International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

ENABLING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MIGRATION FLOWS AND (ITS ROOT-CAUSES) FROM NIGERIA TOWARDS EUROPE

DESK-REVIEW REPORT

DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)

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Enabling a better understanding of migration flows and its root causes from Nigeria towards Europe

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1.INTRODUCTION

In the last years migration movements from Africa to Europe have gained increased and extensive attention. Through popular discourse and media coverage, a certain image of African migrants has been created, based on three main assumptions: migration from the African continent is steadily increasing, it is mainly directed towards Europe, and that its main drivers are poverty, lack of opportunities, and general violence. Images depicted in public often show only the most spectacular movements of a migrant's journey and therewith tend to reinforce the public perception of African migrants as 'desperate invaders' or 'poor victims of smuggling networks' (Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2014; Schapendonk, 2012).

The main problem with those depictions is, that most of them are based on assumptions, selective cases or individuals' impressions instead of sound empirical evidence. Research and empirical studies on the movements of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have increased in recent years and have highlighted the diversity of migration from those countries, namely the fact that Europe is not the only destination. Nevertheless, the patterns of movements, migrant profiles as well as reasons and experiences of the journey still often lack evidence-based research (De Haas & Flahaux, 2016).

Therefore, this study, rolled out by DTM with support from various IOM country offices, aims to collect data to foster a better understanding of migration movements from Nigeria to Europe. A comprehensive understanding of factors shaping migrants' decisions to leave their country, and to choose a particular route and destination can help to inform the debate on regular, irregular and forced migration. It would enable policy makers to better target interventions that address humanitarian needs and to mitigate root causes of mobility, particularly for forced migration. In order to better understand the dynamics and characteristics of mobility, IOM will implement surveys in a number of countries and will support efforts to foster a better understanding of how different factors come together in prompting a final decision to migrate, and how this may vary among different socio-demographic profiles of the mobile population. In order to understand which fields are understudied and might need greater attention in evidence-based research this phase of the project aims at establishing existing research gaps and at giving recommendations for further research. The study revolves around six main thematic areas:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Migrant profiles (socio-demographic)	Migration drivers and decision making	Vulnerability factors in origin, transit and destination countries	Role of intermediaries	Migrants' perceptions towards Europe	Migration choices and options

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

2.1 RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

The increasing emigration from Western and Eastern African countries towards other parts of the world over the last decades has been reflected in a corresponding abundance of literature on the topic. Focussing in particular on Europe as final destination, especially the more recent literature becomes of value as organizations and scholars have started to show a growing interest in understanding the dynamics of these population movements. To get a better understanding on the literature - what information is available and what is missing, this desk review report uses the Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) as a method to gather as well as to evaluate existing literature on the flows and their root-causes of Nigerian migrants towards Europe. As outlined in the introduction, the research focusses in particular on six main thematic areas. A preliminary literature review suggests that some of these thematic areas are relatively well covered, while others lack firmer empirical footing. Furthermore, the combination of the different thematic areas, targeting different sample populations within one study adds to the distinctive features of this research study. The REA is therefore believed to be a useful approach for the first phase of the project, evaluating the existing literature, taking into account the clearly defined research questions of the study and for identifying existing data gaps. REA follows a clear protocol – clear research questions have to be identified and the literature search has to be structured, following a clear pattern and rationale. Furthermore, indicators for the relevance of the source have to be established.

Table 1 - Structure of REA

Search	IOM internal data (i.e. AVRR data, FMS[1] etc.)
	External data, i.e. databases (Google; Google Scholars), journals, organizations & governments websites
	Storing search strings
File & Coding	Assess type, design of study
	Screen Quality & Relevance against inclusion criteria
	Create Excel Spreadsheet
	Identify relevant thematic area
Literature Compilation	Reading and analysis of studies/data
	Writing phase
	Identifying research gaps
Review	Review of report by relevant stakeholders at headquarter, missions & donor
	Including feedback and finalizing report

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[1] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)
  Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS)

2.1.1 Data Gathering

In the first phase, "search" data was collected using Google, Google Scholar as well as the search function of organization and government websites. The collection of the data was guided by the search strings displayed below in Table 2. Even though the approach of "search strings" is very useful to get a first impression on what is available about a specific topic as well as necessary to retrieve relevant data, it is sometimes also described as rigid if only sticking to the predefined strings. The desk review report therefore also made use of "snowballing" within the literature. Studies, reports, journals etc. of renowned scholars as well as of established organizations on the different thematic areas were screened for their used references on the topic. Those sources were than screened based on the same criteria as the initial sources. The literature is reviewed in line with the ten research questions identified for this study. Ideally the literature should not be older than 10 years, however, in some cases older sources were still included if they provided useful and still up-to-date information, for instance on theories or the historical context of Nigeria. As a next step, all sources are screened for their relevance for this research study as well as their quality score.

Table 2 - Search Strings for Literature Review

1. Migrant profiles	2. Drivers of migration and decision making
Nigerian migrants (refugees; asylum seekers) to (in) Europe	Destination choice migration Europe Nigerian
Demographic profile Nigerian migrants	Transit countries destination choice Europe Nigerian
Socioeconomic profile Nigerian migrant	Economic conditions/ migration/ Nigerian
Nigerian migrant ethnic/religious persecution/discrimination	Conditions destination country host country migration choice
(Unaccompanied) minors Nigerian (+transit countries e.g. Turkey, Libya, Niger etc.)	Drivers of migration push pull Nigerian Europe
Nigerian migrants/refugees profiles/profiling/arrivals	Migration motivations decision making factors Nigerian to Europe/ EU
	Motives for migration Nigerian
3. Vulnerability factors in origin, transit and destination countries	**4. The role of intermediaries**
Migrants abuse/exploitation/border guards/sexual abuse/rape/transit/Europe/Turkey/Libya/Nigeria	Smugglers Europe EU Nigeria
Europe camp conditions hot spots	Smugglers/Traffickers in Nigeria/Libya/Niger
Europe stranded migrants	Smuggler destination choice
Turkey/Libya migrants asylum seekers returned deported	Smuggler abuse exploitation Europe Nigerian

Refugee/asylum seeker women/children Europe/EU	Smuggler protection network ethnic
Unaccompanied (minor/children) shelter asylum seeker protection risk	Smuggler/trafficker network Nigeria/Libya/ Niger/Europe
Detention migrant asylum seeker	
5. Migrants' perceptions towards Europe	**6. Migration choices and options**
Migrant perception/misinformation about Europe	Legal/regular vs. illegal/irregular migration from Nigeria towards Europe
Migrant knowledge asylum procedures policy Europe	Legal channels for Nigerian migrants to Europe/EU
Expectations reality migrant perceptions Europe	Migration choices for Nigerian migrants
Migration information campaigns	

2.1.2   Screening of Sources for Relevance

As already mentioned in order to identify a source as relevant it is screened against the nine established research questions:

1) Does the source provide information on the contextual factors on a national and regional level which drive Nigerian nationals to make a decision to migrate to Europe?

2) Does the source provide information on the contextual factors on the European level which drive Nigerian nationals to make a decision to migrate to Europe?

3) Does the source provide information on particular individual, household or community level "events" and circumstances that trigger Nigerian nationals to make a decision to migrate to Europe?

4) Does the source provide information on the socio-demographic profiles of (potential) migrants to Europe from Nigeria?

5) Does the source provide information on how migrants from Nigeria prepare for migration to Europe?

6) Does the source provide information on the role of "intermediaries" in facilitating (irregular) migration to Europe for Nigerian nationals?

7) Does the source provide information on the challenges and vulnerabilities Nigerian nationals face before and during migration to Europe?

8) Does the source provide information on how migrants from Nigeria select a final destination country in Europe? If yes, what influences this decision and why is the particular destination country selected?

9) Does the source provide information on the perceptions/ knowledge migrants from Nigeria have on potential risks & vulnerabilities migrants could face during migration to/ in Europe?

10) Does the source provide information on the perceptions and/or knowledge (potential) migrants from Nigeria have of Europe and what their sources of information are? What is the view of Nigerian (irregular) migrants on socio-economic opportunities in Europe and what knowledge do they have of European asylum procedures?

When screening for the relevance of the sources, the criteria outlined in Table 3 were applied. Apart from these criteria, the publication date of the source also played a role in certain cases. Even though the review was only intended to include studies from the last 10 years, the date often mattered depending on the topic of interest. Therefore, the date was sometimes reflected in the relevance score.

Table 3 - Assessing Relevance of Source

1	The data may contribute towards answering the question but is limited, incomplete or represents only a minor focus of the report
2	A significant proportion of the data is directly relevant to answering the question
3	Data has been gathered and analysed to specifically address the questions posed

2.1.3   Screening of Source for Quality

Next to the relevance of the source, it is also checked for quality. The desk review report distinguishes in its evaluation between primary[2] and secondary[3] studies as there are different quality criteria necessary. The quality of primary studies should be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Table 4 - Assessing Quality of Primary Studies[4]

Does the study have a conceptual framework and clear research question?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Does the study appear to draw conclusions based on its results rather than theory or policy?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Does the study explain its research design and data collection methods?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Does the study present or link to data sources?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Is the study internally valid? Are alternative causes of impact or the study's limitations considered?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Is the study externally valid? Can findings be generalised to other contexts and populations?	1 Yes/ 0 No

Based on these criteria, a primary study can be evaluated between the ranges of 0 to 6. In the case of secondary studies the criteria look a bit different:

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[2] Primary research involves collecting data about a given subject directly or using the raw data to draw analysis or conclusions e.g. empirical journals (both qual. and quan. - in form of interviews, surveys, observations, censuses etc.)

