Master’s Thesis in African Studies

Africa-Europe Migration
A Qualitative Analysis of Nigerian Migration to Europe via the Libya-Mediterranean Route

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Abstract

This thesis examines the migration saga of Nigerians who follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe and ended up in Sweden. With the use of Everett Lee’s Push and Pull theory as framework, this thesis provides a qualitative analysis of the reasons why Nigerian migrants choose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe, how they ended up in Sweden, and why they choose to seek asylum in Sweden but not other countries in Europe. The study also discusses the Swedish migration and asylum policy in relation to Nigerian migrants. Through the use of interviews, first-hand information was obtained from four Nigerian migrants who had plied the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe and agreed to participate in this study. The results of this study show that political instability, economic crisis, terrorism, insecurity, and stringent laws against homosexuality are all factors that could make some Nigerians migrate to Europe for a better life via the Libya-Mediterranean route.
List of Abbreviations

AK: Avtomat Kalashnikova

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CLGF: Commonwealth Local Government Forum

DTM: Displacement Tracking Matrix

EASO: European Asylum Support Office

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

ID: Identification

IOM: International Organization for Migration

MHUB: North Africa Mixed Migration Hub

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

SCB: Statistiska Centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden)

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNSMIL: United Nations Support Mission in Libya
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Preface
As an African who has lived in Sweden and been to other countries in Europe for quite a long time, I became more aware of the migration menace of Africans to Europe as it is broadcasted almost every week in different news platforms throughout Europe. The most disturbing part of this decade-long trend is the life threatening risks these Africans take as they ply the Libya-Mediterranean route in their thousands. Although according to European Commission report (2018), there has been a slight decrease in the numbers of migrants and refugees arrivals in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea between the years of 2015, 2017 and 2018 which was 1,015,078, 179,536, and 134,004 respectively; however, these numbers are still staggering. The European Commission report (2018) also recorded decreased numbers of migrants who died in the middle of the sea on their way to Europe as 3,129 in 2017, and 2,160 in 2018; but is this journey for greener pastures really worth it? A concerned individual would ask.

This desperate, dangerous and embarrassing adventure for a better life boggles my mind as I would really want to hear from African migrants to attain a more holistic understanding of the situation whereby their dreams, aspirations and ambition may not be achieved in Africa but in Europe. I mean what is it about Europe that so many Africans risk losing their lives by travelling across the desert and Sea when they should actually be preserving it? This is my major motivation to do this research in order to gather answers to the many questions one-on-one in interviews with the migrants who were lucky enough to have made it alive through the terrifying journey to Europe.
Chapter One

1. Introduction

The migration of African people to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route has been a prevailing issue in both continents over the last couple of years as the number of migrants increased significantly. This mass movement of Africans has negatively affected the social, economic, political, and security conditions of European countries, which has necessitated the prioritization of policy reformations to curb migration and refugee crises (Park, 2015, José-Manuel, et al., 2017). The influx of thousands of immigrants into Europe every year mainly originates from the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa (UNHCR, 2015); hence European countries are experiencing difficulties to meet and maintain the EU standards for receiving, facilitating asylum applications, and accommodating immigrants (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015). As African leaders continue to fail in providing basic needs, infrastructure, and amenities for the citizens of their various countries, the negative impacts is reflective on the continent of Europe and also in the increased numbers in deaths of Africans who journey through the Libya-Mediterranean route in search for better lives in Europe (Telschow, 2014).

According to Garcia and Martin (2015), the European governments are actively making efforts to reduce the numbers of African asylum seekers who come to Europe via the Libya-Mediterranean route by collaborating with African governments to address the irregular migration problem and also provide higher education, job opportunities, and technological skills for Africans in Africa; this joint efforts have been productive according to recent BBC report (2018) and UNHCR (2018) on migration, as the number of African migration to Europe has greatly reduced between the years of 2017 and 2019.

As global news outlets and humanitarian institutions discuss this phenomenon with different statistical records as backup, a certain image and perception of African migrants is being created based on three major assumptions. Africans have been assumed to migrate to Europe mainly because of poverty, lack of opportunities, and general violence (IOM, 2017). However, Castles, et al. (2014) thinks that the Africa-Europe migration issue suffers bias news coverage that often depicts images of remarkable movements of a migrant’s journey which reinforces and programs the public perception of African migrants as ‘desperate invaders’ or ‘poor victims of smuggling networks’. According to De Haas and Flahaux, (2016), these biased assumptions are problematic because they lack sound empirical evidence as Europe is not the only destination African migrants aim for, and more reasons and experiences are involved in the migrants’ decision but excluded in media narratives. The argument about how Africa-Europe migration is portrayed in the media and
also the global perception it creates could continue indefinitely from different scholars; but how about a more practical solution of fixing the problem, thereby giving the media less topics to misconstrue, propagate, and controvert? As per the African migrants who experience unimaginable and despicable horrors in Libya while they journey to seek charity for their basic human needs and rights in European countries (UNSMIL and OHCHR, 2018), one could argue using the phrase “charity begins at home”. The African irregular migration problem to Europe could ultimately be solved from the migrants’ different countries in Africa by the leaders in government; and if any doubt is entertained or barriers persists in achieving true governance from African leaders, perhaps it is time for a real revolution.

This study is specifically about the migration of Nigerians to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route. It examines the reasons behind the decision of Nigerian migrants who choose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe. The topic is further narrowed down to focus on Sweden as their final destination. It discusses how and why these Nigerian migrants ended up in Sweden, whether they knew about Sweden before they directly or indirectly ended their migration journey in Sweden. This thesis examines why the migrants opted for Sweden and not other European countries like Great Britain where English is the official language just like in Nigeria, unlike Sweden where they will be faced with a strange language that could be a survival challenge for them. An in-depth qualitative analysis and subsequent conclusion would be made based on data collected from the interviewees who are Nigerian migrants that now live in Sweden.

I chose to focus on Nigeria among other African countries because according to the UN migration statistics (IOM, 2018), Nigeria was recorded to have one of the highest numbers of migrants who plied the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe during the years of 2015 to 2018. I also considered the fact that doing interviews in English would not be a language barrier for me and the migrants because English is the official spoken language in Nigeria. Sweden was also chosen as a focus in this thesis because she is highly rated among the benevolent countries of the world that is actively involved in the acceptance, accommodation, and protection of migrants who are coming from countries that suffer political, social, and economic instability (Riniolo, 2016); despite the challenges it imposes on the Swedish government (Sanandaji, 2018).

According to the European Commission report (2018), migrants and refugees spread through different countries in Europe, e.g. Italy that has experienced great numbers of migrants who arrived at their shores over the years; also Spain and Greece have recorded significant numbers of migrants seeking refuge. IOM report (2015) states that between 2014 and 2015, countries such as Syria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Gambia, Somalia, Bangladesh, and Sudan have been recorded to be that with the largest origin of migrants who arrived in Italy. Therefore, as an African student in the
African Studies program at Dalarna University, I think it would be interesting and relevant to carry out this research on Africa-Europe migration. With a focus on Nigeria, below are some statistics of African migration to Italy through the Mediterranean Sea between specific periods of time.

1.1 Research Problem

The problem under study is the recent significant increase of African migrants in Sweden (Swedish Migration Agency, 2018); particularly Nigerians who passed through the Libya-Mediterranean route into Europe and ended up in Sweden as asylum seekers or refugees. According to the report from Migrationsverket (2018), a total of 3,887 Nigerian migrants have sought for asylum between the years of 2010 and 2018. A breakdown of this number is illustrated in a self-constructed graph and table in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Nigeria Asylum Seekers in Sweden from 2010 to 2018](image)

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Asylum Seekers</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>3,887</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swedish Migration Agency (2018)

Generally, the migration of people from different afflicted countries around the world into Sweden has increased over the past years as she received more numbers of refugees per capita than any OECD country; and this phenomenon has become a major political, economic, social, and humanitarian challenge for the Swedish government (OECD report, 2017; Riksrevisionen, 2017). According to Kate (2017), this may be as a result of the European restrictions on the processes of inward regular migration which has compelled desperate African migrants to device alternative
routes into Europe. The Libya-Mediterranean route in recent years is the most prevalent cross-over path thousands of Africans take to Europe, more especially migrants from the Northern and Western part of Africa (World Migration Report, 2018; DTM, 2018).

