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NIGERIAN MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCRA, GHANA

THEIR ROLE IN ADJUSTMENT, INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Different migration scholars have acknowledged the recent growth of migrant associations in different parts of the world. And although these associations are a worldwide phenomenon, much of the literature focuses on those in the USA mostly of Latino migrants from Central and Latin America. In Africa and more particularly Ghana, literature on migrant associations is paltry. The few that exist only explore their development impacts on the migration sending areas. In this paper, I explore in qualitative terms, three Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana, and how members of these association utilize them to ensure adjustment, integration and development. The Nigerian Women, Nigerian Committee of Brothers and the Edo State associations in Accra Ghana are under the spotlight of this discourse. They were formed soon after members arrived in Ghana to meet their various needs as migrants. The paper postulates that social networks such as migrant associations bind Nigerian migrants in complex social and interpersonal relationships, and away from the familial kinship-oriented and other familiar friendship networks at home, migrants find their associations as substitutes. Without state institutions to take care of migrants' needs, it appears these migrant associations play expert surrogate roles to enhance the lives of migrants and to ensure migrants' adjustment and integration into the Ghanaian society. And though the associations are not direct vectors of economic development, their social activities make them useful social development agents in Ghana. On the basis of the argument the paper makes a case for integration of migrant associations into the Ghanaian migration policies.

Introduction

'What benefit do you obtain for being a member of this association?' I asked one respondent who arrived in Accra two years ago. 'When I first arrived in Accra, Ghana', he answered with a serious look on the face, 'I didn't have any relative here. I also did not know anybody here. I was caught up in isolation and solitude. It was like I was 'home-sick', so much so that, I thought I would not be able to stay in Accra for long. I really missed home. Then at a live music reality show on one local television station, I met three Nigerians, a lady and two gentlemen. We became friends, and later, the two gentlemen introduced me to this association. Since then, members of this association have stood by me in every problem I have encountered'. This was one Nigerian migrant in Ghana whose stay in Accra, Ghana would not have been easy but for the association he joined. His was that, the association mollified the initial difficulties he encountered in his stay in Accra. He was lucky to have joined the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers association is one of the three associations this paper focuses. The rest are the Nigerian Women Association and the Edo State association (also called the Edo Association). These associations are part of the estimated fifteen (15) migrant associations for about 2 million Nigerians in Ghana¹. Members of these associations are part of the contemporary Nigerian migrants who continue to sustain the long history of Ghana-Nigerian relations and radiate development impulses, particularly in Ghana.

Studies of migrant associations in West Africa initially portrayed the associations in terms of how they facilitated tribal cultural activities (Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995) and the West African urbanization process, (Little, 1957). To what extent do contemporary migrant associations

¹Conversation with a Minister at the Nigerian High Commission in Accra, Ghana on the 26th March, 2008.

conform to this portrayal? What activities engage the attention of contemporary West African migrant associations, and what are the development impacts of these associations? This paper explores these questions using field work data collected in 2008. This paper mirrors the adjustment, integration and development roles of Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana. The objective of this paper therefore, is to understand the role of the Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, more essentially their adjustment role for new migrant, their general integration role for members and their development impacts in Ghana and Nigeria.

Data for this study comes from primary fieldwork employing multiple ethnographic methods of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and informal discussions to examine three (3) Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana. The fieldwork was conducted in 5 months, between December 2007 and April 2008 in Accra. In the process, contacts were established with the Nigerian migrant associations, both executives and members, and officials of the Nigerian High commission in Accra. Some of the people were only contacted for interviewing, in particular those from the Nigerian High Commission. For others whom I got to know better in the process, various informal interactions with them facilitated the access to some invaluable insights into the activities of the associations. In as much as some of the conversations and interactions took place in informal ways, I did not hesitate in any way to take chance even when the interactions and conversations were in drinking spots, restaurants, and during family and friends' parties. For some of these reasons, some association members have, and continue to be in constant communication with me.

Contextualizing Nigerian migration to Ghana

The available evidence of intra-West African migratory movement reveal that, Nigerian migration to Ghana dates back to the 15th century (Rouch, 1954). Other studies trace the presence of Nigerians in Ghana to the early nineteenth century though their connection with the country, it is argued, goes as far back as the period of the caravan trade (see Awumbila, et al 2008; Anarfi et al, 2003). Also, as shown in table 1 below, as far back as the 1920s, Nigerian migration to Ghana was significantly high. Indeed, Twum-Baah (2005:60) has observed that, Nigerians are the major participants in Ghanaian international migration. According to Manuh (2006), the total number of Nigerians in Ghana stood at 8,891 in 1999. This figure increased to 28,489 in year 2000 before peaking at 44,929 in 2001. It, however, plummeted to 24,718 in 2002. Currently, the Nigerian High Commission puts the number of Nigerians in Ghana at over 2 million (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009).

