International Institute of Social Studies

Erasmus

Journey to Nowhere? Reintegration of Nigerian 'deported returnees' from Libya

A Research Paper presented by:

VINCENT OBIORA EDEH

(Netherlands)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

SJP

Members of the Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
NANNEKE WINTERS
Second Reader:
HELEN HINTJENS

The Hague, The Netherlands
December 2021

Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460
e: info@iss.nl
w: www.iss.nl
fb: http://www.facebook.com/iss.nl
twitter: @issnl

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Contents

List of Tables

List of Acronyms

AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees Migrants & Internally Displaced Persons
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Acknowledgement

Abstract

This study is about the implementation of reintegration of returnees under the Assisted and Voluntary Return program of the IOM. The study uses a qualitative approach as its empirical tool to elicit and investigates the experiences of five male Nigerian returnees from Libya, through interviews, as well as interviewing two male representatives of IOM and NAPTIP, respectively. The extent of success or failure in reintegration in the AVRR program of the IOM comes out through these experiences. Whilst challenges include stigmatization, debt and family commitments, difficulties with reintegration on a personal level, and delays in remittance of support funds, and insufficient funds all emerge as structural challenges. Unsurprisingly, challenges to reintegration on the personal level for returnees tend to be the same for deportees as for returnees. This study explores the experiences of returnees to show how personal reintegration strategies are undertaken, and to show the importance of their immediate social networks in influencing the reintegration process.

Relevance to Development Studies

Reintegration as part of return migration is a development issue. At the very least, the high costs of return and deportation programs make it imperative to ensure their viability in order to prevent re-emigration. When reintegration is efficient, those returned or deported are better informed to make decisions about the activities that can promote their reintegration. Knowledge of spanners in the wheels of reintegration processes, both personal and structural, can help organizations like IOM and government, when working in the migration field to come up with a better and more nuanced approaches to supporting reintegration of returned migrants. Consequently, this study considers the ripple effects of reintegration programs, including 'modern day slavery' and human trafficking that can result from repeated 'irregular migration'. In this regard, this research is useful in informing longer-term development strategies to include returned migrants in the wider planning process.

Keywords

Migrants; Nigeria; Libya; IOM; Returnees; Deportees; Assisted Voluntary Return; Reintegration.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1   Nature of problem

Some Nigerians are ready to make significant sacrifices and run serious risks to acquire a foothold in a wealthy country. This may be due to the perceived hopelessness of daily life in Nigeria and the perception that emigration is the only available path to a better life (Carling 2006: 21). Several issues affect Nigeria's economic and social development. These include conflicts and insecurities, corruption and economic deterioration culminating to poverty, which constitute incentives for emigration (Carling 2006: 7). Nigeria's migration rate was -0.29 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2021. This indicates that the number of individuals departing Nigeria is somewhat larger than the number of persons entering it[1]. Approximately 1.7million Nigerians live outside the country (UNDESA 2020: 46).

While this figure is projected to increase, there are also those Nigerian citizens who are deported every year from different countries, including Libya, a recurring destination for forced or 'voluntary' returns. In many cases, these deportees migrate to Libya as a gateway to Europe, travelling without visas, following trans-Saharan Desert routes.

Image 1: Nigeria Map and International boundaries

---

[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1233163/net-migration-rate-in-nigeria/#statisticContainer
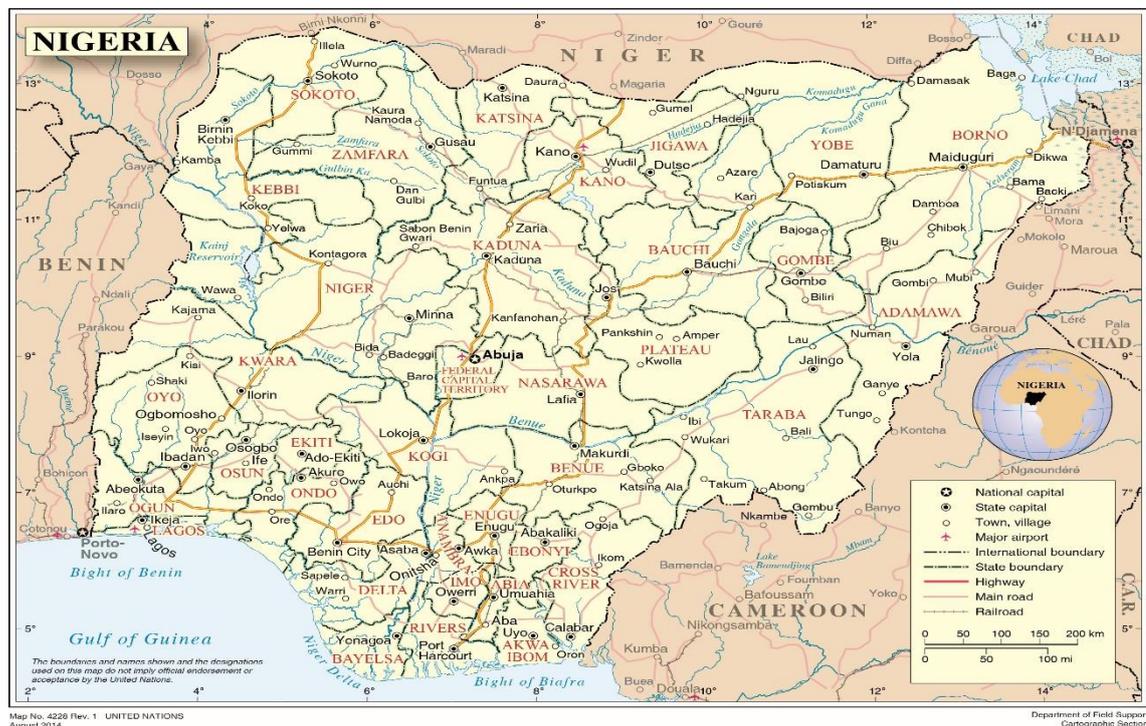
Image 2: Map of Libya and International boundaries

Consequently, their journey translates into perceptions of them as 'illegal', and among the 'undeserving', unworthy of reintegration interventions after they are deported back to Nigeria. This underscores the position of Coutin (1993 in De Genova 2002: 423) that any "act that constructs individuals' legal identities has political implications". Besides, Plambech (2017b) in her study on the economies embedded in the migration of Nigeria female sex workers highlighted that although deportation is increasingly seen as a community experience rather than an individual failing, it remains a highly stigmatized topic in Benin, which the women referred to as a "sealed lips" problem. Deportation appears to be more humiliating and stigmatizing than sex work when compared because it lacks the possibility or tangible outcome of upward social mobility (Plambech 2017b: 149-150). Although depending on the amount of time spent in diaspora, deportees may have difficulty finding work or starting a company because they lack knowledge of local codes and traditions in the countries to which they have returned, and are unfamiliar with social resources to help them (David 2015).

In Nigeria's case, deportees are often perceived as individuals who have committed a crime to deserve their deportation. Having being deported can impact and shape the response given to returnees/deportees. For instance, this can determine whether they can be entitled to reintegration on their return to the country. How do these deportees navigate through the reintegration process in the post deportation phase? How are some of the issues

they face addressed, including debt and family obligations? From the perspective of migration control and management, material problems may incentivise re-emigration if they remain unmet. Deportees who are unable to find their footing in the social life and economy of Nigeria, and cannot take care of their own wellbeing may be regarded as burdens on society or even as 'unwanted surplus life' (Henke 2005). Due to Nigeria's high unemployment rate, there are already significant numbers of disgruntled young Nigerian men and women who can be quickly mobilized for crimes in times of crisis (Carling 2006: 16). Young deportees are the most susceptible to this situation and the least likely to be listened to when crises occur.

1.2 Justification and relevance of this research

In the existing research on return migration, the importance of economic and social reintegration has often been overlooked (David 2017). As integration seems to be a more contentious issue in 'destination nations' than 'origin countries', any viable mechanisms for resolving dynamic problems of reintegration are still in their infancy, and return migration remains an often-overlooked field of migration studies in general (Arowolo 2000). Personal encounters with Nigerian deportees from Libya have shown that the problem of labour market and social reintegration is a hydra headed problem. The complex and multi-dimensional quality of the circumstances means that returnees (deportees) are often characterized as the 'undeserving' since they migrated illegally, and are stigmatized for being returned (often empty-handed) by the society and by their families.

In this study I use a composite character, Emris (not his real name), to represent the young Nigerian deportees who are part of this study. The choice of focusing on young people is hinged on the fact that they constitute the main population of people who often take the Libya route to Europe. This is evident in the study as all the respondents are young people. Young men like Emris shared with me the several issues they faced in getting work or taking care of the wellbeing of their families and themselves. Emris ended up teaching in a secondary school to make ends meet. He was able to do this because he had a bachelor's degree in Applied Biochemistry from a reputable Nigerian university. While teaching in a secondary school, a job taken by many more educated Nigerians, he also felt the job was not in line with his skills and experience. He was not satisfied about his reintegration into the Nigerian society, specifically South-Eastern Nigeria where Emris originates from.

This study is important and unique in five respects. One is its aim of amplifying attention for the reintegration of deported migrants into their home society and to avoid re-emigration and in order to reverse the loss of manpower resulting from their initial departure. Secondly, the study aims to contribute to the body of literatures on return migration. Thirdly, this study critically investigates the role of government and NGO actors in reintegrating deportees into local society and work. Fourthly, the study interrogates the 'voluntary' clause attached to the return of migrants. Also, the study aims to clearly point out the shared lived experiences between 'deportees' and 'returnees'. Finally, the study provides some new insights into the experiences of young Nigerian migrants and the motives that influenced their original emigration from Nigeria.

1.3 Background to the Proposed Study

14 January 2018, is a memorable date for Emris, a young Nigerian in his late twenties. On that day, along with about 60 other individuals, he was deported from Libya to Nigeria. The deportation was the climax of his two-year journey which began from Nigeria to Niger Republic and trekking through the Sahara Desert to Libya, en route to Europe. Emris embarked on this journey in the hope of finding 'greener pastures' in Europe. In other words, he sought improved life chances, economic opportunities, and a new place to be at home. Within the Nigerian context, the search for better economic opportunities often determines the choice of destination for migrants. Most times, Nigerian emigration to the Global North is very selective, attracting only the educated, talented, and professionals who may be more likely to make this decision based on economic prospects. (International Organization for Migration Nigeria and Isiugo-Abanihe 2016: 2). On the other hand, emigration to Global South countries is the least appealing, consisting mostly of persons involved in commerce, trade, and construction, with most of them being short-term migrants (ibid).

Nigeria has a long history of emigration, although the scale, nature, and direction of emigration has evolved over time (Carling 2006: 21). Approximately two-thirds of Nigeria emigrants (61.4 percent) resided in more developed areas in 2013. This is a rather recent trend. In 1990, for example, just 33.8% of Nigerian emigrants resided in more developed areas. In 2000, it had risen to 52%, and by 2010 it had risen to 56.7 percent. The fact that more Nigerians are migrating to more developed countries is due to the workforce driven nature of Nigerian emigration (International Organization for Migration Nigeria and Isiugo-Abanihe 2016: 2). Nigeria exemplifies a context that embodies an interplay of several factors incentivizing emigration and exacerbating the acute loss of manpower over several decades. Recently, the drive to emigrate among young people has been amplified by the dwindling economic fortunes of rural and urban educated/uneducated youth, and high unemployment rates.