1.2 Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to give a qualitative analysis on the migration issue of Nigerians who came to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route and ended up in Sweden.

1.3 Research Questions

i) Why do Nigerians choose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to migrate to Europe?

ii) How did they end up in Sweden?

iii) Why did they choose to seek asylum in Sweden, but not other countries in Europe?

1.4 State of Research

Quite a significant number of interesting literature have been written on Nigeria and African migration to Europe; however none has focused on Nigeria migrants who ply the Libya-Mediterranean route, and Sweden as their end-up destination. Hence, I chose to fill in that gap in knowledge by making Nigeria, Sweden, and Libya-Mediterranean route my focus in this current study. Among the many related past studies, few that I consider more recent were chosen for review.

The study “Transnational gendered narratives on migration: the Nigerian media and female migrants en route to Italy from Libya” by Oloruntoba et al. (2018), discusses national and international media reports concerning the 26 Nigerian teenage girls between the ages of 14-18 who died and was washed ashore in the central Mediterranean Sea on their journey to Italy from Libya with over 400 other migrants. The authors argue that media outlets have uncritically framed and reported the narratives of rescue victims especially when they are females. Having comparatively analyzed several reports from different media outlets on the day of the incident (November 6 2017), they argue that the gendered narratives of stories on migration gives cause for concern. They express their discontents as media reports tend to frame their narrative with themes such as “trafficking,” “prostitution”, and “sex slavery”, while positioning the Nigerian and European governments in a pedestal of moral superiority as they plan and execute rescue programs.

Okeyim (2012), contributed substantially in the Africa-Europe migration research area. His doctoral thesis titled “The state of migration of Nigerians into European Union to live in Spain” examines the factors and causes that necessitate the massive migration of Nigerians into Europe with plans to live in Spain and hope for a better life. The author discovered that the major causes
of this migration are as a result of the worsening political situation in Nigeria in terms of “violence, election crises, failure of political leadership and corruption”; Furthermore, economic crises such as “unemployment, poverty, fall in the standard of living and management of government resources” are also contributing factors to the migration of many Nigerians to the European Union to live in Spain. The author stated that the Nigerian government has failed to provide core services that are critical for the survival of their citizens. The deprivations of Nigerian citizens of basic infrastructure, institutions, and amenities such as “good roads, communication, electricity, water, good schools, good hospitals, recreational services and good governance” by their government have perpetuated the migration of Nigerian to Europe (Okeyim, 2012).

Still on the discourse of Africans migrating to Europe, Giménez-Gómez et al. (2017) in the study “Trends in African migration to Europe: Drivers beyond economic motivations” discusses the reasons behind Africa-Europe migration from a broader perspective as they analyzed the determinants of regular and irregular African migration between the years of 1990 and 2014. The study results show that in addition to economic motivation, other factors such as political persecution, ethnic cleansing, human rights violations, political instability and civil conflicts” also influences the decisions of migrants to embark on a journey to Europe. The authors emphasize the need for collaborative efforts by EU and respective migrants’ country governments to not only support economic development, but also promoting human security: human rights, democracy, peace and social stability (Giménez-Gómez et al. 2017).

In addition to the above previous studies, several other reports and articles related to my current study have been published by renowned institutions, organizations, book stores, and media houses. Yomi Kazeem (2018) a reporter for Quartz Africa, in his article “Chasing greener pastures: The harrowing, step-by-step story of a migrant’s journey to Europe” discusses the perilous encounter of a desperate Nigerian migrant who embarked on a migration journey to Italy through Libya-Mediterranean route. According to the reporter, Andrew (real name withheld) the migrant who got distracted by the seemingly better life in Europe dropped out of school after his lower level diploma from a polytechnic college in Edo State, Nigeria in 2011. Andrew’s detailed and terrifying story covered his leaving Nigeria at first with 22 young migrants that consisted of 10 men and 12 women, after which they converged with hundreds of other migrants brought in by different agents. He discussed about crossing the Sahara desert, Libyan Limbo, deadly sea, and being among the very few who made it alive to Italy as many died on their way to Europe (Yomi Kazeem, 2018).

The extensive report by the UN migration agency, IOM (2018) “Enabling a better understanding of migration flows (and its root-causes) from Nigeria towards Europe” is a research that I also
find very interesting as it is closely related to my current study. This report comprehensively discussed and analyzed the main causes of the massive migration flows of Nigerians to European countries such as Greece and the Netherlands, transiting through Niger and Lydia. It discusses the Nigerian perception of European, their decision drivers to migrate, and graphically illustrated informative statistics of deportees and asylum seekers in European countries.

Another collaborative report by the OHCHR and UNSMIL (2018) “Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya” focuses on examining the human right violations most migrants and refugees undergo in Libya during their journey across the desert and Mediterranean Sea. The report discusses the unimaginable horrors such as unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and unlawful deprivation of liberty, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, slavery and forced labour, etc. (OHCHR and UNSMIL, 2018). The report also stated that the years of armed conflict and political division has weakened the Libyan government and institution in salvaging the human rights violation situation. They recommend that the EU and its Member states should actively partake in the search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as assist to expedite the life-saving work of rescue vessels operated by humanitarian organizations (OHCHR and UNSMIL, 2018).

1.5 Theoretical Framework

In order to make the findings of this thesis more meaningful and acceptable, and also clearly explain its trajectory on Africa-Europe migration, it has to be firmly grounded upon a theoretical construct (Adom, et al. 2018). Hence, the push and pull theory will be adopted. Through the adoption of this theory, the extension of knowledge will be ensured while providing both direction and incentive to this current research inquiry (Adom, et al. 2018). On matters such as international migration, there are always inevitable factors that push migrants out from their country of origin and pull them into their destination country; hence creates defensive reasons, influences and compulsion behind the migrants’ decisions to embark on the Libya-Mediterranean journey to Europe. By applying the theory of push and pull factors, I will be able to interview and interpret the factors that pushed the Nigerian migrants out of their country and pulled them to Europe, and Sweden to be specific amidst the intervening obstacles.

1.6 Lee’s Push and Pull Theory

Push and Pull theory is an old yet very impactful theory of migration that was created and developed by Everret Lee in 1966. It explains the factors behind massive movement of people between two countries and the intervening obstacles there within, as illustrated in Figure 3.
The diagram in Figure 2 shows the negative (Push) factors which drives and motivates migrants from their countries of origin, and positive (Pull) factors that also influences and attracts them to their destination countries. In between these two countries lie the intervening obstacles. According to the EASO (2016) report “The Push and Pull Factors of Asylum-Related Migration: A Literature Review”, factors such, unemployment, economic crises, political instability, wage differentials, conflicts, civil wars, ethnic cleansing, poverty, insecurity, social inequality, the development of market economy, and gender discrimination can be seen in both sides of countries of origin and in the countries of destination. However, the difference is that they are called Push factors in the countries of origin, and Pull factors in the countries of destination (Angelina and Blagojce, 2012). The ultimate reasoning behind Lee’s Push and Pull theory is that migration is most likely to occur if the factors at the country of destination positively outweigh the factors at the country of origin.