Table 1: Foreign Africans in Ghana by Origin: 1921, 1931 & 1960 Census Years (000s)

COUNTRY	1921	1931	1960
Dahomey (Benin)			31.6
Ivory Coast			54.4
Liberia	12.6	6.8	8.7
Mali			19.4
Niger			24.9
Nigeria	21.2	67.7	190.8
Togo			280.6
Upper Volta			194.6
Other West Africans	14.5	199.1	6
Other Africans		15.6	0.7
TOTAL	48.6	289.2	811.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1962. Cf. Kay and Hymer, 1972

By the second quarter of the twentieth century, Nigerians constituted the largest single group (96%) of the 70, 536 immigrants from other British West African colonies resident in Ghana (Cardinall, 1931). During this period Adepoju (2005a) submits, Ghana's relative affluence made it the 'gold coast' for thousands of immigrants from West Africa particularly Nigeria, Togo and Burkina Faso. Nigerians were particularly involved in diamond digging and yam selling as well as butchering, and were part of the many foreigners who occupied positions of economic dominance in trade and commerce in the country (Peil, 1974). The Yoruba and Hausa traders (Nigerians) in Ghana for instance controlled the market place, whilst other foreigners occupied many of the skilled posts in industry (Gould, 1974). Nigerians were the dominant group of people in the waterfront stores at Winneba, and the Fadama motor-parts market on the outskirts of Accra (Stepleton, 1979). Also, about 40 per cent of the female vendors in the Kumasi market were Yoruba (Skinner, 1960).

So dominant were foreign nationals in the Ghanaian economy that, native Ghanaians started mounting pressure for increased participation in national affairs and opportunities for citizens at the expense of non-citizens (Gould, 1974: 356). When in the mid 1960s, the country's economy run into difficulties (see Peil 1974), aliens were quickly accused of posing a threat to the economic survival of the country (see Adamako-Sarfoh, 1974)². Consequent to these, a number of intervention measures were devised to deal with the increasing migrant stock. The Aliens Compliance Order of November 1969 was one of such measures (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009; Awumbila, et al 2008). The Order was described as the best known of all the legislative measures adopted in West Africa. It required all aliens in Ghana to be in possession of a residence permit if they did not already have one or to obtain it within two weeks. The Order affected most of Ghana's immediate neighbours - Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Togolese nationals (see Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009; Awumbila, et al 2009). In the words of Hundsalz (1972) however, majority of the Order's victims were traders of the Yoruba ethnic group from Nigeria (cf. Gould, 1974; see also Brydon, 1985). And although the expulsion affected over 100,000 aliens (Gould, 1974), it was described at the end as a 'patriotic move to garner jobs for Ghanaians and to rid the country of crime' (Brydon, 1985:569).

From immigration to emigration statuses: The case of Ghana and Nigeria

After the devastation of the Biafran War throughout the 1970s, (particularly in the early 1970s) Nigeria's economic position improved (Brydon, 1985). Boom in that country's oil industry spawned abundant jobs in different areas of the economy (Adepoju, 1984). The attendant prospects of rising incomes and rapid industrialisation exerted substantial pull on a number of West African labour migrants (Haas, 2006). As a result, Nigerians developed disinterest in emigration for local working circumstances were attractive. With time this condition attracted migrants from the West African sub-region especially from Ghana, thereby making Nigeria not only an important migrant receiving country, but also complete a *reverse migration transition* process from a net emigration country to a net immigration country. Off record statistics in the early 1980s for instance, put the average number of Ghanaians who migrated into Nigeria to 300 per day and in December 1980, an estimated number of about 150,000 Ghanaians had registered with the Ghana High Commission in Lagos (Anarfi, 1982, cf. Anarfi, et al 2003:7). Soon after Nigeria's oil-led economic boom, however, the country was thrown into economic restructuring and a sharp decline in oil revenue (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009). The results of these were visible and

² The economic malaise and the fact that aliens became scapegoats constituted popular press outputs, see for example Brydon, 1985 for some detail of this.

multifaceted, registering in rapid deterioration in living and working conditions, wage freeze, devalued national currency, declining real incomes and authoritarian military rule in the 1980s (Adepoju, 2005a). These conditions fuelled large-scale emigration, especially of skilled people, driving several professionals to sell their skills internationally, thus making Nigeria undergo her second migration transition process, this time from a net immigration country to a net emigration country (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009).

In most political jurisdictions, aliens often become first count scapegoats when governments confront economic and political problems. These migrants become targets of hostility from the native population (Adepoju 1984, 2005b; Brydon, 1985; Peil, 1974). This was exactly the case in Nigeria, a case Gravil has described as a 'mere self-righteous opportunism' (Gravil, 1985:529). Aliens were blamed for all the economic, social and political problems that confronted the country (Adepoju, 1984, 2005b; Peil, 1974). For instance, they were cited for being responsible for the then flourishing criminal activities in that country (Gravil, 1985:532).

