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The case of Nigeria

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This study forms part of the research project 'International migration and national development: viewpoint and policy initiatives in the countries of origin'. It was carried out under the auspices of the research group 'Migration and Development (M@D)' (Radboud University) and financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affaires and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The research project – which started in May 2006 – focuses on achieving a better understanding of the implications of international migration for national development from the perspective of the sending countries (with an emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa). The aim is to explore (1) current perceptions -as seen from the perspective of the countries of origin- of the links between international migration and national development, and (2) current trends in policy making aimed at minimizing the negative effects, while optimizing the development impact of migration. The views, interpretations, recommendations and conclusions expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of DGIS.

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1. Introduction[1]

In the debate on migration and development, the perspective of migrant sending states is often largely ignored. This is unfortunate, because the various interests and views of individuals and institutions in countries of origin have to be taken into account in designing effective migration policies. The attitude of developing countries towards international migration is often ambiguous, although the reasons for this ambiguity often differ from those of receiving states.

While trying to prevent a 'brain drain', sending states increasingly try to encourage particular forms of migration because the associated remittances and a potential 'brain gain' through a counter movement of skills and knowledge are supposed to be beneficial to national development. There is also increasing interest among receiving governments and development agencies to support the transnational engagements of immigrant or diaspora organisations (de Haas 2006a).

This coincides with increasing recognition of the potentially vital and positive role of international migration in strategies for international development. In the light of past failures with policies to limit emigration of the low and highly skilled (cf. Castles 2004; de Haas 2006b), more and more sending countries are actively designing polices to maximising the positive development impact of migration while minimising its negative effects.

Such policies might include various measures such as the targeted training of professionals for work abroad (cf. the Philippines), policies to facilitate remittances, investments and (temporary or permanent) return of migrants (cf. Turkey, Morocco and various Asian countries) as well as policies to 'court the Diaspora' through granting migrants voting rights, fostering links with migrants' associations abroad or supporting development projects initiated by such migrants (cf. Mexico's *tres-por-uno* projects) (cf . de Haas 2005).

Nigeria plays a key role in African migrations. As Africa's demographic giant, Nigeria has become increasingly involved in international migration to Europe, the Gulf countries and South Africa. Yet Nigeria is also a source and destination country migration *within* west-Africa (Adepoju 2004).

Considering the key role Nigeria plays in African migration systems, its role as destination, transit and source country, and considering the fact that it is both confronted with the negative and positive dimensions of migration; improved systematic insight in the views and interests of Nigerian state and non-state stakeholders is essential in designing more effective migration and development

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[1] With the exception of quotations, this report has purposefully avoided the tempting but inappropriate use of metaphors and expressions such as 'migration *flows*', '*illegal* immigrants' or '*combating* illegal immigration', because they either tend to be inaccurate representations of the true magnitude of the phenomenon (such as migration flows) or are value-laden, such as in the case of 'illegal' and 'combating'. It is questionable whether a person can be illegal, and whether migration policies should be compared to warfare. Therefore, the report attempts to use more neutral descriptive terms.

policies. Surprisingly few empirical data on Nigerian migration and related policies is available beyond the issue of trafficking of sex workers to Europe.

To gain this insight, this study aims at identifying of key issues, obstacles and potential synergies in maximising the positive effects of migration on national development and minimising the negative effects from the perspective of the Nigerian state, key civil society actors and their organisations. This goal has been achieved through the study of available documentation (articles, reports, policy documents, undocumented notes) and a series of interviews with 22 persons representing 18 institutions, ranging from Nigerian ministries and agencies, local NGOs, European and African foreign embassies to several multilateral organisations such as the IOM, ILO and ECOWAS (see the annex for a complete list of people interviewed). The interviews were conducted from 26 to 30 June 2006 in Abuja.

Due to the limited number of interviews, and the general lack of data and empirical studies, this study does not pretend to be comprehensive. Rather, it tries to throw light on the major migration trends and to identify the major policy issues and dilemmas from the perspective of Nigerian stakeholders. The conclusions and hypotheses of this study might also be useful as a basis for further study and verification. Information in this report is based on the interviews, unless reference is made to written sources.

2. Nigerian migrations

2.1. Basic facts on Nigeria

With an estimated number of 140 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It became a British protectorate in 1891 (although initially this mainly comprised the coastal areas), and became independent in 1960. Nigeria has more than 250 different ethnic and linguistic groups, with the major divide running between the predominantly Muslim north and the predominantly Christian south. The largest ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani (north), Yoruba (southwest) and Ibo (southeast). Nigerian is a federal republic, with the 36 states enjoying considerable political and juridical autonomy. Lagos is the country's economic capital and with an estimated population of between 10 to 15.5 million people Africa's second largest city. Centrally located Abuja was proclaimed as the nation's capital in 1976, located in the federal capital territory state, although the actual move from Lagos to Abuja took place in 1991. Other major cities are Kano in the north, Ibadan in the southwest and Port Harcourt in the southeast, a major site of oil refineries.

From 1966 until 1999, Nigeria has been ruled by several military dictators except for a short period of civilian administration between 1979 and 1983. Besides the several coups, the country's history has been characterised by a series of minor and major violent inter-ethnic conflicts, the bloodiest of which was the Nigerian Civil War (1967 –1970) between Nigeria and the breakaway republic of Biafra.. Democracy was formally restored in 1999, when current president Olusegun Obasanjo was elected. Nigeria is an influential member of the African Union and the Commonwealth of Nations. It is also member and hosts the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which was founded in 1975.

Despite the country's oil wealth, many Nigerians suffer from extreme poverty. Between 1980 and 2000, per capita income fell. In 2004, GNI per capita stood at 400 US$, lower than the 510 US$ average for all low-income countries. In the same year, life expectancy at birth was 45 years against a 58 years average for low income countries. Approximately 90 million Nigerians are believed to live in absolute poverty, on less then one dollar a day.

Map 1. Nigerian states

Source: Wikipedia

2.2. Trends in international migration

In the colonial era, parallel to rural-to-urban migration, migration to and from other African countries, Nigerians have migrated to the UK, principally to follow higher education. A significant proportion of them would stay. After independence in 1960 this largely highly skilled migration to the UK continued, although an increasing proportion of Nigerians migrated to the US for study, business and work.

The 1973 oil crisis and skyrocketing oil prices caused a tremendous 350 percent increase in oil revenues. The associated economic boom made Nigeria into a major migration destination within Africa. Rising incomes of the urban middle class and rapid industrialisation attracted substantial number of West African labour migrants. However, the post 1981 decrease in oil prices would herald a long period of economic

downturn alongside with sustained political repression and violence. In 1983 and 1985 Nigeria expulsed large number of west-African migrants, including about one million Ghanaians (Arthur 1991: 74).

It has therefore been observed that Nigeria has witnessed a 'reverse migration transition, transforming itself from a net immigration to a net emigration country (Black *et al.* 2004:11). Nigerians have increasingly emigrated to countries such as Ghana, Cameroon, and particularly the wealthy economies of Gabon, Botswana and South Africa (cf. Adepoju 2000). Since 1994, South Africa has developed as a major destination for migrants from various African countries, among which numerous Nigerians. In particular the skilled have found the booming economy of South Africa to be convenient alternatives to Europe, the US and the Gulf States (Adepoju 2004).

