse society and a blend of different tests in the creation and relationship of different social systems for socio-economic livelihood (Myeza, 2010). The Nigerian immigrant women could, therefore, conceive their arrival as the continuation of a trend in history and hence their determination to be part of the structural-developmental pattern that has become parts and parcel of this ongoing historical trend.

In terms of the environmental or geographical portrait, the choice of their settlements reflects the nature of their jobs and the services rendered. Therefore, concerning settlement,

though Nigerian immigrant women could be found in different parts of Durban, their highest concentration in population is at South Beach, otherwise called 'The Point.' The nature of the environment and settlement pattern makes engagement in small-scale business relatively easier. For instance, it is apparently among the earliest settlements in Durban, with several old and dilapidated buildings that sometimes provide an avenue for informal businesses engaged by some immigrant women to support their family. A number of them also have business outfits or residence in the Workshop area. These areas are close to the Durban Harbour and have a relatively dense population of Nigerian and migrants from other African countries. Accommodation is somewhat less expensive in these areas, and it is, therefore, easier for low-income earners, the category to which most immigrants belong, to make ends meet in such places. Nigerian immigrant women in small-scale business, wage income, employment and key professions are also found in the Central Business District (CBD). This area consists of George Street, Park Street and Russell Street. In the early arrival of most immigrants, their focus centres on places where the cost of living is relatively low and where it is possible to render some skills for services to earn a livelihood. For this reason, they spread to areas like Warwick Junction and West Street in Durban. The Berea and Umbilo areas have also offered some commercial attractions to immigrants, and a reasonable proportion of Nigerian immigrant women in self-employment reside there. This structure of immigrant settlement across Durban gives the researcher a grasp of strategy to source information during the fieldwork.

**Ethical Considerations:** Interviews were conducted, and the participants were assured of confidentiality. The data gathered was only used for this research, and the participant was informed accordingly. All the completed questionnaires have been safely handled exclusively by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. The current study was subject to certain ethical issues. As it was mentioned earlier, all participants reported their written acceptance regarding their participation in the research through a signed Consent and Briefing Letter. At the same time, sample members were asked to sign a Debriefing and Withdrawal Letter. Both letters aimed to reassure participants that their participation in the research is voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason.

Next to this, participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, while they were reassured that their answers were treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes and only for the particular research. Except for the above, participants were not harmed or abused, both physically and psychologically, during the conduction of the study. In contrast, the researcher attempted to create and maintain a climate of comfort.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

Each of the six chapters of the study has been structured to define and explore a theme while complementing the analysis of other chapters to actualise the overall epistemological aim of the thesis. The introductory section of the work, which is the first chapter, examines the statement of the problem and therefore defines the relevance of the work within the context of existing knowledge in the field. It states the research question, linking them with the overall aim of the study and explains the significance and justification of the study. The research methodology is crucial to the handling of complex issues in research and is therefore given due attention here and also within the context of the setting of the work. A careful review of the existing literature relevant to the work is done in chapter two. This is to enable us to identify the gap this research seeks to accomplish. Analysis of the theoretical framework helps us to understand how this study intends to transcend theoretical perspectives in the contemporary search for reality. The following chapter discusses fundamental issues and factors in the emigration of people in the context of the Nigerian experience with an emphasis on the involvement of women. The experience of the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban with a key focus on what constitutes her challenges and constraints is the primary focus of chapter four. The fifth chapter explores the prospects and coping mechanisms of the Nigerian women immigrants in Durban partly by locating their voices in the general theme and analysis of events, considering a reflection of their lifestyle. Apart from attempting a summary of the major issues discussed, chapter six makes recommendations for the way forward. It does this partly by assessing how the life of the Nigerian female immigrant has impacted the Durban society and vice-versa in terms of culture and socio-economic activities.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Background to Review**

There is growing literature on migration in Africa. This embraces both inter and intracontinental migration (Adepoju, 2010; Crush & Tevera, 2010). There are also studies on migration from some other African countries to South Africa and vice versa (Crush & Tevera, 2010). But the case of Nigerian migrants to South Africa has not been given any significant attention. Moreover, an inquiry into the impact of women migration on the family back home is of significant necessity considering the existence of split families due to migration in many modern African Societies (Lefko-Everett, 2010). On a broader level, a discussion of the existing literature here, therefore, briefly starts with issues on gender in international migration and evaluation of the African context concerning women involvement in intercontinental migration. This is narrowed down to intracontinental female migration in the continent and a sub-section that broadly defines the South African scene with the proportion of female immigrants received by South Africa from other African states. These provide the platform for understanding the following sub-section, which examines studies on female migration in Nigeria, followed by existing literature on Nigerian women migration to South Africa. The review of the existing literature derives its focus mainly from the primary objectives of the study. This is in line with the theoretical framework defined in Chapter One, considering the link between the emigration context and the dynamics of international relations in the context of bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa. In analysing the relevant studies in the literature, the chapter attempts a critique of the themes covered concerning the gaps this work is meant to fill and creates a structure for addressing the objectives of the study by providing answers to the research questions in subsequent chapters.

#### **Gender in International Migration**

Gender in the context of migration coupled with its intersection with key issues in contemporary international relations is gradually evolving into a focal theme in policy

formulation globally and therefore attracting scholarly attention (Aydiner, 2020). This is because as improvement in technology reduces the world to a global village, migration is getting feminised, but its intensity is also taking new dimensions. For instance, the government of many countries, including Nigeria and South Africa, have developed an interest in cross-border migration as they can no longer afford to shy away from its practical effects on social and economic activities. This is why it is rational to agree that with the complexities of modern international relations (IR), it just has to accommodate specific key issues 'below state level' (Cornelissen, et al, 2012:129), particularly in the context of migration, now polarised with the issue of women involvement and therefore, a new platform for the management of the gender implications. Holifield (1992) explains the evolution of the scholarly perception of the relationship between migration and IR since the 1990s. The work also examined the intricate evolving link between the two phenomena through a case study of how this impact cooperation and control in the European Union. Other studies have looked at the theme from different perspectives (Aydiner, 2020; Hillmert, 2013; Boswell, 2002). For instance, Aydiner (2020) evaluates the evolving theories surrounding this development and the contradictions and conflicts encountered so far in applying such theories. It is within the platform of this theoretical framework that the study attempts to conceptualise the contemporary gender approach and its implication on migration and related issues. Using the European Union as a case study, Boswell (2002) evaluates how the policy framework of some international organisations has directly or indirectly contributed to migration including the movement of refugees. The epistemological framework of Wee (2018) is also mainly within this platform. The study analyses the role of global institutions in the management and governance of international migration in contemporary globalization trends, focusing on the activities of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

But until the beginning of this millennium, the central focus in migration and even in its link with inter-state relations was the role of men. At the same time, women were classified as a subsidiary. In the African context, the literature identifies and explains four types of emigrants from Africa. The categories discussed in the literature are refugees/asylum-seekers, labour migrants, students, tourists and visitors and irregular migrants (Adepoju, 2010; Afolayan, 2009). But there was hardly any consideration for gender ratio in data

analysis or gender interplay in illustrating facts as men were the only focus. There are enormous figures in the existing literature on this perspective. Using Nigeria as a case study, there was a sharp increase in the statistics of her refugees to other countries in 2002. Still, their number was substantially reduced in 2006, dropping to 13,253 from an initial total of 24,568, all presented with no consideration for gender figures. Since then, the number has remained stable, although high. The figures were 13,902 and 14,168 in 2007 and 2008, respectively. According to the report of the United Nations High Commission of Refugee (UNHCR), the statistics of Nigerian refugees and asylum seekers in Cameroon as of 2016 was 166, 600, the Central African Republic received 16, 500 while 134, 600 refugees were recorded in Niger (United Nations High Commission of Refugee, 2017: 3). We know, for instance, that Cameroon was the key recipient of Nigerian refugees in the African continent. As of 2008, she hosted a total of 2,872 Nigerian refugee outflow (United Nations High Commission of Refugee, 2009), but no fact and figures on the gender ratio of this and other analyses. Moreover, the 2017 report of the UNHCR indicates that the recipient of Nigerian highest refugees and asylum seekers is still Cameroon, hosting a total number of 166 000 (UNHCR, 2017: 3). ECOWAS countries role in this regard was relatively insignificant as they only hosted 1.5 per cent of the total Nigerian refugee population (UNHCR, 2009). The World Bank report of 2011 added that Nigeria is ranked sixth among African countries emigrating abroad (International Organization for Migration, 2016: 28).

However, these statistics were analysed without consideration for gender ratio. The presentation of data on most other countries follows the same pattern. It is also reflected in figures of Nigerian asylum-seekers since the first decade of this century. Over 15,000 Nigerians sought asylum abroad in 2008. This was considerably higher than the 2006 and 2007, which were 8,294 and 10,148 respectively (UNHCR, 2009). Afolayan stated that “European countries remain the most targeted destinations for Nigerian asylum-seekers with Italy, Ireland, and Switzerland in the first three positions” and in 2008 these three nations “received 5,673, 1,009 and 988 asylum-seekers, respectively” (Afolayan, 2009:58). By 2006 Nigerians represented 24 per cent of all asylum-seekers in Ireland, while as early as 2003, they were among the first five dominant groups of emigrants in this category in

terms of population size based on data on the refugee groups in that country (International Organization for Migration, 2006).

Therefore, in general, for a long time, an androcentric view prevailed in social sciences. In migration studies, the assumption that the international migrant is a young economically motivated male, his experience assumed representative of all migrants irrespective of their gender had, in a way, overshadowed the dynamics of migration, including those in which women outnumbered men (Houstoun, et al, 1984). The conventional wisdom about the feminization of migration today as a worldwide and recent phenomenon often directly or indirectly implies that migrations used to be exclusively male-dominated in the past and that women did not participate otherwise than on the trail of movement of men. It took fifty years to acknowledge that in the overseas migration from Europe to the USA, women outnumbered men already from the 1930s onwards (Houstoun, et al, 1984). Meanwhile, feminist historians uncovered the long-standing participation of women in migrations (Gabaccia, 1989; Moch, 1992; Harzig, 1997) and highlighted the complexities of worldwide feminization (Donato et al., 2011). In the gender-blind mainstream literature, the potential specificities of male and female migration were not expected to be of theoretical significance. The gendered distinction between “autonomous” and “family” migration supports the assumption that patterns of female migration would either reflect those of male migration or that women are just passive followers, i.e., not real protagonists and thus, their influence on the migration trend is minimal (Donato et al., 2011).

We learn from Ernest Ravenstein’s Migration laws 1885 – 1889 and studies on gender and migration that distances could impact differently on the migration of women and men (Corbett, 2003; Jolly, and Reeves, 2005). The works reveal that in recent time women tend to outnumber men in migration processes. Though the data collection and findings have been challenged lately, different accounts of rural to urban migration in 19th and 20th century Europe point to over-representation of women, whereas indeed most international and especially overseas patterns were at first disproportionately male-dominated. Rational choice and structural approaches change focus from integrative explanations of migration to the mediation between the individual migrant and the global economy (Boyd, and Grieco.

2003). This is achievable through social networks and household's migrant institutions that open up a space for socio-economic opportunities (Goss and Lindquist, 1995).

Scholars thus became more sensitive to issues underlying women as agents of migrations and even their gender context and implications concerning inter-state relations. Although the global framework in which migrations take place is the same for all, the specific dimensions, e.g. gender division of labour, spatial restrictions, property rights and access to capital as well as gender/age/class hierarchies in the sending areas, differently affect the potential migrants and refugees and determine who would be available for migration and who would stay behind. However, when women have better prospects for gainful employment, local norms restricting their mobility are challenged and targeted “migrants to-be” are also women (Abadan-Unat, 1977; Morokvasic, 1987; Kastner, 2007). They have meanwhile gained the reputation of being reliable in monetary remittances. Beyond the flight from poverty and lack of occupational opportunities, the emigration, especially for all those whose gender practices do not fit the locally established gender norms, has often been an escape from the oppressive nature of the societies of origin (Jackson, 1984; Morokvasic, 1984, Swaisland, 1993). And yet precisely, their spatial mobility can be in many ways restricted by the states and societies. Refugees are considered to be overwhelmingly female; women often being conflated in a category with children. Yet as Jane Freedman has argued, gender-related persecutions and gendered asylum procedures affect women as well as men: men who escape hegemonic masculinities may as asylum claimants have to face the assumptions of being less “vulnerable” and more “threatening” than women. Still, women tend to be more negatively affected by gendered practices in the asylum process. They are a minority among asylum claimants, reflecting both gendered barriers which make it harder for them to leave their countries, as well as gender-related risks of violence during their journey (Freedman, 2007).

The feminization of international migration – an essential aspect of migration, mainly since the 1990s – has created gaps in the existing literature despite the current debates on migration, gender, and globalization. These gaps are yet to be thoroughly addressed. Nevertheless, there are now some significant facts and figures to define the evolving feminization culture concerning migration. Thus, by 2006, women represented almost half

of the total number of international migrants, with many women now migrating on their own rather than in association with other family members. They have constituted what the UNFPA's report calls a "silent and mighty river" that has been growing since the 1980s (Beneria, 2012:6). Commenting on the gender dimension of international migration with particular emphasis on the SADC region, Binder and Tosio, (2005) argues that despite the "marginalisation of female refugees in some policy documents", research reports from migration regulating bodies are yet to capture some current social reality. According to Smit (2015:63), "the most recent United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), global trends report (2014) mentions for example that women accounted for nearly half (46%) of the refugee population in Southern Africa in 2013 —many of whom are responsible for dependent children and do not necessarily have the support of a male relative."

The studies reveal that international migration concerning gender issues in Africa is a function of many variables and that any attempt to capture the reality of the complexities of the African scene should be able to accommodate and explore all these variables. Issues under consideration; inflow of new ideas through globalisation, changes in traditional institutions to cope with current economic realities, and the need to integrate the family as the smallest social unit into the inflow of new worldviews vis-à-vis the intricacies of recent trends in cross-border migration (Smit, 2015; Binder and Tosio, 2005).

### **Women in Intercontinental Migration: The African Context**

From the preceding analysis, there are enough facts and figures to establish that the African continent has been part of this new trend (Adepoju, 2005; Diop, 2010). Commenting on the African scene, some writers explained that migration "once considered an act by single, male labourers looking for work, has increasingly been featured in the lives of women" who are "now more than ever migrating as a means of meeting their own economic needs rather than migrating to join a husband and family" (Diop, 2010:4). For instance, data compiled at the continental level for Africa primarily reflect what is obtainable globally (Ojong, 2019). Despite the response of the existing literature to the current intricacies surrounding gender issues in international migration, the peculiarities of individual immigrant groups and

communities still need further inquiries partly for assessment of the veracity of existing theories concerning complexities surrounding gender issues in grassroots societies.

Several studies examine the relationship between gender and migration in an international context, including a fair analysis of the African scene (Adepoju, 1994; Parrenas, 2009; Muthuki, 2010; Marinucci, 2010; Wee, 2018; Ojong, 2019). A number of these works examine the institutional complexities in understanding contemporary trends in international migration and defining the relative importance of the existing agencies and institutions for an empirical conceptualization of the challenges encountered. According to Wee (2018), it is often difficult to define specific issues involved in conceptualising and identifying the challenges of contemporary international migration. Therefore, when narrowed down to the theme of gender in the context of migration, the entire structure faces more intricacies. It has been observed that the exploration of the relationship between gender and migration is marginalized in the broader field of migration studies and that this creates some gaps in the existing literature (Parrenas, 2009). African women had made some effort to defend their rights and identify what they believe constitutes their privileges in the institutionalised migration structure of their respective society that placed the interest of men above that of their female counterparts (Ojong 2019; Surdakassa, 1977). According to Ojong (2019), “historical evidence demonstrates that her reaction fits into some contemporary theories on feminism as she tried to renegotiate her identity within the different sub-sections of the social system, e.g., religious organisations and socio-economic institutions” and that “there were elements of feminism in efforts at addressing gender conflicts arising from male-dominated migration culture” (Ojong 2019: 13923).

Issues involving intercontinental migration in the African context constitute a central theme in the continent's history and global affairs. It has remained an explosive phenomenon even after the forced migration era induced by slavery up to the first half of the nineteenth century. During these early years, many Africans, both men and women, found themselves in the ‘New’ World (North and South America) and Europe through forced migration. But the existing literature demonstrates that intercontinental migration has remained a significant feature of cross-border movement in the social and economic dialogue between different states and sub-regions of the continent and those of other regions of the world

even up to the twenty-first century (Bach, 2004; Connell, 2007; Adepoju, 2010). Adepoju, (2010) illustrates the emigration of a pattern of people from different regions and countries of Africa since the beginning of this century, a pattern that reveals the principal and secondary destinations and the primary focus of migrants. According to Joshi, and Ayee, (2008) majority of the emigrants prefer the advanced nations of Europe and North America with the belief that these countries' economies have what is required for foreigners to market and develop their skills and careers and even acquire new ones. The secondary destinations are primarily selected countries in Asia, notably the Middle East countries of Lebanon, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, most African migrants in Australia have opted for that region for educational pursuit. In this article and an earlier study, Adepoju (2008), examines how the acute problem of unemployment in most African states constitutes a fundamental reason for intercontinental migration, apart from the challenges of refugee's settlement, human trafficking, sometimes resulting in female prostitution, child labour and child prostitution and the issue of asylum seekers. Some of these migrants are professionals, but most of them are semi-skilled and unskilled workers of both sex, few of whom are clandestine migrants that can find themselves in one European country or the other with the expectation of starting with any menial job or prostitution.

Case studies of individual countries concerning intercontinental migration in the continent corroborate the macro-studies of Aderanti Adepoju and others cited above (e.g. Akinrinade, 2011). For instance, both Mordi (2004) and Nwabuzor (2003) focus on Nigerian female immigrants in Europe, primarily Italy, who try to earn hard currencies through prostitution, with the hope of supporting their families back at home and finally returning home after some years to invest the proceeds in business. Many of them have achieved their objectives as they even completed the building of some edifices in their homeland before returning to Nigeria (Mordi, 2004). Both studies also reveal the hazards encountered by a few of them in terms of accidents and health issues, some of which resulted in the loss of life. The case of Cameroun is explored by Ojong & Otu (2014) and Nyamnjoh (2011). Both studies provide an outstanding scholarly portrait of the Cameroonian traditional metaphorical world view about migration to the advanced nations of Europe and North America concerning the thrills and chills, the gains, and unforeseen dangers on the routes to expected glories as they engage in what is popularly termed "bush-falling" in that part of the world. The phrase

“bush-falling” is derived from what the successful traditional Cameroonian farmer and hunter passed through in terms of challenges, unforeseen hazards, and occasional trauma-induced circumstances towards becoming a successful farmer or hunter. This conspicuously tells the ambitious Cameroonian young man and lady eyeing the “golden fleet” of the Western world that the resources thereof are wrought in significant challenges. Yet, the belief in the ability to overcome the obstacles and extract something from these foreign lands to develop their homeland is so strong that several families contribute money and even sell some of their assets to support a migrant with the hope of reaping the benefit through remittance. In the Cameroonian case, the majority of the emigrants are young university graduates. The studies portray the involvement of both male and female.

Some aspects of women involvement are illustrated in Alpes (2014) and Ojong & Otu (2014). Alpes (2014) explains the depth of women involvement, using the experience of Manuella, a deported female migrant from Europe and Delphine, a female research assistant, who is ready to sacrifice anything to actualise her migration dream to the Western world. Ojong & Otu (2014) used the experience of another young woman, Ongie, to explain the involvement of women, including their plights and aspirations, “Before Ongie could finally travel to the US”, her family had lost “the sum of 2 million CFA ...entrusted” to a local immigration agent, the 'doky man' to process the necessary documents needed for the trip, initially to Germany and that “amidst bitterness and scepticism...the zeal to travel abroad became an obsession for the family” until they “managed to put some money together to exploit yet another opportunity” to actualise Ongie’s emigration to the US. In the light of the plights and apprehension involved, the authors describe the migration venture as “a double-edged sword involving both costs and benefits...for Cameroonian families seeking to live an improved lifestyle” (Ojong & Otu, 2014:65). Some studies reveal that by the beginning of this century, intercontinental female migration in Africa had taken a new dimension, partly in response to the financial ambition of an emerging new set of young African women amidst an emerging global village that links them to the most recent innovations in investments and other opportunities outside their homelands (Ojong, 2019; Oyebamiji, 2018). Among the consequences was a few cases where women solely decided the strategies and purpose of migration without notifying their families or spouses. Another effect is through fosterage whereby the emigrant women placed their kids under

the care of grandparents or relatives, which often fall short of the motherly care needed by kids (Oyebamiji, 2018).

In the case of Nigeria, there was hardly any scholarly work on migration until the 1980s apart from few allusions to rural-urban movements in the study of Nigerian history and related disciplines. The earliest studies, e.g. Kuper (1965: 59), have nothing on gender perspective. But Kuper (1965) reveals that many Nigerians were compelled to migrate due to economic and political agitation emanating from the disparity over resource allocation in the country since the 1960s and Europe and America also welcome several Nigerian nationals who migrated solely for an educational motive. A good percentage of them were from the wealthy class in Nigeria. But with increasing challenges emanating from new approaches to nation-building, the need to give appropriate attention to demographic issues makes both scholars and policymakers develop some interest in migration, which led to the publication of other scholarly works on the theme. The existing literature up to 2000 also had little or nothing on the role of women and thus almost silent on the gender interplay. However, they reveal that contemporary emigration among Nigerians, both men and women, could be said to have commenced with the attainment of political sovereignty from the British in 1960 when many Nigerians started leaving their country in search of greener pasture (e.g. Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011; Ogba, 2003). Their destinations since this new influx of migration consist of both Western and African countries, including South Africa. A good number of them left the country arising from the lapses in the Nigerian educational system, partly due to under-funding and the nature of government policies. Again, various international agencies were shut down in the country due to political uncertainty, labour unrests and protests. This compelled many labour migrants to move overseas and to other regions of Africa, including South Africa. Many Nigerian migrants could be found in different parts of South Africa. Their population is increasing as they make relentless effort to secure better sources of income and explore new opportunities for themselves and their families. This has been observed as “a custom among all human populace groups who try to enhance their conditions under circumstances of strife and restricted possibilities” (Peberdy, 2001:67).

### **Intra-Continental Female Migration in Africa**

In some regions of the world, particularly in Africa, women were conceived as subordinate figures even on the migration terrain (Jinnah, 2013 & 2010). Conceptualizing and discussing the African context, Isike (2017) and Adepoju (1994) examined the structural pattern of the male-dominated era in African migration before illustrating the reasons for women significant involvement since the 1980s. Despite some element of female participation in intra-continental migration in Africa before 1980 (e.g. Sudarkasa, 1977), the above works reveal that independent women migration in Africa was relatively insignificant until the 1970s and that, as such, its impact on the reconfiguration of social institutions and economic activities was negligible. They are also of the view that the evolution of new dynamics in gender structure, particularly concerning “male-female relationship”, as well as the search for new strategic approaches of sharing responsibilities at the family level, has changed the attitude of women to migration and even the entire societal worldview about this phenomenon. Therefore, the assertion is that “due to changing dynamics in a male-female relationship and given the increase in pressure in family’s quest for sustenance, migration has become increasingly feminized” (Adepoju, 1994:76). Scholarly works have revealed that despite the differences in socio-cultural orientation, emigration trends in the ECOWAS region, including Nigeria and those of South Africa and other member states of the SADC region, sometimes produce the same result and, therefore, generate the same challenges. This is attributed to the similarity in terms of patriarchal culture (Isike, 2017).

A study by Lefko-Everett (2007) entitled, *Voices for the Margins: Migrant Women’s Experiences in Southern Africa* is among the works that explore the thrills and chills of the African woman migrant experience. A 2005 study by Adepoju reveals that “the expansion in free female migration is not kept by national edges” and that “capable women of Ghanaian and Nigerian origin now take part in international migration, regularly leaving their husbands at home to tend to the kids while female nurses and doctors have been enlisted from Nigeria to work in Saudi Arabia” (Adepoju, 2005:90). At the same time, the desire to respond to challenges emanating from changes in the social system vis-à-vis the basic needs of the family at the micro-level is said to have made Ghanaian women in the health profession continue embarking on an independent exploration of new grounds and ventures in terms of migration with a focus on the UK and United States to address acute financial needs at home (Adepoju, 2005). Overall, these and similar works on gender in the

context of migration support the emerging social belief in changes in gender relations arising from new configurations in the dynamics of institutional response to the survival of the society. Dungumaro (2013) observes that as a result of the new structure, female migration, particularly at the intra-continental level, gradually received some impetus following the achievement of independence by many African countries in the 1960s. But Robertson (1984) reveals in his study of Kenya and Tanzania that whatever the degree of such impetus, the impact of women migration even within the continent remained relatively insignificant until the early 1980s, thus corroborating the work of Aderanti Adepaju cited above. Marinucci, 2010; Jinnah, 2013 and Ojong, 2019 attributes the new trends in intra-continental female migration to changes in both women and societal orientation in terms of female education and believe in the positive role women can play to support the economic vision of the society at both the family and communal levels.

Studies on migration configuration in some African countries show that in some cases, cross-border migration among women was inspired by the search for financial freedom and the virtue it possesses concerning the actualization of such dreams (Dungumaro, 2013; Adepaju, 1994, 2004). Such works embrace Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. But in the case of Tanzania, Dungumaro (2013) demonstrated that the benefits derived in this regard were minimal and its positive impact on the family financial upkeep as well as communal development was below expectation. However, the author argues that this cannot be generalized to embrace the entire neighbouring states.

Female immigrants, even till the late 1970s, were traditionally regarded not as free decision-makers but dependent on their spouses.. Yet, various variables affecting female movement have a progressive independent tendency among them. Prevalent among these are the changing structures of financial exercises which impacted the female movement to a more prominent degree than male relocation since they are connected to socio-cultural components characterizing sex roles. Education acts as a significant catalyst to the spatial and word related flexibility of women (Adepaju, 2003). The relative open-door structure and the method of employment for women in Africa are generally influenced to a limited extent by their relative aptitudes and the institutionalized structure of occupation, most of which have been historically generated from age-long customs and traditions.

According to Adepaju (2000), in many African societies, the occupation structure implies that, generally, men are engaged in agriculture, trade, industry and transportation. In this manner, men tend to relocate alone and leave their wives behind. Besides, the social elements that at first undermined the education of females at the expense of males have had the impact of keeping women at the lower cadre of employment, particularly in the formal sector. This is because occupation is dynamic in the modern competitive labour market and is often exceptionally connected with education.

The literature reveals that, generally, African female migrants involve themselves in fruitful economic exercises that enable them to contribute simultaneously to their host and home communities (Adepaju, 2005; Dungumaro, 2013). This is particularly true of women in East Africa and the ECOWAS region. This arises from their traditional inclination to ensure that the family is sustained financially and provided with the basic material necessities and social empowerment to enable it to contribute meaningfully to communal development. Thus, unquestionably, analysis of the female movement in Mali reveals that women, in reality, partake in profitable economic exercises to enhance the commercial prospect of their families (Tienda and Booth, 1988).

Women did not also feature directly in early migration patterns in the SADC region analysed in some studies. Instead, it was primarily the affairs of men who migrated to the mining industry and farmland of South Africa, particularly from Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (BLS) (de Vletter, 1985; Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1990; Adepaju, 1993; Makombe, (2011). The long-term impact of this on their spouse and the family was challenging as the arrangement to visit home regularly was often abused in such a way that some even stayed away from their families for a period of fifteen to twenty years. Many women found it difficult to cope, while the arduous task of living up to expectations in the contract jobs of the mining industries and farmlands in South Africa prevented the affected men from being flexible. In other regions of the continent, however, men also have different reasons for embarking on a similar form of migration (Adepaju, 2000; Afolayan, 2010).

Women's response to this socio-economic condition is best attested to by the growing number of those who radically embark on independent migration, predominantly starting from the second half of the 1980s. This is probably not surprising as the literature also reveals that migration positively impacts a woman's life in various ways (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1990; Ojong, 2002). Generally speaking, it helps fortify her economic independence and broadens the horizon of her initiatives to develop her career and exploit existing opportunities. Besides, it is connected with the adjustment in the traditional role of women. Most women relocate looking for better open entryways in light of general calamities or flight from war and internal strife. The adoption of male work through migration likewise influences women left behind who need to devise survival approaches, of which movement is progressively one. Therefore, to adjust, those left behind, both young and elderly, utilise the farmlands and other existing resources without a decision-making authority (Oppong, 1992; Jolly, and Reeves, 2005).

In the traditional migration pattern, men had been the primary determinant of the movement across borders. However, the contemporary trend of migration now accommodates the gender interplay, explaining the level of involvement of both men and women. To understand the new dynamics of migration, current literature now focuses on the increasing participation of women. The literature demonstrates that the emergence of new dynamics in international labour structure in connection with education and higher emphasis on skilled labour does not seem to have significantly altered this attitude of men concerning intra-continental migration in Africa (Adepoju, 2010). For instance, the Republic of South Africa (RSA) harboured up to 51 per cent of the grown-up men of Lesotho as immigrants up to the 1980s. At the same time, the females left behind bear the brunt of the rural household. Thus, family obligation, involvement in basic leadership, and other female roles were encountering significant changes. This was especially so since by the land tenure system of the area, the farmer loses the ownership of a piece of land if such land is uncultivated for over two years. Therefore, the female needs to develop the land in the absence of their spouses, including some who fail to visit home regularly (Adepoju, 2010).