In early 1983, the Shagari government of Nigeria, in a typical Busia government's 1969 legislation style in Ghana, revoked the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons to expel about 1 million Ghanaians (Arthur 1991: 74; Adepoju, 2005a:32). In June 1985, about 0.2 million illegal aliens were again expelled as Nigeria's economic crisis deepened following the implementation of structural adjustment programme (Adepoju, 2005a:32). According to Brydon, the official estimate for dispelled Ghanaians from Nigeria is somewhere in the range 900,000 to 1.2 million³.

Recent developments in Nigerian migration to Ghana

In the immediate post independence era, Ghana continued to attract a number of migrants from the West African sub-region in particular and Africa in general, thanks to her relative affluence at the time. This period generated a lot of empirical studies on Ghana's aliens⁴. In the recent past however, the number of studies on Ghana's immigrants seems to have dwindled, perhaps because of the poor socio-economic and political situations the country was plunged into, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s, and the unattractive position the country occupied in the eyes of migrants. Indeed these periods also saw a lot of out migration by Ghanaians to places within and outside West Africa and Africa. Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Africa, Britain, USA etc are but few of such destinations.

For a decade and half now however, between 1992 and 2007, there has been a growing desire by Ghanaians towards democratic governance. This undoubtedly has paid off. The country has enjoyed relative peace as compared to her neighbouring nations. Two of Ghana's immediate neighbours – Togo and Ivory Coast – experienced turmoil during the time under review. It was within this period that several West African countries experienced political upheavals⁵.

³ Brydon gives the composition of official estimate for dispelled Ghanaians from Nigeria as follows: Asante region 32%, Eastern Region 18%, while Central, Western and Greater Accra Regions together accounted for 32% of the returnees. Official estimate for other regions include Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions, 7% each, and Northern and Upper Regions, 2% each (Brydon, 1985).

⁴ A classic example of these studies is Margaret Peil's 'Ghana's Aliens'. *International Migration Review*, Vol. 8, No.3, International Migration in Tropical Africa. pp. 367-381. See also Beals R. E. and R. E. Menezes (1970). 'Migrant Labour and Agricultural Output in Ghana', *Oxford Economic Papers* 22(CD): 109-27.

⁵ Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone best exemplify this situation. In Nigeria for example, the military, having seized power in 1983 presided over that country even against widespread strikes and demonstrations about its failure to

In all these unstable situations, Ghana played a peace advocate's role. The country was a sanctuary of peace in an area described variously as one of the 'most unstable' regions in the world. The country's economy is flourishing and is about the most stable in West Africa. The economic and political systems show stability⁶. Various democratic structures are firmly established in the country. In the current republic jurisdiction, five democratic elections have been held, the last in 2008. The general aspiration of the populace is that of a country entrenched in democratic tradition. Consequent to these, the country has experienced widespread immigration, mostly from the West African sub-region, and Nigeria in particular. The banking and insurance sectors in Ghana have for instance experienced mergers, takeovers and new entrants in recent years. These have largely been influenced by Nigerians following, in the case of the banking sector, Charles Soludo's banks recapitalisation policy⁷. Nigeria's mobile communication giant, Globacom secured license in June 2008 to operate as Ghana's sixth mobile communication operator. Nigerian students also form bulk guests at the admission offices of most Ghanaian universities, visiting and calling daily to make inquiries on admission and transfer requirements. They constitute a substantial chunk of foreign students of Ghana's universities. In 2004 and 2005, for instance, Nigerians constituted 56% and 49.6% respectively of University of Ghana's international student component (University of Ghana, 2004; 2005).

For migrants in general, the obstacles encountered upon arrival in a destination and during the process of integration influence the way they organise their actions (Jenkins, 1988). Stripped of the presence of family members, other friendship associations emerge, and the dynamics of social relationships and their underlying cultural ethos surface (Meier, 2005:55-56). Migrants in these situations create social networks to facilitate their settling processes as well as their incorporation into the host society (López et. al 2001; Massey et al. 2005). These social networks also provide migrants with valuable opportunities in job and housing searching in their new destination (Massey et al. 1987). In the process, these social networks (informal groups of friendship networks) give way to formal structures that link individuals united by a common origin (Sardinha, undated). In the words of Owusu (2000), migrants establish associations soon after arriving in their destination, to meet their needs. These associations become part of the immigrants' social networks, binding both migrants and non-migrants in complex social and interpersonal relationships (Adepoju, 1998: 326) as family, household, friendship and community people.

