

Searching for Fortune: The Geographical Process of Nigerian Migration to Dublin, Ireland

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Introduction

The migration of Nigerians to different parts of the world is not new. From Greenland to Kabul, there are resident Nigerians. [1] However, Nigerian migrants move predominantly to the countries where they are more likely to adjust rapidly in terms of being able to understand the host country's language, to secure gainful employment, and to reunite with members of their family, friends or associate with other people from their country of origin. For these reasons, the United Kingdom, United States and Canada are some of the most popular destinations for Nigerian migrants. This paper conceptualizes the contemporary migration of Nigerians as an incessant quest, as it were, the departure of mostly well educated and young people from their home country to more fertile pastures abroad, in search of their individual fortunes. The process of migration creates Diaspora in host countries like Ireland that create significant changes in the lives of the migrants as well as the social and economic geography of the host country. In some ways, the migration can also be conceptualized as an Israelites' journey, a journey that takes Nigerian migrants from one promising foreign country to the next until they find the proverbial "promised land."

Nigerian migration to Ireland, like that of many other migrants, is characteristic of the current era of globalization, where the political upheaval, economic crisis, and the decline in opportunities for advancement and upward mobility in one area of the world cause the movement of populations to other parts of the world. The ebb and flow of Nigerian economic forces have significantly affected Nigerian migration to Ireland. Throughout the last decade, the Nigerian government has confronted the economic shambles the crisis that made it imperative for the government to contact the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the World Bank. Consequently, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was introduced by the Babangida military government. During the 1980s, Nigeria experienced negative economic growth (United Nations, 1998b). This affected the Nigerian government, as it could no longer afford to provide jobs for most of her citizen. By 1986, most of those who had jobs had abandoned their jobs to migrate.

Furthermore, the resolution of disagreement over resource allocation in Nigeria caused economic and political unrest and forced thousands of Nigerians into migration. This includes those who moved to Ireland. Some Nigerian migrants in Ireland were admitted for education. Most of them are sons and daughters of wealthy Nigerians. They moved because of the unstable Nigerian educational system. To the contrary, labour migrants moved to Ireland because many international companies closed down in Nigeria due to workers strikes, protests, and political unrest. For these, Ireland presented better opportunities for upward mobility because the country had become a "Celtic Tiger," a high growth country whose economy benefited immensely from the establishment and growth of a high tech industry.

Although the spatial displacement of Nigerian migrants to other countries has not operated according to a straightforward push-pull mechanism Floyd, (1965); Goddard, (1974), poverty and its attendant socio-economic constraints are major causes of population movements. Udo (1975 and Mabogunje, (1970) concluded that the effect of selective and unequal urban development and the growing disparity between urban and rural areas caused people to migrate from the latter to the former in Nigeria. Furthermore, to explain regional migration within West Africa, Stapleton (1959) reported that the availability of diamonds in Ghana led emigrants from Inisha and Oyan to migrate to Ghana. Afolayan (1994) studied both national and regional migration. He showed that the first wave of Yorùbá out-migration was to Northern Nigeria to trade in woven cloth. The second was in the 1920s to the Gold Coast (Ghana) to explore multiple economic opportunities. Cultural similarities and the successive emigration of relatives increased the number of migrants. Galletti et al., (1956) explains that lack of sufficient cash-earning opportunities to purchase desired goods is a factor, which contributed to Nigerian emigration. They believe that many were attracted

to emigrate by the apparent success displayed by emigrants, the predominant belief being that wealth was easier to acquire while away from home, and that such wealth lasts longer there was no immediate compulsion to spend it.

While Nigeria enjoyed a significant economic boom in the 1970s, by the mid-1980s, the boom was a distant dream. Unemployment and underemployment became rife. Many Nigerians actively sought alternatives that would ensure their economic survival. Because of the vigour and relentlessness of the pursuit of more fortuitous circumstances, Nigerian migration can be likened to the search by Israelites in the Bible for the "land flowing with milk and honey." [2] Nigerian migration to Ireland is similar to the land flowing with milk and honey as indicated from the analysis of the regional movement, be it related to temporary or permanent stay.

Nigerian migration reveals regional changeable dimensions. For example, Nigerian movement from other European countries to Ireland is greatly differentiated socially and geographically, as migrants usually construct their lives in other host countries before finally migrating to Ireland. Another aspect of this regionalization concerns those who moved directly from Nigeria to Ireland. Here, the perception of migrants' self definition and identities are primarily influenced by the social context of their experience of migration. After their arrival in Ireland, they engage in trans-national activities, such as sending money, buying land and being involved in other significant socio-economic transactions in Nigeria. Some of them even become involved in Nigerian politics. For most, what they lacked where they were relocating from was found in abundance in their new place of abode, thus, by analyzing the regional dimensions of Nigerian movement to Ireland and other European countries, one can see the relationship between Nigerian migration and the searching for a land that flows with milk and honey.

This movement is not limited to just one Nigerian ethnic group. It is a movement that involves various Nigerian ethnic groups. While the Yorùbá, Ibo, Efik, Ishan, Urhobo, Ijaw, Idoma Benin crossed geographical and territorial boundaries of Africa looking for the Promised Land, whose form might differ from group to group or class to class, most Hausa, Tiv, Egede, Nupe and Fulani limit their movement to within Nigeria and the North African mainland in searching for their dreams. Nigerian migrants have recently turned their attention to Ireland, particularly an ever-unceasing inward flow to Dublin. Consequently, Ireland may well be considered a new haven for Nigerian migrants.

