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**PAUL ENEOJO YARO OKPANACHI**

**The Livelihood and Place-making of Nigerian Migrants in Madrid,  
Spain**

The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (GAPP)

**THE LIVELIHOOD AND PLACE-MAKING OF NIGERIAN MIGRANTS IN MADRID,  
SPAIN**

A Thesis Submitted by

Paul Enejo Yaro Okpanachi

University ID: 800170102

Submitted to the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

September 2020

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The degree of Master of Arts

in Migration and Refugee Studies

has been approved by

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**DEDICATION:**

While appreciating all those who in every way possible, lent hands of support to this great accomplishment, it remains irrefutable that it took a special divine intervention for me to have achieved yet another milestone in my career odyssey.

With immeasurable gratitude, I therefore heartedly dedicate this masterpiece to almighty God whose invisible, weariless supernatural hands have propelled the wheels of my career ambition to this gigantic height of accomplishment. I say thank you Father in heaven.

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Last but not the least in this acknowledgement are all the Nigerian migrants who participated in my interviews. Without you, my field work wouldn't have been successful. May you all accomplish your migration objectives through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## **Abstract**

Spain's history is undoubtedly intertwined with migration. While it may serve as an opportunity of refuge for countless migrants, it also remains a transit country and even a place of refuge for numerous other foreigners who find their ways in and through the country. These mixed migration motivations have consequently made Spain a remarkable country for immigration within the European Union.

Since the second half of the 1980s, Nigerian migrants in their thousands, like their counterparts from other countries and walks of life, also discovered the country as a favorable destination. This often led them to choose to relocate and explore the available livelihood opportunities Spain offers.

The large population of Nigerian migrants, their livelihoods, and their social lifestyles have negligibly been reflected in the academic literature for nearly three decades. For many potential migrants, life is believed to be sweet in Europe, even as issues arise, such as low skilled migrants needing to rely mainly on commercial sex work for their own survival. Because women dominate the population of most migrants of Nigerian origin in Spain and are often school drop-outs, the popular discourses of life for Nigerian migrants in Spain are thus the main lenses to look at the socioeconomic lives of Nigerian migrants as the core of this thesis. The research undertaken reveals an increasing presence of highly educated and skilled Nigerian migrants in Madrid, the capital city of Spain. It also affirms that the majority of the migrant population are engaged in livelihood activities other than commercial sex work, going against the popular discourses of Nigerian immigration to Spain. This study adopted an ethnographic methodological research approach, a qualitative interview method, and secondary sources of archival materials for data gathering.



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## Chapter 1

### 1.1. Introduction

Although the current migration of Nigerians to Spain started from approximately the second-half of the 1980s, records in academic literature only capture entry from the beginning of the 1990s. The attention of scholars and other stakeholders of migration was most likely attracted by the rise in interest of Nigerians looking towards Spain as an opportunity for improved livelihoods.<sup>1</sup> Most of these migrants, who originated from the South and Eastern flanks of the country, comprised mainly of young females who were dominantly low-skilled workers and school dropouts,<sup>2</sup> alongside their male counterparts.

The European anti-migration policies, which began to be strongly manifested at the close of the twentieth century, combined with other political trends, resulted in the reactivation of the ancient trans-Saharan trade route. Nigerians, migrants from other sub-Saharan African countries, as well as their counterparts from Asian countries who were on their way to several European destinations engaged in the reactivation of this important historical trade route.<sup>3</sup>

Although migrants traveling to Europe by land and sea continue to discover new routes, a large population of Nigerian travelers, alongside their fellow sub-Saharanans, often traverse the trans-Saharan through Niger and onwards to Algeria and Morocco, from where they then cross the

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<sup>1</sup> De Haas, “8 International Migration, National Development And The Role Of Governments,” 1.

<sup>2</sup> Kastner, “Nigerian Border Crossers,” 26.

<sup>3</sup> Carling, “Unauthorized Migration from Africa to Spain,” 4; Kastner, “Nigerian Border Crossers,” 30; Carling, “Unauthorized Migration from Africa to Spain,” 18; De Haas, *Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*, 32:18–19.

Mediterranean Sea by boat to Southern Europe. Many others scale the high fences built around Ceuta and Melilla, the autonomous Spanish enclaves in Africa, to reach their desired destinations.<sup>4</sup>

Even though crossing the Mediterranean Sea is an arduous task for all migrants, its risks and dangers are often undermined in their quest for a more prosperous life in their envisaged ‘Eldorado.’<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Nigerian migrants who eventually succeed in entering Spain are encountered by the difficult task of how to start a new life in a new country.

Spain, which was hit harshly by the 2008 global economic downturns, regressed into high levels of unemployment with varying degrees of impact on natives and foreigners alike.<sup>6</sup> Adding to the issues of economic recession was the constant modifications to its immigration laws, as exemplified in the promulgation of Organic Law 2/2009<sup>7</sup>, virtually one year into the recession. In addition, the migration Decree 2011, 2013,<sup>8</sup> as well as other amendments across 2015, 2016 and 2018, respectively, made life challenging for migrants in the country.<sup>9</sup> These trends suggest multiple periods of highs and lows for residents of the country, particularly for migrants.

With little documentation on Nigerian migrants in Spain, a vacuum in knowledge regarding the migrants' socio-economic well-being proves to be an opportunity for researchers. Until now, not much is known on how the migrants become integrated into their host environment; what communal lifestyles they adopt amongst themselves at home and places of livelihoods; what challenges they face at home, work/business places, and in the course of everyday life; what coping

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<sup>4</sup> De Haas, *Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*, 32:18–19.

<sup>5</sup> Kohnert, “African Migration to Europe,” 7; Kastner, “Moving Relationships: Family Ties of Nigerian Migrants on Their Way to Europe,” 28.

<sup>6</sup> Ponzo et al., “Is the Economic Crisis in Southern Europe Turning into a Migrant Integration Crisis?,” 67.

<sup>7</sup> Corella, “Rights, Immigration and Social Cohesion in Spain,” 8.

<sup>8</sup> Hooper, “Spain’s Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis,” 15.

<sup>9</sup> Hooper, 24–26.

strategies they adopt; what social networking strategies are adopted; and how they maintain contact with their places of origin.

Apart from Matthew Okiri Okeyimin's, "*The State and Migration of Nigerians Into the European Union to Live In Spain*",<sup>10</sup> and Jill Ahrens in "*Suspended in Europe Crisis: New (Im)mobilities and Semi-Legal Migrations Amongst Nigerians Living in Spain*," other related studies have not extensively captured the existing realities of Nigerian migrants' presence in Spain. Whereas Okeyim's empirical study extensively examines the "life situation in Nigeria and the life situation in the host country" by interviewing Nigerian residents in Ceuta, Melilla, and Alicante, Ahrens focuses on Germany, England and Spain as three major destination countries for Nigerian migrants in Europe. Ahrens thus examines a combination of migrant experiences of Nigerians that have lived in one or more European countries, regardless of their legal status.<sup>11</sup> This research, however, specifically investigates how the varied livelihood situations of Nigerian migrants shape their place-making practice in Madrid. To probe this question, I inquired into how Nigerian migrants in Madrid establish themselves, integrate, and maintain social ties in their new environment. The study equally investigates what levels of education and skills these migrants acquire, what challenges they face, what daily coping strategies and social lifestyles they adopt at work and home, how they initiate ties amongst themselves through social networking, and how they accomplish their overall migration objectives in the course of the journeys in Spain. This master's thesis, in this regard, documents the activities of Nigerian migrants who reside in Madrid.

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<sup>10</sup> "Thesis Okiri Okeyim 2013.Pdf - Google Search," 30–428.

<sup>11</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 19.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

As stated in the introduction, the primary aim of this research is to investigate how the livelihood situation of Nigerian migrant residents in Madrid shapes their place-making practice. The overall objectives of the study thus include:

- To explore how Nigerian immigrants integrate and maintain social ties, all the while adopting new lifestyles in their new environment.
- To document major socio-economic challenges facing Nigerian immigrants, adopted coping strategies, and their levels of education and skill acquisition.
- To investigate adopted networking strategies by newly arrived Nigerian immigrants with their fellow nationals who are already settled in Madrid and the various occupations/services in which Nigerian immigrants in Madrid undertake.

## 1.3 Research Question

This research specifically intends to investigate how the livelihood situations of Nigerian migrants shape their place-making practices in Madrid. By delving into this research question, the research thus contends that the two adopted theories of dual or segmented labour-market and place-making are interwoven to capture the Nigerian migrants' situation in Madrid. In this regard, the research hypothetically argues that:

1. Nigerian migrants in Madrid are simultaneously embroiled in the search for livelihood opportunities in the Spanish labor-market and under negotiation for their place-making strategies in the host society.
2. Since earnings from livelihoods greatly determine the migrants' standard of living, the lack of, or secured but poorly paid jobs, equally determines their place-making situation and adopted strategies.

3. Since place-making is arguably migrants' commonly adopted strategies to overcome stigmatization stemming from the native population in the host society, difficulty in securing meaningful jobs for the Nigerian group of immigrants implies that they can only make do with affordable place-making opportunities, and so contend with whatever daily challenges accompany such opportunities.

## **1.4 Significance and Scope of Study**

Through ethnographic research methodologies, this thesis practically engages with Nigerian migrants to ascertain and authenticate from a different perspective the realities of their livelihoods and place-making in their Madrid homes. The scope of this study is, therefore, primarily focused on the livelihoods and place-making of Nigerian migrants and how these affect their overall migration objectives in Madrid.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1 Conceptualizing Livelihoods in Migration

Livelihood as a concept can be drawn upon from the definition provided by Frank Ellis in his work, which focuses on setting out ‘a livelihood platform for new policy thinking about national and international migration.’<sup>12</sup> According to the author, 'The term livelihood attempts to capture not just what people do in order to make a living, but the resources that provide them with the capability to build a satisfactory living, the risk factors that they must consider in managing their resources, and the institutional and policy context that either helps or hinders them in their pursuit of a viable or improving living.'<sup>13</sup>

In the above context, livelihood means more than the narrative of a way to earn a living. One needs to also look at the available resources which enhance people's capability to establish a desirable standard of living; putting into consideration all accompanying risks factors. In addition, one needs to look into existing policies and institutional structures likely to be supportive or obstructive of attainment of a decent standard of living. Such resources and factors for those in search of meaningful livelihoods tend to arise in the overall expedition and can both be identified in the origin and destination countries. Hence, Ellis further pictures the linkage of labor and economic policies from several dimensions namely the micro 'family or household policy level' to the macro

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<sup>12</sup> Ellis, "A Livelihoods Approach to Migration and Poverty Reduction," 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ellis, "A Livelihoods Approach to Migration and Poverty Reduction," 1–3.

level of national policies which include the, “national economy and policies that determine the movement of labor within countries and internationally”.<sup>14</sup>

Robert Chambers and Gordon R. Conway equally attempt a further definition of livelihoods in their description of the concept which comprises, “people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets”.<sup>15</sup> In a related view, Christopher McDowell and Arjan de Haan, represent African and Asians’ migration motives to be of an identical perspective. The duo believe that Africans and Asians have, to a large extent, a common tradition of a patterned life of mobility, where migration, tied to identity, equally serves the purpose of survival and livelihood schemes for these two groups.<sup>16</sup> To this end, the negative assumptions in the West which problematize migration as being threatening and challenging to human and societal stability and the so-believed established life is contrary to the mere search for sustainable livelihoods, and, is thus faulted. In addition, migration as referenced by Karim Hussein and John Nelson, plays a cardinal role in people’s quest for livelihood opportunities.<sup>17</sup> The same can also be said for place-making, which defines migrants’ residential condition in host societies as ever developing, as said by Elisabeth Mavroudi and Caroline Nagel.<sup>18</sup> In their argument, migrants are constantly engaged in carving out and negotiating their place of settlement in host societies.<sup>19</sup> However, this assertion does not in any way undermine the role of immigration regulations in determining migrants’ fate in their destinations. In their critical appraisal of the dynamics of migrants’ integration in host societies, Mavroudi and Nagel further align their views with Robert Park to describe migrants’

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<sup>14</sup> Ellis, 1–3.

<sup>15</sup> Chambers and Conway, *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> McDowell and De Haan, “Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods,” 3.

<sup>17</sup> Hussein and Nelson, *Sustainable Livelihoods and Livelihood Diversification*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 211.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

process of adapting to their new environment as a ‘time of inner turmoil, intense, self-consciousness and personal crises’.<sup>20</sup> Migrants’ presence in host societies, as they theorize, is often marked by discrimination by the ‘dominant groups and institutions’ in host societies, which often occur in places of work, schools, as well as in neighborhoods.<sup>21</sup>

This thesis, therefore, goes one step further to investigate the livelihoods of Nigerian migrants, their communal spaces, integration strategies and challenges as regulated by the Spanish immigration laws and the attitudes of the dominant Spanish nationals with whom they live and carry out their daily survival strategies.

### **2.3 Sequence of Spanish Immigration Policies**

The year 1985 no doubt marks a watershed moment in Spanish immigration history. It was a period when the country departed from being an emigration country to an immigration country. Aside from the need to regulate the emerging migration patterns in the country, Spain was also preparing to join the European Union, and was therefore required to have immigration laws in place. This situation primarily propelled the development of its immigration policies.<sup>22</sup> Spanish action at this historic period as told by Jill Ahrens, was so much a ‘balancing act between the need to supply its economy with migrant workers and the demands imposed by the EU to make immigration policies more restrictive in all the member-states.’<sup>23</sup> Before the turn of 1980s, however, Spain had experienced internal "rural-urban" migration which then changed into urban-international migration patterns when its nationals largely left on a search for job opportunities in other

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<sup>20</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 206.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Bruquetas Callejo et al., “Immigration and Integration Policymaking in Spain,” 3–8.

<sup>23</sup> Ahrens, “Suspended in Eurocrisis,” 116.

European and Latin American destinations.<sup>24</sup> During this same period and upward to the 1990s, as King Fielding and Black put it, three significant economic developments prevailed, namely, the coexistence of low and high-productivity sectors; rapid transfer of indigenous workers from low- to high-productivity sectors occurring through short and long-distance migration, and the rapid decline in the supply of available indigenous labour within the rural areas. These trends, Bruquetas and co-authors emphasize, dove-tailed into a period of national economic downturn for Spain, resulting in a significant drop in the rate of investment, which culminated in the Spanish economic restructuring and high-levels of unemployment.<sup>25</sup>

Given this unsavory national economic situation, particularly from around the twilight of the 1980s to the turn of the 1990s, employers largely resorted to hiring the services of employees accepting low wages with high preferences for migrant workers. This option, as expanded upon by Cavalier,<sup>26</sup> was most suitable for the employers as it enabled them to maintain an edge in a competitive market. The employers' preference, coupled with the resuscitation of the Spanish economy in the wake of the country's "economy's prodigious decade"<sup>27</sup> and the country's liberal migration policy,<sup>28</sup> eventually created an entry avenue for migrant workers, Nigerians included, to enter Spain in search of job opportunities.

To coincide with the above assertion, Claudia Finotelli depicts that the Spanish migration regime became a labor migration regime, more so than all other categories of migration. Finotelli affirms that by the turn of 2012, 68 per cent of nationals of third-countries in Spain were already with legal

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<sup>24</sup> Bruquetas Callejo et al., "Immigration and Integration Policymaking in Spain," 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> López-Sala, "Exploring Dissuasion as a (Geo) Political Instrument in Irregular Migration Control at the Southern Spanish Maritime Border," 1.

<sup>28</sup> Bruquetas Callejo et al., "Immigration and Integration Policymaking in Spain," 4.

and long-term stay permits, with those staying on family permits made up 26% of all migrants.<sup>29</sup> Ana López Sala, while confirming how Spain emerged as a migration destination from the 1980s, maintains that the period coincided with the onset of Spanish exponential economic growth.<sup>30</sup>

Nigerian migrants started being documented as having arrived to Spain within the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>31</sup> in search of a better life.<sup>32</sup> They constitute a large chunk of migrant workers supplying labor for the service sector and the construction industries in Madrid.<sup>33</sup> The beginning of a new Spanish migration era, as mentioned above, was also remarkable as it enacted the 'Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners'. This was at a time when Spain had only an estimated '250,000 legal foreign residents on its territory' and had yet to join the European Union.<sup>34</sup> These initial set of laws were specifically developed to govern the country's national migration issues.

The Royal Decree 557/2011 of 20 April, is one of the current immigration regulations present in Spain. This new decree, which is the amended version of the 'Organic Law 2/2009', seeks *inter alia* to improve the principles of immigration policy through an efficient management of labor migration flows, taking awareness of the Spanish national employment situation and the social integration of immigrants by filtering, simplifying, and reordering complex procedures.<sup>35</sup> While the decree aims at achieving an improved migrant situation, it rather prioritizes the employment situation of Spanish nationals. As article 64.3 states, "About the work to be developed by foreigners who intends to hire will be necessary that: to," the national employment situation will

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<sup>29</sup> Finotelli, *Managing Labour Migration in Times of Crisis*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> López-Sala, "Exploring Dissuasion as a (Geo) Political Instrument in Irregular Migration Control at the Southern Spanish Maritime Border," 6.

<sup>31</sup> De Haas, "8 International Migration, National Development And The Role Of Governments," 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 120.

<sup>33</sup> Bruquetas Callejo et al., "Immigration and Integration Policymaking in Spain," 6.