Different trajectories of research on immigrant associations

There is no doubt that research on different types of migrant associations abound in the literature. These associations provide different kinds of support and benefits to their members (Burnet and Palmer, 1988; Okamura, 1983; Orozco and Rouse, 2007; Owusu 2000) as well as the place of their origin (Lopez et. al 2001; Orozco and Rouse, 2007). Even although the presence of migrant associations is worldwide (Caglar, 2006) much of the existing literature focuses on those in the USA; Latino migrants from Central and Latin America. For instance Guatemalan, El Salvadoran,

return the country to civilian rule. It was until May 1999 that Nigeria began tasting constitutional government after Obasanjo won the February elections.

⁶This observation is in comparison to Ghana's West African neighbours including Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Siera Leone, Togo Benin, Nigeria et cetera.

⁷ Charles Soludo, governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and a leading member of the country's economic-reform team, ordered banks in 2004 to raise their minimum capital base twelve-fold to 25 billion naira (\$190m), within 18 months or face being banned from holding public-sector deposits and participating in the foreign-exchange markets. Soludo's directive was intended to spur on a consolidation of Nigeria's fragile and overcrowded banking sector, mainly through mergers. The aim was eventually to reduce the number of banks from 89 to about 12.

Hondurans and Nicaraguan diaspora associations have been documented by Orozco (2006), while Babcock (2006) takes the case of Belizeans in the USA. Oaxacan or Mexican migrant associations in Los Angeles and other parts in USA have also been examined in different studies (see Mooney, 2003; Lopez et. al 2001; Alarcón, 2000; Guarnizo, 1998). There are other studies in Canada (Owusu, 2000; Silva, 2006).

Few exceptions exist, however, to these destination-specific research trajectories on migrant associations, including Okamura's (1983) study on Filipino hometown associations in Hawaii, Amelina's (2007) treatment of Turkish migrant associations in Germany, and Odmalm's (2004) Theoretical Linkages of civil society, migrant organisations and political parties in Sweden. Sardinha (undated) has also explored the integration role of Cape Verdean associations in the metropolitan area of Lisbon. These are about the destination-specific research trajectories in migrant association studies. In much of these studies, association(s) is/are treated from different viewpoints. The result of this is that, migrant associations have been portrayed differently in the literature.

In some of these studies, key issues such as membership and leadership, entitlements and benefits, ties with hometown and discords inherent in the association as well as the role played by migrant associations in facilitating integration into the host society are explored (Okamura, 1983; Sardinha, undated). In other studies, the associations are celebrated as a development tool with emphasis on their role in mobilizing resources (remittances) and infrastructural developments back home (Portes et al, 2007; Akologo, 2005; Babcock, 2006; Orozco, 2006; Silva, 2006; Beauchemin and Schoumaker, undated), but though others focus on the cross border networks migrant associations sustain in sister countries (Guarnizo, 1998).

Caglar's (2006) study also examines how dissimilar genealogies, discourses, and policies of migration in Europe and the USA gave rise to different trajectories of transnational migration scholarship, including research on migrant associations. The tension between integration expectations in immigration countries on one hand and transnational bonds of migrants on the other hand have also been explored (Amelina, 2007). Jon Silva has also provided significant insights into the potential role that donor agencies have in facilitating the flow of collective remittances among migrant organisations, which fund development projects in their home communities and the barriers that prevent them from sending resources home regularly (Silva, 2006).

In all these, one hardly finds studies on migrant associations in Africa. The few studies that exist only examine the link between the associations and indigenous knowledge and development (Okafor and Honey, 1998; Beauchemin and Schoumaker, undated). In Ghana, literature on migrant associations is particularly paltry though these associations may have been present with the emergence of international migration in pre-colonial time. This is because, the literature on migrant associations suggest that, migrants soon after arriving in their destinations, organise themselves into associations to meet their various needs (see Owusu, 2000). There are not even surveys on the number of migrant associations in Africa or Ghana. In a sense, one can argue that, migrant associations never became a serious topic of research in migration studies in Ghana. At best Ghanaian migration has been approached within the nexus of increased flow of remittances and development.

Brief profiles of Nigerian migrant associations in Accra

Although Nigerians have been in Ghana since the period of the caravan trade (Anarfi et al, 2003) the associations under study started only in the early 21st century. The timing of the formation of these associations was influenced by the recent influx of Nigerians into Ghana. This influx is informed by the relative peace and stability Ghana enjoys. It is these factors that provided viable platform for the formation of the associations. In the table below, we provide summarized profile of the three (3) associations under study.

