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**GERMANY'S RETURN POLICIES AND REJECTED  
AFRICAN ASYLUM SEEKERS**

**WHY DON'T FAILED GHANAIAN AND NIGERIAN ASYLUM APPLICANTS  
RETURN HOME?**

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## **Abstract**

Studies on return migration often hypothesise how success or failure of the migration experiment facilitate or hinder return. This has resulted in various migration theories providing grounded basis for return migration. Some theories assume that return becomes the logical choice once the migrant has gained enough knowledge, invested in the country of origin and mobilised sufficient assets. In an attempt to explain why failed asylum seekers from Ghana and Nigerian in Germany do not return to their countries of origin, this case study found that human security concerns rank topmost among the reasons failed asylum seekers of the case studies refuse to return home. This qualitative study interviewed nineteen (19) migrants with varied statuses in Hamburg and also found that due to absence of freedom from fear and want in their home countries, migrants flee reception facilities after receiving negative response on their asylum requests. Their disappearance into existing migrants networks in Germany is to avoid the implementation of return policies, thereby remaining in Germany as irregular migrants. Migrants cite the investment in their trips; non-payment of assured cash sums upon return home; unachieved travel goals; poor economic conditions of other returned migrants and fear of embarrassments in their home countries among others as their reasons for refusing to return home despite failing to secure asylum in Germany.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
List of Tables .....	v
Table of Figures.....	v
<b>List of Acronyms and Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction - Irregular migrants in Europe (Germany) and attempts at return</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. Problem diagnosis.....	1
2. Relevance of the work and research goals.....	3
3. Central guiding questions, research goals and hypothesis .....	6
4. Method of inquiry and structure of the work .....	10
4.2. Structure.....	11
<b>Chapter 2: The Case for Ghana and Nigeria - two country studies</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1. Why Ghana and Nigeria .....	13
2.2. Economic policies of governments as attraction for migrants' Return.....	20
2.3. Employment situation in Ghana and Nigeria .....	28
2.4. Push and pull factors aiding Ghanaian and Nigerians to migrate to Germany and Europe generally .....	31
2.5. Asylum requests by Ghanaians and Nigerians to Germany and Italy over the period 2015 to 2017 .....	36
2.6. Chapter Summary .....	41
<b>Chapter 3. Research Findings – Why irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants do not return after failed asylum requests</b> .....	<b>42</b>
3.1. Decision to leave their country .....	42
3.2. Asylum request, response and reasons .....	47
3.3. Governmental or NGO Support in home country or destination country.....	49
3.4. Post Asylum options – opportunities and fears .....	54
3.5. Human rights concerns .....	61
<b>Chapter 4: Discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	<b>66</b>
4.1. Discussion .....	66
4.2. Reasons failed asylum seekers do not return – economic situation.....	72
4.2.1. Investment in the journey.....	74
4.2.2. Aims of the trip not achieved.....	75
4.2.3. Presence of migrant networks.....	76
4.2.4. Human rights concerns.....	78
4.2.5. Fear of embarrassment .....	79
4.3. Conclusions .....	80
4.4. Recommendations .....	86
<b>ANNEX</b> .....	<b>96</b>
Annex A: Interview Schedule data collection for Master Thesis – Kobby Gomez-Mensah.....	96
Annex B: List of Interview partners .....	99

## List of Tables

Table 1 Basic data on the case studies .....	14
Table 2 Overview table of the case studies compared to Germany of selected indices ....	16
Table 3 Nigeria's 2018 Budget Expenditure Proposals .....	25
Table 4 Data on Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum requests to Germany each year .....	36
Table 5 Data on Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum request to Italy each year .....	37
Table 6 Data on new Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum applications rejected each year in Germany .....	38
Table 7 Data on new Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum requests rejected each year in Italy .....	38

## Table of Figures

Figure 1 Map of West Africa - Home of the case studies .....	13
Figure 2 Number of asylum seekers from Ghana and Nigeria in Germany from 2015 to 2017 .....	19
Figure 3 Service Sector performance in Ghana's 2016 Budget .....	22
Figure 4 A model of Push and Pull factors of migration .....	31
Figure 5 A model on why failed asylum seekers in Germany fail to return.....	72

## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<b>AIDA</b>	Asylum Information Database
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AVRR</b>	Assisted Voluntary Return and Readmission
<b>CEAS</b>	Common European Asylum System
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization of Migration
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>SRR</b>	Search and Rescue Region
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

# **Chapter 1: Introduction - Irregular migrants in Europe (Germany) and attempts at return**

## **1. Problem diagnosis**

Following the rapid pouring of migrants from Africa and Middle East into the European Union (EU) at the peak of the recent migrants' influx, governments in Europe continue to find practical ways to stem the inflows, particularly into the Union's external borders. However, migrants and smugglers in their attempts to outwit the border control measures aimed at reducing illegal crossings into the EU area, risked lives, recording more than 2,200 deaths on the Mediterranean alone last year (UNHCR, 2018b: 17). The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and various member states introduced stricter regulations limiting search and rescue operations by NGOs and merchant vessels, further reducing illegal crossings. At the same time, the Libyan Coast Guards (LCG) held its side of the bargain by thwarting attempts to reach Europe via the North African country's coastline. In 2018, the LCG returned up to 85% of migrants and refugees intercepted to the Libya Search and Rescue Region (SRR) (UNHCR, 2018b: 21).

These measures notwithstanding, in 2018 more than 116,000 migrants and refugees still arrived in Europe with more than half of them entering Spain alone (UNHCR, 2018b: 9). They add on to the millions who arrived in preceding years either as refugees fleeing violent conflict or as migrants in search of greener pastures. But the unplanned nature of their arrivals coupled with their sheer numbers have impacted member states' social policy, further triggering emergency measures to accommodate asylum seekers and at the same time address public outrage over the flood of people entering their countries and its implication for their way of life, safety and security (Atac & Rosenberger, 2018: 4).

These states are torn between honouring their international humanitarian and human rights obligations by offering protection to these strangers or calling on the international community for assistance and pandering to their citizens' fears fueled by nationalist rhetoric and growing right wing extremism. They have to blend international responsibility with local necessities, even as they find ways to address the consequences of huge numbers that have entered their borders. Given that among these asylum seekers



are irregular African migrants, able-bodied young men and women who risk their lives through the perilous journeys hoping to simply improve their livelihoods, the urgency of their asylum pleas compare poorly with similar appeals from refugees fleeing conflict in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo or Eritrea.

If Germany is to choose who to grant asylum in the over 900,000 new applications received between 2016-2017, the likelihood is that refugees from countries that are not safe for habitation will be the first to be considered (OECD, 2018: 234). Asylum seekers from Ghana or Nigeria who have fled harsh economic conditions in search of sustenance are not likely to be a priority. Though there are pockets of insecurity and human rights violations in North Eastern part of Nigeria due to activities of Islamist group Boko Haram, both countries and their immediate neighbourhoods are safe for protection (UNHCR, 2018). Therefore, rejected asylum seekers from these countries should be able to return home where they can take active part of their national life, rather than trooping to Europe in search for ‘protection’.

One can assume that designating those countries, as safe territories constitutes the reason for various agreements and discussions for failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants to return home. Evidence from the UN migration agency’s assisted return programme indicates that majority of those returned under the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) initiatives of the European Union, International Organization for Migration and partners to enable them go back home for a fresh start indicates that West and Central Africa alone constitute over 30% of all returnees (IOM, 2018).

Furthermore, even though states have an obligation to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of their citizens whether they are home or abroad, governments of the study countries are not known to proactively offered to receive their citizens or provide them support to return home, which means European governments have to either jointly or individually coerce the home countries of migrants to assist in their return home. Such return processes require full cooperation of the country of origin, since the host state, regardless of its ability to provide all logistical support still needs to secure entry permit for flights carrying the returnees. Nigeria is known to have entered negotiations for the return and readmission of its citizens in Europe and to curtail human trafficking under the

Migration Partnership Framework in 2016 (Angenendt et al, 2017:11). Yet, reports of returnees not being able to earn a living from training received upon their return is a major disincentive to others whose asylum requests have been denied to follow the path of voluntary returns (Eniola, 2019).

## **2. Relevance of the work and research goals**

### **2.1. Political and Scholarly Relevance of the study**

The subject of assisted returns of asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected has gained prominence in recent years after thousands of refugees and migrants besieged various European territories from the year 2014. Their unplanned arrival did not only throw many national plans out of gear, it also pushed governments to find realistic ways to address the challenges that came with resettling such huge numbers. Both the EU Commission and member states continue to find pragmatic ways to accommodate as many of the asylum seekers as possible, especially those fleeing harm and persecution. Given the strain the huge numbers put on national and continental resources as well as the pressure that it imposes on governments in the face of citizens backlash over perceived threats from large numbers of migrants, it is important that researchers and academics observe the processes closely, especially considerations that would inform the granting or rejection of asylum applications.

Since a significant percentage of those already refused asylum and returned come from Western and Central Africa, it is important for studies to focus on countries in the region that are relatively stable yet record significant numbers in asylum applications in Europe. Researchers need to understand the reasons as well as possible attractions that will entice them to leave their countries that are relatively stable in search of asylum, a process that could take over a year to be completed and in most cases, as the statistics show, ends in refusal, leaving them without means of sustained livelihood (IAM, 2018).

This research focuses on case studies of Ghana and Nigeria due to their close proximity and historical ties to a common European power, United Kingdom. Although Ghana is less than a third of Nigeria's size and population, migrants' numbers in Europe and the

Americas for the two countries show more Ghanaians as a percentage of total population living in Europe and America than Nigerians (MDP, 2019). Yet, more Nigerians returned home in 2017, under voluntary returns compared to their Ghanaian counterparts (MDP, 2019b). Whereas over 75% of Nigerian asylum applications in 2017 to Germany were rejected (IAM, 2018), that of Ghanaians asylum applicants for the same period in Germany was over 96% (UNHCR, 2019). However, despite the difference in the rejected numbers, total number of Ghanaians returning home under the AVRR in 2017 from across the world was 293 (MDP, 2019). Furthermore, discussions during a joint Ghana – EU Declaration on migration in 2016 also revealed that out of over 4,600 irregular Ghanaian migrants were recorded in the EU, - majority of them in the U.K., Italy and Germany. Of the over 4,200 of them refused asylum however, only 31% returned in 2014. By the following year, the number returning had reduced to 29.5% (EEAS, 2016). The UN Information Centre Accra, reported in 2018 that over 10,000 Ghanaians reached Italy through Libya between 2015 and 2016 alone. The foregoing suggests that many migrants are likely to remain in Europe once they enter, even when their applications to remain in the continent have been declined. Others manage to stay without being captured as irregular migrants living in Europe. Therefore, these phenomena of entering illegally and staying without being captured as well as finding ways to embed within European countries even after asylum applications are declined should be investigated and reported.

Again, the growing need for collaboration between European states and migrants' home countries, especially their institutions, to demonstrate their willingness to facilitate return of their citizens has also become a subject worthy of investigation. The Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) and the European Union Trust Fund for Africa are all parts of initiatives to help stem migration flows. However, it is unclear whether these initiatives will reduce the flow of irregular migrants or attract failed asylum applicants home to take advantage of these initiatives. I therefore intend to interrogate the return initiatives as well as options being considered by failed asylum applicants from Ghana and Nigeria. I will also assess the human rights component of the return initiatives and options that are open to rejected asylum seekers. My study will also be interested in assessing the level of

collaboration between institutions in Ghana and Nigeria and their counterparts in Germany over the return of failed asylum applicants (Angenendt et al, 2017:16).

## 2.2. Research goals

I intend to explain why failed Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum seekers have not returned to their home countries, given the limited options they are left with. It also intends to assess the human rights implications of their decision as failed asylum seekers. The study intends to examine the Ghanaian and Nigerian institutions' level of collaboration and cooperation with their German counterpart in the processes leading to the return of failed asylum seekers. This is because since the massive influx of migrants into Europe, many have questioned African governments over their responsibility to their citizens trapped in migrants reception facilities in both host and transit countries. Finally, I intend to examine the human rights concerns of failed asylum seekers from the case studies in Germany, as they consider their next actions. This study will therefore identify failed asylum seekers in Germany, other migrants with information on asylum related issues as well as experts working with asylum seekers as subjects of the research.

I also will recommend initiatives from the migrants' perspective that will be attractive to them and encourage their return to their home countries.

It is also the goal of my research to establish whether incentives to third countries have become preconditions for cooperation to return failed asylum seekers. The study argues that given that third countries have responsibilities to their citizens, therefore, accepting or waiting for incentives before allowing their own citizens back home constitutes failing in their international human rights and humanitarian obligations as contained in international customary law. Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly indicates that *“everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own and to return to his country”*, therefore these countries are required by law to ensure return and readmission of their citizens especially where their national security would not be compromised.

### 3. Central guiding questions, research goals and hypothesis

#### 3.1. Research question

The main question of this study is based on countries' international obligation towards their citizens, particularly in cases where their requests to reside in another country are not granted. The central question for this study is: (1) *Why are irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Germany whose asylum requests have been rejected not returning home?*

Given European states need to cooperate with the home countries of the failed applicants in order to successfully repatriate them as well as the responsibility of home countries to protect the interest of their citizens the first sub question focuses on cooperation of the migrants' home country as Europe persistently makes clear its desire to return irregular migrants to their home countries. (i) *To what extent are Ghanaian and Nigerian governments cooperating with European institutions to ensure the human rights of their citizens earmarked for return are respected and protected?* Finally, many of the 'push factors' identified as the reasons for migration into Europe in the case studies persist. This is matched with claims by previously returned irregular migrants of lack of opportunities for livelihood in their home countries. The next sub-question is the following: (ii) *How are returned migrants able to take advantage of opportunities to fulfil their aspirations in their home country?*

#### 3.2. Hypotheses

The study formulates three hypotheses derived from the research questions to be tested with the data that would be collected. (1) *Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Germany whose asylum applications are rejected are not likely to return home within 18 months after the decisions are communicated to them.* (2) *There is no direct institutional cooperation between agencies responsible for the return of failed asylum seekers in Ghana and Nigeria and their counterparts in Germany to ensure their human rights are respected and protected.* (3) *The reason irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Germany denied asylum do not return home is the absence of freedom from fear and want in their home countries.*

### 3.3. Timeline

This study will review policy changes in the asylum and return processes since the surge in asylum applications in 2015. That year recorded significant flow of migrants many of whom sought to remain in Europe using asylum as a gateway. It will analyse processes leading to the current role of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency as well as the Libyan Coast Guard and their collaboration with West African governments particularly Ghana and Nigeria. Both Ghana and Nigeria subscribed to the JVAP and will benefit from the EUTF, therefore it is important that policy changes towards support for the return and reintegration since the signing of the Malta Declaration in 2015 are documented and assessed. The study will work with the most current available data on asylum and returns to countries of origin and safe third countries that will be available by June 15 when data collection is expected to end.

### 3.4. Limits

The subject of this study has become quite fluid, as individual states respond to the migration flows sometimes as a reaction to public outcry. The continental Union and member states keep reviewing their asylum and return policies to ensure that they can protect their borders, security of their citizens and at the same time meet their international obligations. This may lead to situations where countries implement policies that may have implications on other states within the EU and the collective EU position on asylum and returns. This could impact the outcome of the study. An example would be if another European country decides to grant asylum to failed asylum seekers at Germany's external borders or if Germany decides to relocate failed asylum seekers to Turkey or Morocco.

Again, many of the policies and legislations are currently under implementation, therefore if they are varied at a time when the study is almost completed, the new arrangement may not find expression in this study.

The subject of this study is the return policy and failed asylum seekers from Ghana and Nigeria who are at reception facilities or similar accommodation arrangements in Germany. The study seeks to understand their decisions after their applications to remain in Germany have been rejected and the human rights consideration in the entire chain. Therefore, not every subject of the massive migrants inflows into Europe and migrants distribution will be covered by this study. Finally, since this is a qualitative study with limited number of interview subjects, the findings cannot be generalized with the same degree of certainty as the case may be with quantitative studies. Findings of a qualitative study “are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance” (Atieno, 2009:17). However, it would be an indication of trends and perceptions of some irregular migrants in Germany. This becomes useful for reflection on the subject of migrants and return policies and processes.

This case study sets out to explain why irregular migrants denied asylum in Germany do not return home, with a focus on Ghana and Nigeria. However, given the scope and duration of the study, not every migrant from the case studies could be interviewed. Again, the sensitive nature of the topic meant that not everyone would gladly share their stories for fear of being victimised in their future.

Using Snowball sampling method, this researcher identified 16 migrants made up of only two women, based on reference from an initial source from the Lampedusa group, who migrated from Ghana to Libya and later Italy before his journey to Germany. Three officials of NGOs working with migrants or migrants-related issues were also interviewed. This method allowed me to reach informed migrants most of whom had gone through migration experience in three countries. In the process some seasoned respondents were identified to provide the researcher richer insight for the study (Marshall, 1995: 523). Not every person referred in the Snowball was willing to take part and the researcher had to discard the fourth interview of a failed asylum applicant from Nigeria for obviously insincere responses in the hope of getting paid.

Just as case study approach to research has its advantages, it is also imbued with some limits. The researcher however chose this method fully aware of those limitations. Though using this approach weakens the generalisability of the findings, it offers a

complete understanding of complex human issues, which according Marshall, (1995: 524), is more important than generalisability of results. Therefore, given the complexity of the subject being studied, this approach proved effective.

Again, this Master's thesis has limited scope, is time bound and resource constrained, therefore could only focus on a case study of Ghanaian and Nigeria migrants in Hamburg. The study analysed a number of data on Ghana and Nigeria however, the disaggregated data on migrants' arrivals in Germany for year 2018 was not ready for analysis due to the deadline for data collection.

The data analysed is based on the results of semi-structured interviews that could not cover all migrants' experiences but was useful for the purposes of this study. Therefore the conclusions of the study will derive from interviewee responses situated within theory and analysed data. For the Ghanaian migrants some of the interviews were conducted in a mixture of popular local language Twi and English to allow all respondents to express themselves fully and freely. The researcher translated the responses during transcription; therefore some meaning could be lost. But the researcher also took notes and clarified responses to limit the impact of possible translation errors.

Finally, there is the tendency for some respondents to exaggerate their experiences or hold back some relevant information, thus limiting the richness of responses. All respondents were assured of their anonymity and the researcher only assigned codes to respondents to prevent tracing responses to any individual. Again, respondents hesitant to have their voices recorded had their rights respected. Apart from the Women In Asylum, whose residence is in the outskirts, the researcher met every other respondent individually first in informal informally settings to discuss the research project, solicit their consent and participation. Once the person agreed the interview was scheduled. The researcher believes that the approach created some familiarity with the interviewees and relaxed them during the interviews.