<sup>34</sup> Bruquetas Callejo et al., 3.

<sup>35</sup> Finotelli, *Managing Labour Migration in Times of Crisis*, 42.

allow the hiring of foreign workers in the terms provided for in article 65 of this regulation". As spelled out in these provisions, the country's employment situation will be determined by information provided by a jointly developed catalog which indicates occupations with difficult positions to be filled by Spanish natives.

By looking into of the plights of foreign workers in Spain, the Nigerian migrants interviewed in this research also took into account this stricter labor policy as complicating the process of securing work opportunities in their new home. Nonetheless, this situation partly appears to be less of a novelty and more of a traditional practice amongst countries across the globe where the well-being of citizens is prioritized ahead of those of other nationalities. Following the protracted economic predicament, Spanish authorities resorted to implementing measures, such as reducing the entry of foreign laborers and reducing the quota slots meant to stabilize employment from zero percent in 2010. It equally targeted the number of occupations on the catalog, as well as tightend the existing labor market test which served as the national employment control mechanism, among other objectives.<sup>36</sup>

These stricter labor policies in the wake of the economic downturn is further explained by Zenia Hellgren and Inma Serrano, who write about the period of increased hardships on several fronts for foreigners, more so than nationals.<sup>37</sup> The duo further maintain that migrants were hit worse by high-level unemployment, poverty, and associated risks. Noting that the group's high concentration in low-skilled sectors, such as construction and service occupations that were worst affected by the financial crisis, put them in more precarious livelihood situations.<sup>38</sup>

It is worthy to note that an uneven and adverse effect of the crisis prevails among the migrants, especially migrants of African and Sub-Saharan African origins, who were worse affected by the

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<sup>36</sup> Finotelli, 47.

<sup>37</sup> Hellgren and Serrano, "Transnationalism and Financial Crisis," 5.

<sup>38</sup> Hellgren and Serrano, 11.

economic predicament when compared to their migrant counterparts from other origins.<sup>39</sup> A Nigerian migrant, a Barcelona resident, testifying to how she was affected by the downturn, arguably exemplifies how Nigerians in Madrid, as well as other locations across Spain, also had their fair share of hardship arising from the global economic crisis.<sup>40</sup>

Since 2013, the Spanish government has intermittently engaged in initiating new laws as part of its efforts to revamp its dwindling economy. As part of these efforts, it now focuses on ways to allow highly-skilled researchers, investors, entrepreneurs, company transferees, and professional migrants who want easy access to the country.<sup>41</sup> This shift in focus implies a decrease in opportunities for low and middle-skilled migrants.<sup>42</sup> The new laws also embody Spain's return to an implementation of harsh immigration policy. Evidently, in February 2019, the Spanish government renewed a pact with Morocco for the repatriation of unauthorized migrants back to Moroccan ports. This pact appealed to the EU for the funding of Morocco's border control project, a signed security agreement with Guinea, and other high immigrant sending countries.<sup>43</sup> This pact also includes the return to a 'pushback' policy, whereby Nigerian migrants who arrive on the Spanish shore of Ceuta and Melilla, are forcefully returned to Moroccan territory. Other measures introduced include: the repatriation of unaccompanied children to Morocco which began in early 2019, the refusal to issue departure permits to ships on rescue operations in Mediterranean Sea, and the denial of access to migrants rescued from Central Mediterranean Sea<sup>44</sup>. All of these have

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<sup>39</sup> Cabrera and Malgesini, "Inmigrantes y Sinhogarismo En España," 168.

<sup>40</sup> Cabrera and Malgesini, 6–7.

<sup>41</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 25.

<sup>42</sup> Hooper, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Hooper, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Hooper, 26–27.

undoubtedly, far-reaching implications of further complicating the migration journey for the target group of this thesis.

In the meantime, the social lives of migrant residents in Spain, invariably characterized by a myriad of identity and integration challenges, is also captured by Cabrera Cabrera and Malgesini. For the duo, Spanish natives' expression of resentment towards emigrants in their territory gradually evolved over the years.<sup>45</sup> According to their studies, the local population's feeling of resentment became noticeable from the early 2000s. They argue that the population of Spanish nationals who believed that the increasing migrants' presence in the country was an issue of concern rated at 31 percent in February 2000 later rose to 42 by February 2001 and 54 percent in June 2002.<sup>46</sup> This statistic is only indicative of a growing anti-migrant sensitivity amongst citizens of Spain. Further analysis by the authors attests that there was a departure from an initially expressed solidarity for the many homeless immigrants camped at the center of Barcelona in 2000. By August 2002, a large population of emigrants cramped in the Pablo de Olavide University of Seville, which was evicted by the country's police and was described in certain quarters as "more of a problem of public order than a social and economic issue."<sup>47</sup>

This documented evidence of growing resentment towards migrants is equally confirmed in Andre's Agudelo-Suarez's work. The migrants emphasize how their performance at work and health conditions were being affected by the situation.<sup>48</sup> In the process of time, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance increasingly extended from the domestic level to

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<sup>45</sup> Cabrera and Malgesini, "Inmigrantes y Sinhogarismo En España," 6–7.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> López-Sala, "Exploring Dissuasion as a 'Geo' Political Instrument in Irregular Migration Control at the Southern Spanish Maritime Border," 8.

<sup>48</sup> Agudelo-Suárez et al., "Discrimination, Work and Health in Immigrant Populations in Spain," 69.

schools where migrant children were attempting to integrate, as well as to the labor market, which saw corresponding plights of the migrants becoming more glaring by the day.<sup>49</sup>

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

Two identified theories of dual or “segmented” labor market and place-making have respectively been adopted as a most appropriate theoretical framework and fulcrum upon which the labor migration objectives of Nigerian migrants, who have utilized available routes and means of transportation to enter their Spanish "Madrid" destination to live and work, can be studied.

### **2.4.1 The Dual or “segmented” labor market theory**

Conceptualizing the dual labor market theory, Michael J. Piore postulates that, in modern industrial economies, the labor market is segmented into primary and secondary sectors. The secondary sector is where the migrants largely belong, as jobs in the primary sector are mostly reserved for nationals, a situation which underscores an existential division between the jobs and determines the role of the migrants and those of the nationals.<sup>50</sup> The prevalence of this dichotomy, Piore further argues, is partly attributed to the high illiteracy, low-skilled backgrounds and the temporal initial intent of the majority of migrants.<sup>51</sup> Although Piore’s postulations on the bifurcated labor market and low-skilled level of migrants are still applicable and relevant to this research, the idea of complete illiteracy among migrants has significantly waned, especially with the Nigerian group in Spain. Most of the migrants, as Kristin Kastner and Jill Ahrens separately argue, have at least acquired a certain low-level of formal education.<sup>52</sup> Even though there appears to be an emerging

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<sup>49</sup> Pasetti, “Country Report,” 3–4.

<sup>50</sup> Piore, “Birds of Passage,” 35–36.

<sup>51</sup> Piore, 57.

<sup>52</sup> Kastner, “Nigerian Border Crossers,” 26; Ahrens, “Suspended in Eurocrisis,” 120.

departure from this platitude of low qualifications of Nigerians in Spain, as shall be shown in a latter chapter of this research, the low skills and low qualifications of the vast population of the migrants who enter Spain, in the views of Kastner and Ahrens,<sup>53</sup> hardly determine the migrants' job opportunities in their chosen European destination.

The dual or segmented labor market theory thus postulates a polarized labor market accommodating both low and highly skilled labor. This is what Douglas S. Massey et al. recapitulate as “the structural requirements of modern industrial economies.” This market, accordingly, provides for the constant demand for high and low-skilled emigrant labor as it is structurally embedded in the contemporary capitalist economy.<sup>54</sup> Owing to these low-status backgrounds, the migrants are more likely to belong to the informal sectors of the Spanish economy, picking up low-paying jobs as attested to by Ben, a Madrid-based Nigerian and one of Ahren's interlocutors.<sup>55</sup> In his appraisal of Sassen Saskia, William I. Robinson, however, disagrees on migrants belonging entirely to the low-paying job sector. The top-bottom stratification of immigration labor supply from the service sector to the “down-graded manufacturing sector and the immigration labor supply to the migrants' community”, he stressed, are all indicative of an existing hierarchy in the immigrant job categorization. Due to this, the jobs comprising those in the service sector are those that serve the lifestyle of a growing level of a top-level professional work force. These jobs are rated higher compared to those in the “down-graded manufacturing sector” where wages are often lower.<sup>56</sup> Sassen's argument aligns with the idea that Nigerian migrants also belong to the tertiary occupational level and are not entirely confined to the bottom level of jobs.

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<sup>53</sup> Kastner, “Nigerian Border Crossers,” 26; Ahrens, “Suspended in Euro crisis,” 120.

<sup>54</sup> Castles, Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 35–36.

<sup>55</sup> Ahrens, “Suspended in Eurocrisis,” 131.

<sup>56</sup> Robinson, “Saskia Sassen and the Sociology of Globalization,” 10–11.

Moving on, Massey et al. further contend that the employers of laborers have a need for migrant workers, which hinges largely on the group's disposition to accepting low-level paying jobs.<sup>57</sup> At another level, the migrants from the onset of their migratory journey often prioritize earning a living at the expense of jobs associated with societal social prestige, thereby positioning them as more affordable to employers.<sup>58</sup> Nigerian migrants in Madrid do the same by undermining host societies' prestige in pursuit of available opportunities. Moreover, given the existing disparities in the living standards between developed and underdeveloped countries, the migrants' earnings' "however meagre" of hard currencies and the prestige of working abroad, re-position them to put up with available jobs in the host society.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, it should be noted that the fluidity of the migrant's status greatly manifests in their interaction with the job opportunities on offer. The acceptance of this offer opens up the next phase in the migratory journey and equally serves as a spring board to promoting the migrant into the working class, even though with low remuneration and high vulnerability. Yet, the job is highly instrumental in the practical steps towards integration for the migrants while holding onto the objectives for migrating.

## 2.4.2 The place-making theory

Place-making, as a theory, has an interdisciplinary base in the way it presents multi-dimensional definitions. Scholars of several fields of human endeavors, such as: "spatial and design, social science, arts, education, music and tourism", to mention a few, have variously reconstructed the concept of place-making to drive home divergent theoretical views relevant to their disciplines.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration," 442.

<sup>58</sup> Piore, "Birds of Passage," 54; Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration," 441.

<sup>59</sup> Piore, 54; Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration," 442.

<sup>60</sup> Alvarez, Borsi, and Rodrigues, "The Role of Social Network Analysis on Participation and Placemaking," 118–

In like manner, this theory has found common ground with the dual or segmented labor market theory to explain the economic objective of migrants. Zehmsch Philipp, for instance, defines place-making as “the social cultural, religious, economic and political transformation of spaces into places through naming, practices, rituals and institutions.”<sup>61</sup> The practices, particularly the economic activities of migrants across institutions, show how their economic activities captured by the dual or segmented labor market theory result in the transformation of their occupied spaces and places of livelihoods in the Spanish labor market. In his work, *Partition and the Practice of Memory*, Philipp’s conceptualization of place-making emphasizes that migrants, through social and economic relations, often reconstruct their “physical infrastructure of landscapes and settlements.”<sup>62</sup> This assertion is found relevant to explain the idea that migrants use their socioeconomic activities to carve out a place and unique identities for themselves in the context of this thesis.

As shown in Elisabeth Mavroudi and Caroline Nagel’s account, place-making theory affirms that migrants are constantly engaged in carving out and negotiating their place of settlement in host societies.<sup>63</sup> This style of clustering and formation of unique residential areas, adopted by migrants in their host societies, is also largely shown to have existed throughout history.<sup>64</sup> This assertion is further confirmed by early assimilation scholars like Louis Wirth, who explain clustering to mean “a natural outcome of social heterogeneity and group competition in urban environment.”<sup>65</sup> However, migrant neighborhoods have more often than not been described by the dominant native population as “spaces of disease, vice and deviance” and are often segregated or at best, purified through acts of national slum clearance.<sup>66</sup> Notwithstanding, immigrants on their own part hardly

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<sup>61</sup> Zehmsch, “Between Mini-India and Sonar Bangla,” 63.

<sup>62</sup> Zehmsch, 63–64.

<sup>63</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 211.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” 119.

<sup>66</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 211.

succumb to such disparaging remarks of discrimination as they constantly exert efforts to portray their presence within the space of their host country in a positive light.

The case of China Town in Vancouver, Canada during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is typically illustrated by this theory. Chinese migrants, who were subjected to years of harsh discrimination by the dominant Canadian population, began to take practical steps to carve out their own unique identity in the group's settled area. To do this, Kay Anderson notes how Chinese civic and business organizations from the late 1920s to the beginning of the 1930s embarked on the construction of Chinese patterned buildings, even though this was under the guise of a commercial initiative.<sup>67</sup> This adopted strategy, which was equally supported by the city's merchants and elites, recorded remarkable success in the recovery of the image of the Chinese neighborhood from the hitherto stigmatized "spaces of disease, vice and deviance"<sup>68</sup> to a community of "oriental quaintness". Chinese migrants, again, proved their resilience to defend their spaces during the 1990s when the Vancouver city planners stereotypically described China Town as a blighted area worthy of demolition to pave way for road construction and a city facelift. The resilient Chinese rose up once more and contested the imminent plan to obliterate their community and convinced the authorities to rather view the neighborhood as a tourist site to be preserved.

Meanwhile, Susanne Wessendorf's combination of theories of "belonging, migrant place-making, civility, and cosmopolitanism", posits that migrants' feelings of inclusion or exclusion and level of interaction in terms of social relations within their community of settlement is shaped by the degree of community members' intercultural exposure.<sup>69</sup> To recap, older community members' level of intercultural skill, to a large extent, determines arriving migrants' feelings of acceptance or rejection. Moving towards overcoming this atmosphere of stigma often prevalent in migrant

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<sup>67</sup> Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 155–56.

<sup>68</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 211.

<sup>69</sup> Wessendorf, "Migrant Belonging, Social Location and the Neighbourhood," 133.

neighborhoods shows how groups which constantly engage in carving out a unique settlements within city spaces are more successful. Moreover, such efforts accentuate the individual's devised means of identifying with his or her particular ethnic background in any given place of residence.<sup>70</sup> Migrant neighborhoods commonly sighted in urban spaces are easily identifiable with markers in form of shops, symbols, religious places and community centers.<sup>71</sup>

In related work, spatial mobility is echoed by Benjamin Etzold as an integral part of human history. He contends that migrants, by rights of their spatial mobility, have in continuum engaged in place-making and through this, are able to reconfigure, redefine, and change the characteristics of preexisting societies that have now become their new abodes.<sup>72</sup>

In a bid to restructure these new spaces to suit their habitation, it is common to find that migrants always strive to reintroduce their cultural heritage and values that they have carried all along with them throughout their spaces of transition. This reality is typically exemplified by the Nigerian community in the Kasa-Vubu District of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo. The neighborhood, with a large concentration of Nigerians in the Kasa-Vubu commercial area, as expounded by Oliver Bakewell and Loren B. Landau, has been coined as a "Nigerian district".<sup>73</sup> Having the monopoly of business in the sale of vehicle parts in the business district, along with the introduction of their cultural lifestyles, the Nigerian migrants can be said to have successfully carved out a unique socio-cultural and economic space for themselves within the same sphere.<sup>74</sup>

An existing interplay between the two theories above is the contestation that both theories are interwoven to capture the migrants' residential and livelihood situation in Madrid. From this

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<sup>70</sup> Wessendorf, 134.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Etzold, "Mobility, Space and Livelihood Trajectories," 45.

<sup>73</sup> Ngoie, "Social Capital, Spatial Conquests and Migrants' Social Mixity," 184.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

arguable point of view, the migrants are simultaneously embroiled in the struggle for means of livelihood, while also negotiating their settlement strategies. Given this entwined situation, and since earnings from livelihoods re-shapes the migrants' standard of living, the lack of, or secured but poorly paying job opportunities, certainly trickle down to their place-making situation. In the same vein, since place-making is often migrants' adopted strategy to overcome discrimination and stigmatization from the native population and host societies,<sup>75</sup> the difficulty in securing meaningful jobs also implies an existential daily web of challenges in which the migrants are constantly entangled. This arguably amounts to a considerable halt of progress and discomfort for the group.

Researchers have also proven that place-making, heritage transfer, and its preservation constitutes a common importance among migrants in their host societies. It is of little wonder that Nyamjo, in conversation with Adey P., Greenblatt et al., and van Dijk et al., further emphasizes that Africans, like their fellow human beings, move with their habitus. Noting that regardless of new experiences and exposure, the people are attached to their cultural heritage, such as "food habits, social relations, rituals, religious convictions and ideologies" and material culture, with which they transit through all spaces to distant locations.<sup>76</sup>

The foregoing analogy typically portrays how a people, for example the Nigerian community in Madrid, already mired in their predicaments, are also striving to preserve their cultural values. They ultimately trudge onward to accomplish their overall migration objectives.

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<sup>75</sup> Wessendorf, "Migrant Belonging, Social Location and the Neighbourhood," 134.