Table 2: Summary profile of the associations

Name of Association	Sex	Membership	Year of Establishment	Meeting Place	Location
ESA*	Males & Females	75	2006	Hse. No. 31, First Race Course Link, Lapaz	Abeka Lapaz
NCBA**	All-Male	Over 200	2004	Rotational	Madina
NWA***	All- Female	Over 100	2001	Nigeria House, Accra	Accra

Edo State Association (also Edo Association) **Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association *Nigerian Women Association*

Source: Field Study, December 2007-March 2008

The associations fall into three categories as follows: ethnic association (the Edo Association), national association (the Nigerian Women Association) and a semblance of brotherhood or charity association (the Nigerian committee of Brothers Association). Of the three associations, Nigerian Women Association is the only all-female and the oldest. It was established in 2001 at the Banquet Hall, Accra. Its inauguration was by the then First Lady of Ghana, Mrs. Theresa Kuffour. Following the Nigerian Women Association in age is the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association. This association is located at the Madina suburb of Accra, though its membership is not exclusive to Nigerians staying at Madina. The membership of this association is open to all Nigerians in Accra, irrespective of the suburb one stays in Accra. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association is the only all-male of the three associations. The Edo State Association, unlike the other two associations is a mixed sex association. It draws its membership from Edo State⁸ Nigerians in Accra, Ghana. It is the youngest of the three associations under study

The formation histories of the associations

According to some studies, migrants create informal social networks in their settling process. To a large extent, these social networks give way to migrant associations (Pojmann, 2007; López et al (2001). Migrant associations are formal manifestations of migrant social networks (López et al., 2001). This assertion is supported by Owusu (2000) who suggests that migrants, soon after arriving in their destination, organise themselves in associational form. For the three Nigerian migrant associations in Accra - Ghana, the observations by López et al (2001) and Owusu (2000) appear to be accurate representations of their formation histories.

⁸ The Edos are the people that occupy the old Bini province of the Western Region of Nigeria which is referred to as Edo State today. Historically, they were thought to have migrated south from the Nile valley having very strong affinity with ancient Egyptian gods. The Edo tradition which is very well preserved is very similar to the tradition of Egyptian Pharaoh.

The formation history of the Nigerian Women Association, the oldest of the three associations, is representative of the three Nigerian migrant associations. First, this association was started anew for it represented revival of previously existing association. The previous association collapsed because of inactivity. Later on in the later part of the 1990s, there developed an awareness of the growing numbers of Nigerian women in Accra. It was this awareness of the growing numbers that gave rise to a desire on the part of these migrants who shared a common nationality to establish and maintain ties with one another through formal association. Prior to the formation, the migrants formed friendship networks based upon common citizenship. Under this common factor however was the fact that, as women migrants (mostly husbands of the male migrants), there was the need to form distinctive association to deal with their peculiar problems. These Nigerian women migrants were aware of their unique position as women, and also realized the absence of state institutional bodies in Ghana to assist them. In accounting for the formation history of this association therefore, there is need to acknowledge the conscious action on the part of the women to care for themselves. It was being responsive to the lack of structures in place to cope with the gender-based needs of Nigerian women migrants that led these women into organizing themselves autonomously away from their men counterparts. In general terms then, gender and nationality were the main components of Nigerian women forming an association to deal with their problems. The formation process was however facilitated, initially, by friendship networks. Attempt to find solutions to their unique problems as women, nationality, gender and the formation of friendship networks based upon unifying and or identifiable factor(s) help explain the formation history of the Nigerian Women Association.

Part of this explanation however is appropriate for the other two associations - the Edo Association and the Nigeria Committee of Brothers Association. At the background of the formation histories of these two associations was the realization of the growing numbers of Nigerians in Accra, Ghana. There developed at this time the need to form associations to deal with the problems they encountered in Accra, Ghana. It is therefore accurate to argue, just as some scholars have done, that migrant associations are formed to take care of the problems migrants face in their destinations (López et. al 2001; Owusu, 2000; Jenkins, 1988; Okamura, 1983; Sardinha, undated).

Activities of Nigerian migrant associations in Accra

The activities of the three Nigerian Associations vary greatly. This variation can be explained with reference to the reasons underlining the formation of the associations. Whereas much of the activities of the Nigerian Women Association are in the areas of child development, charity works and mother care services, the Edo Association works to protect or defend members who have problems with the Ghanaian police or immigration officials. For the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association, activities that create good brotherliness constitute their fundamental interest.

The Nigerian Women Association meets once in every month, specifically on the last Saturday of every month. During such meetings, members discuss minutes of the previous meeting and more importantly, activities that took place in the previous month. These activities may include visits to children's homes (orphanages), donations to social welfare institutions, food/fashion fairs, and children's parties, among others. This association engages in activities which go to enhance the lives of underprivileged children. It organizes party for children every Independence Day celebration in Ghana. During such parties, children are drawn from orphanages and other motherless baby homes just to mingle and interact with children of association members. Music

of both Ghanaian and Nigerian origin including Nigerian and Ghanaian traditional bands are employed to entertain the people. For instance, Yoruba traditional men are often invited to play Yoruba traditional songs and also dance to entertain the children and association members. In all these, dresses are often made to display Nigerian culture.