## **4. Method of inquiry and structure of the work**

### **4.1. Methodology**

Researching into reasons migrants have opted not to return home under the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) initiatives despite their asylum applications being rejected requires an approach that offers deeper meaning of phenomena from the perspectives of the subjects (Coomans, Grüfeld, & Kamminga, 2009). A Qualitative research approach provides the necessary tools for data collection, given its ability not only to deal with broad qualitative data sets but also its allowance for in-depth analysis of phenomena as well as explore the complexity of the migrants' situation (Coomans, Grüfeld, & Kamminga, 2009).

This study will therefore gather primary data through in-depth semi-structured interviews with four Ghanaian and four Nigerian migrants, who have sought asylum in Germany, other migrants from the case studies with knowledge of the asylum processes, as well as officials of agencies working with asylum seekers and migrants in Germany.

Case studies allow investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2003:2). This makes it apt for a study into failed asylum seekers whose applications for protection in Germany have been rejected and are therefore expected to leave the country. The strength of case studies is that they allow the researcher to directly observe phenomena being studied as well as interviewing persons involved or affected by it. The strength of case studies is dealing with different forms of evidence including documents, artifacts, interviews and observation of object or subject of study (Yin, 2003: 8). The case studies of Ghana and Nigeria will therefore analyse documents on the two countries' economies, employment, education as well as indices on socio-economic development for the current state of affairs in the countries. The analysis will help to explain decisions that their failed asylum seekers in Germany are likely to take. It will also analyse empirical data on the two countries to provide further context for migrants' decisions.

It will further analyse opportunities in migrants' home countries as well as attempts by their governments to create opportunities to attract their citizens of irregular migrants status in various European destinations including Germany, back home.

Using the human security concept, I will to explain how, in order to be free from 'fear' and 'want', migrants risk their lives and embed themselves in the host countries without the required permission in order to escape threats to their livelihoods, aspirations and dignity. The concept of human security emphasises the individual's own preservation and protection from threats to their survival and development. According to the UN, (1994) *“human security implies for safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. It also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in home, in jobs or in communities”* (UNDP, 1994). The Human Security Commission defines human security as *“the protection the vital core of all human lives in a way that enhance human freedom and human fulfilment. It means protecting the fundamental freedoms that are the essence of life and protecting people from severe (critical) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes to build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity”* (Commission on Human Security 2003: 4). It anticipates living conditions of existence that meet basic necessities and help in the realisation of human dignity and meaningful participation in national life. Human security entails more than the survival needs of the individual, – food, shelter, healthcare and education among others – it also involves curtailing the oppressive powers of the state or community (Thomas, 1999: 3). However, many Africans have no rights to exercise control over their destiny, they cannot play full and active roles in their communities; they cannot make choices and are unable to experience personal autonomy.

## **4.2. Structure**

The thesis will be made up of four chapters including the introductory chapter. The second chapter will discuss the case studies of Ghana and Nigeria, focusing on their

governance, education, employment opportunities and challenges as well as initiatives to support returned migrants reintegrate in the countries.

The third chapter will present findings of the study based on interview responses of irregular migrants in Germany.

The final chapter will summarise the findings, provide answers to the questions, situate the hypothesis within the study, draw conclusions and offer recommendations on how Germany and by extension the EU countries, can gain closer collaboration with Ghana and Nigeria and how to attract a majority of failed asylum applicant into the assisted return initiatives.

## Chapter 2: The Case for Ghana and Nigeria - two country studies

### 2.1. Why Ghana and Nigeria

This chapter discusses Ghana and Nigeria, – the country studies – with a focus on governance, economy, education, employment opportunities and challenges as well as initiatives to support return and reintegration of their citizens currently in Europe as irregular migrants into their countries. This will help understand opportunities available for returned migrants to earn livelihoods if they return home after their asylum requests are declined.

Figure 1 Map of West Africa - Home of the case studies



Source: (Map data, 2016)

Figure one is the map of West Africa, where the case studies are located. It shows Ghana's proximity to Nigeria and their neighbours within the sub region. Nigeria is to the east of the sub region bordering Cameroon, while Ghana lies to its west, sandwiching

Benin and Togo between the case studies. The map is a pictorial representation of the case studies to show the size of each of the two countries being studied.

**Table 1 Basic data on the case studies**

<b>Data</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>
Total area	238,533 sq. km	923,768 sq. km
Population	28,102,471 (July 2018 est)	203,452,505 (July 2018 est)
Life expectancy	55.3 years	47.7 years
GDP	68.26 billion (2019)	444.92 billion (2019)
GDP per capita	\$1,708	\$2,458
Exports value	\$13.49 billion (2017 est)	\$46.90 billion
Poverty rate	34.9%	77.6%

Source: Authors compilation from various sources (CIA, 2019; IDI, 2019; IMF, 2019; WTO, 2018)

The two countries share a colonial history with Great Britain as the last European power to have dominated their people, land and other resources from the mid-nineteenth century. Ghana, then Gold Coast was famous for its large gold deposits and other natural resources, while Nigeria had large oil deposits and was also significant for trade due to its large population (Crowder (1968) as cited in Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson, 2000: 9). However due to their categorisation as non-settler colonies – their climates made it impossible for colonial authorities and businessmen alike to survive – institutions were mainly built to facilitate exploitation of their resources to European cities (Acemoglu et al 2000). This arrangement is in sharp contrast with institutions built in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, where the colonial powers planned to settle due to the favourable climate. Since Sub-Sahara Africa was not considered habitable, it did not benefit from the colonial authorities home-like institutions for governance and business, as was the case in territories they planned to settle in. Analysts believe that structures set up in non-settler colonies – including Ghana and Nigeria – during the period have

influenced their societies and persistently do so, limiting opportunities for their people and making them dependent on aid. To understand mass migration of their citizens and a desire to remain in Europe and elsewhere as irregular residents or otherwise, it is important to explain factors that compel citizens of the two countries to embark on these life-threatening journeys to Europe and stop at nothing to remain, despite evidence of limited opportunities for those without the requisite permission to remain, live and work in Europe. It is important to stress that migration by citizens of these two countries did not only happen westwards, as both have records of large migration into the other, culminating in deportations of Nigerians in Ghana in the late 1960s and Ghanaians in Nigeria in the early 1980s (CIA, 2019). Citizens of both countries are also known to have settled in neighbouring countries as well as Europe and Americas since the 1960s (CIA, 2019). Evidence of success gleaned from social media and traditional media is likely to trump harrowing sights of rubber boats capsizing on the Mediterranean and claiming ‘a few lives’. This is evident in the large number of Ghanaians and Nigerians who continue to embark on those perilous journeys to Europe and elsewhere in search of a dream living.

I shall begin by reviewing the countries’ standing in three major indices that rank states on human development, equality of family incomes and democracy to see how the study countries are faring alongside other states measured in those indices and whether their rankings could contribute to their citizens migrating without the requisite permission.

Ghana and Nigeria’s rankings in these indices help to grasp the reality of citizens’ perception to reach their aspirations within the foreseeable future if they remain in their home countries. If young people are convinced that they cannot realise their dreams within the existing economic arrangements and see no clear evidence of change in reasonable time they are likely to migrate to countries where they believe their dreams could come true especially when they see others who live in those countries in the media or returning home.

The first to consider is the Gini Index; it measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in a country. The more nearly equal a country’s income distribution is the lower the Gini Index. The ranking for the study countries are based on

2013 data like many others ranked on the list. On the Gini index the degree of family income inequalities in Ghana is better than Nigeria.

**Table 2 Overview table of the case studies compared to Germany of selected indices**

	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Germany</b>
Gini Index	43.5 (2016: Gini)	48.8 (2013: CIA)	31.7 (2015: Gini)
Human Development Index	0.592 (140 <sup>th</sup> )	0.532 (157 <sup>th</sup> )	0.936 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
Democracy Index	6.63 (57 <sup>th</sup> )	4.44 (108 <sup>th</sup> )	8.68 (13 <sup>th</sup> )
Fragile States Index	65.9 (110 <sup>th</sup> )	98.5 (14 <sup>th</sup> )	24.7 (167 <sup>th</sup> )
Corruption Perception Index	41 (78 <sup>th</sup> )	27 (144 <sup>th</sup> )	80 (11 <sup>th</sup> )

Source: Author's compilation from various sources (CIA, 2019; Gini 2018; HDR 2019; EIU, 2019; FSI, 2019; CPI 2018)

Table 1 contains indices and in some cases ranks for the case studies in comparison with Germany. This is to help explain why migrants from the two sending countries choose Germany as a preferred destination. The data show that the case studies perform poorly in comparison with Germany in all indices. Whereas Ghana and Nigeria's Gini coefficients are 43.5 (Gini, 2019) and 48.8 (CIA, 2019) respectively, the latest for Germany is 31.7 (Gini, 2019). The values place Ghana and Nigeria closer to countries considered more unequal compared to Germany. They also suggest a higher rate of inequality in family income in Nigeria than Ghana. It further indicates that many citizens have little or no income as others have more than they need for a lifetime. This indicator of degree of poverty is critical because it has implications for the options available not just to families but also individuals and can force citizens of unequal countries to migrate, searching for better living conditions (Altai Consulting, 2015). Though Ghana recorded a lower value than Nigeria, both will be considered highly unequal because they are further from the Scandinavian countries considered as more equal with values of 25 (CIA, 2019). The case studies rank among a group of developing states with Gini coefficient values higher than 42, an indication of widespread poverty in the country (Gini, 2019).

The next to consider is the Human Development Index (HDI); a measure that simplifies and captures what constitutes human development. Results of the 2018 HDI ranking are no different for Ghana and Nigeria compared to the Gini Index. The HDI is a measure of life expectancy, the mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age as well as Gross National Income (GNI) per capita income. The last HDI report shows that 11 countries have outgrown the low HDI group whereas 13 countries had made it to the very high HDI countries within eight years (HDR, 2018). Nigeria occupied the 157th position with a value of 0.532 in the HDI ranking, while Ghana ranked 140 with an HDI value of 0.592. Germany on the other hand ranked 5<sup>th</sup> with HDI value of 0.936 (HDI, 2018). Despite the gains made by a number of states, Nigeria remains within the list of low HDI group of countries. But Germany, the destination country of focus for this research performed strongly, falling behind just four other European states out of the 189 states ranked. Although the 2018 ranking recognised changes that have occurred in lower income countries since the 1990s, there were still sectors that require attention. They include pupil-teacher ratio, maternal mortality, and adolescent births as a factor of total live births, women empowerment, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability among others (HDI, 2018). Even though Ghana surpassed Nigeria in the ranking, the difference between its value compared to that obtained by ‘low HDI countries’ indicate that both countries have poor human development records and therefore need to improve the living standards of their growing population.

The Democracy Index (DI) – a rating of how democratic a country is, – ranks states based on set criteria of *electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; functioning of government; political participation; and political culture*. The 2018 DI ranked 165 countries of the world, classifying them either as ‘*full democracy*’, ‘*flawed democracy*’, ‘*hybrid regime*’ or ‘*authoritarian regime*’, Nigeria was classified as a *hybrid regime* with overall score of 4.44, regional rank of 20 and global rank of 108. Ghana on the other hand was classified as a *flawed democracy* with overall score of 6.63, regional rank of 6 and global rank of 57. Germany on the other hand was classified as a *full democracy*, with an overall score of 8.68, a regional rank of 10 and global rank of 13 (EIU, 2019). This places Germany way ahead of the case studies in terms of democratic credentials and suggests



human rights; freedom and rule of law are better respected there compared to the latter. It is instructive to mention that although both Ghana and Nigeria returned to democratic rule in the 1990s, Ghana's democracy has not been interrupted for over 26 years. Power has also changed hands after every eight years since 1992. Nigeria on the other hand had its first peaceful transfer of power in 2015, since it returned to democracy in 1999. The 2019 election retained the winner of the previous election, despite strong opposition mounted by the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), led by a former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, who challenged the outcome of the polls (Mules, 2019).

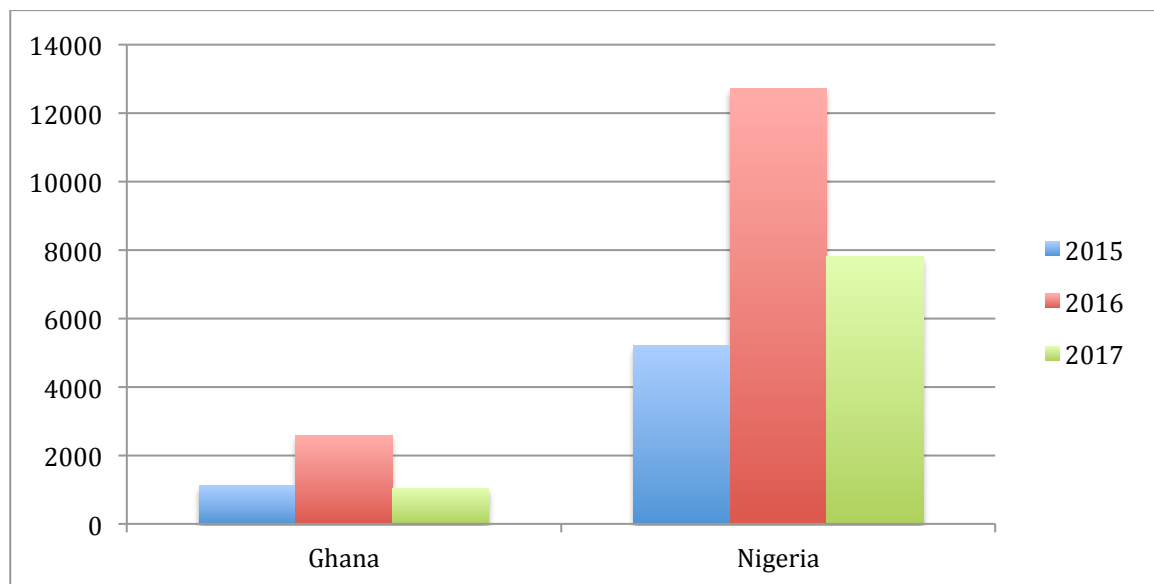
Ghana has gained international recognition as a leading democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the tension that characterises every election and the lack of strong institutions that continue to threaten the gains made at nearly every election. Nigeria also has its share of disagreements and lack of trust in the election management body, which often results in the losers filing petitions to challenge the outcome of polls. The perceived lack of trust in the electoral process often heightens tension during elections and casts doubts in the minds of citizens, thereby affecting confidence in the electoral process.

Finally, the huge disparity in their rankings on the Fragile States Index – formerly, Failed States Index – between Ghana and Nigeria further explains why more Nigerians leave their country compared to their counterparts in the case study. The Index measures conflict risk indicators such as Economic Decline; Uneven Employment; Human Flight and Brain Drain; State Legitimacy; Public Services; Human Rights and Rule of Law; Demographic Pressures; Refugees and IDPs; External Intervention; Security Apparatus; Factionalized Elites and Group Grievances based on a conflict assessment (CAST) framework. It assesses vulnerability between pre-conflict to the post-conflict stage of states to collapse and awards a score of between 1 (not fragile) and 10 (very fragile) to each of the twelve conflict risk indicators, the aggregate of which constitutes the national score. Nigeria scored 98.5 and ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the 2019 rankings, whereas Ghana scored 65.9 and ranked 110<sup>th</sup> among 178 states. Here again, Germany is a high performer compared to the case studies. It had a cumulative score of 24.7 and was ranked 167<sup>th</sup>. (Fragile States Index, 2019). The rankings of the case studies suggest that Nigeria is more fragile than Ghana on the indicators used to measure fragility. Nigeria's ranking points to

higher level of tension that can drive citizens out for fear of not being safe in their home country. Germany on the other hand presents a stable alternative with its rank and cumulative score and justifies why citizens of the case study will prefer to relocated there rather than remain in their countries of origin where threats to human security is palpable.

The rankings in the above indices, all point to less than promising circumstances in the study countries, Ghana and Nigeria. They also fail to engender the possibility of improved socio-economic development within the next decade to accommodate the aspirations of their teaming unemployed youth. Therefore, many assume their circumstances would only be better upon reaching Germany or elsewhere in Europe without knowing the challenges with irregular migration in Europe. It is important to mention that the arrivals in Germany have not always been the same for both countries. Data on irregular migrants flows into Germany indicate that Nigerians' entry has been on the consistent rise, whereas Ghana has recorded inconsistencies in the number of its citizens entering the same destination over the period between 2015 and mid 2018 (UNHCR, 2019).

**Figure 2 Number of asylum seekers from Ghana and Nigeria in Germany from 2015 to 2017**



Source: UNHCR, 2019

The above chart shows in absolute numbers Ghanaians and Nigerians who entered Germany between the year 2015, 2016 and 2017. It shows more Nigerians entering Germany every year compared to their Ghanaian counterparts.

Nigeria recorded its highest annual asylum requests to Germany in 2017 with 12,709 new applications that year alone, while Ghana's highest per year request was 2,581 applications in 2016. The decline in numbers is likely to continue in 2018 as the overall migrant numbers to Europe dipped further in the year (UNHCR, 2019). However, whereas the uncertainties that characterise elections in Ghana could explain the rise in number of asylum requests in 2016, same cannot be said for Nigeria, since 2017 was not an election year. However, previous Boko Haram activities in the north-eastern region of the country remains a major threat to human security and pushes populations outside the region to other parts of the country and elsewhere (Altai Consulting, 2015).

I shall proceed to review the economic policies of the two countries' governments over the period 2015 to 2018, when migrant numbers into Europe increased sharply from previous years, forcing EU member states and the institution itself to curb the flow of irregular migration and possible absorption of returned migrants into the economic life of their home countries.

## **2.2. Economic policies of governments as attraction for migrants' Return**

This section reviews two budget statements and economic policies of the study countries. Budget presentation in both countries allows the Executive to render account on implementation of programmes; projects and policies for the approval of elected representatives and to introduce new policies or adjust existing ones for the legislature's approval to achieve the government's intended objectives. Therefore, this section will review selected budgets for the period of increased migrants flows for policies on irregular migrants and their return as well as economic policies on job creation that can attract irregular migrants in Germany and Europe back home.

The first is the election year economic policies of the study countries – 2015 for Nigeria and 2016 for Ghana, both led to change in the ruling parties and also coincided with the

peak of migration flows into the EU. The second set of economic policies will cover the year before the next general elections in each country, – 2018 for Nigeria and 2019 for Ghana – to identify policy statements by governments of both countries on job creation. The focus on pre-election year in both countries is due to delays in forming governments after elections, that ultimately affects implementation of programmes and projects of the new administration. The year before the next election presents a better time to assess them on their electoral promises to ascertain the extent they have delivered on electoral promises.

Budgets, though statements of intent provide broad outlook on government policies and lay out proposals for the fiscal year, often fitting into some medium or long-term policy that governments pursue. Such a review will show areas of governments' commitment. Therefore, if ending irregular migration is a priority for a government or it is committed to reintegrating returning migrants into the local economy, this is likely to find expression in its policy proposals to lawmakers for a particular year.