Whereas this migration of students, professionals and entrepreneurs to Anglo-Saxon countries has continued, there has been a diversification of Europe-bound migration following the economic decline and increasing political tensions in the 1980s. An increasing number of Nigerians have migrated to countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium as well as the Gulf states. In the 1990s, Spain, Italy and Ireland have emerged as new major destinations of labour migrants from West Africa and Nigeria (cf. Black *et al*. 2004:9). There has also been an increasing tendency of Nigerian migrants towards permanent settlement. Increasing restrictions and controls on immigration in Europe have not led to a decrease in Nigerian emigration. Rather, migrants are more often undocumented and the itineraries tend to be longer and more perilous. This has made Nigerian migrants more vulnerable to exploitation and marginalisation.

There is circumstantial evidence that these more recent migrants to continental European countries are less skilled on average, and that they more often work in the (formal and, particularly in southern Europe, informal) service, trade and agricultural sectors of the economy. The UK and, in particular, the US (through student and professional migration as well as the Green Card lottery) generally continue to attract the relatively higher skilled workers (cf. Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006). The need to expand the UK National Health Service has for instance created opportunities which poorly paid and unmotivated professional health workers find irresistible. UK universities have also embarked upon a recruitment drive of Nigerian students. In Nigeria, countless immigration 'consultants' promise prospective migrants visa and job opportunities. Also the Gulf states primarily attract the relatively highly skilled at least until recently.

Education has always been an important cause of Nigerian emigration. Some Nigerians migrate with their children to pursue studies in the US or the UK, to escape the dismal state of the Nigerian educational system. Labour migration from Nigeria has also become increasingly feminine. For instance, an increasing number of female nurses and doctors have been recruited from Nigeria to work in Saudia Arabia (Adepoju 2000:386).

A significant number of Nigerians apply for refugee status in European countries. In 2004, Nigerians were the fifth largest group of asylum seekers in Europe (Carling 2005). They tend to state ethnic and religious conflict as their reason for asylum. The cases are often denied because it is felt that there are many other states within Nigeria

and West Africa for Nigerians to move to if they are faced with persecution at home. Because of its size and its current *relative* stability, Nigerians have less chance of obtaining asylum status than citizens from other, conflict-ridden ECOWAS countries.

The issue of trafficking of female Nigerian sex workers to Italy and other European countries has received substantial attention. However, it seems to be important to take into account the complexity of the issue as well as the blurred distinction between forced and voluntary migration. It is also important to make a distinction between trafficking and smuggling.

Most recruiting of future prostitutes takes place in the southern Edo state. The most important destination is Italy, where it is said that as much as 10,000 Nigerian prostitutes would be living. Secondary destinations are the Netherlands, Spain and a range of other countries (Carling 2005)[2]. When Nigerians began migrating to Italy in the 1980s as a response to its high demand for low-skilled labour in agriculture and services, these women where only one of many groups that migrated. The first prostitutes tended to work independently. In the early 1990, immigration restrictions made prospective emigrants increasingly dependent on large loans in order to pay their journey. This provided an opportunity for traffickers, who enticed young women to migrate with promises of good jobs, and subsequently coerced them into prostitution to repay their migration debt (Carling 2005).

The initial contact with the traffickers is often made through a relative, friend, or other familiar person, who puts her in contact with a *madam* who organises and finances the journey. The costs may range from US$40,000 to US$100,000. The migrants and the *madam* conclude a 'pact', which is religiously sealed by a traditional priest, which obliges repayment in exchange for a safe passage to Europe (Carling 2005).

In Europe, the women are under the control of a Nigerian madam, a counterpart of the Nigerian *madam*. Most women know that they are going to work as prostitutes, but not necessarily the arduous conditions under which (street) prostitutes have to work as well as the size of the debt. However, this work does offer some 'career' perspective. After repaying their debt in one to three years, women are basically free, and it is fairly common for them to become a supervisor of other prostitutes and, eventually, a *madam* themselves. Carling (2005) stressed that this prospect of upward mobility is a strong incentive to comply with the pact, and that this strong element of reciprocity between traffickers and the victims make it difficult to reduce this form of trafficking.

Whereas labour migration and trafficking to Europe used to predominantly use air links, visa requirements and increasing immigration controls at air and seaports, seem to have led to an increasing reliance on trans-Saharan, overland routes to the Maghreb countries, and in particular Morocco, from where Nigerians and other sub-Saharan Africans attempt to cross the Mediterranean sea to southern Europe or the Atlantic ocean to the Canary Islands (de Haas 2006b).

According to a recent study, traffickers especially in Kano state successfully exploited the annual pilgrimage to Mecca to traffic children, men and women for different

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[2] According to some interviewees, international destinations of Nigerian sex workers would include Gabon, Burkina Faso, Togo, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Spain, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Niger, Mali, Libya, UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Benin and South Africa.

exploitative purposes e.g. prostitution, begging and all forms of domestic work (cf. Ehindero *et al.* 2006).

2.3. Voluntary and forced internal migration

Due to its sheer population size, internal migration[3] occurring in Nigeria is massive compared to the relatively modest international out-migration. Taking into account the huge ethnic, linguistic and religious variety, as well as the fact that 'non-indigenous' inhabitants of states face substantial legal institutional discrimination, the characteristics and personal impacts of inter-state migration may resemble those of international moves, especially within Africa. It is important to observe that differentials in development *within* Nigerian are at least as important as *between* west-African countries. The dominant movement of internal migration is still towards the densely populated coastal areas, although Abuja in the centre and Kano in the north are also major destinations for internal migrants.

Many internal migrants are children and adolescents. The scale of child labour and child trafficking in Nigeria is generally described as 'immense', although there are no studies to substantiate such claims. Children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, through which migration, even if consented, may gain the character of bonded labour or slavery. A recent ILO study on trafficking trends and prevalence rates in Kwara, Kano, Cross River, and Lagos states exemplifies the thin and often blurred line between voluntary and forced labour migration. It revealed how employment agencies come to rural areas to recruit young people to come to urban centres. These recruiters would often deceive children and young people, who, once arrived in the urban centres, may be forced into, often domestic, labour. Labourers often do not receive any income while the recruiter or middlemen receive the money (Ehindero *et al.* 2006).

Internal migration of children is often rooted in strong traditional practices of 'fostering' (cf. Ehindero *et al.* 2006)[4]. Fostering is a well-established practice in which poor rural families send their children to family members in urban centres with the belief that the urban families offer their children better education and work opportunities. In practice, however, especially since the economic recession in the 1980s, several of these children are overworked, not schooled, and sent to the street to hawk food. While hawking they are in a vulnerable position and can be picked up by traffickers.

Several interviewees criticized the 'automatic' association of internal and international trafficking with sex work. Also according to a recent ILO study, there is increasing consensus that the present focus on sexual exploitation of women and girls

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[3] In Nigeria, people are generally considered a 'migrant worker' if they work in another state than their state of origin.

[4] Black *et al.* (2004) endorsed the view that, despite domestic and international concern about trafficking, the movement of children cannot be viewed without reference to the practice of child fostering, which is widespread in Nigeria, Ghana and many other west-African countries. In fact, different studies view child fostering rather differently. In some cases children might end up in highly abusive and exploitative situations. However, another study concluded that child fostering was practiced by wealthy and poor alike, which could lead to positive outcomes for both family and child (Isiugo-Abanihe 1985, cited in Black *et al.* 2004:22)

is too narrow and that there should be more attention for the labour dimension of human trafficking. The study showed that there are at least 660,000 forced labourers in Sub-Saharan Africa of which 130,000 are victims of trafficking. However, the study revealed that 80 percent of forced labour in the region is for economic exploitation and 8 percent for commercial sexual exploitation (Ehindero *et al.* 2006).