The dictatorial leadership style of the present government and increasing poverty rates in the country lie behind rising conflicts and insecurity. In 2019, 40 percent of the total population, or almost 83 million people were reported to be living below the country's poverty line of 137,430 naira ($381.75) per year (World Bank 2020). In this context, Obi et al. (2019: 206) point out the necessity for households to satisfy their basic necessities, especially food security, and that this can drive the decision to emigrate in the hope of sending remittances back home to support the family's basic needs. In the next chapter we will show this is not the only reason young people emigrate from Nigeria, however.

In other words, the money sent home serves as an 'altruistic contribution' to help families cope with present and future food problems and insecurity (Obi et al 2019: 207). Necessity is thus one of the notable causes of migrants to seek entry into Europe via Libya (UNHCR 2017). Emigration from Nigeria has a longer history, and began with the country's independence, in the context of a shifting political economy (Idrissa 2019: 16). Early flows were almost entirely directed to neighbouring West African countries, notably Ghana (Idrissa 2019: 16). Until the 1980s, Nigerian emigration usually followed a pattern of unskilled and commercial migrants mostly moving to neighbouring West African countries, while skilled

migrants with a visa travelled to the Anglophone North (Idrissa 2019: 16). However, today it is harder to move to neighbouring countries, and visas for the EU and North America are hard to obtain. Therefore, many Nigerians intending to enter Europe do so without a visa, passing through third country gateways, where counterfeit papers are more difficult to detect. Some ply through the Sahara Desert, and then pay huge sums to be smuggled into Europe by sea (Carling 2006: 8). Thousands of Nigerians have been left stranded in North Africa and other parts of the world after failing to reach Europe (Carling 2006: 8). Others have drowned on the journey. Within 2014-2018, the Mediterranean Sea experienced the biggest number of deaths, with at least 17,919 individuals killed, with 64% of their corpses never recovered from the sea (IOM 2020: 32).

With many young Nigerians seek to emigrate to Europe through non-official means, Western countries' immigration policies, at the same time, have rendered this an almost unattainable ambition for the vast majority of these Nigerian youth (Carling 2006: 21). Every year, Nigeria now receives hundreds of deportees from Libya. The deportees are deported under the so-called 'voluntary return programme' of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The 'voluntary return programme' of the IOM is sustained. The inception of the voluntary return program started in 2017, shortly after the repositioning of the IOM as a 'related organization' in the UN system the previous year. Since 2017, 14,045 Nigerians, consisting of 8,200 males and 5,845 females, have been returned 'voluntarily' to Nigeria from Libya under the IOM program.[2] They are often trapped while traveling through the dangerous migratory routes that connect Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, and some may well decide not to continue their journey.[3] However, many Nigerians who 'chose' IOM-facilitated return were previously held in Libyan prison centres and detention camps, where conditions were dangerous and where most were forced to work in unsafe conditions. Their 'voluntarily' agreeing to return to Nigeria with IOM, thus took place in many cases under very difficult, involuntary circumstances.[4] Amongst the returned migrants in the IOM program, those identified as victims of human trafficking are handed over to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for further rehabilitation. The roles of both IOM and NAPTIP are further expounded in Chapter 2 of this study.

Nigeria's largest city and key international travel hub, Lagos is the entry point of most deportation and voluntary return flights from Libya.[5] A pre-research discussion with some of the deportees showed that the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) an agency of the government set up in 1999 to manage disasters, are responsible for receiving those returned on flight into the country, and debriefing them. Meanwhile, IOM is supposed to organise follow up and implement reintegration plans that ensure return migrants are able

---

[2] https://guardian.ng/news/nema-receives-161-nigerians-from-libya/

[3] https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/07/28/Nigeria-migrants-return-Europe

[4] https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/07/28/Nigeria-migrants-return-Europe

[5] https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/07/28/Nigeria-migrants-return-Europe

to benefit from support and a reintegration support fund. This reintegration support fund takes the form of both resources and training materials intended to assist with the psychological and socio-economic readjustment of returnees to the Nigerian context. Financial support takes place only after 'returnees' undergo a rehabilitation and business skills acquisition program. Going forward, how well this approach has worked to enhance or hinder reintegration of returnees is the central question of this study.

1.4 Research objectives and question

The objective of this research is to look at the reintegration of deportees and the role of both the Nigeria government and the IOM, in this process. An important part of reintegration is employment and livelihood security, since it is the inability to meet basic necessities that often motivates emigration of youth in the first place. What macro- and micro-economic adjustment measures are introduced to support the returnees/deportees?[6] This study interrogates the overarching intentions to reintegrate the returnees, and interprets the interventions of IOM and the government of Nigeria from the key actors' perspective; from the point of view of young Nigerians deported/returned from Libya.

Therefore, this research aims to fill a void in knowledge by asking whether reintegration measures can address post-deportation problems faced by the deportees/returnees. In addition, this research investigates the roles of other supporting actors, including the government and its various agencies responsible for deportees, as well as IOM and the NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons). Specifically, the main question guiding this research is as follows:

To what extent do IOM and NAPTIP help or hinder the reintegration of those migrants returned from Libya under the AVRR program?

Sub questions:

- What kind of experiences do recent Nigerian deportees report after being returned/deported from Libya?
- What issues affect deportees' daily lives, in particular, their access to livelihoods and social reintegration into society?
- What is the role of social networks in post-deportation integration of young Nigerians?
- What is the impact of the support provided by IOM and NAPTIP to Nigerian returnees/deportees from Libya?

---

[6] Later I discuss IOM resistance to the use of the term 'deportee'. Yet for the returned migrants, their experience was often seen as 'deportation'. This is why throughout the study, I have decided to use the term returnee/deportee, to reflect this complex and contentious terminology, and respect respondents' own definition of the involuntary nature of their return.

1.5 Methodology and Methods

A mainly qualitative research methodology is deployed in this study, since it allows for deeper understanding of people's living conditions and the meaning they attach to these (Silverman 2011). Qualitative methodology is usually deployed to comprehend such contexts, settings, and interrelationship dynamics that require a more nuanced understanding that cannot be obtained solely through a survey and random sampling (Njie and Asimiran 2014). In a place like Nigeria, where migratory patterns seem to be the consequence of a complex combination of circumstances, a comprehensive understanding of migration reality is especially crucial. In this study, the experiences of returned/deported migrants are sought and programs to support them critically assessed. First, the researcher's subjectivity must be properly stated as it influences everything from the topic of study to the formulation of hypotheses, methodology selection, and data interpretation. (Ratner 2002).

Based on the foregoing, both primary and secondary data are used during analysis. The primary data is drawn from 5 semi-structured interviews conducted via zoom and WhatsApp with those who were 'voluntarily returned' to Nigeria from Libya since 2017 through the Assisted and Voluntary Return and Re-Integration Program (AVRR) of the IOM. Secondary data will include scholarly articles, research reports and news reports. Also, the qualitative approach in this study enables deeper insights into the experiences of returnees themselves as they try to re-enter the labour market and reintegrate into society. The aim is to gain greater understanding of the problems they face in Nigeria, and whether they feel supported in their reintegration as was promised by the IOM under the AVRR program. The study also touches on what is being done, by whom, to try and deliver on the prospects of reintegration of returnees.

Although the participants in the research are regarded as returnees, the choice of the categorization as deportees which is reflected in the paper is buttressed by the commonality of challenges both returnees and deportees alike are faced with. Consequently, the categorization as 'deportees' instead of 'returnees' posed a challenge to data gathering which is further discussed in chapter 3. However, within the context of the research, stigmatization, family debt etc. are evident in both categories. Also, the level of coercion employed in 'voluntary return' resonates with the experience of being deported, albeit there may be a softer landing in Nigeria.

1.6 Ethical Consideration:

As a result of the sensitivity of the study especially bordering on stigmatization and personal migration experiences of the deportees, the research takes into consideration the choice of anonymity of the participants in the research. The consent to pre-record interviews was sought verbally from the participants before the actual conversation was initiated, and it was made clear that the exercise was solely for the purpose of the present study. Also, where necessary the study has respected the choices of participants not to disclose certain traumatizing personal experiences during the migration journey.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. This chapter has introduced some overarching issues and provided justification for the study. The objectives, and questions of the research, methodology it employs and ethics have also been outlined. Chapter 2 looks at existing research and discourses around the genesis of migration and deportation in Nigeria in terms of 'irregular' emigration, deportation, return and mandates of the IOM and NAPTIP as well as the conceptual framework for this study. The third chapter follows with a more in-depth look at the study procedure, research approach and data collection challenges. Chapter 4 presents the main findings and analyses the narratives of deported/returned migrants to provide answers to the overarching and sub-questions posed in this research. The study's findings are drawn together in Chapter 5, the Conclusion, which also mentions some limitations and makes some suggestions for additional research.

Chapter 2
Background and Conceptual framework.

2.1 Introduction

Deportation can be considered one of the worst nightmares of any Nigerian migrant. Observations from previous studies have uncovered some of the dreadful experiences Nigerian migrants have experienced during migration and deportation processes. A few empirical studies have looked at returned migrants' reintegration after being deported/returned. As a result of a very young demography, Nigeria leads the trends in African migration, including in migration movements to Europe, the Gulf nations, and South Africa (De Haas 2006: 4). Aside from the size of its population, many other factors account for this increased Nigerian out-migration. The inverse consequence of this rising emigration has been the deportation of Nigerians from different parts of the world, which has been on the increase from the 2000s onwards. From 2017 to June 2021, Nigerians numbering up to 20,291 have been returned under the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program of the IOM[7]

2.2 Drivers of Migration in Nigeria Context: An Overview

Migrants are best understood as people who take action in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the all-important human task of finding a balance between individual and social expectations on the one hand, and the world's capacity to accommodate those expectations on the other (Lucht 2011: X). Resistance to accommodation of migrants' expectations of what is possible underscores the rush to deport in contemporary migration governance. Nigeria exemplifies a context where several factors induce people to take migration as a way out of insurmountable difficulties. Despite its vast natural resources, Nigeria's economy has stuttered, and its leaders have groped in the dark for solutions to development problems. Young people are unable to find work after finishing school, and the country lacks a functioning social welfare system. In the face of economic hardship, young Nigerians regard departure as the only viable alternative to failure, poverty and unemployment (Obi-Ani et al 2020: 3).

Against the dominant narrative that migrants are 'searching for greener pastures', many young Nigerians also migrate to avoid persecution and violence, natural disasters, drought and other ecological difficulties, and rising internal conflicts which have dislocated people's lives within their own country (Adepoju 2000: 392)—Persecution of LGBTQI community, Boko Haram and Niger Delta insurgencies are recent examples of this. Those compelled to host the displaced tend to frown on the displaced, whether caused by natural disasters or

---

[7]

https://rodakar.iom.int/sites/rodakar/files/document/publications/Assistance%20to%20voluntary%20and%20humanitarian%20return_2017-%20mid%202021_IOM%20EN.pdf

man-made violent conflicts. This is because internal displacement adds the strain of more mouths on limited resources available (Obi-Ani et al 2020: 2). The reality is that the more issues of internal displacement linger, the more people are willing to consider migrating even illegally. However, migration may have both positive and negative consequences for migrants and one of the most negative outcomes is facing deportation, particularly for those who are irregular migrants. (Dako-Gyeke and Kodom 2017: 1084). Most of the deportation research in Nigeria has been focused on the human trafficking discourse and how deportation takes a toll on migrant's chance of integration in country of origin. These researches are mainly focused on women sex workers, for example young Nigerian women deported from Italy (Plambech 2014; Plambech 2017a; Plambech 2017b; Ratia and Notermans 2012). On the other hand, little or no attention has been paid towards exploring the re-integration of those in post deportation situations.