The everyday administration of the family unit back home became a duty of the immigrants' wives as few members of the husband's family offered some help, particularly in

organizing and regulating activities of the home front (de Vletter, 1985; Adepoju, 1993; Lucas, 2006). Usually, the men move without other members of the family, i.e., wives and children, who may later go along with them. Family migration at first are not common, and women either go with or later join spouses. Furthermore, women's movements have been hindered by some traditions and customs, such as the patriarchal system that subjected women mobility to the decision of men and the inability to acquire asset like land. For example, in Swaziland, a conventional set-up is designed that whatever the women acquire is the property of the spouse and his kinfolk. Hence, the women restrictions become worsened coupled with occupation isolation and urban discrimination based on their sex. For jobs in urban centres, sex discrimination was also noted. (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1990; Adepoju, 1993; Lucas, 2006).

Studies on census and population provide us with some more in-depth insight. They indicate that the structural configuration of independent female migration in Africa from the 1960s to the early 1970s was predominantly from rural to the urban area and hardly cross-border. This trend is said to have continued until 1980, but starting from the first half of the 1980s, cross-border female migration was recorded in some African states (Pittin, 1984; Findly, and Williams, 1990; Dodson, 1998; Peberdy & Oucho, 2001; McDonald, and Jacobs 2005; Peberdy, 2016). The first reason advanced for independent female migration was deteriorating quality of life which is said to be in its worse form in a rural community (Peberdy, 2016). The second was the gradually increasing rate of separation and divorce in several communities, which tended to betray the hope and confidence many women had placed on the marriage institution as a form of insurance against old age. Thus intra-continental cross-border migration in East Africa, particularly in Uganda and Tanzania, was a function of the first factor but evolved gradually through the rural-urban movement of the 1970s (Tieda and Booth, 1988; Dungumaro, 2013). In both countries, female migrants were said to have improved their social and financial status through relocating from rural to urban areas before the 1980s. With the injection of new dynamics into the social system and a change in communal worldview about the female role in societal development and family upkeep, many felt they could do the same and even better by searching for greener pasture in foreign lands.

It has been generally observed in the literature that education is among the essential keys to the success of women independent migration. Findley & Williams (1990) are among the few studies that approach the scene from its realities observing the fact that over 50 per cent of female migrants have a minimum of primary education: “57 percent in Juba City, Sudan; 54 per cent in Monrovia, Liberia”. Studies on women trafficking in the West African countries admit that no matter the socio-economic structure of the host country, the level of education of the female emigrants give them the advantage to access opportunities (Akinrinade, 2011; Mordi, 2004; Nwabuzor, 2003). They assert that educated female migrants as of late have more key open doors in business in both formal and informal sectors. This likewise improves their capacity to contend and partake progressively in other issues involving career acquisition and access to information system. However, some of the inferences on the topic are derived from rural-urban migration, which is still fair considering the inadequate level of our knowledge at the moment on women cross-border migration. Such inferences were employed by Findley & Williams, 1990 and Vaa et al (1989) in analyses of Burkina Faso, Bamako, the capital of Mali, and Kenya. Applying these inferences to cross-border migration, some works demonstrate that educated women, both married and single, in outstanding professions like nursing and medicine have emigrated to other states within the continent just as they could be found in Europe and North America as well as the Middle East state of Saudi Arabia (Oyebamiji, 2018; Adegbola, 1990).

In Bamako, for instance, educated migrants were predominantly within the age range of 16 to 35 years in the 1980s, and the female was as numerous as the male. At the same time, in Burkina Faso, forty per cent of women involved in rural-urban migration had received some education. It fell within the age groups of 20-24 years, while about 38 per cent of those from Kenya were within the same age group. Additionally, women migration is often a necessary means of escaping the socio-economic and cultural constraints that made life difficult for young girls (Danzigier and IMO, 2009). Again, the quest for knowledge and better life pushes rural women to migrate to urban areas and to secure training and educational qualification for possible international migration (Danzigier and IOM, 2009). Indeed, a study of intra-continental cross-border migration among women for commercial

purposes in pre-1970s West African communities (Sudarkasa, 1977) demonstrates that the evolution of such women independent initiatives started from rural-urban migration.

### **Women Migration to South Africa from Other African Countries**

There are reliable figures on cross-border migration from many other African states to South Africa. Isike (2017), Smit (2015), and Jinnah (2013) attempt a scholarly analysis of the rapid flow of African female migrants into South Africa since the end of apartheid and the commencement of democracy in 1994. Smith (2015) focuses mainly on asylum seekers and challenges thereof, while Jinnah (2013) explores the experience of Somalian women immigrants in South Africa. These works rely on a host of data, including those of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). On the issue of immigrants' experience, Jinnah (2013) examined the extent of integrating Somalian female immigrants into the social fabrics of existing institutions in South Africa using Johannesburg as a case study. This is explained in the context of livelihood and survival and the depth of hostility amidst the inherent apprehension embedded in the social structure of the immigrant lifestyle. Therefore, using the experience of Somalian women immigrants in Johannesburg as a case study, the work focuses on women involvement in cross-border migration with special emphasis on South Africa. The thesis illustrates with facts and figures the challenges encountered by these women and factors in their migration to South Africa. It examines their effort to get integrated into the host community, their aspirations and coping strategies.

However, the literature has more of such data with regards to intercontinental migration. But at the intra-continental level, the literature reveals mass emigration of semi-skilled female labour to South Africa, being the most developed African country and the only member of the BRICS in the continent. Crush & Tevera (2010) and Lefko-Everett (2007) attempts a scholarly portrait of these immigrants, particularly those from the SADC region, while Kihato (2009) explosively examined their experience in the socio-economic life of the city of Johannesburg. In their case study of Zimbabwe emigrants, Crush and Tevera (2010) analysis embraces the challenges of these women not only as settled immigrants in South Africa but also their pre-migration investment experience in preparation for the

arduous task of cross-border migration coupled with the fear of the unknown in terms of the prospect of success as an immigrant in a foreign land, i.e., the cost and expected benefit. Therefore, among the challenges uncovered are attempted efforts to obtain a visa, most of which ended in disappointment, border hazards and the traumatic experience of those trying to cross without a visa.

However, analysis of the impact of such migrations is hardly complete without addressing immigrants' survival strategies and the attendant social development of xenophobia and social violence. Kihato (2009) attempts a micro-study of the social problems, and other challenges migrant women of different nationalities encounter. As already mentioned above, she concentrated on the city of Johannesburg. She metaphorically conceptualized their challenges through the framework of the contours of the many borders they cross to enter South Africa, and according to her, “these borders are not just physical, represented by the political borders they cross to enter South Africa” but “also the contours that shape their relationships with the state, their host community, their ethnic or national communities, men and patriarchy” (Kihato, 2009:212).

Isike (2017) also examines some crucial issues in gender in the context of female migration within the African scene using Mozambican female migrants in South Africa as a case study. Among the topics discussed are factors in the migration of these women to South Africa. He discusses the challenges encountered by these women and the structural pattern of the relationship between them and their native Southern African counterparts, and the impact of this on their coping techniques. The work explores the trends in their migration and the changes in the population size of the group. It explains how their pattern of integration into the host community differs from that of their male counterparts. In addition, the study locates the experience of Mozambican women within the feminization trend of migration to South Africa since 1994.

This study and some other works like Hlatshwayo (2014), Jinnah (2013), Kihato (2009), and Lefko-Everett (2007) attempt an x-ray of the sociocultural phenomenon of xenophobia and other constraints of immigrants coupled with a number of their survival strategies. Such survival techniques range from resilience through the exploitation of the informal economy

to creating a social network among migrants within each group or sub-group. In particular, using the case of migrants from the SADC region for illustration, Hlatshwayo (2014:10) examines explosively immigrants' alienation and deprivation and the effort they made to survive through what he terms "resilience and solidarity." There is also a need to point out that even the Nigerian press has become interested in analysing this aspect of female immigrants' life in South Africa (Ameh, 2017). However, it must be admitted that such portraits or analyses are general as they embrace all groups and scholarly exploration of the peculiarity of each group constitutes a key asset to appropriate policy formulation. This scholarly and practical relevance is a primary reason for this case study of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban.

The existing literature does not have anything significant on student emigration and its gender interplay. There is, therefore, hardly any major study on the intra-continental migration of female students in Africa. However, Muthuki (2010) explores the life of foreign immigrant students of African origin in South Africa, using the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) as a case study, with a primary focus on the role played by transnationalism in the "(re)construction of gender" among these African foreign students (Muthuki, 2010:1). In Chapter Four, the thesis examines the impact of gender on migration within the framework of intricacies surrounding gender relations and gendered-structured grassroots institutions.

## **Women and Cross-Border Migration in Nigeria**



## Map 2: NIGERIA

*Map of Nigeria, showing all the 36 states of the Country; including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.*

*Source: Dada, Fredrick O. A. et al (2010) Macmillan Atlas Series, Macmillan Publishers, Yaba, Lagos.*

The works on rural-urban migration established that women involvement in migration until the 1980s in the country was primarily decided by their spouse, meaning that they merely played a subordinate role (Makinwa, 1990; LISBOA, 2007). It is, therefore, believed that this established cultural trend must have slowed down the rate of women involvement in emigration in the country (Oyebamiji, 2018). However, Nightingale (2002) and Akinrinade & Ogen (2011) see no connection between this cultural norm and women emigration in the country as the studies were completely silent on the issue. However, they focus primarily on emigration trends among females from the 1990s to the first decade of this century. This era is quite receptive to the inflow of new dynamics in gender relations and the reconfiguration of social institutions and cultural practices that accommodate the reality of a globalizing world for the survival of society. These authors portrayed the Nigerian female immigrants as individuals compelled to seek fortune in foreign lands to sustain the survival of the family and development of their immediate communities following the dwindling economy of their nation that put many members of the extended family in a helpless condition. As discussed under the section “Intercontinental Female Migration in Africa” above, the authors explained that majority migrated with the hope of supporting their

families back at home and finally returning home after some years to invest the proceeds in business. A number of them are said to have achieved their objectives despite the hazards involved. The studies also allude to women trafficking to Europe for prostitution, particularly amongst those with low literacy levels.

Clemens and Pettersson (2007:95) also discussed some issues on the emigration of professionals from Nigeria. They revealed that most Nigerian nurses (predominantly female) and “ninety per cent of the Nigerian physicians abroad is currently working in two countries: The United States and the United Kingdom.” Their studies reveal that most Nigerian female nurses are also engaged in the health sectors of both countries and that by the beginning of this century, the available data indicate that 71 per cent of Nigerian nurses were in the United States while 27 per cent were in the United Kingdom. The authors stated that Nigeria is registered by the “United Kingdom’s Nursing and Midwifery Council as one of the top source countries from which nurses and midwives are admitted as about 500 nurses legally emigrated to work in the United Kingdom between April 2002 and March 2004” while in 2005 the figures remained stable until April that year when it recorded a decrease to 378 which was sustained up to March 2006 (Clemens & Pettersson, 2007:98). The authors' estimate of physicians who left the country in 2000 alone was 4,856. However, the gender ratio is not provided. Again, “Nigeria operators who set up enrolment places for work in Saudi Arabia selected several health workers in the city of Port Harcourt in June 1990” consisting of about 5,000 female nurses and 264 medical practitioners (Adegbola, 1990:164). Adepoju & Jacques-Minnegheer (2008) attempted to analyse data up to 2008, embracing Nigerian emigrants in the health sectors and skilled workers in other sectors and arrived at more or less the same figures. The majority of the nurses are female, but little or nothing is said about the gender figures of other sectors.

Overall, the migration of Nigerian female skilled workers is among the factors in the increasing figures of foreign-born Nigerians in the host countries. Thus, as of 2006, from the calculations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) database, estimates of foreign-born Nigerians in the OECD countries have the following figures: “France (2,563); United Kingdom (88,378); Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal (26,435); other European countries (22,361); North America (150,917); and Japan,

Australia and New Zealand (3,190)” (Afolayan, 2009:55-58). By 2013 the figure has increased to the following figures respectively: “France (5,394); United Kingdom (184,314); Spain (36,885) Italy (48,073); Germany (22,687) and Ireland (18,540); North America (271, 684); and Australia and New Zealand (5,523)” (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2016: 30-32).

But Mordi et al (2004), Nwabuzor (2003), and Okojie (2003) complemented the works above because they concentrated on the emigration of the unskilled and semi-skilled as well as the abuse and hazards in the entire process (though at the expense of the gains), with hardly any practical consideration for the circumstances that compelled the participants to join the emigration trend. The literature shows that most female migrants are from Edo State, i.e. the ancient city of Benin and its environs (see Map 2). The studies discussed the socio-economic and political background of Nigeria up to the 1990s, including the frequent military coups that produced dictators who further compounded the economic crises of the country and increased the rate of poverty (UNESCO, 2006). But they fail to link it to the practical reality of what happens at the grassroots level in terms of suffering and poverty that made many women and some family heads in rural communities see the women trafficking exercise as an opportunity that could be exploited to minimize poverty at the grassroots level. Overall, the studies were more concerned with the moral aspect of the decision and approach of this set of emigrants than the economic perspective and practical reality. Unlike the previous authors, they argue that the emigration of this set of migrants was involuntary because the traffickers lured them to do so even though most of these women achieved their objectives. A number of them claim to have opted for this approach on their own accord. If we accept the viewpoint of these authors, then it would appear that despite the involvement of women in the leadership of the trafficking process, most of them played a subordinate role like the traditional ones of the pre-1980s. However, the actual merit of these later works is that they explored the abuse of the whole system by exposing the trafficking of minors to Europe, particularly Italy, by some adults to earn hard currencies through prostitution and even child labour in the name of female migration.

Okojie (2003), Nwabuzor (2003), and Mordi et al (2004) contribute to an understanding of trends and patterns in female cross-border migration in Nigeria. These and other works tend

to portray that international migration impacted negatively on the Nigerian woman until she was able to work out her formula to address its hazards on the womenfolk and other members of the family back home. As mentioned above, until the 1990s, women mostly stayed at home to take care of the children after contributing all they had to support their migrating spouse both financially and morally (Adepoju, 2007:21). In most cases, the woman suffered from the children at home until the husband was able to find his feet abroad and start assisting the family back home through remittance (Ogbaa, 2003). In most instances, too, this took up to two to three years. There were record cases where the migrants could not earn enough to send money home or even lost his life. The woman accepts it as her fate and bears all the pains. Yet there were also recorded cases of men who engage other women abroad and abandon their wife and children back home after securing a good source of income.

But her response changed by the end of the 1980s. Consequently, there was a noticeable increase in independent female migration to other countries in the 1990s in Nigeria as women thought of better alternative ways of countering these challenges. Education and access to better sources of information contributed to the success of the new alternative, i.e. independent female migration. Following this, existing evidence reveals a striking increase in the number of Nigerian women involved in emigration. Significant proportions of these women are educated and move independently to satisfy their own economic needs; they are no longer merely joining a husband or other family member. According to Makinwa-Adebusoye (1990) and Adepoju (2006), this trend is increasing due to the positive response of present-day societies to female education and training opportunities while the growth of the services sector has enhanced their employability locally and internationally.

But this was truncated by another development that exposed the Nigerian woman to another hazard in international migration—it was the desire to make ends meet that caused many to succumb to the demand of women traffickers. While some educated and enlightened ones with access to the fund could obtain valid travel permit and relevant legal documents, the majority fell into the hands of these traffickers only to be exploited in trying to secure menial jobs or sex work in Western nations. This was mainly due to poverty and lack of education and enlightenment on the part of the victims. Some studies claim that women

trafficking is linked to global women prostitution and drug trafficking (Douglas, 2000; Mordi, 2004). Hitherto international human trafficking to Asia and Eastern Europe has been a key issue. In the process, some African countries such as Mali, Morocco, Ghana, and Nigeria became source countries of women trafficking, with Nigeria featuring as the leading African source for this global malady. Guest (2000) observed that at least 15 000 Nigerian female immigrants were among the sex workers in Italy alone in the second half of the 1990s. Also, Nwokedi and Iloh (2018) show that Nigeria is a key source of recent human trafficking to Europe and the Middle East.

For example, thousands of Nigerians were trafficked to Europe for prostitution in countries like Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland, among others. Additionally, it is on record that about 10, 000 Nigerian sex workers were deported from the Arab world, including Libya, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, between 2002 to 2004 (Nwokedi and Iloh 2018: 118). In like manner, the records of a humanitarian body, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), shows that Nigerians were among 160,699 migrants deported in 2013 by the European Union, and only 16,660 were returned through the AVRR program (Plambech 2016). Again, the records of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reveal that the number of “potential sex trafficking victims” from Nigeria to Italy via the Mediterranean between 2014 and 2016 increased by almost 600 per cent (Pathfinders, 2020). Moreover, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has on its record that in 2017, a total of 18000 Nigerians arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean, of which 5400 were women (cited in Pathfinders 2020). This source, however, reveals that the figures are gradually declining as both the government and NGOs are working relentlessly to at least minimize this form of trafficking (Pathfinders, 2020).

International women trafficking began in Nigeria in the late 1980s as a result of the harsh economic conditions that characterized the military dictatorships in the country (Guest, 2000). The high corruption of the military officials, coupled with the impact of the International Monetary Fund structural adjustment conditionality, imposed untold hardship on the masses (Nwabuzor, 2003). Nigerian women began to seek greener pastures across the borders. Consequently, they began to travel to different parts of the globe, particularly to Italy, Spain, Greece, and France, to obtain all sorts of menial jobs. From there, some of

them were engaged as sex workers in the cities (Nwabuzor, 2003). The Nigerian military junta had drastically devalued the naira in absolute obedience to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund structural adjustments policy. The hard currencies translated into thousands of naira when remitted home. This made the earning of the hard money an endearing objective to the women to salvage themselves and their people from grinding poverty. Many of them quickly changed to sex work which was relatively moral and lucrative. Traffickers saw an opportunity in this and promptly utilized it, and thus began the transnational women trafficking in Nigeria.

However, the traffickers have been accused of dishonesty and exploitative tendencies. They are organized in a variety of ways ranging from small-scale, informal networks to international well-organized groups (Mordi, et al, 2004). In Nigeria, interested women are recruited through person-to-person contact. Recruiters are sent to villages and towns in search of clients. These could be friends and acquaintances that informally recruit women through convincingly talking to them. The whole process of the recruitment of an emigrant for trafficking passes through four groups. These include the recruiter, the documentation officer, the trafficker, and the organizer (Nwabuzor, 2003). In the process of recruitment, the recruiter or enticer makes the first contact with interested individuals. This is followed by the documentation officer to finalize the arrangement with a legal contract put in place.

Those who accepted the offer had to enter into a form of covenant or agreement with the organizers. This is to ensure compliance with the demands of the traffickers. The aim is to exploit the woman financially by the time she finally settled down in her foreign destination. A good number of these women, therefore, arrived at their destination as irregular migrants because most of the traffickers are said to have smuggled their clients through the Sahara Desert in North Africa to Europe or via Ghana, where they had easy access to fake travel documents (Nwabuzor, 2003). Sometimes the client is escorted by the trafficker to Europe under an assumed identity. The organisers, whose total expenditure rarely exceed \$1,000.00, per client scoop out \$40,000.00 from each woman as their pay for piloting her successfully to her destination (Nwabuzor, 2003; Nwokedi and Iloh 2018: 118). Thus, the Nigerian experience portrays a scene of female emigrants that have to contend with a host of issues ranging from victimization to domestic violence and hostile socio-

political terrain at the home front polarized with racial problems in the host country that overlap with gendered institutionalized benchmarks.

The financial exploitation of these immigrant women excludes the enormous challenges and hazards they have to contend with as they seek to achieve their primary motive of accepting the offer, which is the acquisition of hard currencies for remittance back home. These hazards are particularly unavoidable for those in sex work. Thus, the following is part of the finding of a European study on this set in 2003:

*“Trafficking often has a profound impact on the health and well-being of women. The forms of abuse and risks that women experience includes physical, sexual and psychological abuse, the forced or coerced use of drugs and alcohol, social restrictions and manipulation, economic exploitation, and debt bondage, legal insecurity, abusive working and living conditions, and a range of risks associated with being a migrant and/or marginalized. These abuse and risks impact women’s physical, productive and mental health, may lead to the misuse of drugs or alcohol, diminish women’s social and economic well-being, and limit their access to health and other support services” (Mordi, et al, 2004:42).*

Those in this set could be vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases. Some women also lost their lives in the process. For instance, reports indicate that 168 Nigerian female immigrants were killed in Italy in a year (Babatunde, 2014: 71 – 72). In another account, three Nigerian prostitutes were burnt to death when their residential building caught fire (Nwabuzor, 2003). Those into prostitution were usually coerced by the traffickers to embrace the use of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes to cope with the objectionable or risky demands of the work. Their health problems are compounded by their inaccessibility to health information and medical care due to their restricted movement. At the destination, some of the women prostitutes are arrested and detained for ultimate deportation. During their detention and deportation, their health needs are hardly addressed by law enforcement officials. Per year, more than 506 Nigerian prostitutes were rounded up and deported back to Nigeria over allegation of probable infection with Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome infection (Mordi, 2004; Babatunde, 2014: 71).

However, since 2000 there has been an increasing awareness by concerned Nigerian women on global issues that affect them, particularly on international migration. Thus, this has helped to curtail the menace of women trafficking. In addition, there have been concerted efforts between the Nigerian government and international bodies like the World Health Organization (WHO) to put an end to this type of 'migration'. While there may still be few victims of the women trafficking venture in Europe, this hazard is gradually on its demise, and for now, there is no evidence of a Nigerian woman in South Africa for such venture. It is, therefore, from this new perspective that the present study examines the origin of the migration of Nigerian women to Durban in the next chapter.

### **Migration of Nigerian Women to South Africa**

There is a need to point out that the migration of Nigerian women to South Africa is yet to be addressed as a theme of its own in the existing literature. There are only some allusions to the issue in analysing other themes, primarily on general migration theories and inter-state relations. However, both informants and a few published works admit that in recent times, some Nigerian women independently migrated to South Africa to further their education while some travelled with the support of their husbands or relatives basically for economic sustenance (Ameh, 2017; Seteolu, 2016; Oluwatobi, 2015). However, on the Nigeria-South Africa axis, until the end of apartheid and a good record of economic growth and development, South Africa was not a significant target among Nigerian emigrants (Seteolu, 2016), whether male or female. Again before 1994, most Nigerian travellers were generally students, and South Africa was therefore not appealing to them. Instead, Britain was a more attractive destination for these students due to the colonial relationship between her and Nigeria. Most Nigerian emigrants of the 1960s were primarily motivated by the desire to acquire education and new careers and then return to Nigeria after their studies to partake in post-independence politics and nation-building.

But the migrants of the mid-1980s were generally in search of better opportunities in terms of money-related ventures compared to most of the individuals who migrated in the pre-1980s. This set of Nigerian migrants includes a good number of Nigerian women immigrants currently found in South Africa. Their population increased steadily, particularly after the restoration of democracy in South Africa. In the Nigerian-South

African context, the study of migration, whether in general or from a gender perspective, invariably embraces some elements of bilateral relations between both countries. In one way or the other, this has both practical and theoretical link with prevailing concepts and issues in contemporary migration.

A study of this nature is, therefore, required for an in-depth analysis of the entire trend and prevailing cultural and institutional norms that have helped to define the pattern of socio-economic engagements among Nigerian immigrant women and their general lifestyle as well as the extent of their integration into the fabrics of the host communities.

### **Significance of the study**

There is a need to emphasise that the significance of this work can only be understood and comprehended within the scope of existing literature in the field, as explored above. In summary, the studies reveal cross-border migration in the different context discussed by various scholars based on their understanding of the growing phenomenon, vis-à-vis its causes and implication. The authors analyse the diverse views on the several motives for migration and illustrate the pattern of migration across the continent in general and Nigeria in particular. They reveal that this has not only become a global and domestic affair but has, over time, become a vital index of the socio-economic activities of the state. The studies also reveal that emigration issues are no more restricted to only one sex as both sexes are involved. Men and women migrated across borders within the continent and to other continents of the world as the rapid inflow of information in a globalizing world intersect with new challenges emanating from contemporary institutional dynamics, ranging from education, unemployment and insecurity, to mention but a few. The literature also attempts an analysis of different patterns and trends among Nigerian women migrants. The studies show that just like some other African societies, Nigerian women have been involved in emigration since the 1980s because local migration has been part and parcel of their culture. However, it was institutionally conceived as a men's affair until recently. Therefore, current studies shift women's migration experiences from the margins to the centre. In contrast, previous research on migration rendered women invisible as migration was considered a masculine activity and female movement was assumed to be in response to male migration (Olurode, 1995; Kihato, 2007).

However, despite the works explored above, the present study fills a significant gap in the existing literature for several reasons. In the first place, the intermittent flows in cross-border migration between ECOWAS and SADC regions have changed following the end of apartheid and the liberalisation of the economic and political system in the 1990s. In particular, South Africa has attracted many migrants from Nigeria and other West African countries whose efforts and contributions to the Republic's economy only feature in the media reports and are yet to receive any attention in the literature. Secondly, scholarly analysis of this migration flow within the platform of contemporary theories, e.g. the intersectionality and 'gendered geographies of power' employed in this work, will give us a deeper insight on the way forward about appropriate policy formulation and the search for new devices of utilising migration for socio-economic development.

Moreover, as explained above, considering the dynamic approach of grassroots communities to the issue and its recorded benefits to these communities despite the effort made by the Nigerian government since the 1990s to discourage emigration (NPC, 1991), there is a need for a more scholarly approach to the theme to make available the necessary facts and figures that can help the government create a fundamental legal framework for appropriate management of this pattern of migration. In addition, the impact of bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa on the cross-border movement of their citizens is yet to be given any significant consideration in existing works, and this is among the primary focus of this work. Finally, the Nigerian scene on female cross-border migration within the African continent is yet to receive any attention in the literature, except few allusions to it in the discussion of other themes in migration (e.g. Oyebamiji, 2018). The emigration trend of Nigerian women to South Africa, the only member of the BRICS in the continent, provides the best case study for a maiden exploration of this theme. Therefore, thematically the contribution of the present study is along the line of authors such as Simon and Brettell (1986) and other studies which have gained momentum for recognising the impact of gender in negotiating migration, settlement and occupational attainment (Chant, and Radcliffe, 1992; DeLaet, 1999, Boyd and Grieco, 2003).

Once more, the existing studies in the literature delved extensively into the challenges faced by women migrants in their new nations of abode and how they overcame them. However,

there is no work on the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban. The present study is significant as it aims to explore the challenges encountered by this set of immigrant women and the strategies employed to overcome the obstacles. Specifically, the study will explore their socio-economic experience such as employment, cost of living, and utilisation of economic opportunities at the grassroots level, in addition to their socio-cultural encounters in terms of xenophobia, identity, communication, and language. The study is significant because it will enrich the regional dimension of migration studies in the South African context by exploring the challenges encountered by the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban. It will highlight migration-related challenges in Durban, a relatively unexplored area in the migration history of South Africa. A closer understanding of the activities of Nigerian immigrant women in this study area will be helpful in the design of programs and policies that may assist immigrant women in their integration into their host community and unleash their potential to be contributors to the development of South African life. This would make them more useful to the need of their host and home communities.

Therefore, as a micro-study concentrating on the relatively small Durban community in South Africa, the work serves as a means of projecting the viewpoint of the immigrant group discussed and identifying the peculiarity of the area vis-à-vis the pattern of relations among its different identity groups. This underscores its significance in unravelling some of the salient complexities in the field of gender studies, mainly as its focus is derived from the dynamics of contemporary dimensions in gender studies, and this is in connection with its empirical analysis of the migration link between Nigeria and South Africa. The Nigeria-South Africa bilateral relations as well as the regional dialogues between the ECOWAS and SADC regions, have roles to play in the improvement of refugees and asylum seekers (Seteolu, 2016; Ramdoo, 2014). A study of the experience of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban is vital because it is also meant to assess the veracity of this assumption by relating it to existing facts and figures on migration in the context of international relations.

Finally, by the nature of its scope, the research is expected to inspire further studies in female migration in Africa, thereby contributing to the emergence of new and comparative

paradigms and modelling in the search for solutions to the challenges of inter-regional migration in Africa.