A major source of internal population mobility in Nigeria has been caused by forced displacement associated with frequently recurring and violent religious (such as in Plateau and Kano states in 2004) and ethnic conflicts (such as in Benue state in 2001) as well as conflicts over crude oil mining and refining in the Delta area. 'Non-indigenous' inhabitants of states are often heavily discriminated against, which might be also a reason for internal migration[5]. Nigeria allegedly has the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in West Africa. At the end of the 1990s, it was estimated that the number of IDPs would be as high as 1.2 million (Ibeanu, 1999: 168; cited in Black *et al.* 2004: 17). International organizations have estimated the number of displaced persons at considerably lower levels of 200,000 (see also DPV 2005).

2.4. Immigrants and refugees in Nigeria

Despite past expulsions and the economic decline after 1980, substantial communities of west-Africans migrants remain in Nigeria, and immigration has continued at more modest levels. Between 1984 and 1991, the numbers of migrants from Mali and particularly Ghana declined, whereas the numbers of Togolese and Beninoise seem to show an increasing trend. Although official figures probably underestimate the true number of migrants, table 1 suggests that migrants from Benin, Ghana, Mali, Togo and Niger form the largest groups[6], altogether comprising 305,000 officially registered migrants in 1991. Until the 2006 census results will be released, it is difficult to guess the actual numbers of foreigners, although according to recent UN estimates, over 971,000 immigrants would live in Nigeria[7].

Table 1. Estimates of West-African migrants living in Nigeria

Country	1970	1975	1980	1984	1991
Ghana	129,872	312,904	511,859	680,384	78,706
Mali	85,003	92,656	87,221	112,970	56,471
Gambia	30,600	38,979	49,680	52,134	2,754
Sierra Leone	28,000	29,112	38,190	43,458	1,623
Togo	19,021	26,989	25,908	29,003	48,993
Benin	9,981	15,767	27,103	29,979	100,939
Côte d'Ivoire	3,879	5,721	8,931	10,432	1,845
Burkina Faso	45,890	52,732	65,579	72,328	3,515
Liberia	6,980	5,789	6,998	8,547	8,175
Senegal	2,542	3,381	3,920	5,468	2,009

[5] Such internal conflicts can also leat to international refugee movements. For instance, about 17,000 Nigerian refugees live in West-Cameroon. They come from Taraba state which they fled due to ethnic conflicts in 2002 (UNHCR 2003 cited in DPV 2005).
[6] The 1991 census data are the most recent data source available. At the moment of the report writing, data from the 2006 census were not available yet.
[7] Source : International Migration Report UN 2006.

| Total | 361,768 | 584,030 | 825,389 | 1,044,703 | 305,030 |

Source: Arthur 1991: 74 (1970, 1975, 1980, 1984); 1991 Census (1991).

Compared to other ECOWAS countries, Nigeria hosts a relatively small number of refugees. Nigeria does not see the refugee issue as a major problem because of the much large IDP problem within the country. Authorities and the UNHCR[8] estimate that that there are 19,000 refugees and asylum seekers, of which 9,000 are registered with UNHCR. The majority of refugees are from Liberia (about 7,000). Other groups come from Sierra Leone (1,700) and Chad (3,200). There are 300-500 refugees and asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as well as refugees from Sudan (Darfur), Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Cameroon.

2.5. Characteristics of Nigerian international migrants

Scattered evidence on the origin of Nigerian immigrants in Europe and the US strongly suggest that the majority originates from the relatively developed and densely populated southern provinces. The Ibo from the southeast and the Yoruba from the southwest, and, to a lesser extent the Edo and the Ogoni ethnic groups seem to constitute the majority of Nigerian migrants in the UK (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006). The majority of Nigerians trafficked to Europe seems to originate from Edo state, and Benin City in particular. Edo and, to a lesser extent, the Delta states are known as the main origin areas of sex workers.

The Hausa and other northern groups from the north seems relatively more oriented on migration to the Gulf states. The predominantly Muslim character of the north as well as the position of the northern city of Kano as a major air hub in the *hadj*, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, might partially explain this connection.

Reliable or even approximate data on Nigerian migration is generally lacking. Nigerian authorities do not register or estimate emigration, presumably reflecting the low interest in the issue. Receiving country statistics are incomplete, as many countries do not include naturalised and second-generation Nigerians in immigrant statistics and because of the substantial presence of undocumented migrants.

Nigeria's PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) estimated that more than 2 million Nigerians (mostly highly educated) have emigrated to Europe and the United States (NNPC 2004), but the empirical basis for this claim remains unclear[9]. A compilation of existing migration statistics shows that more than 300,000 first generation Nigerian migrants were legally living abroad at the beginning of the 21st century (see table 2). Although the real number is certainly higher if we include second and third generations as well as undocumented migrants, claims that "millions" of Nigerians would live abroad appear to be rather unlikely.

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[8] UNHCR has branch offices in Cotonou, Accra, Freetown, Monrovia, Conakry, Abidjan, and Dakar.
[9] Hernandez-Coss *et a.* (2006) even claim that 5 million Nigerians would be living abroad. According to some diplomatic sources, at least 1 million Nigerians would live in both the US and the UK, 500,000 in both Germany and Canada, and about 10,000 in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, these estimates lack empirical underpinning.

Table 2. Estimates of Nigerians living outside Africa

Country	Nigerians abroad		Arrival of asylum seekers (2004)
US	160,000	(2004; country of birth)	NA
UK	88,380	(2001; country of birth)	1,209
Germany	16,183	(2002; nationality)	NA
Canada	10,425	(2001; country of birth)	589
Ireland	9,225	(2002; country or birth)	NA
Netherlands	4,564	(2003; country of birth)	NA
Italy	3,575	(1989; nationality)	NA
Austria	2,913	(2001; country of birth)	1,828
Greece	2,021	(2001; nationality)	NA
Australia	1,783	(2001; country of birth)	NA
Belgium	1,636	(2004; nationality)	NA
France	1,425	(1999; nationality)	1,572
Total	**302,130**		

Source: OECD 2006 and http://www.migrationinformation.org

Black *et al*. (2004:19) refer to sources suggesting that nearly 15,000 Nigerians enter Europe and North America annually. The UK census in 2001 reported 86,958 Nigerians living in the UK, with about 80 percent living in greater London. However, this does not include undocumented migrants and UK citizens of Nigerian descent (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006). There would live between 200,000 and 300,000 first and second generation Nigerians in the US. This figure would perhaps include up to 21,000 Nigerian doctors, although these figures are contested. According to 2000 census, 90,000 of the 109,000 Nigerian-born immigrants in the US aged 25 or over were tertiary educated (Adams 2003).

3. Nigerian migration policies in a regional and global context

3.1. Nigerian immigration and emigration policies: regulations

Nigeria has largely pursued a *laissez faire* policy concerning emigration of its citizens. It has only actively intervened in the case of anti-trafficking policies. However, since European countries started to put pressure on Nigeria to collaborate with the re-admission of undocumented migrants, the Nigerian state seems to have begun more active emigration policies through negotiating immigrant quota in exchange for collaboration with re-admission. Nigeria's own immigration policies are rather restrictive, with the exception of ECOWAS citizens who nominally have the right to settle, work and do business (see further). Most non-ECOWAS foreigners have to obtain a visa to come to Nigeria.