2.3 Migration and Deportation in Nigeria: The Genesis

Deportation is the expulsion of people from nations where they dwell as a result of formal administrative or criminal legal actions (Rosenblum and Meissner 2014 in Dako-Gyeke and Kodom 2017: 1084). It has been practiced for as long as there have been states, given nation-building processes have often been linked to population transfers, evictions, defections, and in some cases even massive involuntary migrations and ethnic cleansing (Collyer 2012: 227).

In Nigeria, deportation dates as far back as the 1980s when the country experienced a downturn from the oil boom period. The post-oil boom period led to uncertainty in national development and bestowed economic hardship on many Nigerians. Until the advent of the oil boom, agriculture had been the main source of Nigeria's economy and the main form of employment. The oil boom introduced a new dimension to the country's economic activity (Godwin and Dagogo 2011: 124) and escalation in its fortunes caused a shift from the focus on the agricultural sector towards services, industry and the urban areas.

Before this, Nigeria witnessed a high influx of immigrants especially from neighbouring African countries, arriving to tap into her flourishing economy. However, Nigeria's economy was on the edge of collapse by the early 1980s, and in early 1985, to late 1986, due to a significant drop in the international oil prices, things worsened rapidly (Godwin and Dagogo 2011: 124). Consequently, Nigeria's OPEC quota was reduced in the early 1980s, putting the country's economic and financial situation in jeopardy and leading to rising external debt (Godwin and Dagogo 2011: 125).

The dwindling fortunes of the oil industry after this period worsened other national problems like insecurity and political instability, also altering the trajectory of migration out of the country. As a result, Nigeria has been described as having undergone a "reverse migratory shift," changing from a net immigration to a net emigration country (Black et al. 2004 in De Haas 2006: 4). This shift is captured in the assertion of Agbu (2008: 2) that 1986 marked the beginning of a generation of Nigerian migrants seeking economic opportunity in other regions of the developed and industrialized world.

From the 1980s, Nigerians began moving to Italy due to a strong need for low-skilled labour in agricultural and the service industry in that country (Plambech 2017a: 2213). Many groups of people emigrated legally through this channel. Today, Nigeria's population, economic climate, and porous borders continue to drive substantial internal and external migration[8]. Evidently, the mobility of people has been challenged by the stringent immigration laws introduced in the Western World as well as in other African and Gulf countries, to stem the unregulated influx of migrants. This has resulted in migrants seeking ever more risky alternatives since legal procedures to travel are extremely limited. Journeys may be overland, or in some cases by air with the use of fake documents to try to bypass immigration authorities. Other emigrants take high-risk migration through the Sahara Desert, some remaining in Libya for many years, and then relying on ramshackle boats for transit across the Mediterranean Sea. In many instances, deportation becomes the climax of these journeys when emigration proves unsuccessful.

Image 4: Migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea

Source: Foreignpolicywatchdog.com (2021)

Although revoking the right to reside legally in the country informs one of the ways to expel immigrants, there are categories of migrants whose returns are not classified as deportation, but as voluntary return. For instance, individuals repatriated under the AVRR program of the IOM are regarded as voluntary returnees. But such categorization is not devoid of politics. Given the challenges faced by Nigerian migrants in Libya on their journey, how voluntary such returns are is questionable. Moreover, aside from the prospect of reintegration, there seems to be a shared experience between deportees and returnees in their difficulty in navigating the murky waters of post deportation life 'back home'.

---

[8] https://nigeria.iom.int/

2.4 IOM and NAPTIP: Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program

AVRR program is the brainchild of the IOM which began worldwide in 1979. As a result, their role in the return and reintegration of returnees informs a vital part of this study. This will be followed by the role of the NAPTIP in the rehabilitation and reintegration of the returnees identified as victims of human trafficking. Although other government agencies assist in the reintegration of returnees, this study will solely be focused on the IOM and NAPTIP with IOM. The IOM's AVRR program facilitate the return and reintegration of migrants. It offers administrative, logistical, and financial assistance, as well as reintegration support, to migrants who are unable or otherwise unable to stay in the host/transit nation and choose to return to their home country[9]. The Program is pitched as a more humanitarian and dignified alternative to deportation (Fine and Walters 2021: 1). As an alternative to deportation, "It can also provide a solution for migrants in an irregular situation who are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, violence, exploitation and abuse and are in danger of being exploited by crime organizations involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling" (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 10).

Succinctly, to identify those eligible to participate in the program, IOM described it in the following way;

> "Beneficiaries of AVRR programmes could be migrants in both regular and irregular situations. They could include, for example as stranded migrants; asylum seekers who, having claimed asylum, subsequently choose not to pursue their asylum claim; migrant workers at the end of their contracts; or visa over-stayers" (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 10).

However, a quick look at the constitution of the organization shows the exclusion of migrants forcefully returned from the beneficiaries in the AVRR program. Precisely, "IOM is prohibited by its constitution from being involved either directly or indirectly in forced return. However, it recognizes that migrants who are forcibly returned may find themselves in vulnerable situations and need assistance with socioeconomic reintegration, as much as any voluntary returnee IOM assists under its AVRR programmes. In the contexts where IOM is not involved in organizing and facilitating the return, IOM may still be involved at the post-arrival stage with reintegration activities" (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 9). Deduced from the above, the implication of the exclusion of 'forced migrants' or 'deportees' connotes no reintegration prospects for this category of migrants.

On the other hand, NAPTIP is the government agency created in 2003 to combat the issue of human trafficking. It serves the country's international commitment under the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, which supplements the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention, to prevent, repress, and punish trafficking in persons,

---

[9] https://www.migrationjointinitiative.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl261/files/files/articles/assistance-voluntary-and-humanitarian-return2017-mid-2021iom-en.pdf

particularly women and children[10]. NAPTIP performs several functions bordering on the eradication of human trafficking. Particularly, it Investigates any incidents of human trafficking, such as forced labour, child labour, coerced prostitution, predatory labour and other forms of exploitation, slavery and slavery-related crimes, bonded labour, organ removal, unlawful migrant smuggling, and the sale and purchase of people[11]. Survivors of human trafficking (SoT) returning to Nigeria are referred to NAPTIP for rehabilitation and reintegration. NAPTIP is responsible for counselling these returnees and, where necessary, coordinating Family Tracing initiatives[12]. This is implemented through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Nigeria in which NAPTIP and its partners receive, profile, and identify human trafficking survivors among the returnees upon arrival into Nigeria. Verified survivors are housed and catered for a maximum of six weeks in NAPTIP's closed transit shelter. Survivors who require medium- to lengthy rehabilitation and reintegration assistance are referred to NGOs that can fulfil their ongoing and long-term needs, including temporary housing, continuing medical and psychological care, education, and vocational skills training in areas such as beading, hairstyling, tailoring, and catering. Survivors are transferred to the main referral organizations (IOM) after completing the 3–24 month reintegration support programs in the NGOs' closed/open shelters (Idemudia et al. 2021: 4). One common feature observed in the various function of the IOM and NAPTIP is the non-inclusion of migrants forcefully returned or 'deportees' as beneficiaries to their reintegration plan. While for NAPTIP except in a verified incidence of human trafficking, returnees are rendered reintegration. On the other hand, IOM is concerned with the reintegration of returnees that falls within the categories of the beneficiaries of the AVRR program.

2.5 The Assisted Voluntary Return Program and Reintegration

Many Nigerians returned through the AVRR programme of IOM after being stranded in Libya. Their numbers increased within the last decade, as the AVRR appears to have become an alternative to the unpleasant situation in Libya, where human trafficking, kidnapping, imprisonment, and extortion of migrants and refugees have flourished[13]. According to IOM, the AVRR assists a wide range of migrants who want to return home, including individuals who travelled for economic reasons, unaccompanied minors, and trafficking survivors. The processes involved in initiating the return of migrants from Libya under the AVRR program are outlined below;

"The AVRR programme involves standard interventions throughout the return migration cycle: first, in the host country, though, amongst other things, securing travel documents for

---

[10] https://www.naptip.gov.ng/about-naptip-2/

[11] Ibid

[12]   https://ncfrmi.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VALIDATED-AVRR-MANUAL-11-DEC-updated-1.pdf).

[13]   https://www.msf.org/libya%E2%80%99s-cycle-detention-exploitation-and-abuse-against-migrants-and-refugees

migrants, counselling on the environment for return and reintegration in the country of origin—including provision of return relevant information from Nigeria, and medical evaluations; second, in transit, through coordination with airport officials and escort and medical services; and third, in the country of origin, though, amongst other things, assistance through immigration, reception assistance, payment of reintegration assistance in instalments and provision of business trainings"(Framework for effective AVRR in Nigeria: Standard Operating Procedure: 10[14]) .Once in Nigeria, the most vulnerable are supposed to be given extra help in the form of in-kind reintegration assistance and business start-up assistance, support for studies, medical bills, and so on. For instance, the IOM monitoring report shows the AVRR program which was originally implemented in 2005 for Nigerian asylum seekers in Switzerland and who wanted to return home, provided participants in the program with a reintegration grant tied to a chosen professional activity. Beneficiaries were mandated to legally to register their professional activity. The grants were paid out in two to four instalments to the supplier or as reimbursement relying on evidence of payment. In addition, since 2008, the AVRR program has offered returnees the opportunity to participate in a business training course on small business management for the sake of ensuring the sustainability of their livelihood strategies[15]. IOM's AVRR programs are often presented as the only option for migrants who have to return home but lack the financial resources to do so. Categories of these migrants are as follows:

1. Migrants whose asylum applications have been denied or withdrawn

2. Trapped Migrants

3. Those who have been victims of human trafficking, as well as

4. Other vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied child migrants or those who require medical attention[16].

Flowing from these categories of migrants, the integration offered by the AVR program is exclusive to voluntary returnees, and does not include those who are deportees, i.e. returned involuntarily. Entitlement to integration and legal recognition as a returnee is premised on the voluntary expression of intent to return to one's home country. Meanwhile, the extent and form of coercion used to put pressure on individual migrants to take part in assisted return programs like AVRR is still up for discussion, and it is not always apparent that the term "voluntary" is correct even though countries concerned, as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), draw a clear distinction between 'voluntary' and 'forced' repatriation (Collyer 2012: 286; Salihi 2020). This unclear boundary in categorization subsumes several other issues that affect post-arrival reintegration of

[14] https://ncfrmi.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VALIDATED-AVRR-MANUAL-11-DEC-updated-1.pdf

[15]https://switzerland.iom.int/sites/switzerland/files/New%20Website%202017/IOM%20Publicat ions/Monitoring%20report%20AVRR%20Nigeria%202015.pdf

[16]https://rodakar.iom.int/sites/rodakar/files/document/publications/Assistance%20to%20volunt ary%20and%20humanitarian%20return_2017-%20mid%202021_IOM%20EN.pdf

deported/returned migrants into their country of origin. These issues include distinctions drawn between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' from the perspective of reintegration policies, their legal status as deportees or returnees, and their social stigmatization by the society and even official attitudes.