Table I: Total number of Nigerian Migrants to Ireland

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Male	3	461	506	426	1006
Female	7	168	898	998	1748
Total Population	10	629	1404	1424	2754

Source: Komolafe, J (2001)

During one of the interviews I conducted in Abeokuta, Nigeria on September 18th 2001, I met a teenage boy in a restaurant who interrupted the interview with one of my interviewees in Yorùbá:

"Kíni bòdà yí nso? Bòdà Délé tí wón ngbé ní ègbé ilé wa, wón ní Ireland ni wón lo. Wón ti ra mótò fún bàbá wón lénu igbà díè tí wón dé ilú náà. Kí ló dé tí èmi náà kò lè lo sí ilú náà látì se oríre?"

Translation

"What is this brother saying? Brother Dele that lived beside our house, people said he went to Ireland. He bought a car for his father shortly after he got to the country. Why shouldn't I too go to that country and succeed?"

From the above statement, one can say that Ireland's reputation as the "Promised Land" is a consequence of

statements about Ireland that expresses the values and attachments of each prospective migrant. The question to be answered is: Why Ireland? Ireland itself has historically been a nation of emigrants that has a large Diaspora all over the world particularly in the United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia. In the course of this research I met many people that asked me, Why Ireland? In one of my interviews with Mr. P., a government official in Dublin, the first question he asked was:

"Why are Nigerians coming to Ireland? Why did they not come to Ireland before? This is what I would like to know&"

There were so many questions as to why the number of Nigerians emigrating to Ireland increased so rapidly that quite often I thought: Why the sudden increase in Nigerian migration? This thought shaped the aim and objective of this research.

Aim and Objective

New historical developments have led to renewed interest in the nature of migrant decision-making and a re-conceptualization of the basic motivations that underlie geographical mobility. Principle among these is the dynamic phenomenon of globalization and the consequent impact on migration patterns. The objective of this research is to search for transformative moments in Nigerian migration to Ireland by dividing the phenomenon into an analytic "before and "after". It seeks to do this by laying emphasis on the migrants themselves and contrasting the experiences of first migrants with those of succeeding migrant populations. The aim of the paper is to examine a number of interlocking questions: Where do Nigerians migrate from? Why do they migrate? How do they migrate? Who migrates? What are their settlement patterns?

Research Domains

This work is based within the broad area of migration studies. For the past several decades, migration research has produced an impressive collection of studies that approach migration from different perspectives, focusing on different methods of analysis and developing theoretical models. These include the first generation of migration research which was based on macro empirical scale studies. Such studies searched for the laws of migration. E. G. Ravenstein, (1885) and Herberle, (1938) later formulated a "pull- push" hypothesis to explain why people move and Lee, (1966) later focused on the characteristics of the potential migrants'origins and destinations. Short (1978) prompted the development of a more contextualised and micro influenced traditional research. However, White (1980) recognised a philosophical dichotomy in migration research between micro and macro approaches. These approaches produced the theory of multilevel modelling Cadwallader (1989), and Massey (1990). Halfacree and Boyle (1992) developed the theory of assimilation to explain what happens to the migrants in their new environments. Presently, humanistic methodologies are used in studies that consider migrants as decision makers Thomas-Hope (1999), Riccio, B (2002) and Nadjé, A (2002). However, this literature does not locate migration within individual biographies. The comprehensive analysis and comparison of the migrants are mostly tied to censuses, aggregate data and official statistics. To the contrary this research on Nigerian migrants to Ireland moved away from these mechanical models toward more dynamic processes that allow the extensive use of life histories and in-depth community studies. The emphasis of this research is on the migrants themselves. An effort is made to look for the explanation of migration as an action in time.

Methods

The results presented in this paper are part of a wider study that analyse the geography of Nigerian migration to Ireland. The study employed various methods in obtaining its data. These methods include partly structured interviews, structured interviews, conversational interviews, and the collection of documentary data.

Partly Structured interviews

The goal was to obtain information on fifty-four individuals. These interviews began with the people regarded as Nigerian community leaders in Dublin. The important task in the first phase of the interview was to identify those regarded as community leaders, and through them, to generate introductions to other Nigerian migrants for the interview. From canvassed opinions of Nigerian migrants in Dublin, pastors, medical doctors, and some shop owners were identified as respected community leaders. It was difficult to convince these community leaders that the interviews for this research were not frivolous, and that they served a legitimate research purpose. There was more success after I was admitted to the Mater Hospital in Dublin, where a Nigerian medical doctor attended to me. After I was discharged, the doctor introduced me to his pastor and his friend, a shop owner. From them, other interviews were obtained through snowballing. Thereafter, Nigerian migrants were divided into sampling fractions based on five categories. These are:

1. Ethnic group
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Marital Status
5. Household Status

Using systematic sampling, the interviews were conducted between December 18, 2000 and the July 21, 2001 in different areas of Dublin. The theme explored include: An exploration of the migration decision-making process, which involves identifying the factors that were important or unimportant in causing migration to Dublin, Ireland; the degree of choice at the time of migrating to Dublin; the level of satisfaction in Dublin; the migrant's profile; last country of residence before migration to Dublin; and the mode of entry to Dublin. Open ended questions were asked. Most of the subjects did not allow the interview to be taped, but permission was given to record the interviews in writing.