3.2. Migration relations with European states: focus on control and re-admission

The focus of migration policies of European states as well as their embassies and consulates in Nigeria[10] is on immigration control, and restrictive visa polices are the

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[10] There are 90 foreign missions in Nigeria with staff ranging from 3 to 40 people.

main instrument of trying to limit immigration. A major problem in this process the widespread forgery of documents supporting visa applications, such as false bank statements and reference letters. This makes Nigerians particularly suspect in the eyes of immigration officials. Nigerians are also thought to be regularly involved in various forms of crime, such as the global trade in cocaine, financial fraud, money laundering and internet scams. Nigerians stakeholders tend to complain that their migration is only put in a negative light through the persistent association with trafficking, crime and fraud, whereas the vast majority of Nigerian migrants are law abiding.

In recent years, migration has clearly risen on the agenda in bilateral relations between Nigeria and European states, who specifically seek Nigeria's collaboration in the *readmission* of undocumented migrants or rejected asylum seekers of Nigerian citizenship. Nigeria is known as one of the most 'cooperative' African states on this issue. Several European countries have signed re-admission agreements with Nigeria, such as Italy[11], Spain, Ireland and Switzerland. Some countries are hesitant to concede to demands of the Nigerian side for certain quota of legal migrants in exchange for cooperation on re-admission – such as Italy is doing.

Visas are described as a major bargaining chip that European states use in negotiations, and that they do not want to give up, while Nigeria tends to ask for immigration quota in exchange for collaboration with re-admission. There is resistance among European states to deal with these issues on the European level due to a lack of agreement on a common migration policy.

Although European embassies tend to describe Nigeria is rather willing to cooperate in increasing border control and readmissions, they tend to state that the main obstacle is the limited resources and organisational and infrastructural capacity on the Nigerian side. Also the sheer size of the country, which counts 147 overland border crossing points, makes it notoriously difficult to control migration.

Although 're-admissions' from several European countries to Nigeria do take place by sending back planes, the numbers returned are fairly small, and interviewees do not tend to see them as a very effective way of limiting undocumented migration. Several stakeholders claim that these repatriations are largely 'symbolical', which would function to give the impression that policy makers are doing 'something'.

Although the readmission agreements with European Countries state that undocumented migrants should be returned on a voluntary basis, some Nigerian interviewees as having the character of deportations, whereby undocumented migrants would be treated "as criminals". Undocumented migrants who are apprehended in Europe are imprisoned in detention centres before being deported, and aircrafts are full of police and security people[12].

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[11] In an official communiqué, Italy describes its cooperation with Nigeria on migration affairs as 'ever improving', referring to the 2000 Italy-Nigeria immigration agreement and the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding against trafficking. Nevertheless, the Italian embassy refused to be interviewed for the purpose of this study.
[12] Because deportees are officially not allowed to be hand coughed, the number of (military) police in an aircraft may well exceed the number of returnees.

3.3. ECOWAS: infringing nominal freedom of movement

Nigeria is a founding member of ECOWAS[13] and hosts its headquarters in Abuja. The purpose of the ECOWAS is to have common trade, elimination of tariffs, and freedom of movement of people. Freedom of movement is enshrined in the ECOWAS protocol of 29 May 1979 on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment. This protocol allows ECOWAS persons to (1) enter any ECOWAS state without a visa; to (2) reside in any ECOWAS country up to 90 days; and (3) after 90 days, citizens can apply for a residence permit which is permanent and allows them to start businesses, seek employment, and invest. An ECOWAS passport was established in 2000. National passports will be gradually phased out.

However, the implementation of the protocol on free movement leaves much to be desired. A major obstacle is the frequent corruption by police, *gendarmerie* and border officials in all ECOWAS countries, which hinders free movement in practice. In Nigeria and throughout roads in the ECOWAS zone, several interviewees mentioned the presence of many unofficial road-blocks where police, *gendarmerie* and border officials take bribes as a form of unofficial toll. It was also reported that it is very difficult if not impossible to obtain residence permits for ECOWAS citizens due to widespread corruption, bureaucracy and a general lack of awareness among migrants of their rights.

Migration issues have also become more important in EU-ECOWAS relations, presumably because of the increasingly visible presence of sub-Saharan migrants in North Africa and Europe and the deaths of West Africans attempting to enter EU. It is seen as a problem by Nigerian and other ECOWAS stakeholders that most negotiations between ECOWAS and EU countries on issues such as migration (i.e., readmission) agreements are done on a bilateral, country-to-country level. ECOWAS would prefer to have block-to-block ECOWAS-EU negotiations.

3.4. Focus on forced migration

So far, the focus of Nigerian migration policies has been on the prevention of trafficking of women and children to Western Europe and other African states. This partly reflects domestic concerns, and in particular those of the wife of the vice-president, but also the priorities of international donors. Nigeria has been under intense pressure particularly from the US to 'combat' trafficking. Trafficking is also seen as harmful for Nigeria's image abroad.

The Nigerian Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) was one of the first Nigerian organisations working on trafficking issues. Since its inception in 1999, 600 women and children have used WOTCLEF's Abuja shelter. WOTCLEF activities focus on awareness raising, through establishing volunteer clubs in each state (of which 23 have been realised) and visiting schools,

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[13] Economic Community of West African States; the French acronym is CEDEAO (Communauté Économique des États des l' Afrique de l'Ouest). Current ECOWAS members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

markets, local leaders, and hair salons in order to raise awareness of trafficking. A WOTCLEF-sponsored TV programme on trafficking played for a number of years. WOTCLEF has supported the elaboration of the national law prohibiting human trafficking, which was adopted in July 2003.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP) is the agency, which was created to implement the law. Its primary functions include the prosecution of traffickers, investigation, rehabilitation of victims of trafficking, the 'enlightenment' (awareness raising) of general public and institutions such as immigration, police, and justice departments.

NAPTIP has a staff of approximately 250 persons located in 6-7 offices around the country. Strategies to identify traffickers include working with paid informants in schools, motor parks, and hair salons in states where trafficking is prevalent. NAPTIP works with government agencies, WOTCLEF, UNICEF and IOM. There is a donor group on Child Trafficking headed by UNICEF. In May of 2006 the NAPTIP headquarters was entered and the trafficking files were stolen. Ironically, this might be a positive indication of NAPTIP's effectiveness.

Between February 2004 and April 2006, NAPTIP was involved in the return of 520 trafficking victims. This includes those apprehended *en route* to North Africa and those who are deported from Europe in the context of re-admission agreements Nigeria has signed with several European countries such as Italy and Spain. This number only includes the women and girls who admit to have been trafficked. The true number of returned trafficking victims is felt to be much higher. It is estimated that of returned undocumented migrants, only a small fraction (perhaps 5 out of 200) admit to have been trafficked, because of the negative stigma attached to female sex workers and their presumed fear to be retraced and punished by their traffickers.

Trafficked persons enter an 'oath of secrecy' (or a 'pact'.) with their *madam* in Europe. The belief in these oaths is said to be very strong and deters the victim from seeking police support or from saying they have been trafficked. Deportees include both traffickers (*madams*) and trafficking victims. When the Italian authorities do 'sweeps', the traffickers are also included among the returned undocumented migrants. Upon arrival in Nigeria, NAPTIP used to put them together, which decreased the chances that victims want to denounce the traffickers. Therefore, NAPTIP now interviews expelled girls and women upon re-entry in Nigeria, so that it becomes apparent who are the traffickers.