2.6 The concept of deserving and undeserving

The notion of deserving and undeserving coincides initially with the boundary drawn between voluntary and involuntary returns, a distinction that underscores and justifies the AVRR program. Migrants that opt-in for AVRR program are deemed worthy of reintegration support, whereas those who are deported, for example by being forced to return on criminal grounds or due to breaching host country immigration laws, are not regarded as similarly deserving. As Sökefeld (2019: 95) has pointed out, deportation comes with significant consequences for deportees, and thus opting for 'voluntary' return may be a desperate tactic to avoid the consequences of forced deportation. Highlighting the logic of reintegration and deservingness, Sökefeld (2019) in his study on the deportation of Afghan migrants from Germany opines that migrants who are permitted to stay must prove their 'deservingness' by undergoing an 'integration' process (Sökefeld 2019: 92).

Migrants in short of this subjection to an integration process are perceived as 'undeserving', hence, informs an eligible ground for deportation. "Economic Refugees" are excluded from the category of the 'deserving' refugees, a distinction critical for reinforcing the difference 'desired/legal' and 'undesired/illegal' migrants, implying that some 'deserve protection and others do not. Because they have only fled from unfavourable economic circumstances, rather than war or persecution. This study showed that 'deservingness' was the primary component of this differentiation and was used to justify the German government's deportation choices to Afghanistan (Sökefeld 2019: 94). Others who are considered deserving are assisted in the form of 'integration courses' and language education (Sökefeld 2019: 99). Succinctly, Sökefeld (2019) argues that the deportee is a symbol of the contemporary "reterritorialization of nation-states and the worldwide system of uneven (im) mobility".

Similarly, Mahar (2020) embarked on a study to investigate how voluntary are the return of Afghans and Pakistanis from Germany to their home country. Through ethnographic material and selected three case studies, the logic of (deserving) political refugee, as well as an exploitative (undeserving) economic refugee is extrapolated, albeit how it affects the rights of Afghans and Pakistanis to seek asylum in Germany. From the analysis, part of the results showed that Germany's removal politics reveal a continuous negotiation between opposing political, economic, and social pressures. Consequently, refugees or migrant other appears to have no actual agency or options in this process (Mahar 2020: 33).

While the logic of deserving or undeserving mirrors the divide between political and economic refugees in Germany and how it determines their fate in seeking asylum, in the Nigerian context, the divide between deportees and returnees is an important one, especially for IOM. The fate of the former is sealed on account of whatever crime they are assumed to

have been guilty of preceding their deportation. The latter obtain legal recognition as voluntary returnees, being redeemed by their expression of a 'voluntary' willingness to return to the home country. As a result, integration is offered to returnees, whilst deportees are not supported; they are on their own.

2.7 Concept of Illegality and Deportation: The nexus

Deportation of migrants is often justified on the grounds that not to deport them perpetuates illegality. 'Illegal status' implies a hostile relationship between the migrant and the state. As a result, a migrant 'illegally' resident is primarily seen through the lens of criminal justice and border controls. It becomes a political identity imposed by the state (De Genova 2002: 422). Several studies show that most migrants become illegal because of their mode of arrival and due to breaking visa rules of continuous stay in the host country in addition to taking a job without a work permit. A person may not even know they have violated host country immigration laws, which are often very complex. The law establishes the boundaries of legal and illegal activities, creating the circumstances for both 'legal' and 'illegal' behavior (De Genova 2002: 424). While the law makes a distinction between what constitute 'legal' and 'illegal', within the context of migration, there seems to be a blurry line along the boundaries especially interpreting that distinction in different context and how it's meant to be handled. For instance, the concept of 'crimmigration' as coined by Juliet Stumpf exemplify the "division between criminal law and immigration law that "has grown indistinct" such that the two "are merely nominally separate" (Garcia Hernandez 2017: 2). According to her, 'crimmigration' entails the convergence of criminal law and immigration law norms, concentrating on changes to substantive and procedural law as well as enforcement techniques on the ground. (Cuauhtemoc and Hernandez 2018: 208). Deduced from the convergence of criminal and immigration laws, the 'criminality' attached to deportation appears to offer legal justification to the pre and post deportation treatment on deportees.

Deportees at the point of entry back into their home country are not supported by any agency with responsibility for improving their prospects for reintegration. I highlight here that the distinction between both categories of migrants; returnees and deportees is rather fluid, but also very critical to IOM. The former's expression of interest to voluntary return automatically wears out the cloak of illegality despite the fact they are illegal in the first instance. While the latter on the other hand lost the chance to reverse their fate.

In sum, whether returnees or deportees, integration prospects involve several contending discourses around the nature of their removal and return back to the home country. Compounded with the unclear notion of voluntariness in the AVRR program, both categories of migrants share almost a common experience in their post-arrival life. As David (2015) opined, deportees have a greater likelihood of being jobless, implying poor work performance and fewer prospects. Simultaneously, they have a lower level of sociocultural integration in their homes, which is associated with a lack of sense of belonging. This also holds even for returnees who had intended to stay abroad indefinitely and suddenly faced with unexpected possibility of leaving the host country to their homes. This shared

experience is further confirmed during a more in-depth examination of respondents' integration interview narratives.

Chapter 3 Methodology

"The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete; they make one story become the only story"– Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter lays forth a roadmap and methodology for achieving the study's objectives. It explains the methods and tactics used to collect data for the analysis. To do this, I begin by asserting positionality especially as it connects to the context of study. This is because a clear positionality on the topic would serve as a check to assumptions around the experiences of respondents in the study. Following from this intention to avert assumptions, the study encountered a challenge associated with the use of different terminologies to categorise respondents. The rest of the chapter covers the data gathering processes and challenges thereof.

3.2 Positionality

I find the truism of the above quote from the renowned author mirroring down in every step taken during the research, especially with data gathering. During a brainstorming exercise with my supervisor, I found myself asking why people would take the Libyan route to Europe, knowing how treacherous the path is. However, stories from respondents challenged the single-story narrative I had about people's reasons to migrate through Libya. My privileged position as a skilled migrant who could afford to migrate to Europe for advanced studies through legal or formalized means is acknowledged. As a young male migrant researching reintegration of deportees/returnees in Nigeria and exploring how reintegration can be more efficient with regards to their work and social integration, my perspective is that of an observer who is unaware of the magnitude of stigmatization, family responsibilities, debt and a host of other challenges faced by the deportees/returnees following their return to Nigeria.

This brings to mind what David (2015) said that migrants who desire to return will prepare for their return by mobilizing resources and engaging social networks. When it is a forced return, the end of the migration is an abrupt episode, leaving little time for proper preparation (David 2015: 128). Although I share a common contextual experience with participants in the research in terms of social relations, I was not equipped to fully understand their personal experience in view of the fact that my migration was voluntary, with a visa and was still on-going. This research is the climax of a program that necessitated my relocation. In this regard, my positionality in this study finds resonance with the call to review and improve support for the reintegration of deportees, whilst highlighting challenges they face, what support they get and how they try to circumvent the hurdles they face on return.

At the inception and conceptualization stage of the research, the initial framing of the topic revolved around deportees but later I discovered they were defined by IOM as returnees. Those who returned to Nigeria through the AVRR Program were seen as voluntary returnees and therefore not deportees at all. Nevertheless, the choice to categorise them as deportees in the research is underscored by some common experiences shared by both deportees and returnees after their migration journey is halted. After all, for both categories of migrants, David (2015: 152) noted that reintegration into the home country's socio-cultural setting is significantly more difficult as alterations take place in the anticipated migration process. On the other hand, the categorization of deportees posed quite a significant challenge that are now further explored.

3.3 Deportees or Returnees?

In the chapter one of the research, I gave a brief rationale for the choice of the term 'deportees', and explained that participants in the research are also considered returnees by IOM. At first, I did not fully recognize how powerful these categories are, as they distinguish who is a desirable migrant and who is an unwelcome migrant, and who deserves support for reintegration and who does not receive any such support (Mügge and van der Haar 2016: 77). Pennington and Balaram (2013: 22) in their study on reintegration of returned Nigerian irregular migrants noted that migrants who were detained and deported had the most difficult time returning, due to the fact that they did not get any pre-departure assistance, unlike those in AVRR program. They were also denied the benefits of being linked with family or civil society organizations in Nigeria ahead of time, and they had no one to meet them at the airport or assist them in coping with the trauma of their homecoming.

Whereas, there are certain migrants' experiences and realities inherent in the context of the study that led me to use deportation as the preferred terminology rather than voluntary return. Migration occurs for several reasons, thus is perceived that there is a purpose attached to such a journey. Non-materialization of this purpose as a result of deportation or voluntary return implies that migrants will confront several challenges after their return. David (2015: 128) aptly noted that between the time migrants leave their home country and the time they return, values and expectations change. In a similar vein, Kleist (2020) in her study to investigate the social and migratory pathways of forced repatriation of Ghanaian immigrant workers, pointed out the communal and collective optimism that these precarious migration initiatives represent. They are viewed as a well-established way of changing one's family or future situation in the absence of any obvious and viable alternatives. This, Kleist argued, can give rise to disappointment, anxiety, regret, sadness, and a sense of humiliation when migrants return empty-handed, whether as deportees or returnees without having arrived at their intended destination country (Kleist 2020: 280).

In the case of returnees from Libya, this envisioned future transformation informed their original decision to migrate. As a result, once they return to their country of origin, they are confronted with the question of what they carried with them (Kleist 2020: 280). In many instances, stigmatization, payment of personal and family debt becomes the aftermath experiences of deportees and returnees alike when their intended migration destination was

not reached. Also, within the Nigerian context, public perceptions of deportees and returnees appear to embody a convergent view around both categories of return migrants. Deportees and empty-handed returnees are seen as people with no net gain to share from their migration. Hence this to some extent makes their experiences a shared one of social stigma and disappointment.

Meanwhile, for Libya returnees the question of how voluntary their return is, is a difficult one to explore. Until the 2020 proposal of permanent cease fire between the Libyan army of the government of national accord and the Libyan national army of the general command of the armed forces by the UN[17], the absence of any constituted legal or governmental authority in Libya created anarchy and lawlessness in the operation of political and economic affairs in the country. The instability in Libya caused by the NATO-led operation against Muammar Gaddafi's rule in October 2011 made the migration crisis and its effects more inevitable. The collapse of that dictatorship exacerbated the nation's political instability, resulting in greater security risks that have spread to other countries of Africa. In this process, Europe lost a stable ally in the efforts to curb or limit irregular migration from Africa[18].

Migrants seeking to take the route into Europe were often caught in the web of this political upheaval. As such they would often be taken into custody by private security forces and kept in detention centres awaiting removal from the Libyan territory on the grounds that Libya is unsafe for migrants. This process of return was consolidated by the initiation of the IOM AVRR program which allows migrants to return to their home country 'voluntarily' and with some element of support. Worthy of note here is that the above-mentioned intervention downplays the agency of migrants, and makes the degree of 'voluntariness' unclear in the AVRR program. Taking a cue from this, Houte and Davids (2014) carried out a study to find out under which circumstances migrants returning from European to (post-) conflict nations are willing and capable of contributing to development and peacebuilding in their home country.