## CHAPTER THREE

### FACTORS IN THE MIGRATION OF NIGERIAN WOMEN TO DURBAN

The viewpoint of Mrs Elizabeth Ashe, would rather imply that there is a more fundamental factor behind the migration of the Nigerian immigrant women to South Africa before the general ones amenable to the analytic framework of the “push and pull” theory. Mrs Ashe was formerly based in the UK but presently has her family members in South Africa. According to her:

*My migration is the result of the changes in our traditional societies. I know that like any other immigrant woman I'm in search of greener pasture, that is trying to avoid poverty, crises or some other hazards in one's home country that makes life uninteresting. But these things have always been there and yet women did not respond appropriately to them in terms of leaving their home country. Many families attitude to the female is that she has to look up to her husband and therefore, could be denied of her visions as a single, including the ambition to leave her country if it is not strictly for educational purpose, and I'm talking of recent period up to the 1990s. For instance, I could still remember vividly when I planned to rent a shop near my family house for catering purpose, my aunty said, "you are to do this in your husband's house!" Then I was old enough to marry but yet to be engaged to any man. If I had a plan of leaving the country then on my own...to say the least, I would be more than stigmatized. To me our migration as women has to do with the inflow of new ideas based on the nature of modern information technology and other developments that even modified the customs and traditions of our traditional societies, the other reasons are secondary. For these other reasons I have my own...but it's this change that makes us respond to the other factors. (Mrs Ashe).*

This view implies that the “push and pull” factors have often been there but did not trigger off the cross-border movement of some category of people, in particular women. Therefore, to explore the factors in the migration of these women through the analytic lens of the “push and pull” theory is to over-simplify the entire scene. Thus, in times past, the traditional “push and pull” yardstick might have been of some help in attempting a general understanding of cross-border migrations in this context. But the emergence of new social

dynamics at the grassroots level in connection with recent structural changes linked to the inflow of new ideas in a globalizing world creates another variable that explains the case of the Nigerian women migrants. This variable may be considered dormant in some regions. Still, in the Nigerian context, it provides the underlying and primary propelling force in most grassroots communities that made women respond to the general motivating factors outside the scope of “push and pull.” In a way, this force is linked to the complexities between the inflow of new ideas and cultural mindsets, which include domestic violence, and traditional benchmark for the female gender as well as its stigmatization, and these are primarily within the domains of the theories of intersectionality and “gendered geographies of power.” As explained in Chapter One, part of this is captioned by Selvin (2016) as “disjunction, dislocation, displacement, disengagement, disconnection and the dismantling of the old stabilities, conventions and identities” and is also linked to the radical responses of the social system, even at the grassroots level (Selvin, 2016:12).

There is, therefore, a semi-breakdown of the age-long traditional gender institution and its related cultural benchmarks, and this enables women to respond to new propelling factors, thus modifying the gender structure of labour migration from Nigeria to South Africa. All the informants mentioned here are women. Some Nigerian female nurses and doctors have been recruited in South Africa. However, this is below the number of such workers in Europe (especially the United Kingdom), the United States and Saudi Arabia (Adepoju, 2000: 386). South Africa receives many Nigerian female migrants annually (UNHR, 2010) though there are no sufficient data to know their exact population. However, according to census figures compiled by Statistics South Africa in 2014, Nigeria is among the top ten countries in respect of the population of female immigrants in South Africa (Table 3.1 below). Concerning both genders, the 2011 census estimates that over 2 million foreign-born immigrants reside in South Africa and constitute 4% of the country’s population. Two-thirds of the immigrants are from the African continent, with Zimbabwean immigrants accounting for 42.6% of this number, 12.9% come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 10.3% from Nigeria and 4.7% from Lesotho (Statistics South Africa 2012). Segatti et al. (2012) report that approximately 36 000 Nigerians have entered South Africa annually between 2004 and 2010 (Segatti et al., 2012). As a commercial centre, Durban attracts many Nigerian female migrants because it is relatively easier to start a small-scale business

or keep life going tentatively through menial jobs until one can secure a regular source of income. This is chiefly because Durban ranks as the third most populous urban area in South Africa after Johannesburg and Cape Town and the second most important manufacturing hub in South Africa after Johannesburg (Durban, 2017). Moreover, on average, life here is less expensive compared to places like Pretoria and Johannesburg.

**Table 1. Ten Leading Countries of Birth for Female Immigrants in South Africa: 2004-2007 & 2008-2011**

COUNTRY of birth	2004-2007 census year: population & %	2008-2011 census year: population & %
Zimbabwe	64948 ---- 47.7%	163090 ----- 49.5%
Mozambique	20124 ---- 14.8%	51964 ----- 15.8%
Lesotho	16969 ---- 12.5%	54353 ----- 10.4%
Congo	3097 ---- 2.3%	4828 -----1.5%
Malawi	3010 ---- 2.2%	11845 ----- 3.6%
DRC	2999 ---- 2.2%	3882 ----- 1.2%
Swaziland	2472 ---- 1.8%	7213 ----- 2.2%
India	2280 ---- 1.7%	4411 ----- 1.3%
Nigeria	1656 ---- 1.2%	3688 ----- 1.1%
UK	1644 ---- 1.2%	3604 ----- 1.1%
Other counties	17030 ---- 12.5%	40518 ----- 12.3%
Non-stated	13293 ---- 9.8%	45412 ----- 13.8%
Total	136229 ---- 100.0%	329396 ----- 100.0%

Source: Statistics South Africa, *International Migration Data in the Case of South Africa*, A Presentation made at the Workshop on Strengthening the Collection and Use of International Migration Data for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 18 – 21 November 2014.

On the platform of these new propelling forces, the pre-emigration experience of some of the immigrants could be said to have illustrated the reasons for cross-border migration as illustrated by their reflection on life in Nigeria as follows:

*I left my country because of unemployment. Besides, there's no electricity, no infrastructure, and hospitals are not functioning. We are suffering, people are dying of hunger, pensioners get no pay and yet the fresh graduates have no employment. The government does not care for the people while there is a high rate of corruption among political office holders (Informant, Mrs Bolanle Ikudende).*

Another informant, Mrs Patience Amao, said:

*I come to South Africa to run a PhD programme at UKZN, but I know many Nigerians, both male and female, who are here because of the harsh socio-economic situation in that country in terms of unemployment, even among the educated ones. Also, there are almost complete absence of infrastructure to enable the unemployed one start with small-scale business, unlike in South Africa where there are basic infrastructures, particularly electricity and a relatively good network of road transport that can sustain such business outfits. All the Nigerian women, and even the men, I know here only focus on the small-scale business. They did not even come with the motive of salary jobs because they know that office jobs have not even gone round all the indigenes. I don't think that there is any exaggeration in the global rating of Nigeria in terms of the poor quality of life. (Informant, Mrs Amao)*

Moreover, Sister Chioma of the South Africa branch of the Lord Chosen Charismatic Revival Movement discussed extensively issues involving cross-border migration between Nigeria and South Africa and the lapses in Nigerian government and politics in addition to the hardship and poverty at the grassroots level as well as the link between this and the pattern of migration.

According to her:

*My colleague and I left Nigeria for South Africa, intending to start with a small-scale business. You know that in Nigeria, existing infrastructure from the power supply to roads and health institutions are grossly inefficient. In terms of electricity, for*

*instance, most parts of the major cities experience power failure for weeks, and sometimes indefinitely. At least Lagos provides a very good example. These are major hindrances to the success of the type of small-scale businesses one can embark upon in Nigeria. For instance, to run a shop for selling frozen foods successfully, one needs a regular supply of electricity. When we came, we could not even afford one-room accommodation because we spent all we had on visa and flight ticket. My colleague is a man and was sleeping in the church, though I manage to get assistance from another Nigerian who allowed me to stay with her for three months while working to raise money for my accommodation. But today, my colleague, Stanley is well-off and doing well in his business. He married a South African lady, lives in a two-bedroom apartment, uses one of the modern cars and is one of the key sponsors of the Lord Chosen Ministry here in terms of funding. However, I also want to admit that some left the country for other reasons (Informant, Sister Chioma).*

The second informant said she does not “*really think that there is any exaggeration in the global rating of Nigeria in terms of the poor quality of life*” simply because these views also primarily reflect the ranking of Nigeria in the global Human Development Index (HDI). Contemporary international institutions have a keen interest in the pattern of life, human resource index and standard of living in each country partly to identify the propelling factors in the escalating international migration rate. Unemployment, violence, environmental degradation, lack of enabling social infrastructure, political repression and extreme poverty could be critical factors in the Nigerian case as these have been found to induce large-scale migrations in some other countries (Crush & Tevera, 2010). Both per capita income and life expectancy are low. In 1978 these stood at 41years and \$380 respectively. The existing data of this decade indicate no significant improvement as listed in the table below comparing Nigeria with some other countries.

**Table 2. Selected Countries from Global Human Development Index, 2011**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Human Development Index(HDI)</b>	<b>Life Expectancy At Birth</b>	<b>Mean Years Of Schooling</b>	<b>Expected Years Of Schooling</b>	<b>Gross National Income(GNI) Per capita</b>	<b>Non Income HDI***</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>0.459</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>2,069</b>	<b>0.471</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	0.718	73.5	7.2	13.8	10,162	0.748
<b>Libya</b>	0.760	74.8	7.3	16.6	12,637	0.795
<b>Saudi A</b>	0.770	73.9	7.8	13.7	23,274	0.765
<b>Sweden</b>	0.904	81.4	11.7	15.7	35,837	0.936
<b>USA</b>	0.910	78.5	12.4	16.0	43,017	0.931

**\*\*\*Value of HDI computed from the life expectancy and education indicators only**

Source: Based on data from UNDESA (2011), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011), UNSD (2011), World Bank (2011a) and IMF (2011), cited in Babatunde Raji Fashola, “Education, Research and National Development: Bridging the Gap between the Town and the Gown”, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Lecture, School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka, 2012 (pages 33-36).

Again, the available facts and figures demonstrate that the problem of poor infrastructure, high birth rate, high unemployment rate and hunger and starvation (reflected in the views of the above informants) date back to the 1970s (Falola, 2001:111). Yet currently, there is no significant improvement. The available data by 2015 indicates that Nigeria parades a plethora of unflattering socio-economic indices. With a poverty headcount of 53.9%, the population of the poor in Nigeria of about 100 million is more than the whole population of Egypt (93m), the Democratic Republic of Congo(79million), the United Kingdom (65 million), France (64 million), Turkey (79 million), among others (Sodade, 2017:17). Nigeria belongs to the low human development category positioning it at 152 out of 188 countries and territories under the UNDP ranking. Her Human Development Index value for 2015 of 0.514 is below the average for sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria’s life expectancy at birth of 52.8 years is among the worst globally compared to 60.6 years on average for other

low HDI countries and 64.1 years for Ethiopia, and 58.7 years for the Democratic Republic of Congo (Sodade, 2017:17).

The World Economic Forum uses the Human Capital Report to rank countries on how well they are deploying their peoples' talents. The index embraces the totality of human endeavours, ranging from the structural pattern of employment to that of education and skills acquisition. The 2016 Human Capital Report ranked Nigeria 127 out of 130 countries, the worst country in Africa except for Chad and Mauritania (Sodade, 2017:17). According to experts, for every one million population; 1000 megawatts of electricity is required to satisfy every need. With a population of about 180 million, Nigeria's optimum power supply is grossly below that of South Africa that generates and distributes over 50,000MW with a population of 53 million (Sodade, 2017:17). It is not surprising that "the dominant media, political and academic discourses on the demographic mobility of Nigerians see a wave of desperate people fleeing chronic poverty, repression and violence and trying to enter the elusive Eldorado of the developed world" (Akinrinade and Olukoya, 2011:75).

Some immigrants, including the first informant above, talked about corruption in the Nigerian government and politics. Reflecting on this, it must be pointed out that amidst the suffering of the masses and epileptic electricity supply, as well as public hospitals, public schools, and other public institutions, the political elites appropriate trillions of Naira illegally among themselves in addition to the reckless spending of a vast amount of public fund on trivial and often selfish projects. For example, Obasanjo spent ₦1, 570 trillion, withdrawn from the oil reserve fund, for his third term ambition in 2006. Among others, each member of the House of Senate got ₦50 million while members of the House of Representative got ₦40 million each. At the same time, senior staff of the Federal Civil Service got a substantial amount of money to solicit their support for the third term bill (*The Punch*, May 9, 2006, page 1). Recent figures compiled by G. O. Igiebor demonstrate a continuation of this trend (Igiebor, 2019). He highlighted that similar fraudulent waste of public fund is perpetuated at the state level by most governors. The least among those listed is the former Governor of Gombe State over a fraud of US\$82 million (29.5 billion Naira). Others are Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma, former Nasarawa State Governor (US\$115 million), former Governor of Ogun State, Otunba Gbenga Daniel (US\$372 million), Chief Adebayo

Alao-Akala, Former Governor of Oyo State (US\$160 million), and Muhammed Danjuma Goje. Yet, they received no punishment after their trials (Igiebor, 2019).

### **Political instability**

It has been argued that the gross structural weaknesses in the running of Nigeria's government since independence is a significant factor in political instability and the creation of poverty. This was a key issue raised by a former Nigerian senate president, Anyim Pius Anyim, when he said in the Reverend Samuel Odunaike Memorial Lecture held at Ikeja, Lagos, on June 21, 2002, that "the nation's persistent socio-political instability was traceable to tribal-cum-regional politics, religious bigotry, political violence, farce political rivalry, leadership without commitment to the people, fear of domination, and corruption" (Okpubigho, 2016:41). Until 1960, in the absence of such essential and cohesive factors as common religion and language, as well as uniform culture and worldview, which bind people together, the only force that brought Nigerians together was coercive British presence and rule. So, instead of developing the love of one's country (patriotism), Nigerians developed the love of one's ethnic group (ethnocentrism), and this was antithetical to the realization of the type of national unity and socio-political institutions required for the creation of wealth and provision of employment. This was the trend even after the people, led by political leaders of the three regions - Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe from the East, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa from the North, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo from the West—became politically independent of Great Britain and continued until the outbreak of the civil war. Yet over four decades after the civil war, many feel Nigeria is yet to learn anything from the past (Ogbaa, 2003). In other words, the type of unity Nigerians expected from the lessons of the civil war was not attained despite Gowon's three R's, "Reconstruction, Reintegration and Rehabilitation" (Arifalo, 1982:167; Ogbaa, 2003). A good number of people were disillusioned, poverty increased, and this has been observed to be another factor in the search for greener pasture in foreign lands (Ogbaa, 2003).

From January 15, 1970, when the civil war ended, to May 29, 1999, when Nigeria began once again to experiment with a democratic political system, no fewer than seven military adventurers ruled Nigeria: General Yakubu Gowon (1966-75), General Murtala

Mohammed (1975-76), General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-79), Major-General Muhamadu Buhari (1983-85), General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-93), General Sani Abacha (1993-93), and General Abdulsalaam Abubakar (1998-99). The only civilian interregnum occurred between 1979 and 1983, when Alhaji Shehu Shagari won elections to become the first post-war civilian president, only to be toppled by Major-General Buhari in a 1983 military coup. The other brief civilian regime, which was headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, lasted for less than four months: from the middle of August to November 1993, when it was toppled by General Abacha in another military coup.

So, for three long decades (1970-99), Nigeria was ruled by military juntas, except for the few months in 1993, they allowed civilians to rule under their watchful eyes. For all those long years, Nigeria felt like a military camp because of the ubiquitous presence of military officers among civilians (Ogbaa, 2003). More significant was the precarious effects of the economic policies of these military rulers, particularly Ibrahim Babangida and Sanni Abacha, on the life of the average Nigerian. For instance, the devaluation of the Naira during the Babangida regime coupled with the acceptance of IMF conditionality to be granted loans compounded the crisis of the Nigerian economy. The significant outcome was acute hardship and general poverty. For the first time, based on World Bank data on the global economy, Nigeria joined the league of the poorest 20 countries in the world (Adegbulu, 2003:104). The result is that even Nigerian emigrants, particularly those to the U.S., who voluntarily came back to the country between 1985 and 1995, had to embark on a return migration (Ogbaa, 2003). Thus, also subscribing to this point as a key factor in the emigration of Nigerians, Mrs Abosede Ikudende, a self-employed immigrant, also in the hair-dressing industry in Durban, has this to say:

*I'm an indigene of Ogun State in Nigeria. I belong to a Christian family. After my secondary school education, I attended Lagos State Polytechnic where I completed my OND in Business Administration. Nigeria is very tough. I dropped out of the HND programme because of the absence of a sponsor as my parents could not provide the required fund. There have been no promising jobs to sustain the educated citizens. Besides, there is no electricity, no good roads, and the government does not see it as its responsibility to address the demand of the masses (Informant, Mrs Ikudende).*

Apart from the obvious evils of the dictatorial regimes, such as lack of fundamental human rights, absence of the rule of law, general corruption, and debauchery, the country was torn into two parts—Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria—instead of the four regions into which it was divided before the war—Eastern Nigeria, Midwestern Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, and Western Nigeria. Also, because six of the seven military rulers came from the North and the remaining ones from the West, the governance of the country was usually in the hands of Northern military rulers and their civilian cronies (Ogbaa, 2003).

The military governments appointed heads of federal universities and colleges. However, such appointments ought to be carried out by the academic institutions with the use of standard procedures and criteria for appointments. The laws of the land were replaced with military decrees. Social amenities, such as piped water, good roads, electricity, hospitals, and medical supplies became scarce or non-existent in virtually all parts of the country, further compounding the poverty issue as many people in small-scale business dropped out because of poor infrastructure, particularly electricity (Ogbaa, 2003).

Eventually, civil unrest, as well as ethnic and religious tensions, was felt everywhere in the country. The military commanders ordered soldiers to deal with situations they saw as a threat to their very existence. And before the civilians know what was happening, the soldiers had a field day killing and maiming of unarmed civilians, especially those who took part in legitimate demonstrations against obnoxious military decrees. In the end, highly trained professors, technocrats, and other professionals from Eastern, Midwestern, and Western Nigeria left the country in droves to find jobs in foreign countries, thus creating a phenomenon the government dubbed "brain drain"(Ogbaa, 2003). In the end, all the major ethnic groups developed profound and far-reaching mutual suspicions for one another, which have continued to make it almost impossible for many Nigerians to believe in the land of their birth.

Yet, despite such easy communication links between Nigerians at home and those abroad, all was not well with the country. The people fought hard to bring in a democratically elected administration in 1999, but they were yet to experience the benefits of democracy.

This is because there still exist, a lot of nagging socio-political, economic, and religious problems - a situation that bothered everybody, including Nigerian, elected officeholders (Okpubigho, 2016:41).

### **Poverty**

This prevailing socio-political and economic situation eroded almost every element of egalitarianism and increased the level of poverty. Many were relegated to the poverty zone, while those still living above the poverty level were hounded and haunted with the fear of falling victim to the same social ill. Therefore, poverty and inequality became critical factors in international migration as even those yet to be relegated to the zone conceived migration as the only means of avoiding relegation. Poverty can be considered to be one of the key factors that have motivated many women to migrate to South Africa. This can be discernible from the following interview of Mrs Temilade Balogun, a housewife and hairdresser, whose view seems to summarize some issues surrounding the motive behind female emigration in Nigeria. According to her:

*I'm 28years old and I'm from the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. I'm a hairdresser and came to South Africa to join my husband. We face language and cultural barrier, and the natives are scared of foreigners. I know that people come up with different issues when explaining the reasons for migration. Some talk of ethnicity in government, Boko Haram, corruption and military rule, etc., but if they don't result in poverty people will be comfortable where they are. Therefore, I believe the bottom line is poverty. For instance, life is better here compared to Nigeria. Here we have enough food without begging from people. Now that even single women can migrate on their own, the basic thing in their mind is how to erase poverty (Informant, Mrs Balogun).*

It must be argued in line with the view of the above informant that poverty is responsible for several issues, including the increasing rate of migration. Looking more closely at the Nigerian scene, with emphasis on the poverty question, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Nigeria grew by 0.2 per cent per year on average in the decade 1979-1989. It rose to an average of 2.7 in the decade 1989 to 1991. The population, however, grew by 2.8 per cent through these years. Consequently, the per capita GNP fell from \$780 in 1981 to \$200 in

1999 (Toyo, 2010: 88). The percentage of people below the poverty line of the estimated population rose, as indicated in the table below.

**Table 3. The Percentage of People Below the Poverty Line in Nigeria**

Year	1980	1985	1992	1996
Poverty	28.1	46.3	42.7	65.6

**Table 3** showing the percentage of people below the poverty line in Nigeria:

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, 1999. Cited in Toyo Eskor, 2010. “The Poverty Question,” *The Constitution*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September), 75-94

Despite some improvement over the years as the percentage of the poor, including those living below the poverty level, is believed to have dropped to 53.9 per cent by 2016, in practice the rapidly increasing population of the country implies that relatively the population of the poor in Nigeria outnumbered those of any other African country (Sodade, 2017:17). As pointed out earlier, Mrs Abosede Ikudende said that Nigerians are rugged, and as part of her experience, she added:

*We are six children in my family. As I said before, I managed to complete my National Diploma programme at the Lagos State Polytechnic but dropped out from the HND programme due to the absence of a sponsor. My family could not sustain it financially. My mother was a petty trader. My father was employed by the local government, but when he retired in 1999 life became tough. I came to South Africa for economic reason, i.e., the poor economy of Nigeria vis-à-vis the issue of poverty. I even came with pregnancy and without my husband. But I reached an agreement with him. I own a hairdressing salon here in South Africa. South Africa is better than Nigeria and my life here is also better compared to when I was in Nigeria. I have been here for five years without my husband, though he visited me last year. (Informant, Mrs Ikudende)*

On the issue, another informant, Mrs Abiodun Oloko said that she left Nigeria “to be exposed to what happens in other parts of the world.” But according to her, the collapse of the Nigerian currency and other social crises makes life there difficult compared to South

Africa, adding that the lapses in the Nigerian socio-political and economic scene tend towards poverty and hardship and constitute key reasons for migration (Mrs Oloko).

However, it is argued “that it appears simplistic to overstress this factor” (Akinrinade and Olukoya, 2011:75). According to this view, strict adherence to the poverty factor in the emigration of Nigerians neglects some fundamental issues in the pattern, nature, and history of cross-border migration. This study argues that there are Nigerian migrants who are relatively educated and others from reasonably well-off backgrounds in terms of wealth, especially considering the relatively enormous cost required for emigration. This school of thought also contends “that the majority of Nigerians living abroad belongs to the elite class and not the class of over 90 million Nigerians living below the poverty line and earning less than a dollar per day” (Akinrinade and Olukoya, 2011:75).

This view is, however, based on three wrong assumptions. The first is the failure to know that there are many educated Nigerians, even university graduates, that are paupers due to the high rate of unemployment. Secondly, as mentioned above, yet most of those striving to avoid being relegated to the poverty zone believed that migration is the only antidote. Finally, most Nigerians abroad who belong to the elite class left the country as poor citizens; some even left as paupers. Kalu Ogbaa (2003) has demonstrated this in his study on Nigerians in the United States. Thus, while we agree with De Haas (2008:13) that empirical and theoretical evidence strongly suggests that higher incomes, improved education, and access to media and information contribute to migration, the Nigerian situation is best understood mainly from the poverty-oriented structure. Thus, almost all the informants in Durban said one or two things about the poverty issue, either directly or indirectly.

At the continental level, a rapidly increasing rate of poverty is regarded as a significant factor in the escalating rate of migration. Added to these are the growing population, political and ethnoreligious crisis. These have been observed as issues for appropriate consideration in analyzing the variation in migration pattern from sub-region to sub-region, e.g., the migration of labour within central and western Africa from one location to the other as well as to the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD ) and the oil-rich countries of the Middle East. Also included are the flow of refugee in East Africa and labour migration from eastern and southern African countries to the South Africa Republic as well as clandestine cross-border migration of seasonal workers and nomads in East Africa (Adepoju, 2010: 11-13).

### **Violence and Insecurity**

Few Nigerian female immigrants see some connection between the level of insecurity in the country and the emigration rate, even to South Africa. Therefore, it was considered one of the secondary reasons for migration. Some of the informants listed here alluded to this. According to Mrs Abimbola Folami:

*I came to South Africa for a Ph.D.programme. In terms of infrastructure and opportunity, South Africa is better than Nigeria... On the issue of security, we have Boko Haram and Niger Delta Militants in Nigeria. But I didn't know we have worse than this in South Africa until I came here. In most parts of South Africa, you are not free to move because of a violent group is known as the Scapengos, I don't know whether you are aware of this. I have friends who are victims of this group. They attack people and collect their laptops, passports and similar valuables. One of my friends was stranded for years because he became a victim of this group. Among the things collected from her were his travel documents. Moreover, I was in Durban during the xenophobic violence in 2015, though I was not a victim of the crisis. (Informant, Mrs Folami)*

Moreover, Sister Chioma mentioned above also said:

*However, some people may have two or more reasons for the option of leaving the country as we now have different terrorists' groups like Boko Haram and others under the camouflage of protecting ethnic interests. (Informant, Sister Chioma).*

On the issue of socio-political crises and violence, almost every African country, including South Africa, is indeed a victim. The tendency now in the public sector is to assume that socio-political crises and violence cannot be classified among the *push factors* in Africa intra-continental migration because all African countries are engulfed in either violence or political turmoil or other. But the *push factors* cannot be wholly divested of this phenomenon in the Nigerian context because many migrants lacked in-depth knowledge of

the extent of such crises in South Africa at the time of migration, as experienced by Mrs Abimbola Folami.

It must be mentioned that, like some other countries, city life in Nigeria is marred with insecurity. These were among the issues under serious consideration by the U.S. government at the beginning of this decade. Thus, in September 2011, the U.S. State Department advised tourists to be extremely cautious in any visit to Nigeria. This was done with particular emphasis on the Niger Delta states and many of the northern and south-eastern states of Nigeria because of the multiplicity of terrorist and militant groups. Specifically, Abuja is gradually becoming a victim of frequent terrorist bombing as the menace of Boko Haram is on the increase. Criminal activities are also a conspicuous issue in Nigerian cities. The government is, therefore, marking out new strategies to counter the situation. Despite this, the organization of ethnic militias, terrorist and militant groups, as well as the incidents of crime, continued to rise across the country as armed robbers targeted individuals, homes, banks, hotels, shops, bureau de change and communities. The Commissioner of Police in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) disclosed that in just one month, about 203 suspected armed robbers were arrested, with 27 killed (Zabadi, 2008:11). The situation is worse in the Niger Delta where kidnappings, abductions, hostage-taking go on despite the efforts of security agencies. Part of the consequence has been the spread of popular but violent vigilante group against alleged criminals in poor neighbourhoods and rural areas, with extreme human rights violations. Some of these vigilante group initiatives have in the past been hijacked and turned into militia-type formations engaged in urban terror activities (Zabadi, 2008:11).

It has been observed that the critical issue is the negative image this insecurity gives Nigeria internationally and its implication for the flow of investments and tourism into the country in addition to the loss of revenue and income (Zabadi, 2008:11; Karumbidza, 2011; Okeshola, 2014; Osawe, 2015). Yet, in a country with a rapidly increasing population of youth, investment, tourist attraction, and revenue accumulation are indispensable to the creation of employment opportunities that can help to minimize the emigration of labour, whether skilled or unskilled. Consequently, there is an urgent need for both immediate and

long-term investments and strategies to be put in place and implemented, to reverse the situation and achieve national security and development.