The ILO office in Abuja is active in anti-trafficking, although with an emphasis on forced labour. ILO's Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour (SAP-FL) has since 2004 implemented the Programme of Action to combat trafficking in West Africa (PATWA) to address the structural aspects of the demand and supply of trafficking in persons and its consequent forced labour in West Africa. ILO collaborates with government (Ministry of Labour), unions (National Labour Union), and employers (National Labour Consultative). IOM Nigeria has conducted a project on Trafficking of Women and Children from 2001 to 2005.

There is little evidence that Nigeria's new anti-trafficking policies have led to a measurable decrease in trafficking, although most interviewees state that people are

more aware of the dangers of trafficking. Some interviewees criticised the public awareness campaigns for having the character of general anti-migration manifestations which try to convince the youth that they should not migrate. One interviewee said:

> "They simply say 'East, west, home is best'. But this is the wrong message. You won't stop people from going. You should instead inform people how to migrate legally so as to create a balanced opinion. Migration is not really a bad thing."

Nigerian stakeholders tend to criticize the failure of European receiving countries, such as Italy, to identify the traffickers in country and not deport them with the trafficking victims. Currently, no such differentiation is made, and all undocumented migrants are categorised as 'illegals':

The focus on improving Nigeria's rather negative image abroad through anti-trafficking campaigns is subject of criticism by civil society actors, because this would coincide with an emphasis on repression and a lack of attention to the victims themselves:

> "The Nigerian government wants to make a good show, laundering its international image, rather than protecting the rights of individuals. For instance, the preamble of the anti-trafficking law only mentions the bad image migrants are creating for Nigeria. It does not address the rights of the individuals."

Because victims of trafficking are not well protected in Europe and in Nigeria, they are generally not inclined to denounce traffickers, which is seen as essential to really address the issue. It was suggested that undocumented migrants should be given a temporary or permanent residency status if they inform on a trafficker and will not be deported straightaway.

4. Emergent links between migration and development policies?

4.1. Contested migration-development links

In the first four decades after independence, international migration has hardly been an issue in Nigerian politics, and until recently no connection was made between migration and national development strategies whatsoever. In comparison, the much more large-scale rural-to-urban internal migration has attracted much more attention from Nigerian policy makers and development agencies. However, this was mostly with the aim of stemming rural-to-urban migration rather than using this migration as a development force.

This policy was based on the assumption that migration impacts negatively on development processes. For instance, in the few instances Nigeria's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), in Nigeria better known as *NEEDS* (see NNPC 2004), mentions (internal) migration, it is generally seen as a force disrupting social cohesion in village societies and causing urban crises. Migration is strongly associated

with trafficking, forced child labour and prostitution. In addition, Nigeria's PRSP perceives internal migration as a force which potentially contributes to urban unemployment[14] and urban pollution and waste management problems (NNPS 2004:12 + xix). Migration of the educated workforce to urban areas would also provoke the ageing and deepen the poverty of rural populations (NNPS 2004:32), and is indirectly blamed for the decrease in the level of security through

> "social dislocation caused by massive rural-urban migration, and the breakdown of societal values, leading to fraud and community unrest" (NNPS 2004:95).

The perceived solution to these problems is to develop rural areas to stem rural-urban migration through rural development schemes (NNPS 2004:70). The PRSP proposes to "implement an integrated rural development programme to stem the flow of migration from rural to urban areas" (NNPC 2004: ix). Nigeria's PRSP warns that if rural development strategies fail, and internal migration continues,

> "the rate of urban unemployment could become unmanageable. The implications for poverty—and crime, conflict, and the maintenance of democracy—are grave" (NNPS 2004: 43).

As far as Nigerians policy makers have dealt with *international* migration, its positive contribution to development has so far mainly been envisaged in strong connection with *return* migration (cf. Federal Government of Nigeria 2004:38). Emigrants have been seen as a drain on the country's resources rather than a potentially positive force for national development even when living abroad. More in general, in most policy circles migration, whether internal or international, is still primarily seen as a development failure rather than a constituent part of broader social and economic transformation processes.

4.2. Development contributions of internal and international migration

In this context, it is relevant to assess what has been the actual contribution of internal and international migration to social and economic development. The contribution of internal migration has possibly been more positive than that of international migration, although the dominant policy analysis tends to put international migration into a more positive light, in contrast to the negative role ascribed to internal migration. International migration of the elite, although numerically not impressive, is widely associated with a large-scale capital flight, in which large parts of the country's oil windfall is transferred to foreign bank accounts and invested abroad.

The recent, often undocumented, migration of people from more modest socio-economic backgrounds to southern Europe and elsewhere may therefore have been more beneficial for national economic development. This can even be the case of trafficking-related migration of female sex workers, as is testified by the visible

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[14] This is based on the assumption that labour demand would be constant, and ignores the fact that migrants themselves are also consumers of services and products, and, hence, increase the total size of the urban economy.

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increases in remittance-driven wealth in Edo state and Benin City in particular, from where much recent emigration including trafficking takes place.

Over the past years, there has been a remarkable increase in remittances. As part of its wish to develop a so-called remittance partnership (see paragraph 4.4) with Nigeria, of the UK Department for International Development (DfID) recently completed a study on the UK-Nigeria 'remittance corridor'. The study concluded that Nigeria received about 2.26 US$ billion in registered remittances in 2004, while in kind remittances (such as cars and electronics) were estimated at a level of 0.510 US$ billion. Based on the assumption that fifty percent of the remittances to Nigeria are unrecorded[15], it was concluded that the real level of remittances must be around 5 US$ billion (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006).

Most UK remittances are destined to cities in the main origin areas of Nigerians migrants in the southwest and southeast regions (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006). Thus, international remittances seem to exacerbate rather than level down the income differentials between Nigerian states. Internal migration has probably more contributed to income redistribution from urban to rural areas, which might seem surprisingly in the light of the bad press it tends to receive in comparison to international migration. Back in the 1970s, on the basis of a survey conducted in rural Nigeria, Adepoju (1974) already concluded that internal remittances enabled rural households to significantly improve their livelihoods, construct houses and enabled children's education. However, there is virtually no empirical evidence to assess the development impacts of internal and international migration more precisely.

4.3. A nascent interest in migration and development policies

So far, Nigeria has never pursued a migration or a remittance-led development strategy, as has been the case in countries with far higher rates of out-migration. Migration prevention has ranked higher on the agenda. In recent years, there seems to be a certain (re) appreciation of the potentially positive contributions of international migration and remittances to national development. There is also growing awareness that the migrants themselves are not the culprits for the loss of resources, but rather the rather dismal economic, institutional and security conditions prevailing in Nigeria. As one interviewee said:

> "Instead of pushing migrants not to migrate or to come back, the state should create the circumstances to lure them back"

The formal re-introduction of democracy in 1999 and increasing freedom of speech was generally recognised as an important step forward in restoring trust among Nigerian migrants in Nigeria. Yet at the same time the high insecurity and crime rates as well as the omnipresent corruption and lack of economic reform were seen as massive obstacles.