The findings from the study showed motivations to return, rather than return assistance, is critical for post-return integration, necessitating a more in-depth examination of the meanings and motives of return. Ideally, return is said to be voluntary if it is not accompanied by physical coercion. On the other hand, with the existence of other non-physical coercion, Houte and Davids (2014) suggested deconstructing return as a sophisticated decision-making process to engender a replacement for the unsatisfactory language of voluntary return (2014: 78). The differentiation between deportees and returnees appears to be problematic especially as the 'voluntary' clause attached to voluntary return has been criticized by several scholars. (See Salihi 2020; Mahar 2020; Sökefeld 2019; Pennington and Balaram 2013; Webber 2011). The stories of people who were returned and interviewed for this study demonstrates why public resistance to the use of the word 'voluntary' in the practice is still

---

[17]
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/United%20Nations%20Support%20Missi on%20in%20Libya%20-%20Report%20of%20the%20Secretary-General.pdf

[18]   https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/the-migrant-crisis-in-libya-and-the-nigeria-experience/.

prevalent. As a result, I placed the terminologies 'returnees' and 'deportees' side by side in the study to reflect the realities of respondents in the research.

3.4 Data gathering

From the literature search, it was perceived that there are relatively few Nigerian scholars within the migration track as the outcome of the search indicated most of the research on return migration were authored by non-Nigerians. This, however, is not to invalidate the findings of the authors. (For example, see Plambech 2014; Plambech 2017; Ratia and Notermans 2012; Carling and IOM 2006; De Haas 2006; Pennington and Balaram 2013).

To foreground the primary data gathering process, the study used a snowball approach intended to interview 10 returnees from Libya that participated in the IOM AVRR program, but eventually only 5 were interviewed. The five participants had the advantage over those not interviewed who lacked internet access and were difficult to contact. All interviewees were male. Each returnee interview was structured around a number of open-ended questions that aligned with the research objectives, to get a sense of their reintegration, especially into the labour market and local society, through their own eyes, and to appreciate how problems with reintegration could be addressed. Returnees were interviewed via Zoom and WhatsApp platforms and the researcher bore the cost of mobile data so that interviewees could reliably access internet for the interviews. Details from these interviews pointed to the need for corroboration of certain details with other research participants, including IOM and NAPTIP representatives.

As hinted earlier, the categorization of the research topic as being about 'deportees' initially hindered data gathering and especially delayed my interview with IOM staff. The interface and exchange of communication with the organization proved futile at the preliminary stage because IOM sees itself as absolved from any formal responsibility for the reintegration of deportees. This is considered out of the scope of their field of operations, which concerns only voluntary returnees. Any mention therefore of 'deportees' resulted in a communications blackout from IOM staff. As a strategy, I made some modifications to the terminologies used by eliminating the categorization of returnees as deportees and by focusing on the labour market and social reintegration of those returned. I was then able to elicit useful information from the IOM Program Officer-AVRR/Migration Management via an interview using the Zoom platform.

Similarly, almost the same circumstances were encountered in the interface with NAPTIP staff. Worthy of note here is the clarifications given by NAPTIP on the status of returnees and deportees. Based on this clarification, deportees could pass for criminals as they are thought to have committed a crime in contravention of some of the laws in their previous host country, thus, support for the reintegration of deportees is at the discretion of the Nigerian government and is only provided if and when funds are available to give such support. In contrast, returnees are all those returned through the IOM's AVRR program and support for their reintegration process are part of the agreement entered into between the Nigerian government and IOM before their return. Furthermore, NAPTIP claimed their

scope of operations focuses mainly on returnees whose situation has been verified to indicate that they have been victims of trafficking. The organization offers reintegration support to such categories of persons. Also, NAPTIP highlighted that although trafficked individuals may be deportees, they do not associate their trafficked situation with deportation in order to avoid the dehumanizing effects of the label or categorization of 'deportee' as more or less criminal.

One of the main objectives of this study was to incorporate the role of civil society alongside the government's role in improving reintegration of returnees into the labour market and home society, hence Amnesty International Nigeria and National Emergency Management Agency Nigeria were contacted. Both indicated that the focal points of their work did not include the reintegration of deportees and returnees. Amnesty International staff suggested that I should reach out to the IOM and NAPTIP instead.

3.5 Limitations and Challenges

The major limitation of this study was the decision not to include female Nigerian returnees from Libya. This happened due to the snowball method used which ended up producing only male respondents for the research. This means I was not able to learn about women's reintegration and migration experiences, especially as they related to their family responsibilities, compared to men's. Specifically, being aware of the similarities and differences of the reintegration experiences between both sexes could have lent this study a more nuanced understanding of the interplay of gender in return migration and reintegration. However, since the main focus was on the outcome of IOM programs, the gendered nature of deported Nigerian men and women's experience was not considered as part of the study. Other studies have been carried out on Nigerian women returned from Europe who have been engaged in sex work and are deported afterwards. Many of these women are from Edo State in Nigeria's South-South area, and their predicaments have received considerable attention in the European and Nigerian media (Ratia and Notermans 2012: 145).

Conducting this research was fraught with many challenges due to distance barriers. Due to the impossibility of travelling to Nigeria some communications blackouts resulted that might have been more easily resolved if I was able to be in Nigeria in person. First, the inaccessibility of some respondents detracted from the number of interviews possible, and the lack of an accessible deportee/returnee database did not help. The problem of non-response from the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons was another difficulty. NCFRMI is the government body that is supposed to support the reintegration of deportees and returnees. The study sought to include this organization as critical in the research but experienced a complete communications blackout for no apparent reason after several e-mail exchanges. On the other hand, as a result of not being able to access the database for IOM returnees or for deportees in Nigeria, the study was not able to locate who was where. This left me obliged to focus only on IOM returnees who had been returned through the AVRR program. The difficulty of contacting deportees underscores David's (2015) standpoint that deportation and socio-cultural integration are

connected in negative ways that lay the foundation for deported migrants' marginalization in their home contexts. This can also, incidentally, become a re-emigration incentive.

Chapter 4 Improving on Past Performance

4.1 Introduction

One of the major aims of this study is to find out how the integration plan for deportees and returnees can be improved upon by the Nigerian government. I point to employment and migratory experiences of deportees as key challenges that clog the wheel of their quest to reintegrate into the labour market and host society post-return. To begin this through the lens and narratives of returnees, I highlight here that there is a need to extricate the meaning of reintegration and its fundamental purpose from the IOM perspective. This purpose appears to embody a slight contradiction with stories from the field. The IOM pitch the assisted voluntary return as a more compassionate alternative to forced return in which reintegration amongst all other things forms one of its cardinal principles. It claims to usually succeed in the assistance 'to return' offered to returnee migrants.

4.2 Sustainable Reintegration?

Reintegration as defined by IOM entails a "multidimensional process enabling individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and achieve inclusion in civic life" (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 11). Furthermore, although this is not necessarily a universally acceptable definition of sustainable reintegration despite informing the fourth principle of the AVRR, the IOM highlights as a yardstick for measuring the success of the reintegration of migrants as being attaining levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and mental well-being that enable them to cope with challenges associated with their return. Armed with these capacities, returnees are presented as making migratory decisions out of choice rather than being forced to make the decision to return (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 11).

Based on these definitions, there seems to be a recognition that returnees are confronted with several challenges after return, hence the need by IOM to engender their economic self-sufficiency, social stability and mental well-being. However, lived experiences of respondents in this research negates this acclaimed process of reintegration to the extent that it seems only to serve short-term goals. For the majority of the respondents, the reintegration support received from IOM is used to solve immediate needs like housing, family commitments and debt servicing. This is why Arowolo (2000: 60) said the majority of structured plans for rehabilitating return migrants are primarily donor-driven and are often an impromptu response to emergency situations.

Regarding reintegration, there is a need to examine whether its appendage to the AVRR solely serves as an incentive to return or whether it enables the readjustment of migrants in a way that addresses their incentives for migration in the first place. Although, reintegration is positioned to aid the readjustment of returned migrants in home country, it appears to serve as a 'bait'. In other words, IOM support tends to serve only the short-term goals of returning migrants classified as 'unwanted surpluses' (Henke 2005)). Integration when not

presented as bait to solely return migrants most often may result in the sustainable readjustment of migrants; serving a long-term goal. Reintegration which is aimed at addressing re-migration incentives for returnees is associated with the futuristic goal of migrants' self-sufficiency and independence. This is aptly captured in the yardsticks for measuring the success of reintegration as stipulated by the IOM. Since several factors appears to influence reintegration outcomes and contravene this goal, reintegration may be short-lived. Hence re-migration becomes a new longer-term alternative. The desire to emigrate once more is part of the lived experiences of respondents and will further be explored in this chapter.

4.3 Respondents as key informants

The respondents that participated in this research are all males including representatives of the IOM and NAPTIP respectively. Although women constitute a significant number of Nigerian returnees (See section 1.3), the sex of returnee migrants in this research reinforces what Plambech (2017: 2222) said that in some parts of Nigeria young men's migration is perceived as a transition to adulthood. Those who do not move or who are unable to create a decent living are avoiding hard labour and family duties. To point out the correlation between family duties and intentions for migration, Figure 1 below gives a breakdown of respondents' family size and positions.

Figure 1: Family Size and Position in the Family

Number of Respondents	Family Size	Position in the family	Pseudo names
1	12	Fourth	Johnny
1	5	First	Emris
1	6	First	Damian
1	3	Third	Mike
1	5	Third	James

Source: Interview data.

Johnny is a young man from a polygamous family. Precisely, a family of twelve and occupies the third position. Before his departure to search for 'greener pastures', Jonny had worked as an apprentice in his Uncle's pharmacy store. Currently, he works as a ghost worker (Errand boys) in his post-return life in Lagos. Also, Damian is a literate young man who holds a bachelor's degree. He had departed for Libya shortly after the National Youth Service Corps Program (a compulsory scheme for every educated Nigeria youth after their first degree). Damian comes from a family of six and is the first child and son in his family. He had embarked on his migration journey with the hope to make good fortunes from his Irvingia Gabonensis trade in Libya (African Bush Mango Kernels). James is a fairly educated young man who comes from a family of five and occupies the third position and the only son. Before his migration, he was a footballer playing for the Synagogue Church of All

Nations football Club. Apart from his search for greener pastures, James had hoped his journey to Europe would get him signed up with a European football club. Mike is a young man from a family of three where he occupies the third position and the only son. Before his migration journey, he had a business that deals in automobile spare parts. Mike had hoped his migration will bring him closer to 'greener pastures' through the importation of cars into Nigeria from Europe. See Chapter one for Emris.

Respondents were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study. On the other hand, the study realized from the standpoint of the IOM Nigeria that there are 7 States in Nigeria with particularly high incidences of irregular migration including Edo, Imo, Delta and Anambra. Based on this observation, the states of origin of respondents fall within this list and Figure 2 clearly shows the distribution.

Figure 2: Origins of Respondents

Number of Respondents	State of Origin
2	Anambra State
2	Delta State
1	Imo State

Source: Interview data.

4.3 Migration Motives

Most of the respondents in the study cited family responsibilities to be the underlying motive for emigration. This is expressed in their parlance with phrases such as "the search for greener pastures" or a "better life". Based on their narratives, the outcome of this better life search connects and influences their capacity to fulfil family responsibilities. Specifically, four out of the five respondents pointed to family obligations as the overarching rationale behind their original emigration. One also listed poor healthcare facilities in Nigeria as a motive for emigration. This respondent had an underlying health issue, and hence perceived his migration as bringing him closer to a location with adequate healthcare facilities. Two also specifically gave their interest in business opportunities as another reason for their decision to emigrate. Family responsibilities highlighted by respondents included feeding, education of younger siblings, and self and family financial empowerment.