1.7 Research Methods

In order to conduct a qualitative analysis on Africa-Europe migration, the collection of direct and factual information from my respondent view interviews is required to explore the complex and subtle real life situations, e.g. experiences, emotions and opinions (Denscombe, 2010, p.173). According to Denscombe (2010), interviews are most efficient for qualitative studies as it obtains more detailed information from the respondents about the subject matter given the high response rate and flexibility. Therefore, I chose to use interviews as the primary source of collecting data from the Nigerian migrants who in this study are my respondents. The author further recommends a personal or individual interview that could be administered by using semi-structured types of questions (Denscombe, 2017, p. 270). Since my intention was to obtain in-depth information, I adhered to the author’s recommendation as it was more suitable for the study.
In as much as the interviewees were volunteers and Nigerian migrants who live in Sweden, I made it a point to find those who hail from Edo State and around that region. My reason is to achieve a proper representation of Nigerians who follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe. According to the attorney general of Nigeria’s Edo State Yinka Omorogbe, 80% of Nigerian migrants who ply that route to Europe and also deported to Nigeria hails from Benin City in Edo State (O’Grady, 2018). Data was collected from respondents via interviews that consist of questions formulated from previous studies and designed to provide reasonable answers to the research questions. All interviews are done in English language as my respondents understand and speak English.

Denscombe (2017) suggests that the interviews should be recorded for easier transcription of information afterwards because the interviewer could forget some vital information during the explorative interview sessions (p. 58). Hence, all respondents granted my request to record and save the interviews in a voice recording device to ensure easier access to replay, recollect and transcribe information accordingly.

According to the Swedish Migration Agency “Migrationsverket” (2018), the ages of Nigerian migrants who seek asylum and refuge in Sweden ranges between 17-64 years. Therefore, my respondents are within the age range of 24-50 years. Getting in contact with these Nigerian migrants was through references. According to Denscombe (2017), the process of referencing one person to the next person who could be relevant for research purposes such as interview is called a snowball-sampling technique. I started by contacting a friend who used to work at the Swedish Migration Agency in Malmö for assistance in not only how to get current statistical data about African Asylum seekers and refugees in Sweden, but also to get in contact specifically with Nigerian migrants who came to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route.

At first it was difficult to convince migrants to participate in this study because they were very sceptical about us being police informants that might get them arrested and deported back to Nigeria; but after extensive explanations and assurance from us to protect their identity and information that the study will only be used for academic purposes, they later agreed to do the interview. Therefore, through this means I was able to make contact with two Nigerian migrants (men) who live in Malmö and granted my interview. These migrants were very cooperative and helpful to me as they referred me to two other migrants (men) who live in Stockholm. In total I was able to work with 4 Nigerian migrants who all agreed to do interviews with me in English language. Some of the women contact i got were not courageous enough to participate in this study despite my explanations and assurance of the research purpose and use. Initially, I made contact with a woman who agreed to participate in this study, but later backed-out. Probably her
decision may have been out of fear of being deported if anything goes wrong from my end as she does not have legal document yet to stay in Sweden and has not applied for asylum either. However, all interviews were done through telephone conversation which was also recorded for easier transcription (Denscombe, 2017, p. 58). The type of questions used during the interviews consisted of general and specific questions for control-flexibility reasons as it was a semi-structured interview.

1.8 Researcher’s Position

My mixed cultural background of being born and raised a Nigerian and having lived in Sweden long enough to naturalize as a citizen, enables me to operate from an independent position as a researcher and have a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under study. Having studied up to university level in both Nigeria and Sweden creates the mixed academic background and position for proper representation of Africa and Europe in terms of my understanding of the opportunities, challenges and what is feasibly obtainable from both regions. Furthermore, as a former master’s level assistant teacher and researcher in a Swedish University, my experience in qualitative research methods and ethics provides me with the needed discipline in collecting and analyzing data while avoiding any possible biases in this study.

1.9 Restrictions and Constrictions

The constrict time period for this study is 8 weeks; therefore, it had to be streamlined to specific cases to enable the gathering of manageable data and ensure comprehensive analysis. This study focuses on Nigerian migrants who came to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route and now live in Sweden. Hence, other Nigerian and African immigrants who came to Sweden through other ways, moreover legal ways were not included in this investigation. The study did not focus on all African migrants but only on Nigeria as a specific African country whose migrants ply the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe.

1.10 Source Materials

The materials used for this thesis was sourced primarily from interviews with the Nigerian migrants who came to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route and now live in Sweden; and secondarily from previous articles, books, journals, and other credible websites. More information about my respondents is thus stated below, and their names altered for reasons of personality and privacy protection.
Aihie: 36 years old male from Edo state, in Nigeria. He attended University in Nigeria for some time but dropped out for financial reasons. He has applied for asylum in Sweden and has been living in Malmö for 2 years.

Ifeanyi: 38 years old male from Anambra state, in Nigeria. He is a university graduate in chemical engineering from Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNN) in Nigerian. Currently living in Stockholm, Sweden for almost one year and still contemplating whether to seek asylum amidst the fear of being deported to Nigeria.

Osaze: 34 years old male from Edo state, in Nigeria. He is a polytechnic graduate with a lower diploma in business administration from a Nigerian academic institution. He has sought for asylum and has been living in Malmö for about 2 years.

Ochuko: 33 years old male from Delta state, in Nigeria. He is an O’ level (Secondary school) graduate from an academic institution in Nigeria; and has been living in Stockholm for 3 years after a successful asylum application in Sweden.

1.11 Research Outline
This thesis is presented in the following outline. Chapter one presents the introduction, research problem, objective and questions, researcher’s position, restrictions and constrictions, state of the research, theoretical framework and research methods. Chapter two presents the background of the study which discusses the Nigerian migration to Europe, causes of Nigerian migration, and the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe. Chapter three discusses the Swedish Migration and Asylum Policy. Chapter four presents the narratives of Nigerian Migrants to Sweden. Chapter five presents the discussion of findings from interview in relation to previous research, and subsequent conclusion of the study.

Chapter Two
2. Background

According to the European Commission report (2018), migrants and refugees spread through different countries in Europe, e.g. Italy that has experienced great numbers of migrants who arrived at their shores over the years; also Spain and Greece have recorded significant number of migrants seeking refuge. IOM report (2015) states that between 2014 and 2015, countries such as Syria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Gambia, Somalia, Bangladesh, and Sudan have been recorded to be that with the largest origin of migrants who arrived in Italy. With a focus on Nigeria, below are some statistics of African migration to Italy through the Mediterranean Sea between specific periods of time.

Table 1: African Migration Arrivals by Sea to Italy between the years of 2015 and 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Countries of Origin</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td>6,151</td>
<td>5,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>39,162</td>
<td>20,718</td>
<td>7,052</td>
<td>3,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>8,932</td>
<td>9,327</td>
<td>6,221</td>
<td>1,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>22,237</td>
<td>37,551</td>
<td>18,158</td>
<td>1,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>3,772</td>
<td>12,396</td>
<td>9,507</td>
<td>1,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>5,826</td>
<td>10,01</td>
<td>7,118</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>2,801</td>
<td>13,342</td>
<td>9,701</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IOM UN Migration (2018)

Table 1 shows the African countries and numbers of migrants who arrived at the shores of Italy through the Libya-Mediterranean Sea between the years 2015 and 2018. According to UN Migration (2018), between the years of 2015 and 2017, Nigeria accounted for almost 80,000 irregular migrants traveling from Libya to Italy, and an average of 26,000 per year. In 2018, the arrivals of Nigerians to Italy through the Mediterranean route amounted to 1,250 people.

The Swedish Migration Agency report stated that over 3,000 asylum seekers have relocated from Greece and Italy to Sweden through the EU asylum relocation program (Migrationsverket, 2018). These immigrants are majorly from EU member states as Sweden upholds to fulfill her commitment to the EU decision of 2015 which is to help decongest the number of migrants who seek asylum in Greece and Italy; hence I could not find exclusive statistics of Nigerians or African migrants who moved from Greece and Italy to Sweden. This report further stated that Eritreans and Syrians were also considered for the asylum relocation program to Sweden because they fulfilled the criteria which states that the asylum seekers “should be among the nationalities that are granted residence
permits in 75 percent of cases according to the EU average” (Migrationsverket, 2018). However, there is statistical information on African asylum seekers in Sweden between the years of 2010 and 2018; though it does not specify whether they relocated from Italy, Greece, or made their way through the Libya-Mediterranean route. For better illustration, below is a table containing the African countries and numbers of asylum seekers respectively between the aforementioned period of time.