<sup>76</sup> Nyamnjoh, "Fiction and Reality of Mobility in Africa," 58.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

Research methodology, according to McMillan and Schumacher, “encompasses the complete research process: the research approaches, procedures and data-collection or sampling methods used.”<sup>77</sup>

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As already stated in previous chapters, the main objective of this thesis is to investigate the livelihood situation of Nigerian migrants in Spain and how these situations interact with and shape their place-making strategies in the course of traveling to their final destination, Madrid. To accomplish this task, I therefore employed a sequential, methodological approach by splitting the chapter into: method of data collection, method of data analysis, materials, research design, study area, study population, sampling technique and sampling procedure, sample size, limitation of the study, and finally, ethical issues.

#### **3.2 Method of Data Collection**

This research adopts an ethnographical research method considered to be most suitable to enable me to capture the realities of the socio-economic lives of Nigerian migrants in Madrid. Qualitative ethnographic technique, as described by Amir Marvarsti, is an empirical research method which

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<sup>77</sup> James, “Sally, Schumacher. (2001),” 74.

“provides a detailed description of the analysis of the quality or the substance of the human experience.”<sup>78</sup>

Employing the qualitative ethnographic method, I therefore conducted participant observation while utilizing informal, in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended interviews with participants. In this process, individual migrant’s responses provided sufficient insight into the group’s actual situation, while equally clarifying inaccurate notions held in some quarters concerning Nigerian migrants in Spain.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with different categories of the migrant population, reflecting their different livelihood engagements and integration experiences in Madrid. The interviews were open-ended with slight adjustments in questions to suit migrants’ peculiar situations and also spur them to provide valid and detailed information.

Two of the interviews were held at the premises of the Redeem Christian Church of God (RCCG) Leganés, three at residences of two of the migrants at Alcorcón and Leganés, one at the business premises of a self-employed participant in Mostoles, two at the African Restaurant Mostoles, four in two separate restaurants in Mostoles, six at the Karibu Women Training Centre in Ventillas, one at Karibu head office at Cuatro Caminos, two at Hostal Ivor Calle del Arenal, two at the premises of two separate supermarkets in the Madrid metropolis, and one at the embassy of Nigeria in Calle Segre.

Participant observations were carried out during my second visits to the enumerated locations. There were, however, a few exceptions to distant locations that were out of reach to warrant a second visit towards the close of the research. Such impromptu visits enabled me to observe the actual lifestyles, attitudes, and business strategies put in place by the migrants in their various endeavors and daily life.

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<sup>78</sup> Marvasti, *Qualitative Research in Sociology*, 4.

### **3.3 Method of Data Analysis**

I engaged key interlocutors in extensive interactions to make sure they felt comfortable during the interview, which allowed me to extract additional information regarding their individual lives and related trends affecting the general migrant situation in Spain. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed accordingly, just as notes were also taken during the course of the interviews.

### **3.4 Materials**

This research relied mainly on both primary and secondary sources for needed materials. Primary sources, on the one hand, were participants' responses to interview questions, and other information gathered during the field work. Literature and other archival materials were, on the other hand, used as secondary sources.

### **3.5 Research Design**

The essence of my research design is, according to McMillan and Schumacher, used according to applicable methods of systematic investigation to feed relevant and concise answers to research questions.<sup>79</sup> Adopting a combination of descriptive and narrative designs for this research, the standard of data gathering, sampling, instruments and techniques employed, as well as the data analysis procedure as outlined in this chapter, aided the inquiry which produced accurate information about the migrants' actual situation. A period of two calendar months was used for both in-depth interviews and follow-up inquiries to gather reliable information and data from the migrants.

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<sup>79</sup> James, "Sally, Schumacher.(2001)," 106.

### 3.6 Study Area

Madrid was the area selected for this study. Being one of the seventeen Spanish autonomous regions, the Madrid community is made up of 40 surrounding municipalities with Madrid Metropolitan City doubling as both the Spanish national capital and the autonomous region's headquarters. In the view of David Sartori, the integration of high-volume migrant workers into the Madrid community has immensely contributed to the community's rising population of 6.4 million inhabitants, as revealed in the 2013 head count.<sup>80</sup>

Situated on the Manzanares River in the heart of Spain, present day Madrid borders the autonomous communities of Castile and Leon and Castile-La Mancha. With rich cultural heritage handed down throughout generations, Madrid evolved from an ancient humble and unpopular background to its present-day famous height as the administrative, business, service and industrial nerve center of Spain. Hence, it is highly recognized as an opportunistic destination attracting migrants from all walks of life. The 1950s-1960s industrial growth in Madrid remarkably accounts for the genesis of population flows into the city.<sup>81</sup> The community of Madrid currently plays host to migrants from Latin America, other European countries, Asia and Africa, with Nigerian migrants comprising the bulk of population flows into the region, which succinctly qualifies the community for this study.

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<sup>80</sup> Sartori, "Culture and Tourism. Ex Post Evaluation of Cohesion Policy Programmes 2007-2013, Focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)," 11.

<sup>81</sup> "Madrid | Layout, People, Economy, Culture, & History | Britannica."

Figure 1: Map showing study area



Source: <https://villaviciosadigital.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Mapa-terremoto-Alcorc%C3%B3n-e1521460645518.jpg>  
accessed 7/20/2020

### 3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sampling Procedures

In this study I adopted the nonprobability sampling technique, employing both quota and purposive sampling methods to select participants across the gender divide and experience. Purposive sampling, according to Mariam S.B., is “based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and, gain insight, and therefore must select sample from which the most can be learned.”<sup>82</sup> She further states that, “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study.”<sup>83</sup> Focusing on Nigerians that have been residing in Madrid on arrival in Spain since of the second-half of the 1980s, I, therefore, purposefully sought information from migrants across the years up until 2020 to spread information. I also deliberately selected my participants almost on a gender balance, interviewing both males and females to gather data supportive to my argument and with a depth of evaluation.

Gender aggregation and personal experience were important in the gathered information as they aided in gathering sufficient data for the study and set the record straight with regard to the claims on the migrants’ gender proportionality in Spain. The snowball technique was adopted to get respondents’ referrals of known and knowledgeable potential participants.

### 3.8 Sample Size

The sample size for this research comprised of twenty-three migrants: workers, the unemployed, traders, students, the self-employed, religious leaders old and newly arrived, drivers, and house wives of Nigerian origin between the ages of 18 to 60 years living in Madrid. I also interviewed the Consular Nigerian Embassy in Madrid, the Director of Karibu Association (a civil society

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<sup>82</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from " Case Study Research in Education."*, 61.

<sup>83</sup> Merriam, 61.

organization in Madrid that champions the cause of migrants in Spain), and the head of Karibu Women Training Center in Madrid.

### **3.9 Limitations of the Study**

During my empirical study, I met Nigerian migrants of differing statuses with varying migration experiences. Some were traumatized by harrowing experiences while on transit, some live in steady fear of deportation for lack of residence permit, some were still emotionally traumatized by loss and a lack of job, or for undisclosed reasons. Such unpleasant mindsets can cause stress to migrants' emotional behavior. A few targeted participants declined participation in the interview owing to their state of mind at the time. I however exercised ethical caveats to avoid emotionally triggering questions and also observed respondents' body language not to pressure them to say anything against their will. I was faced with a language barrier when trying to gather information at the office of Karibu Association, where Spanish was the only official language of communication. However, with the help of an interpreter, the challenge was easily surmounted. Time constraints equally posed a great challenge as it hindered me from reaching an expected depth of my field work to be able to pay a second visit to a couple of locations to carry out certain observations on those migrants. To overcome this, I recalled observation carried out during my first meeting with the affected participants for use in this research.

### **3.10 Ethical issues**

Keeping in mind ethical considerations, I ensured the protection and integrity of participants throughout the interview process by adopting pseudonyms so as to not reveal their real identities where and when necessary. Participants were constantly assured of the protection of their privacy in compliance with the use of anonymity and participants' welfare was prioritized to the extent of ethical and financial coverage.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter opens up discussion on my main focus, which centers on the livelihoods and place-making of the Nigerian migrants in Madrid. An overview of expected topics to be explored in this analysis therefore include: an overview of the Nigerian migrant community in Madrid; Karibu Association; the migrants' place-making and adopted strategies; social networking; migrant community associations; communal living and cultural practices; negotiation of livelihoods in the Spanish labor market amidst obstacles and opportunities. Other topics to be covered are: highlights and impacts of Spanish labor market regulations on Nigerian migrants; employers' attitudes towards Nigerian migrants; the migrants' working habits; the self-employed; daily social lifestyles and the community's adaptation to the host society.

#### **4.2. Overview of Nigerian Migrant Community in Madrid**

In Madrid, Nigerians tend to find means of networking and forging unity. With an official population figure of 8,472 in 2019, according to the Spanish National Statistic,<sup>84</sup> it can be said that a community of Nigerians is evidently present in Madrid. Though sparsely settled, the migrants<sup>85</sup> largely live in the Madrid neighborhoods of Alcorcón, Leganés, Torrejon de Ardoz, Fuenlabrada,

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<sup>84</sup> "Population by Nationality, Communities, Sex and Year."

<sup>85</sup> Migrants are of Benin, Igbo and Yoruba extractions alongside their counterparts drawn from other Nigerian ethnic groups.

Zarzaquemada, Móstoles, and Parla. All of these are sparsely located, modern settlements in the outskirts of the Madrid metropolis. Religious grounds, particularly Churches and ethnic community associations, are the core unifying factors and melting pots for the ethnically heterogeneous migrant population.

At the Redeem Christian Church of God located on the outskirts of Madrid, a Nigerian Christian community of diverse ethnic backgrounds and statuses exists to champion a common cause of unity. They perform their Christian religious obligations in the order of the Nigerian originated RCCG mode of worship. Isaac Shamam, a Madrid based Nigerian afro beat musician's description of the church as both a religious place and community center where spiritual issues, marriage, and business affairs are commonly deliberated by parishioners,<sup>86</sup> precisely captures my findings that the church brings the Nigerian migrants together for several reasons.

Meanwhile, a study carried out on Nigerians in Madrid and Malaga by Jill Ahrens indicates common livelihood activities amongst members of the Nigerian migrant community in Madrid, as elsewhere in Spain, that includes working in construction industries, as domestic cleaners, cooking at restaurants, and begging for alms or "selling a newspaper for homeless people" at the entrance to supermarkets, popularly known as "La Farola" or Streep Lamp in English.<sup>87</sup> Ahren's claims align with my research findings regarding the common occupations in which members of the group are more often employed in Madrid. Equally worth noting is the challenge of the language barrier which often leads to unemployment and lack of access to highly-paying jobs.<sup>88</sup> However, the same challenge is not the case with those who have surmounted the language barrier, those who have

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<sup>86</sup> "The Nigerian Church in the Industrial Outskirts of Madrid - <https://Madridnofrills.Com/Gospel-Nigerian-Church/>."

<sup>87</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 127.

<sup>88</sup> Ahrens, 121.

learned the local culture, are comfortable with the weather, and found a secure and child-friendly environment.<sup>89</sup>

### 4.3 The Migrants

Phyllis Asare estimates that throughout the world, millions of human beings are moving, engaged in menial jobs like harvesting, and also do sophisticated computer programming.<sup>90</sup> The eventual agglomeration in countless cities around the world of such mobile population certainly suggests a growing population of people living outside their places of origin. This assumption is validated in OECD's 2018 assessment report of the global migrants population which reveals that the migrant population in the European Union has exceeded just a mere doubling estimation from 1990 to 2017.<sup>91</sup> For the Nigerian migrants in search of a "greener pasture" in Europe, or wish to live in Spain, the record is simply suggestive of a growing arrival in Madrid within this same period.

Steve, one of my research interlocutors who arrived in Madrid in October 2019 as a hired soccer player, for example, noted that he flew into Spain in October of 2019 alongside several other Nigerians, even though most of them on arrival dissolved into different locations across the country. According to him:

Yes, because when I was coming into Spain for the first time, at the airport, I saw a lot of Nigerians, we were in the same flight. I saw a lot of Nigerians coming to Spain and I was happy. I was actually surprised, I thought there is a place that we are going to meet. When I landed, I just realized we all went different ways. I realized that a lot of Nigerians actually travel from Nigeria to Spain. (Steve, 18, Madrid).

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<sup>89</sup> Ahrens, 121.

<sup>90</sup> Asare, *Labour Migration in Ghana*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> "OECD Migration Report 2018.Pdf - Google Search," 2.

While Steve came to his already awaiting football appointment with a club in Madrid, it was not possible to ascertain the mission and stay of his co-travelers.

Since a lot of Nigerians adopt different methods and routes to enter Spain, it is most probable that some tend to arrive by airplane on a tourist visa with the motive of over staying their visa permits, as alluded to by Jill Ahren, citing the case of irregular migrants adopting similar strategies to enter Spain.<sup>92</sup> Although the question of what kinds of visas were used by my participants never arose in the course of my interview, Kemi, one of my interlocutors, narrated how she first visited Madrid as a tourist before returning to prepare for her longer stay. The kind of visa with which she reentered Spain the second time was, however, not mentioned. Nonetheless, Halimat and Precious, two other participants, who were sponsored for commercial sex work, had EU passports paid for by their sponsors, and so, never had the need for visa permits to access their destinations.

These strategies tend to work for the group of migrants taking advantage of the Spanish economy's heavy reliance on tourism.<sup>93</sup> This is far from saying that acquiring even the tourist visa to enter Spain is anything but easy because of the prevailing strict immigration policy. It is to be mentioned at this point that 19 out of my 23 respondents entered Europe by airplane, 16 on direct flights from Nigeria to Spain while one flew in from another part of Europe. Four others, comprising of two of the 19, crossed the Mediterranean Sea and entered Spain by train from other parts of Europe, just as two traveled by land and then crossed the Mediterranean Sea directly to arrive at their destination.

Anthony, who arrived in Madrid on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 through clandestine means and participated in my interview a few days after his arrival, equally corroborates a growing number of Nigerians in Madrid. Anthony, who headed for Madrid as his chosen destination from Italy,

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<sup>92</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 117.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

noted in his response to my interview questions on how he arrived at the decision after moving to Spain, having lived in Italy and France since 2016. He recounts further:

I left Nigeria in 2016. I traveled out of Nigeria by land. . . We spent 15 hours on top of the Mediterranean Sea. Then our boat started leaking because it was not a good boat, it was the boat of a robber, informed on the tarpaulin ‘Zodiac inflatable boat’. To God be the glory, we saw a ship on top of the Mediterranean Sea, that was how they rescued us. Later, they told us that we are welcome in Italy. That was how I discovered that I am even in Europe. After getting to Italy, that was when they told us that we are going to thumbprint us. I had my thumbprint taken in Italy, they packed us into a camp where I stayed for two plus years. They refused to give me documents. They gave me the first negative RSD, second negative, I re-appealed again with a lawyer and they said I should leave the country. That was how I left to France. I used the road. After I got to France, the same problem. I went back to Italy, they said I should leave the country, that my asylum has been rejected. I said okay. That was when I now moved to Spain here three days ago. I left Italy on the ninth of January and arrived, that was on the fourteenth of January. Anthony, 25, Madrid.

Anthony’s choice of Spain as a last resort in his endless quest for a residence permit in Europe is suggestive of how much easier it is for migrants without legal permits to live in Spain than in other parts of Europe. In addition, his arrival and plan to reside in Madrid has no doubt added to the existing population of Nigerians in the community.

It equally attests to how some Nigerian migrants find their way into Spain and have a preference for Madrid in the beginning and how some members of the group equally come in from other EU countries in validation of Ahren’s assertion that, “migrants also came to Southern Europe from other member states, mainly in search of residence papers.”<sup>94</sup> Even though Anthony entered

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

through irregular means, he had, on arrival, swung into action by initiating strategies to locate his fellow Nigerians. These individuals helped put him through the process to achieve his first round of permit stay in the country. Using his Italian temporal residency permit and guided by his friend, he planned to secure a room in an already rented apartment, while the main tenant in a written document notified Spanish authorities that Anthony will be living with him. Such a document is a non-asylum seeking three year stay permit, during which the migrant negotiates a longer residency permit. In so doing, he would be required to show proof of a working contract, obtain his country's passport, along with other required documents and a lawyer who litigates on his behalf to process his residency.

Anthony's confession at the time of this interview that he only had the Italian temporal residency issued to him at the camp and no passport is indicative of his belonging to the category of migrants who traveled across countries without any travel or identification documents. This, to a greater extent, has implications on his real identity. Yet, he negotiates modalities to identify procedures of regularizing his stay in Spain and to adapt to his new environment.

Like Anthony, five other participants equally took turns explaining their migration experiences in other parts of Europe before entering Spain and settling in Madrid. The first is Panam, who flew into Germany in 2002 on an invitation by his elder brother who was a resident there:

Well, I travelled to Germany. My elder brother who lives in Germany brought me there, and as I arrived in the course of fighting for a greener pasture, my passport expired. I was advised to go to Spain because the country can help people, give residency or make you legal. When I got to Spain, the challenges I had was the language problem and how to integrate. I met some Nigerians who told me that the first thing I had to do was to first seek asylum, because I was illegal in Spain. So, they showed me a place, I went there, and sought asylum. They gave me a piece of paper that authorized me to freely move around without problem. Panam, 39, Madrid.

Adebayo, who arrived by airplane to Holland as his initial European destination from Nigeria, subsequently relocated to Spain, explaining that:

In the actual sense, I knew a friend, in Holland that received me there. But by the time I got there the immigration law in Holland was very tough, they don't want to accept any immigrant, and they asked all the immigrants to leave their country, so I had to find my way to France. When I got to France, I was stranded. I didn't know what to do, I was moving along the streets, I didn't know what to do. I took a decision, and the decision I took, well, I learned that Spanish people love black people and migrants, so I looked at the people that they are accommodating. I decided to come to Spain because of this love. And when I came, I saw the love in them. Adebayo, 45, Madrid.