### **Bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa**

Nigeria and South Africa have been in series of bilateral agreements for some decades, particularly since the liberalization of the South Africa political system in 1994 (Seteolu, 2016). Such relations were substantial during the regimes of Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo and embraced economic and social issues. They were reflected in the response and support of both countries for the creation of the New Economic Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). These contributed to the presence of a good number of South Africans in Nigeria and vice-versa, which invariably adds to creating a network of social relations like marriage and business partnership resulting in a chain of the cross-migration trend from both sides. Thus, Aderonke Ololade and some other female immigrants attributed their migration to South Africa to marital arrangement contracted in Nigeria with South African immigrants. This is due to the nature of bilateral relations between both countries that make room for the regular flow of cross-border migrants between the two states. Seteolu (2016) has demonstrated many South African nationals in Nigeria, just as we have Nigerians in South Africa. This also applies to the establishment of business ventures owned by Nigerians in South Africa and vice-versa, combining to create chains of socio-economic networks that induce regular cross-border migration. According to Mrs Aderonke Ololade:

*My journey to South Africa is solely in connection with a marriage contracted in Nigeria with a South African citizen. We met at Federal Polytechnic, Abeokuta, i.e., in Nigeria. He enrolled in the Polytechnic to update his educational career and I was at the same time pursuing my diploma programme in Music. He was in Nigeria for many years; in fact, we courted for five years before the marriage. I had to follow him when he decided to leave for South Africa, despite the successful business I had in Nigeria. (Informant, Mrs Ololade).*

Thus, this cordial pattern of bilateral relation that has gradually evolved since the 1990s following the end of apartheid has also steadily created a platform that accommodates several issues in the social network of cross-border life among citizens of both countries (Seteolu, 2016). For instance, traces of the religious factor in the migration history of Nigeria (Akinrinade & Ogen, 2011) are also noticeable in the contemporary era concerning the life of her immigrant women in South Africa. There are several Nigerian female immigrants in South Africa for religious reasons. These categories of migrants are there primarily to propagate the gospel on behalf of a particular Christian denomination. Thus, one of the informants, Mrs Evelyn Emmanuel Moses, said:

*I am from Jos, the northern part of Nigeria, married to a Yoruba man from Oyo state in the Southwest of Nigeria. I came to South Africa to join my husband in the ministry; he is a pastor in Christ Apostolic Church in Durban. I came with visa status to accompany my spouse. We work in the vineyard of God as a minister, the main reason for being here; however, we do little business to support ourselves. The initial challenge was the assimilation problem; people are not so friendly and accommodative compare to where we came from. There is a lot of discrimination within the community when we walk around it was as if they were running away from us; whereas in Nigeria, we welcome foreign people as if they are our own family. Even in the UK, I didn't feel the way I felt here in South Africa. I was also in the United Kingdom for the same reason of being with my husband (Informant, Mrs E. Moses).*

The structural pattern of the relationship also makes room for a smooth cross-border flow of students seeking admission to higher institutions of learning from both sides. It is significant to mention that many informants here are post-graduate students of South African universities. For the same reason, several Nigerian immigrants often think of different means of acquiring permanent residence (PR) visa after completing their education here and have some satisfaction in terms of career acquisition. Thus, some of the informants here already secured their permanent residence visa, while a few others are also making an effort to obtain it. Among them is Mrs Temitope Ige, who stated that she came with a study visa but had converted it to a PR visa. (Informant, Mrs Ige)

Finally, the nature of bilateral relation tends to avoid undue rigidity and formality to accommodate a practical reality in terms of the plight of migrants' vis-à-vis the sustenance

of humanity and the search for survival. This creates room for some elements of irregular migration utilized by migrants from both sides. This is believed to have induced the migration of a few Nigerians into South Africa. It has been demonstrated that irregular migration to South Africa became pronounced due to the relative absence of legal mechanisms for entry and working in post-apartheid South Africa (Adepoju, 2007:18). Most of the irregular migrants from Nigeria come to South Africa as visitors and then start applying for the status of asylum seekers. They may, therefore, be classified as semi-irregular migrants. Among the informants with this experience is Mrs Abosede Ikudende, a 35-year-old indigene of Ogun State in Nigeria who came alone to South Africa after some agreement with her husband. According to her:

*I came to South Africa as a visitor, so I had to devise all means to obtain a legal document of asylum status and I have been here for over five years. The environment in South Africa is very nice in terms of infrastructure and basic social amenities (Informant, Mrs Ikudende).*

Similarly, another informant, Mrs Folami Abimbola, came to South Africa as a visitor but spent a year after the expiration of her visitor permit. In the process, she tried to change her status but was finally successful. According to Adepoju (2007:18), many irregular migrants do not have skills that are indispensable to their domestic economy and, even after several years abroad, may not have acquired such skills. According to him, they may have difficulty reinserting themselves into the domestic labour market on return home. This is, however, not true of Nigerian irregular migrants in South Africa. Most of them are educated, while others are talented artisans. The only thing is that most of them do not have the fund to process the necessary travel permit because of insufficient income. Thus Mrs Folami Abimbola mentioned above had a master's degree in Microbiology from the University of Ibadan and was in South Africa for a Ph.D. programme. At the same time, Mrs Abosede Ikudende was a talented hairdresser. The latter had an OND from Lagos State Polytechnic before coming to South Africa, while the former finally completed her PhD and secured a post-doctoral research programme in South Africa (Informant, Mrs Folami Abimbola).

### **The Attractions and Illusions about South Africa**

It must be noted that the Nigerian media has been fair in its portrait of the South African socio-economic scene and assessment of opportunities available in that economy. None of the informants here rely intensely on the media but instead on information from ex-schoolmates colleagues and country folks abroad and leaflets and pamphlets circulated by private organisations involved in cross-border migration and import/export business. For instance, it is these individuals and agents that create the wrong impression or circulates ideas that are wrongly interpreted by those at home.

According to an informant, Dr (Mrs.) Bolanle Oyegoke:

*The first impression is that South Africa is an organized country compared to where I came from; it is similar to what I have experienced in the UK because I have been to the UK previously. A colleague of my husband who graduated from the same university with him came to South Africa earlier and convinced us that the place is a convenient alternative to Europe (Informant, Dr Oyegoke).*

This description is clear, but for those in Nigeria, it would mean different things to different people due to the relative economic advantage South Africa has over other African nations, thus creating some illusions about the wealth and prosperity of the state. Almost every informant made one or two statements that can attract ambiguous interpretation among friends and others in Nigeria in search of greener pastures. Thus, Mrs Temilade B. Balogun said:

*Life is better here compared to Nigeria. Here we have enough food without begging from people. I'm 28years old, and I'm from the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. I'm a hairdresser and came to South Africa to join my husband. We face language and cultural barrier, and the natives are scared of foreigners. (Informant, Mrs Balogun).*

Similarly, in the words of Mrs Bolanle Ikudende, "Life has been far better than the home country." Other informants in this category are Mrs Amudat Ademuyiwa and Mrs Adetola

Umoh. In particular, the phrase “*is a convenient alternative to Europe*” points to some element of illusion as it would attract significant controversy among those familiar with South Africa and Europe, particularly the advanced states of Europe.

Yet the viewpoint of these immigrants must be given its due merit concerning existing facts and figures on the relative strength of the South African economy. The economic edge South Africa has over other African countries is partly portrayed by her rapidly expanding investments in Nigeria and many other African countries, making the citizens of these countries have a high perception of its economic and commercial prowess. It is no more controversial to say that the overwhelming nature of South Africa investment in other African states has been accomplished at a rate beyond the expectation of even the experts in macro-economic analyses (Hudson, 2007:128; Brenton, 2013). Nothing probably illustrates this better than the fact that her investment in the rest of Africa supersedes that of other nations despite the recent effort made by the advanced economies of the West to increase the value of their fixed assets in the continent (Hudson, 2007:128; Brenton, 2013). This new trend of South Africa economic expansion has been described as “one of the biggest economic phenomena” of the first decade of this millennium (Hudson, 2007:128).

It was the confidence derived from the enormous investment of South Africa in the continent that made Brand South Africa host a conference in Nigeria in 2019 during which Ralph Mupita, “CFO of the biggest South African investor in Nigeria – MTN” addressed representatives of Nigerian banks and other financial institutions as well as managing directors of several multinational corporations. The primary aim of Ralph Mupita talk was to demonstrate that South Africa’s investments are designed for the economic development of African states, and he started by analyzing the historical trend of South African economic expansion with emphasis on her investments in Nigeria (Brand South Africa, 2019). He revealed that South Africa already had noticeable investments by the first decade of this century. Compared to other countries in the African continent, the potential attractiveness of South Africa is high. However, its performance is relatively weak for FDI attraction, despite progress owing to investment potential in infrastructure. Still, the country leads in terms of FDI inflows in Africa, primarily thanks to SEZ programmes. The Musina/Makhado SEZ, along the principal north-south route into the Southern African

Development Community and close to the border with Zimbabwe, offers a strategic location to attract FDI. According to data published in UNCTAD's 2019 World Investment Report, FDI inflows recovered in the country after several years of low level, and increased by 166% in 2018, reaching USD 5.3 billion. This is related to the Government's campaign to attract \$100 billion of FDI by 2023. This significant increase is mainly due to intercompany loans and equity inflows. During the year, Beijing Automotive Industry Holding, BMW, Nissan and Mainstream Renewable Energy were the biggest investors. FDI stocks decreased by 17.5%, to almost \$129 billion in 2018. The new ANC administration led by Ramaphosa is expected to be more encouraging to foreign investors than the previous president, Jacob Zuma (as an example, the latter had previously announced his intention to revise the Land Law to restrict propriety rights for foreigners). In 2017, European countries were active investors in South Africa (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg), as well as the United States, China, Australia and Japan. Most of the investment went to the financial, mining, manufacturing, transportation and retail sectors (Brand South Africa, 2019).

One of the agencies employed by the government to support the private sector for this economic expansion is the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). This body makes provision for funding and risk-sharing. Its sixty projects in twenty-one different African countries in the first decade of this century are specifically for this purpose. The principles of the New Economic Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) have also been injected into the strategic packages of South Africa economic expansionist policy, mainly through state-owned business ventures. The new approach is partly to enhance the dynamics of production and oil the wheels of industrialization through joint effort in the development of infrastructure (Hudson, 2007:128-130).

According to Naidu (2005:9), South Africa's companies have exploited what seems to be a limitation to the host African states in the expansion of commerce and industries. It is the "generally underdeveloped—or in some cases, non-existent—infrastructure." This has been handled with rugged strategies and a dynamic approach, making it "a boom for South African contractors and parastatals" (Naidu, 2005:9). Among the key names in the private sector of South Africa's commercial package in the continent are Transnet and Eskom

Enterprises, as well as Spoornet and Comazar. The commercial prowess of Transnet is evident from the expansion of its rail division. Eskom Enterprises is active in the energy field in 17 African countries in a bid to secure South Africa's electric power and sources of revenue. Its investment in the power sector constitutes its most substantial venture, an ambitious project seeking to create a united mega power structure for the entire SADC region (Hudson, 2007:128-130).

It has been observed that two major factors sustain South African corporate investment in the continent. The first is her home market estimated to have up to forty-seven million consumers, though considered insufficient for the expanding industries (Hudson, 2007:128-130). An aggressive drive into the rest of Africa is thus perceived to be in South Africa's national self-interest. The second is her "liberalization of the regulatory regime for outward FDI", which has facilitated the expansion of her companies into most other countries of Africa. This has been assisted by the "signing of trade and investment agreements with African countries and regions" (Hudson, 2007:128-130). South Africa, therefore, controls the lion's share of total investment in Africa. The continent managed to increase its share of global FDI inflows from 1.7 per cent in 2002 to 2.6 per cent in 2003, suggesting improved confidence in the region's prospects. Further to this, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recent report stated that South Africa attracted R80bn in FDI in 2013, 110% more than the previous year (Patel, 2015). The Africa Attractiveness Survey by Ernst & Young said: "that Africa rose to become the second most attractive investment destination in the world, tied with Asia." (Ernst & Young, 2014). In this sector, for example, South Africa's telecommunications giants, Vodacom and MTN, have been profitably active in Africa, most notably MTN in Nigeria though South Africa is by no means the only telecoms investor (Games, 2004).

Since 2000 when South Africa became fully involved in the search for new dimensions in the political and economic integration of Africa, this commercial prowess has been enhanced by her relative strength as a key political player through initiatives such as NEPAD and a careful leadership role in the promotion of peaceful democratic transitions, 'good governance and human rights. (Hudson, 2007:128-130) This has again made Nigerians conceive that country as a nation with some semblance of peace compared to

their crisis-ridden homeland where, among others, Boko Haram and Niger Delta militants made many communities to live in perpetual fear. Indeed, this is partly what an informant means when she said, “The first impression is that South Africa is an organized country compared to where I came from” (Mrs Ikudende).

This image has been enormously enhanced by South Africa soft power diplomacy, primarily meant to expand her political and economic interests. It has been observed that “soft power is increasingly becoming significant for countries who wish to wield significant power in the international system” (Smith, 2012:63-83). Therefore, as one instrument of expanding her international horizon, this emerging power of the African continent is gradually embarking on investments that would bring out the best she has in terms of soft power utilisation (Smith, 2012).

It has been observed that South Africa is emerging as a soft power country because it has the quiet power qualities to create some influence in inter-state relations, especially at the continental level, without the adoption of coercion and force. This can be actualized by adopting measures to ensure that the virtue of her ideas and choices is accepted and hence injected into the preferences of other countries, particularly within the continent. She can initiate this “by taking cognisance of its racial past; the richness of its diverse culture; the contradictions in socio-economic development; the fight against poverty and inequalities; and adherence to constitutionalism and the rule of law in setting the agenda and ensuring that the multilateral system can implement policies that are people-centred” (Chiroro, 2012:2). South Africa tried to employ some of these to enhance its foreign policy in the continent. These are among the ingredients of her economic integration package for the region.

Again, “South Africa can confidently exploit its geopolitical influence by exercising its values, culture, policies and institutions and use these effectively in attracting other nations to want what South Africa desires for its people; this is the ultimate display of soft power” (Ogunnubi, 2013:277). Through such means, where force is counter-productive, she will have her way by enjoying some form of voluntary compliance and acceptability. However, much of this is yet to be utilised, particularly her soft power of cultural attraction. This

refers to her cultural exports in terms of music, art, media, literature and the likes. In music, media, art, literature etc., South Africa parades a host of cultural exports, which, if well explored, could transform the role she plays at the international level about her diplomatic vision and mission (Ogunnubi, 2013:277). This situation in which South African companies are building a presence across the continent, its politicians promote an 'African Renaissance', and her leaders speak for the developing world in international fora is somewhat different from the apartheid years when South Africa was an agent of destabilization and consequently isolated. The economic implication and consequent outcome is a symbiotic socio-economic relation that has positively transformed her image open up new avenues for economic expansion. This structure also induces an inflow of immigrants (Patel, 2015).

Hudson (2007) also observes that South African firms make more profit from their investment in other countries than what they invest in their homeland. This is said to be "two to three times higher than those earned in their home operations by 2004" in addition to an "average returns of between 30 per cent on equity in the banking sector and up to 60 per cent in other sectors" (Hudson, 2007:129; Patel, 2015). These facts and figures on the viability of the economies of African states were among the data for consideration when former UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, noted that investment in African economies yields more profit than what is obtainable in other regions of the world. In many African countries - Botswana, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria in particular - educated and enterprising people have boosted business operations. As former British colonies, South Africa shares many institutional, political, economic and cultural traditions, and consequently, South Africans find these business environments familiar. Indeed, the rest of Africa has proved to be fertile ground for many South African investors, though the terrains are rough for many companies and that effective management of risks requires promising visions and strategic approach (Hudson, 2007:128130; Patel, 2015).

But this perception of rapid South African economic expansion tended to blindfold the Nigerian public from identifying the lapses in the entire scene, among which is general slowing down and a relative decline in some sectors of the South African economy in later years, among which is aviation, banking and road construction units. Thus, South Africa's

exports were just over 37 million Rand more in 2004 than in 2003, representing just about 0.11 per cent increase. Daniel and Lutcham (2005:487) noted that “overall, their near decade-long dash into the African market slowed in 2004, while some sectors, like aviation, banking and road construction, actually showed a decline.” For example, Shoprite Checkers opened only one store in Lagos, the commercial hub of Nigeria, in 2004. The perception above also tended to obscure the fact that South Africa is not without its crisis, thus contributing to the development of several illusions among Nigerians about the nature of existing opportunities and living standards. Thus, according to Sister Joke Sofola, a fashion designer and dealer in fabrics:

*I came to South Africa to develop my career and assist others. But now I found that life is not better here because of the cost of living, particularly house rent and subscription for power supply... However, I'm not thinking of going back to Nigeria now because I have a good number of apprentices under me and I want them to be well trained and commence their own business (Informant, Joke Sofola).*

Overall, the migration of Nigerian women to Durban is a function of two sets of factors. The primary one is not within the intellectual consciousness of most immigrants but is of fundamental significance. It is the gradual collapse of some cultural norms and traditional institutions amid the dynamics of rapidly evolving new social concepts best understood under the empirical umbrella of the gender geographies of power and intersectionality theories. The second set is within the forces and general framework of concepts in traditional migration, some of whose items may partially respond to the conceptual explanation of the old “push and pull” theory. It consists of internal factors like unemployment, poverty and general socio-economic crisis coupled with political leaders that are insensitive to the plight of the masses and the attractions and illusions about the host country, South Africa. At the same time, the chapter corrects some wrong impression, among which is an observation with facts and figures that any attempt to attribute the mass emigration of Nigerians to affluence and acquisition of wealth at home is primarily based on a false assumption.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN DURBAN**

The challenges and constraints of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa had attracted the attention of both the government and the populace of Nigeria since 2015 when Nigerians became victims of violence, deportation, and xenophobic attack in South Africa (Ameh, 2017:7). One outcome of the incident of 2015 is that the Nigerian masses, government and related bodies like the Niger Delta militant organizations became interested in the details of the challenges facing Nigerians in South Africa (Ameh, 2017:7). The recent xenophobic violence of 2019, during which many Nigerians in Johannesburg lost their lives, compounded the situation as President Muhammadu Buhari was forced to visit South Africa to alleviate the problem. Two primary reasons made Nigerians take the event of 2015 seriously. In the first instance, apart from bilateral foreign relations with South Africa, both countries have gradually evolved a platform of peace and a measure of social links partly through the exchange of movies and music and other elements of soft-power diplomacy like sports (Isike, 2012:94-95). These have also created a network of good inter-state relations between both countries and other African states. Secondly, though on average Nigeria was not among the dominant migrant groups in South Africa by 2015 (Isike,2012:94-95), data on female immigrants from Statistics South Africa demonstrate that Nigeria is among the top ten countries in respect of foreign female population (Refer to Table 1 above). In particular, the Niger Delta militant organizations believed that the Federal Government response to the situation should commence with the fate of Nigerian immigrant women in South Africa (Akasike, 2017:7).

The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban are faced with the challenges of unemployment, language and cultural barriers, family isolation and the problem of adaptation to emerging trends in cultural dynamism. Others are deportation, domestic violence, and xenophobia. In practice, these are challenges and hazards that compound the intricacies surrounding gender relations, the primary reason why they are theoretically classified under the platform of intersectionality as issues that overlap with gender. But in a way, they have the tendency to

vary from one area to the other, mainly when analysed under the platform of transnational migration, the very reason why the gendered geographies of power have addressed their spatial perspectives. This spatial perspective is also required here since the interconnectivity involves cross-border issues. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the challenges above here in the context of the experience of the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban without completely losing sight of the tenets of both theories.

### **Unemployment and Underemployment: Nigerian Immigrant Women and the South African Informal Economy**

In terms of employment, the first significant challenge encountered by Nigerian immigrant women in Durban stemmed from the fact that most of them are engaged in what has been classified as the informal economy. For example, two Nigerian women interviewed in Durban for this study are students, while twenty are employed in the informal economy. Out of these twenty, one is a medical doctor but was still engaged in the informal economy partly because she was pregnant and was yet to be employed in a health institution. Among those in the informal economy, seven are into fashion, hairdressing, and cosmetic business. At the same time, one is a housewife to a branch pastor of a Pentecostal Church with headquarters in Nigeria. She tries to contribute to the upkeep of her family through petty retail trading. Therefore, before examining why the majority of them are employed in the informal economy, there is a need to understand the nature of challenges they have to contend with within the sector. This has to be done partly through a proper conceptualization of what is meant by the informal economy and partly through some analysis of its characteristics.

It has been observed that the informal economy provides the socio-economic platform for the sustenance of the poor in the less developed countries (LDCs), especially in Africa, including Southern Africa (Mirand, 2015). In particular, the informal economy is regarded by analysts as “the sector of the economy which is unregulated” and one known for its general characteristics, customs and traditions, among which is tax evasion and indifference to some categories of government economic programmes and policies (Mwaba, 2010:37). Others attempt to portray the illicit nature of some of the transactions involved and other

illegal commercial activities connected to the smuggling of goods and undervalued receipts (Njiwa, 2013: 22).

However, there is a need to be practical and realistic in addressing topical issues involving appropriate management of this sector by the government and interested non-governmental organizations. In practice and reality and concerning the economic structure of the LDCs, it is mostly that part of the economy run by those who endeavour to make ends meet through their initiative and enterprise. (Mirand, 2015) This is also the view of one of the informants, holding a national diploma in business administration but earning a living as a hairdresser. In addition to the absence of government sanction, there is not sufficient documentation of the numerous small-scale business initiatives in the sector, even though this could be an asset to effective management and utilization of the sector. This is partly because most financial institutions are very cautious and sometimes reluctant when it comes to investing in the business initiatives of the informal economy, most of which are small-scale in nature. Nevertheless, in terms of reduction of poverty in the management of the family as a social unit, the potency of the informal economy, especially in the LDCs, is hardly disputable. Both the government and regional organizations have identified this benefit of the sector. It is for this reason that an Advocacy Strategy by the Southern African Development Community noted that the informal economy “acts as a safety net for unemployed people” in many sectors of society. (SADC, 2011: 5).

Unfortunately, despite the enormous contribution of the sector to the national economy of most LDCs, the governments of African states, including South Africa, hardly recognize its importance in terms of policy formulation and effective utilization of its small-scale business initiatives. The value of trade conducted by women in the SADC region under the umbrella of the informal economy has been enormous. For instance, a 2010 estimate by the United States Agency for International Development has placed it at approximately US\$7 billion annually (USAID, 2012). However, most key players in government see it as a threat “as opposed to managing and nurturing it so that it becomes a secure and viable support system for people who cannot secure formal employment or for those who have identified an opportunity to create a business for themselves and employ others in the sector” (Makombe, 2011: 44).

## **Challenges Facing Women Working in the Informal Economy**

Appropriate inquiry into the nature of socio-cultural forces women have to contend with would give us an insight into the challenges they grapple with within the informal economy. The average output of an immigrant woman is directly or indirectly related to the structural pattern of these forces. Analyzing the complexities involved, Mwaba (2010: 14) is of the view that “social factors and cultural priorities, constraints, and opportunities form the basis of what people hope to achieve and how they go about meeting their goals.” Due to the dominant nature of patriarchal systems in Southern Africa, most women have not only been subordinated to their male counterparts, but there is also some other forms of discrimination against them.

Patriarchy is a system that denied women growth opportunities rather than provides a structure for their advancement. Mwaba (2010) categorically stated that women are generally regarded as subordinate to their male counterparts, have less voice, less autonomy, fewer opportunities, and lowered self-esteem. The Nigerian woman in Durban faces this limitation from both ends. This is because she comes from a local community in Nigeria with highly institutionalized patriarchal dominance. At the same time, the native Zulu and her Nigerian immigrant male neighbour in South Africa relate to her through the lens of this already established cultural barrier. For married women like Mrs Evelyn Emmanuel Moses, the husband determines every step she takes, including her business life and when to stay in South Africa or Nigeria. Of course, the existing patriarchal dominance is such that this has become the typical structure of our society. According to an informant cited in the previous chapter:

*You know that in traditional society, the woman's respect is believed to be attached to the subordinate role of assisting the husband. In a polygamous family, the wives even sometimes compete among themselves trying to win the favour of the husband. Though our values are changing due to modernization, once married both the family and community expect you to have some honour for these values, i.e., one cannot afford to be on the extreme side even as a migrant in a foreign land. Once married, your*

*husband has a say on the nature of your job or business and even income, in most cases, more than the influence you have on his own* (Informant, Mrs Ashley).

Generally, these factors and established norms have a gender implication as they impact the income and life of women in the informal economy and sometimes expose them to certain unpredictable constraints. This has infringed on women's rights to make a living and has enabled men to “invade the private space of women with inappropriate demands that are demeaning to women as well” (Mwaba, 2010:15). Before any business partnership or otherwise with a woman, some men go to the extent of trying to know her menstrual condition. This is backed up with the doctrine of the “Ecumenical Service for Socio-economic Transformation”, which claimed that women have to stay away from business life during such times and at best engage other women in their place tentatively (ESSET, 2010). Sadly, women hardly protest their subordination and tend to internalize it. For instance, this is reflected in their attitude to leadership issues in their respective associations. It is also reflected in how they conduct their business and their reactions to policymakers’ injunctions. According to existing studies in the field, several factors have compounded the challenges of women in the sector (Mwaba, 2010). It would, therefore, appear that the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban is, of course, not an exception.

**A lack of appropriate legal and policy frameworks and Exclusion from policy processes:**

It has been observed that women are often excluded from policy processes, although based on gender classification, they constitute the dominant group in the informal economy, and this exclusion is manifested in different forms (ESSET, 2010). But the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban can hardly draw any relationship between this and her small-scale business or house chore duty as a housewife. Thus, when asked to respond to this and some other factors illustrated below, an informant who is a housewife and into small-scale trading, Mrs Rose Umar said:

*If you are talking about laws to address the xenophobic crisis, then I may be able to respond properly...Apart from this, only those women in leadership can help us; or must all the immigrant women in Durban gather in Pretoria with the*

*President for policy formulation before we can say that they are not excluded? You also ask me about unfair competition from men. Women who are looking for an excuse to enable them to remain idle may have some stories to tell you. But as far as I'm concerned, there is competition in every business. Even if you allow only women in a particular sector, the competition will remain stiff. In any case, competition contributes to improvement in the quality of goods and services produced (Informant, Mrs Rose Umar).*

The responses of the other informants asked to comment on these were more or less the same. In her response, she said:

*The roads, electricity, water supply, and other things are there to enhance my business hairdressing, compared to my home country, though I pay for them. But you may ask "what do I think about government policies". I guess it is not the duty of government agents to attend to my customers or help me market my business. I know. However, that good government policies help to create employment, increase income and helps to promote small-scale business (Informant, Mrs Akinola).*

This is not to say that the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban is not in any way affected by any of these factors. It only means that on a general assessment, i.e., at the macro-level, these are topical issues that cannot be ignored, but at the micro-level, there is variation in the degree of their impact on each locality. The point is that the average Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban can hardly connect the challenges she faces in business life and government policies on commercial activities. This is partly due to her exposure to the issue and partly due to her level of interaction with the conventions and norms of modern politics and the economy.

The regulations and conventions employed in the sector often ignore the disadvantageous position of women. A good number of these are mere formalities structured to sideline and disempower some people in the marketing of some goods and services, and women are often the worse victims as most of them lack the required capital that can absorb shock under keen competition. As a result of this exclusion, there is often the formulation of top-down policies with hardly any consideration for the specific interests of women in some localities. In contrast, women's demands are perceived from a negative angle (ESSET,

2010). Some elements of this are noticeable in the daily business life of the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban.

More significant is that most countries, especially in the SADC region, not only lack the required legal and policy instrument to protect women as is the case in the formal sector but also lack what it takes to protect and develop the informal economy. Even those that can put in place some form of the legal framework, such as the legal system, fails to respond to the demand of women and the gender power dynamics at play in the informal economy (Mwaba, 2010:15; Steyn, 2011). A significant handicap of the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban is that despite adopting appropriate legal frameworks, the prevailing xenophobia culture exposes her to all manner of abuses, particularly from law enforcement agencies and officials who show little or no concern for the very laws they are supposed to uphold. This is expressed in various ways, including police brutality and corruption. However, unlike the experience of women in some other places (ESSET, 2010; Chetty, 2012), the Nigerian woman in Durban has not been compelled to pay double taxation.

Some governments have even managed the informal economy through the adoption of old colonial laws (Mitullah, 2004: 18). According to the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa (2013), under this platform, the worker in the informal economy is perceived as a nuisance and, therefore illegal elements. It is for this reason that “these laws allow city authorities to forcibly remove any nuisance, obstruction or encroachment on streets or any public place” (Mitullah, 2004: 18). Nigerian immigrant women in Durban are primary victims of these because those of them in the informal economy employ similar places for their business. With a structural framework that tend to criminalize street merchants, cross-border transactions and related commercial activities, many of those in the sector often employ different initiatives, some of which are illegal in approach as they involve the use of unmapped routes to smuggling of goods. However, from the response of the informants in this study, we discover that though, the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban does not want to stretch herself to the extent of engaging unmapped routes to smuggling of goods. But for them to get the best from the sector, they need to be fully involved. For instance, one of the informants once involved in the importation and exportation of charcoal and chemicals explains her experience in the informal economy:

*I'm a Nigerian; I attended Bauchi State University, where I studied Public Administration. I also have a master's degree in Public Administration. Currently, I'm at the University of KwaZulu Natal for another post-graduate programme. However, this does not mean I should not be engaged in a job or business to take care of myself. In collaboration with some friends back home in Nigeria, I'm therefore into the business of importing and exporting charcoal and supply of chemicals to some manufacturing companies. We try to go through the normal channel as prescribed by the law, without which I'm likely to withdraw. But I know that we need to be rugged, expand and mark out new strategies in order to get the best from this business. The sector is rough, and if you are in it, you can hardly blame those who try to achieve their target through hooks or crooks. Generally, the informal economy requires a higher level of creativity, ruggedness and hard work from anyone in the sector who is determined to make his impact felt (Informant, Mrs Ige).*

#### **Lack of Finances:**

It is argued that generally, women in the informal sector of the economy face numerous kinds of problems. Women are said to be the worst victims of such competition because they are less well-endowed in terms of strategizing and resources than their male counterparts. Relatively poor business literacy among women, coupled with the generally low level of education, has significantly contributed to this. Again, compared to their male counterparts, more factors are militating against their access to finance. On average, the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban is educated and commands a reasonable degree of literacy. However, in terms of resources, she is still relatively handicapped compared to his male counterpart. To some extent, she is, therefore, a victim of this factor. According to an informant:

*I was doing better in Nigeria before I came to South Africa for a marital reason. In fact, I had several business outfits, including the running of a pharmaceutical shop, with a total asset worth some millions of Naira. But after some years in South Africa, when I found that I must revive my full career in business, I contacted some people in Nigeria, mostly relatives, to assist me in raising of the fund. I raise almost all the fund for my present business in electrical appliances from Nigeria. When I made some effort here to look for local cooperatives for savings and loans, something like what is called isusu in Nigeria, what I came*

*across was those that assist people to save for their funeral. Of course, that will not serve my purpose apart from being very odd to Nigerians and probably some other foreigners. At a glance, it is like asking you to save for the dead instead of saving for the living. In Nigeria, one saves for old age for the purpose of the children, caring for the health, and sustaining the family, but not for his/her burial. Generally, from my experience so far, such fundraising and loan cooperatives can only respond to our needs if they are initiated and organized by non-natives, I mean if we are able to organize one ourselves (Informant, Mrs Ololade).*

Most women utilize their sources of income to raise capital for their business, even though this is often meagre. This may be supported with fund borrowed from family members or neighbours. Women are often sidelined when it comes to bank credit because the requirements for granting such fund are cumbersome. This is partly because most financial institutions in this category sometimes classified 'women' as high-risk groups for credit. Thus, in respect of this, two of the informants, Aderonke Ololade and Sister Joke, strongly believe that acquiring loans from banks to sustain your business as an immigrant is to live in fantasy.