Table 2: African Asylum Seekers in Sweden between the years of 2010 and 2018

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>495</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>270</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>304</td>
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Source: Migrationsverket (2018)

Generally, the migration of people from different afflicted countries around the world into Sweden has increased over the past years as she received more numbers of refugees per capita than any OECD country; and this phenomenon has become a major political, economic, social, and humanitarian challenge for the Swedish government (OECD report, 2017; Riksrevisionen, 2017). According to Kate (2017), this may be as a result of the European restrictions on the processes of inward regular migration which has compelled desperate African migrants to device alternative routes into Europe. The Libya-Mediterranean route in recent years is the most prevalent cross-over
path thousands of Africans take to Europe, more especially migrants from the Northern and Western part of Africa (World Migration Report, 2018; DTM, 2018).

Figure 3: Global Granted Asylum Applications in Sweden from 2010 to 2018

The graph in Figure 3 shows the granted asylum applications of the increasing numbers of migrants from different war-torn and unstable countries into Sweden in between 8 years. However, according to SCB report in 2016, the total population of African immigrants in Sweden was 187,776; among which 133,181, 18,502, 33,044 and 3,049 were from Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern Africa respectively.

2.1 Nigeria

Nigeria is a country that is located in West Africa, with Abuja as the capital and English as the official language. With a population of over 200 million people, it is the most populous country in Africa and it is also rated as seventh most populous nation in the world (world population review, 2019). Nigeria is made up of 36 states, and as a multiethnic country, it is inhabited by over 250 ethnic groups. There are over 500 indigenous languages and represented by diversified cultures respectively (The world factbook, 2019, 2018). However, among the many ethnic groups in Nigeria, there are three major ethnic groups which include Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba (CLGF, 2019). Nigeria as a former colony got her independence from the British government on the 1st of October 1960 (The world factbook, 2019). The Federal Republic of Nigeria, as it is officially called generates her main revenue from natural resources such as oil and gas, zinc, gold, limestone, coal, iron ore, lead, tin, and even columbite.
2.2 Nigerian Migration to European

As irregular migration from Africa to Europe continues to remain a huge challenge and threat to both continents, thousands of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are still making headway to Europe via the Libya-Mediterranean route (Uchehara, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2018). Specifically, the migration of Nigerians to European countries in 2011 was very high, as they were majorly part of contemporary migration flows across the Mediterranean Sea (Beber and Scacco, 2018). Countries such as Spain and Italy were targeted destinations for migrants from Nigeria as they arrived in their thousands during the periods of 2016 and 2017, with majority of them hailing from Benin City, the capital of Edo state in Nigeria (O’Grady, 2018; Hoffmann, 2018; BBC, 2017; Agbakwuru, 2018).

Figure 4: Nigerian Migration to European Countries from 2016 to 2017

The historical background of Nigerian migration to European countries could be divided into three parts, which are the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. However, this study will focus on the post-colonial era because that was when the Nigerian migration to Europe through desert and sea occurred by volition.

During the post-colonial era, given the colonial ties that have been established between Britain and Nigeria, educated Nigerian elites between the periods of 1950 and 1970 began a discretionary movement to the United Kingdom and America for education, work, and business reasons of which they returned back to Nigeria in due time. The “no return” agenda and attitude among many Nigerian migrants in their destination countries in Europe and other parts of the world was as a result of the economic stagnation Nigeria started to experience in the 1970s and 1980s due to political instability in the country (Okeyim, 2012). These unfortunate events have lingered and even worsened till today. As the number of Nigerian migrants increased over decades, destination countries in Europe adopted more stringent migration policies to regulate the inflow of migrants in general, hence Nigerian migrants became more frustrated, desperate and compelled to ply the risky
Libya-Mediterranean route to get into European countries with high hopes for better livelihood (Kate, 2017).

2.3 Causes of Nigerian Migration

Every country of the world is expected to possess and perform certain features and functions for the welfare of its citizens in order to qualify to be called a country (Okeyim, 2012). Some of these features and functions include the provision of basic job creation and employment, security, infrastructure, academic institutions, hospitals, and prioritized policies to benefit and protect its citizens. When these vital factors and necessities are lacking in a country, then the migration of its citizens is inevitable. According to the Push and Pull theory (Lee, 1966), there are eminent factors pushing migrants away from their country of origin as they seek better living conditions in the destination country that pulls them in. This theory is very well applicable in the case of Nigerian migrants seeking for better lives in European countries; hence below are some push factors deduced from previous studies.

2.4 Economic Crisis

Previous studies have shown that the migration of Nigerians to European countries is mostly associated with economic challenges or factors such as unemployment, lack of sufficient income, lack of economic growth, financial problems and debts (Danaan, 2018; Adeniyi, 2016). Before migration, most of the Nigerian migrants were self-employed or received daily wages that was not sufficient enough to carter for their monthly expenses (Danaan, 2018). Given the inability of the Nigerian government to properly manage, stabilize and sustain its economy for so many years, the migration flow of her citizens to European countries has drastically increased.

The development of industries, factories, and institutions should be the priorities of the Nigerian government, as it would create jobs to assimilate university graduates, and people with craftsmanship, but the UN statistics on Nigerian migration do not look like those factors have been considered (IOM 2018). Nigeria may have been quoted in several reports, journals and news outlets to be the leading oil and gas producer in Africa (Deloitte Report, 2018), but it is apparently oxymoronic that majority of her citizens are living in abject poverty, harsh and miserable conditions as a result the greed, selfishness, and corruption of the Nigerian politicians and government (Danaan, 2018); Hence, currently Nigeria is no longer among the fastest growing economies in Africa by percentage growth in GDP (PWC Report, 2019).

2.5 Terrorism and Insecurity

One of the greatest responsibilities of the government of any country in the world is to protect the lives and properties of its citizens. If this vital necessity is lacking in a country, then what would be
the fate or response of its citizens? Run for their dear life, a concerned individual may suggest; thus most Nigerian citizens resort to migrating to European countries where they hope to find security. The Nigerian government has failed to provide adequate security in some parts of the country where political and religious insurgences abound (Barungi et al., 2017); hence it has precipitated the massive migration of Nigeria out of the country seeking security of their lives and families in European countries.

The Boko Haram insurgency and violent incivility that has existed over a decade in the north-east of Nigeria still has not been completely put to halt even as it continuous to reduce and destabilize the population and political and economic activities in that region (Herbert and Husaini, 2018). Why that is? Sometimes beats the imagination of a critical thinking person. Currently in Nigeria, the terrorism of the Fulani cattle herdsman whom some people argue is another arm of the Boko Haram terrorist group is nothing to joke about. There have been several accounts where these groups of cattle rearers who carry AK 47 machine guns go into remote villages in the Eastern part of Nigeria raping women in farms lands as their cows eat the farmers’ crops; also shooting sporadically and killing both men, women, and children even in churches and schools of these communities, yet the Nigerian government and security forces turn blind eyes to these incidents (Akinyetun, 2016; Ezemenaka, 2018; Amnesty International, 2018). Even the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria that seemed calm for a while are now beginning to resurface in that region threatening all hell to be let loose on the country if the government does not comply with their proposals for autonomy and control of the oil resources (Herbert and Husaini, 2018).