Charity, another Nigerian who traveled by land through Libya and afterwards crossed the Mediterranean Sea to access Italy as her initial destination before crossing to Spain in 2018, had this to say:

I came into Europe in 2016, so my first country in Europe was Italy before I went to Germany, after I came to Spain to meet my father. I graduated from the College of Education in Nigeria. When I graduated, my daddy wasn't sending me money, so I had to come to Europe. I thought there was a good life in Europe. That was why I came to Europe. Coming to Europe, things weren't the way I thought it would be, so I had to suffer a lot before I came to live with my daddy because he's my only hope. Charity, 25, Madrid.

On why her first choice were other parts of Europe while she already had her father living in Spain, Charity noted how she desired to be independent by living away from her religious, disciplinarian father to enjoy her youthful life and pursue her life ambitions all alone. This cherished lifestyle of hers was interrupted, however, by the untold hardship she was eventually plunged into in her previous European destinations. Charity's situation became aggravated when she was raped in

France on her way to Spain, resulting in an unwanted pregnancy. While she blamed her accidental motherhood status on the decision to come to Spain, Charity would remain in Spain for the foreseeable future in order to be supported by her parents in the upbringing of her baby.

Meanwhile, Francis, who had earlier on transited through Germany to enter Italy before finally arriving in Spain with his family, had a similar narrative of difficulty in securing a residency permit in previous locations. The case is not the same with Johnson, who moved from Portugal to Spain. According to him:

I did not come to Spain directly. I've traveled all over the world. A friend convinced me on a business trip here before I stopped here. ... .. At the long run, my anticipation never worked out. I decided to stop over here. I came from Portugal. I've travelled to many places. "Johnson, 59, Madrid."

As an international businessman, Johnson finally resolved to stay in Spain, following a friend's invitation in 1998 during which he met a group of business fellows there with whom he subsequently entered into partnership.

For all of the five interlocutors, Spain was rather a last resort in efforts to establish a foothold in Europe, rather than being considered as an important opportunity destination. Although different reasons were given, the five preferred trying their luck elsewhere before banking on the different and relatively more liberal Spain.

Meanwhile, Patrick, who has been residing in Madrid since 1992, was among the later arrivals of the first generation of Nigerian migrants that started living in Spain. According to him, Spain was his first country of arrival in Europe because he needed to join his siblings who had settled in Madrid in 1986. This disclosure by Patrick gives insight into how Nigerians have been living in Spain much earlier than has been documented by Hein de Haas and Richard Black et al.,<sup>95</sup> Apart

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<sup>95</sup> De Haas, "8 International Migration, National Development And The Role Of Governments," 2; RAJKOTIA, "RICHARD BLACK, SAVINA AMMASSARI, SHANNON MOUILLESSEUX," 9.

from being insignificant in figure, Nigerian migrants could be said to have started arriving about the same time Spain became more open to international migration. Madrid, being among the top locations in Spain, therefore, attracts more of the migrant population who are on the search for job opportunities in line with postulations of the dual/segmented labor market theory. Moreover, the city and its surrounding outskirts undeniably become a striking whirlpool for the same populations jostling for residential spaces to make their place in the process of adapting to the society, as upheld by theorists of place-making. Thus, the Madrid Autonomous Area is an attractive center for migrants, no doubt. This conforms to Louis Wirth's view of an ideal characteristic of modern cities as, "the initiating and controlling center of economic, political and cultural life that has drawn the most remote parts of the world into its orbit of woven diverse areas and activities into a cosmos."<sup>96</sup> Recall that Wirth inexorably affirmed in the place-making theory section above that migrants clustering in urban areas is a natural phenomenon produced by "social heterogeneity and group competition." Nigerian migrants' arrival has been in continuum over the years, despite the drop being recorded in the wake of the country's protracted economic predicament. This resulted in job scarcity with many remaining in a prolonged unstable residency situation. The language barrier and the uncompromising economic journey of the migrants have consequently put many members of the group on further migration to other parts of Europe and beyond, especially to English speaking countries.<sup>97</sup>

This onward migration practice suggests a non-static stock of the population estimate throughout the year. As indicated in the table below, low and high populations of migrants entering Madrid was a regular trend from 1998 to 2019.

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<sup>96</sup> Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," 2.

<sup>97</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 121.

## Nigerians Population by year and sex in Madrid from 1998 to 2019

Years	Male	Females	Both Males and Females	Percentage of Males over Total Entry	Percentage of Females over Total Entry
2019	5,029	3,443	8,472	59.4	40.6
2018	4,985	3,489	8,474	58.8	41.2
2017	5,106	3,536	8,642	59.1	40.9
2016	5,304	3,668	8,972	59.1	40.9
2015	5,415	3,731	9,146	59.2	40.8
2014	5,478	3,931	9,409	58.2	41.8
2013	5,520	3,942	9,462	58.3	41.7
2012	5,843	4,046	9,889	59.1	40.9
2011	6,126	4,093	10,219	59.9	40.1
2010	6,481	4,157	10,638	60.9	39.1
2009	6,343	4,012	10,355	61.3	38.7
2008	5,802	3,821	9,623	60.3	39.7
2007	5,194	3,560	8,754	59.3	40.7
2006	5,172	3,635	8,807	58.7	41.3
2005	4,586	3,193	7,779	59.0	41.0
2004	3,569	2,521	6,090	58.6	41.4

2003	3,348	2,221	5,569	60.1	39.9
2002	2,771	1,834	4,605	60.2	39.8
2001	2,074	1,273	3,347	62.0	38.0
2000	1,268	491	1,760	72.0	27.9
1999	429	202	632	67.9	32.0
1998	343	132	475	72.2	27.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,186</b>	<b>64,931</b>	<b>161,119</b>		

Source: ‘ ‘Author’s modification from Spanish National Statistics (INES)’ ’<sup>98</sup>

There is no denying the fact that the above statistics represent figures of the official register alone, and that many more who are in irregular statuses are most likely uncaptured in the data collection. Notwithstanding, the Spanish authorities also operate a policy accommodating migrants in irregular situations which allows those newly arriving to even get documentation with relevant authorities in designated centers across the country. Such initial documentation is intended to put the affected migrants in situations of short-term stay permits lasting for the first three months or three years during, which they then negotiate for regularization of longer stay permits. Since the registration enables the migrants’ free movement within the country before obtaining the short-term residency, they are also often disposed to avail themselves of the opportunity of early registration.

It is to be noted that the first short-stay permit, as it were, does not shield the migrant any more than the stipulated period of the first three months/years, after which justifications for further stay have to be given to Spanish authorities. Otherwise, the migrant(s) risks deportation. This means that Francis, who obtained the initial temporal stay permit on arrival in Spain in 2008, became

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<sup>98</sup> “Population by Nationality, Communities, Sex and Year.”

undocumented following the expiration of his permit. However, living in the latter situation until 2017, when he finally secured a longer stay permit, indicates staying in the country an excess of six years. All through those years up until 2017, he steadily encountered the government in order to justify the reason of his over staying in the country. According to him:

You know, these were the challenges I was facing here in Spain, and it was from time to time, from year to year I was passing through similar cases like this. If I can still remember, I think I have been to at least seven different stations where they will lock me up there, the next day they will release me. ... These were the challenges I was facing here, before 2017, I was lucky, . . . I got my document in 2017. Since then, I no longer face this embarrassment. Francis, 47, Madrid.

The initial documentation thus makes it easy for the Spanish authorities to track the migrants living in the country.

Worthy of note, obtaining a longer residency permit is often a tedious process with varying financial implications to the migrants. Agnes, who arrived in Madrid in the company of her husband in 2014, sheds light on the intricacies of settling down in Madrid:

I am from Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. I came to Spain by my husband. I came here through him. I have been here trying to obtain permission, which is a paper that has been taking a longer time than expected because of the things that are involved. In the process of waiting for it, I started working in order to raise enough money to get the paper and move on.

The idea of working to raise money to process the residency document as put forward by Agnes, means that stay permits have some financial implications on the migrants.

In a separate inquiry with another Nigerian during a follow-up WhatsApp chat a month after my return to Cairo, it was gathered that obtaining the residency through the back door costs as much as 2,000 to 3,000 Euros, excluding the contract fee. This amount is in sharp contrast to findings

from an online visa, residency and Spanish nationality guide which puts official application fee at 21.02 Euros.<sup>99</sup> The back door approach indicated above, no doubt, implies an existing underhand deal between migrants cutting corners in their quest for the documents and those turning such demands into a business opportunity to charge high fees for an expedited process.

Agnes, who found the unofficial fee outrageous and unaffordable, was at the time of my post-field work online interaction seeking a cheaper means of achieving her residency. Until this hurdle is surmounted, she will continue to do the restaurant job commonly referred to as “African or black job” for sustenance, despite her status as a university graduate. The stated rigorous process equally involves some levels of legal back and forth. This requires the migrants’ reliance on free services provided by lawyers, especially from those at Karibu, an African association in Madrid.

## **Karibu Association**

Founded in 1987, the Karibu Association is a famous Madrid-based non-governmental organization (NGO) with branches spread throughout other parts of Spain. They are devoted entirely to providing humanitarian support to Sub-Saharan African migrants and refugees arriving to Spain. Currently headed by Nicole Ndongala, the humanitarian organization’s head office in Madrid, according to its 2018 annual Activity Report, caters to approximately 51,343 registered Sub-Sahara African migrants with Nigeria representing 10 percent of total population. It provides services such as: Spanish classes for women; accommodation for those who are highly vulnerable; accommodation for minors; accommodation for those who don’t have the health cards, or even those who have the health cards but don’t have money to buy their drugs. It equally provides: sanitary products to female migrants; hostel accommodation for homeless people, pregnant people, and persons with disabilities; and legal services for those who have documentation challenges.

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<sup>99</sup> “A Full Guide on Residency and Nationality Options in Spain.”

Other services include: assisting migrants and asylum seekers in detention centers; family reunification in Spain; and a skills training center.

The association equally supports those migrants and refugees with cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and organizes non-traditional workshops for the most vulnerable migrants. They assist migrants who have acquired certain skills or levels of education to further develop their skills and knowledge or pursue higher education.

On a more specific note, Ndongala holds a personal opinion on the identity and image of Nigerian migrants in Madrid society as follows:

A high percentage of Nigerians integrate well in Spain. The major barrier is the learning of the language. A large segment of Nigerian female migrants is taken advantage of by the mafias. They deceive them from their own country, and when they come here, they are introduced to or join prostitution. Karibu helps them to move out of prostitution. ... I have seen Nigerians who are really successful people here, who have really learnt the language and are well-established. I also have those who couldn't handle language learning and would go back. Nicole Ndongala, Madrid.

She added that the group of Nigerian migrants participating in the services provided by Karibu Association are actually those interested in learning the Spanish language with the intention of integrating fully into society. While Karibu does not have any set standards of measuring the migrants' actual level of education, the director affirmed that a good number of them lack basic educational qualifications, just as some do possess qualifications ranging from low to higher knowledge acquisition.

While Ndongala's assessment of Nigerians migrants might not be entirely accurate, it no doubt represents the various categories of the migrants. As stated in her narration, the migrants have amongst them: the serious minded, successful, failed but still living in the country, as well as those

who have returned for reasons of failure and inability to cope with challenges of the European society.

Nigerian migrants who arrive in Madrid in pursuit of a means of livelihood opportunities in the Spanish labor market, therefore, act in line with the theorists of dual or segmented labor market. They equally require residency permits, accommodation and other social support in the postulation of the place-making theory to carry on with their migration objective in their new society.

#### **4.4 Migrants' Place-making and Adopted Strategies**

##### **Place-making**

From a migration perspective, place-making has a multifaceted conceptualization, encompassing shelter, social-cultural life, and livelihoods of the migrant(s). The concept of shelter in the first instance simply reemphasizes the increasing importance of shelter to migrants in destination societies, as it is generally for all humans. In light of this, Edward S. Casey states that, "making places out of spaces is now seen as a fundamental priority of human existence."<sup>100</sup> Thus, this research reveals how Nigerian migrants in Madrid, from the time of arrival to the actual time of settling down, prioritize place-making as part of their daily lifestyles.

When the migrants enter Spain and head for Madrid, their chosen destination, they are confronted with complications of having to simultaneously secure accommodation and the preliminary temporal stay permit. He or she is then at this point of a crossroads where they often have to pursue both, simultaneously. Grappling with securing a job and feeding themselves also poses a great challenge for the migrants, especially coming without prior knowledge of the Spanish language to facilitate communication. Only in very rare cases are migrants able to attain a comfortable place of settlement prior to securing a job. Otherwise, affected migrant(s) remain entangled in a web and nightmare of not having a place to return at the end of each day. Faced with these conundrums and

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<sup>100</sup> Byrne and Goodall, "Placemaking and Transnationalism," 3.

uncertainties constantly haunting their minds, the migrants plunge into that moment of significant psychological distress as described by Elisabeth Mavroudi and Caroline Nagel in their place-making postulations.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, tapping into their community networks, Nigerian migrants are soon ushered into moments of relief, being guided by their fellow Nigerians on adaptive strategies for their new home. In a contrary scenario to my research findings, some experiences of migrants are plagued by feelings of loneliness as explained by Peter Speek.<sup>102</sup>

Samson, a Nigerian who arrived in Spain in 2006 via the Mediterranean Sea without any prior contact in Spain, relied on the connection of his twin brother back in Nigeria to find an initial place of settlement. Wandering through the streets of Algeciras, a Spanish coastal city, for a couple of days following his arrival, he narrated his ordeal:

I don't know anybody in Spain. It was when I arrived in Algeciras that I called my twin brother in Nigeria informing him I have entered Spain. He was happy. He said where are you going from there? And I said I don't know. ... I was in Algeciras for five days. During those five days, we were just sleeping in bus and train stations. ... So my twin brother then called one of his friends, his friend lived in Madrid and so my brother then made the connection from Nigeria and told his friend that my twin brother is in Algeciras and is on the street he doesn't know where to go, please, I will give him your number.

In Madrid, the migrants on arrival are first engaged in the mental exercise of place-making, exerting every effort possible to achieve at least a temporal place of settlement. This is indeed a moment of psychological and emotional turmoil as their minds are obsessed with where to lay down their heads to prepare for the actual job search. And so, the practice of place-making starts

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<sup>101</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 206.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

with initial accommodations provided by friends, relations, and fellow villagers.<sup>103</sup> On rare cases it could include sleeping in public spaces. However, those who have the means are more likely to rent their own apartments as soon as they enter their desired location. Denis Byrne and Heather Goodall attach more meaning to place-making than a mere recast of physical environment to encompassing social and emotional reconstructive dimensionalities, including its impacts on migrants.<sup>104</sup> For further elaboration, the duo contend that migrants often face temporal displacement given the obvious reality of their inability to own places of their own on arrival. Noting the difficulties associated with the immediate adaptation of existing “place-scape” to suit their instant accommodation needs, it is important to remember that such possibilities often abound in the long-run.<sup>105</sup>

It is important to state that the shelter aspect of place-making is a necessary springboard for newly arriving migrants who are in need of a “spatial foothold” to commence the phase of adaptation into their host societies.<sup>106</sup> Speaking from a personal experience, Adebayo, who entered Spain by train from Holland, narrated his major initial challenges:

My initial challenges were the language barrier and accommodation. For the language barrier, it was difficult for me to express myself, and when you cannot express yourself, then how can you tell people your problems? So, I had to look for people that spoke English, people that came from my country, not my country *per se*, even a Spanish brother that speaks English was fine. I decided to walk directly to the police, I stopped them along the road and I told them my problem. ... So, when we got to the Red Cross, they gave me papers that I should go and photograph.

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<sup>103</sup> Byrne and Goodall, “Placemaking and Transnationalism,” 3.

<sup>104</sup> Byrne and Goodall, 2–4.

<sup>105</sup> Byrne and Goodall, 3.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

When I took the photograph, they gave me documents that can permit me to be walking around without hindrances.

As expected, the language barrier, hunger, accommodation and absence of residency permits are initial hurdles for first timers like Adebayo. Entering a foreign land with a different language and without prior contact persons is difficult for anyone. After meandering through the streets of Madrid within the early days of arrival, and left without any other options, Adebayo summoned his courage to confront the Spanish police to whom he explained his frustrations. Migrants' preference for specific residential locations in the community equally speaks to how they envision their place-making from the onset. 17 out of 23 of my interlocutors already had contact persons whom they met on arrival in Madrid, while six preferred Madrid for their respective reasons, mainly it being the nation's capital and main source of jobs. Ten already had contact persons from prior connections, four accompanied or reunified with spouses in Madrid, two relocated to Madrid from other parts of Spain as a better study and job destination, four arrived on a family member's invitation, two arrived without any known prior contact person, and one had a prior job appointment in Madrid.