Profile of Dublin interviewees

Number of Interviews Conducted: 54			
Region of origin in Nigeria	West	East	North
	38	12	4
Gender %			
Male	21	33	0
Female	79	67	100
Age Category %			
15 - 24	16	16	0
25 - 44	74	67	100
45 - 64	10	17	-
65+	-	-	0
Marital Status %			
Unmarried	42	33	0
Widowed	11	8	0
Separated / Divorced / Abandoned	21	42	50
Married	26	17	50
Household Status %			
Household Head	21	50	50
Spouse	63	17	50

Minor	16	33	0
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Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. A dash (-) signifies a value less than 0.5% but greater than (0) zero. Source: Komolafe, J (2002)

Structured Interviews

The interviews were conducted in Nigeria, in a three-city survey of Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta. The reasons for choosing these three cities are two-fold. First, these are by far the largest source regions according to the demographic profile of Nigerians living in Dublin. Second, historically, Lagos is a gateway for out-migration from Nigeria. The other two cities are close enough to Lagos to be affected by the same motive forces. The surveys consisted of a questionnaire with approximately thirty questions including migration propensity to Ireland, migration orientation toward Ireland and attitudes toward migrating to Ireland. The wide range of questions that were asked helped to offset the limitations of this quantitative method and in the end produced an extraordinarily rich set of data. Twenty interviews were completed, ten in Lagos, five in Abeokuta, and five in Ibadan over a period of one month beginning in September 2001. Subjects for the interview were selected at the University of Lagos, the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and the University of Ibadan. Only those that were potential migrants to Ireland were selected for the interview. This gives a somewhat biased sample insofar as the survey is limited to only residents of the universities that were potential migrants to Ireland. However, the research is unique as a pilot study upon which future studies can draw.

Profile of Potential Migrants in Three City Survey - Nigeria

Number of Interviews conducted: 20			
Cities	Lagos	Abeokuta	Ibadan
Academic Institutions	University of Lagos	University of Agriculture	University of Ibadan
Number of Interviews	10	5	5
Gender%			
Male	60	40	60
Female	40	60	40
Age %			
15 - 24 Years	70	20	60
25 - 34 Years	30	80	40
Course of Study %			
Engineering	30	20	0
Science	30	80	20
Arts	20	0	80
Environmental Science	20	0	0

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Source: Komolafe, J., (2002)

Conversational Interviews

These interviews were conducted within non-governmental organizations like Ireland Refugee Center, Refugee Network in Ireland, African Networks in Ireland and Amnesty International. Other interviews were conducted at the Department of Justice and Equality Reforms (governmental). The interviews were unstructured. The questions asked emerged from the immediate context of the conversation. Interviewees were encouraged to relate their

experiences with Nigerian migrants in Ireland and to share their insight and opinions on the subject.

Documentary Data

This data was collected from the Association of Nigerians in Ireland, formerly Association of Nigerian Asylum Seekers in Ireland. The data gathered was on the demography, settlement and profile of Nigerians in Dublin.

A Brief History of Nigerian Migration to Ireland

Nigerian emigration to Ireland is still in an embryonic stage. This movement began after the Second World War, increasing modestly after Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960. Unfortunately, it was impossible to be entirely accurate. Since there was no hard data of past Nigerian migration to Ireland since neither Nigeria nor Ireland registered past Nigerian migration departures and arrivals. For this study, information on past Nigerian movement to Ireland came from various individuals. However, this data in spite of its imperfections is the best to date, for assessing past Nigerian movement to Ireland. Most of the past Nigerian migration to Ireland was by businessmen, mostly in the fishing business. It is from Ireland that most of the mackerel fish (òkú èkó) that is consumed in Nigeria is exported. The most recognized Nigerian trading partner was Killybergs in Donegal, the northern part of Ireland (Kómoláfé, 1993.) Others who migrated in any noticeable number prior to 1981 were Nigerian medical students. They reportedly did not desire to establish permanent residence in Ireland. Past Nigerian migration to Ireland did not have any significant effect on the recent trends in movement because most Nigerians presently in Dublin do not even realize that past Nigerian migration existed.

In more recent times, Nigerian migration became noticeable in 1981. At the time, the number of migrants was relatively small. By 1996 there were significant changes in the inflow of Nigerian migrants. The Nigerians who came to Ireland prior to 1981 tended to study, to undergo various kinds of training and to visit. For the purposes of this paper, 1981 is regarded as the first phase of contemporary Nigerian migration to Ireland.

In considering the historical panorama of Nigerian migration to Dublin, there is need for some chronology and categorization. The population includes those who migrate to Ireland to extend their visa, those who migrate to seek legal residence, "Celtic Tiger" migrants, who were attracted by the Irish economic boom, refuge-seeking migrants, employment-seeking migrants and providence-seeking migrants. According to the historian Nancy Green, (1997:59) "only through comparison can we understand what is specific and what is general in migration." Thus, categorization is done to facilitate the historical comparative analysis of the different categories of migrants.