According to her:

*Generally, from my experience so far, such fundraising and loan cooperatives can only respond to our needs if they are initiated and organized by non-natives, I mean if we can organize one for ourselves (Informant, Mrs Ololade).*

According to Sister Joke, she started her business with the fund she raised at home before coming to South Africa. Explaining some of her experience, she added that she could not say anything about other nationals in South Africa. Still, the issue of capital for business for Nigerians through existing financial institutions in Durban is a mirage, whether those initiated through the organized socio-economic network to minimize poverty at the grassroots level or those founded by constituted capitalist agencies for profit-making while still serving the interest of those who have the collateral requirements to enjoy their services. She also said that several Nigerian immigrant women here make contact with cooperative bodies at home to obtain short-term loans for implementation of their business initiatives, adding that after paying all the expensive rent and power bills "through our nose; what do we actually take home?...if not being careful foreigners may just transfer all their

homeland resources to serve South Africa and go home empty-handed” (Informant, Sister Joke).

Some other Nigerian women immigrants were glad to discuss the issue extensively. Madam Joyce Oloko said that she has heard of the local fund-raising bodies for small-scale business but does not know how reliable they are, especially in addressing the needs of foreigners. She stated in Nigeria, the benefit of each member in the organization of such financial institutions depends on his/her contribution. Madam Joyce, who combines fashion designing with the sale of electronics, has a well-organized shop in one of the popular markets in the area generally known as “Town”. Among her stock are micro-waves, electric cookers, blenders and boiling kettles. She added that she relies on God to provide fund for her business and that she believes in diversification as a source of financial strength,

*My husband is a pastor, and I give him all the necessary support. Sometimes, there is a need to spread out because there may be certain things God wants you to do apart from that your focus, e.g. business or job, which has occupied your heart. At times, those things that look secondary or even foolish may become a better source of income than the one you consider primary and important. Sometimes, by working in the vineyard of God, He raises people to support us in times of financial need, e.g., for a project (Informant, Mrs Oloko).*

Women’s potential to nurture and expand their business is considerably limited by lack of assets and inability to meet the collateral requirement of the relevant financial institutions (Mwaba, 2010). The perception of women as non-bankable by several such institutions stemmed partly from this disadvantage (Chetty, 2012). This tends to further create gender inequality in the informal economy in terms of inadequate funding instrument for protecting the demands of women.

**Poor infrastructure:** In some cases, this issue is said to have constituted a significant limitation to the operation of the informal economy and is among the factors contributing to unfavourable or counter-productive marketing packages. This applies to workers within a country as well as female cross-border traders. Among the significant issues noted here are

“shelter, roads, toilets, water and sewerage, and garbage collection” (Mitullah, 2004: 9). Also included are the inadequate nature of existing infrastructure for effective utilization of cross-border commerce for self-actualization and grassroots development (Chetty, 2012). This constitutes an obstacle to women in their search for realistic logistics in the informal economy partly by undermining their socio-economic rights apart from compromising their health. In the Africa continent, the quality and distribution of infrastructure in South Africa are relatively standard. Therefore, Nigerian immigrant women in Durban believe this does not apply to them.

This is what Opeoluwa Akinola said:

*The roads, electricity, water supply, and other things are there to enhance my business hairdressing, compared to my home country, though I pay for them. But you may ask, what do I think about government policies? I guess it is not the duty of government agents to attend to my customers or help me market my business (Informant, Mrs Akinola).*

### **Reasons for entering the Informal Economy**

Three significant factors explain why most Nigerian women in Durban are employed in this sector. The first is the acute difficulty encountered by new immigrants in trying to secure a job in the formal sector. The situation is that university graduates and even professionals may take up menial jobs to keep body and soul together while searching for a job in the formal sector. Thus, as mentioned earlier, one of the informants, a medical doctor, was engaged in the informal economy for almost one year, partly because she was pregnant. Nearly all the informants illustrate their experience concerning this. According to a housewife, Comfort Oluwafunke Olaseyinde, from Ondo State in Nigeria:

*I came to South Africa in January 2012. I'm a graduate and was a teacher in Nigeria. I intend to continue with the same career here in South Africa. But I couldn't get a job. Foreigners can't get a salary job in South Africa, more so when you have no work permit, because they see you as "Kwerekwere," a woman with an accent. I study Home Economic and so back home in Nigeria I was involved in baking, catering, fashion design and decoration. I'm now into the same business here. That is what I*

*use to take care of myself and the children. I also send money home. My husband is in Nigeria (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

In her response, Cynthia Okeke, a native of Anambra state of Nigeria who came to South Africa to join her husband, said, “They discriminate a lot, I have not applied for the job, but my friend who tried declined because of discrimination” (Mrs Okeke). The only informant that has a salary job among all those interviewed during the fieldwork is Dr. (Mrs.) Bolanle Oyegoke.

She gave her own experience, and it was even more appalling:

*In employment, you only get a job that South Africans don't want. That was the type of job I have. We were even humiliated in the process of looking for a job. We went to the Foreign Office of the Department of Health, fifteen of us on a queue; they said that there was no job for us, that we must go back to our country and that Nigerians are parasites. They said they were going to call immigration officers to send us home. We begged them to consider us but they said the jobs are for Cubans. They send us home and we came the following day only to be humiliated again. They packed fifteen of us together and told us we better go back to our country. We begged them again to allow us to participate in the written test, they refused. Eventually, they allowed us to write the test. They said the fact that we have passed does not in any way mean that they have a job for us. They finally called me. I thought that they liked me only to find that it is a hospital in Durban South Africans don't like. My husband passed through the same process. That I was in a hospital in Durban implies that my husband also had to be employed in Durban. But for the same reason, he couldn't get a hospital in the area. I started applying for him in the various hospitals in Durban. All the fifty hospitals in the area said they didn't want foreigners. It was a huddle for him to even get engaged in a hospital about two- and a half-hour drive from Durban. Luckily for him, two of his friends were working in that hospital and they assisted him. Yet my husband was only considered because South Africans don't like the place too. Those of us who tried to move to another hospital were not allowed, except South African citizens. For three years, my husband tried to relocate to Durban to keep the family together, he was not allowed. We were victimized by even South African medical doctors, things they don't want to do, e.g. any assignment they consider odd, they shift to us. The patients give you name, that doctor with an accent, that*

*“Kwerekwere.” They refuse to come into your consulting room because you are a “kwerekwere” (Informant, Dr Oyegoke).*

Thus, the difficulty of Nigerian women immigrants in this study to acquire employment in the formal sector has forced many into the informal sector. The reality is that most informants believe that foreigners cannot be employed in the formal sector in South Africa (Omomia, 2014).

The informal sector is dominated by women in South Africa in their effort to sustain the family. Several studies have alluded to this. (Bibangambah1992; Chen, 2001; Onwe, 2013; Fourie & Skinner, 2018) Therefore, most Nigerian women in Durban in this sector can be seen as following traditional trends of employment for women; for instance, gender-focused research on the issue among the SADC countries which year revealed that the ratio of men to women is 3:7. This implies that female involvement in cross-border trade of these states was high, i.e. up to seventy per cent are women (USAID, 2012: 2). This statistic is similar to the results of the membership data compiled by the Southern Africa Cross Borders Trade Association, which indicate in 2014 that seventy-two per cent of the 52,574 registered members are women. (SACBTA & SAT, 2014)

Several factors explain why most women enter the informal sector. Firstly, as a source of income and job creation, it is suggested that the informal economy is more inclined to the needs of women (Ramani et al., 2013: 4). Secondly, the structural pattern of most business ventures organized by women tends to utilize the street or their homes for daily business activities (Chen, 2001: 4). Furthermore, women tend to overpopulate lower segment jobs, while higher-income jobs are often dominated by men (Chen, 2001: 4). Therefore, it can be concluded that women are engaged in the sector because it is among the accessible channels of earning some income to keep life going despite the hazards of stress and competition. This may be due to a lack of skills and high illiteracy rates, and the absence of employment opportunities and experience. But for Nigerian women in Durban, illiteracy is not a factor because at least 85% of the informants are university graduates (Ramani et al., 2013: 4).

Moreover, most Nigerian women in Durban are in the informal economy because some were able to carve a niche for themselves in the sector and, as a result, have chosen to develop a career along this line. A good example is Sister Joke, one of the informants here, who is into fashion designing with several apprentices, the majority of whom are South Africans. According to her, it is a talent she identified in her youth, and the confidence she has in herself in this career is a critical factor behind relocating to South Africa. Many women decide to explore the informal economy to convert their knowledge and talent into tangible material wealth that can sustain their family and the society at large even though they have acquired enough formal education to secure a job in the formal sector. Some of them have a vision of obtaining a career in the industry because with their talent, the private sector would be more rewarding in the long run (Fourie & Skinner, 2018). Thus, a Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban, holding a degree in Accounting, said that she discovered her talent in catering at the university level and is determined to develop and utilize it in the private sector at the expense of any well-paid job in the formal sector. This is even though profits are often insignificant in the short run coupled with occasional setbacks and limitations in the operational structure of the sector. There is, therefore, no exaggeration in the observation that the industry is resilient in addition to the creation of employment in contexts where the formal economy cannot provide jobs for the majority of people who are less skilled and who are thus casualties of the capitalist system (Mwaba, 2010).

Finally, another primary reason why most Nigerian immigrant women in Durban are employed in the informal economy is its role and significance concerning its contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the labour market in their homeland. In other words, it is a sector many Nigerians have interacted with at home, partly due to the existence of a socioeconomic structure and political economy that render many people jobless (Omomia, 2014). Therefore, at home, it was a source of income to several people, and when trying to cope with challenges in a foreign land, it becomes an option for consideration. According to Comfort Oluwafunke Olaseyinde also quoted above, this is the primary reason why she quickly made up her mind to explore the South African informal economy as a source of income. She said:

*With a degree in Home Economics, back home in Nigeria, I tried to do some other things to supplement my salary as a teacher. I was therefore also fully involved in the Nigerian informal economy with all its handicaps compare to South Africa, where the sector is more productive partly due to the availability of good roads, electricity and other basic social amenities. I simply told myself, 'you are already used to self-employment in Nigeria where the gains are minimal, but here you are sure of getting a better reward for your labour, why waiting for formal employment. That is how I revived my baking, catering, and decoration business here, and I have never regretted it (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

According to Onwe (2013), the informal labour market is dominated by men in Nigeria. On the other hand, “it has already been established that in many countries in Southern Africa, women make up most of those in the informal economy” (SACBTA & SAT, 2014; USAID, 2012: 2). Thus, policies must be purposefully structured to address the real challenges of the sector, especially those that affect women, considering the role of women in contemporary structural input and utilization of the virtue of the informal economy concerning service production and virile approach to the challenges of poverty.

### **Strategic Policy Measures to Enhance Development of the Sector**

Nigerian women in Durban constitute a small proportion of the entire female population in South Africa. It is therefore hardly viable to single out a policy framework at the national level that can effectively respond to their socio-economic needs at the grassroots level. But a policy framework that positively impacts the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban would be a viable instrument for national development if its horizon is such that all other women derive equal benefit from it. Thus, according to an informant:

*The police once took me to their station to explain what I don't know about, and nobody was ready to listen to me. We are not asking the government to address just the interest of the Nigerian women in Durban, who constitute only a small proportion of all the women in South Africa; but the government should respond to the needs and interests of all women in the country, e.g., in terms of gender interest in small-scale business, introducing some formalities into the sector to protect women against unnecessary harassment by law enforcement agents and similar officers,*

*adoption of new policies for the progress of the small-scale business sector and so on*(Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).

The following are among the strategic policy issues that Funke Olaseyinde and other women in her category would like the government to address concerning the informal economy. Among them is guiding against the stigmatisation of Nigerian women in the informal sector. This is what Funke Olaseyinde meant when she said:

*In South Africa, they believe that all Nigerians are drug pushers, which is not true. Thus, once they know that you are a Nigerian, they believe you are in this category, and they look at you with bad eyes* (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).

## **Accommodating African Cultural Conventions in Urban Setting**

### **Fosterage**

The institution of fosterage has been undermined by declining economic activities and an increasing rate of urban poverty in other parts of Africa but is still upheld in rural communities. The concept refers to the upbringing of children by somebody who is not a blood relation of such children. But by African cultural conventions and as practised in most African societies, most children are from the extended or *compound family*. Secondly, fosterage may mean providing the money or part of what is required for proper upkeep and training of other children within the extended family. According to Mrs Rose Umar and Mrs Amao:

*Urbanisation and emigration have not really eliminated this tradition in some communities. Even if you refuse to utilize the benefit attached to it by tradition, it is part of the reason why you are expected to support other members of the extended family about the upbringing of children, even financially in support of certain customs* (Informant, Mrs Umar).

Even the South African cases illustrate that this multi-generation African family system is yet to be completely wiped out (Moller and Devey, 1995:3-10). Thus, an informant, Mrs Patience Ufuoma Amao said:

*I wanted to leave my three children with a member of the family as this tradition is still cherished among members of the extended family. However, I had to give it a second thought despite the extra cost to be incurred by taking them with me to South Africa. Some relations advised me to leave them behind partly because they are all boys and is believed boys are difficult to control and partly because there are female emigrants who have utilised this traditional institution for the upkeep of their kids. I know you are likely to support them since you are familiar with the culture and considering the fact that I'm not travelling with my husband. But for reasons best known to me, I opted to come with them (Informant, Mrs Amao).*

Also, this institution has for long sustained the link between the rural and urban areas. Thus for those who finally left their children at home under the practice, as pointed out by Mrs Amao, it provides the link between the emigrant and the family back home. Fosterage, as practised in most traditional African communities, is a little bit different from the global use of the term and the way it is practised in some other parts of the world.

The demographic and economic impact of fosterage, over the years, as a means of sustaining the African child and family institution is noteworthy. It supported high fertility by subsidizing the cost of maintaining it even among low-income earners in rural families and thus provided for such individuals the means of defraying expenditure on child-rearing. The Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban cannot completely shy away from this convention of their home culture despite the demand for an urban lifestyle. Moreover, fosterage helps to prevent inequalities in terms of resource endowment among children when smaller and wealthier families take over the guardianship of children from large but low-income families by the parents' consent.

Nevertheless, current research reveals that the institution of fosterage network in most African communities has been gradually eroded by the prolonged economic downturn in

these communities. This has, in turn, jeopardised life in rural communities by contributing to declining income and low standard of living in addition to eroding the virtue of rural-urban relationships (Stokes, 1995:1-22). Urban families could no more generate savings for the support of foster children because of the considerable reduction in the real income of most households in urban areas coupled with an increasing rate of unemployment amid a rapidly deteriorating economy. These economic changes have therefore created more disincentives for large families in both rural and urban areas. However, the decline of “fosterage raises concerns about the economic mobility prospects for children from rural families, especially in an environment of increased competition for limited formal-sector employment” (Stokes, 1995:1-22). For the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban, this decline is to her advantage as it implies that she is not under severe compulsion to observe it in total. However, a number of the informants refer to the issue of remittances partly for the upkeep of children at home.

### **Cultural Barriers**

It may be significant to point out from the onset that the immigrant women easily adopt some aspect of Zulu culture like a dress while some even speak the language and also copy the accent. However, analysing the depth of the challenges posed by cultural and language barrier to the African migrant woman in South Africa, a study on migration compared their life in South Africa to that of a chameleon. ‘Its colour is green but as it moves around, whenever it comes across a brown environment, its colour changes to brown.’ (Ojong, 2002: 65) It changes its colour with changes in the environment. The changes the African migrant woman experiences are related to place, career, and her physical appearance in South Africa, resulting in her acquiring a new identity. She explains that these changes in the identity of African migrant women do not wipe out their original identities, even while in South Africa and that most people living in their countries of origin may tend to take their identity for granted. However, when the identity of an individual is perceived by him or her as threatened or suppressed, especially if the identity is essential to the person's personal, economic or social well-being, then "a crisis of identity" has been created. According to Vivian Ojong:

*“This is the situation of migrant women from Nigeria whose identity has already been painted by the media. As soon as these women disclose their real Nigerian identity, "eyebrows are raised". In South Africa, Nigerians are seen as "419" (a section of the Nigerian penalty code that means stealing by tricks), drug dealers etc. In such situations, the migrant woman's identity is distorted. It brings mixed feelings as Seyi, a Nigerian, remarked, "the fact that rape is very rampant in South Africa does not make all South Africans rapists” (Ojong, 2002: 65).*

Similarly, an informant, Funke Olaseyinde said:

*In South Africa, they believe that all Nigerians are drug pushers, which is not true. Thus, once they know that you are a Nigerian, they believe you are in this category, and they look at you with bad eyes. Like me as a lady, I don't know how drugs look like. Where I sell food, the police often search me; they said I'm only using the selling of food as a pretext. Even there was a day they turned my coolers of food upside down. I told them that I'm a graduate, and it is in the absence of a job, I manage this small business. They also once took me to their station, and I explained to them, nobody was ready to listen to me. They asked me to come back the following day. It was on the second day that they managed to grant me an audience and finally asked me to go (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

In other words, the issue of financial fraud known as ‘419’ in the Nigerian context provides an easy camouflage for denying Nigerian women employment opportunities and other benefits on the ground that they are foreigners. It is a significant challenge for Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, even in the informal economy discussed above. Like other careerists and businesswomen from countries like Cameroon, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigerian immigrant women in Durban travelled to South Africa only to become aware of their ‘identities’ simply because of the linguistic and cultural disparities between them and the South African natives of KwaZulu-Natal. As a result of this, they felt handicapped. This made them draw closer to migrant women from other African countries. These women become very conscious of their identities as either Nigerians, Ghanaians, or others, especially when the linguistic and cultural disparities become the yardstick for economic and social benefits and interaction. Most of the informants referred to this incident, while others briefly explained their experience. One of them, a hairdresser from Imo State in Nigeria, said that on one occasion,

in addition to being harassed and victimized, she was also charged to court by the same native. But the court found her innocent and declared the case in her favour. According to her:

*My name is Mrs Jenifer Izu. I'm an indigene of Imo State in Nigeria. I came to South Africa in 2015 to join my husband, my husband arranged the travel. Though happy, I still missed those at home; therefore there is a problem of isolation from family at home. My major challenge was discrimination in interacting with the natives. My worse experience so far was a misunderstanding with a Zulu woman who was not in any way known to me, but my husband knew her. On a number of times, she assaulted me and called me all sorts of names, kwerekwere, prostitute, etc. I felt so bad, and as if that was not enough when I reacted, she charged me in court. But the court declared the case in my favour and warned her to stop calling me such names. This, however, gave me much relief (Informant, Mrs Izu).*

It is argued that the discrimination against migrant women in South Africa is more of gender than cultural and linguistic differences. Ojong (2002) reveals that the African women face discrimination at all stages in their lives, whether in their countries of birth or abroad. The language and cultural bias against them in South Africa is only an extension of this inherent gender discrimination. According to her.

*In most West African countries, girls go to school with their brothers, and when they come back home, girls are the ones to prepare the food. In situations where some families could not afford to pay school fees for all their children, the girl children were the ones to drop out of school. Even when women decide to migrate, this discrimination still follows them. Why; because of their identities as women (Ojong, 2002: 67).*

At their workplaces in South Africa, they face particular disabilities and discrimination in employment which the writer attributes to gender. Bridget K. has been frustrated on several occasions on account of her gender (Ojong, 2002: 65-71). Requests for equipment for student research were not seen as necessary by management until she asked another colleague who is a male to request the same equipment, and following this, it was bought.

It has been observed that these women are not only discriminated against in South Africa because they are women but because they are migrants (Isike, 2012:99-101). For instance, the treatment meted to Mrs Jenifer Izu by a Zulu woman before charging her to court quoted above. The humiliation meted to Dr Mrs Bolanle Oyegoke also cited earlier provide a concise illustration of this. This is also well reflected in the account of Lady Aderonke Ololade quoted in Chapter Three, whose experience makes her conclude without any reservation that “South Africans hate foreigners.” In her words:

*The family of my husband hated me from the onset, and I discover South Africans hate foreigners! They harassed my husband and did everything to frustrate him for marrying a non-South African even though we got married when the man was an immigrant in Nigeria, and I then left my business in Nigeria to accompany him here as expected from a faithful wife. At the same time, they marked out different devices to frustrate me, some of which were meant to hurt my emotion and antagonize me until I'm forced to move out of my matrimonial home, but my husband protected me. His mother was always at loggerheads with both of us (Informant, Mrs Ololade)*

Similarly, we gathered from the experience of Dr Mrs Bolanle Oyegoke that the Nigerian female professional that manages to secure a salary job in South Africa after much humiliation is denied many opportunities to which South Africans are entitled. They are often misunderstood and are often labelled as having an accent. There are facts and figures to demonstrate that these women are constantly under interrogation because of their different accent, having to account for their immigration to South Africa and not any other country. The traumatizing effects of isolation and loneliness are among the daily experiences of these women. Dr Mrs Bolanle Oyegoke responded thus:

*Those of us who tried to move to another hospital were not allowed, except South African citizens. For three years, my husband tried to relocate to Durban to keep the family together, he was not allowed. All their post-graduate programmes for specialization in a particular field of medicine are only for South Africans. Foreigners are completely denied by these. We were victimized by even South African medical doctors, things they don't want to do, e.g. any assignment they consider odd, they shift to us. The patients give you name, that doctor with an*

*accent, that “Kwerekwere.” They refuse to come into your consulting room because you are a “kwerekwere” (Informant, Dr Oyegoke).*

Like other African migrant women living in KwaZulu-Natal, the Nigerian women in Durban have acquired a unique identity that is different from other migrant women in other provinces in South Africa. Being women with dark pigmentation and coming from African countries, these migrant women can never see themselves as South Africans, even when they have acquired South African citizenship. This is because South Africans do not recognize them as one. Thus, responding to the question, “what are your challenges here in South Africa?” Miss Amudat Ademuyiwa, a Nigerian immigrant from Abeokuta in Ogun State who runs a hairdressing salon, exclaims,

*Ah!!! South Africa, full of racism; I don't just know why they don't want to be with foreigners. But we are not like that in Nigeria. I come here for a change of environment. (Informant, Miss Ademuyiwa).*

In her response to the same question, Mrs Evelyn Emmanuel, who accompanied her husband to South Africa for the propagation of the Gospel, said:

*...a lot of challenges to be honest with you, I have been to other countries for the work of the ministry, but here in South Africa, the challenges are different. The first challenge I face is that the people are not friendly. If you watch, back home in Nigeria we are very friendly. If you see a foreigner, you greet him with honour even more than the indigenes. But when I got to South Africa, the natives run away when they see me as if I'm going to harm them. They call me 'foreigner', 'foreigner', or whatsoever it is called, 'kwerekwere', 'kwerekwere' (Informant, Mrs Emmanuel).*

According to the informants in this study, any black foreigners living in South Africa attract special names from the locals' in KwaZulu-Natal. They are referred to as *Mlungu Mnyama*, meaning a white-black, who cannot speak the Zulu language. *Mlungu Mnyamais* is, therefore, another version of *Kwerekwere*.

This identity further alienates migrant women as non-indigenes who are therefore exposed to discrimination in South Africa. Without this discrimination, i.e. if the Nigerian migrant women were given the opportunity, life in South Africa for them would be a far more enriching experience even with all the discrimination they face as migrant women, these women are pleased, and they show a great deal of flexibility and adaptation to the many social contexts that they participate during their life in South Africa. While the present Nigerian immigrant women in Durban believed that the situation could be improved upon, several earlier immigrant women up to the early years of this century, particularly from other African countries, however, decided to accept the situation without expectation of any change. Thus, Bolanle Ikudende, one of the immigrant women who came to Kwazulu-Natal in the year 2001, once remarked, “we should stop complaining, after all; what are we doing here? If our countries were better, we would not have been here. (Informant, Mrs Ikudende).

Whatever the situation, even the Nigerian migrant women in Durban have decided that despite the hatred of migrants and discrimination, there is no need to fear and hate South Africans on account of the challenges emanating from cultural and linguistic disparities. But they expect better social relations from the natives of the area partly to reciprocate the role of Nigeria in the anti-apartheid movement and the general cordial diplomacy between Nigeria and South Africa in the search for the economic development of the African continent (Landsberg, 2007).

### **Xenophobia and the Response of Nigerian Immigrant Women in Durban**

The first section of this sub-theme attempts to briefly identify the origin of xenophobia and Afro-phobia based on the existing literature with some reference to the facts and figures gathered from the fieldwork on the experience of Nigerian immigrants in Durban. The second section illustrates the scene of unfortunate Nigerian victims of these social hazards with emphasis on Nigerian immigrant women in Durban.

#### **The Origin of Xenophobia**

Xenophobic attacks in South Africa emanate from a blend of many factors. The first is the legacy of the apartheid regime. The second is the competition for scarce resources between

indigenes and foreigners. At the same time, the third is the rise of acute nationalist views and sentiments which accompanied the collapse of Apartheid after 1994. Finally, the biased attitude of the media to the inflow of foreigners also played a significant role. Overall, it is the result of a combination of complex factors which, however, can hardly be delinked from the migrant inflows from neighbouring countries that characterize the post-1994 migrations patterns.

According to the viewpoint linked directly to the experience of Nigerian immigrants in the country, the negative perceptions of the native inhabitant “in-group” against the foreigner “out-group” is a manifestation of the social vices of xenophobia. This outburst can be manifested in various ways. It is reflected in the relationship pattern, both at the individual and group levels, abnormalities like aggression concerning issues of identity and undue suspicion emanating from the presence of an “out-group”. It argues that “xenophobia can also be exhibited in the form of an uncritical exaltation of another culture in which a culture is ascribed an unreal, stereotyped and exotic quality” (Vanguard, 2017:23). However, exponents of this viewpoint also differ from the first school of thought explained above because it identifies a second reason for the development of xenophobia. It is the rise of acute nationalist views and sentiments which accompanied the demise of Apartheid after 1994.

Despite a lack of proper empirical data, xenophobia in South Africa is believed to have increased significantly after the political development of 1994 that led to the restoration of democratic government (Neocosmos, 2010). The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP, 2004) came up with this result after some fieldwork investigation. The study was extended to embrace the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC). The fieldwork involved interaction with citizens of all member states through questionnaire and oral interviews. It demonstrates that most average South African citizens are against the increasing inflow of immigrants into their country. The study noted that 21% of them support a complete ban on the entry of immigrants of whatever category, while 64% call for the formulation of policies that place strict restrictions on the number of immigrants allowed annually. Namibia and Botswana are the other states whose citizens express such anti-immigrant sentiments, but the percentage is far below that of South Africa. Both of them record 10% each as an average figure of nationals who want their government to come

up with policies placing a total ban on the admission of immigrants (SAMP, 2004). In a recent analysis of the South African situation with emphasis on Nigerian victims of the attacks, a member of the Nigerian Parliament, Senator James Manager, called for decisive action against South Africa by the Federal Government of Nigeria, “it is now about eight different times that these have taken place in the history of South Africa, with the xenophobic attacks in that country” (Ameh, 2017:54). However, despite the factual illustration and portrait of the 2008-2017 violence by the Nigerian press, there are no data to demonstrate that Nigerians were victims of any of the xenophobic attacks than the cases of 2015-2017.

The 1998 Human Rights Watch report had no record of any attack on Nigerian immigrants. But the report explained that Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique living in the Alexandra Township were among the victims of the xenophobic attack for almost the whole of January 1995. According to the report, a group of citizens constitute themselves into armed gangs to wipe out foreigners from the township. They “identified suspected undocumented migrants and marched them to the police station in an attempt to ‘clean’ the township of foreigners” (HRW, 1998:10). The campaign, known as "Buyelekhaya" (go back home), blamed foreigners for crime, unemployment and sexual attacks. In September 1998, a Mozambican and two Senegalese were thrown out of a train. The assault was carried out by a group returning from a rally that blamed foreigners for unemployment, crime and spreading AIDS (HRW, 1998).