As stated earlier, looking for accommodation is a place-making practice for migrants which oftentimes begins before arrival and culminates in the renting of personal apartments as they gain a foothold in their new home. While some of the migrants were offered temporal accommodations pending their ability to save enough money to secure privately owned apartments, others would have to shift accommodation two or more times before renting their own houses. As disclosed from female interlocutors who are now hosted by friends and distant relations, they reminisced how they were charged by their sponsors upwards of a 500 Euros a month before being able to secure any employment. Such money was starkly out of reach. One of the two migrants who were sponsored in Madrid for sex work found the bill outrageous and increasingly engaged in frequent domestic squabbles with her sponsor. Being uncomfortable with the situation, she had this to say of her adapted strategies:

When I was living with my aunt, I was even paying for the room I was living in. and I had to pay for food and utilities on top of the rent. Let me just say everything was like 500 Euros every month. And I didn't have work where would I get such money from. At some point, I didn't like going home because I am the kind of person that hates a quarrel. And she was talking too much, she was doing so constantly. At one point I was scared of going home, because she will talk and talk about the money owed and sometimes she would even call my step mum. Halimat, 25, Madrid.

Despite being her aunt, Halimat's hostess on whose invitation she came to Madrid had her arrival redefined by accommodating her from a pure business level at the expense of a pre-existing relationship. This brings to the forefront the new reality that often greets some of the migrants on their arrival in Spain. On the kind of job she was engaged in to earn a living, Halimat again had this to say:

I am not going to lie, I know most people won't say these things, most of our girls that come here, you already know they engage in prostitution. So that's the kind of work they force you into doing when they bring you here, even if you don't want to.

Thus, Halimat relied on earnings from sex work to both pay her aunt, now her madam, who sponsored her travel to Spain and also paid her monthly accommodation bills. Faced with such a conundrum in a new environment with the difficulty to meet her financial obligations, Halimat eventually resolved to stay away from the home after the night's outing. She would rather remain in the train all-day-long and return home at the end of day. She maintained this lifestyle until she met the man she now lives with, the father of her two kids.

Kemi, another Nigerian, was convinced by a fellow female Nigerian migrant she met during her first visit to Spain in 2017 that life and job opportunities were easy to come by in the country. Being on a fact finding mission about better livelihood opportunities there, the potential migrant

eventually heeded her friend's assurance of supporting her in securing a job upon relocation from Nigeria to Madrid. However, on arrival, she encountered similar challenges of paying rent. Being unable to cope, she was prompted to seek support from the Karibu Association where she was offered free accommodation, the place she occupied at the time of the interview.

In the meantime, the cost of renting an apartment in Madrid varies from one location to another. Accommodation in the Madrid central area, for instance, is more expensive compared to what one can obtain in the suburbs. Even so, rent rates are charged according to the size of a given apartment. Where a one-bedroom flat in Villa de Villecs costs 650 Euros, the same can cost between 250 to 300 Euros in the neighborhoods of Parla, Leganes, or Mostoles. In the same vein, two and three bedroom apartments can range from upwards of 500-700 to 900-1,000 Euros depending on location.

In Spain, it is a common practice amongst tenants to rent parts of their apartments as a way of mitigating the financial burden on themselves. Migrants are also not left out of this economic lifestyle and often rent or share apartments with fellow migrants. Once the migrant is financially capable to rent an apartment, he or she does not hesitate to undertake responsibilities. However, on assumption of their status, they begin to share the flat with fellow migrants. Thus, it is implied that accommodation as a place-making practice amongst Nigerian immigrants entails cohabitation, even though such a situation means financial responsibility from all parties involved, as explained by my interlocutors. At another level, some of the female immigrants tend to have their accommodation burdens shouldered by men they come in contact with during the course of their living in the country, especially in situations where such relationships result in families. Precious, the second of the two female migrants sponsored to Madrid for commercial sex work, as mentioned earlier, explained that, "Economically, the father of my daughter normally helps me with the house rent, with food and stuff like that." Precious, 28, Madrid.

Nigerian migrants also have a high preference to live in close proximity to the Madrid metropolis. This made some of them turn down offers of accommodation given by some humanitarian

organizations, like the Red Cross Society. All my participants admitted preference to city dwellings as being most suitable to their desired lifestyles. Adebayo again has this to say:

I did take asylum. Like I told you before, I went to the police, they took me to a hotel. ... I stayed there for two weeks and they paid. After the two weeks, they want to send you to a village, which am not interested in. I prefer to live in the city.

Living in the city is, for the migrant, living next to employment and other livelihood and social opportunities. As far as cost of living is concerned, it is cheaper in the local areas. However, residing in such locations takes migrants further away from opportunities for which they initially set out. Even though they may not live in the city center, suburban neighborhoods have found common acceptance of the migrants. Against all odds, migrants would prefer hanging around city vicinities while waiting for employment opportunities.

This mindset explains Adebayo's resolve to sleep in a public space within the city, having entered the country without any known person to him. He explains further:

I don't have documents and I don't know anybody, nobody is ready to accommodate me unless I am ready to sacrifice myself. How do I sacrifice myself? To be ready to surrender myself to somebody. I am not ready to get married because there are some women, they are ready to accommodate you, just to destroy your life and I am not ready for this. ... I didn't take shelter anywhere, I slept outside like I told you. Up until today, people are still sleeping in that particular place. ... The place is dangerous because different kinds of people use to come there. So, what we did is that we decided to tear cartons, put them on the floor and sleep on them. Nothing affected us, we were okay. That's how I was able to accommodate myself for three months.

As can be deduced from Adebayo's narration, his gender status as a male encouraged him to sleep freely on the street without fear of being raped. It also points to how a group of women in Madrid sexually entice new arrivals to cohabit with them.

The desire among Nigerian migrants to live in Madrid and its periphery substantiates claims put forward by scholars of place-making theory, like Elisabeth Mavroudi and Caroline Nagel. As the authors have clearly argued, an increasing population of migrants within the neighborhoods of city-centers has become quite a common phenomenon.<sup>107</sup> Findings by this research equally corroborate scholars' claims of the practice of migrants in their efforts to carve out their own unique identity and place of living while away from their place of origin. Regardless of their year of arrival or age, my participants have shown the practice of carving out their own place of settlement in close proximity to Madrid central area is important to all.

Aside from those supported by prior contact persons and those daring the risk of arriving without prior contacts, Nigerian churches are also notably involved in helping new members secure accommodation. This kind of support is evident in the testimonies of Steve and Kemi. While Steve already had accommodation provided by his employers, he was taken in by Samson, an RCCG member, upon announcing his arrival to the country during his first Sunday service at the church. Steve has since found home to be more with his host than he would have in his official residence. He admitted the role played by the church in keeping him in homely company.

Heeding her Fountain of Praise Church pastor's advice, Kemi visited Karibu Association from where she was provided with a place to live. My personal experience with Pastor Kingsley at the Redeem Christian Church of God in Leganes also brought clarity to the picture of how Nigerian churches exercise their hospitality towards fellow strangers, particularly of Nigerian origin. In the course of our interaction, Kingsley inquired to know the location of my residence and what the cost was. He noted how the church would have been able to help provide me with a less expensive accommodation for my stay if only they had an early notification of my arrival.

This gesture is not entirely unconnected to the common practice among Nigerian Pentecostal Churches' way of retaining membership. At the same time, it undeniably serves a great deal of

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<sup>107</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 212–13.

hope for newly arriving migrants, who at the time of entry can hardly be acquainted with the necessities of adapting to their new environment.

Above all, it is worthy to note that different levels of place-making strategies are often adopted by the migrants depending on the situation on the ground. As different livelihood challenges evolve, so do the migrants' strategies. They adjust where and when necessary. In light of this, shelter supporting Nigerians who adopt group accommodation as a rent strategy to cut cost has become more prevalent. In this case, a group of five, six, seven or eight, depending on those in need, come together to rent a single flat. Even though such a practice is rarely preferred by Spanish landlords, the migrants often seem to take advantage of some home owners' tolerance to cohabitate. Nonetheless, upon securing a job or any steady means of livelihoods, the migrants are hardly hesitant to get their own apartment for reasons of privacy and comfort, as noted earlier.

## **Social networking**

For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of social networking will be narrowed down to networking and interactions amongst Nigerian migrants through community associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the church. As noted earlier, place-making extends beyond issues of accommodation to other ramifications of life in a host environment. The migrants' place-making strategies, therefore, dovetail into social networking. Attaching a great deal of importance to the role social networks can play in their journey to Spain, migrants adopt strategies, either designed by themselves, or established for them by other bodies to ease their adaptation into Spanish society. Benjamin Etsold claims that social networks plays a key role in migrants' struggle to secure livelihood opportunities, as much as it is also supportive to their families.<sup>108</sup> Etsold's idealized role of social networks, therefore, denotes an emergence of a self-help method, or, at best, an improvised adaptation approach. Social networking strategies adopted

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<sup>108</sup> Etsold, "Mobility, Space and Livelihood Trajectories," 53.

by Nigerian migrants in Madrid can be studied in the context of the roles played by the Nigerian and/or the African Church, cultural and community associations, and social media platforms.

## **The Nigerian or African Church**

Nigerian or African originated churches act in double capacities as both a social network support provider and a unifying factor for the people. These occupied spaces help the migrants forge ahead with their objectives in Spain. In addition to the place-making guidance discussed in the preceding section, a majority of my interlocutors see the church as a connection and interaction center through which the convergence of Nigerians of diverse ethnic identities flourishes. Drawing from the picture presented by the Redeem Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Madrid by Isaac Shamam, the Nigerian Church is a place not restricted to worship activities alone, but, “a community center that hosts celebrations, reunions and talks about anything from love and sex to business and finance, where both the wedding ceremony *and* reception take place.”<sup>109</sup> Occupying such a strategic position as my investigation discovered, the church, on the one hand, indirectly benefits in the retention of migrants whose stabilization is supported. On the other hand, beneficiaries of the church’s gesture also see the church as part of their success stories, and so, are more likely to reciprocate by staying true to their spiritual and financial obligations to it. This practice culminates in the formation of a strong family bond.

## **Migrant community associations**

Migrant community, or home town associations, have become a familiar phenomenon across cities throughout the world. A case in point is the Ghanaian, Indian and Serbian associations documented by Simona Vezzoli and Thomas Lacroix’s account on the intent and characteristics of such

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<sup>109</sup> “The Nigerian Church in the Industrial Outskirts of Madrid - <https://Madridnofrills.Com/Gospel-Nigerian-Church/>.”\*

associations.<sup>110</sup> As this account has aptly depicted, migrant community associations are formed for three basic reasons, namely: to mediate between communities and receiving societies to smooth migrant members' process of stabilization, preservation of "immigrant identity" and, of late, their transnational role as a bridge between migrant communities and their origin.<sup>111</sup> The Nigerian community associations in Madrid are examined in light of the first two functions. I wanted to understand what conceptual convictions drive the Nigerian associations in their traditional roles of easing members' settlement and identity preservation in Madrid. In the course of my field work, several Nigerian ethnic, state interest groups, and community associations were mentioned to be operational in Madrid, particularly for the more populated ethnic groups.

Some of these associations are: The Nigerian Cultural Association, the umbrella cultural organization for all Nigerians in Madrid, Oduduwa Community Association, an umbrella organization for the Yoruba ethnic group, and the Ohaneze Ndigbo umbrella organization for all indigenous Igbo people. Stemming from these are other state, ethnic and home town groups, some of which are: The Edo Community Association for the indigenous of Edo State from South-Western Nigeria, the Imos in Diaspora, an off shoot of the Imo Progressive Union, the Abian meeting for Abia State citizens of South-Eastern Nigeria, the Anambra Meeting also of South-Eastern Nigeria, the Etsako meeting for the Etsaka people of Edo State, as well as interest groups like the "Top twelve", to mention just a few. I adopted the views of both members and non-members who were my interview participants following failed attempts to speak with leaders of the Nigerian Cultural Association, chairmen of other umbrella organizations and heads of other mentioned groups. This adopted strategy was also necessitated by other unsuccessful efforts to visit their gatherings, owing to their monthly meeting schedules that were at a difference with my research duration. However, the views of these participants may not represent the exact positions of the respective associations. Nonetheless, as members and Nigerians, their divergent opinions

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<sup>110</sup> Vezzoli and Lacroix, "Building Bonds for Migration and Development. Diaspora Engagement Policies of Ghana, India and Serbia," 12.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

were assessed as giving valid insights into the activities of the various Nigerian associations. These opinions also aided an examination of the role played by the church. In order to capture the divergent views of Nigerian migrants in Madrid, my interlocutors' responses are thus represented in the following order of estimations:

Eight out of my 23 respondents merely recognized the existence of community associations; six, recognized the presence and the commendable role they play; one respondent admitted the role of Madrid experts, a mummy-baby group, social media platforms, and the church to aid her stabilization; two neither recognized their existence nor saw the need to join. An additional four did not know such associations existed, while two leaned entirely on the Church for their stabilization and did not have recourse to seek support from community associations. Meanwhile, an overall 18 out of 23 mentioned the role of the Church, in addition to other means utilized for their stabilization. Using the church as a social network, Agnes again, said:

Through the African Church that is through the Pentecostal Church we get information. There is no Kogi Association, but there is a Nigerian association, but I am not yet a member. Yes, I have plans to join because you have to belong to one association.

While she acknowledged the support of her church to help her stabilize, Agnes's plans to join the Nigerian cultural association some six years after entering Spain explains her priority, first and foremost with the church. Joining the association, on the one hand, means to me a sense of patronage for the sake of belongingness. But it could be, on the other hand, a helpful guide in securing residency or at least searching for more useful information to get a better job, especially considering graduate qualification status.

For someone like Patrick, joining any community association after spending close to 28 years in the country only amounts to dissipation of energy. According to him:

I have not joined them, and I don't know if I will join them. But, they are not doing what they are supposed to do. As a Nigerian association, they are supposed to be

helping people that newly arrive in the country, but they are not doing that. Even the police report that what are doing, they are collecting money from people. I don't know what they are doing. Like I said, I will be leaving the country by the grace of God in the next three years, so what am I going to join the association for?

In a related view, Panam said:

Well, I got to know about Nigerian associations and I've been privileged to attend one or two of their meetings. But is not something that elevates your status in the country. We were here to identify ourselves as Nigerians, but, otherwise, it is of no value. Because when you talk about association, the idea should be how to help people who are not yet able to stand on their feet. So I didn't take it seriously because I am a man who doesn't involve himself in things that don't work. The community associations are just to recognize where you are from in Nigeria and that's all.

The two latter views imply the limited services and narrow focus of these associations, explaining the respondents' apathy for such associations. In light of such assessments, the Nigerian cultural or community associations restrict the essence of its existence to frivolities. They are seen by many as having gone off target. Perhaps they started without a definitive objective, like providing networking assistance in order to ease members' stabilization on arrival, mediating between its community and Spanish society, or declaring the importance of preserving migrant identity, as alluded to by Vezzoli and Lacroix.<sup>112</sup>

On the contrary, Uche, the President of Imos in Diaspora Madrid, is among the Nigerians with a strong conviction that the associations offer opportunities for migrants' interaction. He said:

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Here, there is a Nigerian community, and many Nigerians attend the meetings. There are various ethnic meetings too. ... Through those meetings, a channel for us to interact is achieved. Uche, 51, Madrid.

James also said:

Yes, the associations are important because the meeting help us to meet and know each other. We help each other, like if someone dies, we can help to do a wake to help the person raise money for the family, to help with the burial. Then, if anybody marries, we also help the person. These are the benefits. James 45, Madrid.

While the above could be reflective of community or home town associations which provide alternative social networking amongst those migrants in Madrid, a section of my interlocutors equally aired their views on the role played by their various churches to ease their adaptation to Spanish society and make them feel at home. In this context, Steve again acknowledged that his church has been of immense support to him since he joined the worshipping community. According to him, for the mere reason of being a Nigerian, members of the church have always carried him along in the scheme of both spiritual and other activities. He noted how members are often willing to help those who newly arrive. Providing those without jobs useful information about opportunities, as well as helping those already with jobs to stabilize are just two functions of the church.

With or without ideal social networking platforms, Nigerian migrants that have entered Spain and reside in Madrid have commonly identified networking strategies. More often than not, the migrants' settlement takes almost identical patterns. They often take advantage of either a close relation in the form of siblings, friends, or someone known to their siblings and/or uncles already settled in the country. Others without such links enter the country with the hope of finding someone to support or guide them before linking up with the church from where they gradually adapt to their new terrain.

To highlight, the social networking aspect of place-making practices amongst Nigerian migrants in Madrid apparently has points of convergence and divergence with what was obtained amongst the migrant population in East London and Birmingham, studied by Susanne Wessendorf. While interactions within the neighborhoods of Wessendorf's study group was used to determine the migrants' place-making and feeling of belongingness,<sup>113</sup> the Nigerian group of migrants adopt variously suitable strategies to stabilize in their new society. In addition, Nigerians, unlike their Birmingham and East London counterparts, utilize personal contacts and the Christian community to achieve stabilization and feel a sense of belonging in their new environment. Those connections equally serve the purpose of social networking through which the migrants initiate and perfect their place-making. This is in contrast to those who rather distance and/or mix with entirely strange or diverse populations in migrant neighborhoods.