[3] Secondary research involves analyzing and interpreting of primary research. The method of writing secondary research is to collect primary research that is relevant to a writing topic and interpret what the primary research found (i.e. literature reviews, country profiles, newspaper articles etc.)

[4] The initial criteria were taken from the study by Cummings, C., Pacitto, J., Lauro, D. & Foresti, M. (2015) but amended to the requirements of this desk-review report

Table 5 - Assessing Quality of Secondary Studies[3]

Does the study describe where and how studies/data were selected for inclusion?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Does the study assess the quality of the studies/data included?	1 Yes/ 0 No
Does the study draw conclusions based on the studies/data reviewed and consider alternative conclusions and/or limitations to the conclusions?	1 Yes/ 0 No

To evaluate a secondary study with these criteria, a value between 0 and 3 can be ascribed to a source. For transparency purposes all the different scorings are entered into the excel spreadsheet.

In total, more than 100 articles, studies, papers etc. were reviewed and 47 articles were included in this literature review based on their relevance to the Nigerian and ECOWAS-regional context.

Table 6 shows the total number of sources used for each thematic area as well as the distribution between primary and secondary data in the case of empirical literature.[5]

Table 6 - Overview of Sources per Thematic Area

Thematic Area	Number of total sources used	Average Relevance	Average Quality (Primary Data)	Average Quality (Secondary Data)
History/Current Trends	11	2.3	2.5	4.2
Profile	10	2.4	2.7	4.1
Decision-Making	11	2.1	2.8	4.3
Vulnerabilities	15	2	2.2	4.3
Intermediaries	10	2.1	2.4	4.3
Perceptions	4	2.5	/	4.4
Migration Options	6	2.3	2	4.4

3. PAST & CONTEMPORRAY MIGRATION PATTERNS

3.1 MIGRATION INSIDE & OUT OF NIGERIA

In order to better understand migration patterns and routes in contemporary times, the report will provide a brief overview of general country facts about Nigeria as well as summarize main migration trends during the last century before moving on to current trends while looking at the different thematic areas.

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[3] The initial criteria were taken from the study by Cummings, C., Pacitto, J., Lauro, D. & Foresti, M. (2015) but amended to the requirements of this desk-review report
[5] This list does not include sources that are primarily data compilations e.g. Eurostat data, Frontex etc.

3.1.1 Basic Country Facts on Nigeria

In 2016, Nigeria counted a population of 186 million people, making it Africa's most populous country. The country is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups; the most populous and politically influential are: Hausa and the Fulani (north) 29%, Yoruba (southwest) 21%, Igbo (Ibo) (southeast) 18%, Ijaw 10% and Kanuri 4%. Nigeria's population is projected to grow from more than 186 million people in 2016 to 392 million in 2050, becoming the world's fourth most populous country (CIA, 2017a). Nigeria is a federal republic, with 36 states enjoying considerable political and juridical autonomy and Lagos being the country's economic capital (De Haas, 2006).

Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1891 (although originally this mainly comprised the coastal areas), and gained independence in 1960. The post-independence period was shaped by several military dictatorships (1966 until 1999) except for a short period of civilian administration between 1979 and 1983. Besides those military coups, the country has been experiencing a series of minor and major violent inter-ethnic conflicts, the bloodiest of which was the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) between Nigeria and the breakaway republic of Biafra. Democracy wasn't formally restored until 1999 when President Olusegun Obasanjo was elected. When in 1975 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded, Nigeria was an instrumental member state that encouraged the creation in pursuit of regional integration and development (De Haas, 2006; Isiugo-Abanihe & IOM-Nigeria, 2014).

3.1.2 Past Migration Trends

Pre-Colonial and Colonial Era

Migration movements prior the colonial era were mainly linked to slave trade, inter-ethnic conflicts and warfare (Adejumoke, Ikwuyatum, & Abejide, 2008). The largest of these trades took place during the 15th century when 12 million people were "exported" as slaves from west, west-central, and eastern Africa to the European colonies in the Americas (Mberu & Pongou, 2010). During the colonial era (1891 – 1960) most movements were in relation to labour migration, especially to the United Kingdom (UK), as the British needed a large labour force for mines, plantations, and public administration (ibid). Apart from labour migration to the UK, there were also movements within Africa, especially to Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Ghana and Sudan. Most of the movements before the independence are assumed to be linked to the artificial nature of colonial boundaries, splitting the people of common culture and ethnic groupings into different countries (ibid).

Post-Colonial Era

While prior to the independence of Nigeria migration was primarily limited to intra-African movements, shortly after the independence movements towards Europe, especially towards the UK, and the United

States started to increase (De Haas, 2006). Already in the 1950s the elite initiated emigration to the UK due to the legacy of colonial ties, mainly for educational and administrative purposes. This trend increased after Nigeria gained independence in 1966. These movements to the UK and the US were mostly limited to those that were "highly skilled", leaving for school, work and business (Mberu & Pongou, 2010).

During the 1970s Nigeria experienced a substantial influx of immigrants which was caused by Nigeria's oil wealth after 1973 and many West-Africans seeking employment there (De Haas & Flahaux, 2016). However, in the early 1980s oil prices were decreasing again and the economy faced a downturn along with political repression and violence. As a consequence many of the labour migrants, amongst which about one million Ghanaians, were expulsed from Nigeria (De Haas & Flahaux, 2016). This period was marked by Black et al (2004) as Nigeria's "reverse migration transition" as the country was transforming from being a net immigration to a net emigration country (De Haas, 2006).

With the stagnating economy many Nigerians chose to emigrate, especially the better educated and wealthier ones. Mberu & Pongou (2010) call it the "culture of professional migration", which was particular present in the early 1980s, caused by the austerity measures of the Structural Adjustment Program. As a result, the national currency was devalued, wages for professionals decreased and working conditions deteriorated. As conditions worsened and desperation grew, the low-skilled youth started to leave Nigeria as well. In the early 2000s an increasing number of Nigerians could be found in countries such as the Gulf States as well as throughout Europe, i.e. Spain, Italy, Ireland Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium working in the agricultural, informal service and trade sector (Mberu & Pongou, 2010).

Next to economic reasons, Nigeria's migration history has been internationally but also internally linked to conflicts. The mass killings of Igbo residents by the Hausa-Fulani group in the North of Nigeria as a result of power struggle between the north and the south, and the subsequent civil war between the newly created Biafran state and the rest of Nigeria led to one of the major displacements of the Igbo people within and outside of Nigeria during the 1960s and 1970s (SIHMA, 2014). Another major ethnic conflict developed between Hausa-Fulani herdsmen and Mambila farmers in the early 2000s prompting the Hausa-Fulani to flee in large numbers. Conflicts in Nigeria were fuelled by the various military dictatorships leading to the establishment of several groups, all perusing and mobilizing their own interest. In the southern region the most commonly known groups are the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) claiming the South's demands for oil-resource control and self-determination (Mberu & Pongou, 2010). In the north there are the Islamic groups, Izala and the Boko Haram, aiming to eradicate Western

civilization and to establish an Islamic theocracy in Nigeria. As a result of those ongoing conflicts in the northern part as well as the persistent clashes between the forces of the government and the youth militias in the south-eastern region and the Niger Delta, the livelihood of thousands was destroyed, leaving many displaced, injured or even killed (Mberu & Pongou, 2010).

With increased degradation of living standards due to a combination of economic and security issues in Nigeria the applications for asylum in other African states as well as in Europe and North Africa have subsequently increased from the late 1990s onwards (Mberu & Pongou, 2010). Nigerian out-migration is often associated with criminal activities and victimization due to many detected cases of trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, money laundering as well as fake documents for cross-border movements (SIHMA, 2014).

3.1.3 Contemporary Migration Trends

While the thematic areas aim at giving an overall and more in-depth picture on the different factors influencing the migration flows of Nigerian migrants towards Europe, this part only briefly describes current migration trends of Nigerian migrants, including also those that chose not to make their way to Europe. Based on available and current information, the statistics in Table 6 suggest that only a third of all Nigerian migrants chose to go to Europe. Another third only moved within Africa's borders and the last third moved to other parts of the world, the largest share going to North America.

Table 7 - Migration Statistics Nigeria (end of 2015)

Stock of emigrants (2015)[a]	1,093,644
To developed Regions	679,165
To developing Regions	414,479
To other Sub-Saharan African Countries	371,137
To Asia	38,803
To Europe	398,476
To Northern America	271,841
To other parts	13,387
Refugee population (incl. refugee like situations)[b]	167,942
Asylum seeker population[b]	51,821
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)[b]	2,219,272

[a]UNDESA, International Migrant Stock 2015
[b]UNHCR, Population Statistics 2016

Nigerian migration to Europe is the result of a gradual process beginning with rural to urban population movements. The 2014 Migration Profile of Nigeria indicates that 60 per cent of all internal migration is directed at urban areas. A large concentration of migrants is located in the southern part of the country

in the states of Anambra, Lagos, Ebonyi, Enugu, Oyo and Delta with a concomitant increase of out-bound migration to Europe. The most recent organization and situation reports on Nigerian migration trends have been predominantly focused on the forced migration trends driven by the Lake Chad conflict in the north of the country. An escalation of Boko Haram violence in 2014 resulted in mass displacement in north-eastern Nigeria. Even though a share of the affected population seeks refuge in neighbouring countries, the majority of displaced persons remains within Nigeria. According to the latest DTM Round Report from March 2017, a total of 1,832,743 individuals were internally displaced due to the insurgency (DTM Nigeria, 2017). The increase in the refugee population induced by the conflict amounted to a total of 210,674 by the end of May 2017, (just in the neighbouring countries) of which the largest share (106,146) was hosted by Niger followed by Cameroon (96,693 individuals) and a smaller share by Chad (7,835) (UNHCR, 2017). Even though this conflict dominates current data on migration from Nigeria towards other parts of the world, the flows are by no means limited to conflict induced forced migration patterns in the northern region. As the second thematic area, "drivers and decision-making" will outline, Nigerians migrate due to a variety of reasons and in most cases the decision to move is based on a combination of factors (De Haas & Flahaux, 2016).