In 2000 the probable increasing fear emanating from the inflow of immigrants and their increasing proportion in the informal sector of the economy was taking a new dimension. The police ascribed the killing of seven foreigners on the Cape Flats within a period of fewer than two months to this development and “the fear that outsiders would claim property belonging to locals” (HRW, 2000:10). There are also no data at the moment to demonstrate that Nigerians were among the victims of the attack. Closely related to this was a new development in October 2001 when a group of immigrants from Zimbabwe were given ten days to evacuate the Zandspruit settlement by indigenes. They were finally evicted forcefully, and their shanties were looted and set ablaze by the same indigenes as they could not meet up with the requirement of the ultimatum. The foreigners were accused of being responsible for several crimes in addition to the allegation of rendering the natives

jobless by taking the available jobs at the expense of the indigenes (HRW, 2000). According to Human Right Watch report, the Zimbabweans were harassed without any record of injury.

Among the sources of violence was a 2004 fieldwork which claimed that 87% of the respondents were of the view that most irregular immigrants in Johannesburg survive through criminal activities. Yet, the central theme of the study was attitudes among police officers in the Johannesburg area. This fieldwork was organized by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR). Besides, there was absolutely no statistical evidence in criminal records to substantiate the opinion of the respondents. According to some analysts, such views combined with the vulnerability of illegal aliens led to abuse, including violence and extortion (CSVR, 2004).

In December 2005, the locals claimed that foreigners were responsible for the death of an indigene in the Olievenhoutbosch settlement. Despite the lack of substantial evidence to authenticate the allegation, two Zimbabweans were assassinated between the last week of 2005 and the second week of January 2006. Two other foreigners were also killed in the area during the period increased the number of deaths to four. The natives involved the police and requested that all foreigners should be evacuated from the site. The situation was such that Shacks owned to immigrants were burnt down (HRW, 2006). In July 2006, twenty-one traders of Somali origin lost their life through mass killing, while twenty-six became victims of a similar attack in August 2006. Reacting to this hostile situation, Somali refugees called for urgent government intervention and appealed for protection through the law enforcement agencies. The Somalians perceived the situation as another manifestation of xenophobic sentiment in the Western Cape. But the police refused to see it as a coordinated campaign to send Somali traders out of the area (HRW, 2006).

In March 2007, there was an interaction between the “representative of Burundian refugees in Durban and the home affairs minister, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula” during which one of the representatives said that immigrants had lost confidence in the police force as an institution for the protection of lives and property. Instead, according to him, the police maltreated the refugees, robbing them and extorting money from them in addition to

“unfounded allegations that they sell drugs” (HRW, 2007:11). Mapisa-Nqakula accepted two years earlier that the attitude of the police to refugees and asylum seekers portrayed a significant element of xenophobic sentiment. This was observed during a meeting held in Johannesburg when it was reported that police had mistreated these categories of immigrants with xenophobic attitudes (HRW, 2007:11).

In late 2007 there was a significant increase in the rate of attack on foreigners, and the trend continued into 2008. From January to May 2008, the occurrence of such attacks was believed to be so frequent that one could count nothing less than a dozen of them (HRW, 2008). The murder of two Somalian businesspeople on January 8, 2008, was among the most severe incidents. Both of them were shop owners in Eastern Cape, precisely in Jeffrey’s Bay and East London. Also notable was the setting ablaze of several shops and shacks belonging to immigrants in Atteridgeville near Pretoria (*The Times*, 2008). This occurred in March 2008, and seven people died during the incident, among whom were Zimbabweans, Somali nationals and Pakistanis. The xenophobic violence of 2008 spread rapidly. Durban and Gauteng were affected. Mpumalanga, another town of the Kwazulu-Natal region, was also a victim. The injury record was high as hundreds were injured while as many as Sixty-two people lost their lives. Many foreigners had their properties destroyed through burning or otherwise, a development that compelled immigrants in the area to subscribe to voluntary deportation. Immigrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, were victims of another attack on May 12, 2008, during which two people died, and 40 others were injured, following riots that broke out in the township of Alexandra, in the north-eastern part of Johannesburg (BBC, 2008; Neocosmos, 2010). It was a scene of several natives who organized themselves into armed groups to attack foreigners. Some of them were reported to have been singing Jacob Zuma's campaign song in the Zulu language, “*UmshiniWami*” (“*Bring Me My Machine Gun*”). There was similar violence in most settlements in Gauteng Province a few weeks later. The cities of Durban and Cape Town were not left out (Neocosmos, 2010). Similar crises and attack of immigrants have experienced in some parts of the North West and Free State as well as Southern Cape and Mpumalanga.

There were Nigerian immigrants in Durban before 2008. Segatti et al (2012) report that approximately 36 000 Nigerians have entered South Africa annually between 2004 and 2010, with the majority being situated in Gauteng. However, though there were Nigerian migrants in the city in 2008, the records are not explicit enough to enable us to know how many of them fell victim to the violence. This provides a loophole for some members of the Nigerian public to postulate that Nigerians have been losing their lives to xenophobic attacks in South Africa since the beginning of this century.

In 2012, Nigerians were not significant objects of Attack. But the scene was pathetic against Mozambican and Congolese immigrants. It is important to note that due to conflicts and political crisis in Mozambique, about 50,000 to 350,000 people left the country in the 1980s and 1990s. The majority of them fled to South Africa. The Bantustans or black homelands formed during the apartheid regime provided settlements for them, but nothing was done to grant them refugee status. There were mixed reactions among the natives to the arrival of the Mozambicans. For instance, they were outrightly rejected in Lebowa but welcomed in Gazankulu where the natives assisted them with even land and farm implements. However, even those in Gazankulu were being threatened with deportation apart from the fact that they had limited access to economic resources. They were therefore compelled to restrict themselves to the native homeland as deportation was the penalty for trying to enter South Africa proper (Steinberg, 2008).

The immigration of many Congolese into South Africa in 1993 and 1997 was also the result of a similar political crisis. The records indicate that many of them came in illegally to escape from civil war and intermittent social unrest. These refugees were denied access to basic social amenities like health facilities. The gradual acceptance of xenophobia by many natives as part of the social system was primarily responsible for this (Steinberg, 2008).

The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban were among the victims of 2015 xenophobic violence in South Africa when the coastal city of Durban was a significant target. In that year, Nigerian immigrants fled their homes after violent attacks in Durban. Some people were killed while shops owned by foreigners were burnt and looted in Durban. Over one thousand immigrants living in South Africa fled their homes (Vanguard, 2017). Nigeria and

Zimbabwe nationals were the worse victims of the violence of that attack. It was said that this particular violence erupted due to the inciting words by the Zulu King, who called that all foreigners leave the country. Before then, there were records of similar violence in 1998, 2000, 2008, 2009 and 2013. In 2013, the Governments of Nigeria and South Africa agreed to prevent such violence through a joint effort. This was done by signing a Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce diplomatic ties. However, if those efforts were anything to go by, the clashes of 2016 and 2017 would have been avoided (Vanguard, 2017).

The attacks of 2015 started in Durban and spread to Johannesburg, a primary reason why Nigerian immigrants in Durban were seriously affected (Los Angeles, 2015). Locals looted foreigners' shops and attacked immigrants in general, forcing /hundreds of immigrants across the country were forced to evacuate their residents, at least tentatively. Some resided in the police stations for security reason. Many foreign governments believe that the situation was beyond control and came up with devices to safeguard their citizens. For instance, Malawian authorities decided to repatriate their nationals, and several other states also announced steps to make provision for similar devices for their citizens to be gradually evacuated. Over three hundred individuals were under arrest (Voice of America, 2015). On the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2015, a cameraman, James Oatway, who works with the *Sunday Times*, captured a photography recording of a Mozambican man, Emmanuel Sithole, who was brutally attacked with severe injuries that led to his death. The photographs were published in the *Sunday Times* of April 19. The events later led to the arrest of four suspects as law enforcement agents obtained more information from the *Sunday Times* publication (African News Agency, 2015). But the name of Sithole was missing from “the official list of seven victims killed in the April 2015 attacks, including an Ethiopian, a Mozambican, a Bangladeshi, a Zimbabwean and three South Africans who were all killed in KwaZulu-Natal” (Ferreira, 2015).

Authorities in government insisted that Sithole was not a victim of a xenophobic attack. But most members of the public and some organized bodies in the private sector did not accept this view (Ferreira, 2015). There was a major protest against the series of deadly attacks on immigrants on April 23, 2015. The protest featured thousands of demonstrators who marched through the streets of central Johannesburg. Many immigrants were shouting as

they stood at their respective balconies and entrance to their residence to lend their support to the demonstrators. The protestors were singing songs to demonstrate their demand for a standard social structure devoid of any form of xenophobia. This was combined with a display of banners that read “We are all Africans” (Tshidi, 2017).

In the Eastern Cape, most sections of Grahamstown were rocked with unrestrained xenophobic violence in October 2015. Many Muslims fled their homes because they were the primary objects of attack by the group. It is reported that the number of people displaced was over five hundred, while over three hundred stores and residence were either destroyed or looted (Ferreira, 2015).

The 2017 attack on Nigerians has, however, made members of the Nigerian public reflect on the xenophobic trend in South Africa since the 1990s in demanding a retaliatory measure from the Nigerian government. This is primarily because the ₦84m compensation to Nigerian victims of the attacks of 2015 through the Nigeria-South Africa Commission was not implemented (Ameh, 2017). Among the places affected by the xenophobic attacks of 2015 was Isipingo in the south of Durban (Tshidi, 2017). The violent mobs attacked and confiscated the property of those who tried to restore their homes.

A peaceful atmosphere was expected after the holding of an *Imbizo* in Durban as the violence went beyond control. Here King Goodwill Zwelithini appealed to his subjects to protect foreign nationals. However, the resurgence of fresh xenophobic violence indicates that the natives did not take the King's address seriously.

Also, according to the Department of Home Affairs, there was a need to maintain peace and create a good rapport between the natives of KwaMashu and Umlazi in Durban and immigrants from other African countries. The law enforcement agencies were also expected to act and demonstrate a reasonable degree of maturity and professionalism in the performance of their duty. For instance, the South African police killed a Nigerian, Tochukwu Nnadi, on December 29, 2016, in an extrajudicial manner through strangulation. A member of the Nigeria House of Senate, Rose Oko was aggrieved that 20 Nigerians in South Africa were allegedly killed extra-judicially in 2016 over allegations of drug

trafficking “without recourse to legal process and fair hearing as prescribed by the international laws and the South African laws.” She emphasized that despite the long-term relations between Nigeria and South Africa, about 116 Nigerians had allegedly been killed in the attacks since the last two years (Ameh, 2017: 7 & 15).

On average, Durban was among the primary targets of 2015, 2016 and 2017 violence and therefore, Nigerian women immigrants were victims. They were widely publicized by the Nigerian media (Ameh, 2017; Eze, 2017; Vanguard, 2017). Some foreign nationals in the Durban Point area say they remain on edge following the violence in the CBD. They were forced to arm themselves in anticipation of a further attack from the natives. Five people, in addition to a boy of fourteen years, were killed in a series of attacks on foreigners in several parts of KwaZulu-Natal, including KwaMashu and Umlazi, in a period of two weeks. As the violence escalated, Nigerian immigrants on Mahatma Gandhi Road said that they were ready to fight and would defend themselves against any attack emanating from the increasing wave of xenophobia. According to them, "They won't come back. Forget about what they say, they will not come here. We are ready for them" (Tshidi, 2017:3).

One of the indigenes, apparently an exponent of the xenophobic ‘culture’, came close to a group of semi-devastated Nigerian immigrants thinking of the next line of action. He infuriated the group by contending that all foreigners must go back to their homeland. In his words, “I hate them so much because they hate us, so it's better if they go home” (Tshidi, 2017). As more foreigner’s troop into the refugee camps in Durban, the police had to be more alert in terms of maintaining firm control over the CBD area of Durban in the morning. Government authorities in KwaZulu-Natal thought of new devices to address the situation. This did not seem to yield any tangible results, but they finally set up four camps to house immigrants who were victims of xenophobic attacks. Meanwhile, an NGO, the Gift of the Givers Foundation, came to the aid of some immigrants who were victims of displacement. There was also an aid group that set up a camp outside Durban, where many immigrants were receiving food and blankets. Women and young children were the primary consideration of this group. This was revealed by one of the coordinators, Abdirisack Hashi, “We are trying to protect them because you'll see when they're evicted from their areas, they become more and more vulnerable” (Press Associated, 2017).

The violence emanating from these recent xenophobic sentiments has received wide condemnation from different constituted authorities. One example is the reaction of the Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada Foundations to the harm done to foreigners by the perpetrators in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Sello Hatang from The Nelson Mandela Foundation said, “we would like to welcome the intervention of the state ... our president and the Cabinet members” to investigate who was involved. Two security guards were arrested in connection with the shooting of the 14-year-old boy in KwaMashu in 2015 mentioned above. The boy was shot dead during what appears to have been a confrontation between the guards and a group that was looting a foreign-owned store in the area. The owner of a well-known security company in KwaMashu said two of his guards were placed under arrest after the event that led to the boy's death.

He said that the case was yet to be charged to court. The attackers stayed with the boy even while exchanging bullets with the guards. According to the guards, the boy was on the roof during the clash, and shots flew in all directions. The owner of the security company said that they were forced to abandon virtually every shop under their custody. They were a total of 110 shops, all owned by foreigners. According to him, after the event, those behind it were satisfied that their mission had been accomplished, and he believed that in the following weeks, Durban became relatively peaceful (Ferreira, 2015).

It is against this context that the experiences of Nigerian women must be examined concerning xenophobic attitudes. Recalling this critical and hostile period, Comfort Olaseyinde, a home economics graduate from Ondo State of Nigeria who is into food entrepreneurship in Durban said:

*It was tough; some of my friends had to come to where I stay for fear of attack. My advice is that people should not stay far from the major settlement of those from their country of origin. They couldn't come to where I live because many Nigerians are there. Therefore, there would have been a war if they had come (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

Mrs Nneka Onyeruka, a migrant from Anambra State of Nigeria, said the scene was robust but appeared more conscious of a way out. In her response, she said:

*The xenophobia was very serious here. Those people involved don't know that it is a great benefit for foreigners to come to their land. It is a matter of ignorance. They are not well educated, which is why they think foreigners take their jobs and husbands; many of the foreigners are self-employed. The perpetrators need to be enlightened; they are simply not ready to work. They want to get everything on a platter of gold. Government is helping them, and therefore they don't want to work. The government needs to educate members of the group and give employment to some (Informant, Mrs Onyeruka).*

In her response, Cynthia Okeke, a native of Anambra State of Nigeria said:

*I came to South Africa to join my husband. I was not a victim of xenophobia, but the violence and the thought of those who lost their lives in the process gave me a traumatic psychological effect (Informant, Mrs Okeke).*

Similar violence was, of course, recorded in some other parts of South Africa. For instance, there was the arrest of people in Rosettenville in connection with the violence on February 24, 2017 (Press Associated, 2017). Of those arrested, 27 were undocumented foreign nationals. One person was arrested for carrying an illegal firearm, while another 14 were arrested for drug possession or dealing in drugs. On Friday, the 24 February 2017, a large scale and officially sanctioned anti-immigrant protest was also organized and held in Pretoria. Protesters marched to the Foreign Ministry and handed a petition to government representatives. Protesters accused immigrants of taking jobs from South Africans, causing crime, and complained that they are arrogant and don't know how to talk to people, especially Nigerians. (Tshidi, 2017) An informant, Comfort Olufunke Olaseyinde, also said:

*There is this preconceived notion among most Zulu that Nigerians are too full of themselves and don't know how to talk, which to me emanates from the problem of language and cultural bias, i.e., once you cannot speak their language, they mount up many wrong notions about you. In fact, that you don't know how to talk may simply mean you cannot speak the Zulu language, while the inability to speak the language after residing*

*in their land for some years is considered deliberate and, therefore a mark of arrogance. But you know that some adults are very poor at the acquisition of a new language* (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).

One hundred thirty-six protesters were arrested during the march. Moreover, in the previous year, precisely from 20–23 June 2016, a wave of riots hit the City of Tshwane. Although the riots were sparked by political discontent within the ANC, Somali, Pakistani and other foreign-owned shops and micro-enterprises were targeted for looting, and a number of foreigners were attacked (Nkosi, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Thus, Nigerian immigrant women in Durban faced enormous challenges. In terms of employment, over 90% of them are employed in the informal economy where you can hardly earn up to a Rand from labour that deserves two Rand. Besides, they have to grapple with the limitations created by the language barrier, violence, xenophobia, and established trends in African customs and traditions, particularly those from their homeland. Spatially, their experiences, plights, and challenges as a gender group are linked to two different geographical regions, thus creating a worldview polarized by the institutional intricacies and complexities from both sides, i.e. Nigeria and South Africa. Therefore, the spatial platform of gendered geographies of power has been of some help in capturing this worldview, just as the conceptual dynamics of intersectionality provides the relevant link between it and emerging trends in gender intricacies about migration. If they can cope and fare better as the majority of the informants believe, it means that the condition in their homeland may be worse, implying that the leaders of African countries still have much to do in terms of going back to the drawing board to address the socio-political and economic problems of their respective states.

The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban did not enter into direct dialogue with their home government. But their voices were heard by some prominent women leaders in Nigeria who were seriously concerned with the plight of these immigrant women. Among these women leaders were the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Khadijat Abba-Ibrahim, and a member of the Nigerian National Assembly, Senator Monsurat Sunmonu,

who was quoted above. After much prevarication by the Nigerian government over the challenges of Nigerians in South Africa, nothing definite is yet to be done. However, after the recent xenophobic violence in Johannesburg in September 2019, the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, paid a visit to South Africa, soliciting peace and tranquillity. The survival of these immigrant women in Durban also implies that they must have discovered some coping mechanisms. What then are their coping mechanisms? The next chapter is an answer to this question.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **COPING MECHANISMS OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN**

### **Introduction**

Coping involves specific skills and capacities that permit people to face and deal with life's problems to prevent and reduce stress-related illness. The most broadly accepted definition is that of Lazarus and Folkman, who viewed coping as continuously changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to handle specific external and/or internal demands which are seen as challenging or greater than the resources of an individual (1984, cited in Naicker, 2014). In facing their challenges, individuals use personal or external coping resources as the significant factors that help minimise the undesirable effects of stress in overcoming difficulties (Straubb, 2003). Mobilisation of those resources leads to two critical coping strategies, which are emotion-focused or problem-focused coping (Straubb, 2003). In emotion-focused coping, individuals try to decrease and adjust distressful emotions, such as by obtaining support from others, avoiding or minimising the problems. With problem-focused coping, individuals try to confront and ultimately find their solutions directly by being proactive or reactive when it is assessed that the stressor can be changed. Problem-focused coping is increased by instances where constructive action is possible, whereas situations that may require acceptance are more likely to increase emotion-focused coping (Straubb, 2003).

There is a significant relationship between coping and adjustment because people can only adjust when they are in search of new devices or strategies required to deal with a new environment or structures. To the average migrant, adjustment begins with the process of migration. When people migrate, they have to adjust to a new culture to survive. Bock defines culture as "what makes you a stranger when you are away from home" (Bock, 1997). The migrant adjustment, as defined by Gold Scheider, (1983), is the process by which a migrant responds to changes in his/her new physical, economic and social environment arising from the decision to migrate. Some women must learn to live without male protection and support for the first time, re-building their lives alone or with limited

help from informal networks (Bock, 1997). With the contemporary migration to South Africa, the migrant adjustment is complicated because most of the migrants, especially from the west, east and central Africa, have moved to southern Africa, which is very different in terms of the physical, political and social environments that they were accustomed to. From the informants' response, adjustment for the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban was difficult because, for them to adapt to this new society, they had to interact with the Zulu-speaking people despite the social hazard of xenophobia.

The informants described various coping mechanisms that aided their survival and integration into the socio-economic life of Durban. The data demonstrate that Nigerian immigrant women in Durban employed general coping skills to deal with everyday life problems. They also used specific coping mechanisms when dealing with internal and external stressors. Concerning their general coping styles, the women described factors such as acceptance and finding a way to integrate with the native as a device of coping with their daily life experiences. One of how Nigerian immigrant women in Durban have sought to manage in their new environment is to learn the local language, isiZulu.

A number of the informants, MrsJenifer Izu, MrsEsther Ikudende, Mrs Bolanle Oyegoke, and Mrs Opeoluwa Akinola specifically explain how they tried to acquire the native isiZulu language. In her response, MrsJenifer Izu said:

*On my arrival, I was with my husband and relation from Anambra State, both of whom helped me to cope with the cold winter season. Initially, I couldn't understand the language not to talk of speaking. But at the same time, I was lucky to have a colleague from another tribe that speaks Zulu. She was the one that interpreted for me all along. Little by little, I started to understand the language (Mrs Izu).*

According to Mrs Esther Abolanle Ikudende, a native of Ogun State, Nigeria, also cited in the previous chapter, acquisition of the language is a crucial instrument for coping, and she responded thus:

*I have been in South Africa for five years. The language barrier is the worse if you cannot speak Zulu either they do not talk to*

*you or they look down on you. Even I have been making effort to enable my child to learn the language (Mrs Ikudende).*

It is discernible from the above quote that ability to speak the local language such as isiZulu is crucial in promoting inter-ethnic relation and easy inter-trade relations among immigrants and the local people. Thus, it shows that Mrs Ikudende now develops a keen interest in understanding isiZulu as a language of communication. This is part of the experience of Mrs Esther Ikudende quoted above. This experience further helped them to improve their knowledge of the language.

The other informants in this study also noted that acquisition of the native language is of valuable aid in this regard. Often the younger members of the family can adjust faster to new situations, and cultural identities such as new languages are picked up quickly, which means that in some cases, children tend to act as translators for their parents. It is argued that this may result in intergenerational tension by creating a scenario of role changes where mothers may feel inferior with their children (Martin, 1991; Leslie, (2005). The passion for respect for elders by the nature of African culture and the social configuration of the African family, the acquisition of the language by parents through their children is bound to be an asset and never a liability. Nigerian women in Durban, the young ones who understand the language take pride in teaching their elders.

This study has noted that for many Nigerian immigrant women, the most challenging was the early years of their arrival. No matter how talented and enthusiastic these women were, they all ended up with the same experiences, "the stigma of not understanding the language spoken by the people" (Ojong, 2002:71). A lack of understanding of the local language like isiZulu becomes a stigma; some local people often used the weakness to mock, intimidate and exploit the immigrants. For example, an informant, Mrs Opeoluwa Akinola, stated that a Zulu friend sometimes accosted her that:

*She is proud; she doesn't want to learn our language. How is it possible that you don't understand the Zulu language? What language do you speak in your country?*

Many women encounter this interrogation in their early years of stay in KwaZulu Natal. In most cases, these women are compared with other migrants who have been in this province for quite some years who are now fluent in the Zulu language. This was also the experience of some other immigrant women in South Africa (Ojong, 2002:67).

Despite the scenario cited above, it is important to state that the experience of immigrants differs on the issue of the barrier posed by the inability to speak the local language. This is because different social settings create different scenarios in language impediment. For instance, those who study for a career do not have to strive to acquire the language because most of the people they interact with are in an academic environment where they speak English. Such a group of people only face the language barrier during their fieldwork among the broader community.

Just as Mrs Patience Amao puts it:

*It is a thing of joy and virtue to acquire a foreign language. But if you are unable to do so while residing with the people due to the demand of your primary engagement in relation to the time factor, it should be understood by your neighbours. However, unlike those who are here for small-scale business for which the language is important, I'm here for a post-graduate programme for my nursing career, and therefore not under that pressure (Informant, Mrs Amao).*

According to her, those who interact with the locals directly, even including nurses who chose to practice in some parts of the country, may strive to acquire the language as one means of attracting clients. For instance, migrant women who are teachers in secondary schools have realised that most of the children who attend the schools are being exposed to English for the first time. Therefore, teaching and learning become easy at this level when women can speak isiZulu. Her opinion also conforms to an informant, Doreen, "It makes you feel good when you can meet each child's needs" (cited in Ojong, 2002:73).

The experience of those of the women who have been able to learn the Zulu language has proven that the best way to adjust to the pattern of this society is to learn the language no matter what occupation one belongs to. As we shall see below, despite the sacrifice made to

learn the Zulu language, they never abandoned their own culture. They have imported certain aspects of their culture to South Africa as a means of adapting. This has been possible either by physically bringing their foods and clothing or by adopting the social practices of their home countries. Apart from the general approach, which involves the acquisition of the language, there are specific coping mechanisms employed by these women.

### **Family and Social Networks**

A critical coping mechanism of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban is the use of pre-existing social networks among earlier immigrants from their country. The second informant, Dr. (Mrs.) Bolanle Oyegoke, explains how the existence of such a social network helped to provide the necessary information for her husband at the time of migration to South Africa. According to her:

*Both of us decided to leave Nigeria. We came together; it was only a week difference. My husband friend was already in South Africa and told him that he would get a job immediately...my husband got a job in Standard because two of his friends were working there, and they assisted him (Informant, Dr Oyegoke).*

From the participants' responses, it can be deduced that both the social networks and family ties of migrants play a role not only as a coping mechanism for survival but also in the migration of some Nigerians to Durban. Massey *et al.* (1993) analysis of the network theory reflects the fact that aside from economic reasons for migrating, migrants also weigh the social effects of migrating to foreign lands. The associated costs and risks are reduced when some form of networks already exist in a foreign country. With the migration network already formed, the costs for future migrants are lowered since arriving and trying to survive in a new country is unlikely to come relatively effortlessly. (Mckenzie and Rapport, 2007)

Migration studies have posited new explanations for increasing international migration, which has been linked to migration networks. Migration networks are conceived in some studies as a predictor of future movement flows that mostly facilitate chain migration (Arango, 2004, cited in Lucas *et al.*, 2006). Bauer *et al.* (2002) state that there is the

likelihood of an exponential increase in immigration as a result of network externalities having a significant effect on the migrant's decision of where to migrate. Oluwatobi (2015), gives credence that the more the migrants flow now, the more prominent will be the influx of future migrants. But this is not always the case, as the table below demonstrates. For instance, in 2003, the population of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa was almost twice that of Zimbabwe. But in 2013, ten years later, the reverse was the case. The population of Zimbabwe immigrants increased to 18,889, while that of Nigeria was 10,265 (Oluwatobi 2015).

Similarly, there were six Malawi immigrants in 1994, while Mozambique had 45 immigrants. But the number of Malawi immigrants increased to 85 in 1995 while that of Mozambique was even reduced to 41. This is because, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, there are other critical variables in the assessment of the flow of migrants from one country to the other.

**Table 4.****African immigrants in South Africa documented by source countries**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Lesotho</b>	<b>Malawi</b>	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Zimbabwe</b>
1994	227	6	45	25	556
1995	222	85	41	45	405
1996	233	98	53	66	394
1997	124	45	39	77	273
1998	141	37	50	63	300
1999	111	130	575	72	181
2000	92	23	14	87	133
2001	118	33	40	198	326
2002	123	66	87	631	464
2003	237	174	187	1,698	959
2011	2706	2047	NA	12210	15628
2012	3886	2803	NA	14089	24370
2013	2766	1720	NA	10265	18889

*Source: Statistics South Africa, documented migration, 2009, 2011, 2012, and 2013, also cited in Oluwatobi, E. et al. (2015:3)*

However, “it could be argued from existing studies on migrant networks that networks rank amongst the most important explanatory factors of migration since these networks transmit information, provide financial assistance, facilitate some form of employment and accommodation and generally support migrants in various ways” (Oluwatobi, et al., 2015:15).

*“Migration networks can be seen as a form of social capital so far as they are social relations that permit access to other goods of economic significance such as employment or higher wages” (Arango, 2004:165).*

There is evidence to demonstrate that several migrants usually move because other migrants with whom they are associated with moving before them (Oluwatobi, et al. 2015). Hence there is an ensuing multiplier effect, and this serves as a predictor of the increasing role that social networks play in migration as well as the role such networks play in future as a means of reducing the associated costs, risks and uncertainty of migrating, resulting in the development of enclaves in destination countries.

Apart from media reports on Nigerian migrants, the informants explained the pattern and role of network ties in the entire scene, which they regarded as a significant motivating factor in migrating. The existing networks in South Africa, which attracted the Nigerian immigrants to the country, were emphasised by the informants. These network elements vary from individual to individual and from family to family. In some cases, it is marital relations contracted in Nigeria before one of the individuals can travel. Others have to do with family friends, kin, school mates and club membership.

Tiebout stated that “people will move to communities consisting of people similar to them” (1956, cited in Glazier and Kondo, 2007:4). Most informants in this study are living within family and friends’ and maintain a strong link with their relatives both in South Africa and in their home countries. For example, the third informant, Mrs Jenifer Izu says that she copes through the social network of her relatives, especially her husband in Nigeria and co-migrant friends in Durban. At least eighty per cent of the informants admitted that they might not have migrated to South Africa if they did not have some friends or family members living in the country or someone that told them about South Africa. Invariably this was also an instrument of coping with the social hazards of the new environment (Informant: Mrs Jenifer Izu).

In the case of non-Nigerian migrants, it has also been demonstrated that network information about South Africa diffused to various communities in migrants’ home countries proved to be useful (Oluwatobi, et al. 2015). Some respondents stated that they received the motivation to migrate to South Africa from their friends. “One of the respondents stated that he got more information about South Africa as regards study opportunities available from a local church network he belonged to in his home country” (Oluwatobi, et al 2015:10). Through

this, he had access to available study opportunities in South Africa. A member of the church gave him further assistance and thus made his migration process easier (Oluwatobi, et al. 2015:10).