Visa Extension-Seekers

The emergence of this population arose from the inability of some Nigerians in to extend their visa in the United Kingdom. This was the first significant movement of Nigerian migrants to Ireland. They knew that their visa would be extended once they got to Ireland because people who had British visas did not need Irish visas to enter Ireland. The extensions granted in Ireland could also be used to enter the United Kingdom without having to obtain a British visa. Most migrants who came to Ireland at this time saw their movement as temporary rather than permanent. Those who got their visa extended returned in a day or two to the United Kingdom. Those who got only a few days extension on their visas considered themselves unlucky, and decided to stay in Ireland. Once their visas expired, they became illegal immigrants in Ireland. For many, this was a more desirable situation than going back home, where there were limited or non-existent economic opportunities. Instead, they chose to become illegal immigrants because they were able to manipulate the technicalities of the immigration law in Ireland at the time. The Nigerian migrant, Fajujonu who was permitted to enter Ireland in 1981 is one such example. He became an illegal resident immediately his visa expired and maintained this status until 1987, when he found employment and his employer obtained a work permit for him. Another very good example is the case of Mr. B., a Nigerian migrant from Abeokuta, who migrated to Ireland in 1984. He said:

I have been in Ireland for a while now. Those were the good old days; nobody worried you when coming to Ireland. You were always welcome. In 1984 when I came to Ireland, I had a problem with extending the British visa I used to enter London. In my desperation to legalize my status, I contacted a lawyer. He explained to me how I could get my visa extended in Ireland. I came to Ireland on his advice and since then I have been in Ireland with no regrets.

Legal Resident Status-Seekers

The Fajujonu case with the Irish Minister of Justice in 1987 explains why many more Nigerian migrants choose Ireland. Fajujonu was illegally resident in Ireland, but he had two children who were born in the country. In the High Court Barrington J. recognized that the rights of the child under Articles 40, 41 and 42 include the right to have parents within the state Costello (1990). There was a brief time lag between the resolution of the Fajujonu case and the emigration of an increased number of Nigerians to Ireland, most of whom did not begin coming to Ireland in large numbers until 1995. Before then, those who came did not stay. They came to seek verification about the possibility of acquiring residency as the parent of an Irish-born child. The following interview further illustrates this tendency. Mrs. C. is from Ibadan. She lived in London for seven years. She said:

Before I came to Ireland in September 1996, I asked my cousin, who is British to go and verify the information I heard in the Church concerning ìwé ìgbèlú (residency permit.) He came and gave me the good news. Four months later I decided to move with my whole family.

In 1996, the second stage of Nigerian migration to Ireland began. This movement is restricted only to Nigerian migrants that were already within other European countries. These migrants were illegal immigrants at their points of origin. Most had lived for approximately five years in the respective European countries. In essence, they had left Nigeria for a while. Their desire to migrate to Ireland was to be able to arrange for their physical movement. This arrangement of physical movement was believed to be possible by acquiring residency status within other countries in the European Union. This group accounts for the largest number of migrants in Ireland until 1999. The following interview gives an example of one such migrant. Mrs. C. is Yorùbá from Lagos. She left Nigeria six years earlier and lived in Germany illegally. She said:

I came to Ireland to have my baby and to obtain Irish residency status. I had lived in Germany for six years as an illegal immigrant. My mother died two years ago, but I was unable to go for her burial in Nigeria. I knew if I went I would not be able to come back to Europe. Where would I have begun again? It was a terrible experience. All I want is to be able to move from one area to another. This I am now enjoying.

There are other Nigerian migrants who are similar to Mrs. C. because they move to Ireland to have their babies in the country. These women are also interested in exercising the option of using Irish residency as a means of facilitating free travel to other EU countries. Irish citizenship also makes it possible to acquire European citizenship. This has added an additional rationale to the traditional reasons why Nigerians migrate to Ireland. Having one member of a family become a European citizen is the reason why most wealthy husbands in Nigeria send their pregnant wives to Ireland, have a baby who is an Irish citizen. Once the baby is born in Ireland she/he becomes a European Union citizen. Such women do not depend on the Irish government for support throughout their stay in Ireland. They often reside in a hotel till they deliver their baby. After the baby is born, they obtain the birth certificate and leave Ireland for Nigeria.

"Celtic Tiger" Migrants

This movement was a response to Ireland's economic boom. It was also due to the presence of a Black community in Ireland. Many companies in Ireland were looking for workers. At times, to meet their demands, these companies went abroad to recruit employees. Consequently, information spread around the world, and many people agitated to

come to Ireland. Most Nigerian migrants that moved to Ireland during this period had legal residence in their prior country of abode. The following interview further illustrates this tendency. Mrs. C who owns an African shop on Dorset Street in Dublin, migrated from Britain. She told me:

I came to Ireland as a result of the article I read about the booming Irish economy. It was inside the London Financial Times. The article described the details of how companies needed people and how people were benefiting from the economy.

The reason for this group's movement was to extend their business frontier, particularly for those whose businesses were not very profitable where they resided. Such individuals perceived the Irish market as an excellent prospect for their investments where they could "make it" in no time. They were right in the sense that the Irish market could not meet the demands of African customers for African food, restaurants, hairdressing, and other necessary goods and services. The next interview shows the kind of assessment made by many such small entrepreneurs. Mr. D. has owned a shop on Parnell Street in Dublin since 1997.

I have been in Dublin since March 1997. I was in Greece before then. I came to Ireland as a result of the hint I got from my friend living in Dublin at the time. He told me about their inability to buy African foodstuffs. At the time, I owned a shop in Greece that sold African goods. Unfortunately the business was not doing well. I decided to give Dublin a try. Luckily for us the business thrived very well. This you can see for yourself.

Refugee Status-Seekers

Ireland is a signatory to a United Nations Convention (1951), which recognizes and guarantees the right of asylum. However, Nigerian refugees never migrated to Ireland in massive flows. While some Nigerian migrants have sought refuge in the country from persecution and political upheaval, other undocumented Nigerian migrants who are not refugees by definition also apply for refugee status as the only expeditious way to regularize their stay. All applicants for refugee status are required to present supporting documentation to Irish authorities. Many of those fleeing from persecution and political upheaval had characteristically achieved a certain degree of success and prominence in Nigeria. They usually fled alone or sometimes, with family members. This interview will illustrate further:

I am a former Captain in the Nigerian Army. I came to Ireland with the help of a Scottish friend who was also a combatant. I was involved in a foiled coup and was lucky to escape the death penalty.