4. THEMATIC AREAS

4.1 THEMATIC AREA 1 – MIGRANTS' PROFILES

Before investigating in more depth the movements of migrants towards Europe this reports aims to establish a general profile of Nigerian migrants. In order to do so, the report takes literature into account that analyses the profiles of Nigerian migrants that leave their home country. As a complementary method, DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS), which are collected in various countries around the globe are used in order to generate a more complete migrant profile including data on migrants en route.

This research does not distinguish between the different migrants' classifications but focusses on mixed migration as a whole. Therefore, when establishing the profiles of Nigerian nationals migrating to Europe all migrant groups are taken into account.

4.1.1 Profile of Nigerian Nationals leaving their Home-Country

Nigeria

When analysing data on Nigerian nationals leaving their home-country, it should be noted that profiles vary greatly depending on the destination. While extra-continental migration of Nigerians has been

growing in recent years, this increase tends to be exaggerated. As this research concentrates on movements towards Europe, the focus lies primarily on Nigerians nationals migrating to Europe. However, in cases where it is considered relevant, references to other Nigerian migrant populations are made.

Hernandez-Coss et al. (2006) claim that especially Nigerians from the relatively developed and densely populated southern provinces, such as the Ibo (south-east) and the Yoruba (south-west) ethnic groups chose to migrate to Europe, as well as the Edo and the Ogoni ethnic groups, albeit to a lesser extent (De Haas, 2006). Reference to the main origins of Nigerian migrants cannot be found in more recent literature, except for the case of Nigerian sex workers, which have received increased attention. A problematic increase of both voluntary and trafficked migration for the purpose of sex work in Europe has become the subject of a growing body of literature on the topic. This literature suggests that the main region of recruitment is Edo State, and within the state the main hub is believed to be Benin City as well as smaller surrounding cities (De Haas, 2006; EASO, 2015; Kastner, 2010).

Looking at other factors that give an indication about the profile of Nigerian migrants leaving for Europe, the literature is scarce in terms of demographic features. Only few data sources shed light on the demographic characteristics of Nigerian nationals that chose to leave their home-country. In an Altai Consulting report, Malakooti (2015a) describes that the youth in particular often chooses to migrate as a household strategy. Especially for young men who are expected to provide for the family and maximise income, migration seems lucrative. Success stories of households increasing their living conditions through remittances encourage other families to pursue the same strategy. Consequently, the decision to invest in a child's journey to Europe becomes a seemingly rational option to increase household income (Malakooti, 2015a).

Feminization of Migration

The term 'feminization of migration' puts emphasis on the fact that women are increasingly becoming active participants in the process of migration. Nowadays, women make up almost half of all international migrants. Furthermore, women's reasons for migration have changed over time, as it is now recognized that more and more women are independently deciding to become active in the global labour market. Unfortunately, even though the trend is going towards more independence for women in the migration process, long-established and exploitative female-specific forms of migration persist, including trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, the commercialization of domestic workers, as well as the organization of women for marriage (Carling, 2005; Kuschminder, Andersson, & Siegel, 2012).
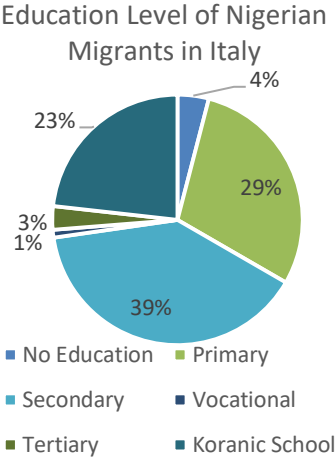
In the case of Nigeria there is an existing trend of female migrants leaving Nigeria and making their way towards Europe. In Kastner's (2010) research it became clear that present international migration of Nigerian women can be understood as an extension of existing female, autonomous internal migration.

Increasing numbers of females have and are still making their own way to Europe, not as a mere dependent of their husband or male family members (Kastner, 2010). According to Adesina (2006) it is commonly believed that in the region of Edo State, particularly in the capital Benin City, almost every family has one or two children, in most cases daughters, living abroad (Kastner, 2010). Within the study the majority of females that were interviewed were between 17 and 28 years old. In terms of the socio-economic profile it is also interesting to note that the interviewed women did not belong to the poorest strata of society but belonged to the middle-income class (ibid). In this regard, Kastner (2010) speaks of two different groups of female migrants. The first one consists of those women that are autonomously able to undertake their journey, in terms of financial capacities. The second group, which is also believed to be considerably larger, is linked to female migrants that have less financial capacities and whose migration to Europe is enabled by networks reaching from Nigeria to Europe. These networks often sponsor female Nigerian migrants in the form of loans with high interest rates which the migrant is obligated to pay back. Those activities are in most cases linked to prostitution within Europe, especially in countries like Italy, where the stock of Nigerian prostitutes is identified as the largest (EASO, 2015).

4.1.2 Profile of Nigerian Nationals in Transit

Nigerian Nationals in Transit

Niger

Education Level of Nigerian Migrants in Italy

- No Education
- Primary
- Secondary
- Vocational
- Tertiary
- Koranic School

4%
23%
3%
1%
29%
39%

For Nigerian migrants, Niger is most often the first transit country. Data from DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) in Niger paint a detailed picture of Nigerian migrant profiles. Of the 505 Nigerians captured in the Niger FMS, only 12 percent were female. The largest share of migrants was between the age of 26 and 35 (59%). Both the migrant population aged between 14 and 18 (0.6%) as well as the share above the age of 45 (1.2%) are very low.

In terms of education, 96 per cent of the sample population had completed at least primary education. The largest share had completed secondary education (39%) and 23 per cent of the sample completed some form of indigenous Quranic educational system, such as Islamiyya, Almajiri, or Tsanyawa.

The dataset shows that the largest share of Nigerians are single. However, when comparing the marital statuses by gender it becomes clear that men are more likely to be married (43%) than women (10.5%).

Marital Status of Nigerian Migrants in Niger (by gender)

Legend: ■ Male ■ Female

Data points: Single — Male 49%, Female 72.5%; Married — Male 43%, Female 10.5%; Divorced — Male 0.5%, Female 10.5%; Widowed — Male 0%, Female 3.5%; Did not want to answer — Male 7.5%, Female 1%
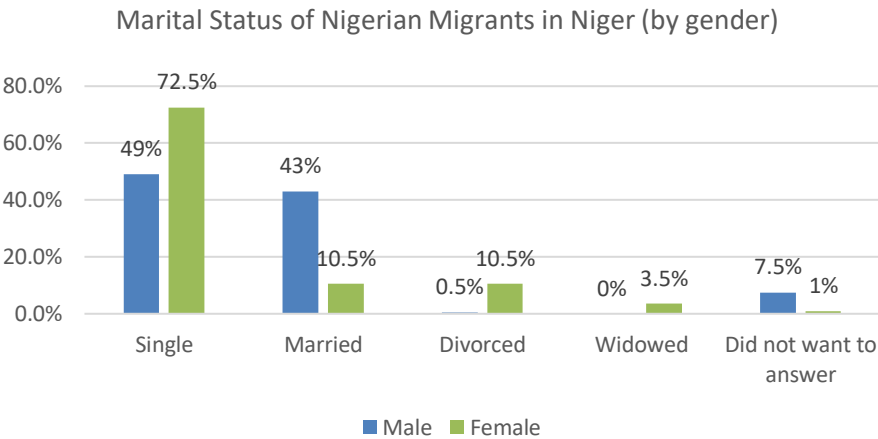
Libya

Libya is one of the most important transit points for migrants travelling along the Central Mediterranean route. Data from Libyan FMS (2016) reveal that Nigerian migrant profiles remain relatively similar to those in Niger. Of the 736 Nigerian migrants that were recorded, around 70 percent intended to go Europe while approximately 20 percent indicated that Libya was their intended final destination and 10 percent intended to travel elsewhere (mainly USA and Canada). Compared to the Nigerien FMS, the Libyan FMS recorded a smaller proportion of female migrants (6%). The age distribution shows that the majority was either between 18 and 25 (39%) or between 26 and 35 years of age (53%). With regard to marital status, the large majority (71%) of the sample population was single, while only 26 percent was married. Of the remaining 3 percent, around 2 percent were separated or divorced and 1 percent either widowed or chose not to answer this question. The number of Nigerian migrants that do not have formal education is higher for Libya as transit country than for the other countries with 29%.

South & Eastern Europe

When analysing the Flow Monitoring data collected from 2015 to 2016, the numbers of Nigerian migrants in Greece and along the Balkan route remain marginal. Only 21 Nigerian migrants were interviewed in Greece, 7 in Hungary and 2 in Serbia. Given the statistical insignificance of these figures, greater emphasis is put on the profiles of Nigerian migrants in Italy. Through the FMS in Italy, the profiles of 1,285 Nigerian nationals were captured. Data collected in Italy reveals that of the sample population 27 percent were female migrants and 73 percent male. The largest share of Nigerian migrants (58%) were between the age of 18 and 25. The sample shows that the average age was relatively young (23.5 years) with only 0.1 percent being older than 45 years.

Looking at the education level, only 12.5 percent had no education. The remaining 87.5 percent had at least primary education.