A good percentage of these immigrants said that they reside with fellow citizens in South Africa from their homeland. In contrast, others live alone with migrants from other countries, including South Africans. Most of them admitted having also shared information about South Africa with fellow nationals from their country or recommended South Africa to people from home. Some of the Zimbabwean male respondents regarded the existing family ties in South Africa as motivation to remain in the country. They explained that they currently live with their siblings and enjoy the home community away from home (Oluwatobi, et al., 2015:11).

This study which spans 19 years (1994-2013), indicates that spousal ties are a motivating factor for Nigerian women as their decision to migrate depended mainly on the decision of their spouses. My fieldwork revealed that approximately 75% of the Nigerian women in the focus group said that they are in South Africa based on the decision of their spouse to migrate. At the same time, the remainder simply came for study purposes. Some of the women who came to be with their husbands took the opportunity to further their education. For example, an informant, Mrs Jenifer Izu added, “I came to South Africa to join my husband”, as would be the case for most females and, in the process, get more education. Some of the other women also subscribed to this. In the present data on Durban, out of 15 informants, 10 claimed spousal ties as a valuable coping mechanism and that this also acted as a motivating factor for migration. However, a fall of 8% (i.e. from 75% to 67%) implies that there is a measure of change in gender response to the migration trend regarding Nigeria, i.e. there is a slight increase in independent female migration (Oluwatobi, et al. 2015).

However, compared to Nigerian immigrant women of the 1990s in South Africa, this set of immigrants, including the refugees among them, could cope reasonably well with moral and financial support from NGOs. None of the informants in this study has counselling records or soliciting financial assistance from NGOs. But a survey of earlier African immigrant women, including Nigerians in South Africa, has shown that such support from NGOs

constituted a critical coping mechanism (Naicker, 2014:90-92). According to this study, participants attributed much of their coping ability to assistance from various NGO's in and around Johannesburg. Organisations such as the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) – an NGO in Pretoria that provides limited accommodation and assistance to asylum seekers and Refugees—and CSV, an NGO in Braamfontein (Johannesburg) offering rehabilitation services to victims of trauma and torture, seemed to play a role in helping the participants to cope with both internal/emotion-focused as well as external/problem-focused stressors. Most of the informants described their favourable experiences with counselling at CSV and other forms of humanitarian assistance by JRS. They also explained the support from Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), an NGO providing legal aid to refugees and asylum seekers, apart from similar support from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Unlike men, most immigrant women believe that sponsoring other kin to join them constitutes an asset in the foreign land and aid to their survival. In a way, this may look elusive. But the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban conceives it as an asset for three reasons. First, if emigration has helped her in terms of self-actualisation, she believes that it will produce the same result in the life of the kin, no matter the nature of changes in economic and migration policies of the government. Secondly, she believes it will add to the value of remittance to assist those at home. Finally, those in business believe that such close relations could become business partners. Hence, should they migrate alone, subsequently, they may sponsor family members. (Richmond, 1988)

An informant, Madam Joyce Oloko said that:

*I derive much satisfaction from having my children and husband around me. Most of the Nigerians in our church, where my husband is a pastor, relate in such a way that “we now feel that we are in a larger family.” My children may school in South Africa or Nigeria, but bringing them here for the purpose of education gives me a second advantage (Informant, Mrs Oloko).*

Similarly, Mrs Jenifer Izu, who came to join her husband in 2015, also said that she still missing those at home, and according to her, “If I have any good opportunity to assist one

or two relations to join us, I will not hesitate to do so” (Mrs Jenifer Izu). The statements of both informants suggest that having family around them does not only keep them company but also serves as a means of social networking.

### **Networks with Cultural and Ethnic Groups**

The migrant women's ability to meet and connect with other migrants from their home countries and other African countries has enabled them to adjust to life in Southern Africa. Bock (1970) defines culture as what makes you a stranger when you are away from home. For a deeper understanding of how cultural groupings facilitate migrant's adjustments, the experience of Nigerian women immigrants in Durban would be of some help for illustration. According to Comfort Olaseyinde, an immigrant from the Ondo State of Nigeria:

*I belong to some associations formed by different cultural groups from Nigeria. Among them is Oduduwa Bizi, a Yoruba immigrant association. This group has been very helpful to members in terms of job and business connections. We receive relevant information from this body, some of which is of valuable help even to relations at home seeking visas to visit South Africa (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

Madam Nneka Onyeruka, who has been in South Africa since 2008, gave her experience:

*My husband belongs to the Nigeria Union, which also makes me a member. You know when the husband belongs, the woman cannot be exempted. I also belong to family meetings and local government meetings. The Nigeria Union has been very helpful to members. In my case, there was a time I was trying to get my permit, and it was tough. The Nigerian Union intervened to see me through. I had to see the Councillor through the Nigeria Union (Informant, Mrs Onyeruka).*

Thus Opeoluwa Akinola, a migrant from the Lagos state of Nigeria, said:

*I came to South Africa in 2015 because I like the place. I single-handedly took the decision to migrate, and one of my friends, Kikelomo Ademuyiwa, assisted me to be here. We come from the same area and therefore belong to the same cultural group. I was a hairdresser in Nigeria, and I rented a shop to continue the same business here. South Africa is better than Nigeria,*

*especially if you are good at your job or career. I don't receive any financial assistance from home, but I send money home through those I know when they visit Nigeria. My husband has come to join me (Informant, Mrs Akinola).*

Cultural grouping also involves creating a collective settlement where most immigrants from a cultural group or particular country reside to exchange ideas, transmit useful information and protect their members and interests, especially during the period of crisis. Thus, the areas carefully selected for the fieldwork of this study are those with the highest concentration of Nigerians in Durban. Among them are Workshop, Warwick Junction, West Street, the Berea and some parts of Umbilo. Also included is an area sometimes referred to as the Central Business District (CBD) consisting of George Street, Park Street and Russell Street, though there are informants from other parts of the town. Comfort Olaseyinde, a Home Economic graduate from Ondo State of Nigeria who is into food entrepreneurship in Durban; alluded to the importance of residential proximity during the xenophobic attack:

*My advice is that people should not stay far from the major settlement of those from their country of origin. They couldn't come to where I live because many Nigerians are there. Therefore, there would have been a war if they had come (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

Some of the immigrants felt that with the people from their home, the world is viewed the same way, and they all know in general terms what to expect of one another. In Durban, some women like the Nigerians have formed a community where they practice solidarity and reciprocity, and some other groups are tending in the same direction. Whenever there is a birthday party or funeral, they will all come together to feast or sympathise with the family of the deceased and to assist both financially and emotionally. They all make some contribution whenever a member who is resident in Durban dies. The contribution is higher if the deceased is to be transported home. Apart from this, those who are very close to the deceased will make the extra sacrifice. At times close friends may decide to provide the food and drinks at the funeral. After the funeral, if the deceased was single, his belongings are sold, and the money is sent to his parents at home. If he was married and his wife decides to go home, the community will contribute money to pay her air ticket back home.

If she chooses to continue living in South Africa, the money that is collected will be given to her. Among some of the Nigerian groups residing in Durban, there is a community list bearing the name and contact addresses of each member and his/her family, both in South Africa and Nigeria. It also contained the name and address of the next of kin at home in case of an emergency. These are actually among the benefits that Comfort Olaseyinde and Nneka Onyeruka referred to when they said that this socio-cultural structure has been beneficial to members. A similar socio-cultural network has been found among the Ghanaians in South Africa (see Ojong, 2002:71).

As a community, the operation of the social group goes beyond these activities. When any of them is facing the problem of deportation, they come to his or her rescue. If anyone of them is sick, every member is contacted, and in many other cases. It is worth emphasising here that migrants' social networks are crucial for psychological support and continuous social and economic support (Peberdy, 2001). For the Nigerian migrants, the network among community members recognises the sets of obligations and rights concerning the entire community. A study on Ghanaian immigrant women in South Africa reveals that such community members see themselves as brethren (brothers and sisters). The word brethren, as used by migrant women, may not necessarily mean people but members of the same family (cited in Ojong, 2002).

It is the type of relationship that Ebaugh et al. called "fictive kin system." (2000, cited in Ojong, 2002). They define it as a family-type relationship based not on blood or marriage but rather on close friendship links. It constitutes a type of social capital that many immigrant groups bring with them, and this facilitates their incorporation into the host society. It also represents a resource to immigrants as they confront problems of settlement. This brand of the social network enables the migrant women to be able to relocate to a particular urban area in KwaZulu-Natal. For those who are in business, it allows them to get their goods from their home countries, and through it, they are introduced to new business ventures. These women do not have access to loans from the banks because most of them do not have permanent residence permits. As a result, they resort to social networks to get loans to start new businesses, which usually are interest-free.

The cultural grouping structured pattern of asocial network is an essential means by which migrant women find jobs and accommodation in the first few months of South Africa. These networks of family and friends have been established over time and link cities and labour markets in receiving countries (Cholewinski, 1997). It is now being adopted by similar groups from other countries, for example, Zambians and Somalians.

Thus, as explained earlier, the Oyegoke family, while in Nigeria, got relevant information about the procedures for getting a job in South Africa as a medical doctor through friends from the same cultural group who were already working in KwaZulu-Natal. Both husband and wife were told to apply through the Foreign Office of the Ministry of Health. Coming from other African countries which have been plagued by either political unrest or suffering from the consequences of the application of structural adjustment programmes, migrant women know that they must do everything to survive and therefore have utilised diverse strategies to adapt to life in South Africa, apart from learning the Zulu language and importing and planting indigenous crops. However, cultural grouping often results in the creation of general social support structures with a network connection to members of other cultural groups and even different nationalities or fortification of the social network through the presence of close relations.

### **General Social Support Structures**

The impact of social support structures such as the healthcare organisations, professional councillors, community engagement like bring and share family get together, and associations affiliated to Nigerian immigrants in Durban provide helpful support to cushion the psycho-social issues among immigrants. The establishment of support structures also emerged as having significance in the lives of these immigrants. From the informants' experience, there are indications that some of the women either inherited or created the necessary social support that contributed positively to their ability to cope with their new environment. Social support can contribute to adaptive coping responses by increasing self-esteem, confidence and provide information and guidance in the host country for newly arrived refugees; social supports facilitate access to information and services in the host community and help to maintain the link with the country of origin (McMichael &

Manderson, 2004). To some extent, this is true of the Nigerian women in Durban. These social supports help in providing a buffer against the adverse life of immigrants.

For example, the Nigerian women, Christians or Muslim immigrants would find solace in approaching the relevance of religious groups in Durban for their spiritual, moral support as well as business networking. An informant, Mrs Ikudende, explained that:

*“Whenever I encounter misfortune or loss in my personal and business life, I would go to church for prayers and advice, and I will feel okay (Informant, Mrs Ikudende).*

Healthwise, the informants Mrs Esther Ikudende and Madam Nneka Onyeruka added that the provision of good healthcare facilities in South Africa helped us a lot in our medical issues as women.

Mrs Ikudende further explained that:

*It was in a church that I met a doctor who also a Nigerian, who later informed me to go to the public hospital to register for anti-natal care when I had my first pregnancy in 2012. The medical support I received helped me until this time (Informant, Mrs Ikudende).*

Again, Madam Nneka Onyeruka also added that:

*I derive peace and happiness from emotional discomfort when I am with my friends and see my children playing happily with friends. As a result, we organise monthly social events gathering where each family comes with food items, drinks, sports kits for children to play with at places such as Albert parks, or Botanical garden etc. It’s a means of coping with depressions, and it is a way to feel home away from home (Informant, Mrs Onyeruka).*

The above information depicts how Nigerian immigrants cope in Durban through the social support structure, as mentioned.

A number of the informants give an account of their experience regarding social support structure. Some studies regard this as ‘social capital, which helps understand how some immigrants can resettle successfully (McMichael & Manderson, 2004). Mrs Jacob, an

immigrant from South Eastern Nigeria, narrated her experience when she arrived in South Africa with pregnancy and yet without the husband:

*There were quite a good number of Nigerian friends who assisted. They also helped to link me up to sources of information through which I could be connected to daily or weekly jobs to sustain me until my husband, who was still in Kaduna State in Nigeria, could raise money for me. Even through them, I came to know how I could have access to organisations formed by Nigerians both within South Africa and Nigeria that render special assistance to ladies in my category. It was while I was trying to utilise this means that my husband was able to come to my aid (Informant, Mrs Jacob).*

As we shall see below, among the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, the churches also helped them to adjust because, through their membership, the women knew whom to call on in times of need. For those who are doing business, church members were among their first customers. These women have devised diverse strategies to survive. Some of them are very successful and courageous and serve as examples for other migrant women.

### **Spirituality and Religion**

Some studies have demonstrated that spirituality and religion constitute fundamental coping mechanisms among immigrants (Naicker, 2014; Gozdzia, 2005). It is observed that early immigrants discussed an aspect of spirituality or belief that has helped them to cope with their circumstances. These immigrants placed great emphasis on spirituality and often turned to prayer during times of need. Elements of this could be found in the experience of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, but not as pronounced as the case of the earlier immigrants. According to an informant, Mrs Evelyn Emmanuel Moses, her immigration was primarily motivated by religion and spiritual reasons, and this is also the key source of income for her family (Informant: Mrs Evelyn Emmanuel Moses). Based on the traditional fusion between religion, spirituality and social life in many Nigerian communities, the other informants also conceived it as an essential coping mechanism. This involved an occasional visit to a religious gathering like the church, mosque or others known as spiritual homes. Some works in the existing literature have shown that religion or spirituality operates in varied ways as it shapes the experiences of refugee women (Naicker, 2014; Gozdzia,

2005). It is also argued that as a source of resiliency, religion can facilitate or impede the integration processes of immigrants into the social structure of host societies depending on how it is being managed (Gozdziak, 2005). Religion is, therefore, an essential issue for consideration, especially in the planning of future rehabilitation of immigrants concerning national policy on migration. However, the majority of Nigerian immigrant women rely on the church. For instance, Mrs Patience Amao narrates the benefit she derives from her Christian denomination, Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministry (MFM), in Durban. This church receives sponsorship from its headquarters in Nigeria. Again, Mrs Rose Umar, cited in Chapter Four, stated,

*I belong to the Winners Chapel Church, also known as Canaanland. The ministry has its headquarters in Nigeria. Churches have been helpful to most of us in times of challenges. Apart from the financial aspect, a church with faithful members provides psychological support in times of emotional stress (Informant, Mrs Umar).*

Some works in the existing literature have observed that religion or spirituality operates in varied ways as it shapes the experiences of refugee women (Naicker, 2014; Gozdzia, 2005). It is also argued that as a source of resiliency, religion can facilitate or impede the integration processes of immigrants into the social structure of host societies depending on how it is being managed (Gozdzia, 2005). Religion is, therefore, an important issue for consideration, especially in the planning of future rehabilitation of immigrants with regard to national policy on migration

### **Retention of Cultural Identity**

Most of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban believe that acceptance of their culture and identity helps them to sustain a social network that transcends the borders of South Africa. Nigerian culture is maintained and supported in diverse ways. For example, Nigerians in South Africa have an association of ethnic representations across the provinces, such as the Yoruba and Igbo Association in Durban. Through these associations, cultural identities are sustained by weekly meetings which are being conducted in local Nigerian languages and organisation of the annual end of the year party where the cultural

dressing codes, dramas are showcased. Besides, the associations also encourage all members to preserve their cultural identities at homes by ensuring the local Nigerian languages are spoken to children at all times for them to be kept alive beyond generations. Also, Nigerian food items such as gari, yam, palm oil and melon seeds (egusi), among others, are imported and made available at shops for purchases. Also, there are several Nigerian women in Durban whose jobs is to prepare and sell Nigerian foods at the eat-in canteen and as take away services. In this regard, an informant of this study, Comfort Olaseyinde, a food seller, shares her view on how she sustains Nigerian culture by selling Nigerian cooked food.

*Though I was not a food seller back in Nigeria, but when I got to South Africa, and my husband is always being the person shouldering the family responsibilities with two kids, I thought of what I could be doing since my degree could not fetch me a job. Then on a particular Sunday after the weekly Yoruba Association meeting, my husband came back to brief me that it was discussed at the meeting that their interested wives should think of how Nigerian food can be brought to the meeting every Sundays. Then my husband said he had pledged that I will bring food for the members to taste next Sunday meeting. This was how I started food selling. From there, I opened a shop where people come to eat on a daily basis. Even some South Africans who wish to taste Nigerian food also patronize me. I am now known as a Nigerian food seller and can support my family (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

This explains the role Comfort Olaseyinde plays in preserving and promoting Nigerian cultural identity in Durban through food selling. It shows that she does not only become an income earner through food sales but also earned a job to support her family both in South Africa and Nigeria as a means of remittances.

The issue of remittance is also crucial and shared among Nigerian immigrants in Durban. People, because of their relationships and love for their families back home especially, parents and children, are very concerned about supporting their dependents and loves ones in Nigeria. Their families, especially parents in most cases, would have supported or sponsored some immigrants to travel to South Africa, so when the opportunity arises for them to pay back, they will not hesitate to do so. They see this culture of remittance not

only as an African tradition but also as interfamilial, cultural sustainability. Therefore, many informants refer to the custom of remittances as one means of sustaining the culture of contributing to the upkeep of children at home. Despite the sacrifices, this involves they are determined to maintain it because of expected benefits. The primary benefit is the financial and other support received from a home in periods of distress. For this reason, some of the women have to weigh the virtue and vices of retaining aspects of their own cultures while living in South Africa.

On the remittance culture, Lady Aderonke Ololade said she assists people at home financially when they need money for a small-scale business or some key issues to keep the family going, and according to her:

*It is among the practices that all Nigerian immigrants here try to imbibe and therefore, I consider it a tradition that keeps us together. Even those who cannot do so now due to their income encourage others and demonstrate that they will be part of it when they are able to find their feet. In my case, almost everything I invested in my business, I mean financially, was from relations and colleagues in Nigeria. Therefore, I should assist when it is my turn to do so (Informant, Mrs Ololade).*

Comfort Olaseyinde and Opeoluwa Akinola are among the informants that discuss the remittance practice among Nigerian female immigrants as a well-established social norm.

Both Tope Ige and Comfort Olaseyinde talked about the paraphernalia of Nigerian food culture and how it provides a common platform for interaction among Nigerians in South Africa. Comfort Olaseyinde is into some catering business, but according to her, she is yet to raise enough funds to operate at the level she has in mind. At the same time, Tope Ige is involved in the occasional distribution of Nigerian foodstuffs, most of which are brought from Nigeria. Both of them talked about the love of Nigerian men for Nigerian food culture, illustrating their local diet, among which is *eba* and *fufu*, made from cassava as well as those derived from grains and yam. Others are pounded yam. Asked what Nigerian men married to South Africans, Comfort Olaseyinde said:

*That is why there are Nigerian food canteens, I mean, most of them patronise those canteens daily, especially those who are mobile. Some of them teach their wives how to cook Nigerian foods and some cook themselves. In fact, I believe that there may be few who visit Nigeria with their wives in order to expose them to some of these things (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

It is therefore argued that immigrants, particularly refugees, often find that they have to reorganise themselves in a manner that may bring about a distinct cultural identity, though this could be complicated by their new physical and social environments (Spitzer, 2007, cited in Naicker, 2014:100). This is because identity is not fixed but is in a constant state of fluidity based on the social location, socio-economic status and cultural context that individuals find themselves in. Although cultural identity is seen as a process and a resource that can be utilised, it is also often defined from this perspective.

But overall, the sustenance of cultural identity demonstrates the ability of the immigrants to maintain continuity in the face of change, namely the social dynamism of the urban setting. This continuity is sustained due to the belief that customs and traditions from home have their role to play in sustaining the vision of the migrant when there are critical personal challenges. Analysing, therefore, adjustment and adaptation have become accepted as a secondary instrument of survival among the immigrants.

Regarding dress code, one informant described herself as adopting a more ‘westernised’ style such as jeans and T-shirts, whereas she wore more traditional clothes in her country of origin. She also described how she felt more accepted and integrated when she dressed like many others around her. This also prevented her from standing out odd in a crowd (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010:104). From the above, it seemed that although conflict does exist between people from various ethnic backgrounds and cultures, being able to adapt by imbibing some socio-cultural traits of the immediate host community is an important aspect of coping.

## **Skills development**

Most immigrants gave accounts of the new skills that they have acquired that help them to cope with their new environment. In the case of Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, most were aware that despite their university education, they must have one skill or the other that could enable them to penetrate the South African informal economy since employment for immigrants in the formal sector is extremely difficult. Most of them, therefore, acquired skill in Nigeria before embarking on the journey to South Africa, particularly hairdressing and catering. Others have to acquire a trade on arrival in South Africa.

Most of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban are sustained through personal entrepreneurial activities ranging from running restaurants and hair-dressing salons to the selling of clothes, including fabrics majority of which were visited in the course of this research. Others interacted with during the fieldwork are those with business outfits for the sale of electronics and related goods. Among them are Sister Joke, Lady Aderonke Ololade, Comfort Olaseyinde and Opeoluwa Akinola, Madam Joyce Oloko, to mention a few. Thus Opeoluwa Akinola, a migrant from the Lagos state of Nigeria, said:

*I came to South Africa in 2015 because I like the place. I single-handedly took the decision to migrate, and my friend, Kikelomo Ademuyiwa, assisted me to be here. I was a hairdresser in Nigeria, and I rented a shop to continue the same business here. South Africa is better than Nigeria, especially if you are good at your job or career. I don't receive any financial assistance from home, but I send money home through those I know when they visit Nigeria. My husband has come to join me (Informant, Mrs Akinola).*

Another informant, Comfort Olaseyinde, said:

*I'm an indigene of Ondo State of Nigeria, and I came to South Africa in 2012. I'm a university graduate and teacher. I intend to continue with the same career here in South Africa and also further my education. I was also engaged in baking, catering, decoration and fashion designing while in Nigeria. But right now, I'm fully into the business of baking, catering, and decoration because I couldn't secure a salary job. I came to South Africa with my children, and I single-handedly decided to travel here. I send money home, but my husband is in Nigeria (Informant, Mrs Olaseyinde).*

These women are patronised by both South Africans and foreign nationals in terms of sales and apprenticeship. The case of Sister Joke provides an example for some illustration in this context. She said that she has been able to identify her talent while in Nigeria and is fashion design which she now combines with the sale of different categories of fabrics here in South Africa. She has a good number of apprentices, and the majority of them are South Africans. With this niche, she and her apprentice design different categories of native South African attire, particularly those that epitomise the essential ingredient of Zulu culture, thus serving the interest of the locals' rather than that of Nigerians and other foreigners. This is among the reasons why most of her clients and apprentices are South Africans. She has some non-South African clients, including Nigerians, but since the majority are South Africans, “my focus is on their culture and taste”. Asked when she is likely to return to Nigeria, considering the cost of rent and power subscription, which she regards as her primary challenge, her response is:

*That is never on my agenda; for now, my present focus is to make sure all those under me as apprentices complete their training and commence their own business. That is my joy”*  
(informant, Mrs Sofola)

Another example is Madam Joyce Oloko, who combines fashion design with the sale of electronics. She has her shop in a primary market in the Durban region, generally known as “Town.” It is a market devoted to the sale of assorted goods, including second-hand electronics and furniture. She said that she has been in this business for over five years, patronised by South Africans and foreigners, including Nigerians. According to her, she quickly discovered that she could be a link between some category of drivers and buyers who need their services, thus helping to keep them in business. This, she said, has helped to increase the number of her customers, enabling her to make more sales. In the process, she provides a link between the drivers and buyers who want their luggage like freezer, refrigerator, bed, chairs and similar goods transferred from one place to another, e.g. from the market to their residence and vice-versa, or from the market to other places depending on the nature of transactions.

Based on the above illustration, entrepreneurship has also been conceptualised as a process by which individuals, either alone or inside organisations, pursue opportunities regardless of the resources at hand.

The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban could be classified as very enterprising, and this constitutes a vital instrument of coping in the foreign land. This is partly because employment is the greatest challenge facing immigrants in South Africa. This implies that the progressive immigrants are creative, resilient and rugged enough to fit into the structure of the South African competitive informal economy. As explained in the previous chapter, the majority of the women are self-employed, and some have been able to start a small-scale business. This has also made them job creators. Most of the women receive a university education, and this has been an asset in their business life. For instance, about 90% (13 out of 15) of informants received university education or its equivalent. Moreover, they financed the businesses with funds brought in from their homeland.

These migrant women are, therefore, among the non-SADC immigrant entrepreneurs who finance their businesses with funds brought in from outside South Africa (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). A study has revealed that most SADC entrepreneurs had a secondary school education but immigrant entrepreneurs from non-SADC countries are better educated, which gives them broader horizons in their business development strategies (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). Some 50 per cent of non-SADC entrepreneurs had some University education. The study has also demonstrated that most non-SADC immigrant entrepreneurs finance their businesses with funds brought in from outside South Africa (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010:388).

Indeed, the potency of African immigrants in job creation has been empirically demonstrated in a study conducted in 2007 on job creation for South Africans by African immigrant entrepreneurs, including face-to-face interviews with 120 African immigrant entrepreneurs (cited in Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010:387) These findings were documented based on the outcome of 7 non-governmental organisations that interact with immigrants in Cape Town. The results indicate that more than 80 per cent of African immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed employ South Africans in their businesses. Over the last decade, African immigrants have been met with and exposed to severe manifestations of hostility to

their presence in South Africa. A significant number of these migrants have, therefore, successfully applied their entrepreneurial flair in establishing small enterprises and employing workers, often to the envy of their local counterparts. Despite a generally negative national perception of immigrants, this study has also revealed that entrepreneurial skills are transferred from immigrant entrepreneurs to their South African employees. While the research was conducted only in the suburban areas of Cape Town, the researcher believes that the results represent the general trend in South Africa. From the existing facts and figures on the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, their experience is also primarily in line with this trend. As the study involved only migrants from the African continent, it is among those that provide some facts and figures for analysing how the experience of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban compared with that of other African migrants in South Africa, particularly non-SADC immigrant women. The overall aim is partly to understand the contribution that non-citizens are making to the country's growth and development. However, the findings of the study include recommendations relevant to policy changes on South African immigration law. It also includes research on the role of immigrants in job creation in South Africa and the need for consideration of immigrant entrepreneurs in the allocation of financial support (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010).

Overall, job creation is a formidable challenge for the South African government and the Nigerian immigrant women in South Africa are making their impact felt in this regard despite the enormous limitations they face in the South Africa informal economy to which the majority of them belong. Despite its extraordinary efforts to reduce the unemployment rate, which is estimated at 27.32% per cent, according to *Trading Economics* (2008:2; Pletcher, 2020), the government and other businesses in the formal sector have not been able to arrive at an expected target in the agenda of creating employment for all. Many South Africans have to work for small business owners, and many immigrants run their businesses in this sector. At the same time, the presence on the South African soil of so many immigrants from all over the world and the implications of their presence in the job market, as well as the problem of the country's scarce resources, raise controversial comments and debates (Pletcher, 2020).

One notion, or unsubstantiated belief held by many South Africans, is that immigrants from north of the country's borders are taking South Africans' jobs. Timberg (2005:3) disagrees, maintaining, to the contrary, that they are creating employment for themselves and sometimes for unemployed South Africans. In light of the adverse reaction to immigrants' involvement in the economy, to which the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban has been a victim, one could ask whether they do add any value to the well-being of the host country, given their education, experience and high involvement in small businesses. Several studies have noted that the relatively higher level of education and skills of migrants is on the same level as those of host populations (Timberg, 2005:4). To a large extent, this mirrors the case of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban. The Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, therefore, create some jobs within their little capacity in the informal economy. To some extent, this is in line with the general trend observed in macro-studies. For instance, in his study on immigration and employment growth in the United States of America, Enchautegui (2005:10) shows that overall, immigrants contribute more to increases in employment than the indigenes. Kalitanyi & Visser (2010) reveals the pattern of employment creation by African immigrants in South Africa, a confirmation of Enchautegui's finding. The study shows that 29 out of the 40 (73 per cent) interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs from Nigeria prefer to employ South Africans, as do also 36 out of the 40 (90 per cent) interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs from Somalia (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010).

A significant number, 19 out of the 20 (95 per cent), interviewed immigrant entrepreneurs from Senegal and 14 out of the 20 (70 per cent) other African immigrant entrepreneurs from various African countries prefer to employ South Africans. The total number of interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs who employed South Africans is 98 out of 120 (82 per cent). Nine out of the 40 (23 per cent) interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs from Nigeria choose to employ anybody. In comparison, five out of the 20 (25 per cent) interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs from various African countries choose to hire either a foreigner or a South African (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010). The total number of interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs who employ anybody, foreign or South African, without preference is 17 out of 120 (14 per cent). Presenting the extent to which African immigrant entrepreneurs create employment for unemployed South Africans is

among the issues that cannot be completely left out of a work of this nature. Judging by even this small sample of 120 respondents, African immigrant entrepreneurs demonstrate that they are indeed creating jobs for South Africans, as 82 percent of interviewed African immigrant entrepreneurs were employing South Africans (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010).