#### **4.5 The Migrants' Communal Lifestyles and Cultural Practices.**

Presenting the African's long cherished culture of communal living, Chimurenga notes how the real sense of communal life is embedded in members' expression of their traditional indebtedness to "all kinds of foreigners". Peoplehood—not nationhood—includes not only the living, but also the dead, the unborn, humans and non-humans.<sup>114</sup> Central to Chimurenga's message in the above excerpt is that people's unbounded culture and tradition speak to a typical African society. In the same way, Africans, Nigerians included, are renowned for their unique cultural practices both at national and transnational levels. Cultural habits of people carried along through places of transit are often reintroduced in foreign lands, especially by way of improvisation and adaptation. Aligning my view with Zehmisch Philipp, it is worth mentioning here that social and cultural practices equally constitute essential components of migrants' place-making.<sup>115</sup> Hence, Francis Nyiamjo affirms that, "People, far from traveling in disembodied ways as isolated individuals,

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<sup>113</sup> Wessendorf, "Migrant Belonging, Social Location and the Neighbourhood," 133–34.

<sup>114</sup> "African Imagination of a Borderless World | The Chimurenga Chronic - Part 2," 8.

<sup>115</sup> Zehmisch, "Between Mini-India and Sonar Bangla," 63–64.

often and mostly travel with their cultural values and ways of life, and are very eager to re-enact, reactivate or reignite these values in host communities, however hostile.”<sup>116</sup> Nigerian groups of migrants have, therefore, sought ways to reactivate and improvise, especially with their cherished food and communal cultural values carried to Madrid. By doing so, they have, to an extent, equally succeeded in reconfiguring their present environment.

This practice speaks volumes amongst most of the migrants I interacted with in the course of this research. Despite their dislocation from home and the geographical spatial design of Madrid; its urbanized nature and physical environmental, which is undoubtedly quite discrete and not the archetypal of an African community setting, Nigerians still live with their cultural values. The migrants’ values being reintroduced in a new terrain has notably only taken on a somewhat modified pattern. Communal lifestyle, for example, has assumed more of an inward or domesticated practice or at best as religious and/or cultural fora. Habituated cultural heritage such as food, social gathering amongst friends, and dress pattern are all being modified amongst the migrants in Madrid. This assertion further implies that the best experience of Nigerian culture is in the people’s homes. Not even skin color is any more a reliable way for distinguishing Nigerians from among other colored populations filing the streets, metro, and rail stations in Madrid. I and my research guide maintained an all-time trial and error manipulation process to meet a Nigerian. The winter dress necessitated by the finger and ear numbing cold complicated matters the more for us.

However, at the homes of some of my participants, an atmosphere of the culture of hospitality and food were practicably observed. At the Leganes outskirts, for instance, Steve hosted me in his apartment of his Madrid foster family during my interview with him. Here, his guardians hospitably ensured I was accorded every needed support for a comfortable stay. During my second visit to the same house, he was also relaxing with the family after the Sunday service. Steve explains further:

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<sup>116</sup> Nyamnjoh, “Fiction and Reality of Mobility in Africa,” 58.

Like most times, some people do look at me differently, like when I am at the mall, or train stations and so on. They might be people from Spain or other places, I don't really know. But they just look at me differently. ... I haven't met fellow Nigerians like me. I realized that they are mostly from other countries. So it is only on Sundays, and with the family that are hosting me, where we are now, that I feel like myself. Sometimes, we go out and I am able to meet with other Nigerians in the Church.

Steve's recurring disappointment from speaking to colored people mistaken for Nigerians attests to my stated experience of attempting to distinguish Nigerians from the crowd by their color. His intimate relationship with his Spanish family, with whom he often goes out to meet other Nigerians, equally attests to an aspect of the improvised communal lifestyle in the foreign land.

While at Adebayo's house, he told us of how he had ingredients to prepare *fufu*, a favorite Nigerian traditional meal processed from yam flour, for us. Back in Nigeria, pounded yam is prepared from fresh yam boiled and as the name implies pounded and made ready for consumption. With the absence of that, the processed yam flour is improvised. This indicates how the migrants have discovered how to reintroduced their home way of life in their new environment so as to avoid unnecessary nostalgia.

Again, visiting the only African restaurant in Madrid where I was referred to by some of my participants beforehand to find Nigerian meals, the restaurant was indeed a point of reference for Nigerians and other Africans needing to quench their hunger for their homeland originated food. This is for those, unlike those in Adebayo's category, who can afford to prepare it for themselves at home. African restaurant also serve such needs to the Nigerian Embassy, as they call in to book for specific delicacies to be delivered on agreement. I also took my turn to be served before commencing my interviews in earnest. The African Restaurant in Mostoles Madrid has been operational since 2016.

With about 45 to 50 adults with membership, the Redeem Christian Church of God in Leganes is unmistakably a unique center to have a first-hand experience of African musical renditions. The dexterity of the African talking drum players, its well-blended rhythm with other instrumentation, and the melodious praise and worship section of Sunday services sustains a crescendo of musical atmosphere. Here, the choir treats worshipers to an extended moment of song renditions in Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, English and other Nigerian languages accorded with congregational dance steps. It is not unusual at such moments to feel a belonging to the traditional Nigerian community while the praise and worship section lasted. Even though the church is open to people from other nationalities, which are often in limited numbers, the Nigerian tradition is constantly invoked. Such sustained practice brings to the forefront how migrants have successfully reintroduced their musical tradition in Madrid. Pastor Kinsley Alonge, who has been in charge of affairs of the church since 2002, explains the role of the church to both old and new members of the assembly: Feeding them with the word of God; guiding them on how and where their accommodation and documentation problems can be addressed through social work institutions, as well as shelter opportunities, and providing available accommodation within the church facilities. Adding that such supports take beneficiaries through their first three years of arrival, at the end of which they qualify to solicit for residency permits. They are also supported by fervent prayers, Alonge concluded.

Although, Adebayo never sought accommodation from the church, he spoke to me of how the church regularly contributes money to support newly arriving migrants. According to him, this practice, comprised part of the church's adopted measures to ease migrants' initial challenges on arrival in Madrid, adds to how the church contributes to his stabilization. Samson and Adebayo hold a common view on the important role played by RCCG Leganes to members' stability and growth.

The reintroduction and preservation of these migrants' cherished cultural values through the objects and ideas carried along to Madrid, as described in this section, has undoubtedly redefined and transformed their occupied spaces. This cultural place-making strategy is also in validation of

Argun Appadurai's assertion.<sup>117</sup> Accordingly, the group through a sustained bond of unity, constantly make their places and utilize trans-local relations, recasting fluid landscapes that are both real and imagined.

#### **4.6 Migrants Negotiating Livelihood Opportunities amidst Obstacles in the Spanish Labor Market**

The OECD Migration Report for G20 areas reflecting December 2007 and November 2018 indicates that Spain, like its EU counterparts, recorded a significantly low labor market integration for migrants and refugees compared to the native population.<sup>118</sup> This report is implicated in the fact that the year 2007, being the eve of the global financial crunch, and 2018, another year of recovering from crises, are arguably detached from reasons of the unemployment challenges brought about by the years of economic meltdown. For this reason, the report can serve the purpose as a useful tool for measuring the level of labour market opportunities for the migrant population.

On a more specific level, the Nigerian migrants who are by no means an exception, have and are still having a handful of difficulties entering the Spanish labor market. As indicated in the Karibu Association database on sub-Saharan African migrants registered with them, Nigerian migrants, like their African counterparts, grapple with labor and economic challenges in Spain. This disclosure was further corroborated by the Nigerian Embassy in Spain. Accordingly, it is on record that the group commonly experiences difficulty in securing job opportunities. Geoffrey Chima Ph.D., the Consular of the Nigerian Embassy, while responding to interview questions, affirmed that persistent economic stagnation of the Spanish economy has altogether complicated the means of securing job opportunities for Nigerians. Notwithstanding the predicament, the migrants hardly

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<sup>117</sup> Etzold, "Mobility, Space and Livelihood Trajectories," 44.

<sup>118</sup> "OECD Migration Report 2018.Pdf - Google Search," 13.

back down or resign to their fate in the face of the daunting challenges. Patrick, narrating his ordeal in Madrid revealed:

My belief was that when I come here, everything will be free for me. But when I came, things were not the way I expected. You have to work hard to get what you want. You have to work, if you don't work, you can't eat. You need to work in construction. You know these people; the work they give us Blacks is harder than the work they do. We have no academic courses, no certificates, we don't have the qualifications to that extent. They give us the hard work by carrying concrete or other heavy things.

The low-skill and low educational qualification of Patrick, as put forward in the dual or segmented labour-market theory, accounts largely for the dirty and demeaning jobs he's always offered. With his status as a low-skilled migrant, Patrick belongs to the secondary sector of the Spanish labor market, deprived of job security and often vulnerable to being fired at the slightest opportunity. His predicament explains the fate of migrant workers in line with presumptions in the theory of dual or segmented labour-market. Yet, since his mission to Madrid is that of raising money for himself and his family, regardless of his qualifications, he would rather work anywhere, regardless of the difficulty. Even though he did not disclose his actual earnings, Patrick repeatedly lamented on poor remunerations, despite the difficulties associated with the jobs he was always offered. To support Patrick's claim, Ben, a participant in Jill Ahren's study, noted prevailing fluctuation in migrant workers' remuneration. As documented by Ahren, the payment was slashed down to six Euros per hour from the original 11 Euros.<sup>119</sup>

This restriction to the secondary section of the labor market also extends to those with higher qualifications, as well, for obvious reasons of their migrant status. This argument goes on to state

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<sup>119</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 131.

that employment regulations limits migrants across all statuses to the secondary labor market. Panam, a graduate in economics narrates his view thus:

So when I became integrated, I took somebody's documents to work. I worked in a construction company called IDU. Our work then was with pipelines, to water the flowers on the streets. It was beautiful. At a point I begin to enjoy the work even though it was stressful. ... They treated us, though, with a lack of professionalism. They only helped us so that we could earn a living.

The migrants here see employers' offers of job opportunities as sympathy offers to preserve them from starving to death in the same way as they view themselves as grossly underqualified for higher paying jobs.

While one may be tempted to consider horticulture as having little contribution to the country's economy, the same cannot be said of construction jobs. Even though not many of my interlocutors belonged to the construction sector at the time of interviews, the sector is renowned for accommodating a huge chunk of Nigerian migrants across all levels of education and skill acquisition. Whether manual or mechanized, migrant workers in this sector must display a great amount of energy to work in this sector. Unfortunately, the migrants' qualifications often do not count here. Without consideration for their education, the migrants automatically belong to the bottom rung of remuneration, irrespective of their contributions to the host economy with its accompanying risks. To this, Adebayo, a graduate of Biological Sciences, said:

Because when you look at this country, we have worked to build this country. We have used our strength to build this country. Me as I am talking to you, I have used my time, my youthful age is what I have used to build this country. I've worked in this country for about 14 years now. And if you look at somebody who has worked for 14 years, you know he has really built this country. Me, I am a partaker of the building of a tunnel from Cuatro Caminos.

In Adebayo and some of my participants' separate assessments, the Spanish government upholds high preferential treatment towards migrants from its former Spanish speaking colonies. Such treatment, which is at the expense of those from countries like Nigeria that it had no colonial bond with, hardly recognize the years of trails, experience, and contribution to national economy, nor do they recognize the level of education. The exemption perhaps being Chilean and Peruvian migrants as Kate Hooper aptly points out,<sup>120</sup> tends to corroborate my interlocutors' assertions.

With this feeling, the migrants' views also represent the opinions of some of my participants, confirmed in Jill Ahren's claim that Nigerian migrants have hopeless expectations for better opportunities in Spain, and have, therefore, looked elsewhere.<sup>121</sup> This is not to say, however, that those with feelings of contentment migrants would lose their resolve to remain in the country in anticipation of improved opportunities someday.

Nigerian migrants represented by my group of participants, exhibited distinct features of initial prioritization of earning money to address their pressing needs, rather than pursuing the preservation of prestige, as put forward by theorists of dual or segmented labour-market theory.<sup>122</sup> This therefore implies that the majority of the migrants started as "target earners"<sup>123</sup> seeking money to address their pressing survival and shelter needs before considering the preservation of societal prestige. Notwithstanding, they always find themselves at the secondary sector of the labor market, irrespective of education and skills acquired.

## **4.7 Current Spanish Labour Market Regulations: How Does It Affect the Migrants?**

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<sup>120</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 16.

<sup>121</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 121.

<sup>122</sup> Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration," 442.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

Drawing from the words of Oliver Bakewell, people who are constantly on the move encounter changes as much as they are bound to rules and regulations of new societies.<sup>124</sup> Without attempting to establish a cliché on this assertion, it is no mistake that the fact that Nigerians who have left their country to live and work in Spain are answerable to the host country's laws governing their daily livelihood activities and opportunities. In fact, the national labor regulations touching on job positions for foreigners applies to the migrants as well. An assessment of how they are affected and how they respond to such regulations is, therefore, a critical dimension in this research and shall be summarily examined in the proceeding paragraphs.

Kate Hooper rightly observes how migrants arriving in Spain in the years before the economic crunch who belonged more to the “low- and middle-skilled sectors on temporary (fixed-term) contracts areas” were worse hit by the waves of the crisis.<sup>125</sup> The then deteriorating job collapse affecting particularly the “real estate market sector” and the spiraling effect of the economy taking its toll on the masses, resulted in frugal domestic spending. These trends affected the male dominated construction and female migrant favored domestic sectors, respectively.<sup>126</sup> While the protracted ugly trend robbed foreigners and native born alike, it left the foreigners with higher degrees of adverse impacts, with the non-EU category of migrants affected the most. This culminated in an inevitable resolve to amend the country's labor laws. As depicted in Hooper's captured data, unemployment rates for non-EU migrants jumped to 38% in 2013. It was 14% and 8%, respectively higher than those of native born and EU migrants from the hitherto 2007 of 12%, being 4% and 11% higher than those of same groups. In emphasis, the labor law amendment's focus was essentially to cushion the effect more on natives than migrants. In this unprecedented direction, The Spanish government consequently introduced outlined measures guiding the new operational order for its labor market. The emerging labor laws, which were intermittently

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<sup>124</sup> Ngoie, “Social Capital, Spatial Conquests and Migrants' Social Mixity,” 8.

<sup>125</sup> Hooper, “Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis,” 9.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

retouched in the wake of the crisis, has left several marks on the life of Nigerians who constitute the non-EU foreign residents in Spain. Highlights in the progression of these regulations shall be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Spain's labour policy, as Kate Hooper's account depicts, functions primarily on the certain legal framework of: The Catalogue of Hard-to-fill Occupation and Collective Management of Hiring System.<sup>127</sup> The Catalogue of Hard-to-Fill Occupation, as a legal document, is prepared for all autonomous communities in Spain, including Ceuta and Melilla. It stipulates the national employment situation.<sup>128</sup> Often drafted by the Tripartite Labour Commission for Immigration, the document is to be updated quarterly, working with the employment and unemployment information supplied to it by the Public Employment office of the various autonomous communities. The commission thus drafts a list of shortage occupations in line with proposals submitted by the National Public Employment Service.<sup>129</sup> Until the advent of the economic crisis, the catalogue usually contained lists of jobs reflecting almost all skills levels. But as the economic situation deteriorated and became protracted, the occupation categories listed on the catalogue were significantly discarded.<sup>130</sup>

## **The Collective Management of Hiring System**

Formally known as "contingente" or sometimes "anonymous hiring",<sup>131</sup> the Collective Management of Hiring System is one of the Spanish labor market's policies. Under this framework, employers in need of groups of migrant workers for temporal, seasonal agricultural work are permitted to recruit potential migrants strictly from origin countries that entered bilateral

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<sup>127</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 17.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 16.

agreements with Spain. The list of such countries as presented by Kate Hooper indicates only nine Sub-Saharan African countries, including: Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, and Senegal.<sup>132</sup>

The Collective Management of Hiring system notably functions, among other things, through the inclusion of those partner countries in the selection process in order to extend protection to their emigrant workers, as well as limit opportunities for their abuse and exploitation.<sup>133</sup> As it were, the heightened unemployment occasioned by the protracted economic crisis resulted in the jettisoning of the Spanish policy of employing non-EU migrants, leaving the employers with restricted opportunities to recruit low and middle-skilled migrant workers.<sup>134</sup> In my supposition, Nigeria not being on the list of Sub-Saharan African partnering countries as shown above, means more than mere absence on the list, to rather a lack of special recognition and protection for its nationals residing and seeking livelihood opportunities in Spain.

Fall out from this framework is how Nigerian migrants face great difficulty in their search for jobs or even retaining ones already secured. Even though job opportunities for the migrants are more in the low- and middle-skills categories or temporal and seasonal for those officially recognized, the difficulties for Nigerian migrants who fall outside the scope of protection is not to be underestimated. Blessing, a Nigerian graduate of accounting and now a Spanish national, has this to say of her experience with the country's labor market:

You find out that in the company, the migrants, especially the Black people, suffer a lot of racism. Because the first people that have their contracts ended are the Black people. You know, when the company is not doing too well, even if you have been there for many years, they might say, you, go off and they prefer to keep their

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<sup>132</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 17.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 20.

nationals. . . You might get a contract of three months, then you are laid off again. So this goes on and off. Is a challenge, but we have all decided to accept it like that. Blessing, 34, Madrid.

The constant flux of the job situations of migrants as explicated by Blessing, presents a picture of a people constantly gripped with fear. With unstable economic statuses and persistent stress, they are observing almost an all-time stagnation in their migration journey or at best, maintain a cyclical progress (four steps forward and three backward in efforts to make meaningful progress.) It also indicates an existing group of migrant workers are not always favored by their employers. To emphasize, livelihood activities for most remains by and large a back-and-forth progression.