Regarding marital status, the FMS from Italy showed that the largest share of Nigerian migrants were single (81%), 17 percent were married and around 2 percent widowed or divorced.

Age Distribution of Nigerian Migrants in Italy

3.5%   0.1%
11.5%
27%
58%

■ 14-18 ■ 18-25 ■ 26-35 ■ 36-45 ■ >45

Education Level of Nigerian Migrants in Italy

3%   5.5%
11.5%
31.5%
47.5%

■ No Education ■ Primary ■ Secondary
■ Vocational ■ Tertiary
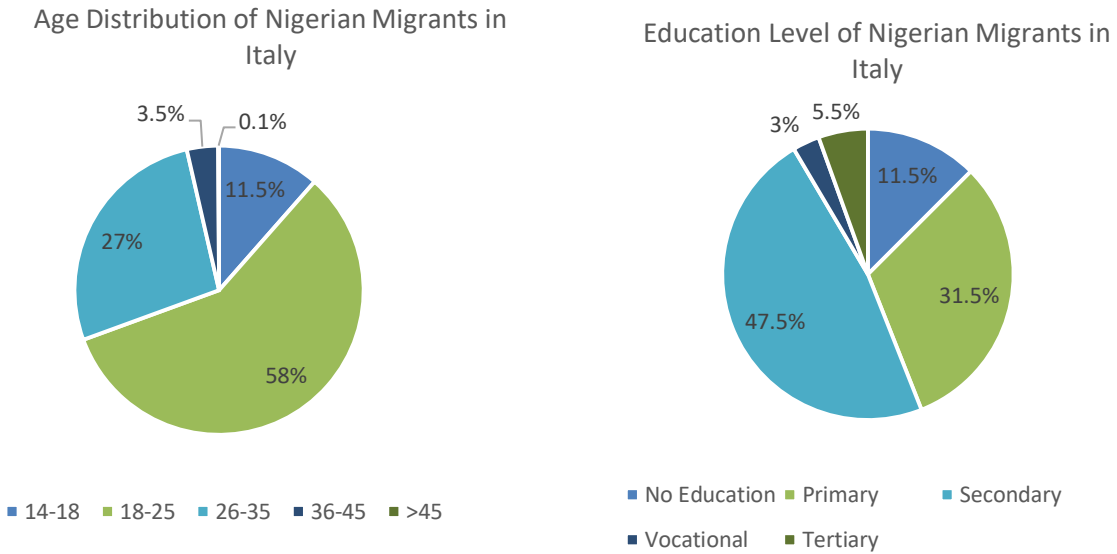
All FMS data combined show that most Nigerian migrants that were interviewed on their way to Europe originated from Edo State (62%). Around 13 percent left from Delta state, 5.5 percent from Lagos state and 3.3 percent originated from Imo state. For the remaining 32 states the share seems to be more or less equally distributed (ranging from 0.1% to 2.3%).

4.1.3 Profile of Nigerian Nationals in Europe

Nigerian Nationals

In a study about the most popular destination countries within Europe, Eurostat (2017) revealed that in 2016 a total of 48,725 Nigerian nationals applied for asylum. The top destination countries were:

Table 8 - European countries with the most received asylum applications from Nigeria in 2016

Country	Total number of Nigerian asylum applications
Italy	26,975
Germany	12,910
France	1,930
Austria	1,850
United Kingdom	1,835
Switzerland	1,105
Other	2,120
Total	48,725

The overall gender distribution of Nigerian migrants in Europe seems to be more male dominated since 67 percent of the asylum applicants were male and 33 percent were female applicants. The age distribution shows that 74 percent of the applicants are between the age of 18 and 34. The second largest share was made up by the group of 14 to 18 year old Nigerians with 14 percent (Eurostat, 2017).

THEMATIC AREA 1 – DATA GAPS

For Nigeria, more recently a limited number of quantitative operational studies have been developed in order to gain a better understanding of the profiles of Nigerian migrants, such as DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) throughout the Mediterranean as well as in North and Western Africa. Academic studies related to this thematic area are limited, of qualitative nature and mainly focus on intra-continental migration. Furthermore, most academic research that includes profiling of Nigerian migrants to Europe is often related to human trafficking whilst excluding other migrants moving towards and entering Europe.

In addition, during the desk review phase it became apparent that migration research solely focusing on SSA generally lacks macro-data that allows to map the overall evolution of the migration patterns from, to and within Africa over the past decades.

4.2 THEMATIC AREA 2 – DRIVERS OF MIGRATION & THE DECISION-MAKING

Understanding the historical patterns and profiles of Nigerian migrants from the previous sections allows to get a better picture of the factors that drive Nigerian migrants to leave their place of origin and start their journey to Europe. Next to drivers, this part also summarizes existing data on decision-making and what role external factors play in the actual decision-making process.

While much of the literature regarding, Nigeria focuses on the decision-making process on a macro-and meso-level, research on the micro dimension in this context remains scarce. De Haas (2011) suggests that analysing the decision-making processes and drivers of migration at the micro-level will provide a more complete picture, taking factors such as aspirations and capabilities into account. Furthermore, de Haas (2008) points out that migration is a conscious choice by the relatively better-off households as a means to enhance their livelihoods (Collyer, 2006; De Haas, 2008).

4.2.1   Reasons for leaving Nigeria

The reasons why Nigerian nationals choose to leave their country of origin are complex and cannot be generalized. Existing literature ascertains it is a mix of economic as well as forced drivers that lead Nigerian nationals to leave their country. Research by Crawley, Düvell et al. (2016) recorded several different reasons mentioned by survey respondents along the Central Mediterranean route – amongst others: escalating tensions due to differences and resource sharing between Muslims and Christians, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria, intergenerational conflicts related to family and marriage, religious obligations, lack of livelihood opportunities as well as tensions around religious and fraternity affiliations leading to physical violence. The IOM migration profile on Nigeria (2014) also stresses that the enduring outbreaks of intrastate violence in the forms of ethno-religious, political, criminal and resource struggles are key drivers in the decision to leave Nigeria. The most challenging, however, has been the rise of influence and power of the Boko Haram, causing problems that Nigeria has not faced to that extend before, particularly in the north-eastern region of the country (Isiugo-Abanihe & IOM-Nigeria, 2014). Migrants rarely name a single reason or trigger why they migrate since drivers often change and evolve en route. Many migrants cannot name one specific trigger but it seems there is an overlap between forces and economic reasons, especially since drivers also changed along the routes. Crawley, Düvell et al (2016) cite the example of migrants who have left Nigeria due to economic reasons but the conflict and violence in Libya forced them to flee further (Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016).

4.2.2   Migration as a household strategy

Many young Nigerian nationals hear the success stories of fellow Nigerians who have managed to make it all the way to Europe. Motivated by 'success stories', the youth especially tend to ignore the stories of failure or of the dangers faced by fellow Nigerian nationals. Even those that are aware of the dangers and risks, often still want to 'try their luck' (Malakooti, 2015a). A report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on the role of organized crime from Western Africa towards Europe supports this assumption. The report reasons that the cultural family setting from which Nigerian migrants originate is often marked by a tendency to ignore known risks when considering migration (Ellis, et al., 2011). The desire to migrate is frequently fuelled by a mix of aspiration to maximise income but also the pressure to support one's family. In Nigeria migration is often associated with remittances. As a result, it has become custom for children-rich households to invest in the emigration of one family member. As wages are known to be much higher abroad many families consider the option of sending one household member to Europe (ibid). Combined with the perception that income generating activities will be increased with migration, having lived abroad or having one family member abroad is also a source of

pride, a means to gain status in Nigeria. For many people, emigration also provides opportunities, such as obtaining status symbols such as land, houses or cars (Carling, 2006). As Castle (2004) writes in less-developed countries labour export is often seen as a way to reduce unemployment, securing skills, investing capital and improving the balance of payments. Combined with the factors explained above, seeing migration often as a household strategy to maximize income, a culture of emigration seems to emerge. Especially for the lesser educated population, migration is more or less synonymous to a survival strategy or as a way to gain social prestige (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014).

4.2.3   Role of the diaspora[6] and development

The Nigerian migrant network in Europe is believed to influence potential migrants in Nigeria in their choice of a country of destination. The information provided and validated by them seem to have an influence on the decision to migrate as well as where to migrate to (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014). The decision-making process regarding the choice of destination country is believed to be contingent, primarily, on the information that is accessible through personal networks, especially information provided by the Nigerian diaspora (ibid). It was reported that Nigerians nationals that had family members or friends living in Europe, were more likely to have a specific destination country in mind (59%), in contrast to compatriots that did not have family or friends in Europe (Crawley, Duvell, Jones, & Skleparis, 2016b). While no extensive quantitative and concrete data on this topic seem to exist, interviewed Nigerian migrants reported that they had gained their migration-relevant information and knowledge from family members or friends that had already migrated to Europe (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014). Communities of Nigerian decent throughout the world display similar structures in form of associations. There are two main organizations/networks that are officially supported by the Nigerian government: the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) and the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS). Recently, the government of Nigeria also set up the office of the Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora within the Presidency as part of a strategic move to annex diaspora contributions to national development. Migrant associations of professional, ethnic or religious nature serve as a source of information, enabling the self-perpetuation of migration. Scholars agree that these migrant networks have the capacity to reduce the financial and psychological cost of migration, thereby acting as a catalyst in the decision-making process of those who expect to encounter greater economic opportunities in their chosen country of destination. Especially strong ties, such as those found among local communities, family and friends in the migrant networks, tend to play an important role in the financing of migrants' journeys. With regards to smuggling networks, research has shown that migrants

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[6] Diasporas are broadly defined as individuals and members or networks, associations and communities, who have left their country of origin, but maintain links with their homelands. This concept covers more settled expatriate communities, migrant workers based abroad temporarily, expatriates with the nationality of the host country, dual nationals, and second-/third generation migrants (IOM Glossary, 2nd edition, 2011)

whose family members or friends had previously undertaken the journey, use these ties to find out about available service qualities and contacts as further elaborated in section 4 (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014; Malakooti, 2015a).