Since children occupy a special place in the affairs of this association, frequent visits are paid to orphanages, most especially in Accra and Tema. Other visits have been paid to the Nsawam Prison in the Eastern region. Other activities of the association include Peace Walks, Food and Fashion Fairs, Home Keeping Seminars and resolution of personal, marital and family disputes. The Nigerian Women Association also plays a vital role in the adaptation and settlement of Nigerian women migrants in Ghana. They carry out a number of social, economic, and cultural functions and activities to promote and sustain social interactions among its members. Specific activities that promote social interactions include meetings, parties, picnics and other recreational activities.

But the associations do more than promoting unity and social interaction among members. The associations are aware of the difficulties that members, both new and old encounter. These problems are often in the area of housing. In response to this therefore, the associations help members to locate available housing vacancies in Accra for its members. They also engage with landlords and do the rent rate negotiations on behalf of the would-be tenants. In addition, the association provides initial advance payment, particularly for new comers to help in their transition and incorporation into the Ghanaian society.

The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association stands as a vital source of financial assistance for its members. The association offers direct financial assistance to its members. The financial assistance is mostly interest-free, with flexible repayment terms. Members describe this as 'soft loans' and therefore appeals to most new migrants. Indeed older members experiencing financial difficulties are also free to turn to the association for this facility. In most cases, members access this facility to take care of housing and accommodation problems, but others use it to offset medi-care (hospital) bills. Apart from the financial assistance, the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association also organizes social and charity-related activities to promote 'social intercourse' and socially induced interactions among its members. These activities include End of Year Party, congratulatory parties, and visits to orphanages and hospitals. In most cases, visits are accompanied with donations. When a member acquires a new house or vehicle, congratulatory party is organized in his honour and also to inaugurate the house or vehicle their 'own way'. Similarly, parties are organized for newly married members as well as members who give birth.

The activities of the Edo State Association in Accra, Ghana show differences and similarities to the activities of the other associations. As an ethnic association, members of the Edo Association rely on the association not only for emotional support, but also financial assistance. Members who have a new baby receive financial and material support from the association. Here in the Edo Association, material and financial support to members come in the form of donations. Members donate generously with the hope that, similar donations would be made to them should they face difficulties in the future. During child-naming and/or child christening ceremonies, during marriages etc, donations are made to the person(s) concerned. These donations demonstrate not only the economic and social value of the association, but also the cultural significance attached to marriage and child births in the Nigerian society. The Edo Association

also helps to resolve personal and marital disputes between its members, as well as between members and their Ghanaian host.

Nigerian migrant associations' adjustment and integration roles

Migrants are often isolated in their host communities. They also face cultural and language barriers, lack confidence and are not always aware of opportunities available to them. In addition, most migrants find the initial phases of their migration difficult especially when the requisite networks for participating in mainstream socio-economic activities in the country of settlement are not yet in place (Caglar, 2006). In simple terms, migrants face integration problems and for new arrivals, the problem is compounded by adjustment difficulties. Here, migrant associations have been treated in functional terms (Caglar, 2006; Owusu, 2000; Attah-Poku, 1996; Okamura, 1983; Little, 1957).

This way of treating migrant association finds expression in this study. For new arrivals, the associations help integrate them into the Nigerian community in particular and the Ghanaian society in general. This, the associations do by encouraging new migrants to be more active participants in the associations, and by creating a series of networks to represent their interests and meet their needs. These networks also enable the new migrants to voice their concerns. The Edo Association for instance helps its new members deal with the problems they encounter with immigration officials. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association also takes special interest in the initial settling problems that members encounter especially those that relate to accommodation. The social and cultural activities of Nigerian migrant associations (both indoors and outdoors) stimulate interactions and integration.

These activities also help new migrants to adapt and integrate into the Ghanaian society. In the special case of outdoor activities, the new arrivals become acquainted with their new 'sociological universe' as they continue to fine-tune, with what one respondent indicated as the new social space, Accra'. In most cases, the associations advise newly arrived migrants to attend association activities to ward off loneliness which often characterizes the lives of migrants in the initial phase of their adjustment process. By virtue of these activities, the associations can be conceived to serve as substitutes for migrants' extended families, allowing new migrants to be 'at home away from home'. The Nigerian migrant associations therefore contribute to 'out of home home-making' or better still, 'home-making abroad' by Nigerians. These aside, the associations encourage their members to take full part in the life of the neighbourhoods within which they find themselves. The members are especially encouraged, to be part of communal activities or local community works and to exhibit high level civic spirits in order to promote integration and cohesion. By most accounts, membership in these associations has stimulated civic participation, and by extension integration of new migrants into the Ghanaian social, economic, and cultural spaces.