Employment-Seeking Migrants

This population is comprised of Nigerian skilled workers who are predominantly medical professionals. Unlike most other migrants, they moved directly from Nigeria to Ireland. From 1996 to 2001 there was an open policy that allowed Nigerian medical doctors and nurses to apply for employment permits in Lagos, and later, in Abuja, to come to Ireland. These working permits were usually for a period of two years, renewable thirty days before expiration. The system has changed. Hospitals now go to Nigeria to directly recruit medical doctors and nurses. Once the doctors and nurses arrive in Ireland, they only need to undergo a six-week induction course and then begin work. The following interview illustrates one such experience:

I am a Nigerian trained medical doctor. I work in Mater Hospital. I learnt about Ireland, from a friend who was in Dublin, working in a hospital. On his advice, I applied for an Irish working visa in Abuja. I was given a two-year employment visa. When I came to Ireland, I registered for a certification exam, which I passed.

Family/Friend Network

Many studies have shown that "each new immigrant creates a large pool of potential immigrants" (Massey et al. 1994: 732.) The principle of the immigrant bringing their family to join them in their country of settlement has prevailed in a process of chain migration. In this case, the earlier Nigerian migrants assist their friends or relatives to migrate to Ireland. Such beneficiaries of assistance in turn assist their own friends or relatives. Chain migration has increased in the Nigerian immigrant population. It has also caused some important changes. Unlike other movements, this category of migration is not generated by external influences. Those who move are mostly young fresh graduates. They migrate because they have relatives or friends in Ireland. Their primary aim is to seek their fortune in Ireland. These migrants also have the obligation of helping at least one other family member to migrate to Ireland. In this way, the chain is continuous. One interviewee said:

I helped my sister to come to Ireland from Nigeria, to reduce the amount I had to send home. I used to send one hundred and fifty pounds home every month. Now we both share the responsibility equally.

Institution Building

Many social institutions have evolved as a result of Nigerian migration to Ireland. Nigerian migration patterns have helped to produce, and continue to strengthen the formation of Nigerian social institutions in Irish society.

1. There has been spatial restructuring of economic activity in Ireland: The presence of Nigerian-owned shops and Nigerian restaurants in Dublin city is a new phenomenon. This is part of an emergent economic structure in the host society since it has led to the development of new accommodations in the social geographical structure of Dublin. For example, some departmental stores in Dublin now sell different Nigerian immigrant-demanded products. In all likelihood, many more Nigerian migrants will be attracted to Ireland as a place where some of the needs for day to day living are more readily available. This could in turn generate increased interest and profitability for the import and export business between Ireland and Nigeria.

2. The image of private and public space is changing: The evolution of a Nigerian community in Ireland, drawn from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, (see table 2) has created a change in public and private space. One of the notable features of Irish social experience of Nigerian ethnic concentration is their district location in Dublin. Nigerian migrants are mostly concentrated in the inner city areas of Dublin. Although they invariably live close to other African migrants, their presence is more noticeable to the host society because of the liveliness of social interaction that is often generated. Numerous parties and other social events are common-place. There are also important implications for the use of space for religious worship. A number of Nigerian owned churches have been founded in an around Ireland which underline these migrants' presence.

3. The imposition of new regimes of spatial organisation: There are visible signs of social polarization as a result of the presence of Nigerian migrants in Ireland. However the reactions in the host country are becoming more favourable toward them. This has set in motion new regimes of spatial organization in the host society. Presently, on the Dublin radio station, Jazz FM, an hour is dedicated to playing Nigerian music with such artistes as Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Kollington Ayinla, and Sunny Ade featuring prominently, from 10pm every Friday. Also, the weekly paper, the Metro, highlights the activities of Nigerians and other Africans in Ireland. As a result of this new regime, the social landscape of Ireland is changing and the everyday experiences of Irish social life have been transformed.

Ethnicity

There is Yorùbá ethnic dominance in Ireland, when compared with other Nigeria ethnic groups in Ireland. This

might have occurred as a result of threats or perceived threats from the past military regimes in Nigeria. There was mass emigration of Yorùbá out of the country immediately after the failed June 12, 1993 Presidential election that was won by late Chief M. K. O. Abiola, who is Yorùbá. Elizabeth-Hope, 1999 argues that perceived racial discrimination could cause alienation and stimulate the urge to migrate. In this instance, the Yorùbá could be said to have responded to social and political alienation to a greater degree than other ethnic groups because they perceived themselves as being subjected to political discrimination. This was the case of Nigerian migration to Ireland.