Especially in the Sub-Saharan African context the migration development nexus is widely discussed by de Haas. According to de Haas (2011), migration becomes more attractive when development and therewith income increases. This phenomenon, which was originally put forward by Zelinski in 1971, is linked to the fact that with development, exposure to higher living standards raise aspirations, too. This is also linked to the concept of relative deprivation, meaning Nigerian nationals do not move because they are necessarily poor, but rather because they are economically worse of than others in their surrounding (Stark & Taylor, 1989). Closely linked to aspirations are capabilities, which naturally also increase with more development and the concomitant increase in economic revenue. This enables potential migrants to afford the journey and to fulfil their aspirations, especially with regards to places and communities to which so-called pioneers have already migrated to (Van Heelsum, 2016). This further links to the network of the diaspora which perpetuates a culture of migration (De Haas & Flahaux, 2016).

THEMATIC AREA 2 – DATA GAPS

Only a limited number of studies focus on topics related to migration drivers and the decision making of Nigerian' migrants towards Europe. The majority of existing data often seems either outdated or not comprehensive enough to establish an understanding of the broader picture of migration drivers as well as decision-making factors, nor does the data particularly focus on movements towards Europe.

It further became apparent that most data on migration drivers to Europe for Nigerian nationals focus mainly on macro- and meso-level indicators. A representative sample that focusses on the micro level indicators, taking the personal reasons of different population groups into account, does not seem to exist for the Nigerian case.

4.3 THEMATIC AREA 3 – RISKS AND VULNERABILI-
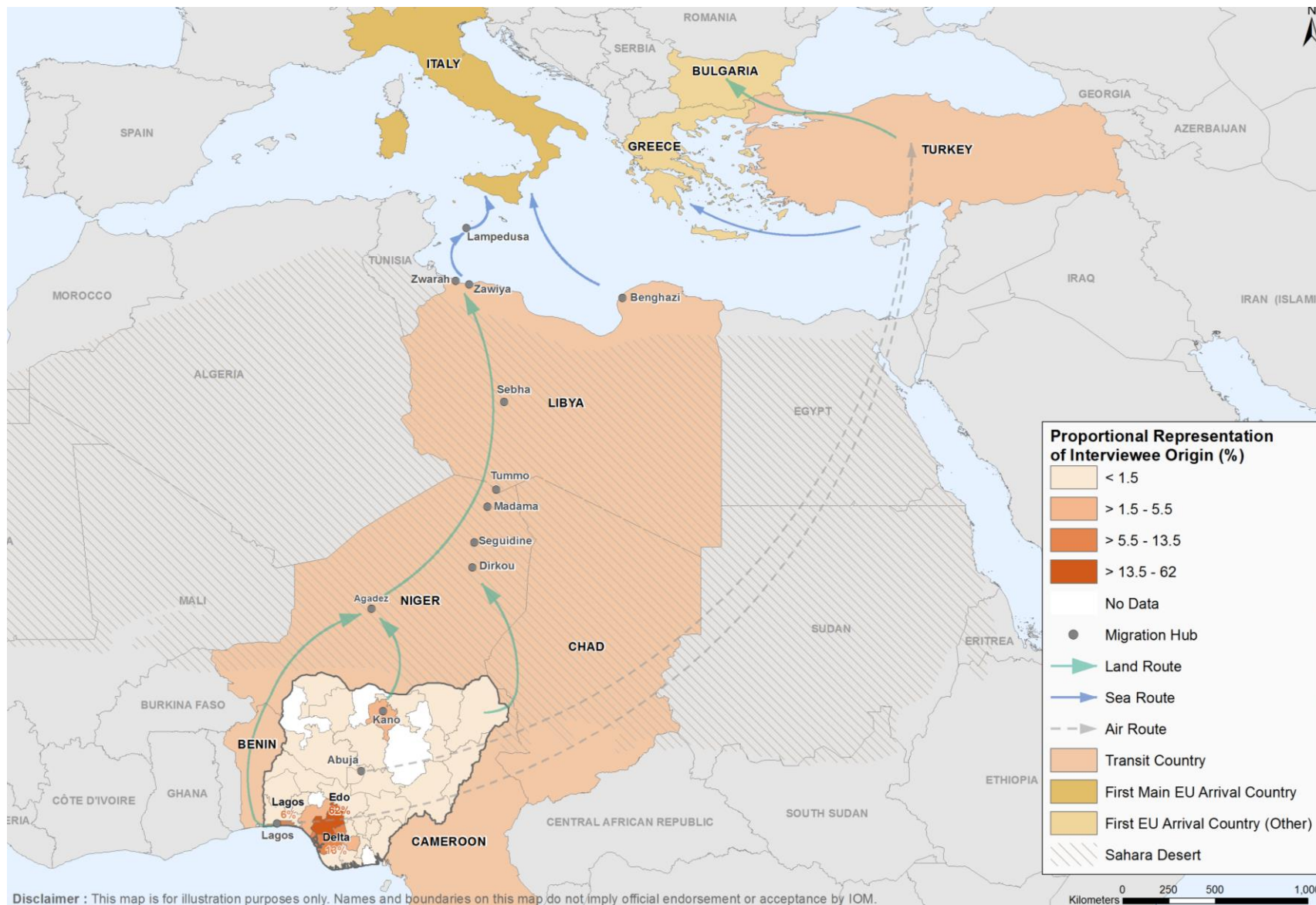## TIES IN ORIGIN, TRANSIT AND DESTINATION
COUNTRIES

Before explaining the different challenges and risks Nigerian migrants face along their journey towards Europe, the routes will first be explained to get a better understanding of where migrants can potentially encounter risks and vulnerabilities.

In the case of Nigeria, the main migration routes towards Europe are the Western route within Africa towards Libya and the Central Mediterranean route from Libya towards Europe. While Banulescu-Bog-dan & Fratzke (2015) claim that overall the use of the Central Mediterranean route has diminished, in part because of the rising instability in Libya, making the Eastern Mediterranean route the primary maritime route in 2015, it has nevertheless persisted as the most commonly used route for migrants from the SSA region. Unlike often suggested in previous literature, migration movements, especially from parts of world like the SSA-region, are not linear, uninterrupted journeys. Particularly, for those moving by land, the journey consist of many different legs. While the first part of the journey, the West African route which mainly used by migrants from West Africa, is fragmented with many stops before reaching Europe, the second part of the journey, the Central Mediterranean route, is rather straight forward as 96 percent of those that arrive in Italy come from Libya (Crawley, Duvell, Jones, & Skleparis, 2016b).

Nigerian migrants are exposed to risks and vulnerabilities throughout all parts of their journeys. Mala-kooti (2016) categorizes the risks into four parts: the first one being the risks faced within Nigeria and the ECOWAS region, the second being the risks encountered on the road from Niger mainly to North Africa, the third category then focuses on the risks faced in North Africa, mainly Libya, and the last part revolves around the vulnerabilities encountered at the destination.

Even though routes differ and cannot always be generalized, this research focuses on the main route taken by the majority of Nigerians. Nevertheless, this report does not ignore the existence of other routes and makes references to these as much as possible and whenever considered relevant.

Map 1- Main routes from Nigeria towards Europe

Proportional Representation of Interviewee Origin (%)

- < 1.5
- > 1.5 - 5.5
- > 5.5 - 13.5
- > 13.5 - 62
- No Data
- ● Migration Hub
- → Land Route
- → Sea Route
- ⇢ Air Route
- Transit Country
- First Main EU Arrival Country
- First EU Arrival Country (Other)
- Sahara Desert

Disclaimer : This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

0   250   500   1,000
Kilometers

4.3.1 Risks and Vulnerabilities faced in Nigeria/ECOWAS region

Routes out of Nigeria

Scholars identify four main routes out of Nigeria: leaving Nigeria at the northern border (often from Kano) into Niger, moving from Lagos state into Benin at the south-western border, exiting from Borno state into Cameroon and Chad at the north-eastern border or flying out of Abuja or Lagos (Malakooti, 2016). The most common one, especially for irregular migration, is the overland route through Niger, crossing the Sahara towards North Africa, mainly leading to Libya before entering Europe through Italy (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014). The movements of the other routes to Europe are limited. These routes are typically taken by Nigerians who are fleeing, for instance, the Boko Haram insurgency and who seek refuge in Cameroon or Chad (Malakooti, 2016). As previously mentioned in the part on migrants' profiles, the main provinces of origin seem to be Edo, Delta and Lagos.

Risks and Vulnerabilities at origin

The exit from Nigeria into one of the neighbouring countries is considered relatively easy and the least risky part of the journey to Europe. Because Benin and Niger, the most commonly transit countries, are ECOWAS members, most of the border crossing can be made regularly. The biggest risks are related to bribes at the border points as well as corruption. Even though Nigerians are entitled to move around freely in the ECOWAS region without a visa, they still need to hold valid travel documents such as the ECOWAS passport and/or the National Biometric Identity Card (NBIC) and an international health certificate. As most migrants are not aware of this or do not know how to obtain those documents, much migration within the ECOWAS region is still undertaken irregularly. As a consequence, many of those who did not know about the need for documentation, but also for those who did, end up paying bribes at the border crossings, which are higher than expected. This leaves the migrants with less money upon their arrival in Niger making them more vulnerable to other smugglers as well as traffickers (Malakooti, 2016).