In their budgets before the elections that changed governments in both countries, Nigeria's agriculture sector boasted over 6% growth. However, the sector had a poor showing in Ghana. Dubbed “Transition Budget”, Nigeria's 2015 annual Budget posted over 7% GDP growth rate in the non-oil sector for the third quarter of 2014, with agriculture as the main driver, topping textile apparel making and footwear manufacturing (Oyedele & Erikume, 2015: 3). However, this growth in the non-oil sector does not trickle down to majority of the people, due to the high rate of income inequalities in the country, which leaves majority of the huge population without sustainable livelihood.

Ghana's 2016 election year budget showed the service sector contributing over 54% to its GDP of the previous year, while agriculture remained underperforming (Ashiagbor, 2016: 4).

**Figure 3 Service Sector performance in Ghana's 2016 Budget**



Source: Author’s compilation by PWC based on Ghana’s 2016 Budget. (PWC, 2016).

The above chart shows Ghana’s service sector performance for year 2015. It shows public administration, defence and social security as the top performers, followed by financial intermediation and information and communication. However, unlike information and communication that failed to meet the set target, the others outperformed the set targets for the fiscal year under review. It shows negative growth for hotels and restaurant, transport and storage as well as community, social and personal services many of which fall within the informal sector.

Given that its service sector is foreign-driven with telecommunication as a main driver, the returns are likely to be repatriated to the parent companies of MTN, Vodafone and now Airtel-Tigo, the dominant brands in the country. Again, growth in the service sector is not likely to impact many Ghanaians due to the limited number of jobs available in the sub sectors that are the growth poles. Telecommunication and financial intermediation subsectors that propel growth in the service sector employ less people, other services remain largely informal and mostly fall within the vulnerable category, making jobs provided hardly sustainable. On the contrary, agriculture is known to be the largest employer of households across the country. However, it did not show signs of growth and

had been underperforming for a number of years (Ashiagbor, 2016: 9 & 32). Therefore, a declining agriculture sector hurts the numerous Ghanaians who depend on the sector for livelihood and sustenance. It is also instructive to note that though many Ghanaians are engaged in agriculture, 30% of both males and females regardless of their current status or educational background want to work in service and sales sector of their economy (GSS, 2016:25). However, the service sector in its current form cannot accommodate that number.

The budgets of both countries emphasise education and spend heavily on it. Ghana for instance, constantly spends a huge chunk of its social sector budget on education. In the year under review, over 64% of the sector budget went into education. Similarly, Nigeria also spent a greater part of its 'recurrent' expenditure on education. The sector's allocation in 2015 was 11.7% of the total national budget (Overview of the 2015 Budget Proposal, 2014: 15). However, in both countries the teeming school leavers at all levels of education have neither ready jobs nor adequate access to capital to start businesses, even if such school leavers were enterprising individuals. In the Nigerian budget, government promised to create 750,000 jobs over a five-year period in the agriculture sector (Oyedele & Erikume, 2015: 3 6). It also planned to create 70,000 additional jobs in the insurance sector by targeting over 200% increase in insurance subscription, through enforcement of compulsory insurance in the country (Overview of the 2015 Budget Proposal, 2014: 19 & 21). The budget further pledged training 1,000 unemployed youth per state in all states in 'Microwork and e-Lancing platforms' to improve their productivity (Overview of the 2015 Budget Proposal, 2014: 22). The number of jobs promised is both inadequate and unrealistic, especially the number tied to insurance subscriptions. Increasing insurance subscription by such a huge percentage will require people engaged in productive ventures to be able to pay them. Therefore, the government's policy seeking to raise huge revenue through such a measure tied to employment as cause and effect may not be the most sustainable way to create jobs. The policy position suggests that if the target is not met, those jobs will not be created. Furthermore, Nigeria's population continues growing with those in the productive years in search of employment constituting the majority. Therefore, even creating the 750,000 jobs within five years would not be enough to reduce the current rate of unemployment

by a percentage significant to prevent the youth from fleeing in search of better livelihood.

Ghana's election year budget under the heading "Job Creation and Development Programme" only referred to 47,000 jobs created in the previous year under the Youth Employment Agency (YEA). This is an initiative that paid university graduates less than half what their counterparts employed in both private and public sector earned. The budget also promised to create more jobs without specific mentions of sectors and initiatives that will create meaningful jobs for sustained livelihoods (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2015: 128). It also mentioned other job creation interventions such as; engaging 30,000 youth in cocoa farming, 985 people under the Microfinance and Small Loans Centre, estimated direct and indirect jobs in the fisheries sector as well as employment of 105,660 people in local communities to implement sub projects (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2015: 56, 74, 83 & 85). The budget further makes references to credit facilities advanced to 193 micro small and medium enterprises (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2015: 92).

Just like Nigeria's budget, Ghana's budget also did not have visible incentives for private sector to expand and employ young people desperately looking for means of livelihood, as the jobs promised were not significant enough to employ majority of them. It is therefore important to review budgets before their next elections for job creation measures for unemployed youth as well as opportunities for returning irregular migrants.

The situation in both countries, leave many with little or no hope for a decent future where their aspirations would be met. It can also explain why Ghanaian migrant numbers in Germany increased that year. Many who had expectations of jobs could not be assured of means of livelihood; irregular migrants could also not be convinced that if those already home have no jobs, they could return jobs to earn a living back home.

Nigeria's 2018 budget to the Legislature was silent on any policy position on returning or possible return of irregular migrants in Europe. There were also no proposals for massive job creation or incentives to the private sector to encourage hiring. On the contrary, the President announced a freeze on hiring in public agencies unless they received permission to do so (Budget Speech, 2018: Para 65). The Budget Statement rather hoped

that developing critical infrastructure would spur growth and job creation. A total of 200,000 unemployed youth had been engaged under the national power company, – N-Power, health and education sectors of the country in 2017. Like the 2015 budget, Nigeria’s 2018 pre-election year budget did not offer new avenues for job creation or initial capital to offer the youth opportunities to earn a living.

**Table 3 Nigeria's 2018 Budget Expenditure Proposals**

<b>Fiscal Items</b>	<b>2017 Budget</b>	<b>2018 Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	N' Billion	N' Billion	%
FGN Expenditure	7,441	9,120	23
Statutory Transfers	434	530	22
Debt Service	1,664	2,014	21
Sinking Fund to retire maturing bonds	177	190	7
Recurrent (non-debt) Expenditure	2,991	3,513	17
Capital Expenditure (Exclusive of Transfers)	2,361	2,873	22
Fiscal Deficit	2,356	1,950	-17
GDP	107,958	113,089	5
Deficit/GDP	2.18%	1.74%	-20
Capital Expenditure as % of Non-Debt Expenditure	42.17%	81.78%	39.61
Capital Expenditure as % of total FGN	31.73%	31.50%	-0.23
Recurrent Expenditure as % of total FGN	68.27%	68.50%	0.23



Debt Service to Revenue Ratio	32.73%	30.76%	-1.97
Deficit as % of total FGN Revenue	46.34%	27.22	-19.12

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria Budget 2018

The above table shows expenditure of the Nigerian government for the year 2018 and the preceding year. In the 2018 fiscal year, debt servicing and recurrent expenditure constituted a significant component of the government's spending for the period. Capital expenditure was the next big item on the government's expenditure; put together, the three form about 90% of government spending. This trend is also seen in the previous year, it suggests that the government is left with not enough money to provide low interest loans as capital for potential entrepreneurs to engage in ventures that can employ some of the unemployed in the country. The squeeze on its finances makes it impossible for the government to grant businesses that would free up resources for increased production leading to employment.

The situation in Ghana was no different. Its 2019 budget under the theme "A Stronger Economy for Jobs and Prosperity", just like the 2016 budget, proposed to create jobs that mainly paid university graduates and other youth less than market rates for employees with the same training working in both the private and public sectors under the Nation Builders Corps (NaBCO). The NaBCO was expected to employ over 11,000 youth as tax collectors and district level staff (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2018: 71). The country's crop sector that according to the budget saw positive development due to Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), an initiative of the government since 2017, was also expected to create some jobs. Other jobs were promised under Youth in Afforestation, Aquaculture for Food and other similar programmes (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2018: para 533, 540 & 551). There were other promises of jobs listed but not tied to these initiatives (Budget Statement and Economic Policy, 2018: 167). The number of jobs promised however, are still far less than the huge number of unemployed youth in the country. The One-District-One-Factory (1D1F), another initiative of the current government that promised to create many jobs in every district by building factories, is yet to offer those jobs as the budget reported that 79 factories are at various stages of development.

But the size of the two countries' economies varies widely. Current International Monetary Fund (IMF) data indicate that the Nigerian economy is more than six times the size of its Ghanaian counterpart. As at April 2019, the Nigerian economy was valued at 444.92 billion dollars, whereas the Ghanaian economy measured a fraction of it at 68.26 billion dollars (World Economic Outlook, 2019). Despite the huge difference, Nigeria with a GDP per capita of 2,458 dollars has median daily income that stood at 1.80 dollars in 2018 with a poverty rate of 77.6%. The median daily income in Ghana for the same period was 4.40 dollars with a poverty rate of 34.9% with a GDP per capita of 1,708 dollars. Not only are Nigerian workers poorly paid comparatively, poverty rate covers more than two-thirds of the citizens (IDI, 2018). This suggests that large portion of the economy remain in the hands of about one-third of the country's population, widening the inequality gap. It is therefore important to account for how the wealth is distributed that fails to reach majority of the population. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), global surveys and expert assessments that measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, scoring them on a scale of zero to 100 for most corrupt to the least corrupt can help explain. The 2018 CPI awarded Nigeria the same 27 points as the previous year, to place Africa's biggest economy at the 144<sup>th</sup> position. Ghana on the other hand gained one point from its 2017 point to secure 41 points at the 78<sup>th</sup> position. Though both countries' corruption record remains prohibitive, the canker seems to be more pervasive in Nigeria, depriving majority of the population its share of the national economy. The high rate of corruption in Nigeria if addressed could lead to increased earnings and thereby reduce the poverty rate in the country. On the contrary, Germany's showing on the CPI presents it as a destination perceived as less corrupt with 80 points and ranked 17<sup>th</sup> of the 180 countries ranked. This suggests that the greater part of public resources is applied for the benefit of the general public.

The foregoing suggests that promises of creating jobs in both countries are yet to be fulfilled. However, many young people continue to leave school at various levels every year to join the existing band of unemployed citizens. Added to the growing population in sub-Sahara Africa, young people with the benefit of education and skills are likely to move in search of jobs and their dream living. The promise of jobs yet to be delivered does not assure young people at home, especially given that the last two election

campaigns in both countries emphasised job creation. The lack of jobs is also not likely to attract citizens who risked their lives to Europe in search of livelihood to return home even if they are left with no option but to return. Therefore, governments of the two countries' inability to create jobs has implications for European countries, including Germany's efforts to return citizens of these countries, whose requests to remain in the country as asylum seekers have been declined. Those earmarked for return will prefer to remain in the host countries illegally within the community of their nationals in the destination country rather than return to their countries of origin where there are no assured opportunities.

### **2.3. Employment situation in Ghana and Nigeria**

This section gives an overview of employment situation in Ghana and Nigeria. Unemployment is often cited as one of the main “push” factors for African migrants who end up in Europe in search of better opportunities. The section will review the state of employment/unemployment in the study countries to understand the young people's motivation to travel to Europe in search of jobs and the willingness to do everything to remain, even when their request to stay in these countries is declined. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines unemployment as the proportion of those in the labour force age who were actively looking for work but could not find work during 20 hours before the reference period to the total currently active labour force (NBS, 2018).

Population in sub-Saharan Africa continues to grow despite the lack of corresponding growth in infrastructure and expansion of economies. Ghana's population is estimated to grow at 2.16% annually and nearly 53% of the population is aged between 15 and 54 years (CIA, 2019). Because retirement age in Ghana is 60 years, nearly everyone between 15 and 60 years expects to be employed. The case is no different in Nigeria, where annual population growth rate is estimated at 2.54% with over 50% of the population aged between 15 and 54 years (CIA, 2019). In both Ghana and Nigeria, the largest demographic group is those within ages 0-14 (CIA, 2019), meaning that a significant number joins the group in search of work every year. However, the structure of their

economies remain the same; they continue to mainly produce raw materials for export to the West and recently China for value addition, (Workman, 2019). Exporting natural resources without adding value to them locally means fewer new jobs would be created as some of the systems for exporting minerals and other resources have existed since the colonial era. No new industries with capacity to employ large numbers of the unemployed youth have been built in recent times. This leaves many in their workforce engaged in unsustainable economic activities and therefore unable to meet their basic needs in a dignified way.

The growing population comes with it a band of unemployed youth waiting for non-existent jobs. This state of affairs can be stressful for young people and cause them to look for other ways to earn a living. Especially, when they are educated or trained and have skills that should earn them and their families a living, it is difficult for such people to waste away if they can find opportunities elsewhere. So the real challenge is absence of jobs rather than the lack of appetite to work and a desire to simply migrate to unknown territories, leaving behind family and friends to the unknown. Yet, many such individuals are left without practical options – no access to capital to start their own businesses or existing jobs - therefore the urge to find ways outside their established structures to earn a living.

A Labour Force Report published by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) in 2016, estimated the unemployed population as over one million citizens aged 15 years or older. The report also said nearly six million people in the same age bracket, are in vulnerable employment, this suggests their employment cannot be said to be sustainable due to the structure of their business activities (GSS, 2016: 33). The report gives the total population in paid employment as 1,884,299, with the unemployed youth population as 1,250,913 (GSS, 2016: 56 & 34), majority are either in vulnerable employment due to the unstructured nature of the informal sector or unemployed, a situation that requires serious attention. This group that constitutes the largest active population has no job security or pension to secure their future. The report suggests that over 10% of the employed only receive in-kind payments rather than cash and the average wage is GHC 898.65 (GSS,

2016: 43). This converts to less than \$250 for a month for a minimum of eight hours of work daily.

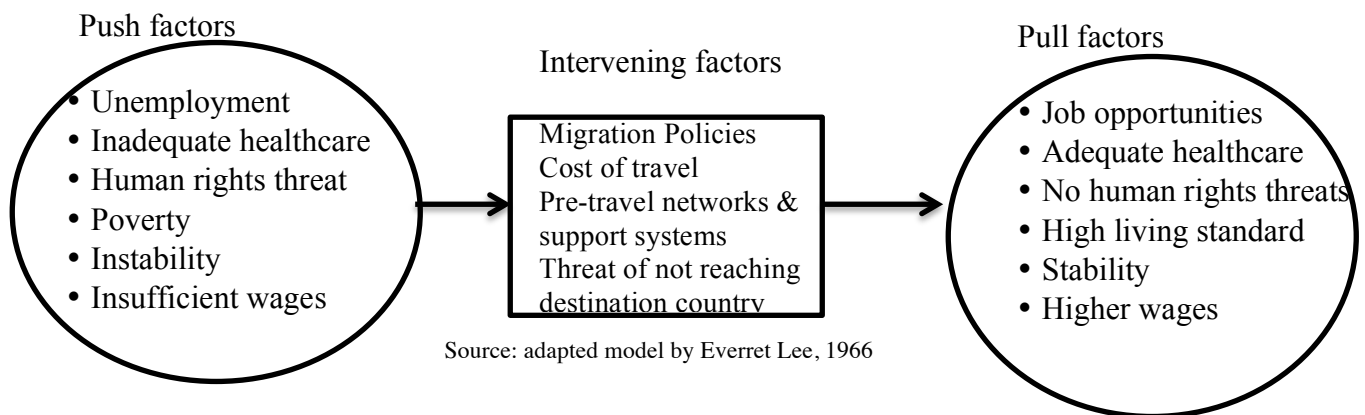
The situation in Nigeria is similar, as many in the age group expected to form the country's labour force - 15-64 years - are either not working due to lack of opportunities or unwilling to work. A Labour Force Statistics published in 2018 puts the number of citizens constituting the active labour force as at the third quarter of 2018 at 115.5 million, but the total number of people in full time paid employment is 51.3 million. Over 43% of the active population qualified to join the labour force is considered either as part time employees or underemployed (NBS, 2018: 11). The minimum wage in Nigeria is 18,000 Naira, which converts to \$50 per month (Wageindicator, 2019) and the average salary is 52,700 Naira (Trading Economics, 2019), which converts to \$146.35 for a month. But a living wage for a family in Nigeria according to Trading Economics (2019) is \$382.12. This suggests that earning an average wage in the country is not enough to take care of one's family expenses, depending on the part of the country one lives and the size of family. It also suggests that many in the active labour force population will not earn enough to live beyond the basics of life, therefore cannot aspire to change their circumstances unless they move up on the ladder of employment. Yet, such a rise requires adding value to oneself or by staying long on the job to gain more experience or upgrading one's academic qualification with the hope that vacancy at the next level will occur for one to take it up. All of this comes at a cost, such as taking time off current employment without the guarantee of a job afterwards or biding your time to get to the level where your earnings can take care of your family's needs. This often becomes the reality of majority of the people in the country studies.

The above discussion shows that the youthful population of both countries who aspire for improved living standards but have no jobs will continue their search for jobs within their home countries and elsewhere. It is the only way to live dignified lives rather than allowing the lack of opportunities in their countries to become obstacles to their personal and families' advancements. The lack of systematic programmes for job creation or comprehensive loan schemes that cover significant number of their youthful population seeking jobs based on their academic qualification and training in vocational and

technical skills can be frustrating, therefore could contribute to migration in search of livelihoods. The persistent unemployment situation in these countries serves as a major disincentive to asylum seekers whose request to remain in Germany or elsewhere in Europe has been denied. They will have no hope of returning due to the possible deterioration in their already precarious economic circumstances. On the contrary, they may prefer to remain in Europe, where even in an underground economy earning less than the going rates, their circumstances are likely to be better than returning to conditions in their home country which they had previously fled and which are yet to improve.

#### 2.4. Push and pull factors aiding Ghanaian and Nigerians to migrate to Germany and Europe generally.

Figure 4 A model of Push and Pull factors of migration



The above is an attempt at modelling migration as occurs between citizens of the case studies and Europe. It identifies factors that cause migration in the case studies – push and pull factors as well as intervening factors that facilitate migration from countries of origin. Lee, (1966) categorises them as Origin and Destination factors, – those “*which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it and there are others which tend to repel them*” as well as others “*to which people are essentially indifferent*” about (Lee, 1966: 50). Kainth, (2010) for his part describes them as Push and Pull factors. According to him, ‘Push factors’ compel an individual (or group) to leave one place for the other

due to varied reasons, whereas ‘pull factors’ attract individuals (or groups) to a location. They include better job opportunities, higher wages, facilities, superior working conditions and amenities (Kainth, 2010). However, Lee (1966) introduces what he calls intervening obstacles that can be either *slight* in some instances or *insurmountable* in others. These include; distance, physical barriers, immigration laws and transportation cost among others. He also alluded to personal factors – personal sensitivities, intelligence, awareness of conditions elsewhere – as important components in the migration decision (Lee, 1966: 51).