In addition, the expression, “They helped us so that we could earn a living”, as expressed by Panam, one of my respondents while referring to jobs usually offered by Spanish employers, further denotes some of the migrants’ feelings of helplessness before their employers. To reiterate, one who sees job offered to them as an act of survival rendered by employer is arguably at the mercies of their employers, and most probably deprived of any possible right seeking legal entitlements. In the same vein, Adebayo, another of my participants disclosed that, “I have worked in many places. I’ve worked in more than 20 places here in Madrid”, depicts how the migrants are often embroiled in existential hiring and firing encounters with several employers. This is evident in Adebayo’s ordeal of having to work in over twenty different places within a span of fourteen years in Madrid.

This prevailing high-level job insecurity undoubtedly puts the migrants between a rock and a hard place, seeking survival opportunities in almost all directions. For example, within the informal construction sector where Adebayo belonged at the time of my interview and Samson had previously worked, many of my interlocutors preferred starting up a personal business to remaining in a constant state of vulnerability. Details of this shall be further elaborated in the “Self-employed Migrant” section below.

As its economy benefits largely from contributions made by low- and middle-skilled migrant workers, Spain equally operates the ‘General Regime’<sup>135</sup> system which runs parallel with the Collective Management of Hiring system, thus creating a bifurcated migrant employment structure.<sup>136</sup>

According to the earliest Spanish immigration regulation of 1985, the General Regime provides for Spanish employers to sponsor potential migrants to fill specific vacant positions proven unable to be filled by nationals.<sup>137</sup> However, the bureaucratic procedures posed more challenges for employers who found it difficult to meet their employment needs. Since most positions often meant for migrants belong largely to the hospitality, construction, and agricultural sectors as Spanish nationals are unwilling to work in these sectors, employers often resort to the informal sector to hire migrants that have already arrived in the country.<sup>138</sup> Yet, the volume of migrants in the informal sector waiting for such limited opportunities brought about by employers’ alternative hiring decisions suggests slim availability of such jobs for Nigerian migrants.

These stringent restrictions of the previous immigration regulation led to the introduction of the Quota system in 1993 by the Spanish government in order to enhance the regularization of migrants already in country to be hired by employers in these hard-to-fill positions. To reiterate, the Quota system made it easier for employers to consider recruiting those migrants already in the country, as opposed to having to recruit migrants from outside. However, the Quota system being the core of Spanish immigration policy puts the government at the center of deciding actual labor market need, like sorting out workers to fill needed positions.<sup>139</sup> In this regard, the migrants often find it increasingly difficult to secure even the migrant designated “blue-collar, industrial, low-

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<sup>135</sup> Hooper, “Spain’s Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis,” 16.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Hooper, “Spain’s Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis,” 11.

<sup>139</sup> Hooper, “Spain’s Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis,” 16.

wage, menial and (...) the dirty works as observed by Saskia Sassen.<sup>140</sup> These constitute jobs in the secondary sector of the bifurcated labor market of the capitalist economies in highly industrialized nations as posited by the dual or segmented labour-market theory.<sup>141</sup>

### **4.7.1 Attitudes of Spanish Employers towards Migrants of Nigerian Origin**

“So, the Spanish government, they still believe that only the people that we colonized are our people. No. There are some people that came to you out of love. Once they come like that, they should be treated like their people. That is why they prefer giving job opportunities first to people that came from Venezuela, than to people that came from Nigeria. They prefer to give opportunities to those they think they know, despite the fact that if the person that came from Nigeria is serving them with all his strength, they still prefer to give to someone that came from Guinea.”

The extract is a remark from Mr. Adebayo expressing his feelings about the attitude of the Spanish Government towards African migrants in its preferential treatment of migrants from former colonies. As a major employer of labor in the country, Adebayo is of the view that the government should consider offering job opportunities acting on the track records of migrants’ attitude to work under difficult situations, rather than being discriminatory and indulging in wrong choices of employees for the sheer reason they are from former colonies.

Since it was difficult to get actual employers of labor in both the private and public sectors to give interviews, I fell back on revelations from the migrants. This implies that such accounts can only represent the Sub-Saharan African migrant employees’ perception of their employers’ attitudes towards themselves.

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<sup>140</sup> Robinson, “Saskia Sassen and the Sociology of Globalization,” 16.

<sup>141</sup> Massey et al., “Theories of International Migration,” 442.

Adebayo again attempted to clarify some underlying misgivings regarding foreign labour employers. He stated as follows:

Most of the businesses and companies here are not owned by the Spanish, they are owned by other countries. So the Spanish can't determine the business. I don't call it racist. They don't like giving people long-time contracts. They just give you a short-term contract. For example, Carrefour is owned by France. If the Spanish Government decides to give long-term contracts to people that are working there, what happens? If France decides to remove their business from Spain, what happens to people working there?

From Adebayo's illustration above, attention is drawn to the difficulties associated with extending long-term employment contracts with its perquisites to employees of Spain-based multinational corporations and other privately owned foreign establishments in the country. The question to ask however, is to what extent does such limitations equally affect employees of same organizations' job security?

In line with this, Jill Ahrens and Joquin Arango reiterate that there exists a higher proportion of unemployment of Africans amongst the diverse ethnic nationalities of migrants in Spain. For reasons such as this, Ahrens posits that not even those in the formal labor sector have job security. According to her, the relaxed labor laws create room for easy firing of workers and an arbitrary lowering of wages while still operating in highly unprotected working conditions.<sup>142</sup> Given such conditions, it is expected that the Nigerian group of migrants would remain unprotected, belonging to the secondary labor market, always doing the casual jobs, and being the most vulnerable to employers' vagaries of hiring and firing dispositions.

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<sup>142</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 123.

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## 4.8 The Migrants' Attitudes towards Work

Despite the casual nature of jobs offered, most Nigerian migrants have the reputation as being diligent and committed to assigned occupational responsibilities. Some of my interviewees who consider themselves as bread winners for their families back in Nigeria are of the view that the decision to come to Europe was squarely in the quest for 'greener pastures', the term commonly used by the migrants.<sup>143</sup> In light of such mindsets, the migrants tend to accept working under harsh conditions and under paid jobs. Yet, they put in their very best to sustain the same job. This attitude leads to a better understanding that low-skilled migrants are accepting any kind of job on offer in destination countries, as would be explained by theorists of dual or segmented labor market theory. As this research has further investigated, acceptance of difficult jobs also extends to university graduates whose certificates are not recognized in the Spanish labor market. Those who are breadwinners for their families need whatever food to put on their table and a roof over their heads in Madrid. According to Panam, a graduate of economics:

I left Nigeria to live in Spain because of a lack of jobs. After I graduated, I found out that, there are no jobs. ... For me, I studied economics and when I got to Europe I presented my certificate for a job. They laughed at me because it is from Nigeria, it is not even valued here. I was asked to enroll for further study. I should go back and start all over again, but with my age there was no time to do that. ... Not like England where after six months of training, you could be helped. Spain and other European countries are not like that.

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<sup>143</sup> Ahrens, "Suspended in Eurocrisis," 120.

Being a beacon of hope to his family, Panam came prepared to take on any kind of opportunities that come his way. Again, he had this to say:

I need every day upkeep to pay my rent where I live, which I had to do some petty jobs to be able to raise money even while I was in school. Schooling means learning the language. ... Why we travel is to be able to support our families. So we support them any way we can. We know the government cannot provide for us, what about the people we left back home? It's also our responsibility to take care of them. Sometimes you see some Nigerians involved in certain crimes, it is not their intention to do so, but because of the pressure on them, what else should they do? You have a lot of responsibilities, you have your younger ones who are doing nothing, no financial support, the government does not even think about them. So we strive harder and by the grace of God every time we send money to those back home to help them stand on their feet is an accomplishment.

In a related view, Blessing, a graduate of accounting, echoed her discontent as a strong supporter of her dependents back in Nigeria. According to her:

Am not content, because, you know, Nigerians are very ambitious people. Apart from being very ambitious, there is a lot of responsibilities. When you come from a family, for example you have five brothers and sisters, and people believe you are abroad and you can defend yourself. They always expect something from you. So, you find out that you are not working for yourself alone, but you are working for others. You are working for your brothers, you are working for your cousins, working for your parents. Sometimes, you are under a lot of pressure if your family members are not understanding. They don't know you can lose your job. These jobs are not stable.

Nigerian migrants in Madrid have thus far assessed that securing good and stable jobs is the most challenging aspect of their lives in Spain. Jobs offered to them are often temporal in that you are

either employed as a replacement of the actual employee, or as a temporal employee always at the mercy of your employer who hires and fires at will. Such situations can also have some bearings on the migrants' attitudes towards jobs. Francis again, has this to say:

Yes, it sounds like that. It is not always like that. I worked for some time and I stopped. Then I went back to the street again. After some time, I got another job. Because the job will always come. There is what we call 'temporal', which might be a job of six months, it might be work for a month, and it might be work for three months. Maybe somebody working in a company had an accident and he will not be able to work for at least six months, so the company will hurriedly look for somebody to put in their place. And the moment the person gets well, they lay you off. That is what they call temporal. There are so many jobs like this. It is not just that once you get your residency, you get a job automatically.

Nicole Ndongala holds a somewhat divergent view from the Nigerian group of migrants:

“Actually, a lot of Nigerians don't like to work, but for those who do, they can become self-employed, set up their own small-scale businesses.”

According to her, female migrants are more disposed to working in the hospitality sector, as migrant domestic workers and in restaurants, with a few of them working in companies. Others, including the male migrants, work in supermarkets and hospital carparks. There are also those working in illicit activities such as the mafia, money laundering, as well as those who deal in counterfeit money. On the whole, Ndongala's critical assessment mentioned a collection of different categories of Nigerians present in the Madrid society..

Being target earners is in validation of claims in the dual labor market theory. Nigerian migrants are relentlessly pursuing the means to satisfy their immediate personal needs and those of their dependents back in Nigeria.

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## 4.9 The Self-employed Migrants

With unwavering determination, the participants go on with their daily lives towards self-actualization in fulfilment of their dreams. Six out of my 23 respondents who were already self-established in Madrid, bring to the forefront the resilient spirit of the group. The six self-established are: Samson, who started a personal taxi business ending his years of recurring hiring and firing in the construction industries; Panam, who ventured into business as a car and truck dealer; Gloria who opened her own restaurant; Blessing, who owns a computer accessory shop; Johnson, who prefers cloth and wine ventures to seeking employment in Madrid; and Comfort, who considers her property management venture as more rewarding to her than working for someone else.

Blessing, who deals in telecommunication accessories and Gloria, who is the owner of the African Restaurant, are both employers of labor, thereby making impacts on both the Nigerian migrant community and the Mostoles neighborhood of Madrid as a whole. For Blessing, a graduate of accounting as pointed out earlier, her motivation to venture into the telecommunication business sprang from the interest she developed in computer technology on arrival in Spain in 2009, following her graduation from a Spanish computer institute.

I found myself getting interested in computer repairs and technology. And when I started learning it, I found it quite easy. I was one of the best students in my class.

While Blessing's story of how she started her computer business may appear simple, the same does not hold for Gloria. Although a graduate of Animal Health/Science, Gloria progressed through several rigorous stages to arrive at her present condition. According to her:

What I know is, I have maintained. I have to take it the way I see it. Trying to struggle is a way of life. I have been in that situation for almost seven years. It

wasn't easy for me to get things, to get papers. I even begged in the supermarkets to make my living. I did that work for one a year and two months. I left my house in the morning with my papers to go to supermarket. I stayed there to open doors for people that go into the supermarket to buy something. When they are passing, I would be greeting them, when they are going I will still greet them. When they are leaving, they will hand me whatever change they have. I was feeling bad, but the fact that I don't have any other thing to do, I have to follow it up. It was helping me to pay my house rent. I was living comfortably because I was making a lot of money.

Like Gloria, I also met a female Nigerian migrant elegantly dressed, engaging in this type of work at an entrance of a supermarket in Madrid. However, she declined my interview proposal. Upon securing her residency, Gloria proceeded job searching until she saved enough money to venture into her own restaurant business. The above mentality as displayed by my participants expresses the resiliency of the migrants in pursuing their initial objectives. It equally explains place-making and livelihood practices, particularly amongst the female self-employed migrants of Nigerian origin in Madrid.

#### **4.10 Daily Social Lifestyle of the Migrants**

As noted in preceding sections, Madrid, the new environment in which the people have come to live, greatly impacts them. They must modify and take on a new way of life though an interwoven social and cultural lifestyle. Having discussed the cultural aspect of the people's place-making practices in section 4.5 above, attention shall now focus on the social aspect of their lives as a further assessment of their place-making processes.

Even though the lifestyle of staying out late is a general phenomenon across Spain, Madrid is no doubt unique for its culture of night cinema, theatrical performances, street-wide musical performances and mobile entertainment. This well celebrated tradition, coupled with the local

aphorism that says, From Madrid to heaven, and in heaven, a little window from which to see it,<sup>144</sup> leaves no doubt of how highly esteemed the ever bustling Madrid is among its inhabitants. Coming to live with a people so endeared to their social lifestyle, Nigerians tend to find social belongingness as germane to their process of adaptation. For them, there are two kinds of socialization. The first is the one occurring amongst themselves and the second is with those they now live with. To the former, Geoffrey Chima described existing fraternity amongst Nigerians as remarkable. According to him:

The Nigerian migrants tends to socialize quite rapidly with other Nigerians through social media, churches/mosque and cultural events that are held very often by various cultural associations.

The social gatherings and interactions of the migrants I observed in three restaurants and beer parlors in the Móstoles neighbourhood, an outskirt of Madrid, and at a McDonald's fast food restaurant in Alcorcón, brings Nigerians of like minds together to refresh and socialize after the days endeavors, especially on weekends.

In addition, Nigerians extend this practice of their social lifestyles to both nationals and other ethnic nationalities. James, one of my interlocutors, noted that:

Living in Madrid, I have many friends. I have American friends and I have Spanish friends. I have almost friends from all over the world, so I am okay with them. So we play football together. The place I worship is Spanish, too. They have Ukrainians and Russians, and we go together to worship.

Socializing with Spanish nationals also helped Patrick with his language learning challenges, as it also provided a way out of persistent police harassments for Francis. As once mentioned, Patrick

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<sup>144</sup> “Madrid | Layout, People, Economy, Culture, & History | Britannica.”

started overcoming his long-term difficulty in understanding the Spanish language from the moment he began to mingle, join clubs and have Spanish friends. Again, Chima confirms:

There are a couple of Nigerian neighbourhoods in the Madrid outskirts of Torrejon de Ardoz, Alcorcon, and Mostoles, among others. Here the social lifestyle takes place around football matches, Nigerian bars and nightclubs. Madrid is well known for its 24-hour social activity which they easily adapt to almost immediately.

Both male and female Nigerian migrants often find a way of putting their social life into practice in Madrid either as a way of feeling a sense belonging and/or to find a way of addressing their pressing migration challenges. This is far from concluding that every Nigerian socializes in the context of free mingling and interaction. Many with residency huddles to surmount, particularly those newly arriving, have almost everything to fear; fear of police harassment, deportation, language barriers, and discrimination. Nonetheless, this appraisal which reveals the daily social lifestyles of the migrants, further mirrors how the members of the group engage in place-making through socializing.

#### **4.11 Migrants' Level of Integration in Host Community**

As the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has pointed out, the level of migrants' interaction and rapport with the host society is a strong factor determining the entire 'migration circle' for the migrant.<sup>145</sup> It further states that, "This relationship takes the forms of psychological and sociological processes of adaptation between migrants and receiving communities which affect the degree of inclusion migrants will experience, including their sense of belonging." Moreover, the intention of a migrant to either temporarily or permanently reside in a foreign society is implicated on their adaptation to the peoples' "culture, customs, social values and language", IOM emphasizes. Host societies' receptive or hostile attitudes towards migrants or the

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<sup>145</sup> "Wmr\_2020.Pdf," 185.

migration process, in general, also plays a critical role in the migrants' level of inclusion in their destination.<sup>146</sup>

Suffice it to say that the Nigerian migrants are tied to a string of concerns bordering on their sense of belonging in Madrid. As responses from all my participants would reveal in the course of this section, language, place-making, naturalization, educational opportunities, family life, and access to health facilities are key factors that have redefined their sense of integration. Omitting political participation, as included on IOM's migrants' inclusion indicators, the above premise will be further examined in this section, exploring how the indicators serve to impinge on the migrants' sense of integration.

## Language

Language has been defined as, “a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings.”<sup>147</sup> Language being the only known means of communicating ideas and feelings implies, therefore, that Nigerians with an English language background and entering into Spanish society, either on temporal or permanent missions, need knowledge of the local language to negotiate their stays and mainstream into societal activities through which they can begin to feel a sense of belonging. Here, Patrick again narrates his language learning experience:

My brother, it took very long. It was not easy. When I came into the country, my elder sister first of all hired a teacher for me to be teaching me in the house. What they are teaching me is just very difficult to understand. When I tried to watch programs on the television, I couldn't understand it. Until I started hanging out with Spanish people, going to clubs, having Spanish girlfriends, I didn't understand the

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> “Language | Definition of Language by Merriam-Webster.”

language. After that I have to started picking it up. I have to put my Spanish language into practice and start learning the language.

Patrick's account is particularly indicative of the urge to learn the language, which served as the push factor that got him into Spanish society. Just as his social lifestyle increasingly drew him closer to the people, he eventually mainstreamed into society by going out into society.