4.3.2 Risks and vulnerabilities faced en route

Routes through Niger and Libya

As pointed out, the most commonly used route for irregular migrants from Nigeria towards Europe is by road through the Sahara with a smuggler who then facilities the sea crossing from Libya into Europe (Carter & Rohwerder, 2016). Due to its geographical location as the last ECOWAS country before the Saharan desert, Niger has turned into one of the most travelled routes within the region, connecting West and Central Africa with North Africa. Agadez is one of the main transit points in Niger, bordering Libya and Algeria. On one hand, this large desert area makes it extremely dangerous for migrants transiting through Agadez. On the other hand, the porous border is difficult to monitor and therefor easy to

cross (Malakooti, 2015a). From Agadez, Niger migrants move primarily to Libya but also to Algeria. Those heading towards Libya, after leaving Agadez, move to Dirkou, Séguidine, Madama before crossing at Tummo into Sebha in Libya (ibid). Reported travel costs vary extensively across studies. Malakooti (2016) reports on estimated numbers around USD 150 – 200 for the part from Niger into Libya. However, in Reitano, Adal and Shaw's (2014) research, the average cost is estimated to be around USD 2-3000, including additional bribes. The journey is by no mean always taken uninterrupted – many migrants stop along the way because they need to work to finance the next part of the journey.

Once arrived in Libya, the main departure points are to the west of Tripoli close to Zwarah and Zawiya (Malakooti & Davin, 2015b; Malakooti, 2015a). The list of cities from where SSA migrants depart to Italy from Libya is extensive due to its long coast line. The trend seems to have shifted towards Benghazi since 2014. For migrants from West Africa, Sabah seems to be a major smuggling hub, since the area around Sabah is known for its farms that hire migrant workers, predominantly from West Africa (Sahan, 2016). Prices seem to vary depending on a range of factors, but often also on the arbitrariness of the smugglers. However, the average price seems to be around USD 1,500.

Risks and Vulnerabilities en route in Niger and Libya

In a MEDMIG research project by Crawley et al. in 2015, interviewing migrants arriving in Italy and Malta, over 75 percent reported to have faced violence en route to Italy. The majority of those who experienced some form of abuse, reported Algeria, Niger and foremost Libya as the primary location (Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a). The risks connected to the journey from and through Niger concern in particular the journey through the Saharan desert. According to Reitano, Adal and Shaw's (2016) report, at least 3,000 migrants cross through Agadez and the region per week towards either Libya or Algeria. The main risk associated with the route are the conditions when driving through the desert. On crammed pick-up trucks which are often overloaded with up to 100 persons, migrants risk falling off. The lack of food and water along the dry and hot route are common for this particular leg of the journey. While a lot of research focuses on the deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, which are by no mean less significant, some experts believe that fatalities in the desert could reach even higher numbers (Malakooti, 2015a). Apart from dehydration, starvation and the risk of falling off speeding trucks, it seems to have become common for smugglers to leave migrants behind in the desert when these become ill and risk to contaminate the rest of the group (ibid). Other risks migrants face include random detentions by smugglers when crossing the desert, being exposed to exploitation and abuse by smugglers, robbery, and kidnapping for a ransom during their journey (IOM, 2015).

Most cases of violence, abuse and exploitation seem to occur en route in Libya. Crawley et al (2016a) speak of long enduring racism and racial discrimination against black African migrants in Libya. The list

of exploitive activities in Libya is long and includes: violent detention, being held hostage for the payment of a ransom, bonded labour, sexual violence against women and in some cases even being sold into slavery (Malakooti, 2016). Many migrants reported having been tricked into migration to Europe and transiting through Libya. Nigerians are often facing a lack of opportunities and financial trouble in their home country. Traffickers take advantage of the situation by promising migrants 'greener pasture' in Europe and by offering to lend the money or to even pay for the whole journey. When migrants arrive in Libya they are sold into bonded labour and required to pay off their debts. Many migrants also report arbitrary arrests and detentions as they frequently get kidnapped upon their arrival and are required to pay a ransom. If they cannot pay, they are put into a detention centre and coerced to work in slave like conditions. Women are particularly vulnerable in such environments – reports indicate that around 80 percent of all Nigerian female migrants arrive in a context of trafficking, be it for the exploitation of sexual or labour activities. Female migrants face a great risk of being raped by smugglers and especially at border crossing points as payments (Malakooti, 2016; IOM, 2015).

4.3.3 Risks and vulnerabilities faced in Europe

Routes to Europe

As mentioned previously, the most common route from Libya towards Europe is by boat, arriving at the shores in Italy, predominantly in Lampedusa. For 2014, Malakooti (2015b) reports that around 80 percent of the arrivals in Italy departed from Libya. In 2015, Crawley et al. (2016) report that 96 percent of arrivals in Italy have crossed over from Italy. Nigeria moved from being the fifth most important country of origin in 2013 to the second most important in 2015 and to the most important one in 2016, as the country of origin with the highest sea arrivals in Italy (Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a). From January to September 2016 a total of 132,155 Nigerian migrants had made their way into Italy (Malakooti, 2016).

Another route used by Nigerian migrants, although not as commonly used as others mentioned above, is the route from Turkey to Bulgaria. Huddleston et al. (2014) report in their case study on Nigerian migrants' routes to Europe that, especially for air travel, this route is growing in popularity. Nigerian nationals fly into Turkey and make their way onwards by road towards Bulgaria. Furthermore, as FMS data showed as well as arrival statistics, a small share of SSA-migrants (including Nigerians) also arrive in Greece, crossing over from Turkey (Banulescu-Bogdan & Fratzke, 2015). In 2015 Turkey was perceived as the new door to Europe – a trend, which the EU-Turkey deal in early 2016 seems to have interrupted, as significant numbers of migrants, many of whom are SSA-nationals, are currently still stuck in Turkey.

Risks and Vulnerabilities in Europe/ at the destination countries

On the journey from Libya to Italy, the most dangerous part is the sea crossing (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014). According to UNHCR data (2014), the deaths occurring in the Mediterranean make up 73 percent of the total number of deaths at sea globally. The increase of sea crossings to Italy has been accompanied by a rising death toll. In 2013 around 600 migrants lost their lives, in 2014 an estimated 2,993 migrants died attempting to reach Europe and in early 2016 the annual number was estimated to be close to 4,000 migrants. According to the IOM "Missing Migrants Project", by the end of 2016 a total of 5,098 migrants were recorded to have lost their lives at sea while trying to cross the Mediterranean and reach Italy by boat (Malakooti, 2015a; Malakooti & Davin, 2015b; Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a; IOM, 2017). The conditions that migrants have to face while crossing the Mediterranean explain the large number of deaths every year. Smugglers in Libya are known to overload boats with too many people, often up to 200 migrants, even though the vessels are mainly built for 30 – 40 people. Food, water and fuel are often packed in insufficient quantities. Journeys should ideally last a day or two. However, depending on the conditions, they often take up to 10 days (Malakooti, 2015a; Reitano, Adal, & Shaw, 2014).

In contrast to commonly held assumptions, migrants continue to be vulnerable and face new risks on European soil. Malakooti (2016) reports in her study for IOM that once migrants arrive in Europe, the uncertainty about their future causes distress, which exacerbates the often occurring PTSD and other psychological problems. Apart from health problems of psychological or physical in nature, migrants can also face abuse and exploitation within migrant communities. Especially for Nigerian nationals, cases were reported where women were recruited for sex work by other Nigerian migrants. Lastly, indebtedness to the smugglers causes a potential risk in the country of destination. Migrants are often expected to pay back their debts as soon as they arrive in Europe. As most migrants are not allowed to work while they undergo the asylum process (if enrolled) or cannot find jobs, the indebtedness causes great distress to the migrants, especially, because smugglers often contact the families at home and threaten them as well (Malakooti, 2016).

4.3.4 Human Trafficking

Literature on human trafficking activities from Nigeria is quite extensive and cannot be limited to one part of the journey, as practices seem to occur throughout all parts of the journey. As already touched upon in sections 1 and 2 on the profiles and drivers of Nigerian migrants, women in Nigeria are at a higher risk of falling into the hands of human traffickers. Many Nigerian women are already recruited and trafficked from Nigeria onwards, others only in Niger or Libya. The link between smuggling opera-

tions and cases of trafficking is often unclear and blurry. However, Eurostat (2014) reported that Nigerians are one of the top nationalities with regard to identified trafficking victims (Huddleston, Karacay & Nikolova, 2014). As already outlined in the part on the feminization of migration, when girls are caught in the trafficking networks from Nigeria onwards, they primarily come from Edo state. Many traffickers lure them into prostitution by promising jobs, usually in the domestic industry, in Europe. Since there is a consistent trend of Nigerian women that consider migration to the Gulf States for domestic work due to higher employment opportunities and often higher wages, the prospect of pursuing the same work in Europe, however with an even higher salary is tempting. While there are some women that are lured into the trafficking business not knowing that the business they will actually work in is the prostitution industry, many women are well-aware of the kind of work they will have to do once they have reached Europe. However, many are not aware of the working conditions or of the debts they will need to pay back (Carling, 2005 & 2006). Others are caught up in trafficking networks en route to Europe. Especially reports on Libya point out that many women are forced into prostitution while transiting. In an IOM report (2015) on the Mediterranean Migration Response, it became apparent that during the reporting period, in Italy alone over 400 victims of trafficking were identified and the majority were Nigerian women and girls.

THEMATIC AREA 3 – DATA GAPS

Literature related to migratory routes from Nigeria to Europe and the associated vulnerabilities is extensive and seems to cover the main itineraries and most important transit points. Gaps exist in more recent literature, failing to address the effect of the EU-Turkey deal on the entry into the EU and how this has shifted routes and increased the potential level of vulnerabilities.