Political change towards democratisation after 1999 also seems to have coincided with a certain policy shift towards more positive attitudes on international migration

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[15] The empirical basis of this assumption is not clear.

and development. For instance, Nigeria's PRSP draws a clear link between democratisation and economic growth on the one hand, and the role of emigrants and donors in national economic development on the other:

> "Some momentum for change has been building since the transition to democracy in 1999… Increasing numbers of Nigerians in the diaspora are willing to return and contribute to the economy, and many of the donor agencies that boycotted Nigeria during the military era have returned" (NNPS 2004: 13)

It also aims to

> "Continue to actively strengthen links with Nigerians and other Africans in the diaspora to deepen technical and business ties with the rest of the world, and improve export market penetration, especially in textiles, food, and cultural artefacts" (NNPS 2004: 83).

It is also interesting to observe the contrast with internal migration, whose contribution to national development is still seen as negative. Strikingly, the PRSP also refers to attracting investments from *non-Nigerian* African migrants:

> "With better management of the economy and the restoration of investor confidence, a higher level of investment inflow is expected … Efforts will be made to attract investment from wealthy Nigerians at home and abroad, and strategies will be developed for inducing other Africans in the diaspora to invest in Nigeria" (NNPS 2004:116).

The launch of the "presidential dialogue with Nigerians abroad" in 2002 marked this shift in policies. The presidential dialogue aims at incorporating the Nigerian Diaspora in national development policies. This also coincides with the stated willingness among the government to establish and reinforce links with Nigerian migrants as well as the numerous associations they have established abroad.

A study on the contribution of UK-based Diasporas to development and poverty reduction conducted by Van Hear *et al.* (2004) highlighted the diversity of Nigerians living in the UK and their organisations. It also showed that UK-based Nigerian diaspora organisations draw on a variety of constituencies, such as national or state-level interest groups such as business associations, associations of particular ethnic groups; whereas others are based on gender, religion, political and cultural activities. Van Hear *et al.* (2004) also reported that, beyond such particular interest groups, Nigerians (and Ghanaians) in the UK figure prominently in pan-African diaspora development organisations, for instance the London-based NGO the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)[16].

Van Hear *et al.* (2004) stated that the Nigeria diaspora provides a substantial contribution, especially by way of remittances, to the homeland, and that, in addition to these transfers, members of the Nigerian diaspora(s) contribute to poverty reduction and development in Nigeria through temporary or permanent return programmes for

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[16] See www.afford-uk.org

highly skilled (partly realised through UNDP's TOKTEN - Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Networks - programme) and numerous efforts to mobilise Nigerians for the social and political development of Nigeria (for a detailed description, see Van Hear 2004:10-11)

It is not so much the engagement of Diaspora groups that is new, but rather the interest of the Nigerian government in their potential contribution to national development. While the government has focused its hope on individual emigrants to invest, their associations are primarily ascribed a role in running and sustaining development projects. As part of the presidential dialogue with Nigerians abroad, the president had meetings with Nigerians living abroad in Atlanta and London.

The government has also established the NIDO (Nigerian in the Diaspora Organization), which has an office based in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. NIDO has set up a network of branches in the Nigerian embassies abroad as well as destination country-specific websites. The official aims of NIDO comprise to (1) Encourage the participation of Nigerians in Diaspora in the affairs of the country; (2) Provide a forum to organisations for the exchange of views and experience; (3) Enhance the image of Nigeria through networking; and (4) Build a database of Nigerians with professional skills and make such database available for the benefit of government, the private sector and Nigeria's partners

The President also appointed a Special Assistant to the President on Nigerians in the diaspora was appointed. Nigerians are officially encouraged to organise themselves and to link up with NIDO branches. There would be NIDO branches in almost all European countries, but also three in Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Australia) , and in African countries (South Africa, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire). NIDO organises meetings and aims to development projects in collaboration with Nigerians abroad..

The Nigeria National Volunteer Services (NNVS) is another government agency, which has been established to reinforce bonds with the Nigerian Diaspora. NVVS aims to engage the Diaspora in a dialogue and to create a reverse brain drain ('brain gain') of their skills and knowledge. NVVS attempts to mobilise Nigerians professionals living abroad for capacity building, through encouraging temporary visits, technical missions and sabbaticals to Nigerian institutions or through giving summer courses. These contacts are partly established through linking up with Nigerian professional associations abroad. However, it is unclear how NIDO and NNVS function in practice, and no (independent) evaluations are available

4.4. Remittances and remittance policies

At least until recently, Nigerian policy makers and banks paid scant attention to the issue of remittances. The Nigerian government and banks seemed mainly interested in large money transfers and major investments by Nigerians living abroad. Small-scale person-to-person remittances were no major issue of interest. Although the Nigerian Central Bank is part of the technical committee responsible for drafting a coherent migration policy, it is unclear to what extent the globally increased interest of donors in remittances is going to change the attitudes of the Nigerian government and banks.

At the 2004 G8 summit, countries agreed to engage in remittance partnerships. Nigeria is one of the countries with which the UK government wishes to engage into such a partnership, but up to now this has been obstructed by a (1) general lack of information on remittances and migrants abroad and (2) very little interest by the Nigerian Central Bank to engage in the discussion.

The recent DfID study on the UK-Nigeria remittance corridor identified the weakened banking structure as a major obstacle for facilitating remittances. Due to decades of economic crisis, the number of Nigerians banks that have branches abroad has decreased. For small remittance amounts, their fixed fees are higher than sending money through Western Union, the main money transfer agency in Nigeria, which is also quicker. In addition, money transfer agencies offer the option to pay out in US$ instead of Nigerian Nairas to avoid the official, low exchange rate. Informal systems of value transfer are common, in particular in Italy, where there are a high number of undocumented Nigerian migrants who have difficult access to formal remittance channels (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006).

The main recommendation of the DfID report is to encourage the use of formal remittance systems through (1) increasing competition in the remittance market and facilitating the entry of more competitors including the postal service and telecommunications providers which can offer remittance products through mobile phone techniques; (2) making regulations affecting remittances more transparent and predictable; (3) encouraging banks to go beyond the role of being money transfer agents and to become more proactive by designing remittance products for the Diaspora, and offering other products, such as mortgages; and (4) building confidence in and capacity of formal financial institutions. The report also observed that banks are the only institutions authorized to pay remittances in Nigeria, the extensive national network of post offices is currently underutilized for distributing remittances.

It was also suggested that in order to increase the development impact of remittances in Nigeria, the government could consider matching the collective remittances from Diaspora associations (Hernandez-Coss *et al.* 2006). This proposal is apparently inspired by the Mexican *tres-por-uno* programmes.

4.5. Elements for a coherent policy on migration and development

The Nigerian president has appointed a Special Assistant to the President on Migration and Humanitarian Affairs. Her office has established a technical committee of government ministries and agencies[17], which currently discusses a coherent policy on migration and development. Civil society actors do not seem to be actively involved in the process. This process is facilitated by IOM Nigeria. The national agencies have asked IOM to support the policy development process by providing guidelines or examples of other similar policies in other countries. IOM suggested

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[17] The committee consists of the ministries of Finance, Education, Justice, Science and Technology, Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth Matters, Women Affairs, Health, Foreign Affairs. It also includes the following agencies: the central bank of Nigeria, National Commission for Refugees, NAPTIP, National Population Commission, Nigerian Labour Congress, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), National Planning Commission and the National Human Rights Commission.

using the African Union Strategic Framework on Migration, which has been drafted in 2006, to guide the process. The IOM will also provide training on migration management. The committee had met six times until July 2006 and intends to submit the draft policy paper to the Federal Council by November 2006 and in any case before the 2007 elections.