2.6 Political Instability

Nigeria has been politically unstable for many years way back since her independence from Britain in 1960, following the 1956 initiation of oil extraction and creation of three regional administrative divisions based on the three majority ethnic groups which include, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017) This persistent challenge has been a major contributing factor to the increasing migration flow of Nigerians to European countries (Okeyim, 2012). Seven years after Nigerian independence, she experienced a bloody civil war known as the Biafran War which lasted for three years (1967-1970); also within and after those years there have been a series of religious crises, inter-tribal conflicts, failure of political leadership, uncertainty in future government, demonstrations, military coups, political turmoil and violence in the country (Okeyim, 2012). These events critically contributed to the deterioration of the Nigerian political system, as the then military government completely failed in their responsibility to maintain law and order in the country (Herbert and Husaini, 2018).
The political instability in Nigeria has also reflected negatively in the proper functionality of the national economy. For instance, for decades, there have been serious uproars in the Niger Delta (oil producing) region in Nigeria where 40 ethnic groups with their smaller populations are politically and economically marginalized (Herbert and Husaini, 2018), e.g. Kokodiagbene community in Delta State, where Chevron is present for over 40 years; hence militants arose and declared war against international oil companies in that region and the federal government of Nigeria for self-governance and adequate control of oil resources within their region (Okeyim, 2012). As a result of the intentional marginalization and total neglect of the people of Niger Delta by the Nigerian government, there have been unspeakable impoverishments, unemployed youths, lack of electricity and clean water, poverty and health issues in that region; therefore the people opt to migrate to European countries.

**Figure 5: The Map of Nigeria**

![Map of Nigeria](source: lpining.com)

2.7 The Libya-Mediterranean Route to Europe

Libya is a country located in the Maghreb region in North of Africa. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, and other surrounding countries such as Chad, Niger, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. For several years Libya has been used by thousands of migrants particularly from Northern and Western African countries as gateway transit and destination path to Europe due to Libya’s geographic proximity and historical ties (World Migration Report, 2018). According to Kate (2017), the European restrictions on inward regular migration may have precipitated the
increase of irregular migration flow into Europe through dubious and desperate means. Migrants fleeing from war, and search for better life opportunities in European countries fall victims to human smuggling and trafficking agents who promise them an easy way passage across the Mediterranean Sea and national borders (MHUB, 2018). Despite the news about people who get dehumanized and die on their journey to Europe through the Libyan desert and across the Mediterranean Sea, African migrants still adamantly ply this very dangerous route that is run by organized criminal gang networks.

2.8 Sweden

With a current population of 10.2 million people, and geographic space of 173,860 square meters, Sweden is the largest country in Northern Europe. According to Statistiska centralbyrån (2018), 2.5 million people out of the total population of Sweden have a foreign background. Sweden operates a unitary form of government, and is currently divided into 21 counties and 290 municipalities.

Sweden has over the years gained a global reputation for being an archetypical and homogenous welfare state, until in recent decades when it began to receive massive numbers of refugees from outside of Europe which has altered its demographic composition (Sanandaji, 2018). This transformative phenomenon has led Sweden to the challenge of attempting to combine her socially idealized and welfare state with multi-culturalism. The irregular flow of migrants into Sweden has indeed brought about some negative impacts on her social ideologies, even though the May 2013 riots, the rise of the anti-immigration party, and the tightening of border controls portray a more subtle narrative of the challenging situation (Riniolo, 2016). As a fact Sweden has worked hard not only to receive, accommodate, and protect refugees and asylum seeker from unstable countries, but also to create opportunities for migrants into the labour market (Riniolo, 2016, pg. 11-12). In 1 December 2010, there was a reform by the Center Right Government enforced to tackle the delayed entrance of migrants into the Swedish labour market. This reform called “Labour Market Introduction of Newly Arrived Migrants – Individual Responsibility with Professional Support”, according to the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, is created to facilitate the introduction of newly arrived migrants into the Swedish labour market and the society in general. These gestures have in turn made Sweden a destination country for thousands of migrants, as 163,000 migrants sought asylum in the country in 2015; hence the problem of migration population deserves specific attention in terms of control (Riniolo, 2016).

2.9 Swedish Migration and Asylum Policy related to Nigerian Migrants

As Sweden struggle with an unprecedented increase of her non-western population from 2% to 15% of the total population over the past 20 years, migration and asylum policy reformation are being enforced in order to regulate and manage this problematic migration inflow (Sanandaji, 2018).
section aims to provide qualitative analysis of the Swedish migration and asylum policy (2018) that governs the reception and integration of refugees and migrants into the Swedish society. This piece of legislation by the Swedish ministry of justice deals with a range of policies and issues associated with migration flow in Sweden such as refugee and immigration policy; return policy, support for repatriation, and Swedish citizenship. It also comprises of matters such as migration and development while cooperating globally to manage the problem of migration. The Swedish migration and asylum policy will be analysed in relation to Nigerian migrants who came through the Libya-Mediterranean route to seek asylum in Sweden.

2.10 The Government’s handling of the refugee situation

Over two decades, several approaches and changes in migration and integration policies have been adopted in handling the refugee and asylum crisis by different government administrations in Sweden. The consistent increase in the numbers of migrant population in Sweden throughout those years has been in four phases. The first phase occurred during the early 1990s when economic crises propelled refugees from the former Yugoslavia; and also the influx of refugees who fled for their lives from the Balkan area as a result of war and arrived in Sweden for refuge. This was a very challenging period in Sweden as she was experiencing the highest level of unemployment since 1930 (Riniolo, 2016); thus the massive number of migrants did not equate the Swedish labour market demand (Wiesbrock 2011). The second phase happened during the period of Social-Democratic government administration between the years of 1994 and 2006 which apparently lead to the creation of Integration Board called “Integrationsverket” in Swedish. This agency was created for the purpose of promoting and monitoring the state of integration in Sweden and ensuring proper integration process of migrants into the Swedish society. Still in an effort to handle the migration crisis, the Social-Democratic government also created and enforced an act “Sweden, the future and diversity – from immigration policy to integration policy (1997/98:16)” with policy that is based on equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background.

The third phase of the massive influx of migrants in Sweden was between 2006 and 2014, the period when a new reform “Labour Market Introduction of Newly Arrived Migrants – Individual Responsibility with Professional Support” was made and enforced in late 2010 by the Centre-Right Government, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, and the Swedish Public Employment Service in order to handle the labour integration disparity of migrants. This reform however has been deemed to be catastrophic and recognized as one of the biggest problems of migrant integration in Sweden (Riniolo 2016). The fourth phase is the recent increase in the number of migrant inflow in Sweden and the new stern approach the government has adopted in 2016 to regulate and handle
the ongoing global refugee situation, such as the introduction of temporary residence permit, internal border control, and limiting the right to family member immigration. With a focus on African migrants and Nigeria to be specific, the series of temporary internal border control measures adopted by the Swedish government to significantly reduce irregular migration was applicable to them until 11 May 2018, just like the ID control stopped in May 2017. Therefore Nigerian migrants who intend to seek asylum will not be approached or harassed by authorities to that effect but allowed to tender their cases to the Swedish migration board and hope to be granted temporary residence to stay in Sweden.

2.11 Conditions for Deportation

The Swedish government has devised and implemented more stringent measure to increase the deportation of illegal migrants. In the case of Nigerians who have travelled the dangerous journey through the Libya-Mediterranean route and arrived in Sweden with hopes for a better life, the Swedish migration and asylum policy must still be upheld and enforced by the migration authorities regardless of the route they took to arrive in Sweden. In other words, just showing-up at the Swedish borders or shores as Nigerian migrants with the intention to seek for asylum is not a guarantee that they will be received, given residence permit, and integrated into the society. Usually, the Swedish migration authorities do thorough interrogation and investigation to examine the migrant’s situation and ascertain whether or not the migrants including unaccompanied minors has valid grounds for protection or staying in Sweden; and if not, the migration authorities will conclude with the basic premise of deporting the migrant back to Nigeria (Swedish Ministry of Justice, 2018). Furthermore, when Nigerian asylum seekers have received a final and non-appealable refusal-of-entry into Sweden, their rights to accommodation and financial assistance will be withdrawn especially for the adults who are not living with a child.

Although deporting Nigerian migrants who have baseless asylum cases back to their country of origin is critical, the deportation is however conditional in cases of unaccompanied minors as the Swedish government announced some changes in the legislation that would enable minors who had arrived in Sweden latest on 24 November 2015 and have not received a residence permit, to be given one so they can continue and finish their upper secondary school education (Swedish Ministry of Justice, 2018). This reform applies to the unaccompanied Nigerian minors who have been negatively affected by the bureaucratic processing times to receive a residence permit and also those who have met certain stipulated migration policy criteria.