Table 2 Ethnic Composition of Nigerian Migrants in Ireland

Ethnic Group	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Yorùbá	8	602	1160	1105	1934
Ibo/Igbo	Nil	5	154	154	523
Edo/Benin	2	9	33	45	68
Urhobo	Nil	4	11	40	52
Ijaw	Nil	4	15	20	38
Ishan	Nil	2	8	17	41
Igala	Nil	1	5	11	19
Aboh	Nil	1	6	4	16
Itsekiri	Nil	1	8	22	58
Idoma	Nil	Nil	2	3	5
Tiv	Nil	Nil	1	1	2
Kanuri	Nil	Nil	1	2	Nil

Source: Komolafe, J (2001)

Race

This research suggests that the racial attitude that many Irish have towards Nigerian immigrants cannot be characterized as racism. Since it reflects fears and contests, it is better classified as xenophobia. The reason for this attitude is that many uneducated, and a few educated Irish who have never travelled out of Ireland, believe that there would be a contest between Nigerian immigrants and themselves in terms of jobs. Since most Nigerians in Ireland were able to communicate easily in English, unlike some African immigrants who did not come from English - speaking countries. These Irish people often say, 'they are too smart!' at times they respond, 'they have taken our women, taken our jobs and are eating our food& they should send them back'. Their behavior is always infused with hatred and fear. Many times they direct their statements toward all refugees, as many believe that all Blacks in Ireland are refugees. An example is one of the Irish parliament members, the Fianna Fáil TD Noel O'Flynn, who when speaking in the Dáil (House) on November 24th 1999, called the asylum seekers 'the spongers, the freeloaders and the people screwing up the system.' This is characteristic of the kind of hatred that is exhibited toward refugees. The important thing, however, is that the Irish government supports all the minority communities in Ireland.

Gender Imbalance

The relative proportion of men and women in any phase of migration can be explained partly by the selectivity of available work at the destination (Gordon, 1981). In Nigerian migration to Ireland, female migrants are more numerous than male migrants. (See table 1) This is because the Irish legislation that allows the parents of Irish born babies to avail themselves of Irish residency gives increased opportunities to individual female migrants. The

welfare and economic support that the Irish state provides to parents also gives female migrants a sense of social and economic independence from men. Nigerian women therefore migrate in their own right and not simply as dependents of Nigerian male migrants. Indeed, some male married migrants allow their spouse to migrate to Ireland first before they follow.

Nigeria-Ireland Migration and Social Class

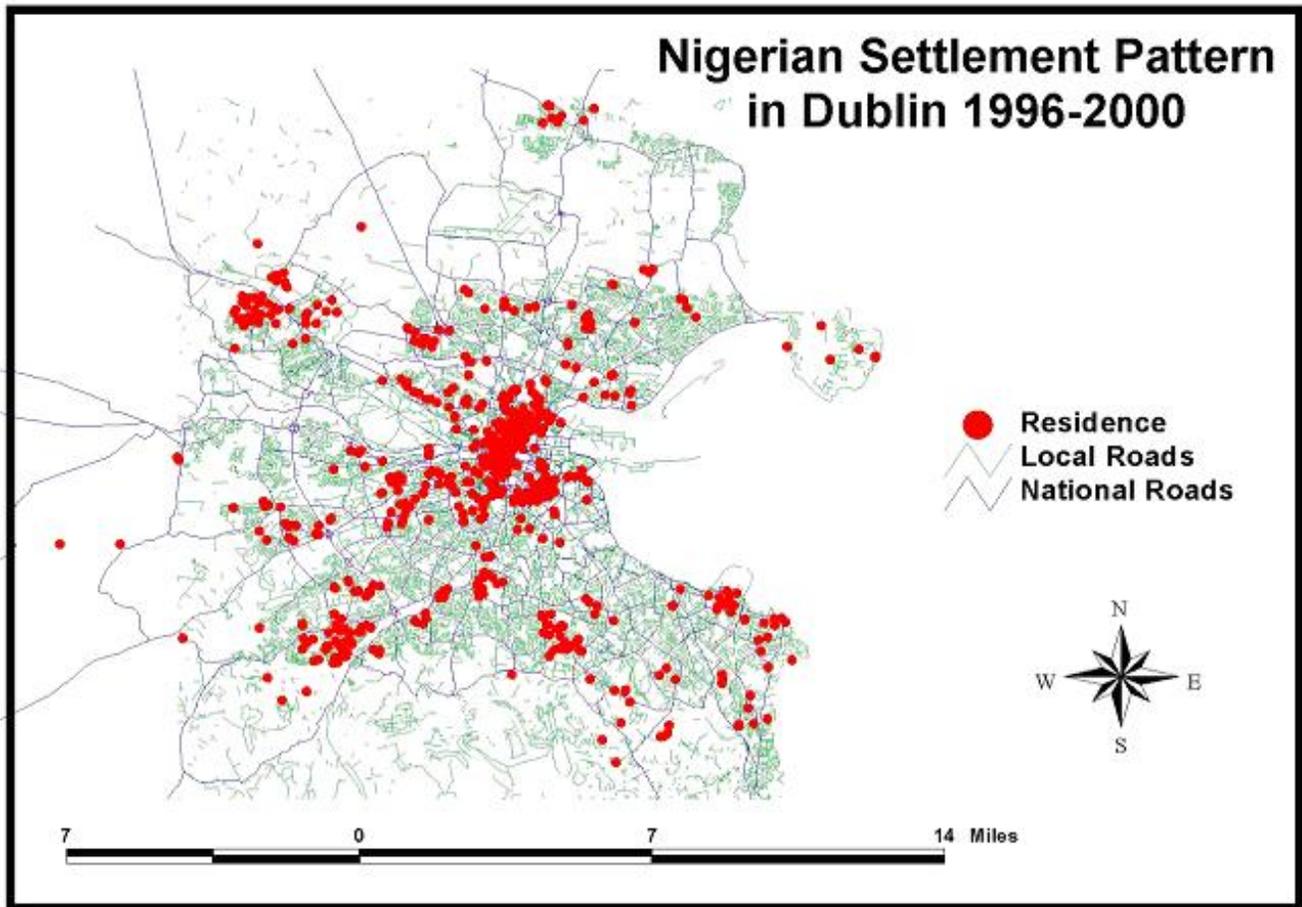
The data collected shows that Nigerian migration to Ireland is heterogeneous. For each social class different patterns, different purposes and different meaning have characterized the movement. Unskilled labour movement characterized the first cohort of Nigerian migrants to Ireland. These same migrants are perceived by potential migrants and their families at home to be upper class, due to their level of success and achievement, when compared with the lack of opportunities at home. Reality has shown that most of these migrants left Nigeria because of their inability to fit into the Nigeria working class. For this reason, their movement has been characterized by permanent departure. However, the recent Nigerian migrants are characteristically skilled labour. Most are fresh graduates. Their movement is geared at improving their socio-economic position in order to return to Nigeria. This explains why their orientation is to return home and they tend to remit both goods and capital back home. The following quotation from one of my interviews may illustrate further. Mr. F is a medical doctor, when asked if he intended to return to Nigeria. He said:

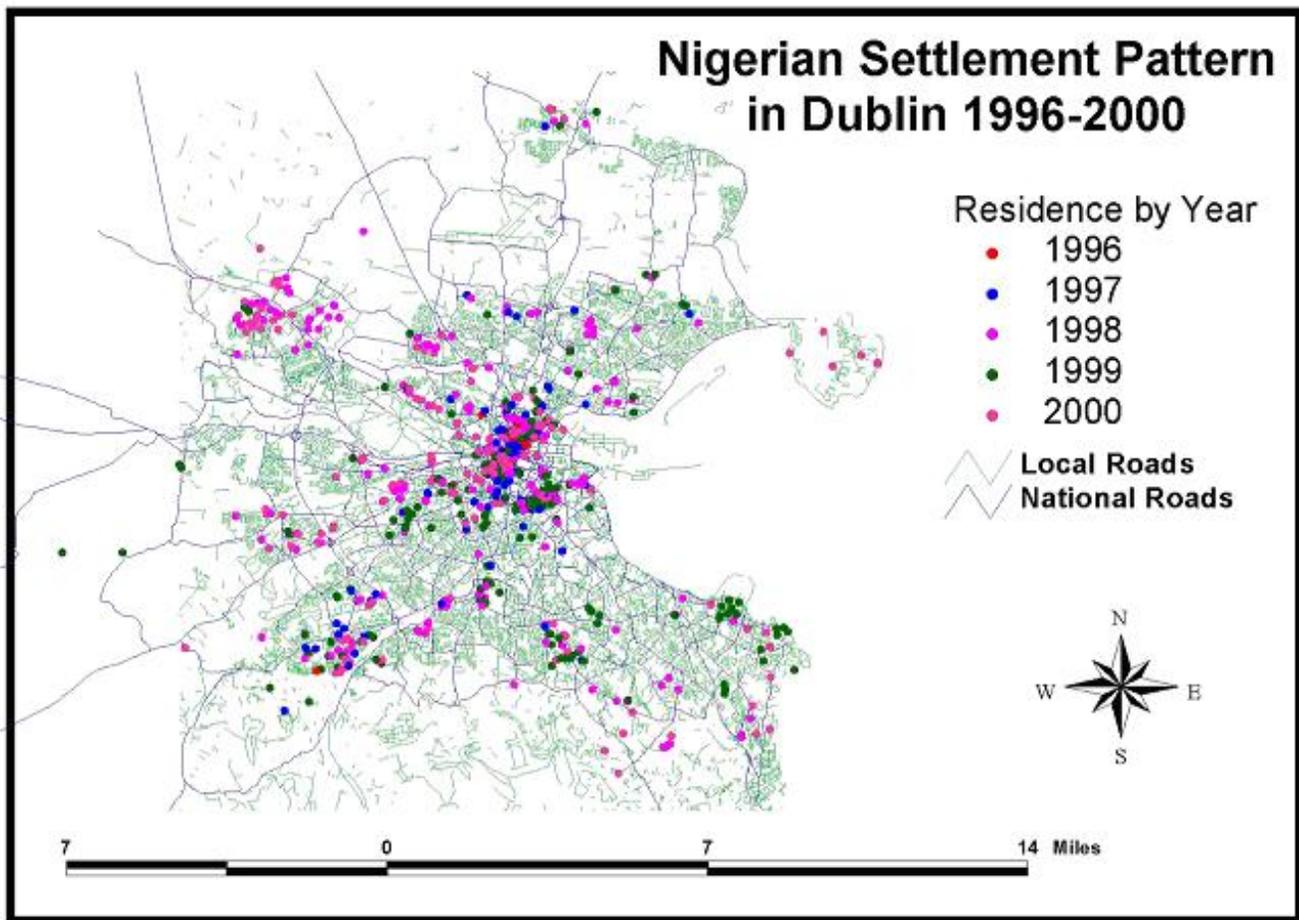
Yes! My intention is to build an ultra modern hospital in Lagos. Already I have acquired the land. Once the planning permission is granted work will begin. When this project is completed I intend to go back.