As the routes have become firmly established and seem to have a consistent patterns, literature on the risks and vulnerabilities faced along those routes to Europe has grown, most studies are however of qualitative nature. The limited number of reports with a quantitative nature often report on overall numbers of Nigerians that have faced abuse or violence while migrating to Europe. Quantitative reports however often lack information on the types of risks and vulnerabilities. The limited information that is capture in various (qualitative) public studies is mainly anecdotal nature.

In final, recently no representative qualitative or quantitative results have been published related to the actual awareness Nigerian nationals have regarding potential risks and vulnerabilities migrants could face whilst migrating to Europe.

4.4 THEMATIC AREA 4 – THE ROLE OF INTERMEDI-ARIES

Understanding the routes migrants take from Nigeria towards Europe is essential to get a clearer picture of the roles of the intermediaries and their services provided to the migrants. This section proceeds by providing a general overview of smuggling activities in the SSA-region before elaborating upon the profiles and services of intermediaries for Nigerian nationals and explaining the constellation of networks.

For migrants from the SSA-region it is believed that for 80 percent of the cases, a smuggler and/or criminal groups are involved, which provide a range of different services, ranging from transportation and fraudulent documents to the bribing of border officials and settlement services (Reitano, Adal, & Shaw, 2014). In particular for migrants coming from SSA the concept of smuggling can often overlap with trafficking, as trafficking practices from West Africa are no rarity. In general, but also for the purpose of this study, smuggling refers only to the facilitation of migration related services, especially the irregular entry of a foreign national into a third country in exchange for payments. While smuggling can occur without exploitation, human trafficking implies that people are forced, threatened or tricked into exploitative activities. The exploitation can be financial, sexual or in the form of forced labour (Carling, 2006). Reitano, Adal and Shaw (2014) distinguish in their research between three different kinds of services:

1. Ad hoc smuggling services: The migrant travels on his or her own, occasionally using smuggling services, for example, to cross a border.

2. Migrant smuggling through misuse or abuse of documents: Migrants who can afford to use this type of smuggling often have sufficient financial resources to purchase visas and other necessary papers.

3. Pre-organized stage-to-stage smuggling: The whole journey is organized and migrants are accompanied for most of it by smugglers.

The services are also often defined as either 'full-package service' or 'pay-as-you-go' services (De Haas H., 2011; Reitano & Tinti, 2015). It is believed that as migrants cross different countries and territories they might be 'passed on' from one facilitator to the next as guides are often locals from the region with the necessary knowledge, networks and skills (ibid).

4.4.1 Facilitators' Services & Profiles

In the research of Crawley et al. (2016), it became apparent that only a few of the migrants that were interviewed after crossing the Mediterranean had actually pre-organized their journey all the way from their place of origin to Europe. The majority seem to have made use of Reitano's (2014) definition of ad hoc smuggling services, as they only engaged smugglers for certain legs of their journey (Crawley, Düvell,

Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a). De Haas (2011) also reports that Nigerian migrants mainly make use of the 'pay-as-you-go' method when using the overland route. This is mainly because migrant journeys range from one month to several years as they stop periodically. As already pointed out in section 3 about the routes and vulnerabilities, in order to leave Nigeria some migrants do not make use of smugglers, while others do, depending on whether or not they are in possession of the necessary travel documents (Malakooti, 2015a). Smuggling activities for Nigerians are often associated with corruption.

Nigeria seems to have become a country in which the acquisition of genuine documents containing false information, as well as the correction of data in existing documents have become relatively easy provided that one is ready to pay (Huddleston et al., 2014). In terms of document forgery for the purpose of migration, documents are commonly misused in three main ways: the first option involves altering the passport by replacing the photograph of the visa with another one, secondly real passports might be issued, albeit with false information in return for bribes, and the third way is the use of one passport with visa by multiple individuals. Carling reports that at the time of his research in 2006, it used to be common to send a passport containing a Schengen visa back to Nigeria once its initial user had arrived at his/her destination. In its annual risk assessment, Frontex reported that Nigerian nationals are among the top nationalities detected with forged documents (Frontex, 2016).

The main smuggling services for Nigerian migrants include forged documents (e.g. passports, flight tickets or visas) transportation, border-crossing facilitation as well as consultative services. Travel arrangements in particular are consistently mentioned since migrants depend on these for parts of the journey, namely the desert crossing from Niger to Libya. As the journey to Niger is still relatively easy, most migrants will approach smuggling networks in Niger at the latest to arrange their journey to Europe. Agadez has developed a thriving smuggling industry over the years. In Niger migrants usually deal with a 'frontman', who is working for the smuggler and who is from the same country of origin as the migrants themselves. It is common for migrants transiting in Niger to be accommodated in ghettos which are organized according to country of origin (Malakooti, 2015a).

4.4.2 Role of Networks

Nigerian smugglers often become known to a family or an individual through extended social networks as a 'family friend'. Per Nigerian government officials, smugglers seem to primarily operate via organized, horizontal networks reaching through the transit to destination countries (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014). The horizontal structure, especially in places like Agadez in Niger or in Libya implies that the network of intermediaries is mainly coordinated by higher level smugglers, called *"passeurs"*. Those passeurs liaise, for example, with police officers and other officials to facilitate passage via corruption or with lorry drivers crossing the Sahara that will carry smuggled migrants (ibid). Research also

suggests that smuggling facilitating activities, be it the initial contact, advertising or communication amongst smuggling networks, are now conducted on social media platforms such as Whatsapp or Facebook (Malakooti & Davin, 2015b; Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014). The network structure for the route from SSA to Europe seems to rely on both smugglers as well as brokers, so called "connection men". The brokers and connection men are usually from the same country as the migrants and establish the initial contact between the migrant and the smuggler. The latter usually owns the necessary safe houses, vehicles and boats. While brokers are commonly referred to as 'connection men', the smugglers are known as 'pushing men' or 'passeurs' (Lutterbeck, 2013). Both the smugglers and the brokers usually have connections to counterparts in other countries, i.e. Nigerian smugglers know smugglers from Niger and they again have connections to Libyan smugglers (ibid).

Apart from the roles of intermediaries, research in the destination country also showed how strategic social networks between migrants themselves facilitate journeys and help migrants to get ahead. Social networks can overlap with smuggling networks but this is not always the case. There are strong ties (with family members and good friends) as well as weak ties (connections and acquaintances outside the circle of family and close friends). The strong, durable ties are believed to be the connections that help migrants along the route. Social connections can change along the journey depending on their utility in a given context (Schapendonk, 2012).

THEMATIC AREA 4 – DATA GAPS

The role intermediaries play before and during the journey of Nigerian migrants to Europe has recently not been studied widely. Information on the role of smuggling networks and profiles of intermediaries in both Nigeria and transit countries is limited and scattered. Various literature does broadly address the fact that Nigerian migrants use intermediaries to reach Europe and touches upon routes and networks.

However, structured and quantitative data that provides insights on the actual 'services' provided by intermediaries and how smuggling networks are used and function is largely missing.

4.5 THEMATIC AREA 5 – MIGRANTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS EUROPE

Research activities for the six thematic areas focused on data related to migrants' perceptions of life in Europe and knowledge of procedures for obtaining refugee status, humanitarian protection or permission to stay various European countries.

There is no specific research done on this thematic area for Nigerian nationals. Nevertheless, certain studies that focus on migration towards Europe highlight some general perceptions of migrants. The general perception and a commonly held assumption by politicians is that most migrants leave SSA because they are seeking employment. The motivation to flee because of conflict or security issues in their country of origin is often ignored. Migrants from the SSA region frequently say that they 'seek a better life' and migration is their way of achieving this (Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a).

In recent years, European governments have introduced or are planning new policies and practices intended to make the journey to Europe more difficult and less attractive. In this regard, there is often assumed to be a big gap between what migrants want and what is actually possible (Ystehede & Fosse, 2016). Skilbrei from the University of Oslo intends to conduct research on the factors influencing a migrant's choice of destination and means to get there. However, no results have been published yet.

In a 2016 presentation, Kuschminder and Koser provided a general overview of their findings on the reasons why migrants choose to migrate and their perception of the destination country. While the case study is on Greece and Turkey and not explicitly linked to Nigerian nationals (focus rather on Afghan, Iraqi, and Pakistani nationals) the findings can still provide an indication about potential perceptions Nigerian nationals have of Europe. Factors that seem to be the most important include positive expectations with regards to living conditions, safety, the possibility to acquire citizenship/ a residence permit, a welcoming attitude towards asylum seekers as well as good social assistance/service (Kuschminder & Koser, 2016). Similar observations are reported in the MEDMIG report by Crawley et al. (2016a). Germany was reported to be a country that is more welcoming towards refugees than others. The data suggests that perceptions of policies relating to refugee status and the chance to family reunion were more important to migrants than the perception of access to welfare support (Crawley, Duvell, Jones, & Skleparis, 2016b).

Literature on sex trafficking of Nigerian women suggests that victims of trafficking often have more knowledge of asylum systems in Europe than the average irregular migrant. The smugglers and traffickers generally make sure that the Nigerian women involved in their network apply for asylum as soon as they arrive in Europe. Once they have applied, they get a receipt for their application. It is assumed that

their application is generally based on a fake testimony, with the aim to enable them to stay in the French territory so that they can start working as sex workers. The migration law and asylum procedures are extremely well known to the traffickers who are mostly also Nigerian migrants that arrived in Europe as victims of human trafficking themselves. Therefore, Nigerian women involved in sex trafficking and prostitution are often believed to have a better knowledge of the asylum system than other irregular migrants in Europe (Lavaud-Legendre, 2013).