2.12 Resettlement as a safe and legal route into Sweden

The resettlement route to live in Sweden is a form of special asylum program run collaboratively by Sweden and the UNHCR for refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection under the
provisions of Sweden’s Aliens Act “Utlänningslagen” (Migrationsverket, 2018). The program applies to refugees with complicated migration cases where they can neither return to their country of origin nor given continued residence permit in the host country. These migrants cannot be deported for several reasons such as the fear of being subjected to death, inhumane conditions, or receive corporal punishment in their country of origin; hence Sweden creates sustainable solutions for them via resettlement program and following recommendations from UNHCR. According to UNHCR who are very keen in the work of helping migrants and refugees in North Africa and the Mediterranean, there are 1.2 million refugees in need of resettlement in 2018. Sweden who is the sixth largest humanitarian aid donor in the world, has lately been preoccupied by huge increase on migrant influx is still expected to actively participate in the rescue, even as she received about 2800 asylum seeker who were relocated from Greece and Italy in 2017 under a 2015 EU decision.

Nigerian migrants who came to Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route having different reasons to seek asylum in a destination and host country such as Sweden may be considered into the resettlement program depending on their story and situation. Coming from a country that is faced with all sorts of challenges such as religious and political conflict and violence, terrorism and insecurity of life and properties by respective Nigerian authorities and government, Nigerian migrants who may have missed out on the UNHCR selection mission from their country of origin could justify their pathway to Europe, how they ended up in Sweden and why they should be considered for the resettlement program. According to Migrationsverket (2018), 3,700 refugees were resettled in Sweden in 2017, and 94% of cases selected from Syria, Eritrea, the Congo and Ethiopia by UNHCR and submitted were accepted. Therefore, Nigerian migrants may also be partakers of this opportunity to rebuild their lives with all the protection they need.

Chapter Three

3. Narratives of Nigerian Migrants to Sweden

In this chapter, I will present the narratives of the four Nigerian migrants who journeyed through the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe and finally ended up in Sweden. This information that was obtained through telephone interviews contain the reasons why the migrants left their home country, chose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe,
how they ended up in Sweden, and why they chose to seek asylum in Sweden, but not other countries in Europe. For a quick grasp of the main ideas from the migrants’ narratives, I made a brief comment as a summary for each and every collective stage of the migrants’ stories.

3.1 Why I left Nigeria

Aihie: I am from Edo state in Nigeria, and I am 36 years old. Although I am a Nigerian from Edo state, but I was born in Katsina state which is located in the Northern part of Nigeria where my parents resided. In this region, we experienced terrible encounters with the Boko Haram Islamic movement. Boko Haram is the main reason why I left Nigeria because I did not want to be killed just like so many people in the North. These killings happen majorly in the Northern part of Nigeria. There were daily killings of people by Boko Haram in Katsina of which as a result I lost my parents. I was left with only my sister who was fifteen years old at that time, so I tried and escaped with him. My father was a businessman who took care of us and paid my school fees before he died. After the death of my father I had serious financial problems and could no longer continue with my studies at the university because of unpaid tuition. It was really hard for me to get a gainful job to take care of us and survive as nobody cared enough to assist us financially.

Ifeanyi: I am 38 years old, from Anambra state in Nigeria. There are different problems in Nigeria and as an educated indigene of Anambra state I saw and experience joblessness and unemployment among the youths. After spending a lot of money and time in academic institutions, so many graduates cannot find work in Anambra state and Nigeria in general. This has made a lot of Nigerian youths resort to indulging in different sorts of criminal, fraudulent, and immoral activities such as internet scam and prostitution in order to survive. For me as a Christian, I refused to participate in such activities but rather decided and was determined to travel out of Nigeria to Europe by any means necessary. I was very frustrated in Nigeria because many years after I graduated from university with a degree in chemical engineering and could not find any work or be employed by any company. I had no money to take care of myself or assist my siblings, let alone talk about sponsoring my travel. The idea of leaving Nigeria through Libya and crossing the Mediterranean Sea was suggested to me by my friend who was equally tired of Nigeria and desperately wanted to travel overseas. I told him that I was interested but had no money to embark on the journey and he promised to and did help me financially, so we travelled together. The journey was not easy because we saw hell on the way to Europe.

Osaze: I am 34 years old from Edo state, in Nigeria. I left Nigeria in search of greener pastures overseas and also to run away from the crimes I committed at the university. For a long time, the
living conditions in Nigeria has not been conducive and comfortable for me and many other people, so I had to leave Nigeria to better my life and be safe in another country. There is no need for me to talk about the problems, economic conditions, and political situations in Nigeria because I think everybody knows about that already. I went through all these challenges there in Nigeria and had to make a move.

Ochuko: I am 33 years of age from Delta state in Nigeria. The reason i left Nigeria is because I was afraid of prosecution for my belief and practice of homosexuality. In Nigeria, same sex love relationship is highly prohibited and anybody who is arrested, prosecuted, and found guilty of homosexual practices is bound to 21 years imprisonment. I experienced the Libya passage to Europe and it makes me feel very bad whenever I remember the journey because it was terrible. When I was in Nigeria, I had no financial problems because I had a well-paying job. Few years after I finished secondary school, I became a truck driver who was living very comfortable with good income; but my life changed when I discovered that as a man, I was sexually attracted to men.

Comments

The narratives of these four Nigerian migrants confirms that there are indeed certain factors pushing them away from their country of origin and pulling them into an undetermined European country of destination (Lee, 1966). Aihie’s frustration, hopelessness and decision to leave Nigeria for Europe through the Libya-Mediterranean route set in as a result of the killings of his parents by Boko Haram. Furthermore, he dropped out of school, had no gainful job to sustain and survive life with his only sister. This is evident in the works of Herbert and Husaini (2018), and also Danaan (2018), where they discussed how terrorism and unemployment triggers the massive migration of people to seek solace in some other country. Ifeanyi’s narrative explains how the Nigerian labour market and general economy was unfavourable to him after university graduation and also to many other educated youths in the country. Insecurity in Nigeria is reflected upon in Osaze’s case in relation to the unsafe learning environment in Nigerian higher institutions. Although he did not specify the kind of crimes he committed in the university that necessitated his travel abroad just to get away, but the inability of the Nigerian law enforcement agencies to track him down after the crimes until he left the country is something to worry about. Ochuko’s story shows that being gay or homosexual in Nigeria is highly intolerable under the law as it, according to him attracts 21 years imprisonment. This information was heavy and critical that i had to double check it after the interview. Therefore, having read through the explanatory memorandum of the “Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act” of Nigeria (2013) signed by the Former President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan, i learned that persons who are found guilty of same sex marriage contract will be liable to 14 years imprisonment (Maikasuwa, 2013). Furthermore, while persons who administers, abets, witnesses or aids the solemnization of a same sex marriage in Nigeria will be charged with 10 years
imprisonment; anybody found guilty of registering, participating in gay clubs or societies will be also punished with a 10 year imprisonment (Maikasuwa, 2013).

This law could necessitate the migration of any person in Nigerian who is practicing such lifestyle. Since his life was no longer protected and secured under the Nigerian Federal law; he resorted to the Libya-Mediterranean route out of Nigeria to Europe. Although they migrated for different reasons but these reasons are commonly attributed to political and economic instability, insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria as elaborated in the theoretical framework above (Okeyim, 2012; Adeniyi, 2016; Herbert and Husaini, 2018).