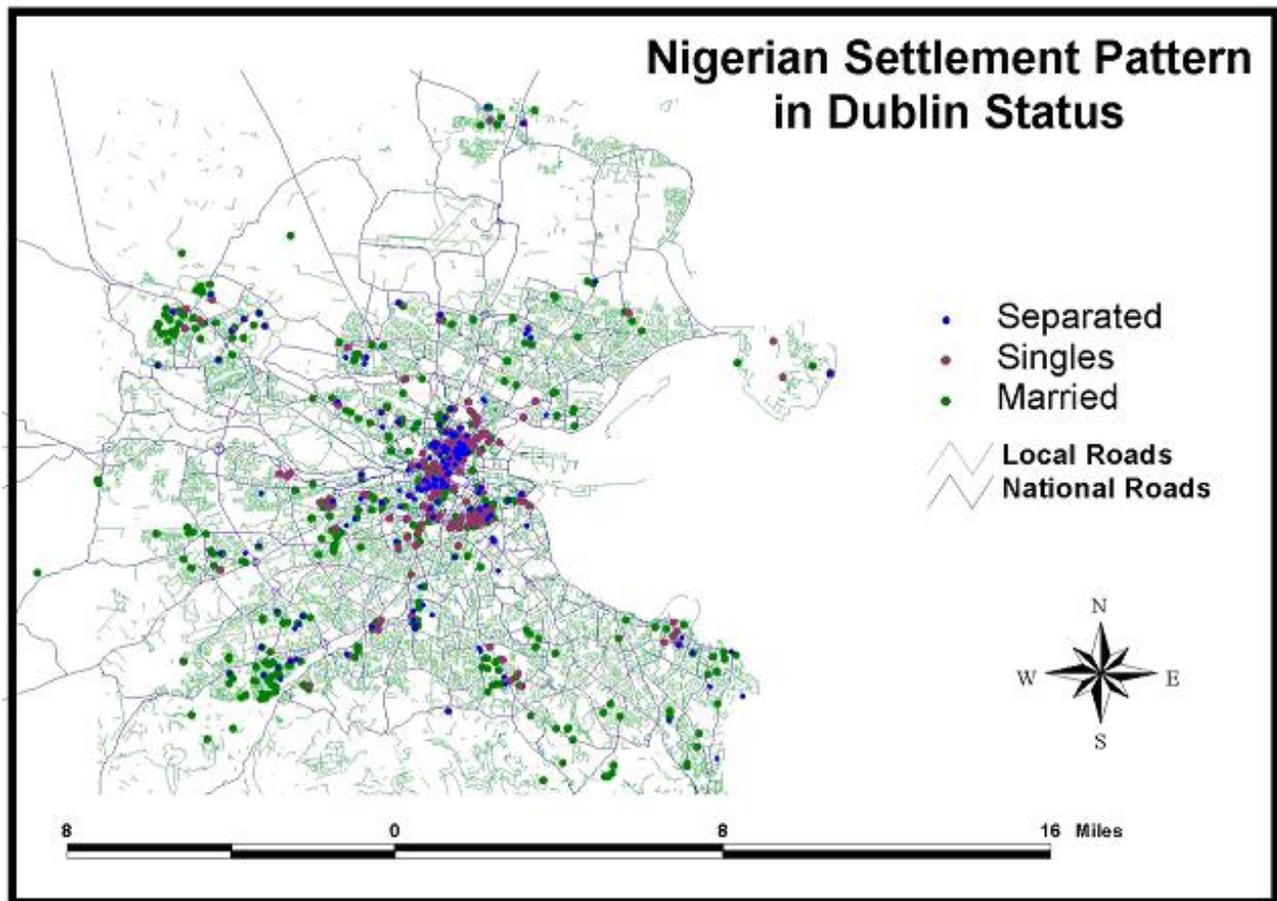
These patterns, differentiated by class, are reflected in other institutional behaviour of different Nigerian migrants in Ireland.

The Settlement Pattern of Nigerian Migrants in Ireland: Cohesive or Disparate?

Most of the information that I present in this section relates to the Dublin county area. This comprises of Fingal, City, South Dublin and Rathdown/ Dun Laoghaire. The Dublin county area is recognized as the first stopping point for migrants, not only from Nigeria, but also from other countries. From 1996 to date, Nigerian communities have clustered around the city area. There was a significant change in their movements from 1998 as a result of the dispersal system undertaken by the government and the fact that most skilled Nigerian labour chose to live outside the city area. The city area retained an image of having African shopping resources, ease of transportation, closeness to other Nigerian and African migrants and a few other options that hold Africans together. Moreover, Nigerian single migrants see the city area as the starting point for success and personal advancement.







Dublin County areas.

Cartographer: Julius Komolafe

Note: The Dublin map used were supplied by Ordnance Survey Ireland (O S I)

Note: The map is a general positioning not the actual point. For safety of the migrants.

Conclusion

According to John Salt (1989:431) "the world map of international migration has changed considerably. Old links have faded and new ones have evolved". In Nigerian migration to Ireland, a new migration history has emerged that is distinct from the migration history of surrounding areas. As this research shows, migration is not a discrete contemplative act but rather is an action in time Halfacree and Boyle, (1993). Over time Nigerian migration to Ireland has produced a distinct migration process. The belief that Ireland is a promised land has been created, and Nigerian migrants in Ireland are widely admired by the Nigerian potential migrants because of their success. What does this mean for migration Geography? We need to change the strategy of using mechanical models to study the lives of migrants and to put our efforts in studying the biographies of individual migrants. In other words, research should become increasingly feasible and not constitute a data feast as expressed by Champion (1992).

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[1] .One of my lecturers at University of Lagos, Nigeria once reminisced about being in Greenland on a research project, and finding Nigerians living there. Also, as Kabul was being evacuated after the collapse of the Taliban regime, Nigerian newspapers reported that there were a number of Nigerians there.

[2] . The Holy Bible, King James Version, Numbers 14, verses 6-8.

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