This finding confirms the hypothetical statement of a study undertaken in 2006/2007: “African immigrant entrepreneurs create jobs for unemployed South Africans in Cape Town”, and they justify their preferences in the following terms (cited in Kalitanyi & Visser, 2010:389):

- a. South African employees offer the business a communication facility.
- b. South Africans are empowered: they gain financially and they are trained in business;
- c. South Africans do not ask for a high remuneration rate as foreigners, who are here in search of money.

In recent years, a growing number of immigrants have entered South Africa, who, in their first months, survives under difficult circumstances. To earn their living, some of them manage to create and successfully run their small businesses and create employment for locals (Informant: Lady Joke)

Independent movement among African women is now widespread and is used as a survival strategy. Since 1994 more and more women are migrating to South Africa to meet their professional, social, and economic needs. Some of these women leave behind their spouses and children and when they are well settled in South Africa. They invite their spouses and children to join them. In some cases, however, their spouses are reluctant to do so and are prepared to receive only the remittances sent to them by their wives. Despite the enormous differences in the economic and social circumstances of these women, there is some consensus on the overall goals the women set for themselves in addition to making a living (Informants, Mrs Akinola and Lady Joke).

The Nigerian migrant women are, however, conscious of actualising these goals within the framework of the labour policies of South Africa. These goals include enhancing and improving their skills through further education and training whilst in South Africa, building more networks of relationships for further career advancement and improving the living conditions of their families (both nuclear and extended), with special attention given to those members of their families who are still in school (also see Ojong,2002:72). Others include contributing to the development of the host country and their country of origin. Regarding the occupational experiences of these women, there is no doubt that they have achieved a lot in general terms. However, the impact of the occupational skills of African migrant women seems to be underestimated by the South Africans and the South African government. It has been observed that the presence of African female engineers, hairdressers, lecturers, head of departments, etc., even when it goes unnoticed, has affected positively and will continue to affect the developmental indices of economic activities (Ojong, 2002:72)

It is for this reason that the South African government, especially the Department of Home Affairs, should re-consider the relative advantages of having African migrant women in South Africa. Their presence, of course, can be used as an opportunity for capacity building among South African women.

According to Dr Golda (cited in Ojong, 2002),

*“When confronted with the truth, there is always the tendency to react against it. My appeal to the South African government is that instead of reacting against it they should respond to this new challenge and relax their policies on African labour migrants”* (Ojong, 2002:89).

In analysing the occupational experiences of the Nigerian women in Durban, a wide range of other forces come into play. The success of the occupational experiences of the migrant women lies in the fact that, as mentioned above, before emigration, all of them had a primary high school education, and a majority of them also had a tertiary qualification or a university degree. The salient factor in their success in South Africa, as revealed through in-depth interviews, is the fact that they did not just rely on their certificates for survival, especially during the early months of arrival in South Africa, as revealed through their

adjustment patterns. They were so ambitious and confident that the hardships they experienced at the early stage of their career in South Africa could not act as a disincentive for them. Coming to South Africa for study, acquire a career or doing business was a matter of choice, and their experiences varied with their different occupations.

### **Urbanization as a strategy for Household survival**

The urban average income earners have adopted several strategies in their attempts to manage the changes in their economic circumstances. Two major coping strategies can be identified. The first involves an increase in informal sector activity, with previously unemployed household members entering the petty commodity sector, as well as wage-earners taking on supplementary cash-earning activities. This is illustrated in a number of studies (Jespersen, 1990; Roe and Chilowa, 1990; Maliyamkono and Bagachwa, 1990; Bibangambah, 1992; Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 1992; Kanji, 1993). The case of Nigerian immigrant women in Durban belongs to this pattern. Other strategies have been identified among other immigrants. Among them is the development of food-growing by urban households on any available patch of arable land within and around the metropolitan area (e.g. Sanyal, 1985; Mulenga, 1991; Gefu, 1992; Holm, 1992; Mlozi et al., 1992; Mbiba, 1994; Drakakis-Smith et al., 1995).

Planting of food crops brought from their home countries has become a hobby among some migrant women and is classified as a pattern of adjustment and adaptation and a second coping technique. According to one of them, “When it comes to what I eat, I don't miss home” (Informants, Mrs Akinola). By so doing, they have a continuous supply of their indigenous food. A final and fundamental survival strategy involve the strengthening and adaptation of the rural-urban linkages that have always been such an essential part of urbanisation processes in sub-Saharan Africa (Potts and Mutambirwa, 1990). According to Mrs Evelyn E. Moses, an informant cited above:

*Like most other Nigerian immigrant women, I utilise the advantage of the urban environment for maximum benefit from my small-scale business, i.e., think of stuff that is likely in demand at a particular season, areas with a category of people who need your goods and so on. Some of us including myself have a little*

*orchard where we plant some vegetables for assisting to keep the family going (Mrs Moses).*

### **Negative Coping**

This involves conflict and an illegal approach to address a particular challenge, including the probability of parent-child disagreements. (Barry, 1979). Negative coping may also involve the maladaptive ways an individual tries to cope with a stressful situation (Naicker, 2014: 94). Often, refugees experience acculturative stress during the process of adaptation, which arises at various levels in their social systems, including their family system. Many refugee parents, in adapting to their new environments, experience high levels of stress and are not sure of how to cope with this. As such, they may tend to adopt negative coping strategies, which may relieve their stress symptoms in the short term, but create more problems in the long term. However, this is not known among Nigerian immigrants.

The only element of negative coping identified among the Nigerian immigrants in Durban is in the aspect of conflict and has to do with apparent possession of illegal arms in their effort to counter xenophobic attacks, as discovered in 2017. They were forced to arm themselves in anticipation of a further attack from the natives. Six people, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed in a wave of attacks on foreign nationals in several parts of KwaZulu-Natal, including KwaMashu and Umlazi, in two weeks. Nigerian nationals on Mahatma Gandhi Road say they're prepared to fight and will defend themselves should they come under attack. According to them, "They won't come back. Forget about what they say, they will not come here. We are ready for them". (Tshidi, 2017:5)

There were also cases of some Nigerians who could resort to advanced free fraud called 419 if circumstances permit and classify it as negative coping by hook or crook. Thus, according to *Premium Times* of July 24, 2016, 254 Nigerians living in South Africa defraud the federal government of Nigeria in connection with the processing of passport and visa. Nigeria's Consul-General in South Africa, Uche Ajulu-Okeke, announced in July 2016 that the Federal Government lost \$39,370 (about N10.9 million) to visa and passport fees at processing centres in South Africa (Informant: Uche Ajulu-Okeke). Mrs Okeke told the News Agency of Nigeria in Johannesburg, South Africa, that the Online Integrated

Solutions (OIS), a firm that processes passport and visa on behalf of the Nigeria Immigration Service abroad, reported the loss to the Consulate. According to her, concrete evidence shows a recent compilation of 254 online payment fraudulent reversals of passport applications occurred between April and June 2016. She said that Nigerians deliberately employed the acts to defraud their government, adding that they were perpetrated through the banks. She explained that the South African banking system allowed anyone with a credit card to reverse such payment if there was a complaint within 30 days. “Some Nigerians in South Africa, unfortunately, have perfected the act of defrauding the Federal Government by going to the banks to report the loss or fraudulent use of such cards, and the banks will reverse the payment” (Informant: Mrs Okeke). The Consul-General also said this approach was adopted because of the speed in service delivery accorded Nigerians by the Consulate as approved by the Federal Government.

According to her, the Nigerians paid online, collected the passports within the stipulated 30 days and then went back to the bank and reversed the payments with the passports in their pockets. Mrs Okeke said it was regrettable that some Nigerians deliberately defrauded the government through such acts in a foreign land. The Consulate finally compiled a list of those involved in this act and sent it to Abuja. The purpose was for the Nigeria Immigration Service to decide whether those passports should be cancelled or withdrawn from circulation. The Consul-General also disclosed that the mission recorded 58 reversals of online visa payments between April and June 2016. She said South African visa applicants reported that they paid a Nigerian agent to process it for them. The Nigerian agent collected cash from the applicants and use their credit card to pay, but only to reverse the payment thereafter. She said the Consulate was taking various steps to address the situation and that the Nigeria Immigration Service would be advised on local measures that could be effectively employed to deal with the situation. Overall, in the Nigerian context, negative coping is noticeable among few immigrants and has manifested only within the platform of conflict and employment of illegal approach in response to some issues (Informant: Mrs Akinola).

## **Conclusion**

Although most of the women talked about their struggles in making ends meet and their challenges with adjusting to a new environment, many of them also described aspects of their lives that had changed positively through adjustment and adaptation since the time of their arrival in South Africa. The Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban is in a new socio-cultural terrain. Adaptation is, therefore, the only means of survival. Just as their challenges emanate from a platform created by the intricacies of two spatial world views, i.e. the host country and homeland, as epitomised by the framework of “gendered geographies of power” so is her adaptation structured along the same line. Yet as a member of a gender group, she contends with the remnant of traditional and inherent barriers to the sustenance of her vision but polarised by other complexities like racial bias, urban hazards, xenophobic and related violence and the likes. The effort to adapt has, therefore, resulted in the adoption of a number of coping mechanisms within the realm of intersectionality. Through the lens of intersectionality theoretical framework, one can visualise the traditional handicaps of her gender group that has trailed her even across the border and yet beclouded by the general social limitations explained above. Social network and entrepreneurship are the most solid coping strategies. Social networks are often fortified by recognition of cultural groupings, while some of the cultural groups believe that they can enhance their position by bringing more kinsmen into the host country through assisted migration. This is combined with a culture of resilience, acquisition of skills and adoption of religion and spirituality in addition to the exploitation of the virtue of urban life (Informants: Mrs Akinola, Mrs Evelyn Moses).

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION

### **Summary and Findings**

This study centres on the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, South Africa. The objectives of this study have been analyzed and understood using theoretical frameworks such as the Intersectionality and Spatial framework of the “gendered geographies of powers.” It demonstrates in chapters Two and Three that the traditional “push and pull” framework is too shallow to capture the intricacies surrounding the migration of Nigerian women to Durban. However, at a general level, it may partially provide a simple explanation for some rudimentary issues. The intersectionality theory offers an understanding of the issues that affect immigrants, such as language barrier, ethnicity, religion, race and sexual orientations related to the interplays of ideas and cultures towards achieving economic sustenance. The Spatial framework theory of the “gendered geographies of powers” also provides a comparative understanding of gender complexities that emerged from the growing, national, regional, global migration movement of women because of domestic violence, urban crisis, economic crises and political conflicts (Pessar & Mahler, 2001). For this reason, the theory provides the framework for capturing the spatial connection between the experience, including gendered limitations, of these immigrant women in their home country and their encounter in the host country.

This study has also explored the challenges and constraints of Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, South Africa. As discussed under the literature review, the degree of resilience and its gender undertone, particularly among female immigrants in the country, has attracted the attention of some scholars, but with different viewpoints (e.g., Hlatshwayo, 2014; Lefko-Everett, 2007). The present study has shown in chapter Five that Nigerian immigrant women have tried to imbibe some element of the resilient lifestyle amidst the prevailing culture of xenophobia, social violence, and other constraints. It also showed that Nigerian immigrant women had become fully entrenched in the fabrics of their social lives through self-employment initiatives by identifying and exploiting the gaps in the informal economy. These self-driven initiatives and lifestyle have become a coping mechanism they

adopt to survive in a competitive environment with limited or scarce resources of an emerging economy like South Africa. This lifestyle of resilience and individual initiatives implies focusing on your dreams and visions and allowing them to be driven and to create an unyielding spirit against any opposing force during periods of apparently insurmountable challenges and acute hazards. It is therefore invariably linked to their aims and aspiration of living behind a footprint of dedicated service in South Africa by which all their clients derive expected satisfaction from the service they pay for. This is why one of the informants, Sister Joke, who has most of her apprentices and clients from Durban, said, “my joy, is to make sure the apprentices are well-trained in addition to necessary exposure to enable them to commence their own business so that in future they always remember me for good (Informant Mrs Sofola). It is also directly or indirectly linked to the aspiration of creating and sustaining a remittance culture to enable them to contribute to the development of the extended family as a social unit and that of general communal development involving their respective immediate communities back home in Nigeria.

The study revealed that issues of ethnicities, languages and racial differences are significant factors that often constitute hindrance from different angles, even to social networking of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Over the years, these immigrant women have come to realise that proper understanding of the politics of race relations in South Africa vis-à-vis the pattern of ethnic sentiments and an understanding of the traditions and norms guiding the development of languages and their acquisition can go a long way in stemming the tide of xenophobia and related violence. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, as explained in Chapter Four, they constitute key challenges to this set of immigrants. These immigrant women believe that they are making headway in this direction as many of them now speak the native language through personal effort made to acquire it and create a platform that makes the impact of their services felt by their clients, both natives and foreigners. But they are often traumatized by the recurrence of sporadic violence either within or without. For instance, the xenophobic violence of September 2019 in Johannesburg, during which many Nigerians lose their lives, send traumatic waves to this and similar immigrant groups in the country.

However, the profound legacy of inequality left by the apartheid state may compound the enormous challenges faced by the South African government is trying to deliver services to all. At the same time, the rapid rate of urbanization in South Africa's cities since the early 1990s indicates that these challenges may expand as the state tries to keep up with new arrivals (Peberdy, 2016:23). The ability of immigrants to understand this constitutes an asset in terms of mitigating challenges and hazards, and the existing evidence reveals some element of understanding of the situation by the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban. Immigration into South Africa's cities, coupled with internal migration, poses several problems or issues. First, it increases the demand for services and service delivery on city governments struggling to deliver. Second, it can disrupt communities and community structures. Third, new arrivals, like a segment of the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban, may take time to organize themselves into civil society structures. Fourth, and notably in the context of the violence of May 2008, new arrivals like those among the Nigerian immigrant women in Durban had to adjust in terms of coping mechanism that have to factor in new strategies of survival in case of recurrence of such crisis (Informant: Mrs Nneka Onyeruka)

The study has also revealed that Nigerian immigrant women have adopted multiple coping mechanisms to assimilate into their new environment. Entrepreneurship is among the most potent coping mechanisms adopted by this set of immigrant women mainly because it provides the only key to exploring the informal economy readily opened to immigrants with small-scale business initiatives. The formal sector is only for those in professions and skills with high demand, e.g., medicine and related fields, and only a few Nigerian female immigrants have acquired such skills. For instance, only one of the informants, Mrs Bolanle Oyegoke, who holds a degree in medicine, belongs to this category. The majority of the Nigerian immigrant women are into a small-scale business involving the sale of fabrics, jewels, household electronics like standing fans, table fans, boiling kettle, micro-waves and related items, as well as fashion design hairdressing and catering. This coping mechanism is closely linked to the exploitation of the dynamics of urbanization. Skill acquisition among the Nigerian immigrant women is another coping mechanism and also goes hand-in-hand with entrepreneurship because those with some basic skills like hairdressing, sewing, and catering find it easier to penetrate the informal economy. Closely related to the above

coping mechanisms is the structural adoption of social support networks. This coping mechanism provides a social network that links all members of the group, holding them together and providing them with relevant information, financial and material support; that sustain the visions of the individual and keep hopes alive in a time of distress or acute challenges.

In addition, the study has identified the challenges of social networking as another form of coping mechanism for Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Thus, most of these immigrant women prefer to reside where they can easily be in contact with their kith and kin around. One of the immigrants categorically said that among her key policies is never to reside where there are no Nigerians and advises others to do the same as a security device against xenophobic and related violence (Informant: Mrs Olaseyinde). Also, among these coping mechanisms is adjustment and adaptation concerning new immigrants. A number of the new immigrants like Mrs Jennifer Izu, have to adjust and adapt to the new environment through personal effort and adoption of new orientation based on the awareness that social life in the host country is vastly different from what is attainable in their home country (Informant: Mrs Nneka Onyeruka). Yet, there is another coping mechanism that is widely adopted by this set of immigrant women even though the efficacy of its potency may still attract some controversy in the empirical platform of intellectual analysis—it is religion and spirituality. However, this is considered to be a vibrant coping mechanism as it is a form of a social group and semi-cooperative approach to addressing the social problems of members. For instance, an informant to this study, Mrs Jacob, explained that when she and two other immigrants had the problem of accommodation due to lack of funds, it was their church that helped them out by providing temporary shelter to stay before money was gathered to secure a befitting accommodation (Informant Mrs Jacob). This coping mechanism was created through religion and cultural groups that constitute a vibrant instrument for the sustenance of a network approach against social violence and other forms of insecurity and challenges related to career life.

Another form of coping mechanism is financial and psychological support. The study revealed that immigrant women received financial and psychological support from relatives in Nigeria. The request for financial aid was premised mainly on the effect of the economic

crisis as immigrant workers without help from the host country owing to scarce resources. Thus, the degree of support received from home varies from individual to individual. A good number of them initiated some business ideas for penetrating the informal economy, but the commencement of a small-scale business based on such initiatives only came into reality through fundraising device supported by relations from their homeland in Nigeria. Some were, however, able to start with the provision of certain services like hairdressing and finally settle for one thing or the other by exploring different avenues in South Africa and therefore got little or no financial assistance from home.

The Nigerian government is aware of the challenges involving xenophobic and related violence that threaten the security of immigrants in South Africa. It has tried to assist Nigerian immigrants through legislative processes in three dimensions. Firstly, such legislative approaches have been attempting to set up panels that can appeal to the South African government to put in place new and functional machinery for eliminating such threats to the security of immigrants. Secondly, panels set up through such approaches have sometimes appealed to the government to give financial support to victims of xenophobic attack or family members. A notable example was in 2015 when the Nigerian legislature initiated the idea of such a fund. Still, some other developments truncated its implementation due to which the affected families never received any assistance (Ameh, 2017). Finally, such panels have recommended direct service to Nigerian immigrants in South Africa during an ongoing crisis or xenophobic violence that constitutes a threat to the security of life. This is mainly in the form of free flight ticket for those who are threatened and are ready to embark on return migration, as was the case in September 2019 during the xenophobic crisis in Johannesburg.

The work has also revealed some aspects of the history of cross-border migration by Nigerian immigrant women and their token contribution to the building of the South African contemporary economy. This is analyzed within the context of the state's commitment to diversity and respect for human rights, both in policy and practice. Immigration legislation, policy and practices remain largely exclusionary except for skilled professionals while challenging the rights of irregular migrants. The character and nature of immigration and refugee legislation, as well as policing measures, contribute to

exclusionary constructions of South African nationhood, and this remains a challenge that the Nigerian immigrant woman must consider when given the option between living in South Africa and relocating back to Nigeria.

The study revealed that all these immigrant women conceive remittance as one of the primary reasons for cross-border migration. The passion they have for remittance can be said to be innovatory in outlook and further justifies the assertion that immigrant women are more remittance conscious than their male counterparts in contemporary migration. All the informants mentioned remittance and explained its significance to the search for self-actualization by the immigrant. Some of these were cited in Chapters Four and Five. Thus, the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban conceives remittance as the only means of contributing to the development of her home community in Nigeria. She also sees it as part of her responsibility to assist other members of the extended family in coping with an economic crisis at home. It has been observed that remittance constitutes a key aspect of the traditional culture of many Nigerian ethnic groups, and this is demonstrated even in internal migration. For instance, even those who migrate from rural areas to urban centres believe that it is their responsibility to contribute to the development of their rural communities because their stay in the city is only for a while (Ogbaa, 2003). Due to established customs and traditions, emigrants from the Eastern region of the country believe there is no justification for their migration if they cannot be part of the remittance culture of contributing to communal development at home (Ogbaa, 2003). The attitude of the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban to the issue of remittance demonstrates her inclination to this cultural trait and provides enough evidence to refute the official dominant opinion of the Nigerian state up to the 1990s, explained in Chapter One, that international migration only constitutes a source of capital flight to the nation rather than a tool for national development.

The fundamental growth in the inflow of remittances has been attributed to two key factors in the existing literature on the theme. First, the economic reforms have renewed the confidence of the Nigerian Diaspora with a noticeable improvement in their support for the entire structure. Second, the stock and bond markets, as well as the mortgage sector, have attracted progressive investment opportunities (UNO, 2016; Afolayan, 2009:64-65). But

this does not in any way explain the importance attached to remittance by the Nigerian immigrant woman in Durban. Instead, as described earlier, it is an effort to contribute to the development of her community at home and also part of her response to the basic need of other members of the extended family who are devising different means to cope with the economic crisis at home.

Finally, the study reveals the need for a proper education and enlightenment package on the totality of cross-border migration concerning the African continent, operated and channelled through the media to embrace even grassroots communities. This will expose intending migrants to prospects, hazards and expected violence and crises regarding regional variations and desired level of political and economic stability attainable in each member state. This is because the analyses indicate several illusions and related fanciful attractions that appeal to some emigrants before migration, only to discover in the host country that the situation is different. For instance, an informant said: “I would have been better off in Nigeria” (Informant Mrs Ololade). Many immigrants arrive before discovering that the existing wealth and its attendant lustre are wrought in enormous challenges in the context of institutionalized social norms and economic structures put in place for the protection of national interest and for distribution of resources that are assumed to be scarce. Again, for some immigrants, while in Nigeria, violence and insecurity were among the reasons for migration, even though secondary, mainly due to ignorance of the depth of the same occurrence in South Africa.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

1. The work reveals that the underlying force behind the emigration of Nigerian immigrant women is the evolution of new social dynamics at the expense of traditional institutions at the home front, while the “push-and-pull” framework only played a subsidiary role.
2. The work has provided elaborate facts and figures on the emotions and aspirations of the Nigerian immigrant woman in South Africa and how these can be effectively managed to tap her potentials for national development.

3. The study provides deeper insights into the issue of remittance as a tool for development regarding female immigration.
4. It has identified some flaws of over-generalization in the analysis of some concepts in the literature, e.g., concerning remittance and the push factor in African intra-continental migration.
5. The study demonstrates that what is required to make intra-African migration an asset rather than a liability is partnership and cooperation among all African countries since they are all affected.
6. It demonstrates that women migration could be an asset to national development if properly harnessed.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the lessons learnt from the experience of these immigrant women, there is a need for an overview of the national institutional and policy framework governing migration in addition to the creation of a consistent migration policy framework in Nigeria that utilizes the identified virtues of her immigrants in South Africa, precisely concerning their remittance culture. This should also be structured to create a migration-enlightened grassroots community with liberal principles that expose them to the reality of the “push-and-pull” framework. This alone will provide a natural self-regulating structure that would enhance the virtue of migration as a source of economic development by ensuring that majority of those who lack the potential and talent to tap the resources of the foreign or receiving country opt-out. In the case of South Africa, the management of migration data and policy framework is well structured, though this can be improved upon. For a long time, migration attracted a laissez-faire attitude from the Nigeria Government (Migration Profile, 2014), but this was not well structured to create a policy framework. This is noticeable in analyzes of general issues on migration during the 1988 and 2004 National Policy on Population.

Also included is the need to examine all forms of irregular movement in the context of a general trend in emigration to a country like South Africa with her position in the continent as the only member of the BRICS. This is largely because most irregular migrants are hardly well exposed to the basic tenets of the prevailing socio-economic conditions and needed skills in the receiving country vis-à-vis their own skills and services they can render for a daily source of income. This is also one key instrument for improving the utility of immigrants to the host country. The 2004 National Policy on Population, for example, observes some issues on the transmission of data on international migration. It explains that such data are transmitted to the National Population Commission for analysis through the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, other critical issues on migration were hardly given any attention. It is essential to mention here that several issues needed to be addressed in the draft national policy on migration for a well-structured policy framework. Among these is the issue of fundamental human rights as it applies to migrants. The relationship between migration and development also needs a critical review for effective national policy. This should go hand-in-hand with the question of the national population and funding sources for the management of migration. Others are a review of statistical methods regarding migration data and cross-cutting social issues and movement in the context of national security.

The coping mechanisms of the Nigerian women immigrants in Durban can be strengthened by marking out strategies that would improve inter-state relations between both countries. This would also constitute a vital instrument of enhancing their utility to the host country and their respective communities in Nigeria. Such relations since the end of apartheid may be said to be fair but has not been entirely smooth and consistent in terms of cooperation. Indeed, as Seteolu has argued, “Nigeria and South Africa have de-prioritized the key objectives of leading economic growth and economic development in Africa and resorted to the competitive pursuit of regional hegemonic status” (Seteolu & Okuneye 2016:1). Overall, it is mostly a theme of both cooperation and competition. In some issues involving the development of the continent, the two countries have tried to create a platform of unity as epitomized in the era of Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo while in others leadership interests and domestic policies have created some ripples. It is argued that traces of such ripples were noticeable during the Jonathan and Zuma regimes because Nigeria was

engulfed in crucial domestic policies while South Africa's focus was on resolving entangled issues in international politics that are antithetical to the economic interests of African states. It is this pattern of interrupted cooperation that led to the deportation of one hundred and twenty-five Nigerians from South Africa in 2012 over purported allegation of non-possession of genuine yellow fever certificates, of which Nigeria retaliated by deporting over twenty-five South African immigrants (Eboh, 2012). Such ripples and competitions create loopholes that are sometimes or often exploited by internal enemies of the state when they are sure or suspect that constituted authorities may be slow to act, resulting in xenophobic and domestic violence.

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Mrs Bolanle Ikudende	35	Hairdressing	Durban	August 06, 2016
Mrs. Adetola Umoh	36	PhD Student	Durban	August 10, 2016
Mrs Amudat Ademuyiwa	35	Hairdressing	Durban	September 23, 2016
Mrs. Evelyn E. Moses	49	Entrepreneur	Durban	September 24, 2016
Mrs Omolayo Oyebamiji	39	Housewife/Trader	Durban	November 25, 2016
Mrs Rose Umar	38	Business lady	Durban	December 24, 2016
Mrs Shimi Jacob	30	Master Student	Durban	January 05, 2017
Mrs Temilade B. Balogun	28	Housewife/beautician	Durban	January 06, 2017
Dr Mrs Abimbola Folami	40	Postdoctoral fellow	Durban	January 10, 2017
Madam Nneka Onyeruka	31	Food Venture	Durban	January 15, 2017
Mrs Temitope Ige	33	PhD Student	Durban	February 03, 2017
Mrs Jenifer Izu	32	Hairdressing	Durban	February 04, 2017
Mrs Opeoluwa Akinola	25	Hairdressing	Durban	February 17, 2017
Madam Blessing Adewusi	44	Food vendor	Durban	March 2017
Patience Amoo	56	PhD Nursing pg.	Durban	March 15, 2017
Mrs Cynthia Okoro	35	Trading Business	Durban	March 20, 2017
Sister Chioma	50	Self Employed	Durban	April 06, 2017
Dr.(Mrs) Bolanle Oyegoke	41	Medical Doctor	Durban	April 08, 2017,
Comfort Olaseyinde	40	Food Venture	Durban	April 13, 2017
Mrs Elizabeth Ashey	46	Self Employed	Durban	November 12, 2019
Lady Aderonke Ololade	52	Self Employed	Durban	November 26, 2019
Mrs Abiodun Oloko	46	Self Employed	Durban	December 10, 2019
Sofola Adejoke	47	Fashion Designer	Durban	December 02, 2019

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## Appendices

### Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Sunday Israel Oyebamiji (*student nr*). I am a Honours / Masters / PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College / Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: Life Across Borders: A Case Study of Nigerian Immigrant Women in Durban, South Africa.

The aim of the study is to explore an often neglected aspect of the life of immigrant Nigerian women and the challenges they face as they grapple with quest for survival in a foreign land. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 60 to 90 minutes.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg. / Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: [214585437@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214585437@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Cell: 0617662163

My supervisor is Prof. Kalpana Hiralal who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus / Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email [hiralalk@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hiralalk@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: 0312607536

My co-supervisor is ..... who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus/ Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email ..... Phone number: .....

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za), Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I..... *(full names of participant)* hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## **Interview Schedule**

### **Demographics**

1. Your Full name (maiden)
2. Marital Name
3. What is your country of birth?
4. Date of birth
5. Linguistic group
6. Religion
7. Age
8. Ethnic group

### **Life in the homeland**

1. Tell me about your life before coming to South Africa
2. Which part of Nigeria did you come from?
3. How was religion observed in your home?
4. How many children were in the family
5. What were the gender roles?
6. Identify and Describe the hierarchical relationship in the family
7. Describe the house you grew up in.
8. What were your family's economic circumstances?

### **Early Schooling:**

1. Did you attend school
2. If no, why?
3. If yes, at what age? What was the name of the school?
4. Did you complete your schooling,?
5. If no, why?

### **MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN**

1. At what age did you get married
2. Who arranged the marriage
3. Name of Spouse?
4. Was he from the same religion group?

### **Reason for immigration**

1. Who made the decision of immigrating?
2. If your spouse was living in another country how did you manage on your own?
3. What were some of the challenges and hardships

### **Arrival in host country**

1. What were your feelings when you arrived?
2. Describe your initial impressions of this country, i.e. weather, transportation experience, living experience