3.2 Why I chose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe

Aihie: I was homeless with little money to live on, and without hope of survival I later became frustrated. When my sister and I were returning from church one day, we found out that Boko Haram had invaded and destroyed our neighborhood killing so many people. We could not return to Edo state because we had lived most of our lives in Katsina and even Kano state so do not even know the way around or anybody in Edo state. During my secondary and university school days, I do hear about how people come from different states in Nigeria to the Northern region in order to be smuggled overseas by agents who collect money. I heard and sometimes meet people who say that Europe is not too far from Libya which is close to Katsina and other Northern regional states in Nigeria, although it is risky and dangerous because sometimes people die on the road and in the sea. I started making some inquiries and contacts, and then later decided that it was best for us to embark on the risky journey to escape from Nigeria through the Libya-Mediterranean path way.

Ifeanyi: I decided to follow this way because I could not afford the financial cost of travelling the right way. I had no gainful job for years after graduating from university, so I then became frustrated and desperate to leave Nigeria howsoever affordable way. I know that if I had money, I would have connections to come to Europe through a better means. Honestly I thought of other means of travelling abroad such as applying to further my education abroad with a plan of never to return to Nigeria; but coming from a very poor family I really struggled to pay-up my tuition fees in order to graduate from university in Nigeria. I hoped to get a job after school and then save some money to travel abroad but it was difficult to find work in Nigeria. Meanwhile to survive, I used to go into the bush and cut down firewood and sell to people passing by the main road. That was also how I raised some pocket money and added with the help of my friend to get on the journey to Europe through Libya.

As much as I was ready for any challenge on the way having faced tough situations in Nigeria, the smuggling agents made us understand that the journey is not as risky as we may have heard. In fact
they said to us “see Libya see Europe” just to describe how very close Libya is from Europe; but the reality is that you will not understand what you are about to get yourself into until you join the travel group. So we began the journey through the desert by foot and I am not sure how many million miles we covered before we got to Libya. Some people died amongst us on the desert and were left behind as we continue the journey. There was no water to drink, and at some points we drank our urine. When we got to Libya, we stayed in the bush because there was no house to shelter and wait for the smuggling agents to prepare the boat that will carry us across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. The agents practically robbed us off our money and molested both men and women as they stick their hands in our private parts in search of where we may have hidden our money. Finally three boats were prepared to take so many of us across the sea.

**Osaze:** I considered a road trip as the safest way for me out of Nigeria because I had committed some crimes during my university days; therefore travelling by flight would be risky for me to be tracked down by law enforcement agencies. With the situation at hand, I did not even consider the possible dangers of embarking on the desert road trip, I just had to make the immediate move out of Nigeria and be free.

**Ochuko:** I chose this route to Europe because to me, it was the easiest route. I came to Europe with some physical cash that would have been enough to process a better exist from Nigeria, but the problem was that I was facing an imminent danger and there was no time to wait for visa application. Before I took the decision to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe, I knew that it was a dangerous path to follow; but I said to myself that instead of me to go to jail for 21 years, It is better to take the risk and embark on the journey since I had ran out of options. I just had to leave Nigeria immediately before it would be too late for me.

**Comments**

Having listened to their reasons for following in the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe, I identified some common drivers behind their decisions, and these are frustration and desperation. In Aihie’s case, the terrorism and insecurity that has destabilized the Northern part of Nigeria; and also joblessness and poverty was more than enough capture and torment his mind. Ifeanyi and Osaze also articulated how the joblessness and very high unemployment levels in Nigeria has driven the youth into dubious, criminal and immoral activities just to survival; and ultimately how they resort to travelling abroad by any means necessary in order to have a better life and future. Although Ochuko’s reason was slightly different, however, one could argue that not being able to protect or secure one’s life legally in a country could set in frustration and desperation to seek immediate safety in some other places.
3.3 How I ended up in Sweden

Aihie: When I finally left Nigeria, I had no European country in mind as my destination. From the orientation given to us by the smuggling travel agent, I learned that in Europe, human life is well valued, unlike in Africa. Therefore, my major aim was to first escape from the danger of Boko Haram in Katsina, hopefully cross over to Europe safely, and then I can begin to think of which country to seek for help and settle down. When we left Libya, we were a total number of fifty people in a boat across the Mediterranean Sea. After a very fearful journey that took the lives of many people in the boat, we finally arrived at Italy in Europe with the help of some white people who transferred us into their bigger boat and rescued us.

I ended up in Sweden as a result of the advice I took from a European man that I met in Italy. He spoke good English language unlike the rescue team who did not speak English, so I am not sure whether he is Italian. He told me that he has been helping stranded African migrants for almost ten years. After he heard my story, he advised me to find my way to Sweden and seek asylum at their immigration office. He assured me that Sweden is the best country that could accept, shelter and cater for me and I am sure to have a better life. At that time, I did not care or worry about any possible challenge I might face on my way to Sweden because compared to my experiences in Katsina state Nigeria, I believed that I had seen it all. I was open to learn and cope with any problem like language or culture because I just want me and my sister to have a better life.

On a weekend, I left the camp we were dumped at Italy along with seven other Nigerians who made it through the journey with us but were headed for Germany which was recommended to them a nice country to restart their lives. With the little money I changed into Euros from Nigeria I made a way with my already very tired sister asking random people for help and direction to Sweden. We managed to get on the train to Sweden, after another man assisted us with money to complete our transport fair. I had to stop at Germany with other Nigerians because my sister was very tired and somehow sick. After a few days of meeting other Nigerians who had lived in Germany, I had to drop my sister with them for her to get well while I continue my journey to Sweden. I know she would be fine because I was assured that the German government would take care of her even if I decide to continue my journey; again that I do not have to be afraid because people do not normally get missing in Europe like in Africa.

Today I live in Malmö and have been in Sweden for two years. With the help and direction of other Africans who live in Malmö, I went to the Swedish immigration office and sought for asylum. Everything went well and my asylum application has been granted. My sister is doing very well in Germany and I keep in contact with her. I am very happy here in Sweden, and I personally confirmed what the man who helped me in Italy said about Sweden. Sweden is indeed a very nice country
where everybody is equal and i feel safer and very secure here compared to Nigeria with all the problems with Boko Haram. I thank God that I made the journey to Europe and ended up in Sweden. So far so good, I have no regrets whatsoever and I appreciate the help of the Swedish government of how they generally take good care of immigrants.

**Ifeanyi:** I had no destination European country in mind when we left Libya. I just wanted to make it to the white man’s land and be free from what I have been passing through in Nigeria and the whole journey to Europe. Having spent about five days on the Mediterranean Sea without any control from sea border patrol, we then arrived at Spain, in the city of Almeria. As our boat approached the sea shores, we started to see some white people swimming and everybody who was at the beach started running away. When the boat stopped, we all jumped down and ran as well, with all man finding a way for himself into the city in search of fellow Africans that could render immediate help to us. Some Africans I met in the city rejected me, whereas some accepted and also provided food and shelter for me.

For a long time in Spain, I lived with the African man who helped pick me up from the street. He was married and had a family, so I served them like a maid and took care of every house chores. Life was still hard for me because I had no legal documents to stay in the country, hence I could not get a real job in Spain. I later discussed with the man about the need and my plan to leave Spain to get a better life in another European country, though I had no idea which country would be more favourable to me as a migrant. I also sought for advice from other people I knew and most of them suggested Sweden as the best destination country for me to travel. They say that in Sweden, immigrants are well taken care of, the country security is good, I can get job and have a better life. So that is how I decided to find my way and come to Sweden. The man I lived with took me to a bus station and gave me directions to Sweden. He said I should not come done from the bus until I get to Stockholm which is the capital of Sweden. The bus travelled from country to country without border control and I stayed-put until we arrived at Stockholm.

I have been living in Stockholm for almost one year, I like it here in Sweden, and I thank God that I finally made it safely through my entire journey from Nigeria. Although surviving is tough at the moment because I do not have a good job, but I know things will get better. Right now, I pick and return plastics for money (panting) in order to survive. I am contemplating to seek asylum at the migration office with hope to be granted legal document to stay in Sweden, so I do not have to continue hiding and running for fear of deportation whenever I see police on the street.