4.3.1 Transition and Departure

Of the 5 respondents, four pointed out that Libya was not their destination, but just somewhere they ended up en route to Europe. The remaining respondent indicated that Libya was his intended destination as a result of a business opportunity he found within the Libyan territory. This respondent exported Irvingia Gabonensis (African Bush Mango Kernels), a staple food product with medicinal values from Nigeria to Libya. According to the respondent, this was a profitable business venture at that time. Two European countries were cited by respondents as actual destinations: Italy and Germany. All four respondents

who intended to enter Europe hoped to do so through Libya, and noted that they considered Italy the main gateway into other parts of Europe. From their narratives, their choices were predicated on the fact that Germany is seen as richer than Italy as a result of the booming automobile industry which they hoped to work in if they made it to Germany. One of them explained this in the following words:

> "The first point of call was Italy. As the case may be, it was Italy then from Italy, I will now begin to spread my tentacles" (Emris, Nigeria, 2021)

Similarly, Jonny expressed his admiration for Germany as a destination as well as the alluring automobile industry:

> "Normally, it was Germany that I thought about. I preferred Germany because they live the kind of lifestyle that I want. You know, the truth is that I loved Deutsch. I wanted to speak the German language, I love the language to be sincere with you. And secondly, it has to do with importation of cars that was what I wanted, going into importation when I get there" (Johnny, Nigeria, 2021).

The five respondents pointed out that Libya was a point of transition to Europe. Although, Niger is the primary transit nation for sub-Saharan African migrants en route to Libya (Adesina 2021: 224), the voyage to Europe via Libya, which generally consists of a desert crossing, internal travel within Libya, and a boat ride across the Mediterranean Sea, is extremely perilous(Hamood and Cairo 2006: 7). Migrants often go days on minimal water and food, crowded inside vehicles or trucks to the point that suffocation is a regular cause of death. Passengers might die as a result of vehicle failures in the desert, since they commonly run out of food and water before getting help. Additionally, Migrants are also vulnerable to bandit assaults, and some are abandoned in the desert by their traffickers(Adesina 2021: 225-226) Moreover, the irregular status of many who follow this path en route to Europe, when based in Libya amplifies their vulnerability during the journey (Hamood and Cairo 2006: 7). This vulnerable status according to respondents in the study propelled them to seek refuge in camps before they were arrested and detained. The camps are private homes where migrants are kept before they cross the sea. The number of months respondents spent in both camps and detention centres ranged from 3 to 9 months. They blamed the corruption of the Libyan Police for the extension of their stay in detention. One of the interviewees, Mike (not real name) explained their continuous stay in the centre benefited the Libyan Police who receive funds from unverified donors under the guise of feeding detainees. During the interview Mike said:

> "They'll be telling them that they have been giving us food. I heard a couple of things there even when the IOM came. They were saying that each person eats like 5 euro in a day. And they were given money and food items to give us but they will go and sell those food items. So, those benefits they are getting from them are the reasons the Libya police do not want to let us go" (Mike 2021).

To foreground their departure process, the narratives of respondents appear to express a certain similarity in the way and manner they left for Nigeria, especially given the obvious prevalence of insecurity in Libya. From the narrative of respondents, two places surfaced as

the point where their arrest took place; the camp and the street. The statement "Libya is unsafe" and "The detention is for your safety" seemed to serve as the justification for armed men in uniform to round up the respondents and subsequently detain them for months. Specifically, four out of the five identified these men in uniform as the Libyan Police while one considered them to be the UN police. One example of this is Damian (a pseudonym) who states that under the guise of safety, he was arrested by the police and later discovered it was a ploy to keep him in prison. During the interview Damian says:

> "When I was on my way to Tripoli for me to go and look for Patakar (travel document), then the army people arrested us and said that they are taking us to deportation camp where they would deport us in the next two weeks. They said the Nigerian Ambassador will come and do paper for us to go back to Nigeria. We thought they were telling us the truth but we didn't know they wanted to put us inside prison" (Damian 2021).

Likewise, James (not his real name) stated that:

> "Departure happened after the UN bust our camp. Then they told us that they were going to deport us to our country. So after that now they took us to prison. So from there, I spent over four months in prison before they brought us back home" (James 2021).

The words of James and Damian point to what appears to be synergized collaboration between the owner of these camps where migrants are kept and the police that carry out the arrests. Further analysis of their responses reveals that in some instances the Libyan police were aware of the operations of the camps and compel the owners to shut the camps down which resulted in migrants being sent into the streets where they were then able to be arrested and detained.

Moreover, the use of law enforcement to pick up migrants from the streets of Libya and from camps where they are kept before they cross the Mediterranean Sea points to a contradiction with the claimed 'voluntariness' of their participation in the AVRR program. Given the circumstances of their arrest they did not have the opportunity to fully express their rights to free movement in the face of being detained after their arrest. It is these circumstances that makes respondents use the term 'deportation' when talking of their experience, reflecting their consciousness that 'deportation' well describes their fate after being arrested.

The above scenarios depict a difficult situation for migrants to make an informed decision when participating in the AVRR program and their limited chances to exercise their agency. Consequently, AVRR may violate the conditions that underscore any 'voluntary' return as implied in the title of the program. Freedom of choice that is devoid of physical or psychological coercion and an informed decision based on adequate information on which to make the decision are the required condition for voluntariness (Reintegration Handbook 2019: 11). Instead, respondents faced prevailing circumstance of starvation, harsh treatment in the detention centres and so embraced the AVRR program as the only possible way out.

4.3.2 Reintegration Assistance

All the respondents in the study received reintegration assistance from the IOM after their return to Nigeria. The assistance they got started within two to three months of their arrival in the country. It begins first with an integration forum where psychological and psychosocial support is provided to all returnees. From their narratives, this is done to cause a shift in their mindset as well as to heal any traumas they may have experienced during the journey to Libya and their stay in the country. One of the interviewees, Jonny explained that for him the provision of psychological and psychosocial support was followed by an epiphany of self-discovery during the business skills training that followed:

> "After the rehabilitation aspect of it, I started thinking, started gaining knowledge and learning a lot of things, business ideas and trying to create something for myself. I had so many ideas on what I can do, I started having all those mindsets" (Jonny 2021).

The interviewee's discovery of business ideas started with the five days of intensive business training skills that follow on after the provision of psychological and psychosocial support to migrants. At this stage, returnees are trained in different business skills that cut across economic sectors. From the business skill, training returnees are asked to draw up a business plan and undertake a market feasibility study. Furthermore, they are expected to establish a connection to a vendor who can provide materials and resources to start up the business. Worthy to note here is that the funds to assist the businesses of returnees are remitted directly to vendors. Returnees have to find a vendor to supply the materials needed for the proposed business, as returnees are not given any direct cash support themselves by IOM. During the interview, James captures this situation this way:

> "They teach us how to do the business or the idea, how to economize and how to run management. So even the money, they never hand the money to our hand direct. Any business you choose, you go to the market and ask the price. The sellers of those materials will give you a receipt that you take to IOM and then IOM will pay them directly and the owner of the goods will release the goods for you" (James 2021).

It can be deduced from the narrative that this approach to providing reintegration support through vendors is hinged on transparency of the vendors and on the assumption that the funds would not be used to finance returnees' re-migration plans. However, the approach seems to amplify the vulnerability of returnees. Under the prevailing conditions, in a relatively weak position, returnees tend to negotiate with vendors to take a share of the cash instead of the materials meant to be supplied for their business. As a result, a significant percentage of the total amount is deducted by vendors and in some cases they keep more than is eventually passed on in cash to the returnee. This experience is evidenced in the response of Damian, who noted that the need to pay for housing materials connected to a burial, was behind his decision to negotiate for cash with the vendor. As he said:

> "The support they gave us was just a token, just to use and start up something. They gave three of us almost 700,000 naira each (1.447, 57 Euros), then the vendor that was supposed to supply us goods took his percentage because I didn't take goods because I told him I had a problem. I explained everything to the man. The man later came around to confirm it that I

have my younger brother in the mortuary. So the man took some money and gave me [the rest]. It's up to 300,000 naira and from there I bought wood and zinc for roofing the house for my younger brother's burial" (Damian 2021).

He received less than half the money as cash, despite the vendor having verified that his brother had died. Damian's near bankruptcy from the arrangement with the vendor and after undertaking the burial of his brother with the support funds resonates with what Webber (2011: 101) opined that the IOM's support to returnees is, by default, "short-term and piecemeal". Although insufficiency of the support was hinted at by the respondents, two out of the five are currently working in the business they opted for. The other three have followed a different vocation and have used their IOM support in the form of cash to take care of other vital needs. Meanwhile, the considerable delays before funds are remitted to vendors was pointed out by respondents. From the interviewees, the duration of the remittance to each vendor of the five respondents ranges between 2 and 24 months. As Johnny said during the interview:

> "Particularly at the initial stage after the rehabilitation program, that is the area they were supposed to remit the funds because then you have the mindset of the kind of business that you want to do. Sometimes in these things they do, some people say the delay is not denial but it is. When delay stays too much, it becomes a denial because opportunities wait for no man. A business idea is that when you are thinking about it, you need the financial aspect that is the capital. If you think about business without capital, then you have never started a business".

The frustration caused by the often long delays in remittance of support is evident from this statement, which shows to an extent that a delay could abort even a good business idea. Returnees brought back to Nigeria via the AVRR program are entitled to reintegration support, but bureaucratic delay means that funds are not distributed; these problems should not persist. The delay from the respondents' point of view makes them feel they are not prioritized for timely and appropriate financial support. For returnees to enhance their post-return living situations and sustain their livelihoods requires a more flexible system that could reduce their vulnerability during the reintegration process. Delays can also lead to further accumulation of personal and family debt.

4.4. Challenges, resilience and social networks

In their post-return life, IOM support for the reintegration of returnees does not appear to protect them from certain challenges including stigmatization, debt, and a lack of funds to engage in job hunting. Although some respondents could not access formal employment for lack of required qualifications, they attested that these challenges confront their growth especially accessing the labour market. For instance, stigmatization encompasses the perception of them as 'failures' by family and even as 'threats' by prospective employers.

Stigma has been said to be one of the greatest challenges faced by deportees. In his study on stigma, Goffman (1963: 3) pointed out that someone who is stigmatized is viewed as embodying a quality that distinguishes him or her from others in the group of related people,

in such a way as to make that individual appear less desirable. In extreme cases the stigmatized individual or group can also be regarded as bad or evil. As a result, the way individuals are perceived by others is degraded from being viewed as a full and ordinary person to being seen more or less as a contaminated or disgraced person. Besides, Goffman's study on stigma also explained two perspectives on stigma. In the first, it is assumed that whether or not the stigmatized individuals believe their 'differentness' is already recognized or obvious on the spot, or that it is not known nor instantly perceivable by those present based on their knowledge of what constitute 'differentness'. Precisely the difference between the two perspectives is that the first perspective talks about the predicament of the discredited while the second perspective hints at the 'discreditable'.