Figure 2 is adapted to factors that cause migration in the case studies of Ghana and Nigeria. Even though existing models raise similar issues, this model focuses on issues identified from the literature as the main drivers of migration to Europe from the study countries. The model helps to explain factors that promote migration from the case studies, grouped under push factors, pull factors and intervening factors. Contrary to Lee’s categorisation of the factors between the origin and destination as intervening obstacles, the adapted model classifies them as intervening factors. This is informed by the role these factors play in facilitating not just migration but asylum as well as their impact in migrant’s choice of destination (EASO, 2016).

### ***(i) Push factors***

Ghanaians, just like Nigerians fall within West Africa, which joins Central Africa as the highest contributors to Europe’s irregular migrant population. Research suggests that West Africans migrate to Europe due to a number of factors. Key among these factors is lack of job opportunities in their home countries as well as the need to meet their family and other responsibilities (Altai Consulting, 2015). Migration causes are divided into root and proximate causes. Root causes are mainly structural arrangements that create conditions to trigger migration. They include; economic restructuring, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and poor economic management (Boswell, 2002). However, migrants who move in search of economic security usually evaluate their current conditions in relation to opportunities in their intended destinations. Lack of jobs, poor healthcare delivery, poverty, instability, low wages and related human rights threats

repel them from their countries of origin and force them to move to where they believe their living standards would be better (Boswell, 2002). Others leave their countries as a result of harsh weather conditions that affect the agriculture sector where majority of the people in the case studies are employed as well as other human security threats (Altai Consulting, 2015).

Others are threatened by political instability that leads to persecution along ethnic and political lines. The post-independence political situation in many countries has led to conflicts and militarisation of governance that continue to foster human rights abuses of political opponents. The situation often leaves affected individuals or groups with no options but to flee their homes in search of peace of mind or leave their countries altogether (Gimenez-Gomez et al, 2017: 25). Another important driver of migration is increased population that leads to pressure on social services such as healthcare. Even though there is evidence that on its own rapid population growth may not drive migration, when combined with poverty, low income per capita, political instability and human rights violations, they become drivers of migration too (EASO, 2016). Once migrants are convinced that the potential outcome is greater than the cost of their journey; they are more likely to take the risk. They take into account factors such as job opportunities, high standard of living, freedom and stability, improved healthcare delivery as well as personal wealth (Boswell, 2002).

### ***(ii) Pull factors***

On the other end of the spectrum are improved living conditions in European states that respond adequately to migrants' needs, thereby drawing them to European destinations. The pull factors remain major attractions to Africans migrants and form part of their motivation to migrate to European destinations due to desires to end threats to their safety, threats to basic needs as well as threats to their human rights and access to opportunities (Gimenez-Gomez et al., 2017) These conditions that manifest as political stability, wage differentials, human rights protection and other social factors have been cited as the main invitations to migrants' as they choose destination countries (de Haas, 2008; EASO, 2016). Employment opportunities in destination countries rank highly with



their stable political climate and human rights protection as leading attractions to destination countries for migrants fleeing political persecution or economic stress (Altai Consulting, 2015; Gimenez-Gomez et al, 2017: 24). However, these factors alone would not be enough if there was no demand for their services in destination countries.

In their migration decisions, migrants from the case studies, like all other migrants consider destinations where threats to their human security will either be much lower or completely eradicated. This is often the case in European destinations where they find jobs that pay better than their home countries, their political rights are not violated and they are able to live in dignity (Gimenez-Gomez et al, 2017)

Nevertheless, migrant's drive and perception of improved conditions alone are certainly not enough if there were no avenues in the destination countries to contain the numbers. The growing competitiveness in the current global manufacturing sector requires creative ways to cut cost; therefore low cost labour provided by migrants becomes attractive to businesses due to their flexible nature. Migrants are also known to service other less attractive jobs that citizens of European countries whether less educated or unemployed are less likely to take up (Boswell, 2002; de Haas, 2008: 1317).

### ***(iii) Intervening factors***

Intervening factors that facilitate and sustain migration have been discussed in many migration studies. Migrants are believed to move to countries that share historic ties or economic and political relations (including immigration policies) or closeness geographically to their home country (Fawcett, 1989; DeWaard et al., 2012). However, the existence of family and friends in a particular destination or presence of large group of nationals also serves as means of facilitating migration of people from a particular country of origin (Fawcett, 1989). The strict immigration regime that makes it impossible for low skilled migrants to enter Europe either through family reunion or schemes that allow them to work in Europe leaves no window of opportunity for them to make it to these destinations. Despite strict immigration rules, migrants have discovered that irregular migration is the only means by which they can reach European destinations and are willing to take the risk (Boswell, 2002: 10; de Haas, 2008: 1319). Therefore, potential

low skilled migrants to Europe have to rely on illegitimate means including forged documents or smuggling, rather than abandon their dream to reach Europe altogether (Boswell, 2002: 10).

Again, advancements in technology facilitate travel across continents in a manner never before imagined thereby, allowing many groups access to means of travel to destinations previously not easily reached. But the expensive cost of travel is offset by various approaches, including migrants moving from one country to another, working and saving till they can finally pay their way to Europe. This helps reduce the overall initial cost that could make the journey impossible (de Haas, 2008: 1317; Altai Consulting, 2015). In other cases, families are willing to invest savings in the journey of their relations as a form of social security with the hope to receive remittances in the future (Constant & Massey 2002). In other cases, relatives in destination countries provide financial support to prospective migrants to enable them embark on the journey, subsidising the cost for the actual traveler (Boswell, 2002: 9).

Furthermore, the existence of pre-travel networks whether family members, friends or countrymen offers migrants a reliable and trusted community. They offer potential and new migrants information they need to enter their chosen destination, fit in and function well in the community (Fawcett, 1989).

But this penchant to enter Europe in defiance of strict migration rules is not without greater possibility of being discovered at the entry point or even within the destination countries. Border control mechanisms, police internal controls and sanctions against employers who take on illegal migrants are potential threats that can end the migration experience abruptly even after reaching the destination country (Boswell, 2002).

The foregoing indicates that migration decisions are influenced and shaped by many factors all of which need to be carefully considered to make one's journey possible and successful. However, the push and pull factors alone are not enough to make one's migration experiment successful if the potential migrant fails to take into account the numerous intervening variables. Together, all of the above have implications for the

migration process; therefore failure to take them into account can ruin the quest for human security that drives migrants from the case studies into destination countries.

## 2.5. Asylum requests by Ghanaians and Nigerians to Germany and Italy over the period 2015 to 2017

Despite the increased discussion of irregular migration, pushbacks and return in Europe and elsewhere, migrants from Western and Central Africa are yet to back down completely from journeys to end persistent threats to their human security. Rapid population growth continues to threaten access to employment and other economic opportunities, leaving many with limited options. Skilled and unskilled young people for some time now have taken their destinies in their own hands as they joined the Maghrebis to cross the Mediterranean to Spain and Italy. Their motivation was to take up roles in the unskilled labour market until the introduction of visas for such migrants in the 1990s (Collyer & de Haas, 2012). The visa restrictions proved only a temporary hindrance as many Africans managed to enter Europe during the recent migrants' flow. This is evidenced in the number of Africans recorded to have entered Germany and other European destinations since 2015. In Nigeria's election year, which also coincided with the year of inflow of massive migrants to the EU, Germany recorded 4,855 Nigerians, whose applications were filed the previous year, seeking to enter or remain in the country (UNHCR, 2019). The data below demonstrates the flow of Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants into Germany and Italy from year 2015 to 2017.

**Table 4 Data on Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum requests to Germany each year**

Country	2015	2016	% +/-	2017	% +/-
Ghana	1,109	2,581	+132.73%	1,035	-59.90%
Nigeria	5,207	12,709	+144%	7,811	-38.53

Source: (UNHCR, 2019)

Table 3 provides data on the number of migrants in Germany seeking to remain in the country with asylum requests at the end of each year. It shows total numbers for 2015 to

2017 and half-year report for 2018. The figures for each year are a sum of requests from the beginning of each year as well as those received throughout each year.

**Table 5 Data on Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum request to Italy each year**

Country	2015	2016	%+-	2017	%+-
Ghana	3,621	4,946	+36.59%	5,010	+1.29%
Nigeria	17,779	27,088	+52.35	25,094	-7.35%

Source: (UNHCR, 2019)

Table 4 provides data on the number of migrants in Italy with asylums requests to enable them remain in the country with asylum requests. It contains asylum request numbers to Italy from 2015 to 2017 full year numbers and half-year numbers for 2018. Together, the two tables compare the number of asylum requests in both countries. However, being a major entry point for migrants from the Libyan coast, Italy recorded higher numbers transiting from there to other countries like Germany.

According to the data on table 5, in 2017, over 25,000 first instance Nigerian asylum applicants reached Italy, the number is an increase of over 7,000 the figure recorded a in 2015, the year that saw major change in migrant numbers (UNHCR, 2019). Again, those who applied to enter or remain in Germany in 2017 grew by over 2,000 in comparison with applications for 2015. Ghana, however recorded its lowest number of asylum requests to Germany in 2017, falling below the numbers recorded in the two previous years. For instance, over 5,000 new Ghanaian migrants sought to enter or remain in Italy in 2017 alone (UNHCR, 2019), which constitutes more than a fifth of the Nigerian applicants for the same period in the country. Given their land size and total population, Ghana becomes a larger contributor to the irregular migrants stock for that year, making the two relevant cases for analysis.

Again, in 2016, nearly 5,000 first instance Ghanaian applicants sought to enter or remain in Italy. It also recorded over 2,500 new applications in Germany that year, representing over 130 percent increase in the previous year's figures. Though Ghana's new

applications reduced in 2017, there were still over 4,000 applications waiting for decisions in Germany that year that added to the tally (UNHCR, 2019).

The data below presents rejected asylum applications of migrants in the case studies from 2015 to 2017, which is currently available and disaggregated for easy analysis. It shows major surge in the number of rejected applications for year 2016 in both countries. However, whereas the absolute number of rejected applications increased in Germany in 2017, there was a nearly 10 percent decline in the number of Nigerian applications and about 19 percent reduction in the Ghanaian applications to Italy.

**Table 6 Data on new Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum applications rejected each year in Germany**

Country	2015	2016	%+-	2017	%+-
Ghana	128	1,199	+836.71%	2,522	+110.34%
Nigeria	176	1,774	+907.96%	12,484	+603.72%

Source: (UNHCR, 2019)

**Table 7 Data on new Ghanaian and Nigerian asylum requests rejected each year in Italy**

Country	2015	2016	%+-	2017	%+-
Ghana	1,868	2,694	+44.21%	2,187	-18.82%
Nigeria	8,852	13,795	+55.84%	12,441	-9.82%

Source: (UNHCR, 2019)

Tables 6 and 7 provide numbers of new asylum applications that were rejected each year in Germany and Italy. Italy is provided for comparison due to its geographical location that makes it an entry point for many African migrants entering Europe through North Africa (de Haas, 2008). The figures provided do not include rejected review applications for the years under consideration. Figures in table 6 show exponential growth for both case studies from 2015 to 2016. Whereas in the case of Ghana the change was over 830 percent, Nigeria reached over 900 percent rejections in new asylum applications (UNHCR, 2019). The number of rejections for 2017 further increased compared to the

2016 figures, however in terms of percentage changes, they fell behind the previous year's numbers. Nigeria topped the list in 2017 with a far greater number compared to the previous years. The numbers grew from 176 in 2015 to over 12,400 in 2017 whereas Ghana's rejected cases grew from 128 in 2015 to over 2,500 in 2017.

The number of rejected applications in Italy does not follow the previous pattern. By the year 2015, Italy was already rejecting applications in excess of 1,000 for both countries; however, the number of rejected Nigerian applications far exceeded those of their Ghanaian counterparts. Whereas over 1,800 Ghanaian applications were rejected in the 2015, the number of Nigerian applications rejected for the same period was over 8,800 (UNHCR, 2019). The Nigerian numbers further grew by nearly 5,000 in 2016 when the number of Ghanaian applications rejected for the same period was in excess of 2,600. In 2017, the rejected numbers fell for both countries though they were more than the rejected applications for 2015. The number of Ghanaian applications in 2017 were in excess of 2,100 against the over 12,000 Nigerian applications rejected (UNHCR, 2019).

Apart from the new asylum applications each year and the numbers rejected, each year, a backlog of asylum requests in their significant numbers is carried over. Adding these to new applications for the year pushes the numbers to nearly twice what is recorded for 2016 and 2017 for both destination countries and in some cases the numbers grow by over 100 percent (UNHCR, 2019). The numbers notwithstanding, some migration researchers argue that Europe's reaction to the migration situation does not take into account the demand and supply side of migration (de Haas, 2008). According to de Haas (2008), it is impossible to prevent irregular migration due to established routes, improved transportation and trade relations between North Africa – the main African route to Europe – and EU and Europe in general nor seal off the Mediterranean coastline between North Africa and Europe (de Haas, 2008: 1318)

Furthermore, Gimenez-Gomez et al (2017) argue that perceiving African migrants in Europe as undeserving of asylum status can be misleading because it fails to take their political and economic realities that compel them to migrate and can contribute to misguided policies. Their study found that human security threats in the form of poverty, ethnic cleansing, civil conflict, human rights violations, and political persecution, in the

source countries contribute significantly to Africans migrating to Europe. They conclude that improvements in civil and political rights, democracy and political stability decrease migration flows to Europe (Gimenez-Gomez, Walle & Zergawu, 2017: 29).

Findings of their study can help explain why despite the reduced activities of Boko Haram in Northeastern part of Nigeria, many still feel insecure and have left the region to seek refuge elsewhere. Some of those individuals may have escaped from the dangers of terrorist activities of the Islamist group, whereas others also feel insecure due to their past actions and are likely to leave the country for fear of losing their lives or becoming victims of the Islamist group's activities (Asuni, 2009). Again, the longstanding conflict in the oil-rich Niger Delta region also poses a threat to many in the West African country. As indicated earlier even though Nigeria produces large quantities of oil, the rate of poverty in the country can explain the activities of these local militia groups making the region insecure. Factions in the region have in the past interrupted oil supply by vandalising supply channels and creating instability in the region (Asuni, 2009: 7 & 26).

In the case of Ghana, militia activities have only been known to be associated with elections. Activities of party sponsored militia groups send the nation to near precipice at every election. Elections are often tensed events because the party that wins controls nearly every aspect of national life. This leads to a process where political operatives, especially members of the party in power at the time act with impunity and create tension in parts of the country. Even though elections occur every four years, this situation is likely to drive people out of their communities; known members of a political party that loses an election, for example could become targets (Gyampo, Graham & Asare, 2017: 115 & 126).

Again, though Ghana started producing oil in commercial quantities in 2011, there are no known cases of vandalism of distribution channels yet. It is important to stress that Ghana's oil activities for now are offshore and therefore even if the youth had similar intentions, carrying them out would require resources and expertise that they may not have. The challenge for Ghana is providing jobs for the large unemployed youth migrating to the urban centres in search of non-existing jobs. This imposes enormous

challenge on infrastructure that has failed to keep pace with population growth (Throup, 2011: 12-17).

## **2.6. Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed a number of indices that have a bearing on living conditions of any group of people belonging to a particular territory and the implications of their standing in those indices on their citizens. It also reviewed budgets of the case studies for economic policies aimed at stemming irregular migration flows to Europe. It was clear that both countries have challenges with employing majority of their citizens in the labour force but have also failed to develop policies that allow their private sector to employ majority of their active population. Though available data shows a reduction in the number of asylum seekers reaching Europe for 2018 the numbers have still not returned to the figures for the period before the high flows recorded from 2015. The chapter therefore concludes that if African countries are desirous of ending the flow of irregular migrants into Europe and entice those already in limbo to return, they need to come up with policies to support their active populations to earn decent livelihoods and work together with Germany and other European states to return their citizens whose asylum requests have been denied to dignified livelihoods, otherwise many of them are likely to remain in Europe in vulnerable conditions.



## **Chapter 3. Research Findings – Why irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants do not return after failed asylum requests**

This chapter presents findings of the study after collecting field data in Hamburg for a period of two weeks. The data is the results of semi-structured interviews of failed asylum seekers, informed migrants who have sought asylum in either Germany or another European country but currently live and work in Germany as well as African professionals whose organisations work with migrants or migration related issues. Given the sensitive nature of the subject of the study, respondents are anonymised to protect them as many remain in Germany after their asylum requests were declined. Majority of the respondents had previously entered another European country (Italy, for the most part with a few in Spain), sought asylum there but have left due to various reasons, key among them opportunities to earn income. Others have not requested asylum but remain in Germany without the required permission to remain. In all, nineteen (19) persons were engaged in face-to-face interviews for the thesis. They were made up of fifteen migrants with varied statuses within Germany and three experts whose organisations work with migrants in Hamburg. The migrants had spent between three and fifteen years in Europe. Codes of “ASGH”, “ASNG”, “IMGH”, “IMNG”, “WIAGH”, “WIANG” and “MNGO” are assigned with numbers to differentiate between individuals and organisations that participated in the interviews. “ASGH”: represents asylum seeker from Ghana; “ASNG”: represents asylum seekers from Nigeria; “IMGH”: represents Informed Migrants from Ghana; “IMNG”: represents Informed Migrants from Nigeria, “WIAGH” represents Woman in Asylum from Ghana, “WIANG”, Woman in Asylum from Nigeria and “MNGO” represents a Migrants Non-Governmental Organisation. The numbers assigned to each migrant are cited in addition to transcripts of their interviews and the interview protocol in the annex.

### **3.1. Decision to leave their country**

The research sought to understand why migrants from the case studies denied asylum in Germany do not return home. This makes it imperative to understand the factors that inform migration decisions of migrants as well as the time allowed between the decision

and leaving their home countries. Nearly all respondents ascribed the decision to leave their home country to lack opportunities there to realise their full potential. They left their home countries due to lack of economic opportunities or assumed that their circumstances will improve within a short time to enable them live up to their familial responsibilities. ASGH5, for instance said if he had not left the country, maybe his deprivation could have pushed him to turn to crime because he was constantly depending on money he took from his mother's bag to survive.

“I think if I didn't leave the country, I would have created a problem for my family, because taking money from my mother's purse to survive would not have been enough after a while. I know that I would have probably gone to take someone's money and ended up in police grips. That would have devastated my mother. My whole future would have been ruined. Therefore, I chose to leave Ghana to hustle (struggle) to make something out of my life”.

ASGH1 said he knew of people traveling to Libya over the years, but he had no idea of the accompanying risks and challenges. He said that he left Ghana after things became difficult for him. His master fell from the roof of a church building they were working on and was hospitalised for a long period, leaving him without a job and a means of livelihood. But he knew that construction workers in Libya earned enough money and that was why he left Ghana to make a living there. The conflict in Libya however, made it impossible for him to realise his dream, so he continued to Italy, in pursuit of that dream only to discover he required a permit to stay before he could get one to work.