According to the office of the special Assistant to the President on Migration and Humanitarian Affairs, the main components of the migration policy are likely to be focused on mapping Nigerian migration and identifying the most needed expatriates, how not to lose skilled labour, how to bring back the diaspora, and how to prevent undocumented migration. It has also been mentioned that, as part of this new policies, migrants will possibly be granted voting rights in the next elections[18].

Several interviewees expressed a fair level of scepticism about these initiatives. According to one Nigerian interviewee, the government's policies still essentially boil down to anti-emigration policies:

> "The message is still 'do not migrate'. When the president talks to Nigerians living abroad he says 'come back struggle it out in Nigeria'. This is unrealistic if you take into account the enormous numbers of graduates without decent employment. They don't recognise the unattractive environment that Nigeria is. The government is not trying to regulate it through managing migration and protecting migrants. It is still seeing migrants as deviants. At the same time, ministers send their children to study and work abroad, but they don't call it migration".

This sceptical view seems to be partly based on doubts on the intentions of the government for developing a migration and development policy. One interviewee feared that, just as it has been the case with trafficking, that the issue of migration and development is been imposed by the international community and that is predominantly a fashion:

> "When trafficking became fashionable, many NGOs "jumped into trafficking"

The fear is that the same might happen with the issue of migration, remittances and development. According to many interviewees the low levels of security and institutionalised corruption are among the main concerns of migrants who return temporarily or permanently. Due to their alleged wealth, many migrants are said to be attacked and robbed when they visit Nigeria. NNVS tries to address this problem by providing police protection for returning migrants, which shows how worrying the security situation is.

4.6. ECOWAS' migration and development policies

ECOWAS has recently developed its Poverty Reduction Strategy. Although it does not address international migration, ECOWAS is starting a dialogue on migration for West Africa, but has not developed a specific policy on migration and development.

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[18] Nigeria does apparently not have restrictions on dual citizenship.

The focus is on facilitating genuine free movement within the ECOWAS zone by making citizens more aware of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment and by clamping down on corruption and roadblocks hindering its effective implementation throughout the ECOWAS zone. Several ECOWAS states, and in particular Senegal, Mali and Cape Verde, have more elaborate migration and development policies than Nigeria at this moment and have established special ministries for their nationals living abroad. Several interviewees suggested that by looking at and learning from experience in such countries, a common migration and development policy of ECOWAS could be created.

4.7. Euro-African collaboration in migration and development polices.

Nigerian interviewees tend to criticize EU migration policies for being solely focused on security issues and migration prevention. The feeling is often that these policies fail because governments cannot control migration because it is a result of or is supported by globalisation and new technologies. Probably more than other West-Africans, Nigerians feel stigmatised and collectively treated as potential undocumented migrants, criminals and traffickers. Even Nigerians with good jobs in Nigeria have difficulties securing a visa.

The international image of Nigerian migration is dominated by issues around trafficking, whereas the large majority of Nigerians emigrants are often highly skilled and do not cause problems. For low skilled workers, was suggested that European states should give temporary stay permits that enable individuals to work and acquire skills and income and then support them in returning to their countries of origin.

5. Conclusions

Knowledge gaps

Although several hundreds of thousands of Nigerians live outside Africa, as a proportion of its total population of an estimated 140 million, the number of Nigerians living abroad is relatively small compared to other African countries such as Ghana, Senegal or Morocco. Likewise, remittances are relatively low as percentage of Nigerian GDP, and certainly compared to the total oil revenues.

However, a general lack of quantitative and qualitative research makes it impossible to make any definite statements. There is no data confirming that there is a 'massive outflow' of Nigerians. In the same vein, claims on the harmful effects of the Nigerian 'brain drain' lack a sound empirical underpinning. It seems to be important to put the development potential of migration into a realistic perspective – and to make relevant policies based on factual situations and not on international policy trends. However, too many facts are simply unknown. Therefore, more research on the nature and trends of Nigerian migration as well its development implications is urgently needed in order to develop policies that can enhance the development potentials of migration.

Migrants' rights as precondition for migration and development policies

Nevertheless, there seems to be a certain scope for developing policies to enhance the development contribution of internal and international migration. Most Nigerian stakeholders (both from government and civil society) stressed that such a policy should first start by recognising and respecting the basic human rights of migrants. This seems to be a responsibility of both sending and receiving countries. Without such rights, migrants become extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Paradoxically, the generally repressive ('combating') approaches towards phenomenon such as the trafficking of children and women have limited effects or are even counterproductive because they deprive the victims even further of such rights.

Although all stakeholders condemned internal and international trafficking and child labour, many Nigerian stakeholders also stressed that it is virtually impossible to eradicate these phenomena if their structural causes remain unaddressed: high inequality, poverty and corruption. Exploited and marginalised migrants are unlikely and less able to contribute to the development of their communities of origin. More in general, it was said that European employers profit from cheap immigrant labour and their often undocumented status makes it easier to exploit them. Instead of targeting these employers, migrants are punished and stigmatised while denying their rights.

Most Nigerian stakeholders, in particular those in non-governmental positions criticize the anti-trafficking policies of the European states because they do not differentiate between traffickers and their victims, which are instead collectively labelled as 'illegals' and subsequently expelled. They stressed that serious anti-trafficking policies should address trafficked men and women as victims and protect their rights. A blanket repressive approach will work counterproductive because it reinforces the strong reciprocal relationship between traffickers and their victims.

The Nigerian state is equally seen as failing to adequately defend emigrants' rights. This applies both to Nigerian emigrants as immigrants in Nigeria. Emigrants have often been seen as deviants or even as traitors, and the Nigerian state has done little to protect their rights abroad and those of forced and voluntary returnees. Returned victims of trafficking tend to get re-trafficked very rapidly, because there is no real policy on repatriation and re-integration. The Nigerians embassies do not really support migrants and protect undocumented and even legal migrants. Going to the embassy has even been described as "the very last option" in case of trouble.

Furthermore, the Nigerian state – as well as other ECOWAS member states – is failing to implement the ECOWAS protocol which guarantees free movement and settlement of ECOWAS citizens. In practice, free movement is impeded by insecurity and high levels of corruption and the related phenomenon of roadblocks and 'toll' levying by police officials.

Creating legal possibilities for immigration

From the viewpoint of most Nigerian interviewees, European states do not sufficiently respect the human rights of legal and undocumented migrants. Instead of

criminalising and stigmatising migrants, it was said that European states should recognise the need for immigrant labour through giving access to legal channels of temporary or more long-term migration. Access to visas should also be made easier. Many Nigerian interviewees felt deeply uncomfortable with the fact that the focus on trafficking, crime and document forgery obscures the fact that the vast majority of Nigerian migrants are not criminal. In this context, it has been suggested that the Nigerian government should open discussions with destination country governments about changing laws to create more legitimate opportunities for migration; and that the Nigerian government needs to control and ensure that the rights of migrants are respected.

Preventing conflicts and informing people

Several Nigerian stakeholders argued against 'migration prevention programmes', which deny the fundamental reasons why people migrate as well as their rights to do so. They advocated a strategy of preventing forced migration through conflict prevention while giving people a genuine and informative choice to migrate or not. The lack of information available to prospective migrants has been mentioned as one of the major problems. Many prospective migrants are highly ignorant about the situation at the destination, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation including trafficking. However, it was also said that information campaigns should provide honest information about migration. Campaigns that try to convey a "don't migrate" message seem to fail, because they are not trusted. The relative success of many migrants – even trafficked persons – show people that migration *can* be a genuine avenue of upward socio-economic mobility.