Both perceptions of stigmatization are mirrored in the response of interviewees in the study in ways that portrayed them as 'failures' by family or 'threats' by employers. Considering that a common view of the normal is required for stigma to function (Schuster and Majidi 2014: 5), in Nigeria, it is common to perceive deportees or returnees as 'failures' that came back to the country empty-handed and should have returned, if they were successful, with money to solve family and community problems. In fact, in Nigeria returnees' geographical migration is intended to lead to increased social mobility and prosperity, and if this isn't the case, the individual in question does not appear to meet the socio-cultural ideal of travel. (Ratia and Notermans 2012: 149). This perception also transcends the respective families of some of the deportees. One of the interviewees, James pointed out his family were not pleased with the fact he came back empty-handed. During the interview he said:

> "So as somebody that has travelled, they are expecting you to come back with something. Now you come back, you are coming back with nothing too. Number one, they feel good that I came back with my head but in the aspect of coming back with nothing is also another thing. So I had to start life from the beginning" (James 2021).

The negative view towards the reality of returning empty-handed appears not to be limited to family members only. Even from prospective employers, returnees or deportees are stigmatized. This stigmatization that affects the prospects for employment is expressed in Johnny's response. He explained it this way:

> "It is not easy because some never trust you based on the experience that if you give him an opportunity, maybe he would take our money and run away. After you share your experience, like this is what I went through some people will have some kind of pity. But some people will be like if we give him the chance now, are you sure he would not run away with our money" (Johnny 2021).

Johnny's account resonates with what Carling and Hernandez (2008: 4) stated that returnees are not only dissatisfied and sometimes furious, but they often feel humiliation at having failed and returning empty-handed. And what emerges from such accounts of stigmatization is that for returnees, it stalls reintegration and labour market access. This is compounded by the lack of the funds to engage in job hunting in the first instance or support their businesses. While some of the educated respondents cite a lack of funds to sponsor job hunting mobility, those in business pointed out insufficient capital to keep the business afloat

was a challenge they confronted. An example of this situation can be found in the response of Emris. According to Emris:

> "The challenges I encounter, number one financial challenge because there was no money coming from anywhere financially that was the main issue…. And I need money to find a job. You're either run from one place to another because, you know, you're not looking for a job in one particular locality. You have to be going from one place to place, from place to place" (Emris 2021).

For Emris the lack of funds for job hunting was not the only challenge he is faced with that hampers his labour market reintegration. Emris also took a loan to finance his migration and was obliged to use part of the IOM payment he negotiated with the vendor upon his return, to service his debt.

On the other hand, respondents proved to have found ways to circumvent these challenges in their post-return live. These ways embody individual strategies and support they receive from their social networks including their family, friends, classmates and pastor. While some of them found ways to overcome stigmatization and navigate the job search, their families supported establishing a business or provided funds to cushion the impact of these challenges in their post-return life. During the interview Emris explained:

> "I decided not to stigmatize myself by allowing what has happened to me to overwhelm my sense of perspective. So whenever I'm talking to people, most of them starts to feel pity for me. But I overlook their official expression. I continue with what I was telling them and so on" (Emris 2021).

Elsewhere during the interview, he noted the strategies he had adopted to overcome barriers facing his job search:

> "I had to employ a strategy of using the mechanism of what word of mouth. When I meet people that I know, I would tell them please I'm looking for a job. I just came back and I really want to get something doing. So that's I will equally start making a living. In order to feel belonged in the society to the society again. So that was the strategy I had to employ" (Emris, 2021).

Emris noted during the interview that his strategy of job search by proxy paid off as he eventually secured a job through a friend. Some of the respondents in business pointed out the role of their family and friends to reposition their economic status. One of them is Mike who initially sold all he had to finance his migration. Currently, his parents have re-established his spare parts business. Specifically, he said that

> "After some few months, so my parents borrowed money for me to start up the spare parts business again before we went for the IOM training and they supported us with a little amount" (Mike 2021).

Most of the respondents reported that they adopted measures to resolve the challenges facing them as this was necessary to reduce the pressures inherent in their post-return lives. Since the economic reality in Nigeria is unfavourable adopting these strategies and receiving

support from social networks, it is clear that 'return' or 'deportation' embodies a new process of change for migrants.

4.5. IOM and NAPTIP effects

In Chapter 2 of this study, I gave an insight to the mandates of the IOM and NAPTIP. I highlight here that their responses from the interviews were more inclined to eulogize their reintegration programs specifically the AVRR than acknowledge their shortcomings. Both organizations share a common mandate with minor difference. IOM which pioneers the AVRR program that returnees used to return back into the country while the NAPTIP as a government organization has its core mandate centred on abolishing human trafficking and rehabilitation of victims. Regarding the AVRR program, the IOM has the responsibility to provide:

> "Administrative, logistical or financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country or country of transit and who decide to return to their country of origin" (IOM glossary 2019: 12).

By implication, migrants' welfare is covered in this stipulated IOM mandate. Flowing from this, those returnees interviewed for this study attest to the fact that their reintegration process was initiated if not fully supported, by the IOM. Findings from the research shows that at the point of entry into the country, the IOM provides a general integration package that begins with a medical screening to check for health conditions and the provision of psychosocial support before returnees are asked to go back to their place of origin. Subsequently, a formal five day long business skills training by trainers follows the provision of psychosocial support to returnees. Specifically, the IOM explained the contents of the business skill training:

> "It's five days long. And it's like a brainstorming exercise like a mindset development because they have been through precarious situation and in the very difficult situation, they have to get like normalized like as part of a new life beginning sensitization. Before we start the process with entrepreneurship. So, what are the areas in demand? What businesses are in demand? The market demand and supply in the country. So we focus on what are the areas that we can do that they can engage, particularly if they might have an experience because most of the returned migrants do have a previous experience of working and engage in different business activities before leaving. In the meantime, they [were] bankrupted and they had decided to leave the country. And also, there are different pushing and pulling factors that are vulnerable that we can look at to the determinants of migrant vulnerability in the community or in the states or in the cities that they've been living" (Program Officer-AVRR/Migration Management at IOM).

The term used here, 'brainstorming exercise', belies the consideration of business choices made by interviewees as pointed out in their response. While the term brainstorming exercise seems to depict a collaborative effort between the returnees and the IOM, some interviewees stated their choices for the business idea were restricted to those suggested by the IOM. Johnny's response during the interview captures this:

"And the main thing is that you have to choose exactly the business that suit them because not all the business that you choose that they would answer. They know some of our guys, they would use the money and go back to Libya" (Johnny, Nigeria 2021).

Based on this account, it appears businesses that require heavy capital are not covered in the list of businesses available to returnees to make a choice from. The reason for this from the perspective of the returnees is to reduce the amount of cash at their disposal and ultimately discourage remigration. However, some of the respondents hinted on the vendor-returnee backdoor arrangements which informs us about hindrances in reintegration into the local economy and labour market. These informal arrangements as explained by the respondents can also prepare returnees to collect the funds to re-emigrate again, but it is doubtful IOM can completely prevent this possibility. Emris stated it this way:

"Most often when they pay the money to the suppliers of the goods, what really happens is that they will go ahead, liaise with their supplier. So instead of the supplier to give them the goods, because once IOM pays the supplier, they will call the returnees and tell them that the money has been paid. Now the returnees will go ahead and liaise with the supplier that they don't want any goods that what they need is the money. I have seen that happen severally" (Emris, Nigeria 2021).

To address this shortcoming, during the interview, Emris called for a more proactive approach from IOM towards ensuring economic reintegration of returnees. Specifically, he said:

"If there is a way that it can be done so that they would stop giving the money to the participants but rather, let the so called business be set up for the participants and then handed over to them because most of them after giving them this money, most of them still try to use their own part of the money to enter the road and start going back to Libya" (Emris, Nigeria, 2021).

4.6 Conclusion: Reintegration and Voluntariness

The results of the study have shown that the reintegration of returnees in the AVRR program of the IOM is not without hurdles which challenge the sustainability of its objectives. These hurdles include stigmatization, debt, family commitments, delay with remittance of reintegration support, vendor-returnee unofficial negotiation of support funds and limited funds on the part of IOM and NAPTIP. While some of the hurdles are earlier migration incentives that trickled down to reintegration after return/deportation, most as clearly shown in this chapter are hinged on the shabby structural implementation of the program specifically the reintegration plan attached to the AVRR of the IOM. Meanwhile findings show the roles of immediate networks and strategies put up by returnees to circumvent reintegration hurdles. Furthermore, the findings of the study also reveal some conditions that returns to Nigeria from Libya were not fully voluntary. As shown in the commentaries of respondents, the use of force to take them into custody before return and their deplorable state during detention clearly influenced their choice to return albeit on the grounds of frustration and despair not 'voluntariness'.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Further Research

In retrospect, this study set out to answer the overarching question of "to what extent do IOM and NAPTIP help or hinder the reintegration of those returned/deported from Libya through the AVRR program". Inclusive of sub-questions the study has investigated the kind of employment and migration experiences Nigerian returnees/deportees reported after being returned to Nigeria from Libya. What issues affected their daily lives? How did they try to reintegrate through their own efforts, and what was the role of immediate social networks? We also sought to find out what impact support provided by IOM and NAPTIP had on the Nigerian returnees/deportees from Libya. I followed a qualitative approach to implement an interview process that answered these questions. From analysis, it is clear that the IOM and NAPTIP engender reintegration of returnees/deportees after return to Nigeria notwithstanding structural loopholes in the implementation of reintegration to returnees. These structural loopholes include the vendor-returnee arrangement that is obscured and harbours exploitation, the delay with remittance of support funds in addition to its insufficiency. To understand how the reintegration of returnees is shaped both by the IOM and local population, I explored the concept of 'deserving'/'undeserving' and 'illegality' in the study noting that these concepts offer justification for the reintegration of 'returnees' against 'deportees' according to the IOM. For the employment and returnees' migration experiences I saw the 'search for greener pastures' or 'better economic opportunities' as the overarching motive that incentivise migration of returnees as well as circumstances surrounding their return which contradicts the 'voluntariness' of their return as argued by the IOM. On the issues affecting their access to livelihood, I highlighted stigmatization, debt, and lack of funds to undertake job search or explore business ideas as challenges returnees/deportees are faced with in their post-return lives. I showed that despite these challenges, returnees initiate their own personal reintegration strategies to circumvent the challenges they faced. This is in addition to several roles played by their social networks. Consequently, the study suggests that the reintegration propagated by the IOM and NAPTIP to an extent had an impact on returnees/deportees. However, because the findings are laced with contradictions and obvious reintegration challenges, I cannot infer that the underlying impact of the reintegration is all encompassing in assisting returnees under the AVRR program to address remigration incentives. In short, one could say that the evidence seems to suggest that reintegration may be a smokescreen serving a short-term purpose and its long term viability for 'returnees'/'deportees' is uncertain. Hence, there is need for the IOM and NAPTIP to evaluate and revise reintegration plans for migrants returned to Nigeria. Otherwise, a challenging socioeconomic integration, may be a greater motivation to emigrate. Returnees will have fewer options to travel abroad due to their poor socioeconomic situation, and may resort to 'irregular' migration (David 2015: 152). Moreover, the positive affirmation of all respondents in the study to remigration plans clearly shows the truism of the above assertion.

During the interview processes, comments from respondents about the magnitude of family responsibilities they have to bear almost tried to instigate me to dissuade them from

assuming this 'messiah' position in their respective family or at best do the much they can for their families. Although, I recognized the benefits of kin migration range from happiness, family respect, and pride in having a relative(s) living abroad to additional socio-cultural, political, and financial advantages for both emigrants and family (Akanle et al 2021: 326). The rationale behind attempting to dissuade this 'messiah' mentality at the time is hinged on the idea that they are also individuals with needs, dreams and careers to pursue. However, I perceived from their responses that any defiance or inability to meet up with family responsibilities would suggest a form of weakness and demean their sense of self-worth. While meeting family responsibilities may appear to be a laudable goal, it will be interesting to carry out further field-based research among Nigerians in the diaspora to explore the nexus between 'self-worth' and fulfilling family responsibilities within the context of forced and voluntary forms of migration.