“I had no knowledge of asylum. I never assumed it was so difficult to get documents and that documents were central to getting a job or living in Europe. Germany is the third country I have tried to stay since I entered Europe and everywhere is the same”.

The two women offered asylum due to their children being born in Germany left their countries for promised job offers only to discover that they were going to work as prostitutes. WIAGH1 left with a man, known in her neighbourhood as taking people

abroad but no one knew their whereabouts or the purpose for which he took them. Her grandmother was excited the man was offering her an opportunity and she was convinced her circumstances will change if she made it across the Atlantic. She did not expect to end up as part of a prostitution ring in Holland. When she declined to participate, her “benefactor” threatened to kill her and threw her onto the streets of Holland without her documents.

This was different for WIANG1 who had agreed to join a prostitution ring in Italy through a friend who had joined and within a year was sending her mother money and other goods from abroad. She was enticed and agreed to join them to also make some money and take care of her mother even though her mother had a shop and was better off economically than the average Nigerian. However her deal went bad when she refused to sleep with the man traveling with her from Nigeria to Libya by road before crossing the Mediterranean to Italy. She was then left in the middle of nowhere for refusing to sleep with the man and others who wanted to sleep with her. Her contact in Italy (Nigerian) accused her of being rude and asked that she is left in a town near Agadez.

ASGH3 said he had to take the decision to leave within a short time after the person assisting him to get the visa contacted him. His visa was issued within weeks but was expiring after a month. Because he could not afford to let that happen, he did not have the chance to reflect over possible failure and its implications for the money he invested in the trip. He left Ghana within days after receiving the visa. The same applies to ASGH4. He also got his visa to Morocco after paying someone to facilitate his visa acquisition. Once the visa was issued he needed to leave immediately.

Two of the migrants interviewed said they fled violence in their communities in Nigeria. ASNG1 left for fear of being attacked as all young men in his community in the Niger Delta region were attacked on accusations of oil bunkering. ASNG2 said he was a victim of an attack in the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the Benue State as a member of the Idoma tribe. He was rescued to Niger, but he left when he got the chance because those who killed his wife and children were of the same ethnic group across the border and he feared they could kill him if they found that he was from their enemy

group in Nigeria. Both interviewees individually ended up in Libya during the conflict in the North African country and therefore continued to Italy for safety but moved to Germany because there were no opportunities in Italy to earn a living.

Majority of the respondents first went to Libya because of the available job opportunities for foreigners in the North African country but left after the collapse of the Libyan economy as a result of the 2011 conflict that toppled its leader. Others arrived in Libya without enough information about the level of human rights and human security threats that existed in the country after the 2011 uprising. They became victims of the circumstances as those who took them to Libya failed to brief them of the conflict situation. They had to escape for safer countries, where they could secure their livelihoods. They arrived in Italy to be declared refugees and kept in camps without being able to work. The situation forced them to leave with some of them currently in Germany. From the responses, human security concerns, prevail over all other considerations. Nearly all respondents pointed to the desire to live in dignity and in addition the two Nigerians who were driven out by political and sectional conflicts in their respective states also want a life without threat to lives.

The majority of the respondents though had desires to leave the country in search of economic options. They left their home countries between one week and the maximum of a month because the opening of a means to leave was always presented at short notice. Only one respondent said he was moved to a neighbouring country after sustaining gunshot injury and subsequently entered Libya when he recovered to begin a new life. IMGH2, for instance said if he took time to reflect on the decision, he probably would have abandoned the idea. He said he would have consulted a number of people some of whom had previously advised that it was not prudent to abandon his workshop as an auto mechanic with apprentices to travel to Europe in search of better opportunities. He said many irregular migrants he has encountered over his thirteen years stay in Europe hold similar views. Also, all MNGO respondents said that their interactions with migrants from the case studies as well as other irregular sub-Saharan African migrants in Germany indicate that their decisions to leave their countries were 'hasty' and that they failed to

take into account the possible challenges associated with leaving their countries for other countries without following the regular migration pattern.

All the migrants in the study paid for their first journeys out of their countries from their savings except the respondent whose departure was as result of rescue by strangers, who took him across the border to Niger and WIAGH whose benefactor was taking her to Holland to 'work'. But all who went to Libya before the crisis paid their way to Europe from their savings during their stay in Libya for employment. Some respondents had previously stayed in Niger, worked to save money to allow them to pay for their trips to Libya. Others who arrived in Libya after the Arab spring also managed to save money or got family members to send them money to enable them reach safety in Europe. One migrant who spent time in Agadez to raise money had to request assistance from relations back home before he could reach Libya. Two other migrants subsequently requested money from relatives at home to enable them continue their trips to Europe after they reached the conclusion that remaining in Libya posed further threat to their survival and the dream of living in dignity.

Nearly all the migrants had no information regarding asylum or stay permission before entering Europe. They believed merely entering a country in Europe qualified them to earn a living as many of them had previously done in Libya. They had no idea that residence and work permits were preconditions to working legitimately in Europe. However, they were confronted with this reality that made it impossible for them to stay legally and work decently in order to earn in dignity. ASNG1, for instance, thought once their boat arrived on the shores of Italy, he could just walk in and begin his new life. It was a huge shock to learn that the boat would not even reach the shore but remain at sea until the Italian Coast Guards finds them and rescued them to safety. ASGH1 had stayed at a camp in Italy for years before leaving, however, unlike all others who had previously sought asylum in Italy, he did not receive documents to stay as a refugee. He did not know he needed them even though he had remained at the camp throughout his stay in Italy before proceeding to Spain. However, because his fingerprints had been taken in Italy, under the Dublin regulation he did not qualify for asylum anywhere else within the

EU. ASGH3 and ASGH4 flew from Ghana, to Europe and Morocco respectively, but did not know they needed stay permission or that without it they needed to apply for asylum.

### **3.2. Asylum request, response and reasons**

The respondents said they waited between six weeks and six months for decisions on their asylum requests. The decisions were communicated through letters stating reasons for the decline. None of the male applicants I interviewed from the case studies was granted asylum in Germany. The reasons for the rejections were either that they come from safe countries of origin or they had previously sought asylum in another EU state; therefore, did not qualify for asylum in Germany. Two of the respondents have engaged the services of lawyers to appeal their cases but do not have all the funds for lawyers' charges, as they can only pay through their monthly stipends but no longer stay at the reception facilities. ASGH1 was able to pay 50 euros from his last monthly stipend to the lawyer to represent him. He hopes to find money to pay the lawyer to represent his interest. ASNG1, has also paid 75% of the services of a lawyer to represent his interest in an appeal to compel the German government to grant him stay. They both entered Italy from Libya but the former also spent time in Spain subsequently, therefore, Germany is not their first European country of destination. ASNG3, has also engaged the services of a lawyer after his children's mother who pressured him to join her in Germany from Italy said she was no longer interested in their relationship and asked him to leave the property given to her by the German government upon granting her asylum in Lubeck. He wants the lawyer to work on his Italian asylum documents that expired due to his inability to renew it in good time.

Those who previously applied for asylum in Italy upon their arrival in Italy are asked to go back to Italy, where they previously sought asylum as provided under the Dublin regulations. Applicants are further informed of their right to appeal the decision, if they so desire. They are also advised to engage the services of lawyers in the reception facilities. These lawyers represent many other applicants in the reception facilities. Applicants are also informed about voluntary return opportunities. ASGH3, for instance said he was given a week to think about return possibilities and he decided to return.

“After the one week, I told them I’m willing to go back home. Living this way is not how I imagined the trip. I had my own business in Ghana but I thought I could make some money in Europe to buy vehicles to facilitate my business. But I am yet to even recoup the amount of money I spent to travel to Europe and I have spent over two years already without proper documentation to enable me work legally, so I am only wasting time here”.

His position is different from ASGH2, who despite leaving his business to come and work to buy a vehicle for his private school, remains undocumented after five years but is unwilling to seek asylum or return.

“If they take me back I don’t know what I’m going to do because even though my brother helped me to come to Europe, I have to pay him back before I start anything on my own. So imagine if I am taken back home, what am I going to do? I will die of depression if I am taking back home”.

As stated earlier, majority of the respondents had entered Italy through Libya therefore had to apply for asylum in Italy. Migrants rescued at sea were automatically required to apply for asylum upon reaching reception facilities in the European country they entered. These migrants were kept at camps in Italy, pending decisions on their cases. However, majority had to leave because their asylum applications were denied and they had also exhausted their two years permitted stay at the camps. They could no longer be there, even though they were not deported. Over the period they had to contend with poor conditions at the camps as well as lack of opportunities to earn reliable income in the country due to their status as undocumented immigrants and the lack of jobs. ASNG2 said he was kicked out of the Italian camp for exceeding the mandated three days asylum seekers are allowed outside the camp during the two-year period. While under the commission, he spent three days outside, upon his return he was told the register for the third day had already been marked. This meant he breached the number of days he was allowed to stay out of the camp therefore; was kicked out.

“I had to live on the streets from then because I had nowhere to go and I didn’t know anyone in Italy. After a while, I decided to leave the country and come to

Germany. Even though I received negative response to my asylum application, I remained at the camp for two years”.

The respondents said they left other European states to discover that asylum seekers waiting for their decisions in Germany were treated a lot better than Italy or Spain. Only two of the interviewees have never sought asylum in Europe, even though they both overstayed their visas. One found a partner after a year and has therefore regularised his stay through marriage but the other remains without the required stay and work permission in the country. ASNG2 left Italy for Germany because according to him, the Italian economy is no different from Africa’s. Despite being stranded after his ejection from the camp, he still thinks he made the right decision.

“There is not much difference between Italy and Africa; their economy is not doing very well. So if you remain there, your economic situation will not be any better”.

### **3.3. Governmental or NGO Support in home country or destination country**

Only one of the respondents said a church offered a group he was part of a sleeping place when they arrived in Hamburg in 2013. The rest had not received any governmental or NGO support throughout their asylum process. They said if they had such support their experience could have been better than it currently is. Unfortunately however, they had been on their own since they started their individual journeys. It was not likely that their governments would intervene at any stage, because according to those who were in Libya, their escape from the conflict received no government intervention. They had to go through it all by themselves without support from anywhere.

Majority of the respondents blamed their governments for failing to engage European states over work and residence permits to enable them remain and work legally even if for short periods. They said it was disingenuous for their governments to give the world an impression that the absence of open hostilities meant there was no conflicts. They said yawning income gaps and high rate of unemployment threatened their survival and had the potential to trap them in multi-generational poverty. They therefore had to take their



destinies in their hands and attempt to make something of them. ASNG2 chided his government for the conflict that led to an attack on his family.

“There is nothing the Nigerian government can do about this asylum situation. Just forget about those people, you cannot expect anything from them. Because the same injustice that happens in the country is perpetrated at the embassy in this country”.

Others believe their government could intervene to allow the German government to grant them permission to stay and work. They claim the absence of jobs in their country is enough reason for their government to negotiate with the Germany to allow citizens of the case studies opportunities to earn decent livelihoods. They fear the growing unemployment could lead to increased crime. ASGH5 for instance, is convinced that Ghanaian government has contributed to denial of citizens’ asylum requests in Germany.

“You hardly hear of Togolese, Guinean, Somali or Gabonese who have been denied asylum because their leaders have admitted economic difficulties. A Ghanaian applying for asylum with a Togolese stands no chance of success. If the government of a country intervenes and lets the European leaders understand that their economies are not doing well so they should allow their citizens in their countries to stay and work, the European governments are likely to allow them to stay and work. The role of diaspora in Ghana and Nigeria is very significant. Yes, there is no violent conflict in Ghana but that alone should not be the determining factor. But if our leaders are telling the world that all is well with our economies when in fact majority of the youth have no jobs or future, soon, they will all turn to crime, no wonder people have started kidnapping for ransom payments in Ghana now”.

The above view was re-echoed by ASGH4, who thought that the Ghanaian government has failed to negotiate for its citizens to get jobs in Germany. He said the Ghana government does not want to admit the challenges confronting the economy that lead to massive rate of unemployment, forcing many to leave the country.

“Our government could intervene because the economic conditions back home are not the best, despite all our resources. Unemployment keeps rising. It is important that our government admits it and negotiates a system that allows people to stay and work, even if for short periods. It should be possible for Africans who are willing to gain proper entry, to work for short periods and return. That could help reduce the unemployment in our countries. You could be given six months to enter and renewable for up to two or three years. That would be better for us”.

ASGH3 said it was impossible for the government of Ghana to play a role in the asylum process. However, government could negotiate for its citizens to be granted opportunities to earn livelihoods.

“There are two things the state could have done for its citizens who are here. First, the government could engage the German government to allow its citizens the opportunity to seek livelihood here once they are already in the country. Again, if the person is being sent back home the government should assist to have them sent home”.

ASNG1 said due to President Buhari’s intervention a few Nigerians had been granted asylum in Germany. He said though not many, was as a result of President Buhari’s intervention. He said though majority of Nigerian applicants may not be granted asylum, those coming from the Northeastern part of the country, where Islamist group Boko Haram has become a torn in their flesh, get asylum. Others from Benue State, where cattle rustlers have been locked in conflict with farmers in recent years and people from the conflict-ridden Niger Delta region also get asylum but the rest are not granted.

IMNG1 believes African governments have a responsibility to improve their economies and put in place systems that allow their citizens to derive the full benefits of their abundant resources. He proposed that African governments engage Germany to train their human resources to return home to contribute to developing their countries.

“All our governments can do is to engage their counterparts in Europe to fund their students to come and learn vocational and technical skills in Germany and

return to put those skills to use. If the people come to Germany on their own to acquire skills through German government scholarships, you don't expect them to go back home to use that knowledge for anyone's benefit. African governments must also create the enabling environment to attract their citizens in the diaspora to return and apply their acquired skills for the benefit of their countries. If there is no effort in that regard, they may end up not contributing their expertise to anything back home".

Every one of the interviewees took a dim view of African governments, regarding their handling of their economies and the sheer corruption and nepotism that deprives majority of the people the basics of life. MNGO3 blamed African government for failing to create opportunities despite their resources but continue to depend on aid that hardly impacts their countries and economies positively.

"Governments in Africa need to address the issue of hopelessness. They have the task to address the lack of opportunities that has plagued the continent. The continent isn't poor. If the resources are properly managed, we can cater for ourselves. Corruption and nepotism have deprived us of the development that the continent deserves".

Everyone interviewed had negative comments about how African governments including the case studies, have left majority of young people without hope of a better future. They expressed worry that many young people cannot achieve their dreams in their home countries despite being educated. They see no real change within the foreseeable future that makes it possible for majority of the young people to fulfil their dreams. ASNG3 is convinced that he would not have been in Europe if there were opportunities back home.

"We are only in Europe because of bad leadership back home. Europe's weather is not our kind of weather, the lifestyle is also boring for many of us, and that's not our way of life. There is no place like home, even though some people have good reasons for asylum, many of us should not be here seeking asylum but due to poor leadership back home, we have to be here seeking asylum. Ghana and Nigeria are not poor countries, they are rich but we have bad leaders making the

youth leave the country”.

There are others who feel that the German government can also introduce initiatives in collaboration with other European countries through their training programmes that eventually lead to job creation in migrant sending countries. MNGO1 believes that such initiatives can attract majority of the investments by European Union and Member States’ development organisations working in Africa to stem irregular migration flows and provide for dignified return of migrants who have been unsuccessful with their asylum applications.

“It would be great for the German government to have crash programmes for those willing to return to train them in skills that are useful back home and engage them upon return in projects supported by German Development Organisation GIZ and other Western nations’ development NGOs in sending countries to provide them sources of livelihood. This will provide a soft landing for them back home and be seen to be living meaningful lives and working on projects supported by international organisations. Over a six months period, the returnees would have reintegrated into their communities and could then decide where to proceed from there”.

Making a similar point, ASGH2 said government’s lavish spending forms the basis of European government’s impression that all is well in their home countries. He said it was important for the German government to have programmes that lift people out of poverty in their home countries.

“Our government should admit the economic challenges back home and stop living in luxury to disabuse the minds of developed of world that we are doing well. It must be possible for the German government to create programmes that allow poor people to enter Germany in order to have a better life”.

### 3.4. Post Asylum options – opportunities and fears

All interviewees demonstrated some knowledge that asylum seekers from Ghana and Nigeria are not eligible for asylum in Germany, if they come in search of economic opportunities. The reasons are either because they entered another European country or sought asylum elsewhere. Others were denied asylum because they come from safe countries of origin. This common knowledge has led to various approaches by migrants from the case studies to remain, even when their asylum requests are denied. Many who applied for asylum did so because border agency officials sent them to reception facilities upon their rescue to register as asylum applicants because they had no entry permission. Those who flew into Europe and entered Germany but have overstayed their visas remain with family or acquaintances until they find a means of getting regularised. WIAGH1 said she stayed with someone from a church she was singing at until she found a man with German citizenship who impregnated her.

“I stayed with someone from church but it was a difficult moment. Anytime I had to go to the house, I had to look over my shoulders if no one was watching or following me. I could only enter and leave the house at odd hours using different routes each time”

Her case is not different from ASGH4 who said after refusing to take his church’s offer of rent, he met someone from his country and told his story, who offered him a place to stay.

“My church wanted to rent a place for me so I pay later, but I declined because I still owe money back home so I didn’t consider the option to begin to accrue debts here as well. As I speak with you, it is not clear how soon I will get a job to earn any money. I later met someone in similar situation as me, who has been of great support so far. He gave me a place to stay as I look for something to do. It hasn’t been easy”.

ASNG1 also said after he received the negative response for his asylum application, he left the reception facility out of fear that he could be deported at any time because he did not want to return without achieving his aim for coming to Europe, which is to give himself a new life.

“I left the camp after I received the negative response for my asylum request that said I should go back to Italy. I left the camp because I didn’t want them to find me there and deport me. I have been staying with some people here that I knew back home. But if you have nobody here, you have no choice, you have to stay at the camp and maybe one day they will deport you”.

The perception that staying at the camp once you receive a negative decision on your asylum request opens you up for possible deportation is rife among respondents. It is the reason nearly all failed asylum seekers interviewed gave for not remaining in the reception facilities in Germany. The case was different in Italy, where majority of the respondents left because of lack of jobs. Even the respondent who had to leave the camp in Italy after he overstayed his permitted days outside the camp also left for Germany because he wanted a job and a decent living. ASNG2, who lost his spot at the camp after he returned from a three-day stay out of the camp, chose Germany because he wanted a place where he could work. He remains at the reception facility even though his asylum request was denied. ASGH1 on the other hand said he left the reception facility in Germany after they rejected his asylum request.

“I left the camp because they told me they will take me back to my country and they will give me some money. But that is not what I want so I had to leave and look for something to do. What I need now is a place to lay my head and get a job that will give me money”.