Some members of the associations are also encouraged to join prayers with locals in local churches and mosques. For those who accept to join churches, the various Nigerian churches in Accra become, in most cases, the first point of real integration, with both Nigerians and Ghanaians. Here, they come into contact with many Nigerians and Ghanaians. While some of them forge friendship networks, others develop acquaintances. For others, this is a platform for real interactions and interrelations for forging strong connections to deal with the adjustment and integration difficulties they encounter. There are some Nigerian migrants though who do not belong to any associations. For these migrants, associations do not perform any surrogate role of

the extended family. Their migration, integration and adjustment difficulties are not placated by the associations under this study. For these migrants, it is kinfolks that they depend on for assistance (see also Anderson and Anderson, 1962). These kinfolks also allow new migrants to settle/stay with them, as accommodation and other difficulties are resolved, and for some migrants, such relationships continue even after they have settled. This line of argument is however inconsistent with some earlier studies on migrant incorporation into host communities (see Okamura, 1983).

Socio-economic and cultural dimensions of Nigerian migrants' adjustment and integration

The reasons and activities of the three Nigerian Associations, it has been observed, vary greatly. In economic terms, the associations serve as vital sources of financial assistance for members. Members depend on their association for soft loans and solution to other economic difficulties they encounter. Though evidence of associations providing information on jobs to members was not found, it was clear some of the services that the associations provide enhance the economic activities of members. A number of Nigerians in Ghana engage in trading activities, and from time to time, they get into problems with the Ghanaian Customs and Police officials. Some of these problems end up in law courts. But when these occur, associations offer assistance by intervening to find solution on behalf of the troubling member, even if it means finding legal counsel for him or her. These activities and services obviously enhance the economic activities of members, and for some focus group discussants, the economic-related activities of their associations '...remain outstanding, unmatched by any other activity'. But more economic activities remain to be done. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers intends establishing a transportation business to generate funds for other projects and also to offer employment to some of its members. In a similar vein, the Nigerian Women Association hopes to set up a viable economic venture to provide jobs for some of its members.

The subject of cultural integration has been sparingly dealt with in the earlier sections. Here, it suffices to aver that the associations work to ensure that their members continue to be in touch with the Nigerian culture, while they still find ingenious ways to incorporate into the broader Ghanaian cultural landscape. Nigerian cultural manifestations are glamorous in several ways. They are also unique and a source of pride to many Nigerians in particular and Africans in general. As such, the associations try to prevent it 'from sliding from the lives' of their members. Members are encouraged to show pride in their culture. Leadership of the associations indicated that, 'culture is our lives, we should not kill it rather we should sustain it'. Of course the associations sustain the culture of their members through several socio-cultural activities. Members are also encouraged to express, promote, and preserve their traditional songs and dances as well as dresses and food menus – activities which both membership and leadership acknowledged, give the distinctive character and appearance of them as Nigerians.

For the Edo people and indeed all of Nigerians in general, traditions occupy the apogee of their way of life (Aluede and Braimah, 2005). As such marriages and child-naming and/or christening ceremonies prop up display of Nigerian culture. Other cultural manifestations characterize funerals, parties, independence celebrations. These activities have cultural importance. They draw large number of people, both Nigerians and Ghanaians, together amidst cultural manifestations. In the special case of funerals, mourners and the bereaved members exhibit culture, tradition and heritage. The cultural activities unite members as they portray Nigerian culture together, and also build their self esteem. The unity and confidence that such cultural activities engender help the associations and their members to mobilize resources and pool their

energies together to deal with the challenges they face in Ghana. Association members are constantly reminded of their root. They are also encouraged to form friendship networks and forge understanding among members. In addition, members are encouraged to promote the speaking of Nigerian languages and teaching them to their children. The President of Edo Association for instance intimated that, 'teaching Nigerian language or languages to our children does not interfere with their grasp of a second language or even a third language'. In simple terms then, the associations play vital roles in the lives of their members. These roles are socially and culturally relevant for members. They help members to adjust and integrate into Accra.

Nigerian migrant associations as vectors of development?

The role of migrant associations on development is an issue many studies have explored (Orozco and Rouse 2007; Portès et al. 2007; Babcock, 2006; Beauchemin and Schoumaker, undated; 2006; Caglar, 2006; Orozco, 2006; Silva, 2006; Akologo, 2005). No conclusive findings however have been reached yet. Some studies acknowledge the presence and activities of migrant associations to constitute a powerful force for development. Such studies conceive migrant associations as 'faithful' development intermediary actors, and therefore form inventive working networks with Non-Governmental Organizations. There are other studies that conclude that migrant associations are not growth machines, not even growth poles. These positions are treated for their merits, and in this scientific endeavour, contextual specificity and relativity is paramount.

In this study, it is difficult to identify elements of economic development in the activities of Nigerian migrant associations. But giving the economic undertone in the migration decision-making, Nigerian migration generally may have some economic development impact on the economy of both Ghana and Nigeria. This however can not be said of the activities of the migrant associations. The development activities of Nigerian migrant associations are more in charity and philanthropy in Ghana. Social service activities far outweigh other development considerations. These activities are socially relevant and therefore in line with 'social development'. Charity and philanthropy to orphan child care institutions, prisons and hospitals appear more compelling. While association donations to hospitals help improve health services delivery in Ghana, those to orphanages and prisons assist in improving the standard of living of both prison inmates and orphans.