THEMATIC AREA 5 – DATA GAPS

The thematic area on migrants' perceptions towards Europe seems to be widely understudied and despite more recent initiatives to collect data on the topic, namely on nationals from Afghanistan or Iraq, limited data exist for Nigerian migrants. Although the importance of the topic seems to be acknowledged within the international and academic community, only few studies do actually focus on this thematic area.

To gain a better understanding of movements from Nigeria to Europe, further research related to migrants' perceptions of destination countries in Europe is crucial. In this regard, it is necessary to investigate what Nigerian migrants know before migration and what sources of information they use before migrating to Europe, whilst studying if decisions/ perceptions are based upon this information. To further fill current gaps comprehensive data collection should also focus on what expectations migrants have about the route to Europe, general life in Europe and their potential new lives in Europe, whilst capturing key information sources that influence those views.

4.6 THEMATIC AREA 6 – MIGRATION CHOICES AND OPTIONS

Complementary to the perceptions migrants have about their arrival and life in Europe, the study aims at shedding light on the different migration options Nigerian migrants have within the region but also in Europe. Further, it will endeavour to identify the options that motivate the migrants to make the journey to Europe. In the report we aim to understand what legal options there are for migrants to migrate to Europe and if they are aware of those. Furthermore, literature is searched in order to investigate whether or not potential migrants are aware of regional migration options and if so, why they prefer Europe.

4.6.1 Legal Options in Europe

For third-country nationals, not only explicitly for Nigerian nationals, the EU has a number of measures and directives in place that would allow them to enter the EU legally. The Blue Card directive, for instance, allows highly-qualified immigrant workers to access the EU labour market. Family reunification provides already legally residing immigrants the chance to bring family members into the EU. The directive on the entry and stay of students, volunteers and interns establishes common rules for young immigrants' entry in to EU territory. Furthermore, the seasonal workers' directive ensures the rights of third-country nationals and aims at preventing irregular immigration (Eurostat, 2015). As Mberu and Pongou (2010) describe, the legal route to Europe is predominantly reserved to the highly-skilled who are attracted by the policies in place and who have the means to navigate these legal channels.

4.6.2 Regular vs Irregular Migration from Nigeria

It is not uncommon for Nigerian nationals to choose to migrate irregularly while being fully aware of the legal options. This is because of a prevalent perception that visas are only accessible to those that know the right person. Prospective regular migrants usually hire a middleman, namely an agent, to acquire a visa, much like irregular migrants make use of a smuggler (Malakooti, 2016). Furthermore, considering the cost of migration, many Nigerians reported that it is not worth going through legal channels because the cost of an agent's services are perceived as overpriced. While the visa itself is estimated to cost around USD 60, an agent will sell it for approximately USD 1000 (ibid). In addition to the financial barrier, the processing time is typically greater than it would take a migrant to reach Libya with a smuggler. Therefore, while regular border crossings would in most cases be preferred, the process of obtaining the visa is regarded as too time consuming, cumbersome, and expensive while producing too little benefits to be viable (Ikuteyijo, 2012; Malakooti, 2016). The lack of access to legal channels or information about these has been repeatedly mentioned as the main driving force behind migrants' decisions to seek out a smuggler (Huddleston, Karacay, & Nikolova, 2014).

4.6.3 Choosing Europe over regional migration

As research already ascertained, regional migration is much more common for Nigerian nationals than the move to Europe. Nevertheless, a significant amount of Nigerians face the often harsh and arduous travel conditions described above every year to reach Europe. Section four's analysis of migrants' perceptions of Europe partially explains why it can be a preferred destination. The expectations of enhanced security and better livelihood opportunities in particular are primarily associated with western countries. Research on this thematic area reveals that not all migrants reaching Europe had intended to do so at the beginning of their journey. Many plan on travelling to the Gulf States or Libya and change

their destination en route. Worsening living conditions in Libya are named as one of the reasons why migrants who initially never planned to go to Europe, eventually end up crossing the Mediterranean Sea (Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon, & Sigona, 2016a).

Not particularly for Nigerian migrants but for the general African migrant population, it is repeatedly cited that intra-continental migration is often driven by the complexities of the history of state formation. Colonial borders were arbitrarily drawn, disregarding linguistic and ethnic commonalities, as well as internal and cross-border conflicts. This also further reflects that migration is often a strategy looking for job opportunities across neighbouring countries because evidence also suggests that prospect for a better work plays a significant role in attracting emigrants. For movements towards Europe, the literature suggests that cross border movements are most often facilitated by common inter alia re colonial ties, linguistic and historical roots, meaning migrants tend to go to European countries where they have relatives or friends. Social capital gleaned from migrant networks can reduce the psychological and financial costs of migration, offering access to social and professional communities (Shimeles, 2010).

THEMATIC AREA 6 – DATA GAPS

Only limited research focusses exclusively on this thematic area, various available sources provide information on options and regional alternatives to migration towards Europe, unfortunately there is a lack of primary data amongst Nigerian migrants. Regular and irregular migration channels are covered relatively thoroughly; nevertheless limited quantitative research focusses on the decision-making process of Nigerian migrants and why Nigerian nationals choose one European country over another. Some studies exist on why Nigerian nationals migrate within the region as well as why others choose to go to Europe, unfortunately the existing literature does not seem to draw the connection between the two migration flows. Limited sources provide information on why particular groups of Nigerian migrants chose the lengthily journey instead of migrating within the continent or to the closer regions, such as the Middle East.

New studies of both qualitative as well as quantitative nature could help fill the above gaps and shed light on particularly the decision to migrate to Europe versus regional migration alternatives.

5. SUMMARY OF KEY-FINDINGS

In line with the thematic areas and the research questions, information and data collected under the literature review reveal that various thematic areas have more significant data-gaps than others. The main data gaps for each of the thematic areas are outlined below. Gaps which are visible in almost all of the TAs is the **lack of comprehensive quantitative data as well as data that particularly focuses on the movements towards Europe** and not to the Middle East or within the African continent.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Migrant profiles (socio-demographic)	Migration drivers and decision making	Vulnerability factors in origin transit and destination countries	Role of intermediaries	Migrants' perceptions towards Europe	Migration choices and options

Thematic Area 1 – In recent years there has been a growing effort amongst international actors and researchers to increase a better understanding of the profiles of migrants that move to Europe. Although methods such as DTM's flow monitoring surveys provide regular updates on the profiles of Nigerian migrants toward Europe, most information collected in the past on Nigerian migrants has put greater emphasis on intra-continental migration than on the migrants' profiles of those Nigerians that travel to Europe. In final Nigeria, as a country, is also **lacking effective tools to capture basic migrant related characteristics** of its citizens in **household surveys or censuses.**

Thematic Area 2 – Over the years, various data on migration drivers and decision-making factors of Nigerian nationals have been collected, however data is mainly macro-level focussed which leaves **significant information gaps on the micro-level.** Moreover, a lot of the existing data is rather outdated or not comprehensive enough to allow an understanding of the broader picture of migration drivers as well as decision-making factors. Nor does this data focus on individual or household level migration drivers. In addition, a lot of the existing literature does not have a focus on those Nigerian migrants that move to Europe. The **core gap is a representative sample that focusses both on macro and micro level** migration drivers and decision-making factors of Nigerian nationals that migrate towards Europe.

Thematic Area 3 – Representative sample-data and information on **what risks and vulnerabilities Nigerian migrants face along the journey is scarce**, often anecdotal, and in many cases based upon informal incident reports from humanitarian actors. Quantitative data that exist often solely focusses on actual numbers of Nigerian migrants that faced abuse or violence while migrating to Europe. However, the

types of risks and vulnerabilities are often not captured in quantitative studies and much information that is publicly available is of anecdotal nature. Moreover, recent qualitative or quantitative data does not provide detailed information **regarding the actual awareness Nigerian migrants have before departure on the potential risks and vulnerabilities** they could face whilst migrating to Europe.

Thematic Area 4 – Information on what role intermediaries play in facilitating the journeys of Nigerian migrants to Europe and how their networks operate (incl. their profiles) is available but often anecdotal and at times limited. Various literature does broadly outline information on routes and how networks are used by Nigerian migrants to reach Europe. However, **structured and quantitative data that provides insights on the actual 'services' provided by intermediaries and how smuggling networks are used and function is missing.**

Thematic Area 5 – This thematic area is understudied despite more recent initiatives to collect data on migrants' perceptions towards Europe. To obtain a better understanding of movements from Nigeria to Europe, **further research related to migrants' perceptions of destination countries in Europe is crucial**. In this regard, it is necessary to investigate what Nigerian migrants know before migration and the **sources of information** they use before migrating to Europe, whilst studying if decisions/ perceptions are based upon this information. To further fill the current data gaps, comprehensive data collection should also focus on what **expectations migrants have** about the route to Europe, general life in Europe and their potential new lives in Europe, whilst capturing key information sources that influence those views.

Thematic Area 6 – Despite the fact that various sources do provide information on options and regional alternatives to migration towards Europe, there is a lack of primary data on this topic amongst Nigerian migrants. Limited quantitative research is available related to the decision-making process of Nigerian migrants and why Nigerian nationals choose one European country over another. Various studies exist on why Nigerian nationals migrate within the region as well as why others choose to go to Europe, unfortunately the existing literature does not seem to draw the connection between the two migration flows. Limited sources provide information on why particular groups of Nigerian migrants chose the lengthily journey instead of migrating within the continent or to the closer regions, such as the Middle East. New studies of both qualitative as well as quantitative nature could help **fill the above gaps and particularly shed light on the decision to migrate to Europe versus regional migration alternatives.**

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