Only two of the interviewees who sought asylum but had negative responses remain at reception facilities. The rest have left the facilities in search of other ways to remain in the country. Out of the two, one is willing to return since his expectations were not met.

The other, ASNG2 said he would plead with the German authorities at the facility not to deport him to his country because that will put his life at risk.

“My intention is to engage them to let me stay. If they say no, I would still plead with them if they can help me; they are human beings like me. But I hope they will have pity on me”.

Majority of respondents attribute their unwillingness to return home to the lack of opportunities there. ASGH2 believes it is suicidal to send some irregular migrants back because some have invested everything they have into the trip to Europe. Therefore, failing to take that into account could lead to killing such people slowly.

“If someone has sold his home to pay for his trip to Germany, and such a person is returned he's likely to commit suicide. It's not necessary for people to accept to return because some people may be useless back home. Many impediments are put in people's ways to make it impossible to succeed back home, so if such people can survive in Europe, why don't they allow them”?

The view is also shared by ASGH5, who believes that if the situation back home had improved, many of his friends deported would not be feeling so dejected there.

“Many of those who returned are in terrible conditions. Many are depressed and others have psychiatric problems. It becomes difficult to function in the country after you have become used to the life here. It's not in our interest whether one chooses to return or is forced to. If you subscribe to Voluntary Return, the money given to you cannot take you past five months. Here is the case where there are no jobs, how do you survive? That is why many people have developed all kinds of ailments upon their return home due to conditions back there”.

IMGH2 takes a different view. He argues that taking people back should be a blessing given irregular migrants inability to secure residential and work permits. It makes their situation in Germany pathetic, opens them up for exploitation by those who engage their

services. But he concludes that the situation of such migrants could be worse, if they are taken back home.

“Being taken back should have been a blessing because many of our people live in bad conditions and if they get jobs, they are not paid well. But there are no opportunities back home for them to get jobs. It would also be considered a disgrace if they return without anything to change their circumstances. Therefore, they would rather remain in a foreign country, rather than return to the same situation that compelled them to leave their countries”.

Migrants’ decision not to return despite failing in their asylum request has also been attributed to such migrants’ inability to achieve their set objective. IMGH2 said many migrants embark on the journey not with their own resources; therefore asking them to go back has implications not only for them but also for those who invested in their trips.

“We usually leave our countries with an objective in mind. The objective may be to acquire something and return home. Usually, one wants capital to be invested in one thing or the other back home. It is therefore difficult to return if the objective of the trip has not been achieved. Sometimes, you don’t even achieve the objective. But to return knowing that you haven’t achieved that will bring problems to many families”.

Some migrants also doubt that even if they agreed to return, the sum of money assured would be given. ASNG1 said people he knew who returned were not given the full amount promised. Even though they got the portion given to you for your departure, the remainder to be collected once in your home country was not given to them on their return.

“I know people from Nigeria who agreed to return due to the difficulties they faced in Germany without documents. But even the balance of the money they said they would get when they reach Nigeria was not given to them. Those who could save some money only relied on that. As for those who were deported,



some have lost even their assets they left behind, because people they trusted to organise and send their belongings failed them”.

Others are afraid of the embarrassment that will welcome them, knowing the expectations of family members, relatives and friends. This according to respondents in the past prevented deportees from returning to their communities but rather stayed in bigger cities in their home countries, where no one knew their stories. ASGH3 who is willing to return after his asylum request was denied said he knows people who have become worse off because they didn't get documents to stay and work in Europe. They therefore decided to return.

“Many people I know who returned after failing to get documents in Europe are going through difficult times. They invested huge sums of money into their trips abroad. Some had to borrow money from relatives and friends to embark on the trip. Therefore, if you are returned, the burden grows. Some returned migrants have died through depression; others have become alcoholics as a result. Only a few do well.

In my case, it is different. I am willing to go back because all the money I spent was mine and if I continue staying, many people will have expectations. But once I return, everyone knows I am back so they may not keep asking for favours, so I won't remain here doing nothing”.

Other respondents shared similar sentiments about reasons returnees take to drinking and substance abuse, whereas others have become depressed due to the general economic situation back home. ASGH1 for instance said even though he has no proper documentation in Germany, he would rather die in Germany than allow himself to be deported because being sent back home is equivalent to decapitation.

“Going back home is equivalent to decapitation. Staying home meant that I am dead both physically and spiritually that is why I left to find a job. So why would I go back? Because nothing has changed since I left Ghana, there would be no job for me to do and I can't get over my predicament”.

Similar sentiments were expressed by ASNG2 who fled what he describes as injustice in his country that led to the loss of everything he had. He would rather plead to remain in Germany because his community is not fit for human habitation for as long as the Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict in the Benue State continues.

“It would be difficult for me to go back to a place that is not safe, a place that is not safe for human beings to live; it would be difficult for me. I don't think that would help me. It means taking someone back to a danger zone; I don't think that can happen. You take people to safe places not a place that is not safe for humans to live”.

One of the two respondents determined to return home due to unmet expectations, ASGH4, said he is looking for any job that will enable him save enough to pay the debt he incurred while in Morocco and something to invest in his shoe making business and he would be gone.

“I am willing to return to my business back home, all I need is to recapitalize to get the business running, I would be better there. I don't think from what I have experienced, there will be any regrets going back home to continue my business. My challenge now is finding money to pay my debt and start my business again”.

MNGO3 said because migrants are looking for opportunities, they tend to gravitate towards where they believe they will find avenues to achieve their aim. He said Germany has gained a reputation in Europe as a buoyant economy with prospects for jobs and that is why migrants looking for livelihood will choose it over other countries to the south of Europe, where migrants usually enter Europe.

“For some irregular migrants, the economic and political situation in their countries contributes to the decision not to go back; otherwise their circumstances become worse. Many of them choose to stay in Germany because of opportunities in the country. Information about Germany's high rate of employment is spreading among the African migrants. I think if there are opportunities elsewhere

in Europe, African migrants would have gone there too.”

Not all the respondents thought that returning after failed asylum request spelled doom for the applicants. At least three respondents thought that it is important for migrants to put their experience gained through their travels to use back home and not allow themselves to be overcome by any embarrassment whatsoever. IMNG1 was of the view that

“People who have to go back home will be very happy to return because they are returning to their family and friends. The difficulty however, is whether their countries’ economies can support them and make use of the knowledge they gained while in the diaspora. Many of our people work at places where they learn a lot of things; they must use that knowledge back home to make money. Also, Africa needs to make use of technology so that our people, who return whether forced or voluntary, can use their experience for the continent’s benefit. That is why it is important for our people to learn when they travel, that way you will not be afraid to return to your own country, no matter what”.

ASNG3 shared the same view, saying that he has skills that he can survive on, if he is deported at any time to his country. Therefore, he believes that other deportees should use their acquired skills to earn a living back home.

“People outside acquire a lot of knowledge when they stay there, sometimes I think we in Africa are sleeping because when you are deported with skills and knowledge you should survive. If I am deported today, I will make use of the skills I have acquired over the years through my travels. I tell you, I can farm, that’s the least I can do. We have rainfall for six months in the eastern part of Nigeria every year. I am also a technician mechanic, I can repair all kinds of phones; I can repair any electronic device. I can rewind any kind of motor and fix water pumps. I can change the speed of any fan”.

MNGO1 said Nigeria's government introduced initiatives to help reduce the flow of migrants out of the country and attract returnees. However, the projects seem to be incoherent and lack public knowledge to enable people take advantage of them.

“I was shocked by my experience in Nigeria because when we went through the four geopolitical zones of the country, people didn't know about institutions that are supposed to support start-ups or the national directorate of employment. People also didn't know about the Bank of Industry and similar banks that offer financial support to start-ups as well as various training programmes. Either the government isn't pushing them enough or the policies are not effective because many people don't know about them. So even though there may be interventions for returnees to take advantage of, such measures for now, are not very effective. There seems to be lack of coordination among institutions working to discourage migration flows outside the country”.

### **3.5. Human rights concerns**

Nearly all migrants who went through Libya before reaching Europe said they experienced human rights violations along the way to Libya or on their way to Europe. WIANG for instance said she went through mental agony over persistent attempt by the man taking her to Libya to have sex with her. The man also wanted other men to sleep with her during the journey. Her refusal resulted in being abandoned near Agadez. She said her contact in Italy saw no reason in her decision not to succumb to attempts to get her to sleep with men along the way to Libya.

“I felt my human rights were being abused when they wanted me to sleep with those men. They wanted to keep me in a room so that the men will come and have sex with me. Can you imagine? I could have gotten HIV. I didn't know what to do and there was no one to report to”.

ASNG3 said a militia group in Niger forced the driver of the bus they were traveling on to Libya to stop with warning shots and subjected all passengers to bodily harm, rape and torture.

“They blocked the vehicle I was traveling in, searched us and removed all our belongings, asked all of us the men to take off our shirts and flogged us. All the women were asked to look for condoms so they can rape them. If any man had a wife in there, he had to look on for them to rape her. This was a pure jungle, when they hear of vehicles coming, they show up and kill any driver who attempts to resist them or escape”.

Similar claims were made by ASGH5, who went through similar encounters while they attempted to leave Libya during the conflict. He said men in uniform chased and assaulted them leading to bodily harm.

“Along the way to Europe, security men brutalised us due to our inability to produce travel documents. We had to run for our lives and they pursued us and many of us were injured in the process. I stumbled and fell; I lost my toenail. I had to limp for the rest of the journey out of Libya. Those I travelled with were patient, if this had happened on my way to Libya, those who escort migrants across the border from Niger to Libya would have killed me. They killed anyone who draws the group back because if they leave you alive, they could be exposed”.

Others said they felt their human rights violated in Europe by individuals and organisations they encountered. WIAGH1 said the man who sent her to Holland mentioned that she was going to be a prostitute after they entered the country. When she protested she was abused.

“He said I was joining some prostitutes, I said what? I will never do such a thing! He abused me verbally, held on to my documents and threatened to kill me. When he saw that I wasn’t willing upon all the threats and abuses, he drove me out onto the streets of Holland. I had to live from street to street. At a point I even wanted to commit suicide and end it all”.

Regarding the accommodation offered those granted asylum, she said their privacy is often violated by social workers responsible for their residential facilities.

“Even here, we don’t have our privacy because you are not allowed to let anyone sleep over, so often in the morning, the social workers will open our doors, even when you lock it. They open to check if you have someone staying over with you”.

ASHG3 referred to someone he worked for in the past, who refused to pay him for work he had done over a period. He said though the employer, (African with German citizenship) was paying him 50% of the hourly rate for the job done, he also kept his share of the money and has still not paid him.

“It was rather in Germany that I felt abused. Africans will give you jobs when you finish they won’t pay you. This man was paying me below the statutory minimum wage because he kept 50 percentage of the advertised rate for the job. He still didn’t give my share to me, making it difficult to even buy food for some time. There is no way I will forgive him”.

Work-related discrimination was also mentioned by ASGH2, who said he felt that even when it comes to rewards meant for all of them (not wages), they discovered that the Africans received far less than other races that worked with them at the same place.

“In terms of work the level of respect is different depending on your race. Even in the sharing of tips, there's discrimination against blacks. The perception of black people is demeaning. People get rewarded every year but blacks don't benefit from these arrangements. We also get paid 6 euros per the hour, even though the minimum wage is 10 euros per hour. When you work overtime, they won’t pay you for that. But because we are afraid to lose our jobs, we have to keep quiet”.

Others complained about discrimination that they thought was as a result of their skin colour. ASNG1 said in the reception facility where he spent over four months, black Africans had up to three days to stay outside while others had up to a week.

“There is discrimination at the camps based on one's colour. Whereas Arabs and others can stay outside the camps for up to one week, we are only entitled to 3 days”.

Again, some respondents think that sometimes the discrimination is on the basis of one's perceived status. IMGH2 recalled an instance in Italy, when someone behaved in a manner he considered reprehensible but the people around supported the person against him because he was a known asylum seeker.

“People discriminate against you because of your status. You don't get to defend your rights. In Italy a boy once urinated right next to where I was sitting. When I tried to find out why he did that the neighbours jumped to his defence. I felt so helpless. Everyone seemed to be on the boy's side, when he had done something that was unacceptable. What could I do?”

In all the cases of perceived human rights violation, none of the respondents took action, some because they had no avenues for redress. Others were afraid to blow their cover as irregular migrants. All respondents whose violations occurred outside of Europe said there were no known avenues for reporting those who had violated their fundamental rights. ASNG3 said the middle of the desert where the violation occurred there was no way they could have reported it.

“This was a pure jungle the people only show up when a vehicle is passing so it was impossible to find them to make a case against them”.

ASNG2 also said the circumstances leading to the loss of his family and property persists in Nigeria, therefore he did not think there was any avenue to report the violation they suffered.

“There was no opportunity to seek redress back home, the atrocities continue till date”.

In the case of WIANG1, the person she spoke to about her ordeal was the one who gave her to another person to be taken to Libya at a cost that her family had to settle for her to gain her freedom. Eventually the man who paid to send her to Libya became her source of support.

“I only told the Arab man who later sold me to a Nigerian near Agadez. In Libya I didn’t know where to report the incident. Who would have listened to a black girl over attempts of sexual harassment?”

Others said their status as irregular migrants could be exposed, ultimately leading to their deportation. ASGH3 said on many occasions he contemplated reporting the case to the police but feared the man will expose him.

“I have only engaged him to pay the money. There are times that I wanted to report the case to the police but I haven’t had the courage to do that because of my status. He could report me and I would be deported without getting my money”.

ASNG1 said he did not have the courage to ask why Blacks in the reception facilities were given only three days even though the Arabs, Asians and Latinos could stay away for up to a week.

WIAGH1 said she has forgiven the man who took her through her ordeal, because she did not allow herself to become a prostitute. She said even though at the time in 2015 she would have reported the case, she did not know where to report it, so had to let it go.



## **Chapter 4: Discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations**

### **4.1. Discussion**

The outcome of the study is discussed below taking into account some recent studies based on the theoretical underpinnings of this research. The discussion will interpret the results of the study, testing the validity of the assumptions made at the start of the study.

This study sought to explain why migrants denied asylum in Germany from the case studies do not return to their countries of origin. To understand their reasons, I interviewed eighteen individuals including irregular migrants denied asylum; migrants in Germany who gained asylum in another European country (mainly Italy); migrants who have overstayed their visitors' visas; those who have gained residence due to marriage or childbirth; and African NGO officials in Hamburg. The interviewees discussed their decision to leave their home countries, knowledge of asylum and asylum processes, governmental or NGO support at home and destination countries, post-asylum option – opportunities and fears and human rights concerns.

The findings of the study indicate that irregular migrants' decisions or options upon receiving negative feedback on their requests to remain in Germany is informed by a number of variables, key among them, absence of freedom from fear and want in their home countries. The lack of economic opportunities in their home countries drove them out to search for better livelihoods. However, a number of other considerations are also at play in the decision making process. Investment into migrants trip to the destination countries is also a major variable in the post-asylum options. This involves time, energy, experiences and perception of failure. Another variable that informs post-asylum decision is the 'unfinished business' of the journey, this includes the objective for which they left their home countries. Networks in the destination country that offer migrants support until a means of livelihood is also found to inform the post-failed asylum decisions. Migrants denied asylum also do not want to return for fear of embarrassments that awaits them in their countries of origin. Human rights threats also play a role in the post asylum decisions of failed asylum seekers.

In spite of aforementioned variables that prevent failed asylum seekers from returning home, one strong observation from the interviews was that the majority of respondents from the case studies had left their countries without thinking through their decisions fully for options in the destination countries. This is explained by their decisions to leave their home countries that were made in haste and failed to take into account those variables.

For instance, ASGH3 who had previously tried without success to secure US visa on two occasions, said he almost did not take up the offer but for his cousin who encouraged him to take his chances in Europe to raise capital. ASGH4, who was embarking on his first attempt to leave Ghana, left for Morocco without enough resources to continue the journey. He assumed that he could work in Morocco to raise money to continue the journey. Only to discover that there were no jobs for migrants upon reaching the North African country.

ASGH2 also left Ghana in haste after his visa was procured without the needed information only to end up in Germany to learn that without stay and work permits he could not work. He spent over three months indoors and teetered on the brink of depression. The case is no different for WIAGH1, who agreed to go to Holland with her benefactor from Ghana. She had to leave once the travel document and visa were ready. In all these cases, though the respondents harboured the intentions to emigrate in search of opportunities; their decisions to leave their home countries were not informed by knowledge, experience nor curiosity, thereby exposing their vulnerabilities to charlatans who profited from their interests to travel outside their home countries.

The situation was no different for those who traveled by road to Libya and later to Europe, ending up in Germany. Nearly all of them left their countries on short notice, because they had reached their breaking points. They said their search for opportunities back home yielded no positive results and had become desperate to leave. Therefore, any opportunity to leave their home countries was taken without adequate information on the destination and requirements for entry, stay and work. IMGH4 said because migrants

from sub-Saharan Africa were mainly engaged in the informal economy of Libya, they did not require residence and work permits to find jobs in that country.

Many of them were engaged in construction and other low skilled employment that did not require them to secure the necessary stay and work permission. The arrangement in Libya explains their entry into Europe with similar mindsets to function in Europe's underground economy. But as MNGO3 puts it, "in Europe, our skin colour easily gives us up", so employers risk sanctions if they hire people without work permits. Therefore, even though irregular migrants could work in Europe's underground economy, the cost of being caught and sanctions thereof make employers more careful.

ASGH5, however said although irregular migrants could find jobs in the underground economy, when there is a crime or 'police control' – raids by the police – and headcount is conducted, one could be a subject of deportation. The business owners could be charged for hiring undocumented workers. This makes it difficult to find jobs if one's asylum request is denied. Others had to produce documents, which are not easy to come by in order to be employed.

Another observation was respondents lack of knowledge of stay and work permissions as preconditions to realising their objectives in destination countries. Nearly all respondents said at the time of reaching European destinations, they had no knowledge of the need for stay and work permissions to enable them fully function. Therefore, all the irregular migrants interviewed did not plan for it. They entered Europe, thinking entry was the most important hurdle to jump, only to face multiple others they had no prior knowledge of and hence, had no plans to address them. This deepens their frustrations and exposes them to dangers.

According to IMGH4 and IMNG1, but for the winter programmes in both Italy and Hamburg, many irregular migrants would end up in health facilities because many of them had no permanent places of abode. The above notwithstanding, irregular migrants interviewed were unwilling to return, due to their investment in the journeys to their chosen destinations. The situation regarding stay and work permission has been more pronounced among migrants I encountered over the period of the study due to what

IMGH4 refers to as exploitation by other migrants of their fellow countrymen now in need of stability.