It was also frequently mentioned that policies trying to curb migration are unrealistic as long as the high differences between origin and destination in terms of educational and employment opportunities remain. Both sending and receiving states seem to be reluctant to accept this fact.

Creating links between migration and development policies

The issue of migration and development has only recently been put on the agenda of the Nigerian government as well as development agencies. This study has identified a number of specific obstacles that impede the implementation of policies that to reinforce the development potential of migration:

- The lack of rights of many recent Nigerian migrants to Europe, which make them vulnerable and easy to exploit. This obviously diminishes their own socio-economic mobility as well as their capacity to contribute to origin country development.

- A general feeling of distrust of migrants towards the Nigerian state, which makes it difficult to 'reach out' to diaspora groups. This seems to be the result of years of repression and neglect, and is unlikely to be changed overnight. This is visible in the NIDO initiative, which obviously lacks a firm connection with the already very active development associations of Nigerians abroad.

- The general lack of insecurity, high prevalence of crime, high levels of corruption and a generally unfavourable investment environment prevent Nigerian migrants from investing, circulating and returning.

- Both the Nigerian and European states have put severe limitations on legal migration.

- The development missions of receiving countries in Nigeria have not made a genuine link between migration and development issues. In practice, policies of receiving countries tend to almost exclusively associate migration with security issues and crime.

- Both the Nigerian and European states base their policies on the assumption that migration is the result of a lack of development. This makes it difficult to envisage a policy that creates a positive link between these phenomena.

- The fact that a significant proportion of Nigerian migrants are *relatively* wealthy and the fact that most migrants are from the relatively developed south, will make it difficult to establish a direct link between migration, poverty reduction and reducing inequality at the national level. However, more research is needed to identify in which regions and under which circumstances such positive connections can be made.

- There is striking lack of empirical knowledge on the number of Nigerians living abroad, their origin and whereabouts as well as the reciprocal connections of this migration with development. This lack of knowledge seems to be indicative of the past neglect of emigrants.

Recommendations

There was general agreement among the Nigerian stakeholders that in order to enhance the development contribution of migrants, it is necessary to create a *generally* conducive environment for development and investment. Nigeria is still seen as too risky, and beyond the oil industry few investments are being made allowing for a significant skills transfer. In the eyes of many interviewees, there are not enough assurances that entrepreneurs can make profit and can get these profits back.

Besides this need to pursue sustained *general* economic and political reform in order to restore trust among migrants, the following specific policy suggestions can be formulated:

- In order to reinforce links with Nigerian migrants and their organisations, the Nigerian state wishes to encourage migrants to register at Nigerian embassies abroad. However, they will only do so, if the Nigerian state assumes a more active role in assisting and defending the rights of both documented and undocumented migrants. After years of repression, the Nigerian state is

generally distrusted. Granting migrants voting rights is also believed to contribute to restoring trust.

- With regards to the desire of the Nigerian government to 'reach out' to diaspora groups and to 'tap' their development potential, a important point of departure seems to be that the governments and development agencies should not so much try to 'mobilise' diasporas for development, but rather link up with and build on the wealth of *existing* initiatives of Nigerian (and other West-African migrants), such as AFFORD in the UK. Current initiatives of the Nigerian state such as NIDO seem to be rather top-down and this is perhaps an obstacle for their successful implementation. It is important to recognise that many migrants *are* already mobilised for development on their own force. They are unlikely to be willing to be 'tapped' by the Nigerian government. A more fruitful approach could therefore be if the Nigerian state and development agencies try to reinforce rather than direct the transnational engagement of diaspora groups in development cooperation.

- The 'brain drain' cannot be prevented as long as general conditions in Nigeria do not improve substantially. In Nigeria basic rights are not upheld and there is not a feeling that the government protects its citizens. Besides improving investment conditions, personal security needs to be addressed before the 'brain drain' can be turned into a brain gain through increased remittances, transfer of knowledge and competencies and even a reversal of the capital flight.

- Encouraging free and circular movement through liberalising migration polices. This applies both for West-African as European countries. Migrants that can freely travel back and forth are more likely to contribute to development. Most Nigerian stakeholder felt that EU must create more ways for Nigerians and other West Africans to migrate legally and move freely in and out. The high restrictions mean that the poorer Nigerians cannot migrate, and also provoke undocumented migration. As it is difficult to obtain visas, it was said that once a West African gets one they are likely to stay a long time. If there is freer movement, West African nationals would be less compelled to stay permanently. Increasing possibilities for legal migration and freer movement should preferably be negotiated on EU-ECOWAS ('block to block') level instead of on bilateral level.

- In the same vein, it was felt that also the Nigerian state should liberalise its immigration policies and that Nigeria and other ECOWAS states should genuinely implement the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons, the right of residence and establishment. Regional integration, both in economic and migratory terms, is seen as a powerful tool for national development.

- For the Nigerian state and banks, there is substantial scope to decrease the costs of remitting money and to encourage the use of formal remittance systems through increasing competition and transparency, offering remittance products through mobile phone techniques, encouraging banks to design

remittance products for the Diaspora, and building general confidence in and capacity of formal financial institutions.

- In order to create a knowledge base for policies, data should be gathered on Nigerians living abroad as well as the development contribution of migration on the local and regional level. There is a striking, almost total lack of basic data and research on Nigerian migration and its reciprocal connections with national and regional development. Therefore, more research on the nature and recent trends of Nigerian migration as well its development implications is urgently needed in order to elaborate policies that can enhance the development potentials of migration. Such research should increase insight into the differentiated and interconnected roles of internal, intra-regional (ECOWAS), African and trans-continental migration in national development.

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Annex 1. Individuals and organisations interviewed

Contact person	Organisation
Tommaso de Cataldo (Country Representative)	International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Abuja.
Queen Chinwe Okaro (Programme Assistant)	International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Abuja.
U.S. Haruna, Director (Director, Legal & Prosecution)	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP)
Abdulrahim O. Shuaibu (Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary)	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP)
Neil Angell (second secretary)	British High Commission, Abuja.
Victoria Nwogu (Programme Specialist)	UNIFEM, Abuja
Chika John Ejinaka (Director of Programmes)	Office of the Special Assistant to the President on Migration and Humanitarian Affairs
Ard van der Vorst (Deputy Head of Mission)	Royal Netherlands Embassy, Abuja
Dr. Patience Idemudia (Chief Technical Advisor)	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Veronica Umaru (National Coordinator)	WOTCLEF (Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation)
Martin Malan (1st Secretary)	South African High Commission, Abuja
Amb. Joe Keshi	NNVS, Nigerian National Volunteer Services
S.O. Monioh	NNVS, Nigerian National Volunteer Services

N'faly Sanoh (Principal Programme Officer, Immigration Political Affairs Department)	ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States), Abuja.
P.O. Akinsola (Assistant Director, Special Assistant to Chief of Protocol)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja.
Thomas Millar (Head of Section, Politics, Economics and Trade, Information and Communication)	Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria
Jan Wimaladharma (Private sector development advisor, growth team)	Department for International Development (DfID), British High Commission.
Caroline Nicolson (Program Officer)	Save the Children, Abuja
Alphonse Malanda, (UNHCR Representative for Nigeria and ECOWAS)	UNHCR
Prince Bola Ajibose (director)	National Commission for Refugees
Mustapha Cherqaoui	Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco

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