**Osaze:** When I left Nigeria I did not really know which country in Europe I would finally end up. The only country I had in my mind and plan was Libya and how to get there in order to be free first from the problems I was facing in Nigeria, and then possibly start a new life. Therefore, I started
my journey from Nigeria to Niger, and then got to Libya. Arabians treat Africans very bad in Libya and in fact there is no government in the country so I had to move out from Libya and continue my journey for a better life. Unfortunately, what I saw and experienced in Libya was worse than my ordeal in Nigeria; hence, I made another journey to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. When I got to Europe, I first arrived at Italy and was put in a refugee camp. Life was hard and uninteresting in Italy because there was no work, and I really needed to work so as to earn a living and survive. I layabout most times, sit back in doors, eat and sleep all day in the refugee camp.

As a normal human being in a strange land, I made friends in Italy whom I confided in and discussed my predicament with, and they suggested that I make a move to Sweden. I took heed to their suggestions, moved to Sweden and sought for asylum. I am glad to have been granted my asylum application. The main reason I moved to Sweden from Italy is because I was told that there are a lot of jobs I can do to survive in the country. I took the decision to move to Sweden to find work, and I confirmed what my friends told me in Italy. I would have liked to move to the United Kingdom, but I was told that it would be difficult to get into the country. I did not really consider Canada and America because these countries are far away in another continent, so I thought it best to make move within reasonable proximity. I have been living in Sweden for almost two years, and I can say that life is much better for me here than every other country that I have been.

**Ochuko:** When I left Nigeria, I had no plans of the country in Europe that I would end-up in or settle down. Italy was the first arrival point when the boat that carried us made it across the Mediterranean Sea. It happened that during my stay in Italy I met an Italian man whom after listening to my predicament suggested that I should move to Sweden. He said that Sweden is one of the best countries in Europe that respects my belief and lifestyle because in Sweden, there is provision for equal rights and protection for everyone under the law regardless of different genders or sexual orientation. I seriously considered his suggestion and decided to move to Sweden. The Italian man really helped me, even in buying a train ticket to Sweden as I could not buy it myself for the reason that I had legal documents. He also gave me his complimentary card and told me to make contact with RFSL when I get to Sweden. RFSL is the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights.

When I got to Sweden, I went to this organisation and gave them the complimentary cards the Italian man gave to me, so I later became a member and also sought for asylum in Sweden. My asylum application has been granted. We meet from time to time to discuss the challenges we face in the society and how to handle it. This is how I ended-up in Sweden and chose to settle here. I have been living in Sweden for three years and I can tell you that I enjoy my life here one hundred percent compared to Nigeria because I am very secured and safe in this country.
Comments
What resonates to me through their narratives with regards to the journey from Libya is their arrival point in Europe which was Italy and Spain. According to the European Commission report (2018), most migrant who follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to Europe arrive in Italy like Aihie, Osaze, and Ochuko; or Spain like Ifeanyi. Another factor I observed is that of destination country recommendation. Sweden was recommended to these migrants by people in Italy and Spain as a great destination country to find security, jobs, equal rights and protection under the law. Hence, these migrants did not hesitate to continue their pursuit for good life by finally choosing Sweden as their destination country.

Chapter Four

4. Discussion and Conclusion
This is the chapter in which conclusion is made based on a qualitative analysis and discussion of the theoretical framework and empirical findings as a means to answer the research questions; thereby achieving the relative purpose of this study. In reflection to the research questions, this study aims to find out why Nigerians choose to follow the Libya-Mediterranean route to migrate to Europe; how they ended up in Sweden; and why they choose to seek asylum in Sweden, but not other countries in Europe. However, the findings obtained from interviews reveal that as the Nigerian migrants evaluate their options on how to evacuate their country of origin in the most
“inexpensive or easier” way to Europe for a better life, they decided to journey through the Libya-Mediterranean route and somehow ended up in Sweden as their final destination country.

Just as Lee’s Push and Pull theory (Lee, 1966) stipulates in relation to international migration, it is evident after my interviews with the Nigerian migrants that there are inexorable factors that pushed them out of their country of origin (Nigeria) and pulled them into their final destination country (Sweden). These factors that have pushed the migrants out of Nigerian are so crucial and frustrating that caused them to neglect the imminent risk and dangers of the intervening obstacles across the borders of Nigeria and Sweden. In concurrence to the EASO (2016) report, the 4 Nigerian migrants during the interview of this current study articulated their reasons to have left Nigeria; and these reasons revolve around factors such as unemployment, economic crises, political instability, conflicts, poverty, and gender discrimination.

According to Okeyim (2012), when a country is experiencing political instability, it is likely to fail in political leadership, encourage corruption, and also exhibits uncertainty in future government. This will result to subsequent failure to provide security, basic infrastructure, hospital and academic institutions for the country; hence the migration of its populace for greener pastures is necessitated. This push factor is evident in the narratives of Ifeanyi and Osaze when analyzed from a proactive cause perspective. In other words, since the power to make impactful economic, social, and technological changes in Nigeria is obtained through politics, an unstable political process and government makes it difficult for every sector in Nigeria to work effectively. Thus, political instability has created the avenue for anti-progressive activities and corruption to abound in Nigeria. Otherwise Ifeanyi should have been able to secure a job in Nigeria after graduating from University, and also Osaze should have been arrested by the police for the crimes he committed at the university before he escaped from Nigeria.

The push factor of economic crisis is a major issue in Nigeria, as it is preponderant in the empirical findings of this study. Among the 4 Nigerian migrants that were interviewed, 3 of them which include Aihie, Ifeanyi, and Osaze discussed their predicaments of unemployment, lack of sufficient income, and general financial problems as part of the factors that necessitated their migration to Europe for a better life and future (Danaan, 2018; Adeniyi, 2016). I deduced through their narratives that there is no financial provision by the Nigerian government for study loan or grants, otherwise when Aihie lost his father who was his education sponsor; Ifeanyi graduated without a job for many years and Osaze also without work after university graduation, they all would have turned to the Nigerian government for support. The findings also reveals that there is a very high level of unemployment and joblessness amongst the college and university graduates in Nigeria; which has driven many of them into fraudulent and immoral means of survival. The
positive impact or plan of the Nigerian government on how to resolve these critical issues is yet to be seen and recorded by the people; hence thousands of Nigerians migrate to Europe following the Libya-Mediterranean pathway with hope to meet their basic needs in life.

Terrorism and insecurity has been a push factor for many years to Nigerians who are migrating to other different countries and a lot of literatures have been written about it, even as the findings of this research confirms it (Herbert and Husaini, 2018; Barungi et al., 2017). Aihie’s narrative of the gruesome killings of his parents by Boko Haram, how the Islamic extremist terrorized Katsina state where they lived, and how he escaped with his only sister explains the high level of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria; especially in the northern region. Ochuko on the other hand might interpret insecurity to be him not being safe or protected by law in Nigeria with regards to gender discrimination, sexual orientation and preference; as he stands the risk of spending 14 years in jail as a homosexual in Nigeria. Although, he did not specify the level or category of his homosexual indulgence, I assumed it to be the highest because he claimed the highest jail term to be associated with his case.

According to Lee’s Push and Pull theory (Lee, 1966), the migrants’ destination country converts their push factors to pull factors. In other words, almost every factor that the migrants need but lack to survive, prosper and be happy in their country of origin is provided for and exists in the destination country. In the case of this study, Sweden as the Nigerian migrants’ final destination country is a more secure and safe haven for the migrants to start their lives afresh with peace of mind. The high humanitarian reputation of Sweden throughout Europe and the world especially when it pertains to migrants, refugees or asylum seekers is second to none. This is evident in the findings of this study because Sweden was recommended in Spain and Italy to the 4 Nigerian migrants as a country they should move to if they want to have a better life in Europe. The Swedish migration and asylum policy has been very accommodating for years despite the recent amendments as a result of the problematic massive inflow of migrants from different parts of the world. Despite the couple of stringent clauses currently add to the Swedish migration policy, 3 out of the 4 Nigerian migrants who participated in this study have sought for asylum and have been granted permits to stay permanently in Sweden.
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