Giving the future intents of two of the associations - Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association and Nigerian Women association - to establish transportation business and viable economic venture respectively, one can expect more positive roles of the association in the economic life of the members, and therefore more development impact of the associations in Ghana. Giving also the ages of the associations (the oldest being 8 years), one could expect the associations to expand their scope of activities to include other economic development activities in the future. The associations have settled on social activities at their 'embryonic phase'. In the course of time, as this embryonic phase gives way to a more broadened outlook, the associations *may* turn to more economic related activities for as argued by Sardinha when migrant associations broaden their outlooks, it calls for a complete change in goals and objectives as well as activities and structure. These are extrapolations though, and must be treated in futuristic terms barring all impediments to the realization of present intents.

For now, most of the benefits of the activities of the associations are available only to Ghana and not to Nigeria. This is because all the activities are undertaken in Ghana with the intended

beneficiaries being Ghanaians. The associations have not expanded enough to make visible impacts in Nigeria. It is only the remittances of association members that benefit Nigeria, and since these remittances are individual initiatives (not group remittances), they do not feature in the associations' beneficial development activities to Nigeria. However, there are a number of activities by Nigerians in Ghana that also impact positively on both the Nigerian and Ghanaian economies. The influx of Nigerian banks and insurance companies, not to mention various forms of movie industry and communication activities also radiate development impulses to the benefit of both Ghana and Nigeria. Are Nigerians in Ghana vectors of development in Ghana and Nigeria? This is not a question to be answered with a straight forward response. While activities of Nigerian migrants outside their associations may have some positive development implications for Ghana and Nigeria, the associations explored in this paper are not direct vectors of economic development. However, their social activities (charity and philanthropic) make them useful social development agents in Ghana.

Conclusion and policy implications

The discussions in this paper show that, Nigerian migration to Ghana has a long history, dating back to the caravan and pre-colonial times. This long history connects the contemporary type of Nigerian migration to those in the past (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009), a situation which has given rise to various dynamics within the Ghanaian society. In this study, the argument has been that, the associations were formed soon after members arrived in Ghana to meet their various needs as migrants. The obstacles that these migrants encountered upon arrival in Ghana and during the process of integration influenced the way they organised their actions. Aware of the absence of family members, as well as Ghanaian state institutions to help in their adjustment and integration, the social networks emerged to bind the migrants in complex social and interpersonal relationships. In this way, the dynamics of social relationships and their underlying cultural ethos also surfaced.

It is these social networks and friendship relations that gave rise to the emergence of Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana. And while the Nigerian Women Association reflects both gender-related needs of the migrants (a kind of sisterhood), the Nigerian Committee of Brothers' Association exudes brotherhood sentiments. It is the Edo State Association that blends the two extremes, even though, this association is ethnic based. Taken together, these associations service their members in the area of adjustment, particularly new arrivals, as well as migrant integration into the Ghanaian society. In doing these, the associations engage in all manner of activities, reflecting both manifest and latent reasons for their establishment.

And though most of the activities are socio-cultural in orientation, they nonetheless have wider economic bearings. One of the central questions of this paper is to investigate whether or not these associations have implications for development. It is argued with reference to this question that, while the activities of these migrants away from their associations *may* radiate some positive development impulses for Ghana and Nigeria, the associations explored in this paper can not be considered in any direct way as vectors of economic development. This finding notwithstanding, the social activities of the associations, particularly their charity and philanthropic activities make them useful social development intermediaries in Ghana.

What does all this imply for Ghanaian migration policy formulation? Some existing studies in Ghana suggest that, with the current socio-economic, political and security issues in Ghana and Nigeria, it is quite unlikely for Nigerian migration to Ghana to ease, at least not in the near

future (see for example Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009). Even with cautious extrapolations, it is possible Nigerian migration to Ghana would increase in volume, thanks to the oil discovery, political stability, historical connection as well as the similarity in culture between the two countries. Expulsion measures as those employed by Ghana in the late 1960s and Nigeria in the early 1980s are clearly not the option for Ghana at this time. The option for Ghana is to maximize the benefits of this migratory phenomenon. Part of the benefits of this migratory movement is in the activities of that associations of this kind may engender. In addition, migration policy makers in Ghana may consider incorporation of migrant associations into the broad migration policy because of the control that these associations have over their members. Through this, attempts at mobilizing migrants for the benefit of the Ghanaian economy could be directed at the associations. The discussions also show that migrant associations could exude development impulses beneficial for Ghana's development. And though the findings and policy implications discussed are specific to Ghana, they nonetheless have wider application for West African and African countries that are currently experiencing immigration.

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