Appendices

Appendix I: Research Interview Questions (Returnees, IOM and NAPTIP)

- Date of interview:

  Family background:
- Describe yourself and your family background and the former job you were doing before?

  Travelling Motives/ experience:
- At the point of your departure, where was your intended destination and why?
- What did you hope your migration would bring you before you left?

  Arrival/survival in Libya:
- What skills did you acquire in Libya and how?
- Were you able to provide for yourself and family with this skill?

  Deportation (Process and experience afterwards):
- How did your departure from Libya happen?
- How did your family reacted after your return?
- What does deportation mean to you?

  Post deportation survival/employment:
- What challenges did you face in the labor market after your return and how did you overcome them?
- Do you receive any support to solve these challenges? If yes, who provided it and how did you experience it?
- Follow up: what did you like and dislike about it?

  Integration/Current Status:
- Do you consider yourself to be well integrated? If yes, how? If not, Why?
- How do you think the integration plan can be improved to enable your access into the labor market?
- What does your daily life look like, and what would you like to see different?
- What opportunities do you find in Nigeria?
- Follow-up: What other opportunities do you find elsewhere?

Research Interview Questions for IOM and NAPTIP:

  Integration Plan:
  - Are there integration plans for returnees by the IOM?
  - If yes, Could you tell me how it ought to work? And how it worked in reality?
  - Are you aware returnees are often stigmatized or faced with other challenges?

- Follow up: What sort of support do you provide to them concerning this?

Administrative procedures in receiving deportees:

- Are those returned from Libya referred to as deportees or returnees?
- Follow-up: Why are they called a different name?
- Follow up: Does this categorization affect their integration?
- Can you describe the procedures involved in receiving them?
- Would you say the overall integration plan takes proper consideration of returnees' capacity to gain employment or be self-employed?

Implementation of integration plan and assessing deportees' current state:

- What are the strengths and challenges of this integration plan especially with the aim to ensure returnees get employed or settled to sustain themselves?
- Follow-up: Delay with the support fund.
- How well does the plan to integrate returnees address the reasons they left in the first place or challenges they might face?
- How well does the organization monitor and follow up returnees' integration?
- Are there returnees who have testimonies of the success of the plan? Or not? And could you describe it?

References

Adepoju, A. (2000). Issues and Recent Trends in International Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Social Science Journal*, 52(165), pp.383–394.

Adesina, O.S., (2021). Libya and African Migration to Europe. *In African Migrants and the Refugee Crisis* (pp. 219-240). Springer, Cham.

Agbu, O., (2008). Re-visiting Corruption and Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Any Progress?. Geneva: UN-GIFT.

Akanle, O., Fayehun, O.A., Adejare, G.S. and Orobome, O.A., (2021). International migration, kinship networks and social capital in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 36(2), pp.319-332.

Arowolo, O.O. (2000). Return Migration and the Problem of Reintegration. *International Migration*, 38(5), pp.59–82.

Carling, J. and International Organization for Migration (2006) Migration, human smuggling, and trafficking from Nigeria to Europe. Geneva: International Organization for Migration (IOM migration research series, no. 23).

Carling, J. and Hernandez Carretero, M., (2008). September. Kamikaze migrants? Understanding and tackling high-risk migration from Africa. *In conference Narratives of Migration Management and Cooperation with Countries of Origin and Transit* (pp. 18-19).

Cuauhtemoc, C. and Hernandez, G. (2018) "Deconstructing Crimmigration". (immigration Law & Resistance: Ensuring a Nation of Immigrants)," *U.C. Davis Law Review*, 52(1), pp. 197–253.

Collyer, M. (2012). Deportation and the Micropolitics of Exclusion: The Rise of Removals from the UK to Sri Lanka. *Geopolitics*, 17(2), pp.276–292.

De Genova, N. P. (2002) "Migrant 'illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31(1), pp. 419–447. doi: 10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432.

De Haas, H., (2006). International migration and national development: Viewpoints and policy initiatives in countries of origin–The case of Nigeria. *International Migration Institute,* University of Oxford, Oxford.

Dako-Gyeke, M. and Kodom, R.B. (2017). Deportation and Re-integration: Ex   ploring Challenges Faced by Deportee Residents in the Nkoranza Municipality, Ghana. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18(4), pp.1083–1103.

David, A.M. (2017). Back to Square One: Socioeconomic Integration of Deported Migrants. *International Migration Review*, 51(1), pp.127–154.

Fine, S. and Walters, W. (2021). No place like home? The International Organization for Migration and the new political imaginary of deportation. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, pp.1–18.

Foreignpolicywatchdog.com. (2021). [online] Available at:
https://foreignpolicywatchdog.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/un-rights-
chief-urges-libya-eu-to-protect-migrants-crossing-the-central-mediterranean.jpg
[Accessed 30 Oct. 2021].

Garcia Hernandez, C. (2017). What is crimmigration law. Insights on Law and Society,
17(3), 22-25.

Goffman, E. (1963). Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity. London:
Penguin Books.

Godwin, D.T.O. and Dagogo, D., (2011). Deregulation of the Nigerian economy: The
theoretical milieu. In 1st International Technology, Education and Environment
Conference.

Hamood, S. and Cairo, I. (2006). African transit migration through Libya to Europe: the
human cost. Cairo: The American University In Cairo, *Forced Migration And Refugee
Studies*.

Henke, H. (2005) Crossing over: comparing recent migration in the United States and
Europe. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (Program in migration and
refugee studies).

Horyniak, D., Pinedo, M., Burgos, J.L. and Ojeda, V.D. (2016). Relationships Between
Integration and Drug Use Among Deported Migrants in Tijuana, Mexico. *Journal of
Immigrant and Minority Health*, 19(5), pp.1196–1206.

Houte, M. V. and Davids, T. (2014). Moving back or moving forward? Return migration,
development and peace-building. http://newdiversities.mmg.mpg.de/. [online]
Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/2066/135844 [Accessed 9 Nov. 2021].

Idemudia, U., Okoli, N., Goitom, M. and Bawa, S. (2021). Life after trafficking:
reintegration experiences of human trafficking survivors in Nigeria. *International
Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, ahead-of-print (ahead-of-print).

Idrissa, A. (2019). Dialogue in divergence: the impact of EU migration policy on West
African integration: the cases of Nigeria, Mali, and Niger. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2004). International migration law:
glossary on migration.

http://www.iomvienna.at/sites/default/files/IML_1_EN.pdf.

International Organization for Migration Nigeria and Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2016)
Migration in Nigeria: a country profile 2014. Geneva, Switzerland: International
Organization for Migration. Available at:
http://publications.iom.int/books/migration-nigeria-country-profile-2014
(Accessed: October 30, 2021).

IOM (International Organization for Migration), (2020). World Migration Report 2020:
Migration and Health: Current Issues, Governance and Knowledge Gaps.

Kleist, N. (2020) "Trajectories of Involuntary Return Migration to Ghana: Forced Relocation Processes and Post-Return Life," *Geoforum*, 116, pp. 272–281. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.12.005..

Lucht, H. (2011). Darkness before daybreak. University of California press.

Mahar, U. (2020). The Management of Refugee Repatriation: How Voluntary are 'Voluntary' Returns from Germany?. [online] Available at: https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/74028/1/Mahar_2020_How%20voluntary%20are%20voluntary%20returns%20from%20Germany.pdf [Accessed 9 Nov. 2021].

Mügge, L. and van der Haar, M., 2016. Who is an immigrant and who requires integration? Categorizing in European policies. *In Integration processes and policies in Europe* (pp. 77-90). Springer, Cham.

Njie, B. and Asimiran, S. (2014). Case Study as a Choice in Qualitative Methodology. IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSRJRME), [online] 4(3), pp.35–40. Available at: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6686/9520477e1d876378b13c4ee37f1b85a3c6f4.pdf

Obi-Ani, P., Anthonia Obi-Ani, N. and Isiani, M.C. (2020). A historical perspective of Nigerian immigrants in Europe. *Cogent Arts & Humanities,* 7(1), p.1846262.

Obi, C., Bartolini, F. and D'Haese, M. (2019). International migration, remittance and food security during food crises: the case study of Nigeria. *Food Security*, 12(1), pp.207–220.

Pennington, J. and Balaram, B., 2013. Homecoming: Return and reintegration of irregular migrants from Nigeria. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Plambech, S. (2014). Between "Victims" and "Criminals": Rescue, Deportation, and Everyday Violence Among Nigerian Migrants. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 21(3), pp.382–402.

Plambech, S. (2017a). God brought you home – deportation as moral governance in the lives of Nigerian sex worker migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(13), pp.2211–2227.

Plambech, S. (2017b) "Sex, Deportation and Rescue: Economies of Migration among Nigerian Sex Workers," *Feminist Economics*, 23(3), pp. 134–159. doi: 10.1080/13545701.2016.1181272.

Ratia, E. and Notermans, C. (2012). "I was crying, I did not come back with anything": Women's Experiences of Deportation from Europe to Nigeria. *African Diaspora*, [online] 5(2), pp.143–164. Available at: https://brill.com/view/journals/afdi/5/2/article-p143_2.xml [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

Ratner, C. (2002). Subjectivity and objectivity in qualitative methodology. *In Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 3, No. 3).

Reintegration Handbook: Module 1 - An integrated approach to reintegration. (2019). publications.iom.int. [online] Available at: https://publications.iom.int/books/reintegration-handbook-module-1-integrated-approach-reintegration [Accessed 24 Sep. 2021].

Salihi, R. (2020) "Assisted" and "Voluntary" Return?: Implementation of AVRR schemes in Afghanistan. The Hague, The Netherlands: Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus (Working paper / Institute of Social Studies, no. 676). Available at: https://eur.on.worldcat.org/v2/search/detail/1262803215?queryString=Assisted%E2%80%99%20and%20%E2%80%98Voluntary%E2%80%99%20Return%20to%20Afghanistan%3F%20IMPLEMENTATION%20OF%20AVRR%20SCHEMES%20IN%20AFGHANISTAN&clusterResults=true&groupVariantRecords=false (Accessed: November 4, 2021).

Schuster, L. and Majidi, N. (2014). Deportation Stigma and Re-migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41(4), pp.635–652.

Silverman, D. (2011). Qualitative research (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications

Sökefeld, M. (2019) "Nations Rebound: German Politics of Deporting Afghans," Internationales Asien Forum. *International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, 50(1/2), pp. 91–117.

UNHCR. (2017). Desperate Journeys Refugees and migrants entering and crossing Europe via the Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes. Bureau for Europe, (February), 9. Retrieved from http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,TUR,,58b58b184,0.html.

United Nations. Department Of Economic And Social Affairs. Population Division (2020). *International migration 2020: highlights.* New York: United Nations.

Webber, F. (2011). How voluntary are voluntary returns? *Race & Class*, 52(4), pp.98–107.

World Bank (2020). Nigeria releases new report on poverty and inequality in country. [Online] World Bank. Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/lsms/brief/nigeria-releases-new-report-on-poverty-and-inequality-in-country.