The migrants, however, adopt different approaches in their efforts to learn the Spanish language. While some quickly embrace the formal process of enrolling in language classes organized either by the government or other NGOs to speed up their learning process, some adopt the street learning approach. This method has to do with the migrants' daily engagement with people they meet on the street. Others still adopt learning in places of employment, as job efficiency demands the ability to speak the language in order to act and respond appropriately to instructions.

Patrick's approach was more of the street learning methodology:

First of all, when you come into Spain here, what you learn first is the insults on the street, because they insult a lot here. It took me like eight years to learn before I became comfortable.

In the same vein, Samson explained:

Every other person passed through that challenge. ... After completing two years when I was with Erick, I didn't know a single word. I didn't know what is go, I didn't know what is come. Even the words we learned, we learned it in the streets.

Similar procedures was adopted by Francis, Adebayo, Johnson, James and Steve, with the last still at the initial language learning stage, being in the early months of arrival to Spain.

On the contrary, Panam, Uche, Gloria, Precious, Halimat, Blessing, Pastor Kinsley, Peace, Ngozi, Kemi, Joy, Charity, Comfort, Agnes, and Lucy all preferred the formal learning process. At the time of this research, six of my female interlocutors were enrolled at the Karibu Women's Learning Center. Worthy of note, however, is that Patrick eventually enrolled in the formal learning process

through which he was able to obtain a degree in Spanish language. Others who first adopted the informal process also had and /or are considering adopting similar strategies to have evidence of their language skills.

Paucity of knowledge in the language can result in migrants losing their jobs, as well, regardless of their degree of ingenuity. Samson had this to say:

When I started working, it was a war between me and the workers there. We Nigerians, whenever we enter a company, to communicate is a different thing for us Nigerians. And the Spanish people, before they take you, if you don't know how to speak the language, it is very difficult. Just because I understand how to do the work, carrying things and arranging them in the right places, doesn't mean I will get the job if I don't know the language. I understand it, but they still want me to be communicating with them. The first company I entered, the boss said, this guy knows how to work but he doesn't know how to speak. So, because I knew how to do the work, I worked there more than a year before later asking me to leave the job.

Since it is commonly accepted that language is the bedrock upon which knowledge can be acquired, pursuit of higher education in Spain by Nigerians thus hinges largely on the individual's language skill. To state it differently, even though pursuit of, or already acquired higher qualifications, as suggested by IOM,<sup>148</sup> tends to influence migration decisions and opportunities for migrants moving to advanced countries, only a minute number of Nigerians would, until now, consider migration to Spain successful due to the language barrier. Yet, education is still seen as indispensable in the migrants' level and pace of social participation in Spain, where hiring increasingly gravitates towards favoring those with higher qualifications.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> "Wmr\_2020.Pdf," 193.

<sup>149</sup> Hooper, "Spain's Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis," 25; "Wmr\_2020.Pdf," 193.

Ngozi, a medical doctor by profession and another Nigerian participant in my research, arrived in the company of her husband in 2018, She has since then been unable to either practice or enroll for an examination to be able to elevate to a specialized level in her career. According to her:

I do have plans to further my career, but I'm not sure how feasible that will be here. The first thing is to learn the language, and without the language, I cannot write the exam. I am also considering how long it will take for me to learn up to a professional level where I can now use it to work. It is quite challenging.

In the same vein, Samson's initial frustration stemmed from, among other things, his inability to practice his Mercedes truck mechanic knowledge in Madrid. Out of determination, he enrolled in a Spanish engineering institute, but became discouraged a couple of months later. He said:

The school I entered, the man told me that the lectures will be in Spanish. He gave me some Spanish books to read and told me that it is going to be online learning. After two months, I discovered that I am not learning anything here and was still paying monthly fees of 70 Euros without gaining anything. Any company I entered where I told them I want to work as a mechanic, they would ask for my certificate and I don't have any. So I dropped the idea and focused on other things.

Even though Panam has long given up on possibilities of utilizing his graduate certificate in economics while living in Spain on ground of the language barrier, the thought of extending the frontier of his business activities in the country was making him reconsider enrolling in a Spanish institute for a certificate in marketing. This contemplation was however hinged on his current advanced knowledge in Spanish. While Panam's latest decision has yet to see the light of day at the time of our meeting, Blessing, who had earlier on taken intensive course in Spanish language, was encouraged by her level of knowledge in the language to enroll in the computer technology institute from where she qualified as a computer technician. Her case was, however different compared to Pastor Kingsley, who left Nigeria with a short-stay plan in Madrid. He wished to proceed afterwards to London for further study of computer science. Failing to achieve this, due

mainly to the religious assignment he later took on in Spain and weighing his language knowledge, he eventually shelved the idea. Blessing and Comfort are the only two of my 23 interlocutors that have attended Spanish higher institutions for further studies in their separate fields of interest. The rest stopped at the level of learning the language for communication and daily transactions.

However, the challenges hold more for those migrants with low-level education who often learn the language with great difficulty, not to speak of those already at an older age at the beginning of their migration.<sup>150</sup> Coupled with education and age challenges, a majority of Nigerian migrants are also held down by peculiar challenges of cultural background, which has already complicated easy adaptation to learning. To this, Nicole Ndongala again mentioned that:

Nigeria as an Anglophone country makes it difficult for us to learn Spanish easily than the Francophone Africans. A high percentage of Nigerians integrate well in Spain. The major barrier is the learning of the language.

Confirming this, the head of the Karibu Women Center, Biatris, had this to say:

I think that those women from Nigeria that are here have more problems in learning the language, but little by little they begin to understand. For instance, I did a test for one today, since she has been here from last year, and she did very well. But when the student really wants to improve, they do very well. Those with only a primary school education have more problems in learning the language. But I think those who are speaking or from French speaking countries learn easily because French is close to Spanish.

Although, most of Nigerian adult migrants in Spain would not see their migration destination as an ideal learning environment for themselves as pointed out earlier, their acclimatization and feeling of belonging is equally tied to their children's education. As it were, education tops parents' priorities and, to a large extent, a determinant to their level of adaptation into society. On this basis,

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<sup>150</sup> "Wmr\_2020.Pdf," 193.

education is key in redefining the migrants' feelings of their membership in the community, as their children's enrollment in Spanish schools give them the hope of a longer stay. An excerpt from Francis reveals thus:

If am based in one place, I don't like changing to another place because, if you change, so many things have to change too. And as a family man, you cannot move from one state to another, because if you are doing that, you have to change the medical care for the children, you have to change the school for the children. So many things have to be changed, too. So to avoid that, you have to stay in one place. Take the life the way it comes.

For Francis, the health and education of his children are his main priorities for which reasons he wouldn't consider moving out of Madrid, where he has settled since living in Spain. Meanwhile, Charity, a graduate of Computer Science and a fluent English language speaker, was perplexed with her difficulty in learning the Spanish language. Hence, she enrolled at the Karibu Women's Center, where she would learn the language which she considers a top priority to enable her to further her education in Spain.

### **Family reunification, access to health facilities, and Naturalization**

My participants who married after arriving in Madrid or reunited with their families, expressed feelings of fulfillment and a sense of belonging in their new environment, especially following their marriages and/or now living with their families. For this category of the group, it is rather the feelings of accomplishment or prayers answered, especially after recalling their travails throughout their migration journey and entering Spain with little or no hope of success. Now, they feel more at home and a sense of belonging in the community, more so than when they first arrived. Even though these topics did not constitute my interview questions, the migrants again never spoke to me without referring to their residency permits and free medical care offered to them in Spain. Whereas most of my interviewees at the time of interviews were not yet offered Spanish citizenships, the migrants made references to the moment they were issued their long-term

residency permits as the beginning of their respite in Spain. While those without it, were eagerly looking forward with resilience to that moment when they will begin to see themselves as bona fide members of the society. Suffice it to say that acquisition of residency permits marked the formal beginning of their membership to their adopted society. Until such a moment, the migrants live in constant fear of uncertainties and strangeness. However, possessing these documents redefines their mindset and social participation.

Coming from Nigeria, where there hardly exists an affordable health care scheme for the masses, migrants did not mince words describing the free medical services availed to them in Spain. They viewed it as a rare opportunity for which they repeatedly expressed feelings of being at home and gratitude to the Spanish government, with the conviction that such a gesture elongates their life span. As it were, the temporal job situation of the migrants is by no means a novelty in line with postulations of dual labour-market theory. In the same vein, feeling of belonging mean more than mere societal acceptance and having accommodation. Benefiting from Spanish government's health and educational policies equally extends to the ability to speak the language and settling down with one's own family members in Spain, all of which constitute the practice of place-making for the migrants.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

This final chapter aims to highlight the findings from this empirical study on livelihoods and place-making of Nigerian migrant residents in Madrid. It thus begins with the summary and ends with the conclusion.

### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

Data analysis from this empirical study provides details on the livelihoods and place-making trajectory of Nigerian migrants in Madrid. As findings have revealed, Nigerians started arriving in Spain and residing in Madrid since 1986, slightly before the period when the country transited into an immigration destination. Even though there is a growing reduction in volume of influx, Madrid has remained a prime destination for the Nigerian group of migrants who are still on the trail of livelihood opportunities, either directly from their destination or from other parts of Europe.

With a unique communal lifestyle, place-making, and cultural identity, a growing community of a multi-ethnic Nigerian migrants is felt within and around Madrid. Though believed to be dominated by low-skilled and low qualified categories of migrants, this research reveals that the community is increasingly witnessing the arrival of highly-skilled and highly qualified members. 11 out of the 23 of participants who were randomly selected were graduates, two others with added qualifications to their initial O Level certificates, and two university dropouts. This is indicative

of a community viewed to be experiencing a paradigm shift into a more populated, highly-skilled rather than low-skilled and low educated group. By further implication, the Nigerian group of migrants in Madrid were dominated by little educated and low-skilled people, rather than being completely illiterate and unskilled, as claimed by Michael Piore and other theorists of dual or segmented labor market theory.<sup>151</sup>

The community is also characterized by the increasing presence of Nigerian originated and/or African Churches. The Churches are at the heart of coordinating negotiations for adaptation of newly arriving members, just as new members' stabilization is enhanced by fraternizing with members of their religious community.

This research has also documented that members of the Nigerian migrant community in Madrid are not fortunate enough in terms of job opportunities in the Spanish labor market. Arising from the strict labour-market regulations, persisting preference to nationals of Spanish former colonies, and those it entered into bilateral migration and labor agreements with, among which Nigeria is not, most Nigerian migrants have remained in a permanent state of temporal employment. Being employed only in situations of emergencies, particularly to fill gaps created by the absence of an employee, puts the migrants in an endless circle of an in and out employment situation. Although, some are fortunate to last longer than a few months, a maximum period of six months is the average working period after which a migrant returns to the job search.

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<sup>151</sup> Piore, "Birds of Passage," 57.

This situation thus keeps a majority of the migrants in the informal Spanish labor sector, with many resorting to seek opportunities for self-employment. A lot of this casual work takes place in the informal sectors of construction, the domestic sector, and the restaurants sector, just as the bulk of the rest rely on *lafarola* for daily up keep. Servicing of bills and raising money enough to venture into interested business areas is the way of life.

Some of the self-employed Nigerians are equally employers of labor. This is exemplified in the computer accessory shop and the two restaurants where I conducted interviews in Mostoles, one of the neighborhoods of Madrid, where each of the migrants had upwards of one employee.

Another finding from this empirical study is that Nigerian migrants have a good reputation of being hard working, but are oftentimes hardly employers' favorites. The majority of Nigerian migrants thus belong to the secondary sector of the Spanish labor market, with high-level jobs being precarious. Regardless of educational qualifications, skills and years of experience working in the Spanish system, it takes a Nigerian an exceptional fortune to belong to the primary and mostly well-paying labor sector of Spanish market.

Investigations by this research regarding the aspects of place-making, equally reveal that the migrants adopt unique strategies from their moment of arrival to the time of full stabilization. Newly arriving migrants experiment with four major approaches as they explore the phases of stabilization before getting to finally settle down in the society. The first of these stages is: meeting contact persons, for those who have, or self-help to secure a place of temporal settlement. During this stage, newly arriving migrants squat in provided accommodation or in a self-acquired personal

or public place, or in those places provided by friends, family members, relations or village or ethnic contact persons already settled in Madrid.

The second is the phase is where the church or charity organizations either provide the migrant with accommodation or direct them to relevant places where they can be supported. The third stage, applicable to some, is when a group of migrants numbering four or more come together to pay for a single apartment, pending the time each one is able to secure a private apartment. The fourth and final stage is the moment when the migrant, having saved enough money to rent his or her own apartment, have their own privacy and become fully adapted to the environment. All of these strategies are often experimented in close proximity to Madrid. These common practices are in conformity with migrants' characteristics of making their places within the city space, as put forward by theorists of place-making.<sup>152</sup>

Once an immigrant begins to adapt to the environment, he or she tends to be socially oriented, inclining to mingle with nationals and those of other countries, while at the same time cherishing the company of fellow Nigerians. Such a level of social interaction occurs at the church, community associations, clubs, and sporting environments. However, personal temperament and philosophy of individual life comes into play as a determinant level of social integration.

In place-making, knowledge of the Spanish language also plays a great role in boosting migrants' sense of belonging in Spanish society. As it were, from securing and retaining jobs to pursuing higher qualifications, engaging in social interaction, as well as enjoying available migrant

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<sup>152</sup> Mavroudi and Nagel, *Global Migration*, 211.

designated welfare packages in the Spanish society, the individual's knowledge of the country's language is indispensable.

The language barrier, for instance, hampers Nigerians' quest for higher qualifications in Spain. A majority of the migrant population, assessed through the lenses of my interlocutors, prefer learning Spanish for communication rather than learning for academic engagement. This is mainly due to the required length of time to acquire the required knowledge. The migrants, however, adopt different approaches in their efforts to learn the language. Learning could therefore occur through a formal process to street learning, job learning, or the hiring of private instructors.

Nigerian migrants' sense of belonging, as this empirical study has identified, is equally tied to their family life, naturalization, and access to health and educational facilities. All of these are pivotal in every migrant's pursuit of livelihood objectives.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The summary on the livelihoods and place-making of Nigerian migrants in Madrid, as reviewed in the opening section of this concluding chapter, indicates a mixture of exciting and emotional situations of the group. While members of the community, on the one hand strive to retain their communal lifestyle in the host society, their daily livelihood predicaments, on the other hand, often take them backwards.

Again, inherent and unfavorable labor market conditions undercuts the migrants' place-making practice, often leaving them in a constant imbalance. Such a situation explicates the

interwovenness of the dual or segmented labor market and place-making theories. With the migrants simultaneously processing job opportunities and struggling to live their social cultural life, the good and bad conditions in one phase of their lives certainly rubs off on the other.

## ANNEX

PARTICIPANT'S QUALIFICATIONS AND OCCUPATION		
NAME	QUALIFICATION	OCCUPATION
Agnes	BSC Business Administration	African job (Restaurant)
Adebayo	BSC Biological Sciences	Worker at Construction Industry
Blessing	BSC Accountancy	Self-employed: computer accessories seller
Gloria	BSC Animal Health/Science	
Johnson	HND Business Administration	Self-employed: exporter of cloths and wines
Lucy	BSC Estate Management	Employed as Teacher of English language and also a learner of Spanish language
Ngozi	BSC Medicine	Unemployed: student of Spanish language learning class.
Panam	BSC Economics	Self-employed: car and truck dealer
Pastor Kinsley	BSC Computer Science	Employed as Pastor. Also work in construction industry.
Uche	MSC Political Science	Employed as Dispatch rider with FedEx.
Charity	NCE Computer Science	Unemployed: student of Spanish language learning
Comfort	O Level/Certificate in Estate Management	Self-employed: estate Manager
James	O Level	Employed as sales man at supermarket and also runs personal business.
Joy	O Level	Unemployed: student of Spanish language learning
Francis	O Level	Unemployed: practices Lafarola by selling newspaper at entrances of supermarket.
Peace	O Level	Unemployed: student of Spanish language learning class
Patrick	O Level/Degree in Spanish	Employed as agriculture worker.
Precious	O Level	Unemployed: house wife

Steve	O Level	Employed as Soccer player
Anthony	University dropout	Unemployed: practices Lafarola by selling newspaper in front of supermarket
Kemi	University dropout	Unemployed: student of language learning class.
Halimat	O Level dropout	Unemployed: house wife
Samson	O Level dropout	Self-employed as taxi driver

Source: Author

<b>PARTICIPANT'S YEAR AND MEANS OF ARRIVAL TO SPAIN</b>		
<b>NAMES</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS BY YEAR OF ARRIVAL</b>	<b>MEANS OF ARRIVAL</b>
Agnes	2014	By airplane
Adebayo	2005	By train
Anthony	2020	By train
Blessing	2009	By airplane
Charity	2018	By train
Comfort	1997	By airplane
Francis	2008	By airplane
Gloria	2009	By airplane
Halimat	2010	By airplane
James	2009	By airplane
Johnson	1998	By airplane
Joy	2018	By airplane
Kemi	2018	By airplane
Lucy	2018	By airplane
Ngozi	2018	By airplane
Panam	2005	By train
Pastor Kinsley	2000	By airplane
Patrick	1992	By airplane

Peace	2019	By sea
Precious	2012	By airplane
Samson	2006	By sea
Steve	2019	By airplane
Uche	2013	By airplane

Source: by author

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