Before data collection, as part of efforts to build trust and identify with would-be respondents, I spent over two weeks observing the migrants at the Lampedusa Platz, near Hauptbahnhof, Hamburg Central. Lampedusa Platz is a canopy mounted at one of the exits of Hauptbahnhof Sud, along Steindamm Strasse by migrants who arrived in Hamburg after they were driven outside camps in the Italian island of Lampedusa. Today, the canopy structure serves as informal migrants information centre, mainly for irregular migrants as well as German citizens. Migrants from West Africa, who are citizens of the case studies, particularly Ghanaians are found there all times of the day.

During my stay there and interactions with some of migrants who spend time there, I found that most of the Ghanaians in the current group come from the country's deprived regions of the north, namely: Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions – some of which have been recently demarcated. Many of the current crop arrived in Hamburg years after the pioneering group that mounted the canopy. Many of the over 300 migrants of different nationalities, gained stay permission through marriage, childbirth and asylum, leaving others betrayed due to their resolve for the whole group to be granted asylum (MNGO2). Most migrants visiting Lampedusa Platz needed information on accommodation and job opportunities. Often a contact was passed to the person depending on available information and their assessment of the person in need.

It is instructive to understand that the lack of knowledge of the systems in destination countries, aside from the desperation to leave their home countries, opens irregular migrants up for exploitation. At least three of the respondents paid agents far in excess of the cost of securing visas, but did not take the trouble to find out about job opportunities and other requirements for working in destination countries. Therefore, they had invested significant amounts of money in the search for additional money, the source of which was at best, unclear.

Other respondents who went to Libya before arriving in Europe followed a similar pattern. Even though they found jobs in Libya, if work permit and stay permission were

conditions for their stay and work in Libya, they would have become more desperate upon reaching the North African country. It shows that though majority of the respondents claim they left their countries of origin because of absence of freedom from fear and want, and desired to live in dignity, they failed to take into account conditions in destination countries whether as enablers or hindrances to their cause. By the same token, they failed to plan for return because they did not even know about asylum. It became for the many, their only chance to enter and remain in the destination country in the hope of achieving their objective of freedom from fear and want as well as living in dignity.

In a few cases however, the interviewees admitted not being in desperate need but assumed they could raise some capital to improve their businesses back home. ASGH2, who runs a school in Ghana wanted money to buy a second-hand minivan to convey pupils from nearby communities in order to increase enrolment rates in his school. His brother in Germany asked him to come and raise money for the purpose, without full details of the country's stay and work permits set out to raise the said money. But the debt incurred upon arriving in Germany makes him vulnerable and no longer willing to return but determined to pay his brother and make additional money to achieve his mission. ASGH3 also wanted to buy vehicles for public transport to secure him income, but unlike the former, he came on his own to work and raise money for the purpose. However, things did not turn out as planned therefore wants to return. The story is almost the same for ASGH4 who wanted capital to buy some equipment for his business back home. But has become desperate because conditions in Europe were not what he expected.

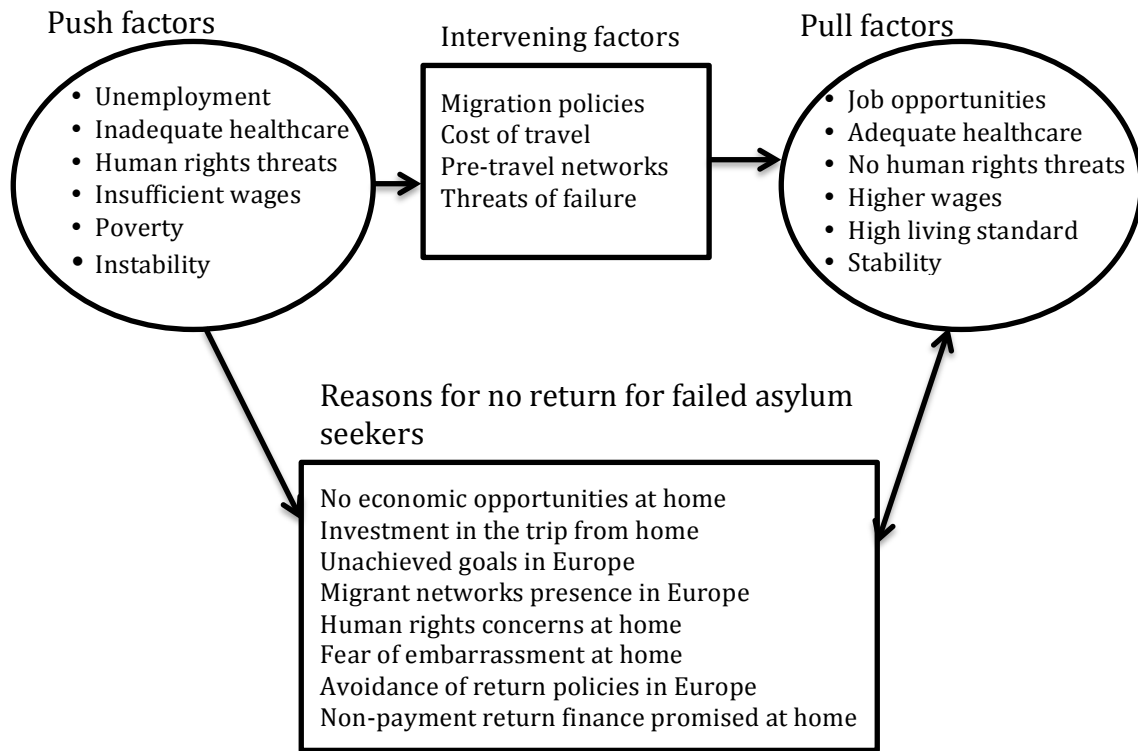
Unlike the above situations, WIANG1 was enticed by a friend who left Nigeria for Italy and within a year started sending money and accessories to her mother. However, like all the others, she failed to inquire about the challenges her friend had encountered throughout her journey to Europe. All other interviewees cited "Been Tos" – neighbours living in Europe who occasionally visited their communities back home - as the basis of their convictions that if they made it to Europe their economic situations would improve. IMNG1 said the "Been Tos" show off in the communities, intimidating those who have never travelled to Europe and creating an impression that all is rosy across the Atlantic.

WIAGH1 puts it succinctly when she said “they [Been Tos] give an impression with their lifestyles upon their return that money just falls from the skies in Europe”, giving many people the desire to follow in their footsteps.

The foregoing indicates that irregular migrants interviewed for this study set out on the journey to destination countries without enough information. It also shows that despite their networks in the destination countries, many set out without full regard for the implications of their journeys on themselves. ASGH2 said his brother who asked him to come to Germany, did not tell him that he needed permission to work upon reaching Europe. Since he did not have stay and work permission, he had to spend his first couple of months indoors.

Irregular migrants interviewed embark on blind trips only to encounter the realities in destination countries to deepen their frustrations. Their focus on possible achievements in Europe blinds the need for the necessary preparation, including adequate knowledge of the destination country conditions. For instance, these migrants had no knowledge regarding skills and language needed for employment in Germany. However, majority are afraid to return due to embarrassments they will suffer back home in their communities and the lack of economic opportunities. Finally, not many of them took issues of human rights violations seriously, because of claims that there were any avenues for redress or for fear of being exposed and deported.

**4.2. Reasons failed asylum seekers do not return – economic situation**  
**Figure 5 A model on why failed asylum seekers in Germany fail to return**



Source: Author’s compilation based on Everret Lee, 1966 and Kainth, 2010

The above is an attempt at modeling why migrants from the case studies denied asylum in Germany do not return. It introduced a new variable (reasons for no return for failed asylum seekers) to Lee, (1966) and Kainth (2010), used to explain the push and pull factors of irregular migration in chapter two. According to Kainth, push factors compel individuals to leave a place for varied reasons, whereas pull factors attract them to a location. Kainth’s model emphasises job opportunities, higher wages, facilities, working conditions and amenities all of which attracted citizens of the case studies interviewed for this study. The respondents’ of this study’s reasons for not returning fit into the pull factors and some intervening factors as shown in this model. However, the new variable details specific reasons given across the board as to why asylum seekers from the case studies fail to return to their home countries. The reasons stress the prevalence of push factors as well as conditions of return and unachieved goals as the basis for failed asylum seekers refusing to return.

As stated earlier, the reason majority of failed asylum seekers from the case studies fail to return to their home countries after their asylum claims are denied is the fear of returning to the very economic and social conditions that pushed them out of their countries. This is even emphasised by those who are willing to return after their claims were not granted. ASGH3 and ASGH4 who have the desire to returning are willing to return because they had thriving businesses they could return to have concerns over their place in Ghana's current economy. The former said he faced the prospect of people whose fees he paid mocking him because his trip was not successful. So even for them, the desires to return hinge on their ability to recoup the amount of money invested in the trips in addition to some savings for their time in Germany before they return.

The WIAGH1 in a response to whether she contemplated return during the trying times before her childbirth and subsequent stay permission said she did not want to return to a situation where she had no job and had to depend on her grandmother. Even though she had finished her training as a caterer she was unemployed and looked for opportunities to travel to achieve her dream. ASGH1's fear of returning is so visceral that he describes it as "decapitation", which is also indicative of his economic state while in Ghana. He described being returned to Ghana as equal to having his head chopped off because he had no options back home to live a dignified life. He is willing to remain in Germany than return, even though as at now he has nowhere to sleep or a job from which he can earn any income.

ASGH2 who left his school behind is also unwilling to return because he had to pay his brother for his trip to Germany and returning will mean coming to an economic state that is even worse than before he left Ghana. The emphasis on their economic state should they decide to return is influenced by the fate of those who previously returned. ASNG1 stressed how those he met in Europe who either volunteered to return or were deported have become worse off back home and have regretted their decisions to return.

All MNGOs also argued that if there were initiatives back home that offered direct economic benefits to returning failed asylum seekers, more would be willing to return. They advocate initiatives implemented by the EU and other development partners in the



migrant sending countries including the case studies that failed asylum seekers could return to. This position runs through asylum seekers responses. They are afraid to return because their human security concerns remain unaddressed. Their terrible personal economic situations would further degenerate if they choose to return after their asylum requests are denied. Even though for some, their current circumstances in Europe are precarious, they remain hopeful of gaining stay permission through other means in order to work to realise their dreams as they see others do.

#### **4.2.1. Investment in the journey**

Closely related to the first reason is the investment migrants put into the journey, which goes beyond finances. Their hope of a better future not only for themselves but family and other relations also plays an important part in their decision not return. Some respondents invested their capital from Ghana into this adventure with the hope of doubling or tripling that investment upon reaching Europe. Failure to do that means returning to less than nothing, since money that could have gone into their business has now been lost in the attempt.

Even those convinced of return still want to be able to take with them the money they invested for their trips to Germany. ASGH3 wants his over 8,000 dollars back with him in order to return. ASGH4 also wants to earn money to pay back the debt his family secured to enable him survive in Morocco and to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. On the contrary, ASGH2 who originally wanted to just acquire a minivan and is no longer eager to return because he still needs to pay his brother 7,000 euros invested in his trip to Germany before embarking on his own mission of acquiring a vehicle for his school back home. These confirm de Haas (2008: 1318) position that many irregular African migrants are not among the poorest, but move on their own agency. It also confirms de Haas et al (2015) conclusion that initial desire to migrate and return change over time due to personal experience and contextual factors such as discrimination, social exclusion and access to labour markets.

Unlike the above respondents who paid agents for visas and paid their way into Europe from their savings back home, the majority of the respondents had to work through the journey to Europe. They had to save money in Libya or call for family support in order to pay their way across the Mediterranean. This group who mostly left their home countries with insignificant sums of money, however, spent time working in other African destinations and went to Europe due to the conflict in Libya. Others arrived in the country to a conflict situation that no longer made it the haven that once provided jobs for many sub-Saharan African migrants, including those from the case studies. Their financial investment coupled with their time, energy and the emotional stress through the journey to Europe, makes it unattractive to return, if their aims for the journeys are not met. WINGN1 recalled how at her first sight of the Mediterranean, she was overcome with fear and decided against sitting in the boat across the vast ocean. Her fears grew even more pronounced when half way through the trip they had to return to Libya over concerns that their boat could capsize. ASGH5 said he had to call home for his siblings to look for money for him to make it across to Europe, despite staying in Libya for years. ASNG3 said he has lost the money that he planned to invest in Nigeria in 2010 and 2013 in his attempt to reach Europe from Libya and ASNG1 said he could not return because the aim of his trip was not yet achieved.

#### **4.2.2. Aims of the trip not achieved**

Another factor influencing failed asylum seekers decision not to return is that their aim of leaving their countries has not been achieved. IMGH1 said if you set out on a journey to acquire something, in this case capital, you cannot return without it. Though many of the respondents indicated their disappointments in their decision to arrive in Europe without being able to work to earn decent living as they anticipated, they are unwilling to return. ASNG1 said he would not want to be returned because the aim of his journey to Europe has not been achieved and that is why he fled the reception facility to avoid deportation after receiving the negative asylum response. His position is shared by ASGH1, who said he is not ready to leave Europe because he has not achieved his aim.

ASNG2 however, said he would plead with the German authorities because his aim of leaving his country, which was to give him a new life and a new beginning has not been

achieved. ASGH5 was of the view that even though his aim had not been met, he was hopeful that remaining in Europe, he could find an avenue to change his circumstances. IMGH4 said many migrants are willing to take advantages of any job opportunities if they believe that it would bring them some returns, but it exposed them to being exploited because they are motivated to make it at all cost. WIANG1 had to change her position of not traveling on the Mediterranean because her dream of traveling to shower her mother with gifts as her friend did, had not materialised and so she could not just return.

The aim of their journeys means a lot to the respondents, even though for many achieving that aim is further afield, they were still determined to pursue their objectives of improving their circumstances in order to live in dignity. They draw inspiration from others who entered Germany in similar situations but have currently found ways to integrate.

They remain optimistic that over time, they may also find the same or similar opportunities. ASGH5 said he was readying for his stay permission by saving money, so that if ever an employer in need of his service were willing to assist him get a stay permission, he would have some money to facilitate the process.

#### **4.2.3. Presence of migrant networks**

As many previous studies found, the presence of migrant networks and employers' appetite for low skilled labourers without rights, facilitate and sustain irregular migration (Boswell, 2002:17; de Haas, 2008:1319). This was confirmed by this study. The majority of the respondents said they chose Germany and Hamburg because they knew other people who lived there. "Such decisions are taken based on relationships. So the decision is based on information you receive about the destination country. But if you have no information then you take an uninformed decision and deal with the consequences, however, where you have people giving you information is where you are likely to go," IMNG1 said about decisions of irregular migrants regarding taking asylum and post asylum decisions.

ASNG1 for instance said he could leave the camp in Hamburg because he knew people who lived in the city. He said other migrants in his situation who had no links to the city remained at the facility. Sometimes these networks were not preexisting but were discovered upon arrival in the destination countries. Many visitors to Lampedusa Platz, including this researcher, derived wealth of information on migrants in asylum as well as activities of citizens of the case studies in Hamburg. Many irregular migrants looking for employment in the informal economy checked there regularly for leads and agents with links to employers also charged to offer such leads.

ASNG3 said he moved from Italy to Germany because his daughter's mother was there and insisted that he joins them. He had to leave his business activities in Italy to join her. However, he now functions in the informal economy. ASNG2 said he chose to come to Hamburg because he knew that there were many migrants from his country in the city, therefore could find leads to get a job.

Again, religious institutions of both migrant communities and established orders in the destination countries also provide important relief for newly arrived migrants. A significant number of the interviewees said their religious community in Hamburg played a role in helping them survive their early days in the city. IMGH4 said a religious leader at the St. Pauli church hosted his group of migrants who arrived in Hamburg in 2013 from the Italian island. ASGH5 also said a religious institution served as a sleeping place for him and others over a long period of time. ASGH4 said his church, mainly for Ghanaian migrants in Hamburg, wanted to rent accommodation for him on credit.

Also, MNGO3 said his religious community offered spiritual, moral and financial assistance to migrants in Hamburg (including irregular migrants) because it is the Christian thing to do. The positive contributions of religious groups notwithstanding, ASGH1 said he was driven away from a mosque, accommodating other irregular migrants because he not a Muslim. On the contrary, IMGH4 said their group of over 300 migrants who arrived in Hamburg in 2013 of different faiths and nationalities were all hosted by a Christian religious leader whose actions changed the narrative on the

discussions surrounding the arrival of migrants from Italy to focus on their wellbeing and welfare in Hamburg.

#### **4.2.4. Human rights concerns**

Despite alluding to deprivation and lack of opportunities as the reasons for embarking on their journeys to Libya, none of the migrants related that to a breach of their fundamental human rights. They only saw it as governments' lack of willingness to help them realise their dreams. This indicates that respondents consider economic social and cultural rights as a benevolent act of their governments, rather than rights that must not just be demanded, but respected, protected and fulfilled. Citizens from the case studies must claim economic social and cultural rights. Evidence abounds in many states, particularly the case studies' reluctance to afford all citizens their economic, social and cultural rights to enable them live in dignity and earn livelihoods. These important rights are often placed below civil and political rights, which are often emphasised in voting and the right to free expression. Many other rights are not claimed by citizens due to their lack of knowledge and inability to mobilise around the fight for these rights as a collective.

MNGO3 stressed that economic deprivation is a human rights concern and wondered why the EU and Germany will declare them as conditions not warranting asylum. He said if the member countries of the European Union were interested in promoting human rights across the world they need to demonstrate it in their handling of migration from the developing world. MNGO2 blamed Europe for its exploitation of Africa, which continues to render many countries of the region poor and leaves their citizens deprived. But it also fails to offer them help when they arrive in Europe due to deprivations that Europe, continues to perpetrate with the help of African leaders who put their selfish interest above their citizens.

But both ASNG1 and ASNG2 referred to possible repeat of human rights violation they suffered if they were to return to their communities. The latter referred to a forced return as being sent back to danger, to a place not fit for human habitation. The former, on his part believed that targeting young people as potential perpetrators of bunkering in the Niger Delta region persists.

#### 4.2.5. Fear of embarrassment

Nearly all respondents were unwilling to return for fear that they would be considered failures in their communities. MNGO3 mentioned that many returned migrants he knew could not re-enter their communities, but remained in bigger cities because they did not want to be considered failures. Many migrants explained that because the “Been Tos” have presented Europe as the place where dreams come true, returning without achieving your aim brings embarrassment not only to the individual but his or her the family.

This remains the reason many failed asylum seekers stay in Europe despite the lack opportunities to realise their objectives. IMGH2 said when he faced the realities of Europe, he contemplated return but thought of the embarrassment involved and stayed. IMGH1 said nearly everyone in your community finds out soon about your trip; raising expectations on your return.

ASGH3 said the reason he was willing to return early in his journey is that if he remained in Europe, expectations would increase back home with friends and family making demands. However, if he returned early, those expectations would be curtailed.

Finally, ASGH5 said returning empty-handed embarrasses irregular migrants because of successes your mates who remained home may have chalked in their fields. It becomes difficult to return with nothing after years abroad. He was convinced that the embarrassment caused his friends returned forcibly led them to resort to substance abuse.

The above discussion confirms the earlier point that the failed asylum seekers interviewed for this study are unwilling to return due to uninformed migration decisions that were based on their imagination rather than the realities in the destination countries.

Many respondents frustrated over the lack of jobs or inability to provide for themselves assumed that upon reaching Europe, their circumstances would improve. Their assumption stems from their impression of the “Been Tos”. Even though they were clueless of the Europe experiences, they thought, “money falls from above” (WIAGH1). They failed to investigate “Been Tos” European experience but based their future on the appearances of others living there. But “some of them were probably returning after over

a decade in Europe without stay permission and so couldn't travel home," IMNG1 said about migration decisions influenced by "Been Tos".

Strangely, from all migrants interviewed (excluding MNGOs), only one respondent (ASGH5) said he knew about stay and work permit before entering Europe from Libya. The rest had spent between two and nine years in Libya or flew from home assuming they could begin working the moment they arrived. They considered entering Europe to be the panacea to their human security threats, but failed to meet the legal and regulatory requirement of destination countries.

The foregoing forms an intrinsic part of asylum seekers from the case studies' decision to remain in Europe regardless of their inability to earn sustainable incomes. The above factors among others influence their decisions to remain in destination countries hoping to find opportunities to live free from want and fear and in dignity.

### **4.3. Conclusions**

This thesis sought to answer one main question: *Why are irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Germany denied asylum not returning home? And two sub questions: To what extent are Ghanaian and Nigerian governments cooperating with European institutions to ensure the human rights of their citizens earmarked for return are respected and protected and how are returned migrants able to take advantage of opportunities to fulfil their aspirations in their home countries?* To answer these questions, this research analysed push and pull factors as well as factors that facilitate and sustain the flow of migrants from the case studies to the destination country, Germany.

I also analysed annual migrant flows to the destination country, focusing on irregular migration and the number of asylum requests rejected over a three-year period between 2015 and 2017. The data was compared with similar data in Italy to see the patterns of arrival and rate of rejection of asylum requests from the case studies in the two European destinations. I also examined policy documents of the case studies for targeted policies

aimed at stemming migration flows and to identify economic opportunities targeting irregular migrants in the destination country in particular and Europe in general.

Publications of Germany's ministry responsible for migration, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) were also reviewed for migration policies and actions that have bearing on the case studies. The analysis was to establish possible cooperation between institutions of the case studies and the destination country to ensure that human rights of failed asylum applicants earmarked for return will be respected and protected. This researcher also gathered primary data from migrants most of whom have gone through the asylum process in Germany but without success and some experts who work with migrants and migration-related issues.

The study also formulated three hypotheses, these were: *First, Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants whose asylum applications are rejected are not likely to return home within 18 months after the decisions are communicated to them. Second, there is no direct institutional cooperation between agencies responsible for the return of migrants in Ghana and Nigeria and their counterparts in Germany to ensure that human rights of failed asylum seekers are respected and protected in the process of return. Third, the reason irregular migrants in Germany denied asylum do not return home is the absence of freedom from fear and want in their home countries.*

The analyses of primary and secondary data for this research shows that failed asylum seekers from the case studies do not return home due to multiple factors. Key among these factors is the absence of freedom from fear and want resulting from their economic and in some cases their political situation back home. Failed asylum seekers interviewed are afraid that if they return they may not have economic opportunities to earn a living to enable them live dignified lives. As indicated earlier, some asylum seekers who left their businesses in Ghana and are willing to return want to make enough to cover the cost of their trips to Europe due to its implication for their economic situation if they return without covering them.



The case is no different for those unwilling to return, they emphasise their investment of cash, time, energy and future into the journeys to the destination countries. Furthermore, migrants do not return because the goals of their trips to destination countries have not been achieved. Also, migrants do not return for fear that they and their families would be embarrassed they did not succeed in their migration experiment and finally, some also refuse to return due to human rights concerns.

Though migrants denied asylum have faced difficulties in the destination countries due to their lack of stay and work permissions, migrant networks offer opportunities. Churches, ethnic groups, family relations, countrymen and the appetite of some business owners for cheap labour prove to be an effective enabler that allows failed asylum applicants to find alternative arrangements not just to stay but also facilitate their employment. These arrangements include finding partnerships that lead to marriages, having children with German citizens, finding employers interested in one's expertise and working in the informal economy.

On the question of institutional cooperation to ensure protection and respect of human rights of failed asylum seekers, the literature and interviewee responses suggest that though the EU and member states have engaged many African states including the case studies, no effective mechanisms have been established yet. Whereas the German government policies provide for human rights of all including failed asylum seekers, interviewees believe when it comes to forced removals, migrants' rights are not respected. They said such removals are carried out at an unholy hour and the migrants lose their rights of access to their lawyers. Again, some interviewees who raised issues of discrimination against them as a result of their race and status by employers or at reception facilities in the Germany failed to report. These asylum seekers did not report for fear of being exposed as working illegally, staying without permission or being victimised in the reception facilities.

The majority of the failed asylum seekers interviewed in the study left the reception facilities in order to avoid being returned because they claim the goals of their trips have not been achieved. Though it is possible for the German government identify such

migrants for deportation using available technology and working through migrant networks, no such known approach has been applied as yet. The challenge however remains working with the home country governments to facilitate the return process.

One of the failed asylum seekers willing to return was asked by immigration officials to renew his passport. However, upon initiating the process the German officials said the passport renewal cost (200 euros) was expensive. He was therefore asked to opt for a travel certificate instead. Again, one of the expert interviewees also indicated that German immigration officials often try to access Travel Certificates – a document that allows migrant without travel documents to travel to their countries of origin – for failed asylum seekers without success. Even though the study did not interview government officials to assess the level of cooperation, the perception among experts and migrants interviewed is that no such cooperation exists. However, the position of migrants and experts interviewed alone is not enough to conclude on the question of institutional cooperation that can adequately facilitate returns and protect human rights of failed asylum seekers.

On the question of returned migrants ability to take advantage of economic opportunities back home, the study found in particular in Nigeria some economic activities for returned migrants published by the UN Migration Agency. However, government policies remain unknown and inaccessible failing to provide returning migrants opportunities. Analysis of case studies governments' economic policies in relation to employment and entrepreneurial initiatives showed that these initiatives are in short supply in relation to the number of unemployed youth; therefore returned migrants will not be accorded priority status.

Initiatives for employment and entrepreneurship are general in nature, therefore returning migrants need to compete with everyone else available for spots. The interviewee who recently studied Nigerian government initiatives said not only do the initiatives lack coherence and inter-agency coordination. If the initiatives fail to impact lives in countries of origin, they are not likely to attract failed asylum seekers back home because they will not address their human security concerns.

Nearly all interviewees alluded to poor economic conditions back home that fail to create opportunities for growing population. Therefore failed asylum seekers who return will not be free from fear and want nor can they live in dignity. They believe that the lack of these freedoms is cause the depression and substance abuse by returned migrants whose circumstances have deteriorated. Again, respondents argue that part of the money earmarked for voluntary return, though insufficient, would not be released to them upon return. This obvious lack of good faith is part of reasons they refuse to return.

The evidence that failed asylum seekers from the case studies skip reception facilities, widely shared by all interviewees, confirms the *first hypothesis* of the study. Migrants from the case studies denied asylum are not likely to return home within 18 months after their decisions are communicated to them.

Analysis of secondary data and policy documents did not produce evidence of direct institutional cooperation between agencies responsible for return of migrants in Ghana and Nigeria and their German counterparts to facilitate the smooth return of failed asylum seekers. The study did not find any evidence of efforts from the countries of origin to work with Germany on the return of failed asylum seekers for their human rights' sake. These are citizens of the case studies that have failed to secure permission to remain in Germany. If these were German citizens whose asylum requests failed, their government would intervene to ensure their human rights are respected and protected. However, the governments of the case studies often look on while their citizens' wellbeing and welfare deteriorate.

Given that international law and human rights laws govern immigration and provide roles for both countries of origin and destination to ensure violation of migrants' rights do not occur even if they do not qualify for asylum. The seeming inaction and lack of initiative from countries of origin takes away the required burden sharing to ameliorate the situation. As stated earlier, access to Travel Certificates to countries of origin for the return of migrants are rarely issued by home countries to failed asylum seekers. Again, returning migrants are to pay to renew their passports instead of their governments intervening to facilitate the process. These fuel perceptions that there is no institutional

cooperation to facilitate smooth return of failed asylum seekers to avoid possible human rights violations. Because the study did not engage government officials, there is no conclusion on the *second hypothesis*, except the perception among respondents that such cooperation does not exist.

The *final hypothesis* of the study posited that irregular Ghanaian and Nigerian migrants in Germany denied asylum do not return home due to absence of freedom from fear and want in their home countries. Even the two asylum seekers who indicated a desire to return due failed expectations had concerns about the rate of unemployment and the toll it impose on most young people. Their return is conditioned to recouping their investment into the trip and raising capital, otherwise their economic situation degenerates.

The others face similarly frustrating situations daily, but the only thing keeping them in Germany is the hope that they may find jobs in the informal economy. Those who complained about earning six euros an hour instead of the statutory ten euros have not abandoned post because they know it is more rewarding than returning to no jobs back home. Analysed data on wages in the second chapter gave the daily median wage in Nigeria as 1.80 dollars and Ghana as 4.40 dollars. Many of the asylum seekers encountered during the study may earn less than the median wage were they to return home.

Therefore, staying in Germany's informal (underground) economy and earning up to 6 euros an hour is more rewarding than returning home to no ready jobs. Even if there were jobs that paid them up to two dollars a day in the case of Nigeria or five dollars in the case of Ghana, their counterparts in the informal German economy would be well off. Their unwillingness to return after denied asylum is due to the absence of freedom from fear and want. Fear that their economic situation would worsen if they return and cannot live in dignity. The downside to this arrangement is that Germany loses income tax from the migrants' earnings, while the employer gains by paying lower rates.

Respondents often cited conditions of returned failed asylum seekers as their basis for not seeking to return. Most interviewees rather want their governments to intervene for the German government to grant stay and work permission to those already in Germany to

prevent them from returning to join the band of unemployed in their countries, many of who grow desperate by the day. Even those granted stay were quick to share their frustration before leaving their home countries over the lack of jobs. For the women granted asylum, they needed to make unplanned babies in order to get stay permission. Therefore, even though some failed asylum seekers spent in excess of 5000 dollars for their trip to Europe, majority of the respondents are not willing to return due to the absence of freedom from fear and want.

#### **4.4. Recommendations**

The study makes the following recommendations. Any initiative to reduce the flow of migration from sub-Saharan Africa, including the case studies, to Europe that fails to tackle the roots causes of migration, as many authors have said in the past, will yield limited results. Previous and current initiatives between EU, member states and Africa, some dating back decades ago have focused on institutional capacity building and legislation. But these have failed to curtail irregular migration because they fail to address the causes of mass movement of people from the continent. As previous studies (Altai Consulting, 2015; de Haas, 2008) among others pointed out, majority of movements of Africans occur within the continent therefore there is the need to address human security threats created by the lack of access to livelihood.

As Europe continues to find a lasting solution to migrants' influx from Sub Sahara Africa, one area it cannot ignore is investment in job creation within Africa. The partnerships with Africa to reduce or eliminate irregular migration must lead to the creation of new economic powerhouses such as Libya before the 2011 uprising. A fraction of border management budget can be invested in the African countries serving as safe third countries for irregular migrants to build industries to keep the migrants busy. Otherwise over time, new routes to Europe will emerge in those countries. Even if these industrial hubs pay half of the salaries available in Europe, they will provide jobs for the people, promote returns and significantly reduce the irregular migration flows from Africa if it is implemented over a decade period.

Pathways should be created for irregular migrants currently in Europe that legitimises their stay and provides them documents in their present destination countries on a contract basis to allow them to work for up to two years and then return to their home countries afterwards. This could provide options for skills training to enable them to return with skills needed in their home countries. Host country governments can get income tax from them, as their engagements would be formalised. They would also pay rent and utility rates to the state rather than pay individuals higher rates for accommodation and pay health insurance.

Europe should subsequently mainstream opportunities for low skilled labour in the informal sector and recruit through transparent schemes, if there are spots for people outside of Europe. This will allow individuals to directly apply through regular migration channels, thereby making irregular migration less attractive.

In order to prevent large flows of African migrants into Europe seeking asylum, EU countries can demand that potential asylum seekers first approach their diplomatic missions in their home countries or immediate neighbourhood. This will allow for their cases to be investigated, processed and where there are merits, the needed assistance provided.

Germany should channel its development assistance into initiatives that create jobs with the private sector in ways that can be monitored by receiving state's agencies to ensure success. This will reduce human security threats and begin to inspire hope in the people. These initiatives can serve as attraction for failed asylum seekers and prevent them from risking their lives back Europe.

European governments should work with migrant communities in Europe subsequently to develop sanction mechanisms for harbouring irregular migrants. This would be lauded especially if there are opportunities for jobs in Africa and schemes for low skilled labour recruitment to Europe that allow for those interested to enter legally through regular migration.

African governments should step up to the plate and take responsibility for their citizens' wellbeing and welfare regardless of where they are. Diplomatic missions of African states in Europe must be accessible to stranded citizens in destination countries, provide the needed counseling and facilitate return of failed asylum seekers.

African governments must create sustainable economic opportunities for their young people to keep them at home to help development their countries rather than fleeing to menial jobs in Europe. Initiatives aimed at encouraging the use of technology must be the new growth area of the continent to ensure that more technology-based jobs are created.

African governments as part of their efforts to create jobs must have a medium to long term strategy that leads to processing at least 50% of their natural resources back home to create employment and promote infrastructure development. The current trade arrangements with the rest of the world, particularly the West, will only keep the continent poor due to its imbalance nature. If the current arrangements remain, Europe will continually see scores of Africans finding ways to enter its shores, either dead or alive.

The fight against corruption in Africa needs to be taken more seriously to eliminate the practice in public service to ensure that majority of Africans are not deprived the basic necessities of life but can live dignified lives.

Where people have fled violence and persecution due to conflict, the rule of law must be respected to allow those whose rights are violated the chance to seek redress and be compensated, where necessary.

African governments are responsible for addressing the human security concerns of their citizens; therefore they should constantly adapt their human capital development to their needs and train citizens in skills that are useful at home.

Campaigns against irregular migration and trafficking in persons that manifest as favours must be intensified in the churches, schools, market places and wherever people gather on the continent for the dangers of irregular migration to be presented to prevent charlatans from continually taking advantage of the unlettered.

Africa Union and their European counterparts should work with Libya to form a functional government to help address the breakdown of law and order that has contributed to the increasing use of the country as a transit point to Europe, rather than the destination it once was for African migrants.

Finally, visa regimes must be transparent and flexible to weed out visa contractors who collaborate with their European counterparts to profit from people's ignorance.



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## ANNEX

### **Annex A: Interview Schedule data collection for Master Thesis – Kobby Gomez-Mensah**

#### **Questions for semi-structured interviews – Migrants**

What information did you have about have about asylum before starting your journey?

Why did you decide to leave your country? (Political, economic social etc)

How long did you consider the decision to migrate?

What was the source of funding for your trip?

What did you expect upon arrival in Europe?

How different was the reality from the expectation?

#### **Asylum**

When did you first apply for asylum?

How long did the response take?

What was the response to your asylum request?

What reasons were you given for the decision on your request?

#### **Government support (or NGO) home country or destination**

What support have you received from your government during the period of the asylum request?

What support did you expect from them?

#### **Post asylum options – opportunities and fears**

Do you know any asylum seekers from your country who have returned home?

What are they doing back home? What would you do upon return to earn a living? Why?

What opportunities do you know of in your country that you can take advantage of should you go back?

What information regarding your return were you given at the time the asylum decision was communicated to you?

What are your plans, given that your asylum request was not granted? Why?

What would you like to do if you get the opportunity to go back home?

**Extras**

What else would you like to tell me?

**Questions for semi-structured interviews – Experts and Key Informants**

How long have you been working with migrants?

**Migrants' information on Asylum in Germany**

How do African migrants end up in Germany?

Why do migrants from Ghana and Nigeria seek asylum in Germany?

What are the prospects of Ghanaians and Nigerians being granted asylum in Germany?

**Asylum related issues**

What plans do they have at the time of seeking asylum?

What is their reaction to negative asylum decisions?

How many failed asylum seekers leave Germany? What are their options?

**Post asylum decisions and options**

What percentage of failed asylum seekers return home? What happens to the rest?

How many asylum seekers show willingness to return? Why?

What are their political and economic concerns regarding going back home?

How do they impact their choices in Germany?

What is the role of economic opportunities back home in their decision after their asylum requests are denied?

**Government and NGO support in both origin and destination**

What is the level of collaboration between their home countries and the Federal Republic of Germany?

Why do you think that level of cooperation exist or does not exist between the states?



**Human rights**

What are their human rights concerns both at home and in Germany?

What avenues did they have to address those concerns? Why?

**Extras**

Are there any other concerns you would like to share?

## **Annex B: List of Interview partners**

1. ASNG1: A Nigerian male who spent over a year in Libya, two years in Italy and has been in Germany for over a year.
2. ASNG2: A Nigerian male, who spent time in Libya, was admitted to a camp in Italy but currently in a camp in Germany.
3. ASNG3: A Nigerian male who spent over five years in Libya, fled the conflict to Italy but now In Germany.
4. ASGH1: A Ghanaian male, who spent time in Libya, went to Italy and then Spain, now in Germany.
5. ASGH2: A Ghanaian male, who has overstayed his visa but remains in Germany.
6. ASGH3: A Ghanaian male, who has overstayed his visitors' visa but remains in Germany.
7. ASGH4: A Ghanaian male, who flew to Morocco and entered Europe, currently in Germany.
8. ASGH5: A Ghanaian male, who fled the conflict in Libya to Italy, Spain and now in Germany.
9. IMNG1. A Nigerian male, who fled the conflict in Libya to Italy, now in Germany.
10. IMGH1: A Ghanaian male, who fled the conflict in Libya to Italy, now in Germany.
11. IMGH2: A Ghanaian male, who fled the conflict in Libya to Italy, now in Germany.
12. IMGH3: A Ghanaian male, who overstayed his visitors' visa but remains in Germany.
13. IMGH4: A Ghanaian male, who fled the conflict in Libya for Italy, now in Germany.
14. IMGH5: A Ghanaian male, who fled the conflict in Libya for Italy, now in Germany.
15. WIANG1: A Nigerian female accommodated by the German government.
16. WIAGH1: A Ghanaian female accommodated by the German government.
17. MNGO1: A Nigerian male, operating an NGO in Hamburg that deals with Migrants related issues.
18. MNGO2: An Ivorian male, operating an NGO in Hamburg that works with Migrants and related issues.

19. A Sierra Leonean male Pastor of a migrants' congregation in Hamburg